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(This survey covers the years 1983 and 1984)

I. GENERAL

The Literary critic Ion Dodu Bălan, well known for his work on Octavian Goga, publishes in English *A Concise History of Romanian Literature*, under the sponsorship of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences, and merely 'issued' by Ed. șt. și encic., 1981, 119 pp. It is inexplicable that the work, though printed in English, reaches the West rather late, but it is even more inexplicable that the manuscript is not 'translated' but 'adapted into English' by A. Bantaș. Though quite useful, the work is more of a commented anthology than anything else, with the author naming himself on the last page of the book as being among the top twenty literary critics of the country; one gets the clear feeling in the end that it is an Establishment-promoted achievement. *Le Comparatisme roumain, histoire, problèmes, aspects*, vol. 1, Univers, 1983, 287 pp., ed. R. Munteanu, is a collection of 17 essays, under the headings (a) 'Théorie du comparatisme', (b) 'Histoire du comparatisme', and (c) 'Les critiques roumaines et les littératures étrangères'. All of a sudden and out of the blue, N. Iorga, N. I. Apostolescu, and Gh. Bogdan-Duică become comparativists of European status! However, it remains true to state that Romania of the post-war period can stand as an example to the whole of Western Europe for teaching comparativism on a large scale at university level — thanks to T. Vianu, G. Călinescu, E. Papu — only to be matched by analogous teaching in the United States. G. Lăzărescu, *Romanul de analiză psihologică în literatura română interbelică*, Minerva, 1983, 298 pp., is an ambitious book with a strong comparative-literature bias, for it is only after 50 pages devoted to finding out what the psychological novel is about in European literature that the author turns to Romanian literature. He deals correctly with the issues of centrality of character, duration (and time) as well as interior monologue. Chapter IX, 'Conclusions', a mere two pages, is in flagrant imbalance with a 16-page French summary of the book! However, it seems to me that, judging by the authors quoted and discussed, the Romanian psychological novel is not only 'less psychological' but also 'less significant' than the author wishes it to be. V. Morar, ed., *Despre frumos și artă. Tradițiile gândirii estetice românești*, 2 vols, Minerva, is a selection of critical texts supporting the existence of the concept of Romanian aesthetics as early as D.

Cantemir, S. Micu, and I. H. Rădulescu; hence, the possibility of an elaborate history of this concept. S. Pascu, ed., *Istoria învățămîntului din România*, Ed. did. și ped., is made up of articles by at least 25 contributors on the pattern of N. Iorga's 1928 book bearing the same title. E. Simion, *Mitologii critice*, Cartea Românească. M. Coman, *Logica simbolului*, Cartea Românească. P. P. Negulescu, *Geneza formelor culturii*, Eminescu. L. Leonte, *Prozatori contemporani*, Junimea.

2. ANTHOLOGIES

A. Deletant and B. Walker, *An Anthology of Contemporary Romanian Poetry*, London and Boston, Forest Books, 99 pp., put together nearly 100 short pieces by the poets Ioan Alexandru (b. 1941), Ana Blandiana (b. 1942), Constanța Buzea (b. 1942), Nina Cassian (b. 1924), Ștefan Aug. Doinaș (b. 1922), Marin Sorescu (b. 1936), Ion Stoica (b. 1936), as well as the late Nichita Stănescu (1933–1983). The short preface manages to give nutshell definitions of each of these poets, and correlates them with their great predecessors — Eminescu, Bacovia, Blaga, Barbu, Voiculescu. This little book is an excellent introduction to the country's non-politicized poetry.

3. BIBLIOGRAPHIES

For *Bibliografia românească modernă*, Vol. 1, see p. 574 above.

4. THEATRE

The Institute for the History of Art and Editura Academiei issue a fairly anonymous *Abridged History of Romanian Theatre*, 1983, 191 pp., compiled by seven different contributors, and modestly edited by S. Alterescu. This is a valuable précis of the three-volume *Istoria Teatrului în România* (1965, 1971, 1973), as well as of *Teatrul românesc contemporan 1944–1974* (1975). This useful synthesis in English is divided into seven chapters giving a chronological survey ranging from Dacian rites, through feudal princely performances up to the 'dramatic' (sic!) picture of the Romanian theatre after World War Two. This book deserves far wider circulation in institutions teaching Romanian in the West. E. Azernikova, *Драма и театр Румынии* ('The Drama and the Theatre in Romania'), Moscow, Ed. Iskusstvo, is devoted to prominent playwrights living and working in Romania at the end of the previous and the beginning of the present centuries, such as Caragiale, Camil Petrescu, M. Sebastian. The author is an excellent specialist on both the Romanian language and Romanian drama. The last chapter deals extensively with the playwrights of socialist Romania, such as P. Everac, H. Lovinescu, T. Popovici, D. R. Popescu, and M. Sorescu. A. Saceanu, *Clasicii nu vor să îmbătrînească*, Dacia, discusses the plays and the specifically personal views of the drama as regards outstanding personalities such as I. L. Caragiale, Camil Petrescu, V. I. Popa, G. M. Zamfirescu. M. Ghițulescu, *O Panoramă a literaturii dramatice române contemporane: 1944–1984*, Dacia, 315 pp., is a complete, commented inventory of all playwrights of today.

5. FOLKLORE

P. Caraman, *Colindatul la români, slavi și la alte popoare; studiu de folclor comparat*, ed. S. Ciubotaru and prefaced by O. Bîrlea, Minerva, 1983, 635 pp., is the Romanian version of a monograph published in Polish in Cracow as early as 1928. This publication was made possible by the fact that its author, born in 1898, died in 1980! This is one of the very rare comparative studies of the Romanian and Slavic folklores. The comprehensive monograph is divided into two main parts: (a) description, and (b) origin and genesis of this particular folklore phenomenon, with 300 pages devoted to each of the two parts. In spite of their being 50 years old, scholarly statements do not seem to date at all; on the contrary, they sound both fresh and frank in a way that post-war statements in the field of East European folklore do not. It is also worth pointing out that, given the local nature and idiomaticity of the subject, this first Romanian translation is a genuine *tour de force* on the part of the three experts who undertook it: consider these titles — ‘Practicile magice gospodărești la români și la slavi față de datina colindatului’ or ‘Colacii ceremoniali de Crăciun și colindele’ — as quite representative samples of near-untranslatability into English! O. Bîrlea publishes vol. II of his thorough monograph *Folclorul românesc*, Minerva, 1983, 498 pp., containing the following highly relevant headings: Descîntecul, Balada, Cîntecul propriu-zis, Strigătura, Proverbul, Ghicitoarea, Cîntecul de leagăn. The book ends with a 50-page synthesis of themes. Quoting almost at random, ‘Jos pe apa Nistrului, / La morile turcului’ (p. 463), I wholeheartedly wish to believe that this book aims at dealing with Romanian folklore ‘de la Nistru pîn’-la Tisa’, in the genuine Eminescu sense . . . or is it just wishful thinking? V. G. Popa, *Folclor din ‘Țara de Sus’*, ed. and prefaced by M. L. Ungureanu, Minerva, 1983, 877 pp., is a most comprehensive collection of texts printed in optimal graphic conditions, and representing vol. IV in the series *Folclor din Moldova*; the book is divided into seven main parts, ranging from short pieces (Bocete, Proverbe, Zicători) to longer texts (Balade, Teatru haiducec, Teatru cu măști). Most valuable is the complete index of individual sources: though it may well be that the sociolinguist would have liked to see more information given about the informants (their age, in the first place!) than just names and page references. V. Golban, *Estetica ceremonialului social în obiceiuri*, Ed. șt. și encic., is a historical study of the ‘ceremony’ in Romanian folklore as a representative instance, most closely linked to reality and day-to-day life. I. Datcu publishes the second volume of his *Dicționarul folcloriștilor*; as the first volume had been devoted to literary folklore, this second volume is devoted to musical folklore, and contains 123 entries.

6. STYLE AND STYLISTICS

M. Mancaș, *Limbaajul artistic românesc în secolul al XIX-lea*, Ed. șt. și encic., 1983, 339 pp., deals first with ‘Specificul limbajului poetic premodern (Văcăreștii și Costache Conachi)’ followed by ‘Limbaajul figurativ în poezia primei generații romantice’. The merit of the book is that it provides a symmetrical and parallel analysis of both poetry and prose, with several central chapters being devoted to narrative modalities (Odobescu, Filimon), and classicism in prose (Creangă). The book ends with an attempt to single out *fin de siècle* features of literary productions. It remains, however, questionable whether poetry and prose can be discussed together under the same methodological umbrella as they are in this book.

7. EARLY LITERATURE

A. Cornea, *Mentalități culturale și forme artistice în epoca româno-bizantină (300-800)*, Meridiane, is a study meant to put forth a specific overall cultural image of the civilization developed in the Romanian-Byzantine period between the arbitrary limits marked by the years 300 to 800. The book attempts to outline and define the transition period placed between the end of Antiquity and the start of the Middle Ages.

Printing in Romania in the 16th and 17th centuries is a favourite topic of research of D. Deletant. And a fascinating topic it is. His excellent study, 'Rumanian presses and printing in the 17th century', *SEER*, 60, 1982:481-99 and 61, 1983:481-511, is a follow-up of and natural sequel to 'A survey of Rumanian presses and printing in the 16th century', *SEER*, 53, 1975:161-74. The explicit goal is to examine 'the activity of those presses in Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania that served the spiritual and cultural needs of educated Rumanians and of the Orthodox clergy', in a linguistic situation in which 'the use of Church Slavonic was regarded by the prelates of the church as sacred'. D.'s investigation establishes the sociopolitical and technico-financial conditions under which the Printed Word established itself and developed in the Romanian Principalities, where the linguistic landscape was totally different from that of, say, England, France, or Russia, when printing was being introduced. It is for that and many other reasons that religious texts of the time also count as *belles lettres*, more so perhaps than in any other part of greater Europe. This is a piece of fundamental research.

8. INDIVIDUAL AUTHORS

AGÂRBICEANU, ION. M. Caziu, *Ion Agârbiceanu, centenaire de sa naissance, 1882-1982*, Cartea Românească, n.d., 101 pp., is — largely on account of the absence of the author's name from the cover, and its replacement by 'Union des écrivains de la R.S.R.' — another typical Establishment production. It probably emerges from an Establishment guilt-complex of long standing with regard to a major writer greatly neglected until not long ago. The book is made up of a 30-page monograph, followed by a 20-page chronology, in turn followed by a mini-bibliography, and fifty packed pages of brief statements by famous personalities as to how great Agârbiceanu really was.

ARGHEZI, TUDOR. *Poezii/Poems*, Romanian-English bilingual edition, transl. A. Bantaş, prefaced by N. Manolescu, Minerva, 1983, 467 pp.; most unusually, the book contains a 'Translator's Preface' (in both Romanian and English!), in which the highly-skilled translator explains in a most competent way to the average reader the problems both (translator and reader) have to grapple with in the process of going through the parallel texts more meticulously than is customary. The translator does not fail to pay tribute, at least twice, to his professor and master in translation theory, Leon Leviţchi.

Books published in French become less of a rarity in Romania: thus, Ş. Cioculescu publishes *Introduction à la poésie de Tudor Arghezi*, Univers, 1983, 235 pp. The book is divided into ten chapters, the first nine of which were written at Telega in July-August, 1945. Unfortunately, the tenth chapter is dated 'Bucarest, septembre 1970', and carries the even more unfortunate title 'Après la libération'! After chapters bearing titles such as 'La poésie érotique', 'Les symboles de la vie intérieure', or simply 'L'Artiste', the unlikely Western teenage reader might well be in danger of reading this last title as liberation from Sex, Art, or the Unconscious. Had it not been for this *idiosyncratic* 'Liberation', Arghezi (in the sixties) — and L. Blaga (in 1956) — would certainly by now have been Nobel Prize Laureates. Balaci, *Sinteze umaniste*, includes 'Acvila amintirii: Tudor Arghezi' (pp. 276-84).

BACOVIA, GEORGE. A bilingual anthology *Plumb/Plomb*, Jumimeca, 1983, 115 pp., is devoted to B. by V. Drăgănescu-Vericeanu, who selects and translates the poems; after a 20-page introduction, there

follows a selection of 80 texts. Like most bilingual editions printed in Romania, the French version seems far too close to the original to read as anything else than an elegant paraphrase in the foreign language, and as such, providing excellent material for seminar work (rather than for aesthetic enjoyment). A. Indrieş, *Alternative bacoviene*, Minerva, 257 pp., is a very comprehensive study indeed, with a 12-page Abstract in French. Balaci, *Sinteze umaniste*, includes 'Gindind la Bacovia' (pp. 272-75).

BIBESCU, MARTHA. M. Brăescu, *Interferențe românești în opera Marthei Bibescu*, Minerva, 1983, 179 pp., is a comprehensive monograph, largely based on an extensive bibliography in French about the Romanian Princess. The book is ultimately a study of the intersection of the French and Romanian cultures, mainly in the period between the two world wars. Thus, the third chapter is entitled 'Martha Bibescu și scriitorii francezi', and one of the last ones — 'Sufletul românesc în opera Marthei Bibescu' (to say nothing of 'Cuvinte, expresii și calcuri lingvistice românești în opera Marthei Bibescu') — points in the same direction.

BLAGA, LUCIAN. *Zum Wesen der rumänischen Volkseele (Despre esența sufletului popular românesc)*, Minerva, 1983, 269 pp., is a German transl. by J. Draser, prefaced by D. Ghișe and ed. M. Flonta, of famous texts by the poet and philosopher Blaga in which he discusses *spațiul mioritic* ('der mioritische Raum'), and other major Blagian theoretical concepts proposed by him as early as 1936. This publication is quite an achievement, particularly in view of the fact that in 1956 Blaga failed to be short-listed for the Nobel Prize mainly on account of the non-availability of many of his poetic or philosophical works in Sweden, or in the West. D. C. Mihăilescu, *Dramaturgia lui Lucian Blaga*, Dacia, is a very subtle study of another literary field in which Blaga broke new ground, namely the theatre.

EMINESCU, MIHAIL. G. Balăn's 1984 book, published in exile and entitled *Nebănuitul Eminescu*, Munich, Jon Dumitru Vlăg, 184 pp., is a welcome attempt to revivify Romanian culture from outside the country. The well-known music critic gives the impression of a vigorous and elegant horse (what's in a name?) who has just managed to shake off a heavy harness and thoroughly enjoys a long-awaited and much-deserved freedom (of the pen) . . . Alongside what C. Noica has written on Eminescu, this book is one of the most original *recent* contributions leading — in spite of its occasional verbosity — to a renewed understanding of the greatest Romanian poet. N. Ciobanu, *Structurile fantasticului narativ*, Junimea, discusses the overall structures of Eminescu's narrative prose. A. Oprea, *În căutarea lui Eminescu gazetarul*, Meridiane, 1983, studies his work as a journalist. P. Caraman, *Pământ și apă*, Junimea, 359 pp., is an unexpected

investigation subtitled 'Contribuție etnologică la studiul simboliceii eminesciene'. A. Z. N. Pop, *Întregiri documentare la biografia lui Eminescu*, Eminescu. Balaci, *Sinteze umaniste*, includes 'Eminescu oriunde' (pp. 246-52).

GOGA, OCTAVIAN. It is high time that the long persecuted Goga begins to have his letters published in *Octavian Goga în corespondență: documente literare*, ed. M. Bordeianu and S. Lemny, Minerva, 1983, 551 pp. The book is divided into (a) 'Corespondența cu familia', (b) 'Corespondența trimisă', (c) 'Corespondența primită', and (d) 'Varia', which is a most illogical epistolary classification by any standards. Goga's correspondence has obviously been subjected to screening in this volume: an earlier volume of correspondence, ed. D. Poenaru, was published under exactly the same title as early as 1975. However, as no criteria of selection are mentioned in either volume, it is reasonable to assume that there is a lot of unpublished material left.

IORGA, NICOLAE. With Iorga, everything is literature: reading his *Opere economice*, ed. G. Penelea, Ed. șt. și encic., 1983, 846 pp., one feels one is in the realm of *belles lettres*. For Iorga, just like Winston Churchill, always manages to entertain, even in his most factual ('economic') statements — be it baker unrest in 1796 (p. 237) or salted fish in pre-Roman times (p. 433). The book is made up of four major parts: (1) 'Negotul și meșteșugurile în trecutul românesc'; (2) 'Istoria industriilor la români'; (3) 'Istoria comerțului cu orientul'; and (4) 'Istoria comerțului românesc.' None of these four separate works, written before the war, had ever been published in the forty years of people's power in spite of the fact that if Karl Marx himself had lived long enough to have access to the text, he would indeed have found it highly relevant to the *specific* economic conditions in the Romanian Principalities before and after the Union. Iorga remains as factual, and as entertaining of course, when he turns to literary history, as he does in the 3-vol. *Istoria literaturii românești în veacul al XIX-lea de la 1821 înainte*, Minerva, 1983. It is quite typical of Iorga that in just about eleven hundred pages he only manages to cover forty years of literary history; the two-page epilogue (sic!), discussing the years 1863-1865 is significant proof thereof. It begins with the significant sentence: 'O vreme nouă se pregătea însă pentru scrisul românesc, dacă nu numai decît în toate privințele una mai bună.' The monumental history ends on the death of Andrei Murășanu on 24th October 1863 and that of Simion Bărnuț on 2nd of June 1865, both of them Transylvanians! Had Iorga written an exhaustive history of Romanian literature covering its modest (by comparison with French or English!) four (or five) centuries of objective existence, how many volumes would he have needed? One other thing: it is no mere coincidence that the publication in Bucharest of Iorga's economic

writings preceded by a mere few months the publication of his 3-vol. literary history: for the two works converge, and genuinely complement each other; just like everything else he did. All his 'deeds' should therefore be taken as literature in the first place, and as anything else only afterwards . .

ISTRATI, PANAÏT. A genuine pictorial biography of Panaït Istrati is the album of photographs *Panaït Istrati*, compiled by the Museum of Romanian Literature, and ed. C. Brezia Stoian with a comprehensive introd., Meridiane. The book contains hundreds of photographs of the author, covering the early years in Brăila as well as his long years of travel and exile.

LOVINESCU, EUGEN. In spite of its deceptive title page — Eugen Lovinescu, *Opere*, vol. II, ed. M. Simionescu and Al. George, Minerva, 1983, 343 pp. — this book is written and published entirely in French (apart from most of the notes in Romanian), with a preface by Émile Faguet and a dedication to Prince Georges B. Stirbey. The book contains Lovinescu's doctoral thesis entitled *Jean-Jacques Weiss et son œuvre littéraire*. Judging by its very few Romanian words on the dust jacket, hard cover, and title page, one wonders whether this is not a semiotic attempt at pointing to the so very close French–Romanian cultural relations along the centuries, regardless of other 'accidental' interference.

PREDA, MARIN. Balaci, *Sinteze umaniste*, includes 'Pași alături de Marin Preda' (pp. 290–96).

REBREANU, LIVIU. *Jurnal*, vol. I, seria 'Documente literare', Minerva, contains the writer's diary for the period 1927–1935, and can indeed be considered fundamental for a good understanding of the sociology of Romanian culture in the inter-war period. The text is established and introduced by P. F. Rebreanu, with notes by N. Gheran.

STANCU, ZAHARIA. Balaci, *Sinteze umaniste*, includes 'Zaharia Stancu — in memoriam' (pp. 285–90).

STĂNESCU, NICHITA. A volume devoted entirely to *Nichita Stănescu*, ed. by S. Angheliescu, Eminescu, contains critical articles by C. Ciopraga, N. Manolescu, R. Munteanu, E. Papu, M. Sorescu, and 20 other scholars.

VOICULESCU, VASILE. M. Pop, *Vasile Voiculescu pelerin prin veac*, Litera, contains many so far unpublished documents, items of correspondence, a chronology of the work, a selective bibliography as well as many testimonials written by the poet's friends.

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