

RADNÓTI MEMORIAL YEAR

– RADNÓTI-WEEK IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF FOREIGN LITERATURE IN
COLLABORATION WITH THE NSZL –



As part of the Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year, the Radnóti-Week was organized in the National Library of Foreign Literature in collaboration with the NSZL, between November 3-7, 2014. The program series consisted of a series of five conversations in the evenings, and a sweeping exhibition presenting the complete Radnóti oeuvre. The themes of the evening-conversations covered Radnóti's work as a translator; his love poems; and his relationship with other, associate fields of art, like the art of photography and theatre. There were literary historians, critics and poets between the lecturers, like Béla Vilček, Béla Pomogáts, Ágnes Gergely, Tamás Ungvári, and three coworkers of the NSZL participated in the programs-series also. Our director of Research and Academic Affairs, László Boka literary-historian opened the series with a comprehensive essay; Ildikó Sirató was the specialist and moderator of the evening-program about the adaptations of a Hubay-play, entitled: Three nights of love; and Zsuzsanna Rózsafalvi was the curator

and presenter of that extensive exhibition, called „In the wake of Orpheus” – Radnóti, the translator-poet, which was open in November, and constituted the overture of the whole program-series.

Radnóti's life was well documented thanks to his comrades and contemporaries – his legacy, thanks to his widow, Fanny Gyarmati, is one of the most complete legacies of contemporary poets. Thus, the Manuscript Collection of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences organized a large exhibition at the one-hundredth anniversary of the poet's birth, and the Petőfi Literary Museum evoked the life of the poet and its age, presenting the destiny of the artist under the crushing weight of history. The aim of present exhibition was more modest; primarily, we draw a portrait of the poet and translator Radnóti, calling attention to the eternal opuses of his carrier as translator. Furthermore, the ten cases of the show provided rich



Full-house opening of exhibition in collaboration with Béla Pomogáts, László Boka, Zsuzsanna Rózsafalvi

background material for the programs of the Radnóti-Week, through unique pieces – autographs, photos, agreements with publishers among others – rarely seen by the public at large. Thus, there were on display all of the first editions of Radnóti's works, six of which were dedicated to László Szemere translator and two letters. We placed next to the books their autographs also, so one dozen handwritten poems were exhibited also (*Reckoning, Between New Year's Eve and the New Year*), from the Manuscript Collection of the NSZL. We exhibited in separate cases the magazine- and anthology-publications, and in the case of the latter, the editorial work (*Korunk [Our Age], Mai magyar költők antológiája [Anthology of Contemporary Hungarian Poets]*). In connection with the approximately 80 Radnóti-texts published in *Nyugat [West]*, we presented the ambivalent, varying relationship between Babits and Radnóti. We also selected few letters from their autograph correspondence. We draw attention to Radnóti's less known forums of publication (*Tükör, Új idők, Argonauták, Színpad [Mirror, New Times, Argonauts, Stage]*), and works published in them.

We put special emphasis on Radnóti's translations, since according to his contemporary, István Vas, he was the best translator of their generation. Besides the first editions of multi-authored, multi-translated anthologies (*Three poets*) and of independent volumes (*La Fontaine tales*), we also selected from contemporary

reflections regarding them. For example, the *Don Quijote*, adapted for youth by the poet, was exhibited together with a letter written to Vas, in which the process of adaptation is mentioned. We presented the antecedents and the after-life of the works which remained fragmented because of the undeserved, tragic death of the poet. For example, the history of translation of the *Twelfth Night*, which he put together for Franklin, was finally finished by György Rónay, and we reconstructed it based on the publisher agreements found in the Franklin Fond of the NSZL.

For the conversation-series, closing the Radnóti-Week, we collected in a separate case documents connected to the Miklós Hubay-play inspired by the poet, entitled *Three Nights of Love*, including documents of its film-adaptation. We exhibited, for example, the short novel *Lost homes* written by István Vas, which inspired the play, and the Vas-manuscript of the essay on the birth of the play; photos from the rehearsal and the poster of the musical, premiered on January 12, 1961, directed by Miklós Szinetár; the photo-documentation of the shootings of the movie directed by György Révész, in 1967. One of the curiosities of the exhibition was the photo dedicated to photographer Tibor Inkey, signed by the protagonists of the movie.

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