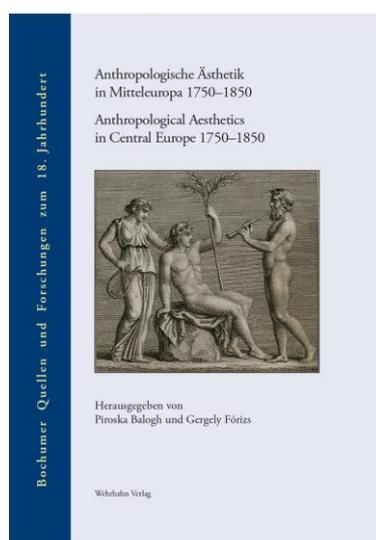


BALOGH, Piroška – FÓRIZS, Gergely [eds.] (2018): *Anthropologische Ästhetik in Mitteleuropa 1750–1850/ Anthropological Aesthetics in Central Europe 1750–1850*. Hannover: Wehrhahn Verlag 2018. (Bochumer Quellen und Forschungen zum 18. Jahrhundert, 9.) 304 pp.

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Around 1800, anthropological aesthetics gradually established itself as a scholarly discipline uniting cross-field research in the human sciences (“Wissenschaft vom Menschen”) the predominant concern of which was self-constitution and self-improvement of man that was seen as a part of nature (in both physical and spiritual senses). In the concepts, communication approached through the medium of a human language was considered a central methodological tool. The concept of anthropological aesthetics first emerged in relation to works on Friedrich Schiller and presented a set of disciplines that, as of now, may well be considered established and relatively distant from each other; however, at that time they were in close proximity or even closely tied (especially aesthetics, medicine, biology, psychology, and linguistics).

Between 1750 and 1850, the set of disciplines related to man gradually deduced their problem areas from philosophical systems; the core ones are presently dealt with within philosophical anthropology (using completely different rhetoric and drawing on different scholarly disciplines, though). The proceedings edited by Piroška Balogh – Gergely Főrizs, Budapest-based academics and organizers of international scholarly events, capture the first centuries of aesthetics as a separate scholarly discipline. They do not aim to give a comprehensive historical picture or overview of the results through telling a “great story”, rather to bring different perspectives through specific concepts of contemporary anthropological aesthetics as a new humanistic discipline spreading in Central Europe.

The themed volume covers the following perspectives: institutional (introduction of aesthetics as an academic discipline), Central-European (the expansion of aesthetics into the Habsburg monarchy), and linguistic (the transfer of conceptual adaptation from Latin to German, later also to other languages); it also takes into account adaptation mechanisms (translations, possibly also compilation and interpretative practices) sometimes leading to eclectic concepts. The proceedings are divided into three chapters. The first chapter (*Deutsche Ästhetik*) presents papers dealing with the works of contemporary German aestheticians, such as Heinrich Zschokke (Carsten Zelle), Friedrich Bouterwerk (Sandra Richter), Karl Heinrich Heydenreich (Antonín Polícar) and Wilhelm Traugott Krug (Gergely Főrizs). Főrizs analyzes the reception of the philosophy and aesthetics of one of the most influential contemporary German post-

Kantian philosophers of the first half of the 19th century, Wilhelm Traugott Krug. He does so through assessment of translations and works by Hungarian philosophers, while focusing on translations and related works by István Márton. In his study, he notes that the eclectic anthropological aesthetics of the epoch represents a more or less uniform rhetoric that develops according to the laws of inner experience, but which is not closed to the outside world.¹

The second chapter (*Universitätsästhetik der Donaumonarchie*) deals with aesthetics at the universities of the Habsburg Monarchy. Around 1800, the new discipline began to play an increasingly important role in humanities education in the cultural milieu of Central Europe, enjoying state support in relation to building its institutional base (study plans, university aesthetics departments, and demanding auditions for uncensored book publishing). In its development, the encounter of aesthetics as education of taste and state interests (Hlobil, 2012) strengthened the role of the school system of the monarchy. Tomáš Hlobil evaluates thematic treatments of aesthetics in the philosophy textbooks of German-speaking countries with regard to the reception of Immanuel Kant's philosophy. Other authors subsequently raise problem areas connected with aesthetics in the Hungarian part of the monarchy. In this context, the most important contributions are original aesthetics typologies in the works of Hungarian aestheticians, such as Lajos Schedius (Piroska Balogh, Dezső Gurka) and György Szerdahely (Botond Csuka). From the point of view of contemporary research, Balogh Piroska notes that the texts are unavailable to the public and to researchers because of their Latin (and not yet translated) versions. The author sees the possibilities of revitalizing anthropological aesthetics for the 21st century in three steps: “to translate and publish the works of these aestheticians”, “to explore the contexts and connections of their approaches”, and “to make them part of current scholarly discourses” (Balogh, 2019, p. 152).

The third chapter (*Gymnasial und Zeitschriftenästhetik in Ungarn*) is devoted to aesthetics as an academic discipline taught at Hungarian lyceums and to the methods of making it more scientific in contemporary periodicals in Hungary. The following writings were analyzed: synthesizing works focusing on reception and criticism of Kantian aesthetics written by authors like Józef Rozgony (Béla Mester), aesthetics handbooks in the Hungarian language, namely that by Ferenc Verseghy (Réka Lengyel), pieces in newspapers and reviews of important aestheticians by Karl Georg Rummy (Ferenc Máté Bodrogi). The reception of works by philosophers such as Friedrich Schiller, namely in the creative and scholarly output of Hungarian authors like József Benke (Ágnes Simon-Szabó), played an important role in the spreading of the ideas found in humanities and in the education of holistic man in the contemporary anthropological aesthetics circles. Even the Scottish school of taste of the early 19th century was tackled; namely, a qualitative analysis of two translations of Hugh Blair's textbook by Kis János and Count Aurél Dessewffy (a translator of several aesthetics texts of English and German origin) is presented. The latter intensively dealt with the questions of aesthetics published by other Scottish school authors by reflecting on them in contemporary literary journals or in correspondence with other scholars (Ferenc Hörcher – Kálmán Tóth).

Anthropological aesthetics is currently in a phase of renewed interest from historians of, among others, philosophy, aesthetics, linguistics or classical philology. Several newer publications by prominent authors or editors like Stöckmann (2009), Borchers (2011), Gurka (2019), Herrmann (2019) and others evidence the importance of this field. The peer-reviewed publication can be added to a series of those that notice

¹ Fórizs (2018, p. 96) concludes: “Insgesamt drängt sich die Hypothese auf, dass die eklektisch eingestellten anthropologischen Ästhetiken der Epoche eo ipso einen mehr oder weniger einheitlichen, sich nach inneren Erfahrungsgesetzen entwickelnden, aber nicht nach Außen geschlossenen Diskurs darstellen.”

changes in the perception of man since the Age of Enlightenment (in contemporary systems of philosophy, literature, linguistics, but also physical anthropology in the 18th and 19th centuries). Today's understanding of anthropological aesthetics, as a study of aesthetic and artistic phenomena, sign and meaning structures in “natural” nations and communities, is far from the original perception of “human science”. Therefore, the editors of the volume very productively define anthropological aesthetics over time, eliminating thus the possibility of misunderstanding or misinterpretation of their intention.

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