

## THE ANALYTIC DICTIONARY OF ROMANIAN LITERARY WORKS

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This work by the Professors from the Romanian Literature, Comparative Literature and Literary Theory Department of the Faculty of Letters in Cluj is a bold and unprecedented project in Romanian lexicography and, in a way, even in universal lexicography. The team led by Professor Ion Pop started work on the dictionary a decade ago. The first volume (letters A-D) was published in 1997 by the Didactic and Pedagogic Publishing House, Bucharest; the second volume (letters E-L) was published in December 1999 by the Scientific Publishing House (Casa Cărții de Știință), Cluj. The third volume will be ready in autumn this year and will probably be followed by another one, depending on the organisation of the material. The dictionary is a large repertory of representative literary works - poems, prose works and drama from the beginning to the present day. For the first time literary works are in the limelight instead of their authors. They are placed in the alphabetical order of their title. The volumes of poetry, prose and drama, and the individual poems, short stories and plays considered representative of an author, epoch or literary trend are first presented in a concise bibliographic file containing the literary genre, author, place and time of publication of the princeps edition, variants and modifications in subsequent publications, notes regarding the book cover, illustrations and translations (if any). This is followed by interpretation and criticism. Authors were granted methodological and stylistic liberty which is only natural. Various works from various epochs are presented by people with a different education - different on the level of nuances, mostly - which accounts for the different "tastes" and personalised style. However, the academic balance of the texts is not tilted by personal nuances. Moreover, the project is unitary although it did not aim at bringing texts to a common denominator. It is a collective work in the gentler sense of the word. Although the authors are very different, belonging to different generations (we can read articles by the most venerable professors as well as the youngest members of the Department), they belong to the same school, the Faculty of Letters in Cluj which with its exigent and sober climate promotes quality writing.

Finally, there is a box after each section, showing the subsequent editions of the work in question and the most important critical references, which form a basis of critical bibliography. Each volume of the dictionary is provided with an

alphabetic index of the works analysed, the list of articles in alphabetical order of their authors and a general index of names.

This dictionary endeavours to be the *essential "library" of Romanian literature*, and a *live library*: the authors were conscious of the fact that new works are written all the time which could be included in the volumes just completed and also that tastes change and a work included in the dictionary at a given moment might prove to be valueless. Moreover, the project assumed from the very beginning an inevitable level of subjectivity. The authors have *chosen* the works, not with the objective of an exhaustive representation. They, living *today*, have chosen *today*, according to the most rigorous criteria, taking into account the opinion of critics, literary historians, the public reaction and the level of classicisation of works. Nevertheless, they could not eliminate relativity.

Beyond this subjectivity and relativity of which the authors are conscious, the dictionary offers an impressive panorama, in terms of the range and rigorousness of the analysis of Romanian literature from the beginnings to the *present*. A *present* which promises a periodical return on its own footsteps, taking into account a reality in progress. The dictionary is an instrument of work and a model for professors, pupils, students and literature-lovers. The modern and spontaneous arsenal of criticism which preserves traditional values, but also refreshes critical vision establishes the competence of the authors. The works listed and analysed are seen as interpenetrating, growing in concentric contexts - the work of the writer, the period, Romanian literature, world literature. This is an extremely fine and profound "network", a real laboratory of literature: the rich material also conveys the pleasure of reading and re-reading. From the chroniclers to Dimitrie Cantemir and the Transylvanian School (Școala Ardeleană), from Eminescu and Caragiale to Bacovia, Blaga, Barbu or Arghezi, from Sadoveanu to Mircea Eliade or Emil Cioran, from Alecsandri to Mircea Dinescu, Ana Blandiana, Marin Sorescu or Mircea Cărtărescu, the peaks of Old Romanian literature and the literature of our days are both presented in a generous, ambitious and open project. The *Analytic Dictionary of Romanian Literature* is a fundamental work of reference for everybody interested in Romanian literature.