

**„We are facing 'bojánjános-like' times” – the years of Zoltán Jékely at Kolozsvár, as reflected in his correspondence from 1940 to 1946**

- synopsis -

As the centenary of Zoltán Jékely has come in April 2013, his personality attracts more attention in this special year than in the past period. Amongst others, the periodical *Holmi* has commemorated the poet in its April issue with a diverse compilation, in which I, the person handling his literary heritage, was given the opportunity to publish close to 50 letters from the Jékely-Áprily correspondence between 1940-46. These are perhaps the most interesting years of their rich and lifelong correspondence, and seems to be most edificatory in the field of 'crisis and culture', too.

After the 2nd Vienna Arbitration, Zoltán Jékely decided to return to his birthplace, to Transsylvania, and to settle at Kolozsvár again. At that time it seemed to be a final decision, and he looked at the decade spent at Budapest as a mere intermezzo. („Pest has disappeared under the horizon. I have never lived there – as I have always been home here.” – he writes to his father). It can be followed in the Jékely-Áprily correspondence of this period how the enthusiasm and optimism in the initial letters („Zsoli Kolozsvariensis”) turn into pessimism and distress along with the progress of the war. As a result of tragedies in the family and in history as well as the more and more hopeless situation in Transsylvania, no other choice remained and Jékely had to decide to move back to Budapest again.

Based on the correspondence from the '40-46 period, partly published in the periodical and partly unpublished as still being processed, and taking into consideration lyrical works and prose of the time as well, my intension is to follow the stages of an inner transformation of Jékely in the years of historical and family tragedies, reaching the psychological state by 1946 that is well summarized in this sentence: „But how different it was to think of Transsylvania to living there!”

The mystical 'bojánjános-like' expression can be found in a letter of Áprily Lajos in 1944, and returns in a letter from Jékely to his father, too. Although the expression (made from a Hungarian personal name) seemed to be inextricable at the beginning of my work, it was plausibly a symbol of the loss of values and the tragedies of the era. The mystery has been deciphered by Kovács András Ferenc: if we translate the name into Romanian, we get to Jon Boian, the notorious political adventurer and agent of Romania in the 1940'. This is how this name becomes an adjective and thus the symbol of all that Jékely Zoltán faced in 1944, the most tragical year of the world war for Kolozsvár.

Being born in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in Transsylvania incorporates the state of living in one continuous crisis situation, being forced to make serious decisions day by day – to stay at the birthplace, but already in another country, or to move to the motherland, which is an alien environment – accordingly, Jékely also exists in a continuous liminary, cross-border situation as a frontiersman between languages, countries and cultures. And still, this cultural diversity opens the opportunity to become receptive: the equality of cultures living in parallel in Transsylvania is an evidence for Jékely.

In the years of the intermezzo at Kolozsvár, Jékely takes part actively in the literary/cultural life of the city (as the editor of the periodical *Termés*, and then of the literary part of the periodical *Világosság*), and these few years formed a very productive period of his life as a man of lyrics, prose and translation – along with more than 120 poems, the translation of *Vita nuova* and of *Faust* are also dated to these times. However, the historical crisis period has set a kind of seal on the language of his poetry – as he puts it in a letter to his father in '46, reacting on a poem by Áprily: „Thank you for these poems carved into ore – I wander in the opposite extreme, sitting more and more in the lap of shapelessness.” In my lecture I also intend to grasp those acts in his works that show what he calls shapelessness.