

## Summary

### ANTIQUITY IN THE WORK OF JOSEF KOSTOHRYZ

Many Czech Catholic authors turn to ancient inspirations at the end of the 1960's, after twenty years of exclusion from literature (Václav Renč, Klement Bochořák, Vladimír Vokolek, Josef Kostohryz). The antiquity often serves as a “neutral” visual and imaginary space that does not arouse suspicion of communist censors, but in which Christian world-views, that cannot be expressed directly, can be projected disguisedly, and more or less enciphered. Josef Kostohryz (1907-1987) moreover originally transformed ancient inspirations at motivic and versological levels.

At the motivic level, Kostohryz is concerned with the themes of fate and evil in the world. His books of poetry from the 1960's to 1980's depict the world as a scene of metaphysical drama of the powers of chaos against the powers of order. The powers of order are symbolized by female characters whose names refer predominantly to the antiquity – Parca, Ariadne, Eurydice, Muse, Medusa. The subject holds fragmentary conversations with them. Through these conversations and partly through mutual anagnorisis finally all these characters fuse in understanding that it is all about one character only – about one “stern image”, about the symbol of Fate.

Parca, the foreteller of fate, occupies a central place. The motif of Parca also bears an aspect of irony regarding the poet's own literary beginnings linked to “poésie pure” in the spirit of Paul Valéry, for whom Parca was an emblematic figure.

At the versological level, Kostohryz is inspired by ancient metre. He does not accept them as ready-made models, but uses them as an inspiration for his own versological experiments with which he had started even before he turned to antiquity – when his main source of inspiration

was the verse of Otokar Březina. In Kostohryz's books of poetry one can find regular inspiration by the elegiac distich, by hexameter and in some cases by other forms (Sapphic strophe). However, Kostohryz makes his verse of hexametrical cadence shorter or longer by one or even two feet. His aim is not to imitate ancient metre, but to find a "narrow path" between formal freedom of the avant-garde and rigidity of neoclassical poetry. His verses oscillate between the syllabical principle and the tonal principle, between the orality of Březina's style and the "Antique" declamation.

**Key words:** Czech literature; Catholic authors; Josef Kostohryz; Antiquity as inspiration; ancient metrics

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