

CLAUDIO MAGRIS: ON THE OTHER SIDE, 1999

—

On the occasion of the Sikkens Prize being awarded in 1999, a publication by Claudio Magris was also published. Magris (Trieste, 1939) studied German language and literature at the University of Turin and received his doctorate in 1962 for his thesis *The Hapsburg Myth in Austrian Literature*, a book that has now been translated into six languages. He was professor of German literature in Turin up to 1978 and from that year up to when he became professor emeritus, he held that chair at the University of Trieste. Magris was given honorary doctorates by the Universities of Strasbourg (1991), Copenhagen (1993), Klagenfurt (1995), Szeged (1999), Madrid (2006), and Paris Nanterre (2006). In 2001 he was awarded the Dutch Erasmus Prize. He published more than thirty literary studies, novels, plays and collections of essays, and his reflections appeared in the daily newspaper *Corriere della Sera* for many years. *Donau*, his magnum opus dating from 1986 has now been translated into 22 languages. The first of these translations was the Dutch translation by Anton Haakmat.

Up to the first world war, Trieste was the most important port of the Austro-Hungarian double monarchy. In 1918 the city was annexed by Italy, together with the Karst mountains and the Istrian peninsula. In 1945, the partisans of Marshall Tito occupied the city and the surrounding area and it was only following the interventions of the allies that it was possible to prevent Trieste from becoming part of Yugoslavia. The Karst and Istria, with the port of Fiume, (Rijeka) were annexed by Tito. In 1954 the new boundaries were ratified by the four major powers.

In *On the Other Side, Reflections on Boundaries*, Claudio Magris described the influence of the city on his work.