

ESCL Excellence Award for Collaborative Research 2026

Final report of the Award Selection Committee

In response to the call published by the European Society of Comparative Literature (ESCL), twenty-seven edited volumes were submitted for the ESCL Excellence Award for Collaborative Research 2026. The Selection Committee was impressed by the high standard and diversity of the submissions. After careful consideration, three volumes were selected as finalists:

- i. Alina Bako and Mihaela-Gențiana Stănișor, eds, *Géographies insolites*. Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2025.
- ii. Anca Parvulescu, Alex Goldiș, and Levente T. Szabó, eds, *Acta Comparationis – An Alternative Genealogy of World Comparatism. Transilvania 4–5* (2025).
- iii. Hany Rashwan, Rebecca Ruth Gould, and Nasrin Askari, eds, *Arabic, Persian, and Turkic Poetics: Towards a Post-Eurocentric Literary Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024.

All three volumes are outstanding examples of collaborative comparative research. Different in scope and methodology, they share a commitment to crossing linguistic, cultural, and disciplinary boundaries and to questioning established frameworks of literary history and comparison. They demonstrate how collaboration can foster genuine dialogue between different scholarly and literary traditions.



Antonella Ippolito, Rosa Mucignat, Marijan Dović, Alina Bako, Levente T. Szabó, Hany Rashwan and Zsuzsanna Varga at the award ceremony in Leeds Cloth Hall Court, 25 August 2026. Photo: Shuangyi Li.

Géographies insolites, edited by Alina Bako and Mihaela-Gențiana Stănișor, brings together approaches to literary space, translation studies, and multilingual translation workshops within a coherent framework. Connecting French, Romanian, Croatian, and other Central and Eastern European literary spaces, it unites scholars, younger researchers, and students from several European universities. The volume presents comparative literature as a polyphonic and multilingual practice in which literary spaces are translated and negotiated across cultures.

Arabic, Persian, and Turkic Poetics: Towards a Post-Eurocentric Literary Theory, edited by Hany Rashwan, Rebecca Ruth Gould, and Nasrin Askari, brings Arabic, Persian, and Turkic traditions into dialogue across languages, periods, and regions. Moving beyond theoretical frameworks derived primarily from European traditions, it draws on indigenous critical concepts such as *balāgha* and treats these traditions as sources of literary theory in their own right. Philologically grounded and conceptually ambitious, the volume offers a compelling model of post-Eurocentric comparative poetics.

Acta Comparationis – An Alternative Genealogy of World Comparatism, edited by Anca Parvulescu, Alex Goldiș, and Levente T. Szabó, reassesses the early history of comparative literature through archival research and critical reflection. It reconstructs the multilingual and inter-imperial context of *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum* while addressing nationalism, imperial asymmetries, multilingualism, gender, and exclusion. Rather than offering a celebratory alternative origin story, it uses this recovered history to question established genealogies of the discipline.

After extensive discussion, the Committee selected Anca Parvulescu, Alex Goldiș, and Levente T. Szabó's *Acta Comparationis – An Alternative Genealogy of World Comparatism* as the winner of the ESCL Excellence Award for Collaborative Research 2026. The Committee particularly valued its combination of archival research, disciplinary self-reflection, and theoretical ambition within a genuinely collaborative framework. By recovering a neglected episode in comparative literature while critically examining its contradictions, the volume invites us to reconsider how the discipline's history has been constructed: from which centres, in which languages, and through which cultural and institutional hierarchies. Its editorial coherence, multilingual and transnational perspective, and relevance to current debates in comparative literature make it a deserving recipient of the 2026 Award.

The ESCL Excellence Award Selection Committee

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Francesco de Cristofaro (Naples)
Marijan Dović (Ljubljana, Chair)
Antonella Ippolito (Potsdam)
Rosa Mucignat (London)
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