

- PROBLEMY LITERATURY STAROPOLSKIEJ. 2 vols. Edited by *Janusz Pelc*. Warsaw: Polska Akademia Nauk, 1973. Vol. 1: 551 pp. Vol. 2: 512 pp.
- LITERATURA STAROPOLSKA I JEJ ZWIĄZKI EUROPEJSKIE: PRACE POŚWIĘCONE VII MIĘDZYNARODOWEMU KONGRESOWI SŁAWISTÓW W WARSZAWIE W ROKU 1973. Edited by *Janusz Pelc*. Warsaw: Polska Akademia Nauk, Instytut Badań Literackich, 1973. 338 pp. 62 zł.

The two volumes of *Problemy literatury staropolskiej* (the final volume is in preparation) contain nineteen essays, written by twelve different authors, on important issues of Polish literature from its beginnings until the eighteenth century. What distinguishes this publication from others is its presentation of literature exclusively through thematic studies, and not studies of individual writers. This is an original endeavor, and it satisfies an urgent need. Taken together, the problems discussed represent a general synthesis of the present state of knowledge in the field. The large number of contributors has the advantage of introducing a multiplicity of critical approaches, attitudes, and methods. Thus, the work gives the reader a more complex and challenging picture of Old Polish literature than a single author could produce.

The editor deserves praise for his excellent organization of the material: the essays are grouped into a few large sections and are arranged in an order which could be described as progressing from the general to the particular, from panoramic reviews to the study of more specific questions. The first volume has four sections. The first, most general section provides a survey of the main periods, trends, ideologies, and styles in Old Polish literature, and it situates them in the context of European literature. This section contains three outstanding essays: Jerzy Woronczak's new and interesting presentation of Polish medieval literature in relation to European literature, and two polemical papers by Janusz Pelc who, in open opposition to the scholars of the 1950s, stresses the cosmopolitanism of both the Polish Renaissance and the Polish Baroque. Especially interesting is Pelc's reevaluation of the concept of "Sarmatism." He believes that "Sarmatism," far from being equivalent to provincialism, megalomania, or illiteracy, was the expression of national consciousness and that it coexisted with cosmopolitanism. Pelc perceives a close mutual relationship between the ideology of "Sarmatism" and the art of the Baroque, and he coins the term "Sarmatian Baroque" for what he considers to be a peculiar version of the European Baroque.

The second section of the book discusses a few key literary problems in connection with the cultural climate of early Polish literature. Noteworthy is Barbara Otwinowska's essay, which examines the problem of national language as an expression of the rise of national consciousness and the social orientation of the Renaissance. The essay is impressive in the breadth of its critical approach; it is philosophical, historical, and comparative. The essay by Tadeusz Bieńkowski on the role of the writer in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, although less ambitious in scope, is an excellent continuation and supplement to Otwinowska's contribution. It also confirms Otwinowska's thesis about the exceptional social awareness of the Renaissance writers.

In the context of such remarkable scholarship, the essay by Stanisław Grzeszczuk on folklore in literature is disappointing. It is chaotic and uninformative. It does not—as it promises—offer a study of the influences of folklore on litera-

ture, and it lacks a comprehensive definition of what the author understands by "folklore."

The third section of the book is devoted to genre studies, and it includes two very good essays on the epic and on the romance. They both present the genres in the light of European counterparts as well as in relation to the native Polish tradition. Stefan Nieznanowski advances an original thesis in his essay on the historical epic; he traces the development of the new type of specifically Polish, realistic, and historical epic in the seventeenth century which eventually became the Polish Romantic epic. An essay on the philosophy and theory of poetry closes the first volume.

The second volume of *Problemy literatury staropolskiej* is devoted in large part to the Renaissance. It opens with two important essays rehabilitating Old Polish literature written in Latin. Adopting a historical, rather than a normative, point of view, Stefan Zabłocki persuasively argues for a positive reevaluation of Polish poetry in Latin.

The second section of this volume examines the social and cultural contexts of Old Polish literature. Particularly fascinating is the essay on the role of patronage in the Renaissance and in the Baroque, written jointly by a literary historian, Janusz Pelc, and an art historian, Władysław Tomkiewicz. The essay by Bronisław Nadolski on the geography of literary life in Renaissance Poland is erudite and vividly written, but it is sketchy and superficial.

The last section of the second volume treats literary aesthetics. Barbara Otwinowska's extensive study of the problem of imitation is impressive but disappointing because of the disproportion between the expanded and rather misleading introduction (devoted to French theories of imitation) and the cursory "Polish part," which seems inadequate for a problem so essential to Old Polish literature. The last essay on the Renaissance concept of poetry in Poland by Elżbieta Sarnowska-Temeriusz is a continuation of her essay on the theory of poetry which closed the first volume. The separation of these two complementary essays seems unjustified.

All the essays in the book can be divided into two groups: those which introduce new problems on which very little has been written previously, and those which bring new critical approaches and new interpretations to bear on areas that already have been explored by critics. It is a special merit of this publication that it opens new fields for future scholarly exploration. Of equal merit is the intellectual attitude toward literary scholarship exhibited in the essays. The book represents a new era in postwar Polish scholarship which, in opposition to the scholarship of the 1950s, has become factual, historical, open, and comparative, and which is not slanted by political or ideological concerns. No matter how much the critical methods of individual authors differ from one another, they all follow basic principles of intellectual honesty and scholarship.

*Literatura staropolska i jej związki europejskie* is another collection of essays on Old Polish literature, published on the occasion of the Seventh International Congress of Slavists in Warsaw, 1973. The book centers on the European relationships of Old Polish literature. The comparative approach is not understood here as a narrow study of influences alone, but rather as a review of literary analogies and relations. Most striking is the variety of topics discussed. Of uneven quality, the book is a mosaic of themes, and it gives a sample of almost every comparative method. It includes studies of the influences of foreign literatures in

Poland, of the reception of European poetics, literary trends, and styles, of the assimilation of particular genres, of analogies between individual writers, of the problems of translation, and the interrelations between literature and the visual arts. We find an essay about an interesting scholarly *trouvaille*, an essay on the publication in 1635 in Cracow of a letter by Petrarch on Vergil, and, finally, an essay on a semiliterary curiosity, a sixteenth-century burlesque association of Polish nobles known as the Republic of Babin.

With few exceptions the authors deal with literary and cultural "imports" into Poland rather than "exports" from Poland. In an important essay on the Europeanness of Polish literature of the Renaissance, Janusz Pelc unites both these aspects and offers a panoramic review of the European elements in Polish literature and the extent of the diffusion of Polish literature abroad. Only the combination of the two, Pelc astutely maintains, can effectively testify to the Europeanness of a literature.

Because of the nature of the publication, many essays are fragmentary, and—as Professor Brahmer warns in his condensed, pithy outline of the affinities between Old Polish and Romance literatures—are invitations to discussion and future research, not thorough presentations of problems. Indeed, the greatest value of this book is its openness to a new exchange of ideas, as well as the novelty of its critical approach, rather than the quality of the individual essays.

BOGDANA CARPENTER  
*University of Washington*

PRZEWODNIK POLONISTY: BIBLIOGRAFIE, SŁOWNIKI, BIBLIOTEKI, MUZEA LITERACKIE. By *Jadwiga Czachowska* and *Roman Loth*. Vademecum polonisty. Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1974. 642 pp. 120 zł.

*Przewodnik polonisty* (A Polonist's Guide) like its twin volume *Warsztat badawczy polonisty* (A Polonist's Workshop), is intended primarily to help the graduate student in the field of Polish literary studies. While the *Workshop* concerns itself mainly with technical problems in research, the *Guide* has the dual function of supplying information on *what* bibliographical literary sources are available and *where* they can be found. Thus, *A Polonist's Guide*, both exhaustive and well organized, will also prove useful to advanced researchers.

The volume is divided into two parts: part one provides a carefully annotated bibliography; part two gives detailed information on libraries and museums whose holdings include materials listed in part one. A subject index and an author index complete the volume.

The bibliography contained in part one fills gaps in information about materials available before the Second World War, and brings up to date the information on biobibliographical publications appearing in the postwar period through 1972. The importance of this work, as well as the magnitude of effort involved, can be fully appreciated by recalling that, until the 1960s, the main and almost only organized sources of biobibliographical data on Polish literature were Karol Estreicher's monumental *Bibliografia polska* (1882–1916) covering the period from the fifteenth century to the end of the nineteenth, and Gabriel Korbut's *Literatura polska* (1917–33) covering the period from the tenth century to the First World War. There have been, of course, many separate individual pub-