

The characterization of most of these periods and their representatives is based strongly on literary analysis. At the same time, it is far from being narrowly formalistic, because it has been composed with a regard for deeper cultural and social influences, as well as for world-wide philosophical and literary trends. According to the editor of the translation, Čiževsky's analyses of the Ukrainian Baroque and of the Romantic period demonstrate his great erudition and his capability of logically relating these periods of Ukrainian literature to world literature in general, and to Slavic literatures in particular. Čiževsky's *History* does contain some flaws. The author does not cover the whole development of Ukrainian literature. He does not include the characterization of the last and richest period, twentieth-century Modernism, which was defined in his periodization formula. (A description of this period could be the subject of a separate volume, prepared by several other literary scholars, as Luckyj suggests.) His analyses of such original genres in Ukrainian literature as *dumy* and *vertep* (the Christian puppet theater), as well as of the whole period of Realism, are presented rather schematically and do not give a complete picture of their development. Some of these shortcomings were discussed by G. Shevelov in his review of the Ukrainian edition published in *Ukrains'ka literaturna hazeta* (1956, no. 6) and are also mentioned by Luckyj in his foreword to the English translation. None of these drawbacks, however, can minimize the monumental nature of this work, a work that can rightfully be considered one of the masterpieces of this great scholar.

The translation of the work into English is faultless, making it very useful for English-speaking scholars and students, especially those specializing in Slavic literatures in general and in Ukrainian literature in particular. The extensive bibliography and the index of names and titles, carefully prepared by Alexandra Chernenko-Rudnytsky, effectively complete this first scholarly and comprehensive history of Ukrainian literature.

DMYTRO M. SHTOHRYN

*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

BOLESŁAW LEŚMIAN: THE POET AND HIS POETRY. By *Rochelle Heller*  
*Stone*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976. xii, 364 pp. \$15.95.

Dr. Stone has given us the second book length Western-language study (after Marian Pankowski's *Leśmian: La révolte d'un poète contre les limites* [Brussels, 1967]) of this poet, who had a group of ardent admirers during his lifetime, but who was considered by most a marginal oddity. Since his death in 1937, however, Leśmian has won recognition as one of the greatest poets in the language. The author has carefully mapped out the philosophical background of Leśmian's poetry and has devoted considerable attention to his links with later Russian Symbolist poetry. The study of these connections is the most valuable part of the book. Her findings, however, would have been much more convincing had she known where to stop. One is startled, for example, to read that a common Polish military order "*Na kon!*,"—which reappears in so many battle descriptions and in one of the most frequently quoted poems by Słowacki, *Agamemnon's Tomb*—is adduced as an instance of Russian influence because of the parallel *na lohad'* (p. 228). *Bestia nieczysta* is explained as "the Russian connotation of the devil" (p. 239); had she consulted the *Słownik polszczyzny XVI wieku*, she would have learned that Polish has been familiar with that particular connotation since the sixteenth century. A quite common poetic word *wid*, attested in the works of Słowacki, Konopnicka, Staff, and others, is considered to be "of Russian origin" in Leśmian's poetry (p. 224). She further misreads Russian parallel words listed in Linde's dictionary as evidences of borrowing from the Russian.

The author goes to great lengths in this direction, even to the brink of absurdity. One reads in her book: "Ivanov quotes from the Old Testament in Hebrew 'Eli, eli Lama azaftani?' ('God, why hast Thou forsaken me?'). Leśmian seemed to follow this path, perhaps unconsciously . . ." (p. 174)—as if Leśmian could not have known the dying Christ's words from the Gospels and could not have come across Ps. 22, verse 2 without Viacheslav Ivanov as intermediary.

Most controversial, however, is the first chapter which presents Leśmian in his cultural setting. Poor orientation in the Polish literary scene and an uncritical acceptance of the testimony of the poet's daughter—hardly an objective witness and not a very reliable one (in her reminiscences, published in 1966, she stated that, while in Kiev, her father became acquainted with Taras Shevchenko!)—leads to a one-sided and distorted picture. Thus, speaking of the neglect Leśmian suffered during his lifetime the author affirms: "The neglect was apparently intentional, for a hatred of everything Russian must have been combined, in Leśmian's case, with deep-rooted anti-Semitism" (p. 3). Yes, some critics were anti-Semitic. But Dr. Stone should have been aware that, at the same time, Julian Tuwim (another poet of Jewish extraction) was highly praised and widely read, in spite of the fact that there exists a Jewish theme in Tuwim's work—a theme absent in Leśmian's poetry—and that, unlike Leśmian, Tuwim flaunted his admiration for Russian poets whom he translated extensively. Moreover, it would be difficult to cite critics who castigated Leśmian as a poet spiritually "Russian," the more so since his close ties in his youth with Russian literary circles were little known. When Čiževsky published his article "Bolesław Leśmian als russischer Dichter," in 1955, his findings were a surprise to the Polish literary public. Finally, in the 1920s there was a steady stream of Polish translations from Russian literature, prose and poetry, which continued somewhat abated in the following decade.

Dr. Stone claims that discrimination against Leśmian did not stop even with his death which occurred on November 5, 1937. One reads in her book the following gruesome details: "His body lay unburied for weeks because the head of the Academy denied him the funeral honors befitting one of its members" (p. 11). In fact, the funeral took place November 9, *four days* after the decease (see *Pion*, 1937, no. 46). Needless to say, there existed no ritual of special funeral honors for deceased academicians. Furthermore, a few weeks later, on November 28, the Academy organized a celebration in honor of Leśmian at the Warsaw National Theater; Iwazskiewicz spoke there in the name of the writers, and leading actors, among them Jaracz, recited Leśmian's poetry. As the source of her statement, quoted above, Dr. Stone gives page 103 of the collection *Wspomnienia o Bolesławie Leśmianie* (Lublin, 1966). If, however, one opens the book at the given page, one looks in vain for this information.

According to Dr. Stone, the Skamander poets knew that Leśmian was a great writer but did not admit this out of envy—a verdict rendered without a shred of evidence. The author dwells upon her theory that there was a conspiracy of silence and stubbornly refuses to accept the most natural explanation that Leśmian won general recognition only after his death, a quite common occurrence in literary history.

When trimmed of its wild exaggerations, Dr. Stone's investigation of Leśmian's links with late Russian Symbolism is a contribution to Leśmian scholarship. Her analyses—provided with copious quotations from the poet in the original Polish and in English translation—can help American students get acquainted with a highly idiosyncratic and difficult poet. But the book should be used with great caution.

WIKTOR WEINTRAUB  
Harvard University