

Lidia Stefanowska, compiler and editor. *Antologia tekstów źródłowych* [*Anthology of Primary Sources*]. 2014. *Mission Impossible: MUR i odrodzenie ukraińskiego życia literackiego w obozach dla uchodźców na terytorium Niemiec 1945-1948* [*Mission Impossible: MUR and the Revival of Ukrainian Literary Life in Displaced Persons Camps on the Territory of Germany 1945-1948*], part 2, Uniwersytet Warszawski, Katedra Ukrainistyki, 2013-14. Seria monograficzna Katedry Ukrainistyki UW oraz Uniwersytetu Przykarpackiego im. W. Stefanyka w Iwano-Frankiwsku [Monograph Series of the Chair of Ukrainian Studies of the University of Warsaw and the V. Stefanyk Precarpathian National University in Ivano-Frankivsk] 5, edited by Katarzyna Jakubowska-Krawczyk and Stefanowska. 656 pp. Illustrations. Map. Bibliography of First Editions. List of Sources. Paper.

A short preface describes this volume as “part two of my [Lidia Stefanowska’s] monograph,” which is dedicated to “the remarkable revival of Ukrainian literary life that took place after the Second World War in the displaced persons [DP] camps on the territory of Germany” (my trans; 11). Part 1 (published in 2013; that is, the first book of a two-volume set) is a monograph by Stefanowska—a 344-page Polish-language study of the major literary trends and most-prominent personalities in the Ukrainian Artistic Movement (Mystets'kyi Ukrains'kyi Rukh, or MUR) in Germany during the years 1945-48. Part 2, as the book’s title indicates, is a supplementary “anthology of primary sources.” More specifically, it is an extensive collection of polemic articles, essays, and literary criticism that is relevant, in one way or another, to a general dispute that took place among MUR members and other Ukrainian writers and critics in Germany (often ardent opponents of MUR) regarding the future paths of development of Ukrainian letters and, in particular, of Ukrainian literature written outside of Soviet Ukraine and free of Stalinist censorship. A substantial section of these texts pertains directly to a heated discussion between MUR members regarding their mission to create “[a] great literature” (“[v]elyka literatura”; Grabowicz, “Great Literature” 240; 430), as it was termed by MUR president Ulas Samchuk in the title of his polemic article (and later by others as well). The objective of this literature (according to the MUR mission statement) was “to create, by artistic means, a synthesizing picture of Ukraine and its spirituality in the past, present, and future” (my trans.; 615).

The scholarly analysis of this particular polemic and of the MUR legacy in a broader sense was initiated three decades ago by George G. Grabowicz in his essay “A Great Literature” (the Ukrainian version, “Velyka literatura,” appeared in 1986; it was followed by the English version in 1992). In the

essay, Grabowicz, remarking on the “intensity and sheer productivity of this [MUR] period,” calls it a “small renaissance” of Ukrainian letters (Grabowicz, “Great Literature’,” 243). This term seems especially appropriate in view of the fact that for many MUR members in the 1940s, their work represented a conscious attempt to revive and continue, outside of the borders of Stalinist USSR, “the Executed Renaissance” (as it was termed by Iurii Lavrinenko in the title of his anthology *Rozstriliane vidrozhennia: Antolohiia 1917-1933; Poeziia—proza—drama—esei* [*The Executed Renaissance: Anthology 1917-1933; Poetry—Prose—Drama—Essays*]). “The Executed Renaissance” was the bustling Ukrainian culture of the 1920s that was brutally suppressed by the Stalinist mass terror in the 1930s. Although many scholars agreed with Grabowicz’s assessment of the significance of MUR and of the “renaissance” that it generated, a serious scholarly discussion of the cultural legacy of MUR did not materialize until many years later.

Stefanowska’s monograph (the first book of her *Mission Impossible* set) represents a major breakthrough in the study of this important but still greatly under-studied and underappreciated cultural phenomenon. And the monograph, in spite of some regrettable editorial, typographic, and, at times, factual errors, is the most important analysis of the MUR period since Grabowicz’s essay. Stefanowska’s much more extensive study, while not challenging any of Grabowicz’s general views, provides incomparably more detailed discussion about the polemic concerning “a great literature” and about the creative achievements of prominent MUR members. The specific importance of part 2 of this publication lies in the fact that it presents, in one book, a wide array of primary sources pertaining to the MUR polemics, without which any serious study of the subject would, simply, be impossible. Prior to the appearance of this volume, almost all of these sources had been scattered throughout obscure and inaccessible DP-camp publications; most of them have not been reprinted since the 1940s, and some of them had remained in manuscript form and were published for the first time only by Stefanowska in this book.

Stefanowska, in making her selection of relevant sources for this volume, paid particular attention (as did Grabowicz in his essay) to the views of writers whom Iurii Shevel'ov calls “evropeisty” (“Europeanists”; 459; my trans.), namely, Iurii Kosach, Ihor Kostets'kyi, and Viktor Petrov; the anthology offers several texts by each of these writers (a total of around 40 to 80 pages per author). And Stefanowska, also like Grabowicz in his essay, gives a more prominent place to Shevel'ov, the main theoretician and de facto head of MUR: his texts (written under the pseudonyms Iurii Sherekh and Hr. Shevchuk) take up over 160 pages in the book. However, unlike Grabowicz,

Stefanowska rightly devotes a fair amount of space in her anthology to texts by the literary scholar Volodymyr Derzhavyn (Grabowicz barely mentions him in his essay), who was in many ways Shevel'ov's main opponent and was an eloquent critic of Shevel'ov's theory of a "national-organic style" (my trans.; 454) in literature (see, e.g., 119). Eleven of Derzhavyn's essays and letters take up almost 120 pages in the book.

Stefanowska, apart from including texts written by central and other important figures in the dispute about "a great literature" (other figures such as Samchuk, Ivan Bahrianyi, and Ostap Hrytsai), also includes certain articles that seem marginal to this polemic. For example, one will find here Vasyl' Barka's essay about Kostets'kyi's prose (29-39), which not only has no direct relevance to the MUR disputes but was written much later, in the early 1960s. Similarly anachronistic in the context of the MUR polemics is Kostets'kyi's address to the first convention of the Association of Ukrainian Writers in Exile (304-11), which took place in New York in 1958. However, the presence of such peripheral texts can be explained by the fact that this anthology was specifically intended as a companion volume to Stefanowska's earlier monograph. Thus, the volume here includes not only key publications relevant to the MUR disputes of the late 1940s but also some texts that for other reasons are discussed in the first *Mission Impossible* book. This also explains certain thematic clusters of texts (they are not necessarily physically clustered), such as several articles dedicated to Kosach's novella *Enei i zhyttia inshykh: Povist' (Aeneas and the Lives of Others: A Novella, 1947)*. Although the latter texts are not always relevant to the discussion of the MUR disputes, they are pertinent to Stefanowska's specific discussion of Kosach's novella and, thus, will likely be appreciated by careful readers of her monograph.

At the same time, some other texts that are relevant to the MUR disputes have been omitted by the compiler. In the opinion of this reviewer, the anthology would have been enriched by the inclusion of such notable essays as Kostets'kyi's "Mystets'kyi pidsumok svitu" ("The Artistic Summary of the World," 1948; written under the pseudonym Iurii Korybut) and Kosach's "Do obnovy Oktsydentu" ("Regarding the Renewal of the Western World," written in 1946 but published much later). Nonetheless, overall, *Antologia tekstów źródłowych (Anthology of Primary Sources)*, published as part 2 of Stefanowska's monograph set *Mission Impossible*, is a comprehensive and very useful compilation of polemic texts relevant to the MUR period. It will be indispensable for any in-depth study of the "small renaissance" of Ukrainian letters that took place in the late 1940s in Germany. In general, the

significance of this period as a whole in the history of Ukrainian literature still needs to be fully explored.

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