

## FOREWORD

The presented *Polish-Ukrainian Studies* is a collection of essays by outstanding Polish and Ukrainian scholars, members of the Experimental Laboratory of Literary Studies at the Faculty of Applied Linguistic, Warsaw University. Its existence the Laboratory owes to the authorities of the Faculty of Applied Linguistic: on 16 April, 2013, the members of the Faculty Council approved a proposal to establish this new scientific structure. Thus a platform was created to make possible the exchange of ideas and experiences in the domains of history of literature, theory of literature, literary studies, history of Poland and Ukraine. Since, as Norman Davies put it, literature and history “are twins born of one mother – *humanitas*”.<sup>1</sup>

The first volume of the *Polish-Ukrainian Studies* brings together articles that relate to the jubilee of the Ukrainian foremost poet Taras Shevchenko (1814–1861). 2014 is the year of the 200th anniversary of the birth of the poet whose poetry forms a part of the repository of world literature. His poems speak words of truth and freedom. ‘Ukraine always desired its freedom’ – wrote Voltaire in his famous *History of Charles XII, King of Sweden* (1731). As everybody knows, Hetman Pylyp Orlyk and also his son contributed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the popularisation of the idea of restitution of the State of Ukraine, necessary in their opinion for peace in Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> Norman Davies, *Europa między Wschodem a Zachodem*, translated by Bartłomiej Pietrzyk, Krakow: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2007, s. 109.

Larry Wolff in his *Introduction* to the Ukrainian edition of his *Inventing Eastern Europe* (*Винайдення Східної Європи*) puts special emphasis on the fact that it was Ukraine that belonged to those places of the most radical transformation of mental mapping of Europe in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and it will remain crucial for the unification and future of Europe in the following century, that is in the 21<sup>st</sup>.<sup>2</sup> The events of 2013–2014 bear out the truth of his prediction, thus inspiring us to read Taras Shevchenko's verses again, the poet whose fate and work personify Ukrainian desires for freedom and liberation.

The first part of the *Polish-Ukrainian Studies* presents the essays devoted to little known aspects of Shevchenko's literary works. The next part describes the achievements of the Shevchenko's Scientific Society which in 2013 celebrated its 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was a kind of first, albeit unofficial one, Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. The Society was founded by the eminent personages of Ukrainian science and culture from Eastern Ukraine who, after the 1863 Valuev Circular banning virtually all scientific publications in Ukrainian, began active scientific work in Lvov. The activity is recalled in the studies by Leonid Rudnytsky, Stefan Heley, Vladymyr Bilecki.

The *Ad Fontes* section sheds light on valuable sources on which Taras Shevchenko relied: *Istoriya Russov*, Cossack chronicles of the 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries, old-Ukrainian literary monuments.

The next section, *Profiles of Scientists*, devoted to the eminent personages, includes articles on Oleksa Myshanych (1933–2004), as the leader of research on the old-Ukrainian literature of the 11<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> century and promoter of neo-Latin studies in Ukraine, and also on the life and work of the distinguished

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<sup>2</sup> Ларі Вулф, *Винайдення Східної Європи. Мапа цивілізації у свідомості епохи Просвітництва*. Переклав з англійської Сергій Біленький за участі Тараса Цимбала, Київ, 2009, р. 23.

Ukrainian writer Valery Shevchuk, known and highly regarded also in Poland. Shevchuk, a writer and scholar who referred to the philosophical thought of Hryhorii Skovoroda, is also the author of several important works about Taras Shevchenko.

The section of *Reviews and Reports* presents reviews of recent scientific publications and a report of an important meeting of science – the 15<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Slavists held in August 2013 in Minsk.

In the last section, *In Memoriam*, we pay tribute and honour to an outstanding historian, Professor Władysław Serczyk (1935–2014), a great Polish friend of Ukraine.