

ARION 9: NEMZETKÖZI KÖLTÖI ALMANAC. NUMÉRO SPÉCIAL, ATTILA JÓZSEF (1905–1937). Commission Nationale Hongroise pour l'Unesco. Budapest: Corvina, 1976. 79 pp. Paper.

Published under the aegis of UNESCO, *Arion*—a multilingual magazine—is a beautifully produced propaganda brochure, albeit occasionally an interesting one. The ninth issue is devoted partly to a major modern Hungarian poet, Attila József, who committed suicide in 1937, at the age of thirty-two. Translations into French, English, Russian, German, letters and documents by Thomas Mann, Benedetto Croce, Tristan Tzara, and so forth all give a vivid and interesting insight into the short, unhappy life of this unique poet. Soviet critical praise is effusive and widely quoted, although not a word is said about his suicide—the result of a Soviet-led witch hunt after his expulsion from the Communist Party on the grounds of Freudian-bourgeois deviations. The rest of the magazine offers the reader a panoramic view of contemporary Hungarian poetry—from the doyen of Hungarian poets, Gyula Illyés (born in 1902), to the youngest member of the generation, Judit Kemenczky (born in 1948). But again, regrettably, the introduction to this useful selection is an exercise in evasions, omissions, and distortions in an almost indecipherable jargon of party aesthetics. Closing the issue, we find—quite incredibly—an unpublished manuscript by Pablo Neruda, celebrating “the banners of Lenin and Stalin” as they “flutter in the Soviet wind” in the “country of freedom and peace.” An affront to the memory of Attila József, it illustrates fittingly the editorial concerns and ambiguities of *Arion* in the name of UNESCO.

TAMAS ACZEL

*University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

HISTORIA LITERATURY POLSKIEJ: RENESANS. 2nd rev. ed. By Jerzy Ziomek. K. Wyka, series editor. Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1976. 554 pp. 90 zł.

The book under review belongs to a series, *Historia literatury polskiej*, published under the auspices of the Institute of Literary Studies of the Polish Academy. In the Anglo-American world its closest counterpart would be the *Oxford History of English Literature*, a voluminous venture with each tome devoted to a specific period and written by a specialist. The years 1972–73 saw the appearance of the volumes on the Renaissance, the Baroque (by Czesław Hernas), and the Enlightenment (by Mieczysław Klimowicz). A recent newcomer, *Pozytywizm* (by Henryk Markiewicz), deals with literature between 1864 and 1890. By 1976 a second edition of the three volumes on earlier literature had been sold out; plans for a third edition have already been announced. The series has obviously answered an acutely felt need.

The scope of Ziomek's book is larger than the title would indicate. Roughly speaking, it covers literature in Polish and in Latin throughout the sixteenth century. In the first half of the century, Polish literature in the vernacular was, unlike its Latin counterpart, still medieval in spirit, and, even in later decades, the same was true of some literary genres, especially of the popular novel which consisted mostly of adaptations of medieval texts. The material in the book is divided into genres, but four writers—Modrzewski, Rej, Kochanowski, and Szarzyński—are treated differently, each of them the subject of a special chapter devoted to the totality of his production. The last one, Szarzyński, is also discussed in Hernas's volume on Baroque literature—the period in which he actually belongs. Ziomek, however, as the majority of Polish literary historians, is reluctant to admit this fact, out of concern, one would guess, for the neatness of the divisions of literary periods: the “anomalous” Szarzyński died in 1581, three years before Kochanowski.