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## Lesia Ukrainka

### *Povne akademichne zibrannia tvoriv u 14 tomakh*

[Complete Academic Collection of Works in 14 Volumes].

Edited by Vira Aheieva, Yurii Hromyk et al.

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Each new edition of an author in the canon represents, first of all, a re-thinking of well-known works and an inclusion of them into new contexts. In the collection under review, two more concerns are present: the recovery of lost works and the restoration of censored texts – consequently, the collection represents a new postcolonial stage of re-reading and re-thinking Lesia Ukrainka's works. The new edition not only returns an uncensored Lesia Ukrainka to her readers – with the play *The Boyar Woman*, a number of poems, and the instructional textbook *Ancient History of Eastern Peoples* – but also radically re-conceptualizes Lesia Ukrainka's *oeuvre*, focusing on the pinnacle of her achievements. For this reason, the first four volumes include Lesia Ukrainka's dramatic works, considered to be the most influential part of her *oeuvre*, having had a great impact on forming the Ukrainian intellectual writing tradition. Accordingly, the editorial board, consisting of Vira Aheieva, Yurii Hromyk, Oksana Zabuzhko, Iryna Konstankevych, Mariia Moklytsia, and Serhii Romanov, choose the genre approach as a basis, while at the same time maintaining a chronological principle within genre clusters. A movement from the public to the private (the collection opening with dramatic works and ending with correspondence) encourages the reader to inverse the attitudes of patriarchal society that dooms a woman to be silent within a home space. Speaking of language, the new edition tends to maintain a balance between a full preservation of Lesia Ukrainka's original linguistic peculiarities (word sounds and usage, vocabulary, etc.) and a maximal adaptation of her language to contemporary orthography. Additionally, a focus on textual history includes an examination of the changes and additions in each new version, including drafts, manuscripts, and ante mortem editions. A vast range of illustrative material, including photos, examples of manuscripts, and first editions provides an in-depth cultural context. Each volume includes a history of its texts' creation (and sometimes recovery), expanded

commentaries (they are extensively detailed in places, leading to reflection on identifying a necessary self-explanatory cultural minimum), and a compendium of allusions to Lesia Ukrainka's other texts. As a result, the reader can observe the history of the emergence and development of crucial themes – how they appear in poems, letters, dramatic works, etc.

In her preface to the first genre cluster, which includes 4 volumes of dramatic works (from 1896 to 1913 inclusive), Eleonora Solovei considers Lesia Ukrainka's dramatic works as a history of philosophical reflections and aesthetic pursuits in the context of *fin de siècle* revolutionary style shifts. As Solovei puts it, Lesia Ukrainka reflects on Ukrainian dramatic literature modernization, given the development of the European dramatic literature that the dramatist knew very well (evidenced by her letters and literary criticism). These style-shift changes include refocusing on character's internal development rather than on external events themselves, and experiments with open endings and different genre forms. Solovei refers to Lesia Ukrainka's dramatic works as private stories in broad ideological and cultural contexts – careful, almost archaeological work with contexts that allows the author to reach a pinnacle in creating intellectual dramatic literature. The modernist criticism of Christianity, a re-thinking of women's roles in society, individual/societal conflicts, and communicational difficulties are all represented in Lesia Ukrainka's dramatic works.

The fifth volume includes Lesia Ukrainka's lyrical and lyric-epic poems – a chronological approach permits the identification of her style evolution, main motifs development and embodiment, crucial ethical and aesthetic problem crystallization, as well as the approbation of themes that would become a mainstay in her dramatic works. Serhii Romanov, the author of the volume's preface, focuses on comparing recurring motifs in Lesia Ukrainka's early and late poetry (for instance, travel impressions) as well as in the dramatic works. According to Romanov, Lesia Ukrainka's so-called cultural poetry is closest to her dramatic works, the cultural poems creation involving the author's work with historical, folkloric, and mythological plots as well as with cultural contexts (this applies especially to Crimean and Egypt themes). Romanov gives a detailed overview of stylistic experiments, literary influences, and the revision of traditional literary practices; he also outlines social and cultural contexts and readers' reception of Lesia Ukrainka's poetry. As Romanov puts it, the most important themes in Lesia Ukrainka's poetry include artist/society relations and the artist's self-realization in a socially unacceptable environment.

The least known part of Lesia Ukrainka's *oeuvre*, her prose, is contained in the sixth volume. As Olha Poliukhovych states in her volume preface, the social and psychological conflicts depicted in Lesia Ukrainka's prose texts have further development in the literary works of Ahatanhel Krymskyi, Viktor Domontovych, and Oksana Zabuzhko. Thus, these texts should be considered in the context of Ukrainian literary continuity. Feminist and gender problems, motifs of madness, artist/society relations (muse or community?), and everyday life/heroism conflicts are all reflected

in Lesia Ukrainka's prose. Poliukhovych shows that Lesia Ukrainka explores themes that would subsequently become objects of reflection for great thinkers of the 20th century – the writer focusing on pathology/normalcy boundaries, feminine/masculine social construction, and patriarchal/colonial double oppression of women within non-state nations.

In the seventh volume, which includes her critical and publicistic writing, Lesia Ukrainka is portrayed as a thoughtful art theorist and literary critic. According to the author of the volume's preface, Mariia Moklytsia, this part of Lesia Ukrainka's works was the most censored. Thus, the critical and publicistic writing forms the basis for the reconstruction of Lesia Ukrainka's values and attitudes in their totality. Within an ideological context, a concept that Lesia Ukrainka stubbornly advocated and which contradicted Soviet ideological attitudes and turned out to be a stumbling block – was her belief that social feasibility cannot justify the contradiction of human rights and freedoms. According to Moklytsia, Lesia Ukrainka's mass psychology criticism resonates with José Ortega y Gasset's notions. As a literary critic, Lesia Ukrainka supported the idea of aesthetic priority first and foremost, advocating that a literary text should be evaluated from the perspective of its literary value, including psychological cogency and the expressive power of individual style.

The eighth volume presents Lesia Ukrainka's translations, including Rigvedic hymns, ancient Egyptian poetry, fragments from Homer and the Bible, as well as Dante's, Shakespeare's, Byron's, Heine's, Mickiewicz's, and Hugo's poetry, and Hauptmann's and Maeterlinck's dramatic works. As the author of the volume's preface, Maksym Strikha, puts it, Lesia Ukrainka was aware of the nation-building role of translation, as evidenced by the *Pleiada* members' detailed plan and concerted collective efforts in translating key world texts into Ukrainian. The Ukrainian canon of foreign authors and the perspective of Ukrainian literary development was reflected upon and formed in *Pleiada* discussions of books to be translated. Lesia Ukrainka's translation principles were based on searching for (or creating) adequate means in the Ukrainian language for the expression of original text peculiarities. For Lesia Ukrainka, translated texts' authenticity should be preserved first of all; however, Strikha credits her translations for their accuracy as well.

In the ninth volume, Lesia Ukrainka is introduced as an active folklore collector and a folklore expedition proponent. As Yurii Hromyk, Tetiana Danyiuk-Tereshchuk, and Larysa Semeniuk state, Lesia Ukrainka conceptualized theoretical frameworks for folklore collecting, including dating, informant identification, dialect peculiarities preservation, combined lyrics and melody recording, text clustering, and the recording songs directly from performers. In the volume's preface, the practically detective story of the recovery of Larysa and Olha Kosach's lost notebook containing folklore recordings from Kolodiazhne is presented; the preface also serves to draw an approximate map of Lesia Ukrainka's folkloric sources. The authors of the preface state that children in the Kosach family experienced the strong influence of the habitat on identity – after moving to Lutsk, they identified themselves as the *volyniaks-polishchuks*.

The tenth volume contains *An Ancient History of Eastern People*, compiled by Lesia Ukrainka as a textbook for her sister Olha. Complex and informative material was to be adapted for a 13-year girl, a difficult task for the young author. Olena Ohnieva, the author of the volume preview, briefly outlines the history of educational traditions of that time and overviews the children's literature that Lesia Ukrainka knew very well. Ohnieva also highlights the history of Lesia Ukrainka's publication plan implementation, noting the role of Mykhailo Drahomanov, who taught a course on the history of the East at the Saint Volodymyr Kyiv University and helped his niece in her searches for academic sources. It should be noted that Lesia Ukrainka's textbook is based on Louis Ménéard's *Histoire des anciens peuples de l'Orient* – a monograph that Drahomanov recommended as a credible and evidence-based scholarly source. Lesia Ukrainka's textbook is based on the comparative method; ancient eastern societies' social structures and war histories are described in depth. While working on the textbook, Lesia Ukrainka addressed translation problems, including rendering proper names and terminology, this constituting yet an additional contribution to the establishment of the national translational tradition.

The final four volumes include Lesia Ukrainka's correspondence with different addressees. Vira Aheieva suggests that the letter should be identified as a genre with its own rhetoric and even poetics, taking into account its dialogic nature and intentionality. Lesia Ukrainka is different with different addressees – her tone depends on situations and ongoing relationships and her communication strategies vary over time (even her phrases in addressing Ivan Franko change in her letters of different periods). According to Aheieva, Lesia Ukrainka's correspondence challenges the concept that fiction and non-fiction have crucially different writing styles – in her correspondence, Lesia Ukrainka conceptualizes problems to be resolved in her literary texts. The most important themes present are the role of the woman-author in the context of patriarchal society, reflections on creative psychology, and immersion into different cultural contexts. It is crucial that Lesia Ukrainka's reflections on her aesthetic conceptions, arising in her discussions with older generation representatives, became part of wider theoretical fields, including national and cultural identities. As Aheieva puts it, Lesia Ukrainka's generation ceased to equate the concepts of people and nation.

To sum up, the new edition not only returns Lesia Ukrainka to readers without censorship and strict ideological frameworks, but also provides in-depth family and cultural contexts with detailed descriptions of social contacts, lost and recovered texts' histories, and travel mapping. Lesia Ukrainka's *oeuvre* is conceptualized in its totality as a whole textual body consisting of her poetry, which received immediate continuation in her dramatic works, literary critical reflections arising in her correspondence, and translations, that turned out to be a basis for structuring and enriching her own poetic language.