

## Reviews

Hrynčyk, M. M. *Šlachi bielaruskaha vieršaskladaŭnia*. BDU, Minsk, 1973. 264 pages. Index.

The revival of interest in versification which has been so marked a feature of Slavonic studies within the Soviet Union for well over a decade has hitherto barely touched Byelorussia. Only one slim monograph by Ralko (*Bielaruski vierš*, Minsk, 1969: see *JBS*, II, 2, p. 241) has appeared in recent years, with the result that, inevitably, much of the present work covers *terra incognita*. It is curious, in fact, that Hrynčyk makes so little reference to the earlier book, only criticising Ralko (pp. 50 and 56) for overemphasising the part played by foreign, notably Polish, influences in the formation of Byelorussian systems of versification. Hopes are raised in the early pages of *Šlachi bielaruskaha vieršaskladaŭnia* by references to Lořman and even Richards, but a greater overall influence appears to have been Tomaševskij with his rejection of purely visual approaches to the study of poetry. Unfortunately, however, the 'licence' implied in Tomaševskij's pronouncements often leads Hrynčyk to provide rather 'subjective' stress patterns and metrical schemes which are in turn used as the basis for his arguments on the characteristics and development of the various types of versification. Another drawback is the fatuous tendency to ally certain types of versification with what is 'progressive' and 'democratic'. Fortunately, however, such chaff can be easily winnowed from the grain, and on balance, despite numerous inaccuracies of detail, some of which are outlined in the present notice, Hrynčyk's pioneering study contains much that is of interest and value.

The period covered is from the beginnings of Byelorussian versification, which the author somewhat surprisingly detects in the 'rhythmic' prose of Cyril of Turaŭ, to the formation of the Soviet state in 1917. Over this time Byelorussian verse underwent many transmogrifications, from primitive poems whose only distinguishing feature was terminal rhyme,

through syllabic and syllabo-tonic or intonational (*intanacyjny*) systems, reaching its still unsurpassed apogee in Maksim Bahdanovič's *vierš bielaruskaha składu*. The best sections of the book are those dealing with the mediaeval period, especially Skaryna and Połacki, and with the poets of the beginning of the present century, notably Bahdanovič on whom the author has already published a separate study (*Maksim Bahdanovič i narodnaja paezija*, Minsk, 1963).

The history of Byelorussian versification proper, like so much in Byelorussian culture, begins with Skaryna, and Hrynčyk balances the twin influences of Czech and Polish literary versification with the traditions of rhetoric and the ever-present 'inertia' of folk poetry in the formation of Byelorussian mediaeval verse. It is interesting to learn that the much vaunted *Polska kvitniet łaciznoju* by Paškievič was rather an anachronism with its 8-syllable syllabic lines at the beginning of the 17th century. Rymša and, particularly, Połacki did much to broaden and modernise resources, and their achievement is assessed in some detail, with Połacki's introduction of different types of syllabic lines (in the 16th century 13-syllabic lines had been the 'norm'), his expansion of rhyme and his influence on other poets being given due or, in the last case, even excessive prominence. In many ways the section on Połacki is more satisfactory than that by M. I. Praškovič in the first volume of *Historyja bielaruskaj dakastryčnickaj literatury* (Minsk, 1968: see *JBS*, II, 1, pp. 110-12), for, unlike Praškovič, Hrynčyk distinguishes between Połacki's verses in Byelorussian and those written in other languages. It may, however, be that Połacki's influence on Byelorussian (as opposed to Russian) poetry is exaggerated, for the author suggests that such 19th-century writers as Čačot, Barščeŭski, Rypinski, Dunin-Marcinkievič and even, rather amazingly, Bahuševič

based their verse on systems developed by the 17th-century poet, although he concedes that there was no direct literary link. In general the author, like writers in several other fields (philology, for example) is inclined to lump 19th-century writers together and indulge in generalisations. Indeed, only the eighteenth century is worse served by students of Byelorussian culture.

The author, dealing with a subject of notorious complexity, although he himself recognises the difficulty of applying conventional descriptive terminology to any poetry such as Byelorussian which is related to folk rather than purely cultivated sources (p. 7), is often inclined to look too hard for patterns and general tendencies (*zakanamiernasť*), which in turn leads to some curiously inaccurate metrical schemes (pp. 65, 80, 81, 82-3, 84, 92, 132, 145, 151 and 157) and misinterpretation of apparently straightforward evidence (pp. 84, 90 etc.). Whilst before the 19th century the establishment of syllabic verse rather than primitive rhyming couplets is seen as the 'aim', in the 19th century poets (Dunin-Marcinkievič, for example, p. 107) are 'praised' for their 'deformations' of the syllabic system, and syllabo-tonic elements are seen as 'progressive'; later in the century, however, tonic elements are emphasised in what on the face of it appear to be syllabo-tonic verses (Ciołka's *Leta* and *Vosień*, for example, p. 151); later still Hrynčyk describes Ciołka's turn to free verse (*svobodny vierš*) as a positive step, apparently forgetting how common such verse was in much of the unorganised anonymous 19th-century poetry, and attempting to give it a spurious literary respectability with references to (correctly) Mickiewicz's *Dziady* and Słowacki's *Kordian*, and (disastrously) Puškin's *Boris Godunov* (p. 175) which is in rather strict blank iambic pentameters interspersed with passages of prose, in imitation of Shakespeare. Later Ciołka is described as 'beginning to develop the principles of syllabo-tonic poetry' (p. 181), although syllabo-tonic metres had been used by, *inter al.*, Bahuševič, Hurynovič, Tapčeuški, Łučyna and Abuchovič, to say nothing of *Enieida navyvarat* and *Taras na Parnasie*, before her. A mere five pages later, however,

syllabo-tonic systems are described as 'traditional'. Much of the discussion of this type of verse is vitiated by the author's unwillingness, or inability, to see it in a wider context than that of simply Russian, Ukrainian and Polish, which in any case should not be packaged together. Perhaps the key to this rather confusing approach comes at the end of the book when it is revealed that syllabo-tonic verse corresponds to the 'rhythmic beating of the human heart' (p. 256) and that syllabo-tonic and 'limited' tonic verse are ideologically acceptable types of versification as opposed to the decadence and 'pseudo-innovatory experiments of some of the contemporary European avant-garde' (p. 258).

The book is not in fact as muddled as focus on this particular aspect of Hrynčyk's analysis might suggest, but terminology is a problem, partly recognised by the author, throughout. At times a Byelorussian word is felt to need supplementation for greater precision (*vymoŭnaść* by Russian *vyrazitel'nost'*, for example, p. 26, or *pieranosy-enžabemany* (*sic*), p. 44); words are used unconventionally or incorrectly like *chary-jamb* ('choriambus', p. 179) for any mixed binary metre rather than just for an iambic line beginning with a trochaic foot, or *svobodny vierš* (see above); numerous words occur which are not recorded in any existing dictionary of Byelorussian, *paraksytaničny* ('paroxytone', p. 67), for example, whilst in other cases the author vacillates between terms like *intanacyjny* and *taničny* which are insufficiently distinguished in his usage.

It is a pity that a book offering so much in factual information and scholarly interpretation should also contain numerous inaccuracies, some of considerable significance. The descriptions of two of Cačot's poems (the second stanza of *U lesie takujeć cieciaruk*, pp. 82-3, and the second stanza of *Pokul sonce ūzydzie*, p. 84) bear little relation to the metrical scheme given. It is very careless not to notice that Dunin-Marcinkievič's play *Sialanka* is a macaronic work with only a few of the characters speaking Byelorussian rather than Polish; as is made clear in the notes to the edition Hrynčyk uses (V. I. Dunin-Marcinkievič, *Zbor tvoraŭ*, Minsk,

1958, p. 421) the majority of the work (i.e. all the Polish parts) was translated into Byelorussian by Janka Kupała. The result, of course, is that much of Hrynčyk's discussion on pp. 105-6 is entirely meaningless. Apart from this major lapse, the treatment of Dunin-Marcinkievič is generally satisfactory, and the main features of his syllabism and the tendency to tonic elements in some works are brought out clearly, although pp. 103-4 contain one very inept illustration of the latter phenomenon, with verses in mixed metres described as though they were homogeneous. Throughout the 19th century Hrynčyk treats tonic elements as manifestations of folk influence, but he is surely wrong in applying this to *Enieida navyvarat* and *Taras na Parnasie* with their firmly maintained syllabo-tonic rhythms, particularly in the light of the earlier work's literary provenance. In Hrynčyk's view Bahuševič took up where Dunin-Marcinkievič left off (p. 125), although he was inclined towards ternary metres (p. 136); the tonic (accentual) elements in his poetry, so stressed by Ralko, are barely mentioned. It may well be that Bahuševič was unimaginative in his approach to versification (p. 124), but Hrynčyk's exposition leaves a good deal to be desired, particularly on the question of Bahuševič's stanza forms. It would be helpful, for example, to make clear that only just over a quarter of his poems have any kind of stanza (the percentage for 19th-century Byelorussian poetry as a whole is only 44%), and it is misleading to speak of one rhyme pattern where there are in fact several in a poem: *Durny mužyk, jak varona* has eight stanzas of which only the first has the pattern *aabcbr* (incidentally, it is not clear why Hrynčyk gives the refrain as 'b', since 'b' does not rhyme with 'r'); for the rest, ii, iii, viii have *aabccrr*, and iv, v, vi, vii have *aabccrr* (p. 140). On metre, the 10-syllable *Chmarki* has considerably more than two 'strong' stresses per line (p. 134) and the *zakanamiernašč* that Bahuševič felt freest in forms closest to folk poetry, notably the 'so-called short syllabic forms' — of 9 and even 10 syllables, and that the latter occupy the major (*panujučy*) place in *Smyk bielaruski* (p. 138) is simply wrong, since less than a third of the

lines in *Smyk* are of this type; it is likewise not clear why lines of 6-8 syllables are not included in Hrynčyk's category of 'short syllabic forms'.

Bahuševič's contemporaries receive interesting treatment, although in two cases (pp. 142-3 and p. 147) the author seems to be forcing syllabotonic metres on to basically irregular material. The temptation to exaggerate cultural influence is not always resisted, and Hrynčyk speaks of the significance of the translations from Russian by Lučyna, Hurynovič and Abuchovič (p. 141), although all five of Lučyna's existing translations are in fact from Polish (he did, however, write in Russian as well as Polish and Byelorussian), whilst of Hurynovič's nine known translations four are from Russian, but three also from Polish; Abuchovič (most of whose works have been lost) is known to have translated not only from Pushkin, Lermontov and Krylov, but also from Mickiewicz and Kondratowicz (as well as Goethe and Dante). Ciotka is seen as a follower of Bahuševič in both ideas and form. Apart from the cases already mentioned, Hrynčyk gives a number of what appear to be wrong analyses. Lack of space precludes mention of all but the most glaring: *Niebyvatyja časy* does not 'apart from the 6th and 7th lines preserve very strictly the dactylic structure of every line' (p. 158) — indeed of the eight lines only the 4th and, perhaps, the 8th could reasonably be described as dactylic; if there is a pattern at all it is roughly amphibrachic. Even more extraordinary is the reference to *Pađ štandaram*, whose lines are of 5-7 syllables, as consisting basically of anapaestic trimeters (p. 163): the supporting reference to Kvjatkovskij's *Poetičeskij slovar'* merely emphasises the inappropriateness of the description as the example given by Kvjatkovskij is of 9- and 10-syllable lines. Nor is there any need to add together two 6-syllable lines to make one 12-syllable one to obviate the necessity of explaining non-rhyming first and third lines in a quatrain of Ciotka (pp. 158-9): the rhyming scheme *abcb* occurs in no less than 31% of Čačot's Byelorussian verses and also in the anonymous *Nočcu ŭ siale*. The treatment of Ciotka's poem is even more surpris-

ing in the light of the author's later statement that the *abcd* rhyme scheme was 'one of the most widely used in Byelorussian poetry of the beginning of the 20th century' (p. 247).

In the book's later stages Kupala, Kołas and Bahdanovič figure repeatedly as a kind of Holy Trinity, which makes somewhat wearisome reading, as does the excessive use of superlatives and words like 'colossal' to describe various features of Slav cultural achievements. Kupala's use of 8/6 Leonine (*kolomyjka*) verse is attributed to folk influence (pp. 192-3 and p. 208) as is Kołas's (p. 223) and Lučyna's in *Viasnovaj paroj* (p. 143), but the latter's *Pahudka*, also Leonine, is given as an example of one of the only two (in Hrynčyk's view) syllabic poems in this poet's *opus* (p. 143); moreover, Leonine elements in the poetry of Barščeŭski are seen as 'linked with the traditions of Polish syllabism' (p. 78). This apparent confusion may be explained by the long and varied career of Leonine verse in Western poetry. Less defensible is Hrynčyk's assertion that Kupala's use of the amphibrach, and in particular amphibrachic tetrameters, in his early narrative poems was partly the result of his 'orientation on anonymous verse *hutarki* and stories' (p. 195): of the nine anonymous narrative poems or *hutarki* in the latest anthology, *Bielaruskaja literatura XIX stahodździa* (Minsk, 1971), only one (*Hutarka Daniły sa Ściapanam*) is in lines long for amphibrachic tetrameters, and even that is relatively regular 12-syllable syllabic; of the rest, two are in

iambic tetrameters, two in trochaic tetrameters, and the remainder in lines of mixed numbers of syllables and no metre.

After all the confusion and uncertainties earlier in the book Bahdanovič comes as a breath of fresh air with his conscious concern to raise Byelorussian versification to a truly European level. Even now his *vierš bielaruskaha składu* remains unsurpassed, and his 'technical and lyrical achievements set a standard for his contemporaries and followers. It is surprising to find Hrynčyk challenging the statement Bahdanovič made in 1915 that there was no characteristically Byelorussian verse form (p. 202). Bahdanovič's pronouncement, like Puškin's famous negative assessment of Russian literature nearly a century earlier, was made by the only man truly competent to comment at the time. Kupala's tonic verse is a poor candidate for this role if one looks at Bahuševič, Ciotka, Ševčenko, or even Fet, Polonskij and Blok, all of whom used tonic metres in an organised way before Kupala.

If the present review has stressed the controversial and negative aspects of *Slachi bielaruskaha vieršaskładania* it is partly because there is also much of value in the book. It must be remembered that this is a pioneering study, doing what no-one has felt able to attempt before. As such it is an important achievement and will be immensely useful to all who are prepared to approach it with a modicum of circumspection.

Arnold B. McMillin

Hurski, M. I. *Paraŭnalnaja hramatyka ruskaj i bielaruskaj moŭ. Fanetyka i marfatohija*. Vyd. 2-e, vypraŭlenaje. 'Vyšejšaja škola', Minsk, 1972. 264 pages.

One's immediate reaction to this scholarly work is that its title does it less than justice. Not only does it contain a mine of information, copiously illustrated, about the relationship between the phonetics and morphology of the Russian and Byelorussian literary languages (and, to a lesser extent, dialects), it also devotes the same attention to their relationship with Ukrainian, so that it really amounts to a comparative grammar of all three East Slavonic

languages. If the title represents modesty on the part of the author then such modesty is unnecessary, but unfortunately also reflected in the smallness of the edition — only 2,000 copies, though this is possibly due to the fact that it is a revised edition of a previously published work.

The Introduction (pp. 3-13) contains a brief survey of the Indo-European language family, the comparative-historical method in linguistics, Indo-

European, Common Slavonic, the break-up of Common Slavonic and formation of Common East Slavonic (Old Russian) and the formation of the individual East Slavonic nations and their languages — all in the space of some ten pages! This is arguably the weak spot of the book, since in attempting to cover so much ground so briefly it succeeds only in giving a very superficial impression, of little value for specialist and general reader alike, which makes the all too familiar omission of a bibliography of any kind doubly irritating. One suspects that the introduction was written not so much for the benefit of the reader as to conform to some traditional format.

By contrast the main body of the work is characterised by an exceptional wealth of detail. The section on phonetics (pp. 14-75), which includes also a comparison of the stress systems and orthographies of the East Slavonic languages, gives an excellent and comprehensive description both of the historical phonetics of Russian, Byelorussian and Ukrainian and of the modern sounds systems of these languages. Rather more attention is given to historical phonetics — the development of the characteristic phonetic features of Common Slavonic is traced through Old Russian into modern Russian, Byelorussian and Ukrainian and appropriate comparison is made with development in the West and South Slavonic languages. In particular the exposition of the *e* to *o* change (pp. 33-7) and of consonant and vowel alternations, in both their historical and modern contexts (pp. 51-9), is both detailed and clear, but *akańnie* and *jakańnie* are dealt with rather more summarily than one would wish in a work of this nature, with no reference to the disagreement which exists among scholars of Byelorussian as to which type of (non-dissimilative) *akańnie* constitutes the norm for literary Byelorussian. Ja. M. Kamarouški, for instance (see his *Bielaruski pravapis*, Minsk, 1965, pp. 60-1 and *Bielaruskaja mova. Arfahrafija*, Minsk, 1972, pp. 27-8), favours the same type which is characteristic of the Russian literary language i.e. except in the immediate pretonic syllable or in word initial position there is a reduction in vowel quantity and a change

in quality to [ɛ], e.g. Russ. [gɔlavá, mɔladó], ar,éx], Byelo. [γɔlavá, mɔladý, aréx]. Hurski, however, is firmly of the view (p. 38) that the norm for literary Byelorussian is strong *akańnie* i.e. no vowel reduction or change in vowel quality (from [a]) regardless of position in relation to the stress, e.g. [ɣalavá, maladý, aréx]. This is in fact the view taken by the leading scholar of Byelorussian pronunciation F. Jankouški (*Bielaruskaje litarturnaje vymauleńnie*, Minsk, 1970, pp. 27-30 and *Rodnaje slova*, Minsk, 1972, pp. 55-8).

Not surprisingly in view of the mass of detail the author is occasionally guilty of minor errors and omissions. In describing the various origins of the vowels of the modern East Slavonic languages he makes no mention of the fact that *i* may originate from the I. E. diphthongs *oj, aj*; the prothetic *в* of Byelorussian is said (p. 44) to occur before initial *у* 'usually', when in fact it is possible to define the situation more exactly — *в* occurs before initial *у* except if the word is foreign (урна), if *у* is a prefix (уvara) or if it derives from *в* (урук); it is not clear why the spellings дам — там, злы — слых should be regarded as reflecting morphological rather than phonetic principles of orthography. On a more general point the use of characters from the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets and of IPA symbols is not always consistent and makes it difficult at times to distinguish phonetic and phonemic transcriptions from orthographical forms.

The Morphology (pp. 76-259) is concerned predominantly with the grammatical categories of noun, adjective, numeral, pronoun and verb; adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, particles and interjections are dealt with in a fairly cursory manner. The approach taken in this section of the book differs from that taken in the Phonetics in that, whereas in the latter the author begins with Common Slavonic and traces developments through to the modern languages, in the Morphology he works primarily from the modern forms and shows how they are derived from Old Russian and/or Common Slavonic.

In dealing with the noun (pp. 77-131) the author discusses the categories of gender, number and case

and of animate and inanimate nouns both in modern terms and in relation to Common Slavonic and Indo-European, and in a detailed survey of the classification of nouns shows the shift from the Indo-European classification on the basis of stems which cut right across any distinctions of gender, to a classification in terms of the modern East Slavonic languages which is based predominantly, though not exclusively, on gender. Each of the three declensions of modern Russian, Byelorussian and Ukrainian (nouns of the *имя* type are not regarded as a fourth declension, but grouped together with nouns like *путь* (*путь, путь*) and *Byelo. цяля, Ukr. теля* etc. as heteroclitic) is then examined in detail, case by case, with comparisons and contrasts being made both synchronically and diachronically. This is followed by an analysis of suffixal word-formation in nouns.

The carefully assembled and well-presented information shows only one or two errors and inconsistencies. In discussing the question of animate and inanimate nouns Hurski oversimplifies the situation by stating that in the singular the animate category is in use for masculine nouns (p. 91) without specifying that this applies only to masculine nouns of the second declension and not to those (admittedly small in number, but among the most frequently used) which belong to the first declension e.g. Russ. *дядя, мужчина*; in subdividing the declensions according to their final stem consonant, on the basis that it is this which influences the form of the endings, he distinguishes in Byelorussian between hard, soft, formerly soft and velar stems but in Russian has only hard and soft varieties (p. 93), ignoring the fact that stems ending in *k, g, x*, should at the very least be described as of "mixed" declension, since they share certain endings with hard stems, other with soft; and under heteroclitic nouns he includes among the *имя* type for Byelorussian eight nouns (*имя, племя, струмя, польмя, бярэмя, цэмя, вьмя, семя*) whereas most modern grammars and textbooks of Byelorussian allow this type of declension only for the first three, the other having been absorbed into second declension (see for example the entries for *бярэмя, вьмя* and

*польмя* in M. P. Loban and M. R. Sudnik, *Arhagrafičny Sloŭnik*, Minsk, 1971, pp. 88, 96, 205).

The section on adjectives (pp. 131-79) is rather inflated in relation to the other section of the Morphology by a considerable excursion into the area of syntax, illustrated by numerous examples from the literatures of the East Slavonic languages, particularly where the author is dealing with degrees of comparison (pp. 135-48) and possessive adjectives (pp. 149-53). It is difficult to see any justification for this in the context of the work as a whole, since no such attention is paid to the syntactical relationship of other parts of speech. Furthermore, in devoting so much attention to the syntactical functions of comparative and superlative forms Hurski fails to put the various methods of forming them into perspective. However, his treatment of the declension of adjectives and more especially of adjectival word-formation is excellent and more than compensates for the above-mentioned imbalance.

Numerals (pp. 179-203) and pronouns (pp. 203-23) are examined in considerable detail both as regards the derivation of modern forms and their declension in the modern East Slavonic languages. The syntactical relationship of numerals with nouns (but not with adjectives and verbs) are also dealt with at some length. Indefinite numeral-words (e.g. Russ. *столько, мало*; Byelo. *столькі, мала*; Ukr. *стільки, мало*) are excluded from the category of numeral on the grounds that they only function as numerals in certain constructions and morphologically are more closely associated with pronouns or adverbs (p. 180), and there is some justification for this. Less convincing is Hurski's explanation (p. 215) of the pronunciation of the Russian adjectival and pronominal ending *-(ero)* as *-о-во (-е-во)* as resulting from the pronunciation of *т* as a fricative which in an unstressed position weakened and finally disappeared, leaving a hiatus between the two vowels *о-о (е-о)*, which was resolved by the development of an intervocalic *в*. While it is true that such a phenomenon occurs in certain northern dialects of Russian characterised by *ока́ннiе*, there is no evidence to suggest that these

dialects have influenced literary Russian, which is based on a dialect characterise by *akainie*. Furthermore, phonetic changes usually embrace stems as well as endings (unless, of course, analogy or contamination inhibit this) but the phenomenon under discussion is confined to this one particular form. It therefore seems more probable that the explanation of it is to be found in morphological analogy with the masc. and neuter gen. sing. form of possessive adjectives of the type *братова, зятева* etc. (see P. Ja. Černykh, *Istoričeskaja grammatika russkogo jazyka*, Moscow, 1962, pp. 211-12).

The section on the verb (pp. 223-51) gives particular prominence to the prefixal and suffixal word-formation of aspectual forms, although no distinction is drawn between instances where prefixation has a purely perfectivising function and those where the prefix adds to the lexical meaning of a verb. There is also rather less treatment of the historical background of verb forms than is the case in the work as a whole: the historical development of the aspect system is covered in one short paragraph and there is nothing on the two stems (infinitive and present tense) or on the relationship of the modern classification of verbs on the basis of two types of present tense conjugation to the older

classification into five classes according to the present tense stem. Hurski is also surely mistaken when he asserts (p. 235) that in the modern East Slavonic languages only two athematic verbs survive: Russ. *есть, дать, Быело. есці, даць, Ukr. їсти, дати* (and compounds). It is true that no other *simple* athematic verb survives but modern Ukrainian does have compounds of the Old Russian athematic verb *вѣдѣти* and these are still conjugated athematically, e.g. *відповісти — відповім, відповіси, відповість, відповімо, відповісте, відповідять*.

The sections on adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, particles and interjections (pp. 251-9) consist mainly in lists of words, with some grouping into general subdivisions. Adverbs are also examined from the point of view of their derivation from other parts of speech, and the few variations between Russian, Byelorussian and Ukrainian in case usage with certain prepositions (e.g. *по/на, за, перед/перад*) are briefly discussed.

Altogether this is an admirable, scholarly book and should serve as an excellent source of material for scholars working in the field of comparative Slavonic language studies, both historical and modern.

P. J. Mayo

Kacer, M. *Narodno-prikladnoje iskusstvo Belorussii* (ot pervobytnogo obščestva do 1917 g.). 'Vyšejšaja škola', Minsk, 1972. 173 pp. Illustrations.

To readers acquainted with Professor Kacer's past work and diligent research as an art historian, the present work, devoted to the popular applied arts in Byelorussia, will come as no disappointment. The field he covers is extensive: 'The work tells of those most beautiful and delicate masterpieces of the popular applied arts — the silk-girdles of Sluck and tapestries of Kareličy, Cie-lachany ceramics and Urečča glassware — of the makers of these and many other artistic objects, — of the talented folk-artists whose works to this day adorn the architectural monuments and museums of the Soviet Union' (p. 5). Following the chronology adopted in his earlier work *Izobrazitel'noje iskusstvo Belorussii* (Minsk 1969, reviewed JBS, II,

238-9) Kacer distinguishes a primitive period (pre-11th century), a period of what he calls the 'West Russian' principalities (*pace* Professor Karskij), a formative period of Byelorussian folk art (14th-16th centuries), the 17th century, the 18th century, and finally the 19th and early 20th centuries. The scope of his study broadens over the latter periods to include, in addition to pottery, ornaments, household utensils and religious *objets d'art*, items such as furniture, ecclesiastical plate, iconostases, wood-carving, textiles, embroidery, folk-costumes, lace and tapestry-work, toys, glassware, tiles and figurines, wrought-ironwork, Easter eggs, Christmas puppet-theatres (*batlejka*), and popular musical instruments.

Many of the objects he describes

will not be particularly novel to the average amateur of Byelorussian art, though it is impressive as well as instructive to gain an overall view of so many different fields in a single work. What is of particular value is the insight given into a number of areas which had hitherto been shrouded in calculated, if not embarrassed obscurity. There are for example, welcome sections on chalices, on the ornamental woodwork of iconostases (though not, alas, on icons), and on tapestry. However, a vast amount still remains to be brought to light.

Those unfamiliar with Professor Kacer's privy thoughts may be tempted to take issue with him, for example over his portrayal of the Byelorussian principalities in the 11th-13th centuries as 'West Russian',

particularly as the evidence which he offers in support of this patently official nomenclature, is very feeble and lacks conviction. To say, as the author does, that 'the art of the West Russian principalities has much in common with the art of the East Slavonic tribes' (p. 18), is something of a truism, and certainly proves nothing at all. Perhaps that is precisely what the learned author intended.

Nevertheless, Kacer's work is an admirable synthesis of the very numerous and varied fields of Byelorussian folk art, and brings yet more clearly into focus the hitherto somewhat blurred outline of his country's cultural heritage.

G. Picarda

Krivickij, A. M., Mikhnevič, A. Je., Podlužnyj, A. I. *Belorusskij jazyk dlja nebelorusov*. 'Vyšejšaja škola', Minsk, 1973. 272 pages.

'A practical handbook for all those who wish to learn to understand spoken and written Byelorussian' is the official catalogue-style description of this book on the reverse of the title page. There can be no doubt as to the qualification of the authors, three of the most important contemporary Byelorussian linguists, to write such a handbook. In the preface they state that the book is the result of increased interest in the Byelorussian language both within and outside the Soviet Union. They go on to say that it is not a textbook for a 'vuz' course on Byelorussian, although it could be used for a course on comparative Slavonic philology or a course on Byelorussian language in non-Byelorussian "vuzy"'.

The book has self-imposed limitations. It does not set out to be a complete grammar of all aspects of Byelorussian, since that would obviously be in conflict with its primary function as a textbook to enable foreigners to learn the language. Since it is written in Russian, the assumption has been made that the reader will be familiar with the grammar of Russian, and the authors make use of that knowledge in compiling what amounts to a comparative, and at times contrastive, study of Russian and Byelorussian. The authors are probably right in assuming that most students of Byelorussian already know Russian, but it

must be asked whether a completely comparative approach is pedagogically correct in a textbook for foreigners.

The chapter on phonetics and pronunciation, complete with palatograms and photographs of lip positions, could well stand on its own as a detailed study of Byelorussian phonetics. This is not surprising in view of the fact that the author of the chapter is A. I. Padlužnyj, whose *Huki bielaruskaj movy*, written in collaboration with A. V. Čekman, appeared last year and is reviewed elsewhere in this issue of *JBS*. While there may be some justification for the detail in the need to differentiate between Russian and Byelorussian articulation of both vowels and consonants, there is also the very real danger that the learner is presented at once with a vast amount of unassimilable data.

Much the same could be said of the section dealing with morphology. Huge lists of words are presented to the reader to deal with as best he can, often divided into strange and instantly forgettable categories, e.g. 'predmetnosti kak javlenija, ob'ekty, zaključajuščije v sebie priznaki drugih predmetnostej;... javlenija, predstavljajuščije soboj besporjadocnyje dejstvija i dr.' — this particular group contains the words *navina*, *jatavičyna* and *stralantina*. To be fair some of these lists are given to



demonstrate the usage of various noun-forming suffixes, such as *-ina*, but just how useful are they in learning a foreign language, and what on earth does 'i dr.' refer to? Similar lists are given for adjectives. Verbs are divided into productive (four) and non-productive (six) classes. The syntax section follows the traditional pattern of Soviet textbooks, relying throughout on comparison with Russian. The book finishes with a selection of Byelorussian texts, a short Russian-Byelorussian vocabulary, and a number of common phrases in Russian and Byelorussian.

What we have here is a 'through-going' analysis of Byelorussian on the basis of a comparison with Russian. Of particular interest here are the sections on phonetics (pp. 14-45) and syntax (pp. 149-229), particularly the paragraphs on participles and syntactic synonymy. Quite correctly the authors have here chosen examples which show Russian and Byelorussian at their most divergent. All these points make for an excellent survey of the language, but not, unfortunately, for a really adequate textbook for non-Byelorussians. The first improvement that could be brought about would be to discard the Russian-Byelorussian vocabulary in favour of one going the other way. The morpho-

logy section would profit greatly by considerable simplification, if only by cutting out the endless succession of word lists, and the treatment of Byelorussian, phonetics could be made more basic, without sacrificing scientific exactitude. In defence of the authors it should be said that no one in Byelorussia can be expected to have the kind of experience necessary for the compilation of a textbook for foreigners. One only has to look at the Russians with their methodological centre and their journal *Russkij jazyk za rubežom* (in addition to the journals concerned with the teaching of Russian to non-Russian citizens of the USSR) to see that, with much more experience and expertise to hand, the 'perfect' Russian language textbook has still not been produced. In view of the different requirements and standards of potential learners, it is doubtful whether one ever could be.

It is a sad reflection on someone's excessively modest view of the increased interest on an international scale in Byelorussian that only 2,000 copies of this book were printed. It may not be entirely satisfactory, but it is at least a textbook — and already unobtainable.

J. Dingley

Krymava, I. (ed.) *Mastak i kniha*. 'Biełaruś', Minsk, 1973. 84 pages. Illustrations.

In a country whose heritage in the field of plastic art has been subjected to systematic pillage and destruction over the centuries, book-illustration as an art-form takes on a particular importance. Through it the historian can retrace the style and development of graphic art in Byelorussia, even though many of the finest examples of iconography and mural paintings have not survived.

The origins of Byelorussian graphic art go back to the Bible printed by Francis Skaryna, between 1517 and 1525, which contains a number of masterly engravings by the great humanist himself. Nor was there any lack of refined and vigorous talent in the 17th century schools of engraving in Vilna, Jeŭje, Mahiloŭ and Kucieina. However, with the decline of Byelorussian printing in the 18th and 19th centuries, came a corresponding

eclipse of book-illustration as an art, though able artists such as A. Bartels (1818-1885) and S. Bohuš-Siestrancevič (1869-1927) maintained and promoted a tradition of classical realism which effectively dominated the beginnings of Byelorussian art. From it the earlier Soviet artists such as E. Zajcaŭ (b. 1908), I. Davidovič (b. 1911) and J. Pučynski (b. 1922) evolved a somewhat sterile and parsimonious style of sketch-book realism which one inevitably associates with the cheap paper and poor bindings of Soviet books during the period immediately following on the Second World War.

It was not until the mid-50s that a more liberated and characteristic school of graphic art finally emerged, reaching back for its inspiration to Skaryna and the Vilna school, the traditions of folk wood- and linocuts,

and more particularly to the modernistic styles of Marc Chagall (b. 1887) and Barys Maŭkin (b. 1908).

The achievements of this talented group of young artists are recorded in this collection, which includes an introductory note by I. Nazimava, brief biographical notes on more than 40 artists, and a number of selected illustrations from their works. Despite brave attempts to update their style, there is a sharp contrast between the old protagonists of the socialist realist school such as I. Davidovič, M. Hucijeŭ (b. 1912) and M. Bielski (b. 1921), and the younger artists, some of whom, in particular H. Papiłaŭski (b. 1931), B. Zaboraŭ (b. 1935) and

V. and M. Basalyha (1940, 1942), show quite outstanding ability. Clearly modern Byelorussian graphic art has come a long way since its hesitant beginnings in 1906, and one can entertain great hopes for its future.

It is unfortunate that the biographical notes are so brief, and that no particulars of the artists' place of birth are given. In view of the considerable number of illustrations for books by Russian authors, one is left with the surmise that, to give the collection the prevailing modish All-Union colour, more than just one or two non-Byelorussians may have been included.

G. Picarda

Łojka, A. A. *Bielaruskaja paezija pačatku XX stahodździa. Niekatoryja zakanamiernaści i asablivaści*. BDU, Minsk, 1972. 240 pages.

Professor Łojka is a prolific writer whose previous monographs include *Adam Mičkievič i bielaruskaja literatura* (1959), *'Novaja ziamla' Jakuba Kołasa* (1961), *Maksim Bahdanovič* (1966), and *Sustrečy z dniom sioŭniašnym* (a study of Soviet poetry: 1968). His latest book is devoted to the interval between the revolutions of 1905 and 1917, or, perhaps more helpfully, the 'Naša Niva period' (1906-1915), and aims to reveal certain general tendencies (*zakanamiernaści*) and individual features of the poetry of the time.

The concept of *zakanamiernaści* in literary criticism is apt to send a cold shiver down bourgeois spines, and indeed many crimes of misinterpretation have been committed in its name. Łojka's confessed intent is to show 'the growth of Byelorussian poetry from concern for the peasant to concern for all humanity', and he pursues this course with ruthless albeit misguided determination in his analyses of Kupała, Kołas and Bahdanovič. This is particularly regrettable as the author himself is keenly aware of earlier travesties of criticism (*vulharna-sacyjatahizatarskaja krytyka*) and is quick to attack his predecessors for their crude generalisations.

The book is in twelve parts, principally devoted to Kupała's *Zalejka*, *Huslar* and *Štachim žyćcia*, Kołas's *Pieśni žalby*, and Bahdanovič's

*Vianok*, but also includes sections on 'mass poetry' (short and shaky), 'poetry and folklore' (nothing new, except an unsuccessful attempt to treat Bahdanovič's *vierš bielaruskaha składu* from a thematic rather than formal viewpoint), 'the establishment of a national (school of) translation' (quite an interesting short analysis of Bahdanovič's efforts in this direction), and finally 'the search for a narrative poem'. The latter section typifies the book as a whole, for whilst providing a good detailed description of the movement of Kupała, Kołas and (in Łojka's view) Bahdanovič towards a *paema* and 'epic' style, the section is ruined by unnecessary generalisation, and particularly the assumption that the concept of narrative poem or epic is mysteriously but inextricably linked with heroism, national self-awareness, politics and revolution.

Bahdanovič, in one guise or another, takes up over half of the book, and yet he is the poet with whom Łojka seems least happy. He is ill served by the author's tortuous ideological manoeuvrings and frequent attempts to prove a negative; nor is there a great deal of new factual material to add to the earlier monograph. One 'new' revelation supposedly made in *Potymia* in 1958 (concerning Bahdanovič's views on Ziaziula: pp. 147-8) was in fact published by Anton Navina (Łuckievič) in 'Z niedrukavanaje spadčyny pa M. Bahdanoviču', *Hada-*

vik *Bielaruskaha navukovaha tavarystva*, 1 (1933). Other inaccuracies include the suggestion (p. 147) that the paper *Biellarus* began to be published in 1909, and that the references to Ziaziula came from an article of 1911 attacking it, whereas the first number of *Biellarus* appeared only in 1913.

In view of the profusion of existing books on the poetry of this period — surely the richest in the whole of Byelorussian literature — it may be wondered whether there was need

for another generalising study at all. However, the patient reader may find some interest in the analysis of individual books and phenomena, particularly in the sections dealing with Kupala and Kołas, provided he can disregard the book's obsession with *thèse*, and its conventionally rhetorical style, peppered with leaders and exclamation marks. There is no index, and the bibliography is laughingly described as 'in the footnotes'.

Arnold B. McMillin

McMillin, A. B. *The Vocabulary of the Byelorussian Literary Language in the Nineteenth Century*. The Anglo-Byelorussian Society, London, 1973. 336 pages.

This work, the author's doctoral thesis at the University of London, makes a significant contribution in a field which until recently had received scant attention from scholars of Byelorussian linguistics. The author himself, in a review published in *JBS*, II, 3, 1971, pp. 316-7, drew attention to this deficiency and it is therefore highly appropriate that he should have thus taken the initiative in attempting to rectify the situation.

After a bibliography of primary sources (i.e. the 19th-century texts which form the basis of this study, some 120 in all), secondary sources, dictionaries and bibliographies, we come to the main body of the work, which consists of three sections: Part I, Introduction (pp. 26-44), Part II, Vocabulary (pp. 45-262) and Part III, Statistics and Conclusions (pp. 263-89).

The Introduction contains a survey of lexicological and lexicographical work relating to the Byelorussian language of the 19th century. This is of necessity brief, since, as has been pointed out earlier, very little has been done in this field, and even in those works which have appeared the material studied has often been chosen on a highly selective basis. In addition research was for a long time seriously hampered by the inaccessibility of many primary sources, and this inevitably led to inaccuracies. Such criticisms certainly cannot be levelled at the author of the present work, which is based on an examination of all the printed and manuscript texts currently available.

Dr. McMillin next sets out the aims of his work. These are: to show the incidence and usage of individual words; to establish the first occurrence of each word; to show the relationship of the vocabulary of the 19th-century language (in the broad sense of 'written language') to that of the Russian, Ukrainian and Polish literary languages and, in some measure, dialects; to attempt to ascertain the significance of geographical and other factors for individual writers and texts; to assess the use of Russicisms, Ukrainianisms, Polonisms and unrecorded forms; and finally to make some comparison between the 19th-century literary vocabulary and that of the modern language.

The Introduction is concluded by an outline of Byelorussian literature in the 19th century (previously published in *JBS*, II, 3, 1971, pp. 271-80), which gives biographical information about the authors and generally places them and their works in their historical context.

The Vocabulary comprises an examination of 3,378 words, which are grouped semantically according to the principles of Roget's Thesaurus. They represent in fact only *abstract* vocabulary, and although in the Introduction (p. 29) the author gives perfectly valid reasons for thus restricting the scope of his study, it would perhaps have been more accurate for the book to be entitled 'The Abstract Vocabulary of the Byelorussian Literary Language in the Nineteenth Century', since with the present title anyone wishing to order

the book could be forgiven for assuming that it covered the whole spectrum of vocabulary.

The slightly less than accurate title should not, however, be allowed to detract from the book's fundamental excellence. The entries are clearly the product of painstaking and meticulous research. Each word in the Vocabulary is followed by: its meaning where this varies from that in the English heading; the text(s) in which it is found; the context, where necessary; the languages (Byelorussian, Russian, Ukrainian, Polish) and/or dictionaries in which it is found; appropriate comparison and comment. Synonyms are occasionally treated together under one entry rather than being listed separately (e.g. *myśl* and *dumka*), but the inclusion in the book of an excellent Index means that this is no barrier to the speedy location of entries. Separate entries are given for imperfective and perfective verbs, with cross-references where appropriate. Perhaps the abundant use of abbreviations makes the entries less than easy to read at times without constant reference to the list of abbreviations given at the beginning of the book, but it is difficult to see how this can be avoided in a work of this nature, since in many cases not to use abbreviations would mean doubling or even trebling the size of an entry without in any way increasing the amount of information given.

Part III — Statistics and Conclusions — incorporates a wealth of statistical data with tables showing all the permutations of the relationship between the abstract vocabulary of Byelorussian and that of Ukrainian, Russian and Polish. Table 1 shows the total number of words in any group (e.g. words which are literary in Byelorussian and Polish but not in Russian and Ukrainian), and in Table 2 these same numbers are expressed as percentages of the total number of words in the relevant chapter of the Vocabulary. Tables 3-9 show the occurrence of lexical borrowings from Russian, Ukrainian and Polish and of unrecorded forms in individual texts. There are also three diagrams which attempt to demonstrate the influence of geographical factors on the writers' vocabulary: the incidence of Russicisms, Polonisms and unrecorded forms (but not, curiously, of Ukra-

inianisms) is examined in relation to the basic dialect of the writer in whose works they occur, in terms of distance west or east of Minsk. However, one can draw only very tentative conclusions here since the diagrams show no clear patterns, and the author admits as much in limiting himself to a few general observations.

There follows an Appendix (pp. 290-7) containing eight tables which illustrate the incidence of Russicisms, Ukrainianisms, Polonisms and unrecorded forms in the works of Dunin-Marcinkievič, the only 19th-century Byelorussian writer whose work the author considers to extend over a sufficient period for its language to show any development, though it seems to this reviewer that the works of Alaksandr Jelski, albeit less numerous than those of Dunin-Marcinkievič, might provide a basis for a similar comparison. The Appendix also includes three diagrams showing the chronological development of the above-mentioned features in the works of Dunin-Marcinkievič over the period 1846-1866. A clearer pattern emerges here than in the case of the geographical factors examined earlier, with both Russicisms and Polonisms at their peak in the middle period (1856-9) and declining, in the case of Polonisms quite sharply, thereafter, while unrecorded forms occur most frequently in Dunin-Marcinkievič's early works, thereafter showing a gradual decline, though a slight reversal of this trend is observable in the later period (1860-6).

The work concludes with a comprehensive Index (pp. 298-335) of all the words from the 19th-century texts found in the Vocabulary. Its usefulness is marred only by the fact that no distinction is made between the occurrence of words as entries and their occurrence as part of an illustrative context. To take an example at random: having looked up *zrabić* in the Index and found references to pp. 93, 126, 134 and 152 one was somewhat puzzled at first to find that only on p. 126 did it figure as an entry. Only a closer scrutiny of the four pages referred to revealed that it did in fact occur on all four, but in three instances under the entries for *skazać* (p. 93), *tleć* (p. 134) and *dyktatar* (p. 152), for which it had no special significance. Perhaps a

notation of the type (93), 126, (134), (152) and an explanatory note at the beginning of the Index would have obviated this confusion.

However, such minor criticisms become insignificant when viewed in the perspective of the work as a whole. Dr. McMillin's study is a major achievement in an area of

Byelorussian studies which has been sadly neglected, and can be highly recommended to anyone with an interest in Byelorussian lexicology or indeed Byelorussian linguistics in general. Furthermore, at the remarkably low price of £2 it represents extremely good value for money.

P. J. Mayo

Ulaščik, N. N. *Očerki po arkheografii i istočnikovedeniju istorii Belorussii feodal'nogo perioda*. 'Nauka', Moscow, 1973. 303 pages. Indexes. Illustrations.

There have surely been few works published in recent years that have more deserved the attention of the historian of Byelorussia than this one. The author has succeeded in amassing a vast amount of archival and bibliographical data, and putting it into a form that is both informative and, surprising as it may seem, entertaining.

Ulaščik makes it quite clear in the introduction that he is primarily concerned with a description of those publications which contain archival material on Byelorussia proper. He therefore includes a discussion on the kind of terminology devised during the 19th century to describe Byelorussia, as distinct (if it was distinguished at all) from ethnic Lithuania, Poland or Russia proper, and on the political considerations involved.

The book is divided into three chapters. Chapter I lists the publications of the period 1824-1862 (including the *Akty Zapadnoj Rossii* and the *Sbornik Mukhanova*). Chapter II deals with the most important period in the development of Byelorussian historiography and of the study of related archives, 1864-1915. The author describes in detail the activities of the 'Vilenskaja arkheografičeskaja komissija' and the collections of documents it produced. Attention is also paid to the relevant volumes in the series *Akty Južnoj i Zapadnoj Rossii* and *Russkaja Istoričeskaja biblioteka*. In general the collections in the second chapter are divided between those which emanated from government-inspired bodies (such as the Vilna commission just mentioned) and those compiled and produced by private persons, e.g. the *Vitebskaja starina* and S. A. Beršadskij's *Arkhiv*. Chapter III takes the listing and analysis of publica-

tions into the Soviet period; the last series to be included is the *Historyja Bielarusi ŭ dakumentach i materyjalach*, vol. 1 of which appeared in 1936, and vol. 2 (with the series title amended to *Dakumienty i materyjaty pa historyi Bielarusi*) in 1940. There is no bibliography apart from the footnotes, but perhaps the whole book should be regarded as a bibliography with exhaustive commentary on each entry, arranged in chronological order of publication.

Ulaščik is concerned primarily with the way in which archives were chosen (often at random), the editorial principles adhered to, publication cost, and so on. He succeeds in establishing the authorship of many of the lengthy prefaces which were a feature of several important 19th-century series. This makes the book a fascinating study of the way in which history is written. The author's own talent as historian (he received his training during the *Inbietskult* period) comes to the fore in his criticism of the shortcomings of many members of the Vilna commission, among whom were to be found 'true amateurs only in the sense that they loved the salary attached to their post, and in his side-swipes at the Polish historian Miernicki. It also shows in occasional lengthy but always interesting discussions of the actual archives and what they contain, in addition to the collections in which they appeared. Thus the reader is treated to a detailed account of the income and expenditure of Mahiloŭ on pp. 184-5, and to the fact that the cripples of the same town were apparently organized in a 'union', being under the control of 'kaleckije starosty'. On p. 194 we learn of a divorce being granted 'z nedobroho meškan'ja, and elsewhere there is an account of a

monastery which raised a band of mercenary soldiers to attack a nunnery. Points of primary importance for the study of Byelorussian history are also raised by Ulaščik in his brief discussion of the various Byelorussian units of measure, and in his careful distinction between the terms 'mirnyj sud' and 'kopny sud'. These points are of course necessitated by his analysis of the inaccuracies in the compilation under discussion. Heavy irony is surely present on p. 271. Here the author is discussing I. I. Jakovkin's compilation *Zakonodatel'nyje akty Velikogo knjažestva Litovskogo XV-XVI vv.* (published as part of the series *Dokumenty i materialy po istorii narodov SSSR* in Leningrad, 1936). He points out that Jakovkin's bibliography omits to mention I. I. Lappo's vitally important *Litovskii statut 1588 g., t. 1. Issledovanija, č. 1.* 'It is possible', says Ulaščik, 'that Lappo's work, which appeared in Kaunas in 1934, had not managed to reach Leningrad by 1936'. There is irony too when he describes the 1926 congress of research workers in Byelorussian archives and archaeology as the first (and so far only) congress of its type.

The author's asides are occasionally surprising, or even mildly irritating. In discussing a document of 1688, he adds that it mentions the village of Žoldino, 'where the BelAZ car factory is now'. A then-and-now comparison is probably intended, but it is tempting to wonder how many Soviet readers of this book know where Žoldino actually is and what it is like with a car factory, let alone what it was like without one in 1688. Excessive space is devoted on pp. 237-8 to berating Sapunov for translating Polish *Podlasie* as *Poles'e*, a mistake which ought to be self-evident to most, if not all, of his readers. Similarly, do we really

need to be told that Polish 'z' = Russian 'з', whereas 'ż' = 'ж'?

A much larger question mark hangs over the assumption that it is possible, or indeed desirable, to separate the history of Byelorussia, particularly in the 15th-17th centuries, from the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a whole. The title of Chapter II of vol. 1 of the series *Historyja Bielarusi ŭ dakumentach i materyjalach* is indicative of the problem: 'Obrazovanije Velikogo knjažestva Litovskogo na territorii Litvy i Belorussii'. In real terms this is putting the cart before the horse — the Grand Duchy preceded the arrival on the political scene of both Lithuania and Byelorussia. Any historian of the Grand Duchy faces the enormous task of gathering together material which, for reasons which have little to do with historical reality, has been hived off in a number of different directions. At least in the case of Byelorussia he has been well served by Ulaščik. The author emerges as a man who writes with enthusiasm about the history of his native country; it is not for nothing that the book opens with the famous verse by Kupała which begins:

Ad pradžadoŭ spakon viakoŭ

Mnie zastalasia spadčyna;

Moreover he writes without any apparent ideological adherence, other than that of scholarly precision, which would tend to colour his judgements.

There is no doubt that this book will be of great service to historians of Byelorussia and of the whole Grand Duchy of Lithuania for a long time to come. It is not only an invaluable bibliographical tool, but also a fascinating study of the 19th- and 20th-century pioneers of Byelorussian historical science.

J. Dingley

Plato. *Gorgias*. Z hreckaha tekstu na bielaruskuju movu peraklaŭ, papiare-dziŭ uvodzinami i ahledziŭ komentarami Jan Piatroŭski. Z datatkam hrecka-bielaruskaha sloŭnika. 'Byelorussian Charitable Educational Fund', Gainesville (Fa.), 1973. 149, 101 pages.

The attention of everyone interested in the development of Byelorussian culture should be drawn to the

pioneering work being carried out in Florida by Pastor Jan Piatroŭski. This volume is the third in the series

of Plato's dialogues, translated into Byelorussian by him. The first volume appeared in 1967 and contained *The Defence of Socrates, Crito and Phaedo*. The second volume published in 1970, contained *Symposion and Ion*, and the first edition of the Greek-Byelorussian vocabulary, the second edition of which is bound with *Gorgias*.

The cultural level attained by a language and the people that use it can frequently be better judged by the works translated into it than by original works. When looking at works of literature of the 16th-century European Renaissance it is often quite impossible to draw the line between translation and original, simply

because the writers themselves did not differentiate. So it is that creative translations become part of the native cultural heritage. When the translations are of works of the great Greeks they become doubly important, because they introduce new readers to some of the most fundamental philosophical questions which still affect modern life (this is a point made by the translator in the introduction) and develop the language's powers of philosophical expression. Byelorussians everywhere owe a debt of gratitude to Pastor Piatrouŭski for his unstinting efforts in making Plato speak their language.

*J. Dingley*