

FOREWORD

It is by a happy coincidence that Byelorussia's two foremost poets of modern times were born in the same year, Janka Kupała on 25 June/7 July and Jakub Kołas on 22 October/3 November 1882. This has meant that all over the world 1982 has been a year of double celebration for Byelorussians. Many special events have been held to mark the Kupała-Kołas birth centenary and this issue of *The Journal of Byelorussian Studies* is devoted to one such event: a one-day seminar held at the Francis Skaryna Byelorussian Library and Museum in Finchley, North London on 9 October 1982, under the auspices of the Anglo-Byelorussian Society.

The occasion was an international one: present were not only Byelorussians living in Great Britain and British scholars of Byelorussian, but also scholars and guests from America, Poland and elsewhere. The international flavour of the seminar was equally reflected in the papers read: contributors came from a number of different countries and read their papers in a variety — and sometimes in a mixture — of languages. Four of those papers are reproduced here, together with two reviews of books relating specifically to the works of Kupała and Kołas.

The title of Antony Adamovič's paper reminds us that 1982 marks more than the centenary of the birth of Kupała and Kołas; their importance was such that the hundred years between 1882 and 1982 may indeed be dignified with the title 'the Kupała-Kołas century'. Professor Adamovič explores this theme, linking it to the cultural awakening of the Byelorussian people and more than that to the history of the Byelorussian national movement, born as he sees it in the very year of the two poets' own birth and continuing through them down to their 'grandsons and great-grandsons'. In his analysis of the romantic elements in Kołas' *Symon-muzyka* Professor Barszczewski draws on the three versions of the poem and discusses the portrayal of nature and music, love, and national and social questions in this most lyrical of Kołas' masterpieces. Arnold McMillin's account, accompanied by illustrations, of the Kupała and Kołas manuscripts and marginalia held by the Francis Skaryna Library provides an insight into the textual history and creative process behind some of the poets' works, as well as introducing us to a hitherto unpublished poem by Kupała. Finally, we see Kupała and Kołas from a rather different angle through the eyes of the Byelorussian artist Barys Zaboraŭ, who describes his approach to the task of illustrating Kołas' *Symon-muzyka* and a selection of Kupała's lyrics.

As was mentioned earlier, the papers were given in a number of languages. For the purposes of publication, however, those in Byelorussian or Polish have been translated into English by James Dingley (Barszczewski's paper), Arnold McMillin (Zaboraŭ's) and Peter Mayo (Adamovič's). Every effort has been made to check the accuracy of the translations but since communication with the authors has proved difficult the Editor takes full responsibility for any errors or infelicities of translation arising therefrom.

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Editor