author does not hesitate to point out features which are common to the East Slavonic tradition, he is at pains to stress essential differences, which even at this early stage were becoming a distinctive feature of Byelorussian architecture (p. 21). For the sake of completeness, it is regrettable that he was not able to include in his study the early mediaeval churches of Smolensk, which although now in Russia, more properly belong from an architectural point of view to the Połack-Viciebsk tradition.

The period extending from the 14th to the mid-17th century must rate as one of the most fruitful in the evolution of a specifically Byelorussian style in architecture. Čanturija pays due regard to the common traditions of the East Slavs, but he archly introduces a fourth 'Brother nation' (sic) (p. 26), namely Lithuania proper with its capital in Vilna, which played a predominant role in the reception of West European tastes and ideas into Renaissance Byelorussia. Indeed, Gothic influences were strongly felt in the building of such monuments as the old castle in Hrodna, the fortified castle of Mir, and the manor-house of Hajciuniški, as well as in the splendidly original churches of Synkavičy (late 15th c.) Małamažajsk (early 16th c.), Supraśl, the Church of the Bernardins in Vilna and the beautifully proportioned church of Smarhoń. These churches are closely related by certain common features, such as their elaborately gabled façades, their four corner towers with plain conical roofs, their Gothic arches and honeycomb fan-vaulting. Although built principally as Orthodox places of worship, they are quite unlike any comparable building of similar date in Russia. Other churches in Byelorussia at Iškaldź, Kamai, Hniezna,

Astašyn and Hrodna display similar Byzantino-Gothic characteristics, and it is to the great credit of the author that he has widened considerably the scope of our knowledge of architectural forms from this period by his research.

The baroque style made an early and spectacular appearance in Byelorussia during the period 1584-1593, when an Italian architect, Giovanni Bernardoni, built the Great Church at Niasviž. Among the most original structures of this style Čanturija mentions the churches of Hrodna, the Uniate church of Kniažycy, the Church of St Nicholas in Mahiloŭ, and the charmingly simple church of Michališki. The author gives numerous examples of baroque style town-halls (Minsk, Niasviž, Viciebsk, Mahiloŭ, and Čaŭsy) urban dwelling-houses (including urban *ensembles* and model villages built by some of the more enlightened magnates in Hrodna, Pastavy and Varniany) and country palaces and manors. He also provides a section on wooden churches and synagogues. The 18th century witnessed some extremely proficient town planning schemes, and the building of innumerable churches in the rococo style with an elaborately gabled façade flanked by two towers, which are so much a part of the Byelorussian rural scene.

There is a particularly interesting chapter on 18th and 19th century wooden *chaty* and farm buildings. More than any other previous author, Čanturija, (who strangely enough is a Georgian by nationality) has given a coherent, well-balanced and extraordinarily fully documented survey of Byelorussian architecture. In view of the work's exceptional quality, it is hard to see why only 2000 copies have been printed.

H. Pichura

Kacer, M. S., *Izobrazitel'noje iskusstvo Belorussii dooktjabr'skogo perioda*, 'Nauka i tehnika', Minsk, 1969. 202 pages. Illustrations.

The history of Byelorussian art has yet to be thoroughly explored. Individual studies on particular aspects of Byelorussian painting, engraving and sculpture, have been published in the past, both prior to and during the Soviet period, by authors such as P. Pokryškin (the

Supraśl frescoes), M. Ščakacichin (the engravings of Skaryna and Voščanka) and T. Rževuskaja (the wall-paintings of the Tupičevskij monastery), but no systematic attempt has been made to present the history of Byelorussian art as forming a coherent whole. A few tentative, and indeed valuable,

steps were taken in this direction by the Institute of Byelorussian Culture in Minsk during the later 1920s, but these were abruptly checked by the unaccountable vagaries of officialdom. Since the end of the last war, however, scholars have shown a reviving interest in the history of Byelorussian art, particularly during the period before 1917. Kacer has proved himself to be one of the most able and dedicated pioneers in this field, and the amateur of Byelorussian antiquities will remember his brief but admirable outline of the history of architecture (*Belorusskaja architektura*, Gosizdat BSSR, Minsk, 1956). His latest work appears with the blessings of the leading official sculptor of the BSSR, Z. Azhur, and the cooperation of A. Lis, the biographer of that most authoritative historian of Byelorussian art, Mikoła Ščakacichin.

Kacer discerns eight distinct periods in his work, six of which he deals with at some length. The monuments of the protohistoric period, which fall more properly within the province of the archaeologist, are considered very succinctly.

The second period, which Kacer, with some reluctance, calls that of the 'West Russian' principalities, includes the evolution of frescoes and miniatures in the lands of Połack, Hrodna, Turaŭ-Pinsk, Viciebsk, Minsk and even Smolensk. Although he readily points out that miniatures such as those from the manuscript *Life of the Blessed Abraham of Smolensk* (12th-13th centuries), have many characteristics in common with similar works from Russia and the Ukraine, Kacer is at pains to explain that the common heritage of 'Ancient Ruś' was analogous to the spread of a common 'Romance' style of architecture and art throughout mediaeval France, England and Germany (p. 20). In addition to the often described frescoes of the St. Saviours Euphrosyne Church in Połack, the author gives details of the lesser-known wall-paintings of the Annunciation Church in Viciebsk, and the stone bas-relief icons of Minsk (pp. 25-6).

The period extending from the 15th to the late 16th century is officially known as the period of the 'formation of Byelorussian national consciousness'. To this era belong the famous icon of St. Paraskieva Piat-

nica (14th-15th c.), that of St. Onuphrius from Mścistaŭ, and the frescoes of the monastic Church of the Annunciation in Supraśl (1551). In an introduction to this chapter, Kacer stresses the continuing links and interaction between the cultures of Byelorussia, Russia and the Ukraine throughout this period; indeed, he seems to attribute to these links an importance equal to if not greater than that of the West European influences penetrating into Byelorussia through Lithuania (pp. 32-3). The evidence which he produces in support of a Russian or even a *drevnerusskij* influence on Byelorussian art during this period is unconvincing. As an example, Kacer refers (p. 36) to the Mścistaŭ icon of St. Onuphrius, in which, however, the realistically drawn body of the Saint, and the clean-shaven nobleman kneeling in prayer and dressed like some Burgundian count, have more in common with Flanders than with the iconography of Moscow. Even the more purely Byzantine Andrejka, who in the 15th century decorated the Chapel of the Holy Trinity in Lublin with frescoes of great splendour, depicted Biblical scenes, such as the flagellation of Christ, which are never encountered in Ancient Russian art, and which are obvious examples of Gothic influences (p. 39).

In dealing with portrait-painting in Byelorussia during the Renaissance period, Kacer very rightly sets out to correct the popular misconception fostered in some official publications that this style only developed in Byelorussia during the 17th and 18th centuries (p. 42), and he establishes that a flourishing school of portraitists existed as early as the 15th century. The great Renaissance engraver Francis Skaryna is dealt with very adequately, but Kacer's section on sculpture relies overmuch on the works of expatriate Byelorussian artists working in Moscow. Similarly the delicate miniatures of Bohdan Anisimovič, which properly belong to this period, are passed over in silence.

In the chapter covering the art of the late 16th and the 17th centuries, the author follows his usual course in considering successively the development of painting, portrait-painting, frescoes, engraving and sculpture. Thanks to Kacer's research, the whole

of this troubled period of Byelorussian history comes to life, as the author describes the rise of the baroque style in art, through the works of the iconographer Apanas Piharevič, and the engravers P. Mścislaviec (late 16th c.), T. Makoŭski (1575-1630), and Maksim Voščanka (fl. 1680-1708). His treatment of the school of engraving at the Vilna Confraternity of the Holy Ghost, is not, however, as well-documented as it might be (pp. 96-7); the many delightful woodcuts from the life of Christ which appeared in its publications are passed over in silence, whereas the relatively slight contribution of Mścislaviec, a collaborator of the much-publicised Muscovite printer Ivan Federov, and a rather fussy artist, occupy an undue amount of space (pp. 88-93); similarly the school of Kuciejna, admittedly rustic, but vigorous nonetheless, which flourished in eastern Byelorussia during the mid-17th century, barely rates a mention (p. 96). Few, if any, examples of Byelorussian sculpture dating from this period appear to have survived, though Kacer notes the existence of one or two finely carved crucifixes, including one from Novy Sveržen (p. 104).

During the 18th century Byelorussian painting remained notably provincial. This was an era of national decline, and circumstances in the political and economic fields were hardly conducive to a flowering of the arts in Byelorussia. Ecclesiastical paintings were generally executed in a rather decadent baroque style, which had never evolved into rococo. Some of these, such as the wall-paintings of the Catholic church in Mahiloŭ, are not devoid of grace and a nice sense of composition, and the works of identifiable artists such as P. Ihnatovič in the Markoŭ monastery in Viciebsk (18th c.) provide a pleasant personal touch to an otherwise uninspiring scene. Schools of portrait-painting flourished round the courts of the magnates, and some engravers of portraits such as H. Lejbovič at the court of the Radziwiłs displayed a very real talent (pp. 128-9).

It was, however, during the early part of the 19th century that art in Byelorussia experienced a flowering comparable to the so-called 'Golden Age' of the 15th and 16th centuries. Painters of genuine talent and sound

technical proficiency, such as the portraitists A. Šemeš (1808-1864), V. Vaňkovič (1799-1842), K. Korsalin (1809-1872) and I. Oleškievič, fixed on canvas the elegant life and features of the luminaries of Vilna society in the age of Barščeŭski, Čačot, and Dunin-Marcinkievič. Perhaps the most genial painter of the age was I. Chrucki (1806-1885), the son of a Byelorussian Uniate priest, who excelled in the painting of portraits, still-life and scenes of domestic life. The importance of this artist's role in Byelorussian art as a whole has yet to be elucidated (pp. 148-51).

In the section dealing with the art of the latter part of the 19th century, Kacer considers the work of the *genre* painters such as N. Silivanovič (1834-1919), and the sculptor Raphael Slizien (1803-1881).

The final chapter of the author's work covers the period immediately preceding the Revolution of 1917, which was dominated to a great extent by the Viciebsk school of Jury Pen and his pupil Marc Chagall, and the very able Minsk portrait-painter, Ja. Kruger (1868-1918). It was during this time that a Byelorussian writer, known to literature as Kasruš Kahaniec (1868-1918), achieved distinction as an engraver and satirical cartoonist under his true name of Kazimierz Kastravicki (pp. 193-5).

Kacer's treatise is a pioneer work in this field. He produces for the first time a relatively comprehensive and well-balanced picture of a specifically Byelorussian art, created by artists born of Byelorussian stock and, for the most part, established there. Kacer's book is far from complete, and the paucity of foot-notes and absence of any bibliography, will doubtless frustrate the reader whose appetite will have been whetted by the author's obvious enthusiasm for his subject. The photographic reproductions are not always of the standard one would look for in a work of this calibre, and it seems little short of astounding that only 1100 copies of this absolutely basic study should have been printed. Despite its shortcomings, it is a thoroughly commendable book which, it is earnestly to be hoped, will incite others to engage in further research on this little-known subject.

H. Pichura