Reviews

BOOK REVIEWS

Adamovič, Ja. *Mikratapanimičnyja nazvy*. 'Vyšejšaja škola', Minsk, 1971. 112 pages.

Microtoponymy is the study of small non-inhabited topographical localities, such as fields, meadows, woods etc. The *raison d'être* of such a study needs no justification. For the linguist, microtoponyms are part of the lexical riches of the language, of particular interest because they usually have more in common with general vocabulary than do the names of inhabited places. They are also of considerable interest to historians, ethnographers and others because they tend to remain remarkably stable and to persist long after the locality has changed its original character (cf. in English names like 'Haymarket' or 'Shepherd's Bush' which are now right in the centre of London).

The present book by Adamovič is the first work on Byelorussian toponyms. The study is based on

material collected by the author in the south-western part of the Minsk and the neighbouring districts of the Brest provinces. The total number of the names considered is 4,800.

The book is the work of a linguist, and is mainly concerned with the ways in which the microtoponyms are formed. The author distinguishes three types of formation — semantic, morphological and syntactical — and makes an attempt to classify microtoponyms according to the word-forming stems.

At the end of the book there is a short but useful bibliography. It is a pity that the author did not provide an alphabetical index of names, thus considerably diminishing the practical usefulness of his otherwise excellent work.

A. Nadson

Aleksandrovič, S. Ch. *Puciaviny rodnaŭa slova*. *Problemy razvičcia biełaruskaj litaratury i druku druhoj pałovy XIX — pačatku XX stahodździa*. BDU, Minsk, 1971. 248 pages.

Byelorussian literature in the 19th and early 20th centuries has been the subject of extensive study and research during recent years. The same cannot be said of Byelorussian printing and its role in the development of literature. The present book by Aleksandrovič is the first serious work on the subject. It covers the period from 1860 to 1917.

The first chapter (pp. 5-125) deals with the development of Byelorussian printing from 1860 to 1904. This period, which began with the emancipation of peasants in 1861 and the anti-Russian uprising in 1863, was marked by the suppression of all free political expression and the intensification of the policy of russification by the autho-

rities. There was no question of any open Byelorussian national activity. Whilst not permitting Byelorussians to publish anything in their native tongue, however, the Russian authorities themselves made use of the Byelorussian language in publications destined for the peasants in an attempt to win their support. A number of such publications appeared in the early 1860s. The practice was soon abandoned since it failed to produce the required results, but was revived for a short period in 1906. Aleksandrovič gives a short account of these officially inspired publications, as well as similar works emanating from Polish political circles. He begins his survey of Byelorussian printing

proper with the first Byelorussian clandestine paper *Mužyckaja praŭda* published in 1862-3 by Kastuś Kali-noŭski, and with the activities of a Byelorussian student revolutionary circle in St. Petersburg, which succeeded in producing in 1884 two issues of another clandestine paper, *Homan*. Much of the chapter is devoted to the printing of Byelorussian books which at that period were published either in clandestine presses or abroad — in Cracow, L'vov, Tilsit, Poznań, Geneva and even London. Only towards the end of the 19th century did a few individuals succeed in publishing openly a limited number of books in Byelorussian within the Russian empire, first outside Byelorussia (St. Petersburg, Moscow) and then in Byelorussia itself.

One of the important results of the First Russian Revolution of 1905 insofar as the Byelorussians were concerned, was that it became possible at last openly to publish books and papers in the Byelorussian language. These began to appear in 1906. The remaining two chapters of Aleksandrovič's book deal with Byelorussian printing from that year to the collapse of the Russian empire in 1917. According to statistics produced by the author, there were 219 Byelorussian books printed during that period as compared with 101 books which appeared during the previous eighty years. An interesting feature of the times was the mushrooming of various voluntary publishing societies. Some of them, such as *Zahlanie sonca i ŭ naša akonca*, *Naša niva* or *Bielaruskaje vydavieckaje tavarystva*, flourished for several years and produced many important publications, among them the works of Janka Kupała, Jakub Kołas, Maksim Bahdanovič, Zmitrok Biadula, Maksim Harecki, Jadvihin Š. and others. Most of the societies, however, were shortlived and disappeared after publishing one or two books. Among the personal achievements in the publishing field the most remarkable was that of the musicologist A. Hrynievič who, single-handed and at his own expense, succeeded in producing 10 books, among them two works of Janka Kupała and two volumes of his own 'Byelorussian songs with notes'. Aleksandrovič in the second chapter of his book (pp. 126-66), basing himself on an abundance of archive material,

describes the history of the most important of these Byelorussian publishing ventures, gives details of their operations, administration, finances, together with the attitude of the Russian authorities towards them; he also provides statistical data of the number of titles and copies produced by each organisation, as well as the total number for each year.

The subject of the last chapter (pp. 167-246) is the development of the press in Byelorussia during the years 1906-1917. After making a short survey of Russian papers in Byelorussia and their attitude towards that country and the Byelorussian people, Aleksandrovič devotes the greater part of the chapter to the study of the first Byelorussian papers *Naša dola* and *Naša niva*, as well as other periodical publications which appeared after them — *Sacha*, *Łučynka*, *Matadaja Bielaruś*, *Bielarus*, *Homan*, *Dziannica* and *Svietač*. As might be expected, most of the space is devoted to the weekly *Naša niva*. This paper which appeared in Vilna during the years 1906-1915 was not only the most long-lived of all Byelorussian periodicals of that time, but also the most important. It was the focal point of the Byelorussian national and cultural revival. Practically all Byelorussian writers were closely connected with it, and the most outstanding of them, Janka Kupała, was even its editor during the last two years of the paper's existence. Despite this, official attitudes towards *Naša niva* in Soviet Byelorussia have been ambiguous, to say the least. It seems that the authorities have not been able to make up their minds as to whether the paper was a 'good thing' or a 'bad thing'. The serious and well documented study of *Naša niva* by Aleksandrovič has done much towards filling in the lacunae and restoring a more balanced picture of the development of Byelorussian culture in the early 20th century. Incidentally it also confirms the views on the subject expressed by the present reviewer some years ago (see his article 'Naša niva', *JBS*, I, 3, pp. 184-206).

The book by Aleksandrovič is an important and serious work on a subject on which very little has been done before. Although it is not a bibliographical work in the strict

sense, it will no doubt be welcomed by bibliographers, as well as by all those interested in the history of

Byelorussian literature, printing and Byelorussian culture in general.

A. Nadson

Aleksandrovič, S. Ch., Łojka, A. A., Rahojsa, V. P. (compilers) *Biełaruskaja litaratura XIX stahodździa. Chrestamatyja*. 'Vyšejšaja škola', Minsk, 1971. 376 pages. Illustrations.

The last decade has seen more valuable textological research in the field of 19th century literature than the entire preceding period, apart from Karskij's monumental and, even now, only partly out-dated *Belorusy*, III, 3 (Petrograd, 1921). Much of this work is reflected in the pages of *Historyja biełaruskaj dakastryčnaj litaratury*, II ('Navuka i technika', Minsk, 1969: see *JBS*, II, 2, pp. 233-5). Newly discovered or rediscovered texts have generally been printed in periodical publications like *Litaratura i mastactva*, although in the last few years a number of the latest discoveries have been held back and appear for the first time in the present anthology. Three Byelorussian verses are printed for the very first time: Bruna Karatynski's *Čto našaj mužyckaj movy* (p. 121), Ihnat Mihano- vič's *Imianinnaje vinšavaŋnie Ihnata Šliuki* (pp. 256-7), and Ijachim Tama- ševič's *Jezusu Čviecinskamu skarha na Daŭmantaŭ* (p. 258). Many more, although not printed for the first time, are retrieved from printed books and periodicals, like, for example, *Kalad- naja pisanka na 1904 hod* (StP, 1903), that have now become bibliographical rarities. Thus, the present anthology is undoubtedly important as a source of texts unavailable to the general reader and, indeed, to the majority of scholars also.

Space in any anthology is limited, but it is very disappointing that some of the rare material here is given not in full but in an abridged form (*Kinuŭ-rynuŭ paŭstaŋnie* (p. 44), for example). Although the book is intended for a wide public, it is difficult to understand why abridgements of otherwise unavailable items are made when so much of the material duplicates the contents of existing anthologies and collected works that are still readily available:

Biełaruskija pišmieŋniki druhoj pa- łovy XIX stahodździa (1959), Dunin- Marcinkievič, *Zbor tvoraŭ* (1958), and Bahuševič, *Tvory* (1967), to name only the most important. Space is also taken up, although with considerably more justification, by poetry and prose originally written in Polish or Russian and now translated into Byelorussian: these range from such well-known pieces as Mickiewicz's remarks concerning the Byelorussian language (pp. 63-4) and Podbereski's introduction to Barščetuški's *Szlachcic Zawalnia* (pp. 73-9) to Daniła Bara- vik's first 'letter about Byelorussia' (pp. 185-6) or excerpts from the long unavailable clandestine newspaper *Homan* (pp. 191-9).

In general, the anthology, although a marked improvement on its pre- decessors of 1922, 1940, 1950 and 1956, is spoiled by a number of factors: namely, too great an insistence on ideological criteria in selection, the use of excerpts rather than complete texts (an unwelcome throwback to Harecki's *Chrystamatyja* of 1922), and the modernisation and normalisation of the writers' language. Clearly, the specialist's needs have been sacrificed to those imputed to a 'wide circle of readers' (p. 4), and the linguist in particular must continue to rely on the worthy but, inevitably, limited *Chrestamatyja pa historyi biełarus- kaj litaraturnaj movy*, II, of 1962. Whilst all tangible results from the splendid literary research being carried out by scholars like Maldzis, Rahojsa and Aleksandrovič are always welcome, the need for far more publications of 19th century and other texts in their original forms remains as acute as ever. Appetite may have been whetted, but hunger is far from satisfied.

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