Biryła, M. V. et al. (eds) *Pytaŋni biełaruskaj tapanimiki*. 'Vyšejšaja škola', Minsk, 1970. 200 pages.

This is a collection of papers by various authors read at the 1st Conference of Byelorussian toponymy, which took place on 1-3 December 1967 in Minsk.

All the contributions may be roughly divided into two groups. The first is composed of articles dealing with general problems. Among them one article, *Starožytnaruskaja tapanimika* (p. 17) by V. V. Siadoŭ, deserves consideration despite its somewhat ambiguous title. In it the author attempts to determine the most widespread type of the names of ancient towns in the territory of Byelorussia, as distinct from other names frequently occurring in the neighbouring territories. He argues that specific characteristics of Byelorussian toponymy are determined by its ethnic history, namely its Baltic substratum. Another interesting paper with a suggestive title is *Hieahrafija farman-taŭ tapanimii Biełarusi — historyja movy i naroda* (p. 39) by U. A. Nikanaŭ, in which the author studies the commonest types of suffix formation of toponyms in the territory of present-day Byelorussia. M. V. Biryła in his *Ab uzajemadziejaŋni antrapanimičnych i tapanimičnych asnoŭ* (p. 47) discusses the problem of the formation of toponyms from personal names. The subordinate elements in the toponyms, i.e. the words or particles which serve to distinguish two place-names which otherwise would look identical, are the subject of a paper entitled *Stužbovyja elementy ŭ biełaruskaj tapanimicy* (p. 56) by P. P. Šuba. The ethnographer M. Ja. Hrynbiat discusses the place names which were

used to indicate the social status or occupation of their inhabitants in his paper *Tapanimičnyja elementy sas-łoŭna-kłasavaha padziełu nasieľnictva Biełarusi ŭ fieadalnuju i kapitalistyčnuju epochu* (p. 64). In an agricultural country like Byelorussia, farming terminology was a rich source for the formation of toponyms, and V. P. Lemciuhova in her *Nazvy ziamielnych ŭčasťkaŭ jak krynica biełaruskaj tapanimii* (p. 69) considers the role played in this respect by the various names used to designate plots of land. U. A. Harpinič contributes a paper entitled *Utvareńnie prymietnikaŭ ad taponimaŭ u biełaruskaj movie* (p. 83) on the formation of adjectives from the toponyms. V. A. Žučkievič in his *Tapanimičnyja typy* (p. 92) makes an attempt at classifying toponyms of Slav origin on the territory of Byelorussia and tries to establish criteria for such classification.

There are a number of interesting papers by E. K. Biryła, I. Ja. Jaškin, A. M. Pryščepčyk, M. M. Kasakova, A. K. Uscinovič, A. K. Akaŭovič, E. M. Katonava and others on toponymy of particular regions of Byelorussia. Finally one should mention a timely article *Bierahčy tapanimiju rodnaha kraju* (p. 189) by Ja. A. Adamovič, in which the author draws attention to the frequent distortion of Byelorussian place names in official publications, and the practice by the authorities of giving new names to towns and villages, which in many cases display singular ignorance of the Byelorussian language, if not complete illiteracy.

A. Nadson

Čekman, V. M. *Historyja procipastaŭleńniaŭ pa čviordašci — miaklašci u biełaruskaj movie*, 'Navuka i Technika', Minsk, 1970. 152 pages. Bibliography.

The historical phonology of Byelorussian is not one of the best studied areas in Slavonic philology. Indeed, although a number of distinguished slavists have made important contributions in this field — including Jurhelevič, Karskij, Shevelov, Stang and Voŭk-Levanovič — the actual number of works is very small, and many of these are already methodo-

logically rather dated. The history of the hard-soft opposition in Byelorussian is even more sparsely studied, and it is therefore a welcome event when one of the ablest modern Byelorussian linguists, V. M. Čekman,* devotes a book to the investigation of this topic.

The book is divided into two main sections. Part I consists of a brief analysis of the phonological treatment

of palatal (Č) and palatalized (Č') consonants (pp. 7-16), very much in the Trubetzkoy-Jakobson tradition which began with Trubetzkoy's *Grundzüge*; and an outline of how hard-soft oppositions function in modern Bulgarian dialects (pp. 16-34), and in the history of the C - Č' contrast in Polish (pp. 35-54). Part II is concerned with the evolution of the hard-soft opposition in Byelorussian, in both the standard literary language and in various dialects (pp. 55-127). There is a wealth of material here, both historical and synchronic; and there is a very useful Addendum (*Dodatak*, pp. 131-41), in which the author summarizes the relative place of hard-soft oppositions in Byelorussian, Upper Sorbian, Macedonian, Slovene and Hungarian. In addition to this breadth of detail, however, the book is also distinguished by a more theoretical approach than is common in most such works, since Čekman is concerned with the general laws governing the stability of the hard-soft opposition as a problem in General Linguistics.

The main concern of this book is the description of Byelorussian, and Čekman presents one of the most succinct and elegant expositions of the language's historical phonology available at the present time. After the reduction of the *jery*, between the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, Old Byelorussian acquired the following palatalized - non-palatalized oppositions:

p - p'	b - b'	l - l'	m - m'
t - t'	d - d'	r - r'	n - n'
s - s'	z - z'		

/š/, /ž/ and /tš/ were palatal; /ts/ was palatal in some dialects and palatalized in others, in the sense proposed by Trubetzkoy in the *Grundzüge*. All these oppositions held before /i/, /a/ and /u/, and were neutralized before [e] and [ě] (i.e., *jat'*); velars were hard. The main differences between the consonant systems of Old Byelorussian and Contemporary Standard Byelorussian (henceforth 'CSBr') can be summarized as follows:

1. CSBr has a /v/ - /v'/ opposition, and a marginal /f/ - /f'/ opposition.
2. CSBr has HARD /r/, /ts/, /tš/, /ž/ and /š/.
3. In CSBr /k/, /g/ and /x/ have soft variants before [i].
4. The status of [dz] in CSBr is unclear.

According to Čekman, the loss of the hard-soft opposition can take any of three different forms:

1. The hardening of palatalized consonants: Č' > Č; (e.g. Bulg. *kon* (< *kon'*)).
2. The separation of Č' into Č + ' : e.g., b' < b + j.
3. The loss of the C - Č' contrast gives rise to a new series of palatals from softened dentals or velars, creating a new contrast Č - Č̣; e.g. Pol. *siostra* < **s'estra*.

The third of these is the most interesting and the most original, since Čekman is convincing in his argument — especially in the Bulgarian and Polish data in Part I — that the loss of the C - Č' contrast is accompanied by the appearance of a Č - Č̣ contrast, and that these two processes are not discrete, as has often been thought in the past. On the other hand, it is difficult to accept Čekman's theory that one of the basic factors leading to the loss of the hard-soft opposition is the disappearance of a neutralizing position for all the consonants with C - Č' contrasts. It is not clear that the loss of Russian /e/, for example, would result in the loss of hard-soft oppositions which are neutralized in CSR before this /e/. The contrary is more likely: that the neutralizing position will be lost as a result of the loss of hard-soft oppositions in some or all of the language's consonants.

The book is therefore stronger on the descriptive side. There are some unfortunate omissions, such as the lack of all reference to Shevelov's work on the historical phonology of Byelorussian; and one wonders whether it was wise for the author to give such scant attention to the possibility of using a distinctive-feature framework in the description of hard-soft oppositions. This book is an expert, but conservative, study in Prague school phonology. Within these limits, however, it is an example of broad, mature scholarship, and meticulous observation.

*) For an earlier analysis, see Čekman's 'Nataški ab procipastaŭleńniach pa čviordašci-miakkašci ŭ niekatorych paŭdniovabelaruskich havorkach', *Lingvistyčnyja dasledavańni*, Minsk, 1968, pp. 3-14.

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