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 dakumientach 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 pradžiadoŭ 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 kamentarami Jan Piatroŭski. Z dadatkam hrecka-bielaruskaha słoŭnika. '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 Piatrouski for his unstinting efforts in making Plato speak their language.

J. Dingley