Kaľubovič, A. *Mova ŭ historyi bielaruskaha pišmienstva*. I. Munich & London, 1974-5. 84 pages. (Reprinted from *Božym šlacham*, nos 1/139-4/142, London, 1974.)

This little book makes very sad reading indeed; one remark on p. 66 is sufficient to show its subject matter: 'Niekatoryja iz žnikšych pomnikaŭ mohuć być jašče adšukanyja, ale baľšynia ich, treba dumać, była žnišćanaja ŭ časie systematyčnych čystak biblijatek, archivaŭ i muzejaŭ'. The author encompasses the systematic destruction of Byelorussian written culture that has been carried out from the 18th century to the present day. He details the way in which whole collections of secular and religious archives were dispersed among libraries in Russia and, to a lesser extent, Poland, or deliberately destroyed.

Dispersal is serious enough, although there is still a chance that the material will be located; on pp. 72-82 the author deals with the present location of Byelorussian archival material, ranging from the pitifully small collection in Byelorussia itself, through holdings in Russia, the richness of which is explained elsewhere in the book, to outposts such as the north of the Archangel *oblast'* and the Komi and Burjat autonomous republics. He shows with references, how Byelorussian scholars, notably Maldzis and Kisialoŭ, are engaged in a painstaking search for valuable documents, to find at least some of the dispersed material.

Wanton destruction, on the other

hand, is totally inexcusable. No amount of religious zeal can justify the wholesale burning of Uniate printed material in the early 19th century, or the abbot who heated his cell for two weeks in 1865 with 'old papers'. What need was there between 1881 and 1883 for 3000 poods of Byelorussian archives of the 16-18th centuries to be sold to Riga as scrap at 1 rouble 18 copecks a pood? Or for old printed books to be used in 1970 to heat the water for the Stoŭbcy municipal baths? The examples cited in detail by the author of lootings, burnings and mysterious disappearances are too numerous to be reproduced here. Kaľubovič has succeeded in chronicling the loss not merely of historical archives, but of whole centuries of Byelorussian history, a loss that was not accidental or even solely the result of war, but deliberately perpetrated by one occupying power after another. In view of the magnitude of the losses sustained it is hardly surprising that Byelorussia is usually thought of as a country that has never known more than a peasant culture. This book is an important contribution to the struggle to remove that particular misconception; it should be read by all those who are interested in a true estimation of Byelorussia's national traditions.

J. Dingley

Kavalenka, V. A. *Vytoki, uplyvy, paskoranašć: raźvićcio bielaruskaj litaratury XIX-XX stahodździaŭ*. 'Navuka i technika', Minsk, 1975. 336 pages.

Whilst it may be argued that there have been enough general surveys of the origins of modern Byelorussian literature and that the most useful work to be done on this period lies in the rediscovery and publication of missing texts, close textual analysis and the study of authorship, nonetheless it has to be admitted that the three elements in Kavalenka's title are central to any proper understanding of a stage in Byelorussian literary development which has too often been distorted by simplistic analogies with other literatures (especially Russian) and an exaggerated emphasis on such *a priori* concepts

as the primary role of folk culture. The principal theme of this book was expressed by Bahdanovič in his important article 'Zabyty šlach' of 1915, when he wrote: 'In the eight to ten years of its real existence our poetry has passed through all the paths which European poetry trod for more than a hundred years. From our verses it would be easy to make a 'short revision course' of European literary developments during the past century. Sentimentalism, romanticism, realism, naturalism, and finally modernism — all these, sometimes even in various different ways, have been reflected in our literature, for the most part