reducing its labour requirements; thirdly, the psychological premises which pertain to the attractiveness of an urban lifestyle, and the negative attitude of rural youth towards some forms of agricultural labour. Fig. 4 (p. 89) shows the 'migration explosion' that has occurred in the 1960s and early 1970s, and it is therefore understandable why the city has had a strict passport regime in operation for more than ten years. It is interesting to note that among migrants of less than two years, habitation in Minsk in 1970, 31% gave personal reasons for their move to the capital.

A useful discussion on the problems of pensioners in society is included and the author notes that by the year 2000 a young person can be expected to change his or her profession three or four times during a lifetime, because of the rapid rate of technological development.

Tables of birth rates for the period 1945 to 1973 show that the number of live births has risen from 4,000 in 1945 to 19,000 in 1973, while the death rate coefficient of 15 per 1,000 in 1945 has decreased to 4.6 per 1,000 in 1973. There has been a significant reduction in the death rate of newborn infants from 22.2% in 1950 to 6.8% in 1973. Divorce, however, is on the increase with absolute numbers increasing from 200 in 1945 to 3,900 in 1973. Reasons for this are not difficult to find. Measures taken by the Soviet government in 1965 have made divorce easier, namely, no announcement in the press, and the right to decide

upon divorce at the first legal instance. The majority of divorces are in the 25-39 age group, and Pol'skij outlines some explanation of why young couples apply for divorce. They enter wedlock without suitable housing, professional or financial status, and problems can arise immediately if they lack a private dwelling; the birth of the first child can add to accommodation problems.

An interesting comment in the final chapter concerns the value of a child in an urban environment, where he or she is not economically active until 16 years of age. The author notes that in a rural environment young children can assist with the work of the rural community. This is recognition of the sharp contrasts that still exist between urban and rural life styles in modern Byelorussia.

An appendix contains a list of population totals and rates of growth of cities with populations of 750,000 or more in North America, Europe, Japan and Australia. Statistics relate to 1960 and 1970 or the nearest possible dates and are for conurbations/agglomerations rather than official city limits.

The publication of this book is a valuable contribution which assists in an understanding of the changing urban profiles of Minsk and Byelorussia. Despite certain shortcomings it is a useful source of statistical data and the author is to be applauded for his detailed study of the capital city.

John Sallnow

Rothe, H. (ed.). *Die älteste ostslawische Kunstdichtung 1575-1647*. Bausteine zur Geschichte der Literatur bei den Slawen, Band 7, 1-2 with Supplement. Wilhelm Schmitz Verlag, Giessen, 1976-7. xviii + vi + 533 + 48 pages. Indexes. Illustrations.

Professor Rothe's annotated anthology is an ambitious undertaking and one which will earn him the gratitude of many scholars with an interest in the early history of East Slavonic cultivated poetry. In taking all the verse of this formative period together he avoids the immense problems of classification besetting those who seek to trace the development of the individual literatures, leaving himself free to include verses in Church Slavonic, Latin and Greek as well as Middle Byelorussian, Ukrainian and

Russian; the editor's principles of selection, based mainly on geographical criteria, are explained in the very lucid Introduction.

Hitherto, of course, A. F. Koršunaŭ's *Chrestamatyja pa starožytnaj bielaruskaj literatury* (Minsk, 1959) has been the standard reference work for students specializing in this area of Byelorussian studies. The only major poem included in Koršunaŭ but omitted by Rothe is one that first appeared in *Voprosy i otvety pravoslavnomu s papieżnikom* (1603), reproduced in *Pamjatniki polemičeskoj*

literatury, vol. 2, St Petersburg, 1882, col. 1: *Vieršy abo stichi do toho, što čitať, kotorym krajezhnariesije sicievo: Chranisia Italijan*. Also in Koršunaŭ but not Rothe is the four-line dedicatory verse which appears at the beginning of Skaryna's preface to the Book of Job (1517). This, together with two other poems of 1519 (a paraphrase of the Ten Commandments in the preface to Exodus, and the short verse summarizing the contents of the Book of Esther which begins 'Nie kopaj pod druhom swoim jamy...') together with the apparently original verse prayer which follows the acathistus in the *Malaja podorožnaja knižica* of 1622, may be reasonably regarded as the beginning of Byelorussian poetry. Some scholars have even tried to trace its origins back to the many rhythmically articulated passages in the sermons and prayers of St Cyril of Turaŭ, but no less cogent arguments can be adduced for the adoption of 1575 as a starting date, and, similarly, 1647 seems a sensible cut-off year.

Rothe's omissions, if such they be, are insignificant beside the positive benefits to be derived from the viewing of this aspect of East Slavonic literature as a whole, and readers familiar principally with Koršunaŭ's anthology will find this new collection of 116 chronologically arranged items richly rewarding for the light it throws on the contemporary background to Byelorussian literary development. The spelling of poems is modernized in various ways (for example, nasal vowels are denasalized), but with rigid consistency. The poems are accompanied by only the most important background information: the source of the given text, references to other sources, with variants, and references to critical literature not falling within the second category. Indexes of names, places and contents add greatly to the anthology's usefulness as a work of reference. Professor Rothe states in the Introduction that he had intended to provide a comprehensive commentary but deferred this task when the 'Biblioteka poeta' volume of Russian syllabic poetry was announced (A. M. Pančenko (ed.), *Russkaja sillabičeskaja poezija XVII-XVIII v.v.*, Leningrad, 1970), realizing subsequently that a full commentary was still necessary.

He now hopes to provide one in a separate volume of the 'Bausteine' series. To judge by the care with which the anthology has been produced, the commentary will be a valuable and eagerly awaited tool.

Die älteste ostslawische Kunstdichtung is attractively presented, and amongst its welcome features is the provision of seventy-seven illustrations to accompany the poems, ranging from heraldic devices described in the armorial panegyrics to portraits (of writers and the noble subjects of 'epigrams' and laments) or to pictures of a few of the places associated with the poems such as, for example, the castles of Łuck and Ostrog. Of particular Byelorussian relevance are those depicting the Ahiński, Chadkievič and Vałovič coats of arms described in *Epikhramma na hierb Bohdana Ohinskaho* (Jeŭje, 1611), *Na starožitny klejnoty ich m. kniaźat Okhinskich i ich m. panov Vołovičov* (Jeŭje, 1616) and *Na starožitny klejnoty ich milostej panov Chodkievičov* (Jeŭje, 1616). Also of interest is the illustration of the arms of Leŭ Sapieha together with the original poem on them, *Epikhramma na hierb L. Sapiehi* (Viłna, 1617).

The Supplement (*Beiheft*) to the two main volumes is devoted to the well-known *Lament domu knjaźat ostrozskich* of 1603, and comprises the text (which is also printed on pp. 118-24 of volume 1), a translation into German, commentary and facsimile. The commentary, though brief, is wide-ranging and augurs well for the projected commentary on the period as a whole.

Naturally, any such collection of early literary texts is bound to be incomplete, whatever its terms of reference. Lost works will continue to be re-discovered and published, in some cases causing a major reappraisal of conventional wisdom and judgments: one that seems likely to do this in the case of Byelorussian literature is the 1620 *Lament* on the death of Laoncij Karpovič when at last it is published in full. Professor Rothe's compilation is a remarkably comprehensive and scholarly piece of work. It is to be hoped that its price of DM 145 will not deter too many libraries from making a valuable addition to their Slavonic collections.

Arnold McMillin