

readers, but how many histories of other literatures do treat translations, and is this not the proper procedure?

The selective approach permits the authors, especially Fennell, to concentrate on a few works. This results in some cases in short monographic studies, certain of which (such as the sections on Boris and Gleb, and Alexander Nevsky) make original contributions to scholarship. Also, we have here a textbook that is not "cribbed" from other textbooks, but based on the authors' own direct knowledge of the texts and the more detailed secondary sources. A limitation of the approach is that it produces few general observations about Old Russian literature as a whole, or even about its specific periods.

Style is a favorite topic and invariably treated. Although this does give the reader a sense of contact with the text itself, at times one is tempted to ask whether, in certain cases, a synopsis would not have served almost as well and more economically. The preference for stylistic analysis is surprising in view of the emphasis at the outset on the "history of Russian culture." Curiously, though Fennell is himself a historian, as well as a philologist, and has published the texts themselves, his analysis of the Kurbsky-Grozny correspondence is largely stylistic with almost nothing about the politics or the world view of either correspondent.

Chapter 4, on *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*, falls "between" the chapters on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and poses more questions than it answers. Clearly Fennell does not believe the *Tale* to be a forgery of the eighteenth century, nor can he accept it as a work of the twelfth. It seems that he would be best pleased were it to fall chronologically sometime *after* the *Zadonshchina* and to derive from that work.

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BYLINA AND FAIRY TALE: THE ORIGINS OF RUSSIAN HEROIC POETRY. By *Alex E. Alexander*. Slavistic Printings and Reprintings, 281. The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1973. 162 pp. 38 Dglds.

Mr. Alexander's thesis is that the Russian *bylina* evolved from the fairy tale because "the aesthetic relationship between the fairy tale and the *bylina* is that of fiction versus artistic truth, or discredited versus credited myth" (p. 121). He rejects as unlikely the notion that the *bylina* and the fairy tale developed independently from pagan mythology and offers instead an explanation of the *bylina* as a "fairy tale history of Kievan Rus'." Alexander reproduces many of the arguments for the historicity of the *bylina* with which scholars have been familiar for some time. He admits, however, that "many names of people and places are historically verifiable, which allows for the coexistence of purely fictional names with factual ones. For example, Il'ja may be purely fictional, but Murom is not: his historically verifiable origins make the hero a historical figure, a Kievan warrior in whose past existence one can believe" (p. 88). That is not a very plausible argument, in the opinion of this reviewer, and it is a pity Mr. Alexander was unaware of recent research touching, in part, on this very matter.

Indeed, the main problem with Mr. Alexander's book, aside from its lack of proper editing, is that it is simply out of date. He could not have known, for instance, of the fundamental work by V. V. Ivanov and V. N. Toporov, *Issledo-*

*vaniia v oblasti slavianskikh drevnostei* (1974), but there is less excuse for the absence from his bibliography of their earlier *Slavianskie iazykovye modeliruiushchie semioticheskie sistemy* (1965). Indeed, the bibliography is most curious. One finds V. V. Ivanov's historical grammar of Russian listed under literary criticism, but no mention of Lord's *Singer of Tales* or any of Felix Oinas's works on the Russian epos. Had Mr. Alexander been able to consult some of these very important works, one suspects that his arguments in favor of the derivation of the *bylina* from the fairy tale would have been differently stated. As it is, his book is not very convincing.

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RUSSIAN LITERARY CRITICISM: A SHORT HISTORY. By R. H. Stacy.  
Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1974. ix, 267 pp. \$15.00, cloth. \$8.00, paper.

"This book is intended for readers who do not know Russian but who would like to learn something of the nature and course of Russian literary criticism" (p. ix). Thus Professor Stacy states his intentions all too clearly; he tells his reader "something" about Russian criticism, but not nearly as much as he might have, even in a book directed at a popular audience.

As the book stands, it completely fails to do justice to Soviet criticism of the sixties. The main problem is that Stacy does not *like* Russian criticism very much. He announces at the outset that "Russian literary criticism both begins and ends badly" (p. 13). He constantly corrects, judges, and argues with the critics whom he is discussing, and since he frequently prefers to paraphrase rather than quote, the general reader will have to accept his strongly stated prejudices (as well as some extremely dubious literary judgments). He has particularly great difficulty in his chapter on "The Modernists" (from Shestov to Mayakovsky), and justly characterizes his remarks on Rozanov, Shestov, and Berdiaev as "rather harsh" (p. 125); he cannot understand, for example, why "The name of Dionysus appears again and again" (p. 127) in the work of a Nietzschean critic like Viacheslav Ivanov. While Stacy does mention most of the names, dates, and titles that the layman needs to know, he unfortunately mentions Iurii Lotman only in passing.

*Russian Literary Criticism* badly needed a demanding editor. I noticed only one mistake in a date, 1744 for 1774 (p. 25), but found a number of misprints and several omitted words; furthermore, on page 92, Stacy inexplicably begins giving titles in Russian as well as in English translation (although he never translates quotations in French and German). A good editor would have caught Stacy's repetitions of extraneous facts, and would have cautioned him about introducing so many peripheral quotations and comments, especially in the later chapters.

I hope the author will revise this book thoroughly before a second edition appears.

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