

This latest study draws heavily upon Professor Shaw's earlier works as well as from the writings of other scholars in Turkey, Europe, and the United States who in the last thirty years have made fundamental contributions to more or less specialized aspects of the field. In addition, the author acknowledges his debt to the official Ottoman chroniclers whose annals he has exploited systematically. Last, but not least, tribute must be paid to his own primary research in the Turkish state archives. The original material which he has incorporated pertains largely to the reign of Sultan Selim III (1789–1807), but new information from Ottoman documents enriches other chapters as well.

Despite the warm reception which this new history deserves, some caveats are necessary. The book is not written in an attractive prose style. Misprints are frequent and the spelling of personal and place names is often inconsistent or simply incorrect. These problems are typical of contemporary publishing, and are perhaps inevitable where several languages are involved. The same considerations do not apply to factual errors. Although basically sound, the present volume reveals insufficient attention to accuracy and detail. Defects drawn from one chapter will suffice by way of example. The Passarowitz Treaty (1718) is described without reference to the very significant Ottoman cession of the Temesvár *sancak*. Later on, this omission leads Professor Shaw to state that at Belgrade (1739) the Habsburgs "surrendered all their gains at Passarowitz." In fact, the Banat of Temesvár remained part of the Habsburg Monarchy until its collapse in 1918. Again relating to Austro-Turkish affairs, there was no "Ottoman campaign against Austria in 1736." One year later, the Austrian army began hostilities with an attack upon Ottoman Nish. This offensive proceeded by way of the Morava and not the Vardar River which is, of course, further to the south. As for François de Tott (1733–93), he could scarcely have fled to France during the Rákóczi Rebellion which had ended in 1711. Faults such as these are representative of a general carelessness which seriously mars an otherwise useful work. Should these flaws be removed in a future edition, this book will become a text of enduring value.

ALLEN Z. HERTZ

Killam Program, The Canada Council

THE FAMILIAR LETTER AS A LITERARY GENRE IN THE AGE OF PUSHKIN. By *William Mills Todd III*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976. xii, 230 pp. \$15.00.

This fine book represents the first serious attempt to examine the informal (but not exactly private) correspondence carried on within the group later thought of as the Pushkin circle, with a view to establishing the correspondence as literature, defining its generic status, and in the process, setting it off from kindred categories such as the slender classicist tradition of Russian literary letter writing which owes most to Fonvizin and Karamzin. Listing the eight main chapter headings will illustrate the book's strategy: chapter 1, "The Epistolary Tradition in Europe and Russia"; chapter 2, "Arzamas and Its Approach to Epistolary Tradition"; chapter 3, "Content: Principles of Selection"; chapter 4, "Characterization and Caricature"; chapter 5, "Literary Criticism in the Letters of Arzamas"; chapter 6, "Style and the Illusion of Conversational Speech"; chapter 7, "Organizational Principles of the Familiar Letter"; and chapter 8, "The Parts of a Letter: Openings and End Games." Throughout, the work is well-informed, scrupulous, lucid, urbane, and on the whole, it succeeds admirably in its purpose. Where it seems to beg the question, that is, tailor its generic criteria to fit its corpus, the author is far from unaware of the problem (itself familiar) and contrives to dispel or shelve one's doubts; with the exception, perhaps, of the still

small voice, smothered by neither René nor Throp, which wonders innocently what use a genre may be which boasts no more than one legitimate member corpus in its era, its culture, or its wider civilization.

The *druzheskie pis'ma* pose a refractory enough initial problem of translation. The "familiar letters" of the title—suggesting either the weariness of old acquaintance or the maidenly bridling at a liberty—is hardly even a critical household term, and as unsatisfactory for middlebrow usage as would be, for other reasons, the faintly Gogolian "Correspondence amongst Literary Friends" or the accurate but a shade unwieldy "Semiprivate Pseudocasual Missives of Prepared Chat and Shop-Talk among Fellow *Literati* aged Fifteen to Sixty." Professor Todd surveys this multilateral palaver of the Arzamas clubbers between 1808 and 1825 for its evidentiary value, but without extensive unabridged citation. His study thus focuses on a seventeen-year period of communication on personal, social, and literary topics within a company of intimates (more or less so) whose adult lives collectively spanned nearly a century of Russian sensibility: from Karamzin at twenty to Viazemskii at eighty-six.

Next to the correspondence between Pushkin and Zhukovskii, the Viazemskii-A. I. Turgenev correspondence is drawn upon fairly extensively, which is laudable on account of its high thematic interest and a superior quota of mobilized intelligence. Griboedov, somewhat unaccountably, is ignored; one would not find out from the three indexed uses of his name and his play that he wrote a single "familiar letter." This is a damaging omission *sub specie quum corporis tum generis petiti*, for while he is not an Arzamasian, he is, of course, of the age of Pushkin, and his adult life falls almost exactly within the period here under review. Further, he is at least Pushkin's equal on most counts of epistolary virtue; and he is the superior of any member of that circle in force and economy of statement and maturity of wit, without being guilty of any more literary "grandstanding" than they. One should hasten to add, however, that the critical analysis of the genre, and the criteria and categories worked out by the author, with such nicety, control, and grace of diction, would not have been much altered by Griboedov's addition to the corpus.

The two appendixes—one of biographical notes on the Arzamasians, the other a translation of N. I. Grech's essay on letter writing of ca. 1820—are both welcome. This reviewer would have been grateful for a third appendix containing a selection of at least one characteristic letter by each of the circle in unabridged form in both Russian and English, and perhaps some contemporary West European specimens for comparison. There is also an index and a most useful four-part bibliography.

This study is so well organized and pleasingly produced that a short adventitious list of misprints and infelicities is offered below from the most constructive, that is, cosmetic and didactic, motives. Misprints are found on page 93, line 4 and pages 141–42, three misprints in the French quotation (plus in the first line one Russicism probably found in Pushkin's original); page 143, line 24, "yet" for yes; page 186, line 11, "Cromwell" for Cornwall (both names missing from the index). Examples of lapses from best lexical usage or graphic form include: page 60, line 11, the vulgarity "folded," gratingly, for failed, ceased publication, or the like; page 124, line 23, "masterful" for masterly; and page 126, line 21, "sometime" (which denotes Latin *olim* or older English erstwhile) for some time; all these are Newsmagspeak pollutants apparently as penetrating as "disinterested" for indifferent and the pestiferous "can't help but." Finally, on page 189, lines 21, 23, and 26, one finds "evocation" *et. sim.* for invocation.

WALTER ARNDT
Dartmouth College