

VINOGRADOV: THE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN LITERARY LANGUAGE FROM THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY TO THE NINETEENTH. Adapted and introduced by *Lawrence L. Thomas*. Madison, Milwaukee, London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969. xxvii, 275 pp. \$12.50.

V. V. Vinogradov presents a challenge to the reader—the problem of extracting extremely valuable minerals from the crude ore which conceals them. All too often his unwieldy syntax and a sort of psychedelic pseudoterminology lulls one into incomprehension. He can also be frustrating for the reader who is searching for a reference or who wants to learn the author's views on a specific question: not only is there usually no index, but even Vinogradov's chapter headings can be Delphically unrevealing. Though *Ocherki po istorii russkogo literaturnogo iazyka XVII–XIX vv.* (2nd, rev. ed., 1938) is not the most flagrant example of such Vinogradov obfuscation, Lawrence L. Thomas deserves our gratitude for the useful service he has performed in condensing the original, putting it into eminently readable English, and providing it with an index.

Vinogradov's work begins with the seventeenth-century crisis in the development of the language and takes us through to the second half of the nineteenth century. As Vinogradov himself acknowledged and as Thomas points out in the preface, "the book constitutes something of a mixed genre. . . . It is a combination of a history of the literary language and studies of the styles of individual authors." It is also "a book of essays." For these reasons there may have been, along with some inconsistencies in the attitude of the author, a certain failure, again in Thomas's words, "to make clear that the development of a literary language is a *continuous* process." But for all that, and particularly if the reader will bear these limitations in mind, he will obtain from this book a clear picture of the development of the language during the period indicated. Vinogradov's work is a standard text, and it is this which prompted Thomas's undertaking. The principal purpose of his adaptation is to make available to the student of Slavic languages and literatures a clear and scholarly account of the main events and processes in the evolution of the language during the more than two centuries covered by the book. In order to enhance further the book's pedagogical value, Thomas has written a sixteen-page introduction which gives a capsule account of the Russian literary language from its beginnings to the point where Vinogradov begins.

It is impossible to abbreviate without some loss (the paring down of examples and the drastic cutting of some sections); but Thomas has succeeded in this self-imposed task without any loss of essential ideas.

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SELECTED TRAGEDIES OF A. P. SUMAROKOV. Translated by *Richard and Raymond Fortune*. Introduction by *John Fizer*. Foreword by *Henry M. Nebel, Jr.* Publications of Eighteenth-Century Russian Literature. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970. xiii, 229 pp. \$8.50.

This volume is the combined work of three scholars: the introduction is by Professor John Fizer, and poetic renderings of the tragedies are by Raymond and Richard Fortune, working from the latter's prose translations. We are given four of Sumarokov's nine tragedies: *Khorev*, *Hamlet*, *Semira*, and *Dimitrii the Impostor*;