
REVIEWS

ART TREASURES IN RUSSIA: MONUMENTS, MASTERPIECES, COMMISSIONS AND COLLECTIONS. Introduction by *Prince Dimitri Obolensky*. New York and Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1970. 174 pp. \$6.95.

THE HORIZON BOOK OF THE ARTS OF RUSSIA. Edited by *Thomas Froncek* and the editors of *Horizon Magazine*. Introductory essay by *James H. Billington*. Consultant, *Frederick Starr*. New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., a subsidiary of McGraw-Hill, 1970. 384 pp. \$20.00.

THE HORIZON HISTORY OF RUSSIA. By *Ian Grey*. Edited by *Wendy Buehr* and the editors of *Horizon Magazine*. New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., a subsidiary of McGraw-Hill, 1970. 416 pp. \$22.00.

These three books were written with the general reader in mind. Contrary to the frequently accepted view, generalizing and summing up is far from easy, especially where history is concerned.

Art Treasures in Russia contains comparatively little text, and this includes indexes, acknowledgments, and a list of museums and monuments of the USSR—the latter an innovation which was presumably compiled with tourist needs in mind, although it fails to list many places of historical importance: Ladoga, Izborsk, Novgorod-Seversk, Putivl, Torzhok, and Narva, to mention only a few. Consequently the maps inside the front and back covers are somewhat incomplete. Six authors in nine surveys and an introduction have embarked on the very difficult undertaking of enlightening the reader on the artistic achievements of Russia from 2500 B.C. to the modern day. The late Professor David Talbot Rice contributes a valid and interesting survey, "The Building of the Islamic Cities (900–1700)," although six pages seem a minute allowance for this subject. The remaining authors, skimming over the surface of their subjects, isolate only a few salient facts; since no bibliography is provided, it is sometimes difficult to imagine where they found the evidence for the assertions they advance. "The possibility of certain Scythian traditions having survived into the VIth century A.D. when the pagan Slavs would have been able to adopt them and extend their life span" (p. 16) is a most doubtful one, and the statement on page 40 is puzzling: "It would be a mistake to suppose that early Russian Church buildings were erected exclusively to the greater glory of God." Patronage and rivalry in the search for beauty, which frequently stimulated the medieval creators, never had the effect of lessening the religious motivation either in Russia or elsewhere.

The author of "Art in the Muscovite Period" lacks a sense of proportion. The lacunae are so many as to defy listing, but perhaps the following gives some idea of the author's approach to the subject: "The dynasty which had ruled Russia for 800 years came to an abrupt end with the murder by Ivan the Terrible of his own son in a fit of uncontrollable rage. After this horrifying episode, Muscovy suffered a harsh occupation by the soldiers of Poland and Sweden. It is possible to speculate that during this time of troubles (1605–13), Russian Orthodox civilisation might well have been completely annihilated, and Muscovy incorporated within the frame-

work of the Germano-Latin West" (p. 79). The "horrifying episode" took place in 1581. On Ivan's death in 1584 he was succeeded by his son Fedor, and on the death of the latter in 1598 Fedor's brother-in-law, Boris Godunov, ascended the throne and ruled until his death in 1605. Furthermore the Danilovich dynasty had been extant only since 1263. Foreign intervention commenced only after the death of the Pretender Dmitrii in 1607 and ended with the complete triumph of Muscovite orthodoxy. Nevertheless the author avers, "Muscovite culture was facing decay and internal dissolution. . . . much had disintegrated, and what was left was a peasant culture" (p. 79). This is a disappointingly inaccurate survey.

Dr. Malcolm Burgess's chapter on the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries, is, however, sensitive and lucid and is a useful "conducted tour." Regrettably 1855-1917 and the postrevolutionary era, with its vast and complex material, apparently merits only the briefest summing up. Not even the attractive presentation or the beautiful reproductions, many of them in color and fourteen of which have been printed back to front (though this can be put down to the ignorance of the printers as far as Russian icons are concerned, it is less easy to be forgiving when the same fate overtakes Rembrandt's *Danae*), can free this book from the taint of dilettantism.

Horizon Books have now devoted a volume to the arts of Russia. The many illustrations are enhanced by translations from Russian literature and historical sources and by an explanatory text by Professor James H. Billington. He has acquitted himself well of this onerous task. His ideas are interesting, but his approach is sometimes controversial, particularly in his comparison of Russian and American national psychologies. Thus his statement that "the earliest Russian epic [twelfth century] 'The Lay of Igor's Campaign' is a Cowboys-and-Indians tale of a raid" (p. 8) seems open to question; surely, too, his suggestion that the love of a small girl (p. 15) for her mother and her pleasure in good weather is really an echo of the nature worship of the ancient Slavs and the earlier pagan cult of Damp Mother Earth is not meant to be taken seriously? Possibly the uninformed reader will swallow these suggestions of the author's, but they would appear to pertain more to the realms of the imagination than to scholarship. However, Billington professes deep regard for the "remarkable Russian people" and places great hopes in the creative impulses of the young. Thus this impressive book provides an extra bonus in the optimism which the author generates.

The Horizon History of Russia has as its author Ian Grey, who has written many books on Russian history aimed at the general reader. It is a great art to be able to synthesize clearly and express with reasonable brevity the views of a great many scholars. Grey is successful at doing just that. Certain corrections could doubtless be suggested, particularly in his treatment of Russian ecclesiastical history. The church gained its national importance during the Mongol suzerainty, for it was the church alone which was able to inspire hope for a future both terrestrial and celestial and which remained totally Russian. The return to the patriarchate after the Revolution was an attempt to renew the church's independence outside the realm of state administration. While the majority of the illustrations are extremely well chosen, those that deal with the most recent periods of Russian history tend to favor the official line rather more perhaps than is necessary.

One point that the publishers of all three volumes might like to consider is whether it is really essential to spoil beautiful pictorial reproductions by stretching

them over two pages, with the sewing of the binding disfiguring the middle of the picture.

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INDEX TO THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS. By *Igor de Rachewiltz*. Uralic and Altaic Series, vol. 121. Bloomington: Indiana University Publications, 1972. 347 pp. \$16.00.

The *Secret History* is the oldest narrative text in Mongolian (A.D. 1240), and represents a semilegendary history of Chingis Khan and his ancestors, extending into the time of his successor, Ögedei. There are text editions of that work, translations, and a good dictionary of words occurring in the text, compiled by Haenisch (1939, reprinted in 1962). The dictionary does not list all grammatical forms of the words attested, nor does it indicate all occurrences of each word. Therefore the dictionary is of little use in cases in which it is important to have a particular word in all contexts in which it occurs, or to have all its grammatical forms attested in the text. The book under review is therefore a timely and useful publication because it enables the reader to find a particular word in all contexts, and lists all grammatical forms of each word. The first part of the book (pp. 1–174) contains the text which follows the line arrangement of Pelliot's edition (P). Each line is preceded by a code number indicating the page and line of P. The second part (pp. 177–343) is an alphabetical index of all words and forms to which code numbers referring to the pages and lines concerned are added. The third part (pp. 345–47) represents a finding list which enables the user of the index to find out to which paragraph of Pelliot's edition the code numbers refer. Pelliot's transcription has been slightly modified (*c* instead of *č*, *j* instead of *ǰ*, etc.), but Pelliot's text has not been corrected. Thus, P 59 *qatqun* should be *hatqun* "squeezing in the hand," and so forth (see *Bull. of the Inst. of Hist. and Phil., Academia Sinica*, vol. 39, p. 270). However, the corrections must be left for later research. De Rachewiltz's index is to be welcomed as a valuable publication which will serve as a basis for compilation of a grammar and a complete dictionary of the language of the *Secret History*.

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THE HISTORY OF THE COUNCIL OF FLORENCE. By *Ivan N. Ostroumoff*. Translated by *Basil Popoff*. Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1971. x, 313 pp. \$2.00, paper.

For those desirous of an unreconstructed, strictly Orthodox account of the position taken by the Greek Church on the points at issue at the Council of Florence, this book can be of use, since it follows most faithfully the extremely valuable if biased account of the pro-Orthodox, Byzantine ecclesiastic-historian Syropoulos, whom most Western historians have for centuries unjustly neglected. Yet he alone provides material on the behind-the-scenes thoughts and activities of the Greeks which can be found nowhere else. Ostroumoff refers also to the pro-unionist work of the Greek, Dorotheus of Mitylene (but almost invariably to prove him wrong), and uses some material from the Synodal library of Moscow. The latter provides in-