
REVIEWS

"SLOVO O POLKU IGOREVE" I EGO SOVREMENNIKI. By *B. A. Rybakov*. Moscow: "Nauka," 1971. 295 pp. 1.61 rubles.

RUSSKIE LETOPISTSY I AVTOR "SLOVA O POLKU IGOREVE." By *B. A. Rybakov*. Moscow: "Nauka," 1972. 520 pp. 2.58 rubles.

Rybakov's two volumes on the *Slovo* are the result of long and careful research on the twelfth-century epic and its historical background. This eminent Soviet scholar always attempts to break fresh ground in his approach to a problem, and here, too, there is innovation in his inclusion of the writings of the eighteenth-century historian V. N. Tatishchev among his historical sources—that is, those writings in which Tatishchev relates the contents of early Russian chronicles which have since disappeared. The question of Tatishchev's reliability is still not completely resolved. Fairly recently, Soviet historians were still arguing about it—see my bibliographical survey of Soviet articles on this subject in *The Year's Work in Modern Language Studies*, 33 (1971): 833–34. In any case, Rybakov's use of Tatishchev's accounts seems acceptable.

There is a vast amount of material on the *Slovo*, and the problems are manifold and complex. It follows that the author's task is not an easy one, and the reader must be prepared to devote some time to the study of the multitudinous aspects of the *Slovo* in these two volumes, which though published separately should be read as one opus.

Section 1 of the first volume is a somewhat debatable attempt to recreate the structure of the poem by repositioning various parts of it, although the author goes no further than to suggest that this hypothesis is workable. Rybakov uses Stelletsy's rendering of the *Slovo* into Modern Russian—with a few of his own variants—for this "reorganized" text. One of the theories he advances is that some "cantos" dealing with Vladimir Monomakh, whom he identifies with the Elder Vladimir of the *Slovo*, have disappeared. The text certainly gains in logical continuity, but one would have to decide whether logical continuity is a necessary concomitant of poetry. N. Galen-Torn, of Leningrad, in the journal *Ezik i literatura* (Sofia), 1972, no. 2, pp. 104–11, expresses some doubts on this point. Section 1 also contains important observations on the influence of the *Slovo* in later literature. Rybakov illustrates this point most successfully by reference to the miniatures in the Radziwiłł Chronicle.

The second section of the first volume traces most expertly the biographies of all the personages in the *Slovo*. The third section (pp. 170–201) is given over to a survey of the details (as given in the chronicles) of Igor's campaign of 1185. The last section contains a detailed analysis of the actual events of 1184–85 which are the subject of the *Slovo*. The strategy and logistics of the campaign and the battle on the Kaiala River are all thoroughly investigated, and some significant remarks concerning the bibliography on this subject are included. There is also a most helpful genealogical table. Igor's flight on June 21, 1185, is carefully elucidated. This is the most impressive part of the work. Rybakov adduces many details to support his crucial hypothesis that the *Slovo* was written in August

1185 and that it was composed by an unknown poet in the hope of persuading the princes to unite in a concerted effort "to block the gateway of the steppes."

The second book is an analytical study of the chronicles which attempts to define scope and trends in the writing of the individual chroniclers. The author emphasizes the importance of Tatishchev's *History* for this aspect of his research, convincingly defends Tatishchev against the accusations of falsification made by S. L. Peshtich in 1961, and then proceeds to analyze the information derived from Tatishchev. This leads him to conclude that the author of the *Slovo* may have been the boyar and author Peter Borislavich, who, according to Rybakov, was one of the best educated and informed of the secular chroniclers of that period. Borislavich would seem to fit the features of the *Slovo*'s author as adumbrated in the previous book—that is, possessing a spirit which soared above the petty conflicts of the princes (whom he did not hesitate to censure), lacking Christian motivation (whereas full use was made of pagan symbolism), and revealing a complete understanding of the political interrelationships of the times. Although Rybakov does not insist on the acceptance of his somewhat audacious hypothesis, it does seem more soundly based than those of other scholars who have sought to discern the personality of the *Slovo*'s author. Of course, to accept Rybakov's theories one must accept his asseverations of Tatishchev's veracity. Even then, many questions remain in this attempt to prove that a chronicler could have been a great poet and shared the ideas revealed in the *Slovo*. Rybakov admits this difficulty, but points out that there is also a vast dissimilarity in style between Pushkin's poem *Poltava* and his uncompleted history of Peter the Great in prose.

The books regrettably have no indexes.

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THE TALE OF THE CAMPAIGN OF IGOR: A RUSSIAN EPIC POEM OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY. Translated by *Robert C. Howes*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1973. x, 67 pp. \$6.95, cloth. \$1.75, paper.

The *Slavic Review* has not generally sought reviews of literary works translated into English. An exception has been made in the present case because despite the excellent translation by Dimitri Obolensky and those by Serge Zenkovsky, Vladimir Nabokov, and, most recently, Sidney Monas with Burton Raffel, there has been no accurate translation with accompanying historical introduction to permit the English-speaking reader to enjoy this mysterious and beautiful masterpiece of medieval East Slavic culture. It is this lacuna that Mr. Howes has attempted to fill.

In part he has succeeded. In fact the chief virtues of this edition are the historical introduction, the numerous historical footnotes and the appended genealogical table of princes mentioned in the work, and a translation of the Hypatian Chronicle account of the ill-fated campaign of Prince Igor. It may well be argued that some of Howes's introduction is not really essential, and one certainly would wish to dispute certain of his remarks (such as those concerning the Conference of Liubech).

By and large the historical information Howes provides is useful and accurate. His discussion of the *Slovo* as literature is less so. He gives us a list of tropes, but he makes no mention of the language, the rhythmic effect of which is such a powerful element in the work. Nor does he mention the important ques-