

## BOOK REVIEWS/COMPTES RENDUS

*The Pennington Catalogue: A Union Catalogue of Cyrillic Manuscripts in British and Irish Collections.* Compiled by Ralph Cleminson. General Editors Veronica Du Feu and W. F. Ryan. [London]: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, 1988. xiv, 352 pp., 16 plates. £ 15.

A splendid tribute to the late Professor Anne Pennington, who had helped initiate the project and was to have been its chief compiler, this volume is the first attempt at a union catalogue of cyrillic manuscripts and codices in the British Isles and as such complements Janet Hartley's guide to Russia-related documentary material (*Guide to Documents and Manuscripts in the United Kingdom relating to Russia and the Soviet Union* [London, 1987]). The 204 manuscripts described are largely complete codices, but included as well are some calligraphic rolls and fragmentary cyrillic material contained in manuscripts principally of non-Slavic origin. One is impressed by the richness and variety of the material, ranging in content from liturgical books to law codes and chronicles and in provenance from the Balkans to the Russian North.

Dr. Cleminson's catalogue sets a standard worthy of emulation for any future scholarly descriptions of cyrillic manuscripts and one that is especially important where there has been such a distressing lack of uniformity and unevenness in quality in the published descriptions that have appeared even in recent years. This is the first case I have seen where proper attention has been given to all of the physical characteristics of the manuscripts and the codicological information has been laid out with sufficient clarity so as to leave few questions about the structure of the books. Collations have been carefully noted, information on watermarks presented with clear indication of the degree of similarity between the observed marks and their published analogues, and in cases where there are separate manuscripts now gathered in a single binding, the physical data are grouped with the content descriptions for each of the parts. Six indexes (chronological, linguistic, place, name, works and incipits) further facilitate the use of the volume, which, one should add, is also a model of accurate computerized typesetting in a complex variety of scripts and alphabets.

Could one reasonably ask for more? Probably not, but nonetheless, let me suggest some desiderata. Even though Cleminson has given what information he readily could about the versions of the particular texts he describes, one thinks with fondness of the expansive content descriptions that are "classics" if in many respects obsolete—those by Gorskii and Nevostruev or by Bychkov. While in some cases we learn about a long line of former owners of the books (there is a great deal here to whet our appetites about the collecting being done by those associated with the

Muscovy Company in the Russian North, for example), in others the mere indication that the book was purchased at auction leaves us to wonder about its history and whether additional information could not have been pried out of the auction houses. Would it be too much to ask for more facsimiles of the manuscript hands, although one can supplement the few plates in this volume by numerous additional ones in the literature cited? Perhaps more important, since no one yet does this in manuscript descriptions, could we not have accurate tracings or photographs of all the watermarks rather than mere verbal descriptions? Cleminson has been careful to indicate what connections he could among these manuscripts, but if we would hope some day to obtain a much clearer idea than we have now about provenance and in particular identify scriptoria, we really need to be able to have all the hands and all the watermarks accessible for future identification.

Let me hasten to add that such desiderata are undoubtedly unrealistic, in terms of their cost in time and money. In fact, it appears that the publication of this volume was something of a miracle, that required a collaborative effort, especially with regard to the raising of sufficient funds. In a way, that is a sad commentary on the priorities that adversely affect such an important field as ours; on the other hand, it is a glowing tribute to the way in which an individual such as Anne Pennington, in whose memory private contributions were solicited, could inspire a work of scholarship of such high quality and lasting value.

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