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BOOK REVIEWS

LITERATURE AND FINE ARTS

Strumiński, Bohdan. *Linguistic Interrelations in Early Rus': Northmen, Finns, and East Slavs (Ninth to Eleventh Centuries)*. Rome: La Fenice Edizioni (Collana di filologia e letterature slave, vol. 2), copublished with Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1996. 353 pp. C\$49.95 (paper).

Strumiński's impressively researched book is a set of two dozen essays grouped under six broad topics having to do with the linguistic systems of early East Slavic, Nordic, and Finnic. They deal primarily with phonetics and lexicology. Although several of the essays will be of interest to historians (especially those in Section 4, which eruditely consider the linguistic aspects of such questions as the name *Rus'*, East European river names, the gods of the Rus', the names of the Dnieper rapids, and personal names), the primary readers for this book will be linguists. Since relatively few will have the command of Old Nordic, Finnic (and, more broadly, Uralic), and East Slavic that Strumiński seems to have, any given reader will probably find certain parts of the book more useful than others. The audience of linguists would certainly include Germanists and Uralists, not just Slavists.

The book is generally "user-friendly," with its clear type, large bibliography, and detailed word index (51 pages!). This index by languages greatly increases the usefulness of the book, although the references are not always exact (for example, Estonian *säädi*, *sääs*, and *sääsa* are all listed as being on page 14, when in fact they are on page 13). The book, however, gives very little quarter in its demands on the knowledge of the reader. To evaluate Strumiński's exposition in its entirety one would need a good knowledge not just of Old East Slavic and its modern descendants but also of Old Nordic, several Finnic languages, and comparative Finnic. When dealing with Arabic and Hebrew he thoughtfully assists the Semantically challenged by giving a transcription of the original.

Some of Strumiński's assertions contradict the consensus opinion without explaining why that opinion is rejected. For example he flatly assumes "the fall of all the jers in Rus' by the early eleventh century" (p. 274). On page 78 he moves the date back still further: "After the jers had disappeared throughout Rus' by the end of the tenth century." Since Rusian scribes write the jers accurately, even correcting "errors" in South Slavic protographs, until at least the third quarter of the twelfth century (with the exception of certain definable and explainable positions), such a radical challenge to the usual history of the jer shift needs better justification than he gives it.

Another problem manifests itself on the same page (and elsewhere in the book). Strumiński seems to assume (phonemically) palatalized consonants even before the jer shift. He gives a form *V'at'ič' i* for the tenth century, where he seems to assume two consonant phonemes (*v'* and *iv'*) and only one vowel phoneme (*a/*), instead of the more probable and more widely accepted idea of one consonant phoneme (*iv'*) with two allophones before the two vowel phonemes *æ/* and *a/* (similarly the language had *t/* before *i/* and *y/*, not *t'* and *t/* before a single phoneme *i/*, but only [č'], phonemically /č/, and only before *i/*, since *y/* did not occur after /č/).

In spite of the objections just mentioned, Strumiński's book must be regarded as a very significant contribution to our knowledge of the language and history of Rus'.

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