

## SUMMARY, No. 6 (93), 2010

---

ARCHE 2010, # 6 presents important critical studies about (1) the basic official Belarusian historiographical narratives, (2) the origin of the Belarusian language and, particularly, (3) the genesis of a written language of the chancellery of the Great dukes of Lithuania.

The issue opens with the Belarusian translation of a pathbreaking study by **George Y. Shevelov** 'Problems in the Formation of Belorussian. — New York: Linguistic Circle of New York, 1953. — VI + 109 pp. (= Suppl. to «Word». 1953. Vol. 9. Monograph series; No. 2.) Although the author worked at that time as a lecturer of Russian and Ukrainian at Harvard, he contributed significantly to the Belarusian linguistics as well. In particular, he proved that one of most peculiar features of the Belarusian phonetics — so-called 'akannie' — has a Baltic origin.

The issue contains the Belarusian translation of a research by a Norwegian linguist **Christian Schweigaard Stang** 'Die westrussische Kanzleisprache des Grossfürstentums Litauen. Oslo 1935 (= Skrifter utgitt av Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo, Historisk-filosofisk Klasse 1935/2).'

The research became a classical 'must be read' one, but still remained unavailable for the Belarusian academics who do not read in German.

The piece distinguished several types of the chancellery language of the Great Duchy of Lithuania. The author concluded that by mid-16th century, the chancellery language had become identical to the literary Old Belarusian, and had been closely related to the Belarusian dialects of a contemporary Vilnius/Vilnia area.

Historians **Aleh Łatyšonak** and **Hienadz Siemiančuk** in their «Vain Efforts of the Academic Historians» criticize a fundamental 'Big Historical Atlas of Belarus (maps)' (Вялікі гістарычны атлас Беларусі [Карты]: у 3 т. Т. 1 / рэдкал.: Г.І. Кузняцоў (старшыня) [і інш.]. — Мінск: Белкартаграфія, 2009. — 247 с.: іл.). Various people from official academic institutions worked on this book. **Viačasłaŭ Nasievič**, director of the Belarusian Research Centre for Electronic Records and the editor of the publication, opposes them in his 'Some Reflections about Łatyšonak's and Siemiančuk's Review.' The author **Viktar Ciemušaŭ** explains why the book appeared in an improper condition, in his 'Big Historical Atlas in a Distorted Mirror of a Review.'

Sociologist **Vital Silicki** in his 'Kitchen-Table Opposition Still Speaks Russian' reflects about nation building process in Belarus. The country was the most Russified Soviet republic, and the state of things has not changed significantly until now. Analyzing some sociological data the author stresses that the Belarusian national culture and heritage remain unattractive for the majority of Belarusians. In spite of the ideological clichés claiming the cultural nationalism is a driving force for the European choice he traces different dynamics. As earlier, Russian colonialism continues to influence the Belarusian society. The Russian speaking majority is better educated, economically more prosperous and demographically active. A part of these people opts for the European choice of Belarus. Unlike them, people speaking Belarusian on the daily basis are still mostly politically conservative rural inhabitants. **Silicki** concludes



## SUMMARY, No. 6 (93), 2010

---

that the old model of a national mobilization does not work in the country now. The future of the cultural Belarusian nationalism depends on the ability of the Belarusian intellectuals to offer innovative ways to disseminate national ideas.

The issue includes an essay by **Carter Elwood** 'What Lenin Ate.' This article is an attempt to make V.I. Lenin a little less «geometric» by addressing a topic overlooked by most of his biographers: his attitude towards food and the nature of his diet. Based largely on his wife's memoirs and their letters to the relatives, the piece discusses who did the cooking in the Ulianov household, where Lenin ate, what he ate and what he drank. It suggests that he did not view meals as social or business occasions and that he had little interest in food, *per se*. Contrary to popular assumption, there is evidence that he drank alcohol, albeit in moderation.

The issue presents the research «Hrodna. Traces of the Jewish Life. Short Outline of a Long History: The Jewish Community in Hrodna» which was carried out within the Belarus program of the Robert Bosch Foundation by young Belarusian and German historians. As they note in the 'Foreword,' it is a 'result of the academic cooperation of the Hrodna and the Frankfurt/Oder Universities which were aimed at learning some aspects of the Jewish history of Hrodna. The authors wanted to show Hrodna in a different way — by looking behind facades of the renovated buildings, by asking symbolic questions to the great monuments of architecture — so that the reader perceives the historical symbols of the Jewish people as a part of the common history of the city.'

**Matthias Battis, Uładzimier Bućko, Nadzieja Krapivina, Alaksandar Paniaëŭ, Volha Sabaleŭskaja, Julija Fiodosava, Eva Hanf and Anna Schlögel** contributed in the study which is published in Belarusian and English.

The issue ends by three reviews. **Alaksiej Łastoŭski** writes about a yearbook of anthropological history '**Homo Historicus 2009**', edited by **Aleś Smalančuk** (Гадавік антрапалагічнай гісторыі / пад рэд. А.Ф. Смаленчука. — Вільня: ЕГУ, 2010. — 400 с. ).

**Alaksiej Šota** examines the Belarusian translation of a Ewa Thompson monograph 'Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism.' (Westport, CT, 2000) (Томпсан Э., Песняры Імперыі. Мінск: Медысонт, 2009.)

**Hanna Jankuta** summarizes main concepts of an extra-large research by a British scholar **Arnold McMillin** 'Writing in a Cold Climate: Belarusian Literature from the 1970s to the Present Day.' (London: Maney Publishing for the Modern Humanities Research Association, 2010.) This monograph assesses the work of nearly two hundred Belarusian writers and literary groups, ranging from poets to playwrights. The coverage includes provincial and metropolitan authors, and pays particular attention to the historical writing which is particularly important in a country where history has been suppressed and denied, and to the youngest generation of talented writers born in the early 1980s at the very end of the Soviet Union's existence.