to the influence of the West Slavonic languages, particularly Polish. Żuraŭski thinks this unlikely on the grounds that not only did *bydy* start to become established in its role before the period of substantial Polish influence on Byelorussian but also manifested itself initially in the north-eastern dialects rather than the western dialects which were most susceptible to that influence. Nevertheless the existence of a comparable construction in Polish would at the very least have been a supporting factor in the rapid spread in the literary language of the auxiliary *bydy* at the expense of the earlier alternatives.

The other topic to which Żuraŭski devotes considerable space is the evolution of the morphology of the imperative mood. In doing so he advances the proposition (pp. 274-5) that the distinctive forms of the first person plural are becoming obsolete in the literary language and being replaced by the corresponding forms of the indicative mood. Żuraŭski's argument is based on selective evidence from works of literature, to which elsewhere he is inclined to give little credence as indicators of changes in the norms of the standard language, generally regarding those variations that occur as deviations employed for stylistic purposes. If, however, his assessment is correct, Byelorussian will eventually align itself with Russian.

which has long since ceased to distinguish morphologically between the first person plural of the imperative and indicative moods, rather than (as at present) with Ukrainian.

Summing up, the Conclusion rightly points to the fact that Byelorussian has retained certain morphological features which in Russian have been replaced and suggests that in all its most important aspects the morphological structure of Byelorussian was established no later than the 16th century. In the further evolution of Byelorussian morphology the role of the vernacular and the dialects is stressed at the expense of the literary language; all credit for continuity between the old and the modern periods is given to the former and it is they which are seen as the foundation for the contemporary literary language.

One could have wished to see detailed treatment of the development of *akaŭnie* and *jakaŭnie* as morphological features; otherwise *Histaryčnaja marfatahija bielaruskaj movy* can fairly claim to be definitive. Given the complexity of its subject-matter, the book is excellently produced and fills a need long felt by the higher education audience at whom it is aimed. With a print run of only 1200 it is no doubt already unobtainable.

P. J. Mayo

Choroškevič, A. L., comp. *Polockije gramoty XIII - načala XVI vv.* 2 vols. Moscow, 1977-8. 226, 217 pp.

Two volumes, reproduced (sometimes not very well) from typewriting on poor-quality paper, in an edition of 250 copies; this first superficial impression changes, on even a quick perusal, to admiration for what must be the most outstanding publication of documents relating to Byelorussian history for many years. It is all too easy to belittle Soviet standards of book production. Is it really better to hope for collections of documents to be set up in type in the knowledge that the price would be so prohibitive that few publishers would undertake publication anyway? Or should histo-

rians be satisfied with a book in the hand, whatever it actually looks like, in which the documents can be read and used? Moreover the appearance of these two volumes belies the care behind the typing, in several languages, not only of the documents themselves but of complex annotations as well.

The compiler has brought together 325 documents relating to Polack between the 13th and the beginning of the 16th centuries; 110 of these documents are here published for the first time. More than half of the total number of documents are repro-

duced from originals; some 40% are taken from later copies, e.g. the earliest, the treaty of 1263 between the Lithuanian prince Gerden, the Master of the Livonian Order, and the cities of Riga, Połack and Viciebsk, is given in an early 15th-century version. There are three forgeries from the 15th-17th centuries, purportedly relating to the 14th-15th centuries.

The documents included in the collection relate to all aspects of the history of Połack and its surrounding territory. They are written in Byelorussian, German (mostly low German), Latin and Polish; those in the last three languages have been translated into modern Russian for this collection. In those cases where the translation is contemporary with the original, this is made clear in the notes. Valuable information is provided in the introduction about the archival sources from which the documents were taken. The former municipal archive of Riga is particularly important in that it provided 135 of the 172 originals reproduced in the collection. Not surprisingly, therefore, documents dealing with the international relations of Połack and its surrounding territory dominate; this can readily be seen from the summary analysis of the different types of document in the collection on p. 23 of vol. 1. We are indeed fortunate that so much pioneering work was done on the description of Połack documents in the Riga archives in the 19th century, especially by Hildebrand and Schwarz. By 1898 500 of the 800 documents in the 'Moscovitica-Rutenica' section of the archive had been described and annotated. Their work, and the work of later scholars such as von Bulmerincq and L. Arbuzov sen., ensured that the documents would have a good chance of survival. It is interesting that A. A. Šachmatov should have entrusted Branistaŭ Taraškievič, at that time a 22-year-old student of his at St. Petersburg University, with the job of copying documents in the Riga collection. Taraškievič apparently copied 250 documents, of which 130 related to the period before 1461, and Šachmatov put forward a

plan for publication to the Archaeographical Commission. Unfortunately nothing came of the plan and Taraškievič's work seems to have been lost. Here is a noteworthy addition to the scant details on Taraškievič's student career in Aleksandra Bergman's biography *Rzecz o Bronisławie Taraszkiewiczzu*, Warsaw, 1977.

Documents relating to the internal history have not been so lucky. The largest collection of such documents is contained in the *Litoŭskaja metryka*. As Choroškevič points out, the *metryka* was not subjected to special study as a source of historical material until the publication of N. G. Berezkov's *Litovskaja metrika kak istoričeskij istočnik*, I, Moscow-Leningrad, 1946. Other documents on internal history come from the archives of municipal and church offices, and from private collections. Very few of these latter survive, and many monastic archives were destroyed in the change-over from Orthodox to Uniate or Catholic. (It would only be fair to add that Uniate archives were in turn destroyed in the change-back to Orthodoxy. The whole sorry story is amply set out in A. Kałubovič, *Mova ŭ historyi biełaruskaha piśmienstva*, vol. 1, Munich/London, 1974-5; vol. 2, Cleveland (USA), 1978.)

Historians now have at their disposal a unique collection of documents dealing with the economic and political history of Połack from the time of its absorption into the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to the period of economic decline at the beginning of the 16th century. We are indeed lucky that all the technical problems were overcome to allow these volumes to be produced, and that one set of the 250 published has found its way to the Skaryna Library. N. N. Ulaščik's *Očerki po arheografii i istočnikovedeniju istoriji Belorusi feodal'nogo perioda*, Moscow, 1973, as it were, drew the map of the area to be covered. Choroškevič's collection fills in some of the detail. Thanks should go to her and to Ms N. I. Kirsanova who did most of the typing.

J. Dingley