do complement one another in a number of suggestive ways. Each deals, from its topic's perspective, with the unresolved tensions in Russian and Soviet architecture: between individual aspirations and the state's dictates, between tradition and innovation, the national and international styles, between the visionary and the practical. These conflicting trends affected architects and city planners as much before the Bolshevik revolution as after. Taken together, the essays provide a series of informative vignettes and thought-provoking apercus on how creative idealism and a regulated environment interacted with the country's technical capacities, its economic level of development, and with society's needs in Tsarist and in Soviet Russia.

The book proper opens with Blair Ruble's discussion of the way planners conceived of utilizing the squares in St. Petersburg around the turn of the nineteenth-century and in the 1930s, and how these plans in turn reflected different visions of public life. Ruble's chapter ties in nicely with William C. Brumfield's description of architectural designs for Moscow during the 1890-1917 period when the needs of the nascent capitalist economy superseded those of the court and the bureaucracy and dotted the cityscape with commercial structures; apartment houses, banks, department stores, office buildings, and railroad stations. Similarly, two other essays neatly complement one another. In chapter 2, Brumfield surveys Russian reactions to American architecture during the half-century before the revolution and the visionary quality that typified much of the enthusiastic response. Anatole Koop, in chapter 6, describes the activities of foreign architects who worked in the USSR during the first two Five Year Plans and the ideological or economic reasons that drew them to the Soviet Union. In a third felicitous pairing of essays, Milka Bliznakov's description of the daring, utopian projects of the early Soviet period, which remained largely unrealized, goes well with Blair Ruble's detailed guide to the innovative structures that were actually built in Moscow before the return to the monumental forms of a pseudoclassicism preferred by Stalin.

Readers will derive additional pleasure from numerous excellent illustrations and adequate orientation from the maps. In sum, it is a volume that rewards perusal on many levels, giving the reader, as it does, rich insight into the cultural, political, economic, and social forces that have shaped the continuities and discontinuities of Russia's architecture.

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Dmitrii Merezhkovskii (1865-1941) was one of the most prominent figures of Russian literature and culture—popularizer of French Symbolism and Nietzsche in the 1890s, initiator and chief proselytizer of the "new
religious consciousness” in the early years of the twentieth century, and advocate of “religious revolution” after 1905. His literary criticism offered bold new interpretations of Tolstoi, Dostoevski, and other giants of Russian literature. His historical novels on Julian the Apostate, Leonardo da Vinci, and Peter and Alekxis were translated into the major European languages and became international best-sellers. In 1933, he was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature. Despite all this, Merezhkovskii has been neglected by Soviet and Western scholars, largely because of his political and religious views. Radicals resented his militant anti-Bolshevism, while conservatives found his reinterpretations of Christianity distasteful. In the post-Soviet Union, however, as part of the process of reappropriating lost cultural roots, interest in him has revived. Since Pachmuss’s book was written, Merezhkovskii was rehabilitated at an international conference in Moscow (March 1991) and new editions of his works have appeared, including a four-volume edition of his prose, published as a supplement to Ogonek.

Temira Pachmuss, hitherto best known for her works on Zinaida Hippius, Merezhkovskii’s wife, has taken upon herself the task of restoring Merezhkovskii “to his rightful place in the pantheon of Russian and world literature” (p. 22). She considers him one of the great religious and moral leaders of the West and argues for the seriousness and literary importance of the books he wrote in exile. Merezhkovskii, she says, was a master of the genre of biographie romancée.

The book comprises an Introduction, fourteen (unnumbered) chapters, and a Conclusion. The Introduction argues for Merezhkovskii’s greatness as a writer and defends him from charges of Fascism and anti-Semitism. The first chapter describes biographie romancée, a genre which crosses traditional lines to intermix fact with fiction in an interpretive framework. Merezhkovskii’s “novel-biography,” she states, is “a curious amalgamation of historical, interpretive, philosophical, religious, and artistic approaches” (p. 45). The hagiographic composition emphasizes the internal (spiritual) lives of his subjects and the quality of “amazement.” The second chapter treats Merezhkovskii’s (and Hippius’s) metaphysics, especially their understanding of love, freedom, and their interrelation, the mystical significance of the number three, and their ideal androgyne as the perfect blend of male and female.

Subsequent chapters describe the plots, characters, and main ideas of Merezhkovskii’s writings in exile and situate them in his overall oeuvre. The Birth of the Gods (1925) and The Messiah (1928) reflect his interest in Egyptian, Babylonian, and Cretan culture as preludes to Christianity and as preconfigurations of the dilemmas of the contemporary West. In the trilogy The Secret of the Three: Egypt and Babylon (1925), The Secret of the West: Atlantis-Europe (1930), and Jesus the Unknown (1931), Merezhkovskii used the past to predict the future, explain the origins of evils such as war, and discover what Jesus really meant. Jesus the Unknown seeks the “authentic countenance of the unknown evangelical Jesus” (p. 122), using the apocrypha and myths, and is unconventional, even shocking in tone. Merezhkovskii