

century Russian life as well as the rough-and-tumble of international politics in eastern Europe in the time of such vivid actors as Selim the Grim and Suleiman the Magnificent, Pope Leo X, and Emperor Maximilian I.

Because it cannot match Solov'ev's success in conveying the spirit of his sources—a sense of the outlook of the writers as distinguished from the events they describe—the translation is not a perfect substitute for Solov'ev's original, but it is a sorely needed and very happy contribution to the literature on Muscovy now available in English.

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ESSAYS ON KARAMZIN: RUSSIAN MAN-OF-LETTERS, POLITICAL THINKER, HISTORIAN, 1766–1826. Edited by J. L. Black. Slavistic Printings and Reprintings, 309. The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1975. 232 pp. 62 Dglds., paper.

Karamzin was born in 1766 and died in 1826. To commemorate his centennial year, a book of essays on him was published in his birthplace, Simbirsk, in 1867. The present collection of essays, edited by J. L. Black of Laurentian University, appears to have been designed much in the nature of a bicentennial homage. The fact of the volume itself points up an added dimension of such commemoration, that is, not only the place of eminence still accorded Karamzin in the history of Russian literature, but the international interest which has accrued to him from the time of his death to the present. Indeed, no Russian writer of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is so well represented in Western and especially English-language scholarship and translation as Karamzin.

Essays on Karamzin exemplifies this handsomely. Of the eight contributors to the volume only two are from non-English-speaking countries. The rest are all reasonably familiar names in American, English, and Canadian scholarship on eighteenth-century Russia and/or Karamzin.

Arranged according to the chronology of Karamzin's career, the essays give fairly even representation to Karamzin's biography, his fiction, and his work as a historian. The two essays devoted to aspects of Karamzin's life and his reputation in Russian literature strike me as the most interesting. In "Karamzin's Spiritual Crisis of 1793 and 1794," Rudolf Neuhäuser painstakingly documents the personal dilemma Karamzin lived through when his earlier utopian Sentimentalist and Rousseauesque concepts of human goodness were unable to stand the test of the terror in revolutionary France. When the crisis was finally resolved, Karamzin had returned to what Professor Neuhäuser characterizes as a moralizing "sentimental aestheticism," which is distinguished from the "abstract aestheticism" with which the writer was never really comfortable. In "Karamzin and His Heritage: History of a Legend," Hans Rothe, of the University of Bonn, traces at some length the career of Karamzin's reputation as artist and thinker in nineteenth-century Russia and concludes with a plea for the publication of Karamzin's complete works "to free him from his own legend"—the legend of an antiquated writer of transitional importance in whom there has been no real interest in over a century. Rothe's account makes engrossing reading, but Western publication alone on Karamzin in the last twenty-five years would seem to refute his thesis about the writer's antiquatedness and neglect.

The essays on Karamzin's *History* and his social and political views are less appealing, on the whole, than those on literary topics: Richard Pipes's well-known "Karamzin's Conception of the Monarchy," for example, appeared originally in *Harvard Slavic Studies*, vol. 4 (1957), and one wonders why it was reprinted, with only

slight changes, for the present collection. Perhaps the same question can be raised with regard to the Soviet scholar L. G. Kisliagina's "The Question of the Development of N. M. Karamzin's Social Political Views in the Nineties of the Eighteenth Century: N. M. Karamzin and the Great French Bourgeois Revolution," which originally appeared in the *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta* in 1968. A discussion of the evolutionary nature of Karamzin's views toward the French Revolution, the essay only amplifies points made in Neuhäuser's study of Karamzin's spiritual crisis and could have been omitted with no great loss. J. L. Black's own contribution, "The Primečanija: Karamzin as a Scientific Historian of Russia," focuses on the generally overlooked voluminous footnotes to the twelve-volume *History of the Russian State* as an important tool for understanding Karamzin's historiographical method and for assessing, finally, the significance of the *History* for modern Russian historical scholarship.

Two of the three essays on literary topics concern design and structure and illuminate important facets of Karamzin's art. Although the sentimental dimension of Karamzin's *Letters* is by now well known, Roger B. Anderson does a fair job of showing how the "subjective" or "interpretive" (read lyrical) side of the *Letters* is governed by an "educative design" (that is, the aesthetic and moral premises of sentimentalism) no less than the objective descriptions in the work. In "Poor Erast, or Point of View in Karamzin," J. G. Garrard closely analyzes the narrative structure of Karamzin's most famous (if not best) story, "Poor Liza," in order to disclose a fundamental weakness of the work—Karamzin's narration of the story in the third person by an apparently omniscient narrator who plainly sides with the unfortunate Liza. Perhaps the best part of the Garrard essay is the last section in which the author compares "Poor Liza" with two later stories influenced by it, Zhukovskii's weaker "Mary's Grove" (1809) and Pushkin's much superior "The Stationmaster" (1831), in which the narrative deficiencies of Karamzin's tale are admirably overcome. Lastly, in the English version of a Russian essay which appeared in a Soviet publication in 1969—"Karamzin's Versions of the Idyll"—the British Karamzinist Anthony Cross examines Karamzin's interest in the genre of the idyll going back to his translation of Gessner's "Das hölzerne Bein" in 1783. Projecting his investigation onto a broader plane, Professor Cross considers Karamzin's attitude toward the myth of the Golden Age and finds that when the writer at last resolved the conflict within himself between pessimistic and optimistic attitudes toward life his assertive conservatism resulted in a final political version of the idyll in the form of odes, essays, and articles celebrating a Russia in which everyone has his assigned place and all are ruled by a wise autocrat (Alexander I).

The generally high quality of the contributions to *Essays on Karamzin* and the scope of the volume make it a valuable addition to the ever growing literature on Karamzin in English. Among the contributors one misses the name of Henry Nebel, and for balance the volume might have included a piece on some of Karamzin's other prose fiction. The emphasis on the *Letters* and the *History* is understandable, but it may be time now, finally, to lay "Poor Liza" to rest. Karamzin's later fiction is far more interesting and deserves greater attention.

Rounding off the collection of essays are translations, by J. L. Black and Helena Debevc-Moroz, of two of Karamzin's political essays, some excerpts from the *History* also translated by Helena Debevc-Moroz, and bibliographies of translations from Karamzin into English and works in various languages about Karamzin. The only complaint this reviewer has about the bibliographies is that his name is consistently misspelled in them.

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