shifted to political and economic areas, with a strong emphasis on trade. Meanwhile, *ancien regime* scholars were being more and more marginalized, and a new ideologically-driven generation was taking their place, producing research of rather low quality. According to the book, during the early Soviet period, the link between Iranology and Soviet foreign policy became direct and reciprocal. At the same time, Volkov points out the continuity between both periods, when the emphasis on Iranian studies, characteristic of the late imperial period, turned into a dramatic increase in political, military, economic, and cultural focus during the two decades after 1917. Volkov concludes that if during the late imperial period Russian discourse of Iran was characterized by "the trivial European Orientalist civilizing mission. . ., the protection of Russian interests versus Western powers. . . and the promotion of all things Russian, including its own scholarship," during the early Soviet period, it was "the proliferation of revolution" in Iran followed by the "grooming of Persians for social conversion, with the same condescending approach as before 1917," combined with the promotion of all things Soviet (229–30).

The book draws on extensive archival research in eleven archives in Russia and Georgia, combined with deep knowledge of Russian and English-language scholarship on Russian Orientalism, Russia's Iranian studies, and the history of the relationship between Russia and Iran in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The organization of the book reflects the author's reliance on Michel Foucault's concepts of power, knowledge, and discourse, as well as the author's reasoned balancing of theory and practice, and of institutions' and individuals' narratives. The first chapter is dedicated to Foucauldian notions and their applicability to the Russian case. The second and third chapters analyze organizational set-ups during the late imperial and early Soviet periods respectively, and mention a number of representatives of Orientology. The third chapter includes two distinctive parts, the first dealing with the period between 1917 and 1921, and the second between 1921 and 1941. Both chapters are organized on the domains of scholarly knowledge mentioned above. Chapters 4 and 5 present case studies of well-known and representative Orientologists from the same two main periods, illustrating the points made in the previous chapters.

The book is well written and clearly organized; it includes a number of images and is appended with bibliographical notes on the most important Orientologists. Its title, however, is slightly misleading: it does not include any dates, although using the moniker "Persia" instead of "Iran" implies that the time period under consideration ended prior to 1935.

Volkov makes a valuable contribution to the study of aspects of Russian imperial and Soviet history, the relationship between Russia and Iran, and Oriental studies in Russia and the early Soviet Union. It would be fascinating to expand this research beyond 1941 and examine the dynamics of Russian Oriental studies during the rest of the Soviet period.

Elena Andreeva
Virginia Military Institute

The Vory: Russia's Super Mafia. By Mark Galeotti. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018. xiv, 326 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Illustration. Plates. Photographs. $28.00 hard bound; $18.00 paper.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2019.296

The last several decades have seen a lot of ink, along with cinema and television time, allocated toward constructing larger-than-life caricatures of what many believe the

"Russian Mafia" might look like. Mark Galeotti's meticulous and highly-enigmatic book provides a remarkable and nuanced insight into the world of the *vory* (thieves), best known by most curious observers as the testosterone-fueled mobsters who feasted upon the carcass of the flat-lining communist state during the early 1990s. Drawn from decades of scholarship in the field and punctuated by the author's dry wit and immensely insightful personal recollections, this is a book which lives and breathes the study of organized crime, not only detailing the long history of the *vorovskii mir* (thieves' world) but producing a number of subtle and perceptive insights into how it continues to be entangled in the economic and political life of Putin's Russia.

Galeotti's book, structured into four different sections, begins by taking a look at some of the foundations that would pave the way for the more-familiar gangsterism of the twentieth century. The author begins by dismissing the mythologization toward eighteenth century bandit Vanka Kain, described by many as being a Russian version of Robin Hood, and suggesting instead that he should be viewed as an "honest thief" in a world divided between those who openly display their criminality and those who keep it hidden behind the veil of political or judicial authority (10). Alongside this key point, which remains a crucial distinction throughout the book, Galeotti also shows the influence of the notorious tsarist slums that emerged during urbanization and gave rise to a number of criminal specializations, including pickpockets and burglars who would look to organize themselves into groups resembling the *artel'* (traditional work association).

Following these insightful initial sketches, Galeotti heavily details the birth of the vory after the 1917 revolution and civil war, recalling how the lawlessness and widespread banditry of that period gave way to a state crackdown on "49ers": those arrested under that particular article of the 1922 Criminal Code for petty crimes or merely having criminal connections (42). It would be the activities of this group of inmates which would later be detailed in the memoirs of political prisoners (themselves known as "58ers") who were incarcerated after the Gulag had emerged during the 1930s. The author demonstrates impressive detail in reconstructing the daily lives of these criminal inmates, recalling their tattoos, slang, dress and particularly their detailed code, which soon brought criminal gangs into conflict with each other during the so-called "Bitches War" of the early 1940s (57).

The second part of Galeotti's book, on the emergence of the vory throughout the second half of the twentieth century, continues to provide detailed insights through the biographies of such figures as Gennady Karkov, "The Mongol," whose gang is described as creating a blueprint for the future relationship between criminals and corrupt state structures (82). Galeotti recalls how the atomization of organized crime gave way to a rise in street gangs and black-market traders who would soon turn to underworld figures such as "The Mongol" as both middlemen and private security to further facilitate their smuggling operations and counterfeit production lines (95). As Galeotti skillfully elucidates, this would bring the vory right to the very heart of the Soviet system, leading to their continued rise throughout the Gorbachev period and maelstrom of the "wild nineties," giving way once more to their adaption into almost-legitimate *biznismeny* as newly-elected president Vladmir Putin's grasp of greater state control began to fully take hold.

The author's following section, on the varieties of organized crime formations, brings the detail and nuance of the work to the fore as it subtly conveys the various differences between Chechen, Georgians, and Gangster-Internationalists (the latter defined by their integration into the globalized economy). It is in this section that Galeotti fully demonstrates the acclimation of the *avtoritety* (authorities) into the fabric of Russian society, focusing on the different models of criminal networks. This includes St. Petersburg's Tambovskaya and Moscow's Solntsevo, who had actively

https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2019.296 Published online by Cambridge University Press

looked to recruit former members of the gang led by "The Mongrel" and has now subsequently devolved from the "core group" into much a looser structure (146).

In the book's final section, Galeotti looks to the future, speculating with a great deal of insight into how the vory might continue to adapt within the contemporary Russian state. Describing the dense levels of corruption and co-operation, he looks to dismiss the suggestions of Spanish prosecutor Jose Grinda Gonzalez and the by-now common usage of the epithet "mafia state" to describe the relationship between criminals and the Kremlin (210). Instead, Galeotti focuses on the continual evolution of the vory, pointing toward their entrepreneurialism and even considering the rise of cyber criminality to suggest that it would "be foolish" to bet against this adaption happening again over the coming decades (254).

In Galeotti's final chapter, proactively titled "Bandit Russia," the author demonstrates the normalization of criminal subculture through mainstream culture, referring to characters from Isaak Babel''s *Odessa Tales* and Ilf and Petrov's *Twelve Chairs*, alongside the continued popularity of Radio Shanson (265). Despite the continued proliferation of these popular tropes, the author summarizes that although the heavily-tattooed vory, who emerged out of the Stalinist Gulag, are on the verge of becoming a pastiche, the influence of their direct descendants continues in both the framework of the Russian state and the globalized economy (271). Overall, this is a work of great ingenuity, assisted by a huge depth of research and the author's razor-sharp analysis. Like John Dickie's study of the Italian Cosa Nostra, Galeotti's book is sure to become the standard-bearer for anyone looking to understand the murky world of Russian organized crime.

Mark Vincent
University of East Anglia

Slavic Gods and Heroes. By Judith Kalik and Alexander Uchitel. New York: Routledge, 2019. xii, 186 pp. Appendixes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. Tables. $140.00, hard bound.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2019.297

The authors of *Slavic Gods and Heroes* are of two minds regarding reconstructions of Slavic mythology. One the one hand, they offer one of the more radically skeptical positions on the Slavic pagan gods, arguing not only that "we know nothing about either the family relationships of Slavic gods or the conflicts between them" (1), but that "there was no pan-Slavic pantheon[; a]11 Slavic gods were purely local" (83) and even that the Slavic pantheons we know were artificial creations that responded to contact with Christianity by borrowing Christian figures and adapting them, "since [the Slavs] themselves previously had no traditional gods" (85). On the other hand, they offer their own reconstruction of "the proto-Slavic totemic myth" derived from Slavic state foundation legends, a set of sources that they argue has been neglected in research into Slavic pagan religion, which should be compared not to "the polytheistic religions of the neighboring Celtic, Germanic, and Finnish tribes," but to the totemic cults "found among the Hungarians, ancient Turks, and the Wusun people" (129). In their creatively reconstructed ur-tale, "the common Slavic Forefather, the snake [Čech/Shchek], was killed by his son, the raven [Krok/Krak/Kloukas], who was killed in turn by his brother, the white eagle. The latter was exiled for the fratricide and sovereignty passed to their sister, the swan [Libuše/Lybed′/Lobelos/Lebedias]" (129).

Such an argument ought to be grounded in clear evidentiary and methodological principles that are applied with equal rigor to the older reconstructions being