

leaves an exemplary blueprint for successful Soviet provincial history which emphasizes the distinctive nature of the provinces and their importance to understanding the nation as a whole.

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Places of Tenderness and Heat: The Queer Milieu of Fin-de-Siècle St. Petersburg.

By Olga Petri. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2022. xxii, 254 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Figures. Maps. \$150.00, hard bound.

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Olga Petri's *Places of Tenderness and Heat* aims to be a ground-level exploration of St. Petersburg's queer milieu from 1879 until 1914. An examination of queer life as it negotiated the spaces of urban modernity, including how cruising and informal socialization in public and semi-public spaces helps form a kind of community among men—what she calls the “queer milieu”—is certainly long overdue: it has been 25 years since the publication of Iurii Piriutko/K. K. Rotikov's idiosyncratic *Drugoi Peterburg*. Judging by the footnotes, Petri has done an immense amount of archival research, seeking queer traces in the archives of police, municipal authorities, and bathhouses. She also cites secondary sources ranging from queer theory to historians of other urban centers.

The title of the volume comes from Mikhail Kuzmin's diary, in which he joked with Konstantin Somov about making a map and writing a poem “*voyage du pays du tendre au pays chaud*” (Kuzmin, June 15 1906, 173). The line captures two of the geographical locations of the queer milieu Petri herself focuses on: the place of tenderness is the Garden itself, where men congregated, socialized, and occasionally found potential lovers, while the *pays chaud*—the country of heat—was a joking reference to the bathhouses of St. Petersburg that provided both literal heat and a place for more intimate sexual encounters. It is significant that Kuzmin features prominently, both because Petri writes that her initial fascination with the project twenty years ago was inspired by Kuzmin's poetry (xi) and because Kuzmin's diaries also play a significant role in fleshing out her argument and providing a complement to the archival accounts of police and bureaucratic surveillance of queer Petersburg.

The book is divided into 5 chapters. Ch. 1 provides an overview and focuses on the Anichkov Bridge and a secret dossier about queer life in Petersburg. Ch. 2 focuses on policing and the role of street-level constables, including their pushback to a secret mayoral order to crack down on queer activity. Ch. 3 examines street life, including linear street grids, lighting, transportation, public urinals, and shopping malls. Ch. 4 focuses on the many bathhouses of the city and the failure of reforms by city authorities to reduce queer sex and prostitution. Finally, Ch. 5 focuses on the Tavricheskii Garden, where queer men gathered to socialize and make new acquaintances.

In the final chapter, Petri remarks that “it would be unwise to generalize from Mikhail Kuzmin's practice and experience of cruising in the Tavricheskii Garden” (159), but that is exactly what she does, using it as an “in-depth interview.” Petri's major claim here (asserted multiple times) is that cruising the Tavricheskii was starkly different from cruising in Toronto, London, or New York, because it was light-hearted and social, rather than a single-minded furtive pursuit of sex (162, 171, 173). Kuzmin's queer milieu shared much more than queer desire, including “a jargon, manners of dress, . . . even a sense of humor [sic]” (172). George Chauncey's *Gay New York*, to take just one of the western counter-examples Petri cites, includes extensive discussion of gay New Yorkers' jargon and dress as they changed over time, and his chapter on “The

Double Life, Camp Culture, and the Making of a Collective Identity” (Ch. 10) describes exactly the kind of lighthearted community-building process Petri is trying to capture as if it were something undescribed and exclusive to Petersburg. Furthermore, just because Kuzmin did not visit at night or describe sex in the garden itself is not proof that others did not participate in nighttime cruising and sex there.

Petri’s style tends to speculation and metaphor. She focuses on Kuzmin’s use of the term “literate,” expanding it from “men who were eager to have sex with other men” (171) to an ability to “read” the spaces of queer Petersburg, which Kuzmin may have been “particularly attuned to, given his literary achievements and preoccupations” (174). But I’m not convinced Kuzmin and Somov would have used “literate” (*gramotnyi*) to refer to themselves: they apply it to strangers, hooligans, and bath-house attendants—people who were “in the know.” The leap to a connection to reading and literature, from *gramotnyi* to *literaturnyi* seems far-fetched. The metaphor can only be stretched so far. This is symptomatic of the main problem with the volume: Petri’s account seems vague and unmoored from the concrete details of both her primary sources and some of her secondary ones.

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Russia in the Early Modern World: The Continuity of Change. By Donald Ostrowski. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2022, xiv, 559 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. \$155.00, hard bound.
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Donald Ostrowski’s book is an interpretative history of Russia from 1450 to 1800 or 1801 (different cut off dates appear in different parts of the book). He challenges the traditional Petrine divide in Russian history by contending that the period saw a continuous development without major breaks. There were more important changes occurring during the Muscovite period (up to 1700) than under Peter I and his successors in the eighteenth century. Ostrowski organises his material into thematic chapters on imperial expansion; social mobility and the landowning class; military technology, tactics, and strategy; the pre-industrial economy; governmental structure and legislation; the church; and culture. All these topics have been extensively discussed in previous literature. Ostrowski’s book offers a selective coverage of these themes intertwined with historiographical essays. The discussion heavily focuses on men, though Ostrowski briefly comments on female landowners.

Ostrowski concludes that Russia was part of Eurasia. Russian society and economy were connected with the Eurasian economy and experienced common transformations in military technology and warfare that occurred across Eurasia, in particular the Euro-Ottoman zone. The main reasons for Russia’s imperial expansion were security concerns and aspirations to improve access to resources and trade routes. The Russian government employed different methods to sustain Russia’s territorial growth. The main forms of landowning in Muscovy, *votchina* (private estates held by members of the ruling class) and *pomest’e* (conditional grants of land) appeared simultaneously in the late fifteenth century; the service and administrative obligations of *votchina* owners quickly merged with those of *pomest’e* holders. In his approach to the church Peter I followed traditional state-church relations in Byzantium and Rus. The bedrock of Russian culture continued to be that of Byzantium from 1450 to 1800.

These observations raise several methodological issues related to Byzantium, external influences, and Europe. Byzantium ceased to exist in 1453. All subsequent