after many centuries of living together they had developed economic and neighborly ties. All this puzzled the Nazis, and presented them with a question: who are these Judaic groups and what should be done with them?

Feferman argues that the Nazis followed a racist approach regarding these Mizrahi Jews. Without paying much attention to religion, they tried to find out the origin of these three groups. Crimean Karaites were more fortunate due to common belief concerning their Khazar origin, as well as having special status in Czarist Russia (the anti-Jewish legislation didn't extend to them). As for the Mountain Jews, their situation was more complicated. Opinions are divided about them—are they Turks or Jews? Because of the delay in any clarification from Berlin, punitive commanders sometimes made decisions on their own. The most miserable of these three groups were the Krymchaks. They shared the fate of Ashkenazi Jews living in those areas a long time before the war, together with those Ashkenazi refugees who arrived after the German attack upon USSR.

The next two chapters deal with Jewish responses to the Holocaust in both Crimea and the North Caucuses. Opportunities to hide from the Nazis or to manage armed resistance were strongly dependent on location, relationship with the local community, the neighbors, and the presence of a resistance movement in the area. A much longer period of occupation in Crimea greatly reduced the chances of survival, in comparison with the North Caucasus.

In the last chapters, Feferman analyzes the local population's responses to the Holocaust. On the one hand, he gives examples of how individual Jews were saved by representatives of various ethnic groups (both Christians and Muslims), while on the other hand—examples of their collaboration with the Germans in the annihilation of the Jews. He suggests that the local population's approach to the Jewish question strongly depended on the attitude to the Soviet regime, with which the Jews were often associated. This dependence could be observed particularly among the Cossacks.

The author has researched the major and minor sources (mostly in Russian and German), while paying attention to detail. The big picture is never lost. This well-written book gives us a much better understanding of the nature of the Holocaust on Soviet territory.

Albert Kaganovitch
Manitoba University

Ocherki nachal'noi Rusi. By Aleksei Tolochko. Kiev: Laurus, 2015. 334 pp. Notes. Index. Figures. $32.00, paper.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2017.317

I struggled with producing an opening statement that would describe the genre of Aleksei Tolochko's book, and eventually decided to admit defeat. The author accurately describes his work as not being an academic monograph (10). Indeed, it is not. But what is it? Tolochko's stated goal is to debunk the misconceptions present in what he sees as the mainstream historiography of Rus′, which include using the *Primary Chronicle* as a reliable source for ninth-century history and accepting uncritically A. A. Shakhmatov's reconstructions of hypothetical, extinct texts (9, 20–34).

Indeed, some Russian and Ukrainian historians still rely heavily on nineteenth-century scholarship. Outdated historical concepts are not as mainstream as Tolochko presents them, but, along with outright pseudo-history, they often shape popular perceptions of early Rus′. In Tolochoko's country, Ukraine, even the mainstream media

https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2017.317 Published online by Cambridge University Press

reported the "discoveries" of "Ukrainian genes" in Neolithic settlements where "proto-Ukrainian" was spoken five thousand years ago. Tolochko does not mention popular nationalistic myths, but one may hazard a guess that he had them in mind while writing his book, which is animated by the sentiment that there was nothing "glorious" about the origins of Rus′.

In addition to a welcome debunking of nationalistic and outdated views, the book offers a new interpretation of the emergence of Rus′, limiting the role of the indigenous population in this process to providing slaves for the Scandinavians. Tolochko makes a leap from citing the well-known fact that Scandinavians traded in slaves to the claim that this was their exclusive occupation in eastern Europe. The amount of other goods was negligible, because the region did not have anything else to offer.

Tolochko does not consider wax and honey, and he dismisses the commonly-held view about the significance of the fur trade for the early history of the east European plain by citing fifteenth-century data. Contrary to overwhelming evidence that fur-bearing animals shared the fate of other natural resources exploited by humans—that is, as time went, their numbers declined or they disappeared altogether—Tolochko assumes that the amount of the fur trade in the tenth century "must have been" lower than in the fifteenth (178).

This argument reflects Tolochko's belief that everything, from the number of wild animals to the economic standing of any given region, can only progress with time. The territory of the Derevlian land was poor in the modern period; therefore, it could not offer anything of value in the ninth century (227). Archeological evidence for the Derevlians' involvement in long-distance commerce is thus a "puzzle" which Tolochko solves by postulating a large-scale slave trade. Another argument is the size of burial grounds along riverways. Without citing any archeologist who would view the size of the burial grounds as a problem in need of a solution, Tolochko states that "the only explanation" is a large number of slaves dying on their way to the markets. To "prove" that slave-traders would give their victims individual burials, many of which were labor-consuming big mounds, Tolochko refers to excavations of the eighteenth-century African burial ground in New York (228–29).

Tolochko's treatment of written sources is equally cavalier. He ascribes to Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard the outlandish idea that excavations at *Staraia Ladoga* indicate the existence of a "powerful state" there, and then criticizes them for this and other *nezamyslovatye* (simplistic) views that they never expressed (123, 142); he interprets a passage from the *Bertin Annals* by speculating on what answer Portuguese slave-traders in Africa would have given if asked about their king (236); and he uses a Russian translation of Constantine Porphyrogenitus to argue that the much-debated passage about *Rhosia* is "crystal clear" and the difficulties of its interpretation are invented by prejudiced scholars (205). Some names are given in footnotes, but there is no reference to the most recent discussion of the Greek text, which contradicts Tolochko's reading (P. S. Stefanovich, *Boiare, otroki, druzhiny: Voenno-politicheskaia elita Rusi v X-XI vv.* [2012]). Of course, accidental omissions happen, but Tolochko comes dangerously close to "post-truth" when he defends the historian's right to ignore relevant literature and to formulate new theories in a "non-monograph" format that he appears to believe renders him free from the obligation to be scholarly rigorous (10–11). If his book contributes to a destruction of nationalistic myths, it will serve a good purpose; however, it may be replacing old myths with new ones.

Yulia Mikhailova
New Mexico Institute of Technology

https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2017.317 Published online by Cambridge University Press