

fact that most were presented at the same meeting. As a result, it suffers the major pitfall of conference proceedings despite the editors' attempt to cover them all with a broad and lofty title that over steps its purpose; the editors admitted this fact by stating, "This volume with the somewhat ambitious title..." (9). Subsequently, it will remain a seldom consulted volume as it will be difficult for a reader or researcher who has an interest in one or two of the topics to find access to these essays. Finally, no conclusion ties the pieces together with only the introduction and a brief book description on the back cover serving as poor substitutions. Overall, the book, sadly, is a great disappointment.

GREGORY C. FERENCE
Salisbury University

Historical Writing of Early Rus (c. 1000–c. 1400) in a Comparative Perspective.

By Timofey V. Guimon. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2021. xv, 477 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Figures. Tables. Maps. \$170.00, hard bound.

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Written works in early Rus' are a complex web of interrelationships, as authors borrowed readily from each other. It is even more so for chronicles, annals, and similar historical writing of the time. To explore those interrelationships takes decades of study. Most of the information that chronicles provide would not be admitted into a court of law. That is because at best that information is hearsay; at worst, fictionalized. It is not that what the chronicles report is necessarily wrong; rather, we do not know when they are necessarily right. Instead of focusing specifically on what the chronicles and other narrative sources report (as source for something), a turn has been occurring in chronicle studies to study what the sources are (source as text) and how and why their authors report what they report.

Timofey V. Guimon (Gimon) is one of the premier experts on pre-1400 history writing in Rus', having published extensively, including monographs on weather reports in medieval annals and a comparison of Anglo-Saxon chronicle writing with that of Rus'. His latest monograph, *Historical Writing of Early Rus (c. 1000–c. 1400) in a Comparative Perspective*, is the culmination of over twenty years of his study of early Rus' texts.

Guimon adopts the conventional chronological demarcation of around the year 1400 between the age of parchment and the age of paper in Rus'. In addition to treating *letopisi* as primary sources, he is among those scholars who agree that we need to think of them also as early historiographical works. Guimon tackles the problem in translating the word *letopis'* as "chronicle," since *letopis'* means "year writing," whereas "chronicle" derives from the Greek *χρονικόν*, indicating a chronological narrative of historical events, not necessarily in a yearly format. Yet Guimon maintains the traditional translation "chronicle" when referring to a specific text, such as the Laurentian Chronicle or Kiev Chronicle, but prefers "annals" when referring to *letopisi* in the plural as a genre (§1.2).

The book is based on twenty-one of Guimon's published works (all but one in Russian), the contents of which have been incorporated in whole or in part, with modifications to fit the monograph and updates to take into consideration more recent scholarship. After an introduction in which he discusses terminology and provides a brief overview of the historiography of Rus' annals, Guimon divides his book into four main chapters, which discuss: extant texts and a genre typology; the

Kievan origins of Rus' historical writing; Novgorodian historical writing; and the role of Rus' annals. The book has three informative appendixes: (1) on how time was reckoned in Rus'; (2) "A List of [sixteen] Rus' Pre-1400 Manuscripts Containing Historical Writing"; and (3) a list of his published works that served as bases for sections of the book.

In several sections, he adds previously unpublished material. For example, in §2.1–2.2, he discusses the predecessors, both textual and hypothetical, of the *Povest' vremennykh let* (PVL). (Personal note: I appreciate the amount of attention Guimon devotes to describing my own views concerning the PVL, especially since he finds himself in disagreement with many of my conclusions.) Guimon also discusses, among other things, what he calls "the problem of the Oldest Tale" and its relationship to the PVL in particular and to early Rus' historical writing in general. The hypothetical work he is calling "the Oldest Tale" Guimon sees as the pre-annalistic narrative that was later incorporated into what became the first part of the PVL.

In §3.7 Guimon discusses *The Archiepiscopal Annals* in comparison with the "living chronicles" of western Europe. In §4.2 he discusses the "patrons, supervisors, and authors of the annals." In §4.6 the Annals and Legal Texts. In §4.8–4.11 he presents his reasons for considering the 1130s–40s as crucial to documentary and annalistic writing.

Of particular significance among the previously published material is §4.3, where Guimon provides a typology of the "kinds of events" the four major early Rus' annalistic texts (PVL, Kievan, Laurentian, and Novgorod First chronicles) report on (political and military events; events in princely families; changes of ecclesiastical hierarchs; building of churches; natural phenomena, omens, and disasters; construction of fortifications, bridges, and other civil structures, and so forth).

The contents and analyses within this monograph are rich, well worth the effort spent to read them closely. We have a great deal to learn about the time in which these sources were written and the characteristics of their authors. Guimon's book contains an accurate summing up of the state of the field, as well as well-thought-out hypotheses for testing in further research. Yet he also includes much of his own original research. For anyone interested in studying early Rus' chronicles/annals, this book is an excellent place to start.

DONALD OSTROWSKI
Harvard University

Harbin: A Cross-Cultural Biography. By Mark Gamsa. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020. x, 383 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Photographs. Maps. \$90.00, hard bound.
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This interesting book purports to be a double biography of Harbin and one of its inhabitants, Roger Budberg. The example provided as an analogy is Alan Bullock's double biography of Adolf Hitler and Iosif Stalin (244). Budberg was also quite a character and Mark Gamsa has done a remarkable job of sleuthing him out. Born to Baltic German nobles in Russian service, Budberg took his nobility seriously, although he was a third son and would have to make his own way. For fourteen years, he studied at Tartu, took a medical degree and practiced women's medicine. His parents were unhappy with this choice and cut off support. He was named Privatdozent in January 1903 and seemed on his way to a university career, when something untoward