source and what constitutes the work of scholarship. Ptolemy and the director of the British Museum, David Wilson, appear as equally useful when it comes to describe the “Baltic Slav imprint beyond the borders of Slavia” (pp. 310-11).

At a quick glimpse, the aim of this book may not be fully apparent, but is in fact quite clear. Neither scholars of East European history nor those trying to learn something about the medieval Serbs will benefit from reading this book. However, readers interested in the relation between linguistics and archaeology, on one hand, and ethnic nationalism, on the other, will have no difficulty recognizing familiar propaganda techniques. Vukcevich’s attempt to gain a respectable antiquity for the “Serbs” is in many ways similar to Stjepan Pančić’s Urheimat der Kroaten in Pannonien und Dalmatien (Frankfurt a.M., 1997), a book of equally questionable scholarship. More important, Rex Germanorum is reminiscent of Đorđe Janković’s Srpske gromile (Belgrade, 1998) and his theory of a third- and fourth-century Balkan Urheimat of the Serbs. But this is by no means a phenomenon restricted to former Yugoslavia. Iosif Constantin Drăgan’s theories of a Thracian (read: Romanian) origin for most European peoples, from Romans to Anglo-Saxons (Il mondo dei Traci, Rome, 1993) resonate with many outlandish claims in Vukcevich’s book, such as the “Slavic Vikings” (p. 320) or the Serb roots of the Ashkenazi Jews (p. 554). Protochronism is a fascinating topic of current research, and those interested in its linguistic and archaeological ramifications will find a treasure-trove between the covers of this book.

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Though similar in title, in overlapping subject matter, and in relying heavily on archaeology as well as written sources, the two works under review have significant differences. Curta focuses on South Slavs and the Byzantine Danubian frontier for a limited period of two centuries and devotes as much, if not more, attention to the Byzantines as to the Slavs. Barford examines all Slavs, South, East, and West for a longer period, through the tenth century and sketchily even beyond that. And whereas Curta’s archaeological experience and emphasis lie near the Danube, Barford’s lie in Poland. Barford also devotes chapters to specific topics (daily life, social structure, warfare, production, consumption and exchange, pagan ideologies); often points in them are very sketchy and sometimes speculative, which, of course, results from the scarcity of sources on such matters. Both books can be read with profit.

Both authors are concerned with when the Slavs appeared as Slavs and then with what sort of identity was attached to the Slavic label. This appearance can be one of two things, their actual arrival from somewhere else or the first time an already-
present population gets noticed in written sources. Both authors seem, in my opinion, to use the term ethnic/ethnie too readily. This is particularly the case with Curta, who argues that the Slavic label/identity was invented by the Byzantines to describe a particular problem the empire faced. He more or less denies that in the early period the Slavs used the term at all. If they did not, then they had no known ethnic awareness, and thus to me could not be ethnics. He claims that the first time the Slavs identified themselves as Slavs was in the twelfth-century "Russian Primary Chronicle." That is clearly too late, for the mid ninth-century ruler of Croatia Branimir identified himself as Duke of the Slavs on two different inscriptions. However, since the Slavs began to write only in the ninth century, we really are not in a position to know what they called themselves earlier; but since all their other neighbors (Franks, Lombards, Italians [particularly Venetians], the papacy, and so on) called them Slavs too, it seems likely that the Slavs (or many of them) were calling themselves Slavs quite early. However, I see this label as much more political/organizational than ethnic.

The second issue examined (in more detailed fashion by Barford, since he had a large region to examine) is did the Slavs appear in Eastern Europe in the fifth or sixth century from elsewhere or did they emerge as a defined group from an already existing population in parts of that region. Archaeology cannot help too much here, for such remains without written material can identify particular material cultures, but can provide no evidence of language. But in any case, neither author has much sympathy for an urheimat in e.g., the Pripet marshes and a migration in various directions from this territory.

In the case of the Balkans, the Slavs clearly were not present within that territory before the sixth century. Curta presents a very original depiction here. He argues that the Slavs were much less disruptive in that century than scholars up to now have thought and that their raids were fewer in number and actual settlement chiefly came in the seventh century. To advance this argument, he presents evidence to demonstrate that Justinian's system of Danube fortifications (which were clearly on both sides of the Danube) were much more effective than usually believed. The Slavs, as potential enemies and then as actual ones, acquired a descriptive label from the Byzantines who dealt with them. Thus the "Slavs" were invented at the time of Justinian when they became a problem. Curta argues that among the groups given that label would have been speakers of various other languages, but as the largest element their name came to the fore. He also suggests reasonably, which would solidify this thesis, that in the Avar empire, Slavic likely became a lingua franca among the assorted peoples. I see no reason to doubt the presence in particular areas of speakers of different languages; unfortunately, the majority of examples Curta finds in the scarce sources on this issue usually indicate bi-lingualism and do not demonstrate different mother tongues. In any case he states: "Slavs did not become Slavs because they spoke Slavic, but because they were called so by others." (p. 346) Though there is a kernel of truth here, we in fact do not know why these others chose that term for these newly emerging enemies. It is not unlikely that the term was already in use among the Slavs (or some of them), either for their identity or the language they spoke. Barford thinks it was, though it does not come through clearly "from when." He plausibly argues that local groups used it for themselves with no concept (until the twelfth century) of the Slavs being a