THE VIKINGS IN THE EAST
A SURVEY OF SETTLEMENT,
TRADE AND MILITARY ACTIVITY
C.700 - 1100

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ABSTRACT

This thesis surveys three principal Scandinavian activities during the period from 700 to 1100 - those of settlement, trade and military activity - in the regions east of the Baltic Sea. As secondary sources debate the origin and ethnicity of the people known as the Rus mentioned by the primary literary sources and identified with Swedish Vikings, the philological arguments for the derivation of the name and the source material supporting the Scandinavian identity of the Rus are initially discussed. In examining colonising activities, much attention has been paid to the archaeological evidence (supported by literary sources) indicating Scandinavian settlement in the region of North Russia. This is essentially an examination of burial sites and Norse burial practices and rituals. The tradition of the foundation of the first Russian State by Varangian warriors centred initially at Novgorod and shifting to Kiev in the ninth century is also discussed. The development of commerce from the pre-Viking period deals with trade-routes, wares and modes of travel. There is a division along the lines of trade with the Muslims and that with the Byzantines. To some extent, this is divided by the source material, numismatic evidence for Muslim commerce and literary for trade with the Byzantines. My final chapter examines the Norse warrior tradition, their weapons and tactics. A discussion of the great raids on Constantinople and in the Caspian region based primarily on the written accounts of Byzantine and Muslim authors forms the basis of the last chapter. A brief account
of the development of the Varangian Guard and some of the personalities associated with it completes that chapter. My overall conclusions then follow.
INTRODUCTION

During the period that modern historians have labelled the 'Viking Age', men from the Scandinavian north left their homes to settle, raid and engage in trade with regions to the west across the Atlantic Ocean as far as Greenland and Labrador; southwest to the British Isles, France and Spain; and eastward through what is today the Soviet Union as far as the Empires of the Byzantine Greeks, the nomadic Khazars and the Abbasid Caliphate. It is those journeys undertaken in pursuit of the three main activities of the Vikings overseas—land, wealth by trade, fame and riches through military endeavor—that are the subject of this thesis. The men who initially crossed the Baltic Sea to the lands of the East were attracted by the wealth and opportunities afforded by those regions. Furs, slaves, wax and other goods were in plentiful supply in European Russia and in great demand by larger states to the south and east, the Byzantine and Muslim. The lure of Muslim silver and Byzantine luxury goods attracted more men from Scandinavia to exploit the native population and natural products of Russian lands. In the process, settlement and warfare became interconnected with the demands of commerce. Trade-posts were established along strategic sections of the river-systems used to ferry the goods to the Bulgars of the Volga river and the Khazars, who acted as intermediaries for trade.
south to the Muslims. Men settled at these trade stations which soon became fortified, housing a garrison of armed merchants who subjugated and raided the surrounding regions for the goods needed for trade. Gradually, the leaders of these warrior-merchants transformed their fortified trade-posts into the political centres of petty principalities and eventually the larger centres grew to rival each other. Wars ensued, the victor becoming the founder of a genuine State.

The Viking Age is generally considered (in English language histories) to begin with the initial raids on the monasteries of Lindisfarne (793) and Jarrow (794), and the first skirmish between Norwegian Vikings and the Anglo-Saxons at Portland in 793. The terminal point is usually fixed as the year 1066, an unusually turbulent year which saw the defeat of the great Norwegian ruler, Harald Hardrada, at Stamford Bridge by Harold Godwinsson, who was himself soon to suffer the same fate in battle with Duke William of Normandy at Hastings. Together, these battles symbolised the end of an era and the beginning of a new period in the history of the British Isles.

In the East, the greatest period of Norse activity (although falling within the limits defined by western events) occurred somewhat earlier in its initial phases. The first movements across the Baltic Sea began nearer the middle of the seventh century and were directed to the Eastern coastline of the Baltic. Later, in the mid-eighth century, activity was directed further inland along the river-systems that acted as commercial highways to reach markets in the Crimea and the middle and lower Volga river. When this
period ended has become enralled in the whole controversy of Norse involvement in what we today call Russia. Proponents of extensive Norse involvement in the foundation of the Kievan State have argued that Norse activity did not really end until the death of the Grand Prince Yaroslav in 1054, an event heralding increased infighting amongst the sons of the Prince and subsequently the disintegration of the greater Kievan State. Others have argued that Norse activity was strictly limited to a much earlier period and that the Vikings were quickly assimilated with the native population leaving no lasting trace of Scandinavian influence, as happened with the Duchy of Normandy, which soon became a part of the Frankish Empire, albeit one that caused the Frankish rulers a great deal of anxiety. It is difficult to find an event such as Stamford Bridge to bring the eastern activities of the Norsemen to an obvious close. Perhaps the cessation of silver exports from the northwest regions of the Caliphate might indicate a less dramatic end. Certainly the debate will continue.

The men who ventured overseas from Scandinavia are described in modern literature as 'Vikings' or 'Norsemen', designations of their occupation, geographic origin and chronological place in history. To the populations they encountered, the term 'Viking' was synonymous with 'pirate' or 'maurauder from across the sea'. It is possible that the men of Scandinavia termed themselves Vikings (the etymology is uncertain, possibly meaning men of the camps or river), although the word was normally used to describe the commercial or piratical expeditions they participated in: men
went 'a-viking' as opposed to being Vikings. There was no conception of belonging to a national group; they did not see themselves as Danes, Norwegians or Swedes, the designations we often use today when examining their activities. Norwegians are generally supposed to have been involved in the great discoveries across the Atlantic Ocean; while Danes (and Norwegians) usually travelled southeastward, to the British Isles, France and Spain; and Swedes ventured eastward. These generalisations are useful, but there are many exceptions. The modern states which now claim these travelling merchant-pirates did not exist until the latter stages of the Viking period. Although the men who lived in Scandinavia at that time recognised their common relationship in the broader sense (that they were all men of the north speaking a similar language), on an individual level they were still locked into tribal conceptions of origin and allegiance. Men were not Swedes or Danes but Svears or Gauts, coming from Uppland, OsterGotland, Zealand or Halogaland. Although they might have associated with others from the same region and formed groups for expeditions, they were just as likely to join a mixed group of men. The direction in which they ventured certainly had nothing to do with their geographical origin: men from Sweden travelled west while Norwegians and Danes went eastward.

The various cultures they encountered recognised them in the broader generic and religious sense. They were the 'Nordmanni' (Nordomanni), men of the north, the 'pagani', pagans who had no respect for the wealthy monasteries and churches they attacked and plundered. The Vikings who
followed the eastern road were given other names: 'Scyth', 'Tauroscyth' or 'Rhos' by the Byzantine Greeks, 'Rus' by the Slavs and Muslims. The former description, Scyth, was based on a race known to have inhabited the central region of Russia during the pre-classical period and appears to have been given to virtually every subsequent resident by the writers of the Roman Empire meaning generally 'barbarian from the north'. The latter appellations, 'Rhos' and 'Rus', are the subject of some controversy which will be dealt with in my first chapter, but do appear to have been the eastern equivalent of 'Nordmanni'. As no exact description can be attached to the men who ventured eastward in search of wealth by fair means or foul, the general descriptions Scandinavian, Norseman, Viking and sometimes Russian (although not in the modern sense) are employed with regularity to cover the various localities these men came from and the endeavors they collectively achieved.

The geography and climate of Scandinavia have shaped the lives of those who live there. The land is dominated by high mountains and vast tracts of forest leaving the rivers, lakes and surrounding seas as by far the easiest means of communication. Much of the population was then centred near lakes, rivers and the coastline and a knowledge of ship-building and seafaring was not only useful, but for the migrations of the Viking period essential. The development of a ship capable of both sea and river navigation may well have been the decisive factor in the impact made by the Norsemen. Without a sturdy, reliable form of transport none of the commercial and piratical expeditions
or the great ocean voyages to North America could have been achieved.

Travelling eastward was a hazardous undertaking at this time, for not only were there physical and geographical difficulties to overcome but also human dangers to surmount. For want of a better term, the European regions of the Soviet Union have been encompassed in the generalisation 'Russia'. This vast area stretches from the Baltic Sea eastward to the Volga river, north to the region of Lake Ladoga and Lake Beloe and southward to the Black Sea. During the Medieval period, the vastness of this expanse was accentuated by a smaller population, clustered around a few main centres. The climatic conditions were exactly the same as those in Scandinavia: extremely cold in the north and very cold in the south. Little adaptation was needed by those Vikings who ventured there. The geography was also similar: vast intractable forests incised by broad rivers, upon which the Norsemen quickly learned to navigate and exploit as a means of communication. However, the native populations encountered responded to the newcomers in different ways.

Surrounding Lake Ladoga and to the north resided Finno-Ugric and Lapp tribes. They were mysterious people, mainly hunters and herdsmen who traded in products of the Arctic region, and appear to have co-existed and sometimes co-operated with the Norsemen in the trading context. Further to the south were the various Baltic and Slavonic tribes. The Balts (Lithuanians, Letts, Semigallians, Ests and Kurlanders), inhabited the eastern coastal regions of the Baltic Sea and were amongst the first of the native
populations encountered by the Scandinavians when making initial inroads eastward. The Slavs (or East Slavs to distinguish them from their western counterparts, the Wends) consisted of several tribes, mostly occupying the middle Dnieper region, although they gradually shifted northward towards Lake Ladoga during the early stages of the Viking Age. As to the development of pre-Kievan political state encompassing several Slavic tribes, there is some debate. The positive arguments have been advanced in the past by pre-Revolutionary Russian scholars, and now currently by Soviet researchers. If large confederations of Slavonic tribes did exist before the coming of the Rus, little trace of their existence remains.

The Steppe region of southern Russia was inhabited by fierce and savage nomadic tribes. During the ninth century, the Magyars (Hungarians or Ugrians) of Turkic origin, resided in the central area of the Don, allied to the Khazars. Under pressure from the Pechenegs (Patzinaks) they were forced westward c.889, passing through Kiev and on towards the Carpathian mountains, which they crossed, settling in what is today Hungary. The Pechenegs remained in the Steppe region for most of the Viking period, inhabitating the area between the Dnieper and the Don rivers, remaining an ever-present threat to travellers through the region. They were finally driven westward following the path of the Magyars, c.1034 by the Polovtsy (Polocvians, Cumans or Kipchaks). A smaller nomad group, the Torks (Uzes), lived in the region of the Upper Don river and, as constant enemies of the Pechenegs, proved useful allies to the Princes of Kiev.
During the later tenth century, when the Pechenegs began their move westward, the Torks took up residence in the Steppes south of Kiev, but conflicted with the principality and were driven out c.1060.

The most powerful nomadic tribe of the southern Russian region were the Khazars, a Turkic tribe which founded a state during the late seventh century, centred at Itil at the mouth of the Volga river. The core of their geographical base was the area bordered by the Don, Volga and Kuban rivers but at its height extended across to the Dnieper river and northward to the region where the Kama enters the Volga. The Khazar Khagan counted many tribes as his tributaries, among them the Polyanians, Severians, Vyatchians, Magyars and Volga Bulgars. This last tribe became powerful enough in the tenth century to establish its own kingdom almost independent of the Khazars, adopting Islam as opposed to the Judaism of the Khazar rulers. Both realms depended on the trade routes that crossed through their kingdoms taking northern goods south to exchange for Muslim silver.

Further south across the Black Sea lay the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire, with its capital at Constantinople in the Thracian Bosporus. The Greek inhabitants of the Empire considered themselves more the heirs of the classical Roman than of the Hellenic Age, retaining Roman customs, traditions, laws and culture. When the Viking Age began, this Empire, although still powerful, was past its height and beginning to decline. It was ruled for much of the Viking period by members of the Macedonian dynasty, named after the founder, Basil the Macedonian. The wealth of the Byantines,
especially in gold and silks, attracted many Norsemen to venture southward as merchants, pirates or soldiers in the service of the Great City, Miklagard (Constantinople).

The other great state of this period was the Islamic Caliphate centred at Baghdad. Under the Ummayad dynasty, the Islamic state stretched from the Iberian Peninsula across North Africa, and included the modern regions of Egypt, Israel, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. During the reign of the Abbasid dynasty, however, many areas of the Empire broke away from the direct rule of Baghdad and although nominally accepting the Caliph of Baghdad as overlord, essentially established independent states. The northeast regions of the Caliphate held the most attraction for the Norsemen, who raided areas surrounding the Caspian Sea and traded with the more easterly states of Khrasan, Khwarizm and Transoxiana. It was from these regions that most of the silver that reached the north was exported.

My primary source material is divided into four areas; literature, archaeology, numismatics and epigraphy. The literary material is diverse and ranges from excellent contemporary accounts to others producing rather dubious evidence. The geographical diversity is wide and includes Icelandic sagas, accounts from western Europe, Russian chronicles, Muslim treatises on geography, as well as biographies and histories by Byzantine writers as well as many incidental references. Much of the contemporary literature dealing with Norse activity in the East is derived from Byzantine and Islamic sources as it was not until Christianity was entrenched in the North that Scandinavia
developed a literary tradition and interest in their past. Much of the material first written about the North dealt with Christian activity there, such as the missionary activity of St. Anskar, the 'Apostle of the North', written c.875. However, it was not until much later that a more significant work, Adam of Bremen's 'History of the Archbishops of Hamburg and Bremen' (completed c.1075) recounted these early activities in any depth, mostly deriving information about the North from the biographies of Anskar and Rimbert, his successor. Even so, information about Scandinavia during the Viking Age was sparse and although Adam provides reliable details concerning the eleventh century, the earlier period is filled with mythological and legendary qualities.

Northern literature on the earlier period was not developed until the twelfth century and by Icelanders mainly: colonists from Scandinavia who wished to explore their links with the lands of their forefathers. Much of this information was set down in the form of sagas, accounts of important people and families in the history and development of Iceland. Although set in an historical context many of the facts were changed either to colour the story or to enhance the status of the descendants of the hero, perhaps reinforcing their authority within Icelandic politics of the time. Other sagas were concerned with Norwegian politics, particularly the 'Heimskringla' or 'Lives of the Norwegian Kings', written by Snorri Sturlason in the early thirteenth century. A similar history of Denmark, the 'Gesta Danorum', was written by Saxo Grammaticus at about the same time. Unfortunately, the events of the Viking period portrayed by
these writers is not wholly reliable. Both Snorri and Saxo used the works of court poets (skalds) contemporary to the events, but this material with its complicated metaphors and panegyric qualities is not reliable data, although still important material. Many of the works are clouded with legend and traditions, adapted by the writers to serve themes and purposes important to them at the time of composition.

A similar problem occurs with the Russian Primary Chronicle, or Povest' Vremennykh Let (the Tale of Bygone Years), so named after the opening lines in the Chronicle. This work, once thought to have been written by the monk Nestor, was compiled in Kiev (possibly at the Perchersky or Crypt cloister) sometime before 1110. Several versions of the Chronicle exist in different manuscripts, primarily the Laurentian text (named after the monk Lawrence who copied it in 1377) and the Hypatian codex, discovered at the Hypatian monastery at Kostromo. Later editions of the Chronicle exist, including the Nikonovskiy Chronicle of the mid-sixteenth century which has some independent value. The version used primarily in my work has been the Laurentian text translated by Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor.

Much of the history contained in the Chronicle is biased towards the ruling dynasty of Kiev under which it was compiled, the Rurikids. Their authority to rule several Slavic, Baltic and Finno-Ugric tribes covering an extensive geographical area is reinforced where possible with the result that different rulers of the Rurikid dynasty controlled different regions without any hint of how changes in the boundaries occurred. Many of the early events
recorded in the Chronicle are based on legend and traditions, epic poems (byliny) and tales, especially noticeable when examining the reigns of Oleg (880-913) and Svyatoslav (964-971).

Because of the religious and cultural links with the Byzantine Empire several sections within the Chronicle are derived from Byzantine sources, especially the history by Georgius Harmatolus, carried on by an anonymous continuator to cover the period 842 to 948. The Chronicle also contains the texts of three treaties dated to 911 (split into two and assigned to the years 907 and 911), 945 and 971. These appear to be genuine translations from the Greek originals, differing in language and form from the main body of the Chronicle and following Byzantine dating.

Contemporary western sources on Norse activities in the East are, as one would expect, not numerous. A passage in the 'Annales Bertiniani' for the year 838-9, written by Bishop Prudentius of Troyes, records the visit to Ingelheim of a Byzantine embassy along with certain Rus who turned out to be Swedes. Another churchman - Liutprand, Bishop of Cremona - in the account of his journeys to Constantinople in the mid-tenth century as a diplomat for King Otto of Germany, mentions the Rus as Northmen and also provides an account of an attack on the great city in 941. That information on the activities of the Vikings in the East and the West is provided by religious men is not unexpected as they were generally the only literate people of the period. Subsequently, the information gained from them is not without some bias against the people of the north, who
dared to attack and pillage sacred monasteries and churches.

By far the most abundant source of written accounts on the activities of the Rus is derived from the cultures that dealt with them commercially and felt the impact of their military endeavors: Byzantium and Islam. Amongst the many Byzantine writers some provide outstanding details on the Rus. In the 'De Administrando Imperio' compiled and written by the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus between 948 and 952, one chapter describes the commercial (and military) route of the Rus from Kiev to Constantinople. This appears to be an eyewitness account by a Greek who had made the journey to Kiev, following the route along the Dnieper river. Hence many of the details, such as the width of certain cataracts at one point of the journey, are measured in terms of the Hippodrome at the capital. The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, provide an eloquent and eyewitness description of the first attack by the Rus on the capital in 860 and the impact it had on the population. Many general histories of the tenth and eleventh century contain details of this and other attacks, especially the tenth century works of the anonymous continuators of the chronicles of Georgius Harmatolus and Theophanes, and Georgius Cedrenus of the later eleventh century. The biographical works of the philosopher Michael Psellus (c.1070) and the Princess Anna Comnena (1118) provide useful information on the Varangian Guard composed of Scandinavians which became the personal guard of the Byzantine Emperors.

Muslim writers wrote many geographical treatises and encyclopedias containing information on the region of
Russia and its inhabitants which were revised and embellished by later writers and in some cases, such as the work of Ibn Hawkel written in the mid-tenth century, by the author himself. The details they provide were not always accurate but were derived from hearsay through many sources. One exception was the ‘Risala’ of Ibn Fadlan which recounts his journey to the capital of the Bulgars in 921-2. His descriptions of the Rus he met there were apparently observed firsthand, providing excellent details not only of their commercial dealings but also of their social practices, as seen by his account of the burial of a Rus chief. Accounts written by al-Masudi (c.950), Ibn Miskawaih (c.1070) and Ibn Athir (early thirteenth century), of raids in the Caspian region in the tenth century also contain valuable information.

The archaeological material discovered in Russia is of exceptional interest and importance but also of some debate. Archaeological remains are subject to interpretation and assumptions made on the basis of the material are not always reliable. A case in point is the material from the grave-mounds of Gnezdovo near Smolensk in the Soviet Union. The ethnic origin of this material, either Scandinavian or Slavonic, has been vigorously debated by Soviet and Western archaeologists and scholars alike. However, archaeology (particularly concerning burials) is where most of the advances are being made with new techniques and methods of dating constantly supplying more accurate data. One of the problems with this discipline is that it is developing all the time and previous assertions in light of current research
methods and evaluations are sometimes invalidated. Another is that not all the data gained from sites in the past and from recent digs has been systematically compiled to provide full accounts of the material discovered, but this is one that will hopefully be rectified in the future.

To a lesser extent epigraphical material, or runestones, provide some information on Eastern Vikings, particularly on those who died out in the East in either 'Serkland' (Saracen land) or 'Grikkland' (Byzantium). Many stones, over 2,000, have been discovered in Sweden and four runic inscriptions are known from the East as well. Most appear to date to the eleventh century although a 'runakefl' or rune-stick from northern Russia, may date to an earlier century. An important group of stones from the Lake Malar district of Sweden recording an expedition led by a certain Ingvar in the eleventh century provides almost the only information about this raid, probably carried out in the Caspian region c.1040.

The final source of primary material is numismatic; coins, particularly those that have been hoarded. During the ninth and tenth centuries an incredible quantity of Muslim silver flowed northward through Russia as seen by comparable hoards discovered in the region particularly along the Volga river. Much of this Kufic (Islamic) coinage was buried for various reasons in hoards, some of which are very large, in Sweden and in great concentrations on the island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea. Individual Muslim coins usually provide the date and place of issue and the issuing authority. Unfortunately, some western European coins are not
as informative and sometimes can only be generally assigned to a monarch. Within hoards, the latest coin issued supplies one chronological limit, thus providing a useful base for dating the deposit of the hoard. However, as with the archaeological material, information derived from numismatic sources must be evaluated critically. Many hoards discovered in the past have been broken up, the hack-silver (broken coins used to make up a certain weight in transactions) melted down and the information which it could have provided if properly recorded lost. With the advent of increased compilation of hoard material this source has steadily increased the value of the information it provides.

The final introductory comment I wish to make concerns the modern debate between two groups labelled 'Normanists' and 'Anti-Normanists'. In simple terms, a Normanist believes that the first Russian State centred at Kiev was founded by Swedish Vikings in the ninth century while an Anti-Normanist opposes this view, believing that the Vikings played no major part in the political development of the Kievan State. This problem, usually labelled the Varangian Problem, has been the source of heated debate for over two centuries ever since the presentation by Gerhard Muller of his paper 'Origines gentis et nominis Russorum' to the Russian Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg in September of 1749 which set down some of the major precepts of Normanist theory.¹ His scholarship owed much to the work of the German, Gottlieb Bayer, and immediately aroused the ire of a fellow Academician, Mikhail Lomonsov, who felt that attributing the foundation of the first Russian State to
Swedes (with whom there had just been an unsuccessful war) was an affront to Russian patriotism.

Although the problem of the extent of Norse influence in the foundation of the Kievan State is outside the scope of this work it is a question that can not be ignored for much of the source material has been interpreted in terms of one view or the other. During the nineteenth century many of the major Normanist precepts were set, but it was also during this period that the Anti-Normanist stance was asserted with increasing force by scholars such as S. Gedeonov. This was in response to the introduction in the 1840s of philological arguments derived from linguistic analysis presented mainly by Ernst Kunik. Although Gedeonov attacked Kunik’s theories with his own arsenal of linguistic arguments for the origin of the word Rus and Varangian, he did not manage to dismiss them for they re-appeared, improved and strengthened by Vilh Thomsen, in a series of lectures delivered at Oxford in 1877. Many of these arguments are still relevant to modern research of the subject.  

This century has seen the introduction of other phases in the debate. For example, the interpretation of archaeological material from burials such as those at Gnezdovo in light of Normanist - Anti-Normanist theory and the influence of Marxist theory on the political development of states. The effect of these elements has modified the two opposing schools to such an extent that although still essentially following the original precepts, much of the extremism has disappeared. Soviet scholars do not deny that Vikings made their way eastward into Russia but do deny that
they did so in such numbers as to affect the development of internal politics: those who did stay being quickly assimilated. According to the Marxist conception of history, state development was the product of internal processes, not external circumstances such as the invasion of Vikings. With the demise of the communal society and the formation of an economically and politically powerful class able to dominate and organise the masses, the foundations were laid for the development of the state. Hence the Kievan State was the product of lengthy internal political development in which the Vikings may have played a minor role. Although this argument is outside the bounds of my research and one that I do not agree with, it is important that it is mentioned for it does represent the alternative to Western (or Normanist) scholarship that I have followed.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION


CHAPTER ONE

WHO WERE THE RUS?

In the year 859, according to the Russian Primary Chronicle (Povest Vremennykh Let), the "Varangians from beyond the sea" conquered an area of northern Russia inhabited by the ancient tribes the Chud', Slavs, Merians, Ves' and Krivichians and imposed tribute on them. However these tributary tribes quickly drove the Varangians out (between 860 and 862) and began to rule themselves:

Discord thus ensued among them, and they began to war one against the other. They said to themselves, "Let us seek a prince who may rule over us and judge us according to the law." They accordingly went overseas to the Varangian Russes. From this source arises the debate between the Normanists and Anti-Normanists over the ethnicity of the people known as the 'Rus' (pronounced Roos) to the Slavs and Muslims, and as the 'Rhos' to the Byzantine Greeks. On the surface it would seem relatively straightforward that the 'Varangians from over the sea' equate to Scandinavians from across the Baltic Sea, and the Rus appear to be a tribe of this general ethnic grouping. However this is a superficial reading of the source and to reach more precise meanings of the terms 'Varangians' and 'Rus', especially as to their ethnic and geographical origins, I intend to examine critically the philological arguments and literary evidence presented by both sides of the Normanist controversy.
As we have seen, the Normanists advocate a Scandinavian origin for the Rus while the Anti-Normanists press the claims for a local origin amongst the south Slavs. To determine the origin of the Rus, both sides use well developed philological theories to try to trace the geopolitical origin of the terms 'Varangian' and 'Rus'. I will examine both arguments, beginning with the earlier term 'Rus' which is the more complicated debate.

One Anti-Normanist has questioned the importance of the arguments concerning the origin of the Rus on the basis that even if the Rus were of Scandinavian origin all that would be proven is their connection with the geographical area in question, the Ukrainian region of the present day Soviet Union. However, the preponderance of literary and philological arguments from both sides of the controversy admit the importance of the Rus in this area, and hence their ethnic and geographical origin is of central importance.

The Normanist philological theory over the origin of the word 'Rus' dates back to the nineteenth century and centres on the Finnish word for Sweden, 'Ruotsi' (Ruotsalaiset meaning Swedes). This may have originated from the custom of sometimes naming a country after the nearest tribe, just as 'Allemannia' and 'Saxonia' were both names for Germany. This theory puts forward the view that the Finnish 'Routsi' is related to the Old Swedish 'rodhsin' (or 'roths-karlar', meaning rowers), the stem for this being the Old Norse 'rodr' meaning variously ship, rowing, rowing-way or water-way. The linking word from which the Finnish 'Ruotsi'
arose is believed to be the Old Norse 'rodsmenn' (ship-men or men of the rowing-way). The Eastern Slavs borrowed the Finnish 'Ruotsi' to describe these same 'ship-men' as the Rus (Rusi, Russi). The change in the form of the word comes from a not unusual shift of the 'ts' to 'ss' in words borrowed from Finnish into Slavonic. The declension of 'ruossi' to 'russi' is believed to be similar to the way 'suomi' in Finnish declines to the Slavic 'sumi', hence the Slavic 'russi'. It may also be relevant to note a similar sounding equivalent to Ruotsi, the Estonian 'Rootsi'.

Further to this theory, it has been argued that these 'rodsmenn' may possibly have come from the area north of modern Stockholm called Roslagen (Rodslagen), part of the coastland region of Uppland and directly opposite the Gulf of Finland. This region appears to have had close associations with the East. Many rune stones commemorating men who had died in 'Gardariki' or 'Serkland' are present in this area.

There have been suggestions that the name 'Roslagen' did not occur until as late as the fifteenth century, but this is not so. According to V. Thomsen, the area of Uppland, Sodermaland and East Gotland had been known as Roder or Rodin from 'ancient times', names which again appear to reflect the stem 'rodr' and the 'rodsmenn'. Although I favour the etymological argument for the derivation of Rus from Ruotsi, there are points that this theory cannot encompass. For example it cannot explain why the earliest mention of the Rus by the Greeks described them as the 'Rhos' when one would expect the word to translate as 'Rous'. Anti-Normanists have attempted to disprove this theory but I believe it is still
the most convincing explanation for the origin of the word.

Anti-Normanists have more varied theories concerning the origin of the Rus and use a different line of investigation to support their arguments. In attempting to prove a Slavonic origin for the word, Anti-Normanists have centred on geographical and tribal names mentioned in ancient sources which have similar sounding stems to that of Rus and also Ros, following the earliest descriptions of the Rus in Greek sources, using the term Rhos. By proving that the name Rus (or Ros) occurred before the 'calling-in of the Varangians', especially as the name of a local tribe, Anti-Normanists believe they can circumvent Normanist theories and thus neutralise them. On the surface they appear impressive but the frequency with which the stem appears in so many wide and varied sources appears to contradict their argument.¹⁶ Little attempt is made to link the source material to give it a solid basis.

One early source, used by the Patriarch Proclus while describing the Hunnic invasion in the fifth century, recalls the biblical prophesy by Ezekiel referring to the 'Prince of Rosh': "And thou son of man, prophesy against the princes Gog, Rhos, Misech and Thobel..."¹⁶ However there seems to be an error in the translation of the Hebrew 'nesi rosh'. St. Jerome rendered the words into Latin as 'princeps capitis' thus making the passage read: "Gog, the ruler of the land Magog and supreme prince of Meshach and Tubal."¹⁷ This second more logical reading rules out an early reference to the 'Rhos'. A Syriac source of the mid-sixth century, described as a supplement to Zechariah Rhetor, mentions the
'Hrws' (Hros, Heros), believed to be the Syrian transliteration of 'Rus'. They are described as living north of the Caucasian mountains, in the Don river region near to the legendary Amazon tribe, but nothing else is known of them.\textsuperscript{18} Other sources mention the Volga river, known variously as the Rha or Rhos river, but it is difficult to see what this proves as no tribe is mentioned living in the region.\textsuperscript{19} Perhaps the best possibility lies with a well-documented ancient tribe, the Roxolani. Strabo, writing between 17 and 23, describes the Roxolani as a remote tribe of Scythian descent dwelling somewhere between the Dnieper and Don rivers.\textsuperscript{20} Tacitus, writing almost a hundred years later, informs us that the Roxolani, whom he describes as a Sarmatian tribe, invaded the Imperial province of Moesia in 69, and so must have shifted to the Danubian region.\textsuperscript{21} From the sixth century there is a description by Jordanes of a tribe called the Rosomani (or Roxolani) who were subjugated, along with another tribe called the Rogas, by Ermanrich, a leader of the Goths.\textsuperscript{22}

In the 1940s G.V. Vernadsky drew on these sources to put forward his own theory on the origin of the Rus.\textsuperscript{23} Vernadsky focusses attention on an ancient Irano-Slav tribe of the southern Russian region, the 'As', which he believes was a combination of the Antes and Alans (Ossetians).\textsuperscript{24} One clan of this tribe is selected for particular attention, the 'Rukhs-As' or Light (Radiant) Alans. These Rukhs-As, according to Vernadsky, can also be identified in other forms such as the Roxolani, Roc-As (Rogas) or the Hros. He therefore believes that the name 'Rus' is of indigenous
Following Vernadsky's theory, the name later became a designation for the Norsemen. By the middle of the eighth century the Norsemen had penetrated into northern Russia, exploring the Western Dvina, Dnieper and Volga rivers. As the lower sections of the Dnieper and the Volga were under the control of the Magyars and the Bulgars respectively, the Norsemen, in an attempt to reach markets further south, explored and conquered the region of the Oka river. By following tributaries of the Oka and Don rivers they managed to reach the Azov region of southern Russia. Here the Norsemen met the Rukhs-As who inhabited this region centred at the city of Malarosa (Mal-i-Ros) at the head of the Kuban river. These Norsemen, either by conquest or invitation, joined with the Rukhs-As and the Norse chief became 'Kagan' (Khagan) of the tribe. Vernadsky suggests that the capital of the newly-formed tribe was 'Asagard' (As-Grad) mentioned in the Ynglinga Saga. In support of what he calls the 'Russian Kaganate', Vernadsky refers to Ibn Khurdadbeh's description of the trade route of the ar-Rus, asserting that the Norsemen left the Azov region by way of the 'Tanais' (Don) river to reach the markets of the Khazars and the Muslims. However, it is by no means certain, using this evidence, that the ar-Rus were based in the Azov region and it seems more likely that they were based further north. Vernadsky also refers to the statement of Ibn Rusta:

Russia is an island around which is a lake, and the island in which they dwell is a three day's journey through forests and swamps covered with trees and it is a damp morass such that when a man puts his foot on the ground it quakes owing to the moisture.
Considering that Vernadsky translates 'Malarosa' as 'swamp of the Rus', this information provided by Ibn Rusta is valuable, but an equally convincing explanation may be suggested for the town of Novgorod (Holmgardr in the Sagas) or 'Island town (fort)'.

During the early ninth century, the Rus of the Azov region (centred now at Tmutarakhan) proved a menace to the Khazar Empire and were pushed back into central Russia towards the Kievan region. Sarkel, also known as The 'White Tower', built on the Don river by Byzantine engineers at the request of the Khazar Khagan, reflects the more militant attitude taken towards the Rus, according to Vernadsky. The movement towards the interior of the Ukraine was aided by earlier 'mergings' (probably conquests) of 'Antian' (East Slavic) tribes such as the Polyanе and the Severianе of this region. Only the Rus military base at Tmutarakhan on the Taman Peninsula survived as an isolated outpost.

Vernadsky's theory cannot be easily labelled Normanist or Anti-Normanist, as it lies somewhere in between. By incorporating aspects of both points of view, he offers an attractive compromise. Vernadsky himself admits that his argument is very much a hypothesis and his reliance on isolated references has placed it outside serious consideration by other scholars in the context of present-day research.

The Anti-Normanist argument in support of an indigenous origin of the Rus appears full of contradictions and overall has a superficial quality about it. To select haphazardly geographical names containing the stem rus or ros
and use this as evidence led V. Moshin to comment that "one finds oneself in a quagmire". Henryk Paszkiewicz, commenting on arguments using sources mentioning ancient tribes with similar sounding names to the stem rus (ros), noted one scholar who unsuccessfully attempted to prove the origin of the Rus from the Celtic 'Rutheni', as described in Caesar's 'Gallic War', by using the exact same methods of reasoning. His final comment may appear harsh but it is also accurate, in my opinion. "The idea that such arguments could arouse doubts as to the Norse origin of the Rus ... cannot be taken seriously.'

An interesting alternative to the Swedish origin of the Rus has been put forward by Imbre Boba in a study published in 1967. Boba dismissed etymological arguments for the origin of the Rus on the premiss that they do not provide a solution to the geographical origin of the Rus people, or give a meaning for the word. She believes that the word should be examined in the context in which it appears to find the original meaning, and thus location, of Rus, because names for peoples undergo semantic changes over a period of time and their meanings change. For example the Franks, a Germanic tribe, lend their name to what is now modern France, as opposed to the native Gauls. From a passage in the Russian Primary Chronicle, Boba believes the Rus can be identified as Danes:

"...these particular Varangians were known as Russes, just as some are called Swedes, and others Normans (Urmane), English (Angles), and Gotlanders (Goths), for they were thus named."

Boba applies her own interpretation of the word 'Varangian',
which she extends to mean 'foreigner from the Germanic west', not merely Scandinavian. Working by a process centred around the meanings of 'Swede', 'Urmane', 'Angle' and 'Goth', Boba believes she can prove that Danes are meant by the term 'Russes'. The meaning of Swede is straightforward, while Goth may be taken to mean Gotlander or possibly German. Angle could either mean the English, as in the text, but could also include the Angles of the Jutland Peninsula. The interpretation of the final term 'Urmane' (Nurmane, Norman) is of central importance to her theory, as this can either mean Dane or Norwegian. She believes it to mean Norwegian and thus the only people not mentioned in the Russian Primary Chronicle, the Danes, must have had their name substituted for that of the Russes. In support of this theory, Boba mentions two independant literary sources, both describing attacks in Western Europe c.844-845. Ibn Yaqubi, writing about forty-five years later, recorded an attack on Seville in Spain:

Into this town entered the Pagans [in the Arabian text 'Majus'], who are called the Rus, in the year 229 (843-844), and took prisoners and ravaged and burned and murdered.  

A passage of the Annales Bertiniani, a Frankish source written in part by the reliable Bishop Prudentius of Troyes, tells us that in 844 the Northmen attacked from Garonne to Toulouse and into Spain, while in 845 the Danes, who in the previous year had attacked Aquitania, came again. The Chronicon Albeldense also confirms this attack on Seville, calling the invaders 'Norsemen'. It seems clear that the Rus invaders of Ibn Yaqubi were Danish Vikings.

However, I do not agree that the Rus of the
'calling-in of the Varangians' were of Danish descent. Boba's interpretation of 'Urmane' for Norwegian is by no means certain. Although Anglo-Saxon sources may distinguish between Danes (Dani) and Norwegians (Nordmanni, Nortmanni), sources from the continent use the term 'Nortmanni' to describe both peoples, and this usage may have been followed by the writer of the Primary Chronicle. There are suggestions concerning the literary evidence, that the Rus mentioned by Ibn Yaqubi may have been a later insertion by a copyist, but even if Ibn Yaqubi did genuinely describe them as Rus it does not necessarily follow that he could tell the difference between Swedes and Danes any more than the victims of the raid could. Another consideration is that Ibn Yaqubi was writing almost fifty years after the event at a time when the Rus were well known in the East as compared to the Danes, so some confusion may have occurred.

A further point made by Boba is that these Rus were not so much an ethnic group as a clan or professional retinue. The fact that all the Rus supposedly shifted to Eastern Europe is claimed to support this: "They thus selected three brothers ... who took with them all the Russes and migrated". This retinue later came to include members of other ethnic groups. This becomes apparent when examining the composition of the army used by Oleg, the successor to Rurik (the first leader of the Rus), to wrest control of Kiev from two other Rus warriors, Askold and Dir, in c.880. The army appears as a merger of different northern tribes along with the Swedish Rus, from whom the retinue received their name: "The Varangians, Slavs and others who accompanied him,
were called Russes". Boba's opinion that the Rus were a professional retinue is sensible, but I believe this occurred only after settlement in the Ukraine area, and that the original Russes were of a single race.

I would now like to focus attention on the term Varangian. As we have seen, Imbre Boba has suggested it could mean 'foreigner from the Germanic west', but this, I believe, is too broad a definition. The term appears to have arisen in the east as an appellation for the Norsemen who travelled in these regions. It also seems to have had a generic application, equivalent to 'Scandinavian', and was used by Islamic, Byzantine and Slavonic writers, who used the terms, 'warank', Barrogoi and 'varjagi' respectively. Although applied in the East by these peoples, the root of the word appears to have come from the Old Norse 'Var' (Vaer, plural Vaeringjar) meaning variously 'oath', 'agreement', 'promise' or 'contract'. The use of the word in the East may have been derived from the description of the partners in a Viking enterprise of trade or piracy, and does not necessarily have a generic application. The first appearance of the word occurred in Byzantine literature mentioning the Imperial bodyguard made up of Norse (Rus) warriors, described as the 'axe-bearing barbarians', 'the men from the Island of Thule' or the 'Tauro-scythians'. The word appears to have travelled back through Russia to Scandinavia to appear in Norse Sagas. There also seems to be an association of the word with a geographical region. The Primary Chronicle refers to the Baltic Sea as the Varangian Sea in two places: "The Lyakhs, the Prussians, and
Chud' border on the Varangian Sea. Later it refers to Lake Nevo opening into the Varangian Sea as well. This idea is confirmed by Al-Biruni, an Islamic source, who describes the Baltic thus:

... a large gulf separates north of Saghila which stretches up to the neighbourhood of the Muslim Bulgars land. This (gulf) is known under the name of Bahr Warank (Varangian Sea) (given it) after the name of the people living on its coast.

A better indication of the land area where the 'Varangians' dwelt may be found in a description of the famous Norwegian King Harald Hadrada, who served in the Varangian Guard and ended his days at the Battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066, defeated and killed by the English King Harold Godwinsson. He is immortalised in the Icelandic 'King Harald's Saga'. In an anonymous Greek work, Harald Hadrada is described as the "son to the King of Varangia". A fair assumption may be made on this evidence that the Scandinavian Peninsula is the general area of 'Varangia', where men left for what the Sagas called 'Miklagard' (Constantinople) to serve in the Emperor's Guard.

So far I have examined etymological theories as to the origin of the Rus and have concentrated on their possible Scandinavian descent. Now I would like to move to more solid ground and discuss the evidence for and against the Varangian connection with the East.

The earliest reference mentioning the Rus is an entry in the Annales Bertiniani (Annals of St. Bertin) for the year 839. This entry describes the visit of a Byzantine diplomatic mission from the Emperor Theophilus to the court of Louis the Pious of Germany.
"There came [to Ingelheim] the Greek envoys sent by the Emperor Theophilus ... He also sent with them certain men who said that they [i.e. their tribe] were called Rhos [Russians], and that their King, known as Chacanus [Kagan], had despatched them to him ... [Theophilus] asked ... that the emperor [Louis the Pious] allow them to return home across his possessions since the roads by which they had come to Constantinople were cut by wild and ferocious tribes ... The Emperor [Louis] investigated diligently the cause of their [the Kagan's envoys'] coming and discovered that they were Swedes by origin."  

Louis the Pious, having dealt with the Swedes (Sueones) before in attacks upon the Empire, promptly locked them up believing them to be spies. Nothing more is heard of them.

Amongst those involved in the Normanist controversy this passage has raised intense debate. The Anti-Normanist method of attack is by qualifying what the evidence presents, a method Henryk Paszkiewicz describes as 'correcting the text'. A.V. Riasanovsky provides a good example of this method. He goes into great detail, stressing the fact that the Swedes were ambassadors of the Rus Khagan (Khakan) and not necessarily native Rus themselves. He also points out that the title 'Khagan' is an oriental one, and more likely to be used by a Slavic leader than a Viking chieftan. This view appears to be supported in a letter from Louis II of the Holy Roman Empire in reply to one sent by the Byzantine Emperor Basil I:

But we have found that the leader (praelatus) of the Avars is called Khagan, but not the leader of the Gazani or the Northmen, nor the prince of the Bulgars, ...  

Unfortunately, the letter which could have shed much valuable light on the subject of the Khagan-Rus, the one sent by Basil, has been lost. At best the letter of Louis II can
only illustrate that Louis himself did not know of any Scandinavian leader using the title. How much the Western Emperor knew of activities in the Russian area I cannot say, although I would credit the Byzantine Emperor with more accurate knowledge of the area and its various peoples, especially the Rus, than the Holy Roman Emperor. By the time Basil was writing (871), the Rus had already attacked the capital of the Empire once, in 860, and (at their request) had been sent a Bishop to teach them Orthodox Christianity. Perhaps Basil’s letter had stated that he did know of some Norsemen using the title ‘Khagan’, and this sparked Louis’ reply.

In any case, I do not find this evidence substantial enough to challenge what the Annales Bertiniani has clearly indicated, that the Rus were equivalent to the Swedes. We know that the title of ‘Khagan’ was definitely used by the Rus in Kiev until at least the twelfth century. Metropolitan Hilarion describes Vladimir the Great as “the great Khagan of our land” in one of his sermons dated c.1050. This is confirmed by Ibn Rusta and in the Hudud al-Alam, both sources of the tenth century. The link between the title and Kiev dates at least as far back as the capture of Kiev by Oleg about c.880, and possibly to the beginning of Askold and Dir’s reign twenty years earlier. The title may have been borrowed from the Khazars with whom early contact was probably made, as they had ruled Kiev during the early ninth century. Another suggestion for the interpretation of ‘chacanus’ (Khagan) mentioned in the passage, has been the Old Norse ‘Haakon’ (High-King) which

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provides an interesting alternative to the usual translation, although I am sure the Khagan (Khakan) title is the more correct.\textsuperscript{43}

It would be interesting to learn where the envoys of the Khagan had set off from, and how they made their way to Constantinople. Kiev at this time was supposedly ruled by the Khazars with the Rus centres further north at Novgorod and Ladoga, known in the Icelandic Sagas as Holmgardr and Aldeigjuborg. Travelling south, following either the Dnieper or Volga Rivers, contact is eventually made with the Khazars, so it is more than likely that the route to the Byzantine during this period ran by way of Khazaria. The 'fierce tribes', said to block the return route in the text could have been any of the Slavic tribes, the Derevlians, Merians or possibly the Nomadic Magyars. The return journey via Ingelheim would have made sense as the safest and also the most direct way back to northern Russia. This counters the arguments of those who believe that the Rus Khaganate was located in southern Russia.\textsuperscript{44} It would have taken a wide detour through Ingelheim to reach such a location.

The other source we have from western Europe linking the Rus with the Norsemen is by Bishop Liudprand of Cremona. Liudprand was a diplomat in the service of the King of Lombardy and later served for the Holy Roman Emperor, visiting Constantinople twice (in 942 and in 949-950), and is counted a reliable witness. His statement concerning the Rus gives clear evidence in favour of Normanist arguments:

There is a certain northern people the Greeks call Rusii - "les roux" from the colour of their skins, while we from the position of their country call the Nordmanni, "northmen".\textsuperscript{45}
In general the term 'northman' (Nordmanni) in western literature at that time denoted 'someone from Scandinavia, usually a Dane'. Anti-Normanists argue that the term may embrace all northern peoples, including Finns, Slavs and Ugrians as well as the Viking nations. However, I believe most scholars would agree with the former description.

Islamic writings are another good source of information concerning the Rus. We have already seen the testimony of Ibn Yaqubi confirming the Rus as Norsemen in the Danish attack on Seville in 844. Other sources, such as al-Masudi (a writer of the tenth century) draw a distinction between the Rus and the Slavs making it difficult to sustain the claim that the Rus were of native Slavic origin:

One of the various pagan nations which lives in the country of the Khazars is the Sakalibah (Sclavonians), and another the Rus (the Russians).

Ibn 'Rustah, writing c.930, confirms Masudi’s statement of separate nations, in stating that the Rus invade the country of the Slavs and feed off what is imported from the Slavs.

Many Anti-Normanists have stressed the evidence put forward by Ibn Khurdadbeh who describes the trading route of the Rus from northern Russia to Baghdad. Ibn Khurdadbeh appears to make a statement in favour of the "Sclavonian origin" of the Rus. However the translation of the word 'Sclavonian' needs qualification. The actual word in the Islamic text is 'as-Saqlab' (as-Saqaliba) which many scholars translate as 'Sclavonian' or Slav. Omeljan Pritsak, in his work on reconstructing the original source of Ibn Khurdadbeh’s description of the trade route of the ar-Rus,
denies that the word 'saqlab' can be readily identified with the Slavs inhabiting the Ukrainian area during the ninth century. He asserts that the term 'saqlab' means "ruddy-faced, red-headed inhabitant of the northern lands", and originated from the late Roman term 'sclavus' meaning "fair-headed slave, often a eunuch". Therefore, the term saqlab cannot be pinned to any one people. It should also be noted that Ibn Khurdadbeh is an early source for information concerning the Rus, writing at a time when the Rus were not very well known and so could have been mistaken for a tribe of Slavs.

One of the strongest and perhaps more interesting pieces of evidence to support the Scandinavian origins of the Rus comes from Byzantium. The 'De Administrando Imperio' was written as a guide to administering the empire about 950 by the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (912-959) for his son, the future Romanus II. The most important section for our present purpose is the chapter describing a Rus trading expedition to Constantinople. This chapter was probably not written by the Emperor himself. It is more likely to be a report based on an oral description of the journey and incorporated by Constantine in the work. There is a description in this chapter of a treacherous section of the Dnieper river containing seven cataracts, which have now disappeared due to hydro-electric construction during the 1920's which created an artificial lake. These cataracts were only navigable during the spring floods, even then some still had to be by-passed by portaging around them. In the description, each of the cataracts is named in the 'Russian'
and Slavonic languages. Constantine differentiated between the language of the Slavs and Rus, giving us our first direct reference to the separate nature of the Rus language. On closer examination of the 'Russian' words, we find that they are actually derived from Old Norse, which is made clear by their translation.

Only one name has been given for the first rapid, 'Essoupi', which has the same meaning in both languages, 'do not sleep'. The Slavonic for 'do not sleep' is Ne'spi (Nessupi) which appears very close to the word given in the text. However the Old Swedish 'ei-sofi' (do not sleep) or 'ves-uppi' (be wakeful) is equally as close in sound and form and could well have been meant. Because of the similarities between the two names, a Greek copyist may have left them as one. The second rapid, 'oulvorsi' (ulvorsi), by all accounts appears to derive from the Old Norse 'holmfors' or 'island of the rapid (or falls)', Only one name is given for the third cataract, 'Gelandri' (noise of the Barrage), which the author of the report has mistaken as being Slavonic. It is more likely to be from the Norse 'gjallandi' for 'yelling' or 'loudly ringing'. No satisfactory Slavonic equivalent has been found thus far, although K. Falk suggests the Ukranian 'zvonec'. The largest and most dangerous of the cataracts was called 'Aeifor' (in Slavonic 'Neasit'), "because the pelicans nest in the stones of the barrage". This interpretation may have come about because of a transliteration of the Slavonic 'neasit' which means 'pelican' for 'neasyt', meaning 'insatiable'. The Norse term 'Aeifor' (Eiforr) is easily
translated as 'ever-fierce', or 'never satiated'. Another possibility could be 'edfors' (narrow-force, or portage rapid) because a six-mile portage had to be carried out to continue the journey. The last three rapids need little elaboration as they are straightforward translations of the Old Norse: 'Barufors' from 'barufors' ('varufors') meaning wave-rapid, or cliff-rapid, 'Leanti' from either 'hlaejandi' (laughing) or 'leandi' (seething), and finally 'Stroukoun' from either 'strukum' (rapid current) or 'stukn' meaning 'stream' or 'small-fall'. A rune stone from Pilsgard in Gotland gives stark confirmation of the Greek report on the cataracts. It is a memorial to one Hrafn who "went far into Aifor", drowning at the most dangerous rapid.

The final piece of evidence returns us to the Russian Primary Chronicle. This is concerned with the names of the early leaders of the Rus, and those of their envoys which appear on three treaties with the Byzantines dated 907, 911 and 945. It has been suggested that many of the names mentioned in the Chronicle have Scandinavian equivalents: Rurik for Hroerekr, Igor for Ingvarr, Oleg for Helgi, Askold (Oskuld) for Hoskuldr and Dir for Dyri. This suggestion has been carried further by studying the names on treaties made with the Byzantine Greeks. These treaties appear to be genuine copies contained within the text of the Primary Chronicle. Although the agreements of 907 and 911 are listed separately in the Chronicle, they are more than likely to be two sections of the same agreement. The latter date of 911 appears as the logical one for the agreement, as it has a more formal style following Greek diplomatic documents of the
period. The exact date is given for this treaty, equivalent to 2 September 911 in the Christian Era, another point in its favour. The five Rus named as envoys in the 907 agreement, Karl, Farulf, Vermund, Hrollag and Steinvith also appear as envoys in the 911 treaty. The Norse names are apparent in this translation:

We of the Rus nation: Karly (Karl), Ingeld (Injald), Farlof (Farulf), Veremund (Vermund), Rulav (Hrollaf), Gudy (Gunnar), Ruald (Harold), Karn (Karni), Frelav (Frithlief), Ryuar (Hroarr), Aktevu (Angantyr), Truan (Throand), Lidulfost (Leithulf, Fast), Stemid (Stinvith), are sent by Oleg, Great Prince of Rus...

For the later agreement of 945, V. Thomsen believes that of the fifty names given, at least ten are purely Scandinavian. It is possible there are more but they are too distorted to be sure of their origin. Only three purely Slavic names can be identified, that of Igor's son, Svyatoslav, Vladislav and a woman, Predeslava. Thomsen also suggests that most of these names were prevalent in the area of Uppland, Sodermanland and East Gotland in Sweden, the ancient district of Roder (rodin). The preponderance of Nordic names amongst the signatories suggests that these people were the predominant element at the Court of the Khagan at this time. A.V. Riasanovsky again disputes that the ethnicity of the Rus can be identified by examining the nationality of the envoys of the Khagan. However, there is no reason to believe that the Khagan was not sending people of his own race to represent him to the Greeks, especially as the envoys proclaimed themselves, "we of the Rus nation".
NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

WHO WERE THE RUS?


2. ibid., p.59


5. This theory was primarily put forward by E. Kunik and developed in a series of lectures by V. Thomsen, whose work is still the best example of the Normanist stance. See also K.R. Schmidt, 'The Varangian Problem: A Brief History of the Controversy', in Varangian Problems, (Munksgaard, Copenhagen, 1970), p.10f and 13-16


8. ibid., p.246f, Oxenstierna, op.cit., p.104


10. Jones, op.cit., p.247


13. Thomsen, op.cit., p.95

14. Sorensen, op.cit., p.133-140 is the latest to challenge the shift from 'ts' to 'ss'. He suggests that 'ts' should decline to 'c' to form 'rci', p.139
15. P.V.L., p.230, note 82, the recurrence of the word 'Ros' in geographical names might be due to a link with the possible Aryan term for water or moisture, 'rons'.


19. Claudius Ptolemaeus; Cosmographia, presentation and notes by L. Pagani, (Editions Hier et Demain, Paris, 1976) XVII, Asia, Tabula Secunda, (c.100-170) labels the Volga river the 'Rha', while Agathermos (c.215), Ammianus Marcellinus (fourth century) and an anonymous Greek geographer of the fifth century call it the 'Rhos'. See A.V. Riasanovsky, op.cit., p.7, note 31, Vernadsky, 1956, p.168, Paszkiewicz, op.cit., p.131f


24. Vernadsky, 1943, p.258f, and 1956, p.169f


26. Vernadsky, 1956, p.169

27. Vernadsky, 1943, p.273f, and 1956, p.173f

28. Snorri Sturlisson, Heimskringla or the Lives of the Norse
Kings, translated by A.H. Smith, edited with notes by E. Monsen, (W. Heffer and Sons Ltd., Cambridge, 1932), Ynglinga Saga, p.2 "The land in Asia to the east of the Tanakvisl was called Aseheim and the chief town in the land was called Asagarth [Asagard]."

29. Vernadsky, 1943, p.283


32. Vernadsky, 1943, p.305

33. Vernadsky, 1956, p.175

34. Vernadsky, 1943, p.269


37. Paszkiewicz, op.cit., p.132


39. P.V.L., p.59

40. Boba, op.cit., p.103f

41. S. Rapoport, 'Mohammedan Writers on Slavs and Russians', Slavonic and East European Review, 1929, p.82

42. Boba, op.cit., p.106

43. Paszkiewicz, op.cit., p.125, note 3, Vasiliev, op.cit., p.43

44. Rapoport, op.cit., p.82


46. P.V.L., p.61

Thompson, (University of Chicago Press, 1938), p.483


51. P.V.L., p.52

52. ibid., p.53


54. Davidson, op.cit., p.209, Jones, op.cit., p.405, for the Cecaumeni Stratigon (c.1070-1080), Book of Advice to an Emperor.

55. J.B. Bury, History of the Eastern Roman Empire From the Fall of Irene to the Accession of Basil I, (802-867 AD), (Macmillan, London, 1912), p.273 gives the reason for the mission as seeking an alliance with Louis the Pious, asking for troops to attack either Syria or Egypt.


57. Paszkiewicz, op.cit., p.415

58. A.V. Riasanovsky, op.cit., p.4

59. ibid., p.3, notes 10 and 11 for reference and quote.


61. Metropolitan Hilarion's Eulogy of Prince Vladimir c.1050, in Vernadsky, 1972, p.28
62. Macartney, op.cit., p.213, also H.A.A., p.159

63. Paszkiewicz, op.cit., p.432, note 2, see also Varangian Problems, (Munksgaard, Copenhagen, 1970), p.141

64. Vernadsky, 1943, p.305f, this argument for a return to Tmaturakhan on the Taman Peninsula does not make sense for it would have been no trouble to travel across the Black Sea where no 'fierce tribes' block the way.


66. A.V. Riasanovsky, op.cit., p.4, notes 15-18

67. Vasiliev, op.cit., p.10

68. Rapoport, op.cit., p.89

69. ibid., p.97, Macartney, op.cit., p.213, Ibn Rusta and Gardezi

70. Rapoport, op.cit., p.81


72. ibid., p.249

73. Paszkiewicz, op.cit., p.118f, for the use of the term 'Saqlab' by the Anti-Normanists.

74. D.A.I., p.11


76. Davidson, op.cit., p.84, Oxenstierna, op.cit., p.112, illustration 56

77. See Appendix 1

78. Thomsen, op.cit., p.54

79. Davidson, op.cit., p.86, Jones, op.cit., p.257, suggests 'asupi' meaning drinker or gulper.

80. Thomsen, op.cit., p.55

81. Shevlov, 'Slavic Names for the Dnieper Falls', Slavic Word, volume 10, part 4, 1955, p.510,

82. D.A.I., p.59

83. Thomsen, op.cit., p.58-60, compares 'neesyts' with the nineteenth century Russian 'nenasytets' name for the same
rapid.

84. Also 'eifari' meaning ever-rushing, never-ceasing, ever-noisy, or impassable. Jones, op.cit., p.257, Thomsen, op.cit., p.57

85. Davidson, op.cit., p.86, Jones, op.cit., p.257, the Slavic names are Voulniprach, Veroutzi and Naprezi.


87. Thomsen, op.cit., p.68, Cross, op.cit., p.506

88. P.V.L., p.64-5 and 73f


90. P.V.L., p.68 and p.236, note 39

91. Vernadsky, 1943, p.27. Although a full date is not usually applied to Byzantine documents the fact that the newly elevated co-Emperor, Constantine, is mentioned does indicate authenticity.

92. Vasiliev, 1951, p.170, c/f P.V.L., p.65f, only the Scandinavian transliterations are given in the Primary Chronicle where Vasiliev gives both. Some of the names are possibly Finnic (Chud) in origin, see Paszkiewicz, op.cit., p.170f, Jones, op.cit., p.259

93. Thomsen, op.cit., p.69

94. P.V.L., p.73

95. Thomsen, op.cit., p.72

96. A.V. Riasanovsky, op.cit., p.12

97. P.V.L., p.65
CHAPTER TWO
SETTLEMENT AND STATE

Scandinavian expansion overseas reached widespread proportions during the Viking Age (c.790-1066). In Western Europe, Scandinavians had settlements in Normandy, eastern England, Dublin and the Faroe and Orkney Islands. They even reached Iceland and crossed the Atlantic Ocean to Greenland and Newfoundland. In Eastern Europe, they settled in the lands bordering the Baltic Sea and established themselves further inland along river trade routes. Before examining the problems of Scandinavian development in Eastern Europe the motives for movement should be first examined.

The first point to make in examining these migrations is that they were not an isolated incident in the history of Scandinavia; there was no single explosive movement from the north. Continental Europe had faced immigrant Germanic incursions in previous centuries and the migrations of the Viking Age were but the latest in a wave of movements. These movements had begun as long ago as the second century BC when the Teutones and the Cimbri left the Jutland Peninsula moving southward, eventually causing problems for the Roman Republic. Later, during the third and fourth centuries AD, the Roman Empire faced invasions from Burgundians from Bornholm, Vandals from Vendsyssel and the Goths of Oster- and Västergötland. But by the end of the
sixth century the force of these southward invasions had largely been spent and it was not until the Viking Age that they regained momentum. In this intervening period regional struggles moved on to become national struggles and although they changed rulers frequently, the Kingdoms of Denmark, Norway and Sweden established themselves territorially.

Sir Thomas Kendrick wrote over fifty years ago that it is "impossible to explain in final and satisfactory terms the huge outpouring of the northern peoples". However, it is by no means unreasonable to examine various possibilities conjectured by scholars over the years. One of the reasons most often put forward is that of recurring land shortage. The climate and geography of Scandinavia are inhospitable and do not easily allow animals or crops to flourish. The further north one travelled, the worse the situation became. A Norwegian at the court of King Alfred of Wessex (870-899) in describing his homeland said it was: "very long and narrow. All of it that can be grazed or ploughed lies by the sea; but even this is very rocky in some places". This bleak description is not true for all of Scandinavia, but as agriculture was the primary occupation of the Norsemen, the available arable land would eventually prove insufficient for a growing population. This may have occurred earlier in Norway than in Denmark or Sweden and could be reflected in the earlier raids by the Norwegians upon England between 786 and 793. The system of land tenure on a family basis followed by the 'Bondi' (a free man who possessed land and stock) might have also added to the general problem concerning land. To keep an estate from
falling out of a family's hands, it was often left equally to all the sons who subdivided it on the death of their father. Eventually, this practice reduced the estates into units that were too small to farm economically.  

Another popular reason cited for the Norse migrations of the Viking age is that of overpopulation. The chief evidence for this is based on marriage relations. It appears that polygamy was practiced amongst the peoples of the north. According to a writer of the eleventh century, Adam of Bremen: "a man according to his means has two or three or more wives at one time, rich men and princes an unlimited number". It is likely that one wife was by bridal contract and had the primary role in the house while any other wives may have been slaves taken as concubines to produce children to work on the estate. The tendency to have large families seems apparent: Harold Fairhair had nine sons while Vladimir of Kiev had ten. Many sons not only increased manpower around an estate, but also enhanced the ability to protect it. However they were also a burden on its resources and may have found themselves sent 'a-viking' when times occasioned that they were not needed to protect or work the estate. Those sons who did not receive a portion of the inheritance also had to take the alternative of trading or piracy to perhaps win enough wealth to purchase their own property either in Scandinavia or abroad. 

These two causes, land shortage and overpopulation have long been mooted as the primary motivators of movement abroad. It must not be forgotten, however, that other reasons can draw men away from their homeland. The lure of
wealth, whether achieved through mercantile or piratical means, is strongly attested by the archaeological and written sources. To seek adventure, fame or political power may have also been motives to leave. Others left because of differences with the rulers of the emerging Scandinavian states, as Erik the Red, Hrolf the Ganger (Rollo) and Harald Hadradi were forced to do. Such motives can only go to strengthen Kendrick's statement that there is no definitive explanation for the migrations of the Viking Age.

That they made any impact at all is due to a technological development at this time that set the Norsemen firmly apart from the rest of the European world. It was, very simply, a ship: yet one like no other of the time. It came in a variety of different forms and sizes, each suited to a particular function and each with its own particular designation. But the most common was the 'Knorr', the ship of all work. I should like very briefly to outline the advantages of these vessels here, although the subject will require more detail elsewhere.

Arguably the most important merit of the knorr was its reliability. The watertight design could withstand quite rough weather as the famous voyage by Captain Magnus Anderson in 1893 across the Atlantic Ocean in a replica of the Gokstad ship attests. Captain Anderson reported that the gunwale twisted as much as six inches from true without the ship springing a leak." The keel was the focal point for the other distinct advantage of the vessel, its shallow draft of no more than a metre. This allowed the Norsemen virtually unrestricted access to all but the most shallow rivers and
bays. It was also the secret of their ability to penetrate far inland using river systems to reach important markets such as Birka in Sweden, or Great Bulgar on the Volga river, or to make surprise raids on unsuspecting monasteries and small settlements. With two modes of power, the sail and the oars, the knorr was guaranteed movement providing immunity not only from being becalmed, but also reduced the risk of capture. Ultimately, it was a sailing vessel which enabled Norse voyagers to cross an ocean almost half a millenium before it was thought feasible.

2. The ability to penetrate inland to raid or trade.

However, just as it took centuries to develop the construction techniques to build the knorr, so did it take a comparable period to develop men with the skills of seamanship and navigation to sail these ships. Communication in Scandinavia was dominated by the sea. The settlements of Norway were usually isolated either by intractable forests or high mountains, but along the coast islands formed what can only be described as a 'corridor', along which travellers could sail sheltered from the North Atlantic gales. Around the Jutland Peninsula the islands number in the hundreds.
which meant a heavy reliance on the sea for contact, while in
the same way the rivers and lakes of Sweden provided a useful
means of communication.\textsuperscript{11} This is where the Norsemen learned
the techniques which in the Viking Age would allow them to
travel to an unprecedented extent.

The first movements eastward across the Baltic Sea
were made mainly by the men inhabiting the eastern part of
the Scandinavian Peninsula, the area known today as Sweden.
The modern name is derived from that of the tribe that rose
to dominate the region, the Sveas (Svear, Sviar).\textsuperscript{12} The great
Roman historian of the first century AD, Tacitus, described
the Suiones (Sveas) as possessing "not merely arms and men
but powerful fleets".\textsuperscript{13}\textsuperscript{14} He also gave an interesting early
description of what was to become the distinctive feature of
later Scandinavian ships. According to Tacitus, they differ
"from normal in this respect, that there is a prow at each
end with a beak always ready to be driven forwards".\textsuperscript{14} It is
this tribe from Uppland in eastern central Sweden that
managed to gain superiority over their neighbours and long-
time enemies, the Gauts (Geats) of Vaster- and Ostergotland
sometime in the later sixth century, establishing a powerful
kingdom centered on Old Uppsala in Uppland.\textsuperscript{15} Knowledge of
the Gauts is rather limited and confined in the main to
isolated passages in poetry such as the epic 'Beowulf'. This
makes it very difficult to establish the precise relationship
between the Sveas and the Gauts. It is possible the Gauts
retained some semblance of independence as late as c.1000,
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'rex Sveorum Gothorumque' (King of the Sveas and the
Gauts). However, whether they were Sveas or Gauts, Gotlanders or Alanders, it was the people known collectively as the Swedes who began to explore and exploit the possibilities of the eastern Baltic region. They were by no means alone in this quest, for Norwegians raided in the area, the Danes had controlling interests at Jomsborg (Jumne) in the southern Baltic and traders from Frisia were also active. But from what the written evidence suggests and the archaeological evidence confirms, it was the Swedes who dominated the movement eastwards.

Interest in the area known as Estland and Kurland (the modern Soviet Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) by the Swedes appears to have been early in the pre-Viking period c. 600-800. The exploits of these early Vikings is shrouded in legend. Perhaps the best example of these early semi-mythical hero-kings is the legendary Ivar Videfadmi (the far-reacher or wide-grasper). In the Ynglinga Saga, he is said to have "laid under himself all of Sweden; he also won for himself all Denmark, a great part of Saxland [Germany], all the Ostrick [Eastern realm], and a fifth part of England [Northumbria]." This formula is repeated in the Hervavar Saga where King Ivar not only conquers Kurland and Estland but "all the eastern realms as far as the confines of Gardariki". Elsewhere it is said that Ivar perished by drowning on an expedition in the east. Similar exploits are attributed to another Swedish hero named Frode, who, following the footsteps of his father (Hadding), invaded Kurland. According to the Saxo Grammaticus, Frode "aspired to the empire of the east", and numbered the city of Polotsk.
as one of his conquests. However, these alleged conquests made in the pre-Viking period are based upon sparse literary sources.

To supplement the literary accounts, archaeology has been invaluable in assessing the role played by the Swedes in Kurland and Estland in the Viking Age. Most of the information is derived from excavations carried out in the 1930's under the direction of Professor Birger Nerman. Investigations of burial mounds (barrows) at Grobin, to the east of the city of Libau (Liepaja) in what is today Latvia SSR, revealed cremation graves from the period c.600-800. The shield bosses, swords, spearheads and other accessories of armour were of Swedish type which, coupled with the predominance of male graves, suggested the presence of a Swedish garrison settled in the area. Nearby is the ancient settlement of Seeburg with an earthwork fortress protected on three sides by the Alande river dating to this period. The discovery of a third cemetery (the second contained native Kurland graves) of flat cremation graves, also dating c.650-800 and containing Gotlandic material, helps determine the social composition of the settlement. Both male and female graves were found amongst this third group suggesting peaceful family life.

The old settlement at Seeburg appears an interesting combination of social elements. At the top of the social strata appear the Swedes, the effective rulers of the settlement, supporting a well-armed garrison. Their purpose must have been to protect Swedish interests in the area. The Swedish crown, however, appears to have been the
overall ruler of the settlement. In 'Guta Saga', Gotlandic delegates to the Swedish King asked for "the freedom of all Gotlanders to travel overseas to all such places as were subject to the King at Uppsala". This passage assumes that the Swedish King controlled colonies abroad and that it was worth while for the Gotlanders to secure privileges there. A further comment on the role of the Swedish crown overseas may be found in Rimbert's 'Life of St Anskar' (Vita Anskari) written about the year 870. Rimbert gives an account of an expedition undertaken by the Swedish King Olaf around 855. The Swedes attacked Seeburg, which they plundered and burnt to the ground, before proceeding on to the town of Apulia (Apuole in the Middle Ages, today the modern Litauens) to which they lay siege. Before long the defenders of Apulia were forced to come to terms with the invaders. Along with gold and weapons they offered:

half a mark in silver for every man residing in this town, and beside that we are prepared to pay the taxes we once were wont to pay; to furnish hostages; and from now on to obey and follow your leadership as in earlier days.

This passage must be examined in the light of the past relationship between the Kings at Uppsala and the Kurlanders. Olaf's expedition in the 850s was not a reassertion of the King's rights, but a raid made for the purpose of profit. It appears the Swedes abroad exacted tribute from the natives, along with hostages to ensure that they remained amicable. This one-sided relationship did not last however, as Rimbert tells us that the Kurlanders "rose up and threw off the Swedish yoke". The archaeological record confirms that c.800 the Swedes appear to have abandoned the area as no
Swedish material is found at subsequent levels.

The second immigrant group in the settlement of Seeburg were from the island of Gotland. They appear to have set up a peaceful trading community, bringing their wives with them to settle in the town under the protection of the Swedish garrison. Relations between the Gotlanders and the Swedish crown are interesting. According to the 'Guta Saga', the Gotlanders "passed of their own free will under the King of the Swedes", and paid an annual tribute of silver.²⁶ Wulfstan, in his account to King Alfred of Wessex of his journey to Truso (at the mouth of the Vistula river), confirms that "Gotland ... is subject to the Sweons".²⁷ For the Gotlanders the King of Sweden was a very powerful and useful ally to have. Gotland was a wealthy trade station in the middle of the Baltic Sea, an area infested with pirates who could easily take advantage of its isolated position. The amount of Muslim silver coins found in hoards on the island not only attests to the wealth of Gotland, but also the risks associated with such wealth, usually buried in times of danger by men who never returned to enjoy it.²⁸ In return for an annual tribute of silver, the Gotlanders received the protection of the most powerful monarch of the region and enjoyed residential and trading privileges in areas of Swedish control.

The Swedish settlement of Seeburg was not an isolated outpost in Kurland. Southeast of Grobin, beside the Barte river, is another fortress from the period (c.600–800) which was known as Apulia (Apoule). As noted above, the fort was attacked by the Swedes in the ninth century and it would
be convenient to link the iron arrow and spear-heads of non-Baltic origin dating to this period to the attack of Olaf and his men.\textsuperscript{29} These and other Swedish objects do seem to indicate that the Swedes occupied the site between c.650 and 800, contemporary with the settlement at Grobin.\textsuperscript{30} Significantly, there is a Gotlandic cemetery nearby dating to the eighth and ninth centuries.

The similarities between Apulia and Seeburg seem to indicate an organised policy by the Swedes and this is further strengthened by an examination of the area around Wiskauten in present day Lithuania. The settlement was by the river Memel (Nieman) and judging from the size of the cemetery was quite large. Almost 500 barrows are to be found in the area containing grave goods of both Swedish and Gotlandic types dating roughly c.800. The positioning of the settlement also echoes that of the ones further north. Nearby is the natural harbour afforded by Kurische Haff, while the settlement lay up river to afford protection from raiders. The one difference between Wiskauten and and the settlements of Seeburg and Apulia is that the site was not abandoned post 800. This was due mostly to its position on the Memel river, along which trade from the east flowed during the ninth and into the tenth century.\textsuperscript{31}

Scattered finds of Viking type in the region of Elbing (Elbag) near Frische Haff suggested the possibility of another Swedish settlement south of Wiskauten. This was confirmed in 1936 by the discovery of a Gotlandic flat cemetery containing Swedish and old Prussian finds, contemporary to ones found in the settlements further north,
near the railway station in Elbing, then a part of the German Republic.\textsuperscript{32} This must have been the settlement mentioned by Wulfstan as his destination in a voyage he made c.880. "Then runs the Ilfing [Elbing river] east (of the Weissel [Vistula river]) into Estmere [Frische Haff], from that lake [Drausen] on the banks of which stands Truso".\textsuperscript{33}

While the evidence from these settlements appears impressive, it would be easy to overestimate the Swedish presence. These colonies were tenuous outposts in a hostile land and did not always survive as trading towns. It is not easy to explain why some were abandoned at the beginning of the Viking age, but it may have been due in part to the development of new trade routes into the interior of Russia. Runestones attest to the continuing activity of the Swedes in the area of Kurland and Estland through to the eleventh century. The Mervalla stone records a memorial to Sven, "who often sailed to Semigallia with a costly 'knarr' round Domesnas".\textsuperscript{34} Other stones record the hazardous nature of the area: two Swedes from the Uppland region, Anund Karessson and Bjorn Kattilmundarsson, were both killed in Virland, on the northern coast of Estland in the gulf of Finland.\textsuperscript{35}

The development of the northern trade route via the Gulf of Finland to the Volga river also led to the earliest indication of a Scandinavian settlement in Russia. This trade route had developed as a direct consequence of trade contacts with the Volga (Silver) Bulgars, a nomadic tribe inhabiting the middle region of the Volga River with their capital at Great Bulgar. The commodity which made the route so important was Kufic silver obtained from the Abbasid
Caliphate especially from the mines near Tashkent in Afghanistan under the control of a local rebel Muslim dynasty, the Tahirids.\textsuperscript{36} To reach the market on the Volga from Scandinavia, one travelled across the Baltic Sea to the Gulf of Finland to what is now Lake Ladoga.\textsuperscript{37} From this lake several river systems lead to the upper reaches of the Volga river or one of its tributaries. The region between Lake Ladoga and Lake Onega is dotted with burial mounds containing Scandinavian and Finnish material, indicating these waterways as the trade route of the Norse merchants.\textsuperscript{38}

Near Lake Ladoga, just seven miles up the Volkhov river which flows into the lake, is the town of Staraya Ladoga, a place the Norsemen called Aldeigjuborg. Archaeological investigations of Old Ladoga have uncovered objects strongly indicating a Norse presence in the town from at least the late eighth century. However, the area was largely occupied by Finno-Ugric tribes, the Chud and the Ves' and they appear to be the earliest inhabitants of the site. The situation of Old Ladoga on the Volkhov river and the method of fortification, an earth rampart with the river and a ravine affording protection on three sides, echoes strongly the Swedish settlements in the eastern Baltic.\textsuperscript{39}

According to the evidence provided from the lowest level of the town (dating to between c.750 and 825) the early inhabitants of Ladoga were predominantly agriculturalists, raising stock and supplementing their existence by hunting and fishing.\textsuperscript{40} They lived in large two-roomed log houses with an oven in the centre, a style quite different from the Slavs, who later occupied the site in the tenth century,
attested by smaller, single-roomed houses found at upper levels. Several objects found at the lowest level suggest Norsemen co-habited the site, although it is difficult to estimate the size of the population and in what capacity they were present. The most striking Norse object recovered is a runakefl (wooden rune-stick) discovered in 1950 employing short-twig runes of an early type used from the beginning of the Viking Age, although gradually changing later. The inscription appears to be in metrical verse, referring to mythological beings, and most probably dates to sometime between the eighth and the first half of the ninth century. A close cultural link to Sweden can be discerned in the runes employed and the use of alliterative poetry, but it is likely that the inscription was composed and cut in Ladoga as a means to pass the time. Although interpretation of the poem is not entirely certain, V.I. Ravdonikas has translated the passage thus:

Above, clad in his cowl (is portrayed) the master of the Hoarfrost, the Damage of the shining moon, the mighty journey of the plough-oxen.

Other finds appear to confirm the settled existence of a Scandinavian group. One of the log houses excavated yielded tools and bronze objects made in the Swedish Vendel-style indicating the presence of a Norse blacksmith. Another house uncovered in 1958 seems to have been associated with religious activities. In one corner of the dwelling, a stone oven was found to contain what looked to be the remains of sacrificial offerings, as bird, animal and fish bones lay among the ashes. A small wooden figure resembling a bearded man with a long head was also
discovered, possibly a cult object. There are parallels of this to be found in Scandinavia, the tremenn (wooden men) found by roads and harbours. They are also attested to in literature. For example, Ibn Fadlan who met the Rus in the early tenth century on the Volga river noted that they carried with them: "a long upright piece of wood that has a face like a man's", to which they made sacrifices of animals in the hope of gaining favourable trade. Although there is a strong possibility that the sanctuary is Scandinavian, a connection with the Finno-Ugric tribes cannot be discounted.

Other objects indirectly suggest the presence of Scandinavian mercantile activity. These include bone combs and toy wooden swords, copies of examples in common use in Scandinavia. But perhaps the best evidence of this type comes from a study of glass beads. These beads originated in the Mediterranean region and have been found commonly in Western and Central Europe as well as in Scandinavia. It is unusual, however, to find them in Eastern Europe, yet they were present at the earliest levels at Ladoga before being replaced by the simpler, mass-produced beads manufactured locally and in Northern Europe. The conclusion reached is that the beads came to Ladoga via Scandinavia by means of Norse merchants.

Although the written evidence can provide the name and location of Scandinavian settlements within Russia, it cannot provide any specific indication of the extent of the occupation by Norsemen. This evidence is provided by the material remains of the settlement uncovered through the archaeological process, yet this not infallible. The main
problem is to determine the ethnic origin or context of objects uncovered from a site, but to do so certain parameters must be introduced to differentiate between the cultures co-habiting the site at different levels. In dealing with this problem, a recent article by Anna Stalsberg provides a useful guideline. Stalsberg points out that only certain objects uncovered are of use in determining a Scandinavian presence and that while these objects need not necessarily have originated in Scandinavia, they must at least have been made in the Scandinavian tradition for use by Norsemen. Many objects have to be ignored, especially if they are common-use items, as these can confuse the identities of the cultures on the site. Bone combs found at Ladoga come into this category. Another difficult problem is to determine how the objects arrived in the area. They may have been carried directly there by migrants or reached it directly as a result of trade.

To circumvent these difficulties, Stalsberg decided to concentrate on one area which provides fruitful evidence of a Norse presence in Russia: examining the ethnicity of burials in Russia. She defines ethnicity as "belonging to a group which shares the same culture", and presumes that in traditional societies funerals were arranged according to the deceased's cultural background. Hence a Scandinavian grave should contain a Scandinavian person. To distinguish a Scandinavian burial from native burials, a set of characteristics are introduced concentrating on two spheres of the burial, the burial rites prevalent in Scandinavia at the time and secondly, the objects that
ethnically defined Norse dress.

Stalsberg defines three types of burial used in Scandinavia during the Viking Age, burial under a mound, burial in a large wooden chamber, and burial either in or under a boat.⁵⁷ As both cremation and inhumation prevailed in the north (the Norwegians and Swedes tending to favour the cremation rite) this cannot be regarded as a distinguishing feature.⁵⁸ Of these three practices, only one can be asserted as distinctly Norse: burial in or under a boat.⁵⁹

The multiplicity of burial customs practiced by the Vikings reflected the many different concepts of the afterlife, such as Valhalla, the hall where dead warriors were borne by Valkyries, or Hel, the Norse underworld.⁶⁰ Different concepts could also be reflected within one custom such as ship-burial. This custom was quite common amongst the Norwegians and Swedes, where the number of such burials discovered has been estimated at 550 for Norway and over a thousand in Sweden.⁶¹ Although Denmark and the western areas colonised by the Norsemen did not embrace this custom with much enthusiasm, the custom did spread amongst the Finns.⁶² The earliest ship burials began to appear c.500, but only became widely established during the seventh century. During the Viking period this rite reached its greatest geographical extent and became a highly developed form of burial, as illustrated by the Oseberg burial, and the royal burials found at Uppsala in Sweden.⁶³ However, ship burial was not solely reserved for the élite. Men and women of common birth were often interred by this custom.⁶⁴ The form appears without parallel in other European cultures but may have
been derived from the classical notion of a journey across water after death, the vessel perhaps serving to convey the body across the river Gjoll to the underworld of Hel. Other ships were anchored in the grave, however, suggesting a belief that the dead might remain there for ever.

Although archaeology has uncovered the rich remains of ship-burials only one written account reveals the mysterious rituals associated with such burials: the unique testimony of Ibn Fadlan in his description of the burial of a Rus chieftain at Great Bulghar on the Volga river in 922.

Ibn Fadlan travelled to the capital of the Volga Bulgars as a member of a diplomatic mission from the Caliph of Baghdad to instruct the King of the Bulgars in the Islamic faith. Here he came into contact with Rus merchants and attended the burial of one of their chief personages, recording his observations in his account of the mission, the 'Risala'.

The most striking feature in his account of the burial is the role played by a female slave in accompanying the dead man on his funeral pyre, a ship set upon posts of birch wood with other wood piled under it:

When a great personage dies, the people of his family ask his young women and men slaves, "Who among you will die with him?" One answers "I". Once he or she has said that, the thing is obligatory.

This custom is known as suttee, the voluntary suicide of a wife or concubine, best known from Hindu practices in the Indian sub-continent.

Evidence of the practice of suttee by the Rus is not confined to the account of Ibn Fadlan. In 943 or 944 a raid carried out in the region of Azerbaijan bordering the
Caspian Sea by the Rus left its impression in several sources. The raid lasted quite some time, taking a toll of invaders and victims alike. Ibn Miskawaih, who presented the best surviving account of the raid, also provided an account of Rus burials:

When one of them died they buried with him his arms, clothes and equipment, also his wife or some of his womenfolk, and his slave, if he happened to be attached to him; this being their practice.70

The Moslems gained knowledge of these rites after the Rus invaders had withdrawn, for the graves of the Rus warriors were disturbed in order to retrieve their highly prized swords.70 Al-Istakhri also stated that the "Russians are a people that burn their dead. Girls are burnt voluntarily with rich persons among them".71 Finally, there is an excellent description of a Rus chamber-burial from the later tenth century by Ibn Rusta:

When a great man among them dies, they erect for him a tomb like a spacious house, they place him in it ... and they place with him in the tomb his wife whom he loved, while she is still alive, and the door of the tomb is sealed upon her and she dies there.72

The chamber burial rite presents difficulties when encountered within Russia because it was also practiced by the native Slavs. Examples of such burials can be found near Chernigov in the Soviet Union, especially the 'Cherniya Mogila', dating to the mid tenth century.73 Within the grave chamber, a warrior was discovered. Beside him were weapons, armour and animals, including two horses, which had been sacrificed for the burial. Also interred were a woman and a youth. These graves, similar to ones found at Birka in
Sweden, may have belonged to Rus warriors, but could have belonged to members of the native aristocracy.  

The ceremony witnessed by Ibn Fadlan in 922 appears to be a simple case of suttee in the most complete version of the 'Risala', discovered only this century (in 1923) by Amhed Zeki Validi Togan at Meshed in Iran. However a passage provided by Al Masudi, writing soon after Ibn Fadlan in the middle part of the tenth century, helps determine what may be a more accurate description of what happened:

They burn their dead with their horses, arms, and personal ornaments. When a man dies his wife is burned alive with him, though if the wife dies, the man is not burned. If one of them dies unwed, he is given a wife after death. The women desire to be burned, in order to enter paradise along with (their husbands).  

This 'marriage in death' theme is also picked by Amin Razi, a Persian geographer who included Ibn Fadlan's account in his treatise written in 1593. This account is worth serious consideration as it may have been based on an older and more complete manuscript than the eleventh century Meshed copy of the 'Risala'. Amin Razi consistently represents the burial rites as a celebration of a posthumous marriage:

A slave girl arrayed herself and went into the pavilions of the kinsmen of the dead man, and the master of each had sexual intercourse with her, saying in a loud voice, "Tell your master that I have done the duty [or exercised the right] of love and friendship."  

The men expected their 'loud voice' to be overheard by the deceased after intercourse with the prospective bride. The slave girl entered the grave chamber and "... six of the relatives of her husband go into the pavilion and unite sexually with his wife in the presence of the dead man",  

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similarly fulfilling 'duties of love'. The girl was then laid beside her husband and killed, strangled with her bridal veil. In the Meshed version this scene is portrayed as a dispassionate sacrifice: no mention is made of the slave-girl as a bride, or the dead man as a husband, as Amin Razi does. The final act of strangulation with the bridal veil provides a macabre finish to this marriage in death.

Although the Meshed text makes no mention of a posthumous marriage there is an instance it relates which appears to fit into this outline. Before being led into the grave chamber aboard the ship, the slave-girl is brought to a framework resembling a door. Here she was raised to overlook the framework three times:

I asked the interpreter what she had done. He answered, "The first time they raised her she said, 'Behold, I see my mother and father.' The second time she said, 'I see all my dead relatives seated.' The third time she said, 'I see my dead master seated in Paradise and Paradise is beautiful and green; with him are men and boy servants. He calls me. Take me to him.'"

Previous to volunteering as a bride for her master, the girl had no formal rights as a slave. As a thrall she was little more than part of a man's estate, and once she died all she might hope for was perhaps a journey to the Norse underworld, the realm of the goddess Hel, where she retained the status she held in life as a thrall. Once she became the betrothed of her master she gained the status of a free woman, hence her family became participators in her wedding and she gained access to Paradise, perhaps the female equivalent to Valhalla, Folkvangr, the hall of the goddess Freya.

Other instances in the 'Risala' appear peculiarly
Scandinavian in character. After the slave-girl has been raised over the framework, which appears to represent a barrier to the world of the dead, she cut off the head of a hen, throwing the body onto the ship. This act appears to symbolise the renewal of life after death as revealed in a similar tale related by Saxo Grammaticus concerning Hadding (Hadingus), the father of Frode (mentioned above). Hadding followed a witch woman underground in order to find out where certain herbs used by the witch grew in winter. Eventually they reached a wall which she attempted to jump over. She failed and then strangled a cock she had brought with her and threw it over the wall, whereupon the bird came to life and crowed.

The method by which the 'bride' was laid to rest beside her husband is also significant:

...the old woman known as the Angel of Death re-entered and looped a cord [Amin Razi, a veil] around her neck and gave the crossed ends to the two men for them to pull. Then she approached her with a broad-bladed dagger, which she plunged between her ribs repeatedly, and the men strangulated her with the cord until she was dead.

Death by hanging was a method of sacrifice to Odinn (Wodan), the principal god of the Teutonic pantheon. He was known as the 'lord of the gallows' because of the nine nights he spent hung from a tree in order to win the 'runes', becoming master of the wisdom only the dead could impart. There was also another method of sacrifice to Odinn involving stabbing the victim, or 'marking to Odinn', with a spear-point; the spear being the favourite weapon of Odinn.

Although both methods were used separately in human sacrifices to Odinn (the chief recipient of such
sacrifices), a combination of the two actions, hanging and stabbing, made the ritual more complete. At least two references in Scandinavian literature record sacrifice by this method. The first concerns Odinn, where the god sacrifices himself in a scene similar to the passion of Christ, recorded in the 'Havamal':

I know that I hung on a windswept tree for nine nights, wounded with a spear and given to Odinn, myself to myself.

The other episode is found in 'Gautreks Saga' where the hero, Starkad, a favourite of Odinn, unintentionally kills his master, King Vikar, as prophesised by the god Thor:

The King now stepped on to the tree-stump; the noose was placed around his neck, and Starkad struck him with a reed, saying: "Now I give you to Odinn". At that moment, the reed turned into a bitter spear, the stump fell from beneath the King's feet, and the calf's gut became a tough rope.

In the light of these episode the simultaneous strangulation and stabbing of the slave girl in the Rus burial could be interpreted as a traditional Norse ritualistic sacrifice.

Two seemingly minor details complete the picture of Nordic elements in the Rus burial. As already mentioned, the bride, according to Amin Razi, was strangled with her bridal veil as opposed to the cord mentioned in the Meshed text. Norse brides usually wore such veils (brudar lin) at their wedding as seen in the occasion when Thor's hammer was stolen by the giants. The chief of the giants demanded the hand of the goddess Freya for the return of Thor's hammer, but she refused to agree. Thor took Freya's place as the bride and, wearing a bridal veil to disguise his face, travelled to the giants' hall, where he retrieved his
The second detail concerns the grave chamber described variously as a dome or pavillion of wood covered with various sorts of fabrics. In the Meshed text this dome is described as a 'great ships'-tent', similar to structures found on board ship-burials in Scandinavia, particularly the Oseberg ship and also the Sutton Hoo burial in England.

The custom of suttee may have been practiced within Scandinavia, but to determine through archaeological methods the cause of double interments is difficult because accident or epidemic might be the reasons for such burials. Some double burials in Scandinavia were the result of human sacrifice: in the Oseberg ship-burial a female slave accompanied the Queen to the grave. Sweden has two cases of double internments, a ship-burial at Valsgarde and a chamber grave containing two women at Birka, one lying in a twisted position suggesting she was buried alive. On the Isle of Man there are another two Viking burials suggesting human sacrifice, a ship-burial at Balladoole and a burial mound at Balladeare dating to the ninth century. Here a young female lay some feet above the grave of a male: her skull had been smashed. At Westness in the Orkney Islands, a woman aged about 50 appears to have been sacrificed to the grave of a young warrior. Although double interments became more popular during the Viking Age, human sacrifices cannot be regarded as cases of suttee because the victim does not accept her fate willingly. However, the ritual may have been adapted in Scandinavia for the Rus burial described by Ibn Fadlan has a voluntary aspect: although the slave-girl does not take her own life, she is killed in ritualistic
sacrifice.

In Scandinavia Odinn is the chief recipient of human sacrifices, especially of those who had been hung, noted in his title of 'lord of the gallows'. But other Norse gods were given their due as revealed by Adam of Bremen, in his description of sacrifice to the principal gods of the Swedes, Freyr (Fricco), Odinn (Wodan), and Thor:

The sacrifice is of this nature: of every living thing that is male, they offer nine heads, with the blood of which it is customary to placate gods of this sort. The bodies they hang in the sacred grove that adjoins the temple... Even dogs and horses hang there with men.\textsuperscript{105}

Elsewhere in Norse literature of the later Viking Age, there are examples of the suttee custom. Jarl Valgaut of Gautland told his wife to cast herself onto the funeral pyre if he should fall in battle against Saint Olaf of Norway.\textsuperscript{106} The classic tale of such fidelity is related by the Saxo Grammaticus, concerning the lovers Hagbard and Signe. The lovers were betrayed to Signe's father, who had condemned Hagbard to hang. Signe, who had promised to take her own life if Hagbard died before her, ordered that: "torches should be put to the room, then that halters should
be made out of their robes; and to these they should proffer their throats to be strangled, thrusting away the support to the feet", and so she perished, together with her handmaidens.\textsuperscript{105}

Although the custom of suttee gained popularity during the Viking Age and influenced the traditional rites of human sacrifice by introducing the voluntary nature of the sacrifice and the emphasis on marriage, it appears to have originated in Eastern Europe amongst the Slavs. Similar rituals are described as being practised by both the eastern and western branches of the Slavs. Ibn Rusta, writing in the early tenth century, remarked that if a dead man had more then one wife, the one who "wished to show her love to him" suspended herself from a beam set on two posts and remained "...hanging until she is strangled and dies and when she is dead she is cast into the fire and burnt".\textsuperscript{106} Saint Boniface, the English apostle who preached in German territories along the Frisian coast, described the 'Wenedi' (Wends or western Slavs) in a letter to King Aethelbald of Wessex written c.746-7, as the "...foulest and lowest type of beings", yet their marriage bonds were held in the highest regard:

\ldots
does not the physical form of the burial is not the only factor in determining ethnicity of grave sites. Although the ship-burial form is the one regarded as truly Scandinavian, other forms can contain Norse burials, but judgement of these must rely on grave goods or other rites to signify ethnic origin. Intentionally rendering weapons unserviceable by
bending or breaking is regarded as a rite peculiar to Scandinavia, as is the thrusting of spears and swords vertically into the ground.\textsuperscript{100}

Objects associated with ethnic costume are also useful indicators. Scandinavian women used a pair of distinctive brooches to secure their dresses at the shoulder, sometimes adding a third brooch to hold a shawl or cape in place. These shoulder brooches were quite large and oval (tortoise) in shape, with a set of beads or chains sometimes connecting them across the breast.\textsuperscript{100} The third brooch varied in shape and could be round, oblong, trilobate (three-armed), or horse-shoe shaped.\textsuperscript{110} Oval brooches were introduced into Finland by the Swedes and adopted by the Finno-Ugric tribes as part of their costume, which can confuse arguments for the

4. Female burial from Birka, note the fibulae.

ethnicity of some burials in northern Russia. To help in defining a Scandinavian burial, the presence of the third brooch should be the deciding factor.\textsuperscript{111}

Weapons appear to be the only means of characterising male Scandinavian costume, particularly swords, spear-heads, shield-bosses and battle-axes. Of these
items, the sword is probably the best indicator as it has been recovered in large numbers in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. Swords were the weapons most favoured by the Norsemen, who held them in such high regard that they gave them names and ascribed supernatural powers to them. Although the Vikings produced their own swords and other weapons, many of the finest blades were made by the smiths of the Rhineland. These were the 'Frankish swords' described by Ibn Fadlan, highly prized for their strength and flexibility. The makers of these swords also prizéd their work enough to put their signature or the name of their workshop on the hilt of the blade; the best known of these signatures was Ulfberht.

These swords were double-edged, quite distinct from the sword regarded as genuinely Scandinavian, the single-edged 'Sax' with deep grooves running along the back of the blade. Damascus work on the blade produced a distinctive wave or flame pattern, aiding flexibility which could be tested by bending the blade back to the hilt. Another form of damascene work was evident on the hilts in the form of decorative motifs produced by inlaid gold or silver wire in interlacing designs, as a sword from Monastyrische held in the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad demonstrates. Although Carolingian (Frankish) swords are dominant amongst finds in Eastern Europe, it must be noted that the blade is but one component of the sword, the handle and the sheath might well have been added by Scandinavian smiths who might also have produced the damascene work. It has also been further argued that the eastern trade in
Frankish swords was in Norse hands. Another difficulty in using swords as evidence of ethnicity concerns the production of weapons in the latter part of the Viking Age. Local or immigrant smiths in Eastern Europe might have adopted Scandinavian decorative motifs and Carolingian blade markings to produce a weapon hybrid in style, of which the early eleventh century Foscevataja sword in the Kiev Historical Museum might be an example.

The final object and possibly the best indicator of Scandinavian ethnicity is the Thor's hammer pendant and its associated neck ring made from partially twisted square rod. The pendant is known from the Stone Age in Scandinavia and was worn as an amulet. It became popular again as a cult object during the Viking Age, made from silver or iron. Thor was the god of thunder, and to a certain extent war, similar to the Roman Jupiter (Jove) and

![Thor's hammer pendant](image)

5. Thor's hammer pendant.

his weapon, the thunderbolt, was usually represented as a double-bladed axe or hammer, hence the pendant. As the silver pendants were of value, only the worthless iron
objects can truly indicate ethnicity, for only followers of Thor would keep them as a sign of faith.\textsuperscript{122}

Scandinavian burials within the northwest region of Russia appear to be distributed in two general patterns: either scattered and isolated or, more usually, concentrated in cemeteries and near settlements.\textsuperscript{123} The region southeast of Lake Ladoga (where the main arteries of the river trade routes eastward to the Volga, the Syas', Oyat' and Pasha rivers begin) forms the area containing a high concentration of burial mounds dating to the Viking Age. The area was populated at this time by a Finno-Ugric tribe, the Chud', for it was not until the mid-eleventh century that the Slavs made any significant impact on the area.\textsuperscript{124}

The majority of Scandinavian graves in the region are to be found in cemeteries, especially along the Pasha river. These include the remains of two ship-burials (as the presence of rivets, nails, and iron clamps attest) at Ust-Rybezhina dating to the tenth century, and at Il’ino on the Syas’ river.\textsuperscript{125} At Ust-Rybezhina the ship’s timbers had been destroyed, most probably by the funeral pyre during the cremation. A sword of Carolingian type, seven Thor’s hammer pendants and the remnants of a drinking horn were also discovered.\textsuperscript{126} Many oval and round brooches were discovered in graves throughout the region indicating a Scandinavian female presence. Other burials along the Pasha river at Vikhmes and Vakhrushevo contained spearheads thrust vertically into the ground along with bent and broken swords.\textsuperscript{127}

The evidence suggests that the Norse presence was
not insignificant, with almost forty Scandinavian burials in the Ladoga region and a third of all mounds excavated contained Scandinavian articles. However, compared to the size of the area and to the number of native burials the Norse presence should not be regarded as overwhelming. The distribution of Scandinavian burials, as well as individual finds, indicates considerable intermixing with the native Finnic population. All Scandinavian burials in cemeteries in the region southeast of Ladoga are either surrounded by, or contained in, native burial mounds. This, coupled with the presence of Norse females in the area, suggests that relations with the native population were, on the whole, relatively peaceful and stable.

The burials discovered in the Ladoga region provide evidence of Scandinavian activity in the roles of traders or mercenaries, and although the presence of females suggests a settled existence, the isolated nature of the gravesites does not indicate colonial activity. However, positive proof of Norse settlement can be found at the site that has provided some of the most significant Scandinavian material, Staraya Ladoga. On the bank opposite the town on the river Volhov, excavation of thirteen mounds has revealed what amounts to a Scandinavian cemetery. The mounds at Plakun contained no fewer than ten ship-burials, of which at least four were the graves of females. Although few objects have been reported, a Frisian tin-foiliated pitcher, known from sites in western Europe and Scandinavia, was uncovered. These pitchers might possibly have been the work of one man from the lower Rhineland area, dating to the early
ninth century, which also provides a clue to when the cemetery was in use, probably sometime during the ninth and tenth centuries.\textsuperscript{132}

Further south, near Smolensk, there is a major necropolis (burial ground) situated near the town of Gnezdovo, about ten kilometres south of the city. Trade routes from the Baltic Sea, running up the Western Dvina and a northern route running through Old Ladoga and Novgorod along the Volkhov and Lovat rivers, gave access into the region while minor waterways led to the Volga river further eastward. The Dnieper river also flowed out of the region south to the Black Sea, hence the area was a major crossroads. The necropolis at Gnezdovo has aroused intense debate amongst both Western and Soviet scholars because of the Scandinavian material discovered in burial mounds, requiring an explanation for the role of the Norsemen in the region.

The Gnezdovo necropolis is very large, some 3000 to 4000 burial mounds are estimated at the site.\textsuperscript{133} Excavation of the barrows began as long ago as 1874 and by the time of the Moscow University expedition led by Daniil Avdusin in 1949, about 650 barrows had been opened.\textsuperscript{134} Excavations under Avdusin have resulted in another 200 barrows being investigated.\textsuperscript{135} In 1967 a team from Leningrad University led by I.I. Lyapushkin studied settlements in the Gnezdovo region with results sharply differing from Avdusin's theories on the complex and the role of the Scandinavians there.\textsuperscript{136} This has led to two opposing schools of thought within Soviet archaeological circles, centred at the Universities of Moscow and Leningrad. Western scholars have
been unable to participate fully in the debate over Gnezdovo as a full report on the discoveries has not yet been published.  

According to Avdusin, Gnezdovo was the cemetery for the ancient city of Smolensk, mentioned in the Primary Chronicle. Smolensk emerged as a major centre in the ninth or tenth century, as the presence of three settlements dated by Avdusin to the period c.500-800 indicate. The central citadel of the city has not been discovered and neither has the cultural layer of the ninth and tenth centuries been investigated. The burials at Gnezdovo are represented as belonging to a Slavic 'druzhina' (warrior) group on the basis of weapon finds, with swords and arrowheads specifically mentioned. Avdusin makes the valid point that Carolingian swords were in common use in many parts of Europe, and not merely among the Vikings. Most of the arrowheads found were rhomboid in form, more typical of the Slavs. The Scandinavians used a lanceolate form, long and narrow, which have been found in small numbers at Gnezdovo. Avdusin appears to negate what he infers from the use of this material, however, in stating that arguments based only on the analysis of weapons are not sound as they might easily have been captured, bought or stolen.

Although Avdusin does not deny the presence of Norsemen in the region, he down-plays their role. He believes they are a minority and assigns perhaps four percent of the total amount of graves to Scandinavians, all dating to the limited period c.950-1000. Once in Russia these Vikings were rapidly assimilated with the native population.
leaving little trace of their own culture by the eleventh century.\textsuperscript{145} The appearance of hybrid objects also reflects this assimilation. These objects have adapted Norse decorative motifs and forms, perhaps misunderstood by the artisan who produced them. Avdusin believes they are not the products of second generation Scandinavians in Russia, but of native Slavs influenced by Norse decorative forms.\textsuperscript{147}

The views presented by Avdusin in the late 1960s aroused considerable debate and criticism, from Western and Soviet scholars. Western scholars, hampered somewhat by the lack of specific data of recent finds, have tended to attack the anomalies in Avdusin’s findings. The main points of contention centred on dates for the origin of the cemetery, the arrival of the Norsemen at Gnezdovo, and the size of the Norse population.

On the basis of the main finds from Gnezdovo, the extent of the Viking population and the date of their arrival must be re-evaluated. The site itself is in an area which, in the ninth century was not dominated by Slavs but by Baltic tribes (Letts and Lithuanians) with a Finno-Ugrian minority element.\textsuperscript{148} The Slavs, in particular the Krivichi, did not dominate the area until the latter ninth or possibly the early tenth century. Avdusin believed the cemetery was in use for only a short time during the tenth century, and dated the Scandinavian burials to the period c.950-1000.\textsuperscript{149} Many of the finds used to date these burials had the Borre style of ornamentation which has been re-dated to cover the period c.850-900.\textsuperscript{150} This means that Scandinavian burials must be dated to an earlier period. This also affects the
designation of other burials with no distinguishing ethnic traits, regarded by Avdusin as Slavic. As the cemetery belongs to the ninth century, when the Slavs cannot be proved to be the dominant culture at Gnezdovo, these neutral burials should be re-designated to other ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{151} This would also affect Avdusin's figure for the Scandinavian population at Gnezdovo, of about three to four percent.\textsuperscript{152} In calculating this amount, Avdusin has regarded the material selectively and in deciding that the rest of the cemetery is Slavic produces no formula to determine a Slav burial, hence the number he assigns to Scandinavian burials should not be regarded as reliable.\textsuperscript{152}

The amount of Scandinavian fibulae discovered at Gnezdovo, 38 from 27 burials, marks this area as the richest in Norse female remains.\textsuperscript{154} Weapon finds, although generally regarded as poor indicators of a Scandinavian presence, when mapped out and compared to the distribution of Scandinavian fibulae, clearly indicate a link between the two. Both are found in the same localised areas, particularly the Ladoga, Upper Dnieper, Yaroslavl, and Kievan regions.\textsuperscript{155} The picture only changes south of Kiev on the Steppes, where weapons were sold, lost or captured in numerous battles fought with nomadic tribes.\textsuperscript{156}

Scholars opposing the views of Avdusin within the Soviet Union on Gnezdovo appear to follow the precepts of I.I. Lyapushkin, who led excavations at the site and whose results were published posthumously in 1971.\textsuperscript{157} On the basis of his excavations, Lyapushkin believed that the settlements he examined dated from the ninth century and that the burial
mounds adjoining them were contemporary to the settlements.\textsuperscript{158} This view was developed by the students of Lyapushkin, in particular V.A. Bulkin and G.S. Lebedev.\textsuperscript{159} Gnezdovo appears as the centre of two converging movements, from the north by Scandinavians, and from the south involving the Slavs. The area converged upon, however, was already occupied by a third group, the Balts, and the community that subsequently arose in the region was a mixture of ethnic elements, described as the beginnings of ancient 'Russian' culture.\textsuperscript{160} Ultimately the dominant culture was Slavic. Groups of Slavs had arrived during the early ninth century, gradually assimilating the native Balts as they expanded.\textsuperscript{161} With the appearance of the Scandinavians in the mid-ninth century, this process was accelerated.\textsuperscript{162}

Evidence of the Scandinavian arrival is clearly indicated from barrows discovered at Novoselki, a small village between Gnezdovo and Smolensk.\textsuperscript{163} Other mounds containing Norse cremation graves, determined by Scandinavian rites and objects attest to their presence. Certain mound shapes are regarded as peculiarly Norse; quadrangular, high cuppola and flat-topped barrows in particular.\textsuperscript{164} The flat-topped mound appears to have been used in a quarter of all the burial mounds and some of the cremation graves in these contained the richest Scandinavian artifacts.\textsuperscript{165} Many of the barrows were empty, perhaps memorials to the dead, and of these 15 per cent are flat-topped. They appear to have been left by Scandinavians, who used the flat-topped mound for their cremation burials, and this provides a figure for the proportion of Scandinavian mounds to the total of excavated
barrows of 15 per cent.\textsuperscript{166} That the Norse population of Gnezdovo was gradually assimilated is attested by the erosion of burial rites, such as the inclusion of rivets in a burial instead of a full ship-burial.\textsuperscript{167} The appearance of hybrid objects also suggests a decline in Scandinavian cultural identity, although in other ways the Norsemen influenced the local population. This might be illustrated by graves where Scandinavian rituals have been adapted by the ruling aristocracy. Here a ship, or part of one, containing the corpse dressed in armour constituted the funeral pyre, over which a barrow surrounded by a trench with a single incline to the top was raised.\textsuperscript{168}

The Viking Age settlement at Gnezdovo appears to have arisen in response to the needs of commerce, serving as a centre for the production of crafts, similar to the other trading centres such as Old Ladoga and Novgorod.\textsuperscript{169} An analogy to the Swedish town of Birka is stimulating for they resemble each other closely in certain respects. Both became established about the same time in the ninth century, and went through similar phases of development, flourishing in the tenth century but declining c.1000.\textsuperscript{170} Their geographic location, situated on the cross-roads of trade routes also corresponds, as does the physical layout of the settlements, large unfortified areas with a small fortress and surrounding necropoli.\textsuperscript{171} Finally, both were dependent on craft production and trade, serving as staging posts and hosting a population made up of various ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{172} Ancient Smolensk probably transferred from its
original site to the Gnezdovo site at the beginning of the Viking Age, shifting back again in the eleventh century. This was not an unusual phenomenon in medieval Europe, as other towns rose to dominate commerce while nearby towns declined, as the towns of Helgo, Birka and Sigtuna in Sweden demonstrate. Dependence on foreign contacts was the undoing of such stage posts of trade for once commercial links were broken the repercussions were serious. Decline was inevitable if there was no outlet for exporting crafts and the flow of incoming commodities ceased. The cessation of trade in Kufic silver through the agency of the Bulgars of the Volga river c.970 seriously affected trading settlements in Russia and Sweden. Birka rapidly declined after this event and in its place Sigtuna rose to predominance. Smolensk (Gnezdovo) was perhaps more fortunate as it could still take advantage of the Dnieper river and trade with the Byzantine Empire.

In terms of archaeological evidence Scandinavian settlement appears to be very much limited to the isolated regions of Russia, around Ladoga and Gnezdovo. Yet there is a substantial literary tradition which suggests the Scandinavian Rus not only settled but also gained premier political control of portions of Ancient Russia. This tradition is embodied in what has become known as the 'legend of the calling-in of the Varangians', contained in the Primary Chronicle. In the year 859, according to the chronicler, Varangians from across the Baltic Sea imposed tribute on the Chud', Ves', Merians, Krivichians and Slovenes, Finno-Ugric and Slav tribes inhabiting the region
of northern Russia. These tributaries rose up and drove out the Varangians and attempted to govern themselves:

Discord thus ensued among them, and they began to war one against the other. They said to themselves, 'Let us seek a prince who may rule over us and judge us according to the Law.' They accordingly went overseas to the Varangian Russes.... They thus selected three brothers, with their kinfolk, who took with them all the Russes and migrated. The oldest, Rurik, located himself in Novgorod; the second, Sineus, at Beloozero; and the third, Truvor, at Izborsk. On account of these Varangians, the district of Novgorod became known as the land of the Rus.... After two years, Sineus and his brother Truvor died, and Rurik assumed sole authority.¹⁷⁷

Novgorod, according to this tradition, became the seat of the ruler of the Rus, who was invited in by local tribes to rule an extensive area from Lake Chudskoe eastward to Lake Beloe and from Lake Ladoga to as far south as the Polota river.

To the Scandinavians, Novgorod was known as Holmgardr or 'island town', yet in archaeological terms there is little to suggest their presence in the town. Three kilometres upriver (south) there is an island with a hill-fort dating to the ninth century, known as 'Rurikovo Gorodishche' (Rurik's fort), which has yielded Scandinavian material and does fit the name 'Holmgardr'.¹⁷⁸ Two runic inscriptions from Sweden also mention Holmgardr; in Södermanland there is a memorial to Sigvid, a ship's captain, who perished there with his crew, while on a stone at Sjusta, Uppland, Spjallbude is recorded to have "died in Holmgardr in Olaf's church".¹⁷⁹ Ibn Rusta, writing in the tenth century, described the area inhabited by the Rus as:

...an island around which is a lake, and the island in which they dwell is three days' journey through forests and swamps covered with trees and it is a damp morass such that when a man puts his foot on
the ground it quakes according to the moisture.\textsuperscript{180}

Given that Ibn Rusta compiled his report from an earlier account and never visited the region, his statement should be treated with caution.\textsuperscript{181} However, this early account does agree with the description of Novgorod and its surrounds. Lake Il'men is very close to the town and numerous small streams and marshes make the landscape quite damp.\textsuperscript{182} While this is an excellent natural defence and aid to river communications, it does not provide fertile surrounds to help feed the city.\textsuperscript{183} Ibn Rusta perhaps alludes to this commenting that the Rus "have no cultivated lands, they eat only what they carry off from the land of the Sagalaba [Slavs]."\textsuperscript{184}

In assessing the account of the invitation of the Rus in the Primary Chronicle many difficulties are encountered. To begin, the dating and subsequent chronology is of a somewhat arbitrary nature. A mistake in calculating the beginning of the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Michael III resulted in it starting ten years later in 852 instead of 842.\textsuperscript{185} Hence the date for the invitation of the Varangians is at least ten years out and is generally asserted as the year 852.\textsuperscript{186} This has meant that the other dates for this early period are, to a greater or lesser degree, wrong. The attack on Constantinople by Askold and Dir, is ascribed by the Primary Chronicle to the year 866, in fact occurred in 860. The date set by the chronicler was adjusted to fit in with developments after the invitation of the Varangians and the ordering of the new state.\textsuperscript{187}

The voluntary nature of the invitation for Rurik
and his brothers to rule must also be regarded with suspicion. The Varangians first appear as invaders, imposing tribute on certain tribes of the north. These same tribes rise up and drive the Varangians "back beyond the sea, refusing them further tribute". An attempt at self-government collapses and within a short period of time there is disorder and fighting. To regain peace, the tribes, in newly-found agreement, invite members of the same group they have just recently expelled to come and rule over them. This sequence of events is completely erroneous and may have been introduced to disguise the fact that the Varangian Rus were invaders. In later times the Rurikid dynasty paid groups of Scandinavian mercenaries to ensure their control of the state. However, the calling-in of Rurik and his brothers was an invitation to rule, not a request for military aid. By becoming the invited rulers of the newly formed coalition of tribes, the chronicler has not only lent legitimacy to the subsequent Rurikid dynasty, but also shown the early rulers to have introduced order by ending tribal feuding. This is perhaps a reflection of the internal political strife at the turn of the twelfth century and therefore a political message to the princes of the time.

The selection of the three brothers, Rurik, Sineus and Truvor, must be viewed in the light of other legends concerning the founders of states. The Saxon brothers, Hengist and Horsa, in Widukind’s account of their arrival in England, are implored by the native Britons to rule over them. A more striking parallel to the Varangian invitation is found in the 'Topographica Hibernica', concerning the
early history of Ireland, written c.1125. Here three Norwegian brothers, come across the sea to Ireland and settle in three localities, Dublin, Limerick and Waterford. The brothers motif was a popular one, and yet some semblance of the facts may survive account of the calling-in legend.

The names Rurik (Hroerek), Sineus (Signiutr) and Truvor (Thorvadr) are distinctly Norse. Rurik, the eldest of the brothers, has been identified with an historical character of western Europe, a Danish feudal lord, Rorik of Jutland. Rorik was a member of the Skioldung clan which opposed the Danish kings. His father, Halfdane, was expelled from Denmark by King Gudrod and sought refuge in the Frankish Empire, accepting Friesland (Frisia) as a fief from the Emperor. Rorik succeeded on his brother's death to Frisia, only to lose it after the Treaty of Verdun (843) when the fief became subject to Lothaire. For several years after this Rorik raided his former possessions and other areas of Western Europe, including one memorable raid on coastal England with 350 ships in which he almost captured London. During this period he stopped short of actually raiding territories of the empire, hoping that he might regain his former fief. Lothaire finally conceded and reinstated Rorik in Frisia on the understanding that he protect the Empire from Viking raids. In 854 Rorik was again forced to give up Frisia, but was compensated with southern Jutland. After this no more is heard of him, the inference being that Rorik established himself in Northern Russia by the coincidence of the date.

The Laurentian manuscript dated c.1377 of the
Primary Chronicle states that Rurik settled at Novgorod, Sineus at Beloozero and Truvor at Izborsk. However a mid-fifteenth century version discovered at the Hypatian Monastery at Kostromo relates a slightly different tale:

They took with them all the Russes and came first to the Slavs (Slovene), and they built the city of Ladoga. Rurik, the eldest, settled in Ladoga, Sineus, the second, at Beloozero, and Truvor, the third, at Izborsk. From these Varangians the land of Rus received its name. After two years Sineus died, as well as his brother Truvor, and Rurik assumed sole authority. He then came to Lake Il'men and founded on the Volkhov a city which they named Novgorod, and he settled there as prince, assigning cities...

In the light of archaeological findings this chronology appears more logical. Novgorod was not established until after Ladoga in the tenth century and the name 'Novgorod' (new-town) suggests a shift from an older location. But more importantly this passage illustrates that there were divergent traditions concerning Rurik's initial settlement.

The calling-in of the Varangians relied to a large extent on legendary material and traditions which have been elaborated on by the authors and subsequent revisors of the Primary Chronicle. Much of the early history of Kievan Rus' relies upon Byzantine sources using native traditions and legends to fill the empty spaces in the chronology. These legendary tales did have a purpose in the context of the period when the Primary Chronicle was composed, around the turn of the twelfth century. This was a time of endemic warfare amongst the various princes of the State, who were vying with each other for total mastery. Examining the calling-in legend in the light of these circumstances reveals
the messages that were infused in the tale.

Basically, the account produced was one in which the Rurikid dynasty was portrayed as the only legitimate rulers of the Kievan state through the motif of the calling-in of the three brothers. In the Primary Chronicle the descent of these rulers is claimed from a single ancestor, Rurik, and so the other brothers are conveniently written out, dying within years of settling in Russia. This leaves no heirs to rival the claim of Rurik's only son, Igor. However the chronicler cannot disguise the fact that there were other dynasties at other locations in this period, both of local and Scandinavian origin. The treaty of 912 between Oleg and the Greeks speaks of "serene and great princes", while Igor's agreement of 945 mentions "every kind of royal family". Other kings are mentioned well after the establishment of the Rurikids. Mal ruled the Derevlians when Igor was killed whilst raiding their territory in 945, while in Turov in the reign of Vladimir (978-1015), a Scandinavian, Tury, ruled. Another Scandinavian, Rogvolod, "had come from overseas, and exercised the authority in Polotsk".

The most glaring contradiction amongst the early rulers of the Kievan state may be seen in the account of Oleg (879-912), and his ambiguous portrayal in relation to Rurik's son, Igor. Early on in the Primary Chronicle, Oleg is depicted as Igor's 'voevoda' (military commander), yet in the treaty of 912 he is called "Great Prince of Rus". The episode concerning the capture of Kiev and the execution of its two leaders, the Varangians Askold (Hoskuldr) and Dir (Dyri), is enlightening in this context as it contains
several contradictory elements. Oleg, disguised as a merchant, summons the two leaders to greet him, but captures them and saying "You are not princes or even of princely stock, but I am of princely birth", presents the young prince Igor, the son of Rurik, and has Askold and Dir executed.\textsuperscript{210} The ambiguity is apparent, for Oleg appears as the all-powerful prince who can depose rulers falsely claiming princely rights, yet at the same time is bound to present Igor as the rightful heir of Rurik.\textsuperscript{211} Clearly Oleg’s role in early Russian history was quite extensive and the chronicler has subsequently minimalized some of the facts in order to emphasise the continuity of the Rurikid dynasty.

But to ensure this dynastic continuity from the progenitor, Rurik, the chronicler has stretched the chronology of some relationships to lengths that are hard to believe. If we allow that Igor was born after the death of his father c.880, and that he ascended the throne on the death of Oleg in 913, Igor would have been about 33, long able to rule in his own right as legitimate heir of Rurik.\textsuperscript{212} Igor’s marriage to Olga (Helga) is similarly unusual. According to the Primary Chronicle they were married in 903, and yet the only child of this marriage, Svyatoslav, was not born until 942, almost forty years later.\textsuperscript{213} After Igor’s death in a raid against the Derevlians in 945, Olga ruled for her son. During this time she made a visit to Constantinople in 957 where she was baptised. Here Olga was said to have charmed the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus through her beauty and wisdom and proposed that she became his wife.\textsuperscript{214} Given that she was married in 903 and so born c.890 at the
latest, Olga would have been about 67 at the time.\textsuperscript{218}

Obviously some of this early history has been lost and the surviving traditions have been adapted to lend continuity and legitimacy to the Rurikid dynasty. Although it is likely that Oleg was an historical ruler during the late ninth century, Igor is the first prince that can be verified through reliable external sources.\textsuperscript{219} The tradition of Rurik and his brothers may have been a late adaptation to which Igor was clumsily added to provide a link to a time when there were many petty rulers, of which Rurik was selected as the legitimate one by the chronicler.\textsuperscript{217} Sources predating the Primary Chronicle, Metropolitan Hilarion’s Eulogy of Prince Vladimir and Constantine Porphyrogenitus, both mention Igor as the earliest ruler of the Russians.\textsuperscript{218} Thus the calling-in legend has fused traditional elements and political characteristics of the turn of the twelfth century, leaving some historical fragments to theorise over but little solid material.

Kiev is regarded from the time of Oleg’s seizure c.880 as the capital of the Rus state. The traditional origin of the city follows a familiar motif. Three brothers, Kiy, Shchek and Khoriv, settled on three hills that made up Kiev, named after the eldest brother Kiy.\textsuperscript{217} The tribe resident in the district were the Polyanians, who, some time after the death of Kiy, had became subject to a neighbouring tribe, the Derevlians.\textsuperscript{220} By the time Askold and Dir arrived to take control, Kiev was an outpost of the Khazar Empire.

The Khazars took tribute from three Slav tribes, the Severians, the Vyatichians and the Polyanians, all of
whom border the Steppe region.\textsuperscript{221} The Khazars probably influenced early Kiev to a high degree, but very little of this contact remained after their downfall except for the city's name. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, in his description of a Rus trading expedition c.945, mentioned that Kiev was also known as 'Sambatas'.\textsuperscript{222} This was the Greek form of the Turkish word 'Sambat', as the Khazars spoke a Turkish dialect.\textsuperscript{223} 'Sam', meaning top, high or main, was commonly used to name Khazar towns, similar to the use of 'grad', 'gorod' or 'burg' in other languages.\textsuperscript{224} 'Bat' was the Turkish for strong, hence Sambat meant 'high fortress'. The Slavonic name for the heights of Kiev where the Prince's palace stood, Vyshgorod, has much the same meaning.\textsuperscript{225} The name Kiev also appears to be of Khazar (Turkish) origin. 'Kui' means low-place, especially the bank of a river or a wharf, while the word 'ev' designated a settlement and was used to round off the name of a town. The Khazar fort of Sarkel, on the Don river, was known as 'As-ev', or ferry-town.\textsuperscript{226} Thus 'Kuiev' meant harbour-settlement, denoting the lower part of the city as opposed to the fortress on the heights.\textsuperscript{227} The Khazars appear to have developed Kiev from three early settlements into a hill-fortress, perhaps for use as early warning of raids from nomadic tribes or as a collection centre for tribute. The influence of the Khazars in the rise of Kiev was considerably more than the sources infer but difficult to ascertain.

To the Vikings, Kiev was known as 'Koenugardr' and the first Norsemen to establish a permanent presence in the town were Askold (Hoskuldr) and Dir (Dyri).\textsuperscript{228} They had
accompanied Rurik and his brothers across the sea to northern Russia, and after the establishment of Rurik as sole ruler at Novgorod, sought permission to travel to Constantinople. Accepting that Rurik and company conquered the region between Lake Il'men and Lake Ladoga, it would be logical to suppose that Rurik's supporters would have to be compensated for in either land or loot. Not all could be provided for, however, and so some would have seized the opportunity to seek other areas to investigate. With Khazar power stretched, and under pressure from the attack of nomadic tribe, border areas like Kiev would become easy prey, and Viking mercenaries could have established themselves in the absence of the Khazars.

Under the rule of Oleg, Kiev becomes known as the "mother of Russian cities", and the centre of a state encompassing far reaching conquests. This picture of a powerful Kievan State presented by the chronicler is difficult to uphold and has not been consistently represented. Oleg's vast conquests upon his death dissolve away, requiring repeated reconquest by subsequent rulers. Yet no mention of widespread rebellion is recorded in the Primary Chronicle, apart from the Derevlians. By the time Svyatoslav comes to portion out his dominions among his sons, it appears that only Kiev and the territory of the Derevlians is under his direct control. The youngest son, Vladimir, almost missed out in receiving a realm, and was assigned Novgorod by the invitation of the inhabitants, who said they would chose their own ruler if one was not given to them. This episode does not support the theory of a large and strong state under the sway of a single ruler in the early
tenth century.

Although the centre of power of the Rus princes from the time of Oleg is portrayed as Kiev, much of the source material emphasizes the region of Lake Il'men as the power base of the early rulers. Constantine Porphyrogenitus (945-959), a well-informed Emperor, stated that Svyatoslav had his seat at 'Nemogardas' (Novgorod). The ties maintained with Scandinavia also suggest a close geographical with 'Gardariki' or Sweden the Great. Varangian mercenaries helped both Vladimir (978-1015) and Yaroslav (1015-1054) to maintain control of the state. A further example of the orientation of the ruling house may be seen in their selection of marriage partners. Igor's wife, Olga (Helga), must have been Scandinavian, while Vladimir, before his conversion and marriage to the Byzantine princess Anna, was married to Rogned (Ragnhildr), a daughter of the Scandinavian ruler of Polotsk. Dynastic alliances were also forged between Scandinavian royal families and Russia; Yaroslav married Ingigerd, the daughter of the Swedish King Olaf, and their daughter, Elizabeth (Ellisif), married King Harald Hadrada of Norway. Other Scandinavians visited and stayed in the region. Olaf Trygvasson, the Norwegian King, spent some time in his youth at Holmgardr as the guest of Vladimir, before the latter became ruler in Kiev in c.980. Both Magnus Olavson and Harald Hadrada sought asylum with Yaroslav in Russia after the defeat and death of St. Olav at the Battle of Stiklastadr in 1030.

Although Kiev did eventually become the capital of the early Russian state, this only occurred during the reign
of Vladimir (978-1015) when conquests of the scale ascribed to Oleg were actually undertaken, to provide the state with a geographical base in the south. By forging diplomatic and religious ties with the Byzantine Empire, the sphere of interest shifted southward, aided by the decline of the northern Volga trade route. Kiev now developed from a trade and production centre into a capital city worthy of the epithet "mother of Russian cities".241
NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO
SETTLEMENT AND STATE


5. Jones, op.cit., p.155

6. Kendrik, op.cit., p.21


10. Almgren, op.cit., p.7

11. ibid., p.7f


14. ibid., p.205

15. Jones, op.cit., p.34 and 39

16. ibid., p.43

17. Snorri Sturlason, *Heimskringla or the Lives of the Norse Kings*, edited with notes by E. Monsen, translated by A.H. Smith, (W. Heffer and Sons Ltd., Cambridge, 1932), Ynglinga Saga 41, p.31


22. Davidson, op.cit., p.25, Jones, op.cit., p.243, Oxenstierna, op.cit., p.41f

23. Jones, op.cit., p.242

24. Oxenstierna, op.cit., p.44

25. ibid., p.44

26. Jones, op.cit., p.242


29. ibid., p.243, Oxenstierna, op.cit., p.44

30. Davidson, op.cit., p.22f

31. ibid., p.27, Jones, op.cit., p.244, Oxenstierna, op.cit., p.45. The mouth of the river has since changed it's position.

32. Oxenstierna, op.cit., p.45

33. Hakluyt, op.cit., p.181, Oxenstierna, op.cit., p.46


36. Davidson, op.cit., p.52f

37. N.J. Dejevsky, 'Novgorod: The Origins of a Russian Town', in European Towns: Their Archaeology and Early History, collected essays, (Academic Press for the Council of British Archaeology, London, 1977), p.392f. In the early Middle Ages the lake was a part of the Gulf of Finland, but a drop in the water levels formed Lake Ladoga, now connected to the Gulf by the river Neva.

38. Almgren, op.cit., p.132, Jones, op.cit., p.251
39. Jones, op.cit., p.250


41. Davidan, op.cit., p.80, Jones, op.cit., p.250f

42. Davidan, op.cit., p.85, Davidson, op.cit., p.46


44. Liestol, op.cit., p.122


46. Stalsberg, op.cit., p.272

47. Davidan, op.cit., p.83

48. ibid., p.83


50. ibid., p.97


52. Dejevsky, *Mediaeval Scandinavia*, p.16

53. Stalsberg, op.cit., p.267

54. ibid., p.268

55. ibid., p.268

56. ibid., p.269

57. ibid., p.269


59. Stalsberg, op.cit., p.269

60. Jones, op.cit., p.330
61. Smyser, op.cit., p.107, see note 64, p.118
62. Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.281
63. ibid., p.281
64. ibid., p.280, Smyser, op.cit., p.107
67. Smyser, op.cit., see Appendix 2
68. Smyser, op.cit., p.98
70. Ibn Miskawaih, op.cit., p.73
74. Jones, op.cit., pp.169-71
75. Dunlop, op.cit., p.205f
76. Smyser, op.cit., p.95
77. ibid., p.99
78. Oxenstierna, op.cit., p.110, Smyser, op.cit., p.99
79. Smyser, op.cit., p.100
80. ibid., p.100
81. ibid., p.111
82. ibid., p.111, the Meshed text states that a cord was used.
83. Smyser, op.cit., p.99
84. Jones, op.cit., p.332
85. ibid., p.330, Smyser, op.cit., p.112
86. ibid., p.99

87. Saxo Grammaticus, op.cit., Book I. 31, p.37f


89. Smyser, op.cit., p.100, the 'Angel of Death' has been likened to the Valkyries of Odinn's Valhalla, the choosers of the slain, possibly indicating a priestess of the cult of Odinn. Simpson, op.cit., p.185

90. Turville-Petrie, op.cit., p.43 and 48, see also Snorri Sturlason, op.cit., Ynglinga Saga 7, p.5, Odinn was known to sit under the gallows of hanged men, hence his title 'Lord of the Ghosts' or 'Hanged Men'.

91. Turville-Petrie, op.cit., p.43 and 47

92. ibid., p.47

93. ibid., p.42

94. ibid., p.45

95. Smyser, op.cit., p.111

96. ibid., p.98

97. ibid., p.108f

98. Davidson, op.cit., p.307f

99. Turville-Petrie, op.cit., p.272

100. Simpson, op.cit., p.177


102. Simpson, op.cit., p.177

103. Adam of Bremen, op.cit., Book IV. 28, p.208

104. Oxenstierna, op.cit., p.110

105. Saxo Grammaticus, op.cit., Book VII. 236, p.283

106. Macartney, op.cit., p.210f


108. Stalsberg, op.cit., p.269
109. Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.276
110. ibid., p.276, Stalsberg, op.cit., p.270
111. Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.284, Stalsberg, op.cit., p.270
112. Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.382f
113. ibid., p.380
114. Stalsberg, op.cit., p.270
115. Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.379
116. ibid., p.379
117. A.N. Kirpichikov, 'Connections Between Russia and Scandinavia in the IXth and Xth Centuries as Illustrated by Weapon Finds', Varangian Problems, (Munksgaard, Copenhagen, 1970), p.64
118. Stalsberg, op.cit., p.270
119. Kirpichikov, op.cit., p.66-8
120. Stalsberg, op.cit., p.269
121. Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.412
122. Stalsberg, op.cit., p.270
123. ibid., p.280
124. Dejevsky, Mediaeval Scandinavia, p.17
125. Stalsberg, op.cit., p.292, see Appendix 3
126. Stalsberg, op.cit., p.292, Dejevsky, Mediaeval Scandinavia, p.17
127. Stalsberg, op.cit., p.293f, see Appendix 3
128. Stalsberg, op.cit., p.279
129. ibid., p.278
130. ibid., p.277 and 282
131. ibid., p.274, see Appendix 3
132. Stalsberg, op.cit., p.274, Dejevsky, Mediaeval Scandinavia, p.19

135. ibid., p.54


138. *P.V.L.*, p.55

139. Avdusin, op.cit., p.53

140. ibid., p.54

141. ibid., p.55

142. ibid., p.55

143. ibid., p.55f

144. ibid., p.56

145. ibid., p.58 and 60

146. ibid., p.61

147. ibid., p.56f


149. Avdusin, op.cit., p.57 and 60

150. Blindheim, op.cit., p.114

151. Kivikovski, op.cit., p.116

152. Avdusin, op.cit., p.58


155. Callmer, op.cit., p.68, see maps on p.66f

156. Callmer, op.cit., p.68


101
158. ibid., p.8

159. ibid., p.8


161. Bulkin, op.cit., p.11, Lebedev and Nazarenko, op.cit., p.7

162. Bulkin, op.cit., p.11

163. ibid., p.11

164. ibid., p.12

165. Dejevsky, Mediaeval Scandinavia, p.9

166. ibid., p.10

167. ibid., p.14

168. ibid., p.14

169. ibid., p.12

170. ibid., p.12

171. ibid., p.12

172. ibid., p.12

173. Blinheim, op.cit., p.113

174. ibid., p.114

175. Jones, op.cit., p.174 and 265

176. P.V.L., p.59

177. ibid., p.59

178. Jones, op.cit., p.284, see note, Dejevsky, Mediaeval Scandinavia, p.23f, Stalsberg, op.cit., p.288


180. Macartney, op.cit., p.213

181. Davidson, op.cit., p.63

182. Dejevsky, European Towns, p.392
183. ibid., p. 392
184. Macartney, op.cit., p.213
185. P.V.L., p.30

186. I. Boba, Nomads, Norsemen and Slavs: Eastern Europe in the Ninth Century, (Mouton, The Hague, 1967), p.110f, suggests the year 853-4, reached by analogy. The six years added to the date of the attack on Constantinople in 860 should be subtracted from 862, the year of the invitation in the Chronicle, thus giving the year of invitation as 856. As the events of three years are assigned to this year, this would mean the expulsion and subsequent invitation occurred c.853-4.

187. P.V.L., p.32
188. ibid., p.59
189. ibid., p.91, Vladimir returned with Varangian mercenaries after fleeing overseas, and p.124, Yaroslav calls for Varangian mercenaries.

191. ibid., p.181
192. Oxenstierna, op.cit., p.106
193. ibid., p.105

194. S.H. Cross, 'The Scandinavian Infiltration into Early Russia, Speculum, volume 21, 1946, p.506, it has been suggested that the names Sineus and Truvoir were appellations for Rurik, derived from the Norse 'Signjotr' (victorious) and 'Thruwar', (trustworthy), N.T. Belaiev, 'Rorik of Jutland and Rurik of the Russian Chronicles', Saga Book of the Viking Society for Northern Research, volume 10, 1928-9, p.244f
195. Belaiev, op.cit., p.277
196. ibid., p.284
197. G. Vernadsky, Ancient Russia, (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1943), p.388
198. P.V.L., p.59
199. ibid., p.233, note 20

200. However, this may have been derived from Rurik's Fort and not as far afield as Old Ladoga.
201. Lichachev, op.cit., p.184
202. P.V.L., p.31
203. Lichachev, op.cit., p.174
204. P.V.L., p.60
205. Lichachev, op.cit., p.177
206. P.V.L., p.66 and Lichachev, op.cit., p.176
207. P.V.L., p.79 and 91
208. ibid., p.91
209. ibid., p.66, Lichachev, op.cit., p.177, Oleg is the Slavic name for Helgi, possibly meaning a native of Halogaland, a region of Norway.
210. P.V.L., p.61
211. Lichachev, op.cit., p.178 and 181
213. P.V.L., p.64, Paszkiewicz, op.cit., p.151
214. P.V.L., p.82, Davidson, op.cit., p.248f
215. Paszkiewicz, op.cit., p.151
216. The treaty of 912 mentions Oleg as the Great Prince of Rus, P.V.L., p.66 and a Khazar document mentions a certain 'Helgu' as a leader of the Russians which has been associated with Oleg, S. Schechter, 'An Unknown Khazar Document', Jewish Quarterly Review, 1912, p.196f and 217f
217. Lichachev, op.cit., p.182, Paszkiewicz, op.cit., p.151
219. P.V.L., p.54
220. ibid., p.58
221. ibid., p.59, Dunlop, op.cit., p.198
223. J. Brutzkus, 'The Khazar Origin of Ancient Kiev',
Slavonic and East European Review, volume 22, 1944, p.111

224. ibid., p.112f
225. ibid., p.113
226. ibid., p.118
227. ibid., p.118
228. P.V.L., p.43 and 60
229. Boba, op.cit., p.118f
230. ibid., p.119f
231. P.V.L., p.61
232. Paszkiewicz, op.cit., p.151f
233. P.V.L., p.87
234. ibid., p.87
235. D.A.I., p.57
236. P.V.L., pp.91, 124, 130, 135
237. ibid., p.91 and 242, note 75

238. Paszkiewicz, op.cit., p.159f, Snorri Sturlason, op.cit., King Harald’s Saga 17, p.515. Elizabeth (Ellisif) later married the King of Denmark, Svein Estridsson.

239. Snorri Sturlason, op.cit., History of Olaf Trygvasson 7, p.118f

240. ibid., History of St Olav 252, p.473 and the History of Harald Hardrada 2, p.505

241. P.V.L., p.61
CHAPTER THREE

TRADE

Commercial links with Scandinavia were not a phenomenon of the Viking Age but had been developed over the centuries from the time of the first Germanic contacts with the Roman Empire in the south. Roman interests in the north were limited to what goods could be gained from the region, and two expeditions were sent to explore the region. In 4 AD, during the reign of the Emperor Augustus (31 BC-14 AD), a fleet left the mouth of the Rhine and explored the Jutland Peninsula as far as the lands of the Cimbri, before sailing up the Elbe to join up with the army of Tiberius Caesar, who had marched overland 400 miles to defeat the Chauci and Langobardi tribes.¹ In the reign of the Emperor Nero (54-68), a knight was sent northward by Julianus, who was in charge of gladiatorial games to be given by the Emperor, through central Europe to secure amber to adorn the display. The journey was so successful that enough amber was collected to decorate all the equipment used at the games.²

Several routes connected the Empire with the Baltic Sea, from either Cologne or Mainz on the Rhine through central Europe, or further eastward departing from Carnuntum (near Vienna) on the Danubian border through the Moldavian Gap, across the Carpathian mountains and down the Oder to the lower raches of the Vistula.³ Along these routes weapons,
precious metals and glassware made their way northward in exchange for furs, slaves and amber, highly-prized for use as jewellery which the Romans correctly believed originated from "liquid seeping from the interior of a species of pine". Tacitus said the Aestii (possibly Ests), who lived in the region south of the Nieman (Memel) river, gathered the amber from the shallows of the sea and were astonished to be paid for it."

Central Europe, however, was not the only region through which commerce between the Roman Empire and the north flowed. As the western areas of the Empire faced increasing economic distress, due to the incursions of barbarian tribes and the Eastern Empire assumed more importance, so the river-systems of the central and northern Ukrainian region were developed for trading purposes from about the second century. The Ostro-Goths (East Goths), presumably part of the Gautos of Sweden or the Gotones of the southern Baltic region, established a kingdom during the period c.200-370 which stretched, at its height under Hermanric, from the shores of the Black Sea to the Baltic, operating out of the city of Panticapaeum in the Cimmerian Bosphoros. Violent incursions by the Mongolian Huns destroyed this small state and forced the Goths to move westward in the fourth century, into the territory of the Empire. In 558 the Avars invaded and established a Khaganate extending from southern Russia to their power-base on the Danube. They gained enough strength to challenge seriously the Byzantines in the south and the Empire of Charlemagne to the west. By the eighth century they had virtually
disappeared as the East Slavs began to migrate into the area. They were more peaceful than their predecessors, interested in hunting and agriculture, establishing towns and engaging in commerce. These subsequent invasions and migrations caused a severe decline in trade throughout central Europe, while in the west commercial links weakened as the Western Empire collapsed. Meanwhile, in northern Russia, the Volga river began gradually to assume a more active role, the region of the Kama valley becoming by the sixth and seventh centuries an active centre where northern goods were exchanged for Persian (Sassanian) and Byzantine silver.\textsuperscript{10}

The central region of Sweden around Lake Malar enjoyed comparatively lively contacts with the Romans from about the first century, which aided the rise of the settlement of Helgo sometime in the first century.\textsuperscript{11} The extent of this trade may be measured by seventy Roman gold coins found at Helgo, thirty more than have so far been discovered elsewhere in the whole of Sweden.\textsuperscript{12} A hoard deposited about 550 containing a gold bracelet and 47 gold coins from mints of both the western and eastern parts of the Empire, along with glassware dating to the fourth and fifth centuries, gives an indication of the wealth that reached the north and the extent of the contacts with the south.\textsuperscript{13} Helgo was an important metalware production centre, at its height in the fifth and sixth centuries exporting square-headed and equal-armed brooches as well as buckles across the Baltic Sea to Finland and Gotland.\textsuperscript{14} This trade developed as contacts were made with regions further eastward, although it is unlikely that these were direct links. The most stunning
piece of evidence of contact with the Orient was discovered at Helgo: a small bronze statue of Buddha, belonging to a rare group of bronzes dated to the sixth or seventh centuries and originating from northern India. Although this unique object probably reached Scandinavia by means of trade it is just as possible that it was plundered and brought back as booty. It, of course, impossible to date the arrival of the statue in Sweden; it was certainly made before the Viking period, but no-one can now say when it was first sold or stolen.

More reliable evidence of early eastern contacts is a significant amount of Sassanian and Umayyad coinage concentrated in the Lake Malar region, especially in graves at Birka, the settlement that eclipsed Helgo in the ninth century. These coins were all struck before the mid-eighth century and deposited as small hoards, or in graves, either before or very soon after 750. Although the finds are not on the same scale as hoards deposited in the ninth and tenth centuries, the modest amount of Sassanid silver in particular must be viewed as evidence of early trade. The Swedes in the seventh and eighth centuries were establishing themselves across the Baltic and indirect contacts with the Volga trade route may have been made, using the Baltic tribes as intermediaries. However, Finnish activity was also strong and a hoard of 25 dirhems discovered in the Aland Islands deposited c.630 may indicate that trade was flowing further northward.

Commerce in the region was again dislocated in the late seventh century, this time due to the Muslim
expansion. In the earlier part of the century the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (reigned 610-641), with the help of the Khazars, had destroyed the power of the Sassanid state in three campaigns culminating in a battle near Mosul in 627. Unfortunately, this and other wars against the Avar Khaganate in the north exhausted the Byzantine Empire. In its weakened state, many possessions were wrested from it by the rapidly expanding Muslims, under the rule of the Umayyads. Syria and Persia were brought quickly under Islamic rule and soon after the death of Heraclius in 641, Egypt was added. By the early eighth century, the Umayyads controlled the whole of the North African shore and the Iberian Peninsula. Their westward expansion was finally checked by the Frankish Kings, Charles Martel and Pepin the Short.

The economic impact of Islamic expansion has been vigorously debated ever since Henri Pirenne put forward his views on the subject in the period following World War I. For Pirenne, the Islamic invasions shattered the ancient unity of the Mediterranean community. Early successes by the Muslims in Syria and Egypt did not necessarily mean the end of all mercantile traffic between Occident and Orient, but once Islamic expansion reached the Western Mediterranean region, commercial links became untenable and by the eighth century navigation in this area had ceased. One result of the end of commercial intercourse with the Orient was the disappearance of items hitherto common in certain parts of the Occident: papyrus, spices and luxury clothes made of silk or fine cotton. Other consequences symptomatic of the declining economy, in Pirenne’s opinion, were the
disappearance of gold currency and the increased use of silver coinage and the loss of an international merchant class.\textsuperscript{25} The nature of commerce in the Mediterranean sphere changed considerably in a very short period of time. Although the Byzantine navy managed to prevent total Islamic mastery of the sea, the Mediterranean - in Pirenne's view - became a 'hostile Muslim lake' in which piracy was rife.\textsuperscript{26} While some merchants manage to plie their trade eastward from Italian ports, the rest of Western Europe was isolated by piracy and war.\textsuperscript{27}

In terms of northern trade to the East, Pirenne's comments on Mediterranean commerce may appear out of context. Whether Pirenne was accurate in his account of the Carolingian economy is of less importance than his statement on the results of the cessation of Mediterranean trade. It must be noted, however, that Pirenne's theory has been attacked point by point in terms of attributing to Islamic expansion the blame for changes in the economy of the West. Moreover, the disappearance of papyrus and spices are not now thought as complete as he claimed. The Papal Chancery, for example, continued to use papyrus well into the eleventh century, and any decline in the use of papyrus may have been due to an upsurge in the use of parchment.\textsuperscript{28} Decline in gold and silk supplies was perhaps more the result of Byzantine state monopolies than of Islamic expansion cutting supplies.\textsuperscript{29} The merchant class could still have maintained trade with the Muslims who were not at all averse to trading with the 'infidels'. As long as they paid their customs tax and carried a security pass they were free to do so.\textsuperscript{30}
Italian merchants took advantage of this, as did the Radanite Jews based near Baghdad, who found the Muslims far more tolerant in religion than the orthodox Christians. For Pirenne, the apparently sudden shattering of the unity of the Mediterranean world changed the direction by which trade reached the Orient. The Carolingians looked to the Germanic north as the commercial link to the East with the development of trade routes using the Russian river-systems to connect the Baltic region and the Caspian Sea.

But was Scandinavian eastern trade a result of commercial inertia between Occident and Orient? Trade in the Russian region, as has been noted, was not new, but had developed over several centuries. But during the ninth and tenth centuries, the scale of commerce and the direct nature of the links increased. Previously, only modest amounts of silver and gold had reached the north yet during the Viking Age a veritable flood of silver came through Russia to the Baltic Sea. Viking merchants travelled to the centres of exchange on the Volga themselves rather than depend on intermediaries. The development of this trade was by no means a response to conflict in the Western Mediterranean, for that conflict had ended a hundred years before the development of large-scale trade to the East. Commerce through Russia appears to have been stimulated by a conflict in the East, specifically in the Caucasus region between the Muslims and the Khazars, and the result of the Muslim victory.

Islamic expansion by the Umayyad Caliphs in the mid-seventh century into Persian lands brought under their
sway the silver rich region of Transoxiana. It also brought them into conflict with the fledgling Khazar state, a nomadic Turkish group which inhabited the region of the lower Volga river, southward to the Caucasus divide. The struggle that ensued to dominate this area is comparable to the one played out north of the Pyrenees at about the same time.\textsuperscript{33} In this struggle, however, the Khazars were defeated in battle in 737 by Marwan ibn-Muhammad, but this advantage was not pressed by the Muslims. The Khazar Khagan was offered the choice of embracing Islam or the executioner's sword and he wisely asked for instruction in the Islamic faith.\textsuperscript{34} In doing so he ensured the survival of a state that would one day become an Empire; one that would remain a threat to the Caliphate.\textsuperscript{35} A crisis within Islam aided the Khazar's survival. A coup d'état under the leadership of Abul-'Abbas and his brother brought down the Umayyad dynasty in 749, heralding both the beginning of the Abbasid Caliphate and also the disintegration of the far-flung Islamic Empire. The Umayyads secured themselves in Spain while other dynasties, the Aghlabids and Idrisids, secured themselves in North Africa.\textsuperscript{36} In this situation, the Abbasids found it prudent to maintain a policy of détente with the Khazars, for neither had the strength to control the strategic Caucasus region.\textsuperscript{37}

With the war in the region now at an end, commercial development between the two states began in earnest. The Khazars took advantage of the enormous wealth flowing northward from the Caliphate in exchange for slaves and furs, to extend their power base from the Steppes to the forest, where they established their sway over neighbouring
peoples: the Bulgars, Polyanians, Vyatchians and Severians. The trade initiated by peaceful relations between the Khazars and Muslims attracted others to secure a slice of the wealth flowing up the Volga river, and amongst these were the Scandinavian Rus.

Finno-Ugric groups, the Ves' of the Lake Onega region, the Finns and the Karelians of the Kola Peninsula, competed with the Scandinavians in supplying the Muslims with northern goods. But their success in competition with the experienced Vikings might not have been very high. Scandinavian burials in the Ladoga region, along with graves containing Scandinavian objects, on the whole appear to have richer grave-goods compared to contemporary Finno-Ugric and Slavonic burials in the same region. Compared to burials in Sweden, however, the Scandinavian burials in northern Russia are well-equipped but not exactly rich. This indicates two things: firstly, that the men who travelled eastward from Sweden and the islands of Gotland and Aland were not of the uppermost classes of Viking society, but more of the middling class; and secondly, that Viking merchants were more successful than their opposition. This might have been the result of a number of factors: sharper trading practice, better organisation, the quality of the goods, or the number of merchants involved which would aid in securing a larger section of the market. An indication of the depth of involvement in mercantile activities by the Vikings can be seen by the presence of scales and weights in burials in the Ladoga region. Almost half the male graves with Scandinavian finds contain portable scales, while in the case
of couples they are present in over a third of the burials.\textsuperscript{40}

A list of northern wares that could be purchased at Bulgar in the tenth century is supplied by a Muslim writer, al-Mukadisi.\textsuperscript{41} At the head of the list were slaves, mostly of Slavonic origin, and various types of furs; ermine, sable, marten, black and white foxes, beaver, coloured hare, squirrel and miniver. Other goods included honey, wax, birch-bark, hazel-nuts, acorns, coriander seeds, grapes, dried figs, corn, maple-wood, amber, fish-glue, fish-teeth (walrus tusks), goat-skins, leather, as well as pigs, sheep, cattle and goats. Weapons were also available: arrows, coats-of-mail and swords, as were more domestic goods; brocade, caps, thread and lengths of cloth. This extensive range of wares available was supplied by various merchants apart from the Vikings. Many of the goods were produced

6. Merchants' scales which fold into a small container.
locally by Slavs, Balts and Bulgars, especially the agricultural wares. Finno-Ugric traders were probably in the best position to supply some of the furs and products from the far-north, such as fish-glue and walrus tusks. The White Sea region, inhabited by the Bjarmian (Karelian) tribes was, according to Othere who sailed there in the ninth century, the best area to hunt walrus.\textsuperscript{42} Their ivory tusks were prized by Muslims for use as decorative inlay, to make prayer beads and for the handles of swords and daggers.\textsuperscript{43}

Viking Rus traders appear to have specialised in luxury goods which rendered the greatest profits and were easily transportable. A tenth century writer, Ibn Rusta, named trade as the principal activity of the Rus, dealing in "sables and grey squirrels and other furs".\textsuperscript{44} He also mentions that they dress and treat their slaves well, so indicating the other item of their trade. Ibn Fadlan, a contemporary of Ibn Rusta, confirms this report and provides other details observed at his meeting with Rus traders at Bulgar in 922. The Bulgars, he said, allowed the Rus to "build big houses of wood on the shore [of the Volga river], each holding ten to twenty persons more or less".\textsuperscript{45} Slaves and sables were the principal wares for exchange, but before commencing transactions the Rus traders undertook an interesting ritual. A merchant prostrated himself before wooden idols set in the ground, and then began to enumerate his wares, offering the central idol gifts and asking: "I wish that you would send me a merchant with many dinars and dirhems, who will buy from me whatever I wish and will not dispute anything I say".\textsuperscript{46} If business is not proceeding very
well he may return to the idols again to proffer gifts, but if he has done well he sacrifices animals to the gods.  

A further interesting aspect in the account of Ibn Fadlan is his description of the Rus women. They are said to wear:

...on either breast a box of iron, silver, copper or gold ... Each box has a ring from which depends a knife. The women wear neck rings of gold and silver, one for each 10,000 dirhems which her husband is worth, some women have many.  

The breast box might possibly be a description of the oval brooches used by Scandinavian women. Ibn Fadlan describes the women as 'wives' of the Rus traders, and it is possible that these were slaves taken as concubines for the duration of the journey. Certainly the relationship between the traders and his slaves was congenial to say the least:

...a man will have sexual intercourse with his slave girl while his companion looks on.... A merchant who arrives to buy a slave girl from them may have to wait and look on while a Rus completes the act of intercourse with a slave girl.  

But it would be unlikely that slave-girls would be given such wealth in neckrings, so perhaps Scandinavian women did make the journey with their husbands. Female burials in the Ladoga region containing Scandinavian goods have yielded merchants' scales in twenty percent of the cases, and it cannot be certain that the graves of couples are all cases of suttee; slave-girls following their master to the grave in sacrifice.  

Slavery in the north was well entrenched by the beginning of the Viking Age. They were a class along with the jarls and bonders, descended, according to the 'Rigspula', from the son of Rig and Edda, named Thrall.
Thralls had no formal rights and were, to all intents, an integral part of an estate, along with cattle and horses. Because of the labour intensiveness of agriculture at this time, slaves were essential to the viability of Norse farms. There was some obligation on the part of the owner to look to his thralls' welfare, in terms of ensuring their fitness to work.\textsuperscript{52} Essentially the owner decided the conditions and fate of his slaves. Female thralls could become concubines, the offspring becoming supplements to the stock of the estate, unless recognised by the father.\textsuperscript{53} The ultimate fate could be death, sacrificed to follow their master to the underworld, killed because they were past usefulness due to old age or infirmity, or, in the case of infants, exposed because there were too many mouths to feed.\textsuperscript{54} Death, however, was not the only means of escape from servitude, for freedom could be gifted, bought or earned. Unn (aud) the Deep-minded of Iceland set free her bondsman Erp Meldun (Mael Duin), the son of a Scottish noble, and gave him, along with her other thralls, land to farm.\textsuperscript{55} Erling Skjalgsson followed a more pragmatic practice. On his estate he kept more than thirty thralls and allowed them to work plots of land in their own time. Once they had earned a set price they could redeem themselves, and with the money Erling bought fresh slaves.\textsuperscript{56}

Slaves could be born into bondage, or reduced as a punishment. Some served as temporary thralls to pay off a debt.\textsuperscript{57} The vast majority however, were captured by raiders. Many came from overseas, especially from the British Isles and the southern Baltic region or the Slavic regions of Russia. Ibn Rusta, in the tenth century, tells of the Rus
sailing in ships to raid the Slavs: "and they take them prisoner and carry them off to Khazar and Bulkar [Bulgar] and trade with them there". But Scandinavians themselves were not spared the threat of servitude. Olaf Trygvasson (King of Norway 995-1000) was captured as a youth by pirates from Estland, along with his mother (Queen Astrid) while travelling to Russia. Both were fortunate to be redeemed by kinsmen or former subjects who recognised their royal status. Adam of Bremen tells of the Danes in the eleventh century preying on people of their own nation: "as soon as one of them catches another, he mercilessly sells him into slavery either to one of his fellows or to a barbarian". He goes on to say that women who have been raped are sold immediately. A poet at the court of Harald Hardrada perhaps gives the best insight on slave-taking in his description of a raid carried out by the Norwegian King on the islands of Fyn and Zealand with the future King of Denmark, Svein Estridsson, in the eleventh century:

The Danes, those who still lived, fled away, but fair women were taken. Locked fetters held the women's bodies. Many women passed before you [King Harald] to the ships; fetters bit greedily the bright-fleshed ones.

Christians are known to have been captured and served as thralls in northern lands. The Church could do little to help those Christians who suffered slavery, but efforts were made to stop the traffic to the Muslim states in the south. Some enlightened churchmen such as Anskar and Rimbert spoke out against slavery in the north and redeemed those Christians they could, selling church vessels and their own possessions to do so. On the whole, the Church ignored
the vast traffic in human misery because it mostly involved pagans to the profit of Christian and pagan merchant alike. Only when the northern lands had been converted did the practice of keeping slaves gradually lose favour, so that by the thirteenth century it had virtually disappeared.

Some of the captured slaves from overseas were sold in northern markets. The Laxdoela Saga tells of the Icelander Hoskuld visiting the market of Gothenberg in Sweden, and his encounter with a merchant, Gilli the Russian. Hoskuld enquired about buying a bondswoman and was led to Gilli's tent and shown twelve women. One quite attractive but shabbily dressed slave caught his eye and he agreed to pay the high price of three marks of silver, three times the price of the other women. Gilli claimed the woman was deaf and dumb but later Hoskuld found this to be untrue, the woman claiming to be the daughter of an Irish King.

Most of the slaves were exported to the Caliphate, an insatiable client willing to pay exceptional prices for "men and girls for labour and lust, eunuchs for sad service". From clearing houses at Regensburg on the Danube and Magdeburg on the Elbe, captive men and women travelled south to Lyons and on to the Emirate of Cordova. Jews were employed to castrate men, for eunuchs were a speciality of this route and vast fortunes could be made from their sale.

However, the volume of this western route did not compare to the traffic flowing eastward along the great river-systems of Russia. The Vikings sold most of their goods at the markets of Bulgar and Khazaria. From there the slaves were sent either along the caravan route to Khwarizm
and the great market at Samarkand, or south to Darbend and on to the markets of the Caliphate. Both the Bulgars and the Khazars profited from this transit trade, aiding their rise to political predominance in the Steppe and middle Volga regions. Ibn Khurdadbeh mentions Rus traders reaching Baghdad by camel from Jurjan in the ninth century with Slav eunuchs serving as their interpreters. This was probably not the usual practice of the Rus who would have been satisfied with selling their goods at the northern markets. The further south one travelled the more customs tax one paid to the Khazars and the Muslims and, consequently, the smaller became one's profit margin. Some slaves fetched high prices: around 912, for example, a pretty slave-girl cost 150 dinars while Nubian girls, prized as concubines, could fetch up to 300 dinars. Artistically talented ones were more expensive still: a female singer was sold to an aristocrat in 912 for 13,000 dinars. White slaves were most highly prized, even an unskilled slave-girl could fetch 1,000 dinars or more. It should be remembered these were the top prices paid for the highest quality slaves and the vast majority were not nearly as expensive. However the success of the Samanids (who ruled the region of Khurasan and Khwarizm in succession to the Taharids) in taking prisoners produced a glut in the tenth century, and by 985 the price had dropped to between 20 and 30 dirhems (1 or 2 dinars).

The trade routes along the river-systems of Russia reflected the terminal points of trade where goods were sold. There were two major routes, a northeastern one by way of the Volga river to Great Bulgar, and a southern route following
the Dnieper river to the Black Sea and on to Constantinople.

The Primary Chronicle describes this route from the Varangians to the Greeks:

Starting from Greece, this route proceeds along the Dnieper, above which a portage leads to the Lovat'. By following the Lovat', the great lake Il'men is reached. The river Volkhov flows out of this lake and enters the great lake Nevo [Ladoga]. The mouth of this lake opens into the Varangian Sea [the Baltic]. Over this sea goes the route to Rome, and on from Rome overseas to Tsar'grad [Constantinople].

The chronicler also knew of routes to the east and to the Baltic other than this north-south road, which were closely connected in one central region where the Dnieper originated, known as the Valdai Hills:

The Dvina has its source in this same forest, but flows northward and empties into the Varangian Sea. The Volga rises in this same forest but flows to the east, and discharges through seventy mouths into the Caspian Sea. It is possible by this route to the eastward to reach the Bulgars and the Caspians, ... Along the Dvina runs the route to the Varangians, ... But the Dnieper flows through various mouths into the Pontus [the Black Sea].

This region was the nerve centre of communications in four directions, and by dominating it and other key portages through the placement of fortresses (ostrogs), it was possible to control the vast area of central Russia.

The northeastern route to the Volga did not necessarily originate in the Valdai Hills, for it was possible to follow several minor waterways from Lake Ladoga to the east. The Baltic Sea was connected to the lake by the Neva river although the level of the sea was higher in the Viking Age and it is possible that the lake virtually opened into the sea. From Lake Ladoga one could go further north up the Svir' river to Lake Onega and then follow what is now
the Kovzha canal to Lake Beloe. On the far side of the lake was the town of Beloozero, the domain of Rurik's brother Sineus. From Lake Beloe the Sheksna flowed into the Volga. Southerly routes from the lake following the Syas', Pasha or Oyat' rivers with a portage to the Mologa flowing into the Volga, appear to have been more popular. Many burials along these rivers have yielded Scandinavian objects, swords, fibulae and merchants' scales of the Viking Age.

Lake Ladoga also features as part of the southern route, connected to Lake Il'men by the Volkhov river. This river also connects two major trade stations, Aldeigjuborg (Old Ladoga) and Novgorod. From Lake Il'men it was possible to travel further east by travelling along the Msta and then by a series of portages to either the Mologa or the Tiver-tsa rivers, both of which flowed into the Volga. To proceed further south, one followed the Lovat' to the southwestern part of the Valdai Hills near the region of Smolensk. In the Viking Age this was a major crossroads, as indicated by the vast necropolis near Gnezdovo, the site of ancient Smolensk. This was a production and collection centre for goods, serving an ethnically mixed population mostly engaged in trade. It was also possible to reach the Baltic Sea from this area by following tributaries of the Lovat' and portaging to rivers flowing into the Dvina. One could go further south by the same process to the Nieman which flowed into the Gulf of Riga. The key portage, however, was to the upper reaches of the Dnieper which lead south to the political centre of Kiev, and so it was important for the ruler of Kiev to retain control of this region. Kiev was
situated at a crossroads of major international routes, following the Dnieper south to Constantinople, and the other a caravan route from Prague and Cracow travelling through Kiev and across the Steppes to Khazaria and beyond. One could also reach both the Nieman and Dvina rivers to the north and the Vistula to the west by using tributaries of the Dnieper.

Although the southern route was essentially linked to the Byzantines, it could be used to reach the land of the Khazars. An early report by Ibn Khurdadbeh describing the trade route of the Rus in the middle of the ninth century, mentions Rus traders selling their merchandise to the Byzantines at Cherson and at the Khazar city of Tmutarakhan, sometimes proceeding further to the capital of the Khazar Empire at Itil:

If they want, they [take another route, that is, they] go by [the river Severskii] Donets, which is called 'the river of the as-Saqaliba', until they reach the Khazarian [river] arm [i.e. to the Don, to the place where stood the Sarkel fortress]; [there] the Khazarian lord takes from them a tenth, and they [sailing down the Volga] cross Khamlikh [the mercantile part of Itil, the Khazarian city].

From here Rus merchants entered the Caspian Sea and travelled to Gurgan (Jurjun) and on to Baghdad. One reason why this route to the Khazars might have been used in preference to following the Volga south, would be the Bulgar attempt to monopolise trade links with the south, thus forcing merchants to travel to Great Bulgar. The tenth century writer, Ibn Hawkel, describes the region north of the Bulgars occupied by the Rus and their trade practice in these words:

... no one goes for the purposes of trade further than Bulgar. No one goes to Arthn, because there
was possible to raise a sail. Other difficulties were also encountered as the trade routes consisted of several river-systems which could sometimes only be reached by portage overland. Obstacles such as rapids might also need to be portaged around. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, in his tenth century account of a Rus trading journey down the Dnieper to Constantinople, describes how the merchants negotiated seven large cataracts at one section of the river. Most of the time the Rus were able to pass through the rapids by putting hard into the bank and punting the boats along, some of the men stripping down and getting into the water to feel the way through and avoid the rocks. However, not all were so negotiated as seen at the barrage known as 'Aeifor' (ever-fierce) where the men disembarked with their wares:

... taking up the goods which they have on board the 'monoxyla', [they] conduct the slaves in their chains past by land, six miles, until they are through the barrage. Then, partly dragging their 'monoxyla', partly portaging them on their shoulders, they convey them to the far side of the barrage; and then, putting them on the river and loading up their baggage, they embark themselves, and again sail off in them.

Other human perils awaited the Rus in the form of the Pechenegs, a fierce, nomadic Turkish tribe inhabiting the southern Russian steppe region who preyed on merchants negotiating the rapids. It was here that the Prince of Kiev Svyatoslav was killed, the Pechenegs taking his skull to make into a drinking cup.

Constantine Porphyrogenitus described the ships used by the Rus as 'monoxyla' (single-straked), a word usually used to denote a vessel hollowed from a tree-trunk. However, the word 'monoxyla' could also have described the
ships of the Vikings, with their single length planking (strakes) built up in clinker fashion into an open vessel similar in shape to a dugout. It might also have referred to the single length of timber used as the base of the keel. There have been suggestions that the monoxyla were made from single logs with built-up sides, similar to the Cossack river-boats of the seventeenth century. "These, I believe, would have been unsuitable for sea-travel and it is difficult to imagine the Vikings abandoning a superior design developed for use on the rivers of Scandinavia and overseas voyages. Constantine states that at one stage of the journey to Constantinople the monoxyla are partly portaged on the shoulders of men to reach the far side of the barrage. " This would have been extremely difficult to achieve considering the weight of boats made from tree-trunks.

Viking ships were highly seaworthy and very robust due to their method of construction. They were also easily adapted to fulfill different roles, and in this context it is useful to examine one particular vessel uncovered at Gokstad near Oslo in 1881. " This ship is an excellent example of the sea-going 'knorr' or knarr, although it can be described in other terms: 'hafskip', a general description of an ocean-going ship, 'kaupskip' or merchantman, or perhaps the 'karfi', an all purpose vessel carrying between 12 and 32 oarsmen used for coastal defence which could also be adapted to carry cargo and was light enough to be transported overland. " The Gokstad Ship was both merchant carrier and coastal raider, suited to sailing up rivers or across oceans. Such a vessel might legitimately be given various names,
depending on what task it was being used for at the time.

The Gokstad Ship is 23.3 meters long and 5.25 meters wide amidships, measuring 1.95 meters from the keel to the gunwhale.\textsuperscript{77} Unloaded, the ship weighs almost nine tonnes while fully laden it would have been almost 20 tonnes yet apparently drew only between 90 and 95 centimeters.\textsuperscript{78} Viking ships were usually constructed of oak although fir, beech, pine and spruce were used for the various fittings.\textsuperscript{100} The keel of the Gokstad Ship consisted of a single piece of oak shaped like a 'T' in the cross-section allowing the strakes, which made up the hull, to be attached by nails.\textsuperscript{101} The hull was constructed with 16 overlapping strakes on each side in clinker fashion, nailed together and rivetted over a metal washer on the inside.\textsuperscript{102} The thickness of the strakes varies, those below the waterline being about 2.6 centimeters thick as are the three strakes above the waterline. The top strakes are quite thin, about 1.6 centimeters, while the topmost one is reinforced by the gunwhale. Two strakes, the tenth along the waterline (4.4 cm.) and the fourteenth where the rowlocks are situated (3.2 cm.), are the thickest of all, as they were the areas under the most stress from the ribs of the internal structure and the oars.\textsuperscript{103} To keep the strakes watertight they were caulked with cow's hair or wool yarn and tar, and the hull was coated with tar.\textsuperscript{104} Ribs, a meter apart, shape the hull while crossbeams supported by props reinforce the strakes below the waterline. These strakes were lashed to the ribs with spruce roots, allowing the hull to remain both light and flexible.\textsuperscript{105} Flexibility was maintained above the waterline by securing the strakes to 'L'
shaped knees with wooden pegs (treenails), the knees keeping the decking in place and are attached to the crossbeams. This method of construction, especially the use of a single piece of timber for the keel, limited the size of the vessel and few ships in the Viking Age were larger than the Gokstad Ship, which was probably built between 850-900.

Viking ships were measured in terms of how many pairs of oars they carried on each side of the ship. The Gokstad Ship carries sixteen pairs made of pine which vary in length from between 5.3 and 5.8 meters so that, if properly handled, they would strike the water at the same time. Apparently rowers did not sit on fixed benches (at least none were found on either the Gokstad or Oseberg Ships) and so we assume that they made use of their ship’s chests.

Although Viking ships could propel themselves using oars they were principally sailing vessels. By using a single oak keel the ship was strong enough to withstand the pressure placed on it by mast and sail. The mast on the Gokstad Ship fits into a socket in a large block of oak resting over the keel called the 'kerling' (literally, old woman or crone). At the level of the decking is a mastfish, (mastpartner), supported by crossbeams and fixed into place by knees, extending some six crossbeams. The mastfish has a slot in it which allows the mast to be lowered without having to lift it out of the socket in the kerling. This slot is filled by a wedge (mast-lock) when the mast is raised to hold it in place. The top part of the mast on the Gokstad Ship is missing so the height can only be estimated at between 11.5 and 12.5 meters.

backstay
shroud
forestay
sheet
yard
halyard
brace
spar

10. The Gokstad Ship - Cross section.

mastlock
mastpartner
decking
kerling
overlapping strakes
keel
rib
crossbeam
rowlocks
gunwhale

11. The Steering Oar.
Little trace of the rigging remains and how this was set is conjecture. A forecastay was probably used to help raise the mast in place and backstays, either halyards used to raise the yard fixed at the gunwhale or shrouds with blocks taking the tension, additionally supported the mast.¹¹⁴ The sail, made of coarse wool and square in shape, covered about ninety square meters, and was raised on a yard about 11.5 meters long.¹¹⁵ Spars served as under-yards to keep the sail spread when sailing before the wind, although only one was required if sailing across the wind.¹¹⁶ The foot of the sail was held by sheets and the yard trimmed by braces. It is not known how the sail was reefed, but it is possible that a system of lines running through loops or rings on the sail was used.¹¹⁷

The Gokstad and Oseberg Ships were steered by a quarter rudder or steering oar mounted on the starboard side of the stern. On the Gokstad Ship it was 3.3 meters in length, extending below the line of the keel.¹¹⁸ A large block of wood on the side of the hull supported by an extra large rib served as the fastening point and to ensure that it was firmly attached but also flexible, an 'osier', or thick piece of fir-root, was fixed to the rudder and passed through the wooden block to be fastened on the inside of the hull.¹¹⁹ This enabled the rudder to move on its vertical axis producing the necessary movement to steer the ship.¹²⁰ To stop the rudder from rotating it was attached to the gunwhale by a rope or strap which could be released so that the rudder could be raised when the vessel beached or was in shallow water.¹²¹ The helmsman stood on a slightly raised section of
decking steering the ship with a straight tiller connected to the steering oar.\textsuperscript{122}

The overall effect of such construction was a ship with very fine lines and a low profile, appearing quite slender. But because of the overlapping arrangement of the strakes and the internal structure of ribs and crossbeams the vessel was extremely strong and seaworthy. In the voyage of the \textit{Viking} (a replica of the Gokstad Ship) in 1893, the Ship's master, Magnus Andersen, noted:

Because of the flexibility afforded by the methods used for lashing the planks [strakes] to the ribs, the bottom as well as the keel could yield to the movement of the ship, ... Yet, strangely enough, the ship still remained watertight.\textsuperscript{122}

He also noted that the ship sometimes reached eleven knots and was very good at sailing close to the wind. The rudder, Andersen felt, was a "work of genius", preferable to a stern-post as it did not "kick" and one man could easily operate it in any weather.\textsuperscript{122}

8. A ship with the ability to cross the Atlantic.

In terms of traversing the river-systems of Russia, the knorr was an ideal vessel to haul cargo or warriors. The Gokstad Ship was at the upper end of the scale in terms of size, carrying a crew of about 35 for an ocean voyage, although on shorter voyages it could carry up to 70.\textsuperscript{125} Such a ship could easily be transported overland,
either by rolling it on logs or lifting it up on men's shoulders. Ships raised from Roskilde Fjord at Skuldelev in Denmark in 1962 included a 'kaupskip' or merchantman, 13.5 meters in length and lightly built. It had short decks at the bow and stern with an open hold amidships with the capacity to store 10 cubic meters of cargo and could easily have been portaged overland. Another vessel (known as wreck 4) was very similar to the Gokstad Ship, carrying a crew of between 26 and 30. It shows evidence of damage to its keel, possibly due to repeated beaching or hauling overland.

What attracted the Scandinavians to travel vast distances across Eastern Europe to sell their wares was Muslim silver. The Vikings coveted silver more than gold, for use as decorative ornaments and also in commercial exchanges. Gold was, of course highly valued in the north. It usually came from western Europe as a hoard of 'gold objects, including coins adapted as ornaments, of Carolingian origin buried in the mid-ninth century and discovered at Hon near Oslo in 1834 demonstrates. Included in the hoard, however, were nine Muslim gold dinars, the latest dating to the year 848/9 and struck at Merv in the Muslim province of Khurasan, which would indicate that Muslim gold also came to Scandinavia from the east through Russia, rather than from the south through Spain. Gold appears to have been too valuable for use in commercial transactions and was usually converted into jewellery, ornaments, gold leaf, wire and thread in clothing. Although silver outweighs the amount of gold discovered, many gold objects (330 in Sweden and
Gotland) testify to its desirability, distributed in a similar pattern to silver.\textsuperscript{131}

Much of the silver discovered in the north is centred around the Baltic region in Sweden, Gotland and the Soviet Republics of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. In Sweden and Gotland 800 hoards have been uncovered which combined make up 90 per cent of the total number of hoards discovered in Scandinavia.\textsuperscript{132} Gotland alone accounts for 540 of these hoards. The form taken is mostly coinage, although hoards of ornaments such as silver bracelets are also known.\textsuperscript{133} Many coins were converted into hacksilver, cut or broken coins, chains, brooches and arm-bands for use in transactions to make up certain weights, equivalent to small change.\textsuperscript{134} Nearly half the coins in Scandinavian hoards of the Viking Age are Muslim dirhems, known as kufic silver after the style of lettering of the religious inscriptions on the coins associated with Kufah in Mesopotamia.\textsuperscript{135} The rest are of Anglo-Saxon or Carolingian origin. But because Muslim dirhems are twice the weight of West European coins, kufic silver provides almost 60 per cent of the total weight of silver uncovered, which amounts to some 400 kilograms.\textsuperscript{136}

Coins have been discovered as loose finds, and in graves, but it is the hoard material that provides the most useful information on commerce during the Viking Age. Although this period was the silver age of Scandinavia, the hoards that have been recovered from this time are only a fraction of the wealth that once existed in the north. Some of the silver coinage may still remain buried, but most has probably circulated out of the region leaving only a small
amount for study. The individual coins of a hoard can reveal much about its origin. The Muslims in particular put a lot of information on their coin issues; who issued it, whether Ummayad or Abbasid Caliph, where the coin was minted, either Spain, north Africa, the central Caliphate or the northwest provinces in the region of Transoxiana. Finally they also included the year in which it was issued, dating from the Hijra, the year of the flight of Muhammad to Medina in 622. Western coins are more difficult to date and can sometimes only be generally assigned to the reign of a ruler. In order to be of some benefit this information must be put in the context of the structure of a hoard.

All hoards are a confusion of coins, both western and kufic silver from a variety of regions and periods. This diversity is a reflection of the coin stock of the region at the time when the hoard was deposited. This can be seen when comparing several hoards buried in the same region with the latest coins of about the same date, for they all have similar structures. To determine the date of deposit is difficult, except that it cannot of course be before the date of the latest coin. The difficulty lies in estimating how long that coin took to reach the area where it was deposited from the region where it originated, and how long it was in circulation in the region of deposit. There are good reasons for believing that the delay between end coins travelling from where they were minted to the area of deposit was not very long. This can be demonstrated by examining the period c.970 when there occurred in Scandinavia a changeover from predominantly kufic silver to predominantly Carolingian
and Anglo-Saxon coinage. Scandinavian hoards containing kufic silver with end coins dating to the period c.950-70 cannot have been slow in arriving to the north for after this time western coins are a more important component of hoards. Comparing the end coins of different issuing authorities within a hoard as well also suggests that the coins reached the area of deposit quite quickly, as the dates usually correspond very closely. In general, it appears that hoards were deposited soon after the date of the latest coin, perhaps within three years.\textsuperscript{143}

Hoard were probably buried in times of warfare or raiding for safety and as a temporary measure for their owners would naturally have wished to recover them later. There appears a link between periods of unrest and unrecovered hoards, as seen on the island of Gotland. There is an average of two hoards per decade between 840 and 1100, but in several periods there are marked increases in the number of hoards left unrecovered, especially 860-70 and 940-60; no fewer than 25 hoards of the latter period containing more than 25 coins in each have been found. There was also a large number deposited in the early part of the eleventh century.\textsuperscript{144} However, there are other possible reasons behind the presence of some of the hoards. Religious belief might have played a minor part, for in the Ynglinga Saga it is stated that: "every man should come to Valhall [Odinn's Hall] with such riches as he had with him on the firebale and that each should use what he himself had buried in the earth".\textsuperscript{145} This could not account for the many hoards discovered in Russia as these were probably not deposited by
devotees of Odinn. Other hoards may have been buried for safety against a more common menace, theft. Most of the hoards found in Scandinavia are in or near settled areas, as one would expect. A man would bury his wealth before leaving on commercial or piratical ventures overseas, although some never returned to recover this wealth. 

The end coin can also indicate the region from which kufic silver was exported to the north by examining what mint it was struck at. Within the Caliphate all silver, irrespective of where it was issued, was legal tender, hence there was a wide diversity in the coin stock of the Caliphate which is also reflected in hoards found in Russia and Scandinavia. The region from where the coins were exported northward is revealed by the mints providing the most recent issues within the hoards. These originate in ninth century Swedish hoards, from the mints of Samarkand, Merv and Tashkent, controlled by the rebel Tahirid dynasty who ruled the region of Transoxiana and Khurasan from 821 to 873. The most likely route these followed was the caravan route from Khiva to Great Bulgar on the Volga river, where Scandinavian traders exchanged their goods for silver. Russian hoards of the same period appear to have an identical coin stock to Scandinavia, and this would rule out Russia as the source of Scandinavian coin hoards, for if Russia was the transit area differences in the coin stocks would be encountered.

Coins appear to have reached Russia by two routes in the ninth century. Some hoards have recent issues from the Tahirid mints in Transoxiana, suggesting the silver
followed the same route as that which reached the Scandinavians.\textsuperscript{151} To determine the other route, Russian hoards have been compared with hoards discovered in the Caucasus, the northwest province region, and the central Caliphate. They were found to have similar structures to ones found in the Caucasus, suggesting that the other route into Russia was via the Khazars.\textsuperscript{152} This might be the route suggested by Ibn Khurdadbeh in the mid-ninth century across the Caspian Sea from Abaskun in the Jurjan province to the Khazar capital, Itil.\textsuperscript{153}

Hoard material in Scandinavia and Russia from the period c. 800-950 is virtually entirely kufic silver, of which West European and Byzantine coins make up only a modest component.\textsuperscript{154} As already noted the coin stock in both regions was almost the same, indicating that the coins were reaching the two areas by similar routes and from a common source. Chronologically, the hoards can be divided into two main periods: firstly in the ninth century dominated by the presence of Abbasid coins, and secondly the tenth and early eleventh centuries dominated by Samanid issues.\textsuperscript{155} Russian hoards from the first period actually spill over into the latter stages of the eighth century as a hoard from Staraya Ladoga deposited soon after 786/7 demonstrates. It is a small hoard, (as are most found at early dates) of 31 dirhems, exclusively from Abbasid mints, and mostly dating to the period c. 770-787.\textsuperscript{156} There are difficulties with Russian hoards of this period for of the 77 known hoards, only 33 can be examined in any depth and only 17 have been fully published.\textsuperscript{157} This represents less than a quarter of the
total and is clearly a handicap to scholars who wish to know their geographical and chronological distribution.\textsuperscript{150} As the century progresses, however, several tendencies can be discerned by examination of the 33 hoards.

The majority of recognisable coins in Russian hoards of the ninth century were from Abbasid mints such as Baghdad, Isfahan, Muhammadjah (Ray) and Basra, all located in the central areas of the Caliphate.\textsuperscript{157} These average over the century about eighty per cent of the dirhems in any one hoard, and as the century progresses this percentage increases.\textsuperscript{160} Other regions and dynasties are also represented. The earliest coins are Sassanian (Persian) drachms as well as varieties of Arab-Sassanian coins, those of the Umayyad Governors minted prior to the eighth century, the Ispahads of Tabaristan from the period c.700-750 and finally coins issued by the Abbasid Governors of Tabaristan from the second half of the eighth century.\textsuperscript{161} These coins are restricted, occurring only in hoards of the first half of the ninth century and in modest quantities, but they have a wide distribution, present in almost eighty per cent of these hoards.\textsuperscript{162} Sassanian drachms are present in about half the hoards averaging almost five per cent until the middle of the century when there is a sharp drop in the amount of hoards in which they occur and how much they contribute. One would expect older issues to decline as time goes on, either already hoarded, re-minted or exported out of circulation. Umayyad dirhems follow the same general pattern as Sassanian drachms. They are present in more of the hoards and in slightly larger quantities, but they were not as old
as the drachms, and so did not decline quite as rapidly.\textsuperscript{142}

A surprising amount of Muslim coinage was issued by dynasties from North Africa: those of the Idrisids, Aghlabids and the Spanish Umayyads, and is present in hoards from the earlier part of the century. The Idrisid dynasty contributes the most, present in over half the hoards.\textsuperscript{144} It is possible that these issues were bought cheaply by Muslim merchants after they had ceased to be in circulation in their own regions, to use in transactions with the inexperienced Scandinavian and Slav traders, who could not read the inscriptions telling the mint and the date of issue, and so would readily accept them. They appear to have followed the Caucasus route to the north via the Khazars, as an early ninth century hoard discovered at Zakho in northern Iraq reveals. Of the 3,306 silver dirhems, there are 37 Spanish Umayyad, 80 Umayyad Caliphate, 27 Aghlabid and 129 Idrisid issues.\textsuperscript{145} Although Idrisid issues are a modest four per cent of Russian hoards in the period c.800-850, they are present in a phenomenal 90 per cent of the hoards.\textsuperscript{146}

The final dynasty of significance to contribute to Russian hoards of the ninth century is that of the Tahirid rulers of Khurasan and Transoxiana (c.820-870). Tahirid issues are present in almost half the hoards from c.830 to the end of the ninth century, although only in modest amounts in some hoards.\textsuperscript{147} In four hoards, however, discovered at Akhremtsy, Mishnevo, Novgorod and Pogrebnoe, they contribute a significant number of issues reflecting the importance of the caravan route between Khwarizm and Bulgar.\textsuperscript{148} This tendency is also apparent in Swedish hoards of the ninth
century. A hoard discovered at Fittja in Uppland in 1873 containing 136 coins and fragments, of which the characteristics of 120 could be determined, may be used as representative example. The earliest coin is a Sassanid drachm issued in 613 by Chosroes II, but the majority of the coins are Abbasid dirhems, mostly from mints at Baghdad and Muhammadijah, the central region of the Caliphate. Umayyad dirhems are also present in a small quantity (nine coins issued between 704 and 746), as are Tahirid coins from the mints of Bukhara, Merv, Samarkand and Tashkent, where the latest coin was issued in 864, reflecting the Khwarizm-Volga route by which silver reached Scandinavia.149

During the ninth century the chronological composition of the Russian hoards changes. Among several periods, the two most distinct lie between 800 and 820, and hoards deposited after c.850. In this early period, coins struck between 770 and 799 constitute the major component in the hoards: up to 70 per cent in hoards discovered at Ugodichi and Iarylovichi.170 Coins struck before 770 remain a fairly constant portion until the middle of the century when they decline slightly, but not as markedly as coins from the period 770-799, which fall from half in the early stages to less than a quarter by c.880. These groups are replaced by issues struck between 800 and 820 and, in hoards deposited after c.860, by coins minted post-850. Hoards deposited towards the end of the century are predominantly composed of ninth century coins, but the most significant issues are the ones minted between 800 and 820.171 This indicates an ageing effect in Russian hoards over the course of the ninth
century, possibly due to a lack of recent imports to replace the early rush of silver in the first half of the century, so older coins remained in circulation for longer. Two hoards at Pogrebnoe and Bobyli buried in the decade following 870 have 52 and 59 per cent respectively of their coins struck in the period between 770 and 820, while issues minted after 850 only provide 18 and 28 percent of the distribution.172

In the mid 1950s, Professor Sture Bolin suggested that until the middle of the ninth century the relative price of silver to gold was declining within the Caliphate. To combat this the weight of gold decreased, the weight of silver increased and the relationship between the two changed, resulting in a fluctuating price and attempts to fix a maximum price on gold.173 Professor Bolin suggests that the fall in the price of silver was due to the increasing production from mines in the region of Transoxiana, especially the one at Tashkent.174 By examining the revenue the Caliph of Baghdad received from this mine in the early ninth century which, if it was paid according to Muhammadan Law at one twentyfifth, works out at 400,000 dirhems a year. Professor Bolin has suggested the figure of 30 tons of silver as the annual production output for the mine, five times the total world production of silver c.1500.175 Because of this flood of silver the price dropped until the middle of the century when the trend reversed and silver began to increase in price. As already seen, Russian hoards of the latter half of the ninth century have only a small amount of coins minted post-850 which may have been due to problems at the centre of silver production, either falls in production
or political upheaval disturbing production.

In 821 the Tahirid state had established control of Transoxiana and Khurasan under the former Abbasid governor, Tahir I. This did not mean a complete break with the Caliph al-Ma'mun, for the Caliph needed someone to defend this region and he retained a nominal overlordship, confirming Talhah as Tahir's successor in 822. The Caliph probably did not have much choice in the matter as disturbances in other regions tested his resources and the easiest option was to compromise. The Tahirid dynasty retained control until 873 when a rebel army from southern Khurasan captured the capital, establishing the Saffirid state. The government at Baghdad again compromised and the rebel Saffarid dynasty was recognised, but internal struggles for power dogged the regime which finally succumbed in 900 to the Samanids. These events subsequent to 873 might have affected the exports of silver to the north and to other regions of the Caliphate resulting in an increase in price. Professor Bolin believed that the Samanid takeover was a telling factor which, coupled with the discovery and exploitation of gold mines in Nubian Africa leading to a fall in the relative price of gold, affected the price of silver.

This political re-orientation in Transoxiana is also reflected in the hoard material of the early tenth century. There is a sudden and almost complete domination of the coin stock of Russia by recent issues emanating from the regions controlled by the Samanids; to a lesser extent this is reflected in the Swedish hoards. The reason behind this
sudden upsurge in exports to the north may have been the
discovery of new mines in the Hindu Kush region, especially
the mine of Benjahir.\textsuperscript{179} The upsurge in exports to the north
also meant a shift in emphasis in the trade routes, the
caravan route between Khwarizm and Bulgar assuming more
importance for both Russia and Scandinavia.\textsuperscript{177} The
chronological distribution within the hoard material also
changes, as one would expect. Whereas before there was a
significant amount of older issues, now coins are very young.
For example, a hoard of 84 identifiable silver dirhems from
Pskov buried quite early in the tenth century has almost 90
per cent of its coins minted after c.890.\textsuperscript{180} Another hoard of
169 identifiable coins discovered at Kiev from later in the
century (c.935) is entirely composed of coins minted after
c.890 with over half issued after 920.\textsuperscript{181} The disappearance
of older issues in Russian hoards might have been due to the
overwhelming amount of Samanid silver or possibly because
they were hoarded. But the best explanation for this removal
is the re-exportation of the older silver out of circulation,
either to the Byzantine Empire or to Scandinavia.
Contemporary Swedish hoards show evidence of similar changes
occurring in the coin stock of the region in the tenth
century, although they still retain characteristics of the
ninth century hoards as the removal of older issues was not
quite as complete.\textsuperscript{182}

The large scale imports of the late ninth and
early tenth century did not continue at the same volume
because by c.940 there was a marked drop in recently issued
coins in Scandinavia. Hoards begin to show ageing tendencies
with most of the coin stock dating to the boom period between 890 and 930. New coins were still reaching the Baltic region until about 970, but the lesser quantities were not sufficient to replenish the ageing coin stock. The process which had so successfully removed ninth century coins, especially in Russia, in the early tenth century had somehow been interrupted and very few coins of the period 965 to 983 are to be found in hoards. By 965 what had been a decline in exports to both Russia and Scandinavia became almost a complete halt, and for nearly twenty years very little kufic silver travelled northward.

Several theories have been put forward to explain the sudden and very acute decline in silver exports from the Samanid realm. In the 1960s, the British historian, Peter Sawyer, disagreed with Professor Bolin's view that silver supplies were reaching Scandinavia via Russia in the early tenth century, and began to age c.940 because Russia ceased to export to the Baltic region. In Sawyer's opinion, Russia was not a transit area because Scandinavia gained its silver directly from the middle Volga region. He suggested instead that within the Caliphate there was a developing silver crisis which affected the supply to both Russia and Scandinavia. He believed that the silver mines in the Transoxiana region and perhaps elsewhere were exhausted by the mid to late tenth century and this, combined with political problems, caused the stem in the flow of silver. Recently, Sawyer has put forward another view in terms of imports to Scandinavia. Silver, he argued, was less the product of commercial contact than of plunder or tribute.
exacted from regions of Russia. The reason for the cessation c.970 was due to better defences and a stronger central authority employing mercenaries, including Scandinavian Varangians, to repel such endeavors. The increased amount of hoarding on the island of Gotland in the middle of the tenth century may indicate increased raiding within the Baltic, or perhaps they were deposited by men who did not return from expeditions further to the East. It is also possible that the peak of the early tenth century has been exaggerated by the decline in imports after c.970, and as less was added to the coin stock, so less recent coinage would be available for deposit.¹⁹⁶

Another possibility which combined with this economic and political crisis lay with military campaigns undertaken by the Kievan Grand Prince Svyatoslav between 965 and 968. Svyatoslav attacked both the Bulgarian kingdom on the Volga and the Khazarian Empire, destroying the cities of Bulgar, Itil and Samander, and the fortress on the Don river, Sarkel (Bela Vezha).¹⁹⁷ The immediate effect of these attacks on the Bulgarians is unknown, but for the Khazars they were a mortal wound from which they never recovered.¹⁹⁸ The dislocation in what were major centres of commerce must have had serious repercussions for international trade.

Although the destructive wars of the Kievan prince certainly played an important role, the main reason may have been decided in events played out near the centre of silver production. The mines of Transoxiana were still quite rich and far from exhausted, yet they were the focal point behind the cessation of silver exports from the region in any great
quantity, because they were no longer under the control of the Samanids. In the second half of the tenth century a group of former Turkish slave-soldiers (the Ghaznavids) who had risen to power as governors of southern Khurasan dislodged the Samanids from power. They eventually controlled the whole of Khurasan as well as Khwarizm, while Transoxiana came under the rule of the Qara-Khanids from across the Jaxartes river. Turkish slaves formed the backbone of Muslim armies and many individuals rose to command high positions of authority. The Ghaznavids, as former slaves, did not want the same situation to arise which allowed them to seize control. Hence the lucrative slave trade to these regions from the north was of less importance. The orientation of the new state was focused southward into the Punjabi region of northwest India and the division of Khwarizm and Transoxiana between two hostile states would have also cut across commercial routes. As slaves were the principal goods dealt in by the Scandinavians, Bulgars and Khazars, the reduction in demand and the diversion of the silver producing regions from the markets would have been the final blow to international trade in the region.

The focus of northern trade shifted more to the west, to the Byzantine Empire and the Kievan State, and the routes through which trade flowed also changed as Kiev became the central market place of the East. Central Europe assumed a more active role, by land to Cracow and Prague and the Vistula river flowing to the north. Small amounts of kufic silver again began to reach the Baltic region after 983 from
mints in Syria and Iraq, but the volume was insignificant compared to previous exports and by the early eleventh century it had ceased.\textsuperscript{172} New sources of silver discovered in the Harz Mountains in Germany attracted northern trade to the western regions and from the middle of the tenth century German and Anglo-Saxon coins dominate the coin stock of Scandinavian hoards.\textsuperscript{174}

Not all the material discovered in Scandinavian hoards reached the area of deposit by means of commerce. Plunder, ransoms, fines and payments such as the wages of mercenaries, all contributed to the wealth of both regions. Payments of a political nature, such as gifts to envoys and payments to confederates and invaders actually made up the largest component. These sums could reach fantastic proportions: for example, the payment made in one year (443) to the Huns by Theodosius II to keep the peace was 500,000 gold solidi.\textsuperscript{175} Considering that the total amount of silver discovered in Scandinavia is equivalent to 7,500 solidi this and other payments are phenomenal sums.\textsuperscript{176} When Oleg allegedly attacked Constantinople in 907, he demanded that the Greeks "pay tribute for his two thousand ships at the rate of twelve grivny per man, with forty men reckoned to a ship."\textsuperscript{177} This would have amounted to 96,000 grivny (perhaps 500,000 solidi). Oleg commanded other large sums of payment: he charged Novgorod to pay "300 grivny a year for the preservation of peace", which was still being paid when Yaroslav ruled at Novgorod under his father Vladimir, although the sum had inflated to 2,000 grivny a year.\textsuperscript{178}

These payments might be labeled diplomatic
exchanges and did not always involve sums of money. Igor, on his second attempt to attack Constantinople, was paid off with gold and palls, probably of silk.\(^2\) Svyatoslav was said to have refused gold and silks, accepting only gifts of arms from the Emperor John Tzimisces as tribute to end the war between them.\(^2\) Other exchanges were accorded to peaceful embassies such as the visit of Princess Olga to Constantinople in 957 to receive baptism. The Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus gave the Princess and her retinue over a million miliesiosa (silver coins), far in excess of what has been discovered within Russian hoards.\(^2\)

The wages of Norse mercenaries also contributed to the hoard material discovered in the north in the fifth and sixth centuries and in the Viking Age, and may be the major source for coins of the Empire.\(^3\) The most famous northern mercenary in Imperial service was Harald Hardrada, who returned from Constantinople in 1046 with a great quantity of gold. Some of this fell into the hands of William of Normandy after the Battle of Hastings on 14 October 1066, presumably taken off Harald by Harold Godwinsson after the Battle at Stamford Bridge three weeks earlier. According to Adam of Bremen, "the gold was so heavy that twelve young men could hardly lift it to their shoulders".\(^3\) Although the literary evidence suggests payments of this kind were common practice by the Byzantines there is little suggestion that this was carried out by the Muslims who were the source of much of the coin material during this period.

Commercial contacts between the north and the east have so far only been been examined in the light of
archaeological numismatic material indicating the extensive links with the Muslim regions via the Bulgars and Khazars. Trade was also carried out between the Scandinavia and Russia with the Byzantine Empire, but the evidence that has previously been the basis of examination is of little use because only 500 Byzantine coins have been found in Scandinavia and 400 of these were discovered on Gotland alone.\textsuperscript{204} The best evidence of trade links between the Empire and the north are literary sources, especially the Primary Chronicle and Constantine Porphyrogenitus’ account of the journey of a Rus trading expedition to Constantinople.

Trade with the Empire did not begin in earnest until comparatively late. In the middle of the ninth century, Ibn Khurdadbeh mentioned that the Rus paid a tithe (sales tax of ten per cent) to the “lord of Rum” (Byzantine Emperor) at Kherson, before travelling on to Tmutarakan and the realm of the Khazars.\textsuperscript{205} It appears that at this time the Byzantines did not encourage merchants and foreign travellers to the capital, preferring commercial exchanges to occur at border outposts such as Kherson and Trebizond. The Empire was nearly self-sufficient in most essential items and its officials had good reasons to suspect the intentions of travellers who might be seeking military technology, such as the secret of Greek fire and the blueprints of siege machinery. Other goods were essential to the running of the state - gold, slaves and foodstuffs - and the export of these items was banned.\textsuperscript{206}

By the early tenth century, however, merchants were reaching the capital for trading purposes. The wares
they carried were much the same as those supplied to the Muslims. When Igor concluded peace with the Emperor in 945, he sent back gifts of furs, slaves and wax with the Emperor's envoys from Kiev, indicating the products which the Empire desired most from the north.\textsuperscript{207} Wax was an important product because of the great demand for candles in the churches and palaces of the capital. The export of honey and wax to both Khazaria and the Byzantines was taken up by the Rus and the Bulgars.\textsuperscript{208} The importance of wax is underlined by the existence of a merchant guild at Novgorod whose charter dates to the twelfth century. They weighed wax and collected dues from foreign and local traders, storing the wax in the cellar of their own guild church of St. John the Baptist.\textsuperscript{207}

Perhaps the most important single item of export to the Empire was slaves. The Grand Prince Vladimir was said to have kept "three hundred concubines at Vyshgorod, three hundred at Belgorod and two hundred at Berestovo", which the author of the Primary Chronicle believed was evidence of "insatiablity in vice" and "libertine" nature.\textsuperscript{210} It is possible, however, that these numerous concubines were actually slaves owned by Vladimir: his wealth in human terms.\textsuperscript{211} Their importance in trade with the Empire is reflected in provisions of the treaties of 911 and 945 between the Rus and the Byzantines for the recovery of runaway and stolen slaves and the redemption of prisoners. In 911 all Greek prisoners could be redeemed for a flat rate of twenty bezants and Rus merchants had the right freely to search for runaway slaves which, if discovered by the Greeks, were to be returned to their owners.\textsuperscript{212} But in 945

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categories were introduced for ransoming prisoners: ten bezants for young men and women, eight bezants for middle-aged people and five bezants for the elderly and children. Merchants who lost slaves within the bounds of the Empire could claim two pieces of silk as compensation and the Rus were bound to return slaves who had escaped from the Empire.

Before these wares reached Constantinople they needed to be gathered together from the surrounding districts. Most of the goods were supplied to the Rus merchants and the Grand Prince as tribute. This was common practice in the north, Othere received most of his wealth from the Lapps: animal skins, whalebone, birds' down and cables for ships. Higher ranking men amongst the Lapps paid more: "fifteen martens'-skins, five reindeer-hides, one bear-skin, ten measures of down, a kirtle made of bear- or otter-skin, and two ships' cables (both to be sixty ells long, one made of whale-hide and the other of seal skin)". The early rulers of Kiev imposed tribute on various tribes by means of force, Oleg took a black marten-skin from each of the conquered Derevlians, and also forced the Severians to render tribute to himself rather than the Khazars. The Radimichians were peacefully converted into paying what they had previously paid the Khazars, a shilling per ploughshare, to Oleg. Most rendered honey and furs as the Derevlians were prepared to yield to Olga when she besieged their city in revenge for the death of her husband Igor, while others paid wax or silver. But one item (according to Ibn Rusta) could only be gained by violent methods: raiding and taking
prisoner Slavic men and women. The collection process was primitive and usually upheld by force of arms, but in the middle of the tenth century (during Olga's regency) trading-posts were established serving as collection centres for the tribute.

Tribute appears to have occurred in two forms, the 'poludie' and the 'povoz', each serving a different purpose. Constantine Porphyrogenitus (writing c.950) described the "poludia" as rounds or visits, when the chiefs of the Rus wintered with various tribes who maintained them until the spring. There may have also been a collection process because when the retinue of Igor complained that they needed fine clothes and weapons he attacked the Derevlians in search of tribute: "he sought to increase the previous tribute and collected it by violence from the people with the assistance of his followers". Although successful, Igor returned for more and was killed by the Derevlians. The poludie must have been for the upkeep of the druzhina, the military retinue of the ruler, while the povoz or the
'bringing' was the regular tribute used in commercial traffic with the Bulgars, Khazars and Byzantines.\footnote{223} Constantinople, called Miklagardr or the Great City by the Norsemen, was the goal of the expeditions which left about June, when river levels were high but manageable as the winter snows thawed. To negotiate the Dnieper rapids the Rus waited until the waters were high – up to sixteen feet – which widened the river from about half a mile to between five and six miles.\footnote{224} According to Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the merchant fleet gathered at Kiev to refit the boats with oars, rowlocks and other tackle, and then travelled to Vitichev, just south of Kiev, to assemble the fleet and await late arrivals.\footnote{225} The journey to Constantinople might take up to six weeks with many stops along the way. The first of these occurred at the island of St. Gregory, just past the seven cataracts on the Dnieper. Here the Rus sacrificed cocks under a giant oak tree on the island, possibly to the god Perun, leaving arrows pegged in the ground and gifts of bread and meat.\footnote{226} From here they proceeded downriver to an island in the estuary, St. Aitherios or Berezan. Here they had to fit sails, masts and rudders to the ships for the voyage across the Black Sea. A runestone found here in 1905 had been raised by Brand for his comrade Karl.\footnote{227} The fleet coasted around the edge of the sea rather than sailing directly across, stopping at the mouths of the Dniester, Aspers and Selinas rivers.\footnote{228} Nomadic Pechenegs kept pace with the fleet from the region of the Dnieper rapids, hoping to ambush isolated Rus ships, so the entire fleet landed together to present a united front. Once
they reached the Danube and the territory of the Bulgarian kingdom, they had no more fear of attack and, after a brief stop at Constanza, they reached the Byzantine district of Mesembria where their journey, "fraught with such travail and terror, such difficulty and danger", was at an end.\textsuperscript{227}

Trade with the Byzantines was regulated by treaty, of which there were two negotiated with the Rus - in 912 and 945. The first is represented by the Primary Chronicle as separate treaties under the years 907 and 912, supposedly conceded by the Emperors Leo and Alexander after an attack on Constantinople by 2,000 ships under the leadership of Oleg.\textsuperscript{228} The historicity of the attack will be dealt with in the next chapter, but for the present it is sufficient to say that the treaties do appear to be genuine parts of one agreement, the earlier summarising the Rus rights and the latter outlining their obligations, and was probably negotiated about 912.\textsuperscript{229}

Under the agreement, the Rus were provided with lodgings in the St. Mamas quarter (outside the city walls and situated on the Bosporus across from the Golden Horn), a place with its own landing point.\textsuperscript{230} Here government officials recorded the names of the Rus and gave them in order of what city they came from, "first the natives of Kiev, then those from Chernigor, Pereyaslawl' and the other cities", supplies of grain, meat, fish, fruit, wine and bread, enough for six months; also, "baths shall be prepared for them in any volume they desire".\textsuperscript{231} These arrangements were not unusual for foreign merchants and envoys, for by concentrating all foreign residents in one quarter it was
easier for the Byzantines to keep them under surveillance. Special lodging or clearing houses (mitata) were rented or bought by the state especially for foreigners, who paid rent in return for food and lodging. Here they paid their sales tax, deposited their goods and conducted their business, all under the eyes of state officials who inspected the merchandise when it arrived and the goods leaving the city.\textsuperscript{254}

The usual period of residency was three months, but the Rus appear to have been accorded special privileges. Not only could they reside for six months, they also received food and lodging free of charge and could "conduct their business according to their requirements without payment of taxes".\textsuperscript{255} In addition, they were also to be given food, anchors, cordage and sails for the return journey. Only the Syrians, from whom raw silk was procured, were afforded similarly generous treatment, suggesting that the value placed by Byzantines on wares from the north was high. However in the 'Book of the Prefect', outlining bylaws governing trade and production of second quality silks in the early tenth century, none of the concessions to the Rus are recorded. It is possible that these regulations were not put into practice until after the Book was written or they may not have been used at all. The Rus may have preferred to leave the city after finishing their business, to get back to the Dnieper and make the hazardous return journey before the winter came and froze the river solid.\textsuperscript{256}

Not all the provisions were so generous because the Byzantines were wary of these people who had attacked the
city so violently in the past. Merchants who arrived without merchandise received no provisions and once at Constantinople all the names were recorded. Men entering the city went "through one gate, unarmed and fifty at a time, escorted by an agent of the Emperor". The Grand Prince had also to personally guarantee that no violence occurred within the territory of the Empire. Other clauses recorded in the 912 treaty dealt mainly with penalties and damages for crimes such as murder, assault and theft, as well as the redemption of prisoners and the return of runaway slaves. There were also regulations binding the Rus to lend aid to Greek merchant ships in distress. "If a ship is detained by high winds on a foreign shore, and one of us Russes is near by, the ship with its cargo shall be revictualled and sent on to Christian territory". If the ship could not proceed by itself the Rus were to "extend aid to the crew of this ship, and conduct them with their merchandise in all security". Any cargo recovered from Greek shipwrecks was to be sold and the value surrendered to the Greeks on the next visit to Constantinople. The same penalties listed for assault and murder applied to those who ill-treated Greek crewmen. The Rus were also encouraged to enter Imperial service and a subsequent clause confirms that some were already professionally engaged in military service. If any of these men died without setting his property in order his estate was to be returned to his nearest relative in either Greece or Russia.

In 941 Prince Igor led a disastrous attempt to attack Constantinople which ended with most of his fleet.
succumbing to Greek fire. Three years later, he again gathered ships to sail against the Greeks, sending "messengers after the Varangians beyond the sea", asking them to help him avenge his defeat. The Greeks, fearful that he might succeed this time, offered tribute to Igor and his host and a renewal of the treaty made under Oleg which was accepted. This second attack is not mentioned in the Byzantine sources and most probably did not take place. It is perhaps included in the Primary Chronicle as an attempt to boost Igor's exploits as equal to those achieved in the past against the Greeks. The terms of the treaty of 945 confirm this picture as they are less advantageous than the earlier agreement, the Byzantines appearing more in control of negotiations. Most of the provisions are identical to the first treaty, the agents of the prince and Rus merchants still being quartered in St. Mamas, receiving allowances for their stay in the city and provisions for their return journey. Their length of stay within the city, however, was confined and security arrangements had been stepped up. The Rus prince had to list how many ships had been dispatched on a certificate, those not certified as part of the fleet would be detained and, if they resisted arrest, might be attacked and their crews killed. Within the city familiar arrangements concerning numbers, arms and an escort remained. On the return journey the Rus were forbidden to winter at Berezan and "if Russian subjects meet with Khersonian fishermen at the mouth of the Dnieper, they shall not harm them in any wise", indicating that the Rus had used the island as a base for attacking Khersonian shipping and
possibly the Byzantine regions of the Crimea.244

The men who came to Constantinople are now represented by two groups, the envoys of the prince bearing gold seals and merchants carrying silver ones. Of almost eighty names on the treaty (as in the earlier agreement) the majority are Scandinavian, although more Slavic names appear in the latter.245 It would appear that Scandinavians dominated both the court at Kiev as well as the merchant fleet that sailed south to the Empire. The division between agents and merchants suggests that the Kievian state was growing in importance and organisation, the Prince of Kiev assuming diplomatic relations with the Byzantine Empire. In the previous treaty nothing was mentioned of the status of the men who negotiated the terms and signed the agreement and it is possible that they were merchants representing Prince Oleg as well as themselves.

As Byzantine coins provide only a fraction of hoard material and occur mostly in hoards deposited after the mid-tenth century when they might have reached the north as part of the wages of mercenaries and guardsmen in Imperial service, some other commodity must have served as the main object of exchange.246 In the middle of the sixth century the silk-worm had been introduced to Constantinople and soon became the basis of silk production within the Empire which reached large proportions and earned huge revenues. Silks acquired enormous significance not only as desired objects of trade but also as symbols of political and ecclesiastical authority. By controlling the production and export of quality silks, the Byzantine Emperors retained a powerful
diplomatic weapon amongst the hierarchy of rulers. The Byzantine Emperor, as heir of the Roman Emperors and especially of the first Christian Emperor, Constantine the Great (306-337), assumed the premier position amongst political rulers of Europe and the East. In the religious hierarchy he was the equivalent of the Apostles and thus held the highest position amongst Christ's representatives on Earth, at least according to Eastern Orthodox religion. To reflect this political and semi-divine position, the Emperor and his court wore clothes befitting their status, silks of the highest quality were reserved for them alone, forbidden to be worn by others and produced in Imperial factories, controlled and managed by the state. The kekolymena, or forbidden silks of the highest quality, could be gifted to higher officers of state, foreign churches or rulers of vassal and allied states — but only by the Emperor himself, this investiture serving to increase his dignity. The control of production and export was very strict. Members of the Imperial guild who laboured in the Imperial factories were virtual slaves, not able to leave their jobs, sons succeeding fathers to positions in the factory. State officers watched over all aspects of production, distribution and sales. Exports were supervised particularly to ensure that the correct quantities and qualities were leaving the city.

Private guilds produced much of the second quality silks for local and overseas consumption. They were still kept under close observation by state officials to ensure that the forbidden kekolymena was not being produced by their
factories. Within the city, nobles and ordinary citizens could buy any quantity and quality of silks apart from the kekolymena for themselves, the nobles even being allowed to produce their own garments, although they could not sell them.\textsuperscript{247} However, provincial Greeks and foreigners were not so privileged and could only purchase single pieces of silk or silk cloaks up to the value of ten nomismata. This restriction on the provincial inhabitants of the Empire was made to ensure that the more expensive silks were not smuggled across the border and sold to the 'skin-clad barbarians' who envied them, thus maintaining the differentiation in dress between the citizens of Constantinople and the rest of Europe and the East.\textsuperscript{250}

The export of silk was very carefully regulated to ensure that only permitted silks left the city. Liutprand, who travelled to Constantinople in 960 as the envoy of King Otto I of Germany and was appointed Bishop of Cremona in 961, had problems with customs officers when attempting to leave with what he believed was his legal 'pallia', or amount of silk. Customs officers seized five valuable pieces of purple cloth from Liutprand, who had bought them as vestments for his church. He complained, as any traveller would, stating that the Emperor had said he could buy as much silk of any quality as he wished and asking that at least the silks given to him should be returned. The officers replied: "we shall treat gifts and purchases in the same way: every purple vestment you have acquired must be returned to us".\textsuperscript{251}

By the 945 treaty, the Rus were only allowed to purchase large silk fabrics to the value of fifty bezants
(nomismata), although this was still five times the value accorded to the provincial Greeks.\textsuperscript{252} Once purchased, the silks had to be exhibited to an imperial officer who stamped them with a leaden seal. Only then could they leave the city. The importance of the commodity to the Rus is underlined by the clause that allowed them to compensate the loss of slaves within the bounds of the Empire with two pieces of silk per slave.\textsuperscript{253} Although this was perhaps the most important ware sought by Rus merchants, other goods from the Empire did travel to the north: among them, wine, linens, metal-work and glassware.\textsuperscript{254}

Direct commercial links with the capital of the Empire were severed in the mid-eleventh century when the nomadic Pechenegs blocked the lower Dnieper as they expanded westward.\textsuperscript{255} Trade with the Empire reverted back to Kherson in the Crimea, connected to Kiev by a land route crossing the Dnieper at Krarion near the seventh cataract 'Stroukoun' or little barrage, known as the ford of Vrar.\textsuperscript{256} But much of this trade depended on the nomads who were also supplying the Khersonians with furs and wax, possibly gained from Russian territory. Although Russian traders continued to travel south even to Constantinople, where Benjamin of Tudela (a Spanish Jew) met some Russian merchants in the late twelfth century, the great expeditions had ended. Other commercial nations began to control large portions of commercial intercourse with the Byzantines, especially the Genoese, whose factory at Solidaia succeeded Kherson as the commercial centre of the Crimea.\textsuperscript{257}
NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

TRADE


8. Riasanovsky, op.cit., p.17

9. ibid., p.17 and 20f


12. ibid., p.123
13. ibid., p.122f
14. ibid., p.128f
15. ibid., p.121


17. Lewis, op.cit., p.144
18. Sawyer, 1982, p.119f


21. ibid., p.156f
22. ibid., p.153
23. ibid., pp.164-6
24. ibid., pp.169-73
25. ibid., p.173


27. Pirenne, op.cit., p.184
28. Lieber, op.cit., p.9
29. ibid., p.9
30. ibid., p.8
31. ibid., p.8 and Pirenne, op.cit., p.164
32. Pirenne, op.cit., p.165

34. ibid., p.84
35. ibid., p.85


40. A. Stalsberg, 'Scandinavian Relations with North-West Russia During the Viking Age - The Archaeological Evidence', *Journal of Baltic Studies*, volume 13, part 3, 1982, p.281


46. ibid., p.97

47. ibid., p.97

48. ibid., p.96

49. ibid., p.96

50. Stalsberg, op.cit., p.281


52. Jones, op.cit., p.68f

53. Foote and Wilson, op.cit., p.72

54. ibid., p.70f, Jones, op.cit., p.148
55. The Laxdoela Saga, translated with an introduction and notes by A.M. Arent, (University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1964), 6, p.9f


57. Jones, op.cit., p.147, Foote and Wilson, op.cit., p.68

58. Macartney, op.cit., p.213, c/f statement, "... their women taken possession of, and themselves taken into slavery." p.215

59. Snorri Sturlason, op.cit., The Saga of Olav Trygvasson, 6f, p.118, Olav is redeemed by his uncle Sigurd Ericson and 52, p.158, Astrid by a fellow countryman, Lodin, whom she marries.

60. Adam of Bremen, History of the Archbishops of Hamburg and Bremen, translated by F. Tschan, (Columbia University, New York, 1959), Book IV.6, p.190

61. ibid., p.190

62. Foote and Wilson, op.cit., p.67, c/f Davidson, op.cit., p.104

63. Adam of Bremen, op.cit., Book I.41, p.38f, Davidson, op.cit., p.101

64. Davidson, op.cit., p.104

65. Foote and Wilson, op.cit., p.77

66. Laxdoela Saga, op.cit., 12, p.24f

67. ibid., p.27f

68. Jones, op.cit., p.148

69. ibid., p.148

70. Bolin, op.cit., p.26 and 32


73. Mez, op.cit., p.157f: at Oman an ordinary Negro slave cost between 25 and 30 dinars, while within the Byzantine
Empire a slave cost the equivalent of 24 dinars. By the treaty of 945 (P.V.L., 50, p.75) young men and women could be redeemed for 10 bezants (nomismata), gold coins or solidi weighing 4.48 grammes, 72 solidi to the gold pound, giving a value of gold to silver of 1:12, see G. Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State, (B. Blackwell, Oxford, 1980), p.42

74. Sawyer, 1982, p.116: the Caliphate had a bimetallic system based on gold dinars and silver dirhems. During this period the relationship between the two fluctuated. Under the Caliph Harun-ar-Rashid (786-809) the dinar was worth 22 dirhems, and rose to 25 dirhems during the reign of Caliph Mutawakkil (847-861). In the tenth century the value of the dinar dropped significantly to 1:20 in the reign of Caliph Muktadir (907-932) and 1:15 in 928. By 941 the dinar was worth 13 dirhems. To complicate matters the amount of silver in dirhems rose during the period from 2.78 grammes in the early eighth century to 2.96 grammes by the late ninth century, Bolin, op.cit., p.15-17

75. P.V.L., p.53

76. ibid., p.53


78. see Chapter 2, note 37

79. P.V.L., p.59

80. Jones, op.cit., p.252


82. Kerner, op.cit., p.16 and 133f

83. ibid., p.132

84. Lieber, op.cit., p.21, this route may not have been in use before the mid tenth century after the decline of northern routes due to the drying up of silver imports.

85. Pritsak, op.cit., p.256f

86. S. Rapoport, 'Mahommedan Writers on Slavs and Russians', Slavonic and East European Review, 1929, p.93


88. Smyser, op.cit., p.96


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91. ibid., p.61

92. ibid., p.59

93. P.V.L., p.90

94. Davidson, op.cit., p.81

95. D.A.I., p.61


98. Sawyer, 1962, p.68f

99. Foote and Wilson, op.cit., p.242, Sawyer, 1962, p.69

100. Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.357

101. Foote and Wilson, op.cit., p.247

102. ibid., p.243, Sawyer, 1962, p.69

103. Sawyer, 1962, p.69

104. Foote and Wilson, op.cit., p.243, Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.361

105. Sawyer, 1962, p.69

106. ibid., p.70

107. ibid., p.70 and 74

108. Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.371

109. Foote and Wilson, op.cit., p.248, Sawyer, 1962, p.71

110. Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.371

111. Sawyer, 1962, p.71

112. Almgren, op.cit., p.265, Sawyer, 1962, p.71f

113. Sawyer, 1962, p.72

114. ibid., p.72
115. ibid., p.72
116. ibid., p.74
117. ibid., p.74f
118. Foote and Wilson, op.cit., p.247, Sawyer, 1962, p.70
119. Sawyer, 1962, p.70, Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.368
120. Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.368
121. ibid., p.369
122. Foote and Wilson, op.cit., p.247
123. Almgren, op.cit., p.254
124. ibid., p.254
125. Foote and Wilson, op.cit., p.242, Sawyer, 1962, p.71
127. Foote and Wilson, op.cit., p.252, Unger, op.cit., p.26
128. Sawyer, 1962, p.83
129. ibid., p.85f
130. ibid., p.87
131. Lieber, op.cit., p.21
133. ibid., p.130
134. ibid., p.137-39; Sawyer, 1962, p.89
135. Sawyer, 1962, p.85
136. Lieber, op.cit., p.22
137. Sawyer,1962, p.88
138. ibid., p.90
139. ibid., p.93
140. ibid., p.93
141. ibid., p.100
142. ibid., p.101f
143. ibid., p.102f, Oxenstierna, op.cit., p.133f
144. Sawyer, 1962, p.104
145. Snorri Sturlason, op.cit., Ynglinga Saga 8, p.6
146. Lieber, op.cit., p.27
147. ibid., p.28
148. Sawyer, 1962, p.91f
149. ibid., p.92
150. ibid., p.106f
151. ibid., p.107
152. Noonan, 1981, p.50f
153. Pritsak, op.cit., p.257
154. Sawyer, 1962, p.104
156. ibid., p.64 and 73
157. ibid., p.58-61
158. ibid., p.62
159. Sawyer, 1962, p.107
161. ibid., p.63 and 67
162. ibid., p.70
163. ibid., p.69
164. ibid., p.69f
165. Lieber, op.cit., p.21
166. Noonan, op.cit., p.69
167. ibid., p.70
168. ibid., p.65f, Akremtsy, 24 coins, end coin dates to 852/3, 13% Tahirid; Mishnevo, 32 coins, end coin dates to 868/9, 22% Tahirid; Novgorod, 203 coins, end coin dates to 864/5, 12% Tahirid; Pogreboe, 215 coins, end coin dates to 875/6, 15% Tahirid.
169. Sawyer, 1962, p.90f and 216
171. ibid., p.79
172. ibid., p.73
173. Bolin, op.cit., p.17f
174. ibid., p.19f
175. ibid., p.21
176. Spuler, op.cit., p.60f
177. Bolin, op.cit., p.22
178. ibid., p.20f, Sawyer, 1962, p.109
180. Sawyer, 1962, p.110 and 212
181. ibid., p.212
182. ibid., p.110f
183. ibid., p.111f
184. Sawyer, 1982, p.124
185. Bolin, op.cit., p.36f, Sawyer, 1962, p.112f
186. Sawyer, 1982, p.126
187. P.V.L., p.84, Dunlop, op.cit., p.241-45
188. P.V.L., p.96, the Bulgars were still a formidable force for in 986 Vladimir made peace with them "til stone floats and straw sinks".
189. Lieber, op.cit., p.25
190. Spuler, op.cit., p.81
191. Lieber, op.cit., p.25
192. Spuler, op.cit., p.81
193. Lieber, op.cit., p.21, Sawyer, 1962, p.114
194. Sawyer, 1962, p.114f
196. Lieber, op.cit., p.22
197. P.V.L., p.64, see note 25 p.234 a grivny was equivalent to a kufic pound (408 grammes of silver), although by the early eleventh century it contained about half a pound of silver.

198. ibid., p.65 and p.124

199. ibid., p.73

200. ibid., p.88

201. Davidson, op.cit., p.252, Grierson, op.cit., p.134, P.V.L., p.82f

202. Grierson, op.cit., p.135

203. Adam of Bremen, op.cit., Book III.51, schol. 84, p.159

204. Lieber, op.cit., p.21

205. Pritsak, op.cit., p.256


207. P.V.L., p.77, c/f p.83 when Constantine requests furs, wax and slaves from Olga, and 67, p.86 Svyatoslav enumerates the riches of Rus as honey, furs, wax and slaves.

208. Dunlop, op.cit., p.225

209. Davidson, op.cit., p.105

210. P.V.L., p.94

211. A.A. Vasiliev, 'Economic Relations Between Byzantium and Old Russia', Journal of Economic and Business History, volume 4, 1932, p.362

212. P.V.L., p.68, see above note 73

213. ibid., p.75

214. ibid., p.75

215. Ross, op.cit., p.21

216. P.V.L., p.61

217. ibid., p.61, this was probably a silver dirhem, p.234, note 26

218. ibid., p.81

219. Macartney, op.cit., p.213

220. P.V.L., p.81
221. D.A.I., p.63
222. P.V.L., p.78
224. Jones, op.cit., p.257
225. D.A.I., p.59
226. ibid., p.61
228. D.A.I., p.61-3
229. ibid., p.63
230. P.V.L., p.64f and p.65-8
231. Davidson, op.cit., p.89
232. P.V.L., p.234, note 34, Davidson, op.cit., p.90
233. P.V.L., p.65
234. Lopez, op.cit., p.27f
235. P.V.L., p.65, Lopez, op.cit., p.34
236. Davidson, op.cit., p.82 and 92, Lopez, op.cit., p.34
237. P.V.L., p.65
238. ibid., p.65
239. ibid., p.65
240. ibid., p.68
241. ibid., p.72
242. ibid., p.237, note 50
243. ibid., p.74-6
244. ibid., p.76
245. ibid., pp.64-6 and p.73, see Chapter 1, note 92
246. Sawyer, 1982, p.123
247. Lopez, op.cit., p.1-4 and 12
248. ibid., p.3f and 21
249. ibid., p.15
250. ibid., p.22f


252. P.V.L., p.75, Lopez, op.cit., p.35
253. P.V.L., p.75
255. Vasiliev, op.cit., p.326
256. D.A.I., p.61
257. Vasiliev, op.cit., p.327f
CHAPTER FOUR
RAIDERS AND GUARDSMEN

The Vikings who travelled eastward in search of fortune and perhaps fame through mercantile or military means were no less efficient than their cousins trading and terrorising the regions of western Europe in the ninth and tenth centuries. The Rus warriors were formidable opponents and left an indelible impression on the unfortunate inhabitants of the East who encountered their special brand of commercial enterprise. Ibn Rusta, writing c.920-50, described the Rus as "vigorouous and courageous", combining in battle "as one hand against their foes until they have conquered them". Another Muslim source, the anonymous geographer who compiled the Hudud al-Alam c.980, thought the Rus "evil-tempered, intractable, arrogant-looking, quarrelsome and warlike. They war with all the infidels who live around them and come out victorious". Ibn Miskawaih, who recorded an account of a raid carried out by 'Russians' in the mid-tenth century, was also impressed by their "vast frames and great courage. They know not defeat, nor does any of them turn his back til he slay or be slain". The Norsemen were physically imposing to the peoples of the southeast: Ibn Fadlan, who met Rus merchants at the capital of the Volga Bulgarians c.922, was greatly impressed saying: "I have never seen more perfect physical specimens, tall as
date palms, blond and ruddy".  

The warrior tradition was infused at an early age. According to Ibn Rusta, Rus fathers placed a sword in the hands of their infant sons, saying: "I shall bequeath to thee no wealth and thou will have naught except what thou dost gain for thyself by this sword of thine". Whenever a dispute arose and the decision of the Rus leader was disagreed with by the protagonists, they were ordered to "settle it with their swords and whichever sword is the sharper will be victorious". In battle the Rus were portrayed by Ibn Rusta as extremely courageous, uniting and attacking the enemy furiously, laying waste whatever stood in their way. "When they descend on open ground, none can escape from them without being destroyed, and their women taken possession of, and themselves taken into slavery". Those captured were perhaps fortunate as there are many instances of violent massacres. The first attack on Constantinople in 860 by the Norsemen led the Patriarch of the city to exclaim in one of his sermons:

"I see a fierce and savage tribe fearlessly poured round the city, ravaging the suburbs, destroying everything, ruining everything, fields, houses, herds, beasts of burden, women, children, old men, youths, thrusting their sword through everything, taking pity on nothing. The destruction is universal."  

Another example of the devastation they could cause can be seen in the campaign led by Svyatoslav against the Khazars (c.968) which led to the destruction of major centres - Itil, Sarkel and Samander - and the downfall of their Empire. Ibn Hawkel wrote soon after the attack (c.977):

There were in Samander many gardens, and it is said that it used to contain 40,000 vineyards. I asked
about it... of a man who had recently been there. He said: There is not alms for the poor in any vineyard or garden, if there remains a leaf on the bough. For the Russians descended upon it, and not a grape nor a raisin remained in the place."

Although their raids and wars were destructive and violent, they were so for a reason. Commerce and raiding were but two facets of the same purpose, to gain wealth by the easiest means. Plunder could directly profit the raider or he could use what had been gained as a means of exchange; Norse raiders were extremely efficient at gaining goods at the least cost to themselves. During the attack on Bardha'a in 943 (described by Ibn Miskawaih) the Rus, once they had captured the town, treated the inhabitants leniently to begin with, proclaiming: "it is our duty to treat you well and yours to be loyal to us". However, the lower classes of the town could not restrain themselves, and when the Muslim army attempting to recapture the town attacked, they threw stones at the Rus defenders. The Rus issued an ultimatum telling them to leave within three days. A wise minority did; many of those who remained were slaughtered on the fourth day. According to Ibn Miskawaih, 10,000 men, women and children were taken captive, the women and children were taken to a captured fortress; the men to a local Mosque where they were told to ransom themselves. After dissension broke out between the Muslim and Christian inhabitants of the town over the rate of payment, the Rus killed all except some who managed to escape through a water conduit leading into the Mosque, and others who agreed to purchase their lives. Those who did so found themselves quickly ruined as once they took the Rus warriors to their residence or shop, for they found

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the demands rose until the warriors were convinced that
"nothing remained to him, no gold, silver, bedding or
clothing, [only then] would he let him go, giving him a piece
of stamped clay to serve as safe conduct".

The Vikings were pragmatic fighters and did not believe in throwing away their lives if it was possible to
escape or negotiate a way out. At Bardha'a there was always
an escape route kept open by the Rus, by ship down the river
Kur to the Caspian Sea where the Muslims could not reach
them. When things began to go badly for Svyatoslav's force
on the Danube, a meeting was held and suggestions of secretly
escaping by night or negotiating a withdrawal with the Greeks
were discussed before Svyatoslav himself asked his men to
carry on the fight. However, when capture appeared imminent
and there was no means of escape, the Norsemen were prepared
to fight their way out or die in the process. Ibn Miskawaih
recounts how five Rus (one of them a 'beardless lad') with
some captured women were surrounded in a garden at Bardha'a
by Muslim troops. The Muslims attempted to capture them
alive;

... but it was not possible, for none of them would
capitulate, and they could not be killed before
they had slain many times their number of the
Moslems. The beardless lad was the last survivor.
When he perceived that he was going to be captured,
he mounted a tree that was near him, and kept
slashing away at his vital parts with his scimitar
til he fell dead.

This portrayal of dedicated warriors prepared to take their
own lives when the position was hopeless was also encountered
by the Greeks fighting Svyatoslav's forces in the Balkans.
Leo the Deacon reported that the Rus preferred to kill
themselves rather than face death at enemy hands because they
believed that they would become their slayer's servant in the afterlife.\textsuperscript{14} In fact, this belief is not known amongst Norse practices, although it was held by some nomadic tribes such as the Magyars (Hungarians). Some of these were serving with Svyatoslav, so it is possible that Leo ascribed this belief to the whole force in error.\textsuperscript{15} It is apparent that the Rus warriors serving under Svyatoslav, who constituted the majority of the army, were prepared to fight to the death. In the late eleventh century account of Cedrenus which incorporates the work of John Scylitzes, Svyatoslav is said to have encouraged his warriors in these words:

... to the extent that they should wish to do battle with the Romans once and for all, and either by fighting bravely vanquish them, or if they [the Byzantines] should be granted the achievement of victory, prefer a glorious and happy death than living on most basely and disreputably.\textsuperscript{16}

The Primary Chronicle records a similar speech by Svyatoslav to his men, saying, "... I will march before you. If my head falls, then look to yourselves": to which his men replied, "Wherever your head falls, then we too will lay down our own".\textsuperscript{17} This attitude amongst the troops of Svyatoslav is in accordance with the Norse that a glorious death on the battlefield promised immediate entry to Valhalla, or the 'World of Joy'. This was the realm of the war-god, Odinn, where men were borne from the field of battle by Valkyries to a great hall where never-ending feasting and fighting went on in preparation for the great final battle at Ragnarok.\textsuperscript{18}

Norsemen were formidable armed whether taking part in commercial expeditions or military operations. The Rus traders encountered by Ibn Fadlan at Bulgar in 921–2 were
well armed, each man carrying a sword, axe and a knife. Ibn Miskawaih provides more details in describing the equipment of the Rus who attacked and captured Bardha'a in 943. He noted that as well as their weapons they also carried tools:

... bearing suspended upon his person [is] an artisan's outfit, axe, saw, hammer, and the like. He fights with spear and shield; he wears a sword and has hung upon him a lance and an instrument resembling a poniard [dagger].

The warrior and the merchant were obviously prepared for any eventuality. Other details of weaponry and armature can be seen in the accounts of Leo the Deacon and Cedrenus on the Balkan war between the Rus and Byzantines (c.970). Battle-axe and sword appear to be the main weapons in use, while protective armour included a type of chain-mail body shirt and long shields reaching almost to the ground.

13. Battle-axe heads, the breidox and the skeggox.

The battle-axe was especially feared by the Greeks fighting the Rus in the Balkans c.970, who begged their Emperor to "ward off the battle-axe of the Tauroi". The heavier versions were peculiar to Scandinavia although a lighter version, the 'topor' (Old Norse, 'taparox'), was used by both the Scandinavians and the Slavs as a throwing axe or by horsemen. The most common and favoured type amongst the Norsemen was the 'breidox' or broadaxe, which had a large, almost triangular blade and needed both hands to wield it.
In Norway it is difficult to decide whether it or the sword was the most favoured weapon of the period.⁷⁵ Another popular type frequently found in northern burials of the Viking Age was the 'skeggax' which had an almost rectangular projection for the lower part of the blade, giving rise to the description, 'bearded' axe. A longer version, the 'konungsskuggsja', was favoured for seafighting as it could double as a grapple when boarding other vessels.⁷⁶ The battle-axe was the weapon used to repel cavalry and a well-trained group of axe-men could make a devastating impact against a cavalry charge.⁷⁷ The popularity of the weapon spread, especially amongst the Anglo-Saxons so that by 1066 the axe-wielding Housecarls of Harold Godwinsson were reputedly the finest troops in Europe.⁷⁸

![Sword with ULFBERHT inscription.](image)

14. Sword with ULFBERHT inscription.

Nevertheless, the sword was the Scandanavian's favourite weapon. As already mentioned in chapter two, the finest were those equipped with blades produced by German smiths of the Rhineland and marked with special names or symbols: the best known of these workshops in the north used the mark 'Ulfberht'.⁷⁹ The Vikings produced their own swords of high quality as well, the single-edged 'sax' being regarded as the genuine Scandinavian sword. But the double-edged 'handsax' was the more popular and versatile weapon, equipped with Rhenish blades, and besides being a hacking weapon it could also be thrust. Additional work, such as
the adding of hilts and 'false damascening' the blades, may have been carried out by Norse smiths. The hilts were usually made from metal, bone, wood or horn, sometimes covered with leather, and were just long enough to grip with one hand. On the guard or the pommel victory runes were carved to aid the owner in battle, significant of the superstitious beliefs and magical powers ascribed to swords. The false damascene work or pattern welding, (the addition of pieces of iron and steel of differing hardness to the blade), produced a flame pattern on the blade and gave the sword greater elasticity to the extent that, in the finest swords, the tip of the blade could be bent back to the hilt. The most accomplished Norse warriors were able to exchange sword and shield rapidly between hands, wielding the weapon with equal dexterity in either hand. Other swordsmen used secondary weapons, a spear for thrusting (the 'fjadrpjot') or hewing (the 'heptisax'), or perhaps the single-edged sax.

During the Viking Age these weapons were highly valued and a brisk trade in blades to the north from Germany developed, although attempts were made by Carolingian rulers to stop the practice. From Scandinavia swords were exported to other parts of Western Europe and also to the East by Viking merchants. The value placed on these weapons by the Muslims can be illustrated by an episode that occurred after the Rus withdrawal from Bardha'a in 944. According to Ibn Miskawaih, "... the Moslems disturbed their [the Rus] graves and brought out a number of swords which are in great demand to this day for their sharpness and excellence".

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The tactics adopted by the Scandinavians on land were not complicated and "consisted largely of bashing hell out of the opposing side", or beating a hasty retreat if the opposition proved too fierce.\textsuperscript{32} If this could not be accomplished the Vikings would form a defensive line with their shields, preferably on the top of a small hill, and prepare to make a stand. This was the 'skjaldborg' or shield-wall and appears to have been the tactic in use against the Greeks during the Balkan war of Svyatoslav.\textsuperscript{33} According to Leo the Deacon, the Rus (when under attack from the Greeks) formed into a 'battle-array' or 'synaspismos', which is a term known from classical Greek literature for a shield-wall.\textsuperscript{34}

The most common shield used by the Norsemen was a light, round shield made from wood and strengthened with iron bands and an iron rim with an iron boss to sustain the brunt of the blows aimed at it.\textsuperscript{35} However, Leo described the shield used by the Rus warriors of Svyatoslav as "... very strong and, for better protection, are made large enough to reach down to their feet".\textsuperscript{36} A shield of this type, the 'spordr', was known to the Vikings of the north, borrowed from the Germanic tribes of Europe. It was a large, curved shield, oval in shape and quite long and heavy. As time progressed the tip of the spordr became increasingly pointed, allowing the shield to be fixed into the ground.\textsuperscript{37} Behind the shield-wall, archers and javelin throwers took advantage of the protection to initiate the battle. A javelin might have been hurled over the heads of the opposing force to show that they were 'given' to Odinn, the gatherer of slain men.\textsuperscript{38} The
javelins used by the Vikings (the 'geirr' or the 'flein') were attached to the shaft by a socket with pins that could be removed before the weapon was thrown, making it difficult to withdraw once it had struck home, and rendering it useless to the other side as it could not be thrown back. The men in the front row, according to Leo, were protected by "shields reaching down to their feet and ring-corselets". This type of chain-mail armour was commonly used by Scandinavian, Slav and nomad alike, adopted from the Romans and Sasanians. To the Norsemen it was called the 'brynja' or mail-shirt, and was extensively used during the Viking period. It was an expensive item to purchase and men were therefore eager to strip them from corpses even during battle. Those who could neither buy nor steal brynjas made do with padded leather jackets."

The Norsemen were essentially footsoldiers on land. Although they used horses, they did not adapt to fighting on horseback. Under the impetus of nomadic attacks, the warriors of the Kievan State did eventually develop as cavalrymen to deal with the horsemen of the Steppes, but during the early period of Norse infiltration into Eastern Europe and beyond, most of the military and commercial raiding activities were carried out by ship. An early tenth century Muslim writer (Ibn Rusta) noted that the raids made by the Rus were not "... made riding, but their raids and fights are only in ships".

The geography of Eastern Europe made the use of water-transport logical; the Ukrainian region was a vast plain, cut across and interconnected by broad rivers. The
distribution of the population of the region reflected the importance of the river-systems, small towns established at major crossroads becoming regional centres. By exploiting these river systems the Vikings tapped an important means of communication which allowed them to dominate long range commercial activities and carry out raids which their victims never dreamed were possible.

The first raid carried out by the Norsemen against the Byzantine Empire occurred in 860 at the capital, Constantinople. Suggestions of Norse raids against Surozh (Soldaia) and Amastris in the Black Sea earlier in the ninth century recounted in the Vita (Lives) of St Stephen of Surozh and St George of Amastris are now regarded as apochryphal additions influenced by the 860 raid and the attack by Vladimir against Kherson in 980.\textsuperscript{45} The exact date of the attack had been the subject of some debate amongst nineteenth century historians until the discovery of a short passage in the Brussels Chronicle provided the exact day, month and year. The Primary Chronicle placed the attack in the fourteenth year of the reign of the Emperor Michael III (842-867), the year 866, under the false assumption that Michael's reign had begun in 852, deriving this date through a complicated formula based on the chronology provided by an early Byzantine work by Nicephorus the Patriarch.\textsuperscript{46} The date (866) appears to have been arbitrarily fixed so as not to conflict with the chronology of the invitation of the Varangians and subsequent events in the Primary Chronicle. It is possible that the compiler of the Chronicle had access to the late tenth century account by the anonymous
continuator of Georgius Harmatolus, who wrongly placed the attack in the ninth and tenth years of Michael's reign. By coincidence if this chronology had been adopted the year 861 would have been arrived at, very close to the actual date of the raid.⁴⁴

According to the Brussels Chronicle: "The Russians [Rhos] came with 200 ships ... June 18, ind. [indictio] 8, AM 6368, in the fifth year of the reign of Michael III".⁴⁵ The reference to the fifth year of Michael's reign relates to 856 when the Emperor deposed his mother (Theodora) who had been regent, and murdered her chief minister, Theoctistus, thus becoming sole ruler. Further corroboration for placing the raid in 860 is provided by Nicetas Paphlagon, the author of the Life of Ignatius, written c.907. Ignatius, forced to resign as Patriarch of Constantinople on 23 November 858, was replaced by Photius and exiled to the island of Terebinthos in the Sea of Marmora. A short time after this he was removed, first to a suburb of Constantinople and then to Mytilene in the Aegean Sea, before returning to Terebinthos in February 860. Soon after this second period of exile on the island began, it was attacked by the Norsemen.⁴⁷ That the raid should have occurred in June is perhaps not unusual as Constantine Porphyrogenitus, in his description (c.950) of the journey of mercantile expeditions from Kiev to Constantinople, stated that the fleet left in June in order to negotiate the Dnieper cataracts while the waters were high but manageable.⁴⁸ Logically, a raiding expedition from this area would be subject to the same conditions.

The impact of the raid was heightened because the
'Tagmata' (troops stationed around the capital) were away, part of an expedition being undertaken by the Emperor, accompanied by his influential uncle, Bardas, against the 'Agarenes' (Muslims). The Byzantine fleet was also away, showing the flag at the mouth of the Nile in 859 and attempting to forestall more losses of Byzantine possessions on Sicily to the Muslims. The capital was thus deprived of most of its military and naval strength, left with only a small garrison to man the great defensive walls surrounding the inner city, the final defence.\(^8\)\(^9\)

The timing of the attack while the Emperor was away with the army may have been coincidental, but according to a late Russian source (the Nikonovski Chronicle, compiled in the sixteenth century) the Rus attackers, upon hearing that the Muslims were invading the Empire "... went on Tsarigrad [Constantinople] and did much evil."\(^5\)\(^0\) How this information reached the Rus of Kiev is unsure; possibly they gained knowledge of the Emperor’s intentions from merchants at Kherson or Trebizond on the southern coast of the Black Sea. There is also a suggestion that Norsemen were already serving in the Imperial Guard, known to the Byzantines as 'Tauroscyths', a term commonly used by Byzantine writers to designate Norsemen in the tenth and eleventh century.\(^5\)\(^1\) If this information was gained after the Emperor had left the capital in early June it must have travelled very quickly to Kiev for the Rus to have organised an expedition. More than likely, the raid was already planned on the basis that the Emperor would continue campaigning against the Muslims after a relatively successful summer in 859, despite a defeat at
Samosata when the Emperor himself was almost captured. That an exchange of prisoners took place in either April or May was not a reflection of any change in the Imperial plan. Unfortunately for the capital, these plans could not have foreseen the raid from the north.

According to the Primary Chronicle, the expedition left Kiev under the leadership of the two Varangians Askold (Hoskuldr) and Dir (Dyri). The Byzantine sources for the attack knew little of the origin of their assailants. The earliest writers, the Patriarch Photius (who witnessed the attack) and Nicetas Paphlagon, writing in the early tenth century, described the mauroaders as a "fierce and barbarous Scythian tribe" or a "most blood-thirsty tribe of Scyths", the term Scyth meaning any barbarian from the northern Black Sea region. Later Byzantine accounts mentioned them inhabitating the region north of Taurus (or the Taurus mountains), which usually indicated the Crimean region.

Some scholars of the late nineteenth, early twentieth century theorised that the raiders originated from the Crimean region, possibly based at Tmutarakan on the Taman Peninsula, an area which appears to have been ruled since c.990 by members of the Kievan ruling family. The most recent exponent of this theory was George Vernadsky who, in the 1940s, suggested that Norse elements from Kiev and Tmutarakan combined their forces for the raid, the Kievan Rus navigating small rivers across the Steppe region to reach the Sea of Azov. From here the attack was launched. There are several reasons for discounting this theory. In the ninth century the Byzantines and the Khazars were the premier
powers of the region and maintained friendly relations with one another. When the Khazar Khagan requested Byzantine engineers from the Emperor Theophilus (829-842) in 833 to help construct a fortress on the Don river, this was granted.\textsuperscript{39} The supervisor for the building of this fort, thespatharocandidatus Petronus Kamateros, became the first military governor (strategos) of Kherson in the Crimea. The raid of 860 came as a complete surprise to the Byzantines and must have required an immense amount of organisation. It is unlikely that an expedition of this scale organised in the region of the Sea of Azov could have escaped the notice of both Khazars and Byzantines.\textsuperscript{38} Extracts from the first Homily delivered by the Patriarch Photius while the attack was still in progress also suggests that the invaders originated from the "farthest north ... sundered off from us by so many lands and kingdoms, by navigable rivers and harbourless seas".\textsuperscript{35}

The expedition involved 200 ships and compared to the numbers that took part in Norse raids in the west, appears to have been a small one. For comparison against some of the largest raids, King Horik of Denmark in 845 sent 600 ships up the Elbe to sack Hamburg, while 7,000 large ships and many smaller ones were said to have taken part in the siege of Paris in 885.\textsuperscript{31} The actual figures of men involved are more difficult to ascertain. Vasiliev, in his classic work on the 860 raid published in 1946, suggested that 20,000 men took part, assuming that each ship carried, on average, 100 men.\textsuperscript{32} However, if vessels similar to the Gokstad ship were used (which carried between 35 and 70 men) 14,000 raiders would have taken part. In fact, the number
would have been considerably less, because the Gokstad Ship was much larger than most Scandinavian vessels. Some measure of the size of the vessels most likely used can be found in an early tenth century passage of Emperor Leo VI's 'Tactica': "... the Northern Scyths employ lighter and swifter vessels - for they can not use larger boats to travel down rivers to the Euxine Sea [Black Sea]." Leo, writing after the attack on Constantinople, must have taken note of the ships employed by the Norsemen, the 'Northern Scyths' he refers to in the passage quoted.

15. They came against Miklagard with 200 ships.

The unexpected nature of the attack is made clear in the Homilies delivered by the Patriarch Photius at the time of the attack:

... the unbelievable course of the barbarians did not give rumour time to announce it, so that some means of safety could be devised, but the sight accompanied the report, ... the unexpectedness of the attack, its strange swiftness, ... discharged like a thunderbolt from heaven."

The absence of the army (Tagmata), away with the Emperor renewing the campaign against the Muslims, was keenly felt: "Where is now the Christ-loving emperor? Where are the
armies? Where are the arms, the engines, the military deliberations and preparations?" lamented the Patriarch.\textsuperscript{65} The Prefect of the City, Nicetas Ooryphus, hastily sent a message after the Emperor to inform him of the situation. The raiders moved with ease through the Bosporus Straits towards the Golden Horn on which the capital was situated with no Imperial ships to challenge them. The massive walls protected the inner city, but the suburbs remained defenceless. The slaughter was horrific:

\textit{... sparing nothing from man to beast, not respecting female weakness, not pitying tender infants, not reverencing the hoary hairs of old men, softened by nothing that is wont to move human nature to pity,\ldots boldly thrusting their sword through persons of every age and sex. One could see babes torn away by them from breast and milk and life itself, and finding an impoverished grave in the rocks against which, alas, they were dashed; mothers wailing miserably, being slaughtered over their infants who were still convulsed and gasping...} \textsuperscript{66}

According to a tenth century group of sources, mostly copyists or revisors of an earlier chronicle by Symeon Logothete, the city was surrounded in an attempt (one that failed) to breach the massive walls.\textsuperscript{67} Photius also appears to allude to this, recounting how the inhabitants inside the city believing that it was only a matter of time before "the barbarians have penetrated within the walls".\textsuperscript{68} The raiders extended their sphere of operations southward into the Sea of Marmora and the Princes' Islands, where the exiled Patriarch, Ignatius, was residing. According to his biographer, Nicetas Paphlagon, they overran monasteries and estates with 'barbaric fury' and, upon capturing some of Ignatius' servants, "butchered them all with battle-axes on the stern of a ship".\textsuperscript{67} Nicetas, writing in the early tenth century,
also indicates the motive for the raid, as the Rus attackers plundered the monasteries and estates, "both taking as booty all utensils and money".\textsuperscript{70} The atrocities suffered by the Byzantines strongly echo Norse raids carried out in Western Europe, such as the attacks on Lindisfarne, Jarrow and further west on the sacred Isle of Iona. Perhaps the best western parallel may be the savage Norwegian assault on the French city of Nantes in June in 842, regarded as a classic example of Viking tactics.\textsuperscript{71}

The sources derived from Symeon Logothete also mention that the Emperor Michael managed to return to Constantinople from his campaign against the Muslims while the raid was still in progress as he could scarcely cross over to the city because of the invaders' presence.\textsuperscript{72} None of the earlier sources – Photius, Theophanes and Nicetas – or the eleventh and twelfth century accounts of Cedrenus and Zonaras, mention this fact.\textsuperscript{73} This may in part be due to a subsequent antipathy to the reign of the last Amorian Emperor (Michael), who was murdered in 867 by his successor Basil, founder of the Macedonian dynasty.\textsuperscript{74}

The importance of the return of the Emperor from the Mauropotamon (Black river) is linked to the possible duration of the attack. Michael had left the capital sometime in early June. He could not have left earlier because in May there was a truce with the Muslims so that prisoners could be exchanged. It therefore seems likely that one or two weeks passed before the attack began. More time would have elapsed before the message sent by Ooryphus reached him at the Black river. If the attack was near its
end by the time Michael returned to the city then it could only have lasted as long as it takes to travel to the Mauropotamon and back. However, the location of the Black river is a matter of speculation. Two possibilities are regarded as likely: a tributary of the Sangarios which is connected to Lake Sobandja close to Nicomedia, and the other, a tributary of the Halys (Kizilirmak) in Cappadocia in modern central Turkey. A reference by Photius in his first Homily given while the attack was still in progress that the "emperor endures long labours beyond the frontier", would appear to suggest the latter alternative, and if so would infer that the attack lasted for some time.

Suggestions that the raid lasted for nearly a year are based on the chronology of the Pseudo-Symeon (which places the raid incorrectly in the ninth and tenth years of Michael’s reign), a sermon delivered by George of Nicomedia asking liberation from unnamed enemies and their "impious madness", and finally a date (5 June) given by a Greek synaxaria for a religious celebration commemorating:

... the terrific disaster which was inflicted upon us in the form of an incursion of the barbarians; when all were ready to be deservedly captured by them and subjected to slaughter, the merciful and benevolent God,... delivered us.

It is not likely that the raid lasted nearly so long. According to the Symeon Logothete group of sources, the attackers were destroyed by a storm which suddenly appeared after the Emperor and the Patriarch led a procession bearing the holy clothes of the Virgin Mary from the church where they were kept (Blachernae) to the sea where the vestments were dipped. The second Homily of Photius also
refers to a procession:

the whole city was carrying with me [Photius] her raiment for the repulse of the besiegers, and the protection of the besieged,... immediately as the Virgin's garment went round the walls, the barbarians gave up the siege and broke camp, while we were delivered from impending capture and granted unexpected salvation.\textsuperscript{77}

The second Homily was delivered after the Rus had departed, possibly in early July.\textsuperscript{80} No mention is made of the presence of the Emperor (a fact that would have been difficult not to refer to in the sermon), or the storm, possibly because Photius had not received knowledge of it. It seems likely that the raid lasted one or two weeks and ended as quickly as it had begun, the attackers leaving before the Emperor could return with his forces. It could not have been still in progress in December 860, for legates were then beginning to arrive at Constantinople to attend the councils held early in 861.\textsuperscript{81}

The confusion surrounding the events of 860 might have been added to by what appears to be a second Norse raid in the region of the Sea of Marmora, originating from the Mediterranean, sometime in 861. According to the Venetian Chronicle of Johannes Diaconus written after 1008, 360 ships approached the capital but were unable to take the city, being content to plunder the outskirts. Superficially this raid seems very similar to the attack of June 860, although more ships were involved and these raiders returned home in triumph.\textsuperscript{82} The earlier Rus attack is generally regarded as a failure. The Symeon group of sources mention that few ships managed to escape the storm, while the Brussels Chronicle of the eleventh century relates that they were "ruled by the
Christians,... forcefully defeated and annihilated", perhaps an allusion to a military defeat. The Russian chronicles also regarded the expedition as unsuccessful. According to the Nikonovski Chronicle of the sixteenth century: "there was in Kiev great weeping" after the remnants of the fleet returned. Nevertheless, the effect that this raid had on the Byzantines was immense, for the north - previously ignored and regarded as inhabited by mere barbarians - was now seen to contain a dangerously powerful people capable of inflicting severe damage on the Empire. It therefore became necessary to forestall further attacks in some way and an opportunity to do so presented itself soon after the attack. According to the anonymous continuator of Theophanes, an embassy came from the Rus (presumably those of Kiev) to Constantinople, "praying that they might share in divine baptism". Evidently this met with success for an encyclical sent to the eastern Patriarchs by the Patriarch Photius in 867 proclaimed:

... nevertheless these people [the Rus] have also exchanged the pure and genuine religion of the Christians for the godless Greek [Hellenic] beliefs which they held before, and have made themselves a friendly subject people,... And the desire for truth and zeal inflamed them to such an extent ... that they received a pastor and a bishop and welcomed the religious rituals of the Christians...

Constantine Porphyrogenitus, in the biographical work on his grandfather (Basil) mentions that a peace treaty was signed between the Rus and the Empire, and that an archbishop, a man who was already familiar with the region and its inhabitants, was appointed to them about 874.
The Russian Primary Chronicle does not ascribe a religious conversion to the reigns of Askold and Dir and may have been purposely omitted lest its inclusion would have deprived St. Vladimir — a member of the Rurikid dynasty — of the fame of converting the Kievan State to Christianity. The sixteenth century Nikonovsky Chronicle, however, does place the conversion in the earlier period:

Basil ... made a peace settlement with the aforementioned Rus, and converted them to Christianity and they promised to receive baptism and asked for an archpriest, and the Emperor sent (him) to them."

The Primary Chronicle might retain an allusion to the conversion during Askold and Dir's reign, mentioning that after the two rulers were murdered by Oleg, their bodies were buried on the Hungarian Hill in Kiev: "Over that tomb [Askolds] Ol'ma built a church dedicated to St. Nicholas, but Dir’s tomb is behind St. Irene’s". According to Canon law, a church can only be built over the grave or relics of a Christian martyr which is what Askold possibly became after his murder at the hands of the pagan Oleg. The Byzantines appear to have accepted the earlier date for the official conversion of the Rus and Christians do appear to have remained at Kiev after its lapse into paganism: when ratifying the 945 treaty, those Rus who were Christians took the oath in the Church of St. Elias "since many of the Varangians were Christians".

The treaty signed with the early rulers of Kiev c.874, was important to both signatories. For the Byzantines, they felt that they had secured the northern threat to their borders and gained an important ally against
nomadic attacks and the pretensions of the Danubian Bulgars. This, of course, worked both ways for friendly relations were maintained with the Pechenegs in order to check any ambitions of the Rus, who were open to attack on their journeys down the Dnieper, a fact that did not escape Constantine Porphyrogenitus. For the Kievan State, the recognition given to it by the Emperor may have led its rulers to attempt to elevate their status amongst the small states of early Russia, and this may have led to the downfall of Kiev under the rule of Askold and Dir. The leader of Novgorod could not let former members of Rurik's druzhina usurp the position he had inherited, hence Oleg led his Varangians and Slav allies south to Kiev. When Askold and Dir were brought to his presence he pointed out their position and at the same time gave justification for his actions: "'You are not princes nor even of princely stock, but I am of princely birth.' Igor' was then brought forward, and Oleg announced that he was the son of Rurik." Only a member of the Rurikid dynasty could rule in an officially recognised state, a claim which the Primary Chronicle emphasised wherever possible.

According to the Primary Chronicle, Oleg (Helgi) was the next Scandinavian ruler of Kiev to lead an expedition against Constantinople sometime between 904 and 907. He left Kiev supported by many allied tribes, including Varangians, commanding 2,000 ships supported by an army on horse-back. This force was unable to take the city or enter the Bosporus, as it had been fortified. However, they committed many atrocities in the surrounding districts, burning palaces and churches. "Oleg commanded his warriors to make wheels which
they attached to the ships, and when the wind was favourable, they spread the sails and bore down upon the city from the open country". Thereupon the Greeks submitted, offering to pay tribute and sent Oleg gifts of wine and food which he refused, "for it was poisoned". Oleg then demanded tribute for his 2,000 ships at 12 grivny a man, forty men to a ship; the sum sought thus amounting to 96,000 grivny. This tribute was paid and two agreements were then negotiated and signed, in 907 and 911.

Problems concerning the historicity of this attack arise not only from within the passage in the Primary Chronicle, but also from the lack of corroboration from external sources. Byzantine sources are unusually silent about this raid, neither the few contemporary writers nor later chroniclers mention any specific attack by the Rus at this time, although they cover the earlier and later raids of 860 and 941 fully enough. This argument does not in itself prove that the raid never took place, but the silence is very unusual." One possible reference from a contemporary source to the attack might be reflected in the Chronicle of the Pseudo-Symeon, based on the earlier work of Symeon Logothete. This passage lists a series of placenames which lie along the sea route between the mouth of the Dnieper and Constantinople in association with the "Russians, also called Dromites"." An earlier passage refering to the "'divinely inspired oracles' of the Russian chiefs", may refer to the cognomen of Oleg, 'veshchi', the Sage (or Wise). Viewing the passages together, it has been suggested that they contain the outline of the raid by Oleg about 907.
The evidence of Leo the Deacon, writing in the latter half of the tenth century, has been utilised as indirect evidence for the 907 raid. According to Leo, the Emperor John Tzonisces, when dealing with Prince Svyatoslav, said: "I hope you have not forgotten the defeat of your father Igor [Igoros], who, having scorned the sworn agreements, came by sea to the imperial city".¹⁰¹ This passage clearly refers to the 911 treaty and possibly also the earlier agreement of c.874. As the 911 treaty is presented in the Primary Chronicle as made in response to the 907 attack, the reference by Leo to the 'sworn agreements' has been used to indirectly support Oleg’s raid.¹⁰²

Constantine Porphyrogenitus’ statement on relations between the Pechenegs, the Rus and the Byzantines has also been used in the context of the 907 raid. According to Constantine:

Nor can the Russians come at this imperial city of the Romans, either for war or for trade, unless they are at peace with the Pechenegs, because when the Russians come with their ships to the barrages of the river, ... the men of this nation of the Pechenegs set upon them, and, ... they are easily routed and cut to pieces.... So long as the emperor of the Romans is at peace with the Pechenegs, neither the Russians nor the Turks can come upon the Roman dominions by force of arms, nor can they exact from the Romans large and inflated sums in money and goods as the price of peace,...¹⁰³

The importance of the nomadic Pechenegs to the Rus when raiding or trading with the Empire is apparent, and demonstrated in the attack led by Igor in 941, shortly before Constantine wrote his treatise c.948-52. In referring to 'large and inflated sums', however, it is possible that the Emperor Constantine meant the exaction of tribute by Oleg in
907 of 96,000 grivny (possibly half a million gold solidi).  

Islamic source material is equally sparse concerning the 907 attack. A geographical author (Marvazi, writing c.1120) mentions a certain group of Russians reaching Constantinople "in spite of the chains in the gulf". In the context of the whole passage it appears that this raid was contemporary to others undertaken by the Rus in the Caspian Sea region c.913, and could be construed as a reference to Oleg's attack. Although Marvazi is a late source it is possible that he was deriving his information from an earlier work by Ahmed Jayhani of the early tenth century, now lost. The vague nature of the information, however, may be an echo of the earlier 860 attack.

The best reference for the raid comes from a near contemporary of the events, al-Masudi, a widely travelled man who died in Egypt c.956. Masudi mentions that one of the first kings of the Slavs was 'al-Dir', possibly a reference to Dir, the Varangian leader of Kiev along with Askold:

Afterward this King of the Slavs was succeeded by the King Alawang (Alawandj). He possesses vast cultivated lands, numerous troops, and many military resources. He fought the Greeks, the Franks, the Nokabard, and other peoples.  

The name 'Alawang' might reflect the Slavonic name, Oleg, possibly learnt by Masudi on his travels in the Caspian Sea region not long after the first raid on Bardha'a c.913, which he also describes. A more obscure source may confirm Masudi's picture of an attack by Oleg. This is the 'Khazar document' which relates that during the reign of the Khazar king, Joseph, a commander named Pesah defeated a certain
king of Russia called 'Helgu', who had been bribed by the Emperor Romanus to attack the Khazars. Pesah forced Helgu to attack Romanus:

And thus he marched against his own will and fought against Constantinople four months on sea. And his mighty men fell there. For the Macedonians prevailed over him by fire. And he fled but was ashamed to return to his land. And he went to Persia by the sea and he fell there, he and all his camp.\(^{100}\)

Although Helgu appears to represent Helgi (Oleg) there are many problems with this source. Several elements seem to have been merged. Firstly, the Byzantine Emperor, Romanus did not become Emperor until 919, six years after the death of Oleg. Igor, the successor to Oleg, led an expedition against Romanus in 941 and was defeated by Greek fire.\(^{100}\)

Igor's son, Svyatoslav, was bribed with 108,000 gold solidi by the Emperor Nicephorus Phocas to attack the Bulgarians of the Danube in c.969.\(^{110}\) Finally, the death of Helgu in the east might be reflected in the Primary Chronicle passage on the death of Oleg. Oleg was told by soothsayers that his horse would be the ultimate cause of his death. He therefore kept it maintained but never saw it alive again. One day he enquired what had happened to it and was told it was dead:

He rode to the place where the bare bones and skull lay. Dismounting from his horse, he laughed and remarked, "So I was supposed to receive my death from this skull?" And he stamped upon the skull with his foot. But a serpent crawled forth from it and bit him in the foot, so that in consequence he sickened and died.\(^{111}\)

This death is remarkably similar to that of Orvar-Oddr (Arrow Odd or Odd the Far-Travelled), a native of Halogaland. A horse was also foretold as the cause of his death and he died from a snake-biter after striking the skull of the horse Faxi
and was buried in a stone coffin and later cremated.\textsuperscript{112} In Russian byliny (epic poem) nomadic chiefs were often portrayed as serpents and this may have been the basis of the story concerning Oleg's death. As little was known about Oleg's death except that he died in the East fighting a Turkish people, this story was incorporated in the Chronicle to make it more dramatic.\textsuperscript{113}

The version of events presented by the Primary Chronicle contain other inconsistencies. The only route which the cavalry force said to have accompanied Oleg could take was through the Bulgarian Khanate under the 'rule of Symeon. Although he had fought against the Emperor previously, at that time Symeon was at peace, leaving the only other possible route eastward around the Black Sea; a feat that would have been comparable to the march of Hannibal across the Alps.\textsuperscript{114} Horses may have been shipped across the sea as Viking vessels were capable of this. It would, however, have been a risky venture and the use of cavalry is anomalous in Viking tactics and a hindrance to seaborne manoeuvrability and speed.\textsuperscript{115} The placing of wheels under the ships and sailing them overland appears to be a fanciful addition at first glance but it might possibly be a reference to transporting the ships on rollers (a practice in which the Rus were well versed) in order to pass the chain and reach the Golden Horn.\textsuperscript{116}

External circumstances at the time of the raid would have made the attack difficult to execute. In 907 - unlike in 860 - the Imperial Navy was not under any pressure and ships and men would have been available to deal with
raiders attacking the capital. In 911 an expedition was sent to Crete which included 700 Rus seamen, some manning Pamphylian ships, the best in the Imperial Navy. These men are generally believed to reflect the clause in the 911 treaty concerning men serving in the Imperial forces, but it does appear unusual that so many men of the same race that had recently attacked the city and committed such atrocities would have been allowed to serve on crack ships within the navy.

The treaty signed in September 911 with the Emperors Leo, Alexander and Constantine, although conceding some very important rights to Rus merchants regarding trade within the capital, does not appear (as the chronicler may have supposed) to be the result of a military defeat suffered by the Byzantines. The treaty rather appears to have been negotiated peaceably by the two parties, the Rus when departing after the earlier agreement had been signed (in 907) "hung their shields upon the gates as a sign of victory". This was a Norse custom not signifying victory but peace. After the treaty of 911 was signed the Byzantines gave the Rus envoys a tour of the city:

... to show them the beauties of the churches, the golden palace, and the riches contained therein.... They also instructed the Russes in their faith, and expounded to them the true belief.

Such generous treatment of men who had recently attacked the great capital seems highly unusual. If an expedition had come to the capital it appears on the whole more likely that it did so in peace, seeking mercantile privileges rather than plunder.

In June 941, Prince Igor led an expedition
southward against the Greeks. The Primary Chronicle and Byzantine writers (the continuator of Theophanes, Harmatolus and Cedrenus), place the number of the Russian fleet at 10,000. However, Liutprand of Cremona, whose stepfather was in Constantinople at the time of the attack, numbers the fleet at a little more than 1,000, which is still a considerable force. The Byzantines were as unprepared as they had been in 860 and although forewarned by the Bulgarians that the Rus were on their way, there was not enough time for them to recall Imperial ships fighting the Saracens or patrolling the island possessions of the Empire. The Rus did not immediately head for the capital. Instead, they plundered the coastlands and gave the Emperor, Romanus Lecapenus, enough time to prepare fifteen old chelandia (light galleys) and convert them to hurling 'Greek fire', instructing his ship carpenters to "... put the fire-throwers not only at the bows but at the stern and both sides as well". This 'fire' appears to have been an incendiary weapon based on naptha (crude oil), and sometimes distilled into crude petroleum, thickened with a resin to produce a sticky liquid which could burn for a considerable length of time.

By the time the Russian fleet lay off Pharos at the northern tip of the Straits of Bosporus, the Byzantines had prepared the chelandia and also some triremes and these were placed under the command of the Protovestarius Theophanes. The small Byzantine fleet left the safety of the Bosporus to engage the Rus. Leading the attack, "Theophanes set upon them in close order and broke up their formation,
setting alight many of their ships with prepared fire, putting flight to the rest."^{128}

The Rusi seeing the flames threw themselves in haste from their ships, preferring to be drowned in the water rather than burned alive in the fire. Some sank to the bottom under the weight of their cuirasses and helmets which they were never to see again; some caught fire even as they swam among the billows; not a man that day escaped save those who managed to reach the shore.^{129}

The 'fire' according to the Emperor Leo (886-911), passed through "a bronze tube so arranged that the prepared fire could be projected forward to left or right and also made to fall from above".^{130} To prevent it from extinguishing upon contact with the water, quicklime was added to the mixture of naptha and resin. Although the exact method of hurling the fire is unknown it is likely that quicklime and water were used as the propellant, reacting chemically in an explosive form. To prevent the quicklime from hydrating it would need to have been sealed in airtight containers with bitumen. To hurl the fire the mixture was apparently heated in a cauldron over a hearth causing the liquid to boil, the quicklime and water mixture forcing the naptha up the tube. This was plugged at the mouth with resin which melted as the

16. The Rus fleet succumbed to Greek Fire.
hot liquid reached the mouth where it was ignited by a torch, producing a roaring flame. As the liquid was heated it would have become thinner, so crude oil could have been used instead of distilled oil. To achieve maximum effect on the sea the 'fire' could only be used in calm conditions, as Liutprand noted the waves and the wind calmed, "otherwise the Greeks would have had difficulty in hurling their fire". To light the hearth on the ship in heavy seas might have caused more destruction to the users than the recipients.

According to the Byzantine writers, the survivors of the Rus fleet sailed to Sgora in Paphlagonia, ravaging the area as far as Heraclea and the whole region of Nicomedia. For they set fire to the whole area called the Strait and any whom they captured they either crucified or trampled into the ground or set up as targets and shot arrows at them. When they captured members of the Christian clergy, they bound their hands behind their backs and drove iron nails into their heads. Many churches were burnt down by them.

Bardas Phocas was sent with a force of cavalry to intercept the raiders, "and meeting up with a sizeable cohort of Russians sent out to collect food, overran and slaughtered them". John Curcuas, the Domesticus of the Scholae (a regiment of the army) took care of the remnants of the attackers, forcing them to retreat to their ships. In the account given by Cedrenus (incorporating Scylitzes), the Rus attempted to break out of the naval blockade imposed by Theophanes and a second naval battle ensued:

Some of their ships were given to the deep, some iron and fire split in two, while the rest came into the Romans' hands. But a few did return home having escaped war's compulsion. Those Russians who escaped probably did so by heading into
shallow water "... where the Greek galleys because of their greater draught cannot pass". Others captured by the Greeks were beheaded at Constantinople in front of foreign envoys, including the envoy of King Hugh of Provence, the stepfather of Liutprand. The intention of the raid was profit by plunder, through extensive raiding of the surrounding districts. Previous excursions by the Bulgarians c. 925 and the Magyars between 930 and 934 against Constantinople might have encouraged the Russian attack in 941. After his defeat, Igor gathered many warriors together, inviting Varangians from across the Baltic Sea and the nomadic Pechenegs to join him in an attempt to avenge his defeat. The Khersonians reported the advance of the Russian force to the Emperor Romanus who sent noblemen to Igor, "to entreat him to come no nearer, but rather to accept the tribute which Oleg had received, and to the amount of which something should even be added". This was accepted and the scene thus set by the chronicler for the treaty of 945. Nothing in this agreement indicates, however, that the Byzantines were in a position where they had to compromise. On the contrary, the treaty contains clauses that were less favourable to the Rus than the previous agreement as regards trading conditions within the capital, the Greeks appearing in a commanding position. This, combined with the lack of corroborating evidence for the second attack by Igor, suggests that it is an insertion by the compiler of the Primary Chronicle to elevate the reputation of Igor to the level of his predecessors and explain the treaty of 945 as an agreement wrested from the
Greeks by Russian arms.

The final great raid led against Constantinople occurred in 1043. At this stage the political development of the first Russian state centred at Kiev was well established. During the reign of Vladimir (978-1015), Christianity became the official religion and the idols of paganism were overthrown, cut up and burnt, or dragged to the river and thrown in.¹⁴² Ties with the Byzantines were strengthened with the marriage of Vladimir, after his baptism at Kherson in 988, to the Princess Anna, sister of the Emperors Basil and Constantine.¹⁴³ By the reign of Yaroslav (1019-1054) the Kievan State had become one of the most powerful in Europe, with marriage ties to the ruling houses of Hungary, Sweden, France, Germany and the Byzantine Empire. In this context, the raid of 1043 appears anomalous and yet the characteristics which typify the earlier raids against the capital are present.

The pretext for the attack, according to Cedrenus, was the death of a Russian noblemen in a brawl in Constantinople. However, Michael Psellus, a witness to the attack, wrote in his biography of the Emperor Constantine Monomachus (1042-1055) that the Rus suffered no provocation but had revived an antagonism against the Empire after the death of Basil II in 1025 and during the reign of Michael IV (1034-41): "they proceeded to mobilise all their forces".¹⁴⁴ Although they had no ground for complaint in the view of Constantine Monomachus, rather than waste their preparations "... they attacked him fiercely and without provocation".¹⁴⁵

The Russian fleet, led by Yaroslav's son,
Vladimir, consisted of 100,000 men, which, if there were an average of forty men per ship, would give a total of 2,500 for the fleet. A reference in Cedrenus suggests that Scandinavians took part in the campaign, Vladimir employing "auxiliary forces (by no means a small number) from the peoples which were inhabiting the northern islands of Ocean".\textsuperscript{142} According to Psellus, the Rus were inside the Propontis (Sea of Marmora) when the first overtures of peace were made, offering to withdraw if 1,000 staters (solidi) were paid for each ship, to be counted aboard one of the Rus vessels.\textsuperscript{147} However, Cedrenus states that the Emperor first approached the Rus leader through envoys to "dissuade the Scyth from arms, promising to compensate him for any fault, so that he would not break a peace now consolidated for so many years".\textsuperscript{148} This was rebuffed, possibly because Vladimir thought the Byzantines were stalling for time, a ploy they had used before during the Bulgarian war against Svyatoslav.\textsuperscript{149}

The reason for attempting to gain some time was to prepare a fleet. Psellus states: "At the time our naval forces were below strength and the fireships were scattered at various naval stations, ... on guard duty".\textsuperscript{150} The Emperor had triremes and old ships fitted out and supplied with Greek fire, sending them northward to meet the Russians who were anchored near the lighthouse at Pharos. A large cavalry force accompanied the fleet by land. It is here, according to Cedrenus, that the Russians made their demands for peace: three pounds of gold for each man in the fleet.\textsuperscript{151} The Emperor promptly decided that the only solution was to fight.
The battle itself was similar to the one fought in 941. Both fleets opposed each other in a battle line, the Russians forming a "continuous chain stretching across the water from the harbour on one side to the harbour on the other.... It was a sight that produced the most alarming effect on every man who saw it". The Emperor, watching at a distance from a hill, instructed the Magister Basilius Theordorocanus to take three (Psellus says two) triremes and tempt the Rus into battle. These ships attacked the middle of the Russian line, firing several ships. The rest of the Russian fleet began to withdraw as the Byzantines advanced with all their vessels. According to Psellus and the Primary Chronicle, a storm suddenly appeared, breaking up many of the Russian ships, the Greeks taking advantage of Russian misfortune to hunt down the bedraggled survivors who made it to the shore. "So a great massacre of barbarians took place and a veritable stream of blood reddened the sea." Cedrenus stated that about 15,000 corpses were recovered from the shoreline after the battle.

The Russian fleet was harried by triremes as they retreated northward. However, 24 Greek ships pulled away from the main force and were cut off by the Rus who surrounded them in a harbour:

Constantinus Cabullurius,... attacking bravely the enemy with his own and ten other triremes, was killed. Fourteen triremes with their crews were captured, and even the Praetor’s ship. All the men on these were killed.

Later the Russian fleet was attacked by a land force near Varna, where one of their commanders, Vyshata, who had been leading a force of Russians back by land, was captured with a
number of others. These were taken back to Constantinople and blinded, although Vyshata returned to Kiev three years later.\textsuperscript{157}

The raiding activities of the Rus extended further eastward to encompass the Muslim regions of the Caspian Sea. These appear to parallel to some extent the raids carried out against the Byzantine Empire, although the scope of certain attacks is difficult to ascertain. The first incursion by the Rus into the Caspian region was, according to Ibn Isfandiyar writing c.1216, against the city of Abaskun (Abasgun), on the southern coast of the Caspian Sea under the control of Emir Hasan ibn Zaid, ruler of Tabaristan between 864 and 884.\textsuperscript{158} Ibn Zaid defeated this force and it was not until 910 that sixteen ships again entered the Caspian attacking the same region, looting and killing a number of Muslims.\textsuperscript{159} This was only the precursor of an extensive expedition operating in the region sometime after the year 300 AH (912-13).

This raid was carried out by a large fleet of 500 Rus ships, each carrying a hundred men according to al-Masudi, who journeyed through the areas that had been plundered not long after the raid.\textsuperscript{160} The fleet apparently came via the Sea of Azov, sailing to the estuary of the Don:

\ldots they sent to the king of the Khazar to ask his permission to pass through his dominions, to go down the river, and enter into the sea of the Khazar [Caspian], \ldots promising him half the plunder which they should make from the nation that lives on the coast of this sea. He gave them leave.\textsuperscript{161}

The ability of the Rus to travel this eastern route was greatly dependent on the goodwill of the Khazar Khagan who
demanded a tenth part of commercial cargoes, but to allow military expeditions to proceed against the Muslims required a higher price. The Khagan had many Muslim subjects who would be difficult to control when they learnt that their ruler had allowed an expedition intending to attack co-religionists in the south pass through Khazar territory, so the trouble had to be made worthwhile.

The raiders covered an extensive area of the southern coastline in their attacks, raiding Abaskun again and the districts of Tabaristan, Gilan, Daylam and Azerbaijan. The Rus moved boldly inland to occupy Ardabil some three days journey from the sea:

They shed blood, plundered property, made children and women prisoners, and sent out predatory and incendiary corps in all directions.\textsuperscript{162}

The description given by al-Masudi is very familiar and shocked the inhabitants of the regions affected as they had never before encountered such attacks as these. The raiders continued their sphere of operations northward into the region of Shirvan (under the rule of Ali ibn al-Haitham) landing on the coast near Baku. Near the coast were some islands which the raiders appear to have taken over as a base for their activity:

The people made preparations and embarking in small boats and merchant-ships, passed over to the islands. But the Rus turned on them, and thousands of the Muslims were killed or drowned. The Rus continued many months in this sea, ... and none of the natives who border it were able to reach them.\textsuperscript{165}

In an Armenian history of the second half of the tenth century by Moses of Kaghankatvatsi (Kalankatuk), the Rus attacked and took control of Bardha'a (Partav) in Azerbaijan.
Although surrounded the attackers could not be expelled:

But the women of the city, knowing the method, made the Ruz drink a cup of death, who, understanding the deceit, without pity cut down the women and their children. And after being in it six months, they left the city desolate and empty.¹⁶⁴

This account, although ostensibly about the raid c.914, has several qualities associated with the later attack on Bardha'a in 943-4 rather than the earlier raid and the town may not have been the subject of plunder.

Finally, after several months of raiding the expedition began to make the return journey and headed for the Khazar capital, Itil, at the mouth of the Volga. Upon arrival they sent the Khagan his share of the plunder. However, the Muslim population, outraged at the attacks made against fellow members of the faith, asked their ruler to allow them to oppose the Rus. All the Khagan could do was warn the Rus of the impending attack. The Muslim army, including a number of Christians, marched down the banks of the Volga:

When both parties saw each other, the Russians left their vessels and formed their battle array opposite the Muslims,... They fought three days, and God gave victory to the Moslems. They put the Russians to the sword, others were drowned, and only 5,000 escaped,...¹⁶⁵

Some 30,000 dead were counted after the battle, the survivors succumbing to the Burtas and Bulgars to the north. It was possibly on this expedition that Oleg lost his life fighting the nomadic Khazars. According to al-Masudi, who appears to have been writing c.943, the Russians did not undertake another such raid again.¹⁶⁶ Unfortunately for the inhabitants of Azerbaijan, he was wrong.

Soon after the campaign against Constantinople
(941), a Rus expedition arrived in the Caspian Sea and headed for the Kur river, sailing up to the town of Bardha’a in 943. Although this raid is not mentioned in the Primary Chronicle, several Muslims writers refer to it, including two excellent accounts by Ibn Miskawaih writing c.1070 and Ibn Athir who died in 1234. The Rus defeated the force of Daylamites, Sal’luks, Kurds and volunteers, numbering about 5,600 under the command of the governor of Bardha’a, most of whom fled after the 'fierce onslaught' of the Rus with the exception of the Daylamites, "who stood their ground and were killed to a man except such of them as were mounted". The Rus, who had set up camp at the village of Mubarak near the town, took over Bardha’a and although initially treating the population well, when they began to abuse the Rus they were given three (Ibn Athir says ten) days to leave after which they were massacred as already noted.

The ruler of Azerbaijan, al-Marzuban ibn Muhammad ibn Musafir, attempted to retake the town several times with a large force of troops (30,000) but without success. According to Ibn Miskawaih and Ibn Athir, the Rus travelled to Meragha near the coast and "ate too much of a fruit that caused dysentery, increasing the number of illnesses and deaths among the troops". That they reached Meragha may have been ascribed in error for the Rus do not appear to have overrun the whole territory. Marzuban now attempted to draw the Rus into an ambush by marching against them and then feigning a withdrawal past some hidden troops who would, he hoped, take them in the rear. Marzuban would then turn about and attack their front. The Rus met the attack on foot with
their leader mounted on a donkey, following Viking custom whereby the commander was mounted to direct his men and, as their were no horses in the town, a donkey must have been used.\textsuperscript{171} The Muslims took flight according to the plan. However, at the arranged point where the ambush was set they did not stop but continued to retreat. Marzuban himself, accompanied by his retainers, personal attendants, brother and 'stafi' turned to attack:

Thereupon most of the Dailemites were shamed into doing the like; we charged, cried out to the ambush, which issued forth behind the Russians, fought them in brave style, and killed seven hundred of them, including their commander,\ldots\textsuperscript{172}

The remainder of the Rus retreated into the well-provisioned citadel of Bardha'a while the Muslims besieged the town. While this was occurring, Husain ibn Said advanced into Azerbaijan and had reached Salmas before Marzuban received the news. He therefore took most of his force to attack

![Image](image-url)

17. They loaded their booty and left Bardha'a. Husain, later defeating him in the winter of 945–6, leaving a small force to continue the siege of the Rus.\textsuperscript{173} This gave them the opportunity, after remaining in the region a year or more, of quitting the town, taking much of the booty and captives they had acquired. Many had died of an epidemic,
perhaps poisoned by the women they held prisoner (as suggested by Moses of Kaghankatvatsi), and had been buried with arms, clothes and equipment and a woman, either a wife or a slave; these graves were later disturbed by the Muslims to retrieve the swords they so prized. At night the Rus left the citadel with what they could carry, burning what was left behind:

They dragged with them such women, boys and girls as they wanted, and made for the Kur, where the ships in which they had issued from their home were in readiness with their crews, and three hundred Russians whom they had been supporting with portions of their booty. They embarked and departed, and God saved the Moslems from them.

A group of memorial stones containing runic inscriptions commemorating an expedition to 'Serkland' (Saracen land, the lands of the Abbasid Caliphate) in the eleventh century reveal one of the last raids to be carried out in the Caspian region. Nearly thirty stones, mostly from the region of Lake Malar (although three can be found in Uppland, Vastmanland and northern Ostergotland) tell of an expedition led by Ingvar eastward, immortalised in Ingvar’s Saga Vidforla written almost 300 years after the raid.

The saga contains a confused account of a journey through Gardariki (Russia) and further east exploring three large rivers (perhaps the Volga), encountering giants and dragons along the way. Finally, after meeting beautiful queens and heathen kings and battling ships with Greek fire, they reached a sea (called the Red Sea in the saga) finding the hall where King Harald of Sweden had perished and recovered his standard. On the return journey evil spirits haunted the adventurers and many men, including Ingvar,
perished. The saga is full of distortions, but might be based on some facts and does contain some accurate descriptions. The rune stones do not mention anyone returning from the expedition, an indication of its success. The Gripsholm Stone, set up by Tola for her son Harald (Ingvar's brother), may sum up the whole undertaking:

They fared like men
far after gold
and in the east
gave the eagle food.
They died southward
in Serkland.

It is possible that the expedition was attempting to re-open the old Volga trade route through the lands of the Khazars and Bulgars, south to the Muslims. More than a third of the inscriptions are dedicated by sons or daughters and almost as many of the men commemorated were married, hence almost half of the men recorded on the stones were of mature years. To attempt the journey eastward at this late date, where the conditions were not as well known as in the past, would have required experienced men, a possible explanation for the statistics of the runestones.

The saga recording Ingvar's travels eastward dates the expedition to c.1042, just before Vladimir's expedition against Constantinople. However, in 1030 a group of Russians landed at Shirvan near Baku, defeating a local force under the Sharvan-Shah, Manuchihr, before moving further inland into Arran. They again landed near Baku during the following year, but were repelled. In 1032, however, combining with a force of Alans, they took the town of Yazidiyya in Shirvan, to the west of Baku. On their way to the coast they were apparently attacked and severely
defeated, losing much of the booty and many men.\textsuperscript{191} Obviously this was an extensive expedition lasting several years and although ultimately defeated, the Rus attackers were powerful enough to remain in the Caspian Sea for an extended length of time. Here might be the basis of the Ingvar legend.

The final sphere of Viking military activity in the East was as mercenaries in the service of the Kievan Princes and Byzantine Emperors as soldiers and bodyguards. These men were known as Varangians, a name which became renowned owing to its association with the regiment serving as personal bodyguards to the Emperor. Germanic mercenaries had served the Roman Emperors since the inception of the Empire under Augustus in the late first century BC.\textsuperscript{192}

Under the Byzantine Emperors, there were several regiments stationed near the capital city to guard it and the Emperor. These were the Tagmata, four cavalry units (the Scholae, Excubitors, Arithmos and Hikanatoi) and two of infantry (the Numeri and Optimati) to man the great defensive walls of the city. These regiments were commanded by Domestics, the commander of the Scholae - the regiment attending the Emperor in public ceremonies - assuming first place in precedence. During the ninth century, each unit numbered between 4,000 and 6,000 men, but by the tenth it appears that their numbers were held to about 1,500. It was also during the earlier period in the ninth century that foreign mercenaries were admitted to these regiments and many nationalities joined: Germans, Goths, Lombards, Pechenegs, Slavs, Magyars and Scandinavians. Some races were formed into separate units such as the two Turkish regiments, the
Pharangians (from Central Asia) and the Khazars.\textsuperscript{182} From these units and also from the Imperial Navy men were selected to join the Hetaireia, the personal bodyguard of the Emperor.

The Hetaireia was divided into two (sometimes three) divisions. Entrance into the guard was by invitation and regarded as a high honour. Although the pay and privileges were many, a large entrance fee was payable: sixteen pounds of gold for the Great Hetaiteia, ten for the lower, seven for the Turkish units and two pounds for the foreign regiments. As a pound of gold was generally equivalent to 72 gold solidi and a guardsman’s wage varied between 40 and 44 soldi a year, it is likely that a loan was sought from the treasury to gain access and paid back over a number of years. Life in the Hetaireia could be profitable for there were gifts and donations from the Emperor on top of normal wages and payments by landowners also supported the guards as well as the the booty that could be won from campaigns.\textsuperscript{184}

Norsemen appear to have been in the service of the Byzantine Emperors since the middle of the ninth century. In the reign of Michael III, the Logothete Theoctistus was murdered, possibly at the Emperor’s instigation, by Tauro-Scythians (a term used by later sources to describe Scandinavians in the Varangian Guard) so this might be an early indication that Viking adventurers were already in Imperial service.\textsuperscript{185} In 910, 700 Rus sailors crewed Pamphylian ships in the expedition to Crete led by Himerios against Saracen pirates and confirmation of Rus serving in the Byzantine armed forces also appears in the treaty of 911

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dealing with the estates of those who died in the service.\textsuperscript{185} Although the agreement signed in 945 contained a provision for levying soldiers from the Kievan ruler, the Empire does not appear to have utilised the clause until the rule of Basil II (Bulgaroctonos or Bulgarslayer).\textsuperscript{186} Both Vladimir and Yaroslav used Varangian mercenaries in their struggles to gain sole power in the Kievan State and it was a group of these mercenaries that Vladimir sent his brother-in-law, Basil, in 988 to aid him in suppressing the revolt of Bardas Phocas and Bardas Sclerus.\textsuperscript{187} It was his suspicion of Roman loyalty that led Basil to call for foreign troops according to Psellus, who describes this force, some 6,000 men, as a "picked band of Scythians ... from the Taurus".\textsuperscript{188} These men appear to be Varangians enlisted by Vladimir in the struggle with his elder brother Yaropolk for control of the State. Once Vladimir had gained control, after the murder of his brother by two Varangians, he selected "from their number the good, the wise, and the brave men, to whom he assigned cities".\textsuperscript{189} The rest were given leave to travel to Tsar'grad (Constantinople). Here they were trained into a separate corps by Basil, the beginning of the history of the Varangian Guard. In their battles with the rebels they excelled, playing a key roles at the battle of Chrysopolis (988) and Abydos (13 April 989).\textsuperscript{190} The esteem held by the Emperor for this independent body of troops is evident during the Bulgarian campaign where the Rus troops (Varangians) were given a third share of the spoils.\textsuperscript{191}

From this time on, the Byzantine Emperors depended on this guard for their personal security when in the capital
or on campaign. When in the city, the guard was housed inside the great palace, where it either shared quarters with the Excubitors or lived in the Numera near the Hippodrome, the lower rooms of which were used as a prison. It was here that Michael Glykas was imprisoned and wrote a poem in which he referred to the noise made by the Varangians garrisoned above him at night. Their most valuable asset was their loyalty to the person of the Emperor in a state where intrigues and plots were constantly undertaken. As long as they were well paid this loyalty was unquestioned. When Alexius Comnenus, the Domesticus of the Scholae, planned to overthrow the Emperor Nicephorus Botaniates (1078-81), he was advised by the Caesar, John Dukas, not to attempt to bribe the Varangians manning one part of the defensive walls protecting the city:

... for the Varangians, who bear on their shoulders the heavy iron sword, they regard loyalty to the emperors and the protection of their persons as a family tradition, a kind of sacred trust and inheritance handed down from generation to generation; this allegiance they preserve inviolate and will never brook the slightest hint of betrayal.

Even after Alexius was successful in his revolt, the Varangians would only swear loyalty to the new Emperor once Nicephorus Botaniates had abdicated.

There were times, nevertheless, when it was difficult for guardsmen to see where their loyalty lay. For example, under Michael V (1041-2), the guard found itself almost redundant as the emperor preferred to use Scythian eunuchs (possibly Pechenegs) as his personal bodyguard. This had serious repercussions for the young Emperor, who was
overthrown and blinded, possibly by one of the Varangians, Harald Haradrada. Most Emperors did attempt to court the favour of the Varangians. Nicephorus Botaniates was attacked by several drunk guardsmen and managed to defend himself until rescued by members of a Greek company. He did not, however, punish the men severely but was content to send the ringleaders to distant garrisons and pardon the rest. Icelandic literature contains many references to men from Iceland who served in the Varangian Guard. The tradition of men such as Thorkill Thjostadarson and Eyvind Bjarnarson, serving in the guard before the reign of Basil II is not very reliable although two Icelanders (Finnbogi the Strong and Gris Saemigsson) may have served in the armed forces under the Emperor John Tzimisces (969-78). Others appear to have served under the Emperor Basil II: Kolskeggr Hamundarson was said to have commanded the guard c.1000, while Thorgest Thorhallarson supposedly died manning an Imperial ship c.1025. In the decade following 1030 several Scandinavians are recorded as fighting for the Empire, including Thorstein Dromundr who joined the guard to seek the killer of his brother Grettir, Thorbjorn Ongul. A Dane, Eilif Thorgilson Sprakalegg, who had accompanied Knut when he invaded England in 1009, apparently journeyed to Constantinople after 1024 and died in the service of the Emperor. According to the Laxdoela Saga, Bolli Bollason was the first Icelander to have become a member of the guard. However, it is likely that this detail was added to enhance Bolli's reputation. Mar Hunrodsson was said to have led the guards in a campaign in Sicily about the time
when the most famous member of the Varangians was serving in the company, Harald Hardrada.204

After the Battle of Stiklastad (1030) the young Harald Sigurdsson (Hardrada) made his way to the court of Prince Yaroslav of Kiev, accompanied by Halldor Snorrason and Ulf Olpakson, and fought for the prince in the campaign against the Poles (Lyakhs) in 1031.205 According to the Cecaumeni Strategicon (Book of Advice to an Emperor) anonymously written c.1075, Harald (Araltes) arrived in Constantinople with 500 druzhina, to pay his respects to the Emperor Michael IV Paphlagon (1034-41) and learn something of Byzantine administration.206 It is possible that he arrived before the death of Romanus III because there is a tradition that he was in Constantinople for the deaths of three Emperors.207

Harald first joined the army as a mercenary, not necessarily as a member of the Varangian Guard, and helped man Imperial ships fighting in the Greek islands under the command of the Greek general, George Maniaces, known to the saga writers as 'Grygir' and described as a kinsmen of the Empress Zoe.208 Snorri Sturlason (a decedent of Halldor Snorrason who accompanied Harald to Constantinople), writing in the early thirteenth century, relates that Maniaces and Harald did not get on well, often arguing over petty disputes, Maniaces accusing Harald of not supporting him in battle.209 The first land campaign in which Harald was involved was in Asia Minor (not Africa as Snorri erroneously states) or 'Serkland' (Saracen-land) where Harald was attributed with the capture of eighty towns, a typical
classical number for famous heroes to capture when on a successful campaign. This appears to have been just before the Sicilian campaign of 1038-40, again under the command of Maniaces.\textsuperscript{210}

In Sicily Harald again conquered various towns using well-worn strategies, such as the use of birds carrying fire nesting in the roofs of the town and setting it ablaze.\textsuperscript{211} Parallels to this may be seen in the Primary Chronicle and Olga's revenge upon the Derevlians as well as in Saxo Grammaticus where they were used by Hadingus.\textsuperscript{212} The same can be seen in the use of the mock funeral which was used by Frode to capture Polotsk and by Hasding to capture the Italian town of Luna.\textsuperscript{213} Later Harald is said to have visited Jerusalem: "wherever he went in Palestine, all the towns and castles surrendered to him".\textsuperscript{214} Apparently the whole region submitted peacefully and Harald did the usual pilgrimage, bathing in the river Jordan and donating gifts to the church over the tomb of Christ, later clearing the route to Jerusalem of robbers and thieves. This might be an echo of an actual journey made to the Holy land with the intention of rebuilding the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which had been destroyed by fire. In a agreement with the Caliph the Byzantine Emperor was allowed to send in craftsmen and Harald might have accompanied them, protecting them en route to Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{215}

According to the Cecaumeni Strategicon, Harald was rewarded for services during the Sicilian campaign with the rank of manglabites and soon after a revolt led by Peter Delean in Bulgaria (which ended in 1041) was elevated to
spatharokandidatus. During that year, Michael IV abdicated in favour of his nephew, Michael V, and at about the same time Harald, along with Halldor and Ulf, was arrested. Snorri attributes this arrest to the jealousy of Zoe over Harald’s alleged affair with Maria, a (non-existent) niece of the Empress and her anger at his wanting to leave, on charges of defrauding the treasury. It is possible that these charges were true, the story being embellished by the poets and saga writers.

In 1040 Maniaces, who had been arrested for striking the High Admiral (and father of the future Emperor Michael V) Stephanus for letting the Saracen fleet escape during the Sicilian campaign, was released from prison. He may have charged Harald with misappropriation of funds, taking more booty than he was entitled to and also withholding taxes collected. Snorri states that Harald took part in the 'polutasvarf' (palace-plunder) whereby the Varangians could take what they wanted from the palace on the death of an Emperor. This word actually means 'received tax', similar to the Slavic word 'poludie' (where members of the Prince’s druzhina were supported for the winter), which was collected from large landowners (including monasteries) for the maintenance of foreign and native troops. This tax was very unpopular and many landowners asked for dispensations from the Emperor. These were sometimes granted and several bulls mention the Varangians in regard to it. It may be that Harald had stolen some funds gathered on this account.

The time of his arrest was a turbulent one in
Byzantine history. Michael V was an unpopular Emperor and his attempt to seize sole power by putting away the Empress Zoe stirred the citizens of the capital to revolt. The Varangian Guard appear to have supported the people on this occasion as Michael had preferred to rely on Pecheneg eunuchs rather than the Guard: "not even the foreigners and allies whom the emperors are wont to maintain by their side - I am referring to the Scyths from the Taurus - were able to restrain their anger". Harald, according to Snorri, was released by a noblewoman, prompted by a vision of his brother (now saint) Olaf. Psellus in his account of the reign of Michael V, mentions that women joined in the revolt "borne along like Maenads", perhaps confirming Harald's mode of release. Harald may have been gaoled in the quarters of the Excubitors or Numeri, close to the Bronze Gate into the Great Palace and the attack by the rebels through the Forum Augusteum would have thus effected an early release.

Michael and his uncle Constantine fled to a church in the Studion, clinging to the altar in the hope of sanctuary. Psellus apparently was an eyewitness to the subsequent events. A newly-appointed official, most likely sent by the new co-Empress Theodora (sister of Zoe), had the men torn away from the altar intending to take them away, but more officials - 'bold, resolute men' - arrived with an order to blind them. Constantine bore his fate manfully while the deposed emperor "moaned and wailed aloud, and whenever anyone approached him, he begged for help". According to Icelandic sources, the man who executed the order was Harald and he personally carried out the act as a form of revenge:
The warrior who fed the wolves
Ripped out both the eyes
Of the emperor of Byzantium;
Strife was unleashed again.
The warrior-king of Norway
Marked his cruel revenge
On the brave emperor of the East;
The Greek king had betrayed him.\textsuperscript{227}

Harald requested permission to leave
Constantinople in 1043 just after the accession of
Constantine Monomachus, but for some reason the new Emperor
refused this request. Both the Cecaumeni Strategicon and
Snorri mention that Harald had to leave the city quickly and
stealthily.\textsuperscript{227} According to Snorri, Harald left the same
night as the blinding (the chronology is muddled, for Michael
not Monomachus was blinded), taking Maria with him. They
escaped by sailing Varangian galleys (perhaps Viking ships)
over the chain across the Bosporus by putting all the men not
required to row in the stern, running the ship onto the
chain, and then running forward to slide across the barrier.
Harald left Maria ashore once they were clear, proof to the
Empress Zoe that she could not have stopped him from marrying
her had he wished.\textsuperscript{230}

Harald returned to Kiev and the court of Yaroslav
a wealthy man, as he had sent much of his booty back to
Russia while he was at Constantinople. When Harald came to
terms with his nephew, Magnus, he shared his wealth spreading
it on "a huge ox-hide ... on the floor, and the gold was
emptied on to it out of the chests.... All those present were
astonished that such immense wealth in gold should have been
assembled in Scandinavia in one place."\textsuperscript{231} According to Adam
of Bremen, some of this treasure fell into the hands of
William of Normandy after the Battle of Hastings in 1066 and
was so heavy that twelve men could scarcely lift it.\textsuperscript{232} Harald married Yaroslav's daughter, Elizabeth (Ellisif), before returning to Scandinavia.\textsuperscript{233} The sudden departure of Harald in 1043 coincides with the attack by Yaroslav's son, Vladimir, against Constantinople. It would be tempting to link the two events, Harald departing before the attack, his links to the court of Kiev perhaps known at the Imperial capital and open to exploitation, either as a hostage or envoy to keep the peace.

The Varangian Guard appears to have remained composed of Norsemen at least until 1066 when supposedly a large number of Anglo-Saxons and Anglo-Danes joined the ranks in the wake of the Norman victory at Hastings.\textsuperscript{234} The evidence for this change in composition rests largely on the meaning of the geographic term 'Thule' used by Princess Anna Comnena in her biographical work on her father, the Emperor Alexius, written c.1120. It was employed by Anna to describe members of the Varangian Guard or 'men from the island of Thule', meaning the British Isles. However, it is possible that the term was a general reference to Scandinavia or more specifically, Iceland which appears to be the Thule referred to by Strabo, as some six days sail from 'Bretania' (Britain).\textsuperscript{235} In another passage Anna describes the boundaries of the old Roman Empire, placing the northern bounds as "the famous Thule and all the peoples who live in the region of the North, over whom is the pole-star".\textsuperscript{236} In this context, Thule does not appear to be within the bounds of the Empire as Britain certainly was, and hence may be regarded as refering to all northern regions, believed by
classical writers to be islands of the northern ocean.\textsuperscript{237} Therefore the guard may have remained composed mostly of Scandinavians until its ultimate demise in 1204 at the hands of Crusaders taking part in the Fourth Crusade who sacked the Byzantine capital.

During the reign of Alexius Comnenus (1081-1118), the guard was commanded by a Scandinavian, Nampites, mentioned by Anna several times. This name appears to be the Greek transliteration of the Norse 'Nabitr', possibly a nickname or one assumed by the Norseman. There are three possible interpretations for the name, either 'corpse-biter' ('nar' meaning corpse, 'bitr' from bite) or perhaps 'near-biter ('navist' meaning nearness), these being metaphors for a weapon such as an axe or sword. The other possibility is 'bird (or beast) of prey' and may throw light on the man's actual name, Hrafn (raven), Ari or Orn (eagle) or Ulfr (wolf).\textsuperscript{238} It was during the command of Nabites that the guard suffered a dramatic defeat at the hands of the Normans of Italy under Robert Guiscard at the battle of Durazzo in 1082. As the guardsmen drove their opponents before them, they were cut from the main body of the Byzantine army and could not repulse a counter-attack by the reinforced Normans, suffering heavy losses.\textsuperscript{239} Nabites managed to escape the fate of his companions and remained a trusted officer of Alexius: he was a member of the Imperial personal guard at the battle of Drista in Silistria in 1087.\textsuperscript{240}

Runestones attest to other Norsemen leading bands of warriors into the East. There are the famous Ingvar stones as mentioned, but others did not travel quite so far.
From a stone in Södermanland Ingefast raised a stone to the memory of his father, Sigvid, who fell at Holmgardr (Novgorod) while captain of a ship.\textsuperscript{241} The Tunge Stone from the same area commemorating two brothers, Torstein and Anund, tells of the death of one of them leading their Housekarls east in Gardariki.\textsuperscript{242} Another stone from Ed, north of Stockholm, tells of Ragnvald who had runes cut in memory of his mother, Fastvi, and adds that he led a host (troop) in Grikkland (Greece).\textsuperscript{243} Other stones record men who died in

18. The Piraeus Lion at Venice.

the East in search of wealth, but do not say whether they went as merchants or warriors; still others travelled as pilgrims to the Holy land. It might have been any one of these Norsemen who produced the two runic inscriptions found outside Scandinavia in the realm of the Byzantine Empire. The first was only recently found in the great cathedral (now Mosque) of Hagia Sophia, recording the name 'Halvdan'
probably a piece of graffiti left by a Viking perhaps bored with a sermon he could not understand. The other inscription is now rather weatherbeaten and illegible and can be found in a rather unexpected place, on the flanks of the Piraeus lion which used to stand at the harbour of Athens before the Venetians carried it off in 1687 to glare at the tourists in St. Mark's square in Venice.
NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR
RAIDERS AND GUARDSMEN


5. Macartney, op.cit., p.213

6. ibid., p.214

7. ibid., p.214f


10. Ibn Miskawaih, op.cit., p.68

11. ibid., p.70, c/f Ibn Athir, see Appendix 5


13. Ibn Miskawaih, op.cit., p.74


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19. Smyser, op.cit., p.96

20. Ibn Miskawayh, op.cit., p.67

21. Terras, op.cit., p.397, Leo Diaconus, Book V. 3

22. Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.395, Terras, op.cit., p.397f

23. Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.394

24. ibid., p.394f


27. see Chapter Two, notes 111-116


29. Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.379f, Foote and Wilson, op.cit., p.274

30. Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.383

31. Ibn Miskawayh, op.cit., p.73

32. Foote and Wilson, op.cit., p.284f

33. Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.400

34. Terras, op.cit., p.398, Leo Diaconus, Book VIII. 4 and IX. 2

35. Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.397f

36. Terras, op.cit., p.398, Leo Diaconus, Book VIII. 4

37. Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.399
38. Turville-Petrie, op.cit., p.47
39. Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.389
40. Terras, op.cit., p.398, Leo Diaconus, Book IX. 2
41. Almgren, op.cit., p.30 and 223, Shetelig and Falk, op.cit., p.403f
42. Macartney, op.cit., p.215
44. P.V.L., p.60
45. ibid., p.32, for the account by Harmatolus of the raid see Appendix Four.
46. J.B. Bury, History of the Eastern Roman Empire From the Fall of Irene to the Accession of Basil I, (Macmillan, London, 1912), p.419, note 1, c/f Photius, Homilies, p.76
47. Vasiliev, 1946, p.145
49. Bury, op.cit., p.419, Vasiliev, 1946, p.150f
50. Vasiliev, 1946, p.109
51. ibid., p.193
53. P.V.L., p.60
57. Vernadsky, op.cit., p.342f
58. ibid., p. 304f, D.A.I., pp. 183-85
59. Vasiliev, 1946, p. 173
60. Photius, Homilies, p. 88
61. Vasiliev, 1946, p. 190
62. ibid., p. 191
63. Leo VI Sapiens, 'Tactica', in J.P. Migne, Patrologia Series Graeca, (Paris, 1857-66), volume 107, columns 1011-12, section 69, I am indebted to D. King for this translation.
64. Photius, Homilies, p. 96
65. ibid., p. 89
66. ibid., p. 98f
67. See Appendix 4 for full text and references of Pseudo Symeon Magister, 674-5, Leo Grammaticus, 463f, Georgius Harmatolus, 736-7
68. Photius, Homilies, p. 101
69. Nicetas, op.cit., columns 515-518, I am indebted to A. Cuttriss for this translation.
70. ibid.
72. See Appendix 4, Pseudo Symeon Magister, Leo Grammaticus and Georgius Harmatolus.
73. Vasiliev, 1946, p. 194
74. ibid., pp. 152-54 and 165f
75. ibid., p. 195f
76. Photius, Homilies, p. 80, note 24, and 89
77. Vasiliev, 1946, p. 213
78. See Appendix 4, Pseudo Symeon Magister, Leo Grammaticus and Georgius Harmatolus.
79. Photius, Homilies, p. 102f
80. ibid., p. 81
82. Vasiliev, 1946, p. 23f

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83. Bury, op.cit., p.419, note 1, Anecdota Bruxellensia, see Appendix 4 for translation to which I am indebted to D. King.

84. Vasiliev, 1946, p.226


89. Polonska-Wasyleenko, op.cit., p.45

90. P.V.L., p.61


92. P.V.L., p.77

93. D.A.I., p.51

94. P.V.L., p.61

95. ibid., p.64

96. ibid., p.64

97. ibid., p.64


100. Jenkins, op.cit., p.405, P.V.L., p.65
101. Vasiliev, 1951, p.176
102. ibid., p.177
103. D.A.I., p.51
104. P.V.L., p.64
105. Vasiliev, 1951, p.180
106. ibid., p.180f
107. ibid., p.178
109. P.V.L., p.71f
110. ibid., p.241, note 68
111. ibid., p.69
112. Davidson, 1976, p.129
115. Almgren, op.cit., p.27
116. Dolley, op.cit., p.119f, Vasiliev, 1951, p.172f
117. Dolley, op.cit., p.120 and 123
119. Dolley, op.cit., p.115f, P.V.L., p.68
120. Dolley, op.cit., p.125
121. P.V.L., p.65
123. P.V.L., p.68f
(Cambridge University Press, 1929, reprint 1963), p.111, estimates the number of men at 40,000 based on a figure of 40 men per ship provided by the P.V.L., p.64

125. Liutprand, op.cit., Antapadosis 15, p.185, P.V.L., p.72

126. Liutprand, op.cit., Antapadosis 15, p.185, Runciman, op.cit., p.111


128. Cedrenus, op.cit., Book II, 316-7, See Appendix 4, I am indebted to D. King for this translation.

129. Liutprand, op.cit., Antapadosis 15, p.186

130. Davidson, 1973, p.63, Leo, 'Tactica'

131. Liutprand, op.cit., Antapadosis 15, p.186


133. See Appendix 4, Theophanes Continuatus, Georgius Harmatolus and Cedrenus.

134. Theophanes Continuatus, op.cit., Book VI. 39, I am indebted to Dr K. Adshead for this translation.

135. Cedrenus, op.cit., Book II. 316-7, I am indebted to D. King for this translation.

136. ibid.

137. Liutprand, op.cit., Antapadosis 15, p.186

138. ibid., p.186

139. P.V.L., p.71

140. ibid., p.72

141. ibid., p.73

142. ibid., p.116

143. ibid., p.112f


145. ibid., p.200

146. Cedrenus, op.cit., Book II. 551-55 see Appendix 4, I am indebted to A. Cuttriss for this translation.

147. Psellus, op.cit., Book VI. 92, p.200

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148. Cedrenus, op.cit., Book II. 551-55, I am indebted to A. Cuttriss for this translation.

149. P.V.L., p.87f

150. Psellus, op.cit., Book VI. 93, p.201

151. Cedrenus, op.cit., Book II. 551-55

152. Psellus, op.cit., Book VI. 93, p.201


154. Psellus, op.cit., Book VI. 96-7, p.203

155. Cedrenus, op.cit., Book II. 551-55

156. ibid., I am indebted to A. Cuttriss for this translation.


158. S. Rapoport, 'Mohammedan Writers on Slavs and Russians', Slavonic and East European Review, 1929, p.90

159. Chadwick, op.cit., p.57

160. ibid., p.57, Dunlop, op.cit., p.238

161. ibid., p.90

162. Vasiliev, 1951, p.178

163. Dunlop, op.cit., p.211

164. Chadwick, op.cit., p.55, c/f Vasiliev, 1951, p.181

165. Rapoport, op.cit., p.90

166. Dunlop, op.cit., p.212 and 239

167. Ibn Miskawaih, op.cit., p.68

168. ibid., p.68f, see Appendix 5, Ibn Athir's account of the same raid, H.A.A., p.144


170. Ibn Miskawaih, op.cit., p.71, note

Athir, op.cit., p.237 there were no horses in the town as those who had mounts had left.

172. Ibn Miskawaih, op.cit., p.72


174. Chadwick, op.cit., p.55, Davidson, 1976, p.133, Ibn Athir, op.cit., p.239, note one (see Appendix 5, note 14), Ibn Miskawaih, op.cit., p.73

175. Ibn Miskawaih, op.cit., p.73


177. Davidson, 1976, p.168f


180. ibid., p.167f, P.V.L., p.138

181. Frye, op.cit., p.248


183. Bury, op.cit., p.227f, Davidson, 1976, p.178, the commander of the Arithmos was called the Drungary of the Vigla (Watch). The Hikanatoi were added in the reign of Nicephorus I, the others were ancient regiments.


186. Benedikz, op.cit., p.22, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, 'De Cerimoninis Aulae', op.cit., columns 1211-12, P.V.L., p.68

187. P.V.L., p.76

188. ibid., p.93, also note 79 p.242f
189. Psellus, op.cit., Book I, 13-14, p.34f
190. P.V.L., p.93
192. Benedikz, op.cit., p.23, Blondal, 1939(a), p.6
194. Anna Comnena, The Alexiad of Anna Comnena, translated by E.R.A. Sewter, (Penguin Books Ltd., Harmondsworth, 1969), Book II. ix, p.96, the descriptions of the Varangians dangling swords from the shoulder or as 'axe-bearing barbarians' is derived from their method of despatching their victims by felling with the axe and finishing them off with the sword, Davidson, 1976, p.180
197. Blondal, 1939(a), p.21, K.H.S., 14, p.61f
198. Blondal, 1939(b), p.154f
199. Davidson, 1976, p.232f
201. Grettir's Saga, translated by D. Fox and H. Palsson, (University of Toronto Press, 1974), 86, p.174f
202. Davidson, 1976, p.235
203. The Laxdoela Saga, translated with an introduction and notes by A. Margaret Arent, (University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1964), 73, p.183
204. Davidson, 1976, p.234
205. P.V.L., p.136, K.H.S., 2, p.47
206. Jones, op.cit., p.405, note 1
207. K.H.S., 16, p.64
208. ibid., 3, p.48, Davidson, 1976, p.211, Maniaces was not related to the Empress as he came from Central Asia.
209. K.H.S., 4f, pp.49-51
210. ibid., 5, p.51

211. ibid., 6, p.53


213. Saxo Grammaticus, op.cit., Book II. 41, p.49, and 50, p.61

214. K.H.S., 12, p.59

215. Davidson, 1976, p.219

216. Jones, op.cit., p.405, c/f Davidson, 1976, p.208f, Blondal, 1939(a), p.2, a spathariocandidatus ranks below protospatharios, the lowest grade of general officer in the Byzantine army and has been interpreted as the equivalent of a colonel.

217. K.H.S., 13, p.60

218. Blondal, 1939(a), p.4 and 7f

219. ibid., p.6f, K.H.S., 16, p.64

220. Blondal, 1939(a), pp.9-12


222. K.H.S., 14, p.61


224. Blondal, 1939(a), p.14 and 20

225. Psellus, op.cit., Book V. 43-4, p.147

226. ibid., Book V. 47-8, p.149

227. K.H.S., 14, p.62

228. Blondal, 1939(a), p.21

229. Jones, op.cit., p.405, K.H.S., 15, p.63

230. K.H.S., 15, p.63

231. ibid., 24, p.72

232. Adam of Bremen, History of the Archbishops of Hamburg and Bremen, translated by F. Tschan, (Columbia University, New York, 1959), Book III. 51, schol. 84, p.159

233. K.H.S., 17, p.64


236. Anna Comnena, op.cit., Book VI. xi, p.206

237. Blondal, 1939(b), p.146

238. ibid., pp.147-49

239. Anna Comnena, op.cit., Book IV. 5, pp.146-48

240. ibid., Book VII. 3, p.224

241. Jansson, op.cit., p.26

242. ibid., p.38

243. ibid., p.20

244. Liestol, op.cit., p.126

245. Jansson, op.cit., p.39f
CONCLUSION

The identity of the people described as the Rus by the Primary Chronicle may never be determined to everyone's satisfaction, but it seems likely to me that they originated from the Lake Malar region of Sweden. The derivation of Rus from the words Ruotsi or Ruotslaiset appears logical and the connection between the Lake Malar region of Uppland and the coastal region of Roslagen with the regions east of the Baltic are well attested through the presence of a large number of runestones and also hoards of silver coins. Although philological arguments produced by both sides of the Normanist controversy may contain flaws, I have decided in favour of the Normanist derivation for the word which, in my opinion, appears to be the more logical explanation. The importance of this discussion, I believe, is only relevant when examining the calling-in of the Varangians. This invasion and foundation of a small state centred around Novgorod in the early to mid ninth century most probably did happen, although not to the geographic extent portrayed by the Primary Chronicle. Once Scandinavians became entrenched in Northern Russia at a level where they began to dominate small areas (similar to feudal baronies) growth to higher state levels could begin. Obviously, the composition of the Rus was not entirely Scandinavian throughout the entire period and, as Boba suggests, they gradually encompassed
other groups which became dominated by the rulers of Novgorod and Kiev. The problem is deciding when this assimilation was fully completed and an indication might be suggested by certain primary sources. In 911 the treaty made with the Byzantines contained signatories that are almost entirely Scandinavian, but by the 945 agreement Slavic names — including that of the next ruler of Kiev — are discernable. The Russes commanded by Igor in 941 must still have been on the whole Scandinavian for Liutprand's stepfather to recognise them as Northmen, but it cannot have been long after this that they were becoming indistinguishable from native Slavs.

The process of assimilation might have been similar to that seen in the feudal state of Normandy wrested from the Frankish King in the early tenth century. Within perhaps fifty years French culture and religion permeated the Duchy and by the time of the Norman invasion of England in 1066 virtually no trace remained of their Nordic heritage. The influence of the Byzantine Empire over the Rus of Kiev has been properly emphasised by many scholars, but it must be remembered that the Kievan rulers did not ignore their Scandinavian origins. Intermarriage between the ruling houses of Russia and Scandinavia was common through until the twelfth century. During the reign of Vladimir and Yaroslav Norse mercenaries were welcomed and asylum was readily granted to members of the Norwegian ruling family, Olaf Trygvasson, Harald Hardrada and Magnus Olafsson. Relations with the states across the Baltic Sea, if marriage alliances are any indication, were still extremely important to the
Colonial activity and the Norse involvement in the foundation of the first Russian state have become generally entangled due to the nature and interpretation of the primary literature. Ignoring the problem of state foundation, colonial activity does not appear to have been the main impetus for journeys to the East. Pre-Viking settlements on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea appear to have set the mode for subsequent activity further into the interior of Russia. These settlements combined the roles of coloniser, trader and soldier, becoming armed trade stations, strategically placed to exploit a commercial route. As the flow of kufic silver increased during the late eighth century to the north so did the desire to increase the profits from trade. This was achieved by establishing direct routes to the great markets of the East: Kherson, Bulgar, Itil, Tmutarakhan and eventually Constantinople. At these centres commercial traffic flowing southeastward met intermediary traders coming northward.

Both the Khazars and the Bulgars were aware of the profitability of their situation and took advantage of it, even if this meant flying in the face of opposition from their own subjects, as the Khazar Khagans did by allowing the Rus access to the Caspian Sea to carry out raids against the Muslims. Eventually this must have been detrimental (for religious reasons) to relations with the Muslim south and the practice ceased sometime in the mid-tenth century. However, with the demise of the Khazar State c.970, other expeditions managed to follow the old routes in the period following the
collapse of international commerce, south to the Caspian region to carry out raids.

Within Russia, especially in the north, trading stations were established at various strategic locations along the major river-routes. Here multi-ethnic populations engaged in commerce and as the settlement grew it developed into a political centre. This is perhaps where Marxist political theory on the development of the state could bear some relevance as an economically and militarily powerful class rose to dominate society. However, this class did not need to have developed internally, for in the context of tribal (communal) societies that existed in what was the pre-feudal period, any militarily-capable group with a politically conscious leader could have dominated the weaker societies. The argument that a less civilised society cannot dominate a more highly cultured state is also mistaken, for one has only to examine the demise of the Roman Empire at the hands of barbarian hordes in the fifth century. It is also noticeable that less civilised cultures, once they have conquered the higher culture, become immersed in the trappings of this culture, as for example the Ostrogoths of Italy and the Normans of Normandy did. That the Slavs eventually assimilated the barbarian Vikings is not surprising and although the level of culture may not necessarily have been much higher, the proportion of the population would have meant intermarriage with natives and hence a gradual erosion of Norse culture at a domestic level.

It is evident from the archaeological material that some Norsemen (and women) settled in Russia, retaining
their distinct Scandinavian culture, reflected in their burial rites. As the evaluations of this material are very conservative because of the nature of the evidence, it is difficult to set a figure for the proportion of Scandinavian settlers in Russia against the native population, but if the graves at Gnezdovo are used as a representative example, it may be as high as 15 per cent. However, the burials at Ladoga, a town with a strong Scandinavian connection, do not figure so highly and the amount might be significantly lower than the Gnezdovo burials suggest. Compared to western Viking burials, the Russian discoveries far outnumber those found, although it is possible that many western Vikings were buried in churchyards which were periodically cleared during the Middle Ages to make room for others so leaving no traces. The need to bury the dead separately from natives was also disregarded in the East and Norse burials have been discovered in the same mound as native burials. If the majority of Vikings travelling East were of Swedish origin the need to search for land would not have been a strong motivation for there was available land in their native country.

I have attempted to steer clear of the question concerning the Varangian foundation of the first Russian state, but it has required some explanation. I believe that a small group of merchant adventurers could have gained control over certain strategic points along the northern (Volga) trade route which developed into feudal patrimonies. The tradition of Rurikid rule from the early period of the Viking Age is extremely dubious and clumsily masked in the
Primary Chronicle. That other Scandanvians, such as Ragnvald and Tury, controlled other locations along the trade routes indicates that several of these trade stations — cum — feudal states were in existence, perhaps developing along the lines of Dublin and York. Because Russia was such as extensive region these small states did not intrude on each other until the latter tenth century. As Kiev was located at the crossroads of major river and land routes and thus in a position to take advantage of trade to northern Russia, western Europe, the East and Byzantium, it became economically powerful enough to extend its boundaries and become the political centre, officially recognised very early on by the Byzantine Empire, of the greater Kievan State.

Under Svyatoslav's rule, the foundations for the conquests made by his son, Vladimir, which composed the geographical boundaries of the Kievan State, were undertaken. One of the consequences of these extensive wars was the demise of the Khazar Empire centred at the mouth of the Volga and soon after, according to the numismatic evidence, the flow of kufic silver to Scandinavia and later Russia was severely curtailed. The clash with the Bulgars on the Volga left no-one to fill the subsequent vacuum in the East and problems within the Caliphate saw the demand for northern goods, primarily slaves, disappear. As the Kievan State began to encompass a larger geographical area and become increasingly centralised, organised and Christianised under the influence of Byzantine Empire, it became increasingly difficult for Scandinavian adventurers to make slave-raiding expeditions amongst the Slavs, now under the protection of
the ruler of Kiev (and also Christian), or make a hazardous journey through the regions previously made safe by the influence of the Khazar Khagan to the Caspian Sea and trade directly with the Muslims with wares which, unfortunately, they now did not require.

The line between military and commercial activity in the East was often blurred. By raiding the Rus supplied themselves with plunder with which to trade. If trade was not going very well then they became pirates, attacking the very same areas wherein they had peacefully traded. This is perhaps not illogical, for the location of fortifications and the richest pickings would have been well known to the Vikings. The great raids against Constantinople may, however, have had a political motive as an instrument of Kievan state diplomacy. Members of the ruling dynasty generally organised and led the expeditions, in order to perhaps to gain mercantile concessions from the Empire. The Byzantines, in the early part of the period, did not welcome foreigners to their capital, requiring commerce to be carried out only at the border. Once allowed in the capital, trade was still strictly regulated which might have led the Kievan rulers to attempt to take the city on various occasions. It may also have been necessary to get excess military manpower out of Kievan Rus to avoid political intrigues and possible takeover bids. This appears as the motive behind Vladimir sending the Varangians who had helped him take control of the state south to Byzantium to aid Basil. But without a mode of transport none of these endeavors would have been possible and in their knarr the Vikings had the perfect instrument to
undertake military and commercial adventures.

A combination of various factors might have been behind the curtailment of Scandinavian activity in the East. Assimilation with the natives, especially noticeable in the ruling dynasty, is apparent in the mid-tenth century. It is also about this time that international commerce in the region suffers a severe decline, having drastic effects upon the hoard material of Scandinavia, and may also have been responsible for the demise of Birka in Sweden. What limited commerce that continued was finally checked by the blocking of the lower reaches of the Dnieper, Don and Volga rivers by the movements of nomadic tribes, the Polvtsy and Pechenegs. With the rise of the newly-Christianised Kievan State, few military ventures would have been welcomed through central Russia, although some expeditions (such as Ingvar's) might have managed to reach the Caspian Sea via the northern Volga route. But these were the last such Viking adventures, for a new phase of military activity becomes apparent as men travel southward to serve in the Varangian Guard of the Byzantine Emperor. Profit and glory lured men eastward in these late stages of the Viking Age, two of the prime motives that had beckoned them from the beginning.
APPENDIX ONE

OF THE COMING OF THE RUSSIANS IN 'MONOXYLA'

FROM RUSSIA TO CONSTANTINOPLE


"The 'monoxyla' which come down from outer Russia to Constantinople are from Novgorod, where Sviatoslav, son of Igor, prince of Russia, had his seat, and others from the city of Smolensk and from Teliutza and Chernigov and from Vyshegrad. All of these come down from the river Dnieper, and are collected together at the city of Kiev, also called Sambatas. Their Slav tributaries, the so-called Krivichians and the Lenzanenes and the rest of the Slavonic regions, cut the 'monoxyla' on their mountains in the time of winter, and when they have prepared them, as spring approaches, and the ice melts, they bring them onto the neighbouring lakes. And since these lakes debouch into the river Dnieper, they enter thence onto this same river, and come down to Kiev, and draw the ships along to be finished and sell them to the Russians. The Russians buy these bottoms only, furnishing them with the oars and rowlocks and tackle from their old 'monoxyla', which they dismantle; and so they fit them out. And in the month of June they move off down the river Dnieper and come to Vitichev, which is a tributary city of the Russians, and there they gather during two or three days; and when all the 'monoxyla' are collected together, then they set out, and come down the said Dnieper river. And first they come to the first barrage, called Essoupi, which means in Russian and Slavonic 'Do not sleep!'; the barrage itself is as narrow as the width of the Polo-ground; in the middle of it are rooted high rocks, which stand out like islands. Against these, then, comes the water and wells up and dashes down over the other side, with a mighty and terrific din. Therefore the Russians do not venture to pass between them, but put into the bank hard by, disembarking the men onto dry land leaving the rest of the goods on board the 'monoxyla'; they then strip and, feeling with their feet to avoid striking on a rock, [text missing]. This they do, some at the prow, some amidships, while others again, in the stern, punt with poles; and with this careful procedure they pass this first barrage, edging round under the river bank. When they have passed this barrage, they re-embark the others from the dry land and
sail away, and come down to the second barrage, called in Russian Oulversi, and in Slavonic Ostrovouniprach, which means 'the Island of the Barrage'. This one is like the first, awkward and not to be passed through. Once again they disembark the men and convey the 'monoxyla' past, as on the first occasion. Similarly they pass the third barrage also, called Gelandri, which means in Slavonic 'Noise of the Barrage', and then the fourth barrage, the big one, called in Russian Aeifor, and in Slavonic Neasit, because the pelicans nest in the stones in the barrage. At this barrage all put into land prow foremost, and those who are deputed to keep the watch with them get out, and off they go, these men, and keep vigilant watch for the Pechenegs. The remainder, taking up the goods which they have on board the 'monoxyla', conduct the slaves in their chains past by land, six miles, until they are through the barrage. Then, partly dragging the 'monoxyla', partly portaging them on their shoulders, they convey them to the far side of the barrage; and then, putting them on the river and loading up their baggage, they embark themselves, and again sail off in them. When they come to the fifth barrage, called in Russian Varouforos, and in Slavonic Voulniprach, because it forms a lake, they again convey their 'monoxyla' through at the edges of the river, as at the first and second barrages, and arrive at the sixth barrage, called in Russian Leanti, and in Slavonic Veroutzi, that is 'the boiling of the water', and this too they pass similarly. And thence they sail away to the seventh barrage, called in Russian Stroukoun, and in Slavonic Naprezi, which means 'Little Barrage'. This they pass at the so-called ford of Vrar, where the Chersonites cross over from Russia and the Pechenegs to Cherson; which ford is as wide as the Hippodrome, and, measured upstream from the bottom as far as the rocks break surface, a bow-shot in length. It is at this point, therefore, that the Pechenegs come down and attack the Russians. After traversing this place, they reach the island called St. Gregory, on which island they perform their sacrifices because a gigantic oak stands there; and they sacrifice live cocks. Arrows too, they peg in round about, and others bread and meat, or something of whatever each may have, as is their custom. They also throw lots regarding the cock, whether to slaughter them, or to eat them as well, or to leave them alive. From this island onwards the Russians do not fear the Pecheneg until they reach the river Selinas. So then they start off thence and sail for four days, until they reach the lake which forms the mouth of the river, on which is the island of St. Aitherios. Arriving at this island, they rest themselves there for two to three days. And they re-equip their 'monoxyla' with such tackle as is needed, sails and masts and rudders, which they bring with them. Since this lake is the mouth of this river, as has been said, and carries down to the sea, and the island of St. Aitherios lies on the sea, they come thence to the Dniester river, and having got safely there they rest again. But when the weather is propitious, there they put to sea and come to the river called Aspros, and after resting there too in like manner, they again set out and come to the Selinas, to the so-called branch of the Danube river. And until they are past the river Selinas, the Pechenegs keep pace with them.
And if it so happens that the sea casts a 'monoxyylon' on shore, they all put into land, in order to present a united opposition to the Pechenegs. But after the Selinas they fear nobody, but, entering the territory of Bulgaria, they come to the mouth of the Danube. From the Danube they proceed to the Konopas to Constantia, and from Constantia to the river Varna, and from Varna they come to the river Ditzina, all of which are Bulgarian territory. From the Dinzina they reach the district of Mesembria, and there at last their voyage, fraught with travail and terror, such difficulty and danger, is at an end. The severe manner of life of these same Russians in winter-time is as follows. When the month of November begins, their chiefs together with all the Russians at once leave Kiev and go off on the 'poludia', which means 'rounds', that is, to the Slavonic regions of the Vervians and the Drugovichians and Krivichians and Severians and the rest of the Slavs who are tributaries of the Russians. There they are maintained throughout the winter, but then once more, starting from the month of April, when the ice of the Dnieser river melts, they come back to Kiev. They then pick up their 'monoxyla', as has been said above, and fit them out, and come down to Romania."
APPENDIX TWO

IBN FADLAN'S ACCOUNT OF A RUS SHIP-BURIAL AT GREAT BULGAR

This is taken from H.M. Smyser, 'Ibn Fadlan's Account of the Rus with Some Commentary and Some Allusions to Beowulf', in J.B. Bessinger and R.P. Creed (eds), Franciplegius Medieval and Linguistic Studies in Honour of Francis Peabody Magoun Jnr., (New York University Press, 1965), pp.97-101. The main body of the text is from Ibn Fadlan's 'Risala', based on an eleventh century manuscript discovered at Meshed in Iran by Ahmed Zeki Validi Togan in 1923. The passages following the letters AR are taken from Amin Razi's version of the 'Risala' written in 1593, possibly based on an earlier manuscript than the Meshed MS. The references to Canard and Zeki Validi (ZV) are to the French and German translations of the 'Risala'.

87. I had heard that at the deaths of their chief personages they did many interesting things, of which the least was cremation, and I was interested to learn more. At last I was told of the death of one of their outstanding men. They placed him in a grave and put a roof over it for ten days while they cut and sewed garments for him.

If the deceased is a poor man they make a little boat, which they lay him in and burn. If he is rich, they collect his goods and divide them into three parts, one for his family, another to pay for his clothing, and a third for making nabad [an intoxicating drink, perhaps beer], which they drink until the day when his female slave will kill herself and be burned with her master. They stupefy themselves by drinking this nabad night and day; sometimes one of them dies cup in hand.

(AR: They burn him in this fashion: they leave him for the first ten days in a grave. His possessions they divide into three parts; one for his daughters and wives; another for garments to clothe the corpse; another part covers the cost of the intoxicating drink which they consume in the course of ten days, uniting sexually with women and playing musical instruments. Meanwhile, the slave girl who gives herself to be burned with him, in these ten days drinks and indulges in pleasure; she decks her head and her person with all sorts of ornaments and fine dress and so arrayed gives herself to the men.)

When a great personage dies, the people of his family ask his young women and men slaves, 'Who among you will die with him?' One answers, 'I'. Once he or she has said that, the thing is obligatory; there is no backing out
of it. Usually it is the girl slaves who do this [i.e., volunteer].

88. When the man of whom I have spoken died, his girl slaves were asked, 'Who will die with him?' One answered, 'I'. She was then put in the care of two young women, who watched over her and accompanied her everywhere, to the point that they occasionally washed her feet with their own hands. Garments were being made for the deceased and all else was being readied of which he had need. Meanwhile the slave drinks every day and sings, giving herself over to pleasure.

89. When the day arrived on which the man was to be cremated and the girl with him, I went to the river on which was his ship. I saw that they had drawn the ship on to the shore, that they had erected four posts of birch wood and other wood, and that around it [the ship] was made a structure like great ship’s-tents out of wood [Canard: and that around these posts they had arranged some kind of great scaffolding of wood]. Then they pulled the ship up until it was on this wooden construction. Then they began to come and go and to speak words which I did not understand, while the man was still in his grave and had not yet been brought out. (AR: The ninth [ZV; Canard: tenth] day, having brought the ship up on to the river bank, they guarded it. In the middle of the ship they prepared a dome or pavilion a coupole (kunbad) of wood and covered this with various sorts of fabrics.) Then they brought a couch and put it on the ship and covered it with a mattress of Greek brocade. Then came an old woman whom they call the Angel of Death, and she spread upon the couch the furnishing mentioned. It is she who has charge of the clothes-making and arranging all things, and it is she who kills the girl slave. I saw that she was a strapping old woman, fat and louring.

When they came to the grave they removed the earth from above the wood, then the wood, and took out the dead man clad in the garments in which he had died. I saw that he had grown black from the cold of the country. They had put nabid, fruit, and a pandora in the grave with him. They removed all that. The dead man did not smell bad and only his colour had changed. They dressed him in trousers, stockings (?), boots, a tunic [qurtaq], and a caftan of brocade with gold buttons. They put a hat of brocade and fur on him. Then they carried him into the pavilion [gubba] on the ship. They seated him on the mattress and propped him up with cushions. They brought nabid, fruits, and fragrant plants, which they put with him, then bread, meat, and onions, which they placed before him. Then they brought a dog, which they cut in two and put in the ship. Then they brought his weapons and placed them by his side. Then they took two horses, ran them until they sweated, then cut them to pieces with a sword and put them into the ship. They took two cows, which they likewise cut into pieces and put in the ship. Next they killed a rooster and a hen and threw them in. The girl slave who wished to be killed went here and there and into each of their tents, and the master of each tent had sexual intercourse with her and said, 'Tell your lord I have done this out of love for him.'
(AR: The tenth day, they bought the deceased out of the ground and put him inside the pavilion [qubba] and put around him different kinds of flowers and fragrant plants. Many men and women gathered and played musical instruments, and each of his kinsmen built a pavilion [qubba] around his pavilion [qubba] at some distance. The slave girl arrayed herself and went to the pavilions of the kinsmen of the dead man, and the master of each had intercourse with her, saying in a loud voice, 'Tell your master that I have done the duty [or exercised the right] of love and friendship.' And so, as she went to all the pavilions to the last one, all the men had intercourse with her. When this was over, they cut a dog in two halves and put it into the boat, then, having cut the head off a rooster, they threw it, head and body, to the right and left of the ship.)

90. Friday afternoon they led the slave-girl to a thing that they had made which resembled a door frame. She placed her feet on the palms of the men and they raised her up to overlook this frame. She spoke some words and they lowered her again. A second time they raised her up and again she did what she had done; then they lowered her. They raised her a third time and she did as she had done the two times before. They brought her a hen; she cut off the head, which she threw away, and then they took the hen and put it in the ship. I asked the interpreter what she had done. He answered, 'The first time they raised her she said, "Behold, I see my father and mother." The second time she said, "I see all my dead relatives seated." The third time she said, "I see my master seated in Paradise and Paradise is beautiful and green; with him are men and boy servants. He calls me. Take me to him,"' Now they took her to the ship. She takes off the two bracelets which she was wearing and gave them both to the old woman called the Angel of Death, who was to kill her; then she took off the two finger rings which she was wearing and gave them to the two girls who served her and were the daughters of the woman called the Angel of Death. Then they raised her on to the ship, but they did not make her enter into the pavilion.

Then men came with shields and sticks. She was given a cup of nabid; she sang at taking it and drank. The interpreter told me that she in this fashion bade farewell to all her girl companions. Then she was given another cup; she took it and sang for a long time while the old woman incited her to drink up and go into the pavilion where her master lay. I saw that she was distracted; she wanted to enter the pavilion, but put her head between it and the boat [sic.]. Then the old woman seized her head and made her enter the pavilion and entered with her. Thereupon the men began to strike with the sticks on the shields so that her cries could not be heard and the other slave-girls would not be frightened and seek to escape death with their masters. Then six men went into the pavilion and had intercourse with the girl. Then they laid her at the side of her master; two held her feet and two her hands; the old woman known as the Angel of Death re-entered and looped a cord around her neck and gave the crossed ends to the two men to pull. Then she approached her with a broad-bladed dagger, which she plunged
between her ribs repeatedly, and the men strangled her with
the cord until she was dead.

(AR: After that, the group of men who have
cohabited with the slave-girl make of their hands a sort of
paved way whereby the girl, placing her feet on the palms of
their hands, mounts on to the ship. After that, they give
her a hen, which she throws into the ship after tearing off
its head. Then she drinks an intoxicating drink and
pronounces many words, and, thrice standing on the palms of
the men, she comes down and mounts again to the ship and
recites many things [Canard: sings some snatches]. She goes
into the pavilion [qubba] in which her husband [Mann; mari]
has been put, and six of the relatives of her husband go into
the pavilion and unite sexually with her in the presence of
the dead man. When they have finished the duties of love,
the old woman who, according to the belief of these people,
is the Angel of Death arrives and lays the wife to sleep
beside her husband. Of the six men, two seize the legs of
the slave-girl, and two others her hands, and the old woman,
twisting her veil, puts it around her neck and gives the ends
to the two other men so that they can pull it so tight that
the soul escapes from her body.)

91. Then the closest relative of the dead man, after they had
placed the girl whom they have killed beside her master,
came, took a piece of wood which he lighted at a fire, and
walked toward the boat and his face turned (toward the
people), with one hand holding the kindled stick and the
other covering his anus, being completely naked, for the
purpose of setting fire to the wood that had been made ready
beneath the ship. Then the people came up with tinder and
other firewood, each holding a piece of wood of which he had
set fire to an end and which he put into the pile of wood
beneath the ship. Thereupon the flames engulfed the wood,
then the ship, the pavilion, the man, the girl, and
everything in the ship. A powerful, fearful wind began to
blow so that the flame became fiercer and more intense.

92. One of the Rus was at my side and I heard him speak to
the interpreter, who was present. I asked the interpreter
what he said. He answered, 'He said, "You Arabs are fools"'
'Why?' I asked him. He said, 'You take the people who are
most dear to you and whom you honour most and you put them in
the ground where insects and worms devour them. We burn them
in a moment, so that he enters Paradise at once.' Then he
began to laugh uproariously. When I asked him why he
laughed, he said, 'His lord, for the love of him, has sent
the wind to bring him away in an hour.' And actually an hour
had not passed before the ship, the wood, the girl, and her
master were nothing but cinders and ashes.

Then they constructed in the place where had been
the ship which they had drawn up out of the river something
like a small round hill, in the middle of which they erected
a great post of birch wood, on which they wrote the name of
the man and the name of the Rus king and they departed.
APPENDIX THREE

SCANDINAVIAN GRAVES IN NORTH-WEST RUSSIA


1. ZALAKHTOV'E. By the Eastern shore of Lake Chud' on the Peninsula seperating the lake from Lake Pskov. Cremation in mound 131. Sword bent in half, with circles and a cross on the blade (type E, Kirpichikov, p.62). 10th century. Male.

2. PLAKUN. On the river Volkhow, opposite Old Ladoga. Cemetery with 13 mounds, all excavated. Scandinavian cemetery dates to the 9th-10th centuries. Grave numbers 1-4. 9th-10th centuries, cremations in boats, males. Number 5. Cremation in a boat, female. Number 6. Circle of stones around the base of the mound. Cremation, 10th century, female. Number 7. Cremation in a boat, 9th century, female. Number 8. Cremation in a boat, male(?). Number 9. Cremation in a boat. Number 10. Cremation in a boat, male(?). Number 11. Inhumation in a boat. Central cairn with boat rivets, burnt over a burial chamber in the ground. Number 12. Cremation in a boat, female. Number 13. Cremation in a boat. The Sopka (steepsided, tall, round, multi-layered mound with several burials), contained a cremation from the 8th-9th centuries and on the top was found an inhumation grave with an added layer of soil. Rotten wood and rivets were the remains of a boat in which was found a male with his head orientated towards the north. Also 2 horses. This is the only sopka with Scandinavian finds. 9th-10th centuries, male.

3. PIRKINSKOE. On the river Svir'. Cremation in a mound. Sword, pattern-welded with bronze ornamentation on the hilt (type H, Kirpichikov, p.62). 3 strap fittings. Mid 9th-10th centuries, male and female(?).

4. KARLUKHA (Nikol'skoe). On the river Oyat'. Cemetery with 33 mounds. Cremation in a mound with 2 graves and a hearth. 4 oval brooches. Round brooch. 2 neck-rings of iron but without Thor's hammer pendants. After 969-early eleventh century. 2 females in one grave.

6. KUMBITA. On the river Pasha. Cemetery with 11 mounds. Cremation in mound X with 3 graves and a hearth. 2 oval brooches and a round brooch. 10th century, female.

7. UST’-RYBEZHINA. On the river Pasha. Cemetery with 11 mounds. Cremation with a boat in mound XIX containing 2 complexes and a hearth. Sword with figures on the blade and incrusted hilts and the remnants of wood or bark (type E, Kirpichikov, p.62). Remnants of a drinking horn with silver fittings. In the central part of the find area was a boat, i.e., 100 rivets, nails and clamps, within an area 9.94 m. x 4.26 m. There were no traces of wood. The boat was placed above the dead and the hearth. 10th century, male.


9. SIAZNIGA. Cemetery with 12 mounds. Cremation in mound with 3 graves. 2 oval brooches and a round brooch. Viking Age, female.


11. VIKHMES. On the river Pasha. Cemetery with 6 mounds. Inhumation in mound LXXX with 2 or 3 graves and a hearth. Spearhead thrust vertically into the ground. 10th century to the first half of the 11th century, male.

12. KIRILINA. On the river Pasha. Cemetery with 7 mounds. Inhumation in mound LXXXIX with 2 graves and a hearth. 2 oval brooches and a round brooch. Shield boss. Bracelet. 10th century, male and female, although there is only the remains of one skeleton.

13. KOSTINO. On the river Pasha. Cemetery with 8 mounds. Cremation in mound XCV with 4 graves and a hearth. 2 oval brooches to one of which was fastened a chain with an equal-armed brooch. 9th century, female.

14. KOSTINO. Cemetery with 7 mounds. Cremation in mound CI with 1 or 2 graves and a hearth. Spearhead thrust vertically into the ground. Annular brooch of bronze. 10th century, male.

15. SAME CEMETERY. Cremation in mound CII with 5 graves and a hearth. 2 oval brooches, one with an iron chain and a round brooch. 10th century, male, female and possibly a child.
16. VAKHRUSHEVO. On the river Pasha. Cemetery with 9 mounds. Cremation in mound CXVI with 8 graves, the burnt remains of a horse and a hearth. Sword, broken and bent, with signs on the blade (type V, Kirpichikov, p. 59). Point of bone decorated with a dragon’s head. Second half of the 10th-early 11th century, male. Another male and female in the grave but no Scandinavian finds.


18. IL’INO. On the river Syas’. Gravemound with 2 layers of coal. On the bottom were iron clamps and rivets from a boat. Scandinavian boat grave.
APPENDIX FOUR

BYZANTINE SOURCES RELATED TO THE ATTACKS

ON CONSTANTINOPLE IN 860, 941 AND 1043

F. Cumont, Anecdota Bruxellensia, I, Chroniques byzantines du Manuscrit. [Brux.] 11, 376 (Ghent, 1894), compiled in the
eleventh century, in J. Bury, History of the Eastern Roman

"The Russians [Rhos] came with 200 ships [and] through
the embassy of the all-praised Mother of God they were ruled
by the Christians, they were forcefully defeated and
annihilated, June 18, ind. [indictio] 8, AM 6368, in the
fifth year of Michael III. (Michael's sole reign began in
March, 856)."

Nicetas David Paphlagonus, Vita Ignatii (Life of Ignatius),
In J.P. Migne, Patrologia Series Graeca, (Paris, 1857-66),
volume 105, columns 515-518 and 531-2, written c.907-09,
translated by A. Cuttriss. Ignatius began his second period
of exile on the island of Terebinthos in the Sea of Marmora
in February, 860.

"Another misfortune also befell the holy man. At that
time the Rhossi, the most bloodthirsty tribe of the Scythians,
having approached Stenon [Bosporus] through the Euxine Sea
[Black Sea] and having plundered all the estates and all the
monasteries, moreover overran the outskirts of Byzantium,
both taking as booty all utensils and money, and killing all
the men they captured. In addition overrunning the
monasteries of the patriarch with barbaric fury and wrath
they seized all the property they found, and having captured
twenty-two of the more genuine domestics of the patriarch,
butchered them all with battle-axes on the stern of a ship."

This attack occurred on the island of Plati, one of the Isles
of the Princes in the Sea of Marmora.

"Nearby is a chapel to the Mother of God, the altar of
which recently the Rhossi, when they pillaged the island,
threw down; Ignatius rededicated it and re-established it."

Theophanes Continuatus, Michael Theophilii Filius, Migne,
op.cit., volume 109, columns 209-212, Book IV. 33, written
in the tenth century, translated by I. Plant.

"At any rate then, an invasion of the Rhos (a Scythian
people, savage and coarse), devastated the territory of the
Romans and set ablaze the Pontus itself (even the Euxine) and they surrounded the city itself, while Michael was commanding an expedition against the Ismaelites. These people, then, were carried on by divine anger until Photius, who held the helm of the assembly, appealed God and they made their way back home. And not long after an embassy came from them to the city praying that they might share in divine baptism, which is what happened."

Theophanes Continuatus, containing the Vita Basilii (Life of Basil I) by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Migne, op.cit., volume 109, columns 359-60, Book V. 97. Translated by Dr K. Adshead and I. Plant.

"And after winning over the Russian people into negotiations, who are most intractable and godless, with enough gifts of gold, silver and silk cloth, and making a peace treaty with them, he [the Emperor] persuaded them to also share in baptism of salvation and he prepared to receive an archbishop who had accepted his appointment from the Patriarch Ignatius, who having been present in the land of the people who I have spoken of, from this circumstance he has become easily acceptable [a congenial choice] to the people. [This refers to the period after 867 as Ignatius has been reappointed Patriarch]."

Photius, Epistolariurn (Letters), Migne, op.cit., volume 102, columns 735-38, Liber I. 35, written in early 867, translated by I. Plant.

"But indeed, what is also often discussed by many men are a people called the Rhos, who assigned everything second to savagery and blood thirstiness, and who also, after enslaving those people bordering them and from that becoming excessively presumptuous, raised their hand against the Roman Empire. But nevertheless these people have also exchanged the pure and genuine religion of the Christians for the godless Greek [Hellenic] beliefs which they held before, and have made themselves a friendly subject people, settling down contentedly instead of continuing their recent robbery from us and great feats of daring. And the desire for truth and zeal inflamed them to such an extent (again as Paul says, "God is blessed forever") that they received a pastor and a bishop and welcomed the religious rituals of Christians through their great eagerness and care."

Symeon Logothetes Metaphrastes (Pseudo-Symeon Magister), Annales, Michael et Theodora, in Migne, op.cit., volume 109, columns 735-6, 674-5, (37-8), written in the tenth century, translated by C. Manning.

"In the ninth year of the Emperor Michael, the Emperor, after undertaking an expedition against the Agabenes, set out against them leaving [Nicetan] Oryphus, his prefect, in the city. He had already pitched camp by the river Mauropotamion [Black river] when he [Oryphus] announced that the Russians were coming with a fleet of 200 ships. On hearing this the Emperor returned immediately with his policy quite
uncompleted and no battle joined."

"In the tenth year of the Emperor Michael the Russians, when they had got into the Hierum [Bosporus] committed much slaughter. And so they surrounded the city with a rampart and when the Emperor could scarcely cross it, they [either the people of the city or the Emperor] came with Photius the Patriarch to the temple of the Holy Mother of God at Blachernae; and bringing out the sacred cloak and pallium of the same Mother of God with singing they dipped it gently in the sea; and though no breeze was blowing immediately a burst of wind arose and waves were stirred up immediately on a sea that was calm and peaceful. The ships of the wicked Russians were broken and shattered since few of them escaped the danger."


"Immediately the Emperor, leaving the prefect [Nicetas] Ooiphus in the city to guard it, undertook an expedition against the Agarenes. The Emperor had not yet put aside nor achieved any of these things he was planning and had in mind when Ooiphus announced the arrival of the wicked Russians, who [the Emperor, not the Russians] had set out for the Black river. The Emperor, regretting his hurried journey, left off the expedition having achieved nothing royal or noble. The Russians, getting in right as far as Hierum [the Bosporus] committed much slaughter of the Christians and spilt much innocent blood. They had 200 vessels with which they surrounded the city and shook mighty terror into the citizens. Advancing towards the city the Emperor could scarcely pass through the surroundings and enter it, but then with Patriarch Photius he approached the temple of the Holy Mother of God at Blachernae where he aimed to appease the divine power. Then bearing the Holy clothes of the Mother of God and singing hymns they took it [the clothes] to the furthest shore of the sea: earlier great atmospheric calm had been granted but immediately a violent impulse of the wind was raised and in a sea that was previously most peaceful a mighty leaping of the waves occurred to such an extent the ships of the Russians were broken and few were snatched from danger."


"The Emperor led out an expedition against the Agarenes, having left to guard the city Ooiphus his prefect. Ooiphus, when the Emperor had not yet done any of what he was concerned about and was of a mind to do, informed him of the arrival of the godless Russians [when the Emperor] was at the river Nigrius [Black river]. The Emperor repented of his course and gave it up [turned back], having achieved nothing noble or kingly. Meanwhile the Russians, having gotten within the Hieron [Bosporus] unnoticed, wreaked much havoc amongst the Christians and shed much innocent blood. They had 200
ships which had encircled the city and caused much fear for those within the city. The Emperor with difficulty was able to get across and occupy the city. Now he went with the Patriarch Photius into the temple at Blachernae, that of the Mother of God, and there they tried to supplicate and placate God. After their prayer-songs they took out the Holy garb of the God born and dipped it into the sea; immediately calm became onrush of winds and quiet sea the upheavals of waves crashing against one another, and the ships of the godless Russians were dashed to pieces - only a few having escaped the danger."


"Meanwhile the Russian fleet was harrassing with invasion and laying waste whatever coastal regions lay within the Euxine Sea. The race of Russians is Scythian, inhabiting the northern Taurus, a race that is wild and monstrous."


"But the Russians, a Scythian race, inhabitants of the Tauros mountains, attacked the Euxine Sea with a fleet and threatened Byzantine land itself. But their plan did not succeed, being hindered by divine providence, which brought it about that, against their will, or rather having experienced the anger of divinity, they were compelled to depart without achieving their goal."


"During the fourteenth indiction, on the eleventh of June, the Rus sallied against the city of Constantinople with 10,000 ships. The Rus are also called Dromitae and are of Frankish descent. The Patrician was sent out against them with all the ships (dromons) then in the city. Having equipped the ships and made them ready and fortified himself by tears and fasting, he awaited the arrival of the Rus, intending to fight a sea battle with them. When they encountered him near Pharos (so-called because there is a base upon which a beacon is lit for night navigators), he set an ambush for them by the mouth of the Euxine Sea. (The Euxine is named euphemistically, being in fact inhospitable because of the incessant attacks by pirates there against travellers; after Heracles had disposed of these and travellers were safe, they renamed the sea the Euxine [i.e. hospitable] Sea). He (the Patrician) attacked them in strength at the point called the Sanctuary, which got its name from its foundation by the Argonauts who called in their on their outward journey. Spearheading the charge in his
flagship, the Patrician broke up the formation of the Rus ships and burned the majority with prepared fire; the rest he attacked and routed. Following him, the remainder of the dromons, together with the triremes sallied out and made the rout complete; many of their ships were sunk, men and all; many men were wounded, numerous captives were taken. The survivors sallied east to a place called Sgora. Then Bardas Phocas, the Patrician of the rank of general, was sent out overland with cavalry and picked troops to shadow them (the Rus). They had despatched a sizeable squadron into Bithynia to procure what supplies and foodstuffs they needed, and Bardas Phocas encountered this squadron and defeated them soundly, putting them to flight and slaughtering them. John Curcuas, the Domesticus of the Guards, a man of exceptional experience and prudence, came up with them having at his back the whole army of Anatolia; he destroyed many of them as he overtook the fugitives in the area so that they clustered by their ships, afraid of his attacks, and remained there, not daring to make any sorties. Many dreadful atrocities were committed by the Rus before the Roman army caught up with them. For they set fire to the whole area called the Strait and any whom they captured they either crucified or trampled into the ground or set up as targets and shot arrows at them. When they captured members of the Christian clergy, they bound their hands behind their backs and drove iron nails into their heads. Many churches were burned down by them. But with the advent of winter and with food becoming scarce, afraid of the army of the Domesticus Curcuas which was pursuing them and of the intelligence and general shrewdness of the man himself, and also of the seabattles and hostile manoeuvres of the Patrician Theophanes, they made up their minds to return home. Eager to escape the attention of the fleet, in the month of September, in the fifteenth indiction, they set out by night for Thrace and were intercepted by the said Theophanes the Patrician. Nor did they escape the notice of that highly alert and noble mind. There then ensued a second naval engagement and the man of whom I have just mentioned slew many of them, sinking many of their ships. A few escaped in their ships and put into land on the promontory called Cyle. At nightfall they made good their escape. Theophanes, the Patrician, returning with the glory of victory and numerous trophies, was received with ceremony and honour and raised to the rank of Excubitor."


"Thereafter on the eleventh day of the month of June around 10,000 Russi sailed against Constantinople. The Patrician Theophanes, administrator of the Empire and Protovestarius was sent against them with triremes and light galleys which were in the city. Having arranged his ships and having prepared himself by fasting and weeping Theophanes waited for the Russi, awaiting an opportunity of attacking them. When they arrived and appeared near Pharos, Theophanes first placed a station near at the narrows of the Euxine Sea, a place named Hierum, and first of all sailed in his own
vessel and broke the ranks of the ships of the Russi, and set fire to most of them with fires prepared beforehand, and turned the rest to flight. The remaining light galleys and triremes followed up behind him, and attacking their adversaries finished the slaughter of the enemy; a good number of soldiers went down with their vessels, many were hacked down and very many were taken alive. Therefore the survivors sailed to that part of Anatolia which is called Sgora. Bardas Phocas was sent by a land route with chosen cavalry to pursue them. The strong army, however, which they had sent into parts of Bithynia, the aforementioned Bardas Phocas, upon coming across them encountered to their misfortune, put to flight and slaughtered. Then likewise Joannes Crocas, the Magister and Domesticus of the Scholae arrived with the whole army of the Orient, and seizing fugitives here and there, destroyed by killing all the authors of many evils in such a way that they, dreading his attack, having drawn together and become densely packed remained amongst their vessels and did not dare to appeal further."


"In the month of June of the 14th indiction, an attack was made against the city by a Russian expedition of 10,000 ships. The Patrician and Protovestarius set out against them with a fleet and anchored at Hieron [Bosporus] while the Russians were lying in wait at Pharos and the shore around it. Having waited for the right moment, Theophanes set upon them in close order and broke up their formation, setting alight many of their ships with prepared fire, putting flight to the rest. Those of the Russians left behind journeyed to Anatole and put in at the parts called Sgora. The Patrician there, Bardas, son of Phocas, was patrolling the shores with chosen cavalymen, and meeting up with a sizeable cohort of the Russians sent out to collect food, overran and slaughtered them. However, the Domesticus of the band, Curcuas, having appeared quickly with his cohorts, on finding them [the Russians] scattered about wandering here and there, treated them ill. All that these Russians did before being defeated fills out a whole tragedy. Some of whom they captured they crucified, some they bolted to the ground and some they stood as targets and shot with arrows. As many as they thought were of the priesthood they impaled their heads with sharp nails, and not a few in number were the buildings they set to fire. All this happened before, but when, as described above, they were defeated in naval battle and were worsted not a little on land, they shortened their sails and remained quiet in their ships. By now they were short of supplies and were resolved to go home but were afraid of the fleet nearby guarding against their sailing away. Nevertheless they chose their moment, gave the signal, released the ropes and tried to sail away. But they did not escape the notice of the Patrician and Protovestarius Theophanes. He, having seen their departure, straightaway opposed them and a second naval battle arose, the Russians
being turned back. Some of their ships were given to the deep, some iron and fire split in two, while the rest came into the Romans’ hands. But a few did return home having escaped wars’ compulsion."


"With this very indictment, in the month of June, the Russian people (Rossica gens) rose up against the Roman Empire. Up to this time the Rossi had cultivated peace and friendship with the Romans, and there had been reciprocal free commerce and merchants travelled to and fro. Then indeed with a disagreement occurring in the city with some Scythian traders, a fight broke out, and one of the more noble Scyths was killed. Then Vladimerus [Vladimir] the chieftan of his people, a passionate man of unstable mind, hearing the news of this misfortune very badly, without any delay, when he had summoned as many of his subjects as were suited for to arms, and having added auxiliary forces (by no means a small number) from the peoples which were inhabiting the northern islands of Ocean, collecting, as they say, 100,000 men, he put them on vessels customary among them (vessels we call 'lintres', built with a single hollowed out tree) and headed toward the city. The Emperor, being apprised of his endeavor, sought by the embassy he had sent to dissuade the Scyth from arms, promising to compensate him for any fault, so that he would not break a peace now consolidated for so many years for such a trivial cause and commit the peoples to war. But when the barbarian, on receiving the letter, ignominiously repelled the embassy, making a haughty reply, the Emperor, despairing of peace, himself too prepared for war with all his ability. He shared around the provinces the Scythian traders living in the city under custody, some of whom were there as allies. He did this so that no treachery might be feared from them at home. Then when he had fitted out the Imperial triremes and other light vessels, as much as the precipitous nature of the matter allowed and when he had put aboard the ships those of the soldiers who at this time were acting as marines, according to law, he too, having boarded his light galley, sailed to meet the barbarians in the narrows near the lighthouse of Pharus, with nearby on the land a by no means small contingent of horse accompanying the fleet. With the fleets drawn up for battle on both sides, neither force initiated the conflict. While the Scyths were keeping to themselves in the harbour they had seized, the Romans were awaiting their movement. When the time was wasting and day was inclining to evening, the Emperor again sent an embassy to discuss peace, and again the barbarian insultingly rejected them, indicating the only way he would be induced to lay down his arms was if he received three pounds of gold for every one of his marines. When he saw that this reply was completely outrageous, the Emperor decided a conclusion had to be reached by fighting. And while the barbarians still kept their quiet, having summoned to himself the Magister Basilius Theodorocanus, he instructed him to tempt the Scyths to a skirmish with three swift.
triremes, and provoke them to a battle. Basilius having received the triremes did not test the mettle of the barbarians with a skirmish, but sailing into the middle of the enemy fleet and fired seven ships with skillful use of torch, he sank three with their crews, seized one vessel, boarding it and both putting the marines to the sword and putting the terrified marines to flight with his boldness. The Scyths seeing the Emperor drawing near with the whole fleet, and pondering things as they stood, since they had not even borne the attack of three triremes, what would happen if the battle should be fought with the whole fleet, they took flight, and heading themselves into a place with rocks and reefs lurking beneath the surface lost the greatest part of their ships. But the soldiers too attacked them from the land, and caused great carnage. Indeed, afterward around 15,000 enemy corpses were found on the shore. With the Scyths being overwhelmed in this way, the Emperor, delaying in those regions a full two days, returned to Byzantium on the third day, having left behind two legions and those which they call associations, having ordered the generals Nicolaus, the Cubicularius, and the Magister Basilius Theodorocanus to guard the coastline, not to allow the barbarians to make a landing, and that the whole fleet might be on station at Pharus. These men going around the shores, as they had been ordered, where the tide had yielded up the corpses of the barbarians, gained great booty and spoils. Indeed 24 Roman triremes pulled away from the rest of the fleet pursuing the fleeing barbarians, sailed past them, so that they might bring their ships into a port. The Scyths, then, discovering the small numbers of the enemy ships, and ascertaining there were not more than were seen, extended their flanks from the promontories sited on both sides, and employing vigourous rowing began to surround the Roman vessels. The Romans, wearied by the earlier labour of rowing and pursuing, and terrified by the large numbers of enemy ships, inclined towards flight. But when the barbarian vessels had enclosed the narrows of the bay and exit into the open sea was not possible, Constantinus (the Patrician) Caballarius, general of the Cibyrrhaestae, attacking bravely the enemy with his own and ten other triremes, was killed. Fourteen triremes with their crews were captured, and even the Praetor’s ship. All the men on these were killed. The rest of the Romans’ ships in a short while were thrown upon inhospitable shores and rocks and were wrecked. Some marines drowned, others were killed by the barbarians or were taken away as captives. The naked survivors and the infantry returned to the garrison of their men. The Scyths, when the plan had fallen to them beyond their expectations, turning homeward began their journey. Since they returned not only by sea but also by land (for there were not enough ships, because many of them had been sunk in battle, many had been taken, many had been destroyed by wreck). They (the Russians) fell upon Cataconem Besta Anabustus who was then in command of the district near the Ista on the shore of the sea at Varna and were routed and afflicted with great disaster. He (the Prefect) sent eighty of them alive in fetters to the Emperor. When the Scythians were first aiming for Constantinople and going out from his province, were foraging, this Anabustus, gathering his
troops, attacked them bravely and driving them back compelled
them to take refuge beside their own ships. And at that time
again guarding the sea coast of his province he concentrated
upon ways out and did this deed."
APPENDIX FIVE

LES MOSAFIRIDES DE L'ADHERBAIDJAN


During the reign of Al-Marzuban the Russians made their famous expedition which put the village Bardha'a under their control. Before this, in A.H. 301 (913), they had taken a first offensive against Ardebil. In A.H. 332 (943-44), a naib (lieutenant) of Al-Marzuban commanded the town.

"The Russians, arriving by sea," said Ibn-al-Athir, "had followed the course of the Kur (Cyprus) to Bardha'a, where the naib was carried to meet them at the head of an army of 5,000 men composed of Daylamites and volunteers, but the Muslims (volunteers) were defeated in an instant and the Daylamites were massacred to the last man. The Russians entered the town and acted with restraint but the people attacked them with stones, injuring some, although the more reasonable people did not take part. When this situation had lasted sometime, the Russians ordered the inhabitants to leave within ten days but after the time granted the majority still remained and only those with mounts had left. As a result the Russians massacred a great number of them, made several thousand prisoners, and assembled the rest in the Mosque telling them to redeem themselves. A Christian intervened and fixed a ransom of 20 dirhems on each man which the moderate men accepted; when the Russians realised that they could not get the better of these people, they massacred them to the last man, none escaped this fate except those who had already managed to flee. The Russians reduced the prisoners to slavery and chose among them the women that pleased them.

The action of the Russians was appalling to the Muslims who arose at the sound of the trumpet. Al-Marzuban assembled the people and incited them to battle and the number of volunteers increased to 30,000 men. He led from the head of the army wanting to do more than just resist the Russians. He attacked them morning and evening, and each time he returned in defeat. This went on for many days. The Russians then went on to the coast of Meragha and ate too much of a fruit that caused dysentery, increasing the number of illnesses and deaths among the troops."

When al-Marzuban saw how protracted the situation had become, he employed a ruse; he contrived an ambush (of the
following fashion); he would march against the enemy with his troops, then would move back in front of them, and at the moment when the soldiers in the ambush showed themselves, he would attack again. He conveyed this plan to his companions and readied the ambush, he then went himself to the encounter with the Russians¹⁰ and attacked them; then al-Marzuban and his companions retreated, followed by the Russians; they passed [in their retreat] the place of the ambush; the troops continued their flight, without anyone caring for his neighbour. Al-Marzuban himself has told of this adventure: 'I called the men to charge again, but they did nothing, because of the great fear they had of the Russians. I realised that if the men continued their retreat, the Russians would kill most of them, and then return against the ambush, discover them and kill every last man that they found. I then returned to the charge, followed only by my brother and my companion (Caïb, his minister)¹¹ and I reconciled myself to the idea of perishing a martyr of the faith. At that moment most of the Daylamites, overcome by shame, returned and charged; we fought with the Russians and cried the battle cry that we had previously agreed upon. They came out behind the enemy, and we fought with all our might; we killed many Russians,¹² among them their chief: the rest fled to the stronghold of the town which was called Chahristan, where they had gathered considerable provisions, and where they held their prisoners, women and children, and also their riches.' Al-Marzuban besieged them and armed himself with patience.

Then the news reached him that Abou 'Abdallah al-Hosein ben Sa'id ben Hamdan, cousin of Nacir-ed-daula had been sent by the latter to take possession of Azerbaijan and had already come to Salmas. Al-Marzuban left the troops¹³ to continue the blockade of the Russians, and rejoined Hamanide and joined him in combat; then the snow began to fall and the troops of Hamanide disbanded because the majority of them were Bedouins. Then Hamanide received a letter from Nacir-el-daula informing him of the death of Touzoun, letting him know that he had no intention of going to Baghdad, and ordering him to rejoin him, which he did.

As to the troops of al-Marzuban, they continued to besiege the Russians, and more and more fell prey to illness. When the latter buried a man they buried his arms with him;¹⁴ the Muslims, after the departure of the Russians, [ransacked the tombs and] obtained great amounts of these arms. The Russians left the citadel at night, after loading themselves with their riches and other objects that they wanted to take away,¹⁵ reached the banks of the Kur, boarded their ships and left. The men of al-Marzuban were powerless to follow them and regain their booty; they let them go, and may God purify the land of their presence.'

NOTES TO LES MOSAFIRIDES DE L'ADHERBAIDJAN

1. The dynasty of the Mosafirides reigned in Azerbaijan from the second part of the tenth century to the middle of the eleventh century.
2. In the report of Ibn Miskawaih, *Eclipse of the Abbasid Caliphate*, translated by H.F. Amedloz and D.S. Margoliouth, (Basil Blackwell, Cambridge, 1921), volume II, 62, p.68, these troops were composed of 300 Daylamites, about the same number of Su’luks and Kurds, and some 5000 volunteers.

3. Except those who were mounted, says Ibn Miskawaih, op.cit., p.68, (because they could flee).

4. To give assistance to the Sultan’s troops who still surrounded the town, Ibn Miskawaih, op.cit., p.68f.

5. Three days in Ibn Miskawaih, op.cit., p.69.

6. He was a secretary of that town, called Ibn Sam’oun, Ibn Miskawaih, op.cit., p.69.

7. But not the others, who accused Ibn Sam’oun of submitting them to poll-tax. The secretary then withdrew his offer, Ibn Miskawaih, op.cit., p.69.

8. Some escaped by a narrow subterranean tunnel which drew water into the Mosque, and others redeemed themselves by sacrificing their treasures. When nothing remained to be taken from the houses and shops, the Russians gave the prisoners a clay seal to protect them from further claim, Ibn Miskawaih, op.cit., p.70.


10. They were on foot and their chief was on a donkey, Ibn Miskawaih, op.cit., p.71.

11. According to Ibn Miskawaih, op.cit., p.72, he was followed by his brother, personal attendants, 'stafi', and retainers.


14. Abou 'l-Hasan Mohammed ben 'Abd el-Melik el- Hamdani (not el-Hamadhani as de Goeje said in his preface to "Arib, Tabari Continuatus"), author of a supplement to the "Annales" of Tabari, preserved in the MSS in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Arab resources, No. 1469, t, i, (unique), f.90, gives a very abridged account of these events, moreover he adds this detail, "that the Russian was buried with his wife and his slave if he wanted." Cf Ibn Miskawaih, op.cit., p.73.

15. They burned the rest and took what they wanted of the women and children, Ibn Miskawaih, op.cit., p.73.
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