PRIMITIVE CIVILIZATION OF THE EASTERN SLAVS

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The status of social organization and primitive government among the Eastern Slavs at the dawn of their history is not definable with complete certainty, but may best be determined by comparing the data preserved both by the earliest native sources and in the accounts of contemporary foreign observers with survivals of early custom and usage among the modern branches of the Slavic race least touched by the inroads of modern culture. Accurate definition of early Eastern Slavic social organization has, however, been gravely hampered by the dubious terminology of the mediaeval Russian sources themselves and particularly by the ambiguous use of the word rod, which is indiscriminately employed by eleventh and twelfth century texts to mean ‘family,’ ‘clan,’ ‘tribe,’ and even ‘nation.’ The resulting confusion has accordingly exerted an unfavorable effect upon theories of early Russian social structure ever since this topic first became a subject of study during the first half of the nineteenth century.

In the Laurentian Chronicle, for example, we read, “While the Polyanians were living apart and ruling over their rodi, . . . they lived each with his rod and on their lands, ruling each over his own rod and on his own land.”1 In this passage rod can equally well be taken to signify ‘patriarchal family,’ ‘joint family,’ or ‘clan.’ Similarly, a tradition is also preserved by the Chronicle that Kii, the eponymous founder of Kiev, went to settle on the Danube, where “he set up a small town and wished to settle there with his rod.”2

In this instance the same choice of meanings is conceivable. But in the legend of the ‘calling’ of the Varangians, the Chronicle reports that “there was no justice among them (the Slavs), and rod rose against rod,”3 a passage in which any other meaning beside ‘clan’ or ‘tribe’ is scarcely applicable. Yet after the death of Kii and his brothers we learn that “their rod began to hold the principate (knjaženie) among the Polyanians,”4 so that in this instance the word would seem to apply to their descendants and dynasty. Finally, in the Russo-Greek treaty of 911 the Russian contractants are characterized as “we of the Russian rod,”5 i.e., “of the Russian nation.”

1 PSRL, 1, i, 2nd ed. (Leningrad, 1926), 9.
2 Ibid., col. 10.
3 Ibid., col. 19.
4 Ibid., col. 9.
5 Ibid., col. 32.
Dogmatic interpretation of these obviously vague terms has inspired the creation of unduly exclusive theories of primitive Eastern Slavic social structure. The Dorpat school, founded by J. P. G. Ewers (later followed by S. M. Solovyov), thus held that prior to the arrival of the Varangians in the ninth century the Eastern Slavs lived in small isolated communities composed of clans sprung from the same founder and headed either by their senior member or by an elected chief. As Solovyov remarks, “Rod designated the whole complex of grades of kinship, both the nearest and the most remote; it also designated a group of kindred and each one of them.” The same school accordingly urged that the formation of the Kievan principality after the arrival of the Varangians was simply the union of a number of large clans, so that the prince was actually the patriarchal head of the resulting combination, and his rule was no more than the administration of a large family created after the model of the smaller units which existed prior to the moment of their coalescence.

In justice to this theory, it must be admitted that in the social forms of the mediaeval historical period elements are found which would indicate that the Eastern Slavs passed through and retained features of the patriarchal phase of evolution. The conception of the patriarchal family as exemplified by the relations prevailing between princes of the Kievan dynasty and the exclusion of daughters from inheritance under old Russian law are factors in point. On the other hand, the prominent role at the dawn of Russian history played by the various larger groups known as tribes (plemena), especially in sections of the country where urban centers were late in developing (e.g., among the Derevlians and the Vyatichians), together with the probability that strictly family relationships and connections were subject to serious dislocation once the general movement of Slavic expansion and migration set in, renders it improbable that either the patriarchal family or the clan (in their strictest sense) was still a social unit of general importance among the Eastern Slavs when their cohesion into a state began during the ninth century.

The conclusive evidence in favor of the existence at this period of social units considerably more extensive and inclusive than the patriarchal family and the clan led K. S. Aksakov, the great theorist of the Slavophiles, to the conviction that the stage of existence which

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7 Ist. Rossii s drevneishikh vremen, 1, 4th ed. (Moscow, 1866), 62.
8 M. S. Hrushevski, Kievskaia Rus’, 1 (Spb., 1911), 436–437.
they typify had been passed by the Eastern Slavs at a much earlier period. The Primary Chronicle mentions, in fact, that the various Slavic subdivisions on Russian soil (Pohyali, Derevlians, Drevgovichians; the Slovène at Novgorod; the Polotsk district) each had principalities of their own before the Varangians appeared on the scene. Rurik, the semi-legendary founder of the Kievan ruling house, is also reported to have been summoned by the Slavs of the Novgorod area (as a unit) in concert with the Finnish Chudes and Merians. Upon their capture of Kiev, the Varangians Askold and Dir ruled over “the land of the Polyanians,” and the various conquests of the early princes of Kiev were invariably directed against tribal complexes which give no evidence of recent parcellation into more primitive social units. From these data, and in view of the diversified connotation of the term rod in the sources, Aksakov concluded that by the ninth century all traces of patriarchal structure had vanished among the masses. Where they persisted in the princely house they were (he thought) of foreign origin, and the people were infinitely more interested in a prince’s character and energy than in his status of seniority in the ruling family. Aksakov thus considered that the national unity gradually produced by the centripetal policy of the Kievan princes was preceded by a stage during which the Eastern Slavs were grouped into a series of communities (obščiny) formed on the basis of the proximity rather than the kinship of their members. The merit of Aksakov’s suggestion lies in his postulating an intermediate stage between the dominance of patriarchal relationships and the evolution of a state as such, but this suggestion was not accompanied by any reasoned explanation how this intermediate stage was induced.

The same considerations which led K. S. Aksakov to postulate a period of communal existence and the evidence of the sources as to the existence of isolated pre-Varangian principalities inspired N. I. Kostomarov’s notion that groups of clans fused together into tribal unions as a consequence of the normal growth in numbers of the individual clans and the geographical proximity of the latter as the process of colonization and settlement progressed. The existence of

10 PSRL, 1, i, 10.
11 Ibid., coll. 19-20.
12 Ibid., coll. 21.
14 “Mysli o federativnom načale v drevnej Rusi,” Istoričeskaia monografi i issledovanija, 1 (Spb., 1872), 3-49.
such tribal complexes had never been denied by previous investigators, but their importance had been minimized in comparison with the influence of ties of blood relationship. Indeed, as far as either the tribes (plemena) or any previous combinations governed solely by considerations of kinship are concerned, it would seem that the social evolution of the Eastern Slavs by the time they first appear as an historical factor had progressed to a point where neither family nor tribal connection was the chief motive behind the rudimentary federations which were already in existence when the Scandinavian infiltration began. None of the previous theories took into consideration the fact that at the arrival of the Varangians the courses of the chief Russian rivers were already dotted with towns so numerous as to cause the newcomers to name the country Garðariki ('the realm of stockaded towns'). Furthermore, the districts affiliated with these towns did not coincide with the boundaries of the tribal units whose names were still in current use or remembrance. The Slovéne of Novgorod acted in conjunction with the Krivichians of Izborsk and the northern Finns, while Chernigov was the center for Radimichians Severians, and Vyatichians. The first Russian theorist to note this fact was V. I. Sergeyevich, who suggested that the primitive towns were the creation of groups of ambitious Slavs or even of representatives of other indigenous races who sought a convenient point for defense or trade, and then proceeded to expand their possessions and influence by the acquisition (peacefully or by violence) of adjacent interesting territory. The territorial subdivisions which existed at the coming of the Varangians did not (in his opinion) rise from the coalescence of previous clan holdings or represent survivals of earlier and well-defined tribal areas, but were a series of completely new spheres of influence resulting from the drift of portions of the latter toward the nuclei which attracted them.

The defects of this theory are occasioned by an inadequately motivated conception of urban origins and by the fact that it represents a stage of development presupposing earlier phases of social organization for which it offers no definition, regardless of the source data which indicate their existence. While it is necessary to concede that a purely patriarchal or tribal organization was a thing of the past in the ninth century, it is unlikely that all its vestiges should have been erased to the extent implied by the system of Sergeyevich. F. I. Leontovich thus admitted the breakdown of these organizations,

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16 Věte i knjazj (Moscow, 1867), pp. 28–31.
and sought among the non-Russian Slavs some social unit which would give a key to the social status of the Eastern Slavs before the creation of the Kievan princiate. Leontovich pointed out that an exclusively patriarchal and tribal organization is found only among purely nomadic peoples, but is immediately resolved as soon as such peoples become fixed, in consequence of the necessity of integrating non-kindred elements into the social complex. The originally kindred groups became contaminated with extraneous elements, though still conceived as fictitious clans or tribes. Leontovich thus held that the groups known as vervi in the Russkaya Pravda were of this type, i.e., artificial clans or tribes of mixed membership in proximity to the most important towns. The patriarchal background is thus conceded, but no thought is entertained of its perpetuation until the opening of the historical period. A parallel to this form of social organization Leontovich found in the Western Serbian zadruga.

This characteristic Serbian family community, with analogies in other isolated areas (Switzerland, Tyrol, Spain), is down to the present day the chief type of social organization for the Yugoslav peasant class. As Ernest Denis observed, "On rencontre en réalité chez tous les peuples, à un moment donné de leur évolution sociologique, des institutions très analogues à la zadruga," and it is probably true that, like the Indian 'joint family,' the zadruga is a survival, not merely of Slavic, but also of common Indo-European antiquity. It consists of a certain number of persons of common descent (sometimes to the fifth generation), together with outsiders who acquire membership by marriage or adoption. The head of the zadruga is either its senior member or an elected chief, and the direction may even devolve upon a competent widow. The chief represents the zadruga in external relations and directs its economy, though in serious matters he is subject to the group decision of its membership. Usually a patronymic, the name of the zadruga is attached to that of each of its members. Collectivity of goods prevails; the whole fortune of a zadruga, together with the individual earnings of its members, belongs to the group, and cannot be disposed of without the consent of all its adult and married male constituents. While the membership of a Serbian zadruga may rise as high as 60 persons, corresponding survivals noted


18 Hrushevsky, op. cit., i, 438.
in the Western Ukraine early in the present century did not exceed 25. Documents of the seventeenth century indicate, however, the presence in Galicia, Podolia, and White Russia of settlements known as dvorišče which contained as many as 27 households. Though the basis of these aggregations was blood-relationship, the admixture of extraneous elements was considerable, and at least one such dvorišče was composed of two families of totally different parentage. Fields, woodland, and similar landed appendages were common property, but the pasturage was particularized. 19

The term rod as used in the Chronicle may thus be viewed as the primitive Eastern Slavic equivalent of the zadruga: as Hrushevski defines it, “a family and economic union of a group of people usually connected by blood relationship on the father’s side (more rarely, with an admixture of strangers), conducting their economy in common under the direction of their chief, or ‘elder,’ ‘ruling over’ this rod.” 20 But even though the membership might be mixed, the tradition of kinship was still strong, as is proved by the maintenance of the tradition of family vengeance into the eleventh century. 21

While a marked dislocation of the primitive family and clan relationships was inevitable during a period of movement, it is also logical that, as new settlements were founded, the families which occupied them should have developed by normal process into clans resembling those which existed before the epoch of dispersion. Hence the evolution of new rodi resembling the zadruga is equally possible after the Eastern Slavs had sporadically occupied the more remote sections of Russian territory. The persistence of such villages occupied by peasants of a common ancestry in the West Russian provinces well down into historical times is valid proof that such was the case, 22 and the frequency of place names with the patronymic termination -ichi, -ovichi lends further support to this hypothesis. The same concept of family relationship also lies behind the formation of the major tribal divisions, however diversified their membership may have become by the ninth century. Among the western Serbs a number of villages or zadrugi with remote ties of kinship unite into brotherhoods or tribes with a membership as high as several thousand souls. The presence of the patronymic suffix -ichi in Russian tribal names (e.g.,

19 Ibid., p. 442.
20 Ibid., p. 443.
21 Cf. Russkaja Pravda, ed. Ukrainian Acad. of Sciences (Kiev, 1935), 1: “If one man kill another, brother shall avenge brother, son shall avenge father or father shall avenge son, or else the sons of a brother or a sister” (“ubjetj muž Muža, to mjesti bratu brata, ile synovi oca, ljubo otcju syna, ili bratu čadu, ljubo sestrinu synovi”).
22 Lyubavskii, op. cit., p. 67.
Radimichi, Vyatichi) indicates that the Russian tribes likewise passed through a stage when membership depended on kinship, though the later attachment of the same suffix to place-names (e.g., Pskovichi, Tverichi) also proves that its original implication was forgotten before the historical period. Indeed, the tribes mentioned by the Chronicle as existing in the ninth century are too extensive to have retained more than a vague tradition of common genealogy.

The social organization of the Eastern Slavs at the beginning of their history thus contained elements of more primitive groupings: the dvorišča, or small rural townships analogous to the sadruga, preserved phases of the ancient patriarchal and kindred relationships, while the tribes, long since developed beyond a stage where kinship was the sole criterion of membership, indicate by their names the evolution through which they had passed. The dvorišče itself, however, exhibited a tendency to evolve from a family group into a purely social or economic complex under the influence of conditions of settlement and the proximity of non-kindred elements impelled to combination by community of interest. The union of several dvorišča of diversified origin produced villages or, rather, agricultural communities in the modern sense of the word, but extending each over a considerable area, with the original dvorišća lying in the midst of their communal land. It was such groups which formed the veri mentioned in the Russkaya Pravda: not too large to refuse collective responsibility for their members and able to pay wergild for a homicide committed on their land in cases where it was not desirable to surrender the guilty party. In the primitive family, the supreme authority had been vested in the father, whose control over its members was absolute, as is attested by the fact that the words for ‘child’ and ‘slave’ (either rab or otrok) are identical in Old Slavic. In the individual dvorišče, similar authority inured to the eldest member of the family group (starosta, starijšina < staryi, ‘old’). Upon the combination of various dvorišča into larger groups, the authority wielded in the smaller units by the individual father or elder was vested in a council of such elders (starci), known as a veče.

23 Hrushevsky, op. cit., p. 444.
24 Ed. cit., p. 11, par. 4.
26 A consultation of the Kiev elders (starci) is thus mentioned in 983 (PSRL, 1, 1, 2nd ed., col. 82), and a veče in Belgorod in 997 (ibid., col. 127). The veče persisted even when some leader had succeeded in imposing his authority over a tribe or group of tribes; in Latin sources from the sixth century these tribal chiefs are called princeps, dux, regulus,
munal tenure inherent in the dvorišče might persist in sections where agriculture was well established, its hold was likely to weaken as the range of Slavic settlement extended into less occupied areas, so that the conception of property as the possession of the individual family rather than of the larger patriarchal or joint family was promoted by the expansion of the Eastern Slavs along the central Russian water-courses.

Such scattered settlements, regardless of the ties of interest which bound them together, were isolated in vast stretches of primeval forest in which the settlers hunted and collected wild honey. For defence the settlers constructed small palisaded inclosures known as gorodišče, in which rudimentary public life and commerce were ultimately concentrated. Sometimes circular, sometimes quadrangular, fortified by a single rampart (occasionally also by a moat) if on level ground, or by concentric ramparts at the most exposed point if placed on a high or otherwise naturally defensible spot, such gorodišče are found all through the middle Dnieper basin at intervals of four to eight kilometers, and their frequency depended on the thickness with which a given area was settled. Thus, for example, the Chronicle preserves the legend that Kîf and his two brothers each settled at a strategic point on one of the hills of Kiev. However doubtful the legend itself may be, it accurately illustrates the practice of the early Eastern Slavic settlers, and the reputed foundation of a common strong-point named after Kîf reflects the function of the gorodišče as a place of refuge and a center of defense.

The Eastern Slavic communities of the ninth century were not, however, exclusively rural. The area occupied by the Eastern Slavs was traversed from north to south by the Dnieper, which had been since time immemorial an artery of trade, while its branches not only tapped the hinterland but also approached the upland watersheds beyond which other river routes flowed on to the Baltic and the Volga valley. The primeval significance of the Dnieper as a trade-route is crystallized in the early chronicle account of a “road from the Varangians to the Greeks,” by the existence of which the Dnieprian Slavs were drawn into the currents of mediaeval commerce. In the

sub-regulus, with reference to the Western Slavic tribes, but the title knjazj (from West. Germ. kuning, and the only term used in O. Russ.) does not appear till the early ninth century. Cf. Niederle, Manuel, ii, 181, also Slované Zachodni, p. 105.
27 Klyučevskij, Kurs russkoi istorii, t (1904), 134.
28 PSRL, i, i, 2nd ed., col. 9.
29 “Putj iz Vargaj v Greki,” ibid., col. 7.
In the eighth century, the Khazars were in a position to control commercial exchanges not only on the lower Dnieper and Don but also up the Volga from the Caspian Sea. As is proved by finds of extensive caches of eighth-century coins (Arabic dirhems), the mediaeval development of river-borne commerce in the Kiev area dates from this period and coincides with the growth of commerce under Khazar auspices. Many of the Khazar traders were Jews and Arabs. The situation of Itil, the Khazar capital at the mouth of the Volga, made it a transit station between the Caliphate and the interior of Russia. The traffic between Arabs and Khazars passed over the Caspian, from which boats proceeded up the Volga as far as Bolgary, near the confluence of the Kama, and the Khazars collected a ten per cent transit-tax on goods passing through their capital. Similarly, the tributary relationship of the Dnieprian Slavs to the Khazars opened to the former the paths of commerce to the Black Sea over which, according to Ibn-Khur-dahbih (an Arabic geographer of the ninth century) they exported to Byzantium beaver-pelts, fox-furs, and swords, while slaves were also an important item of this traffic. Under the stimulation of such commercial activity some of the little fortified places (gorodišča) originally founded by the Eastern Slavs for defence and security became trading posts (pogosti) where merchandise accumulated and where traders foregathered. Those situated at river junctions rapidly outdistanced the interior strong-points, and became the chief urban nuclei. Their economic functions made them politically the county-towns, as it were, of the areas from which their staple articles of trade were drawn. As these towns grew in importance, attracting to themselves ever greater accretions of population, the rise of a wealthy and influential commercial class tended to wipe out survivals of the primitive patriarchal and tribal organizations both in the cities and in the areas closest to them. As is proved, however, by later survivals of agricultural communities in the Western marches of the Ukraine which approximate the older units of dvorišče and rod, as well as by the archaeological remains testifying to the existence of numerous gorodišča within the area of the principality of Kiev itself, such features of earlier social units were coexistent with the growth of city life on a commercial basis both during the period of Khazar domination and well beyond the beginnings of the historical period. But

within the spheres of influence of the towns themselves the town-dwellers, through their commercial interests and broader contact with affairs, became the controlling element to the point where the old veče, composed of tribal elders and heads of families, either lost its importance or was replaced altogether by representatives of the new commercial ruling class.\textsuperscript{32}

That these numerous budding urban communities were the distinguishing feature of Russian political organization in the ninth century is indicated by the early Scandinavian names for Russia: \textit{i Gorðum}, or \textit{Gardariki},\textsuperscript{33} the realm of goroda, or ‘fortified towns.’ Of the chief cities at the dawn of Russian history, Polotz̆k, on the upper Western Dvina, included in its district a portion of both Dregovichians and Krivichians, and owed its importance to the proximity of a portage from Dvina to Dnieper. Smolensk, on the upper Dnieper near portages to Dvina, Lovat, and Volga, was the central point of an area including chiefly Dregovichians, Krivichians, and Radimichians, while the northern portion of the latter, along with most of the Vyatchians, fell under the influence of Chernigov, on the Desna river which joins the Dnieper from the eastward at a point north of Kiev. The city of Kiev itself was in Polyanian territory, but early extended its sphere of influence to north and east over portions of both Derevlans and Severians, though the majority of the latter were more closely attached to Pereyaslavl, southeast of Kiev on the left (east) bank of the Dnieper. Novgorod was the urban center of the Slavs (\textit{Slovene}) and closely related also to the Krivichians about Lake Ilmen, while Rostov (further to the east in the Volga basin), settled largely by men of Novgorod and by Krivichians, was a Slavic outpost on the edge of the Finns on Volga and Oka before the Scandinavian infiltration.

Prior to the evolution of first, a commercial, and subsequently, an official ruling class, the primitive Slavic population was divided into three distinguishable strata. At the lowest point in the social scale stood the slaves, composed of indigenous natives subjected by Slavic colonists, captives taken in war, Slavs who had lost their freedom in consequence of debt, servants purchased in the open market, and descendants of slave parents. At least in their early history, the attitude of the Slavs toward their slaves was exceptionally mild. In the \textit{Strategikon} of Pseudo-Mauricius (sixth century) it is thus remarked,

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\textsuperscript{32} Cf. Klyuchevskii, \textit{Bojarskaja duma v drevnei Rusi}, 3rd ed. (Moscow, 1902), pp. 20–24.

“Those in captivity among them they do not hold in servitude for an unlimited period, like other nations, but after setting them a fixed term they leave it to their choice whether they wish to return home after paying ransom or remain among them as freemen and friends.”

In contrast with Roman practice, slaves held under the Slavs were also allowed to own property without limitation and bequeath it to their children, and under Russian usage a man enslaved for debt could work off his obligation and the accrued interest.

Above the slaves stood the great group of freemen, known among the Eastern Slavs as smerti. This term in Russia originally extended to all free elements of the population below the rudimentary aristocracy, but later became restricted to the free agricultural population, living on communal or private land holdings. Since the communal lands were eventually regarded as the prince’s, the free rural population on such lands became the prince’s peasants, rendering certain duties but still free, though there are instances where the urban population protected the smers against the exactions of the prince.

Above the freemen stood an ill-defined class referred to in medieval Latin sources dealing with the Western Slavs from the sixth century forward as primates, meliores, seniores. From the last term it would appear that these outstanding individuals were originally the elders (starosty, stareišiny) of the rodi or sadrugi, and that with the decline of communal tenure and the decay of purely patriarchal authority certain influential families acquired a conspicuous share of both property and influence. After the evolution of the Russian commercial towns, the mercantile leaders played a conspicuous role in this connection, eventually allying themselves with the immigrant Varangian warrior-merchants who formed the entourage of the Viking princes established in Russian territory.

The Old Russian sources preserve only slight traces of a pre-Varangian aristocracy; for example, in the largely legendary account of Olga’s triple revenge upon the Derevlians for the murder of her consort Igor (945) it is reported that Olga requested them to send her a delegation of their ‘distinguished’ (narōčiti) men, and that in

34 Reprinted from J. Scheffer, Ariani Tactica et Mauricici Ars Militaris (Upsala, 1664) in Niederle, Slov. star., od. kult., i (Prague, 1911), 27–28: τοιοῦ δὲ δότας ἐν ταῖς αἰχμαλωσίαις παρ’ αὐτῶς ὧν ἔχοντα δύνατον ὑπὸ τοῦ κατ΄ ἡμᾶς κατέχουσιν, ἄλλα ἅπαν δῆμον διέζωσεν αὐτοῖς χρόνον, ἐν τῇ γνώσει αὐτῶν ποιοόμενε εἴτε θέλονσιν ἐν τοῖς ἱδίοις ἀναχωρήσαι μετὰ τῶν μυσθῶν, ἢ μενοῦν ἐκεῖς ἀλέθοις καὶ φίλοι.
37 Niederle, Manuel, 11, 171.
38 Klyuchevskii, Bujarskaja Duma, pp. 28–29.
compliance with her request "were gathered together the best men who held the land of Dereva." These individuals were viewed as forming the entourage of the prince of Dereva, since they are specifically referred to as a družina (escort, suite), the conventional collective term for the escort and councillors of an historical Russian prince of the Kiev period. Nor is there in the Russian sources any evidence of another term for 'chief' beside the imported knyaz. While accounts of the primitive Slavs outside Russia show the existence of tribal chieftains governing with the advice of some type of veže, there is practically no material from which the character of the administration of the early Russian tribes can be defined beyond the statement of the Chronicle that the various Slavic tribal complexes on Russian soil possessed their own principalities (knjaženija) before the arrival of the Varangians.

According to the Laurentian Chronicle, polygamy prevailed among the pagan Eastern Slavs, and together with concubinage it was common to all primitive Slavic subdivisions elsewhere. However, while there is evidence of considerable promiscuity among the primitive Slavs, a sense of the sanctity of marriage as a permanent tie is also demonstrated by early accounts of wives who committed suicide upon the death of their husbands, so that the fidelity of the Slavic women is almost universally commented upon with favor by foreign observers. Survivals of primitive custom among the Russian peasantry down to modern times indicate notwithstanding that great freedom was allowed both sexes prior to marriage. The Slavic women enjoyed no equality in the household, though a surviving widow was authorized to take her husband's place as head of the family. Marriage by capture or by purchase was the common Slavic practice. The Chronicle refers with disapproval to the kidnapping of maidens among the Derevlians, but notes that marriage by purchase was customary among the Polyanians. In this respect also, the retention of pre-Christian customs among the Russian peasants in recent times like-

39 PSRL, 1, i, 2nd ed., 56-57: "sobrašaja lučjšie muži, iže der'jšachu Derevšaku zemljju."
40 Cf. n. 26 supra. This term can hardly be of Gothic origin, since the Goths show no evidence of having used it; furthermore, since it is first applied with respect to West-Slavic tribes in the early ninth century, it cannot have been borrowed into Old Russian from Old Norse konung, the more so since the nasal in the primitive Slavic form (kūndži) points conclusively to a suffix -ing in the Germanic original, which can only have been a West-Germanic kuning, chuminc.
41 Cf. n. 10 supra: Niederle, Manuel, ii, 181-183.
42 Ibid., pp. 19-20.
44a PSRL, 1, i, 2nd ed., 13.
wise points to the coexistence of these two types of marriage, and reflexes of marriage by capture were particularly common among the Schismatics (Old-Believers) before the Revolution.44

From the standpoint of material culture, the Eastern Slavs at the dawn of their history in the ninth century had been exposed for more than a millennium to a series of foreign influences, so that much of the technique which they possessed was not uniquely Slavic, but common to all adjacent ethnic groups of equivalent culture. By the arrival of the Varangians at this epoch, they had passed, at any rate, far beyond rudimentary communism and nomadic agriculture to a system of private property rights, and were exchanging the products of their domestic industries and trades, either by barter or against cash payments, with itinerant merchants of Oriental origin, or even transporting these products themselves to the markets of the Black Sea coast.

Linguistic evidence demonstrates that the mass of the Slavs, like the German and the Baltic peoples, was familiar with iron, gold, silver and lead from the earliest times, i.e., at least from the second half of the first millennium B. C., and therefore prior to their dispersion. The names for gold and silver are indeed identical in all three linguistic branches, while those for iron and lead are common to both Baltic and Slavic, though differing from the German vocable. The common Slavic term for copper has no cognate of equivalent meaning in either the Baltic or the Germanic languages. The Slavic word for ore (queda) likewise has no parallel in Baltic.45 Since iron became known on the coast of the Black Sea about 900 B. C., and appears in archaeological finds from the Kuban district fully two centuries before that date, the early transmission of iron technique to the Slavs is beyond question, particularly in view of traces of iron-mining and smelting in Poland and Bohemia even in the pre-Roman epoch.46 Iron

45 Gold: Goth. guln, Lettish zils (Lith. adj. žilas), Slav. sato (all from indeoer. base *qel-, 'shine, yellow'). Silver: Goth. silubr, Lith. sidabras, Slav. srebo (derivation uncertain, but probably not indoeuropean). Iron: Lith. geletis, Slav. želeo (regarded as connected with Gk. χαλκός, 'copper, bronze' and probably a loan-word of Near-Eastern, perhaps Pontic, origin, cf. Walde-Pokorny, Etym. Wirb., i, 629; the variation in meaning is not impossible if one accepts the derivation of Lat. aes, Go. äsarn from the base *aio-, 'metal, either bronze, copper, or iron'). Copper: common Slavic médt, and without demonstrable indeoer. relations apart (perhaps) from the base *mai-, 'cut, work with a sharp instrument' (ibid., i, 222). Lead: Lith. alavas 'tin,' Slav. olovo 'lead'; however, in view of the correspondence of Lith. alavas in form and meaning with Russian olovo 'tin,' there is at least a possibility that the former is borrowed from the latter, and if any indeoer. background is possible, the base is *ahlbo- 'white,' cf. Gk. ἀλάβασις (ibid., i, 93–94). Ore: Slav. ruda (from indeoer. base *reudh-, 'red') has a Germanic parallel in ON rauði, 'bog iron ore.'
46 Ebert, Südrussland, p. 79; Niederle, Manuel, ii, 214.
cauldrons are thus found in Russian tombs of the pagan period, while iron and steel arms were a favorite importation from Scandinavia before the Russian smiths could produce them themselves. Though the Southern and Western Slavs had considerable silver deposits in their territory, the silver which is the chief material of the jewelry discovered in Russian tombs at the close of the pagan period (e.g., in tombs of the Derevlian district, 72 percent of the ornaments found are silver) shows the filigree technique characteristic of the Near East, and is almost wholly imported.\textsuperscript{47} Similarly, there was no gold in the territory originally occupied by the Eastern Slavs (though they were later able to procure it from the Urals, the Altai, and Siberia), and goldsmiths do not appear in Russia itself before the tenth century. Though the finest gold and silver objects discovered which belong to this period are of Greek and Oriental workmanship (especially bowls, goblets, and pitchers, and the better types of jewelry), there are also extant numerous articles (necklaces, bracelets, rings, earrings, and temporal rings) which are either imitations of foreign articles or products of domestic design and craftsmanship, including reproductions of Byzantine enamels.\textsuperscript{48}

In ceramics as in metal-working, the Slavs were imitators rather than pioneers. Slavic pottery of the close of the pagan period consists of well turned and fired vessels in the form of pots without handles, showing a somewhat flattened lip and ornamented, sometimes with a wavy line several times repeated, sometimes with simple horizontal stripes, and occasionally with vertical or transverse stripes or simply a series of dots in oblique lines. The potter's mark usually occurs on the base. This species of pottery, conventionally known as the \textit{Burgwalltypus}, from its being so often found among the remains of small Slavic gorodišča not only in Russia but also at the extreme western European limits of Slavic settlement, is literally scattered all over Slavic territory from the Elbe to the Volga. There is, however, nothing specifically Slavic about its technique, since it is a reproduction of the Roman vase with undulating ornament familiar in the northernmost Roman provinces between Danube and Rhine from the first to the fourth century A.D. The Slavs thus seem to have had some contact with the northern Roman markets in this interval, and gradually to have adopted the new type of pottery in preference to their own previous products of this character: high vases, or lower bowls without a flattened edge and decorated either with horizontal stripes

\textsuperscript{47} Niederle, \textit{Život starých Slovanů III}, i (Prague, 1927), 216.

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 245–247.
or rows of oblique lines, i.e., types developed independently of Roman influence. All pre-Christian glass and glazed ware (goblets, bottles) was imported, since the technique of glass manufacture and of glazing both pottery and the cubes (lesserae) used in mosaic was not introduced into Kievan Russia until the establishment of closer relations with Byzantium during the last decade of the tenth century. Larger receptacles (pails, buckets) were made of wood bound with iron hoops and lifted by a movable handle.

Among the chief domestic industries were spinning and weaving. While rich silks were an article of import attainable only by the wealthy, the masses were clothed in homespun fabrics prepared from wool, flax, and hemp. Since the early Slavs were not expert bleachers, the resulting fabrics were mostly grayish in color, and all finely dyed fabrics even in the historical period were thus imported merchandise. Not only is general terminology of spinning and weaving throughout the Slavic languages so homogeneous as to show that this technique was a matter of common knowledge before the dispersion began, but the absence of foreign borrowings also proves it to have been a native development of very early date. It is significant that this vocabulary was taken over bodily by the Magyars upon their settlement in Central Europe.

Just as the pagan Slavs by the ninth century had attained a respectable technique in metal-working, textiles, and ceramics (acquired in part from their neighbors), there is likewise abundant evidence that at an early stage of their existence they also possessed a knowledge of agriculture considerably in advance of what is attributed to them in this connection by frequently cited historical sources. The content of the general Slavic vocabulary with respect both to agriculture and to cattle-raising is in itself sufficient to vitiate any conception of the Slavs at the dawn of their history as a race of agricultural nomads leading a precarious and unstable life on scanty fare. Nor is there a sufficient number of loan-words in the Slavic vocabulary of these occupations to indicate that any appreciable proportion of the knowledge of agricultural products or livestock which

49 Ibid., pp. 302–323; Manuel, ii, 225–229.

50 For details of early Slavic methods of spinning and weaving, as well as a description of the primitive Slavic upright loom, cf. Niederle, Živ. star. Slov., iii, i, 338–342, and on the Magyar vocabulary, cf. F. Miklosich, 'Die slavischen Elemente im Magyarschen,' Denkschriften der Wiener Akademie, phil.-hist. Kl., xxi (1872), 15. The extent of Roman or other western influence in the development of Slavic textile technique is difficult to define; Niederle (ibid., pp. 341–342) admits the possibility of this influence, and in later times even Charlemagne's interest in the textile trades is a matter of history.
the Slavs possessed was the result of contacts with other ethnic units of more advanced material culture. Early mediaeval sources (especially Byzantine) which represent the Slavs as nomads poorly clad and fed should thus be taken as referring to their economic status during the uncertain period of migration rather than to their mode of existence and means of livelihood either before their expansion occurred or after its most acute phase had come to a close.

These sources are frequently contradictory. In the late ninth century, for example, the Tactica attributed to Leo the Wise assert that the Slavs "used to live on millet, and preferred moderation, since they resented other labors of farming, inasmuch as they were attached to a freer mode of life without labor rather than to a luxurious regime of plenty bought at the price of intense effort," and fifty years later Constantine Porphyrogenitus declares that the Slavs in Russia had no domestic animals and were obliged to purchase those they used from the Pechenegs. On the other hand, the pseudo-Mauricius, to which Leo's text is heavily indebted, mentions that in the late sixth century the Slavs held large accumulated stocks of grain which it is fair to suppose they raised themselves. Ibn Rosteh, an Arabic observer contemporary with Leo, particularly mentions the Slavs in Russia as habitual raisers of sheep and swine, and cultivators of millet, while a Jewish traveller of the tenth century (Ibrahim-Ibn Yaqub) declares that the western Slavs practiced agriculture more zealously than any other nation.

The common Slavic vocabulary shows that as feed-grains the primitive Slavs knew barley, wheat, millet, rye, and oats; among fruits they knew apples, pears, cherries, and plums, and of vegetables they consumed peas, beans, lentils, onions, garlic and beets. Flax and hemp were familiar textile fibers. Among domestic animals, the common Slavic vocabulary includes homogeneous terms for horse, cow, bull, steer, sheep, goat, pig, and dog, and among domestic fowl, for ducks, geese, chickens, and pigeons. In these phases of culture the

51 xviii, 106; text in Niederle, Živ. star. Slov., i, 35.
53 Text in Niederle, op. cit., i, 28.
54 D. A. Chvolsyn, Izvestija o Chazarach, etc. (Spb., 1861), pp. 29, 31.
56 For a full treatment of the Slavic terminology in this field, see Hrushevsky, Kieskaja Rusj, 1, 300–306, 309–315. Grape-culture was unknown to the Slavs until they borrowed it from the Goths. The Germans themselves derived it from the south after the migrations (Kaufmann, Deutsche Altertumskunde, 11, 205), and the Slavic terms, vino, vinograd, Goth., wein, weinagards, indicate the course of further transmission. The fig was also introduced by the Goths (Goth. smakka, Slav. smoky), though presumably an article of importation from the Black Sea coast.
primitive Slavs were in no essential respect inferior to the primitive Germans, who were frequently their teachers in improved technique, especially during the Carolingian period. As Šafarík remarked nearly a century ago, the predilection of the Slavs for agriculture is the natural consequence of their long residence in the European districts best suited for its practice: the plains of the Dnieper and the Vistula.

In the light of the evidence of the Slavic vocabulary, Niederle's view that prior to their dispersion the Slavs were only semi-nomadic husbandmen living more by hunting, fishing, bee-keeping and cattle-raising is not necessarily final. While this authority also considers the primitive habitat of the Slavs (the Polesie and western Russia) ill-adapted to husbandry, this opinion is obviously in direct contradiction to that of Šafarík just quoted, and there is no reason to suppose that the region between the northern slopes of the Carpathians and the Pripet marshes, wherever it was cleared for agriculture, was any less fertile in the early Middle Ages than at the present day. It is probable, in any case, that the epoch of the migrations and of the repeated nomad incursions from Asia, beginning with the Huns in the fourth century, interrupted the sedentary tendencies and habits which the Slavs had previously developed. By the ninth century, however, the Eastern Slavs had largely returned to their earlier agricultural pursuits except in the northeastern districts more recently and sparsely colonized, where hunting and trapping were the natural resource of the pioneer in uncharted forests. In later times this region also was put into grain and provided the food-supply of Novgorod.

The primitive plow of the Slavs, as of the Germans prior to the migrations, was at first only a forked branch with one fork lopped short and cut into a point. This type of plow, drawn by two oxen, was in use as late as the tenth century, though by that period the primitive implement was also supplemented by a pole to which the draft-animals could be attached and by a handle with which the driver could guide its course. The share itself was then made of iron with a pinch into which the handle could be inserted. Other types are extant consisting of a heavy base-beam sliding along the furrow; to the front of this beam an iron share was attached, while the driving handle rose from the rear of this beam; the drawing pole was then fixed to the handle and braced to the sliding base-beam. The more complex plow, with coulter and primitive mould-board, was a Roman invention and did not reach the Slavs before the time of Charlemagne or even later; in fact, archaeology has not discovered a plow of this type in

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57 Slawische Alterthümer, i (Leipzig, 1843), 537.
58 Manuel, i, 184–185.
Slavic territory older than the thirteenth century, and the fact that its Slavic name is *plug*, as compared with *ralo, radlo*, the name of the primitive implement, is sufficient evidence that it reached the Slavs by German transmission, and long after the migrations.59

The Slavs at the close of the pagan period were practicing the three-field system of culture familiar from the German and Roman usage, in which wheat or rye was sown on one field in the autumn of the first year, then oats or barley in the spring of the second, and finally the field was left fallow during the third season. This system is a matter of record for the Western Slavs in the tenth century. The conclusion that it prevailed elsewhere as well is justified by the common Slavic terminology for spring and winter cereals, and there is specific mention of the practice in Russian sources of the twelfth century. As the three-field system went into use in Western Europe not earlier than the eighth century, its adoption among the Slavs can date only from Carolingian times.60

The prevalence of bee-keeping among the Eastern Slavs was noticed by Arabic travellers of the early tenth century (who even reported the O. Russian term for ‘hive,’ *ulei*),61 and the Slavic vocabulary again indicates the early origin of this occupation. The honey was used for brewing mead, the chief intoxicating drink of the early Russians, and the wax was exported, along with furs supplied by native trappers (chiefly beaver, sable, fox, and squirrel).

The aspect of the Slavic village even in early historical times was extremely simple. There is no trace among the Eastern Slavs of the round village so common in the Elbe basin; on the contrary, the cottages were either scattered throughout the extent of the *dvorîšće* in proximity to the fields of their occupants, or, if gathered into one neighborhood, strung out on either side of the path or road which formed the main thoroughfare. Stone buildings were unknown, and are mentioned as exceptional even in the early Varangian period. One early type of house consisted of a trench dug in the ground, the sides of which were raised by walls of logs stopped with earth; the wooden roof was also coated with earth as an additional protection. Recent archaeological discoveries in the vicinity of Kiev and belonging to the epoch of the *gorodišča* demonstrate, however, that at the beginning of the historical period the Eastern Slavic house had de-

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60 Niederle, *Zit. star. Slov.*, 111, 30–32. The common terms for spring and fall sowings are *jar, jarina*, and *ozim, ozimina*. Frosts killing the *osimicy* ‘fall-sowings’ around Novgorod are mentioned in 1126 (*Synodal Codex*, p. 124), with resultant scarcity and high prices on rye.

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developed beyond this humble norm. These Kievan houses show an unheated entrance hall or inclosed porch (sen', pritvor), which later develops into a reception room, and then receives a porch of its own as an additional appendage. The main room back of the pritvor contained at first an open fire, later a hearth, an arrangement once more indicating German influence, possibly even before the Carolingian epoch. The Eastern Slavic houses frequently show a separate shed used as a storehouse or barn (klet'), sometimes with a second story intended for a granary; the klet' was eventually joined to the house as a third room, though the two-room type is basic. The evolution of a second story for the whole house first takes place in Northern Russia and is attributed to later Varangian influence. The use of small sheds as bathing-houses in which steam was produced by pouring water over heated stones or a hearth is also attested for Russia of the pagan period.

The costume of the men among the pagan Eastern Slavs at the moment of the Varangian infiltration consisted of a coarse shirt made of hemp or flax and falling to the knee, with sleeves and an opening for the neck, combined with tight trousers supported at the waist by a belt of rope or leather and tied in at the ankles. For the shirt was sometimes substituted a short tunic, frequently embroidered like the modern Russian rubakha. The tunic might be either of light material or else of coarse wool, in which case it could be worn over the shirt. There existed a considerable variety of these heavier outer garments, sometimes falling below the knee, fastened at the throat with buckles, frogs, or buttons, and belted in at the waist. The long coat, or caftan, was a characteristic feature of Eastern Slavic garb. It might be trimmed or even lined with fur, though the common people ordinarily used sheepskins or the cheaper pelts (bear, wolf) for protection against the cold. A cloak buckled at the right shoulder might also be worn over the caftan. Upon closer contact with the Orient and with Byzantium, more expensive fabrics and styles borrowed from foreign costumes were frequently affected by the wealthier classes; the ruling house in historical times thus adopted the garb of the Byzantine aristocracy. Women of the people were clad in a long shirt of rough linen or hempen material, often representing merely a cylinder of fabric held up by straps over the shoulders. From the waist down they also wore a double apron attached to a belt, while the upper part of the body might be clad in a coarse woolen jacket, along with a cloak of similar material around the neck and shoulders. Footwear

consisted of rough leather slippers held by a strap over the ankle or of slippers made of warm bast fiber. Leather slippers split down the instep and provided with eyelets for laces have also been found in Kievan tombs. Leather boots were likewise worn by the more prosperous classes, and both woolen stockings and socks are attested in Russia at an early date. The usual male headgear was a high felt hat, sometimes with a narrow brim, or a type of beret edged with fur. Married women might wear a kerchief or bonnet on their heads, over hair cut short, but maidens habitually went bareheaded, wearing their hair braided and long. Men also wore their hair long; the beard might be trimmed or shaven, but moustaches were common. None of these features of attire or personal appearance can be regarded as specifically Slavic, in view of the facility with which foreign usage is absorbed in matters of material culture.

Originally a peaceful race, the primitive Slavs were unskilled in the use of weapons, and at the time of their dispersion commanded no offensive equipment except bows and spears, being unprotected even by the most elementary shields. Such was their armament as known to Procopius early in the sixth century, and by its close the Pseudo-Mauricius could add only that they used poisoned arrows and carried two spears, while some individuals were equipped with shields too heavy for rapid movement. The constant warfare of the migratory epoch and the necessity of defense against successive nomad incursions across the steppes produced in the succeeding centuries a marked amplification of Slavic military equipment which is especially noticeable during Carolingian times, after which the German and Frankish influence is supplemented by imitation not only of the well-equipped Scandinavian pioneers who scouted the Russian waterways during the ninth century, but also of the nomads against whom the Slavs were forced to fight. As a result, the Slavic terminology for this improved equipment is very largely foreign: the names for sword (meč') and helmet (šelm) were thus derived from the Goths (mékeis, hílms). The primitive German sword was single-edged, but during the first century A.D. the Germans were themselves using the Gallo-Roman type of double-edged weapon which must thus have become known to the Slavs even before the Merovingian period. Most of the swords of the later pagan age found on Russian territory

63 Ibid., pp. 419–512; Manuel, 11, 69–85.
64 Bellum Goth., iii, 14 (Loeb ed., iv, 269–270).
66 Kauffmann, op. cit., 1, 496.
are, however, imported articles with German ornament; the single-edged curved sabre is an implement borrowed from the Orient in early historical times, i.e., ninth or tenth century. The Russians also used a one-edged axe with flaring blade, closely resembling the Scandinavian arm of the same type. Armor was not employed by the Slavs till the Carolingian epoch; the term brunja (OHG brunja, brunna) is found in the Primary Chronicle (anno 968), and the Frankish origin of this protection is indicated by Charlemagne's Cartulary of Thionville (805) which prohibited the sale of arms and armor to the border Slavs.\textsuperscript{67} The customary form was chain-mail falling to the knee, as exemplified by finds in Russian tombs. Metallic helmets of this period were either rounded or pointed at the crest (like oriental models), with or without nose-guard.\textsuperscript{68} The early Russian shield was round, strapped with iron, and without a boss. Under the circumstances the armament of the Russian Slavs at the dawn of their history thus represents a fusion of borrowed techniques which placed the equipment of their best-armed men substantially on a par with that of their civilized neighbors. Because of the imported character of much of this equipment, however, it would seem unlikely that the Russian Slavs at the beginning of the ninth century could have placed in the field a heavy armed force of any size. On the other hand, since the Varangians of Kiev sent against Constantinople in 860 an expedition of not less than 3000 men,\textsuperscript{69} the opinion is justified that the chief mercantile towns, even before the Varangian period, possessed defensive troops of well-armed militia, though the outlying peasantry and hunters were still using the spears and arrows which were the traditional weapons of the Slavs. The Eastern Slavs made no extensive use of cavalry before the tenth century, and even then enrolled friendly nomads from the steppe country for this purpose.

The chief avenue by which foreign cultural influences in general

\textsuperscript{67} MGH., LL., ii, i, 122: "De negotiatoribus, qui partibus Slavorum et Avarorum pergunt . . . ut arma et brunias non ducant ad venundandum. Quod si inventi fuerint portantes, ut omnis substantia eorum auferatur ab eis."

\textsuperscript{68} For illustrations of this armament, cf. Niederle, \textit{ibid.}, iii, figg. 133–158, or more conveniently) \textit{Manuel}, ii, figg. 103–119.

\textsuperscript{69} At a conservative estimate. The expedition comprised two hundred ships (cf. Bury, \textit{East. Rom. Emp.}, p. 419, n. 1, on the sources). Though the Greeks called the Russian barges \textit{monoxyla, 'dug-outs,'} it is not to be supposed that the craft that skirted 500 miles of Black Sea coastline even in June were mere canoes. Even before the Viking period, the Scandinavians were building 50-foot boats of 9-foot beam which carried at least 20 people (cf. T. D. Kendrick, \textit{A History of the Vikings} [New York, 1930], p. 24). In any case, no student of the subject has ever contended that there were anywhere near 5000 Varangians at Kiev in the days of Askold and Dir.
reached the Eastern Slavs from the earliest times was supplied by commerce. The most ancient trade-route in Russian territory is the Volga, which was used at least from the second century A.D. for the northward transport of oriental and western merchandise. Roman objects of the first and second centuries A.D. found in Eastern Russia and Western Siberia probably reached these areas from the Bosporan kingdom.\textsuperscript{70} When the Goths invaded southern Russia, they gained that control of trade throughout the Dnieper basin which had previously belonged to the Bosporans, and for a time maintained the same commercial relations with the Roman Empire which had been established earlier by German settlements along its northern frontier further westward. Caches of Roman coins, dating chiefly from the interval between Trajan and Septimius Severus (98–198 A.D.), which have been found in great profusion on the west bank of the middle Dnieper and on its eastern shore as far east as the upper course of the Don, show a remarkable expansion of trade with the Roman west in this area during the second and third centuries, and therefore both under the Gothic hegemony and prior to the Slavic dispersion. In view of the complete absence of Bosporan coins, this commerce cannot have passed through the Strait of Kerch. The capture by the Goths of the Greek cities of Olbia and Tyras about 270 A.D. also indicates their interest in making direct contact with the chief commercial centers of the Black Sea area. Once the Goths had thus entered into relations with Byzantium and the Greek cities on the south shore of the Black Sea, their interest in trade with the western section of the Roman Empire waned, and upon the consequent decline of Roman traffic with the Dnieper basin during the fourth century, a new commercial current appeared, bringing to the Dnieprian Slavs simultaneously not only artistic products of the so-called Gothic type from the barbarized Pontic workshops, but also articles of Prusso-Lithuanian and Norse workmanship.\textsuperscript{70} Discoveries on the Kama and Vyatka rivers of silver vessels dating from the sixth century forward also indicate that the Volga Bulgars and the interior Finns likewise began to enjoy fresh indirect traffic with the Orient. Iranian silver coin of the fourth century is also found among the Chuds and Bulgars, though the numismatic evidence would indicate that the volume of this trade did not approach that which passed to this area through the Cimmerian Bosporus in earlier times.\textsuperscript{71} As long as the Goths lived among the Slavs, they exerted a direct economic influence upon them, but once they had withdrawn to the seacoast after the fall of Erma-


\textsuperscript{71} Niederle, \textit{Živ. star. Slov.}, iii, 363–365; Rostovtzeff, loc. cit.
naric, they ceased to be a significant commercial factor, and even when Byzantine trade set in during the fifth century, its volume was so restricted that from this period to the eighth century, when intensified Arab and Scandinavian commerce becomes conspicuous, there is actually an interval in which the economic relations of the Dnieper valley with the rest of the early mediaeval world were in abeyance.\textsuperscript{72}

This interval coincides with the epoch of Slavic migration and dispersion. Its conclusion is marked in turn by the stabilization of the Slavs on the Elbe and the Danube, and in the Balkans the temporary elimination of nomadic invaders from the steppes, the economic advance of the Carolingian period, the beginnings of the Viking Age, and the establishment of Arab control over oriental commerce. The period from 700 to 1000, though initiating the gradual withdrawal of the Western Slavs from the Elbe frontier under German pressure, also saw the evolution of all the mediaeval Slavic states and their advance to the level of contemporary material and intellectual culture which culminates in their conversion to Christianity under Roman or Constantinopolitan auspices. It likewise witnessed an expansion of trade both in Central Europe and with the Orient; in this commercial expansion the Eastern Slavs were intimately concerned.

The evidence of Abbasid coins found not only along the upper Volga on the route to Scandinavia but also in the vicinity of Kiev indicates that Arabic trade both to Western and to Eastern Russia began to attain respectable proportions about 800.\textsuperscript{73} Traces of Scandinavian penetration into Northern Russia by Lake Ladoga and the Volkhov river date from the same epoch, which is also the period in which both Byzantine and oriental objects and coins begin to appear in Sweden, so that there can be no question but that direct communication between Sweden and the Caspian via the Volga was opened about this date.\textsuperscript{74} The importance of Frankish trade with the Western Slavs at the same time is reflected in Charlemagne’s Cartulary of Thionville, to which reference has already been made.\textsuperscript{75}

The articles exported by the Eastern Slavs were largely the products of their rudimentary industries: furs, honey and wax, grain, salted and smoked fish. These staples were largely bartered for weapons, jewelry, beads, glassware, perfumes, silk, and luxury articles in general, though the omnipresence of coin shows that sales against cash were also current by the eighth century. While slaves had not

\textsuperscript{72} Niederle, Živ. star. Slov., iii, 365–366.
\textsuperscript{73} T. J. Arne, La Suède et l’Orient (Upsala, 1914), pp. 62–76.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., pp. 117, 122.
\textsuperscript{75} Cf. n. 67 supra.
played a large part in the primitive Slavic social economy, they became an important item of commerce at the close of the pagan period, and were sold chiefly to the Orient. Apart from the internal trade routes of Volga and Dnieper, communication between Russia and Central Europe went over the Carpathian passes to the Danube valley, while the route from Kiev into Galicia was particularly important for the Russian salt supply, which depended entirely on the Galician mines east of Cracow.76

As has been observed, the primitive basis of Eastern Slavic commercial exchanges was barter,72 and even in historical times taxes, tribute, subsidies, and individual wealth were still frequently reckoned in furs or cloth, the most valuable staple of contemporary commerce. While coins were far from unknown in pagan times, they may well have been valued fully as much for purposes of personal adornment as for their purchasing power. From the fifth century Byzantine gold solidi appear in the Dnieper valley, and it has been estimated that the number of silver dirhems left in Russia after the rise of Arabic trade at the beginning of the ninth century must run into the millions if the number and amount of caches discovered all over the country is any criterion. If is significant, however, that while Roman coins were well-known during the Gothic period, the common early Slavic terms for various coins are not of Roman but Germanic origin, from which it may be concluded that at this stage the Gothic economic influence was dominant. At the same time, the presence of later borrowings of coin-names from West-Germanic also indicates the importance of Slavic economic contacts with other German elements before the Carolingian period. For example, the Greek denarion (Lat. denarius) is rendered either by ceta [=tsinta], from Gothic kintus ‘farthing,’ or by pēędēže (also common to all Slavic languages and cognate with penny); there is no recorded Gothic original for this word, which thus seems to be a borrowing of West-Germanic penning. Though the Slavic skūlēdzē may be derived from Gothic skilliggs ‘shilling,’ which appears, not in Ulfīlas, but only once in the so-called Arezzo papyrus,78 the temptation is great to attribute this word also to a West-Germanic original. While imitations of Oriental coins appear in Russia during the pagan period, actual coinage did not begin in Russia until the reign of Vladimir I, ca. 1000 A.D. Prior to the introduction of coinage, the unit of value

77 See above.
78 W. Streitberg, Die gotische Bibel, i (Heidelberg, 1908), 480; the text uses only the acc. plur.: skilliggans.
in late pagan Russia was the silver grivna, a lump of silver usually cast in an elongated hexagonal shape and equivalent in weight to the so-called Kufic (Irak) pound of 408 grams, though this weight is by no means constant.79

Though a combined evaluation of linguistic, source, and archaeological evidence permits a tolerably accurate and inclusive definition of the material culture of the Eastern Slavs toward the close of the pagan period, there is no such coherent mass of data upon which any wholly satisfactory statement of their religious beliefs, demonology, and eschatology can be predicated. The references to Slavic paganism in the early sources are, in fact, so scanty as to give rise in this field to a series of conjectures of which the value is inversely proportionate to their originality. When the basic information is so limited, there is no excuse for proceeding beyond the evidence of the sources except insofar as linguistics, toponymics, and early folklore contribute to its amplification.

The primary source materials on the Eastern Slavic gods are so brief as to permit their reproduction practically in full. Procopius remarks of the Slavs: “They believe that one god, the maker of the lightning, is alone lord of all things, and they sacrifice to him cattle and all other victims; but as for fate, they neither know it nor do they in any wise admit that it has any power among men, but whenever death stands close before them, either stricken with sickness or beginning a war, they announce that, if they escape, they will straightforwardly make a sacrifice in return for their lives; and if they do escape they sacrifice what they have promised, and consider that their safety has been bought with this same sacrifice. They likewise revere, however, rivers, nymphs, and some other spirits, and they sacrifice to all these, and make their divinations in these sacrifices.”80 With reference to the Greco-Russian treaty of 907, the Primary Chronicle reports: “According to the religion of the Russes, the latter [Oleg and his followers] swore by their weapons and by their god Perun, as well as

79 Niederle, op. cit., pp. 470–471; on weights of the Viking period generally cf. Arne, op. cit., pp. 176–196. The Kufic pound contained 96 solotniki, and the silver dirhem weighed 2/3 of a solotniki: Vladimir’s silver unit was based by weight on the dirhem, and gave 144 silver pieces to a grivna (ibid., p. 196).

80 Bell. Goth., xiii, xiv, 23–24 (Loeb ed., iv, 270–271): Θεὸν μὲν γὰρ ἐνα τῷ τῇ άστρατῇ δημοκράτῳ ἀπάνω κύριον μόνον ἀντίκρονοι κυνικοὶ, καὶ θίσωσιν αὐτῷ βοῶς τέ καὶ ἵππα πάντα. Εἰμιρμηνεύει δὲ οὔτε ἵππωσιν οὔτε ἄλλως ὁμολογοῦν ὡς οὐκ ἐν πολλῷ ροής τυχεῖν, ἀλλ' ἐνειλόμενοι αὐτοῖς ἐν τοιν ἥδη ο λόγος ἠσθόν ἢ εἰς πόλυμος καθώς κεκατομμύριος ἐπαγγέλλονται μὲν, ἢ διαφύσεωι, θύσων· ἀντί της ψυχῆς αὐτικά ποιήσωιν, διαφύσεωι δὲ θίσωσιν ὑπάρχοντο, καὶ ὀλοκληροὶ τὸν σωτηρίαν ταῦτην ἰδί της θυσίας αὐτῆς εἰσελθόντες. Σέλλοςαν μένοι καὶ ποταμοῖς τε καὶ νύμφας καὶ Άλλα ἀτα δαμώσαν, καὶ θίσωνα καὶ αὐτοῖς ἀπασία, τός τε μακτέας ἐν παύσας ὁτη ταῖς θυσίας ποιοῦνται.
by Volos, the god of cattle, and thus confirmed the treaty.”81 According to the same source, the Greco-Russian treaty of 944 contains the provision: “If any of the princes or any Russian subject, whether Christian or non-Christian, violates the terms of this instrument, he shall merit death by his own weapons and be accused of God and of Perun because he violated his oath.”82 Similarly, when this treaty was ratified in Kiev, the procedure (in the words of the Chronicle) was as follows: “In the morning Igor summoned the envoys, and went to a hill on which there was a statue of Perun. The Russes laid down their weapons, their shields, and their gold ornaments, and Igor and his people took oath (at least, such as were pagans).”83 The treaty of 971 between Svyatoslav of Kiev and John Tzimisces also contains the asseveration, “If we fail in the observance of any of the aforesaid stipulations . . . , may we be accused of the God in whom we believe, namely, of Perun and of Volos, the god of flocks.”83a Then in 978, after Vladimir had gained control of Kiev, “he set up idols on the hill outside the castle with the hall: one of Perun, made of wood with a head of silver and a mustache of gold, and others of Khors, Dazhbog, Strigob, Simargl, and Mokosh. The people sacrificed to them, calling them gods, and brought their sons and daughters to sacrifice them to these devils.”84 After his conversion, Vladimir “ordered that Perun should be tied to a horse’s tail and dragged down the hill along Borichev to the creek [Pochain]. He appointed twelve men to beat the idol with sticks, not because he thought the wood was sensitive, but to afront the demon.”85 Another eleventh-century source, the Eulogy of Vladimir attributed to the Monk James, writes of him, “He overthrew Perun and Khors and many

81 Cross, The Russian Primary Chronicle, p. 151; PSRL, 1, ii ed., 32: “po russkomu zakonu kljašašja oružjem svoim i Perunom bogom svojim i Volosom skotiem bogom i utverdiša mir.”

82 Cross, op. cit., p. 163; PSRL, 1, ii, 53: “ašče li že kto ot knjazj ili ot ljudji russkich, li chrestjaj, ili ne chrestjaj, prestupitj se, eže estj pisano na charatji sei, budetj dostoin svoim oružjem umreti, i da budetj kljat ot Boga i ot Peruna, jako prestupi svoju kljatvu.”

83 Cross, ibid.; PSRL, 1, ii, 54: “zautra prizva Igor sly i pride na cholv kde stojaše Perun; i pokladoša oružje svooe i šit i zdoloto; i chodi Igor rošč i ljudji ego eliko poganych Rusi.”

83a Cross, op. cit., p. 176; PSRL, 1, ii, 73: “ašče li ot tech preže rečenjak so schranim . . . , da imēm kljatvu ot boga, v ego ze vērjum, v Peruna i v Volosa skotija boga.”

84 Cross, op. cit., p. 180; PSRL, 1, ii, 79: “i postavi kumiry na cholvu vnē dvora terem-nago: Peruna drevjana a glavu ego srebrena a us zlat; i Khūrsa, Dažjboga, i Strigob, i Simargla i Mokosj; i žrjachu im naričušče ja bogy, i privozacu syny svoja dščeri i žrjachu běsm.”

85 Cross, op. cit., p. 204; PSRL, 1, ii, 116: “Peruna ze povelje privjazati konevi k chvostu i vleči s gory po Borichev na Ručai. 12 muža pristavi teti žezljem, se že ne jako drevu čjujuščju, no na poruganje běsu.”
others, and destroyed idols, and cast out all godless deceit."86 It is likewise reported that Joachim, the first bishop of Novgorod, upon his arrival at that city, "tore down the pagan altars, cut Perun to pieces, and gave orders to cast him into the Volkhov."87

In addition to these annalistic items, similar evidence regarding Eastern Slavic deities is also preserved in various Old Russian apocryphal and devotional texts. Since the latter are for the most part translations or compilations from the Greek, any enumerations of Russian pagan deities which such translations contain must obviously be glosses. On the other hand, if the Old Russian texts themselves are demonstrably of an age comparable with that of the Primary Chronicle, the glosses possess a value by no means inferior to that of the latter. For example, in a translation of the Greek legend of The Virgin's Harrowing of Hell (the earliest Old-Russ. text of which occurs in a twelfth-century manuscript), where reference is made to human belief in idols, the names of Khors, Veles, and Perun have been inserted.88 Similarly, in the Old Russian Discourse on How the Gentiles, being Pagans, first worshipped Idols, based on a translation (earlier than the eleventh century) of a sermon of Gregory Nazianzen, we read that the Slavs "after holy baptism cast out Perun, and took after Christ our God, but even today in the country districts they pray to him, the accursed god Perun, and to Khors, and Mokosh . . . and cannot rid themselves of the accursed setting of the second table for Rod and the Rozhanitsi."89 Similarly, in the so-called Discourse of a Certain Lover of Christ (earlier than the fourteenth century), the author (or an interpolator) states that he cannot endure those who believe in "Perun, Chors, Sim, Rigl, Mokosh, and the Vily, sisters thirty in number . . . and they pray to fire, calling it Svarozi" and mentions that a marriage is improper "where they pray to fire . . . to the Vily, to Mokosh, Sim, Rigl, Perun, Volos, god of cattle, and Khors, to Rod, the Rozhanitsi, and all their cursed gods."89a Reference should be made also to the Tale of

86 E. Golubinski, Istoriia russkoi cerkvi, t, i, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1901), 240: "Peruna i chorsa i iny mnogi popra, i skruši idoly i otverze vsju bezbožnju lestj."
87 PSRL, v, 2nd ed., 72: "i trebišča razori i Peruna poseče, i povele vleči v Volchov."
88 N. Tikhomirov, Pamjatniki otrečennoi russkoi literature, ii (Moscow, 1863), 23: "to to oni vse bogi prozvaša solnce i mesjac, zemlju i vodu, zvěri i gady; to setjnje i čeloščka imena, to (MS. cevcj okamenata) utrija Trojana, Khūrska, Peruna na bogyi obratiša."
89 E. V. Anichkov, Jazycestvo i drevnja Rusj (Spb., 1914), p. 69: "po svjatom ze kresćenja Peruna otinuša, a po Christa Bogja jašanja, no i noš po ukrašan moljašja emu prokljatomu bogu Perunu, i Chorsu, i Mokoši . . . i . . . ne mogut sja lišiti prokljatogostavlenja 2-ja triapezoi narečenjja rodja i rozanićam."
89a Ibid., p. 374: "i vėrujutvj Peruna, i v Chûrsa i v Sima, i v Rjgla, i v Mokošij,
Igor’s Expedition, a short prose epic of unique literary value dating from the close of the twelfth century, which speaks of the winds as “the grandsons of Stribog,” and mentions the deities Khors and Dazhbog, though only as mythological adornment of the narrative, and with a euhemerism characteristic of the period.  

Finally, a striking instance of rendering Greek names of divinities by corresponding Slavic appellations is contained in the Slavic translation of the second book of the Greek chronicler Malalas (sixth century) which was done into Slavic in Bulgaria during the tenth or eleventh. The passage deals with legendary events of Egyptian history: “After the death of Fiost, who is also called Svarog, the Egyptians were ruled over by his son, called the Sun [in the Greek original “Ηλιος], who is also known as Dazhbog . . . Sun the king, the son of Svarog [in the Greek original “Ηφαιστος], also known as Dazhbog, was a strong man.” Thus Helios and Hephaistos are translated respectively by the Slavic equivalents Dazhbog and Svarog: furthermore, the explanatory clauses here given in italics have no correspondence in the Greek original and are thus the interpolations of a Russian glossator who recalled that Svarog had been the pagan Slavic god of fire, and connected the latter with Dazhbog, the sun.

The passages quoted both from the Primary Chronicle and from the religious texts indicate, however, that even though there were men alive in the lifetime of the compiler of the Chronicle “who remembered the conversion of Rus,” all detailed recollection of the earlier mythology and of the attributes of the Eastern Slavic pagan gods (such as they were) was wiped out during the century which followed conversion. Furthermore, while the Eastern Slavs never possessed anything remotely resembling an organized pantheon, the
references of devotional texts to Rod, the Rozhanitsy, and the Vily point to the existence of a body of early folklore of which surviving traces might be expected to supply some data on the primitive cult, even though the myths behind it vanished upon the elimination of the pagan priesthood by whom it was practised.94

Though Perun appears prominently in most of the texts cited, there is no evidence that he was a general Slavic deity at all.95 The name is a nomen agentis with suffix -un from the root per- ‘to strike,’ and therefore means ‘the striker’ as applied to the thunder. Outside Russia, the word appears only in Polish piorun, ‘thunderbolt.’ Since he is the deity by whom the pagan Varangians habitually swore, the conclusion is justified that Perun is simply the early Russian name for the Scandinavian Thor. Eastern Slavic folklore contains no traces whatever of a thunder-cult; the thunder is considered as the rolling of Elijah’s chariot frightening devils, while the lightning is the prophet’s darting arrow.96

Though the alien origin of Perun is thus clear, the source and functions of Khors are less readily definable. The name of the latter has been at one time or another explained as Greek, Iranian, Turkish, and Slavic, and the deity himself characterized as a sun-god or even as the spirit governing the moon. The derivation from Gk. Χρυσός, with the explanation that the name was applied to some golden statue, is not only feeble but impossible linguistically.97 The notion that this god was taken over from some Turkic nomad tribe is equally indefensible, since the only Turkish tribe which seriously affected the Eastern Slavs was the Khazars, but little is known of their religion prior to the adoption of Judaism by their ruling class, beyond the fact that, like the Huns, they worshipped one great spirit to whom

94 Cf. A. Brückner, “Mythologische Thesen,” Archiv f. slav. Philol., xl (1925), 3. As we are here concerned purely with Eastern Slavic paganism, I share the extremely sceptical attitude adopted by this authority with regard to the entire problem.
95 The Polish place-names Piorunka, Piorunów, etc., more probably designate a place where the lightning had struck. The translation of Zeus by Perun in the Bulgarian Alexandria (cf. Niederle, Živ. Star. Slov., xi, i, 99) results from a purely literary convention (similar to Dazhbo-Helios and Svarog-Hephaistos) rather than from any recollection of a cult. The Polabic peren-dan (ibid., p. 98) is simply a literal translation of Donners-tag, with no religious significance whatever. Even Niederle is sceptical of the general Slavic character of Perun: “On ne peut, à vrai dire, démontrer rigoureusement qu’il ait existé chez tous les Slaves” (Manuel, xi, 138). While he bases on Procopius his assumption that Perun is a general Slavic deity, the Greek historian is not a reliable source in the light of the complete absence of any Slavic folklore data on a Slavic thunder-god.
they sacrificed annually.\textsuperscript{97a} On the other hand, the appellation 'Jewish' applied to Khors in certain later Russian saints' lives and apocrypha would in itself constitute precisely as valid a reason to class Khors as a deity borrowed from the Khazars as to consider him the spirit of the moon, on the basis of the passage in the \textit{Tale of Igor} where it is reported that the magically endowed prince Vseslav of Polotzk galloped by night from Kiev to the strait of Kerch "across the road of the great Khors."\textsuperscript{98} On the whole, an Iranian origin seems most probable, in view of the M. Pers. \textit{khurshid}, 'sun,' and more remote Iran dialect forms like \textit{khir, khör, khùr}. Indeed, we have less convincing data on this deity than with respect to Simargl, of whom it is not even certain whether the name should be thus written or divided into two parts and viewed as designating two gods. However, a good etymological case can be made for the names \textit{Sim} and \textit{Rigl} as separate deities. \textit{Sim} (cf. Lett. \textit{sâime}, Lith. \textit{šeimyna} 'family') may be the god of the family or the house-spirit, while Rogl (cf. Lith. \textit{rugys}, "rye") would be god of the harvest, an etymology especially tempting, both in the light of surviving traditions of a related Baltic deity and because of numerous kindred Polish place-names.\textsuperscript{99} In the case of Mokosh, folkloristic survivals indicate that she was not a divinity at all, but a female house-spirit associated with women's work, especially shearing the flocks and spinning wool or flax; she is, at any rate, the only member of Vladimir's canon traceable in modern superstition.\textsuperscript{100} Stribog, frequently interpreted as "the god of the whistling winds," from the appellation "grandsons of Stribog" given to the winds in the \textit{Tale of Igor},\textsuperscript{101} has likewise been referred to the stem \textit{strib-} "to jump" and explained as a leaping demon of the spring or of vegetation.\textsuperscript{102} These deities possess historical importance only because of their frequent mention in the sources. Their attributes (so far as known or conjectured) cast little light on the nature of Eastern Slavic paganism. Indeed, their very occurrence in the \textit{Primary Chronicle} and elsewhere derives only from some monastic scribe's vague memories of a pagan past, amplified by his observations of current superstitions among the unlettered.

\textsuperscript{97a} Marquart, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{98} \textit{Slovo o polku Igoreve, ed. cit.}, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{99} Brückner, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 93-97. It should be noted, however, that G. Vernadsky, \textit{Ancient Russia} (New Haven, 1943), p. 328, derives Simargl from "the mythical bird-dog Semmuv" of the Scythian and Sassanian periods.
\textsuperscript{101} \textit{Slovo o polku Igoreve, ed. cit.}, p. 79.
\textsuperscript{102} Niederle, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 119; Brückner, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 99-100, though the latter explanation is hardly more than tentative.
Of all the deities mentioned in the early sources, the first of major importance both for the Eastern Slavs and for the whole Slavic ethnic group is Veles (Volos). The Primary Chronicle (cf. p. 76 above) characterizes Veles as “the god of cattle” (skotji bog), but he is not mentioned by the Chronicle among the deities to whom Vladimir erected idols in 980. However, a Life of Vladimir mentions specifically that Vladimir caused an idol of Veles to be cast into the Pochaina creek below the citadel of Kiev, and there is also a late tradition concerning an idol of Veles in Rostov. The general Slavic occurrence of Veles is likewise attested by his frequent invocation as a pagan demon in curses preserved by Bohemian texts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The qualification “god of cattle” has no relation to the original attributes of Veles, but results from the monkish chronicler’s identification of the specifically Russian form of his name (Volos) with that of S. Blasius (O. Slav., Vlas, Russ. Volos), a Cappadocian bishop who died a martyr’s death ca. 316 A.D., and was extensively revered thereafter as the patron of flocks and herds. This identification of Veles with the saint had misled almost all previous investigators to characterize Veles as an agricultural divinity, though the etymology of the name forbids any such attribute. Where Perun and Veles are mentioned together as the gods by whom Oleg’s Varangian and Slavic followers swore, the implication is that the Varangiahs swore by Perun and the Slavs by Veles. The latter may thus be viewed as the guardian of oaths. The name itself is cognate with the Lithuanian velis “corpse,” vėle “ghost,” vėlmis “devil,” so that Veles is to be interpreted as the god of the dead, a conclusion also supported by the identification of Veles with the devil in the mediaeval curses just mentioned.

As Veles is the Slavic god of the underworld, so Dazhbog (also mentioned among Vladimir’s idols) is the sun, the giver of wealth and plenty. The identification of Dazhbog as the sun is indicated only by the Malalas glosses (see p. 78 above), but the etymology of the name (da- “give,” and bog- “wealth, plenty”; the second root appears also in Russ. bog-aty “wealthy,” and u-bog-y “poor”) serves further to support this interpretation. Along with the sun as the giver of wealth, the Eastern Slavs also worshipped fire, deified as Svarog, or Svarozhich. While the Malalas glosses would make the latter form appear as a patronymic, so that Dazhbog has frequently been characterized as “the son of Svarog,” this interpretation is erroneous.

103 Mansikka, op. cit., pp. 53–54, 291.
104 Niederle, op. cit., p. 114.
105 Mansikka, op. cit., p. 388.
since the Slavs never entertained any notion of the kinship of their various deities. Svarozhich is thus not a patronymic, but a diminutive, like the Lithuanian diesātis (from diēvas, "god"). The name Svarog itself is related to svar, svara "quarrel," and signifies "the smith," "he who contends with the fire," hence the smith who forged the sun and controls it in the sky, but manifests himself on earth as fire.106 The evidence of the Arabic sources that the Slavs were all fire-worshipers and the survivals of a fire cult in both Ukrainian and White-Russian folklore provide a solid motive for believing that a sun and fire myth lay at the root of Slavic cosmogony.107

Procopius denied the Slavs any belief in fate (heimarmenē), yet there is abundant proof that an agency of this nature, though related rather to both fortune and fertility than to destiny, played a considerable role in the religious lore of the Eastern Slavs and of the Slavs in general. Passages have already been cited to the effect that the pagan Russians praved and made offerings to these divinities.108 It is scarcely to be supposed that the latter have any connection with the classical fates (Moirai and Parcae), and their function also precludes any notion that they were the souls of ancestors preserving or influencing the destiny of their descendants. Indeed, they possess no manistic character whatever. Throughout the Slavic languages, the primary meaning of rod is the yield of fields and crops, then the increase of the family (hence ultimately "birth"), culminating in the eventual use of rod in Old Russian as a social terminus technicus (see above, pp. 51–52). Evidence of the Slavic veneration of Rod personified as the power which inspires the breath of life in man is supplied by a fifteenth-century Russian polemic which declares: "The immortal and never-aging breath of life is inspired only by the Almighty, . . . for he blew the breath of life into man's face and so man received a living soul; hence it is not Rod, sitting in the air,

106 Brückner, op. cit., pp. 54–55, 69–71, Archiv., xx, 11. For summary of other hypotheses, cf. Niederle, op. cit., pp. 105–111 and nn. I have accepted Brückner's theory as the only one satisfactory from the standpoint of linguistics and folklore. There is no evidence whatever that this basic myth is of foreign origin, and in the history of studies in Slavic mythology there has been an unfortunate tendency to take refuge in the supposed foreign origin of a given deity whenever its attributes or etymology are problematic. Mansikka's suggestion "Höchstens könnte man von einer schon längst vergessenen, ursprünglich nicht slavischen, Volksage reden, in welcher vom Ursprung des Feuers und der Sonne erzählt wurde" (op. cit., p. 397), may thus be rejected.

107 Cf. Ibn-Rusteh, in Khvolson, op. cit., pp. 30–31; other references in Niederle, op. cit., p. 84, n. 5. It may also be noted that the pagan Slavic prayer before sowing quoted in the same passage lends further support to the interpretation of Dazhbog as the life-giving sun which provides wealth and plenty.

which casts heaps upon the earth, from which children are born. . . .
God, not Rod, is the creator of all things." Rod is accordingly the
god of fertility and good fortune in the life he creates. The Rozhanitsi
in turn are the female spirits who aid women in childbirth and assure
good fortune to the newborn child, and thus must be invoked as
soon as the babe is born. In mediaeval Russia the superstitious
even maintained the custom of setting up at Christmas a so-called
"second table" for Rod and the Rozhanitsi. The prevalence of the
cult of the Rozhanitsi (with varying terminology) among all other
Slavs except the Poles demonstrates the general Slavic character of
these beliefs.

The religion of the pagan Slavs was thus primarily animistic in its
origins, and the animistic personification of powers of nature is
further exemplified by abundant references to water and forest spirits
(sily, beregynji, lesti). Numerous traces of manistic conceptions are
visible in the widespread belief in a house-spirit (domovoi), but the
association of nature spirits with the impure dead in modern folklore
points rather to Christian contamination than to any manistic origin
of the latter class of minor divinities. In any case, the belief of the
pagan Eastern Slavs in a future life of some sort is indicated by the
funeral ceremonies (cremation) attributed to the tribesmen of the
ninth century by the Primary Chronicle. Among the Russian tribes,
the practice of placing the ashes in an urn which was set on a post
by the roadside rose from superstitious fear of the spirit of the de-
parted, which was supposed (as in modern folklore) to have some
attachment to its earthly residence; a similar motive lies behind the
modern Great Russian peasant custom of carrying to the edge of the
village all objects and utensils connected with the death and laying-
out of the deceased. Pagan Slavic eschatology was confined, how-
fined, however, to the persuasion that the spirits of the dead led a
life similar to that which they had experienced on earth, so that all
notions of hell and paradise are of purely Christian origin. With the
introduction of Christianity, the cult of the major deities faded out,

109 Mansikka, op. cit., p. 306: "vdunovenie bezsmertnoe nestarejuščee edin vdymaet
vseduržitelj . . . duhu bo emu na lice duh živ. . . . to ti ne rod, sedja na vosduše, mečetj
na zemlju grudy i v tom razajutsja deti . . . vsem bo estj tvorc Bog, a ne rod."
111 Mansikka, op. cit., p. 247.
112 Cf. Niederle, op. cit., p. 66.
113 Ibid., pp. 64-65.
114 Ibid., pp. 45-48.
115 PSRL, I, ii, 14.
but traces of paganism long endured among the masses in their superstitious beliefs in minor household and nature spirits and in the old gods of luck and fortune.

Although there is no explicit evidence for a caste of priests among the Eastern Slavs in pagan times, the prevalence of magicians and sorcerers (after the conversion) who claimed to be in touch with a non-Christian spirit world would place their origins among the de-based interpreters of the old cult. Early Russian sources, especially Hilarion's *Discourse on Law and Grace*, refer to pagan shrines or altars known as *kapishcha*,116 at which sacrifices were offered, and one such altar was found in Kiev itself, surrounded by the bones of animals sacrificed upon it.117 These shrines were visualized by Hilarion as a small inclosed structure with an altar. Apart from Vladimir's idols and the doubtful idol of Veles at Rostov (see above, pp. 76, 81), it is not clear that the Eastern Slavs possessed any idols at all; on the other hand, their existence among the Western Slavs is well attested. The pagan cult of the Western Slavs possessed, however, the dignity of an official religion, and thus developed a complexity of observance which Eastern Slavic paganism, modified by the official Thor-Perun cult of the Varangians, never attained before its suppression at the end of the tenth century.

A final and equally interesting problem connected with the primitive culture of the Eastern Slavs is a determination of the epoch at which they learned to write. While there have been some fruitless though entertaining attempts both at the forgery of specifically Slavic runes and at the identification as genuinely Slavic of certain runic texts more probably of North-German origin, it is, on the whole, unlikely that letters of any sort were known in the pre-Christian period apart from cases where a more or less educated Slav managed to write down a few phrases of his language in Greek or Latin characters.118 A Bulgarian source of the late ninth century, the so-called *Apology of the Monk Khrabr*, which discusses in some detail the origin of the Slavic alphabet and asserts it is more sacred than the Greek because it was invented by St. Cyril, thus declares that "originally the Slavs had no letters, but counted and calculated by

116 *Slovo o zakone i blagodati*, *ka*. 1050, Mansikka, *op. cit.*, pp. 300-301, "a uže ne kapišča sôgraždam, no Christovy cerkvi zizdem" ("we no longer fence off *kapiskha*, but build churches of Christ"); ... "togda tjma besovskago sluzenja pogybe ... kapišča razrušiša-sja, i cerkvi postavljajutsja" ("then the darkness of the devil's service was wiped out ... the *kapishche* have been torn down, and churches are being erected").

117 In close proximity to the Desyatinnaya Church; Niederle, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

lines and notches; and after they were converted, they were obliged to write the Slavic language with Roman and Greek letters without system," remarking at the same time that it was impossible by this means to reproduce the pronunciation of peculiarly Slavic vowels and consonants, of which the author offers several examples. Khrabr's reference to counting and calculating by lines and notches has a modern parallel in the sticks of wood known as rabushi on which, by means of incised symbols, the illiterate Yugoslav peasants kept their accounts, a practice sufficiently recognized and widespread to have caused their admission as legal judicial evidence under the Serbian civil code of 1887. The rabushi were even used by Serbian tax collectors in the nineteenth century, and cases are recorded where a rural official might have in stock as many as 450 of these sticks incised with numerical symbols, and still be able to recall without difficulty to what individual each such stick applied. These are, however, mnemonic or arithmetical devices unconnected with the actual practice of writing, and thus offer no evidence of learning. There can be no question but that the Swedish colonists or mercenaries in tenth-century Russia themselves knew the so-called younger runes: the earliest Swedish rune-stone referring to a death in Eastern Europe was found in Västra Stenby (Östergotland) and belongs to the first half of the tenth century. Five other rune-stones of this or the following century are extant which bear specific references to Swedes who died in Russia. Yet only one rune-stone has so far been found in Russia itself. Discovered on the island of Berezan, at the mouth of the Dnieper, this stone belongs to the first half of the eleventh century and its inscription states that it was erected by one Grani to his comrade Karl. There is no evidence, however, that the Russian Slavs themselves made use of the runes which were familiar to their Varangian contemporaries. With the use of runes by the early Swedish immigrants in Russia is connected, at least indirectly, a problem raised by the item in the Pannonian Life of St. Cyril (Constantine), which reports that when Cyril was in Cherson on his mission to the Khazars he found there a gospel and a psalter written in what are called rostsk (which would normally mean "Russian") characters.

119 V. Vondrák, Cirkeňskoslovanska Chrestomatie (Brno, 1925), pp. 135-141.

120 Jagić, loc. cit., pp. 25-34.

121 On these inscriptions in general, cf. F. Braun, op. cit., 162-167.

122 F. Pastnek, Dejiny slovanských apostolů, p. 52: "obret že tu evangelje i psaltýr rosísky pismeny pisano"; F. Dvorník, Les légendes de Constantin et de M l'hôteues de Byzance (Prague, 1933), transl., p. 359; discussion, pp. 185-188. For a discussion of the controversy over this item, cf. G. Ilinskij, "Odín epizod iz korsunskogo perioda žizni Konstantina
The only Ros known to the Greeks ca. 860 were the Scandinavian freebooters who raided the coasts of the Pontus, and these books thus cannot possibly have been written in any Slavic language of the time. On the other hand, converted Varangians do not appear in Russia till nearly a century later, and (still more important) there is no evidence whatever that a translation into Norse or Old Russian was made of the Greco-Russian treaties of 911 and 945. As the texts themselves indicate, they were executed in duplicate, but in Greek, thus proving at least that Norse was not being used for documentary purposes at this period, while the exclusively Scandinavian character of the Russian negotiators suggests that an Old Bulgarian translation (theoretically possible at either date) would have been useless. A Slavic or a Scandinavian identification of the rosísk characters is thus excluded. The confusion probably rises from reading rusísky for surísky, and the characters must very likely have been Syriac.

From this accumulation of not only scattered but oftentimes both confusing and debatable detail, the main lines of Eastern Slavic culture at the close of the pagan period become discernible. Essentially an agricultural people, yet living also by hunting and trapping in newly colonized and sparsely settled areas, the Russian Slavs tended to develop beyond a purely patriarchal society as soon as they came to inhabit small farms grouped about a fortified village which served as their strong-point for defense and as a rudimentary market for the exchange of their products. Such of these villages as were strategically located on the chief water courses developed into genuine trading-posts and towns, the importance of which was enhanced by the penetration of foreign merchants at the beginning of the historical period. The rise of trading-posts and towns gradually concentrated adjacent agricultural areas under the control of the latter, producing at the same time accumulations of wealth in the hands of a new ruling class which appropriated to itself the influence formerly wielded by the elders of family, clan, and tribe. The growing prestige of the towns also broke down the previous tribal differentiations, since portions of the same tribal area might fall for reasons of geography and communication under the control of different towns.

Filosofa," Slavia, iii (Prague, 1924), 44 ff., also A. A. Vasiliev, Goths in the Crimea (Cambridge, 1936), p. 113 and no. 6. A. Vaillant, Revue des Etudes Slaves, xv (1935), 75–77, first suggested that rusísky(mi) is a scribal error of surísky(mi), and would therefore view these texts as Syriac. The acceptance of this suggestion depends on establishing how much Hebrew Cyril knew and how easily he could accordingly assimilate Syriac. Roman Jakobson, however, "Saint Constantin et la langue Syriaque," Annaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'histoire orientales (New York, 1944), pp. 181–186, has clarified the argument considerably and, indeed, closed the case.
The mass of the population were free farmers or artisans, with only a small admixture of slaves until the latter became a profitable article of commerce. For their technique in agriculture, mechanical trades, and arms, the Slavs were largely indebted to their neighbors, and to the Germans in particular, since the spread of mediaeval techniques among the Slavs becomes most marked from the Carolingian period forward. In spite of an early knowledge of metals, the Slavs acquired little skill in metallurgy until the close of the pagan age. Well fed on a considerable variety of cereals, vegetables, fowl, domestic animals, and game, the Eastern Slavs inhabited small wooden houses, usually with two rooms and connected with sheds for storage and the shelter of their poultry and cattle. They were clad in coarse linen, hempen, or woolen fabrics, supplemented by furs as a protection against inclement weather. Jewelry and other adornments were articles of import exchanged for the furs, pelts, wax, honey, and slaves which were Slavic staple exports. The Eastern Slavs of the eighth century were already in sporadic contact with the Arabic Orient, Byzantium, and Central Europe, and their progress in civilization is exclusively due to this contact. Polygamous in practice, they have evolved from animistic origins a religion of polytheistic and anthropomorphic character, associated with manistic features connected with a rudimentary belief in a future life. Since their social structure was as yet by no means homogeneous, still showing traces of the most primitive patriarchal organization contemporaneous with the rise of concentrated settlements analogous to the western borough and town, they were ripe for the action of some unifying agency which would join these scattered units into a coherent economy. Though illiterate, their rapid adoption of foreign techniques stamps them as possessed of a receptive intelligence. The close of the pagan period thus found the Eastern Slavs ready for the essentially dynastic policy of the immigrant Varangian princes of Kiev and for the absorption of cultural influences rising from intensified relations with Byzantium. While the domination of the Khazars during the eighth and early ninth century had fused the Slavs along the lower Dnieper and its tributaries into a loose federation, it had not extended the Khazar influence to the northern tribal agglomerations. The penetration of the Vikings from the north during the ninth century strengthened the ties between the Slavs at either end of the central Russian trade-route. Once this trade-route was definitely linked with Byzantium, the way was cleared for the introduction of Byzantine culture among the Eastern Slavs, who continued to absorb it until the route was once more barred by the nomads of the steppes three centuries later.

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