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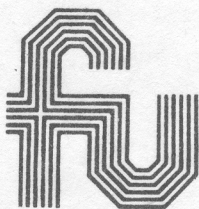
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THE SLAVIC AND FINNO-UGRIC PEOPLES IN THE VOLGA-OKA AREA
IN THE 9th-11th CENTURIES

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1. In the Middle Ages the territory confined between the Volga and Oka rivers was the area of most active and mutually beneficent contacts between the Slavic and Finno-Ugric ethnic masses which provided the basis for the formation of the population of the northeastern outskirts of Old Russia. Devoted to this topic are numerous studies of historians, archeologists, ethnographers, linguists, beginning from the mid-19th century.

2. At present it has been established that the key component of the Old Russian culture in this area were the Slavs with their high agrarian and cattle-breeding culture. However an important role in the formation here of the Old Russian statehood and people (narodnost') was played both by the local Finno-Ugric population and by the ethnocultural elements from the Kama-river area.

3. Formed on the basis of this symbiosis was the original material and intellectual culture of the Russian population of the North-East which is reflected in the archeological sites intensively studied by researchers.

4. This process was extremely involved and contradictory. The proposed paper studies its concrete manifestations and its main conclusion is that in the 9th-11th centuries the Volga-Oka territory saw intensive assimilation by the Slavs of the local Meryan culture, on the one hand, and the beginnings of active penetration of the Slavs into the Kostroma Volga area and further to the northeast up to the reaches of the Urals, on the other.