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(Editeur)

MONTAGNES, FLEUVES, FORETS
DANS L'HISTOIRE

Barrières ou lignes de convergence?

BERGE, FLÜSSE, WÄLDER
IN DER GESCHICHTE

Hindernisse oder Begegnungsräume?

SONDERDRUCK

SCRIPTA MERCATURAE VERLAG

Rivers, Forests and the Settlement Pattern of the Eastern Slaves between the 6th and the 9th Centuries

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Even today natural environment greatly determines the life of nations despite sophisticated technology and their sometimes reckless intervention in nature. Thus, the set of farm crops in the Ukraine differs from that in the colder North. Timber houses of Central Russia are impossible in the steppes of the Ukraine where wood is scarce. In Novgorod dwelling houses stood on high foundations separating the living quarters from damp ground. In regions with dry climate people often do not need wooden floors. Such examples are numerous.

The geographical factor exerted even greater influence in antiquity, when productive forces were undeveloped. People, like animals, are naturally dependent on fresh water. Besides, in the Mesolithic rivers were the roads people used to settle in marshy areas, rich in fauna, after the glacial sheet had withdrawn. Hunting now practiced by individuals rather than large groups of people became supplemented with fishing in lakes and rivers. Newly invented nets and barbed fishing hooks made fishing the main occupation of large human collectives over vast areas for many millenia to come. Human settlements were distributed along rivers and shores of lakes and were moved with climatic changes and the level of water in water bodies. Rivers, which provided means of communication both in summer and winter, united individual groups of people into greater collectives. Later, when land-tilling and cattle-breeding emerged and developed, people preferred to settle on high river capes which offered natural protection against enemies. Flood-plains at their feet were used for sowing or grazing. Other occupations, such as weaving, dressing of hides, iron making and metalworking were equally impossible without adequate water supply, and rivers were its source.

Forests played a no less role in the life of people. They provided timber for dwellings, hunting- and fish-traps, boardings strengthening the swampy soil of settlements. Wood was used for making objects of everyday use, boats and vehicles. Wooden skis made hunting in winter possible. Woods were the source of game, honey, wax, nuts, berries, mushrooms, etc. People could not settle in woods as this required labour-consuming felling of trees or burning. They resorted to the slash and burn method in order to obtain arable land somewhat later. In this case too, people strove to cultivate land nearer to rivers which were natural roads and source of fish. Land roads in forest zones should be attributed to the period when tribal or territorial centres appeared.

The East European Plain is distinguished by its size which for a considerably long time determined its thin population. Great obstacles to settlement were presented by virgin forests and impassable swamps of the northern, forest zone.

The newcomers had overcome both and the East European taiga was settled as early as in the Mesolithic. Rivers, which cross Eastern Europe in all directions contributed to the settlement process. Large-scale movements of peoples occurred immediately after the withdrawal of the ice sheet. Scholars discuss the problem of the expansion of the Neolithic Lyalovo tribes, of the Neolithic Volosovo tribes, of the Fatyanovo and Seima tribes of the Bronze Age, etc. It shows that even dense forests were no obstacles to migration. Tribes in the southern part of the forest belt contacted, although in a sluggish-manner, the steppe tribes. This forest melting-pot gave rise to the Finno-Ugric tribes which comprised the majority of the region's population before Slavs appeared there. In the west their neighbours were Balt tribes.

The question of the origin of the East European Slavic tribes is still being discussed by the scholars. Most probably, they were not an indigeneous population. Having emerged in the early centuries A.D. in the Vistula-Oder interfluve, the Slavs appeared in Eastern Europe, first in its forest-steppe belt between the 5th and 6th centuries. The causes of their migration are an object of scholarly discussions. In Eastern Europe the Slave entered the Dnestr-Prut and Pripyat basins. They settled along the Dnestr up to the modern Northen Bukovina where numerous Slavic sites have been discovered. Plenty of them are found along the Pripyat River and its tributaries. It must be indicated, however, that the left-side tributaries were practically not settled, due, probably, to the swampy Polessie region ¹).

A number of researchers maintain that the right bank of the middle reaches of the Dnieper basin was colonized by the Slavs even prior to the 8th-9th centuries. This area was developed by the Slaves earlier than the upper Dnieper basin, the Desna basin and the left bank of the middle Don ²).

The earliest Slavic archaeological culture, the Korchak culture, took shape between the Pripyat and Dnestr rivers. It is characterized by square one-room ground dwellings with stone stoves in the corner. Its earmark is vessels of the so-called Prague type. The burial rite practiced there was cremation: the dead were burned, the ashes put in pits which often had no mounds. The burial mounds of this culture are limited to the Pripyat, Teterev and Bug area and unknown on the Dnestr. Land-tilling was the main occupation.

There are different views on the eastern borders of the Korchak tribes' territory. Some researchers subscribe to the opinion that it did not expand to the Dnieper, others surmise that along a narrow strip 60-80 km wide, between the Pripyat and the Desna mouths, it crossed the Dnieper to its right bank. The question is of secondary importance, however. The rather dense population of

1) R u s a n o v a I. P., Slavaynskie drevnosti VI - VII vv. (Slavic Antiquities of the 6th - 7th Centuries. Moscow 1976, p. 12 - 15.

2) Ibid., p. 54.

the Pripyat basin, especially in the upper reaches of its tributaries was ensured by the great number of its right-bank tributaries. The Prut tributaries were also densely populated while the number of Slavic sites along the Dnestr sharply decreased. The Zimno fortified settlement, dated by Rusanova between the 6th and 8th centuries, was the earliest fortified settlement of the Korchak culture. A supposition that it was the earliest handicraft centre which supplied the neighbouring Slavic population with handicrafts was resolutely opposed by researchers who indicated that it lacked the potter's wheel, the first sign of the separated handicrafts³). Equally opposed was an opinion that Zimno was a political centre of a tribe or a tribal union. The latter should be resolutely rejected since tribal unions of the Eastern Slavs appeared at a much later stage.

The Luka-Raiki culture was a direct continuation of the Korchak culture. The number of settlements and fortified settlements greatly increased, the dwellings were almost identical to those of the Korchak culture. The Khotomel fortified settlement in the Brest Region, dated to the 7th - 10th centuries, is an important site⁴). Cremation persisted as the burial rite, the ashes being placed either in urns or directly into pits, which were sometimes covered with mounds. As in the earlier period, grave goods were scarce which is considered to be a typical feature of the East Slavic burial rite. Pottery was modelled, its shapes being genetically closely related to Korchak objects. The potter's wheel appeared towards the end of the period. Women wore wire semi-closed lock rings of the common Slavic type or twisted lock rings of the East Slavic type. The Pripyat River remained the northern border of the Luka-Raiki tribes.

The 8th century marked considerable economic advances among the Eastern Slavs. Greater furnaces led to an increased output of iron⁵) and to more frequent use of iron articles such as iron shares and sickles which contributed to higher yields and more efficient reaping. These factors created surplus product which freed part of the population for fishing and hunting, and then for handicrafts⁶).

All dwelling houses in the Luka-Raiki settlements were similarly built and stood close to one another. There were small storage pits nearby. Iron was made on the territory of settlements. All this gives grounds to believe that they were occupied and jointly owned by a single family community.

Between the 8th and 9th centuries the layout of settlements changed: they became greater, covering sometimes several hectares. Dwellings stood in parallel

3) Ibid., p. 24 - 25, 33, 51, ff.

4) Ibid., p. 51 - 53.

5) K o l c h i n B. A., Chernaya metallurgiya i metalloobrabotka v Drevnei Rusi. Materialy i issledovaniya po arkhologii SSSR (Ferrous Metallurgy and Metalworking in Old Rus. Materials and Researches on the Archaeology of the USSR, further - MR), N 32, Moscow 1953, p. 34.

6) R u s a n o v a I.P., Op. cit., p. 51.

rows, forming, in few cases, individual groups. Researchers consider it to be a trace of the family community. The Slavs had acquired and developed their experience in plain landtilling and cattle-breeding with ploughing system predominating. Grain storage pits and outbuildings were placed near each individual dwelling, a sign of separate households engaged on their own in economic activities. People living in such settlements could be members of rural communities which existed in the Kievan Rus as well.

Centres for ferrous metallurgy sprang into existence. They probably supplied considerable regions with their produce. It should be indicated, however, that metalworking still corresponded to the clan system. It was only later, towards the end of the Luka-Raiki culture that handicraft centres producing wheeled pottery appeared. It marked the beginning of separation of handicrafts from agriculture 7).

According to some researchers, settlements of warriors existed in the Luka-Raiki culture period. This can be accepted with the reservation that the host (*druzhina*) of that time should be regarded as a clan establishment, not separated from the clan as such. Those who lived in such settlements were probably land-tillers who abandoned their ploughs for the sake of military campaigns. At that time wars of plunder had not yet become their main occupation. Thus, the host in Rus emerged not earlier than the 8th century. There is no archaeological evidence permitting to relate the process to an earlier period.

In all probability, the end of the Luka-Raiki culture witnessed the emergence of proto-towns, which were yet small in size and of no significance in social life. They marked, nevertheless, an important stage of social development characterized by the combination of socio-economic, military and cultural features indispensable for urban development. Earlier times provided no prerequisites for the emergence of towns, even in their rudimentary form. First mentions of Russian towns in chronicles and their actual appearance are chronologically synchronous. But this is a special question 8).

Archaeological materials indicate that though property inequality did take shape during the Luka-Raiki culture, it was evident in different sets of finds in the fortified and non-fortified parts of settlements and was not extended to either burial constructions or to grave goods. The former custom of little or no grave goods persisted.

Thus, by the 8th and 9th centuries the society had reached the final stage of disintegration of the primitive communal relations but had not yet entered statehood.

By the late 8th century the left bank of the Dnieper had been densely populated.

7) *Ibidem*.

8) *Avdusin D.A., Proiskhozhdenie russkikh gorodov po arkhelogicheskim dannym (The Origin of the Russian Towns According to Archaeological Data)*, in: *Voprosy Istorii*, 1980, N 12, p. 24 - 42.

ed. Initially the river formed the natural border of the Luka-Raiki culture: the Slavs were unwilling, for some time, to cross the river. There is an opinion that this was accounted for by the Khazar domination over the tribes of the left bank. One can suppose that the Slavs used the steep right bank of the Dnieper as a protection. But they crossed the river probably in the end of the 8th century, the time when an undoubtedly Slavic culture with complex make-up and composition took shape on the left bank of the Dnieper up to the upper and middle reaches of the Don. Historians call it the Romny-Borshevo culture (the 8th - 10th centuries). Its specificity does not prevent us from tracing its ties with the right bank population prominent, in the first place, in the community of some pottery forms. Their socio-economic development coincided with that of the right-bank tribes. It was the time of disintegrating primitive-communal relations and a budding neighbour community. There is a traditional opinion that the Romny-Borshevo culture was, together with the Korchak and Luka-Raiki culture, a component of the Kievan Rus culture⁹⁾.

In the 9th century the right- and left-bank tribes set into motion. Most historians account this migration to the drive of bellicose nomads - Ugrians and later Pechenegs. It must be noted in this connection that Pechenegs, a more pugnacious tribe, came to the scene when the Slavic migration had already developed. Other historians, while not denying the nomads' role in the process, shifted emphasis on the nascent power of Kievan princes and, in more general terms, on the feudal exploitation which had just begun to evolve including the tribute paid to Khazars¹⁰⁾. It was a novel form of exploitation for the Slavs as it was connected with the feudal statehood. It was probably one of the causes of Slavic migration. One must say that the bulk of the Slavic population stayed behind on their native lands. However, the reasons and causes of 9th-century Slavic migration await their fuller investigation.

Though the Slavic movement is dated to the 9th century by isolated archaeological Slavic sites of the forest belt, they are supported by chronicle evidences unambiguously indicating that the Slavs lived in this area in the 9th century. Chronicles clearly indicated the towns and stows associated with 9th-century events. Archaeological evidence mainly boils down to the Slavic strata of the Staraya Ladoga fortified settlement and to the Slavic pottery forms discovered in later long barrows (the 9th - 10th centuries) which can be accounted for by the Slavisation of the population which erected them. Any attempts to indicate other 9th-century Slavic sites in the forest zone failed so far.

9) R u s a n o v a I.P., Op. cit., p. 53; L y a p u s h k i n I.I., Gorodishche Novotroitskoe (The Novotroitskoye Fortified Settlement), in: MR, Moscow/Leningrad 1958, N. 74, p. 230.

10) Y a n i n V.L., Aleshkovsky M.Kh., Proiskhozhdenie Novgoroda (k postanovke problemy). (The Origin of Novgorod. Towards the Formulation of the Problem), in: Istoriya SSSR, 1971, N. 2, p. 46.

It is significant that there are no Slavic burials dated to the period in the forest zone. This can testify to migration in small groups, since large collectives are sure to leave behind more or less noticeable burial grounds. Scattered burials containing no grave goods could well be unnoticed by researchers or destroyed by later ploughing, slides of river banks and ravines, etc. In all probability, the migration proceeded by clans, this supposition being in full accord with the opinion that the Slavs at that time were at the last stage of the primitive-communal system. The former tribal unity also made itself felt when they had already settled on new lands. This unity became a thing of the past ¹¹).

The absence of burial grounds also speaks of the swift movement. It was a mighty Slavic wave that had reached the Baltic region.

Here a pertinent question may arise: why did the Slavs choose the northward direction of their migration? There is no ready answer to it. It can be surmised that the eastern direction was blocked by the Khazars. The conditions of life of the Romny-Borshevo tribes on their native territory compelled them to leave it ¹²). The southward direction was blocked by the nomads and the lands there were ill-suited for tilling due to their salinity. Perhaps the Slavs had come from the west and could not or were unwilling to return. The only option left was the northern direction. The lands to the north were populated by the Balts who were also land-tillers. The Slav movement there thus required the use of force. Only the lands around Lakes Ladoga and Peipius were occupied by the Finns who were cattle-breeders and used other stows for their economic activities than the land-tilling Slavs. It is improbable, however, that the Luka-Raiki tribes were aware of the faraway Baltic lands. Quite simply, they were offered less resistance in the northern direction than in other directions.

Not the last factor was the fact that the Dnieper, this excellent natural road, also led the Slavs to the North. Early Slavic towns, mentioned in the chronicles, sprang along this river: Kiev, Lyubech, Smolensk. In the mouth of the Desna River, that is, practically on the Dnieper, there probably appeared Chernigov. By the mid-9th century the Slavs had, in all probability, reached the upper Dnieper.

At Smolensk, Dnieper flows from the east to the west, that is, it could not be used for the northward movement. People had to look for its continuation, to find the Dvina River and then a river flowing to the North. They had yet been ignorant of a single river route connecting these rivers. There exists several

11) Ibid., p. 44; T r e t y a k o v P. N., Rasselenie drevnerusskikh plemen po arkhеologicheskim dannym (Settlement of the Old Russian Tribes According to Archaeological Data). Sovetskaya arkhеologiya, IV, Moscow/Leningrad 1937, p. 33 - 52; A r t s i k h o v s k y A. V., V zashchitu letopisei i kurganov (In Defence of Chronicles and Burial Mounds). Sovetskaya arkhеologiya, IV, Moscow/Leningrad 1937, p. 53 - 62.

12) M o s k a l e n k o A. N., Slavyane na Donu (The Slavs on the Don). Voronezh 1981, p. 11.

variants of using smaller rivers between the Dnieper and the Dvina. It is highly improbable that the Slavs looked for them by the trial and error method: it was both time and labour consuming. Another supposition seems to be more likely. They could have learnt of these rivers and portages from the local Balt population who used them though they had not yet entered the epoch of broad trade and economic ties.

Overland portages, even short ones, in dense forests were a labour-consuming task. It was necessary not only to cut swaths through the woods which in itself was a difficult job. People had to choose the right, more or less level, places for portages. It was a complicated task in the knob-and-basin topography of the region. The portages had to be maintained in good condition, to be cleared from bushes and sprouts, swampy places needed paving, etc. Such portages were necessarily extremely rare and short, not more than 10 km. It was much easier to move ahead by small rivers and brooks deepening and broadening them with ditches¹³). Such road was a level one and needed no maintenance. In this way, switching from one small river to another, carrying their boats along scattered short portages from 3 to 5 km long, the Slavs covered the distance between the Dnieper and the Dvina.

All this happened not earlier than the mid-9th century. The complete assimilation of the trade route "from the Varangians to the Greeks" occurred not earlier than the beginning of the 10th century, since the earliest hoards with dirk-hems in the lower Dnieper dated to that period¹⁴). This coincides with the emergence of feudal relations: under clan system there was no need for trade ties with far away lands and consequently, for long trade routes.

The route from Lake Ladoga to the Volga had been used even prior to the Slavic settlement in the Volga-Oka interfluvium, probably, in the 9th century. Lesser rivers in the inner regions of the Volga basin were used in that period as well. This is testified by finds of foreign-made articles in the Supruty fortified settlements on the Upa River, on Oka tributary¹⁵). The Volga route was a result of the consolidation of the Khazar Kaganate, the first feudal state in Eastern Europe. The Dnieper route came into existence together with the stabilization of the Kievan Rus, another mighty power of the time.

It is interesting to note that the Dvina River route had never been of the same importance as the Lovat River route. This phenomenon of the dominance of the

13) B u r o v V.A., Usvaytsky volok po arkhеologicheskim dannym (The Usvayty Portage According to Archaeological Data). Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta, Series IX, History, 1975, N 4, p. 78 - 85.

14) Y a n i n, V.L., Denexhno-vesovye sistemy russkogo srednevekovya. Domongolsky period (The Weight and Monetary Systems of the Russian Middle Ages. The Pre-Mongolian Period). Moscow 1956, p. 105.

15) I z y m o v a S.A., Drevnosti Tul'skoi zemli. Puteshestviya v drevnost (The Antiquities of the Tula Land, in: Travels to Antiquity). Moscow 1983, p. 90.

northern direction has not been adequately studied so far. Though the Dvina is blocked with shallows it is definitely no less navigable than the Lovat tributaries with steep faults. Apparently, the northern route was chosen for some other reasons. It was probably more accessible and more familiar to them than the western route dominated by the Balts. In any case, there are no more or less considerable Slavic settlements to the west of Polotsk. It seems that the Slavs reached the river system known before them which led from the north to the Dvina. It is quite possible, that the upper reaches of the Lovat were, already at that time, the "sphere of influence" of the Scandinavians who lived at Lake Ladoga. Their presence to the north of the Dvina is supported by a number of archaeological sites yielding 9th-century Scandinavian artifacts. It can be surmised, therefore, that the route from the north to the Dvina via the Lovat was known to the Scandinavians from the local Finnish and Baltic population in the same way as the Slavs were aware of the route from the Dnieper to the Dvina where the two stretches of the great route met.

We have no details of the first journey from Novgorod to the Dnieper and further to Kiev, made by Askold and Dir in 862 or 863. It is likely that they used the portages from the Lovat to Dvina and from the Dvina to the Dnieper. According to the 'Tale of Bygone Years' the aim of their journey was Tsargrad (Constantinople), while the Ustyug Chronicle defined it as the Dnieper. It is difficult to say now whether Askold and Dir had some preliminary information about Smolensk and its size and showed caution in avoiding it or they learned about its size and considerable population only on reaching it. They had no knowledge about Kiev or they would not have asked whose town it was. Bearing this in mind one can safely suppose that they learned about Smolensk only on approaching it. In this case the Dnieper route was practically unknown to them and Askold and Dir depended for their advance along it on information obtained from the local population¹⁶).

This exchange of geographic information had opened the way to Lake Ladoga for the Slavs and the way to the Dnieper for the Scandinavians. It probably occurred not later than 862. Sometimes such contacts were far from being peaceful: a chronicle informs us that the Slavs stopped paying tribute to the Varangians and drove them overseas. Historians associate this information with the time the Slavs reached the Volkhov and Lake Ladoga.

The way along the Dnieper, the Lovat and the Volkhov was described from the south to the north. One can name two reasons for it. First, it was the direction of Slavic settlement. Second, princes' detachments collecting tribute advanced northwards. Constantine Porphyrogenitus described the entire route from the south to the north, too. The chronicle, however, defined it as "the route from

16) Avdusin D.A., Gnyozdovo i dneprovsky put (Gnyozdovo and the Dnieper Route), in: *Novoe v arkheologii* (The New in Archaeology). Moscow 1972, p. 160.

the Varangians to the Greeks' thus indicating that it was used in the opposite direction as well. Indeed, material evidence testify that it was used mainly for the southward movement. There are considerably less traces indicating the northward migration.

On their way to the north Slavs sometimes settled in the previously uninhabited places or in the aboriginal settlements. Some of such settlements, irrespective of their origin, soon acquired functions of a town. They became centres of handicrafts, trade, administration, defence, religion and culture. Such was Gnyozdovo at Smolensk which dominated the switch from the Dnieper to the Dvina, and Shestovitsa at Chernigov, which controlled the way from the Desna to the Dnieper. Their location promoted handicrafts and other urban functions. Gradually, these settlements became proto-towns. The Kievan State that had been formed by the 10th century, led to the exploitation of the territories and population subordinate to it. The river route had been turned into the route used by the princes' detachments to collect tribute. The portages had acquired special importance and were guarded by the Kievan princes. Guard settlements opposed tribal centres.

Novgorod was founded by the Slavs in the 9th century on an uninhabited place. Historians have grounds to surmise that there was alien population nearby. No 9th-century layers, that is, layers dating to the time of its emergence, have been found so far in Novgorod. The same is true of other towns founded on vacant places. This is accounted for by the small size of the primary settlement, weak development of the urban functions, frequent ground movement in the thin cultural layer. On the other hand, 9th-century layers were found and studied in towns which had replaced the old aboriginal settlements. Such are, for example, Pakov and Izborsk.

It must be also noted that the "theory" of transferring the earliest towns initiated, without any grounds, by A. A. Spitayn was proved to be unfounded and lost any significance. While resolutely opposing any supposition that a new town was built in place of an old one, we subscribe to an idea that a settlement could gradually lose its urban or proto-urban functions, which shifted to its economically mighty neighbour without any "transference" of a town or without borrowing its name¹⁷).

The same period witnessed Slavic dispersal along smaller tributaries of large rivers. Villages comprising of from one to three households appeared in floodplains of small rivers. There exists an opinion that they were settlements of extended families. Due to their small sizes they were situated far from large roads where groups of merchants-robbers roamed¹⁸). Such villages preferred till-

17) Petrukhin V. Ya., Pushkina T.A., *K predistorii drevnerusskogo goroda* (Towards the Pre-History of the Old Russian Town). Istoriya SSR, 1979, N. 4, p. 100 - 112.

18) Nosov E.N., *Arkheologicheskie pamyatniki Novgorodskoi zemli VII-IX vv.* (Ar-

ing floodplains with light-textured soils. There was still no need to develop watersheds though the process had already begun. The rural nature of such settlements is further emphasized by the ceramics which, up till the 11th century, remained modelled. No wheel, this earliest indicator of craftsmanship separating from agriculture, was used there.

Changed geographic conditions entailed changes in the everyday life and economy of the Slavs. In spite of the fact that the Slavs brought with them their agricultural implements they changed their methods of land-tilling. Some of the implements proved unsuitable for forest lands. Millet, the usual southern crop, often failed to ripen in the north. It was gradually replaced with unpretentious and frost-resistant rye. Ploughland squeezed out forests. Ploughed fields were combined with slash and burn agriculture.

The Slavs settled mainly along the rivers but both in the forest-steppe zone and in forests there were land roads. Our information about them is scarce. They are usually mentioned in connection with military actions. But, in the Smolensk birch-bark scroll No. 3 there is a mention of some logs that should be "taken out" 19).

According to some researchers land roads connected villages and churchyards (pogosts) - places where tribute collected elsewhere was brought and which served as religious and cultural centres - and other, less significant settlements 20).

We know nothing of how forest roads were built and used. Due to the high load-carrying capacity and swampy soils the sledge was the only means of transportation both in summer and in winter. As the turntable was still unknown at that epoch the wheeled vehicles were restricted by the two-wheeled cart.

We think that the described Slavic settlements was a mighty wave triggering off a rapid Slavisation of the forest zone. The possible infiltration of small groups of Slavs in the earlier period found no reflection either in archaeological or written sources.

According to some researchers, the Novgorodian land had already been densely populated by the late 9th century 21). The rapidity of the process is comparable only to the Slavic settlement of the Korchak tribes' territory. The number of tribes migrating northwards was, probably, much greater than those which had come to Eastern Europe in Korchak time. This determined the rate of settlement.

archaeological Sites of the Novgorodian Land of the 8th-9th Centuries), in: *Arkheologicheskoe issledovanie Novgorodskoi zemli* (Archaeological Investigation of the Novgorodian Land). Leningrad 1984, p. 104.

19) *A v d u s i n* D.A., Smolenskies berestyanye gramoty iz raskopok 1964 goda (Smolensk Birch-Bark rolls from the 1964 Diggings), in: *Sovetskaya arkheologiya*, 1966, N 2, p. 319 - 324.

20) *R y b a k o v* B.A., Smerdy (The Smerds), in: *Istoriya SSSR*, 1979, N 2, p. 36 - 57.

21) *N o s o v* E. N., *Op. cit.*, p. 95.

The ways and regions of Slavic settlement on the East European Plain were determined by rivers. The same can be said of the topography of the Slavic population and the newcomers' contacts with their neighbours. Merchants and military detachments travelled by rivers as well. Rivers route were the means of administrative control over the far-away regions subordinate to the both capitals of Rus.

Flüsse, Wälder und die slawischen Siedlungen des Ostens
zwischen dem 6. und 9. Jahrhundert
Zusammenfassung

Die Geographie hat schon immer stark die Lebensweise der Menschen beeinflusst; dies noch mehr bei den archaischen Gesellschaften. Die Flüsse haben ihre Siedlungsorte bestimmt und die Wälder haben Holz und viele andere Nahrungsmittelquellen geliefert. Die weite Ebene Osteuropas, die undurchdringlichen Wälder und seine Sümpfe haben die Kolonisierung nicht leicht gemacht. Die Slaven haben sich im 5. - 6. Jahrhundert flußaufwärts (Pripiat- und Dnjestr-Becken) niederzulassen begonnen. In ihren Bemühungen, sesshaft zu werden, lernten und vervollkommneten sie ihre Tierzucht-Techniken. Bevor sie den Dnjepr überquerten (nicht vor dem 8. Jh.), besiedelten sie stark sein westliches Ufer.

Zu jener Zeit kam die slavische Stammesgesellschaft im Osten in Bewegung; sie zog gegen Mitte des 9. Jh. unter dem Druck von Nomadenvölkern gegen Norden. Der Dnjepr bildete die Achse dieser Völkerwanderung. Doch verfügt man über nur sehr wenige archäologische Spuren aus jener Zeit. Auf alle Fälle konnten die Slaven, hatten sie einmal das obere Becken des Dnjepr erreicht, nicht mehr auf den Flüssen weiter vordringen. Wege auf dem Land mußten gefunden werden, welche die in die Ostsee fließenden Ströme miteinander verbanden. Während dieser Migration hatten die Slaven die dazwischen liegenden Gebiete stromaufwärts vernachlässigt.

Die Schifffahrt auf der Wolga scheint sich sogar vor dem Ankommen der Slaven an ihren Ufern entwickelt zu haben, noch immer im 9. Jh., als die Slaven übrigens mit den Skandinaviern in Berührung kamen. Die Slaven besetzten unbewohnte Gebiete (Novgorod), wie auch Gegenden lokaler Stämme (Pskar, Rostov). Die neue Umgebung veränderte ihre wirtschaftliche Organisationsform und ihre Lebensweise: die Hilfsquellen des Nordens waren anderer Art als die des Südens, die eine andere Ausrüstung erforderten. Anstelle des Getreides und der Hirse lernten sie, Roggen zu pflanzen.

Rivières, forêts et l'établissement des Slaves de l'Est entre le VIe et le IXe siècle

Résumé

La géographie a toujours influencé bien des aspects de la vie des hommes, et plus encore dans les sociétés archaïques. Les fleuves ont fixé leur établissement; les forêts ont fourni le bois, et bien des ressources alimentaires. L'immense plaine de l'Europe orientale, ses forêts impénétrables et ses marais n'ont pas été commodes à coloniser. Les Slaves s'y introduisirent en remontant le cours des fleuves (bassins du Pripet et du Dniestr) aux Ve - VIe siècles. Dans leur effort de colonisation, les Slaves apprirent ou perfectionnèrent les techniques d'élevage. Avant de franchir le Dniepr (pas avant le VIIIe siècle), ils en occupèrent fortement sa rive occidentale.

A cette époque, la société tribale des Slaves de l'Est se désintègre; elle fait mouvance vers le nord, sous la pression de peuples encore nomades, vers le milieu du IXe siècle. Le Dniepr forma l'axe de cette migration. Mais l'on dispose de fort peu de traces archéologiques de cette époque. De toute façon, une fois atteint le bassin supérieur du Dniepr, les Slaves ne pouvaient plus progresser par les rivières: il fallut ouvrir des chemins de portage (milieu du IXe siècle) qui les reliaient aux fleuves descendant vers la Baltique. Durant cette migration, les Slaves négligèrent les zones intermédiaires plus élevées.

La navigation sur la Volga fut semble-t-il développée avant même l'arrivée des Slaves sur ses rives, toujours au IXe siècle. Ils vinrent en contact d'autre part avec les Scandinaves.

Les Slaves occupèrent tantôt des terres vides (Novgorod), tantôt celles de tribus locales (Pskov, Rostov, etc.). Leur nouvel environnement modifia leur organisation économique et leur mode de vie: les ressources du nord se révélèrent différentes de celles du sud, exigeant un autre équipement. Au lieu du blé ou du millet, les Slaves apprirent à cultiver du seigle.