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FEDIR ANDROSHCHUK

# VIKINGS IN THE EAST

*Essays on Contacts along  
the Road to Byzantium  
(800–1100)*

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS UPSALIENSIS  
*Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia*

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Cover illustration: Istanbul-Constantinople, the wall along the Marmara Sea, tower with Emperor Theophilus' inscription (reign c. 829–842):  
+ΠΥΡΓΟΣ ΘΕΟΦΙΛΟΥ ΠΙΣΤΟΥ ΕΝ ΧΩ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥC  
ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟC

“Tower of Theophilus, faithful and great basileus autokrator”  
(photo by the author)

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Vallentuna and Uppsala, September 2013  
Fedir Androshchuk



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# Introduction

IT HAS BEEN A tradition to write about ‘Vikings’ and ‘Varangians’ within the framework of national histories of Scandinavia.<sup>1</sup> However, it is known that most of them were outsiders in the local societies of the respective countries.<sup>2</sup> Vikings shaped their identity profiles beyond the social and political borders of their homelands, which means that ‘Viking Studies’ actually represent a transnational history. In order to overcome the tendency to marginalize these social categories, we need to see their place in a global historical context. The material culture of Scandinavia reveals some ‘oriental’ influences, which took place in the 9th and 10th centuries.<sup>3</sup> These influences can be traced in weaponry, riding gear, coins, clothing, jewellery, ceramic, textile and copper vessels;<sup>4</sup> however, no interpretative model has yet been proposed to explain them. No critical interpretation of these objects can be undertaken without tracing channels of communication, forms of contacts and social and cultural environments in which they were circulated. During the past decade, I have studied military aspects and cultural contacts in the early towns of Scandinavia and Rus’, and lately also contacts between Byzantium and the Viking world. One result of these studies is the identification of Byzantine influences on cloth style, city life, court ceremonies, town planning and defense, all contributing to a ‘Byzantine dimension’ of Scandinavian history.<sup>5</sup>

There are numerous examples of national histories of the North, while the concept of a transnational history still needs to be explored.<sup>6</sup> The method of writing a transnational history remains to be defined, though we are aware that in dealing with a number of local histories we are required to find one story – a way of uniting different histories in a common plot. Topics that unite histories are, for example, movements of people and the spreading of ideas and technologies across national boundaries. Such common topics are quite popular in the writing of medieval history, but depending on political and/or cultural preferences they may be approached with different attitudes; sometimes they are simply denied. The debate about a Byzantine heritage in Scandinavia offers us a case in point. The question of whether or not Byzantine cultural influences

<sup>1</sup> Svanberg 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Lind 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Arbman 1955.

<sup>4</sup> Jansson 1988.

<sup>5</sup> Androshchuk 2013 and 2014 (forthcoming).

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. Patel 2010.

may be discerned have been debated at length and are still far from being resolved. Some historians of religion and art deny any considerable impact due to a lack of plain evidence.<sup>7</sup> By contrast, other scholars, especially archaeologists, try to show the importance of Byzantium in the spreading of Christianity and in the shaping of a local elite in Scandinavia. In this debate the role of Old Rus' as an agent of cultural transfer between Byzantium and Northern Europe has indeed been noted.<sup>8</sup> Northmen, who were known in the East as Rhos and Varangians, held a unique position in world history; originating from the North they became representatives of a transnational history.

#### SOURCES, METHODOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY

The study of contacts between Rus' and Scandinavia has a long tradition going back to the 18th century. The main concern of previous studies has been the extent to which Scandinavians contributed to the emergence of the Rus' state. The role of the Scandinavians in the early history of Rus' has been the subject of intense debate since the 18th century, with "Normanists" claiming that the Old Russian state was founded by Scandinavians and "anti-Normanists" claiming it was founded by Slavs. This "Normanist controversy", however, is based on a very simplified understanding of early state formation and therefore has little relevance to serious research. Another weak point in earlier discussions is that the archaeological material has been seen as subordinate to the written sources.<sup>9</sup>

However, the written sources relevant to this subject are limited and it is unlikely that their further examination will shed new light on old problems. Under such circumstances the archaeological sources take on a prominent role. Yet the value of archaeological finds has not been fully explored in the extensive discussions concerning the Scandinavian contribution to the shaping of the Old Russian state and culture. One reason is the poor quality of the publication of the results of archaeological excavations in Eastern Europe during the 20th century. Another reason is the poor knowledge of Scandinavian collections and the previous unavailability of Scandinavian publications which pre-

<sup>7</sup> Fuglesang 1997 and Nilsson 2005.

<sup>8</sup> Staecker 1997b and 1999, 385; Duczko 1997; Roslund 1997 and 1999; Jansson 2005; Androshchuk 2011.

<sup>9</sup> There is a vast literature on the role of the Scandinavians in the East, and here I can only list those relevant to the present work. The following studies are mainly archaeological and some of them illustrate how the Normanist controversy has been treated: Avdusin 1969; Klejn 1975; Lebedev 1985; Jansson 1987; Stalsberg 1989; Petruchin 1995; Mel'nikova 1996; Duczko 2004; Androshchuk 2008a.

vented access to reference material in Eastern Europe. The situation changed for the better after the 1990s. Russian, Ukrainian and Scandinavian scholars have now initiated a major project with the aim of publishing the whole corpus of Scandinavian artefacts found in Eastern Europe. The Ukrainian section has recently been published.<sup>10</sup>

This reassessment of the archaeological source material has raised new questions and offers new directions in the study of the Northmen in Eastern Europe and their impact on the emergence of Old Rus' towns, Kiev in particular.<sup>11</sup> How long did Scandinavians in foreign cultural settings continue to remember their Norse origin? How did they display their cultural identity? It has been suggested by some archaeologists that they assimilated quite quickly.<sup>12</sup> One of their arguments was the identification of so-called hybrid objects in some Rus' centres which reflect both Scandinavian and local cultural peculiarities, suggesting they had been produced there.<sup>13</sup> While this view found favour among Russian archaeologists, their Scandinavian colleagues do not regard these objects as anything other than pure Scandinavian.<sup>14</sup> Several important issues accordingly remain to be further discussed.

First, **relative numbers**. The number of artefacts of Scandinavian origin in Eastern Europe is very large, especially in comparison with those recorded in Western Europe and the British Isles. The range of artefacts includes a number of functional everyday items, such as oval brooches, which were manufactured for a specific type of traditional female dress in Scandinavia and were not a common item among the local population of Eastern Europe. There is evidence of local production of such jewellery on sites where a large quantity of other Scandinavian objects have been recognised (Gnëzdovo, Rjurikovo gorodišče). This raises the hitherto unconsidered question of the role women played in the dissemination of traditional Norse culture into Eastern Europe.

Second, **trade versus immigration**. The archaeological material has not yet proven the suggestion of a commercial origin for most of the Scandinavian objects in Eastern Europe. One important issue in this regard is the role of unusual or foreign objects in the local cultural setting as well as local patterns of consumption.

Third, **landscape and identity**. It is important to study models of the way in which cultural landscapes might be deliberately shaped in relation to the cultural identity of the Northmen active in Eastern Europe. How do we identify

<sup>10</sup> Androshchuk and Zocenko 2012.

<sup>11</sup> See e.g. Zocenko 2003; Androshchuk 2004a; Kozjuba 2004; Komar 2005.

<sup>12</sup> Lebedev and Nazarenko 1975, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Arbman 1960; Avdusin 1969, 56; Lebedev and Nazarenko 1975, 7–8.

<sup>14</sup> Callmer 1971, 68; Jansson 1987, 780.

a population's social and cultural manifestations and how were they recognized in the landscapes of the time?

And fourth, **comparative analysis of burial rites**. Graves were an important element in the construction of the cultural landscape. The topography and contents of graves in relation to settlement finds are two issues that need to be placed in a broader social and cultural context.

Not all of these topics will be fully discussed in this work. My intention is merely to approach them through the examples presented in the following essays. The first essay thus offers a general outline and contains a survey of the archaeological evidence available on the prevalence of Scandinavians in Eastern Europe.<sup>15</sup> The second essay, "Identifying Northmen in southern Rus'" deals with the important question of Norse identity and the problems associated with recognising it in archaeological sources. The third essay is a case-study of a Scandinavian presence in the territory west of Kiev, "The role of Dereva and Volhynia in contacts between Northmen and Slavs in the 9th–11th centuries". Essay number four, "Byzantium and the Viking World: archaeological evidence for contacts in the 9th–10th centuries", addresses contacts with Byzantium and the effects such contacts had on shaping the social elite in old Norse societies in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. The fifth essay is devoted to the question of the material manifestation of power and some rituals connected with the construction of large mounds known both in Rus' and Scandinavia. The sixth essay represents an attempt to prove actual contacts between Rus' and Scandinavia in the 11th and 12th centuries by taking into account mainly archaeological sources. In essay number seven, "Symbols of Faith or Symbols of Status? Christian objects in Viking Rus' contexts", I investigate the material symbols of Christianity in Viking Rus' locations. The eighth essay is a study of the role played by cemeteries in the shaping of early Christian urban landscapes in Scandinavia and Rus'. I then briefly summarize my results in a final section under the title "Cultural Adaptation and Shaping Identities".

At the centre of this volume is the significance of the region of modern Ukraine for the interaction between the Scandinavians and Byzantium. My intention is to put the main focus on the southern parts of Rus'. This is not a particularly well-investigated area, especially in terms of its links with Scandinavia, and I hope that my work, rather than offering a full picture, will provide a starting point for further discussion. A comparison of this area with northern and eastern parts of Rus' is not included in this study. That depends to some

<sup>15</sup> For a preliminary version, see Androshchuk 2008a.

extent on the different characters of settlements and politico-military situations in all these regions, but also on the state of published material in Russia.<sup>16</sup>

As already mentioned, the present study involves the correlating of two types of sources: textual narratives and archaeological material. Each type entails its own complexities and methodology. For the period of the 9th and 10th centuries, the major written records on this topic were composed by Byzantine and Islamic authors. The 11th and 12th centuries were a formative time for the shaping of the identity of the Rus' as a people and as a political entity. That the Rus' began writing chronicles is in itself an indication of this process. "This is the tale of bygone years regarding the origin of the land of the Rus', the first princes of Kiev, and from which source the land of Rus' had its beginning", reads the subtitle of the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, considered to have been composed around the beginning of the 12th century.<sup>17</sup> Though it is still a matter of debate how well the writer of the chronicle knew the early history of the Rus',<sup>18</sup> it would seem he did not know it very well: he borrowed his most important information from the Byzantine chronicle of Georgios Hamartolos and from the Greek originals of the Russo-Byzantine treaties of the 10th century.<sup>19</sup> Whenever details were missing, the Russian compiler borrowed from the local oral tradition. Under these circumstances, the manner of relating the first centuries of Rus' existence in the *Russian Primary Chronicle* displays a clear legendary element. Should we avoid such problematic information and keep only to safe ground? Surely not. In Chapter 3, I will show that even such a fabulous description as Olga's attack on Iskorosten', the city of the Derevlians, contains a core of historical truth. Archaeological excavations in Old Iskorosten' (the modern city of Korosten', Žytomirska oblast') have shown the existence of at least one hillfort settlement, which produced outstanding finds of silver and gold as well as objects of Byzantine, Scandinavian and local origin, and which was destroyed by fire some time in the middle of the 10th century. Of course, this does not mean that we should take the chronicle's explanation of the reason for this event at face value, but should take it into consideration and, with the help of archaeology and other available written sources, examine its credibility.

<sup>16</sup> For overviews of the political situations in these regions, I recommend two important overviews: Franklin and Shepard 1996; Toločko and Toločko 1998.

<sup>17</sup> Engl. trans. in Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 51.

<sup>18</sup> For the composition and different theories of history writing in Rus', see Lind 1994, 39–42; Šachmatov 2001; Ostrowski, 2007; P. P. Toločko 2008; A. P. Toločko 2008; O. P. Toločko 2011; Zuckerman 2009.

<sup>19</sup> See Malingoudi 1994 and Franklin 2002, 165.

By cross-examining and correlating the information to be gleaned from the written sources at our disposal, we should then seek verification in other relevant sources. This is the methodology of classical source criticism, familiar to both philologists and historians, but apparently less in favour among archaeologists, who too seldom use written sources critically. For the reader who is not aware of the nature of these works, I will here offer a brief summary of the most important written sources.

The descriptions of Rus' and Varangians in Arabic sources are extremely important. Most have been translated into Russian and are thus known to the Slavic audience.<sup>20</sup> They are also available in editions and translation into other modern languages.<sup>21</sup> In order to discover what the Byzantines knew about the people of the Rus' (or Rhos, as they were called in Greece) in the 9th–10th centuries we must examine several key narratives. One is the work known as the chronicle of Theophanes Continuatus (or *Scriptores post Theophanem*), a collection of chronicles covering the period 813–961 and consisting of four independent parts.<sup>22</sup> The first part contains a series of biographies of emperors reigning from 813 to 867 and was commissioned by Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (913–959). This source contains important records of raiding activities and the conversion of the Rus'. Theophanes' chronicle was continued in Leo the Deacon's *History*, describing events from 959 to 976,<sup>23</sup> and the *Synopsis Historiarum* of John Skylitzes, which covers the period from 811 to 1057.<sup>24</sup> Both Leo the Deacon and John Skylitzes include information on the military activity of the Rus' in the Balkans and specifically the role played by Prince Svjatoslav. Two other important works compiled in the reign of Constantine VII are the treatises *De Ceremoniis*<sup>25</sup> and *De Administrando Imperio*.<sup>26</sup> The former contains information on Princess Olga's visit to the Byzantine court in the middle of the 10th century; the latter describes the Rus' route to Byzantium as well as imperial attitudes to surrounding neighbours.

<sup>20</sup> See Konovalova 1999.

<sup>21</sup> For Engl. trans. with notes, see Samarraï 1959. References to the main editions and translations into French, German and English can be found in Montgomery 2008. For Scandinavian readers, I recommend Birkeland 1954.

<sup>22</sup> The anonymous author of the first part of the work considered himself the continuator of Theophanes the Confessor, hence the title. Ed. Bekker 1838. For a Russian translation, see Ljubarskij 1992.

<sup>23</sup> Ed. Hase 1828, Engl. trans. Talbot and Sullivan 2005.

<sup>24</sup> Ed. Thurn 1973, Engl. trans. Wortley 2010.

<sup>25</sup> Ed. Reiske 1829–30, Engl. trans. Moffatt and Tall 2012. See also Featherstone 2008 with references.

<sup>26</sup> Ed. with Engl. trans. Moravcsik and Jenkins 1966.

Old Russian narratives are represented by the younger version of the *Novgorod First Chronicle* (or *The Chronicle of Novgorod*),<sup>27</sup> and the above-mentioned *Russian Primary Chronicle*,<sup>28</sup> representing different traditions of depicting the early history of the Rus'. The *Novgorod First Chronicle* was compiled in the 15th century and covers the period from the 9th to the 12th century. The *Russian Primary Chronicle* extends from "when the Earth was divided between the sons of Noah" down to the year 1109 and is preserved in two redactions – the *Laurentian Chronicle*, dated to 1377, and the *Hypation Chronicle*, dated to the middle of the fifteenth century.<sup>29</sup> A Slavonic translation of the Byzantine chronicle of George Hamartolos covers the period from "Adam" to 867 and was written in the 10th or 11th century.<sup>30</sup> This was the main source for the compiler of the *Russian Primary Chronicle* on early raids by the Rus' on Byzantium.<sup>31</sup>

Art history supplies us with another source of information, since visual representations can be very exact in their details of costume, jewellery, weapons, etc. However, the dates and sources of such illustrations need to be examined critically, as is the case with all written material.<sup>32</sup> A case in point is provided by the so-called *Menologion of Basil II*,<sup>33</sup> an illuminated manuscript of the 11th century containing no less than 430 miniatures. The *Menologion* has not yet been studied sufficiently, but is a very important source for studies of Byzantine dress of the 10th–11th centuries.<sup>34</sup>

The use of archaeological sources also has its methodological problems. First of all, a large part of the material that is relevant here consists of old finds without proper documentation or which have not yet been published. The well documented finds are, as a rule, published only in Russian and Ukrainian. As a result, some readers might need a short introduction to the available archaeological sources.

The most vital archaeological records relate to a range of key sites. Old Ladoga, Rjurikovo gorodišče and Timerëvo in Russia were established in the early Viking period and provide the earliest material evidence for contacts with Scandinavia. Some of that material has been published and discussed in Eng-

<sup>27</sup> *Novgorodskaja pervaja letopis'*, ed. Nasonov 1950, Engl. trans. Mitchell and Forbes 1914.

<sup>28</sup> Engl. trans. Cross 1930 and Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953.

<sup>29</sup> PSRL, I-II.

<sup>30</sup> Croke and Scott 1990, 45 and 47. George Hamartolos was a monk in Constantinople under Michael III (842–867).

<sup>31</sup> Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 20, 23, and 30.

<sup>32</sup> For a useful discussion, see Brubaker 2008.

<sup>33</sup> Facsimile in *Il Menologio di Basilio II* 1907.

<sup>34</sup> For an important study focusing on a somewhat later period but including the *Menologion* as a source, see Parani 2003.

lish, German and French.<sup>35</sup> The situation is far worse as regards the publication of sites such as Gnězdovo, Kiev and Černihiv, sites which are fundamental for studying the presence of Scandinavians in the 10th and 11th centuries. The extensive articles by Eduard Mühle and Johan Callmer dealing with Gnězdovo and Kiev respectively still provide the only available foreign access to these sources.<sup>36</sup> The published evidence for Scandinavian artefacts has been examined by Władysław Duczko as a source of Scandinavian presence in Rus'.<sup>37</sup>

The present study is intended to present the hitherto inaccessible evidence to non-Slavic readers. It is based on my catalogue of the Scandinavian artefacts of the 10th-11th centuries from Ukraine published in collaboration with Volodymyr Zocenko (see Androščuk and Zocenko 2012). Recognition of a Scandinavian origin for this wide range of artefacts is based on my examination in situ of museum collections in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Ukraine.

Finally, I need to address a terminological issue. The designation "Vikings" in this book is a broad construct. It is known that such a name was characteristic only for one social category of Scandinavian society in the 8th to 11th centuries, namely those who were engaged in warfare and robbery.<sup>38</sup> The Viking raids were a characteristic feature of this period and we may thus label it as the "Viking Age".<sup>39</sup> The terms "Northmen" and "Scandinavians" are applied to all residents of Viking Age Scandinavia, regardless of their social status and genetic history; they share the same cultural preferences that may be read in the style of artefacts, "fashion", organisation of sites, architecture, and language. Any interpretation of artefacts needs to be problem-oriented and demands a specific contextual knowledge. That is why we have to pay special attention to both the spatial and cultural context of every single odd and untypical find in various regions. We must bear in mind all these aspects while interpreting Scandinavian finds in Eastern Europe. Viking studies are a branch of historical or "text-aided" archaeology, which means that we cannot avoid dealing with both written and archaeological sources.<sup>40</sup> There is no universal approach when combining these two sorts of information other than a constant awareness of the source criticism demanded by each discipline. Being trained in both history and archaeology, I am continually aware of this dilemma, and I remain

<sup>35</sup> See e.g. the collections of articles in Müller-Wille 1989; Hansson 1997; Kazanski, Narcessian and Zuckerman 2000.

<sup>36</sup> Mühle 1989; Callmer 1981 and 1987.

<sup>37</sup> Duczko 2004.

<sup>38</sup> Lund 1993. On terminological problems, see Abrams 2012, 18 and Downham 2012.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Svanberg 2003, who claims that the introduction of the term "Viking Age" is a result of nationalistic ideas and can be described as a colonialisation of the past.

<sup>40</sup> For theoretical approaches in historical archaeology, see Andrén 1998 and 2005; cf. the Byzantinist perspective in Crow 2008 with further references.

in debt to those historians and archaeologists who have assisted me during the various stages of my research.

Both Cyrillic and Greek have been transliterated in this volume. The transliteration of Cyrillic follows the practice employed by Scandinavian linguistic journals; a conspicuous exception is provided by my own name (Androshchuk rather than Androščuk), a choice made for bibliographical reasons. Byzantine names and terms are transliterated according to their spelling in the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*.



## *Vikings in the East – A General Outline*

Far more Scandinavian Viking age artefacts have been found in Eastern Europe than in the West – more even, in terms of jewellery and weaponry, than in a single Scandinavian country such as Denmark. This material has been found in various regions of the modern independent states of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, and also in the south-eastern Baltic area (Fig. 1). It occurs in fortified and unfortified settlements in both urban and rural settings, in graves and hoards as well as among stray finds. Here I will offer an overview of that archaeological material and its geographical distribution, a discussion of modern research on the subject and, finally, a consideration of material culture and identity. My intention is to show what kind of evidence of contacts we have, where they come from and how they have been interpreted by various scholars.

### VIKINGS IN THE SOUTH-EASTERN BALTIC AREA: GROBIŅA AND WISKIAUTEN

Latvia and the Kaliningrad region have both yielded large quantities of Scandinavian jewellery.<sup>1</sup> Lithuania has produced single finds of Scandinavian items in local cultural contexts, namely dress ornaments and items of jewellery, swords and scabbard chapes.<sup>2</sup>

A large number of Scandinavian artefacts have been found in the Late Iron Age (7th–10th centuries) cemeteries at Grobiņa (Grobin), in the mounds of Priediens II and Porāni, and also in the flat graves of Rudzukulns I (Fig. 2).<sup>3</sup> These finds include male and female artefacts typical of settlement, grave goods and stray finds in east-central Sweden and Gotland of the Vendel and Viking periods. Recently, researchers have also claimed some south Scandinavian parallels for Grobiņa's Vendel period material.<sup>4</sup> One of the mounds contained a fragmentary shield and a complete Vendel type picture stone.<sup>5</sup> It has been sug-

<sup>1</sup> Apala and Apals 1992; Atgāzis 1992; Jansson 1992; Kulakow 1992.

<sup>2</sup> Kazakevičius 1992a.

<sup>3</sup> Neriman 1958; Petrenko 1991; Jansson 1994; Lamm and Urtans 1995.

<sup>4</sup> Jansson 1994, 14–15.

<sup>5</sup> Petrenko 1991; Lamm and Urtans 1995.

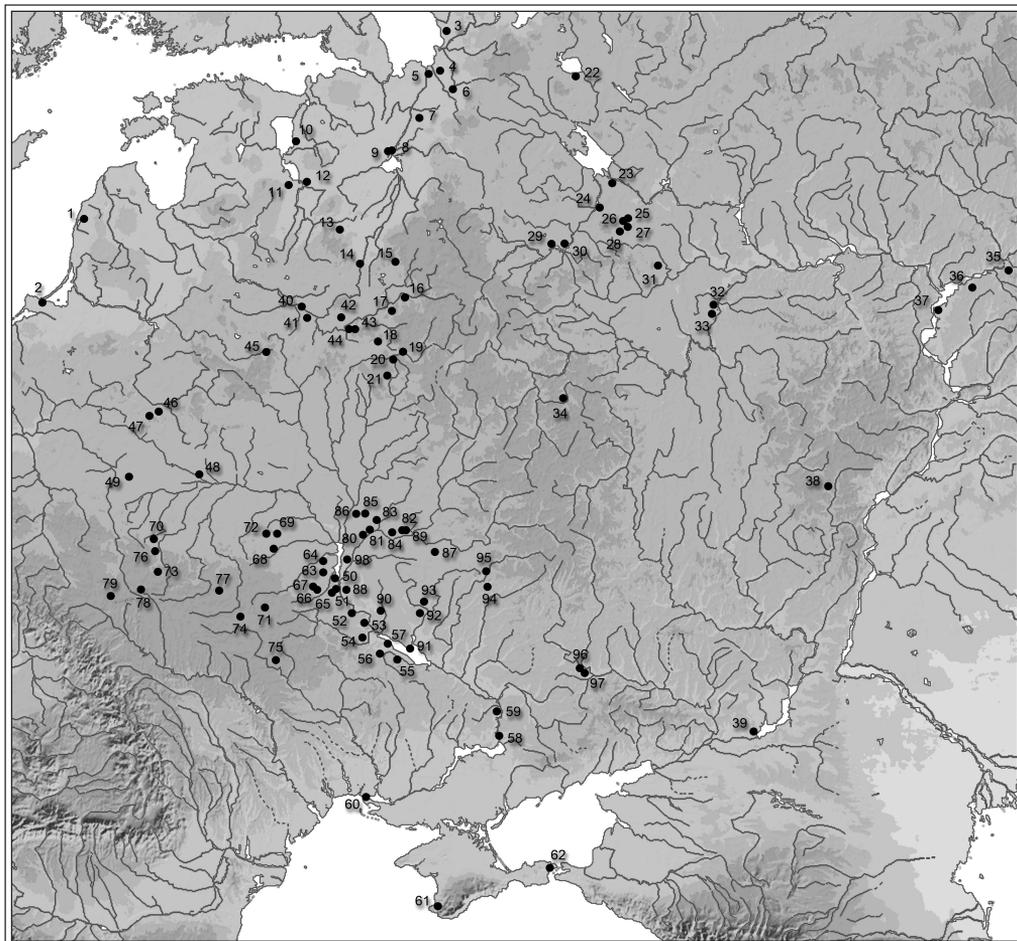


FIGURE I: Distribution of Viking Age artefacts of Scandinavian origin found in eastern Europe (by author).

gested that people from east-central Sweden are buried in the mounds and that people from Gotland are buried in the flat graves.<sup>6</sup> New excavations have yielded a number of cremation graves of local Curonian character. Though on the basis of the polyethnic character of the discovered remains, Grobiņa was once considered a trading centre,<sup>7</sup> a settlement investigated south-west of the

<sup>6</sup> Nerman 1958.

<sup>7</sup> Petrenko and Virse 1993, 102.

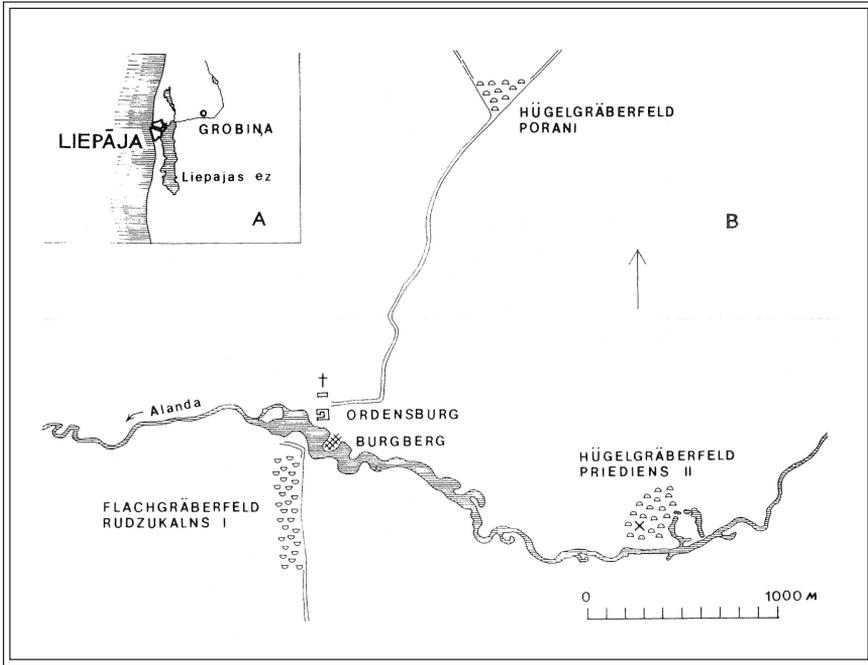


FIGURE 2: Grobiņa, Latvia (after Nerman 1958).



FIGURE 3: Aerial view of the cemetery of Wiskiauten/Mochovoe, Russia (after Ibsen 2008b).

Priediens cemetery has proved to be of local character and shows no evidence of trading activity.<sup>8</sup>

Scandinavian cultural influence at Grobiņa is usually discussed in association with another centre, Wiskiauten/Kaup (the modern village of Mochovoe in the Kaliningrad region, formerly eastern Prussia) (Fig. 3). It has been suggested that in the Vendel period, the Scandinavians of Grobiņa moved out of the Sambian peninsula to Wiskiauten and founded a new settlement there.<sup>9</sup> However, the occurrence of 9th–10th century Scandinavian jewellery in the vicinity of Grobiņa argues against this theory.<sup>10</sup>

The Scandinavian element at Wiskiauten is found in its cemetery material (c. 500 mounds recorded in total) which comprised cremation and inhumation graves.<sup>11</sup> Apart from single finds of Gotlandic provenance, a large number of the male and female items found here are typical of east-central Sweden,<sup>12</sup> while some of the female jewellery is common in Denmark in the second half of the 10th century.<sup>13</sup> It should be mentioned that Type V swords have the same origin and that together with spurs and Ladby type stirrups, they represent typical male items in Danish Viking Age graves.<sup>14</sup>

Finds of female jewellery as well as swords of south Scandinavian origin are interesting in connection with the information provided by Saxo Grammaticus in his history of Denmark, written c. 1200, regarding a campaign by Hakon, the son of the Danish king Harald Bluetooth, in the southern Baltic lands. According to Saxo, the Danes forced the local women into marriage and settled in their country.<sup>15</sup> The archaeological sources indicate, however, that there were both men and women from Denmark in Prussia in the second half and by the end of the 10th century. The archaeological material in this area contains both male and female artefacts of south Scandinavian types. If Saxo's account is correct, this would mean that the local women (at least partly) adopted Danish dress customs. However, other interpretations are also possible, and the information in this written source should therefore be used with caution.

Typical Scandinavian ritual traits such as the folding of weapons and arrangements of stone-settings have been recorded for some of the graves.<sup>16</sup> Until recently, the exact location of the settlement at Wiskiauten was uncertain, but

<sup>8</sup> Lamm and Urtans 1995, 14.

<sup>9</sup> Martens 1996, 54.

<sup>10</sup> Šturms 1949, 207, fig. 2, and 213, fig. 4.

<sup>11</sup> Nerman 1936, 72–92; zur Mühlen 1975; Martens 1996.

<sup>12</sup> zur Mühlen 1975, 20–25; Jansson 1992.

<sup>13</sup> For parallels, see Androshchuk 2004b, 115, fig. 10–11.

<sup>14</sup> Brøndsted 1936, fig. 32, 66–67, 92, 95; Pedersen 1997a.

<sup>15</sup> Ed. Christiansen 1980, 228 (Book X).

<sup>16</sup> Androshchuk 2004b, 112–113, fig. 4.

now German-Russian excavations have revealed traces of at least two villages of local Prussian character which were established here before the arrival of the newcomers from Scandinavia who came to be buried in the mounds in the cemetery. No Scandinavian finds were discovered in the archaeological layers of the settlement and it has been suggested that the settlement established here in the 6th century had a shifting location until medieval times. It is probable that the remains of a settlement with finds of Scandinavian character will be discovered in the future.<sup>17</sup>

Three interpretations of the settlement at Wiskiauten have been presented: it was a Swedish colony/garrison with an element of trade;<sup>18</sup> it began as a Gotlandic colony and later became a Danish colony;<sup>19</sup> or it was a “polyethnic” trading centre.<sup>20</sup> In fact, none of these interpretations is convincing, since they are based on Scandinavian finds from burials alone. Objects of local origin have not been taken into consideration at all; moreover, the location of the actual settlement and its character are still uncertain.<sup>21</sup>

The modern Kaliningrad region has produced 42 Viking Age swords that conform to eleven of the main sword types common in Scandinavia. A unique hoard found at Kivitten, which lies some distance away but still in the territory of Old Prussia, must also be mentioned on account of its connections with Scandinavian activity otherwise concentrated in Sambia. The hoard contained silver arm rings of 9th–10th century Hiberno-Norse type.<sup>22</sup>

Another site in the Baltic area, Janow Pomorski, possibly the port of *Truso* mentioned in the account of the 9th-century traveller Wulfstan,<sup>23</sup> yielded a large number of Scandinavian objects similar to those of Wiskiatuen.<sup>24</sup> The settlement was surrounded by a semi-circular rampart and was in use from the end of the 8th to the beginning of the 11th century. Jewellery and weapons characteristic of Gotland, east-central Sweden and Denmark were found in the cultural layers of the settlement. Traces of the production of jewellery, iron-smithing, glass, pottery, amber and antler working were revealed here, as well as finds such as coins, weights and balances indicative of the importance of trade.

<sup>17</sup> Ibsen 2008a and 2008b; Frenzel and Ibsen 2011.

<sup>18</sup> Nerman 1936, 79.

<sup>19</sup> zur Mühlen 1975.

<sup>20</sup> Kulakow 2001 and 2003.

<sup>21</sup> See, however, Kulakow 2011.

<sup>22</sup> zur Mühlen 1975, Taf. 50: 1–6.

<sup>23</sup> Englert and Trakadas 2009.

<sup>24</sup> Jagodzinski and Kapsprzycka 1991, 706; Jagodzinski 2004, 55–63, 94–113; Pudło et al. 2010.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF SCANDINAVIAN  
ARTEFACTS IN EASTERN EUROPE

Several areas within the territory of modern Russia are characterized by considerable numbers of Scandinavian artefacts: Staraja Ladoga with the area to the south and east of Lake Ladoga; Rjurikovo Gorodišče near Novgorod on the Upper Volchov River; the Jaroslavl'-Vladimir areas including the Volga River system; Gorodok on the Lovat' in the area of the Upper Lovat' River and the Upper Dnieper (Dnepr) area in the vicinity of the modern town of Smolensk (Gnězdovo and Novosělki). Solitary objects of Scandinavian origin have been found in the rural cemeteries in the countryside between the Dnieper and Dvina.

In Belarus, only solitary finds are known from excavations of some old towns (Vitebsk, Polock), hillforts (Menka, Maskoviči), graves (Menka, Uklja), and in hoards (Bryli).<sup>25</sup>

In Ukraine, a large concentration of Scandinavian artefacts have been found in the Černigov/Černihiv area on the River Desna and the middle and lower part of the Dnieper (Kyiv/Kiev, Chortica Island area and Berezan'). Solitary finds are known from the area of the Siverskyj Dinec' and Buh rivers and in the Crimea (Kerč, Sevastopol'). Weapons of Scandinavian character have been found in a grave in the cemetery at Chersonesos (Sevastopol').<sup>26</sup>

*The River Volchov and Lake Ladoga region*

Most of the earliest Scandinavian finds in Eastern Europe have been found in the lowest cultural layers of Staraja Ladoga and a few graves south of Lake Ladoga (Fig. 4).<sup>27</sup> The presence of Scandinavians in Staraja Ladoga can be dated back to the second part of the 8th century. At that time Ladoga, situated on the western bank of the River Volchov at the mouth of the small brook, Ladoğka, in a place now called Zemljanoe gorodišče, was a small settlement or farmstead, populated by people from Northern Europe.<sup>28</sup> There seems to be evidence of early blacksmith which was later supplemented by the production of jewellery.<sup>29</sup> The types of tools found here have close parallels in Scandinavia. In the course of the 780s and early 800s, the Ladoga settlement began to adopt the form of a trading centre. Two different traditions of house building appear there at this time. The large rectangular structures containing a central fire-

<sup>25</sup> Eremeev 2007; Eremeev and Dziuba 2010, 486–517; Rabcevič, Plavinski and Iov 2011.

<sup>26</sup> Androshchuk and Zocenko 2012.

<sup>27</sup> Brandenburg 1895, 122, table I: 2.

<sup>28</sup> Kuz'min 2000, 129–30.

<sup>29</sup> Rjabinin 1994, 26.

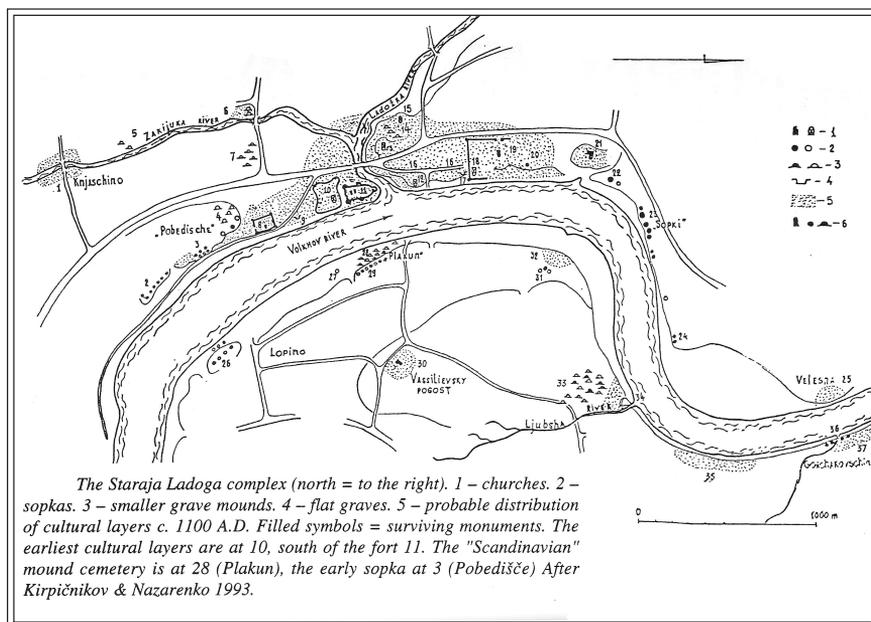


FIGURE 4: Staraja Ladoga, Russia (after Jansson 1997).

place are usually interpreted as Scandinavian and are not recorded elsewhere in the region. The smaller rectangular log-and-plank structures containing a corner fireplace are considered Slavic. The earliest layers of the Staraja Ladoga settlement have produced some objects characteristic of Scandinavian Vendel period culture (c. 600). Finds of a small oval brooch, a bronze handle/terminal ending in a horned head (some believe it depicts Odin, though this is not certain) and a collection of smith's tools seem to indicate that both women and men from Scandinavia had settled in Ladoga at this time.<sup>30</sup>

The site expanded considerably between the 830s and 840s. New houses were built on the northern side of the Ladožka. The settlement is characterised by the manufacture of metal, antler and amber objects, the making of glass beads and weaving activities.<sup>31</sup> During the second part of the 9th century the population of Zemljanoe gorodišče was still using the two housing traditions mentioned above. Some artefacts, interpreted as Slavic by Russian scholars, have close parallels in the area of the Upper Dnepr, a region which, according to the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, was populated by Kriviči tribes. A single large building with a central fireplace belongs to this period. It contained a rune

<sup>30</sup> Davidan 1992, 27, fig. 8: 8.

<sup>31</sup> Davidan 1992.

stick with a lengthy inscription the exact interpretation of which is uncertain.<sup>32</sup> A mould for producing the lunula-shaped pendants popular in many Slavic cultures of this period has been found in the earthen hillfort.<sup>33</sup> Several game pieces of Scandinavian type, also found in the hillfort, date to this and later periods.<sup>34</sup>

Subsequent layers at Staraja Ladoga, dating to the 10th century, have also produced Scandinavian artefacts: a fragmentary bronze oval brooch, equal-armed brooches, a small circular brooch, an animal-headed brooch, pendants, oval strike-a-light-shaped pendants, iron rings containing Thor's hammer pendants, decorated bronze bridle mounts and a decorated ringed pin.<sup>35</sup> A large house dated by dendrochronology to 894 was constructed at Zemljanoe gorodišče. Finds from this house include pottery, spindle whorls, beads, pieces of amber, weights, a gold finger ring, fragments of glass drinking vessels, bone/antler combs, a game piece, an axe-shaped pendant and a wooden cylinder decorated with a cast bronze bird motif.<sup>36</sup> This house was in use until the 930s and is considered a building belonging to a group of well-to-do traders, most probably Scandinavian.<sup>37</sup> Recently, it has been suggested instead that the house might have been the residence of a deputy of the prince, or even the prince's palace.<sup>38</sup> In the 9th–11th centuries, the settlement grew to cover an area of at least 10–12 hectares.<sup>39</sup>

Three Viking Age cemeteries were situated to the south east of the earthen hillfort and west of the settlement on the northern side of the Ladogka. One of them, situated in a place now called Pobedišče, consisted of mounds containing cremation and inhumation graves. The cemetery was destroyed in the 20th century, but a stray find of a 10th-century oval brooch is known from the site.<sup>40</sup> Other grave finds discovered there have close parallels in the mounds south of Lake Ladoga and one of them contained a pendant bearing Rurikid's symbol, the trident.<sup>41</sup>

On the eastern side of the River Volchov, near the village of Černavino, in a place called Plakun, a small cemetery consisting of 18 mounds has been exca-

<sup>32</sup> Mel'nikova 2001, 202.

<sup>33</sup> Davidan 1992, 32, № 39, fig. 11: 39.

<sup>34</sup> Davidan 1992, 50–52, fig. 22, 146–8, 151–4.

<sup>35</sup> Davidan 1992, 28, fig. 8: 4–6, 8–12, 9: 13–14, 21–22; Golubeva 2003, 75, fig. 128–134; 79 fig. 150–152, 154; 83 fig. 176; Kirpičnikov 2004, 189, fig. 10–11.

<sup>36</sup> Rjabinin 2002.

<sup>37</sup> Duczko 2004, 87.

<sup>38</sup> Rjabinin 2002, 23.

<sup>39</sup> Jansson 1997, 27.

<sup>40</sup> Michailov 2003, 154, fig. 312.

<sup>41</sup> Golubeva 2003, 104, fig. 315.

vated.<sup>42</sup> The mounds contained male and female cremation graves, the bodies probably having been burnt in boats or together with boat parts. In one of the female graves a fragmentary Tating-ware jug from Rhineland was found. It has been claimed by some scholars that these were made for liturgical use.<sup>43</sup> One of the mounds disclosed a chamber grave containing a male skeleton inside a coffin. The chamber grave is dated by dendrochronology to c. 895 and has close parallels in south Scandinavia.<sup>44</sup> Another chamber grave from the 10th century, also with south Scandinavian burial traits, was discovered on top of a large mound situated about 250 m south of the smaller mounds.<sup>45</sup> A male individual accompanied by two horses, riding gear, a knife, arrowheads, a bucket, an animal-headed bone point and a Byzantine bronze buckle were found in the chamber.

Most Russian archaeologists consider Plakun to be the cemetery of a Scandinavian section of the Ladoga population.<sup>46</sup> This conclusion, however, is not entirely convincing. The stray find of an oval brooch in the area of the Pobedišče cemetery mentioned above hardly excludes the possibility of finding graves with more Scandinavian artefacts in the same area. The very special topography of the Plakun cemetery, its location on the opposite side of the River Volchov, the large number of female graves, traits of nobility like the Tating-ware jug and the presence of two chamber graves and a large mound all underline the high status of the people here. It also indicates that they were in close contact with Southern Scandinavia during the 8th–10th centuries.

80 Scandinavian objects have been found in the mounds of 23 sites in the area southeast of Lake Ladoga.<sup>47</sup> Most were found, together with elements of the local Finno-Ugrian culture, in mounds with cremation and/or inhumation graves.<sup>48</sup> The female brooch types belong to the middle of the Viking Age and some peculiarities in their manufacture and usage indicate that local craftsmen made them.<sup>49</sup> The contexts of the weapon finds indicate that we are dealing with representatives of powerful rural families. Two different interpretations have been proposed concerning the character of the Scandinavian activity in this area. One goes back to Ture J. Arne and Holger Arbman, who claimed that the Ladoga area was subjected to agrarian colonization from Sweden.<sup>50</sup> The

<sup>42</sup> Nazarenko 1985; Michailov 2003; Duczko 2004, 91.

<sup>43</sup> Selling 1955, 57–59.

<sup>44</sup> Michailov 1996.

<sup>45</sup> Nosov 1985; Michailov 1997.

<sup>46</sup> Bulkin, Dubov and Lebedev 1978, 88; Nazarenko 1985, 165; Michailov 2002.

<sup>47</sup> Puškina 1997, 88.

<sup>48</sup> Puškina 1997, 88.

<sup>49</sup> Jansson 1992, 62, fig. 2, and 71, fig. 5.

<sup>50</sup> Jansson 1987, 775 with references; Duczko 2004, 99.

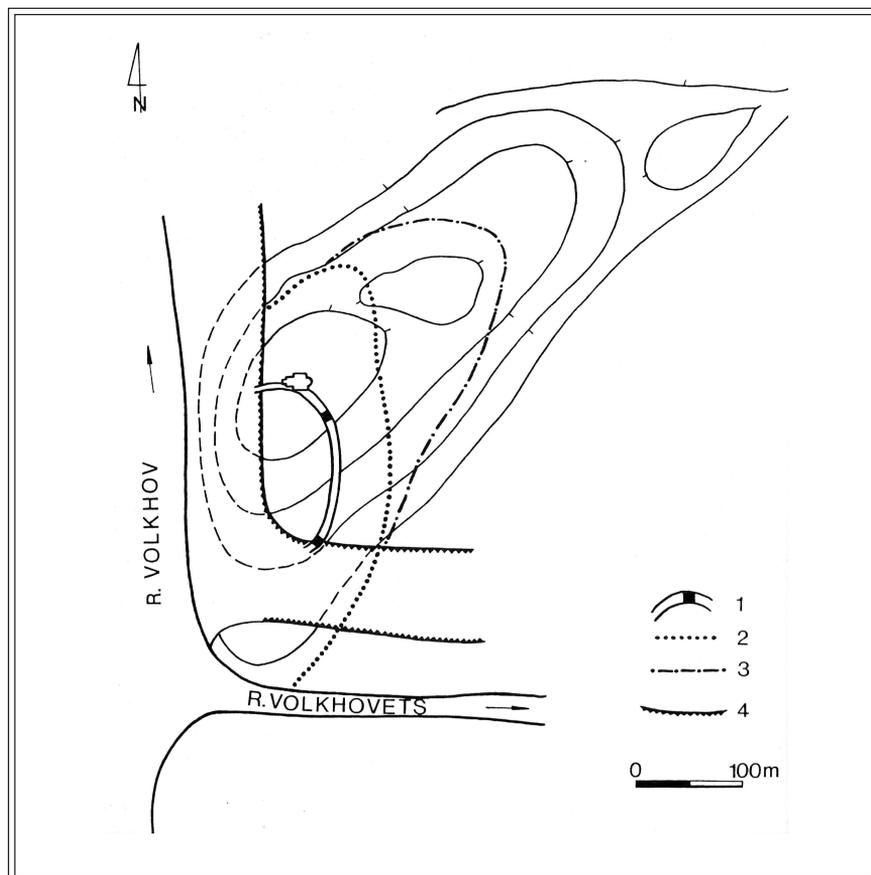


FIGURE 5: Rjurikovo Gorodišče, Russia (after Jansson 1997).

other interpretation considers the activity in this area to be connected with the Scandinavian fur trade and the trading route down the Volga.<sup>51</sup>

#### *Rjurikovo Gorodišče*

The remains of an early urban centre now called Rjurikovo Gorodišče have been revealed on a hillock about two km south of Novgorod (Fig. 5).<sup>52</sup> The settlement covers an area of 4–7 hectares and is thought to be the original Novgorod mentioned in the *Russian Primary Chronicle*. In contrast to Ladoga, Rjurikovo Gorodišče was fortified from the very beginning, which gives the

<sup>51</sup> Raudonikas 1930, 134; Boguslavsij 1993, 135.

<sup>52</sup> Nosov 1990, 1993 and 2000; Jansson 1997, 31–35, fig. 5.

place a patent Eastern European character.<sup>53</sup> Here we do not meet any large houses of Scandinavian type as at Ladoga, but there is a considerable amount of Scandinavian material from the 9th–10th century layers in the settlement.<sup>54</sup> These finds consist of male and female dress accessories and ornaments, tools, weaponry and objects related to cult and the supernatural originating in the area of east-central Sweden.<sup>55</sup> An oval brooch from the early Viking Age probably comes from a destroyed burial on the northern slope of the hill.<sup>56</sup> Careful analysis of these finds has shown that, while the population of this site was most probably made up of both locals and Scandinavian immigrants, they quickly fused into one society.<sup>57</sup>

*Other Russian towns in north-western Russia*

Scandinavian objects belonging to both male and female equipment have also been found in the Old Russian towns of Pskov, Novgorod and Beloozero. Old Pskov emerged at the confluence of the Pskovka and Velikaja rivers. During the 10th century the settlement area expanded to encompass a fort, a trading centre and a cult site. In Pskov, Scandinavian finds come from settlements as well as graves.<sup>58</sup> Five of the 80 excavated graves show Scandinavian traits. Six rich chamber graves containing Scandinavian objects were recently found in the town.<sup>59</sup>

*The Volga–Oka region*

Scandinavian artefacts have been found in different cultural contexts and different types of sites along the Volga waterway. The earliest objects have been found at Sarskoe Gorodišče near Lake Nero in the Upper Volga area.<sup>60</sup> This hillfort was a local centre inhabited from the late 7th to the early 11th centuries. Islamic coins and Scandinavian male and female artefacts indicate contacts from afar in the 9th–10th centuries.<sup>61</sup>

A large concentration of such finds came to light in an area between the city of Jaroslavl' on the Volga and the town of Vladimir on the Kljaz'ma. This, the Timerëvo archaeological complex, is situated about twelve km from modern Jaroslavl' city. The complex consisted of a settlement, including cemeteries that

<sup>53</sup> Jansson 1997, 35.

<sup>54</sup> Nosov 1990 and 2000; Jansson 1997; Duczko 2004, 103.

<sup>55</sup> Jansson 1999, 48; Duczko 2004, 103.

<sup>56</sup> Jansson 1999, 55.

<sup>57</sup> Jansson 1999, 56.

<sup>58</sup> Sedov 1992, 143–154; Duczko 2004, 112.

<sup>59</sup> Jakovleva 2004 and 2006; Zakurina 2006; Michailov 2006.

<sup>60</sup> Leont'ev 1996 and 2000.

<sup>61</sup> Leont'ev 1996, 18–21; Puškina 1997, 89.

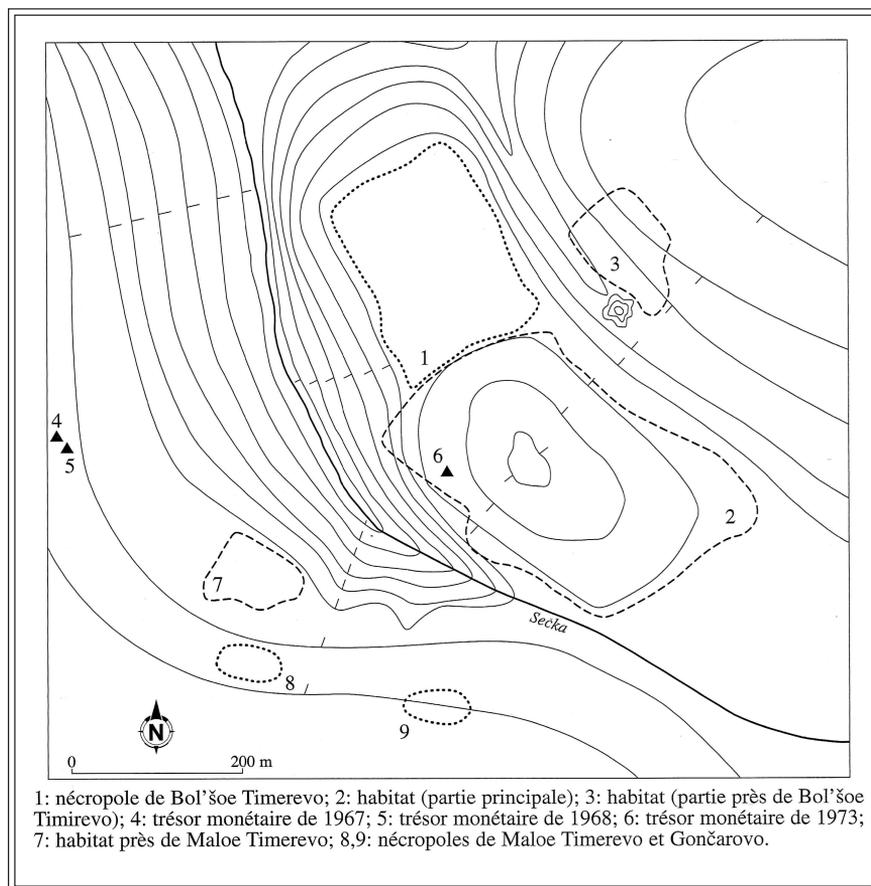


FIGURE 6: Timerëvo, Russia (after Sedych 2000).

covered an area of c. 5–6 hectares (Fig. 6).<sup>62</sup> About 500 mounds with cremation and inhumations, along with chamber graves, have been excavated here. Almost 50 dwellings using the Scandinavian building technique, pits and other structures were found, clustered together, sometimes within fences. A large hoard of Islamic coins dated to 864/5 was found in the settlement. This, along with the oriental and Scandinavian objects from the graves (Fig. 7), indicates the prevalence of international contacts in the activities of the inhabitants of Timerëvo. It has previously been suggested that three different ethnic groups lived here during the Viking Age, but it now seems that “the material culture does not indicate separate population groups, but rather a community with

<sup>62</sup> Muraševa 1997, 88; Sedych 2000.

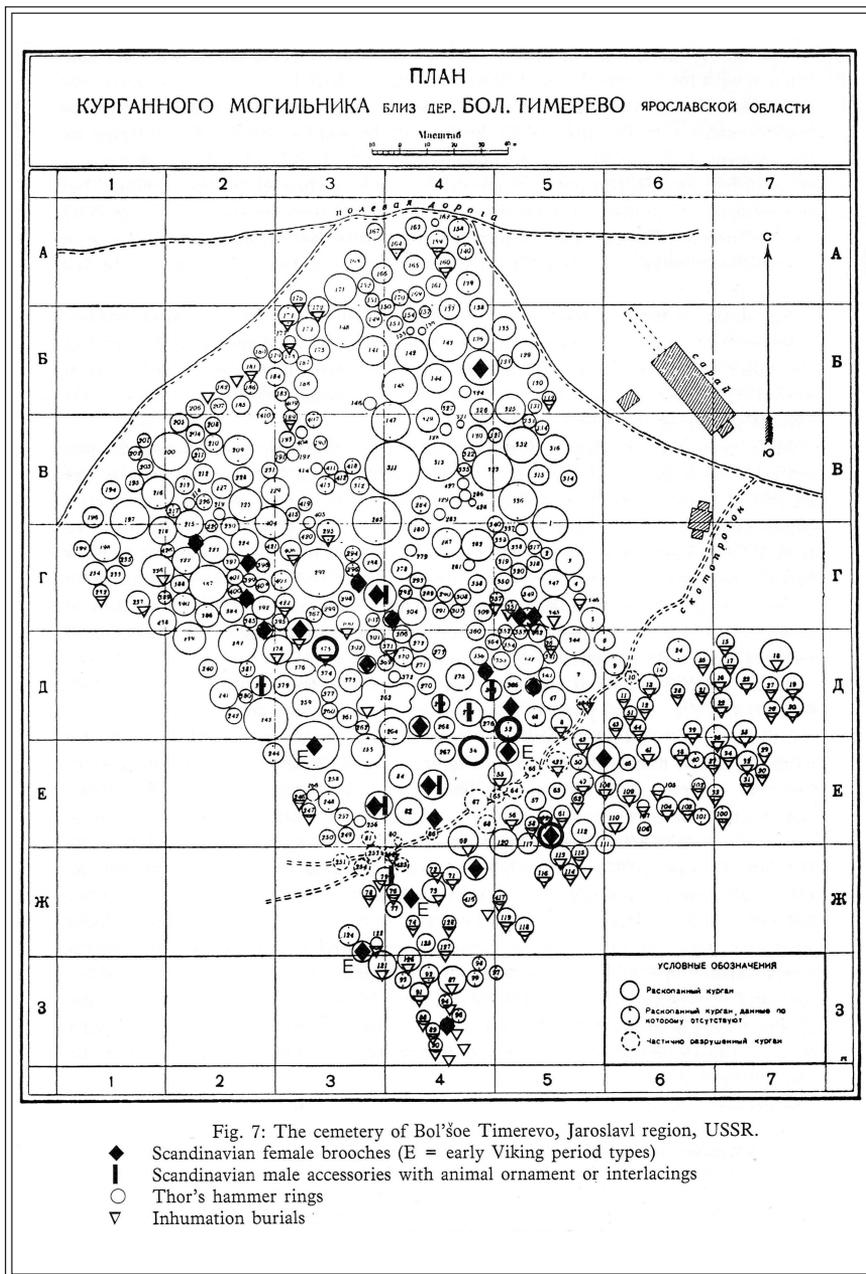


FIGURE 7: Distribution of Scandinavian artefacts in the Timerëvo cemetery, Russia (after Jansson 1987).

people of different genetic origins but viewing themselves as one community and most probably as one ethnic group".<sup>63</sup> Two different interpretations of the character of the Timerëvo settlement have been suggested. One suggests that it was an urban site,<sup>64</sup> the other that it was a rural settlement.<sup>65</sup>

A large number of mounds containing Scandinavian artefacts were found at the Michailovskoe and Petrovskoe cemeteries and mounds in the Vladimir area. These sites are interpreted as centres for the Old Russian population,<sup>66</sup> or as evidence of a Scandinavian immigration.<sup>67</sup> Scandinavian weapons and jewellery are also registered on the Upper Volga, on sites interpreted as centres that might have controlled the traffic along the Volga route.<sup>68</sup> Scandinavian penetration into the areas of the Volga Bulgars is reflected by a solitary find of an equal-armed brooch and a sword found in the town of Bulgar. One bronze scabbard chape decorated in Jellinge style has been found in Biljar. Five swords and one shield-boss have been found in different places within an area between the Kama and Volga rivers.<sup>69</sup> So far only one grave with clear Scandinavian traits is known from this area – a mound at Balymer with a cremation grave containing a folded sword, remains of bronze decorative bag mounts of local production and a strike-a-light (Fig. 8).<sup>70</sup> At least two swords and one scabbard chape of Scandinavian type were discovered in local cemeteries of Mordvinia.<sup>71</sup> In the lower Volga area there is a single Scandinavian find – a bronze scabbard-chape in Jellinge style from Danilovka.<sup>72</sup> Contacts between Scandinavians and the Slavic population in the area of the Oka river are observable in the Supruty hoard that contained a richly decorated snaffle bit made on Gotland, as well as an oval brooch of Petersen type 51 discovered on a rural settlement in the area of Upa river.<sup>73</sup> During the Viking Age, Oka was an important water route leading to the rivers Don and Desna. Only one find marks the movement of Scandinavians along the Don: a richly decorated silver equal-armed brooch in Borre style from Elets in the Voronež region.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Jansson 1999, 42.

<sup>64</sup> Dubov 1982.

<sup>65</sup> Fechner 1963, 17; Jansson 1992, 44.

<sup>66</sup> Puškina 1997, 89.

<sup>67</sup> Jansson 1992, 47.

<sup>68</sup> Tomsinski 1999, 171; Islanova, Krymov and Romanov 2005, 72–77.

<sup>69</sup> Izmailov 1997, 34, 44, 125, fig. 81.

<sup>70</sup> Izmailov 1997, 49, fig. 23.

<sup>71</sup> Šytov 1994, fig. XVIII, XIX.

<sup>72</sup> Paulsen 1953, 41, Abb. 39.

<sup>73</sup> Izjumova 2002, fig. 4; Grigoriev 2005, 164, fig. 60: 3; Muraševa 2008.

<sup>74</sup> Arbman 1960, 120, Abb. 2–6.

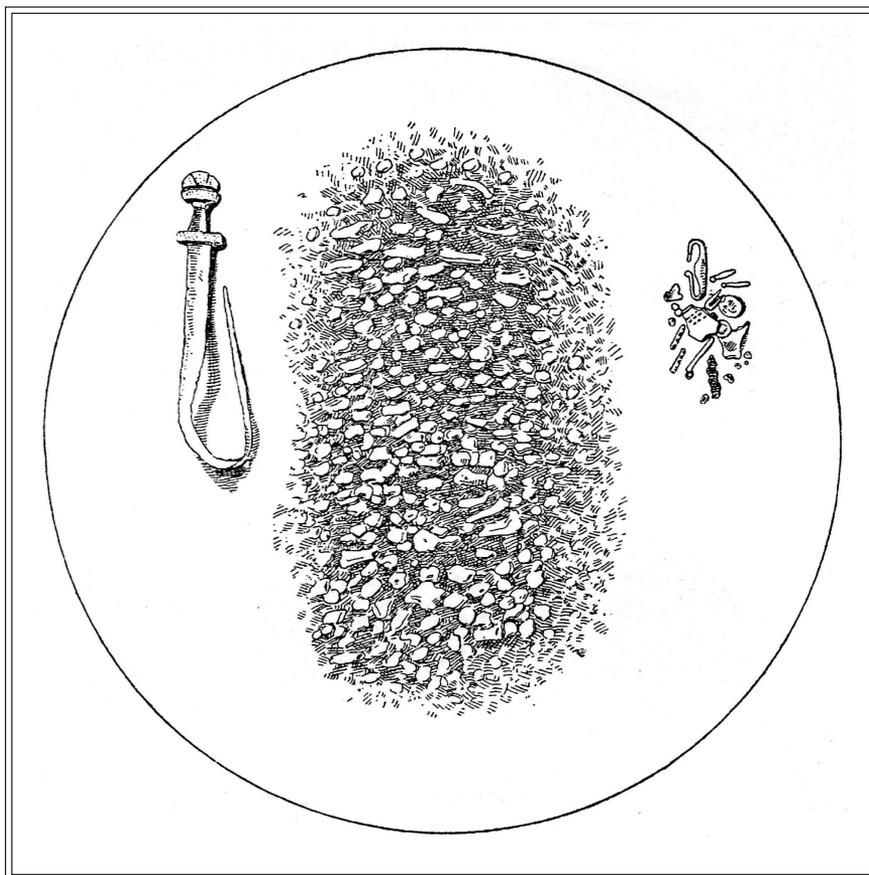


FIGURE 8: Grave excavated in a mound at Balymer, Tatarstan (after Arne 1914).

*The region of the Desna River (Šestovycja and Černihiv)*

A considerable amount of Scandinavian objects were revealed in the regions around the Desna River, especially in such sites as Šestovycja/Šestovitsa/Šestovica and Černihiv/Černigiv/Černigov. The Šestovycja archaeological complex is situated about fourteen km south-east of Černihiv, on the right bank of the River Desna (Fig. 9).<sup>75</sup> Two hillforts, a large settlement and six groups of mounds are known in this area. The dating of the hillfort in the centre of the modern village is uncertain, though some mounds excavated within the village were definitely dated to the Viking Age.<sup>76</sup> The current level of knowledge about

<sup>75</sup> Blifel'd 1977; Androshchuk 1999; Kovalenko 2000, 241–256.

<sup>76</sup> Blifel'd 1977, 187–188.

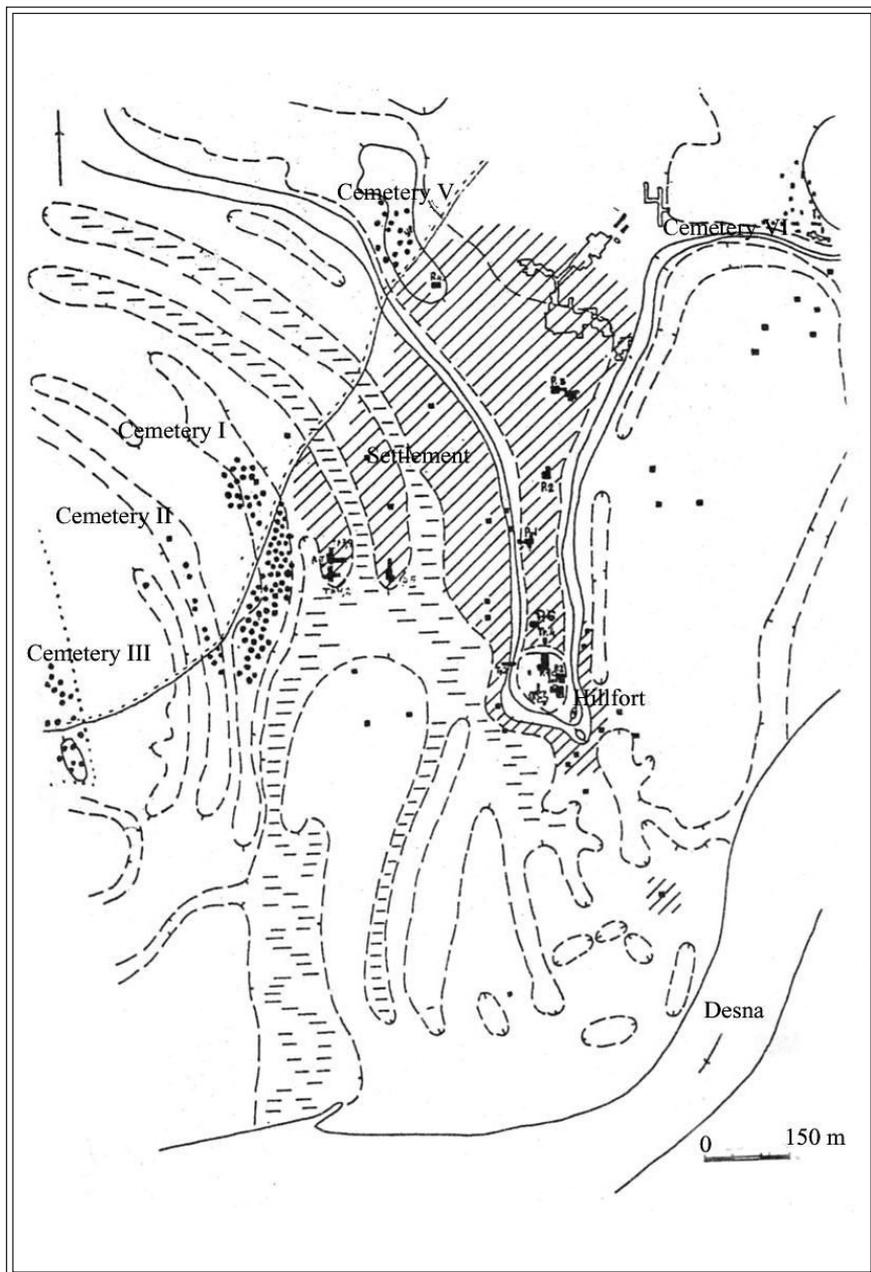


FIGURE 9: The Šestovycja archaeological complex, Ukraine (after Kovalenko, Mocja and Sytyj 2003).

Šestovycja allows us to reconstruct the following site development. Before c. 900 a small fortified settlement existed on the south end of the Korovel' cape. In the course of the 10th century a large settlement was established west of the cape, on the wet meadows and on the cape itself. Numerous mounds were erected west and northeast of the settlement. Because of intensive fortification works on the south end of the cape in the 12th century, it is unclear if any hillfort existed here in the 10th century.<sup>77</sup> During excavations of the cape area, scores of buildings were revealed. Along the western edge of the cape at the wet meadows, rectangular buildings were exposed and evidence for the production of iron and pitch was discovered.<sup>78</sup> Evidence of pitch-production was also revealed on the wet meadow area of the settlement. The finds included a fragmentary Scandinavian oval brooch, numerous rivets, beads and a bronze button from the 10th century. A large number of Scandinavian artefacts came from the cremation and inhumation mounds. Around thirty chamber graves with clear Scandinavian characteristics (jewellery, weapons and ritual traits) could be isolated among the Šestovycja graves.<sup>79</sup> Most of the Scandinavian objects from Šestovycja date to the 10th century; however, a south Scandinavian beaked brooch from the 7th century has recently been found in the settlement. The Scandinavian cultural traditions of Šestovycja point towards east-central Sweden (especially Birka) as well as Denmark and Åland.

Černihiv, the capital of the medieval principality, lay north-east of Šestovycja, on the right bank of the Desna.<sup>80</sup> The topography and character of the site in the 10th century is still disputed. All we know about Černihiv at that time is contained in the remains of numerous groups of mounds, which occupy a wide area. Scandinavian objects were found in both large and small mounds which contained either cremation or chamber graves. Two big mounds were situated on the right high bank of the Desna river. One, Gulbyšče, contained a sword with a scabbard chape decorated in Jellinge style. The third largest mound, Čorna/Čornaja Mogyla, was situated far away from the bank of the river, close to the hill where a medieval monastery was built. Two swords, boat rivets and little bronze figure of the Norse god Thor were found among a large amount of objects here. A chamber grave with horse fittings and weapons was discovered close to the mound.<sup>81</sup> It seems that the topography of Černihiv was very similar to that of Gnězdovo. The complex comprised a hillfort with a settlement on level, now boggy, terrain nearby, surrounded by satellite settlements

<sup>77</sup> Androshchuk 1999, 29, 75; Kovalenko, Mocja and Sytyj 2003, 56, 60.

<sup>78</sup> Kovalenko, Mocja and Sytyj 2003, 57.

<sup>79</sup> Androshchuk 1999, 42, table 7.

<sup>80</sup> Mocja and Kazakov 2011.

<sup>81</sup> Androshchuk 2000, fig. 1.

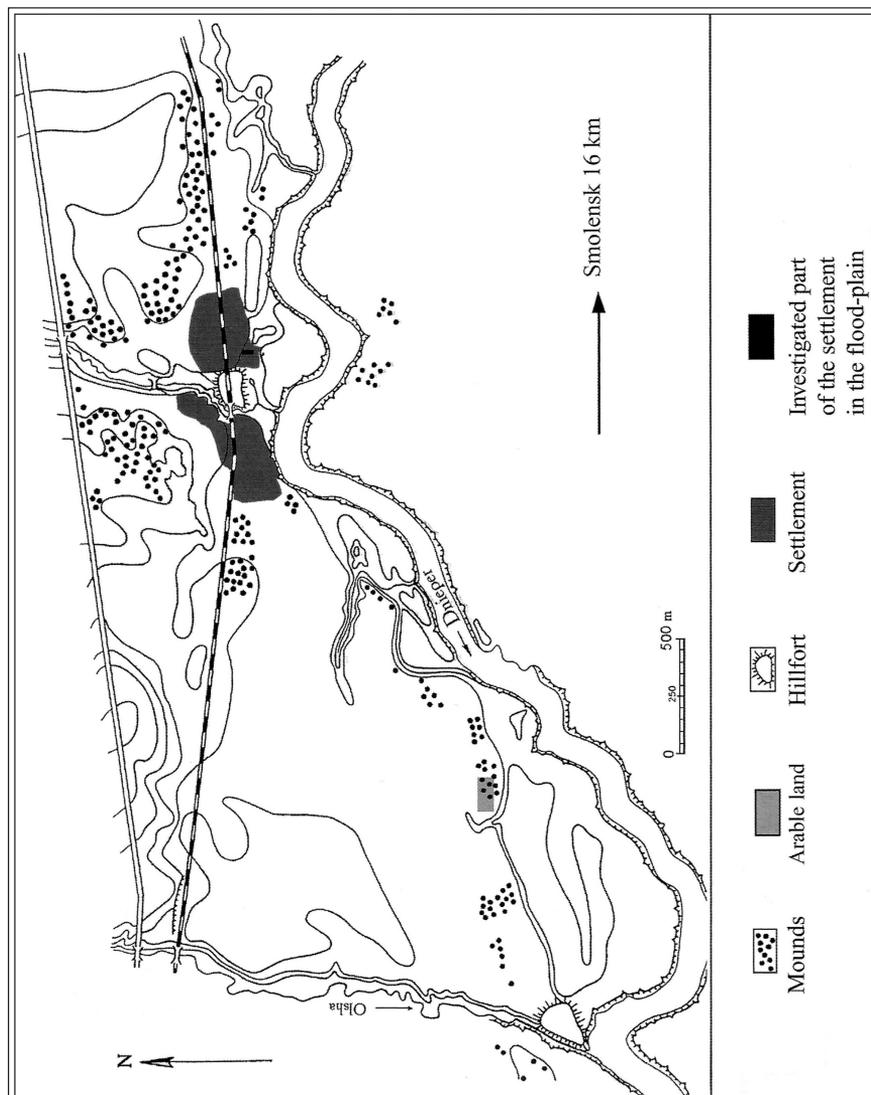


FIGURE 10: The Gnēzdovo archaeological complex, Russia (after Muraševa 2007).

with cemeteries. One such cemetery with mounds containing cremations and chamber graves was excavated in the city, on the bank of a brook called Stryžen at a place named Berizki/Berezki. Here, two mounds produced Scandinavian finds: iron crampons (frost nails) and a pendant.<sup>106</sup> Solitary Scandinavian finds are also known from some rural cemeteries in the Černihiv area, such as Sedniv/Sednev, Peresaž and Liskove/Leskovoe. Černihiv and Šestovycja developed at a meeting-point for the routes along the rivers Desna, Seim and Siverskyj Dinec' (Dinets)/Severskij Donec. A sword and other single finds reflect these movements and contacts along the Seim and Desna.<sup>82</sup>

*The River Dnieper area (Gnëzdovo and Kiev)*

The archaeological complex of Gnëzdovo is situated on the right side of the Dnieper, about 13 km from the city of Smolensk, between two tributaries of the Dnieper: the Svinec/Svinets and the Olša (Fig. 10).<sup>83</sup> The complex consists of a central settlement with the hillfort Centalnoe/Tsentralnoe on the brook Svinec, surrounded by large cemeteries. The dating of a second hillfort and the remains of a settlement at the mouth of the river Olša is uncertain. The cemetery consists of several groups of mounds. The total number of mounds offered by different scholars varies between 3 000 and 5 000.<sup>84</sup> There are two different explanations for a relationship between such a vast number of mounds and the cemetery. Some scholars argue that all these mounds belonged to a single settlement, while others suggest that the different groups reflect the various populations of small satellite communities lying on the lower terrain outside the main complex.<sup>85</sup> Recent archaeological excavations in the low-lying area revealed a cultural layer containing the remains of wooden structures and finds from the 10th century.<sup>86</sup>

More than 250 artefacts of Scandinavian origin are now known from the early phases of the Centalnoe hillfort, the southwestern part of the settlement and the southern part of the Lesnaja group of mounds at Gnëzdovo.<sup>87</sup> Scandinavian jewellery and weapons have been found in the mounds with cremations, inhumations, chamber graves, and especially in the hillfort and settlement of Gnëzdovo. Fragmentary moulds have been found on the Centalnoe hillfort.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Androshchuk 1999, 107–108, fig. 60.

<sup>83</sup> Mühle 1989; Jansson 1999, 49; Duczko 2004, 157.

<sup>84</sup> Avdusin 1969; Mühle 1989.

<sup>85</sup> Jansson 1999, 49.

<sup>86</sup> Muraševa, Fetisov and Eniosova 2003; Muraševa 2007, 106–114; Muraševa and Pannin 2009; Muraševa and Stefutin 2011.

<sup>87</sup> Puškina 1997, 89; Duczko 2004, 159.

<sup>88</sup> Eniosova 2001, fig. 7–10.

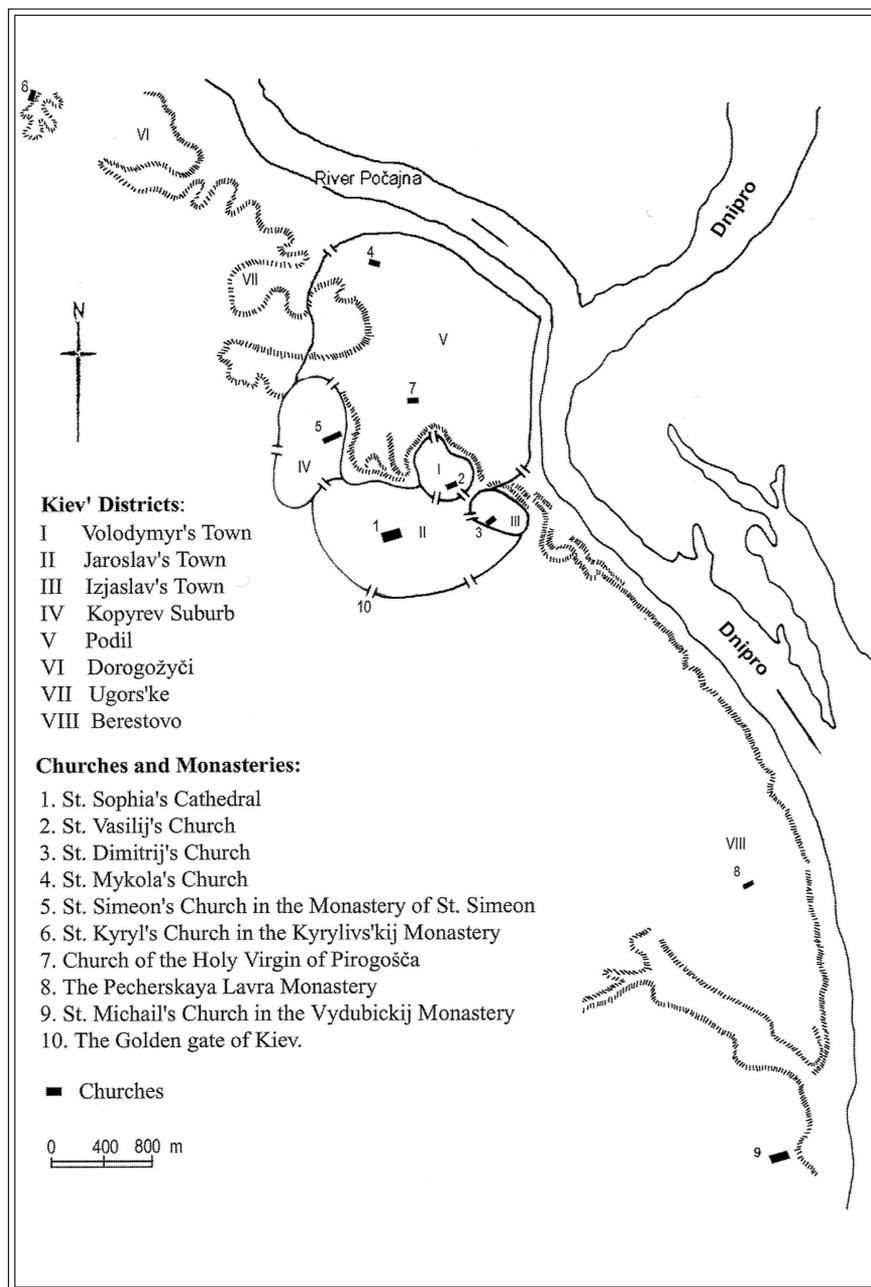


FIGURE 11 Map of Viking Age Kiev, Ukraine (after Sachajdak 2007).

This is where the majority of the coins, a hoard of jewellery, Scandinavian artefacts and sword fittings occurred,<sup>89</sup> testifying to the governing role of the hillfort during the lifetime of Gnězdovo. The cemeteries of Gnězdovo include large mounds that are either concentrated in separate groups, or standing alone among lower mounds. They contain boat cremations and some Scandinavian artefacts.<sup>90</sup>

The Scandinavian artefacts from Gnězdovo have close parallels with those from graves in east-central Sweden and Denmark and with solitary finds on Gotland.<sup>91</sup> Different interpretations have been offered for Gnězdovo. Some Russian scholars have interpreted the site as an important industrial centre belonging to the prince's retinue.<sup>92</sup> Scandinavian scholars, however, consider this site either a central proto-urban settlement surrounded by a number of farming communities belonging to a single society that included people of Scandinavian origin<sup>93</sup> or resembling "a mixture of Birka and Rjurikovo Gorodišče" with a culture that exposes "its origin in Svealand".<sup>94</sup> A number of Scandinavian objects have also been found in hillforts, rural settlements and cemeteries in an area between Western Dvina and the Upper Dnieper.

Kyiv (Kiev) is situated on the high right bank of the Dnieper (Fig. 11). During the Viking Age, this Rus' centre covered the upper part or the town hill, called "Gora" in medieval written sources, and now known as "Starokyevska gora", while the lower part is known as "Podol'e/Podil". A row of hills stretch north of Gora towards another 10th-century centre, Vyšhorod/Vyšgorod. Two of the hills rising over the lower town still preserve their medieval names: Zamkova and Ščekovycja.

Archaeological excavations at Starokyevska gora revealed a small hillfort from the 7th century, which could be connected to the hillfort of the Slavic prince Kiy, mentioned in the *Russian Primary Chronicle*. According to the chronicle, this town still existed when the Northmen Askold and Dir arrived at Kiev in 862. The chronicle relates how they gathered other Varangians and remained as princes in the town built by Kiy. Excavations in the 1970s discovered several well-preserved wooden buildings in the lower part of the town, even complete merchant properties from the late 9th–10th centuries. The finds indicate that merchants and craftsmen were the main inhabitants. No arte-

<sup>89</sup> Androshchuk 1999 with references.

<sup>90</sup> Bulkin, Dubov and Lebedev 1978, 33; Duczko 2004, 161.

<sup>91</sup> Thunmark-Nylén 2001; Duczko 2004, 181.

<sup>92</sup> Petruchin and Puškina 1979, 101; Puškina 1997, 89; cf. criticism in Jansson 1999, 51.

<sup>93</sup> Jansson 1999, 51.

<sup>94</sup> Duczko 2004, 188.

facts of Scandinavian origin were found in Podil during these excavations.<sup>95</sup> However, large numbers of such objects did come from the 10th-century cremation and chamber graves in the upper town. A hoard of six gold bracelets of Scandinavian type was also found there. These and other finds indicate that no regular townscape existed prior to the 11th century. The most likely structures were individual farmsteads around which mounds arose. A chain of satellite settlements situated below the hills stretched northwards from the town. One of them existed in the area of the modern Jurkivs 'ka Street, where the remains of several destroyed mounds with cremation and inhumation graves have been uncovered. The graves yielded jewellery and swords of Scandinavian character.<sup>96</sup> A hoard of Islamic coins and jewellery, dated to 935/6, was also found there.

Solitary Scandinavian objects including brooches, bronze pendants, scabbard chapes decorated in Borre and Jellinge style and swords have come to light in towns, hillforts and settlements to the north and west of Kiev (about ten finds in total from Vyšgorod, Bilogorodka, Korosten', Lystvyn, Pljaševa and Byčeva).<sup>97</sup>

South of Kiev, down the Dnieper, solitary finds of Scandinavian character are known as far as the Old Rus' town of Perejaslav.<sup>98</sup> Objects of Scandinavian origin have also come to light in the lower Dnieper area. Here, close to the island of Chortycja, five swords and other objects from the late Viking Age were found in the river. Taking into account the character of these finds and also textual evidence concerning the sacrifices of Rus' on the island of St Gregory,<sup>99</sup> this find could possibly be interpreted as a weapon sacrifice, a well known practice from this period in Sweden and Denmark.

#### *Crimea*

There is only one Scandinavian grave known in the territory of the Crimean peninsula. It was discovered in the cemetery of Byzantine Chersonesos and comprised a scramasax and lancet shaped arrowheads.<sup>100</sup> A scabbard chape decorated in Borre style was also found in the town. Another chape with a bird motif came to light at Kerč.<sup>101</sup> There are no Scandinavian finds of female character known from this area. The exceptional military character of the finds is also characteristic of Scandinavian objects in Bulgaria. Six bronze scabbard chapes decorated in Borre and Jellinge style and some swords of Scandinavian

<sup>95</sup> See discussion in Androshchuk 2004a; Zocenko 2003.

<sup>96</sup> Androshchuk 2004a, 36.

<sup>97</sup> Some of these are discussed in Zocenko 2004.

<sup>98</sup> Androshchuk 1999, 108; Duczko 2004.

<sup>99</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio* in Jenkins 1985, 60–61.

<sup>100</sup> Kolesnikova 1975.

<sup>101</sup> Frenkel' 2002.

origin have been discovered at different sites in Bulgaria, and it has been suggested that all these elements of weaponry probably came to Bulgaria via the Dnieper route.<sup>102</sup>



To sum up, numerous objects of Scandinavian origin have been found in the vast territory of Eastern Europe. They have been discovered in hoards and graves, or as single finds in both rural and urban areas. The earliest evidence of Scandinavian presence dates from the 8th century and comes from Staraja Ladoga in northern Russia. To the 9th century belong artefacts discovered in the areas along rivers: Volchov and Volga in northern and north-eastern Russia and some parts of the Dnieper and Siverskij Dinec'. Finally, many finds dating from the 10th and 11th centuries have been recorded in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. Accordingly, with few exceptions, most Scandinavian artefacts have come to light within the territory of the Old Rus' state. This means that they are important sources for shedding light on the long-debated role of Northmen in the emerging of Rus'.

#### MODERN RESERACH ON SCANDINAVIAN ACTIVITY IN THE EAST

Ever since Hans Hildebrand's article was published as an archaeological contribution to the Swedish version of Vilhelm Thomsen's book about the origins of the Russian State,<sup>103</sup> archaeological sources have become an important argument for both Normanists and Anti-Normanists in the discussion on the role of the Scandinavians in the creation of the Russian state.<sup>104</sup> Yet in his article, Hildebrand raised the question of how best to determine correct criteria when searching for Scandinavians in Russia. In his view the relationship between foreign and local items is important in such studies.<sup>105</sup> He came to the conclusion that finds of oval brooches in particular, which are characteristic for the costume of Scandinavian women, represent crucial evidence for Scandinavian settlement in Russia.<sup>106</sup> However, he did not include the role of such finds in his discussion on the foundation of the Russian state, and only underlined their importance for Swedish cultural history.<sup>107</sup> This discussion was continued by Ture J. Arne who, on the basis of his personal studies of museum collections and excavations of graves and grave goods in

<sup>102</sup> Jotov 2004.

<sup>103</sup> Hildebrand 1882a.

<sup>104</sup> Shmidt 1970; Šaskol'skij 1970.

<sup>105</sup> Hildebrand 1882a, 135.

<sup>106</sup> Hildebrand 1882a, 139.

<sup>107</sup> Hildebrand 1882a, 141.

both countries, suggested a wider list of indicators for Scandinavians in the east, including crampons (frost nails), rivets, weapons, strike-a-lights, combs and scissors. He regarded graves with such finds as evidence of the existence of Swedish colonies.<sup>108</sup> Arne's approach was developed by Holger Arbman,<sup>109</sup> who, while accepting the existence of Scandinavian colonies in the east, nevertheless came to the conclusion that there is no archaeological evidence supporting the idea that Scandinavians were involved in the "foundation" of a state.<sup>110</sup> Many of Arne's indicators were called into question by later researchers, who suggested trade and exchange as possible ways for Scandinavian artefacts to have reached Russia. Moreover, neither Arne nor Arbman gave detailed explanations for their own definitions of "colonies" and "colonisation". This is one reason why their conclusions were immediately challenged by Soviet scholars.

All conclusions about Scandinavian migration, expansion and colonisation became tangled up with the question of the foundation of the Russian state. This was an extremely sensitive topic during and after the Second World War. Adolf Hitler's statement that "Unless other people, beginning with the Vikings, had imported some rudiments of organisation into Russian humanity, the Russians would still be living like rabbits" certainly placed a shadow over enquiries related to Scandinavian activities in the east.<sup>111</sup> The purpose of Soviet research in the 1930s and the post-war period was to look for social processes and state formation in the archaeological data. The theoretical basis of Soviet scholarship was the Marxist belief that socio-economic processes and class differentiation formed the background of state formation.<sup>112</sup> Accordingly, finds in most ancient towns "demonstrate the unity of Russian culture".<sup>113</sup> This did not leave room for any discussion about the cultures of other populations apart from those that had been colonized.<sup>114</sup> At the beginning of the 1930s, one of the prominent founders of Soviet archaeology, Artemij V. Arcychofskij, was very wary of investigating the earliest cultural layers at Novgorod because of probable Scandinavian finds. Even simple interlacing decoration on some ancient items made him uneasy. Only in private conversation was he able to admit: "Nevertheless, there is something Scandinavian in this interlacing".<sup>115</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Arne 1914 and 1940, 35.

<sup>109</sup> Arbman 1955 and 1960.

<sup>110</sup> Arbman 1955, 78–79, 94.

<sup>111</sup> Duczko 2004, 4; Härke 1998, 22.

<sup>112</sup> Klejn 1975, 3; Latvakangas 1995, 23.

<sup>113</sup> Avdusin 1970, 97.

<sup>114</sup> Balodis 1943, 609.

<sup>115</sup> Avdusin 1994, 30.

From the 1950s to 1980s, scholars developed a concept of a “retainer culture”, concluding that various grave types reflected social differentiation in the society of Old Rus’. All graves containing rich items were determined to be retainers’ graves.<sup>116</sup> It was only possible to speak of other cultural elements that had first become incorporated and assimilated by Old Russian culture. Singling out foreign elements in the material culture became a method of discussion for both Normanist and Antinormanist. On the basis of this approach different calculations of the number of Scandinavian graves were put forward.<sup>117</sup> Typical Scandinavian traits were regarded as ornaments decorated in Scandinavian style, ritual traits such as the bending of weapons and boat graves, but not simple tools like knives, crampons and strike-a-lights, which could be produced by the local population.<sup>118</sup> At the same time, cremation burials under a circular mound were not recognised as Scandinavian<sup>119</sup> even though these graves form the normal type of burial in Sweden.<sup>120</sup> Chamber graves, known from both Rus’ and Scandinavia, were not regarded by Scandinavian scholars as typically Scandinavian. They were interpreted as showing continental influence in the burial practice of such Scandinavian urban centres as Hedeby and Birka.<sup>121</sup> Even outside of these centres, in some rural areas of Sweden,<sup>122</sup> Denmark and Norway,<sup>123</sup> they were interpreted as an interregional burial rite.

The debate between Normanists and Anti-Normanists concerning evidence for Scandinavian activity was characterized by a paradox – both of them, in looking for traces of the Vikings, were influenced by artefacts belonging to female dress. As for swords – evidence that might seem more relevant when considering Vikings – it has been common to view most of the Viking Age swords as Carolingian. Many swords have blades with pattern-welding or inscriptions in Latin lettering that are usually interpreted as the marks of the Carolingian manufacturers. The interpretation of some damaged lettering on the blade of a unique sword decorated in Scandinavian style and indicating the name of a Slavic blacksmith has made it possible to argue that some swords could have been produced in Rus’.<sup>124</sup> It has also been claimed that it is impossible to base arguments on sword provenances because the same types were in use all over

<sup>116</sup> Mel’nikova 1996, 71–72.

<sup>117</sup> Avdusin 1969, 58; Stalsberg 1989, 464; Žarnov 1991, 203.

<sup>118</sup> Kirpičnikov 1970a; Stalsberg 1989, 450–451.

<sup>119</sup> Stalsberg 1989, 450–451.

<sup>120</sup> Šaskol’skij 1970, 26; Gräslund 1980, 72; Jansson 1987, 775.

<sup>121</sup> Gräslund 1980, 46.

<sup>122</sup> Arbman 1936, 89–98.

<sup>123</sup> Eisenschmidt 1994; Stylegar 2005.

<sup>124</sup> Avdusin 1970, 55; Kirpičnikov 1970a, 67; Androshchuk 2003a.

Europe.<sup>125</sup> This issue is further complicated by the variety of ways in which a sword's provenance can also be obscured: swords could be captured in battle, bought, stolen or simply lost.<sup>126</sup> Nevertheless, it is remarkable that the finds of swords are restricted to the same areas where female Scandinavian brooches are found.<sup>127</sup> Some scholars have suggested that a number of the swords found in Rus' might have been imported by Scandinavians.<sup>128</sup> However, it now seems that the frequency of the various types of sword hilts indicate clear regional peculiarities. It is possible to suggest that some types were much more popular in Denmark, others in Sweden and others again in Norway.<sup>129</sup> We have also now identified technological peculiarities attached to swords that were produced in Scandinavia.<sup>130</sup> A deposition of five inscribed blades without hilts on the island of Öland,<sup>131</sup> on the one hand, and unfinished portions of sword hilts on Gotland and Birka on the other, make it possible to conclude that some imported blades were assembled in Sweden with hilts reflecting local taste.

During the 1970s the approaches to the *Varangian problem* moved away from identifying Scandinavian artefacts to contextual analysis. Previously, discussions focused on the problem of explaining the adjacent locations of such centres as Gnëzdovo and Smolensk, Rjurikovo Gorodišče and Novgorod, Sarkoe and Rostov. This was examined within the context of the theory of the transference of towns. In 1974, an often-cited Soviet article devoted to the relationships between Scandinavia and Rus' was published.<sup>132</sup> Entitled "Gnëzdovo and Birka", it aimed to identify eastern European sites from the Viking Age that contained a distinctive type of settlement similar to the series of north European trading centres of Ribe, Hedeby, Kaupang and Birka. Although most of what the article categorizes as the "characteristic peculiarities" of these centres (especially the absence of fortification and chaotic planning) has not been supported by further excavations, it was a first attempt to put eastern European material into a wider geographical context. It now seems that the topography and functions of these centres differed. Some of them have the same topography, but completely different functions and fates (e.g. Gnëzdovo compared with Kiev and Černihiv). Others have both different topography and functions

<sup>125</sup> Avdusin 1969, 55.

<sup>126</sup> Blidheim 1970, 114.

<sup>127</sup> Callmer 1971, fig. 1–2.

<sup>128</sup> Kivikoski 1970.

<sup>129</sup> Androshchuk 2003a, 43; Androshchuk 2004c; Martens 2003, 56–57.

<sup>130</sup> Stalsberg 1989, 451; Kirpichnikov, Thålin-Bergman and Jansson 2001, 231; Martens 2004.

<sup>131</sup> Thålin-Bergman and Arrhenius 2005, 51.

<sup>132</sup> Bulkin and Lebedev 1974.

(e.g. Ladoga, Rjurikovo, Sarskoe, Timerëvo). The only thing that unites all these centres is, in fact, the presence of Scandinavian artefacts.

It has also been argued that centres like Rjurikovo, Gnëzdovo and Šestovitsa were foci of great princely power, *pogosts*, for the collection of tribute, and that they lay in areas where the power of local tribes was strongest (Novgorod, Smolensk, Černihiv respectively).<sup>133</sup> However, as the dating of these “tribal centres” shows, they were established later than the supposed *pogosts*. On the other hand, their interpretation as military centres is contradicted by the existence of large numbers of Scandinavian female elements, which are not usually part of a military assemblage.

From the 1930s to the 1960s, some Scandinavian scholars believed that it was possible to glean the processes of state formation from archaeological data.<sup>134</sup> It was pointed out that a great deal of the Scandinavian artefacts were concentrated mainly along the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea, such as Elblag in Poland, Wiskiauten in Prussia and Grobiņa in Curonia. It was argued that these represent colonies of natives from Denmark, east-central Sweden and Gotland. Viking activity in the Rus’ realm was even considered a deliberate political action of the Swedish state.<sup>135</sup> One feature common to all these works was the consideration that the activities of Swedes on the Baltic coasts must have been large-scale political operations of the Swedish king.<sup>136</sup> However, modern historians believe that it is not possible to talk about a Swedish kingdom prior to the second half of the 12th century and the beginning of the 13th.<sup>137</sup> Furthermore, the existence of colonies of Gotlanders on the east coast of the Baltic has been called into question by modern Scandinavian archaeologists.<sup>138</sup> Many items from Grobiņa in Latvia, a site identified with Rimbert’s Seeburg, are indeed of Scandinavian origin and date from the Vendel period to the beginning of the Viking Age, but their connection with some sort of Gotlandic colonies has no foundation.

Thus, as the above-mentioned discussion has shown, objects of Scandinavian origin found in Eastern Europe have often been explained in their relation to certain social and ethnical groups of the population. This raises important questions about the correlation between material culture and identity.

<sup>133</sup> Petruchin and Puškina 1979; Mel’nikova 1996, 71.

<sup>134</sup> Neriman 1958, 174.

<sup>135</sup> Neriman 1936, 88.

<sup>136</sup> Neriman 1936, 81.

<sup>137</sup> Sawyer 1982, 9, 52; Sawyer 1991, 62; Lindkvist 1988, 8 and 59.

<sup>138</sup> Carlsson 1983; Thunmark-Nylén 1983; Jansson 1994.

## MATERIAL CULTURE AND IDENTITY

The relationship between material culture and identity is a much-debated subject in archaeology. It takes its beginning in discussions about the concept of “ethnicity”, which entered archaeological discourse at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of 1970s.<sup>139</sup> Archaeologists, historians and philologists raised questions as to whether the collective names mentioned in the written sources could correlate with the modern concept of ethnic groups and archaeological data, and whether artefacts, architecture and cultural landscape could be said to express identities of different kinds.<sup>140</sup> Some scholars came to the conclusion that it is impossible to correlate archaeological finds with certain kinds of political units or certain names of people known from written sources. According to this view, early medieval people are no longer regarded as homogenous ethnic units, but as constantly changing institutions united by, for example, political leadership and ideas of a common origin and tradition.<sup>141</sup>

With the appearance of the work of Fredrik Barth, a social anthropologist who showed that social organisation and intensive contacts had crucial impact on the shaping of ethnic identity,<sup>142</sup> the distinction between cultural and ethnic identities became a subject of discussion among archaeologists. In Scandinavian archaeology, discussions moved towards theoretical aspects of the problem. Archaeological research was criticized for basing its interpretations solely on written sources and was accordingly considered as lacking problem orientation.<sup>143</sup> Instead of searching for direct connections between the data of written sources and material culture, a contextual and interpretative archaeology with a particular emphasis on the question of cultural transfer was advocated.<sup>144</sup> And yet, it should be noted that the essence of this approach still depended on data:

An artefact can be interpreted on the basis of its context with the aid of other variables, and the more of these there are, the richer in contrasts is the backdrop we create. Success in the solution of a problem is thus closely associated with the quality and quantity of the archaeological source material, with the chronologies and sorting systems, something that is easily forgotten in discussions of theory.<sup>145</sup>

I would like to take a recent study of the problem, Charlotta Hillerdal's *People in Between: Ethnicity and Material Identity*, as a point of departure for a further

<sup>139</sup> Walleström 1997.

<sup>140</sup> Jones 1997; Johnson and Welinder 1998; Gillett 2002; Brather 2004; Cassel 2008; Curta 2011.

<sup>141</sup> Harrison 1994; Goetz 2003; Garipzanov, Geary and Urbanczyk 2003.

<sup>142</sup> Barth 1969.

<sup>143</sup> Andrén 1998, 103; Roslund 2007, 9.

<sup>144</sup> Roslund 2007, 10; Gustin 2004, 47–50.

<sup>145</sup> Roslund 2007, 11.

consideration of this matter.<sup>146</sup> Challenging former approaches, Hillerdal aims “to locate a phenomenon of identity-making that can, and will, take on very different expressions in different situations, as well as creating different meaning and serving different purposes.”<sup>147</sup> She does so by means of three case studies – the Varangians of Rus’, the Canadian Métis, and the Estonian-Swedish population of the island Ruhnu (Runö) – and comes to the following main conclusions: first, the concept of ethnicity is a modern construction; second, ethnic groups cannot be traced in material culture.<sup>148</sup>

The archaeological section of Hillerdal’s case study on the Varangians deals with a range of material objects and sites that are usually considered important as evidence of Scandinavian presence in Eastern Europe. While earlier research has pointed out that “Scandinavian ethnicity” in Rus’ was often mixed with elite and social identities, Hillerdal argues that we are dealing with “class identity” and not ethnic identity.<sup>149</sup> Mentioning in passing objects such as oval brooches, house types and other grave material, Hillerdal criticises the typological-chronological approach of sorting these objects according to ethnic categories. At the same time, she treats artefacts as an objective source compared to written documents, which as a rule are seen as intentional and tendentious.<sup>150</sup> In her concluding remarks, she underlines the problem of generalisations in archaeology. She argues that “national aspirations, political reality and theoretical preconceptions” shape modern theory and practice, which makes it important to engage in new theoretical discussions on these issues.<sup>151</sup>

While I certainly agree with the idea that national and political issues influence the way in which we conduct research – such tendencies can indeed be distinguished in the study of Scandinavians and Rus’ as described above – there are other problems with Hillerdal’s approach that need to be addressed. It is common knowledge that a “type” in archaeology is an ideal construct created by scholars in order to unite similar objects. We understand that there are different types – types designed in the past, i.e. consciously created as such, and types similar in their function but differing in their design: morphological types singled out on the basis of their shape, functional types singled out on the basis of their functions, and, finally, stylistic types uniting objects made according to similarities in technique and design. If one object has peculiarities which make it different from the surrounding context (by material, morphology and

<sup>146</sup> Hillerdal 2009.

<sup>147</sup> Hillerdal 2009, 37.

<sup>148</sup> Hillerdal 2009, 65–72.

<sup>149</sup> Hillerdal 2009, 73.

<sup>150</sup> Hillerdal 2009, 73–81.

<sup>151</sup> Hillerdal 2009, 83.

style), we have to explain it. Here, a serious comparative analysis of the cultural and geographical background of the archaeological finds is the only way to reach an objective understanding. Let me offer a couple of examples.

We know that between the 9th and 10th centuries the Scandinavian female dress included oval brooches.<sup>152</sup> However, we also know that oval brooches were used in some areas east of the Baltic and that they are found also in the territory of former Rus'. How do we deal with such a situation? Well, first we have to make sure that we are dealing with the same types of brooches. Ingmar Jansson has made extensive comparative analysis of the oval brooches in Scandinavia and Rus'. Earlier research had already noted that in the 11th and 12th centuries Scandinavian brooches were imitated by the local population of southeast Finland, the southeast Ladoga Lake region and Latvia.<sup>153</sup> Jansson managed to define certain peculiarities in the manufacture and use of the oval brooches, including a difference in the pin arrangements,<sup>154</sup> which made it possible to distinguish real Scandinavian oval brooches from local imitations made in the 11th and 12th centuries.<sup>155</sup> This conclusion, based on a detailed artefact analysis, made it possible to re-examine Birger Nerman's theory about Viking colonies on the eastern side of the Baltic.<sup>156</sup> The shape of the pins and the position of the edge holes, in addition to the clear local character of the find associations, indicate that the oval brooches of Scandinavian type found in the areas between Scandinavia and Old Rus' were used by the indigenous population and not by people from Scandinavia.<sup>157</sup> However, the oval brooches of Scandinavian type discovered in the cemeteries of Jaroslavl region as well as Pskov, Gnëzdovo, Kiev and Šestovycja, reveal typical Scandinavian traits in the manner of their production and usage.<sup>158</sup> Judging from this and other finds, we can suggest the presence of people of Scandinavian origin at these sites.

Similar conclusions may be drawn on the basis of an analysis of the distribution of swords. A study of the variations of sword hilts and their decoration has shown that we can single out not only Carolingian swords, but also the types which were most popular in Norway, Sweden and Denmark. The appearance of such swords in Iceland, the British Isles and Eastern Europe indi-

<sup>152</sup> Hägg 1974; Jansson 1985.

<sup>153</sup> Jansson 1992, 63.

<sup>154</sup> Jansson 1992, 68–74, fig. 3–6.

<sup>155</sup> Spigis 2007.

<sup>156</sup> Nerman 1958, 174, 195.

<sup>157</sup> Jansson 1992, 76.

<sup>158</sup> Jansson 1985.

cates Scandinavian activity in these regions, as is also evidenced by the written sources.<sup>159</sup>

Do the finds of swords and oval brooches reflect the real picture of Scandinavian immigration to these countries? In my opinion – both yes and no. In eastern Scandinavia there are a number of cemeteries where not a single oval brooch has been found and beads are the most common type of grave goods. Birka is an outstanding case where a large number of such brooches were recorded. The same is also true for swords. However, the appearance of swords and oval brooches in the same cemetery is usually limited to only a few cases, which indicates that both categories of objects were associated with individuals of a particular social status.

Typology is thus the basis for comparing and analysing all structural parts of the material. This is still the only scientific way to study the material world of the past. That is why it is not possible to study a “situationally based context” without understanding its structural elements. In the case of Eastern Europe, “archaeological culture” is a working term for sorting out chronologically contemporaneous but culturally different associations. No scholar now thinks – as was indeed the case before – that these archaeological cultures reflect only ethnic unities of one and the same sort. It is clear that such associations as a rule consist of different cultural elements, which are very difficult to correlate with particular ethnic groups.<sup>160</sup> Such denominations as “Scythians”, “Sarmatians” and “Slavs” play a relevant role as working terms in archaeological interpretations.<sup>161</sup>

Here it is important to point out the crucial relationship between archaeology and history. Once more taking the discussion of the Varangians by Hillerdal as a cue, we may note that Hillerdal ignores the important collaboration between the two disciplines. Hence a range of written sources that contribute to our understanding of “identity” in the Viking Age are left out of her discussion.<sup>162</sup> We may put it in the following way. We live in a world of circulating modern concepts. To these belong both “identity” and “culture”. Identity can be individual and collective. “Individual identity” is usually considered a “continuity of selfhood”,<sup>163</sup> whereas “collective identity” may be explained as “selfhood of

<sup>159</sup> Androshchuk 2004c, 2007 and 2008.

<sup>160</sup> For the Scythians, see Murzin 1986; for the Greeks and local “barbarian tribes”, see Lapin 1966, 212; Parovic-Pesikan 1974, 144–149; Kryżyckij 1982, 112–146.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. Curta 2001.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. Franklin 2002, 180–195; Androshchuk 2008a, 532–535.

<sup>163</sup> Wagner 2002, 34.

a collectivity". "Identity" is thus about "identification", at the same time making a difference between the individual and/or the collectivity with others.<sup>164</sup>

When dealing with the problem of the relationship between material culture and identity, we have to make clear how stable they are. It has been shown that identity is constitutively temporal and changeable and that it represents different forms.<sup>165</sup> Examples from comparative anthropology are accordingly of interest. I would therefore like to briefly discuss a relevant parallel or model of cultural survival and adaptation: the Estonian-Swedish settlement of Gammalsvenskby in Ukraine.<sup>166</sup>

The history of Gammalsvenskby is well documented and highly important for our understanding of the entire migration process – from the time of departure to the arrival of the migrants and their gradual cultural adaptation into the local environment.<sup>167</sup> First of all, it seems that the travelling of a relatively large group of people through vast geographic areas is a dramatic action. For instance, of the 967 Swedes who moved from the Estonian island Dagö on 20 August 1781 to the south of Ukraine, only 537 reached their new homeland on 1 May 1782. It was recorded that diseases took the life of 345 people during this journey. The first type of dwelling made by the Swedes in Ukraine was a sunken hut. Of course, the most interesting period in the history of the colony is the first 60 years of cultural isolation from the old homeland. During this time they managed to keep their language, customs and identity. We also know how they identified themselves in a multi-ethnic environment.<sup>168</sup> From an archaeological point of view, the gradual change of fashion and the decline of written language of these Swedish colonists are interesting. Concerning fashion, one thing has to be noted: the conservatism. Basically surrounded by two close neighbours, they preferred to change their fashion to the German rather than to the Russian one. This means that there was a kind of cultural preference, and for some reason (similarity of language, belief and perhaps values) one group of neighbours was viewed as closer and more understandable.

In relation to the above-mentioned problem of how ancient migrations could be reflected in material culture, the case of the Ukrainian Swedes should be born in mind. If we would know nothing about the Swedish colony in Ukraine, only two known artefacts would be available for searching their origin

<sup>164</sup> Wagner 2002, 35; Straub 2002, 71–72.

<sup>165</sup> Wagner 2002, 50; Henry 2002, 100–101.

<sup>166</sup> Cf. Hillerdal's case studies of Metis and Ruhnu Island, the relevance of which does not convince me; see Hillerdal 2009.

<sup>167</sup> Hedman and Ålander 1993.

<sup>168</sup> Hedman and Ålander 1993, 59–60.

in northern Europe: two rune calendars.<sup>169</sup> One was brought by the Swedes from Dagö and the other was made in the colony in 1829. From an archaeological point of view, these two artefacts would represent the existence of several hundred immigrants. This fact is important to bear in mind when discussing possible migration processes behind the large number of Scandinavian Viking Age finds that are recorded in Eastern Europe.



We may come to the conclusion that material objects do play an important role in the manifestation of identity, not only of single individuals but also of groups of people. In historical archaeology, identity is seen as a complex, multifaceted cultural construct, featuring in particular origin, language, material culture, religion and other symbols. This means that the study of identity must be undertaken with an interdisciplinary approach, in which studies of material culture, written sources, ethnographic analogy, sociology and psychology have to play important role.<sup>170</sup> For a better understanding of the identity of the Northmen we have to pay particular attention to the “Viking diaspora” that emerged in the East. In the following chapters we shall consider the role of surrounding cultures and their influences on the Scandinavians.

<sup>169</sup> Hedman and Ålander 1993, 14.

<sup>170</sup> Goodwin 2005.



## *Identifying Northmen in Southern Rus'*

The traditional view of contacts between Scandinavia and Eastern Europe during the Viking Age is that the southern regions of Rus' were less affected than the northern part.<sup>1</sup> This conclusion is based on the combination of a scarcity of written sources and continued poor publication of the archaeological evidence. It seems to me that when dealing with this problem, we must keep in mind a fundamental question: who and what are we looking for? It has been suggested that burial practice (especially the use of boat graves and chamber graves) and the occurrence of certain traditional female brooches (such as oval brooches) are the most informative sources for identifying the presence of "Scandinavians" in Eastern Europe.<sup>2</sup> The subjective approach of these criteria has been criticized,<sup>3</sup> and in current discussions the debate tends to focus on the *identity* rather than *ethnicity* of social groups.<sup>4</sup>

In this chapter, I will address three main questions. First, how did Northmen identify themselves in the area under consideration? Second, how were Northmen identified by their neighbouring "Others"? And third, how can we identify these Northmen in written and archaeological sources? Considering these questions, we must also deal with the complicated question of Rus' identity, which was integrated with the transformations of regional identities and the shaping of new social identities for the Northmen.

### RUS' AS A PEOPLE AND A TERRITORY IN WRITTEN SOURCES

The term Rus' has itself changed in meaning over the course of time and has been used to denote completely different kinds of identity. A good illustration is the question about the identity of some Scandinavian people who visited the court of Louis the Pious at Ingelheim on 18 May 839,

<sup>1</sup> Lebedev 1985, 241 and 245; Mocja 1990, 95–96.

<sup>2</sup> Šaskol'skij 1965, 120–121; Lebedev 1985, 244; Stalsberg 1989; Mocja 1990, 91; Žarnov 1991, 203.

<sup>3</sup> Callmer 1971; Jansson 1987.

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, Hedenstierna-Jonsson 2006, 36–37 with references; Roslund 2007, 99; Sørensen 2009; Kershaw 2009.

described in the *Annals of St Bertin* (*Annales Bertiniani*).<sup>5</sup> The process of investigating their identity may be reconstructed in the following way.

They were sent to Ingelheim with the envoys of the Byzantine emperor Theophilos (829–842): Theodosius, metropolitan bishop of Chalcedon, and Theophanius, who had the title *spatharios* at the Byzantine court. The purpose of the envoys was to confirm the treaty of peace between the two rulers. In his letter, Theophilos asked Louis to help these people so that they could travel home safely through his kingdom. Theophilos expressed in his message a clear Byzantine vision of these Scandinavians. He called their people (*gens*) *Rhos* and their ruler *chaganus*.<sup>6</sup> As a comparison, Liutprand of Cremona, who visited Constantinople in the 10th century, noted that “Byzantium has on its northern flank Hungarians, Pechenegs, Khazars, and Russians (*Rusios*), whom we call also by the other name of Northmen (*Nordmannos*)”.<sup>7</sup> He also explained why the Byzantines named these people in this way: “In the northern lands there are people, whom the Greeks call Ρούσιος (red-haired), because of their look...”.<sup>8</sup>

Written sources also offer a possible explanation as to why the ruler of *Rhos* was called *chaganus*. According to *The Book of Ceremonies*, Byzantium in the 10th century had special diplomatic forms of address for foreign leaders and potentates which depended exclusively on the place of these people in the hierarchical order of the Byzantines. For instance, the title *rex* (king) could be used only for rulers of Saxonia, Gallia, Germania and Francia, while *archon* (prince) was used for Bulgarians, Hungarians and people of Rhosia. The title *chaganos* was used only for the ruler of Khazaria.<sup>9</sup> In the 9th century, however, the hierarchical position of the *Rhos* and their relationship to Khazaria were not yet established, and for that reason the Byzantines seem to have chosen the title of *chaganos*. Returning to the *Annals of St Bertin*, we learn that during the investigations conducted by Louis it became clear that these people belonged to the *Sueones*.<sup>10</sup> There is no mention of why they were suspected of being spies or exactly how Louis the Pious managed to discover their true identity, but since later on in the same chapter of the annals there

<sup>5</sup> *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Waitz 1883, 19; ed. Nelson 1991, 44. See also Nazarenko 1999, 288–289; Garipzanov 2006, 7.

<sup>6</sup> *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Waitz 1883, 19.

<sup>7</sup> Liutprand of Cremona, *Relatio de Legatione Constantinopolitana*, ed. Scott 1993, 76; Liutprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis*, ed. Diakonov 2006, 20.

<sup>8</sup> Liutprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis*, ed. Diakonov 2006, 96.

<sup>9</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De ceremoniis*, ed. Reiske 1829–30, 686–692; Moffatt and Tall 2012, 686–691.

<sup>10</sup> *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Waitz 1883, 20.

is a description of the arrival of envoys from the Danish king Horich,<sup>11</sup> there is good reason to suggest that the Danes were the ones who helped Louis.

So what can we learn about identity from this story? Well, it is clear that a group of "sweones" had at least two different names for identification. These names – *Rhos* and *Sueones* – were given to them by cultural neighbours. It is also possible that this group of people had their own name for self-identification, which is not mentioned by the chronicle. It is clear, then, that important information can be found in written sources. But at the same time it should be noted that several questions remain. For example, it is not certain from this record where the home of these foreigners was, and there is an extensive literature devoted to this topic.<sup>12</sup>

For Arab writers, the identity of the Rus' was quite clear; they distinguished between the Rus' and their neighbouring Slavs in almost all respects, from clothing to lifestyle and activities.<sup>13</sup> They described the Slavs as dressing in linen shirts and leather boots and using spears and shields in battle, whereas the Rus' dressed in short caftan-like coats or jackets with buttons and wide trousers, and their women wore bracelets, beads, rings and "discs" on the chest. Unlike the settled Slavs, the Rus' had no fixed property and lived on what they could acquire by the sword. Sources from the eastern part of the Muslim world relate that the Rus' were headed by a leader, for which some records use the term *malik* and others *haqan*. Priests are also mentioned, many of whom were involved in human and animal sacrifices. Some had considerably more power than their kings. The Rus', moreover, were not only warriors. According to Ibn Rustah and Ibn Hauqal (10th century), the Rus' traded in sable, ermine and squirrel pelt, honey and wax, and they had dealings with the Khazars and Byzantines.<sup>14</sup> Al-Mas'ūdi (10th century) records that some Rus' lived in the land of the Khazars and were warriors of the Khazar kings; others lived on the shores of the Buntus (Caspian) Sea and included traders who had dealings with the capital of the Bulgars, Romans, Byzantines and Khazars.<sup>15</sup> The only source that suggests any form of permanent settlement of the Rus' ruled by *Rūs-hāqān* is a geographical work, *Hudūd al-'Ālam* or "The regions of the world" (composed c. 982), which tells that the Rus' included a distinctive group

<sup>11</sup> *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Waitz 1883, 23; ed. Nelson 1991, 47.

<sup>12</sup> Pritsak 1981, 28; Nazarenko 1999, 288–290; Garipzanov 2006.

<sup>13</sup> In the following, I have used mainly Russian translations of Islamic sources and compared them with the Norwegian translations published in Birkeland 1954. References to Russian translations and related studies may be found in Mel'nikova 1999, 169–258. A bibliography in English is available in Montgomery 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Birkeland 1954, 15–16, 49–51.

<sup>15</sup> Birkeland 1954, 33–34.

of warriors, the *muruvvat*, and that the Rus' paid one tenth of their profits in tax to their government. Three main geographical centres are distinguished in this source: *Kūyābā*, the king's seat, where distinctive fur and valuable swords were produced, *S.lābā*, where in peaceful times they went trading into Bulgar districts, and *Urtāb*, a highly protected site forbidden to strangers where valuable blades and swords were produced.<sup>16</sup>

In Byzantium, the word Rus' (*Rhōs*) referred to Scandinavians until the 11th century, when it seems to have been replaced by the word Varangians (*Varangoi*); in a number of official Byzantine charters from the eleventh century, the words Varangians and Rus' are used as synonyms.<sup>17</sup> At about the same time appeared the Arabic name *Babr Warank* (Varangian Sea)<sup>18</sup> and the *Varjagi* of the *Russian Primary Chronicle*. The origin of the word is still not clear, but it indicated different things in different languages. In Slavic and Greek it meant Scandinavians and/or Franks; in English or Old Norse it referred to Scandinavian mercenaries in the service of Byzantine emperors.<sup>19</sup> *Hetaireia*, the imperial guard in Constantinople, had many foreign mercenaries. Many of the Varangians also became part of the bodyguard of Kievan princes. The mercenary Varangians who came to Rus' and the Byzantine Empire were all men. The lack of women among them marks an essential difference compared to the Rus': the Rus' came with their families and settled in Rus'. During the second part of the eleventh century the term Varangian increasingly came to signify west Christians/Catholics in Rus'.

We first meet the idea of tribal identity among the Northmen in Rus' with the name of Prince Rjurik. Before Rjurik's descendants gained power over the whole of Rus' there were at least two other Scandinavian clans mentioned by the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, which places their settlements in the cities of Polock and Turov. Rogvolod "had come from overseas, and exercised authority in Polock just as Tury, from whom the Turovians get their name, had done in Turov".<sup>20</sup> Concerning Askold and Dir, the Primary Chronicle tells us there were "two men with him who did not belong to his tribe (не племени его ни боярина), but were boyars".<sup>21</sup> The Slavonic word *племя* meant "descendants" or "relatives". So, according to the chronicle, Askold and Dir did not belong to Rjurik's family clan, and this gave an excuse for killing them and appropriat-

<sup>16</sup> Birkeland 1954, 52; Hudud al-'Alam, *The Regions of the World*, trans. Minorsky 1937, §44.

<sup>17</sup> Obolensky 1970, 161–162.

<sup>18</sup> Birkeland 1954, 60.

<sup>19</sup> Pritsak 1993, 688.

<sup>20</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 91.

<sup>21</sup> PSRL, I, 20.

ing their possessions.<sup>22</sup> According to the chronicle, Oleg reasons with Askold and Dir as follows "You are not princes nor even of princely stock, but I am of princely birth".<sup>23</sup>

The Nordic identity of Prince Oleg's envoys to the Greeks in 907 is revealed by their Scandinavian names.<sup>24</sup> However, the peace treaty between Rus' and Byzantium in 911 demonstrates a new kind of identity. Among the envoys here presenting themselves as "from the kin of Rus'", 13 bear Scandinavian names while two are probably Finnish. In the updated treaty of 944 this has changed – Slavic names appear for the first time, although we still find Scandinavian and Finnish names.<sup>25</sup> In these treaties, the Rus' comprise representatives of the princely family, their envoys, other agents and merchants. The treaties do not take their ethnical origin into account. The description of the Dnieper raids in *De Administrando Imperio* cites place names in both Slavic and Scandinavian. This fact could be interpreted as evidence of a bilingual situation, at least in the communities which were active along the Dnieper waterway. Such communities with mixed cultural backgrounds could adopt various identities depending on the language they used.

A concept of kin clearly not related to biological relationships is to be found in the 944 treaty between Rus' and Byzantium.<sup>26</sup> Here "kin" embraces not only Prince Igor's close relatives such as son, wife and two nephews, but also Scandinavian and Slavic representatives. In both treaties the "kin" of the Rus' means "all the serene and great princes under the sway of the prince".<sup>27</sup> Because both treaties are translations of Greek texts, their contents also reflect a Byzantine view of identity. Rus' and Greeks are opposed to each other as non-Christians and Christians, which in reality was only partly true. In contrast to the 15 envoys listed in the treaty of 911, the delegation of 944 consisted of 25 persons. In contrast to Oleg's delegation, Igor's delegation also included envoys of other Rus' nobles and merchants. It is difficult to understand why Igor's close relatives had their own envoys. To my mind, the only plausible explanation is that they did not all reside in the same place (Table 1).

<sup>22</sup> Kolesov 2000, 21–22.

<sup>23</sup> PSRL, I, 20.

<sup>24</sup> PSRL, I, 31.

<sup>25</sup> Mel'nikova 2003, 459.

<sup>26</sup> PSRL, I, 32–33 and 56–47.

<sup>27</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 66 and 76–77.

СЪЛЫ	Envoys	Possible residence
Иворъ Игоревъ	Ingvar > Ivarr	Kiev
Вуефастъ Святославъ	Svjatoslav > Véfastr	Novgorod
Искусеви Ольги	Helga > Iskussevi?	Vyšgorod
Каницар Передьсла- винъ	Peredslava > Kanitsar?	Predslavino
Боричъ	Boryč	Kiev

TABLE I: Names of Russian envoys and their possible residences according to the treaty of 944 between Rus' and Byzantium.

According to the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, Kiev was Igor's residence;<sup>28</sup> according to *De Administrando Imperio*, Igor's son Svjatoslav "had his seat" in Nemogard/Novgorod.<sup>29</sup> The chronicle also claims that Vyšgorod "was Olga's city".<sup>30</sup> The village of Predslavino on the River Lybed' is recorded in the chronicle under the year 6488/980 as the place where Prince Vladimir settled his lawful wife Rogned.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, we may suggest that Boryč the merchant was settled in Kiev where the place-name "Boryčev trail" is known.<sup>32</sup> Some 15th–17th century chronicles mention a Boryčev/Biričev bridge across the brook Ručaj,<sup>33</sup> which might suggest that this was located in the lower part of Kiev now called Podil. Unfortunately we do not know the residences of other people mentioned in the treaty, but it is probable that some of them lived in settlements such as Gnězdovo, Černihiv and Šestovyca.

We may thus conclude that despite their high social position, the Rus' of the treaties of 911 and 944 were residents of the towns and boyar residences situated nearby. It may also be concluded that the term Rus' was not associated with the concept of a territory with fixed borders and an urban capital.<sup>34</sup> The

<sup>28</sup> PSRL, I, 29; *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 64.

<sup>29</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Moravchik 1985, 56–57.

<sup>30</sup> PSRL, I, 60; *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 81.

<sup>31</sup> PSRL, I, 79–80; *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 94.

<sup>32</sup> PSRL, I, 9 and 55; *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 54 and 78.

<sup>33</sup> Stryžak 1985, 23.

<sup>34</sup> Toločko 2001.

connotation of a principal central town did not exist in Prince Svjatoslav's time. This is clear from his announcement to his mother and the boyars:

I do not wish to remain in Kiev, but should prefer to live in Perejaslavets on the Danube, since that is the centre of my realm, where all riches are concentrated; gold, silks, wine, and various fruits from Greece, silver and horses from Hungary and Bohemia, and furs, wax, honey and slaves from Rus'.<sup>35</sup>

It seems important that the towns of Rus' were mentioned in both treaties. In the treaty of 907/911 the *Russian Primary Chronicle* records that Oleg was required to make payments for the towns of Kiev, Černigov, Perejaslavl' and others.<sup>36</sup> In the sections in the treaties of 911 and 944 dealing with crimes, there are references to "Russian Law", which suggests there were areas where the law of the Rus' had juridical affect. So here we have another form of identity: regardless of their origin, people are Rus' because they are bound by the regulations of Rus' law.

In the following I intend to show that towns did play a prominent role in shaping the identity of their residents. In order to prove this, I would like us to consider two towns: Kiev and Černihiv.

#### RUS' IDENTITY AS MANIFESTED IN MATERIAL CULTURE

First of all it is necessary to take into account the much-debated problem of how the concept of "town" should be used. Some scholars have concluded that the Northmen had no word for town, and that when speaking of urban settlements they used terms that denoted groups of farms or villages (*by, garđr*).<sup>37</sup> Other scholars point to a wide semantic spectrum of concepts such as "fenced area", "yard", "farm", "courtyard", "house", "stronghold", "domain".<sup>38</sup> A cementing kernel of the urban community was the regular meeting called *byamot*.<sup>39</sup> Old Rus' towns have been interpreted by different researchers as "tribal centres", "centres for rural areas", "trading centres", etc.<sup>40</sup> It is, however, important to establish what they meant to these communities themselves.

The concept of a town is the keystone to the structural design of the internal identity of the population of Old Rus'. Before Christianity there were two

<sup>35</sup> PSRL, I, 67–68; *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 86.

<sup>36</sup> PSRL, I, 31 and 49; *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 64 and 74.

<sup>37</sup> Magnus 2002.

<sup>38</sup> Hed Jakobsson 2003, 67–69 and 93–101.

<sup>39</sup> Wessén and Holmbäck 1979, 470–471.

<sup>40</sup> Toločko 1989; Nosov 1993; Nosov, Gorjunova and Plochov 2005, 8–32.

main types of settlements in eastern Europe: open sites and fortified settlements. The latter were not very large in size and therefore could be interpreted as fortified common land or defended residences for very small communities. A new type of settlement arose in Eastern Europe c. 900. This, similar to Birka in Sweden, consisted of an open settled area measuring several hectares with trade and craft activities, a dominant fortress and large cemeteries bordering the settlement. Examples of such sites are Gnězdo in Russia and Kiev, Černihiv and Šestovycja in Ukraine. Excavations of the open settlements at these sites have revealed remains of a regular layout with dwellings separated by passage-ways and sometimes streets, testifying to the founding of the settlement being a regulated process. Unfortunately the fortresses at these sites have only been partly excavated. However, the finds that have come to light indicate that the inhabitants carried weapons and were engaged in gift exchange, maintaining connections with northern Europe, and had control over the production of jewellery. The analyses of artefacts, burial rites and the DNA of the buried individuals have revealed that the population of such settlements was seasonal and not homogenous as to origin or diet.<sup>41</sup>

Two different urban concepts might be suggested for Kiev (Fig. 11). Around 900–980 the town consisted of two main elements: a naturally shaped hillfort situated on the hill of Zamkova and the valley town of Podol/Podil. Excavations in Podil in the 1970s revealed several well-preserved buildings and merchant properties at a depth of 10–11 m., dating to the 10th century. The finds testify that merchants and craftsmen were the chief inhabitants. No artefacts of Scandinavian origin were found during these excavations. The hillfort of Zamkova yielded a hoard of Byzantine copper coins from the 900s, a lead seal with a Greek inscription, a mould for making copies of Arabic coins, and a sarcophagus of red coloured schist.<sup>42</sup> Very limited excavations showed that the hill was occupied throughout almost all historical periods. Thick cultural layers belonging to the 11th and 12th centuries contained numerous bones of wild animals (elk, roe deer, beaver, wolf, fox) and birds, as well as a mould, an arm ring, finger rings, beads, buttons of antler, and spindle-whorls. A sterile stratum separated this occupation layer from an underlying one, which contained the remains of two houses together with pottery, elk bones and a comb of possible Scandinavian type (Ambrosiani's group B), dated to the 10th century. This in turn lay on a sterile stratum above an occupation layer which contained remains from the 7th–9th centuries.<sup>43</sup> So far, no finds of Scandinavian origin (other than pos-

<sup>41</sup> Hedenstierna-Jonson 2006.

<sup>42</sup> Beljaševs'kij 1888a and 1888b.

<sup>43</sup> Anon. 1947.

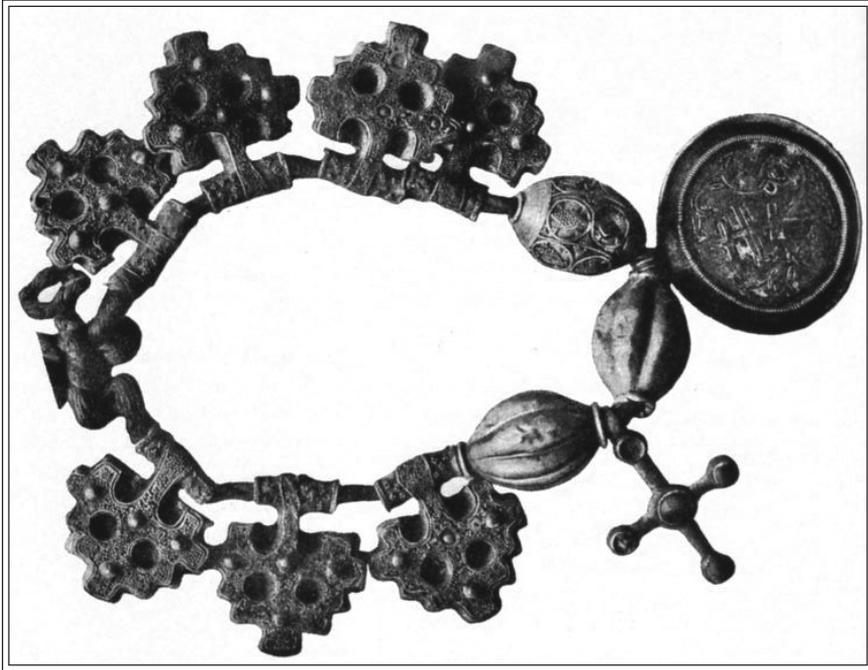


FIGURE 12: Necklace with pendants resembling Thor's hammers and decorated in Hiddensee style, found in the monastery of Mychailivsky in Kiev, Ukraine (after Kondakov 1896).

sibly the comb) have been found on the hill of Zamkova, but there can be no doubt that the excavated houses are of the same date as the structures found in the valley town at Podil. The dominating position of the hill overlooking Podil, the Dnieper and the valley, together with the finds mentioned above, testify to its importance as a strategic hillfort, controlling both the river and the town's harbour. It is probable that a residence of the Kiev princes was situated here.<sup>44</sup>

Male and female objects of Scandinavian origin were found northwest of Zamkova at a site which is currently identified as the Ugorskoje of the *Russian Primary Chronicle*.<sup>45</sup> A distinct settlement or chain of farms has been suggested. A large number of Scandinavian finds, particularly Danish, have been uncovered on the defended hill of Starokyevs'ka, situated c. 200 m southwest of Zamkova. Most of the finds occurred in graves lying within the area bordered by the ramparts built by Prince Vladimir. Some of the excavated finds are decorated in the Jellinge/Mammen and Hiddensee styles, which dates them close to

<sup>44</sup> Zocenko 2003.

<sup>45</sup> Androshchuk 2004a; Sachajdak 2007.

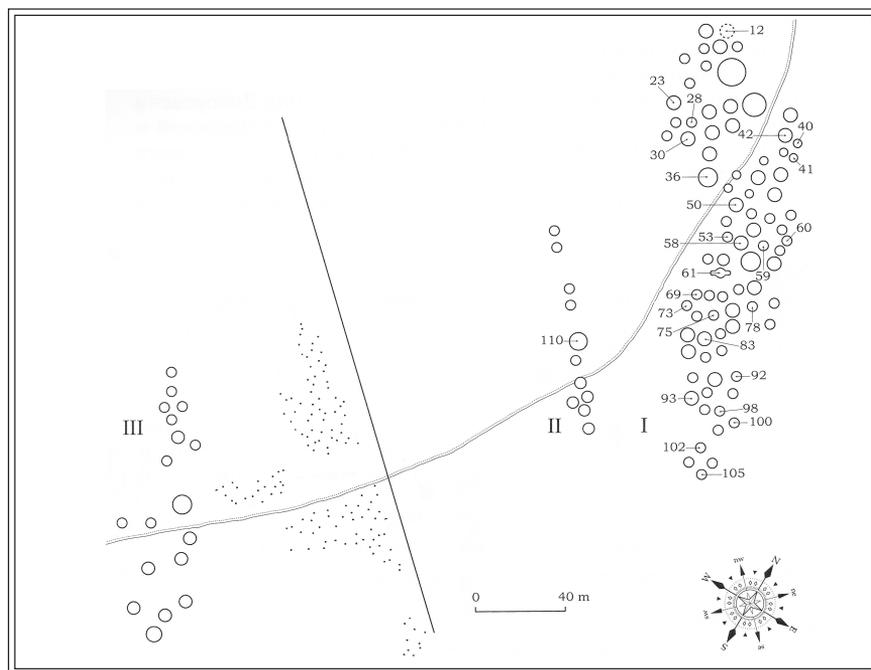


FIGURE 13: Distribution of Scandinavian artefacts within the Šestovyčja cemetery, Ukraine

the time of Prince Vladimir's rule. The distribution of finds in the upper town, identified as the Gora of the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, indicate that no regular townscape existed there prior to the 11th century, but rather individual farms gradually became surrounded by cemeteries containing burial mounds (see below, Chapter 7). As Christianity spread, chapels, churches and sometimes even monasteries were built on these family cemeteries. The founders were often of Scandinavian origin. One example is the Tithe Church, which was built by Prince Vladimir on a cemetery of rich chamber graves that contained Scandinavian finds.

Another example is the monastery of Michailivsky where, below the 12th-century foundations, several inhumation and chamber graves containing south Scandinavian objects were discovered. Remains of houses dated to the 11th century were also documented here. A necklace was discovered in the same area which contained seven pendants resembling Thor's hammers and decorated in the Hiddensee style of c. 1000 along with religious pendants of eastern Christian origin from c. 1200 (Fig. 12). Most probably the Scandinavian pendants originally belonged to a land-owning Rus'/Varangian family and were inherited by their Christian and "Slavified" descendants. It is known that

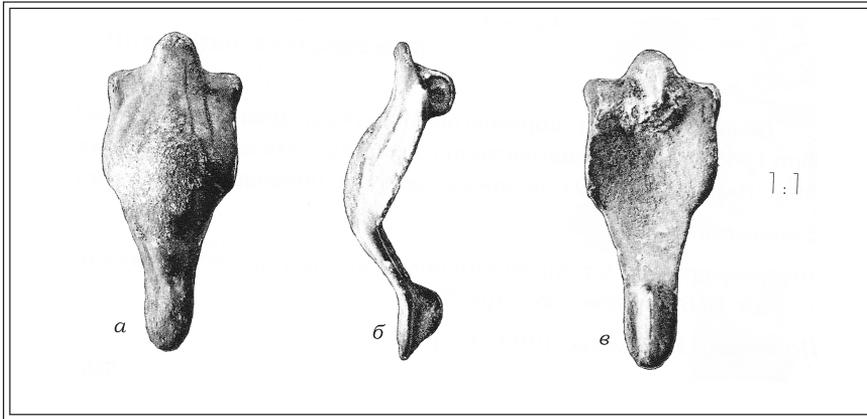


FIGURE 14: Beak-shaped brooch from the Vendel period found in Šestovycja, Ukraine (after Chamajko and Zotsenko 2007).

Prince Jaroslav had the church of St Iryna built close to the place where Prince Dir lay buried. A certain Olma (Old Norse *Holmi*), who had property close to the grave of Prince Askold (Old Norse *Haskuld*), had the church of St Nikolaj built at that site. A building in the upper town was called *Turova božnica* (Thor's chapel), indicating its Scandinavian affiliations.<sup>46</sup> The topography and distribution of the Scandinavian graves surrounding the upper town of Kiev and the exceptional character of the finds and grave types and their connection with the aristocratic farms from the 11th to 12th centuries (which are known from archaeological and written sources to have lain here) indicate that people of Scandinavian origin became a prominent part of the town's social elite.

It is interesting that some of the sites regarded as attesting to the prevalence of Northmen are characterized by the high status of their residents over several generations. A history of the inhabitants of the Šestovycja settlement and trading-centre serve as an example. From archaeological excavations it could be concluded that during the 10th century a large settlement and probably a hillfort were established on that cape and in the valley of the Desna. Many graves discovered in the mounds surrounding the settlement contained rare items such as weaponry, jewellery, textiles and coins, which indicated distant contacts and the high social status of their owners (Fig. 13).<sup>47</sup> These included an exceptional item – a beak shaped brooch from the Vendel period (Fig. 14).<sup>48</sup> The find came to light in a cultural layer dated to the 10th century, and might be

<sup>46</sup> Androshchuk 2004a.

<sup>47</sup> Blifel'd 1977 and Androshchuk 1999.

<sup>48</sup> Chamajko and Zocenko 2007.

interpreted as a kind of “biographical object”, pointing to a resident of southern Scandinavian origin. Two Byzantine seals, one from a grave and one from the hillfort, indicate the diplomatic activity of the residents and their connections with royalty (see below, Chapter 4).

There are not many finds from the 11th century. Some, including a seal of Prince Vladimir Monomach, were discovered in the settlement area situated in the meadow.<sup>49</sup> The scarcity of finds from the 11th century in Šestovycja might perhaps indicate that the site was not occupied permanently, and that the owners resided in their other boyar residence situated in Černihiv (cf. below). During the 12th and 13th centuries the hillfort came into active use again. It was reinforced with a new rampart and a ditch, which separated the main residence from the other households located to the north of the fort. The 10th-century Byzantine seal mentioned above was found in one of these houses.<sup>50</sup> It may have been attached to a document belonging to the “family archives” of the aristocratic family which had lived here since the 10th century. In the 13th and 14th centuries, the residence was moved from the hillfort down to the meadow. Here, excavations have revealed the remains of a dwelling and finds including fragments of glass bracelets, copper finger-rings, Byzantine amphoras, a fragmentary vessel of glass, an iron spur and the expensive building material of brick, which further point to the high social status of the residents.<sup>51</sup>

In a written document from 1527, entitled *Pamjat’* (literally “memory”), the site is mentioned as the boyar village Šostoviči.<sup>52</sup> One of the owners, a “lord (*pan*) Gridko Šestovickij from Černigov”, entered the names of his relatives into the “Memory Book” of the Cave monastery in Kiev from the end of the 15th / beginning of the 16th century.<sup>53</sup> During the time of Ivan IV, in the 1530s–40s, a certain “boyar child” (*bojarskoe ditja*), Ivan Šestovickij, is mentioned among other boyars from Černihiv as the receiver of the Priluki area.<sup>54</sup> These references to Černihiv are an indication that the dwellers of the village periodically resided in that town. All in all, the evidence concerning Šestovycja testifies to the long continuity of the high social status of its inhabitants. We do not have firm proof that the Šostoviči family originated from the multicultural community of 10th-century Rus’, but it is remarkable that during all that time, the owners of Šestovycja maintained a high social status. The Vendel period brooch may indicate that during the 10th century some of the residents main-

<sup>49</sup> Kovalenko, Mocja and Sytyj 2003, 82.

<sup>50</sup> Bulgakova 1999.

<sup>51</sup> Veremeičik 2007.

<sup>52</sup> Rusyna 1998, 199, n. 115; 208; 210.

<sup>53</sup> Golubev 1892, 37 and 57.

<sup>54</sup> Rusyna 1998, 199–200.

tained their identity with the land of their origin. Later, in the 12th century, the use of the 10th-century seal may testify to identity having been associated more with social ties than with geographical origin.

Černihiv on the Desna, c. 18 km upstream from Šestovycja, also shows an interesting topography relevant to the study of the power structure in early Rus' centres. The fortified kernel of the settlement (the later Tretjak-Kreml) is situated on a low ridge overlooking the river and the lowland to the east (Fig. 42). A settlement of the 9th to 11th centuries is also found along the high ground above the river valley and behind it. As at Kiev, a low-lying harbour district, also called Podil, lay alongside the river. In the periphery of the settled area there were several contemporary cemeteries of mounds, some of them containing the graves of equestrian warriors. A limited number of large mounds, now destroyed, were probably a characteristic of the topography of 10th- and 11th-century Kiev (cf. above). This element is still, at least partly, intact at Černihiv. There are three well-documented mounds.<sup>55</sup> Two of these, Gulbyšče and Bezymjannyj, are dated to the second half of the 10th century and are situated close to the edge of the right bank of the River Desna. They hold a dominating position in the open river landscape. The third and youngest mound, Čorna Mogyla, could be dated as late as c. 1000 to judge from a type Z sword which was found in the grave. The mound stands at a considerable distance from the river but on a low ridge dominating the surrounding micro landscape. Later on, the monastery of Elec'ky was established here. Not far from the large mound a set of silver belt mounts, also dated to the late 10th century or c. 1000, has been found. These observations may indicate that the princely compound of Černihiv lay here. The large mound could have had functions in addition to being a grave monument. Perhaps Rus' princes were enthroned or crowned on such large burial mounds (see below, Chapter 5).<sup>56</sup>

#### RUS' AS A STATE: SOME INDICATIONS IN THE MATERIAL CULTURE

The origin of the Old Russian state has been a matter of discussion for a long time.<sup>57</sup> The nature and character of this state has recently been discussed in relation to current theoretical models of political anthropology.<sup>58</sup> Two main meanings of "state" has been suggested: "state" as country or "nation-state" and

<sup>55</sup> Rybakov 1949, 24–54.

<sup>56</sup> Olrik 1908 and Androshchuk 2003b.

<sup>57</sup> For recent works, see Sverdlov 2003; Korotkevič 2009; Puzanov 2007 and 2009; Šynakov 2009; Mel'nikova 2009 and 2011; Gorskij 2012; Žuravlev and Muraševa 2012.

<sup>58</sup> Kradin 2012, 211–239.

“state” as government.<sup>59</sup> Rus’ has in this context been seen as an independent country that came to life owing to the “call for Varangians” (862), the raid of Prince Oleg on Kiev, uniting the northern and southern parts of Rus’ into one state (882), and the establishing of “pogosts” (a kind of coaching inn) by Princess Olga (946).<sup>60</sup> It has also been claimed that Rus’ was a “retinue’s state”, where retinue represented a primitive ruling apparatus with corporative power based on common ideology and economic purposes.<sup>61</sup> To my mind this concept of a “retinue’s state” is based on an uncritical approach both to the *Primary Russian Chronicle* – the important source produced during the reign of Prince Vladimir Monomach (1053–1125) – and to archaeological monuments, sometimes referred to as “retinue’s culture”.<sup>62</sup>

#### *The origin of Rus’*

The *Primary Russian Chronicle* – “The tale of bygone years” – was completed in 1118 by the hegumen Sylvester of St Michael’s Monastery in Kiev. The work reflects political ideas which were representative for Vladimir Monomach’s time, appearing also in the “political resolution” of the princely meeting held in Ljubeč (1097). To such ideas belong the shaping of the political concept of a “Russian land” with an emphasis on the roles of particular towns – Kiev, Černihiv and Perejaslav – and the primacy of Kiev.<sup>63</sup> We may even assume that the intended readers of the chronicle were participants of these meetings: princes Izjaslav of Kiev, Vladimir of Perejaslav, David, Oleg and Jaroslav who were reigning in Černihiv’s domain, and also David Ihorevič and Vasil’ko Rostislavič, ruling in Volyn’, territory belonging to the domain of the Kievan princes. This political background may explain why the names of the towns Perejaslav, Rostov and Ljubeč, which emerged in the early 11th century, appear in Russo-Byzantine treaties of 907/911 and 944:<sup>64</sup> it appears they were inserted into the Slavonic translation of Greek copies of the treaties during the compiling of the chron-

<sup>59</sup> Kradin 2012, 222–224.

<sup>60</sup> Kradin 2012, 225.

<sup>61</sup> Kradin 2012, 231.

<sup>62</sup> Fetisov 2012, 406–436.

<sup>63</sup> Compare e.g. the following ideas expressed during the Ljubeč meeting (“Why do we ruin the land of Rus’ by our continued strife against one another? The Polovcians harass our country in divers fashions, and rejoice that war is waged among us. Let us rather hereafter be united in spirit and watch over the land of Rus’, and let each of us guard his own domain...”) with the beginning of the *Russian Primary Chronicle* (“These are the narratives of bygone years regarding the origin of the land of Rus’, the first princes of Kiev, and from what source the land of Rus’ had its beginning”, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 51 and 187).

<sup>64</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 64, 65 and 74.

icle. In addition to single accounts of Byzantine chronicles and local legends and tales, these treaties were the only sources about origin of Rus' available for Sylvester.

The question about origin of a state has often been confused with the origin of the terms "Rhos" and "Rus'", which became synonymous for the state. However, because of the highly hypothetical place of residence of the *Rhos* mentioned in Byzantine and Muslim sources of the 9th century, we obviously have to see them as a different kind of community than the political unit Rus' that did exist in Eastern Europe of the 11th to 13th century. The largely unstable both social and territorial character of the Rhos in the 10th century, along with the lack of a strong central power, state apparatus and common laws, indicate that the appearance of a truly state-shaped Rus' might be dated only to the time of the reign of prince Vladimir (980–1015).

The term "retinue's culture" (*družynnaja kul'tura*) was coined in sociological reconstructions developed by Soviet Marxist archaeology and is still popular in Russian scholarship.<sup>65</sup> The term discloses a narrow-minded perspective, since it only takes into consideration graves with weaponry without considering female aspects of the culture present at the same sites. Moreover, one must note that weaponry is a common trait for rural societies of Scandinavia, having nothing to do with retinue but rather with the status trait of free men – farmers.<sup>66</sup> In the 9th and 10th centuries some of these people with their families moved to the East and settled in the Ladoga and Volga areas and also in sites such as Rjurikovo gorodišče, Gnězdovo, Šestovycja and Kiev. It has been suggested that we should see Gnězdovo, Šestovycja and Černihiv as centres independent from Rjurik's family clan.<sup>67</sup> However, today it is clear that they, just as other sites such as Ladoga and Rjurikovo gorodišče, differ chronologically and rather reflect various stages of mastering of the territory of Eastern Europe under the sway of one leader – Rjurik's family clan. This can explain the presence of princely power in form of Rjurikid's symbols and princely seals in Rjurikovo gorodišče, Gnězdovo and Šestovycja in the 11th century and later.

Thus, the emergence of the Old Russian state might be seen in lines with the scenario proposed by cultural anthropologists:

Rough, egalitarian war-bands first settled down to become farmers and then divided into a hereditary elite deriving from the most prestigious lineages and a mass of commoners descended from conquered folk and lesser lineages of the conquerors.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>65</sup> See Fetisov 2012 with bibliography.

<sup>66</sup> Jansson 1997; Androshchuk 2004c.

<sup>67</sup> Androshchuk 2000, 257, 264; Fetisov 2012, 413–414, note 30.

<sup>68</sup> Richerson 1991.

Such original farms or agglomerations of farms can be seen in Ladoga, Rjurikovo gorodišče, Gnëzdovo and Šestovycja, and it is only with the establishing of Kiev and under the strong Christian influence from Byzantium that these farms, encircled by a common fortification wall, became integral parts of a truly urban centre.<sup>69</sup>

*State formation and material culture*

There are a number of attributes of power usually seen as markers of state formation, such as coins, seals and symbolic signs.<sup>70</sup> To the same group we may add weapon graves, heavy cavalry, interments with stirrups along with fortresses, fortification walls and monumental architecture. Let us now take a look at other related features which in my view are just as important.

When the Vikings captured York in 866 they established both Danish and Norwegian lines of kings, who controlled the town and its kingdom until 954. The Scandinavian kings of York also established their own coinage. The coins of the 10th century were probably created by Christian craftsmen, yet they included symbols such as the raven, triquetra or sword, which might have been imbued with profane and social meaning.<sup>71</sup> Similar symbols are also to be found scratched on some coins (so-called 'graffiti') in Eastern Europe.<sup>72</sup> For example, the standard is incised on coins from mound № 97 in Gnëzdovo (913–914), the Minsk area in Belarus (904) and a hoard without provenance (c. 906). The image of a sword occurs on a coin discovered in the Pskov area (c. 977). There is no depiction of the raven, apart from the so-called "trident" found on coins from Estonia ("Svyatoslav type", c. 972), the St Petersburg area ("Jaroslav type", c. 1018), Kiev (954–955), Černihiv (979–980) and one coin without provenance (913–914). Other symbols also occur, such as spearheads, knives, Thor's hammers, etc. These have been interpreted as the marks of Rus' princes wishing to circulate the coins as state currency. This suggestion is interesting, but is as yet unproven. It seems possible that the "trident", standard and sword, could be interpreted as common signs of power, though the residence of these holders of power is impossible to locate. It was not until the time of Prince Vladimir that coins were associated with a particular Rus' ruler or a particular area. That is why it is important to trace the iconography of these coins as an aid in studying the development of perceptions of power and state in Rus'.

<sup>69</sup> Androshchuk 2004a.

<sup>70</sup> Janin 1970, 5; Randsborg 1980, 127; Spasskij and Sotnikova 1983, 5; Braathen 1989, 141–167.

<sup>71</sup> Dolley 1958.

<sup>72</sup> Dobrovolskij, Dubov and Kuzmenko 1991, 130.

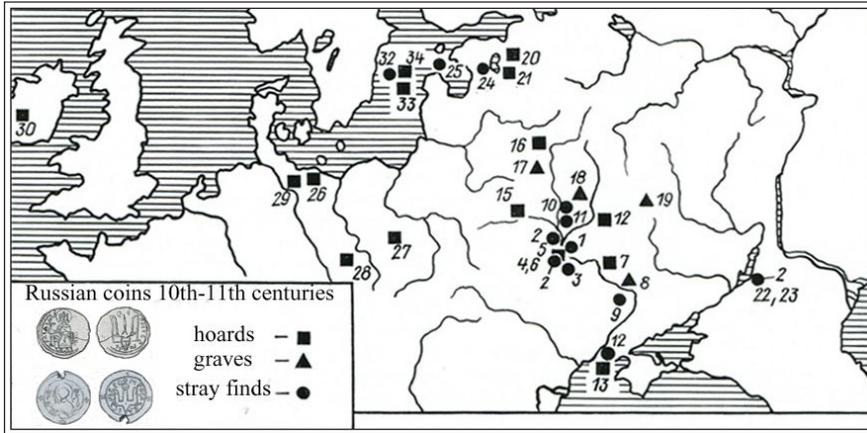


FIGURE 15: Distribution of Russian coins in Old Rus' (after Spasskij and Sotnikova 1983).

Apparently only princes Vladimir, Svjatopolk and Jaroslav minted their own coins.<sup>73</sup> It is commonly held that Prince Vladimir modelled his coins on the issues of his Byzantine contemporaries: Emperors Basil II (976–1025) and Constantine VIII (1025–1028).<sup>74</sup> The distribution of Vladimir's coins corresponds to areas along the trade route connecting the Varangians with the Greeks (Fig. 15). It is possible that this distribution reflects the political geography of Vladimir's power around the year 1000. Chronicles and archaeological excavations have provided much information about the Tithe Church founded by Vladimir. Archaeological excavations revealed three rectangular palaces, assumed to have been built by Prince Vladimir, around the church. Small finds could only date one palace with certainty to his time. However, Vladimir's palaces and his coins bearing the legend "Vladimir on the throne" must surely be considered manifestations of royal authority.<sup>75</sup>

Vladimir's government must have been a formative period for the concept of borders and territorial identity. The German missionary Bruno of Querfurt mentions "the most firm and lengthy fence" with which Vladimir "everywhere enclosed [his] realm".<sup>76</sup> This no doubt refers to the erecting of lines of earthworks known as *Zmievy valy* which defended Kiev along the rivers Ros'-Stugna to the south, Irpen', Zdviž and Teterev to the west, and Sula and Trubež

<sup>73</sup> Spasskij and Sotnikova 1983, 60–96.

<sup>74</sup> Spasskij and Sotnikova 1983, 60.

<sup>75</sup> Franklin and Shepard 1996, 167–168.

<sup>76</sup> Franklin and Shepard 1996, 172.



FIGURE 16: Prince Jaroslav's coins and a lead seal with iconographic parallels.

1. Scandinavian imitation of Byzantine coin of Basil II (977–989) (after Hammarberg et al., 1989, № 1037, Find 62);
2. Jaroslav's second coin group (Spasskij 1983, № 225);
3. coin of king Cnut (after Malmer 2010, № 615);
4. Jaroslav's first coin group, coin found Visby (after Jonsson 2010);
5. Jaroslav's seal from Novgorod (after Janin & Gajdukov 1998).

to the east.<sup>77</sup> The northern border of Vladimir's territory seems to have been open, which might have had a cultural, rather than political intent if these borders were meant to be frontiers between Rus' as a Christian land and the steppes as a heathen region. This region was further developed by Vladimir's son Jaroslav, who had his own unique manifestation of power and authority. Unlike his brother Svjatopolk who tried to legitimize himself by issuing a coinage modelled on that of his father, Jaroslav created his own coin designs, which reflected different sources for his image and manner of displaying power and authority.

Prince Jaroslav's mint consists of two groups of coins bearing the figure of St George with an explanatory inscription and the image of a trident with a circlet

<sup>77</sup> Kučera 1987; Morgunov 2005.

on its central spike (Fig. 16). The first group contains a high quality image of St George similar to that on Prince Jaroslav's seal dated to c. 1019.<sup>78</sup> However, the type of headdress on the Jaroslav seal is very close to the conical helmet-crown depicted on coins of King Cnut (1016–1035).<sup>79</sup> The second group of Jaroslav coins consists of six specimens found mainly in Scandinavia, northern Russia and Germany.<sup>80</sup> This group occurs in hoards of the second quarter and middle of the 11th century and are interpreted as Scandinavian imitations of the first group of Jaroslav coins.<sup>81</sup> The closest parallels to the second group of Jaroslav coins, in design and stylistic traits and in the shape of a crown, exist only in a group of Scandinavian imitations of Byzantine coins of Basil II (976–1025).<sup>82</sup> It is thus possible to suggest that this group is the oldest of the Jaroslav groups. The distribution of finds of Jaroslav coins and their imitations as pendants matches those areas which were under the political and economic interests of Novgorod.<sup>83</sup> Bearing in mind the scarcity of Jaroslav coins (a total of 13), it is possible to conclude that they were not intended for circulation in a controlled market. Instead, they had a distinctive symbolic role manifesting Jaroslav's identity as an independent and powerful ruler in his own land. Minting began not only to challenge the authority of Prince Vladimir, but also to manifest a complex ideological program which took shape in the course of the 11th century. This program found its strongest expression in Jaroslav's ostentatious building activity in Kiev.

Jaroslav enclosed the whole town of Kiev with an earthen rampart that contained several gate-towers. Inside the enclosed area were separate farms with their family cemeteries. He also built the churches of St Sophia, St George and St Eirene. It is not without significance that this action was deemed by the writer of the *Russian Primary Chronicle* to mark the "foundation" of the town. Enclosed in such a way, the formerly dispersed boyar residences of the town's population were brought together, giving the inhabitants a new collective identity as the people of Kiev: *Kyjane*. The appearance of names for various townsfolk such as *Kyjane*, *Novgordcy*, *Pskoviči* and *Rostovcy* is a reflection of the emergence of new local identities based not on the biological origin of the individual but on adherence to a particular place. Rus' in the sense of a name for a collective identity was used only in situations of comparison with the non-Christian borderlands.

<sup>78</sup> Janin et al. 1995, 6.

<sup>79</sup> North 1980, 129, Plate XI: 14–18.

<sup>80</sup> Spasskij and Sotnikova 1983, 199–201.

<sup>81</sup> Sotnikova 1990.

<sup>82</sup> Hammarberg, Malmer and Zachrisson 1989, pl. 34–35.

<sup>83</sup> Spasskij and Sotnikova 1983, 97.



As we have seen, written sources show that during the 9th and 10th centuries in the region under consideration, Scandinavians who were called Rhos or Rus' saw themselves as being separate from their surrounding neighbours. People with that name were known to both the Arabs and Byzantines but not to the Franks.<sup>84</sup> The Arabic and Byzantine writers separated the Rus' from the Slavs by their language and lifestyle. However, judging by the Rus'-Byzantine treaties, the ethnic origin of these individuals was not important and the name Rus' was used for representatives of the whole princely family, their envoys, other agents and merchants. The term *Rus'-kin* referred to all the serene and great princes under the sway of the ruler. People could be called Rus' owing to the legal system they followed – the law of the Rus'. The idea of tribal unity and identity was first established among the Northmen in Eastern Europe with the coming of Prince Rjurik. Other Scandinavian ruling families who had come to the East before Rjurik and established themselves in, for instance, Polock (Rogvolod) and Turov (Tury), did not belong to the Rjurik family clan and would be a confusing social group for the Byzantines. For this reason, some distinguishing markers were created – one treaty mentions gold and silver seals and special certificates provided by the great prince of Rus'.

From an archaeological point of view, the mortuary practices of the Rus' involved both large and normal-sized mounds with cremation graves and chamber graves containing weapons, riding equipment, belt fittings, oval brooches and other types of Scandinavian brooches in association with some items of Slavonic, Hungarian and Byzantine origin. This mixture of cultural elements has sometimes been interpreted as evidence of Scandinavian assimilation. However, a comparative analysis of archaeological and written sources shows that the processes of cultural assimilation and the shaping of identities among the descendants of the Scandinavians in Eastern Europe were complicated, especially in urban contexts. It has been possible to follow these processes in Kiev/Kyiv and Černihiv. In both places we may also observe a strong continuity between the residences of the elite and pre-Christian necropolises and later aristocratic compounds, churches, chapels and monasteries. Eventually, the urge to preserve the memory of a foreign origin and a different culture became weaker, and was replaced by the necessity to conform to the local state hierarchy and the social structure of urban centres. Parallel to these processes runs the transformation of the concept Rus'. With the reign of Vladimir it becomes closely connected with the early Russian state and especially with the lands surrounding Kiev/Kyiv itself.

<sup>84</sup> Liutprand of Cremona, for instance, writes that "...Russians (*Rusios*) whom we call also by the other name of Northmen"; *Antapodosis*, ed. Scott 1993, 76.

## *The role of Dereva and Volhynia in contacts between Northmen and Slavs in the 9th – 11th centuries*

Any Swedish archaeologist dealing with the archaeology of Sigtuna is familiar with a very particular and frequently found artefact, namely a spindle whorl of a light red stone (Fig. 17). This stone is sometimes called a “Volhynian schist”;<sup>1</sup> however, this term is not entirely correct. It is known from the written sources that in medieval times the term *Volhynia* was applied to the large region between the Rivers Bug and Goryn’.<sup>2</sup> Before the 11th century, when this term was established, two groups of Slavonic people were named as living there: the Dulebians and the Buġians, who originally lived along the River Bug and were later called the Volynjane.<sup>3</sup> The Derevljans who “lived in the forest like any wild beast”, according to the *Laurentian Chronicle*,<sup>4</sup> dwelt in the area situated east of the River Bug. In the 12th century, the forestland which was bordered on the west by Luc’k volost’ (the town of Luc’k situated on the River Styr) was called *Derevskaja zemlja* or *Dereva* (the land of the Derevljans). To the east, the land of the Derevljans bordered the territory of Kiev.<sup>5</sup>

From the late 10th century, the area settled by the Derevljans was incorporated into the territory of Kiev, whose western border followed the River Goryn’.<sup>6</sup> Because the river formed a natural border between the lands of the Volhynians and Kievians in the 12th century, it is highly probable that it also served as the border between the areas settled by the Derevljans and Volhynians in earlier periods. Two major towns are mentioned by the chronicles in the land of the Derevljans – Iskorosten’ and Vručij (their modern equivalents are the modern towns Korosten’ and Ovruc’ in the Žytomyr oblast’ of Ukraine). The latter is famous as both the quarrying and the manufacturing region for the light red schist which we meet in Sigtuna and other sites in northern Eu-

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Petterson 1992, № 576; Thunmark-Nylén 2006, 277, fig. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Stryżak 1985, 34.

<sup>3</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 55–56.

<sup>4</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 56.

<sup>5</sup> PSRL, II, 299 and 492.

<sup>6</sup> Toločko 1975, 5–56 and 11.

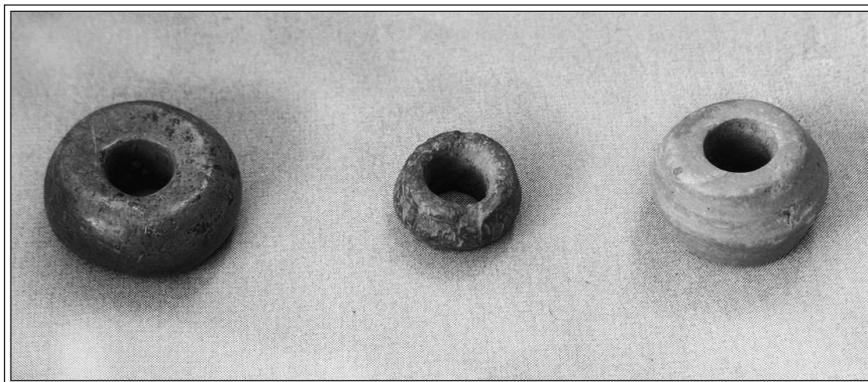


FIGURE 17: Spindle-whorls of Ovruch schist found during excavation in Humlegården, Sigtuna, Sweden, in 2006 (after Wikström 2008).

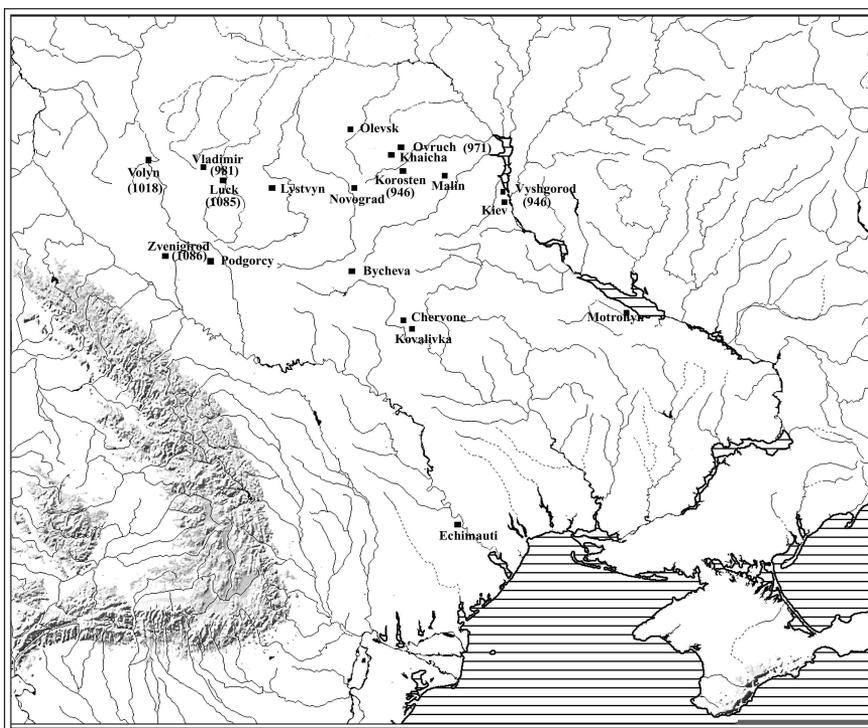


FIGURE 18: Map of Southern Rus' with places mentioned in chapter 3 (by author).

rope.<sup>7</sup> In this chapter, I will try to show that cultural contacts between Sweden and the above-mentioned regions of Ukraine have a long history going back to the time before Sigtuna was established (Fig. 18). It is also my intention to highlight the economic importance of the area before and after the establishing of Rjurik's dynasty in Kiev. In order to achieve this I shall bring together and combine various types of evidence from Russian chronicles, late Medieval sources, and recent archaeological excavations.

#### WRITTEN SOURCES ABOUT ISKOROSTEN´

According to the *Novgorod Chronicle*, Prince Igor placed the Derevlians under Kievian authority in 883, while the *Lavrentian Chronicle* attributes this to Oleg.<sup>8</sup> The Uličians, who "inhabited the banks of the Dniester as far as the Danube", were also placed under tribute along with the Derevlians.<sup>9</sup> The specified tribute was černaja kuna (black marten) and Igor granted the tribute he collected from the Derevlians and Uličians to Svenel'd, his *voevoda* (troop commander).<sup>10</sup> The *Russian Primary Chronicle* records that the granting of this tribute to Svenel'd was the cause of envy and complaint among Igor's retinue: "The servants of Svenel'd are adorned with weapons and fine raiment, but we are naked".<sup>11</sup> According to the chronicle, Igor went twice to the Derevlians for this tribute. The second time he increased his tribute and collected it through violence. On his way home to Kiev, he decided to turn back and take even more tribute. When Igor reached Iskorosten´, the town of the Derevlians, the indignant inhabitants came forth from the town and killed him. After that, according to the chronicle, the Derevlians decided to marry Igor's widow, Olga, to their Prince Mal.

It has long been suggested that the motif of marriage and the dramatic way in which the *Russian Primary Chronicle* paints Olga's revenge has its origin in folklore and represents a Christian interpretation of an elegy (burning 20 of the Derevlian's best men alive in a boat, burning another group of the best men in a bathhouse, killing 5 000 of them during the funeral feast for Igor and burning the Derevlian's town of Iskorosten´ with help of pigeons and sparrows).<sup>12</sup> Olga, together with her son Svjatoslav, gathered a large and valiant army, and proceeded to attack the land of the Derevlians. The latter came out to meet

<sup>7</sup> Gabriel 1989.

<sup>8</sup> PSRL, I, 24.

<sup>9</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 56.

<sup>10</sup> Šachmatov 2001, 80–81 and 388.

<sup>11</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 78.

<sup>12</sup> Kotljár 1986; Androshchuk 1999; Ryčka 2004.

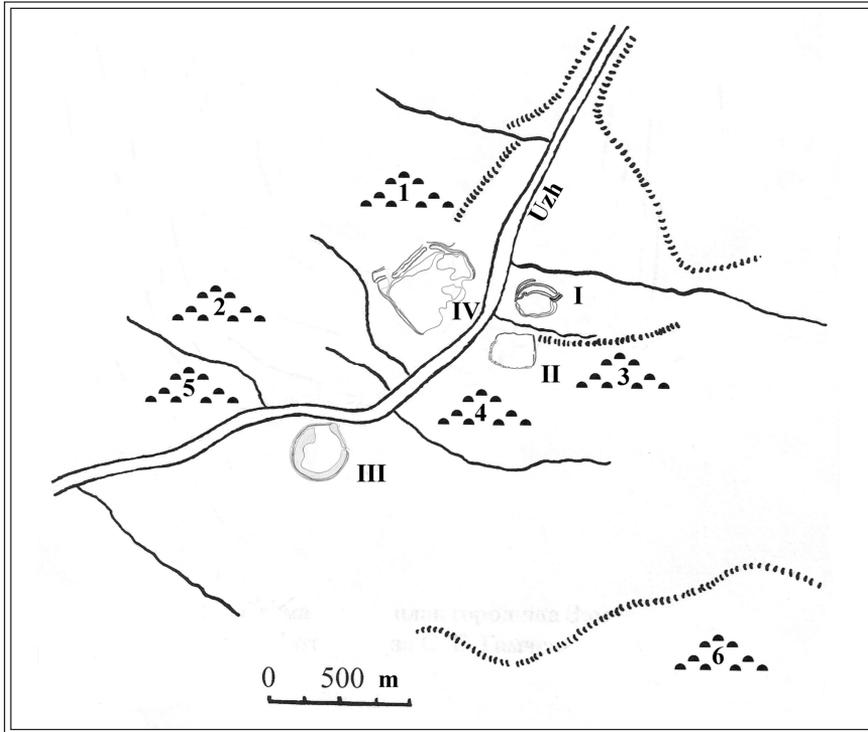


FIGURE 19: Map of archaeological monuments in Old Iskorosten' (by author).

her troops, and when both forces were ready for combat, Svjatoslav cast his spear against the Derevlians. But the spear barely cleared the horse's ears, and struck against his leg, for the prince was but a child. Then Svenel'd and Asnud said: "The prince has already begun battle; press on, vassals, after the prince".<sup>13</sup> Thus they conquered the Derevlians, with the result that the latter fled and shut themselves up in their towns. Olga hastened with her son to the town of Iskorosten', where her husband had been slain, and laid siege to the town. The Derevlians barricaded themselves within the town and fought valiantly from it, for they realized that they had killed the prince and what consequences they would therefore suffer.<sup>14</sup> The degree of truth in this legendary story was not known until 2001, when an archaeological excavation of the town of Iskorosten' was started.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 80.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Zvizdeckyj, Petrauskas and Polguy 2004.

## THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ISKOROSTEN´

The archaeological remains at Iskorosten´, which might be chronologically related to the story told by the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, consist of three hillforts and four cemeteries (Fig. 19). Cemetery № 2, comprising 68 mounds, is situated on the left bank of the River Uż in the vicinity of a large hillfort from the early Iron Age.<sup>16</sup> Inhumations have been discovered in five mounds. The finds include knives, buckets, silver finger rings, silver and bronze temple rings, lyre-shaped buckles as well as beads of glass, amber and cornelian. Cemetery № 1, comprising 60 mounds and containing inhumation and cremation graves, is also located on this bank of the river. The largest of all mounds in these cemeteries, 4.9 m high and 18.2 m in diameter and surrounded by a ditch, stood in cemetery № 2. It was built up of three layers of stones over a wooden chamber, 3.5 × 2.4 m, containing a double grave. The finds associated with one of the individuals included the remains of a bucket, a small iron axe, a knife, a whetstone, a “schist brooch”, a bronze brooch, a silver finger ring and a vessel. The finds associated with the second individual in the grave included pottery, five silver S-shaped temple-rings, four barrel-shaped silver beads decorated with granulation, a number of beads of cornelian and coloured glass, a silver finger ring, a knife and a little silver bell.<sup>17</sup> An additional large mound in cemetery № 2 (mound № 16, measuring 3.4 m high and 15 m in diameter) was excavated and it contained a female grave with two massive “Kievan-type” earrings and six temple-rings of gold, two knives and a fragmented bucket. These graves are interpreted as burials of the Derevian elite.<sup>18</sup>

On the opposite, right, bank of the river, lay three hillforts and two cemeteries: № 3, consisting of 18 mounds, and № 4, consisting of 30 mounds. One of the hillforts (no. 1) consisted of a high rocky hill bordered on the west and south-west by a small brook. In the 1920–30s, its fortifications were partly destroyed by quarrying. Below the north-east side of the hillfort, an unfortified settlement stretches out over an area of 350 × 300 × 100 × 150 m. A small building with a sunken floor and stone oven and a pit containing 6th–7th century pottery was excavated here, as were ten buildings belonging to the 9th–10th centuries. In one of the latter buildings (no. 1), two gold lunula-shaped earrings were found. The find has close parallels in Moravia (Fig. 20). A fragmentary crucible was found in the same building. A further two earrings were found in another building (no. 7), together with the catch-pin of a Scandinavian oval brooch.<sup>19</sup> Another object of Scandinavian origin that was found in the settle-

<sup>16</sup> Zvizdeckyj 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Vyezhev 1954; Zvizdeckyj, Petrauskas and Polguy 2004, 54–55.

<sup>18</sup> Zvizdeckyj, Petrauskas and Polguy 2004, 54–55.

<sup>19</sup> Zvizdeckyj, Petrauskas and Polguy 2004, 78.



FIGURE 20: Gold ear-rings of Moravian type from Old Iskorosten' (after Zvizdeckyj, Petrauskas and Polguy 2004).

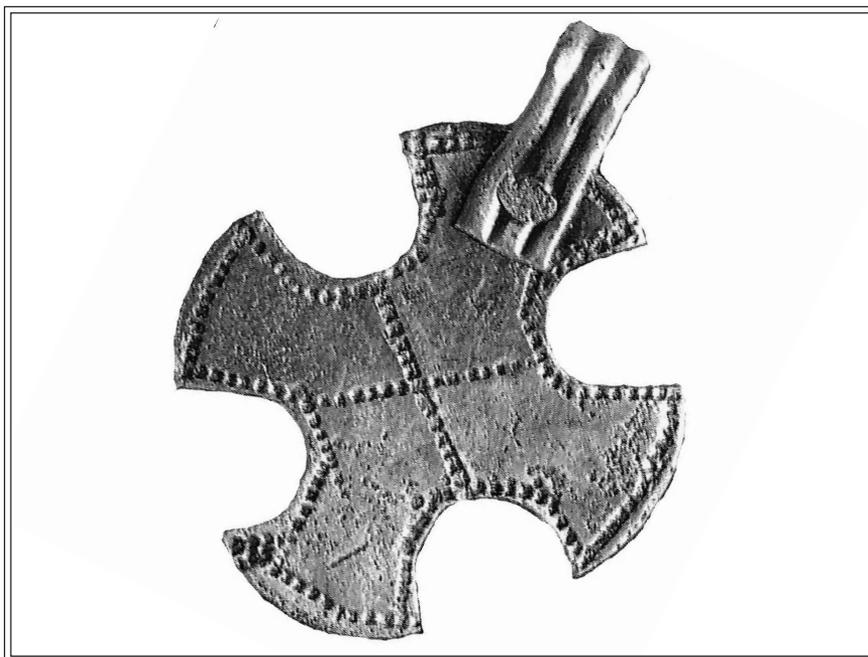


FIGURE 21: Silver cross-shaped pendant found in the old Iskorosten' settlement, north of hillfort № 1 (after Zocenko and Zvizdeckyj 2006).



FIGURE 22: Scandinavian silver pendants decorated in Borre style from Old Iskorosten' (after Zocenko and Zvizdeckyj 2006).

ment was a cross-shaped silver pendant (Fig. 21).<sup>20</sup> The hillfort was fortified by a 6 m wide and 2 m deep ditch with an escarpment containing a 10 m wide terrace and remains of a wall with fire-damaged stone and wooden constructions. Pottery, a spearhead and two silver earrings were found in the lower part of the ditch. Excavation of the terrace produced a range of artefacts, including a silver earring, an Arabic coin (882–907) fashioned into a pendant, silver and bronze buttons and mounts, belt fittings, tiny bells, beads, different types of arrowheads, including lancet-shaped, and two Scandinavian silver pendants decorated in Borre style (Fig. 22).<sup>21</sup> It is probable that a cemetery associated with the settlement was situated in the vicinity of hillfort № 1. A mound con-

<sup>20</sup> Zocenko and Zvizdeckyj 2006, 76, № 6; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012 fig. 104.

<sup>21</sup> Zvizdeckyj, Petrauskas and Polguy 2004, 85, figs 18:1–10; 19:1–5; 21:5–9; Zocenko and Zvizdeckyj 2006, 74 and 84, fig. 3; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012 №s 102–103.



FIGURE 23: 1. Bronze scabbard-chapes found in “Igor’s grave” in Old Iskorosten’ (photo B. Zvizdeckyj); 2. stray find from Ljubče, Ržyščevskij rajon, Volynskaja oblast’, Ukraine, after Androščuk and Zocenko 2012.

taining a cremation grave with four Arabic coins excavated here remains the only evidence for this proposition.<sup>22</sup>

The dating and character of hillfort № 2, situated c. 120 m south-west of hillfort № 1, is not clear. Early investigations revealed a “pit dwelling” with a central hearth, dated broadly to the 10th–12th centuries.<sup>23</sup> Hillfort № 3, located c. 750 m south-west of hillfort № 2, is a large oval-shape covering c. 1 hectare, situated on a cliff-embankment of the river, 40 m above the water. Remains of ramparts as well as cultural layers from the 9th–18th centuries have been recorded here. Traces of iron production, weapons and other objects dating to the 11th–13th centuries are the finds most relevant to our study.<sup>24</sup> Finally, a large mound, situated 7–8 km north-east of the town, on the same bank of the river, in a place known as “Igor’s grave”, should be mentioned. The mound was

<sup>22</sup> Zvizdeckyj, Petrauskas and Polguy 2004, 78.

<sup>23</sup> Zvizdeckyj, Petrauskas and Polguy 2004, 58.

<sup>24</sup> Zvizdeckyj, Petrauskas and Polguy 2004, 65–68.

destroyed during the First World War and a bronze scabbard-chape decorated in Borre style (Fig. 23:1)<sup>25</sup> is the only evidence that survives with dating possibilities.<sup>26</sup>

To sum up, it is apparent that at least three hillforts situated on the right bank of the Uż existed here in the 10th century. The functions of these hillforts are not clear, but their small size suggests that they were used only in exceptional cases for defensive purposes. The permanent settlement was established close to hillfort № 1 and goes back to the 7th century. It is obvious that a Slavic settlement established at that time was active until its destruction, which coins and other dateable finds place in the middle of the 10th century.<sup>27</sup> The artefacts of silver and gold in the graves and the settlement are surprisingly exclusive and rich and are to a certain extent superior in quality to those we know from graves in Kiev. So what was the economic source of the Derevlian wealth, and why was it so important to have power over the land of the Derevlians? These very limited archaeological excavations do not allow us to draw any definite conclusions concerning the occupations of the local population, which is why we must turn to written medieval sources in order to see what information they provide.

#### SOURCES AND RESOURCES OF THE LAND OF THE DEREVLANS

The landscape of the land of the Derevlians, such as we know it from topographical descriptions and early historical sources,<sup>28</sup> was flat and low, sloping slightly towards the River Pripjat'. It is only along the River Noryn' that it rises and forms a chain of hills. This is precisely where deposits of the so-called Ovruc' or Volhynian light red schist are concentrated and this was also the most populated area. Deposits of rock crystal in the Olevska area are also worthy of mention. Chains of hills of different geological composition are also known along the Rivers Žereva, Uż and parts of the Sluč. Elsewhere, hills occur only sporadically, which meant that, up until the 19th century, the inhabitants were extremely isolated from one another. Communications were difficult, following routes through marshland and woodland, both treacherous to strangers. Although in the Ovruc' area there are plenty of good rivers, only one of them, the Sluč, was navigable. Others, like the Ubort', Slavečna, Uż, Noryn', Žereva and Stviga, might possibly have been navigated using rafts, but only sea-

<sup>25</sup> Group II:3, according to Paulsen 1953, 48–53; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012 № 105.

<sup>26</sup> Fechner 1982; Zocenko 2004, 88, fig. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Zvizdeckyj, Petrauskas and Polguy 2004.

<sup>28</sup> Klepackij 2007, 177.

sonally.<sup>29</sup> The forests with their predominance of pine, fir and birch were the main source of livelihood in this region. The most characteristic fauna were deer, elk, bear, lynx, otter, beaver and black marten. From written sources of the 14th–16th centuries we learn that the regular tribute taken from this area consisted of honey, beaver and black marten. Apart from this, rich deposits of iron ore should be mentioned.<sup>30</sup> This is basically our knowledge of the economic resources of the region in later periods, which I believe offers a good basis for evaluating the economic potential of the land of the Derevlans in the 9th–12th centuries. Before we return to discuss the reasons for the military conflict between the Derevlans and the Kiev princes, we must discuss the likely political structure of the Derevlans.

#### TERRITORIAL STRUCTURE OF THE DEREVLIAN PRINCIPALITY

It is a remarkable fact that the Derevlans are represented in the *Russian Primary Chronicle* in very black colours, especially compared to their opponents, the Poljanians, who settled on the Dnieper “among the hills” at the time that a trade-route connected the Varangians with the Greeks.<sup>31</sup> The Derevlans, we are told, were “Slavs” who “lived by themselves and adopted this tribal name ... because they lived in the forests”, and they “possessed a principality of their own”.<sup>32</sup> A comparison between their characteristics as provided by the chronicle may be summarized in the following way (Table 2):

<sup>29</sup> Pochilevič 2000, 112.

<sup>30</sup> Klepackij 2007, 178.

<sup>31</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 53.

<sup>32</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 53, 55–56.

The Poljanians	The Derevlians
<p>For the Poljanians retained the mild and peaceful customs of their ancestors, and showed respect for their daughters-in-law and their sisters, as well as for their mothers and fathers. For their mothers -in-law and their brothers-in-law they also entertained great reverence. They observed a fixed custom, under which the groom's brother did not fetch the bride, but she was brought to the bridegroom in evening, and on the next morning her dowry was turned over.</p>	<p>The Derevlians, on the other hand, existed in bestial fashion, and lived like cattle. They killed one other, ate every impure thing, and there was no marriage among them, but instead they seized upon maidens by capture. The Radimičians, the Vjatičians, and the Severians had the same customs. They lived in the forest like any wild beast, and ate every unclean thing. They spoke obscenely before their fathers and their daughters-in-law. There were no marriages among them, but simply festivals among the villages. When the people gathered together for games, for dancing, and for all other devilish amusements, the men on these occasions carried off wives for themselves, and each took any woman with whom he had arrived at an understanding. In fact, they even had two or three wives apiece. Whenever a death occurred, a feast was held over the corpse, and then a great pyre constructed, on which the deceased was laid and burned. After the bones were collected, they were placed in a small urn and set upon a post by the roadside...</p>

TABLE 2. Representation of the Poljanians and Derevlians in the *Russian Primary Chronicle*.<sup>33</sup>

The contrasting characteristics of the Poljanians and Derevlians in the chronicle most probably echo the Christian viewpoint of the author, who based his work on the Bible and an earlier related chronicle written in Greek by Georgios Hamartolos.<sup>34</sup> To the author of the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, the centre of Christian civilisation was the land of the Poljanians, i.e. the town of Kiev. The three legendary brothers Kij, Šček, and Choriv had lived there with their sister Lybed' and built a small town which they named Kiev after Kij.<sup>35</sup> The purpose of this legend was to underline the exclusive position of Christian Kiev, surrounded by heathens (the Radimičians, the Vyatičians and the Severians) dwelling on the left banks of the river Dnieper and the Derevlians, who lived on the same bank as the Poljanians but were their direct opposites, as reflected in their tribal names ("those who live in the field" versus "those who live in forests"). It is apparent that in these moral judgements of tribal characteristics

<sup>33</sup> Translation from *Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 56.

<sup>34</sup> We might compare with Hamartolos' account of the laws of the Bactrians, Chaldeans and others, cited in *Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 57.

<sup>35</sup> *Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 54.

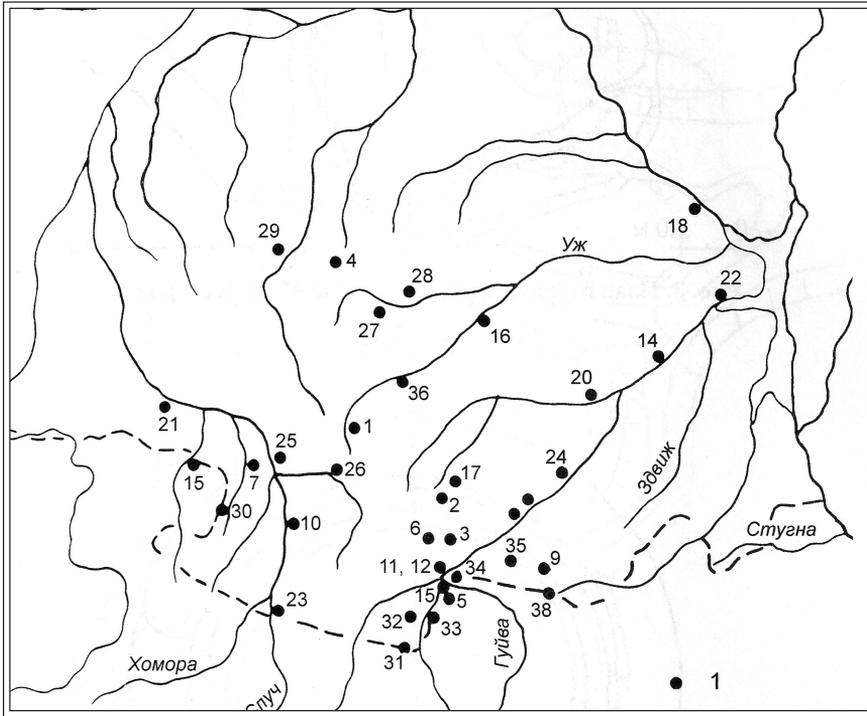


FIGURE 24: Distribution of hillforts of the 9th-13th centuries in the territory of the Derevlians (author's elaboration of Zvizdeckij 2008. 1. Baraši; 2. Bežyv; 3. Bel'kovcy; 4. Gorodec'; 5. Gorodyšče; 6. Gorodyšče; 7. Gorodyšče; 8. Gorods'ke; 9. Grubs'ke; 10. Gul'sk; 11. Žytomir, Zamkova Gora; 12. Žytomir, Sokolova Gora; 13. Zarečany; 14. Ivankiv; 15. Korec'; 16. Korosten'; 17. Korčivka; 18. Leliv; 19. Lenino; 20. Malin; 21. Marenin; 22. Medvin; 23. Miropol'; 24. Myčes'k; 25. Novograd-Volynskij; 26. Nesolon'; 27. Norins'k; 28. Ovruč; 29. Olevsk; 30. Pylypovyči; 31. Rajki; 32. Rudnja-Gorodišče; 33. Singury; 34. Stanišovka; 35. Stepok; 36. Ušes'k; 37. Fruzinivka; 38. Jaropovyči.

such name-elements as “forest”, “river”, “bridge” etc. play the role of cultural borders for constructed categories of Otherness as “them” and “us”.<sup>36</sup> It could also be that, aside from the Christian viewpoint of the chronicle author, other more pragmatic reasons for such negative characteristics were at play. For instance, according to the chronicle, following the death of the legendary brothers, the Poljanians were oppressed by the Derevlians.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Lotman 1969; Androshchuk 1999, 14–16.

<sup>37</sup> *Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 58.

There is no mention in the sources about the reasons for the conflict between the two tribes. After establishing himself in Kiev, Oleg began military campaigns against the Derevlians and (in 883, according to the *Russian Primary Chronicle*) “after conquering them, he imposed upon them the tribute of a black-marten skin apiece”.<sup>38</sup> Then we learn that the Derevlians along with their neighbours, the Dulebians and Tivercians, and other Slavonic tribes as well as the Čud’ and Varangians, took part in Oleg’s attack on the Greeks in 904–907.<sup>39</sup> However, after Oleg’s death, the Derevlians offered resistance to his successor Igor, who attacked them and “after conquering them, ... imposed upon them a tribute larger than Oleg’s”.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, it seems that relations with the Derevlians deteriorated, since neither their warriors nor those of the Dulibians joined Igor’s army in the attack against the Greeks in 944.<sup>41</sup> After returning from that attack, we are told, Igor “thought of the Derevlians, and wished to collect from them a still larger tribute”.<sup>42</sup> Let us turn now to the Derevlian principalities and consider how their social and territorial structure might have looked.<sup>43</sup>

From both the *Russian Primary Chronicle* and the *Novgorod Chronicle* we learn that besides their Prince Mal, there were a number of other princes, “who had made the land of Dereva prosperous” (the words used are *raspasli* and *rasplodili*) and “were good”.<sup>44</sup> In the here reconstructed territory of the Derevlians, there are c. 20 hillforts that are interpreted as possible tribal centres of lesser importance (Fig. 24).<sup>45</sup> So far, there have been no attempts to reconstruct the territorial structures of these small “principalities”, but in my view it is quite possible that the administrative and territorial structure of this region as we know it in the 14th–16th centuries might offer us a model.<sup>46</sup> Comparing some hillforts that existed during the 8th–10th centuries with the centres of known territorial units – called *volost’* (the verb *volodeti* meant “to possess”) – shows interesting correlations (Table 3):

<sup>38</sup> *Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 61.

<sup>39</sup> *Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 64.

<sup>40</sup> *Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 71.

<sup>41</sup> *Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 72.

<sup>42</sup> *Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 78.

<sup>43</sup> For an overview of old literature on the territory of Derevlians, see Zvizdeckyj 2008, 17–20.

<sup>44</sup> PSRL, I, 56; *Novgorod First Chronicle*, ed. Nasonov 1950, 112.

<sup>45</sup> Zvizdeckyj 2004, 41; Zvizdeckyj 2008, 47.

<sup>46</sup> Klepackij 2007.

Modern hillfort names	Old Russian names of local centres of power	Names of territorial units – <i>volost'</i>
Novograd-Volynskij	Vzvjagel'	Zvjagol'skaja
Olevs'k	?	Olevskaja
Ovruč	Vručij	Ovruckaja
Korosten'	Iskorosten'	Zavšskaja
Malin	?	Malinskaja

TABLE 3. Correlation of the names of hillforts from the 8th–10th centuries with the names of the territorial units (*volost'*) from the 14th–16th centuries.

The mapping of the hillforts together with the reconstructed 14th–16th century borders of the *volost'* shows some units with only one hillfort (Olevs'k) while others contain several. The reason for such a difference is the complicated history of the formation and development of these units, and Ovruckaja *volost'* is particularly interesting in this connection.

As was mentioned above, Iskorosten' is the only town mentioned in the chronicles in connection with the Derevlian story. This was the residence of their Prince Mal, who may also have possessed a territory which is mentioned in medieval sources as Malinskaja *volost'*. Malinskaja *volost'* was situated southeast of Iskorosten' and included settlements along the River Irša. So it is possible that this region formed the southern border of his "principality", while on the west it was bordered by the Zvjagol'skaja and Olevs'kaja *volost'*. His northern possessions stretched up to the River Pripjat'. The eastern border is the most problematic, as there is no known *volost'* on that side. Until the Kievan princes established their authority over the Derevlian land, this area was most probably subject to many quarrels with the population of Kiev. Bear in mind that a large number of *volost'* were mentioned in this area during the 14th–16th centuries, along with the mentioning of a number of Derevlian princes in the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, so we may suggest that the structure of a *volost'* was very archaic and went back to the time when a number of the Derevlian principalities existed.

A *volost'* was a main settlement complex usually with a hillfort and a number of surrounding villages. A village or *volost'* could not itself be sold or purchased. Both could change owners but the structure must remain constant – a main settlement/hillfort "town" with surrounding villages which "gravitate" towards it. The *volost'* was never a compact territorial area; it could have settlements situated within other *volost'*s. In later periods, the *volost'* was headed by a *voevoda*, that is a "troop commander" who was responsible for gathering war-

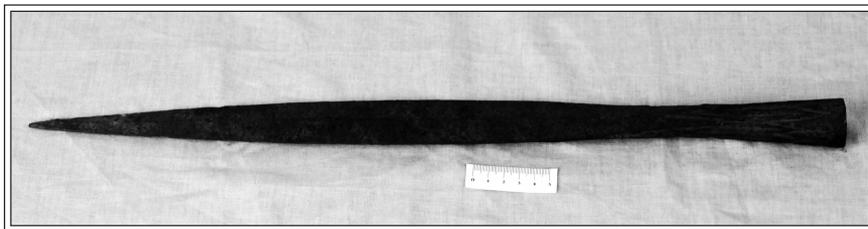


FIGURE 25: Spearhead of Petersen's type E found in the vicinity of the Motronin monastery in the region of Čerkasy, Ukraine, after Androščuk and Zocenko 2012.

riors and served as chief supervisor and governor over the territory. A *voevoda* was also responsible for collecting tribute; except for the honey tribute, which was the responsibility of a special official called *klučnik* (the “person with the key”).<sup>47</sup> From the written sources we know that in the 11th to 13th centuries, a *volost'* could be granted short-term for making of military service. A *volost'* did not belong to a specific prince but to his “seat” (*stol* in Church-Slavonic). Every new prince who became the possessor of a “seat” also became the possessor of a particular *volost'* or number of *volost'*s. To lose control over the seat meant losing the *volost'*.<sup>48</sup>

#### OWNERS AND GOVERNORS IN THE LAND OF THE DEREVLANS

So before being subjected to the authority of Kiev, the territory of the Derevlans consisted of a number of petty “principalities” called *volost'*s. They were ruled by princes responsible for all military business and also by *staricy* or *starcišiny* (elders) who were responsible for the collected tribute and were arbitrators for population of the *volost'*.<sup>49</sup> Owing to the decentralized character of the political power of this territory, superfluous tribute in the form of honey, beavers, black martens and iron was most probably taken. The Derevlans needed to seek external markets, and this was probably a reason for their conflicts with the Poljanians, who dwelt along the important trade route of the Dnieper. In doing this, the Derevlans found a number of good counterparts, such as the Northmen, who in the 9th–10th centuries were exploring the territory of Eastern Europe for sources of wealth and power. In this connection, some weapon finds must be considered.

<sup>47</sup> Klepackij 2007, 92–98.

<sup>48</sup> Toločko 1992, 157–160.

<sup>49</sup> PSRL, I, 17; *Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 58; Klepackij 2007, 396.

The most southern object of Scandinavian origin found in the area of the “Russian land” is a spearhead of Petersen’s type E (Fig. 25), which was found accidentally in the vicinity of the Motronin monastery close to the Tjasmin river (modern Čerkasy oblast’).<sup>50</sup> The find may be considered as evidence that the Northmen were investigating resources even along the southern tributaries of the Dnieper. Two other stray finds have a direct connection to this particular area.<sup>51</sup> A sword of Petersen’s type B dated to the Early Viking Period has been found in the vicinity of the village of Byčeva, formerly under the Podoljen government (Fig. 26.2). It is a classic specimen with pattern-welded blade, typical of examples found in the Carolingian Empire and in Scandinavia.<sup>52</sup> A winged spearhead from Lystven (modern Dubno rajon, Rovens’ka oblast’) should also be mentioned (Fig. 26.1). Winged spearheads occur in Scandinavia where they are usually considered to be Carolingian weapons, particularly those with pattern-welded blades.<sup>53</sup> The Lystven spearhead does not have any pattern-welding and, judging from the shape of the blade, might be dated to the late 8th to the first half of the early 9th century,<sup>54</sup> which corresponds well with the dating of the Byčeva sword. Three other winged spearheads were found in the territory of Rus’. Two of them are stray finds from the area of the Carpathian mountains and the third was found in occupation layers at Novgorod dated to the second part of the 10th century.<sup>55</sup> Judging from their types, the Carpathian spearheads might be dated to the early period, while the Novgorod example is from a later period than the spearhead from Listvin. It might be assumed that all four finds came to Eastern Europe by different means. The appearance of winged spearheads as well as imported swords in Scandinavia is associated with the period of Charles the Great (768–814),<sup>56</sup> which perfectly accords with the dating of the above-mentioned weapons from Ukraine.

So far we have no clear evidence of direct contacts between the Carolingian Empire and this Slavonic area in the 9th century. However, it should be noted that Alexander V. Nazarenko recently suggested that the route “from the Germans to the Khazars”, connecting Kiev with western Slavonic and Germanic lands, was established in the 9th–10th centuries.<sup>57</sup> Nazarenko’s conclusion relies on the assumption that the *Rugi*, mentioned in the 10<sup>th</sup>-century *Raffelstet-*

<sup>50</sup> Androščuk and Zocenko 2012 № 75.

<sup>51</sup> Zocenko 2004, 91, fig. 5; 96, fig. 5; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012 №s III and II4.

<sup>52</sup> Androshchuk 2007.

<sup>53</sup> Solberg 1991.

<sup>54</sup> Type II, according to Westphal 2002, 231–233, fig. 3.2.10.

<sup>55</sup> Artemjev 1991, 183–197, fig. 1–3.

<sup>56</sup> Solberg 1991, 256.

<sup>57</sup> Nazarenko 2001, 71–111.

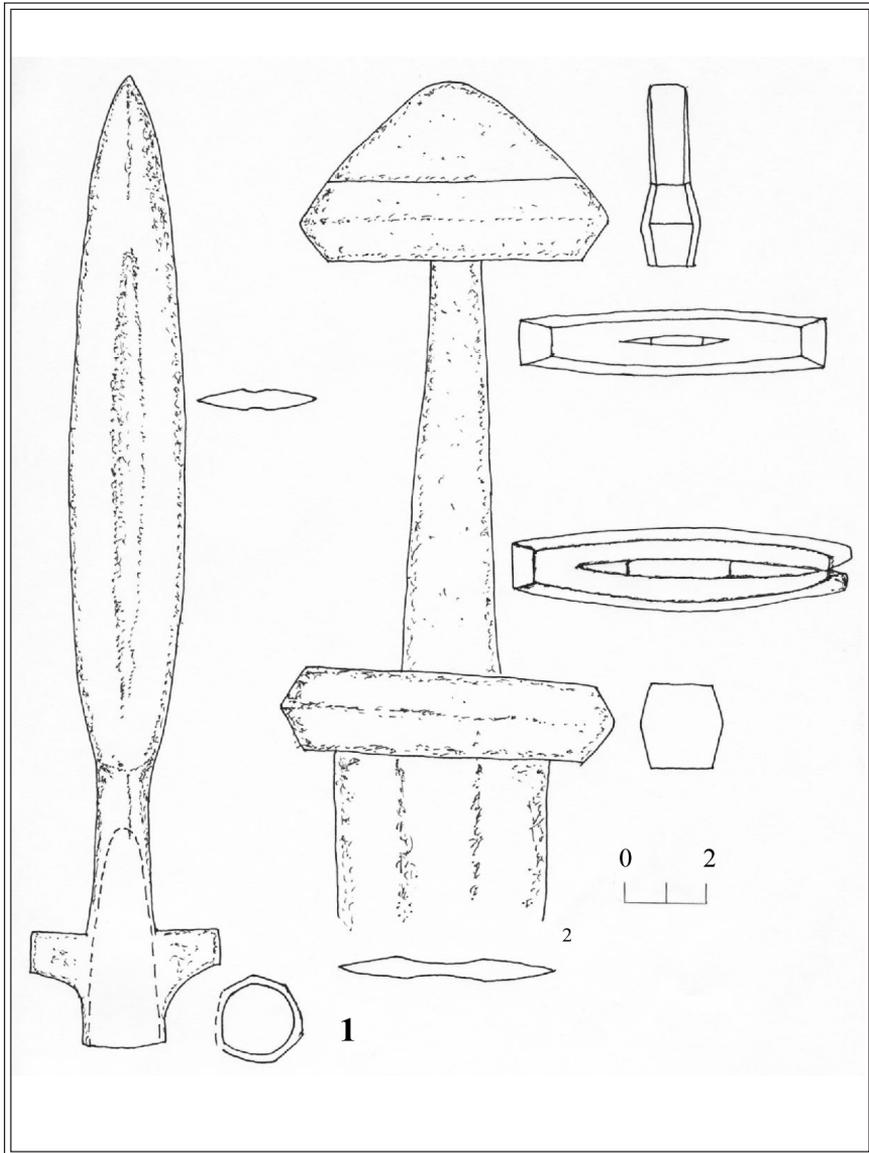


FIG 26: Weapons of Carolingian origin found in Ukraine: (a) Lystven and (b) Byčeva (drawing by author).

*tener Zollurkunde*, is Rus', and also on some "Russian" place-names in southern Germany.<sup>58</sup> Although the "Regensburg-Kiev" route is only recorded in written sources from the 11th–12th centuries,<sup>59</sup> some archaeologists believe that it was in use in early periods.<sup>60</sup> It is very difficult to understand how the weapon finds should be interpreted in connection with this route. None of the type B swords were found on sites that could be interpreted as trade centres (the only exception is a single find of the lower guard of such a sword that came to light in the Gnězdovo settlement in Russia).<sup>61</sup> The swords from Bor in Russia and from Byčeva were found in rural areas, far away from important waterways. This is exactly the same pattern of distribution of most Carolingian weapons in Sweden, which are also found in rural areas.<sup>62</sup> To my mind, all three Ukrainian finds could be interpreted as evidence of the earliest contacts between Northmen and the local Slavonic population. It is highly probably that the search for local economic resources was the primary reason for Scandinavian visitors in this area.

There is some archaeological evidence from the later part of the 10th century that could be associated with the presence of, or contact with, Northmen. On the River Styr, between the villages of Pljaševa and Polunyčne, a sword of Petersen's type E has been found.<sup>63</sup> Although it is a stray find and nothing is known about its find context, it is important to emphasize that this type of sword is otherwise found almost exclusively in eastern Scandinavia.<sup>64</sup> Another stray find comes from Ljubče, Ržyščevskij rajon, Volyns'ka oblast'. This is a scabbard chape of Scandinavian origin made of copper alloy. It is remarkable that scabbard chapes of this type are few in Ukraine.<sup>65</sup> Similar chapes, also made of copper alloy, were found in Birka's chamber-grave dated to the second half of the 10th century.<sup>66</sup>

How might all these finds be interpreted? Do they indicate Scandinavian presence or simply occasional contacts of local populations with strangers from the North? For a better understanding of them we need to examine critically all kind of evidences – archaeology, written sources and philology.

<sup>58</sup> Nazarenko 2001, 88–89, 90–91, 105.

<sup>59</sup> Nazarenko 2001, 79, 91, 102–103.

<sup>60</sup> Zvizdeckyj and Mocja, 1998, 77; Zvizdeckyj 2005, 220.

<sup>61</sup> Egorov, 1996, 64, № 428.

<sup>62</sup> Androshchuk 2007.

<sup>63</sup> Zocenko 2004, 100, fig. 8; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012 № 113.

<sup>64</sup> Androshchuk 2007.

<sup>65</sup> See for instance Androshchuk and Zocenko 2012, №s 109, 116 and 237.

<sup>66</sup> Arbman 1940–43, Pl. 4:5; 5:6–7.

Some philologists interpret the place-name Iskorosten' as derived from Old Norse *í skarpstaini* (meaning "on the steep rock").<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, neither the character of the town nor the context of the Scandinavian finds allow us to draw the conclusion that the town was founded by Scandinavians. The above-mentioned artefacts only reveal that the local population had contacts with Scandinavians, and that the last of these lived in the town just before it was attacked.

As was mentioned above in accordance with the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, after returning from his Greek campaign, Igor made war on the Derevlians and the Uličians. Svenel'd, as troop commander in these wars, received the Derevlian tribute as a reward for his victory over the Uličians.<sup>68</sup> The Derevlians paid black martens "per hearth" as a tribute, just as the population of this region would five centuries later to their *voevoda*.<sup>69</sup> Svenel'd hardly resided in Derevlian land permanently. At the time of Igor's attack he was in Kiev,<sup>70</sup> which means that his mission was short-lived.<sup>71</sup> After the burning and capturing of the town, Olga imposed a heavy tribute upon the Derevlians, to be distributed between Kiev and her own town Vyšgorod. The chronicle also records that she "passed through the land of Dereva, accompanied by her son and her retinue, establishing laws and tribute. Here trading posts and hunting-preserves are there still."<sup>72</sup> The chronicle further tells us that Olga's hunting grounds, boundary-posts, towns, and trading-posts were placed throughout the country. Particularly interesting is the mention of *znamjanija*, usually translated as "boundary posts". In the 14th- to 16th-century documents that relate to our area, *znamjanija* means a particular sign of ownership cut on the honey-trees.<sup>73</sup> Beekeeping was an important item of economy in the Kiev region for many centuries. Olga had a special person – *klučnicu* Malušu – who apparently was responsible for collecting her honey, and who was mother to Prince Vladimir.

Economic wealth of the territory which had formerly belonged to the Derevlian Prince Mal was taken over by Kievian authority. This territory probably included lands that we know from the medieval period: the Malinskaja volost' along the River Irša, the Zavšskaja volost' between the Rivers Už and Irša, and the Kamenovaja volost' between the Rivers Ubort' and Slavečnaja.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Schramm 2001, 257.

<sup>68</sup> *Novgorod First Chronicle*, ed. Nasonov 1950, 110.

<sup>69</sup> Compare the term *podymščina* recorded in the 15th–16th century; see Klepackij 2007, 384–385.

<sup>70</sup> *Novgorod First Chronicle*, ed. Nasonov 1950, 110–111; PSRL, I, 55.

<sup>71</sup> Artamonov 1966, 31.

<sup>72</sup> PSRL, I, 60; *Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 81.

<sup>73</sup> Klepackij 2007, 371–372.

<sup>74</sup> Klepackij 2007, 192, 194, 200, 224.

After establishing Kiev's authority, the centre of political and administrative power was moved from the ruined town of Iskorosten' to the town of Vručij/Ovruč.<sup>75</sup> It is an interesting question why the governing centre of Dereva was moved to Vručij. The reason for it might well be a local economical resource, which is never mentioned in the written sources but is very well known in the archaeological record, namely Ovruč schist. Over fifteen special manufacturing settlements (covering c. 10–16 sq hectares) as well as mines have been recorded here.<sup>76</sup>

There is some question as to when both production and export of the schist began. Some scholars suggest that its industrial manufacture began in the 940s–970s after Dereva was included in the sphere of Kiev's authority. Others maintain that minor production of Ovruč schist can be dated as early as the 7th–8th century.<sup>77</sup> The important fact is that spindle whorls and whetstones, made of Ovruč schist, have been found in cultural layers and objects in Iskorosten', dated from the 700s until the 950s,<sup>78</sup> which means that production of the schist was controlled by Iskorosten' during this period. It is highly probably that during the course of the 10th century, spindle whorls made of Ovruč schist were sold or traded to people living at Šestovycja,<sup>79</sup> Chodosivka, a number of settlements of the Romens'ka culture, and also at Novgorod<sup>80</sup>, Gorodišče and Old Russian Beloozero.<sup>81</sup> During the 10th and 11th centuries, a number of imported spindle whorls reached Chersonesos<sup>82</sup> as well as major centres along the Danube<sup>83</sup> in Poland, the Baltic lands, Hedeby with Schlesvig, Lund and Sigtuna,<sup>84</sup> and Volga-Bulgaria.<sup>85</sup> It should be noted that light red stone spindle whorls occur in Russian hoards of the 11th–12th centuries.<sup>86</sup> This distinctive red schist is found incorporated into jewellery, palace and church buildings, as well as in the sarcophagi of the Kievan princes. In Byzantine court culture, the colour red, or rather purple, was reserved for imperial use. Porphyry was used extensively in imperial buildings and most impressively also in the impe-

<sup>75</sup> Zvizdeckyj and Polguy 1998, 118–119; Tomaševskij, Pavlenko and Petrauskas 2003, 134; Tomaševskij 2004.

<sup>76</sup> Pavlenko 2005, 197.

<sup>77</sup> Tomaševskij, Pavlenko and Petrauskas 2003, 134 with references.

<sup>78</sup> Zvizdeckyj, Petrauskas and Polguy 2004, 72: buildings 2, 4 and 6.

<sup>79</sup> Blifel'd 1977, 155, pl. XVIII: 10.

<sup>80</sup> Rybina 1978, 25–26.

<sup>81</sup> Tomaševskij, Pavlenko and Petrauskas 2003, 134 with references.

<sup>82</sup> Kolesnikova 2006, 129–130.

<sup>83</sup> Perthavko 1999, 214–215.

<sup>84</sup> Gabriel 1989, 201 and 277, Liste 1.

<sup>85</sup> Jakimov 1992.

<sup>86</sup> Korzuchina 1954, 137, № 149; Dadičenko 2002.

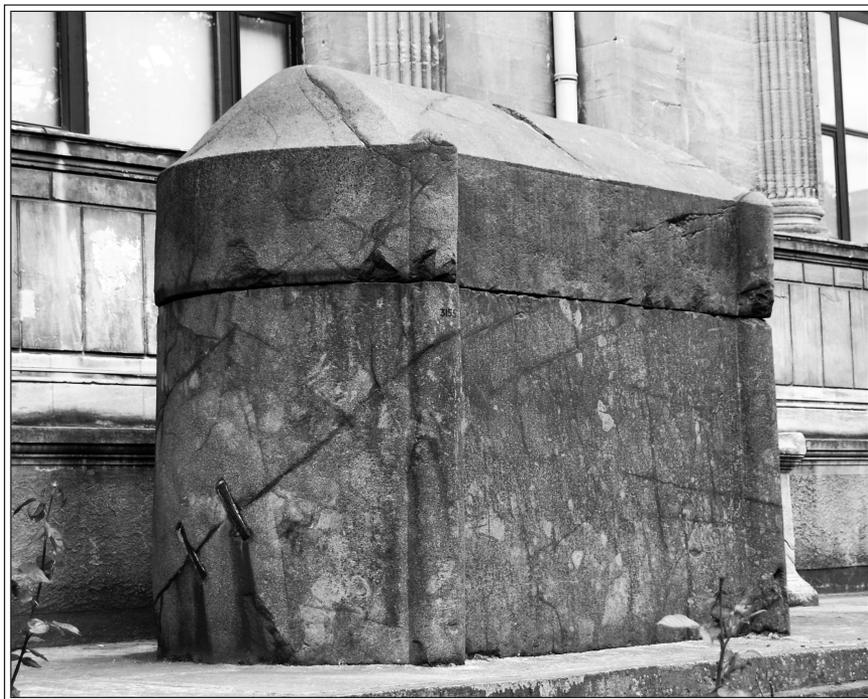


FIGURE 27: An imperial sarcophagus in Constantinople (photo by author).

rial sarcophagi in Constantinople (Fig. 27). Ovruch schist with its similar rose colour and exclusiveness could have played a similar symbolic role for the Old Russian rulers. There seems to be no doubt that the authorities in Kiev controlled the production of Ovruch schist. The presence of these distinctive schist spindle whorls on various sites in Old Rus' and Scandinavia might indicate connections with Kievian authority and an involvement in a prestigious social network.

As mentioned earlier, there are additional finds which indicate that the residents of Iskorosten' also benefited from contacts in another direction. Apart from two gold earrings that have their closest parallels in graves in Great Moravia,<sup>87</sup> there are several earrings of "Volhynian type" which have been recently discussed by a number of scholars.<sup>88</sup> Variants of similar earrings and other objects decorated with filigree and granulation occur in great concentra-

<sup>87</sup> Chropovsky 1993, 76, fig. 5.

<sup>88</sup> Puškina 1996; Zoll-Adamikowa, Dékowna and Nosek 1999; Rabinovič and Rjabceva 2006; Žylina 2007.

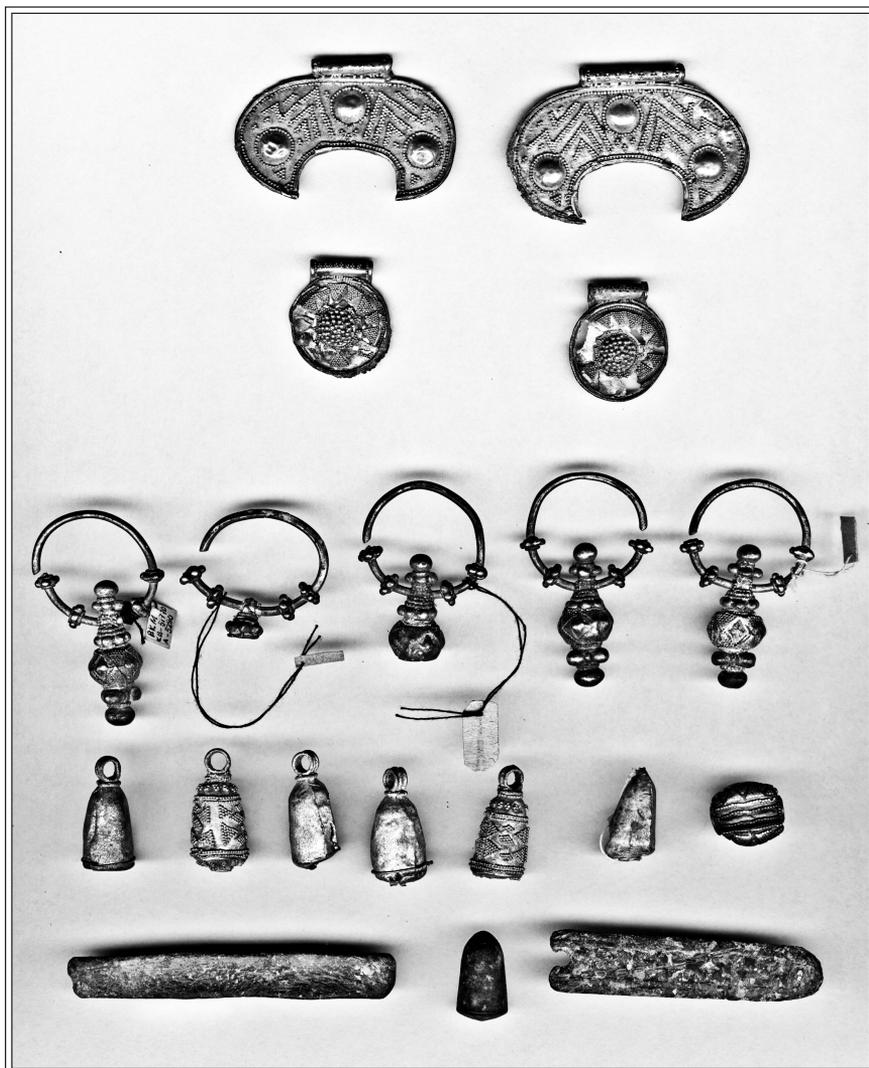


FIGURE 28: Finds from the Červone hillfort, Vinnitsa region, Ukraine (photo M. Potupčik).

tions mainly in the territory between the Danube and the Dnieper and specifically Volhynia. This has given rise to the suggestion that there was a goldsmithing centre of Byzantine character here, especially when taking into account the well-known goldsmith burial in Peresopnica, on the River Stubla in western Volhynia, which contained tools for manufacturing jewellery, matrices for the making of such earrings, and a folding-scales and weights.<sup>89</sup> There were probably several artistic centres practicing the Slavic art of granulation in the territory between the Rivers Dnieper, Dniester and the Western Bug.

I would like to draw attention to a particular type of site closely associated with these finds, namely circular hillforts such as Echimăuți on the Dniester and Červone in the Southern Bug river basin. The hillfort of Červone has been only briefly mentioned in print,<sup>90</sup> but the finds kept in the Vinnycja Historical Museum provide a good series of parallels to the jewellery which we know from mounds and hoards of the 10th century, particularly the recently discovered hoard from Gnězdovo in Russia.<sup>91</sup> Folding scales along with bronze ingots, Arabic silver coins, fragmented objects and unfinished granulation work on lunula- and bell-shaped pendants indicate that silver and bronze smiths were carrying out mass production of these items here (Fig. 28). Further discussion and interpretation of the finds from Červone must take into account the finds from the completely excavated hillfort of Echimăuți in Moldova.<sup>92</sup> This was a small hillfort, 86 × 60 m., with a rampart of wooden construction filled with stones and soil and covered over with clay. The jewellery found there included necklaces and arm rings of twisted bronze wire as well as earrings, lunula and circular pendants, and beads decorated with granulation, along with tools for their manufacture. It is usually suggested that in the 10th century the raw material for local jewellers was the silver gleaned from Arabic coins, while local ironwork was totally dependent on imported ore. The Carpathians and Upper Dniester regions have been suggested as possible areas for providing iron ore.<sup>93</sup>

To my mind, another likely source might have been exploited, namely the Derevlian lands, with their rich native resources (cf. above). In the second half of the 10th century, communication between the Derevlians, Volhynian and Pripjat'-Styr waterway in the Dniester river basin became important. Burial mounds in the basin of the River Styr contain beads and earrings with the same type of granulation as those found in the basin of the Southern Bug.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Duczko 1983, 329–356; Zoll-Adamikowa, Dékowna and Nosek 1999, 114.

<sup>90</sup> Chavljuk 1969.

<sup>91</sup> Puškina 1996.

<sup>92</sup> Rabinovič and Rjabceva 2006.

<sup>93</sup> Rabinovič and Rjabceva 2006, 122.

<sup>94</sup> Gupalo 2006, 61, fig. 48:6; 49; 95.



FIGURE 29: Scandinavian brooch from the village of Kovalivka, in the area of Nemyrov, Vinnica region, Ukraine (photo M. Potupčik).

A hoard of jewellery discovered recently in Moldova supports the idea about contacts among Scandinavians, the people of Volhynia and the land of Dereva with Lower Dniester area.<sup>95</sup> It contained earrings, lunula and circular buttons, and beads decorated with granulation as well as a silver pendant decorated in a typical Scandinavian animal style. Also one silver ingot, a bronze weight and five silver coins (three Byzantine and two Arabic) were discovered in the same hoard. The hoard dated to around 976 and indicates the most important directions of the contacts in that time.

There are at least two finds that indicate Scandinavian interest in the Volhynian region. One is a composite find in Uppland, Sweden, which comprised a large circular brooch in Borre style, glass beads, Arabic silver coins and a bead decorated in granulation style, which has been discussed in detail by Władysław Duczko.<sup>96</sup> The other find is a circular brooch decorated in Borre style which is a chance find that came to light in the village of Kovalivka, Nemyrov rajon, Vinnitca oblast' (Fig. 29).<sup>97</sup> There are other, mainly solitary, finds that indicate contacts between the Dereva, Volhynia and Scandinavia even in the 11th–12th centuries. The most significant are an arm ring and necklace of silver from a hoard found in Chaiča, in the Ovruch area,<sup>98</sup> and a spindle whorl inscribed with the Scandinavian name *Sigrið* found in Zvenigorod.<sup>99</sup>



<sup>95</sup> Rjabceva and Telnov 2010, fig. 1:13.

<sup>96</sup> Duczko 1982.

<sup>97</sup> Jansson, Potupčik and Androshchuk 2006; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, № 115.

<sup>98</sup> Korzuchina 1954, 91, table XII:1; for further details, see Androshchuk 2008b.

<sup>99</sup> Mel'nikova 2001; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012 № 121.

In conclusion, both written sources and archaeological findings provide evidence that the lands of the Dereva and Volhynia had excellent potential for sustaining social and economic development. Their search for new trading markets and trade routes is the most plausible reason not only for their wealth and prosperity, but also for emerging conflicts with the new clan of Rjurikids established in Kiev. The Rjurikids settled down in a centre that controlled the trade route that connected a large part of Eastern Europe with the Greeks. The economic power of Kiev was strengthened by establishing political control over the surrounding lands by arranged marriages with local princes and/or by violence. Under these conditions, the value of the light red schist also changed. Having been restricted by local economic necessity mainly to the Derevlians, it became an important marker of the large-scale territorial ownership and social status of the Kiev Princes.



## *Byzantium and the Viking World – Archaeological Evidence for Contacts (9th–10th c.)*

Research into contacts between Scandinavia and Byzantium has a long tradition among historians,<sup>1</sup> art historians<sup>2</sup> and numismatists.<sup>3</sup> The impact of Byzantine orthodoxy on Scandinavia has been a topic of discussion at a number of international conferences.<sup>4</sup> Archaeological studies are considerably fewer. There are a few articles devoted to individual pieces of Byzantine jewellery found in Scandinavia,<sup>5</sup> or certain categories of Byzantine imports of the 11th–12th centuries discovered in the cultural layers of early medieval towns such as Lund and Sigtuna<sup>6</sup> as well as Schleswig.<sup>7</sup> However, it should not be forgotten that the true “Viking world”, i.e. Scandinavian presence and activity during the 9th–11th centuries, embraced a much larger geographical area than present-day Scandinavia. If we bear this fine cultural and geographical distinction in mind, we can reconstruct a more accurate picture of contacts between the two cultural worlds (Fig. 30). It is indeed noteworthy that Byzantine objects have been excavated from a number of graves and settlements in modern Russia (Ladoga, Rjurikovo gorodišče, Gnězdovo) and Ukraine (Kiev, Šestovycja Černihiv) that contain Scandinavian cultural elements. Quite often the Byzantine and Scandinavian artefacts on these sites are found in association with one another, which makes them highly relevant to our study. Scandinavian objects have also been recorded in Byzantine territories such as Crimea and Bulgaria. That these finds occur together was seldom taken into consideration in former studies giving an incomplete and one-sided picture of these contacts.

To begin with, it must be noted that the criteria for recognizing a Byzantine origin for medieval objects are still uncertain. Pieces of jewellery and high qual-

<sup>1</sup> Benedikz 1969; Blöndal 1978; Ellis Davidson 1976; Shepard 2008a.

<sup>2</sup> Fleischer, Hjort and Bøgh Rasmussen 1996; Piltz 1989, 1998a och 1998b; Lagerlöf 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Grierson 1966; Noonan 1980; Morrison 1981; Hammarberg, Malmer and Zachrisson 1989.

<sup>4</sup> Müller-Wille 1997–1999; Janson 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Duczko 1989.

<sup>6</sup> Roslund 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Vogel 2002.



FIGURE 30: Map of locations mentioned in this chapter 4 (by author).

ity Christian objects are often easily identified by their Greek inscriptions.<sup>8</sup> It is much more difficult when dealing with simple secular artefacts such as weapons, personal items and tools, etc. It is quite possible that some may have been manufactured in various parts of the Mediterranean and Asia Minor and then imported and sold in Constantinople. The *Book of the Eparch* (known also

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Ross 1962 and 2005.

as the *Book of the Prefect*) tells of saddlers, soap makers, candle makers at work in that city; with Syrian items of precious metals and garments, goatskins, silk and linen fabrics being on sale.<sup>9</sup> Of course, one easy way would be to label those objects that come from sites within the territory of the Empire as “Byzantine”. However, the number of archaeologically investigated sites, especially those with cultural layers dated to the middle Byzantine period, are very limited,<sup>10</sup> and frequently poorly published. Another important factor is that Byzantium has always been a multicultural empire and it is not easy to ascertain if an object is Khazarian, Bulgarian or Arabic.

In this chapter, I would like to consider both obvious Byzantine objects, such as lead seals, coins, and pottery, and those artefacts that came from areas influenced by Byzantine culture, such as Bulgaria and Crimea. The composition and social context of these Byzantine finds in the Viking world will be subject to discussion.

#### TRACES OF THE FIRST CONTACTS

The earliest, rather indirect, evidence for contacts between silver seekers and the Greek-speaking world is an Arabic coin minted in 776/7 inscribed with the Greek name of its owner: Zacharias (the name is given in the genitive, *Zachariou*; Fig. 31:1). It was found on the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland at Peterhof (Leningrad oblast') in a hoard of Arabic coins deposited some time after 805.<sup>11</sup> Other material indications of Viking contacts with Byzantium in the 9th century are significant, though not numerous. Three Byzantine lead seals have been found in Denmark, and one in the territory of Old Rus'. The earliest is a stray find probably discovered in modern Novgorod and is a seal of Leon, *protospatharios* or *spatharios* and *domestikos*, dating to the first quarter of the 9th century (Fig. 31:4).<sup>12</sup> Since archaeological investigations date the earliest cultural layer in Novgorod to c. 930–950,<sup>13</sup> it seems quite logical to connect the find with Rjurikovo gorodišče, situated c. 2 km south of modern Novgorod.<sup>14</sup> Excavations in the buildings and cultural layers of the top of the hillfort here produced a Byzantine coin of Theophilos (829–842) and one of Basil I (867–88), two small hoards of Arabic coins (860s and 850s), a bronze

<sup>9</sup> Ed. Lipšyc and Sjuzumov 2006, 292, 294–296, 301–306; see also Mango 2000, 201–202.

<sup>10</sup> See a very useful survey of such sites in Böhlendorf-Arslan 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Dobrovolskij, Dubov and Kuzmenko 1991, 33–34, fig. 4, cat. № 85.

<sup>12</sup> Bulgakova 2004, 53–55.

<sup>13</sup> Gajdukov, Dubrovin and Tarabardina 2001, 80–81.

<sup>14</sup> Bulgakova 2004, 54–55.



FIGURE 31: Objects related to the 9th-century contacts of Northmen with Byzantium (1. Peterhof after Dobrovolskij, Dubov and Kuzmenko 1991; 2. Ljubytino after Michailov 2002; 3. Hedeby after Laurent 1978; 4. Novgorod after Bulgakova 2004; 5. Ribe after Jensen 1991; 6. Tissø after Jørgensen 2002; 7. Hedeby after Jankuhn 1943; 8. Hoen after Buckton 2006).

finger-ring of the Saltovo-Majackaja culture, Scandinavian brooches (Petersen's types 37 and 58) and local pottery, all dating to the 9th century.<sup>15</sup> These finds have led to the conclusion that an administrative local centre (the original Novgorod) must have been established here at that time.<sup>16</sup> Thus, Rjurikovo gorodišče is considered to be the strongest candidate for the base of the envoys of the *chaganus* of the Rhos who visited the court of Louis the Pious in Ingelheim in 839 (see above, chapter 3).<sup>17</sup>

Three seals have been discovered on Danish territory.<sup>18</sup> One of them comes from Hedeby and bears the name *patrikios* Theodosios who held the titles of *chartoularios* and *protospatharios* (Fig. 31:3). It has been proposed that this Theodosios is the same emissary who visited Venice and the court of Lothar between 840–842.<sup>19</sup> However, it should be kept in mind that the identity of the Theodosios on the seal is quite obscure. According to Greek sources, the Theodosios who visited Venice in 838–839 was *patrikios* and belonged to the family *Baboutzikos*, while Latin records mention a *Theodosius videlicet Calcedonensis metropolitanus episcopus et Theophanius spatharius* among the emissaries to Ingelheim in 839.<sup>20</sup> That same delegation to Ingelheim, as we know, included the above-mentioned envoys of the *chaganus* of the Rhos. It is also known that Theodosios was already dead before the death of Louis the Pious in 840.<sup>21</sup>

Two other Danish finds of seals also bear the name of Theodosios. These come from Ribe and Tissø (Fig. 31:5–6).<sup>22</sup> It has been suggested that their owner was “the head of the Byzantine armoury and military recruiting office” and “may have been in northern Europe to recruit mercenaries or to buy iron for the Byzantine army”.<sup>23</sup> Another find of Byzantine origin from Hedeby has to be mentioned. It is a gold coin of Theophilos with Michael and Constantine VIII, minted between 825 and 840, which was refashioned into a female brooch (Fig. 31:7).<sup>24</sup> Finally, the famous Hoen hoard, found in the southeast of Norway and deposited in the second half of the 9th century, contained two gold solidi pendants among objects of Scandinavian, Carolingian, Arabic and

<sup>15</sup> Nosov 1990, 148–149.

<sup>16</sup> Nosov 1990, 183; Nosov, Gorjunova and Plochov 2005, 30–31.

<sup>17</sup> *Annals of St. Bertin*, ed. Grat and Vieillard 1964, 30–31; ed. Nelson 1991, 44. See also Shepard 1995; Franklin and Shepard 1996, 31–41; Zuckerman 2003, 87.

<sup>18</sup> Laurent 1978; Jørgense 2002, 241; Jørgensen 2003, 203; Shepard 1995.

<sup>19</sup> Duczko, 2004, 53, 56–58.

<sup>20</sup> Vasiliev 1900, 141, 146, n. 3–4, and 147.

<sup>21</sup> Vasiliev 1900, 147, n. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Jensen 1991, 70; Jørgensen 2002, 241; Jørgensen 2003, 203.

<sup>23</sup> Piltz 1998a, 35; see also Jørgensen 2002, 241–243; Jørgensen 2003, 203; Duczko 2004, 36, 39–40, 43.

<sup>24</sup> Jankuhn 1943, 114, Pl. 2:m; Graham-Campbell 1980, 101–102.

Anglo-Saxon origin. The solidi are of Constantine V (751–775) and Michael III and Theodora (843–856). The hoard also contained an elaborate gold chain-link with a Greek inscription (Fig. 31:8),<sup>25</sup> considered to have possibly served as a reliquary.<sup>26</sup> It is, however, more likely to have belonged to a large body-chain.<sup>27</sup>

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR CONTACTS IN THE Tenth CENTURY

As we have seen, the Byzantine objects found in Viking Age sites of Eastern Europe are considerably more numerous in 10<sup>th</sup>-century layers and comprise reliquary crosses, glass bracelets, finger-rings, buckles, pottery, lead seals and coins. As a rule, the places where they are found are associated with trade, craft and/or administrative centres, situated along important communication routes. In the following we shall go through the relevant material category by category, in order to get a clear picture of the archaeological evidence indicating contacts between Byzantium and Scandinavia.

##### *Reliquary crosses*

We shall begin with the settlement of Staraja Ladoga, where a small copper-alloy reliquary cross was found in deposits dated to c. 890s–925 (Fig. 32:5). According to some scholars, the find represents the oldest Christian object found in the territory of Old Rus'.<sup>28</sup> It came to light in an area of the settlement (left bank of the River Ladožka) that included other objects of the same period: walnut shells, cowrie shells, wax, imported glazed painted pottery<sup>29</sup> and a box-wood comb.<sup>30</sup> Items from the second part of the 10th century discovered in the same area<sup>31</sup> comprised a bronze pectoral cross, a cross-shaped mount found in association with a neck-ring with Scandinavian Thor's hammer-shaped pendants, and a pendant with runic symbols.

A further two 10th-century copper-alloy reliquary crosses have been found in the Gnězdovo settlement<sup>32</sup> (Fig. 32:6) and the Uglič hillfort<sup>33</sup> (Fig. 32:7)

<sup>25</sup> Fuglesang and Wilson 2006, 17–21, Nos 56–57, 39.

<sup>26</sup> Heyerdahl-Larsen 1982; Duczko 1989, 128, fig. 6; Piltz 1998a, 28.

<sup>27</sup> Buckton 2006; cf. Johns 2003, 14.

<sup>28</sup> Musin 2002, 98–99, fig. 1:1–2; Korzuchina and Peskova 2003, 56, No 19, pl. 14; Peskova 2004, 159–160.

<sup>29</sup> Seničenkova 1997, 115.

<sup>30</sup> Petrenko 1985, 114.

<sup>31</sup> Musin 2002, fig. 6:3; Peskova 2004, 160.

<sup>32</sup> Astašova 1974; Egorov 1996, 57–58, No 344; Korzuchina and Peskova 2003, 54, No 7, pl. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Tomsinskij 2002, fig. 1; Korzuchina and Peskova 2003, 56–57, No 20, pl. 9.

respectively. The latter was excavated from a pit where it was associated with Arabic coins minted in 888/889, 896/897 and 942/943, glass beads, two arrowheads (one lancet-shaped), silver belt mounts, spindle whorls of Volhynian schist, and also a bronze buckle decorated in Borre style. On the basis of the analysis of the material culture of the settlement, it was concluded that the local population had been involved in contacts with the north-western areas of Russia and the River Dnieper region.<sup>34</sup>

#### *Finger rings*

At least two types of finger rings of Byzantine origin are recorded in Scandinavian contexts in Eastern Europe. One type is represented by a copper-alloy finger ring with a hoop of semicircular or oval section and a flat round bezel decorated with various figures. One such ring with a bezel engraved with a five-pointed star comes from the area of the city of Vladimir in Russia (Fig. 32:2).<sup>35</sup> A similar finger ring was found in a female grave in a mound in the cemetery of Posady in the Volga region. It was found in association with temple rings, a neck ring, four finger rings of various forms, beads and Arabic coins minted in 905, 935, 938 and 974.<sup>36</sup> Finger rings decorated with an engraved eagle have been found in a grave with a coin of the 10th century in one of the Kostroma cemeteries<sup>37</sup> and one such ring is recorded in the Timerëvo settlement,<sup>38</sup> as also in a cultural layer in Novgorod dated to before 953.<sup>39</sup> Copper-alloy finger rings engraved with five-pointed stars have been found in an excavated grave in Greece (Azoros, Paliokklisi, in Afrati and Euboia),<sup>40</sup> and sites and cemeteries dated to the turn of the 10th century in Bulgaria (Stambol jolu, Misevsko, Krdzhalijsko, Vinica and Preslav).<sup>41</sup>

Another Byzantine type of finger-ring is represented by a copper-alloy ring with a circular grooved flat hoop with twisted wires at the base of a round bezel filled with a yellow-brown material, possibly glass paste.<sup>42</sup> To this group belongs a gilt copper-alloy finger-ring with a round bezel surrounded by rows of beaded wire and small pearls, found in mound N<sup>o</sup> 110 of the Šestovycja cemetery (Fig. 32:1).<sup>43</sup> This mound held a double chamber grave which contained

<sup>34</sup> Tomsinskij 2002, 263–264.

<sup>35</sup> Spicyn 1905, 149, fig. 283.

<sup>36</sup> Ravdina 1988, 105, pl. 8:14.

<sup>37</sup> Sedova 1981, 137.

<sup>38</sup> Bulkin, Dubov and Lebedev 1978, 93.

<sup>39</sup> Sedova 1981, 137, fig. 50:13.

<sup>40</sup> Papanikola-Bakirzi 2002, 451, N<sup>o</sup> 615, and 560, N<sup>o</sup> 775.

<sup>41</sup> Totev 2004, 240, fig. 8:12–14.

<sup>42</sup> Papanikola-Bakirzi 2002, 444, N<sup>os</sup> 584 and 586; 586, N<sup>o</sup> 835.

<sup>43</sup> Blifel'd 1977, 60, 176; Černenko 2007, 59, fig. 35:1, Pl. 15.

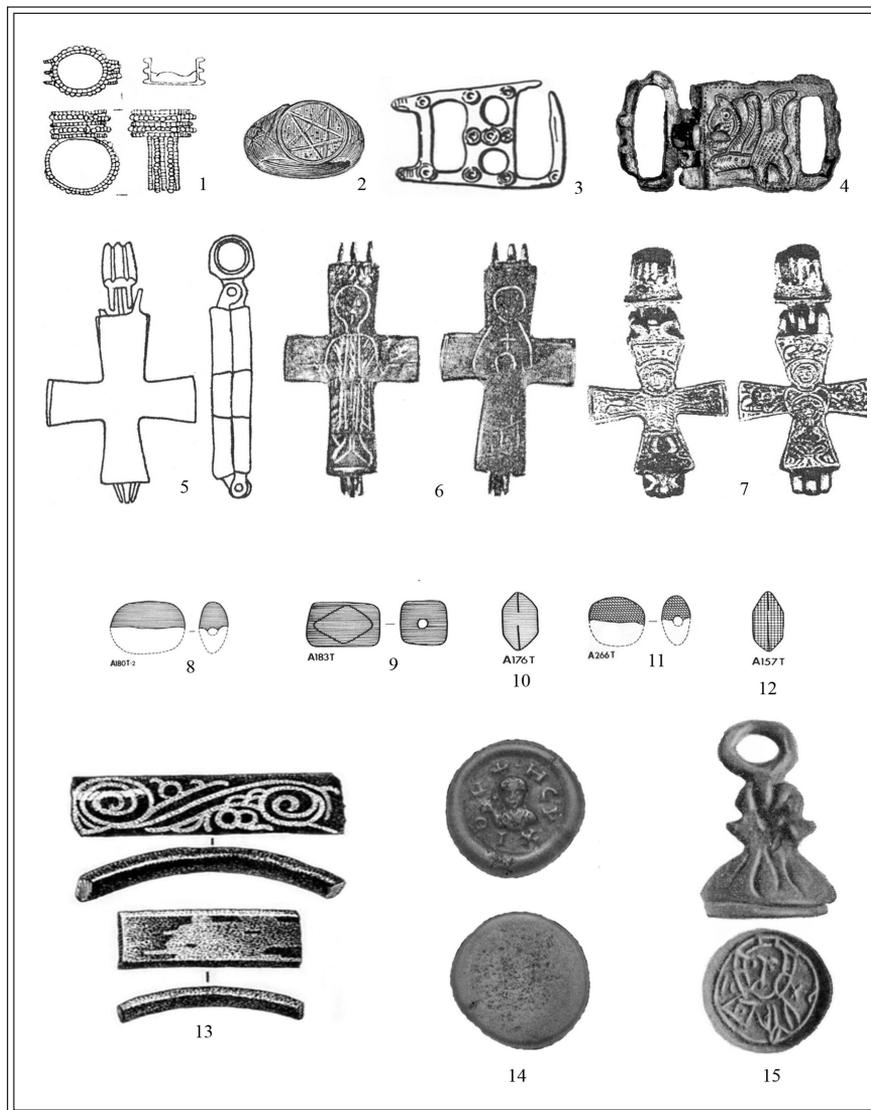


FIGURE 32: Objects related to the 10th-century contacts of the Rhos with Byzantium. 1. Šestovycja after Černenko 2007; 2. Vladimir after Spicyn 1905; 3. Staraja Ladoga after Nosov 1985; 4. Kiev after Movchan 2007; 5. Staraja Ladoga after Korzuchina and Peskova 2003; 6. Gnëzdovo after Korzuchina and Peskova 2003; 7. Uglič after Korzuchina and Peskova 2003; 8–12. Scandinavian graves after Callmer 1977; 13. Kiev after Gupalo and Toločko 1975; 14. Šestovycja after Chamajko and Zocenko 2007; 14. Šestovycja after Khamayko & Zotsenko 2007; 15. Šestovycja after Blifel'd 1977.

a horse and a number of objects including a sword<sup>44</sup> with a bronze scabbard chape,<sup>45</sup> a scramasax, iron quiver binding strips of Hungarian type,<sup>46</sup> arrow-heads of which one is lancet-shaped, a silver mount of a drinking-horn of a type known in Birka's graves,<sup>47</sup> an iron buckle, silver foil and gold foil glass beads, a (10th-century) coin made into a pendant, saddle plaques of antler and copper-alloy horse mounts of Hungarian type.<sup>48</sup> The ring sat on the finger of a female in the grave.<sup>49</sup>

#### *Buckles*

The earliest buckle of Byzantine-Crimean origin was found in Ljubytino, Novgorod oblast' in Russia (Fig. 31:2);<sup>50</sup> Judging from Crimean parallels it might date to the first half of the 8th century.<sup>51</sup> The occurrence of such an object in this area has been explained by contacts with the Saltovo-Majackaja culture, located to the north of the Black Sea. The buckle could have arrived via the Volga–Baltic water route.<sup>52</sup> Another type of eastern buckle is hinged, with a flat rectangular plate with an elongated opening at one end while the frame and tongue are typically missing. The front of the plate normally has decoration in the form of circles or fantastic figures in relief.<sup>53</sup> There are three finds of copper-alloy buckles recorded in the Rus' territory.<sup>54</sup> One of them was found in a possible chamber grave containing a male individual accompanied by two horses, in the upper part of a large mound situated on the right bank of the River Volchov, 300 m south of the famous 'Scandinavian' cemetery in Plakun (Fig. 32:3). The grave had been plundered and most of the finds came from disturbed layers. Other finds from the grave included an antler tool with one end shaped into an animal head in Scandinavian fashion, four gilt-silver mounts, an iron crampon, a knife, three rivets and a nail. This burial has been dated to the 10th century, and was placed immediately above an earlier cremation grave dated to the 9th century.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Type W after Petersen 1919.

<sup>45</sup> Type I:2c after Paulsen 1953.

<sup>46</sup> Fodor 1996, 45 and 443, fig. 3–5.

<sup>47</sup> Arbman 1940–43, pl. 196.

<sup>48</sup> Fodor 1996, 154, fig. 11, and 157, fig. 15; László, 1996, Pl. 89:64–65; 92:3–13.

<sup>49</sup> Blifel'd 1977, 176.

<sup>50</sup> Michailov 1996, 51, fig. 3; Michailov 2002, 68, fig. 4.

<sup>51</sup> Majko 2004, 154–156, fig. 86:3.

<sup>52</sup> Michailov 2002, 70–71.

<sup>53</sup> Orlov, 1973.

<sup>54</sup> Orlov 1997, fig. 1; Michailov 1997, fig. 4; Movchan 2007.

<sup>55</sup> Nosov 1985, 154; Michailov 1997, 114–115.

Two other finds of buckles come from Ukraine. One of them was discovered in the mound of grave 70 in the Šestovycja cemetery.<sup>56</sup> The other was discovered in a recently investigated chamber grave in Kiev.<sup>57</sup> This grave contained a male individual accompanied by a type-N sword,<sup>58</sup> with a bronze scabbard chape.<sup>59</sup> A bronze buckle from a sword belt, decorated with a griffin motif, was found close to the sword (Fig. 32:4), along with the remains of a quiver with arrowheads and a bronze suspension mount of Hungarian type,<sup>60</sup> a bucket, two silver filigree beads and four Byzantine coins minted in Cherson (youngest coin minted c. 920). Bronze buckles of a similar type are recorded from Greece,<sup>61</sup> Bulgaria,<sup>62</sup> Hungary<sup>63</sup> and Turkey<sup>64</sup>. They are considered Byzantine products of the second half of the 10th century.<sup>65</sup>

#### *Pottery*

Byzantine pottery of the 10th century is represented by amphorae and glazed pottery.<sup>66</sup> It seems that amphorae appear in Viking Age sites around 950. This might be borne out by amphora finds (type Hayes 54 / Günsenin 1 / Bulgakov 3,1K) excavated from a plot in Podil, the lower part of Kiev city, together with two Byzantine coins of Romanos I Lekapenos (920–944) and Constantine VII (945; Fig. 33:2)<sup>67</sup>. This type of round-bellied amphora with curved bottom and short handles was most frequent in Constantinople and was widely exported in the 10th to 11th centuries to Crimea, Greece, Southern France, Italy, Rus' and Scandinavia.<sup>68</sup> Single fragments of amphorae of the types mentioned above are known from the settlements of Birka and Šestovycja,<sup>69</sup> but they are never found in the graves on these sites.

<sup>56</sup> Blifel'd 1977, 195, pl. XIX; Michailov 1997, 110, fig. 4:1.

<sup>57</sup> Movchan 2007, fig. 1, pl. 18–21.

<sup>58</sup> Petersen 1919.

<sup>59</sup> Type I:2b after Paulsen 1953, 22–26, Abb. 13–18.

<sup>60</sup> Fodor 1996, 74, fig. 7; 85, fig. 5; 118, fig. 10; 153, fig. 3.

<sup>61</sup> Davidson 1952, pl. 115, N<sup>o</sup>s 2213–2218; see also the apparently wrongly dated buckles published in Papanikola-Bakirzi 2002, 392, N<sup>o</sup>s 482; 394, N<sup>o</sup>s 483–484.

<sup>62</sup> Balbolova-Ivanova 2000, fig. 4.

<sup>63</sup> Fodor 1996, 175, fig. 2; 237–238, fig. 3; 292, fig. 1; Langó and Türk 2004.

<sup>64</sup> Lightfoot 2003, 82, fig. VI/3.

<sup>65</sup> Čallan 1954, 320–324; Michailov 1996; Orlov 1997, 200.

<sup>66</sup> Koval' 1999, 2000 and 2005.

<sup>67</sup> Gupalo and Toločko 1975, 73, fig. 18–19; Sahajdak 1991, 91–92; Bulgakov 2000, fig. 3.

<sup>68</sup> Jakobson 1979, 73–75; Hayes 1992, 73–75, fig. 24; Bulgakov 2000; Paršina 2001; Bäck 2009 and 2010.

<sup>69</sup> Kovalenko 2006, 92–93; Bäck 2009, 269–270, fig. 6, 8.

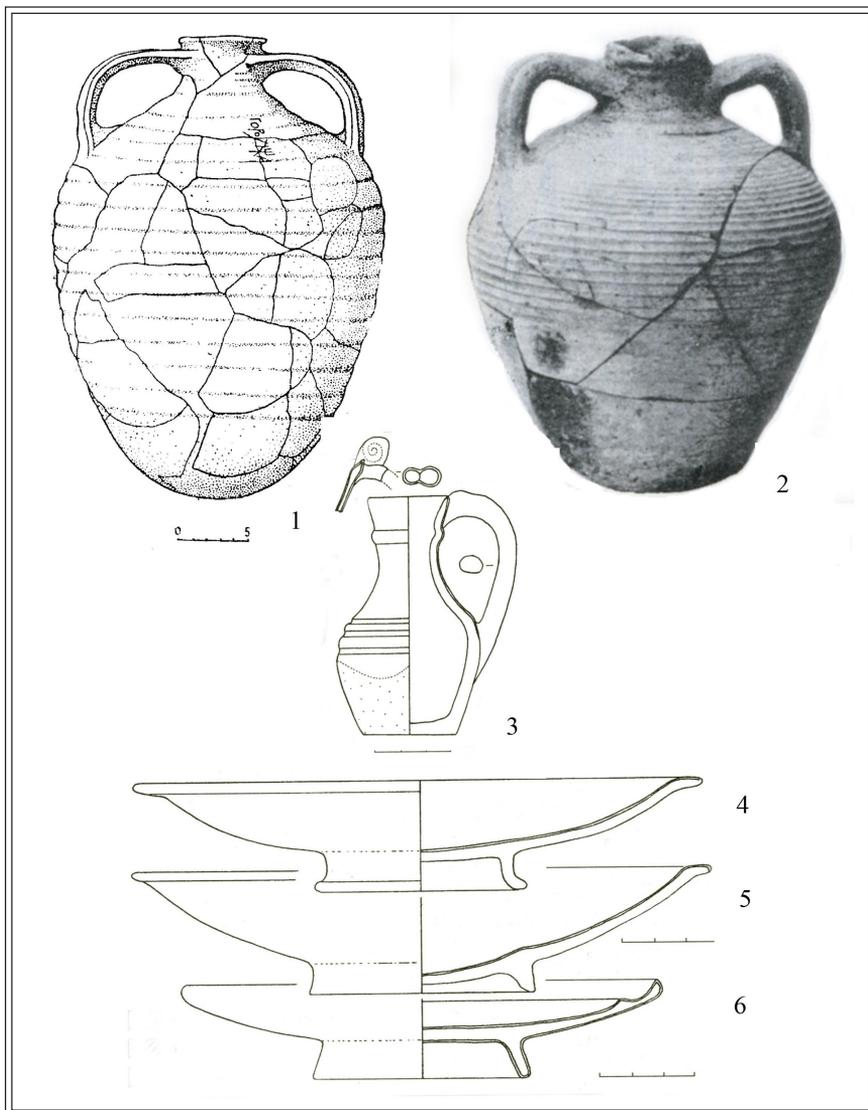


FIGURE 33: 10th-century Byzantine ceramics found in Rus'. 1. Gnëzdovo after Avdusin 1952; 2 and 5. Kiev after Gupalo and Toločko 1975 and Koval' 2005; 3, 4 and 6. Gnëzdovo after Koval' 2005).

One of the few amphora discovered in Viking Age graves is represented by a specimen found in mound № 13 in the Gnëzdovo cemetery (Fig. 33:1).<sup>70</sup> The shoulder of the amphora bears an inscription which has been interpreted as Cyrillic.<sup>71</sup> The same grave also produced c. 180 beads of various types, four different combs,<sup>72</sup> two crampons, a fragmentary oval brooch,<sup>73</sup> a sword,<sup>74</sup> two small iron bells, three bronze mounts, part of a scales, weights, seventy rivets, nails, a tweezers,<sup>75</sup> an iron neck ring with Thor's hammer-shaped pendants, four whetstones, Arabic coins (848–849, 907/908) and two fragmentary clay vessels.<sup>76</sup> One of these vessels is a small jug with a single handle and a light green glaze over its upper part (Fig. 33:3).<sup>77</sup> Fragments of a further jug come from another mound with a cremation grave discovered by V. I. Sizov.<sup>78</sup>

Judging from the published illustration,<sup>79</sup> an amphora similar to that from Gnëzdovo was excavated from a grave in Kiev in association with a twisted silver neck ring (typical of Scandinavian hoards of late Viking Age),<sup>80</sup> an arrow-head, a wild boar tusk and a horse. Apart from the amphora, the same grave also produced a pottery plate with “a rosette depicted with green and red colours on a white background”.<sup>81</sup> Polychrome wares (light brown and green-turquoise with brown and black) have also been discovered at Novgorod, Gnëzdovo and Kiev.

A ceramic plate was excavated from one of the largest mounds (9 m high and 32.8 m in diameter) of the Gnëzdovo cemetery. It is decorated with the figure of a fantastic creature inside a central medallion (Fig. 33:4).<sup>82</sup> The plate corresponded to a type of polychrome ware which is recorded as Turkish, usually in archaeological contexts that date from the 9th to the 12th centuries. However, it is worth noting that a specimen similar to the Gnëzdovo find was discovered in the Great Palace in Constantinople, dating to the 10th century.<sup>83</sup> The Gnëzdovo mound held a cremation grave containing a number of arte-

<sup>70</sup> Avdusin 1952, 337, fig. 2; Mühle 1989, 377, pl. 7, fig. 25:1.

<sup>71</sup> Avdusin and Tichomirov 1950; Medynceva 1998, 187–188.

<sup>72</sup> Types A3 and B1:1 after Ambrosiani 1981.

<sup>73</sup> Type 51 or 52 after Petersen 1928.

<sup>74</sup> Type E after Petersen 1919.

<sup>75</sup> Type 16 after Waller 1984, pl. 20, 16.

<sup>76</sup> Avdusin 1952, 335–338.

<sup>77</sup> Koval' 2005, 167, fig. 1:5.

<sup>78</sup> Sizov 1902, 62, pl. VIII:2–3; Šyrinskij 1999, 120, fig. 28:III.21.

<sup>79</sup> Karger 1958, fig. 22.

<sup>80</sup> Hårdh 1996, 45, fig. 2:6.

<sup>81</sup> Karger 1958, 168.

<sup>82</sup> Sizov 1902, 61–62, pl. VIII:1; Makarova 1972, pl. I:2 and II:5; Egorov 1996, 57, № 347; Koval' 2005, 167, fig. 1:8.

<sup>83</sup> Böhlendorf-Arslan 2004, 100, 162, pl. 47:25.

facts which included a helmet with traces of gilding, a spearhead, two shields, a bronze chape of a knife, bronze mounts decorated in oriental and Scandinavian (Borre) styles, a buckle decorated in Borre style, a needle-case, a fragmentary comb, two whetstones, the silver mount of a drinking-horn, four cornealean beads, melted glass, the remains of a bucket, an Arabic coin (905/906), melted drops of gold and silver, iron rivets and nails. Unfortunately, the sword and spearhead could not be specified as to type, while the shield-bosses correspond to Rygh's types 562 and 563.<sup>84</sup> The bronze buckle is of the same type as the ones found in boat-graves 12 and 15 at the Valsgårde cemetery in east-central Sweden; the helmet is of similar type to one from Čorna Mogyla in Černihiv dated to the late part of 10th century,<sup>85</sup> and the drinking-horn mount is of almost the same type as that found in Šestovycja's chamber grave 36 together with a coin minted in 927.<sup>86</sup> To my mind, the dating of these objects corresponds with the suggestion, expressed earlier, that the large mounds in Gnězdovo were constructed during the mid to the late 10th century.<sup>87</sup>

Two other pieces of Byzantine pottery have been discovered in Gnězdovo. One of them is a small plate from a rich grave in the Gnězdovo cemetery (no. 86, excavated by S. I. Sergeev in 1901;<sup>88</sup> Fig. 33:6). The other is a sherd of a plate decorated with a checkerboard design, which was found in 2000 in the Gnězdovo settlement.<sup>89</sup> Also belonging to the Byzantine group of pottery is a cup decorated with geometrical figures, which was found in Gnězdovo during excavations in the 19th century.<sup>90</sup> A similar design occurs on a fragmented jug found in Kiev in 1988.<sup>91</sup> It has been concluded by various scholars that this pottery was manufactured in Constantinople.<sup>92</sup> Finally, one more specimen of Byzantine pottery should be mentioned. It is a fragmentary liturgical cup, decorated with a cross, which was excavated from an occupation layer in Novgorod and dated to the end of the 10th century.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Rygh 1885.

<sup>85</sup> Rybakov 1949, 28–29 and 36.

<sup>86</sup> Blifel'd 1977, 129; Androshchuk 1999, fig. 43.

<sup>87</sup> Bulkin, Dubov and Lebedev 1978, 38–39.

<sup>88</sup> See Makarova 1972, pl. II:4, 6–7; Koval' 2005, 167, fig. 1:4.

<sup>89</sup> Koval' 2005, 169, fig. 2:2.

<sup>90</sup> Makarova 1972, pl. III:1; Egorov 1996, 58, № 348; Koval' 2005, 167.

<sup>91</sup> Koval' 2005, 169, fig. 2:8.

<sup>92</sup> Koval' 2005, 167 with references.

<sup>93</sup> Makarova 1972, 13, pl. II:13; Koval' 2005, 169.

*Glass*

Glass artefacts from Byzantium still comprise a poorly investigated category.<sup>94</sup> However, both written and archaeological evidence indicate that glass was manufactured in Constantinople.<sup>95</sup> Some attempts have been made to single out Byzantine glass among finds from the Crimea and Eastern Europe.<sup>96</sup> There is some pictorial though very restricted information on Byzantine glassware, featuring bracelets, lamps, ink pots, perfume and medicine bottles, as well as beakers and other vessels.<sup>97</sup>

A Byzantine provenance for some Scandinavian and Eastern European beads has been suggested by Johan Callmer.<sup>98</sup> These include dark blue circular ribbed,<sup>99</sup> rounded,<sup>100</sup> rectangular prismatic,<sup>101</sup> and blown and drawn, thick-walled 'multi-beads' (Fig. 32:8–12).<sup>102</sup> Beads of Byzantine origin never played any prominent role in Scandinavian culture and were only present in very limited numbers in the 9th and 10th centuries.<sup>103</sup> By contrast, archaeological finds show that glass bracelets comprise one of the largest categories of Byzantine glass products imported into Eastern Europe.<sup>104</sup> These bracelets can be seamed, painted, of twisted monochrome coils, or made of coloured threads. Early types dating to the 10th and 11th centuries were painted.<sup>105</sup> Fragments of a painted black bracelet have been found in a building dated to the 10th century in Kiev (Fig. 32:13).<sup>106</sup> One rather unique find is a glass weight containing a representation of the bust of the *eparchos* and the Greek inscription +HCVX-IOV (*Hesychion*) which was discovered in the settlement at Šestovycja<sup>107</sup> (Fig. 32:14). Such weights usually date to the 6th and 7th centuries.<sup>108</sup>

The origin of the glass gaming pieces which occur in graves in Birka, Gnězdovo and Šestovycja is still disputed. Possible Carolingian<sup>109</sup>, Egyptian<sup>110</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Henderson and Mango 1995; Lightfoot 2003, 259.

<sup>95</sup> Henderson and Mango 1995, 343–346; Mango 2000, 202–203.

<sup>96</sup> Ščapova 1998.

<sup>97</sup> Parani 2005.

<sup>98</sup> Callmer 1977.

<sup>99</sup> Types A004, A157, A176 and A344.

<sup>100</sup> Types A180 and A266.

<sup>101</sup> Type A183.

<sup>102</sup> Bead groups D and E after Callmer 1977, 101.

<sup>103</sup> Callmer 1977, 102.

<sup>104</sup> Ščapova 1998.

<sup>105</sup> Lightfoot 2003, 262–263.

<sup>106</sup> Building 12, plot B, in Toločko, Gupalo and Charlamov 1976, 37, fig. 10.

<sup>107</sup> Kovalenko 2006, 90, fig. 2:3.

<sup>108</sup> Zacos and Veglery 1972, 1691; Chamayko and Zocenko 2007, Pl. 24.

<sup>109</sup> Arbman 1937, 63–66.

<sup>110</sup> Arbman 1955, 142.

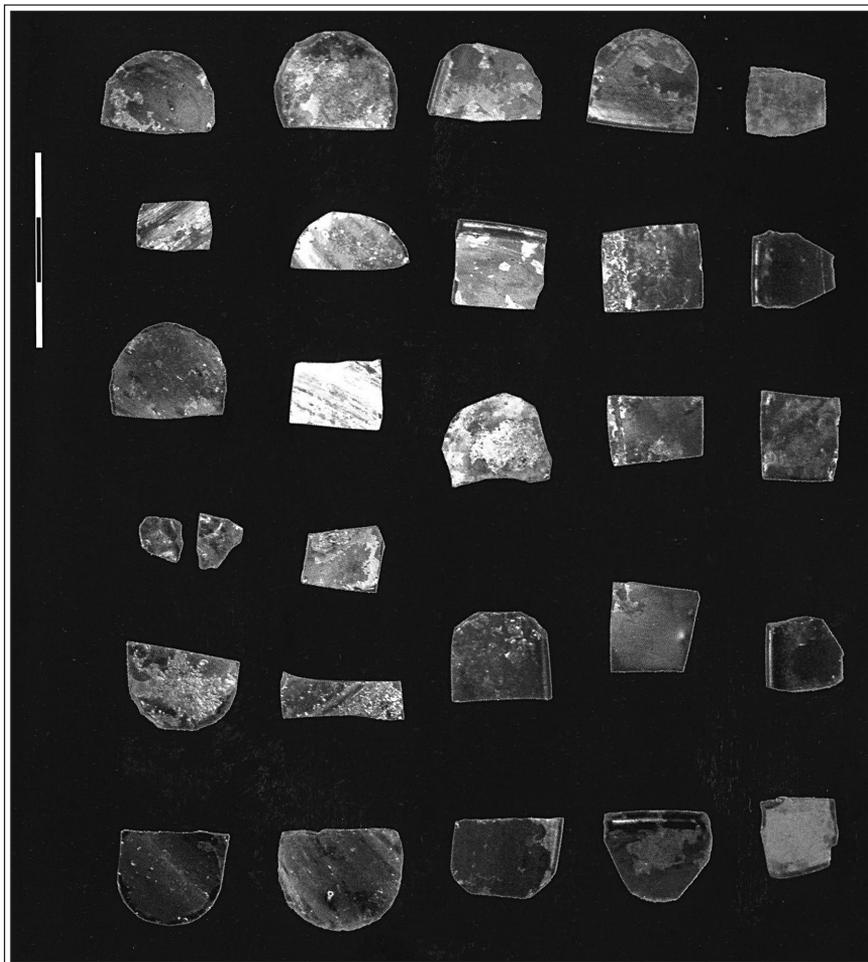


FIGURE 34: Sherds of coloured glass decoration found in a female chamber grave in Kiev (after Movchan 2007).

or Byzantine origins have been suggested.<sup>111</sup> The 27 pieces of blue, brown and yellow glass which once decorated fabric discovered in a female chamber grave in Kiev are of possible Byzantine origin. They were found in association with a Scandinavian silver circular brooch, silver pendants, a silver chain, a golden temple ring, silver belt-fittings adapted into pendants, two silver finger-rings and a bronze bowl.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Ščapova 1998.

<sup>112</sup> Ivakin 2007, fig. 7–10, Pl. 1–8.



FIGURE 35: Piece of silk with bronze buttons found in one of the graves excavated in 1925–1927 in Šestovycja (photo archive of the Institute of Archaeology, National Academy of Ukraine).

*Silk*

Byzantine influences on aristocratic attire in Viking Rus' and Scandinavia have been studied in detail by Inga Hägg and more recently by Kirill Michailov.<sup>113</sup> In the following, I shall mention only the most important finds. Remnants of silk have been found in richly furnished Viking Age graves in both Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. A collection of narrow strips of silk have been recorded from Norway, in the Oseberg ship-grave,<sup>114</sup> as well as in such royal Danish graves as Jellinge, Mammen and Ladby.<sup>115</sup> According to the data collected by Inga Hägg, a total of 53 graves at Birka contained remnants of silk.<sup>116</sup> Of these, 13 could be dated to the 9th century and belonged to rich females. In the 10th-century graves, the fragments of silk were recorded in both female and double graves. In six cases, finds of silk were associated with objects of Byzantine or eastern origin.<sup>117</sup> 16 male graves contained pieces of silk in association with weapons and various bronze, silver and gold braids, dated mainly to the 10th century.<sup>118</sup>

In some inhumation graves dated mainly to the second half of the 10th century, at Birka,<sup>119</sup> Gnëzdovo,<sup>120</sup> and Šestovycja<sup>121</sup> (Fig. 35), remnants of silk were found together with bronze buttons.<sup>122</sup> Pieces of silk have been recorded in three chamber graves at Šestovycja.<sup>123</sup> In grave № 78, they were found together with two oval brooches<sup>124</sup> and two pendants made from coins minted in 909/910 and 913/914.<sup>125</sup> Graves №s 42 and 98 were double graves and contained items of Scandinavian origin.<sup>126</sup> In grave № 98, a piece of red coloured silk was found in association with bronze buttons. In addition to the above-mentioned finds, it should be noted that some pieces of red silk have been discovered in Gnëzdovo, the Pskov graves and Staraja Ladoga.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Hägg 2002 och 2006; Michailov 2010.

<sup>114</sup> Ingstad 1992.

<sup>115</sup> Østergård 1991; Michailov 2010, 275.

<sup>116</sup> Hägg 1974, fig. 53.

<sup>117</sup> See find associations for graves №s 518, 557, 660, 739, 791 and 943 in Hägg 1974, 137–140.

<sup>118</sup> Graves №s 524, 644, 496, 581, 710, 495, 735, 1151, 832, 886, 944, 957, 624, 842, 855 and 958 after Hägg 2006, fig. 1.

<sup>119</sup> Graves №s 716, 752B, 944, 985 and 1074.

<sup>120</sup> Graves nos Pol-62, C-301, Dn-4 and C-160 after Ščerbakova čerbakova, 'Tekstil' 2010, 87–98.

<sup>121</sup> Graves №s 42 and 98.

<sup>122</sup> Michailov 2005.

<sup>123</sup> Stankevič 1962; Blifel'd 1977, 43 and 139.

<sup>124</sup> Type 51 after Petersen 1928.

<sup>125</sup> Blifel'd 1977, 160–163, pl. XXI–XXII.

<sup>126</sup> Androshchuk 1999, 104, №s 26–29; 106, №s 62–63.

<sup>127</sup> See, for instance, C-301 in Fechner 1999. See also Michailov 2005 and Zubkova, Orfinskaya and Mikhailov 2010.

Garments of silk with tablet-woven bands in silk, gold and silver, are usually considered by scholars as belonging to local aristocracy.<sup>128</sup> Hägg has suggested that the variety of textiles in graves indicates differentiated social ranking and a clear 'Byzantine-fashion' in Scandinavian high-status clothing.<sup>129</sup>

#### *Weapons*

Our knowledge of Byzantine weapons is based mainly on written sources and artistic representations.<sup>130</sup> An important new source has appeared in recently excavated Byzantine shipwrecks, such as the 11th-century wreck at Serçe Limani, Turkey, which contained a Byzantine sword and spearheads.<sup>131</sup> Very few objects in Scandinavia or Eastern Europe can be associated with weapons of Byzantine origin.

Remains of lamellar armour have been discovered in the Garrison site at Birka.<sup>132</sup> A Byzantine origin for this armour was decided on the basis of a famous miniature in the Venetian Psalter where Basil I (976–1025) is depicted in "solid-laced lamellar armour".<sup>133</sup> Later, after comparative analysis of the construction of the armour with finds from Siberia and Central Asia, a Turkish origin was proposed for the Birka finds and the Byzantine parallels were disputed (Fig. 36:10).<sup>134</sup> In my view, the closest parallels are to be found in Bulgaria, where a total of 24 find-places of lamellar are recorded.<sup>135</sup> The total number of recorded lamellar in Birka amounts to 720, which group into eight types,<sup>136</sup> of which four correspond to the Bulgarian finds (Fig. 36:1–9).<sup>137</sup> The appearance of lamellar armour in Bulgaria is said to represent Byzantine influence, although a nomadic origin cannot be excluded.<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, it is worth noting that one of the largest finds of lamellar has been discovered in Preslav in association with local Bulgarian pottery and a coin of Leo the Wise (886–912).<sup>139</sup>

Judging from iconographic parallels, a definite Byzantine origin can be ascribed to a group of long scabbard chapes, made of silver or bronze and deco-

<sup>128</sup> Hägg 2006; Hedeager Krag 1999; Michailov 2010.

<sup>129</sup> Hägg 2006, 142.

<sup>130</sup> Kolias 1988.

<sup>131</sup> Bass et al. 2004.

<sup>132</sup> Stjärna 2004.

<sup>133</sup> Dawson 1998, 49; see illustration in Olausson 2001, 25, fig. 3; Magdalino 2002, 182.

<sup>134</sup> Stjärna 2004.

<sup>135</sup> Jotov 2004, 120–129.

<sup>136</sup> Stjärna 2004, 28.

<sup>137</sup> Jotov 2004, pl. 21.

<sup>138</sup> Jotov 2004, 120, 182 and 184.

<sup>139</sup> Vitljanov and Dimitrov 1993, 165.

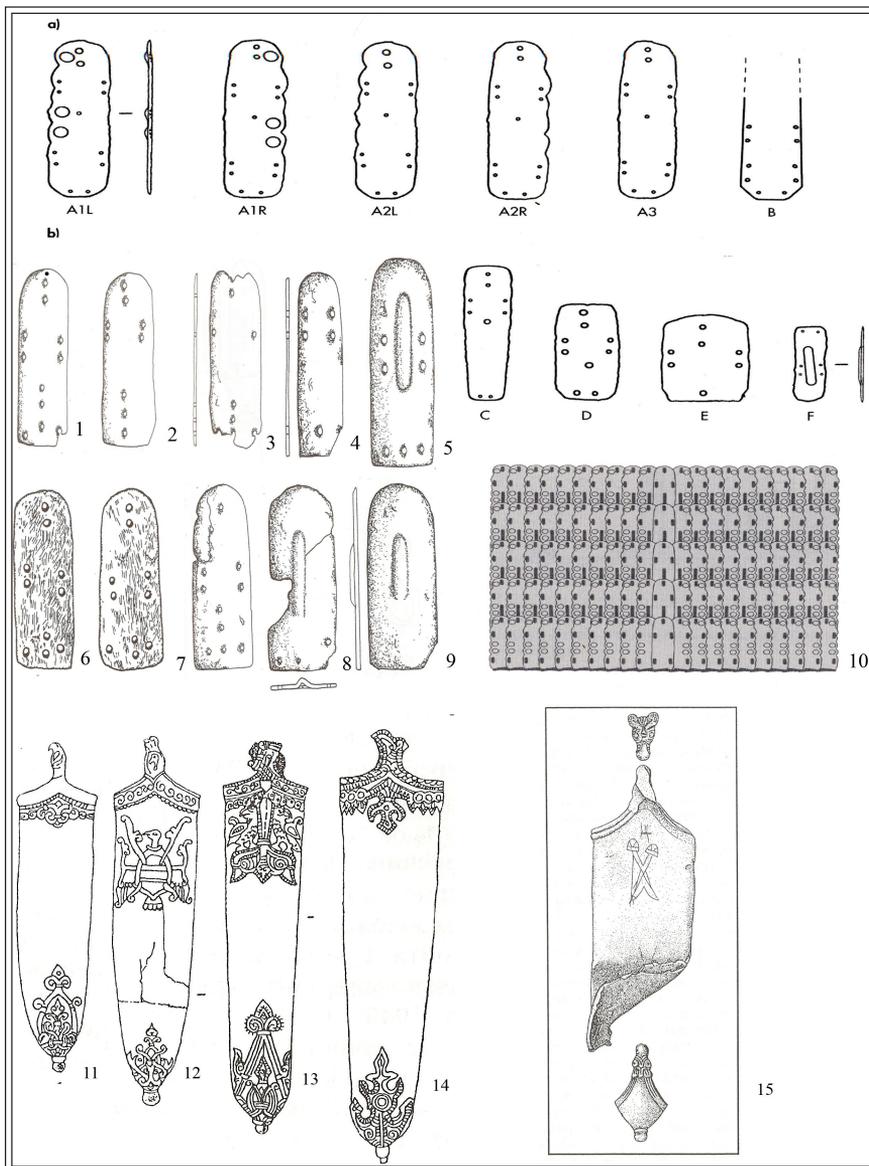


FIGURE 36: Weaponry of Byzantine origin found on Viking Age sites. A–F and 10. Sweden after Stjärna 2004; 1–9. Bulgaria after Jotov 2004; 11. Ukraine; 12–14. Latvia; 15. Sweden, all after Zocenko 1999.

rated with plant motifs or the figure of a bird (Fig. 36:11–14),<sup>140</sup> dated between the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th century. The most characteristic examples are scabbard chapes from Turaida in Latvia (Fig. 36:12)<sup>141</sup> and Kiev (Fig. 36:11).<sup>142</sup> Only two similar scabbard chapes were previously known on Gotland.<sup>143</sup> Recently, another large chape has been discovered at Ocksarve, Hemse parish (Fig. 28:15) in one of the largest silver hoards found in Sweden, containing English, Danish, German, Italian, Byzantine and Arabic coins (c. 999).<sup>144</sup>

#### *Lead seals*

Byzantine lead seals of the 10th century found in the territory of the former Rus' can be subdivided into an early and a late group according to the titles of their owners and dates (Fig. 37). Three specimens belong to the early group (first part of the 10th century). Two of these come from Kiev. The first is a stray find and bears the name of Ioannes, *Protospatharios* and *Epi ton Oikeiakon* (Fig. 37:1).<sup>145</sup> The second (Phokas, *Protospatharios*) came to light during the excavation of the presumed site of the monastery of St Theodore in upper Kiev, where 10th-century burials and 11th- to 13th-century buildings and workshops were discovered.<sup>146</sup> The third seal (Leon, *Primikerios*, *Protospatharios* and *Logothetes of Genikos*) dates to the first quarter of the 10th century and was found in a 12th-century building in the hillfort at Šestovycja (Fig. 37:2).<sup>147</sup>

The late group of seals (late 10th to early 11th centuries) is represented by five examples in northern Rus' (all in the Novgorod area) and two in southern Rus' (Bilogorodka and Kiev). One of the Novgorod finds bears the names of emperors Basil II and Constantine VIII (975–1025) (Fig. 37:4).<sup>148</sup> Two seals of Theophylaktos, *Protospatharios* and *Strategos* (end of 10th to the beginning of the 11th century), were discovered in Rjurikovo Gorodišče and Novgorod (the latter from the layer of the Nerevskij trench, dated to 1055–1096).<sup>149</sup> A further seal from the same period bears a depiction of the Patriarch cross and was found in the same Nerevskij trench (in cultural layers dated to 1116–1134) and

<sup>140</sup> Paulsen 1953, 59–96; Zocenko 1999, 38.

<sup>141</sup> Paulsen 1953, 74–75, figs 93–95.

<sup>142</sup> Paulsen 1953, figs 103–104; Zocenko 1999.

<sup>143</sup> Paulsen 1953, figs 91 and 134.

<sup>144</sup> See Östergren 1997; Thunmark-Nylén 2006, 707–709, pl. III:62B:1.

<sup>145</sup> Bulgakova 2004, 49.

<sup>146</sup> Gončarov 1957; Bulgakova 2004, 69.

<sup>147</sup> Bulgakova 2004, 55–57.

<sup>148</sup> Bulgakova 2004, 43–44.

<sup>149</sup> Bulgakova 2004, 74–75.

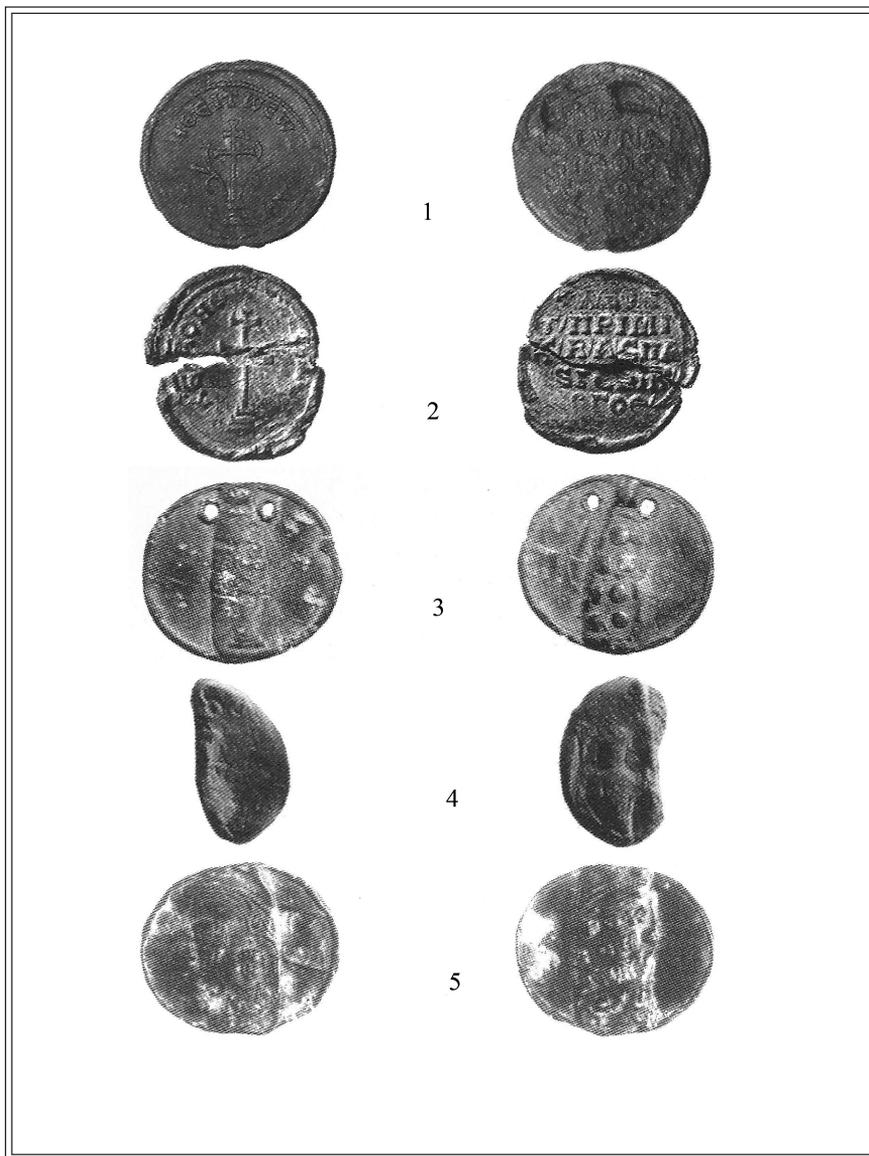


FIGURE 37: Byzantine lead seals of the 10th–11th centuries found in Old Rus'. 1 and 5, Kiev; 2, Šestovycja; 3–4, Novgorod. Composed after Bulgakova 2004.

one possible Byzantine seal was also discovered in Novgorod and dated to the late 10th to the early 11th century (Fig. 37:3).<sup>150</sup>

Seals found in southern Rus' are represented by a specimen bearing the name of Emperor Basil II (c. 991–1025), which came to light in Bilogorodka.<sup>151</sup> Another seal of *Theotokos Hodegetria* type, dated to the second half of the 10th or the beginning of the 11th century, was found in a sunken floor structure in a town plot in Kiev of 11th-century date, situated in the vicinity of the already mentioned St Theodore Monastery (Fig. 37:5).<sup>152</sup> Apart from the seal, a glass bracelet, a spindle whorl, pottery, melted glass and nails were found in that structure.<sup>153</sup>

To sum up, in contrast to the earlier period there are ten Byzantine seals of the 10th century recorded on sites with a clear Scandinavian presence (Table 4). The distribution of these find spots as well as the titles of the seal owners is worth noting:

Find Place	Name	Title	Jurisdiction
Novgorod	Leon	<i>Proto or Spatharios and Domestikos</i>	"sword-bearer", member of the senate, commander of themes, chief of a bureau
Kiev	Ioannes	<i>Protospatharios of the Oikeiakon</i>	chief of the barbarians, an imperial body-guard
Kiev	Phokas	<i>Protospatharios</i>	"sword-bearer", member of the senate, commander of themes
Šestovycja	Leon	<i>Primikerios, Protospatharios and Logothetes of Genikos</i>	"sword-bearer", member of the senate, commander of themes, the chief of major fiscal department
Novgorod	Basil II and Constantine VIII		emperors
Rjurikovo gorodišče	Theophylaktos	<i>Protospatharios and Strategos</i>	"sword-bearer", member of the senate, commander of themes, commander of military units

<sup>150</sup> Bulgakova 2004, 177–179.

<sup>151</sup> Bulgakova 2004, 45.

<sup>152</sup> Bulgakova 2004, 173–174.

<sup>153</sup> Borovskij and Kaljuk 1993, fig. 21; Androščuk 2004a, 22–24.

Novgorod	Theophylaktos	<i>Protospatharios</i> and <i>Strategos</i>	“sword-bearer”, member of the senate, commander of themes, commander of military units
Novgorod	Anonym		–
Bilgorodka	Basil II		emperor
Kiev	Anonym		–

TABLE 4. Titles of owners of 9th–10th-century Byzantine seals found in Rus',<sup>154</sup>

Many of the finds of Byzantine lead seals come from Kiev and Novgorod, the two main political and administrative centres of Old Rus'. It is important to note that the only 9th-century seal comes from Novgorod, in the vicinity of Rjurikovo gorodišče, and the undoubtedly equally important central sites of Ribe, Hedeby and Tissø in Denmark. Most of the finds of lead seals of the 10th century appeared only in southern Rus', namely in Kiev and Šestovycja. A Byzantine cone-seal of the second part of the 10th century has been found in a child's grave at Šestovycja.<sup>155</sup> It has been suggested that it could have belonged “to an imperial official responsible for receiving Rus' merchants at Constantinople and have been used for stamping the wax which they brought with them for sales”.<sup>156</sup> The importance of Kiev and Černihiv is supported by the Russo-Byzantine treaty of 944 and the mention of both places in Constantine Porphyrogenitos' treaty *De Admimistrando Imperio*. However, it is remarkable that there were so few finds of Byzantine seals in Kiev from the end of the 10th until the beginning of the 11th century. As we have seen, only one specimen, namely a seal of Emperor Basil II, was found in the Old Rus' town of Belgorod (modern village of Bilgorodka), which according to the *Russian Primary Chronicle* was founded in 991. One possible explanation may be that at this period Novgorod was more interested in obtaining potential mercenaries from the Scandinavian regions.

#### Coins

Scholars have proposed various interpretations involving the Varangians for the Byzantine coins found in Sweden and Eastern Europe.<sup>157</sup> However, there

<sup>154</sup> Suggested officials in accordance with ODB, 646, 829–830, 1247, 1515, 1748, 1935–1936, 1964.

<sup>155</sup> Blifel'd 1977, 40–41; Shepard 1986.

<sup>156</sup> Shepard 1986, 273.

<sup>157</sup> Arne 1946; Noonan 1980; Morrison 1981.

are still many questions unanswered and one of them concerns the way by which Byzantine coins penetrated into Scandinavia and Rus'.

In Sweden there is a total of 543 genuine Byzantine coins and 60 imitations, dating from the reign of Justin II (565–578) to Nicephoros III (1078–1081).<sup>158</sup> The chronological range of the coins shows a 200-year gap after the reign of Heraclius (610–641), until a very sparse stream of coins began to enter the country during the time of Theophilos (829–842). Only six coins of Theophilos are recorded in Sweden, of which four came from Birka.<sup>159</sup> One was found in chamber grave № 632 in the Birka cemetery in association with two silver pendants of eastern origin.<sup>160</sup> On the basis of the suggested “Khazarian” origin of the pendants, T. J. Arne connected them and the coin with those Swedes mentioned in the *Annals of St Bertin*, arriving at the court of Emperor Louis the Pious in 839.<sup>161</sup> Only 15 finds of silver and copper coins from the reign of Theophilos until the middle of the 10th century are registered in Sweden, and it was not until the joint reign of Constantine VII and Romanos II (945–959) and during the reigns of Nicephoros II (963–969), John I (969–976), Basil II (977–989) and Basil II and Constantine VIII (977–1025) that most Byzantine coins reached Sweden. There are 410 coins dated to the period between 945–989, of which 229 belong to the reign of Basil II (977–989).<sup>162</sup> A considerable number of direct imitations of coins (mainly Basil II) have been interpreted as an early Sigtuna coinage of c. 995–1005.<sup>163</sup>

Byzantine coins were often refashioned into pendant jewellery by means of attaching a loop or ring with twisted ends. Two such coins bear the name Theophilos<sup>164</sup>, one Constantine VII and Romanos II,<sup>165</sup> and one John I. Most of the coin-pendants bear the names of emperors Basil II<sup>166</sup> or Basil and Constantine VIII.<sup>167</sup> With the exception of one coin of Constantine X Doukas (1059–1062) found in a Gotlandic hoard<sup>168</sup> in association with a Basil II coin-pendant<sup>169</sup>, later Byzantine coins were not made into pendants.

<sup>158</sup> Hammarberg, Malmer and Zachrisson 1989, 9.

<sup>159</sup> Jonsson 2001, 30.

<sup>160</sup> Arbman 1940–43, 210–213.

<sup>161</sup> Arne 1946; *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Grat and Vieilliard 1964, 30–31, and ed. Nelson 1991, 44. For a discussion of this event, see above, chapter 3.

<sup>162</sup> Hammarberg, Malmer and Zachrisson 1989, 9.

<sup>163</sup> Malmer 1981; Hammarberg, Malmer and Zachrisson 1989, 10.

<sup>164</sup> Hoard № 10 according to Hammarberg, Malmer and Zachrisson 1989.

<sup>165</sup> Hoard № 73 according to Hammarberg, Malmer and Zachrisson 1989.

<sup>166</sup> Hoards №s 122, 134, 202, 203, 204, 241, 243, 272, 282, 295, 342, 348, 355, 364, 380a, 382, 383, 390a, 402, 406 after Hammarberg, Malmer and Zachrisson 1989.

<sup>167</sup> Hoards №s 427 and 428 after Hammarberg, Malmer and Zachrisson 1989.

<sup>168</sup> Hoard № 596 according to Hammarberg, Malmer and Zachrisson 1989.

<sup>169</sup> Hoard № 204 according to Hammarberg, Malmer and Zachrisson 1989.

Finally, it is important to note the chronological distribution of Byzantine coins in Sweden. There are no hoards containing only Byzantine coins. Single coins from around the middle of the 9th to the middle of the 10th centuries are almost exclusively associated with the trading centre of Birka. Coins of Basil II have been predominantly found on Gotland in mixed hoards of Arabic or West European coins.

As for Byzantine coin finds in the territory of Old Rus', there is no recent estimate. However, on the basis of previously published catalogues,<sup>170</sup> it is possible to summarize their character and chronology as follows.

There are 44 Byzantine coins recorded in graves excavated in the territory of Old Rus'. They all fit into two main chronological groups. The first group includes coins minted between the mid-9th and the mid-10th centuries, found in trading centres situated along the River Dnieper. Five coins attributed to emperors Theophilos (829–842) and Basil I and Constantine (867–879) have been discovered in graves dated to the 10th century.<sup>171</sup> The majority of the coins of this chronological group are represented by 10th-century grave-finds of coins of Leo VI (886–912; 7 coins), Alexander (912–913; 1 coin), Romanos I (919–921; 1 coin), Constantine VII (913–959), Romanos I Lekapenos (920–944), Stephen and Constantine (924–944; 2 coins), and Constantine VII and Romanos II (945–959; 6 coins).<sup>172</sup> The second group consists of coins dating from the end of the 10th to the first quarter of the 11th century. These include coins of John Tzimiskes (969–976) which are found exclusively in graves in northern Russia belonging to the 11th century.<sup>173</sup> This group is also represented by coins of Basil II and Constantine (976–1025), which are mainly concentrated in the northern part of Russia.<sup>174</sup>

Moving on to a discussion of the hoards, it should first of all be noted that there are five main patterns in the composition of Byzantine coins in eastern European hoards. The first comprises “pure hoards” which exclusively contain Byzantine coins.<sup>175</sup> This group consists of eight hoards dating from the second half of the 10th to the 12th century. The second comprises mixed hoards containing both oriental and Byzantine coins,<sup>176</sup> dating from the late 9th to the late 10th century. The third comprises 13 mixed hoards which include Byzan-

<sup>170</sup> Kropotkin 1962.

<sup>171</sup> Ravdina 1988, Nos 52, 92, 222.

<sup>172</sup> Ravdina 1988, Nos 52, 79, 96, 99, 138, 165, 188, 211, 219, 222, 229.

<sup>173</sup> Ravdina 1988, Nos 55-2; 109-1; 155-1; 155-1; 213-1; 219-1.

<sup>174</sup> Ravdina 1988, Nos 75-1; 172-1; 180-1; 211-2; 214-1; 219-1; 225-1; 233-1.

<sup>175</sup> Kropotkin 1962, Nos 92, 150, 153, 172, 177, 258, 270, 297.

<sup>176</sup> Kropotkin 1962, Nos 64, 66, 73, 259.

tine, oriental and Western European coins and jewellery<sup>177</sup> dating from the end of the 10th to the 12th century. The fourth comprises a small group of hoards containing Byzantine coins and gold jewellery<sup>178</sup> dated largely to the 12th century.<sup>179</sup> Finally, the fifth comprises, so far, only one hoard<sup>180</sup> containing both Byzantine coins and gold coins of Prince Vladimir, dating from the end of the 10th to the beginning of the 11th centuries.<sup>181</sup>

The earliest hoard (c. 880) containing Byzantine coins was found at Chitrovka in Russia and contained a silver coin of Michael III (842–867) in association with c. 1000 oriental coins from the 8th to 9th centuries.<sup>182</sup> The hoard lay in the region of the River Oka and probably arrived there via the Don or Volga waterways. There was a lull in the deposition of Byzantine coins in the first half of the 10th century, and it is only from 950 that we again find them in Old Russian hoards. This change is reflected in two hoards from Kiev. One contained 37 copper Chersonian coins of Basil I (867–886), Basil I and Constantine (867–870), Romanos I Lekapenos (920–944), Romanos II (959–963) and Nikephoros II (963–969),<sup>183</sup> and the other contained a small collection of nine coins of John I Tzimiskes (969–976).<sup>184</sup>

A characteristic feature of the distribution of Byzantine coins in Rus' is that all the hoards containing gold coins are concentrated within its southern part (modern territory of Ukraine). These include the Glazkoviči hoard,<sup>185</sup> with gold coins of Constantine VI (780–787), Basil I (867–886), Constantine VII and Romanos and Christophoros (921–931), Constantine VII and Romanos II (945–959), John Tzimiskes (969–976) and Basil II and Constantine VIII (976–1025). This hoard was found in the lands of the Dereva, where Scandinavian activity has been detected (see above, Chapter 3). An additional hoard has been found in Kiev<sup>186</sup> containing 15 gold coins of Nikephoros II (963–969), Basil II, and Constantine VIII (976–1025) Romanos III (1028–1034), Constantine IX (1042–1055) and Isaakios I (1057–1059). Two other hoards are situated along the lower part of "the route from the Varangians to the Greeks". One is the above-mentioned hoard containing both Byzantine gold coins and

<sup>177</sup> Kropotkin 1962, N<sup>o</sup>s 62, 67, 71, 75, 80, 91, 103, 109, 163, 301, 303, dop 57 and 67.

<sup>178</sup> Kropotkin 1962, N<sup>o</sup>s 173, 176, 245.

<sup>179</sup> Korzuchina 1954, N<sup>o</sup>s 30 and 38.

<sup>180</sup> Kropotkin 1962, N<sup>o</sup> 267.

<sup>181</sup> Spasskij and Sotnikova 1983, 56, 60, N<sup>o</sup> 13.

<sup>182</sup> Kropotkin 1962, N<sup>o</sup> 64.

<sup>183</sup> Kropotkin 1962, N<sup>o</sup> 177.

<sup>184</sup> Karger 1958, 124.

<sup>185</sup> Kropotkin 1962, N<sup>o</sup> 150.

<sup>186</sup> Kropotkin 1962, N<sup>o</sup> 176.

Russian coins;<sup>187</sup> another hoard has come to light in the area of the Dnieper rapids and contains 43 Byzantine gold coins (Basil I, Romanos II, John Tzimiskes, Constantine VIII and Constantine X).<sup>188</sup> The youngest dated hoard with Byzantine gold coins was found in Pinsk,<sup>189</sup> where twelve of the 20 coins were of Romanos IV (1068–1071).<sup>190</sup>

Hoards containing oriental and Western European coins generally have very few silver Byzantine coins and occur mainly in the northern parts of the territory of Old Rus'. This feature is also characteristic of Swedish hoards. The presence of Western European coins in northern Russian hoards may indicate that Byzantine coins came to northern Russia from the west and most probably via Sweden. This might be substantiated by comparing the Scandinavian imitations of Basil II coins with one type of the Prince Jaroslav coins. The latter clearly shows a Russian impression of Byzantine iconography transformed via Sweden.<sup>191</sup> Byzantine coins could have reached Sweden via "Great Poland" where 24 hoards containing Byzantine coins date to the period 955–1084.<sup>192</sup> The composition of hoards from the southern part of Rus' is different to both late Swedish hoards and those in northern Rus', which can be explained by the particular social and political position of Kiev's historical area – "Russian Land" – and its key role for the "trade-route from the Varangians to the Greeks" and also its particular relations with Byzantium.

"THE ROUTE FROM THE VARANGIANS TO THE GREEKS" –  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND TEXTUAL RECORD

By the beginning of the 10th century, the Rus' had established themselves in the middle Dnieper area. This was a crucial event. There are two probable reasons for this: first, the striving for tribute from surrounding tribes; second, the profit to be gained from further exchange with Byzantium. The attraction of Byzantine silk, a perishable product, might be specifically mentioned.

It has been long established that "the trade-route from the Varangians to the Greeks" was the main passage to Byzantium used by the Scandinavians. Despite an enormous and not always so lucid literature on the subject, the date

<sup>187</sup> Kropotkin 1962, № 267.

<sup>188</sup> Kropotkin 1962, № 158.

<sup>189</sup> Kropotkin 1962, № 298.

<sup>190</sup> For the new data from Belarus, see Lavysh and Woloszyn 2011.

<sup>191</sup> Hammarberg, Malmer and Zachrisson 1989, pl. 35:1029; Spasskij and Sotnikova 1983, 199–201.

<sup>192</sup> Gliksman 2009, 612 and 617–618.

when this route was in use is still in question.<sup>193</sup> As is well known, the two major textual sources for our knowledge about this route are the *Russian Primary Chronicle* and the *De Administrando Imperio*.<sup>194</sup> According to the chronicle, this trade-route starting from Greece

proceeds along the Dnieper, above the portage leading to the Lovat'. By following the Lovat', the great Lake Il'men' is reached. The River Volchov flows out of this lake and enters the great Lake Nevo. The mouth of this lake opens into the Varangian Sea. Over this sea the route goes to Rome, and on from Rome overseas to Car'grad.<sup>195</sup>

Some historians have suggested that the route was constructed by the chronicler in order to introduce the tale of the journey of St Andrew.<sup>196</sup> However, there is a firm conviction among archaeologists that the route connecting the Varangians with the Greeks was established long before the chronicle was compiled. On the basis of the distribution of oriental coins, G. S. Lebedev came to the conclusion that communication along the Dnieper and Volchov rivers was already established in the 9th century.<sup>197</sup> This conclusion has been supported recently by A. E. Musin, who drew attention to finds of solitary Chersono-Byzantine copper coins of the 9th century.<sup>198</sup> However, the context of these finds is quite obscure, and, from an archaeological point of view, traces of trade activity along the route cannot easily be dated before the 10th century.<sup>199</sup> Let us consider the chronological distribution of objects of both Byzantine and Scandinavian origin and the context of their appearance along the Dnieper route.

In chapter 9 of *De Administrando Imperio*, Novgorod, Smolensk, an unidentified "Teliutza", Černigoga (Černihiv) and Vyšegrad (Vyšgorod) are mentioned as cities from which Russian *monoxyla* (log-boats) were collected and sent to Kiev.<sup>200</sup> As shown above, these are the sites from which both Byzantine and Scandinavian artefacts are recorded, sometimes in association with one another and sometimes not. Important hillforts such as Vitičev and Knjaža Gora lay on the route between Kiev and the Dnieper barrages. They were located on the high right bank of the river and were established in the 10th century. Vitičev is mentioned in chapter 9 of *De Administrando Imperio* as "a tributary

<sup>193</sup> See, for instance, Avdusin 1972; Lebedev 1980; Androshchuk 2001 and Shepard 2010.

<sup>194</sup> Howard-Johnston 2000; Sorlin 2000 and Melin 2003 with references.

<sup>195</sup> *Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 53.

<sup>196</sup> Toločko and Toločko 1998, 20–26.

<sup>197</sup> Lebedev 1980, 99.

<sup>198</sup> Musin 2010.

<sup>199</sup> Boltenko 1947, 43; Kropotkin 1962, 11 and 15; Avdusin 1972, 165.

<sup>200</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Moravcsik 1966, 56–57.

city of the Russians”.<sup>201</sup> Results of archaeological excavations of the hillfort are, unfortunately, too obscure to be useful.<sup>202</sup> It is, however, possible that this city is the *Vitahólmr* mentioned in the runic inscription on the Alstad runestone in Norway.<sup>203</sup> The place-name *Vytyčev holm* was known in the 11th century and recorded in the *Russian Primary Chronicle*.<sup>204</sup> The hillfort of Knjaža Gora was badly damaged by amateur excavations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Most finds are without precise stratigraphical contexts, which makes it difficult to interpret their associations accurately. However, some finds deserve notice here, namely a copper-alloy finger-ring of the Saltovo-Majackaja culture,<sup>205</sup> a bronze die for making small Scandinavian brooches of “Terslev” type,<sup>206</sup> a bronze pendant,<sup>207</sup> and a Thor’s hammer pendant of stone.<sup>208</sup> Down by the river, in the vicinity of the Old Russian town of Zarub, the name *Varangian Island* was recorded in written sources in 1223.<sup>209</sup>

As is well known, the area of the Dnieper barrages is described in detail in Constantine’s *De Administrando Imperio*.<sup>210</sup> Intimate knowledge of the local topography of the barrages suggests that Constantine’s informants may have been spies who, according to military treaties, were the usual collectors of information in Patzinakia, Turkey and Rhosia.<sup>211</sup> This information may also have been obtained by Constantine during Olga’s visit to Constantinople.<sup>212</sup> The barrages on the river are formed by the Ukrainian Crystalline Shield where it emerges as rocks, cliffs and slabs of stone. Some of them obstruct the whole river and are called *porogy*, and others which cut off only part of the watercourse are named *zabory*.<sup>213</sup> The area of the barrages covers a length of approximately 70 km. The rapids, nine in number, lie within a 70 km stretch from Locmans’ka Kamianka, which is 15 km below Dnipropetrovs’ke, to the village of Kičkas (now submerged). Early literature contains differing opinions on the number

<sup>201</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Moravcsik 1966, 57.

<sup>202</sup> Rybakov 1970.

<sup>203</sup> Mel’nikova 2001, 284.

<sup>204</sup> Stryžak 1985, 32.

<sup>205</sup> Černenko 2007, fig. 21:3.

<sup>206</sup> Duczko 2004, fig. 65a; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, № 72.

<sup>207</sup> Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, № 70.

<sup>208</sup> Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, № 71.

<sup>209</sup> Stryžak 1985, 29.

<sup>210</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Moravcsik 1966, 59–63.

<sup>211</sup> Dennis 1985, 292–293.

<sup>212</sup> Cf. other suggestions about possible informants of Constantine in Litavrin and Novosel’cev 1991, 321; Howard-Johnson 2000; Melin 2003, 57–58.

<sup>213</sup> Evarnickij 1888, 49.

of barrages.<sup>214</sup> They vary from seven to twelve, possibly depending on the season when the barrages were observed. The highest flow rate (c. 3.5 m above the norm) has been recorded in spring, around the 9th of May, and occasionally in autumn (up to 1.21 m above the norm).<sup>215</sup>

The first barrage, named *Essoupe* by Constantine,

... is the same width as the Polo-ground; high rocks, which stand out like islands, are embedded in the middle of it. The water wells up against these and crashes down over the other side, with a mighty and terrific din. Therefore the Russians do not venture to pass between them, but put in to the bank hard by, disembarking the men on to dry land and leaving the rest of the goods on board the "monoxyla"; they then strip and, feeling with their feet to avoid striking a rock...<sup>216</sup>

The barrage called *Kodak*, *Kudak*, *Gudak* or *Kajdackyj*, according to the old hydrographical map, corresponds to that description.<sup>217</sup> It is c. 330 m wide and about 540 m long and has four falls c. 1.94 m in height. Even in the 19th century it was considered as one of the two most dangerous rapids of the River Dnieper.

In the *De Administrando Imperio* it is said that when the Russians pass the above-mentioned barrage, they "re-embark the others from the dry land and sail away and come down to the second barrage, called in Russian *Oulvors*, and in Slavonic *Ostrovuniprah*, which means 'the Island of the Barrage'."<sup>218</sup> *Oulvors* has been associated with the *Lochans'kyj* rapid, which is c. 166–270 m long, 127 m wide with three c. 1.70 m high falls, located c. 500 m lower than the *Surskyj* barrage.<sup>219</sup> There are no firm arguments for this suggestion, but it should be taken into account that the Slavonic name *Ostrovuniprah*, connects the barrage with a certain island and may also be interpreted as "the Island on the Barrage". This is more suited to the *Surs'kyj* rapid which lies between the southern end of *Surs'kyj* Island and the left bank of the River Dnieper. The *Surs'kyj* rapid is situated about 7.5 km below the *Kodak* barrage, and is 72.522–102.384 m long with two 0.51 m high falls. Some pottery and arrowheads dated to between the 10th and 13th centuries were recorded on *Surs'kyj* Island during investigations of remains of settlements there.<sup>220</sup>

<sup>214</sup> Evarnickij 1888, 38.

<sup>215</sup> Evarnickij 1888, 35.

<sup>216</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Moravcsik 1966, 59.

<sup>217</sup> Evarnickij 1888, 35; Litavrin and Novosel'cev 1991, 322.

<sup>218</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Moravcsik 1966, 59.

<sup>219</sup> Evarnickij 1888, 38.

<sup>220</sup> Kozlovs'kyj 1992, 115.

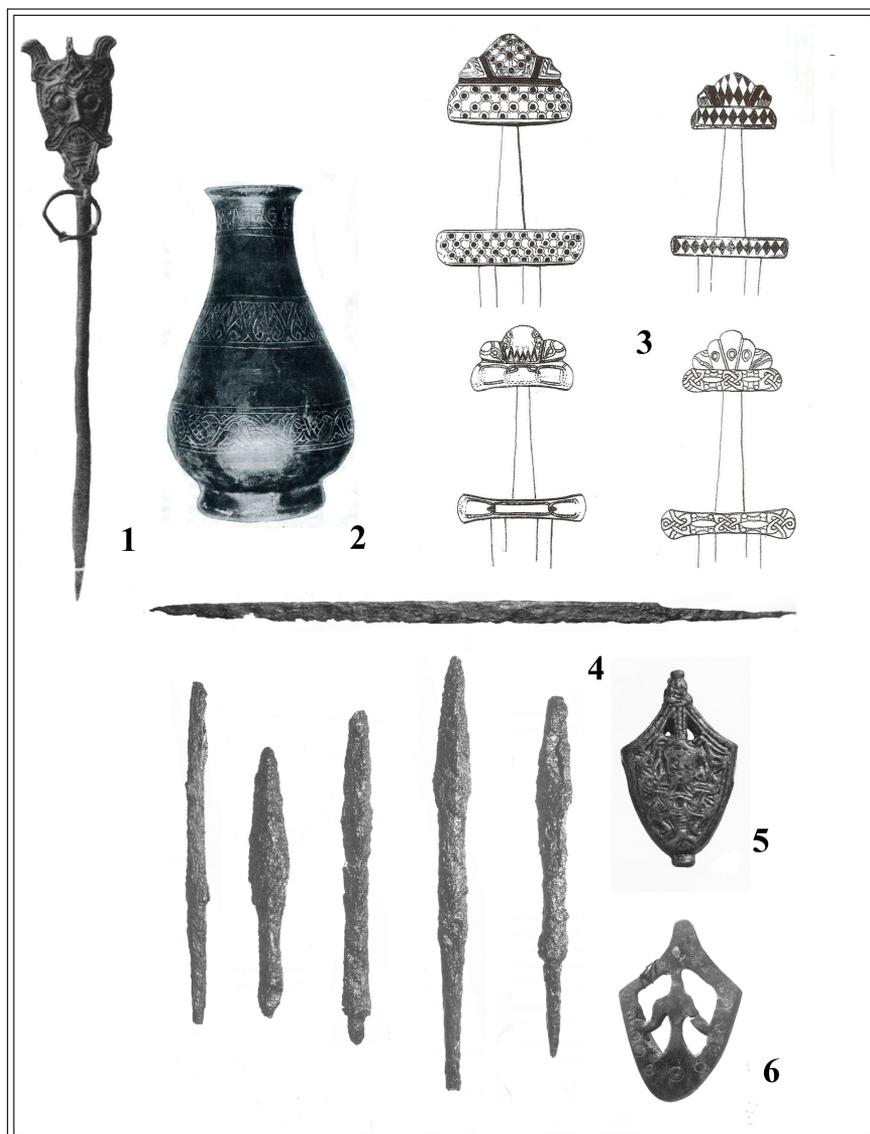


FIGURE 38: Finds of Scandinavian and Byzantine origin found in the area of the Dnieper rapids and Crimea (based on Androščuk & Zocenko 2012, №s 80–84 and 86–93).

There is no doubt that the third barrage, *Gelandri*, should correspond to the *Zvonec'kyj* rapids.<sup>221</sup> It is 186–217 m long and has four 1.53 m high falls and is situated c. 5 km lower than the *Lochans'kyi* barrage. There is remarkable archaeological evidence for people disembarking in the vicinity of this barrage, namely a bronze pin from the 10th century, decorated in Borre style, and possibly found in the village of *Zvonec'ke*, on the right bank of the river (Fig. 38:1).<sup>222</sup> The fourth barrage, called *Aeifor* or *Neasit*, now the *Nenasytec* rapid, is the largest one, being 2453–1064 m long with twelve 5.92 m high falls.<sup>223</sup> The name *Aeifor* is mentioned on a runestone from *Pilgård*, *Boge* parish, *Gotland*.<sup>224</sup> The runestone stood near *Boge Church*, where traces of settlements and a Viking Age harbour were revealed. From the same area came Viking Age jewellery, weapons and a hoard including Danish, English and German coins from the 11th century.<sup>225</sup> *Boge* was probably an important settlement with a lively population involved in trade and/or raids.

After describing the passing of the fifth (*Varouforos/Voulniprach*), sixth (*Leanti/Veroutzi*), and seventh (*Stroukoun/Naprezi*) barrages, which may be associated with the *Vovniz'kyj* (*Vovnih, Vnuk*) rapid, and three smaller rapids – *Budylo, Lyšnij*, and *Vil'nyj* or *Hadjučy*<sup>226</sup> – the *De administrando imperio* gives a strategic description of the *Krarion* passage:

The so-called ford of *Krarion*, where the *Chersonites* cross over from *Russia* and the *Pečeneges* to *Cherson* is as wide as the *Hippodrome*, and is as high, from below up to where the friends of the *Pečeneges* survey the scene, as an arrow of one shooting from bottom to top might reach. It is at this point, therefore, that the *Pečeneges* come down to attack the *Russians*.<sup>227</sup>

The site of the *Krarion* ford should probably be interpreted as the passage of *Kičkas*, mentioned between the 16th and 18th centuries.<sup>228</sup> On a 17th-century map this place is depicted to the north of *Chortycja Island*, and named in Polish as *Wielka Przeprowa Tatarska*, which means “the big Tatarian passage” (Fig. 39).

Judging by the large concentration of archaeological monuments in this area, it has always been a place of great importance.<sup>229</sup> On the left bank of the *Dnieper* the remains of a settlement dated to 9–12th century have been detect-

<sup>221</sup> Litavrin and Novosel'cev 1991, 322.

<sup>222</sup> Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, № 84.

<sup>223</sup> Litavrin and Novosel'cev 1991, 324.

<sup>224</sup> Mel'nikova 2001, 296–297; Gustavson 2006, 70.

<sup>225</sup> Stenberger 1958, 27–28; Thunmark-Nylén 2006, 66–71.

<sup>226</sup> Litavrin and Novosel'cev 1991, 325–326.

<sup>227</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Moravcsik 1966, 61.

<sup>228</sup> Evarnickij 1888, 255; Litavrin and Novosel'cev 1991, 326, n. 44.

<sup>229</sup> Rolle 1989, fig. 4.

ed.<sup>230</sup> In 1928, a remarkable find was made close to the left bank of the river. While dredging the water, five Viking Age swords were found. Four belonged to Petersen's types S and T while one lacked a hilt and cannot be classified.<sup>231</sup> Three of the swords had an "Ulfberht" inscription on the blade and the other two had crosses or cross-shaped signs (Fig. 38:3). Vladislav Ravdonikas suggested three possible explanations: that the swords were offerings; that they were dropped by Prince Svjatoslav's warriors when he was attacked by Pečeneges in 972; or that they were lost.<sup>232</sup> However, Russian activities on St Gregory Island (Chortycja) indicate that religious offerings might be the answer. The *De administrando imperio* puts it as follows:

They [Russians] reach the island called St Gregory, on which island they perform their sacrifices because a gigantic oak-tree stands there; and they sacrifice live cocks. Arrows, too, they peg in round about, and bread and meat, or something of whatever each may have, as is their custom. They also throw lots regarding the cocks, whether to merely slaughter them, or to eat them as well, or to leave them alive.<sup>233</sup>

Traces of a settlement with pottery dated to the 9th–10th centuries have been discovered in the northern part of Chortycja Island.<sup>234</sup> With this in mind, it would be possible to conclude that swords found in the river are indications of sacrifices connected with a ritual relating to travel.<sup>235</sup> Another find to be mentioned here is a bronze vessel with silver incrustation and traces of a Greek inscription, which was retrieved by fishermen in the area of the Dnieper barges at the beginning of the 19th century. The vessel contained Byzantine coins of Nicephoros II Phocas and John Tzimisces (969–976) and a bronze key (Fig. 38:2).<sup>236</sup>

After making their sacrifices, the Russians sailed for four days until they came to the island of St Aitherios: "Arrived at this island, they rest themselves there for two or three days. And they re-equip their single-strakers with such tackle as is needed, sails and masts and rudders, which they bring with them."<sup>237</sup> St Aitherios is mentioned in the Greek-Russian treaty of 944 in connection with the Greek prohibition against Russians spending the winter there.<sup>238</sup> The

<sup>230</sup> For finds of pottery and a cultural layer of this period see Kozlovskij 1992, 113.

<sup>231</sup> Černyšev 1964; Kirpičnikov 1966, 76–78; Androshchuk 2002; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, №s 79–83.

<sup>232</sup> Ravdonikas 1933, 598–616.

<sup>233</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Moravcsik 1966, 61.

<sup>234</sup> Kozlovskij 1992, 116.

<sup>235</sup> Androshchuk 2002.

<sup>236</sup> Korzuchina 1954, 36–37.

<sup>237</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Moravcsik 1966, 61.

<sup>238</sup> PSRL, I, 51.

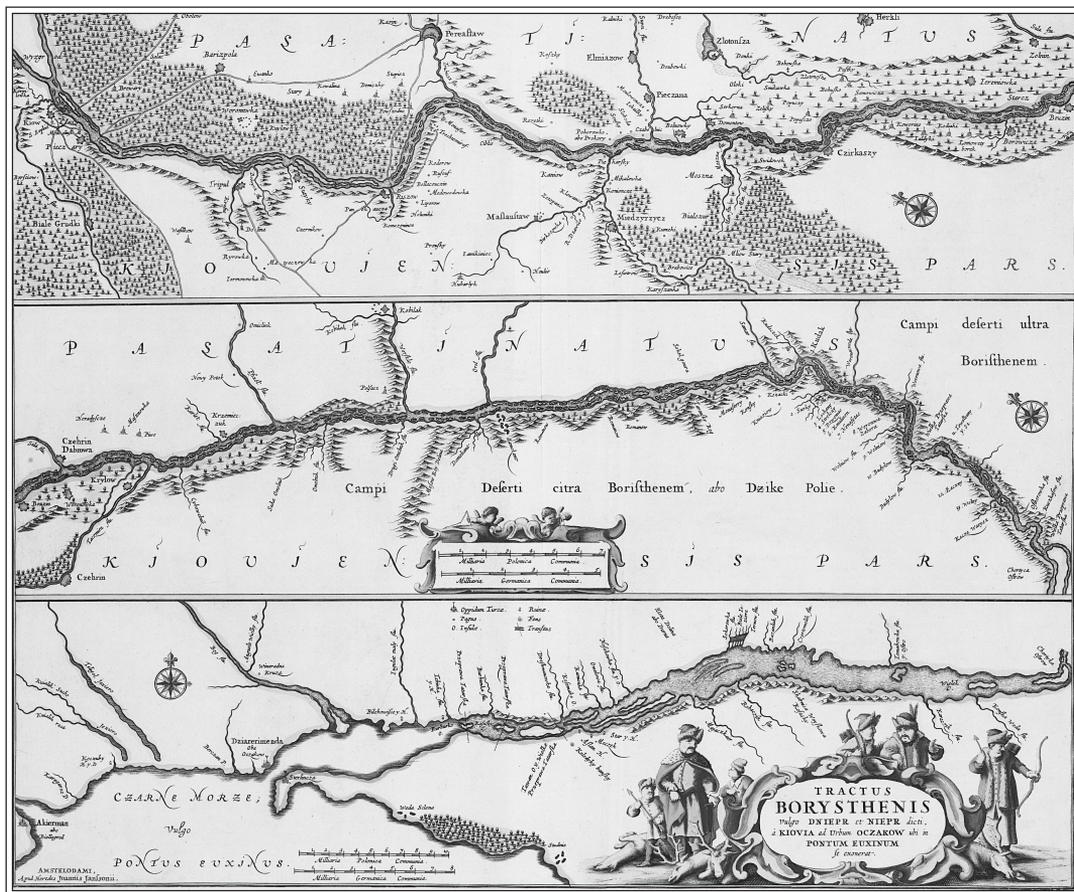


FIGURE 39: 17th-century map showing the River Dnieper between Kiev city and the mouth of the Dnieper (after Blaeu 1660).

island of St Aitherios corresponds with the present Berezan' Island. Very limited archaeological investigations have revealed medieval artefacts and indicated the seasonal character of the settlement.<sup>239</sup> Judging from older maps (Fig. 39), the island was originally a peninsula; this implies that a large part of the land bearing early medieval structures may now be submerged. Written sources claim that a column with a cross on top was erected near the site of St Aitherios' grave.<sup>240</sup> However, the finding of a runestone indicates that a church was situated on the island at least from c. 1000 AD. The stone was discovered in a

<sup>239</sup> Boltenko 1947; Gorbunova 1979; Rolle 1989, 494.

<sup>240</sup> Halkin 1984; Soročan 2005, 1269.

secondary grave and was erected by a certain *Grane* in memory of his companion *Karl*.<sup>241</sup> Both the material and shape of the stone correspond to a type of stone monument which was normally erected in church cemeteries in Sweden. The closest parallels are to be found among such monuments at Håggestads Church in Västergötland.<sup>242</sup>

To conclude, the chronology of Byzantine items along the River Dnieper shows that they may hardly be dated before the middle of the 10th century. The earliest Scandinavian objects appeared in Kiev during the first half of the 10th century.<sup>243</sup> This indicates that Olga's visit to Constantinople – and the compiling of chapter 9 of *De Administrando Imperio* – might have taken place shortly after Rjurikids were established in Kiev.

#### THE DISSEMINATION OF BYZANTINE CULTURE INTO THE VIKING WORLD – HOW AND WHY?

Material proof of the earliest Scandinavian contacts with Byzantium is quite scanty. It consists mainly of individual copper, silver or gold coins dating to the reign of Emperor Theophilos (829–842). Separate finds of Byzantine lead seals, discovered in Ribe, Hedeby, Tissø in Denmark and Novgorod in Russia, also belong to this period. The dating of these finds corresponds with the first records by Byzantine and Islamic written sources, concerning the appearance of Vikings in the regions of the Mediterranean, Black and Caspian Seas.

The *Life of St George of Amastris* seems to be the earliest written account of the appearance of *Rhos* in the Black Sea area.<sup>244</sup> The source describes the *Rhos* pillaging the vicinity of Amastris in Paphlagonia along with their conversion, which probably took place at the beginning of the 9th century.<sup>245</sup> In addition to this military attack, Muslim sources recount the trade activities of the Rus', who sold beaver pelts and black fox pelts as well as swords. They claim also that the Rus' advanced toward the Roman Sea (i.e. the Black Sea), from the most distant regions of the Slavic lands; they were "pretending to be Christians", and the Byzantine emperor collected a tenth of their merchandise.<sup>246</sup> This trade activity could barely be traced in the available archaeological sources in both

<sup>241</sup> Braun and Arne 1914, 44–48; Mel'nikova 2001, 200–201; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, № 85.

<sup>242</sup> Svärdröm 1958, 39, fig. 30; Palm 1992, 114.

<sup>243</sup> Androshchuk 2004a, 46.

<sup>244</sup> Vasiljevskij 1915.

<sup>245</sup> The date of this *Life* is, however, still under debate; ODB, 837.

<sup>246</sup> Ibn Chordadbech, *Kniga putej i stran*, ed. Velichanova 1986, 124; English translation in Adelson 1962, 129.

Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. Scanty evidence of fur-processing from Birka and Hedeby should be kept in mind,<sup>247</sup> although it is difficult to interpret without comparative data from Viking Age sites in Eastern Europe.

At what time the Rhos were required to do military service in the Byzantine army is subject to discussion. There is a supposition that the Rhos under the name of *Taurikes Skithai* are mentioned by Joseph Genesios in connection with the murder of St Theoktistos in 855 in Constantinople.<sup>248</sup> B. S. Benedikz argued that this is the earliest record of Scandinavians being in the imperial military service;<sup>249</sup> others have suggested that the name might refer either to the Khazarians or be a later interpolation.<sup>250</sup>

It should be noted that the three seals mentioned above were discovered in Denmark, in the presumed royal manor of Tissø,<sup>251</sup> and the trading sites of Ribe and Hedeby, which were under royal protection.<sup>252</sup> The fourth seal came to light in Russian Novgorod, in the vicinity of Rjurikovo gorodišče, which has also been interpreted as both a princely site and a trade centre.<sup>253</sup> Most likely, all these seals should be seen as indirect proof of early military contacts between the Viking authorities and Byzantium in the 9th century, and should be related to Byzantium's wars with the Arabs. We know that emperor Theophilus, having trouble with the Arabs, was looking for military help in Venice, Ingelheim and Spain.<sup>254</sup> The Vikings could have been seen as good candidates for solving these problems. As shown above, the titles of the seals are apparently connected to the military activities of their bearers, which implies that a need for mercenaries was the main reason for Byzantine contacts with the Northmen. There are a number of recorded cases of the Rhos participating

<sup>247</sup> Wigh 2001, 120–123.

<sup>248</sup> Joseph Genesios, *On the reign of the emperors*, ed. Lachmann 1834, 89; Kaldellis 1998, 79; see also Vasiljevskij 1908, cxxiv.

<sup>249</sup> Benedikz 1969, 21.

<sup>250</sup> Karlin-Hayter 1970. Nevertheless, apart from the purely literal tradition of *Tauroscythians* which goes back to Ptolemy (see Karyškovskij 1960, 44 and 46), it seems that at least in 10th-century Constantinople there was some sort of association between the names *Rhos* and *Tauros*. According to Constantinople's *Patria*, there was a colossal equestrian statue in the Forum Tauri, the four-sided base of which carried a decorative representation of the final days of the city when the *Rhos* tribe would destroy it. Dated to the 10th century, the *Patria* are considered to represent general attitudes to ancient statues. See *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum*, ed. Preger 1907, 175–176; Berger 1988, 323–324; Mango 1963, 63; Mango 1972, 46, 250, n. 26, cf. Sodini 1994.

<sup>251</sup> Jørgensen 2003.

<sup>252</sup> Fevaile 2008.

<sup>253</sup> Nosov, Gorjunova and Plochov 2005, 30 and 32.

<sup>254</sup> Vasiliev 1900, 141.

in Byzantine military campaigns. The naval expedition to Crete in 910/911, in which seven hundred Rhos took part, is well known.<sup>255</sup> 629 Rhos are reported to have participated in the second expedition to Crete in 949.<sup>256</sup> In 954–955 Rhos troops took part in the Bardas Phokas campaign to Syria.<sup>257</sup> In 964–965 the Rhos were among Nikephoros' army sent to Sicily.<sup>258</sup> Finally, we know that in 967 Nikephoros recruited Rhos troops to attack Bulgaria.<sup>259</sup> There is also established archaeological evidence for the presence of Scandinavian warriors in Byzantine Cherson.<sup>260</sup>

Beginning with the reign of Emperor Leo VI, we can see certain changes in the contacts with Byzantium. From this time on, Byzantine lead seals occur mostly on Viking sites in Eastern Europe: Novgorod, Rjurikovo gorodišče, Kiev and Šestovycja. Byzantine coins, with very few exceptions, are relatively few in this period, but new categories of objects such as reliquary crosses, glass bracelets, finger-rings, and buckles, pottery and silk begin to appear in these and other sites, especially Gnězdovo and Old Ladoga. This change in the type of objects imported from Byzantium can be explained by important information preserved in the written sources. We know that in the Byzantine empire, the Rhos were getting *roga*, a monthly payment of money.<sup>261</sup> Archaeologically, *roga* is hardly visible in the Scandinavian numismatic material (as we have seen above), and we may suggest that precious clothes were payment for the Russian contribution. It is apparent that military campaigns were one of the main sources for obtaining objects of Byzantine and oriental origin for the Rhos; think, for example, of the vessels and treasures (*leidzomenoi kai chremata*) mentioned in the Byzantine written sources.

So judging from the distribution of both Scandinavian and Byzantine finds, it seems that “the route from the Varangians to the Greeks” – the main path of penetration of Byzantine goods – was established around the middle of the 10th century. But how do we explain this? Why were these roads established in the way they were, and at that point in history?

First, we need to underline the importance of the Rivers Don and Volga, leading to the lands populated by the Khazarians and the Bulgars. Individual finds of Scandinavian swords have been made in the regions of the Salto-

<sup>255</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De Ceremoniis*, ed. Reiske 1830, 654; Engl. trans. in Moffatt and Tall 2012, 651–652 and 654–655. See also Filipčuk 2008, n. 13.

<sup>256</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De Ceremoniis*, ed. Reiske 1830, 664.

<sup>257</sup> Rosen 1883, 199; Blöndal 1978, 37.

<sup>258</sup> Blöndal 1978, 39.

<sup>259</sup> Leonis Diaconi, *Historiae*, ed. Hase, 63; Engl. translation in Talbot and Sullivan 2005, 111; Russian trans. in Litavrin 1988, 36–37.

<sup>260</sup> Kolesnikova 1975; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, №s 86–92.

<sup>261</sup> Blöndal 1978, 26; Uspenskij 1997, 90.

vo-Majackaja culture. These rivers were the principle routes of access to the territory of northern Russia and even to Birka, where objects of oriental and Byzantine origin have been found. Another possible reason for establishing the route around the middle of the 10th century was the lifting of previous restrictions placed by Byzantine authorities on the sale of particular goods to foreigners. The *Book of the Eparch* (c. 912)<sup>262</sup> says that vendors of silver and gold objects (*argyropratai*) were obliged to place their workshops in Constantinople's central street – *Mese* – and were not permitted to distribute their wares to outsiders.<sup>263</sup> Likewise, the *vestiarii* were not allowed to give any of the prohibited goods, i.e. large amounts of red or purple cloth, to foreigners.<sup>264</sup> *Serikarioi* who were involved in the dyeing, weaving and tailoring business were prohibited from producing and selling certain types of clothes, usually made for the imperial court, to visitors.<sup>265</sup> This referred to the *skaramangion* in particular – a “belted tunic with long full sleeves and with slits up the front and back or sides”, made of silk with gold embroidered borders.<sup>266</sup> This garment was also used as a payment or gift for distinguished and powerful visitors to the city.<sup>267</sup>

It seems that in the second part of the 10th century these restrictions were lifted. According to *The Life of St Andrew the Fool*, composed in the second half of the 10th century,<sup>268</sup> the selling of costly items was not seriously restricted. At that time, certain saleswomen (*pratriai*) were operating this business in Constantinople's Forum.<sup>269</sup> Gold, silver, Greek silk-work, raw silk, precious stones and pearls are mentioned as goods to be tithed by the royal commissioners in the treaty between the Byzantines and the ruler of Aleppo in 969.<sup>270</sup> It seems that the restrictions mentioned above were quite flexible under certain political circumstances. During the reign of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (913–959), Liutprand of Cremona visited Constantinople (949) as a deacon and envoy of the Italian Marquis Berengar, and bought much precious clothing.<sup>271</sup> However, we should remember that later, in the days of Emperor Nikephoros Phokas (963–969), as bishop and envoy in Constantinople of the

<sup>262</sup> See discussion in Mango 2000, 198–204.

<sup>263</sup> *Book of the Eparch*, ed. Lipšyc and Sjužjumov 2006, 292.

<sup>264</sup> *Book of the Eparch*, ed. Lipšyc and Sjužjumov 2006, 294–295; Nicole 1893. See also Adelson 1962, 136–137.

<sup>265</sup> *Book of the Eparch*, ed. Lipšyc and Sjužjumov 2006, 299–300.

<sup>266</sup> ODB, 1908; see also Piltz 1997.

<sup>267</sup> Piltz 1998b; Cutler 2002, 262; Muthesius 2004, 98.

<sup>268</sup> *The Life of St Andrew the Fool*, ed. Rydén 1995, I, 41–56.

<sup>269</sup> *The Life of St Andrew the Fool*, ed. Rydén 1995, II, 140–141.

<sup>270</sup> Adelson 1962, 143.

<sup>271</sup> On the political interests of Byzantium in Italy, see Uspenskij 1997, 355–361; Shepard 2008b, 540, 542 and 545.

hostile German emperor Otto, Liutprand was inspected by Byzantine authorities for obtaining *kolyomena*, i.e. goods which were forbidden for foreigners.<sup>272</sup> R. S. Lopez has shown that permits to export silk, purple, and gold embroidery were given only for a specific quality and quantity.<sup>273</sup> Silk is indeed weakly represented by archaeological data, but judging from the written sources it was probably one of most important exported objects. However, the demand for large quantity of silk provoked restrictions on its sale. This can be supported by the 944 Russo-Byzantine treaty in which certain restrictions concerning silks are mentioned.<sup>274</sup>

It is well known that gifts played an important role in Byzantine diplomacy.<sup>275</sup> Among gifts to the *Rhos*, mention is made of gold, silver, clothes of silk<sup>276</sup>, silver coins (*nomismata*), a gold dish filled with coins<sup>277</sup>, and a sum of 15 *kentenaria* of gold.<sup>278</sup> From the Byzantine point of view, gifts to dangerous foreigners were not only a material investment, but also guarantees of peaceful relationships with the recipients. For their part, foreigners looked to contemporary Byzantium as a source of exotic items.<sup>279</sup>



As we have seen above, objects of Byzantine origin found in Old Norse cultural settings included lead seals, reliquary crosses, finger-rings, buckles, pottery, glass, silk and coins. Apart from individual finds of seals, most objects belong to the later 10th century. This chronological peculiarity might be explained by different forms of contact, and certain trade regulations which were applied to foreigners by the Byzantine authorities. Carefully recorded stratigraphic information and analysis of the nature of the Byzantine objects (coins converted to jewellery, primary and secondary use of items, etc.) reveal their exclusive character in Old Norse cultural settings of the period. To such cases might be added a decorated bronze Byzantine buckle included in a sword belt set found

<sup>272</sup> Liutprand of Cremona, *Relatio de Legatione Constantinopolitana*, ed. Scott 1993, 20 and 50.

<sup>273</sup> Lopez 1945.

<sup>274</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 75: "When the Russes enter the city, they shall not have the right to buy silk above the value of fifty bezants. Whoever purchases such silks shall exhibit them to the imerial officer, who will stamp and return them"; see also PSRL, I, 49, and II, 37–38.

<sup>275</sup> Cormack 1992; Cutler 2002; Schreiner 2004.

<sup>276</sup> Bibikov 2004, 59.

<sup>277</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De Ceremoniis*, ed. Reiske 1830, II, 597–598; Bibikov 2004a, 78.

<sup>278</sup> Litavin states that this amounts to c. 455 kg; see Leo the Deacon, *History*, ed. Litavrin 1988, 36–37, n. 26.

<sup>279</sup> Cutler 2002, 264.

in a recently investigated chamber grave in Kiev.<sup>280</sup> The Byzantine cone-seal, excavated in a child's grave in Šestovycja cemetery, should also be mentioned.<sup>281</sup> These cases definitely prove that the possession of Byzantine objects manifested the owner's high social position and disclosed their authority, prestige and social networks.

<sup>280</sup> Movchan 2007, fig. 1, pl. 18–21.

<sup>281</sup> Blifel'd 1977, 150–151.

## *Rituals of Power: Great Mounds and “Mound-Sitting” in Rus’ and Scandinavia*

I would like to open this chapter with an anecdote found in the *Galyčian-Volynian Chronicle* for the year 6714/1206. The chronicler tells us that after the Galyčian boyars made an unsuccessful attempt to install Prince Mstislav Jaroslavič on the throne in the city of Galyč, one of the pro-Hungarian boyars – Ilja Štepanovyč – took the prince to the top of the great mound in Galyč, smiled and said: “O prince! Since you have already sat on the Galyčian grave, you have already ruled in Galyč.”<sup>1</sup> The question of the identity of this grave has been debated by scholars since the 19th century. N. N. Karamzin suggested that this large mound gave its name to the city of Galyč.<sup>2</sup> Other scholars expressed the idea that it could be the grave of the city founder.<sup>3</sup> F. Svystun was the first to give it a symbolic interpretation – a recognition of the power embodied in a grave which could be transferred to its visitors. He found parallels in ancient beliefs of the western and southern Slavs. According to him, a prince – the founder of a new dynasty – accompanied by a bull or a horse went up to the top of a hill, where he “sat down” and vowed to be a good ruler.<sup>4</sup> These interesting analogies might be further developed using the information known from Scandinavian sources.

Excavations have shown that the Galyčian mound was quite a large earthen structure approaching 3 m in height and 36 m in diameter. It is difficult to ascertain the burial rite or date of the grave found within it purely on the basis of published information, which merely mentions a wooden structure and lists the artefacts discovered in the mound.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, judging from the size of the mound it is comparable to similar structures known in Rus’ and Scandinavia. The passage cited above becomes more understandable when we recall the rite of “mound sitting” of kings as recorded in Old Norse literature. In the following I will try to show that this rite was actually known in Rus’ and was connected to a pre-Christian empowerment ritual that still survived in the Old

<sup>1</sup> PSRL, II,722; Engl. trans. in Perfecky 1973, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Karamzin 1991, 426.

<sup>3</sup> Hruševskij 1992, 466; Pasternak 1998, 23.

<sup>4</sup> Pasternak 1998, 24.

<sup>5</sup> Baran and Tomenčuk 1998.

Rus' society of the time. For the sake of this investigation, we need to consider both the symbolic roles and the practical functions of large mounds.

The rite of rulers symbolically sitting on burial mounds can be interpreted as a symbolic transition from one social status to another. Grounds for this conclusion are to find in *Haralds saga ins hárfagra* which relates the following:

King Hrollaug went upon the summit of the mound, on which the kings were wont to sit, and made a high seat to be prepared, upon which he seated himself. Then he ordered feather-beds to be laid upon the bench below, on which the earls were wont to be seated, and threw himself down from his high seat into the earls' seat, giving himself the title of earl.<sup>6</sup>

We know very little about the various public ceremonies which might have taken place in the Viking Age on large mounds. However, there is an important account dated to 1417 which refers to the Tynwald ceremony on Tynwald Hill, on the Isle of Man, which we might well consider as an example:

First, you shall come thither in your Royal Array, as a King ought to do, by the Prerogatives and Royalties of the land of Mann. And upon the Hill of Tynwald sitt in a chaire covered with a Royall Cloath and cushions, and your visage into the east, and your Sword before you, holden with the Point upward; your barrons in the third degree sitting beside you, and your benefited Men and your Deemsters [Island's two judges] before you sitting; and your Clarkes, your Knights, Esquires and Yeomen, about you in the third Degree ... and the Commons to stand without the Circle of the hill, with three Clearkes in their Surplices.<sup>7</sup>

Tynwald Hill is 3.6 m in height and 25 m in diameter, and (now) shaped in four tiers. It has been suggested that it is based on a mound which can be possibly dated between the Neolithic and Viking Ages, and that it served as a place of public assembly. It is believed that in the Viking Age a chapel was built close to the mound.<sup>8</sup>

Studies of large mounds in Scandinavia reveal that they were not only burial monuments, but also functioned as important religious and administrative centres. Some were constructed on or along communication routes, crossroads, bridges or fording places;<sup>9</sup> others were used for local district courts and as gathering places;<sup>10</sup> while some contained no grave at all. The largest mound in Scandinavia is in Norway: Raknehaugen, which measures 15 m in height and 77 m in diameter.<sup>11</sup> The mound contained a cremation grave dated between 533 and 551 AD and was built over a ploughed field. This action is an important

<sup>6</sup> Cited from Sundqvist 2001, 630; see also Sundqvist 2002, 273.

<sup>7</sup> Cited from Wilson 2008, 126.

<sup>8</sup> Wilson 2008, 124.

<sup>9</sup> Silver 1996.

<sup>10</sup> Müller-Wille 1992.

<sup>11</sup> Grieg 1941 and Skre 1997.





FIGURE 41: Gulbyšče Mound in Boldiny Gory, Černihiv, viewed from the southwest (photo by Elena Androščuk).

and within it he constructed a large chamber-grave for his father Gorm. This mound is 8.5 m high and 65 m in diameter. On the site of the two rows of standing stones to the south, he raised a new, larger, mound. It measures 11 m in height and 70 m in diameter. The southern mound does not contain a grave and, to judge from its shape which bears no relationship to the previous stone structure or the northern mound, was constructed later. Some pieces of wood found in the mound were dated by dendrochronology to the 960s. A memorial runestone was possibly erected on the top of the mound. Midway between the two mounds, Harald erected a great runestone with the now famous inscription: “King Harald made this monument in memory of Gorm his father and Thyra his mother, that Harald who won for himself all Denmark and Norway and made the Danes Christians”.<sup>15</sup> After being baptised, Harald built a church at Jellinge, and re-interred his father in a large chamber-grave beneath the church. In this way he constructed a monumental complex which became not only an “expression of continuity in the midst of religious change”,<sup>16</sup> but also a manifestation of the presence of a new royal power.<sup>17</sup> A religious continuity

<sup>15</sup> Quoted from Krogh 1983, 185.

<sup>16</sup> Krogh 1983, 214.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Adam of Bremen, *History of the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, Engl. trans. Tschan 1959, 47, n. 155.

between large mounds and churches in both Scandinavia and Rus' has been discussed previously.<sup>18</sup> Here I would like to draw attention to such mounds in Černihiv in Ukraine.

The large mounds of Černihiv were excavated by D. J. Samokvasov in 1872–1873. The partial publication<sup>19</sup> of the results of the excavations were later analysed by B. A. Rybakov.<sup>20</sup> According to Rybakov there were several similar structures in the territory of the modern city of Černihiv. Two of them – Gulbyšče and Bezymjannyj – were situated c. 2 km south of the walls of the city, on the high right bank of the River Desna in the place known as Boldyny Gory (Fig. 41). Both mounds were built close to the edge of the hilly bank 100 m from each other, in such a dominating position that all boats passing down the river could easily observe them. Two other large mounds were placed elsewhere in the landscape. Of one we know only that it was located in Olegovo pole (Oleg's Field), which places it quite far from the River Desna (cf. below). The other mound, called Čorna/Čornaja Mogyla, was also situated far from the river in a large cemetery of cremation and inhumation graves (Fig. 42).<sup>21</sup> A further large mound known as "Princess Černá's Grave", was situated northwest of the walls of the city and destroyed in 1851. However, there is evidence that chainmail, a drinking-horn and a vessel were discovered "in the middle of the mound".<sup>22</sup> I shall now offer brief descriptions of the Černihiv mounds and their finds.

**Gulbyšče** is a conical mound, 8.5 m high with a circumference of 100 m. It is surrounded by a ditch, 5.70 m wide and 2.80 m deep, intersected by three earthen causeways.<sup>23</sup> The diameter of the levelled top of the mound measures 21.6 m. A cremation layer was discovered at a depth of 7 m from the surface, above a layer of sand which had been specially laid down for the pyre. The remains of the cremation consisted of some burnt human bones along with those of animal (bull, horse, dog), fish and bird. The artefacts found comprised: decorated plates of antler, bronze mounts, rectangular strike-a-lights, melted pieces of silver, gold, glass and beads, a penannular brooch, fragments of pottery, grains of rye, wheat, and barley, and an Arabic coin (Fig. 43). The first part of the mound was constructed above the remains of the cremation. On top of this an iron cauldron was deposited which contained the bones of a ram, wool and eggshells. Above this a layer of burnt weapons,

<sup>18</sup> Brøgger 1937, 173; Olsen 1966; Androshchuk 1999, 84–86.

<sup>19</sup> Not all material was published; see Samokvasov 1908, 195–197.

<sup>20</sup> Rybakov 1949.

<sup>21</sup> Rybakov 1949; Androshchuk 2000, 257–266.

<sup>22</sup> Rybakov 1949, 15, 24, 33, 45.

<sup>23</sup> Samokvasov 1908, 195.

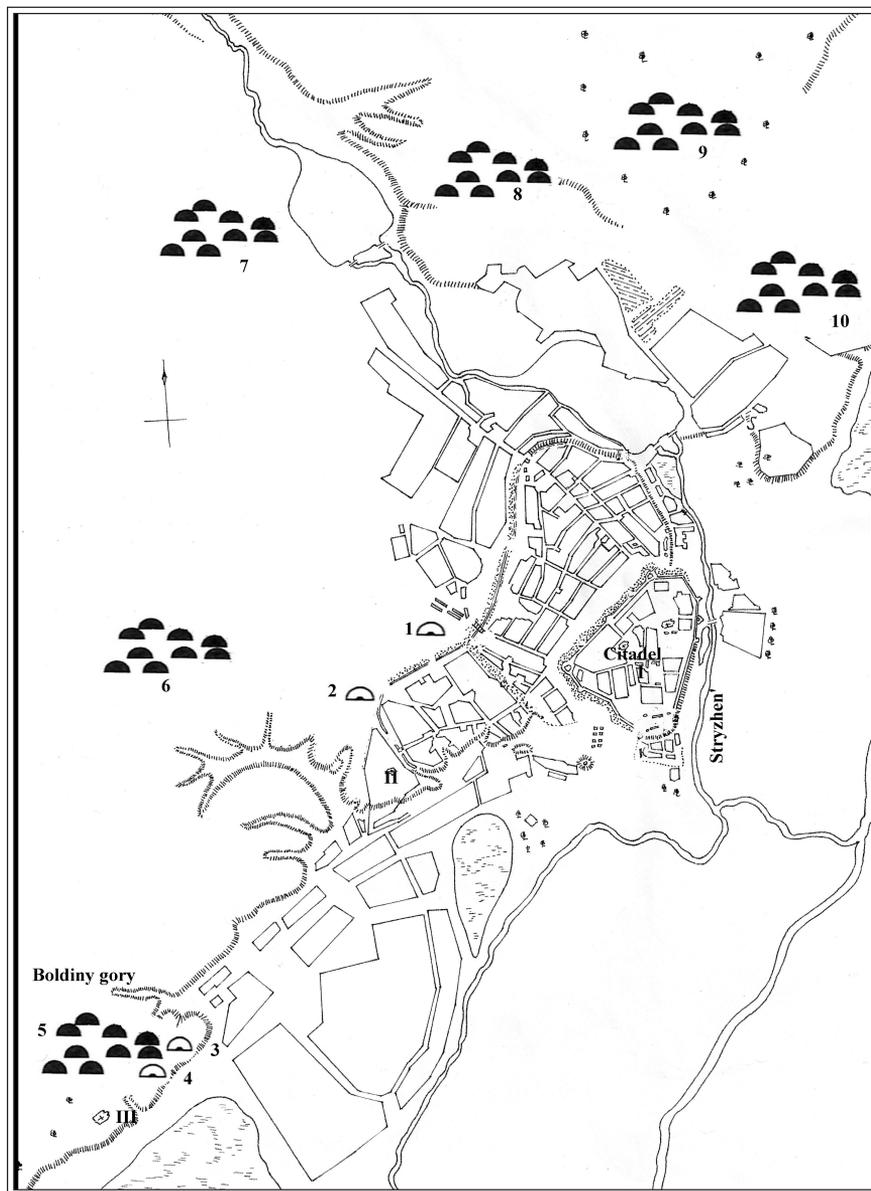


FIGURE 42: Map of large mounds and cemeteries of the Viking Age in Černihiv (drawing by author).

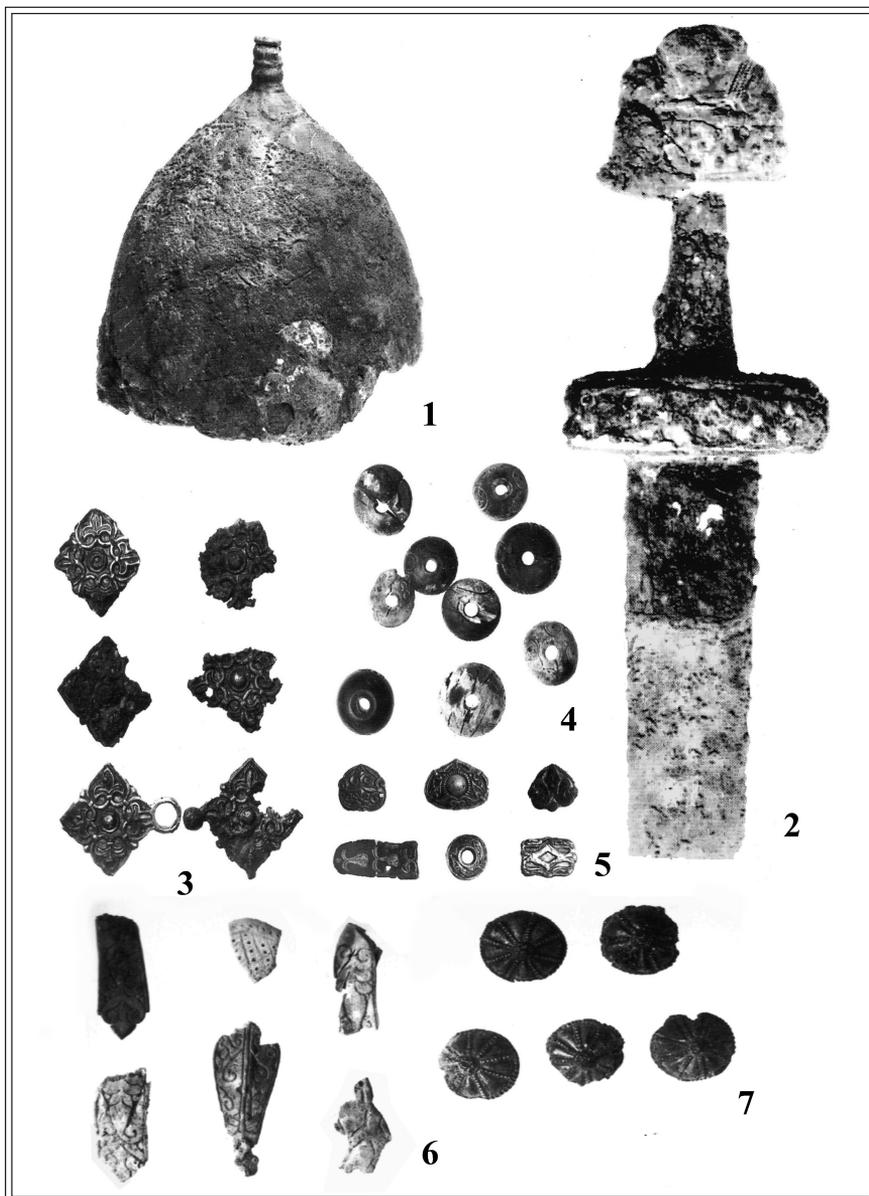


FIGURE 43: Finds from Gulbyšče (after Egorov 1996, Nos 649–655, 658, 660–664, 669–672).

consisting of a helmet, a sword, chain mail, a spearhead, an axe, and two stirrups, was placed. All these were covered by the flat-topped outer mound.

**Bezymbjannyj** is 7 m high and 21 m in diameter. The mound is conical and surrounded by a ditch, 4.26 m wide and 1.80 m deep. Cremated bones as well as an axe, knives, a horse-bit, buckles, a whetstone, a sickle, bronze buttons and mounts, remains of a bucket, a fragmentary comb and a textile fragment, were revealed on a sand layer at a depth of 7 m from the top of the mound.<sup>24</sup>

**Čorna Mogyla** is the largest mound in Černihiv. Originally it was c. 7 m high and its circumference 125 m. The mound is surrounded by a 7 m wide ditch. Cremation took place on the surface of a deposition of sand, 1.0–1.5 m high and 10–15 m in diameter. Within the cremation layer burnt human, animal (a bull, a dog and two horses), fish and bird bones were found. The publication notes that a pile of burnt weapons consisting of two swords, a spearhead, a sabre and parts of chain mail, as well as remains of a saddle with stirrups were discovered here, which seems to be a mistake.<sup>25</sup> Other recorded objects include keys, padlocks, axes and a chisel, ten sickles, two clay vessels, an iron vessel containing the bones of a ram, a bronze vessel with gaming bones and grain, iron fragments of at least 12 buckets and one fragmentary Byzantine gold coin of 945–959. This cremation layer was covered by the first mound of earth, on top of which was placed an iron cauldron with burnt bones of a ram and a bird, chain mail, two helmets, two drinking-horns, two long knives, and a figurine of the Scandinavian god Thor.<sup>26</sup> In addition, two Byzantine gold coins (869–877) were also discovered here (Fig. 44).<sup>27</sup> This lower mound was then covered by the final flat-topped mound.

The closest parallels to Černihiv's mounds are the burial monuments in the Gnězdovo cemetery. They share such burial rites as placing pyres on a specially prepared sand layer, a distinctive use of animal bones which recognizes the special role of rams in the sacrifice of animals and the conical shape of the

<sup>24</sup> Samokvasov 1908, 197.

<sup>25</sup> On reading the description of the finds in Samokvasov's publication, one gets the impression that these weapons and horse equipment are mistakenly listed among the objects discovered in the cremation layer and supposedly among the items placed upon the cauldron above the inner mound, cf. Samokvasov 1908, 199–200. The excavation of this mound lasted for more than 10 months in the early 1900s and Samokvasov could have missed some important details.

<sup>26</sup> Puškina 1984 and Perkins 2001, 72–73.

<sup>27</sup> Ravnina 1988, 125.

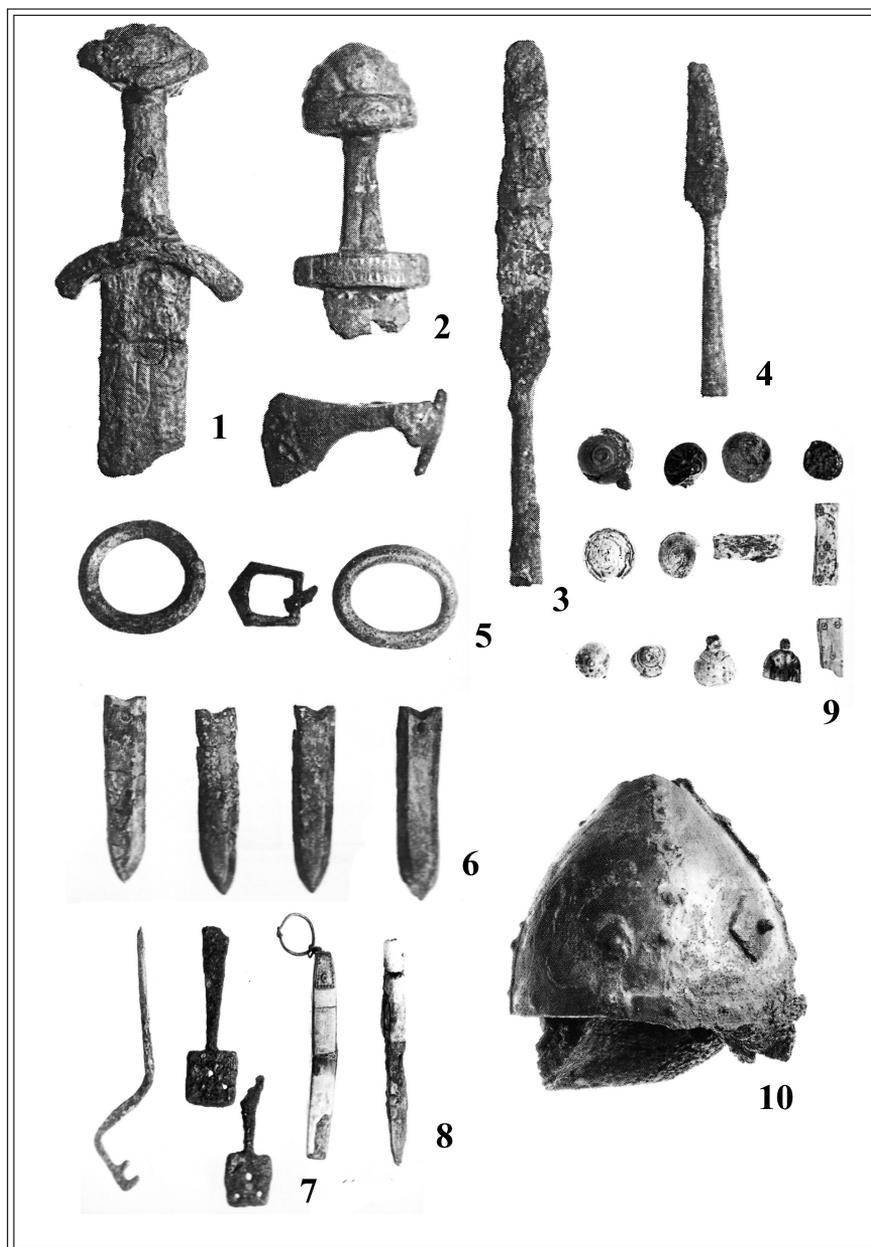


FIGURE 44: Finds from Čorna Mogyla (after Egorov 1996, N<sup>o</sup>s 684, 692–697).

mounds.<sup>28</sup> However, there is also a slight difference. In Gnëzdovo the bones of a ram and goats, as well as weapons, were separated by stones from the rest of the burnt objects in the pyre, while in Černihiv they were put on the top of the first, lower, mound.<sup>29</sup> In Gnëzdovo, a long knife which had probably been used during the sacrifice was placed above the ram bones in a cauldron. In both *Gulbyšče* and *Čorna Mogyla*, personal weapons and horse riding equipment were chosen. However, it is open to question whether the drinking-horns in *Čorna Mogyla* were personal belongings of the dead people or, like the cauldrons with animal bones, the remains of a ritual meal which took place immediately after the first mound was constructed. In relation with this observation, I would like to offer some parallels known from written sources and ethnography.

It has been argued that the presence of drinking-horns and cauldrons with the remnants of a meal in the large mounds in Rus' seemed strange and incomprehensible, and would better suit imaginary Old Norse heathen temples.<sup>30</sup> I will try to show that this association with heathen temples, on the contrary, is not so strange. Fairly recent studies of Old Norse ritual sites shows that heathen temples never actually matched the famous description of the Uppsala temple by Adam of Bremen.<sup>31</sup> It has been possible, so far, to distinguish various types of sacred areas, including a multifunctional hall and smaller buildings, where possible ritual actions could take place.<sup>32</sup> Large mounds also belong to this category.<sup>33</sup> Some of them have obviously been viewed as places where gods dwelt. For instance, the *Ynglingasaga* describes Freyr's mound as having windows and doors.<sup>34</sup> The famous Viking Age tapestry from Överhogdalen in Jämtland, Sweden, contains the image of a human figure sitting on a chair, which is placed on the top of a conical structure which appears to be a schematic representation of a large mound. A warrior is depicted riding up one slope of the structure with an upraised axe.<sup>35</sup> This scene surely represents an intruder threatening the power of an existing king and his property. On the same tapestry we find another image of the same structure but with a flat top with upright spears. Inside the structure five human figures are depicted. Immediately below

<sup>28</sup> Bulkin 1975.

<sup>29</sup> Androshchuk 1999, 82.

<sup>30</sup> Petruchin 1975.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Adam of Bremen, *History of the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, Engl. trans. Tschan 1959, 207, with the archaeological evidence in Olsen 1966 and Nordahl 1996.

<sup>32</sup> Andrén 2002; Carlie 2006; Larsson 2006; Kaliff 2006.

<sup>33</sup> Gansum 2006; Androshchuk 2005; Bratt 2008.

<sup>34</sup> Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, ed. Jónsson 1911, 10 ("en bjoggu haug mikinn ok létu dyr á ok iii. glugga", "at the same time they built a great mound in which they made a door and three windows").

<sup>35</sup> Franzén and Nockert 1992.



FIGURE 45: Golden figurine of Thor and ornamented drinking-horns from Čorna Mogyla (after Egorov 1996, N<sup>os</sup> 645–646, and Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, N<sup>o</sup> 220).

the structure is an explanatory runic inscription – *gudbu* (divine dwelling) – which might be intended to signify “here dwelt the gods”.<sup>36</sup>

It should also be noted that large mounds in Eastern Europe were also important places for a number of religious rituals. We know that during seasons of drought, the people of the Novgorod region made processions to some large mounds (called *sopki* in Russian) to beg for rain.<sup>37</sup> When Christianity arrived, graveyards were sometimes placed around these monuments or on top of them.<sup>38</sup> The sacral functions of large mounds in both Scandinavia and Rus’ are still obscure and require further study. It is apparent that objects deposited in the upper sections of the Černihiv mounds served not only ritual,<sup>39</sup> but also a certain social, purpose. The late Anglo-Saxon Winchester Psalter from c. 1050 includes an illumination representing the scene of the Third Temptation of Christ. A group of objects are depicted beneath Jesus’ feet, symbolizing the earthly wealth he is rejecting. The objects include a sword, a shield, a chalice, a vase, a drinking-horn and three arm-rings.<sup>40</sup> To my mind, this close parallel to the objects found in the graves in Černihiv gives grounds for the conclusion that this set of objects was a well known metaphor for the wealth and high social status of the occupants of the graves.

<sup>36</sup> For more details, see Androshchuk 2005.

<sup>37</sup> Platonova 1991, 76.

<sup>38</sup> Petrov 1993, 84–91.

<sup>39</sup> Rybakov 1949, 45; Petruchin 1975.

<sup>40</sup> Openshaw 1989, 17, pl. 7a; Neuman de Vegvar 2003, 241, fig. 7.

Two drinking horns discovered in *Čorna Mogyla* measure 54 and 67 cm long and are decorated with silver mounts in their upper and central sections (Fig. 45).<sup>41</sup> The mounts of the smaller horn are adorned with plant ornament typical of Hungarian art of the 10th and 11th centuries, while the larger horn is adorned with representations of a plant, an eagle, a hunter, and fabulous animals which are stylistically akin to a more oriental school of art. Scholars have tried to interpret these motifs from the various viewpoints of Slavonic,<sup>42</sup> Scandinavian<sup>43</sup> and Khazarian<sup>44</sup> mythology. However, during conservation of the larger horn, traces of attempted carvings were discovered on its surface,<sup>45</sup> which has led some scholars to suggest that these traces indicate unsuccessful copying of richly decorated Byzantine ivory horns, so-called oliphants.<sup>46</sup> According to recent studies, there are at least three stylistically different groups of oliphants: “Saracenic” horns made by Arab craftsmen, Byzantine examples and European horns.<sup>47</sup> Motifs such as hunting warriors, lions, eagles and griffins are most characteristic for the first group of oliphants. It is argued that they were inspired by the Fatimid Style, which is considered to be an international style of the Mediterranean, portraying “metaphorical associations and analogies to the idea of courage”.<sup>48</sup> That is why it is highly probable that the large horn represents a local (Hungarian?) copy of a Mediterranean oliphant. We know from written sources that oliphants were the personal belongings of noblemen and also objects of tribute, gifts and symbols of allegiance or homage.<sup>49</sup>

Another type of gift was weaponry. The *Russian Primary Chronicle* provides good examples of weapons as gifts. For instance, in 968, after rescuing Kiev city from the siege of the Pechenegs, Pretič, the troop commander of the people on the opposite shore of the Dnieper (that is, the Černihiv region), was invited by the prince of the Pechenegs “to become his friend”. The Chronicle puts it as follows: “They shook hands on it, and the Prince of the Pečenegs gave Pretič his own breastplate, shield, and sword”.<sup>50</sup> The same source also describes the ritual of oath-taking by the Rus’ in 944 in connection with the treaty with the Greeks. In the church of St Elias, those who had been baptised swore that while “the unbaptized Rus’ shall lay down their shields, their naked swords, their

<sup>41</sup> Rybakov 1949, 46–47, fig. 18–20.

<sup>42</sup> Rybakov 1949, 49–50; Orlov 1988.

<sup>43</sup> Černecov 1988.

<sup>44</sup> Petruchin 1995.

<sup>45</sup> Rybakov 1949, 46.

<sup>46</sup> Ščeglova 1997.

<sup>47</sup> Shalem 2004.

<sup>48</sup> Shalem 2004, 61–67, 98, 100.

<sup>49</sup> Neuman de Vegvar 2003, 248; Shalem 2004, 92–93.

<sup>50</sup> PSRL, I, 67; trans. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 55–56.

armlets, and their other weapons, and shall swear to all that inscribed upon this parchment..."<sup>51</sup> In Old Norse literature, oath taking and ritual drinking formed a part of the inauguration ceremony or public promise to increase a king's dominion. The connection between these rituals and the dead ancestors and gods (cf. the Thor figurine found in Čorna Mogyla, Fig. 45) was important for the proof of inheritance and continuity of power.<sup>52</sup>

Both the objects found and the monumental character of the great mounds indicate that the persons buried there were representatives of local authority. The same conclusion may also be valid for the large mounds of eastern Scandinavia, which are mostly associated with Late Iron Age cemeteries, villages and farms. The location of these mounds in the landscape varies. Some are situated in low terrain and some on heights. As a rule such monuments were built in the vicinity of important communication routes. Different emblematic reasons for the construction of large mounds have been suggested: the changing ownership of farms, the setting up of new farms and also a rise in the status of established farms.<sup>53</sup>

If we consider the possible social environment of the Černihiv graves, as mentioned above, we find several groups of smaller mounds situated in the vicinity of the old city. One group was situated about 2 km southwest of the old city, in *Boldyny Gory*, which is mentioned in the written sources.<sup>54</sup> Northwest of the city was a second group of mounds located on the site of *Olegovo pole* (Oleg's Field) which is believed to have lain somewhere between the modern village of L'govo on the Rivers Belous and Stryžen'.<sup>55</sup> In the vicinity of L'govo, a hoard of silver ornaments of the 12th–13th centuries has come to light.<sup>56</sup> The third group has been recorded north of the city on the right bank of the River Stryžen' and can be identified with the place of St Saviour's village (*sel' ce Svjatego Spasa*) recorded in the *Hypation Chronicle* for 1160.<sup>57</sup> On the left bank of the River Stryžen', opposite St Saviour village, lay a fourth group of mounds which can be identified with the Semyn' village recorded in the *Russian Chronicles* for 1152.<sup>58</sup> Somewhere in the valley of the River Desna, south of Elica Hill where Čorna Mogyla is situated, lay the village of Stojanyači, which has been interpreted as a halt for merchants.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>51</sup> PSRL, I, 54; trans. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 86.

<sup>52</sup> Sundqvist 2001, 273, 641; Sundqvist 2002, 275–276.

<sup>53</sup> Bratt 2008, 114–115.

<sup>54</sup> Nasonov 2006, 201; Stryžak 1985, 21–22.

<sup>55</sup> PSRL, II, 360, 361 and 363; Nasonov 2006, 206; Stryžak 1985, 95.

<sup>56</sup> Korzuchina 1954, 138, № 151.

<sup>57</sup> PSRL, II, 507; Rybakov 1949, 51; Nasonov 2006, 208.

<sup>58</sup> PSRL, I, 338, and II, 456–457; Nasonov 2006, 209; Stryžak 1985, 141.

<sup>59</sup> PSRL, II, 506; Rybakov 1949, 51; Nasonov 2006, 202–203; Stryžak 1985, 145.

B. A. Rybakov has suggested that all of these were boyars' villages. However, as could be concluded from the *Hypation Chronicle's* entry dated to 1148, Oleg's Field was part of the territory of the Prince of Černihiv, which contained a number of villages or farms.<sup>60</sup> Judging from its name, St Saviour's village was the property of the cathedral founded by Prince Mstislav Vladimirovič in the 11th century.<sup>61</sup> The Virgin Cave Monastery in Boldiny Gory was founded by the Černihiv Prince Svjatoslav Jaroslavič.<sup>62</sup> The same was also suggested for the Elica Monastery built in the late 11th–12th century and situated opposite the great Čorna Mogyla mound.<sup>63</sup> The monastery was situated on a wide promontory above the lower part of the city. Archaeological investigations have revealed pottery dating from the 9th to the 10th centuries, showing that the site was populated in the 10th and 11th centuries.<sup>64</sup> It seems that this place could have been the location of an aristocratic residence. The reason for this suggestion is the gilt silver belt fittings dating to the beginning of the 11th century found in the territory of the monastery.<sup>65</sup> A hoard of gold and silver jewellery dating from the 12th to the 13th centuries also came to light in this area.<sup>66</sup>



To sum up, it is possible to conclude from the location of the large mounds in Černihiv, from their finds and from their territorial relationship to early medieval monasteries, churches and aristocratic residences, that they proclaimed land ownership and the authority of the local princes. These monuments surrounding Černihiv emerged in the later 10th century, when a new power was established in the area. The great mounds in both Rus' and Scandinavia served as monuments to the dead, as well as centres for religious ceremonies in which rituals of power played a prominent role.

<sup>60</sup> Toločko 1992, 163–166.

<sup>61</sup> Rappoport 1982, 39.

<sup>62</sup> PSRL, I, 192, and II, 185.

<sup>63</sup> Rappoport 1982, 45–46; Rudenok 1995, 78.

<sup>64</sup> Rudenok 2006, 49.

<sup>65</sup> Rybakov 1949, 53–54, figs 21–22.

<sup>66</sup> Korzuchina 2003, 137, № 148.

## *Contacts between Sweden and Southern Rus' (11th–12th c.)*

Despite the fact that many more people were travelling between Scandinavia and Byzantium in the 11th century than previously, it is still believed that appearances of Scandinavians in both Rus' and Byzantium were short-lived.<sup>1</sup> It has also been claimed that a certain shift in the recruiting of foreign mercenaries took place in the 11th century and that people from Rus' and England gradually replaced the Northmen.<sup>2</sup> An expedition of 800 warriors to Constantinople and then to Abydos and Lemnos in the 1020s, led by a certain Chrysocheir, a relative of Vladimir in Kiev, is seen as evidence of this development.<sup>3</sup> Recently, one scholar even suggested that Chrysocheir was ruler of Chernihiv or the "military camp" in Šestovycja.<sup>4</sup> This conclusion is, however, based on an obvious misunderstanding of the archaeological sources (cf. above Chapters 1–2 and below) and it does not take into consideration the possibility that Chrysocheir's Russian connection might be explained simply by his marriage to one of Vladimir's relatives.<sup>5</sup> Political crises and wars in Rus' in the 11th century indicate a shortage of manpower,<sup>6</sup> which means that there were no spare local warriors and so-called "Russians" operating in Byzantine military should be seen rather as Scandinavian mercenaries.<sup>7</sup> As for the expedition of Chrysocheir, we have to bear in mind an older group of Swedish runestones dated to the period between the 1020s and the 1040s, mentioning people who travelled to and/or died in Byzantium.<sup>8</sup> This group of monuments are situated in the south-eastern part of Uppland – a probable homeland of the participants in Chrysocheir's raid. From here, across the Baltic and further down "the route from the Varangians to the Greeks", it was possible to reach Byzantium. Thus, Scandinavia in the 11th century was still a source of manpower not only for Byzantium but also for Rus'. In order to make this situation clear we have

<sup>1</sup> See discussion in Shepard 1982–1985, 223–230.

<sup>2</sup> Vasiljevskij 1908, 208–210, 355; Dawkins 1947, 39.

<sup>3</sup> John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. Thurn 1973, 367; Engl. trans. Wortley 2010, 347. See also the discussion in Vasiljevskij 1908, 207.

<sup>4</sup> Ščavelev 2011, 329.

<sup>5</sup> Shepard 1982–1985, 229.

<sup>6</sup> Poppe 1976, 229, n. 109.

<sup>7</sup> See, for instance, Rosenquist 2005, 38.

<sup>8</sup> Larsson 1990, 114–117.

to investigate how these contacts are reflected in the material culture of “the Russian Land” – the core territory of the Old Russian state. I will start this investigation with a general review of Scandinavian objects discovered in Eastern Europe.

Since Hans Hildebrand’s article, published in 1882, oval brooches were for decades considered as archaeological marks for the Scandinavian presence in Rus’.<sup>9</sup> Later, Ture J. Arne suggested a wider list of finds: apart from ornaments, he included rivets, weaponry, fire-steels and combs.<sup>10</sup> Between the 1960s and the 1980s both Scandinavian and Soviet archaeologists were trying to establish a professional standpoint on the subject. There were also attempts to estimate the number of likely Scandinavian graves found in the whole territory of Rus’.<sup>11</sup> The following traits were considered to be “Scandinavian”: the presence of specific styles of decoration (Borre, Jellinge, Mammen, Urnes and Ringerike styles), and some peculiarities of the burial rite (boat graves and ritual deformation and destruction of weapons). Tools such as iron crampons, knives and fire-steels were not recognized as Scandinavian, because they could be produced by local smiths.<sup>12</sup> Gradually, thanks to comparative studies of forging techniques in Scandinavia and Rus’, it became possible to separate some Scandinavian traditions in the production of iron knives. Archaeologists concluded that the Scandinavian knives were made by the lamination of three layers.<sup>13</sup> Some scholars suggested that there were so called “hybrid-artefacts” combining both Scandinavian and Slavonic cultural traditions.<sup>14</sup> However, there are still no good examples of such items to support this suggestion.<sup>15</sup>

At first, all swords found in Rus’ (Fig. 46) were interpreted as Scandinavian; but after the discovery of Latin inscriptions on some of the blades, it was generally accepted that they were imported from the land of the Franks. Scholars pointed out the various ways of acquiring swords and the occurrence of similar types in different geographical and cultural regions.<sup>16</sup> Johan Callmer has noted that a comparison of the distribution maps of Scandinavian jewellery with those of swords shows the same pattern.<sup>17</sup> It is obvious that the exclusion of swords from the bulk of the sources would distort the true picture of contacts between Rus’ and Scandinavia. On the other hand, comparative

<sup>9</sup> Hildebrand 1882a, 139.

<sup>10</sup> Arne 1914 and 1940.

<sup>11</sup> Avdusin 1969, 464; Žarnov 1991, 203.

<sup>12</sup> Kirpičnikov 1970b, 55–56; Stalsberg 1989, 451.

<sup>13</sup> Rozanova and Puškina 2001; Voznesenskaja 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Arbman 1960; Avdusin 1969, 56; Lebedev and Nazarenko 1975, 7–8.

<sup>15</sup> Callmer 1971, 68; Jansson 1987, 780.

<sup>16</sup> Avdusin 1969, 55; Blidheim 1970, 114.

<sup>17</sup> Callmer 1971, 68, figs 1–2.

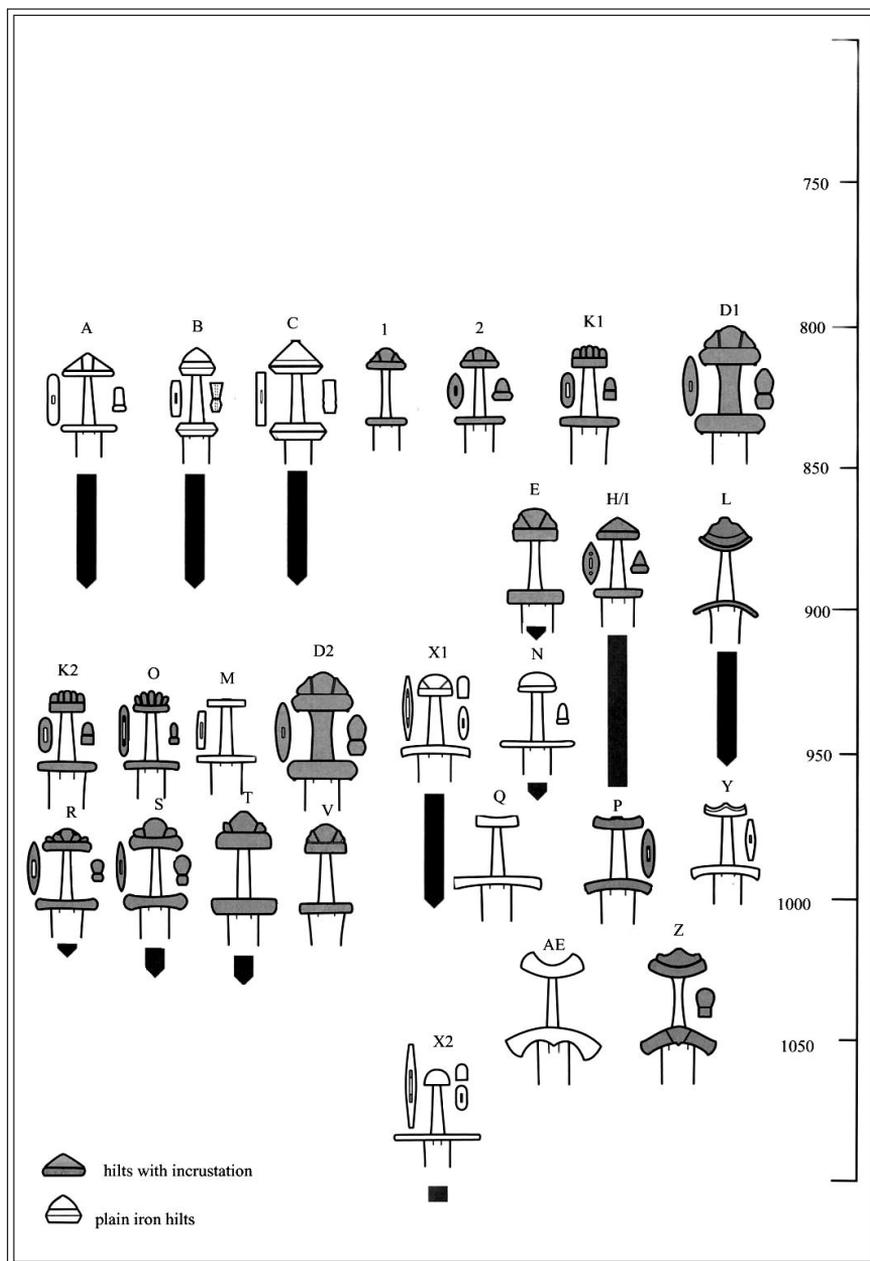


FIGURE 46: Most frequent types of Scandinavian swords (drawing by author).

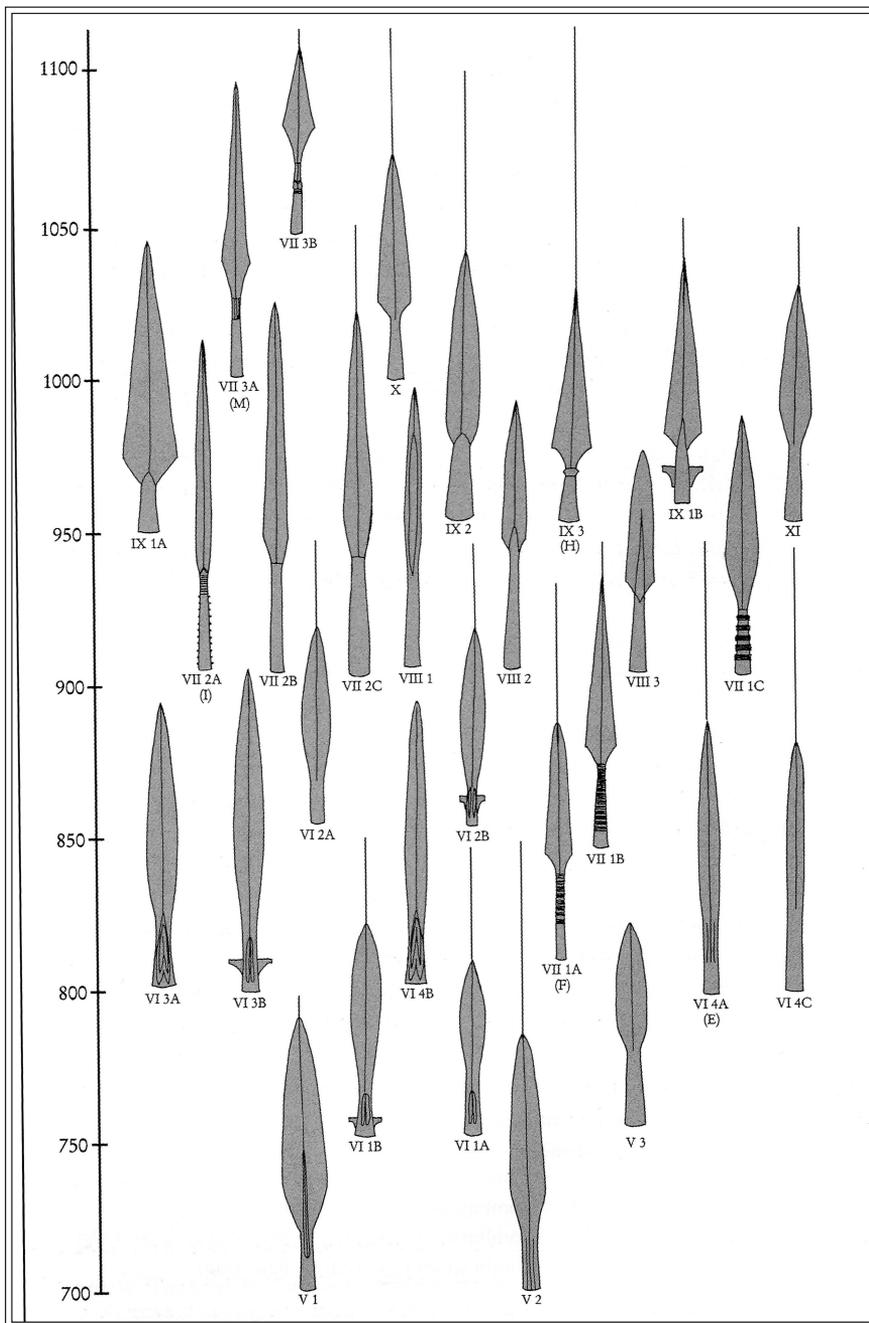


FIGURE 47: Most frequent types of Scandinavian spearheads (after Solberg 1984).

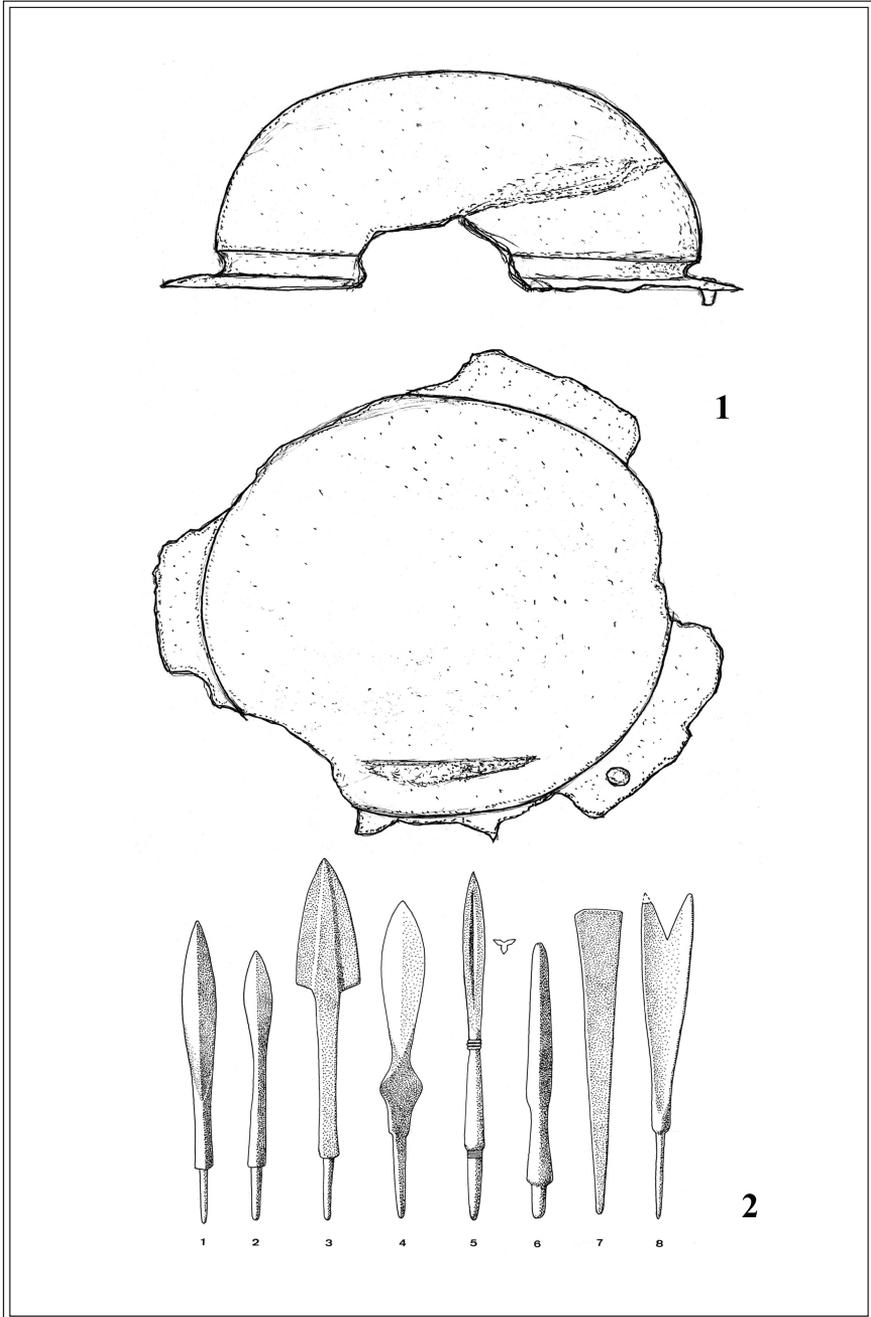


FIGURE 48: Shield-boss from chamber-grave I, excavated in 1988 in Kiev, and the most frequent types of Scandinavian spearheads after Wegaeus 1986.

studies of material in various areas have revealed clear regional peculiarities in the distribution of swords in Scandinavia and on the continent,<sup>18</sup> which make these weapons an important source for revealing contacts.

Among other important weapons were spearheads (Fig. 47). They were most common in Norway and Sweden, while small axes were characteristic of Denmark. Types E, I, K and M are the most representative spearheads in the Swedish material.<sup>19</sup> Finds of fighting knives, such as scramasaxes, are basically restricted to three Swedish provinces: Uppland, Västmanland and Gotland.<sup>20</sup> Arrowheads of types A1 and A2<sup>21</sup> are common finds in both graves and settlements of eastern Scandinavia (Fig. 48:2). Conversely, iron shield-bosses are not that numerous (Fig. 48:1). As a rule, they are found in graves of the local elite. In the whole of Scandinavia, Gjermundbu in Norway is still the only grave where a composite metal helmet has been recorded.<sup>22</sup> Apart from that, two single finds of iron openwork framing for eye-holes have been found on Gotland, in Denmark<sup>23</sup> and Kiev.<sup>24</sup>

One of the most recognisable Scandinavian features is jewellery (Fig. 49). Both techniques of construction and decoration make it easy to single out such finds among the local metal objects of Eastern Europe. In the second half of the 8th and into the 9th century, the standard female set of jewels in eastern Scandinavia consisted of a large button-on-bow brooch, two oval brooches with connecting string of beads and two armlets.<sup>25</sup> Over the 9th and 10th centuries, the set consisted mainly of two oval brooches (a pair of animal-head brooches was a typical Gotlandic tradition), sometimes with a third equal-armed or trefoil brooch (box-shaped brooches were another Gotlandic feature), and beads.<sup>26</sup> Equal-armed brooches could be worn without the oval ones.<sup>27</sup> Trefoil brooches were most widespread in southern Scandinavia and are rarely found in the eastern part of that region.<sup>28</sup> At the end of the 10th century, brooches and pendants of Terslev and Hiddensee types were popular in southern Scandinavia.<sup>29</sup> Heavy silver chains and neck-rings of twisted rods appeared in the

<sup>18</sup> Martens 2003; Androshchuk 2004c and 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Creutz 2003, 75.

<sup>20</sup> Stjärna 2007.

<sup>21</sup> Wegraeus 1986.

<sup>22</sup> Grieg 1947.

<sup>23</sup> Thunmark-Nylén 2006, 317.

<sup>24</sup> Karger 1958, pl. XXXVI:1; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012 № 31.

<sup>25</sup> Callmer 2006, 190.

<sup>26</sup> Graham-Campbell 1980, 27.

<sup>27</sup> Callmer 1999, 201.

<sup>28</sup> Maixner 2005, 168–169.

<sup>29</sup> Duczko 1995; Armbruster and Eilbracht 2010.

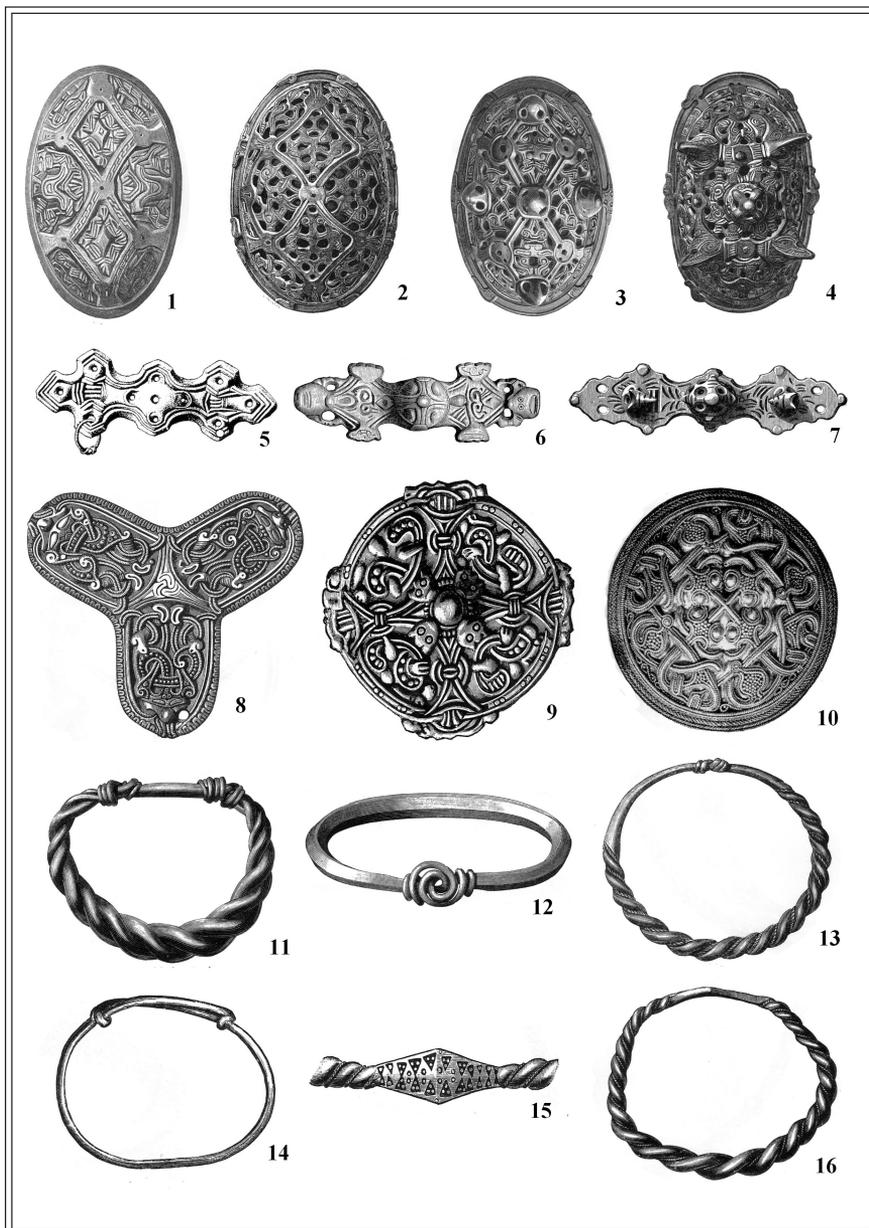


FIGURE 49: Samples of Scandinavian jewellery recorded from sites in eastern Europe. 1. type 37; 2. type 42; 3. type 51; 4. type 52; 5. type 58; 6. type 71; 7. type 68–70; 8. type 108; 9. type 116–117; 10. type 122 [style Hiddensee] after Petersen 1928; 11. type 705; 12. type 707; 13. type 714; 14. type 709; 15. type 714a after Rygh 1885.

11th century.<sup>30</sup> Compared to female accessories, the metallic items of dress of Scandinavian men were not numerous. They were restricted to ringed-pins and penannular brooches of silver or bronze for fastening cloaks, and sometimes hooked tags for ribbon ties. The latter are a typical element in Anglo-Saxon cultural contexts.<sup>31</sup>

It should be stressed that in comparison with such common finds as beads, knives, rivets and local pottery, both jewellery and weaponry are not frequently found in the cemeteries of eastern Scandinavia. With the coming of Christianity, heavy jewellery made of bronze disappeared from Scandinavian graves. Hoards provide the main source of study for jewellery and elements of clothing from the 11th and 12th centuries. Tools, combs, needles, knives, caskets, rivets and crampons are important items of everyday life but their diagnostic local traits are still poorly investigated.

Apart from the study of artefacts, there has been considerable discussion concerning Scandinavian traces in burial customs. Mounds with cremation graves were not considered as a Scandinavian feature,<sup>32</sup> although they are known in Swedish cemeteries from the 7th–10th centuries.<sup>33</sup> Nor are chamber graves assumed to be peculiar to Scandinavia. Most early chamber graves are known in Hedeby and Birka and they reveal continental influences.<sup>34</sup> Outside these centres, such graves are recorded in some rural areas of Sweden,<sup>35</sup> Denmark<sup>36</sup> and Norway,<sup>37</sup> where they are interpreted as a continental phenomenon.

My main reason for singling out objects is to ascertain whether they occur in the material culture of Scandinavia or have decorative or technical traits which were common for that region. In doing so, my main sources of knowledge have been archaeological material in Sweden – in the collections of Statens Historiska Museum (Stockholm), Uppsala University Museum, Universitetets Historiska Museum of Lund, Sigtuna Museum, Gävleborg Museum, and Visby Museum – in Denmark's National Museum in Copenhagen, in Universitetets Oldsaksamling of Oslo in Norway, and in Iceland's National Museum in Reykjavik and the Akureyri Museum, as well as relevant publications.

<sup>30</sup> Hårdh 1996.

<sup>31</sup> Graham-Campbell 1982.

<sup>32</sup> Stalsberg 1989, 451.

<sup>33</sup> Šaskol',skij 1970, 26; Gräslund 1980, 72; Jansson 198, 775.

<sup>34</sup> Gräslund 1980, 46.

<sup>35</sup> Arbman 1936, 31, 89–98.

<sup>36</sup> Eisenschmidt 1994.

<sup>37</sup> Stylegar 2005.

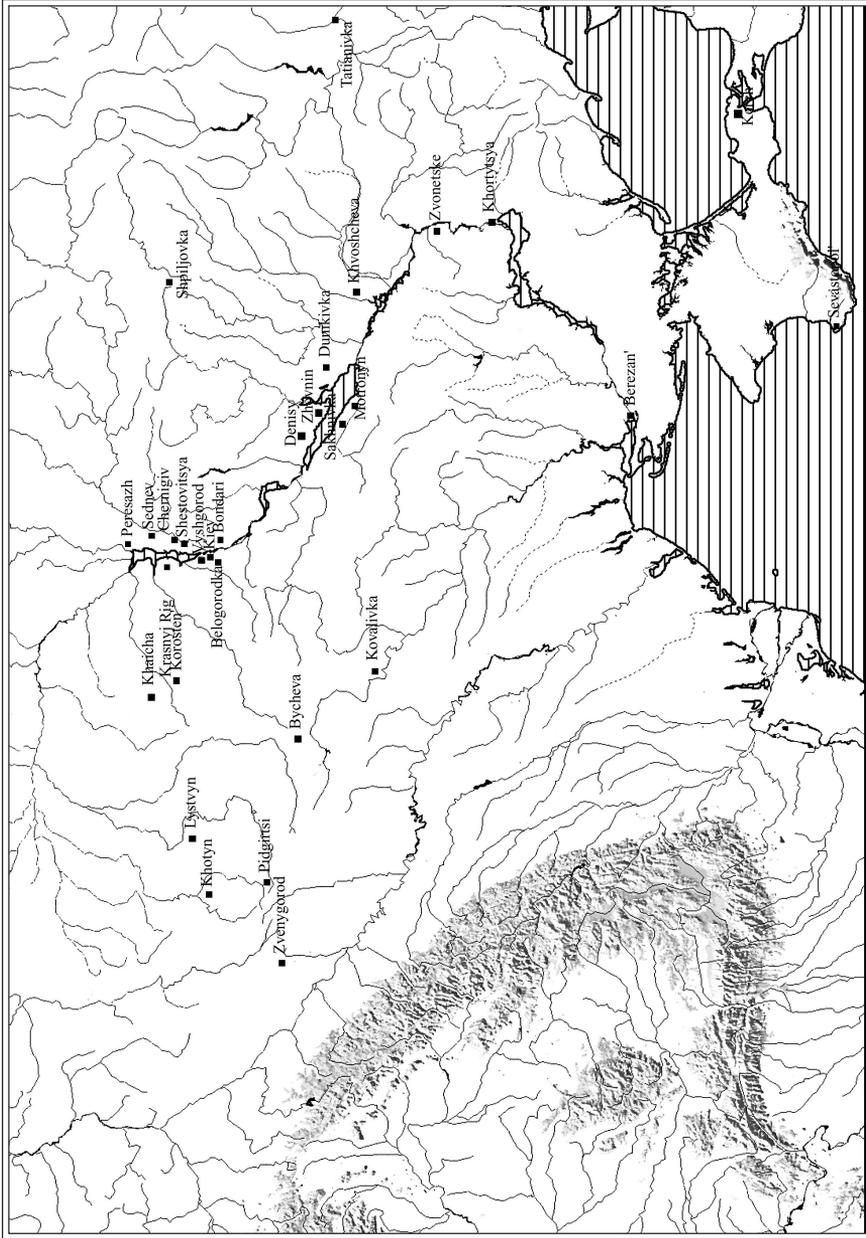


FIGURE 50: Distribution of Scandinavian artefacts in Ukraine (by author).

THE “SCANDINAVIAN ANTIQUITY” OF UKRAINE:  
A GENERAL OUTLINE

My analysis of finds in this chapter is based on 249 recorded objects found in the territory of modern Ukraine (Fig. 50).<sup>38</sup> 16 artefacts came from fortified sites and three were found in open settlements. Objects of Scandinavian origin were discovered in 57 graves and three hoards. 52 objects are stray finds. It must be noted that a substantial number of the artefacts came from old excavations in Kiev, Knjaža Gora and Sachnivka which lacked essential documentation (most of these finds are housed in the National Museum of History in Ukraine). These are also included in the present chapter.

The largest number of Scandinavian objects came from excavated cemeteries in Kiev and Šestovycja. In Kiev, Scandinavian finds occur in two main concentrations. One is associated with the graves situated on the hills north of the central part of the medieval city, along the road connecting Kiev and the city of Vyšgorod.<sup>39</sup> The other occurs on the upper hilly section of Kiev, where at least four distinct clusters of finds from destroyed graves or four groups of graves can be noted. The first cluster was situated beneath and around the Tithe church. The second was located in the area of the modern block of buildings bordered by Volodymirs'ka, Žytomyrs'ka and Desjatylna streets. The third was confined to the territory of the present-day monastery of St Michael, and the fourth was discovered in the vicinity of the Sofia Cathedral. Apart from graves, Scandinavian artefacts have also been detected in hoards disclosed in this part of the city.

In Šestovycja, artefacts of Scandinavian origin have also been discovered in the graves and wet-meadow settlements located in the north-eastern and central parts of the modern village of Šestovycja.<sup>40</sup> Individual finds with the same origin have shown up in the occupational layer and structures of this settlement, which is situated on the Korovel' headland.<sup>41</sup> Single objects with a northern origin are also recorded from graves at Černihiv, Sedniv and Peresaž in the Černihiv region and in the vicinity of Korosten' in Žytomyr.<sup>42</sup> In total, Scandinavian artefacts are known from 32 inhumation graves (including chamber graves), 25 cremation graves (including two large mounds) and one grave with an uncertain burial rite.

The distribution of Scandinavian artefacts according to different groups is listed in Table 5. As we can see, these objects may be categorized into elements

<sup>38</sup> Androshchuk and Zocenko 2012, 32.

<sup>39</sup> Known as “cemetery II” after Karger 1958, 135–138; Androshchuk 2004a.

<sup>40</sup> Blifel'd 1977; Androshchuk 1999; Duczko 2004.

<sup>41</sup> Khamayko and Zotsenko 2007.

<sup>42</sup> Androshchuk 1999; Duczko 2004; Zocenko 2004; Zocenko and Zvizdeckyj 2006.

of dress and adornment, items of daily life, tools, weapons and religious objects. The typological diversity for brooches and swords is indeed remarkable, as depicted in Table 6.

Artefact	amount
Brooch	32
Pendant	29
Finger-ring	3
Metal bead	1
Armring	12
Chain	2
Buckle	2
Sword	32
Scabbard chape	18
Spearhead	10
Arrowhead	23
Shield-boss	2
Scramasax	12 (including fragments)
Helmet	1
Tool	5
Knife	8
Whetstone	7
Awl with case	2
Chest or casket	1
Bronze pin	2
Comb	2
Antler spoon	1
Tweezer	1
Soapstone bowl	1
Needle-case	2
Religious object	18

TABLE 5. Amount of Scandinavian artefacts found in Ukraine (after Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, table 1).

Type classification	Brooches	Swords
JP 42	1	-
JP 51	10	-
JP 52	5	-
JP 58	1	-
LTN I	1	-
LTN V	1	-
GC IVC	2	-
IJ IA	1	-
IJ IIA	2	-
JP 116/117	1	-
JP "B"	-	1
JP "E"	-	4
JP "H"	-	8
JP "N"	-	1
JP "S"	-	6
JP "T"	-	3
JP "X"	-	2
JP "Y"	-	1
JP "Z"/distinctive	-	1

TABLE 6. The number of different types of Scandinavian brooches and swords found in Ukraine (after Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, 36).<sup>43</sup>

There are 21 objects of silver and bronze decorated in the Borre style, eleven artefacts with Jellinge decoration, eight ornamented according to Hiddensee, four in the Mammen style, two more as in Ringerike, and seven in the Urnes style (two belong to the same jewellery set).

The geographic distribution of male and female artefacts differs. While both groups are present in Kiev, Šestovycja and probably in Korosten', female artefacts are very few in the territory to the west of the middle section of the

<sup>43</sup> Artefact types are indicated according to Rygh 1885; Petersen 1919 and 1928; Thunmark-Nylén 1984; Jansson 1984a och 1984b.

River Dnieper. They are represented by jewellery in the Chaiča hoard<sup>44</sup> (Žyto-myrr region), a brooch from Kovalivka<sup>45</sup> (Vinnicja region) and a spindle-whorl with a runic inscription from Zvenigorod (L'viv region).<sup>46</sup> A similar pattern of distribution can be observed on the eastern side of the river where an armring from the Špilevka hoard and two chain terminals from the Černihiv hoard, found in 1883, deserve mention (see further below). The hillfort of Knjaža Gora situated south of Kiev is the only site where Scandinavian female objects dominate. A bronze die for making small brooches of Terslev type was also found there.<sup>47</sup> Male artefacts dominate in the lower area of the River Dnieper and in Crimea, where only weapon finds are recorded.

The 9th and 10th centuries, when the early Rus' state was being formed, are traditionally considered to be the period of most contact activity between Rus' and Scandinavia. There are two factors which have led to such a conclusion: the long-term discussion concerning the role of Scandinavians in the process of the emerging state and debates on the volume of archaeological sources related to this period.<sup>48</sup> Connections between both regions have been interpreted as a gradual process beginning with the sporadic penetration by Scandinavians seeking silver, fur, slaves and adventure and ending with their settlement and complete assimilation into the local milieu of Eastern Europe. Southern Rus', owing to its geographic position and its paucity of published archaeological finds, was considered to be more distanced from this activity, and not such a priority area for contacts between Slavs and Scandinavians as was its northern counterpart.<sup>49</sup> If we want to be objective in this matter, we have bear two things in mind. First, the lack of characteristic Scandinavian jewellery in graves from c. AD 1000 is not only characteristic of Rus', but also of Scandinavia itself, where, under the influence of Christianity, such ornaments as oval brooches as well as other elements of traditional Scandinavian dress, with the exception of beads, disappeared. Second, there are two categories of objects, namely weapons and silver hoards, which are important sources for the study of contacts in particular between Sweden and the area of Kiev in the 11th and 12th centuries.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Korzuchina 1954, 91, pl. XII:1.

<sup>45</sup> Jansson, Potupčik and Androshchuk 2006.

<sup>46</sup> Mel'nikova 2001, 443, fig. 35.

<sup>47</sup> Duczko 2004, fig. 65a.

<sup>48</sup> Jansson 1987 and 1997; Puškina 1997; Duczko 2004; Androshchuk 2008a.

<sup>49</sup> Lebedev 1985; Mocja 1990; Mocja 2007, 158–159.

<sup>50</sup> Androshchuk 2008a.

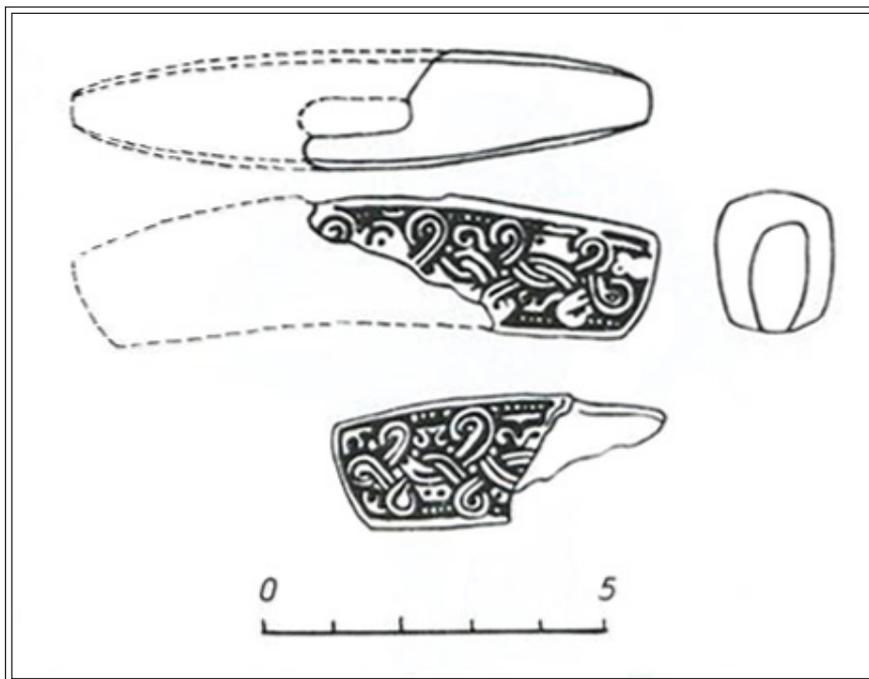


FIGURE 51: Fragmentary lower guard from Kungs-Husby in Sweden (after Kazakevičius 1992).

#### WEAPONS

To begin with, two finds of fragmentary sword hilts will be considered. Both items belong to a small group of swords interpreted to be of local eastern European production.<sup>51</sup> This sword type has a triple-lobed pommel decoratively separated from a slightly upwardly-curving upper guard. The lower guard curves downwards. The grip, which is oval in section, is cast in bronze. Pommel, guards and grip are decorated with imitation of niello (“blackening”, according to one of the publishers), scrolls and interlacing. On the basis of their ornamentation, three main variants of decorative motifs might be singled out. One belongs to a variant which I here call “Kievian” and is represented by a fragmentary lower guard which came to light at Kungs-Husby, in Uppland (Fig. 51).<sup>52</sup> The second find is a pommel found during excavations of Kalmar harbour (Fig. 52), which corresponds to my “Karabčiev-Rjazan” variant.

<sup>51</sup> Kirpičnikov 1966, 35; Kazakevičius 1992b.

<sup>52</sup> Kazakevičius 1992b, fig. 6.



FIGURE 52: Pommel from Kalmar (after Androščuk 2008b; photo Antikvarisk-topografiska arkivet).

Concentrations of these finds in southern Rus', including Kiev, seem to demand further discussion of this group of weapons. The technique of ornamentation indicates that they were precious items circulating in an aristocratic environment. Of particular importance in this connection is the find from Kungs-Husby, where a royal estate (Husby Trögd) was situated in medieval times.<sup>53</sup> The sword gives strong evidence of contacts between the princes of Kiev and Swedish royalty in the 11th century. Another example of possible contact with Scandinavian aristocratic elements from the British Isles or southern Scandinavia during the same period is a sword found in Hvoščeva/ Hvoščeva/ Foščevataja in Ukraine which I have discussed in a separate case study.<sup>54</sup>

Finds of sword scabbard chapes and certain spearheads might be presented here as further material evidence of contacts between southern Rus' and Scandinavia in the 11th century. Two scabbard chapes found in silver hoards

<sup>53</sup> Wahlberg 2003, 176.

<sup>54</sup> Androshchuk 2003a.

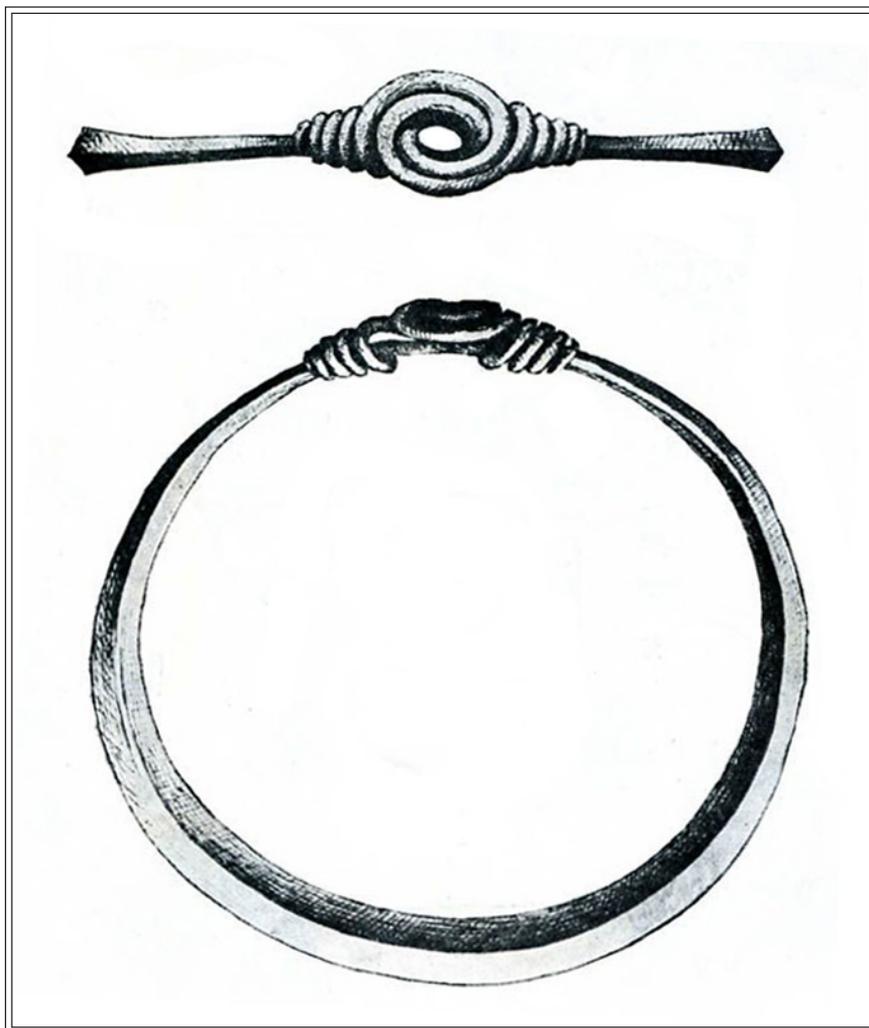


FIGURE 53: Silver armring found in the village of Špilevka, in the Sumy region of Ukraine (after Korzuchina 1954).

on Gotland dated to around AD 1000<sup>55</sup> and two spearheads decorated in the Urnes style from Bondari and Vyšenki, the former Černihiv government<sup>56</sup> are worth mentioning. While these artefacts are not as numerous as in previous

<sup>55</sup> Stenberger 1947, Abb. 186:9; Zocenko 1999, 37, fig. 2; Thunmark-Nylén 2006, 707, Abb. III:62 B:1.

<sup>56</sup> Arne 1943, 10–17, figs 1–2; Kirpičnikov 1966, 13, 84, № 340; 86, № 354, pl. VI:1–2; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012 №s 235 and 238.

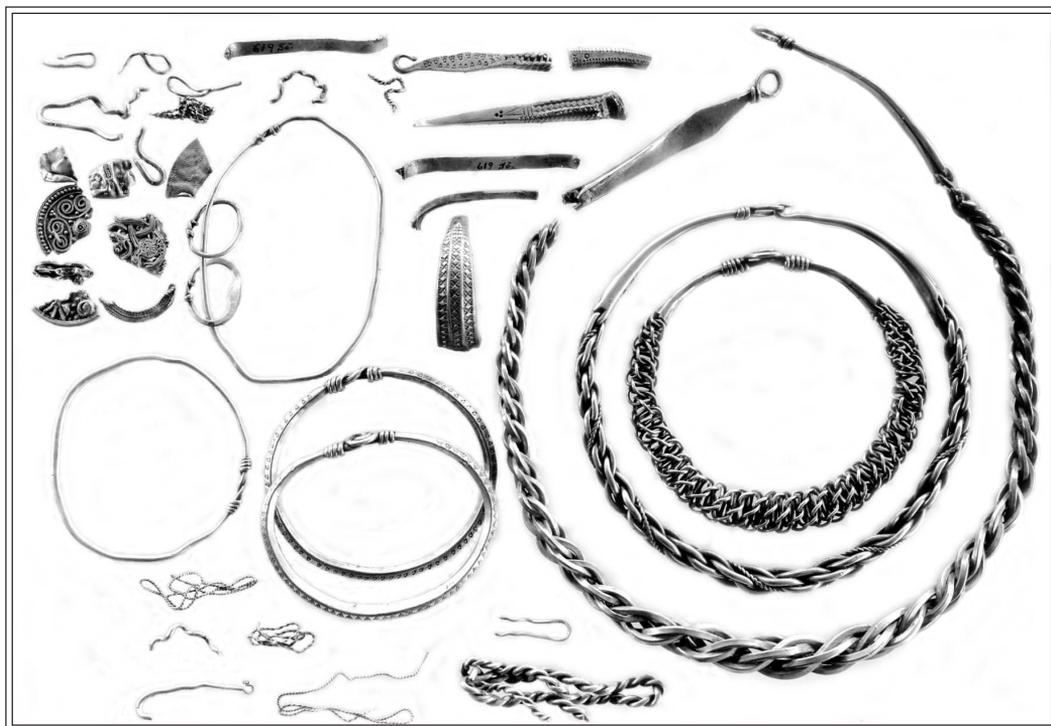


FIGURE 54: Silver hoard from Eskilstuna, Södermanland, Sweden (after Androščuk 2008b; photo Antikvarisk-topografiska arkivet).

periods, they reveal clear traits of exclusivity and the high social status of their owners.

#### SILVER HOARDS

Let us now consider the items of Scandinavian jewellery normally found in hoards of this period. The earliest hoard found in Kiev was discovered in the property site formerly belonging to I. A. Sikors'kyj.<sup>57</sup> Along with a number of Islamic coins (709/10–905/6), the hoard contained six gold bracelets with twisted ends, which have close parallels in jewellery common to southern and eastern Scandinavia.<sup>58</sup> A silver bracelet dated to the end of the 10th century was found in the village of Špilevka in the Sumy region in eastern Ukraine, in

<sup>57</sup> Korzuchina 1954, 83, pl. V; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, N<sup>o</sup>s 58–63.

<sup>58</sup> Types Ar 1 and Ar 3 according to Stenberger 1958, 96, pl. 2:9 and 19:11.



FIGURE 55: Scandinavian jewellery from the hoard found in Chajča, Ovruč region, Ukraine (after Korzuchina 1954).

association with Islamic and Byzantine coins (Fig. 53).<sup>59</sup> Attempts have been made to find parallels to this find in the Baltic area.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, the most convincing comparison seems to be an armring found in association with other jewellery and coins of the 10th–11th centuries in a hoard from Eskilstuna, Södermanland, Sweden (Fig. 54).<sup>61</sup> Another similar gold armring is known from a Norwegian hoard (Vulu, Malvik).<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Korzuchina 1954, 86, pl. IX:2; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, № 245.

<sup>60</sup> Pryjmak 1999, 35.

<sup>61</sup> Statens Historiska Museum, № 619.

<sup>62</sup> Hårdh 1996, 149, fig. 36.

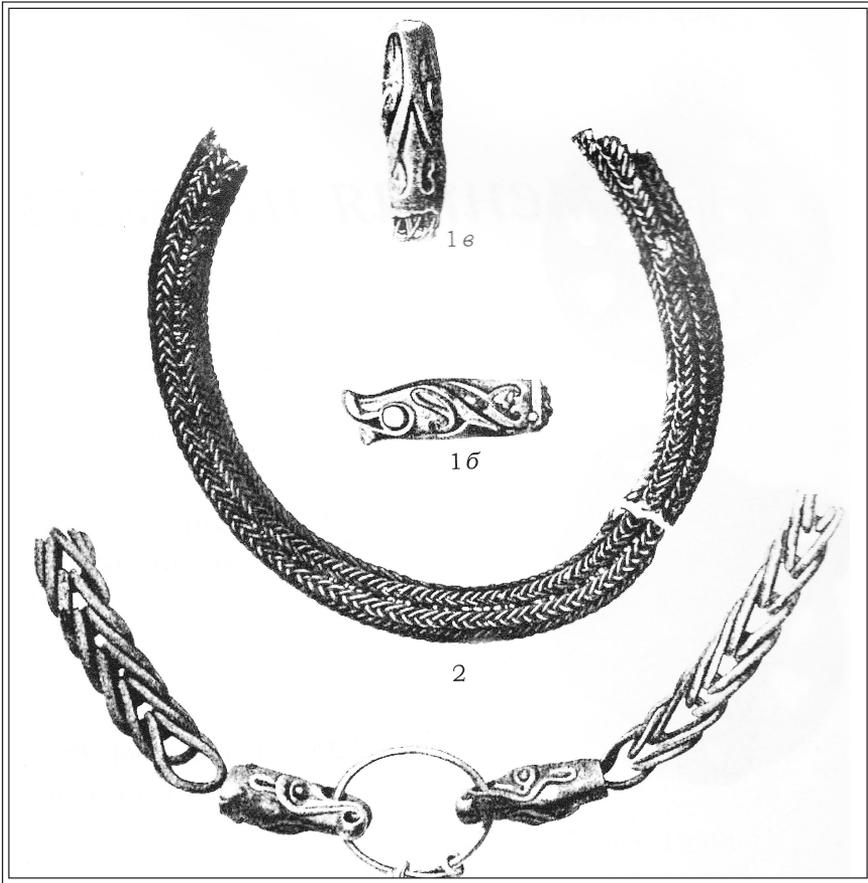


FIGURE 56: Silver chains from the hoard found in 1883 in Černihiv, Ukraine (after Kondakov 1896).



FIGURE 57: Detail of the chain from a hoard found in Allmänninge, Gästrikland, Sweden (after Androščuk 2008b; photo Antikvarisk-topografiska arkivet).



FIGURE 58: A brooch from Devič Gora, Ukraine (photo V. Zocenko).

Several fine pieces of jewellery of Scandinavian origin belonging to the 11th century were found in the territory of the southern Rus'. A hoard in Chajča, in the Ovruč region, produced an armring made of three silver twisted rods (Fig. 55).<sup>63</sup> Similar objects occur in a hoard discovered in 1874 on Björkö, Lake Mälaren, Sweden.<sup>64</sup> Another object from the Chajča hoard is a neck ring made of twisted silver rods with hooked terminals, also typically found in Scandinavian hoards,<sup>65</sup> especially in the western regions.<sup>66</sup> Judging from a drawing published by M. K. Karger, a similar neck ring was also found in Kiev in a male grave together with an amphora, a dish and an arrowhead.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Korzuchina 1954, 91, pl. XII; type Ar 3 according to Stenberger 1958, 96–97, pl. 10:1; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, № 106–107.

<sup>64</sup> Stolpe 1874, pl. I:4.

<sup>65</sup> Type 6 according to Hårdh 1976, 49, pl. 2.

<sup>66</sup> Hårdh 1996, 50–51, fig. 9–10a.

<sup>67</sup> Karger 1958, 167–168, fig. 22:1.

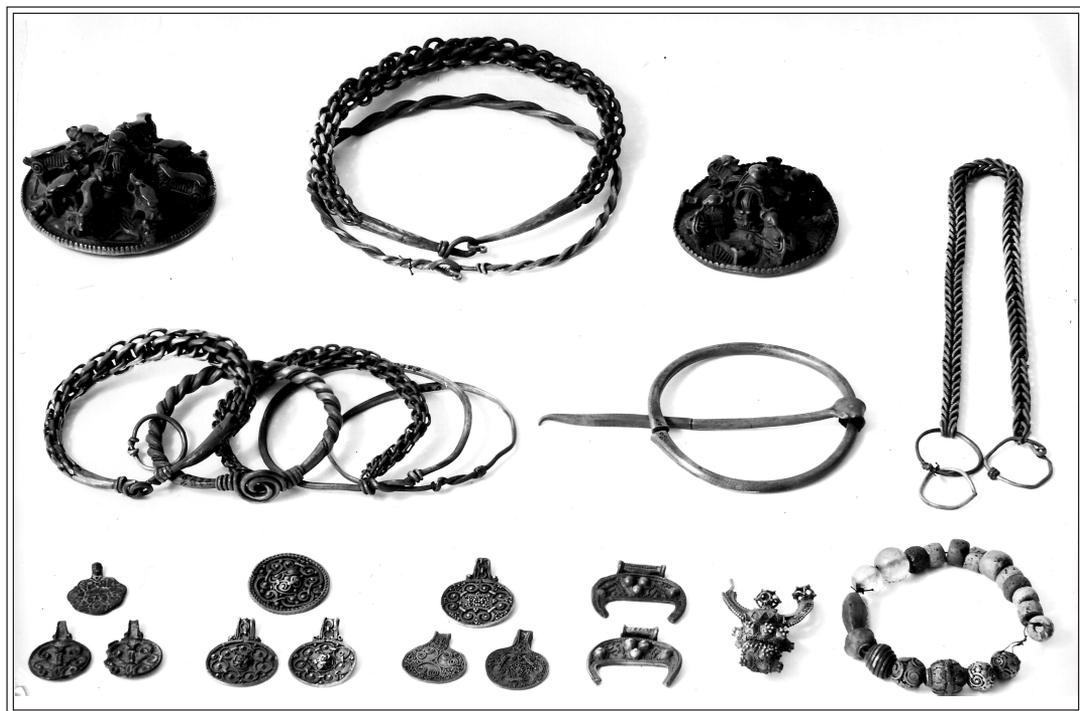


FIGURE 59: The Torsta hoard from Hälsningland, Sweden (after Androščuk 2008b; photo Antikvarisk-topografiska arkivet).

Two fragmentary silver chains with animal-head terminals decorated in the Urnes style were discovered together with a linking ring with twisted ends in the hoard found in 1883 in Černihiv (Fig. 56).<sup>68</sup> Early variants of such chains are dated to the second half of the 11th century, but most finds are recorded in Scandinavian hoards from the 12th century (Fig. 57).<sup>69</sup> It is worth mentioning that Scandinavian brooches decorated in the Urnes style are not common even in Scandinavia. And yet, one was found in Ukraine, most probably originating in Gotland,<sup>70</sup> coming to light in early excavations of the hillfort of Devič Gora in Sachnivka in Ukraine (Fig. 58).<sup>71</sup> Scandinavian objects are also recorded in other Ukrainian hoards dated to the 12th century. In this regard two hoards which came to light in the land of St Michael's monastery in Kiev should be mentioned.

<sup>68</sup> Kondakov 1896, 121, pl. XIII; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, №s 222–223.

<sup>69</sup> Duczko 1986, 14–15, fig. 7.

<sup>70</sup> Carlsson 1983, 31, kat. № 7.1; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, № 73.

<sup>71</sup> Thrane 1994, 65, 78, № 254.

One hoard found in 1841 and dated to the 12th century contained a bracelet made of several twisted gold rods with animal-head terminals.<sup>72</sup> G. F. Korzuchina has rightly suggested that such jewellery is characteristic of Gotland.<sup>73</sup> Another close parallel is a silver arming with gilded terminals found in a large hoard in the Kremlin in Moscow.<sup>74</sup> Contacts between Rus' and Gotland in this period can be confirmed by a hoard found in the parish of Burge on Gotland. Besides three bracelets of this type, there were also several Grivna-type ingots, some of which bear Slavonic inscriptions.<sup>75</sup> The second hoard from St Michael's monastery in Kiev was discovered in 1903 and contained a necklace with seven pendants of south Scandinavian origin.<sup>76</sup>

When discussing hoards it is important to remember that contacts between southern Rus' and Scandinavia did not flow in one direction only, that is, from the north to the east. Take for example the hoard dated to the 10th–11th century from Torsta in Hälsningland (Fig. 59).<sup>77</sup> This hoard included not only typical Scandinavian jewellery but also items of obvious Slavonic origin.<sup>78</sup> There are other items of southern Rus' origin in Sweden. Most numerous are the finds of spindle-whorls made of Ovruč schist which have come to light in Sigtuna, Söderköping and Gotland<sup>79</sup> as well as the glazed pottery eggs discovered in Sigtuna and Gotland.<sup>80</sup>

As already discussed above, some written sources report the presence of Northmen in southern Rus' in the 11th century (see above, Chapter 1). It is well known that there were Varangian mercenaries among the warriors of the Kiev Princes.<sup>81</sup> A certain Bern (Бѣрнѣ) is mentioned among Prince Svjatoslav's retinue during the ceremony for the transference of the relics of the holy princes Boris and Gleb to a new church in Vyšgorod in 1072.<sup>82</sup> A Jakun (Ахунѣ; Old Norse *Hákun*), leader of a Varangian guard, was one of Prince Jaroslav's companions in the battle of *Lystven* against his brother Prince Mstislav in 1024.<sup>83</sup>

Two Scandinavian family biographies can be traced on the basis of written sources. From the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, we learn that on the domain of a

<sup>72</sup> Korzuchina 1954, 66, № 110, pl. XLVII:3; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, № 54.

<sup>73</sup> Korzuchina 1954, 66; Stenberger 1947, pl. 242, 247 and 250.

<sup>74</sup> Jansson 1996, 116–117.

<sup>75</sup> Berghaus et al. 1969.

<sup>76</sup> Korzuchina 1954, 66, № 103, Androščuk and Zocenko 2012 №s 47–53.

<sup>77</sup> Hildebrand 1882b.

<sup>78</sup> Duczko 1983, 331.

<sup>79</sup> Roslund 1989a, 58; Thunmark and Nylén 2006, 189.

<sup>80</sup> Roslund 1989b, 141, fig. 4; Trotzig 1983, 382, fig. 15.

<sup>81</sup> PSRL, I, 75–79.

<sup>82</sup> Bugoslavs'kyj, 1928, 161.

<sup>83</sup> PSRL, II, 135–136.

princely estate in Kiev, two boyar properties existed in the latter part of the 11th century. They were the homes of the boyars Mikyfor Kyanin and Mikula Čudin, who were involved in compiling the first code of law for the Rus' territory entitled *Pravda Yaroslavičej*, dated to 1072. Mikula Čudin was later to receive the town of Vyšgorod as a loan from Prince Izjaslav. Despite his Slavic name, there is reason to believe that Čudin was a descendant of eminent members of the Scandinavian royal bodyguards of 10th-century Kiev. This is suggested by the name of his brother Tuki (*Tóki*), which was common in the southern parts of Scandinavia. The collection of tales concerning the history and members (*Pateric*) of the Cave Monastery in Kiev report that Varangian Šymon (*Sigmundur*) was one of the sons of the Varangian prince, Afrikan (*Alfrékr*). Afrikan was the brother of the above-mentioned Jakun (*Hákun*). He lived the rest of his life in Rus' where he served first with Prince Jaroslav and then with Jarolsav's son. We also know the name of Šymon's son, Georgy, who lived in Suzdal', as did his descendants after him, and made a generous donation to the Cave Monastery in Kiev.<sup>84</sup>

Some of the inscriptions on the walls of the Sofia Cathedral in Kiev were, in fact, made by individuals of Scandinavian origin. One such inscription was left by a young warrior (*otročkom*) Dmitr on 14 April 1093.<sup>85</sup> It is highly probable that we are dealing with Dmitr Ivorovič, a commander in Prince Vladimir Monomach's army, who ravaged Polovcy in the area of the River Don in 1109.<sup>86</sup> The name of Dmitr's father is of Scandinavian origin, and a man of this name is mentioned among envoys of Rus' in the Greek-Russian treaty of 944.<sup>87</sup> Another inscription was made by a certain Hakon (Акунь) who belonged to the retinue of Prince Svjatopolk Izjaslavič, and to judge by his name and the misspellings in his Cyrillic inscription, was originally from Scandinavia.<sup>88</sup>



In conclusion, the 11th and 12th centuries should be considered the main period of active communication between Scandinavia and southern Rus'. These contacts embraced not only princely retinues, but also the aristocrats who had settled in Kiev, Černihiv and some rural areas. We can also see an obvious gender shift in the composition of the material evidence for these contacts. Most of the items we have dealt with have been weapons and other typically male items which correspond with the information received from the written sources.

<sup>84</sup> Molčanov 1990.

<sup>85</sup> Vysockij 1966, 18, № 4.

<sup>86</sup> PSRL, II, 260.

<sup>87</sup> Thomsen 1882, 121.

<sup>88</sup> Vysockij 1966, 81, № 29.

es concerning the important role of Scandinavian mercenaries in both Rus' and Byzantium. However, we must also remember the considerable change brought about by Christianity in both fashion of dress and burial rites, which contributed to hiding material sources for these contacts. This change had its origins in an earlier period, which we will examine in the following chapter

## *Symbols of Faith or Symbols of Status? Christian Objects in Viking Rus' Contexts*

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the social and functional contexts in which Christian objects or symbols circulated among the Rus'. The study of the Christianisation of the Rus' on the basis of archaeological evidence is certainly not a new topic in archaeology, so I list only a selection of recently published works here.<sup>1</sup> The main body of written sources is well known<sup>2</sup> and provides a textual background for archaeologists when formulating their interpretations.

A. E. Musin has devoted particular attention to this subject. According to him, there were four stages in the Christianisation of the Rus'. The first stage, which he dates to the 9th century, was when "a new proto-feudal, military and trade strata" (the Rus') was shaped. He sees an archaeological reflection of this process in the appearance of chamber graves and isolated Christian objects. The second stage, from the end of the 9th to the first half of the 10th century, was associated with a princely milieu and mercenaries. This stage is reconstructed on the grounds of the appearance of "new types" of Christian objects and graves with coffins as well as chamber graves. The third stage, from 950 to 980, was characterized by the widening of both the social setting and the territory being converted, which Musin sees reflected in a wider distribution of Christian objects and inhumation graves. Finally, the fourth stage, which he places between the last quarter of the 10th century and the second half of the 11th, is reconstructed on the basis of the emergence of a new type of cross pendant, the crucifix pendant of bronze or silver which bears the figure of the crucified Christ, and on the total dominance of the rite of inhumation in graves.<sup>3</sup> Since all four stages were reconstructed on the grounds of the same criteria (Christian symbols and inhumation graves), it is important to discover how they differ chronologically. Let us therefore examine these findings.

The earliest inhumation grave in Old Rus' is grave № 11 in the Plakun cemetery in Staraja Ladoga (Fig. 60). A man, c. 60–70 years old, was buried in a wooden cist orientated west–east (northwest-southeast). Close to his feet lay

<sup>1</sup> Mocja 1987, 48–80; Makarov 1991 and 1998; Chorošev 1988; Musin 1998 and 1999; Petručhin and Puškina 1998; Korzuchina and Peskova 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Golubinskij 1901.

<sup>3</sup> Musin 1999, 145–146.



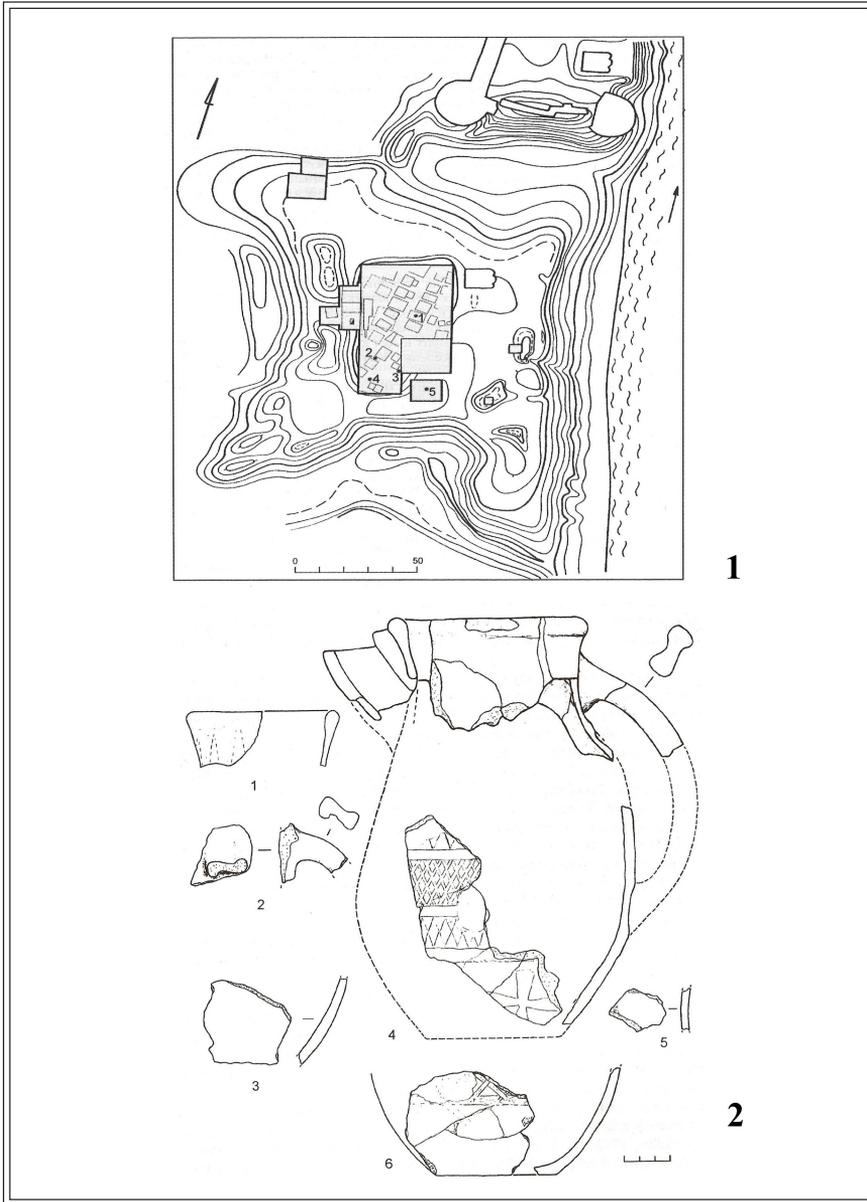


FIGURE 61 : Tating-ware jugs from Ladoga (1. distribution of sherds in the Ladoga hillfort; 2. a jug from a female grave in the Plakun cemetery) (both after Plochov 2007)

ga (Fig. 61).<sup>8</sup> It has been suggested that the jugs were used either for mixing wine and water, washing hands during Mass or some other liturgical function.<sup>9</sup> Critics of such an interpretation emphasize the fact that the jugs come mainly from female graves and rarely occur in the vicinity of churches or monasteries. The grave also contained fragments of two vessels of locally made hand-made pottery, about a hundred boat rivets, nails and mounts, a fragmentary gaming piece, a bronze chain with a ring with twisted ends, 13 beads of glass and four of silver, melted pieces of silver and bronze, a whetstone and a bear tooth.<sup>10</sup> This clear heathen context for the Christian objects did not worry Musin, who justified it with the supposition that the burial rite reflects the beliefs of those performing the burial rather than the deceased's own views.<sup>11</sup> However, it seems that in these two graves in the Plakun cemetery we still lack positive evidence that the buried individuals were in fact Christian. For a more objective interpretation we need to establish the social setting that facilitated such burials.

The Plakun cemetery is only one of several situated in the vicinity of Staraja Ladoga (see Fig. 4). The cemetery lies near Černavino village on the right bank of the River Volchov opposite the medieval fortress and hillfort. The total number of recorded mounds erected here in rows along the river comes to 18. The mounds measure from 4 to 20 m in diameter and 0.30 to 1 m in height. Two mounds did not contain any graves, one was the chamber-grave mentioned above, four were cremations in boats and three were normal cremation graves. The recorded finds include hand-made pottery, beads, iron mounts of wooden boxes, buckles, arrowheads, knives, gaming pieces of stone and bone, iron crampons for horses' hooves and also melted pieces of bronze and silver. In one grave, a fragmentary sword was found.<sup>12</sup>

Scandinavian scholars have noted that boat graves in Sweden are associated with the local elite, whose residences lay in border areas.<sup>13</sup> The power of these people probably came from their control over raw material: iron, furs and elk antler.<sup>14</sup> It seems to me that Ladoga corresponds well with this interpretation. A settlement, or rather a group of farmsteads, were established here as a colony in a catchment area. Considering the finds from the hillfort and the surrounding cemeteries, the local society at the end of the 9th and into the 10th century

<sup>8</sup> Plochov 2007, 25.

<sup>9</sup> See discussion in Staecker 1997a, 431–433, and also Gräslund 2001, 75; Plochov 2007, 36–38.

<sup>10</sup> Nazarenko 1985, 168, figs 5:1, 5 and 9; 6:5, 8 and 14–16; 7:6.

<sup>11</sup> Musin 1998, 277.

<sup>12</sup> Nazarenko 1985, 163–165.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. the situation in Norway, where boat graves are common occurrence; Stalsberg 1998, 370.

<sup>14</sup> Ambrosiani 1983, 22.

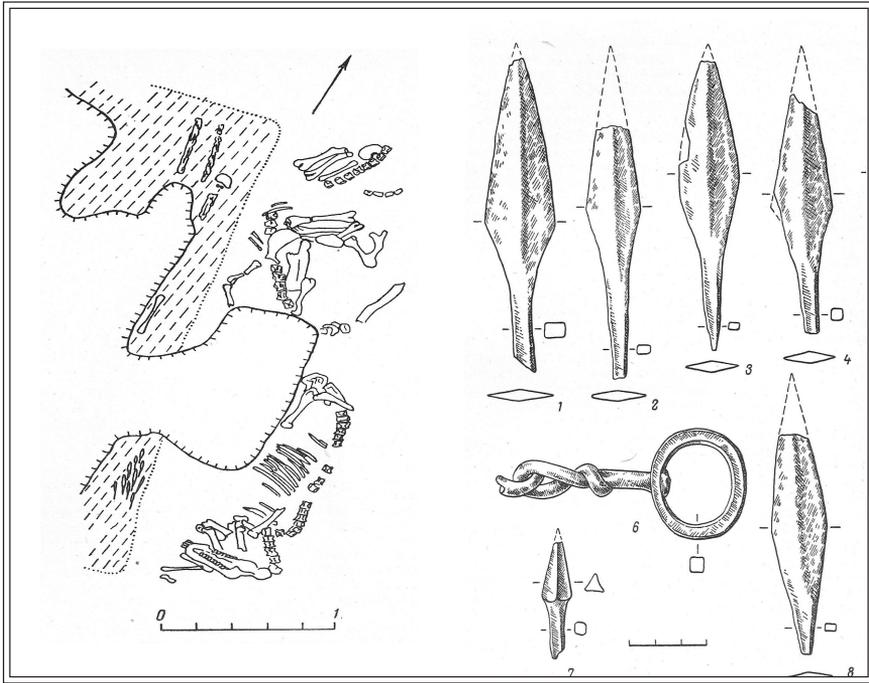


FIGURE 62: A chamber grave with two horses placed under the top of a large barrow in the vicinity of Plakun cemetery in Staraja Ladoga (after Nosov 1985).

was still very mixed and contained various social elements. Those buried in the Plakun cemetery were involved in trade and military activities and perhaps belonged to the upper levels of the local society. It is important to emphasize that even in the 10th century some people of high social status were buried in Plakun. A chamber grave placed on the top of a large mound from this period contains a warrior and two horses (Fig. 62).<sup>15</sup> K. A. Michailov has tried to justify the location of the cemetery at Plakun by a supposed lack of available ground within the settlement resulting in an enlargement of the area of the bordering cemeteries.<sup>16</sup> However, an examination of the topography of the settlement reveals that the river side was dangerously exposed and unprotected. That is why the choice of site for the Plakun cemetery was not made by chance, but was made at this strategically important section of the river; indeed, some of those buried here were very possibly employed in its defence. The objects found could have belonged to the inhabitants of one or several farms established there

<sup>15</sup> Nosov 1985.

<sup>16</sup> Michailov 2002, 66.

by those defenders. Under these circumstances, the presence of a high-status chamber grave and a rare Tating jug in the Plakun cemetery should be seen as social and religious markers, both indicating a certain position in local society.

Let us now examine the contexts of the finds of the cross-shaped pendants used to map the spread of Christianity in the territory of the Rus'. These finds come from three main sources: settlements, graves and hoards. The excavations of the early towns of Rus' produced very few finds. The earliest find was a bronze reliquary cross (encolpion) discovered in Ladoga in the cultural layer dated to the beginning of the 10th century. The same plot produced nutshells, cauri shells, wax, fragmentary oriental pottery and a box-wood comb.<sup>17</sup> These finds indicate that the people who lived on the site enjoyed long-distance contacts with Byzantium. It is, however, impossible to establish whether they considered the encolpion a marker of Christian faith or just an isolated curio.

A silver encolpion from Uglič is dated to the second half of the 10th century (Fig. 63.1). It was found in a pit in association with both oriental coins and their imitations, glass beads, arrowheads (one of them lancet-shaped), a bronze mount decorated in Borre style, other mounts of silver, spindle-whorls of Ovruč schist and pottery.<sup>18</sup> Of similar date to the Uglič silver find is a bronze encolpion excavated from the "wet meadow" area of the Gnězdovo settlement (Fig. 63.2) along with Byzantine coins of Justin I (518–912), Basil I (817–886), Leo VI (886–912) and Romanus I (919–944), one intact amphora and fragments of amphorae and glass vessels.<sup>19</sup> This is the second encolpion find in Gnězdovo,<sup>20</sup> which, along with finds of candles and wax in other Gnězdovo graves, is considered by some scholars to be grounds for concluding that Christianity had spread to the Gnězdovo population at that time.<sup>21</sup>

Cross-shaped pendants have been found in single graves of the 10th–11th centuries in Gnězdovo, Kiev, Šestovycja, Timerëvo, Podgorcy and some rural cemeteries of northern Russia.<sup>22</sup> The archaeological contexts of these finds have been discussed by Musin, who noted that in many cases they were recorded in graves containing weapons, weights and/or scales along with Scandinavian, oriental and European coins.<sup>23</sup> He concluded that Christianity spread

<sup>17</sup> Peskova 2004, 160, fig. 7:2–3; Musin 2002, 98.

<sup>18</sup> Tomsinskij 2002, fig. 1; Korzuchina and Peskova 2003, 56, № 20.

<sup>19</sup> Muraševa, Dovganjuk and Fetisov 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Korzuchina and Peskova 2003, 54, № 7.

<sup>21</sup> Muraševa, Dovganjuk and Fetisov 2009, 545.

<sup>22</sup> Petruchin and Puškina 1998, 249–250, fig. 1; Musin 1998, 279, fig. 3; Jansson 2005, 73, figs 15–16.

<sup>23</sup> Musin 1999, 135–140.

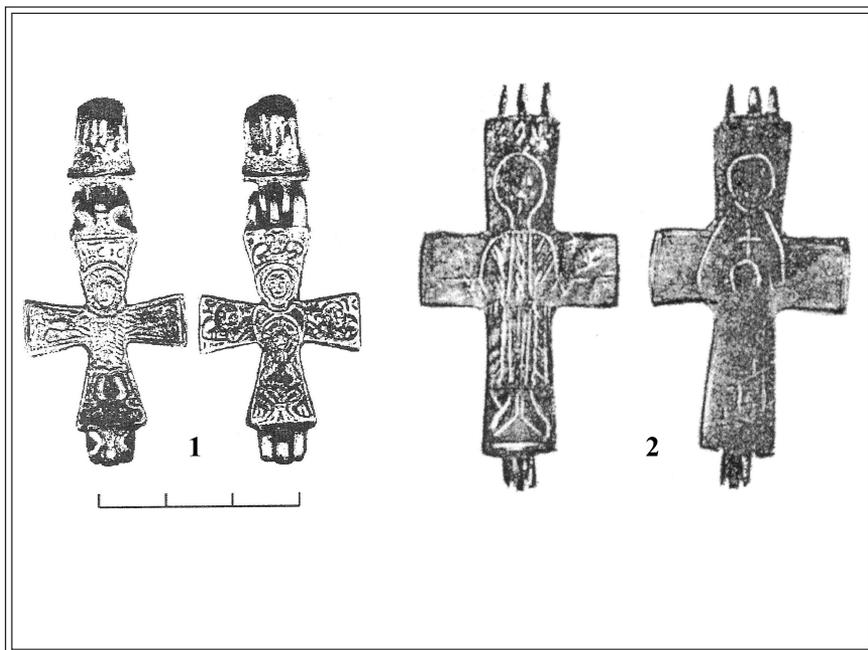


FIGURE 63: Early types of cross-shaped pendants in Old Rus' (1. Uglič; 2. Gnëzdovo after Korzuchina and Peskova, 2003).

mostly within the circle of Rus', society that was dealing with war, trade and administration.<sup>24</sup>

Let us take a look at the gender distribution of these finds (Table 7).

Site (gr=grave)	Female grave	Male grave	Double grave
Kiev, gr.14	+		
Kiev, gr.110 (child)	+		
Kiev, gr.117= gr.125			+
Kiev, gr.124	+		
Kiev, gr.1988– 1989 (child)	?		

<sup>24</sup> Musin 1999, 141.

Kiev, gr.13,1997	+		
Kiev, gr.49, 1999	+		
Šestovycja, gr.78	+		
Podgorcy			+
Gnězdovo, Zaol. gr.5	+		
Gnězdovo, Zaol. gr.27	+		
Gnězdovo, Zaol. gr.38	?		
Gnězdovo, Centr. gr.198	+		
Gnězdovo, Centr. gr.301	+		
Gnězdovo, Cen- tr. gr. 97, 1899			+
Gnězdovo, Dn. gr. 4			+
Timerëvo, gr. 417		?	
Timerëvo, gr. 459	+		
Pskov, gr. 1, 2003	+		
Pskov, gr. 6, 2008	+		
Udrāj, gr.2			+
Ves', gr.4	+		

TABLE 7. Gender distribution of cross-shaped pendants in burials.

As we see in Table 7, cross-shaped pendants were found in 22 graves dated to the 10th and early 11th centuries. Judging from the associated finds, twelve graves could be interpreted as female, four more as probably female, five were double graves and only one was a possible male grave.<sup>25</sup> It may thus be con-

<sup>25</sup> Karger 1958, 142, 175, 190–191, 208–212; Ivakin 2007, 180, 186–189; Blifel'd 1977, 160–163; Liwoch 2005; Kameneckaja 1991, 164, 167, 168; Avdusin and Puškina 1989;

cluded that these pendants are common in female graves. A similar situation has been observed in Scandinavia<sup>26</sup> involving representatives of the equivalent social strata.<sup>27</sup> How may this be explained? According to Musin, the first Christians were women because they were “more sensitive to such a culture as Christianity”.<sup>28</sup> Chronological analysis of cross-shaped pendants shows that the earliest of them were found in graves dated to the mid 10th century,<sup>29</sup> which means they coincided with the time of Princess Olga’s baptism in Constantinople. The retinue which attended Olga at the banquet in the Pentakouboukleion of the Great Palace in Constantinople on 18 October (AD 957?) is recorded to have included 16 female relatives as well as Olga’s 18 handmaidens.<sup>30</sup> Comparison of the payments given to the Rus’, during the banquets on 18 September and 18 October shows the difference in status of Olga’s retinue (Table 8).<sup>31</sup>

Platonova 1998; Jakovleva 2004; Eršova 2009.

<sup>26</sup> Staecker 1997a, 437.

<sup>27</sup> Musin 1998, 279; Jansson 2005, 71–73.

<sup>28</sup> Musin 2002, 124.

<sup>29</sup> Jansson 2005, 74, n. 83.

<sup>30</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenetos, *De Ceremoniis*, 598, lines 9–10; Engl. trans. in Moffatt and Tall 2012, 598. See also Featherstone 2007.

<sup>31</sup> Ajnalov 1908.

Banquet on 18th September	Number	Sum	Banquet on 18th October	Number	Sum
Princess	1		Princess	1	200 miliariaresia
Olga's nephew	1	30 miliariaresia	Olga's nephew	1	20 miliariaresia
Male relatives	8	20 miliariaresia each = 160	Female relatives	16	12 miliariaresia each = 192
Apokrisiariot	20	12 miliariaresia each = 240	Olga's handmaidens	18	6 miliariaresia each = 108
Merchants	43	12 miliariaresia each = 516	Apokrisiariot	22	12 miliariaresia each = 264
Gregorios the priest	1	8 miliariaresia	Merchants	44	6 miliariaresia each = 264
Olga's interpreter	1	15 miliariaresia	Gregorios the priest	1	8 miliariaresia
Interpreters	2	12 miliariaresia each = 24	Interpreters	2	12 miliariaresia each = 24
Svjatoslav's retainers	?	5 miliariaresia each	<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>1080 miliariaresia</b>
Retainers of the apokrisiariot	6	3 miliariaresia each = 18			
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>1011 miliariaresia</b>			

TABLE 8. Comparison between the composition of Olga's retinues attending the banquets on 18 September in the Chryssotriklinos and 18 October in the Pentakouboukleion.

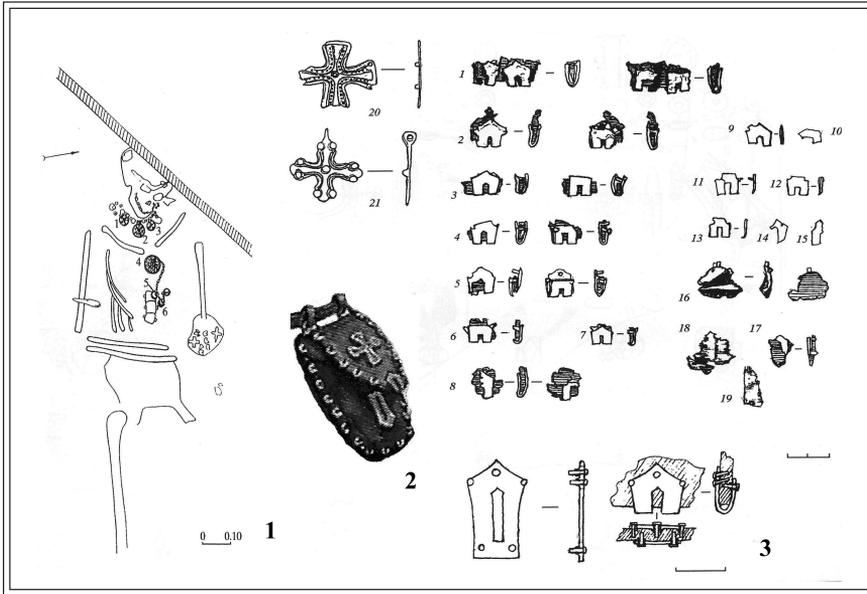


FIGURE 64: Remains of a purse made of leather and silk with a cross-shaped decorative mount discovered in grave 49 in Kiev (elaborated after Ivakin 2007).

The difference in the sums paid to Olga's retinue indicates that her relatives received the most payment on both occasions. At the banquet in the Pentakouboukleion, Olga's female relatives received less than her male relatives had the previous month, while the ambassadors (*apokrisiarioi*) and interpreters received the same amount both times. It is important to note that the status of Olga's handmaidens was equal to that of the merchants. While the differences could reflect the attitudes of the Byzantine administration towards the various groupings of the Rus', and do not necessarily coincide with the Old Russian point of view, it appears that all the women in Olga's retinue held high social positions.<sup>32</sup>

The prevailing theory is that Olga was baptised during her visit to Constantinople. If we remember the female burials with cross-shaped pendants listed above and also the presence of female relatives among Olga's retinue, we can assume that perhaps some of them were baptised along with Olga.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Shepard 2009b, 194–195.

<sup>33</sup> Petruchin 1998, 133, expresses it more specifically: "It is possible that female graves with cross-shaped pendants in Kiev belonged to Olga's courtier ladies, who had as Olga Scandinavian origin". Cf. Shepard 2009b, 197: "There is also an intriguing parallel between the high proportion of female Rus', graves containing crosses and the

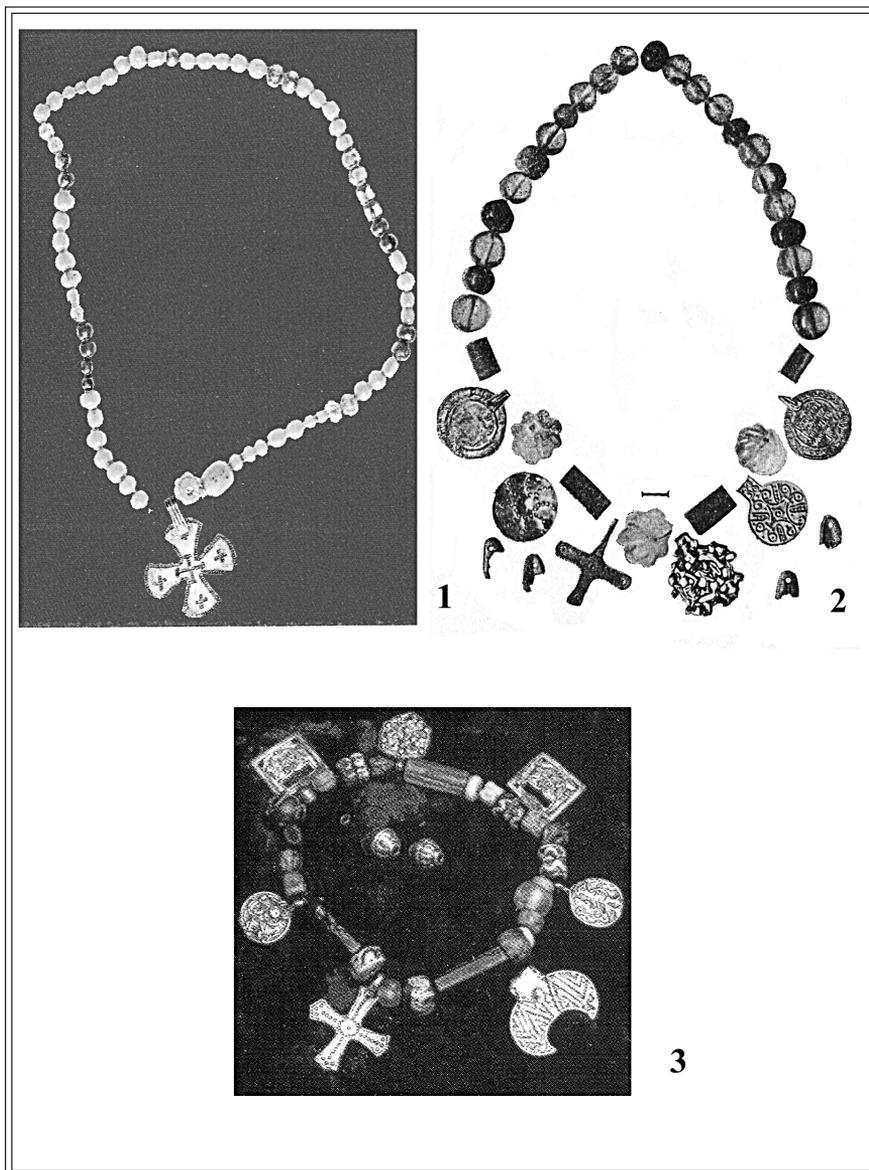


FIGURE 65: Finds of cross-shaped pendants in association with beads (1 and 3. Gnëzdovo after Egorov 1996; 2. Šestovycja after Blifel'd 1977).

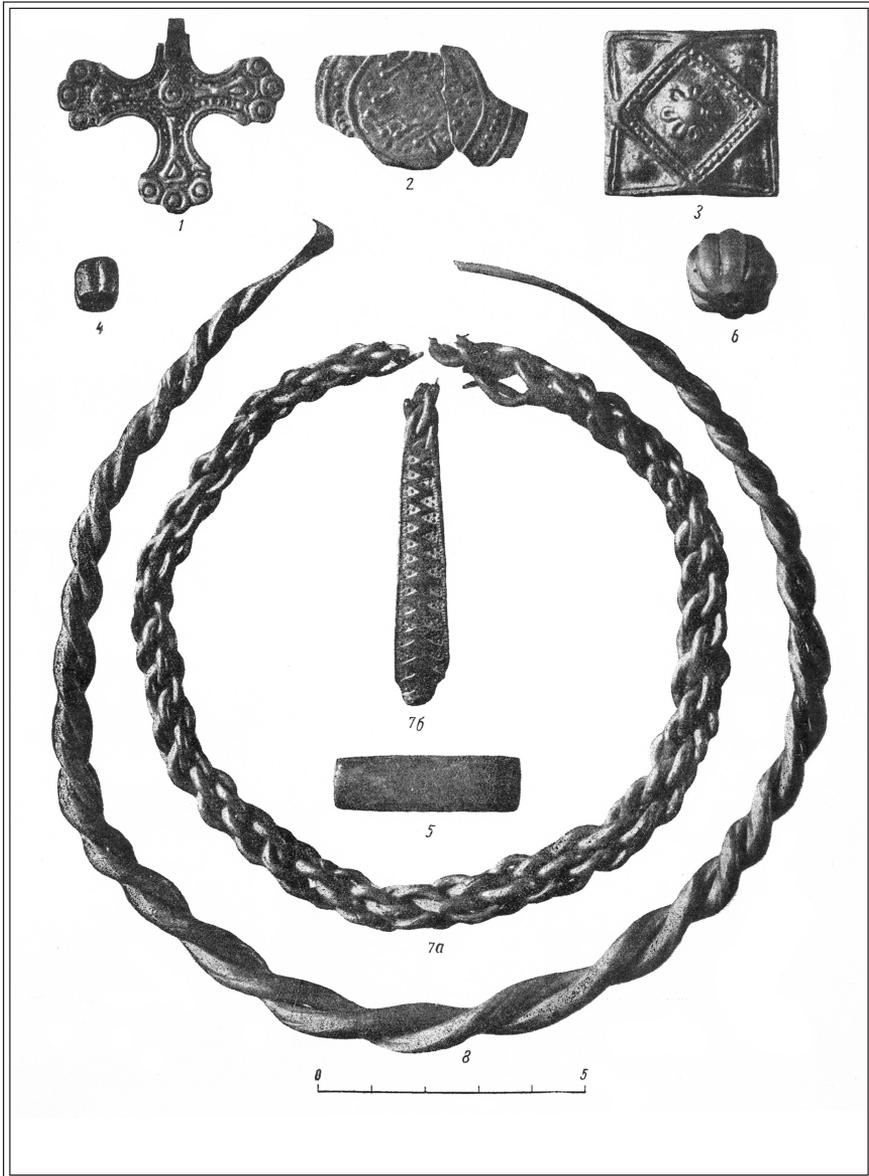


FIGURE 66: A cross-shaped pendant in association with ornaments found in a hoard in Kryžovo, former Pskov region, Russia (after Korzuchina 1954, № 52).

It would seem, then, that there are grounds for the assertion that Christian conversion became synonymous with the holding of high positions in Rus' society during the course of the 10th and 11th centuries.<sup>34</sup> We have already noted that cross-shaped pendants are mainly found in female graves and in hoards. That such pendants were recorded in association with other valuable objects normally kept in purses (for instance coins, finger-rings etc.) is of particular interest.<sup>35</sup> In one of the graves excavated in Kiev, a cross-shaped pendant was found in a purse made of leather and silk bearing a cross-shaped decorative mount (Fig. 64).<sup>36</sup> Finds of pendants in association with beads also confirm their interpretation as symbols of wealth (Fig. 65). According to Ahmad Ibn-Fadlan, a 10th-century Arab traveller, the wealth of the Rus' elite was displayed by both the qualitative and quantitative composition of the necklaces of their women.<sup>37</sup> This interpretation of the high status of Christian symbols is further supported by their association with jewellery in Scandinavian and Rus' hoards (Fig. 66).<sup>38</sup> From the Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies* we learn that small crosses of silver were used in bestowing largess to participants of the Vigil of the Feast of St Elias, the Vigil of Palm Sunday and the Festival of Palm Sunday.<sup>39</sup> They were accordingly considered suitable for distribution as gifts, normally in the form of coins. It is important to emphasize that on these occasions crosses were graded according to the personal rank and dignity of the recipients. For instance, *magistri* and *praepositi*, *anthypati* (proconsuls) and *patricii* received a large silver cross, while the titular heads of the offices, the eunuch *protospatharii* and all others received a small silver cross. This was probably just one of many very specific methods of distribution of Christian symbols. It is highly probable that some of these crosses had been acquired by the Rhos while serving Byzantine emperors.

In relation to the social status of the individuals buried in graves with cross-shaped pendants, one must examine one type of pendant which became a com-

ceremonial attention that seems to have been paid to the high-status women who accompanied Olga at her own court receptions".

<sup>34</sup> Šachmatov 2001, 224, n. 9, quotes an interesting ancient Russian saying: "Boast not of your lineage, most noble one, say not: my father is a boyar, and the martyrs of Christ are my brothers".

<sup>35</sup> Ivakin 2007, 189 and possibly Karger 1958, 210, grave № 125.

<sup>36</sup> Ivakin 2007, 189, pl. 6.

<sup>37</sup> Ahmad Ibn-Fadlan *Kniga Achmeda Ibn Fadlana*, ed. Kovalevskij, 141.

<sup>38</sup> Staecker 1999, №s 42, 57, 59, 75, 80 and 113; Korzuchina 1954, 99, № 52; Puškina 1996, 181, fig. IV:1.

<sup>39</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenetos, *De Ceremonii*, 114–115 and 172–174; Engl. trans. in Mofatt and Tall 2012, 114–115 and 172–174. See Ross and Downey 1956–57, 22–33, and discussion in Hendy 1985, 196.

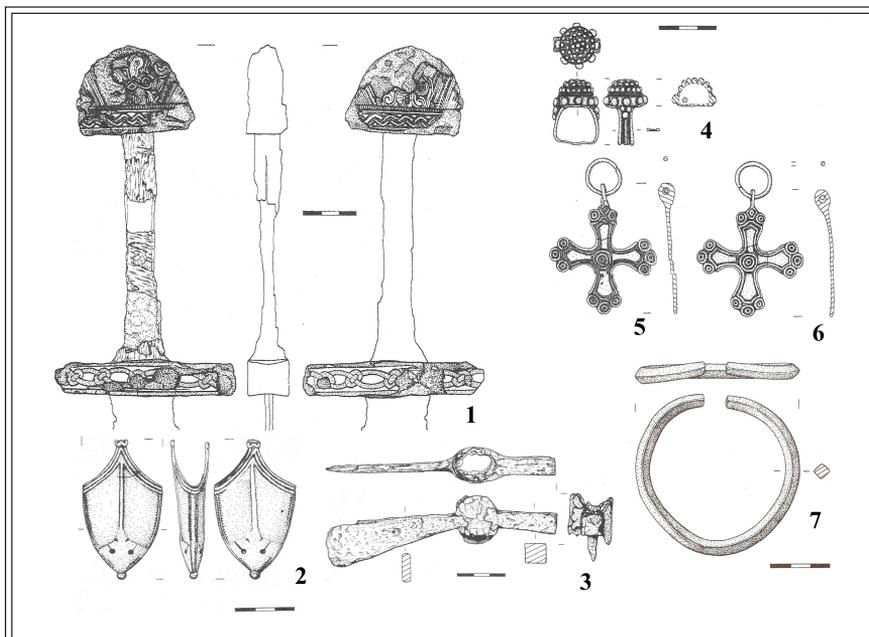


FIGURE 67: Cross-shaped pendants discovered in a double grave in Podgorcy (elaborated after Liwoch 2005)

mon cultural feature in both Scandinavia and Rus' in the 11th and 12th centuries.<sup>40</sup> Let us now take a look at the social context of the pendants dated to the end of the 10th and the early 11th century. One is the pendant found in a female grave on the grounds of St Michael's monastery in Kiev.<sup>41</sup> Another pendant of the same date came with a gilt earring from a similar grave at the same site.<sup>42</sup> A cross-shaped pendant was discovered together with a bronze button in a child's grave in the territory of the former St Theodore's monastery in Kiev.<sup>43</sup> Two more identical pendants, along with a sword, an axe, a silver finger-ring and a silver arm-ring, were excavated from a double grave in Podgorcy (Fig. 67).<sup>44</sup> Finally, we need to note the important find of a bronze mould for producing such pendants which was excavated from the site of a farmstead of the 11th century in the vicinity of the Golden Gate in Kiev (Fig. 68). The high social status of the owners of the farmstead is confirmed by traces of fortification in

<sup>40</sup> Type 1.4.3 according to Staecker 1999, 110–115; see also Jansson 2005, 69–70.

<sup>41</sup> Ivakin 2007, 189, pl. 6.

<sup>42</sup> Ivakin 2007, 180, fig. 2:20.

<sup>43</sup> Borovs'kyj and Kaljuk 1993, 9, fig. 5.

<sup>44</sup> Liwoch 2005, 7–11, fig. 4–11.

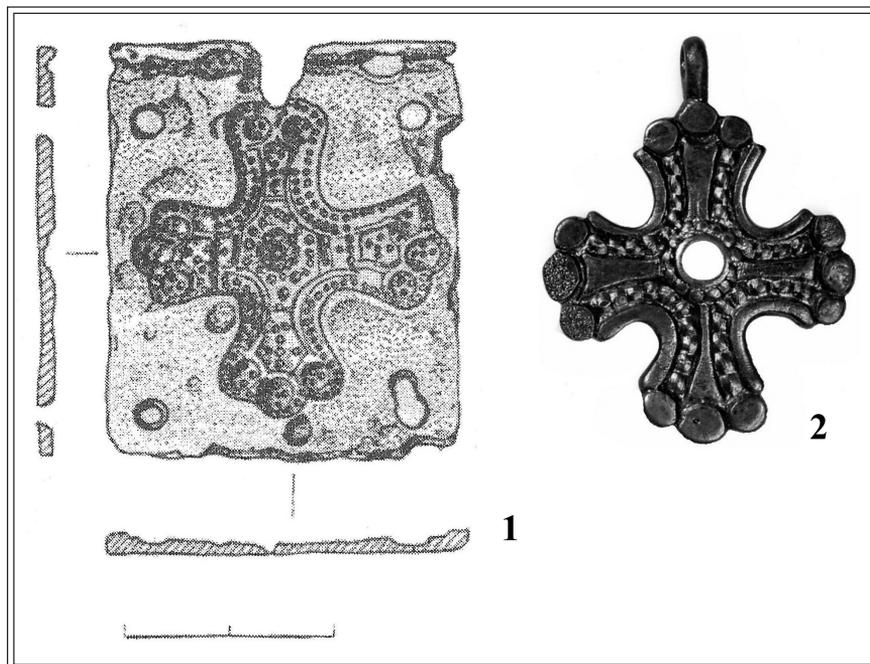


FIGURE 68: Bronze mould for producing cross-shaped pendants found in Kiev (after Movčan, Kozlovs'kij and Ievlev 2005) and a pendant from a hoard found in Gnëzdovo (after Puškina 1994).

the form of a ditch and a rampart and also finds of amphorae, glass vessels and a princely lead seal.<sup>45</sup> Though decoration on the pendants made in this mould are comparable to a pendant found in one of the Gnëzdovo hoards dated to the second part of the 10th century,<sup>46</sup> items associated with the mould do not allow a date before the 11th century.<sup>47</sup>

Thus, early finds of cross-shaped pendants are affiliated mainly with graves of high status women. This context allows us to conclude that these pendants were social rather than religious markers. Such an interpretation of Christian symbols was still valid in Kiev in the 12th to 13th centuries, where moulds for producing *encolpia* and other bronze Christian objects were discovered in a jewellery workshop situated in the vicinity of the princely palaces. The objects

<sup>45</sup> Movčan, Kozlovs'kij and Ievlev 2005, 106, fig. 2:2.

<sup>46</sup> Puškina 1996, 179, fig. IV:1.

<sup>47</sup> Movčan, Kozlovs'kij and Ievlev 2005, 106.

manufactured here included earrings, temple pendants, armrings and enamelled ornaments.<sup>48</sup>

To sum up this discussion, I would like to raise a question: do cross-shaped pendants really reflect Christian identity? If so we must exclude almost all male Vikings found in inhumation graves in Rus', since these normally do *not* contain such finds. However, we learn from the written sources that there were a number of Rhos in the Byzantine army, especially in its navy.<sup>49</sup> The navy was used by the Byzantine emperors Basil I (867–886) and Leo VI (886–912) in the building of various churches in Constantinople.<sup>50</sup> We also know that there were Christian Rhos among the guards of the Great Palace in Constantinople.<sup>51</sup> We must bear in mind that in the 10th century, military service in the Byzantine army rather encouraged one to become a Christian. It was common to hold liturgical services for the troops as well as to pray for victory. Participating in the construction and restoration of churches was one possible occupation for these “defenders of Christ”, but dying for Byzantine emperors was also considered a religious feat as much as a military one.<sup>52</sup> The association of the faith with the fight against the enemy automatically made good Christians of the soldiers.<sup>53</sup> Under these circumstances there was probably no necessity for soldiers to demonstrate their Christian identity by carrying small cross-pendants.<sup>54</sup> In fact, the visual Christian symbols for males might have been the decorative elements of their clothes. For instance, small decorative crosses made of gold or silver wires were found on the garments of males buried in the weapon-rich chamber graves in Birka. It is believed that these crosslets belonged to head-

<sup>48</sup> Korzuchina 1954, 329 and 340; Karger 1958, pl. II, III, XV, XVI, XVII, XX; Bilousova 1996.

<sup>49</sup> Haldon 1999, 125.

<sup>50</sup> *Theophanes Continuatus*, ed. Bekker 1838, 308 and 364–365; Russian trans. Ljubarskij 1992, V.68, p. 129, and VI.18, p. 151.

<sup>51</sup> We are told that baptized Rhos “with banners, holding shields and wearing their swords” were standing on guard outside the balustrade of the Chalke during the reception of the Tarsoite Legates in the Palace on 31 May 946; see Constantine Porphyrogenetos, *De Ceremoniis*, 579.21–22; Engl. trans. Mofatt and Tall 2012, 579. See also Featherstone 2007, 93.

<sup>52</sup> John Skylitzes records that Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969) “endeavoured to establish a law that soldiers who died in war were to be accorded martyrs’ honours, thus making the salvation of the soul uniquely and exclusively dependent on being in action on military service. He was pressing the patriarch and the bishops to agree to this doctrine but some of them vigorously withstood him and frustrated his intent”; John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, Engl. trans. Wortley 2010, 263. Concerning the concept of “Christian warriors”, see Schreiner 1997 and Kučma 2001.

<sup>53</sup> Haldon 1989, 21.

<sup>54</sup> See N<sup>o</sup>s 524, 542, 644, 710, 736 after Geijer 1938, Taf. 27, 28:6–7. See also Hägg 2006, 116–119.

gear, but their shape suggests that they represented an early variant of the so-called phylactery (*venčik* in Russian), which, according to the Orthodox burial rite, must be placed upon the head of deceased laity.<sup>55</sup> The modern Orthodox Church uses such crowns along with an icon of the *Deesis* and the text of the *Trisagion* to symbolize the struggle of the deceased layman on earth as a warrior of Christ and the wreath he will be awarded in heaven.<sup>56</sup>

A possible conclusion is that our traditional interpretation of individuals buried in chamber graves with weapons as high-status warriors should be modified so as to see at least some of them also as “defenders of Christ”.



Visual symbols of Christianity, such as cross-shaped pendants, are associated mainly with female graves and also with hoards, where they served as symbols of high status and wealth. Male burials seldom contain them. However, other evidence points to the reasonable assumption that Christianity penetrated Rus' society through the agency of those warriors who served as mercenaries in Byzantium. It would appear that, for some reason or other, this most heavily influenced segment of society did not consider the wearing or even the possession of small crosses to be an important mark of their faith. The warrior elite either chose not to express their Christianity visually (or else they did so in ways as yet undetected by archeology). Therefore, our traditional interpretation of those individuals buried in chamber graves with weapons – as befitted high-status warriors – as being heathens is probably not correct. Among the tenth-century chamber graves known from Birka, Gnězdovo, Kiev, Černihiv and Šestovycja whose appearance is generally believed to denote pagan belief, there is undoubtedly a sizable number of Christian burials. However, the attempt to establish criteria for separating the two groups despite their seemingly uniform burial rituals is a task that must be taken on by future studies.

<sup>55</sup> Sokolov 2002, 166.

<sup>56</sup> Sokolov 2002, 166.

## *Cemeteries and the Shaping of an Early Christian Urban Landscape in Scandinavia and Rus'*

This final chapter deals with the phenomenon of Christian cemeteries in early towns of the Viking period in Scandinavia and Rus'. I intend to investigate, from a socio-geographical point of view, why cemeteries were located inside the boundaries of towns; I will look at the condition of the locations before and after conversions and at how cemeteries affected the development of towns and their landscapes. The areas under consideration are eastern Scandinavia and Rus', which were closely connected and had a similar social milieu at the time. I shall compare the trading centres of Birka and Sigtuna in Sweden with the city of Kiev in Ukraine. I aim to discover the similarities and differences in attitudes to Christianity in these places among both the urban factions and the city population as a whole.

I would like to begin with a few words on the towns chosen for this study. Despite the fact that there is clear material evidence for the penetration of Christianity into Viking society in both regions, such indicators as inhumation graves and Christian symbols appear to be quite widespread even in local cultural settings. In the Scandinavian homeland cemeteries of Kaupang, Hedeby, and to some extent Birka, and in the Rus' cemeteries of Old Ladoga, Gnëzdovo, and Šestovycja, single graves or even groups of Christian burials were placed alongside those of heathens. A separate location for early Christian cemeteries can only be suggested for Birka and Sigtuna in Sweden and for Kiev in Ukraine. It has been proposed that an indicator for a Christian cemetery is the placing of inhumation graves in rows with a west-east orientation. Other named criteria include the character of the grave goods, a lack of mounds and certain types of burial constructions.<sup>1</sup> With regard to eastern Scandinavia, it is possible that Birka and Sigtuna represent two chronologically different phases of Christianization.

<sup>1</sup> Gräslund 1980 och 2001, 45–47 and 51–52; Eisenschmidt 2004, 131.

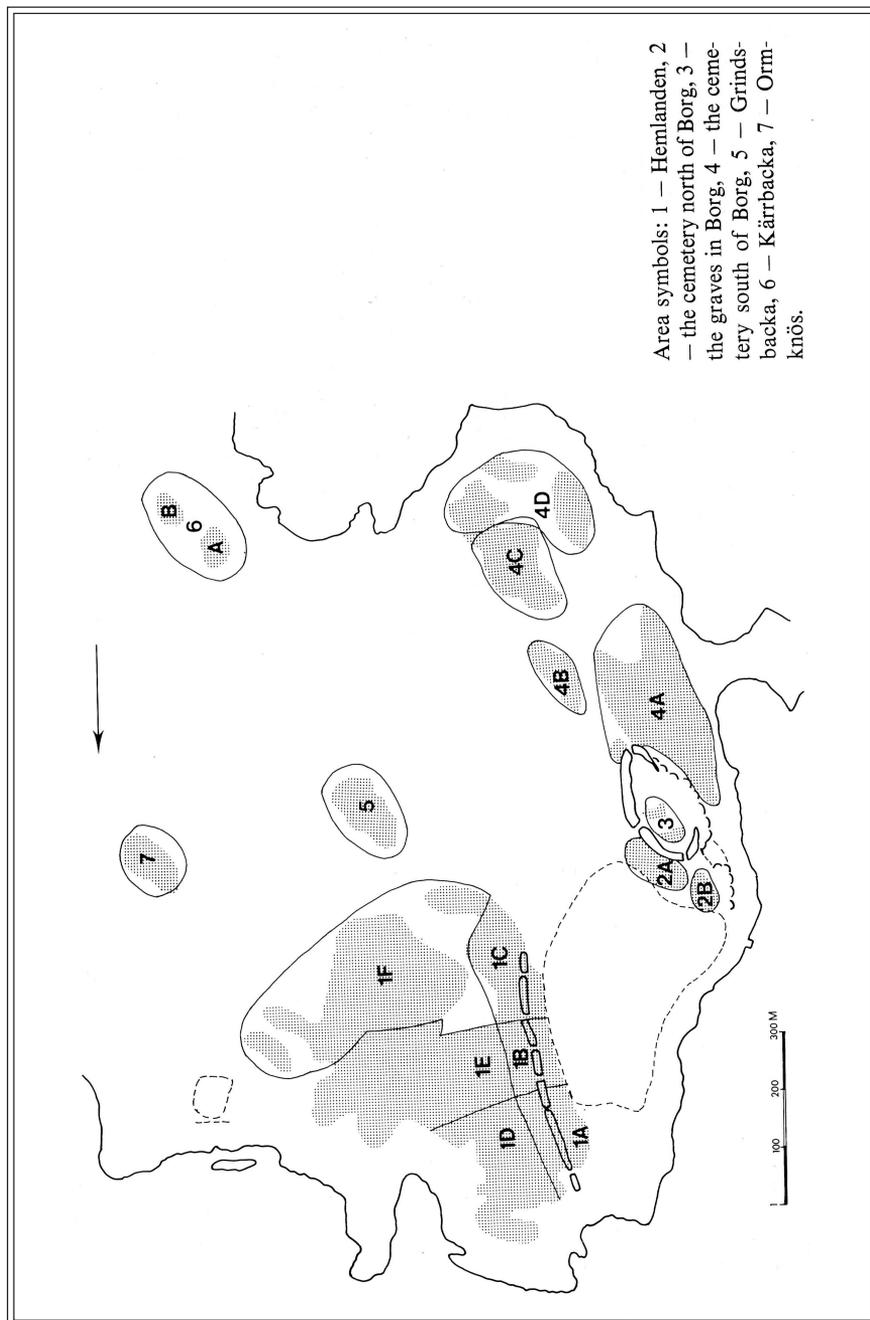


FIGURE 69: Map of the cemeteries at Birka (after Gräslund 1980).

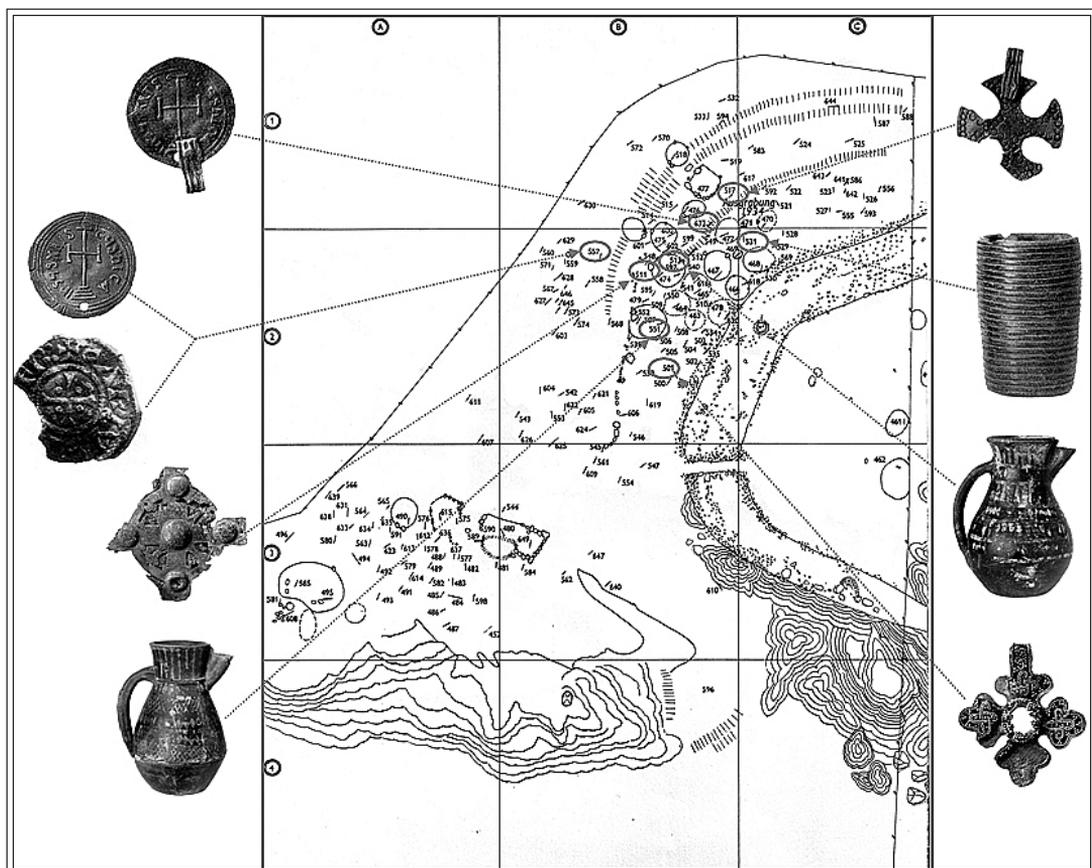


FIGURE 70: Graves with Christian symbols discovered on the plateau north of Borg at Birka (by author).

#### CHRISTIAN CEMETERIES AT BIRKA AND SIGTUNA

There are seven cemeteries in Birka which surround the town to the southwest, the north and the northeast; they contain both cremation and inhumation graves (Fig. 69). The latter are represented by graves with coffins, chamber graves or simply pits without any traces of wooden construction.

Since the time of Hjalmar Stolpe, a cemetery with inhumation graves, situated on the plateau north of the low hillfort “Borg” at Birka, has been assumed to be Christian.<sup>2</sup> The graves excavated there were not all covered by mounds and were concentrated in two main cemetery areas – to the southeast (2A) and

<sup>2</sup> Stolpe 1879, 671–684.

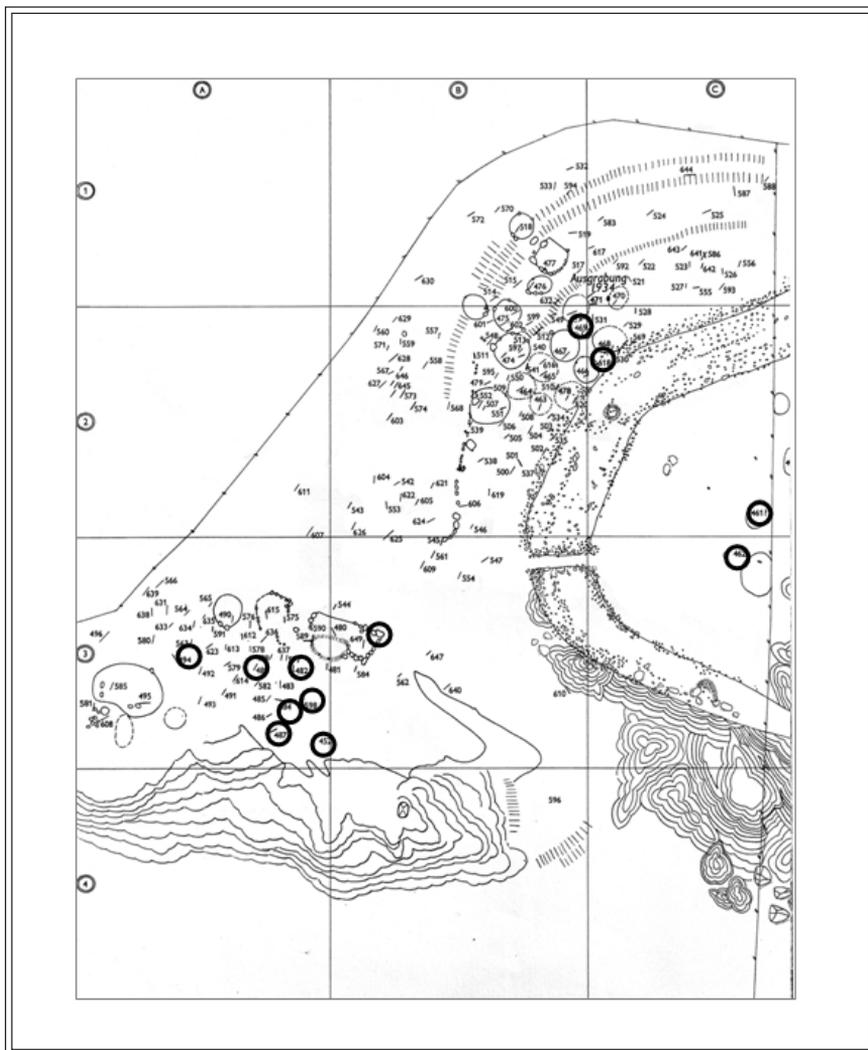


FIGURE 71: Distribution of cremation graves and graves with weapons on the plateau north of Borg at Birka (by author).

the northwest (2B). In total, 196 flat graves from the 9th to the 10th centuries were excavated. We will concentrate on that part of cemetery 2A situated above the town. There is a concentration of tightly packed, mostly uncoffined inhumation graves down the slope toward the town. Ann-Sofie Gräslund argues that this area was consecrated for Christian burials: "No objects with Christian associations have been found in these graves, but it was obviously most desira-

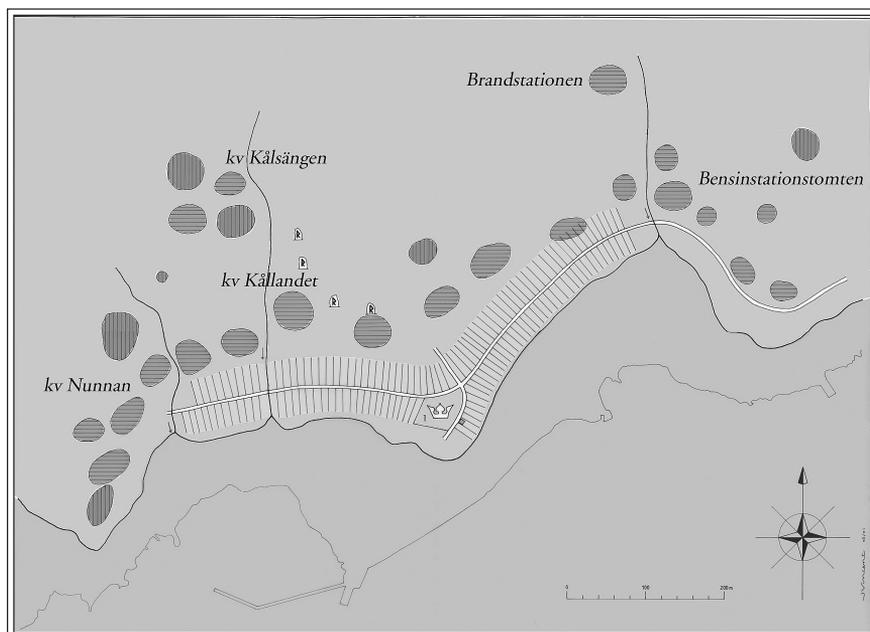


FIGURE 72: Map of the distribution of cemeteries in Sigtuna (after Wikström and Källström 2009).

ble to be buried in this place”.<sup>3</sup> However, according to my calculations there are at least six graves of the 9th<sup>4</sup> and three graves of the 10th centuries<sup>5</sup> containing clear Christian symbols. Let us take a closer look at these graves (Fig. 70).

In chamber grave N<sup>o</sup> 557, among silver pendants and beads of silver, stone and glass were also two silver coins of Charles the Bald (840–877) and Michael III, Theodora and Thekla (842–856). Both coins had a cross depicted on one side.<sup>6</sup> Chamber grave N<sup>o</sup> 632, which belonged to a female, contained a rich necklace of stone and glass beads, silver pendants between her chest brooches and a silver coin of Theophilus (829–832) with a symbol of a cross on one side.<sup>7</sup> In grave N<sup>o</sup> 530, probably a child’s grave, there were three equal-armed brooches, of which two were joined to make the figure of a cross.<sup>8</sup> Tating-ware

<sup>3</sup> Gräslund 1980, 74 and 83.

<sup>4</sup> Graves N<sup>os</sup> 557, 632, 530, 531, 597 and 551.

<sup>5</sup> Graves N<sup>os</sup> 511, 517 and 501.

<sup>6</sup> Arbman 1940–43, 178, and Pl. 141:14; Hammarberg, Malmer and Zachrisson 1989, 61–62, N<sup>o</sup> 7, pl. 1:15.

<sup>7</sup> Arbman 1940–43, 211, and pl. 140:13; Hammarberg, Malmer and Zachrisson 1989, 62, N<sup>o</sup> 7, pl. 1:10.

<sup>8</sup> Arbman 1940–43, 163, pl. 112.

jugs were discovered in graves N<sup>os</sup> 531, 551 and 597, each of which contained a woman.<sup>9</sup> Among 10th-century graves, a female inhumation (no. 511) should be mentioned. It contained a nailed coffin in which a bronze ring-cross of Irish origin was discovered.<sup>10</sup> Finally two female graves (nos 517 and 501) with nailed coffins and containing cross-shaped pendants could also be dated to the 10th century.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, there are definitely graves containing Christian symbols which could be dated to both the 9th and the 10th centuries in this area of the cemetery; we thus have good reason for its interpretation as a place of burial for the Christian faction of the town. However, there are two important traits peculiar to Christian cemeteries in Scandinavia: the proximity to cremation burials (Fig. 71) and graves containing weapons.

Sigtuna was founded c. 970/980 on the northern shore of Lake Mälaren. The principle axis of the city was along its main street (*Stora gata*). Both sides of the street were aligned with plots of 20–30 meters. To the northwest, north and northeast, the plots were bordered by more than 20 separate graveyards containing about 50 graves (Fig. 72). These graveyards are characterised by the lack of a church, a high percentage of graves with coffins, west-east oriented burials and the presence of charcoal and personal objects such as knives, beads, belt buckles and coins in the graves. Judging from the topography of the graveyards, they were established close to the roads leading into the town.<sup>12</sup> The dating of some Sigtuna graves has shown that several graveyards (Nunnan, Götes mack) were established simultaneously at the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th centuries.<sup>13</sup> A common feature is the clustering of burials in several groups. The cemetery in the Nunnan block consisted of 117 graves concentrated into three groups of c. 30–45 graves. It has been suggested that these groups of graves could represent different factions of the population<sup>14</sup> or family town plots.<sup>15</sup> One cemetery (*Kalvtomten*) consisted of eleven circular and five rectangular stone-settings, all but one being inhumation graves; the other was a cremation grave. The very few finds gave little grounds for dating, but judging from the shape and construction of the graves, the cemetery could have been built between the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th centuries.

<sup>9</sup> Arbman 1940–43, 163, 174 and 195.

<sup>10</sup> Arbman 1940–43, 151, and Abb. 98.

<sup>11</sup> Arbman 1940–43, 145–155, and Pl. 102:4, 7.

<sup>12</sup> Wikström and Källström 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Hillbom 1987, 230; Källström 2005, IV, 2–8; Wikström and Källström 2009, 10.

<sup>14</sup> Tesch 1989, 119.

<sup>15</sup> Gräslund 1989, 39.

According to Gräslund, Kalvtomten's burials are similar to those in the Grindsbacka cemetery in Birka.<sup>16</sup> The latter is situated about 300 m south-east of the Hemlanden cemetery and consists of 60 circular and rectangular stone-settings with both cremation and inhumation graves. The very few finds there consisted mainly of knives, combs, pottery, beads, crampon nails, rivets and, in a couple of cases, Thor's-hammer rings dated to the first half of the 10th century.<sup>17</sup> Some of the inhumation graves have been interpreted as Christian.<sup>18</sup> Besides Grindsbacka, one should note another cemetery, Lilla Kärbacka, consisting of c. 30 square, circular, boat-shaped and triangular stone-settings. 14 of them were excavated; eleven graves contained inhumations and one was a cremation.<sup>19</sup> It has been suggested that both cemeteries probably should be dated to later than the Birka town period and that they were established by the inhabitants of an early medieval village nearby.<sup>20</sup> As there is no clear connection between these cemeteries and the urban settlement of Birka, it is difficult to draw any conclusions regarding their relationship to Sigtuna's early cemeteries.

It is believed that Sigtuna was a fully Christian town from the very beginning. A particular characteristic of the Sigtuna graveyards has been the absence of churches in the town until the middle of the 11th century. Christian ceremonies took place in a chieftain's hall situated in the corner of each town plot.<sup>21</sup> In the second half of the 11th and throughout the 12th centuries, several churches with cemeteries were constructed close to the locations of graveyards, and one was situated in the centre of the town on the site of the late 10th- to early 11th-century royal town plots.<sup>22</sup> The people buried in the churchyards are considered to have belonged to powerful families who built these churches or lived in the countryside.<sup>23</sup>

#### NORTHMEN AND THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CEMETERIES IN KIEV

Rus' contains quite a limited number of sites with early Christian cemeteries. Kiev is the most typical example. In the territory of early medieval Kiev, traces of 27 Christian cemeteries dated between the 10th and 13th centuries have been

<sup>16</sup> Gräslund 1989, 38.

<sup>17</sup> Arbman 1940–43, 233–239, Pl. IV; Gräslund 1989, 38.

<sup>18</sup> Arbman 1939, 80; Gräslund 1980, 5 and 84.

<sup>19</sup> Gräslund 1980, 6.

<sup>20</sup> Hallström 1913, 10; Arbman 1940–43, xxii; Gräslund 1980, 6; Holmquist Olausson 1993, 53–65.

<sup>21</sup> Tesch 2000 and 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Bäck and Carlsson 1994, 106–107; Wikström 2006.

<sup>23</sup> Källström 2005, IV, 7; Tesch 2008, 334.

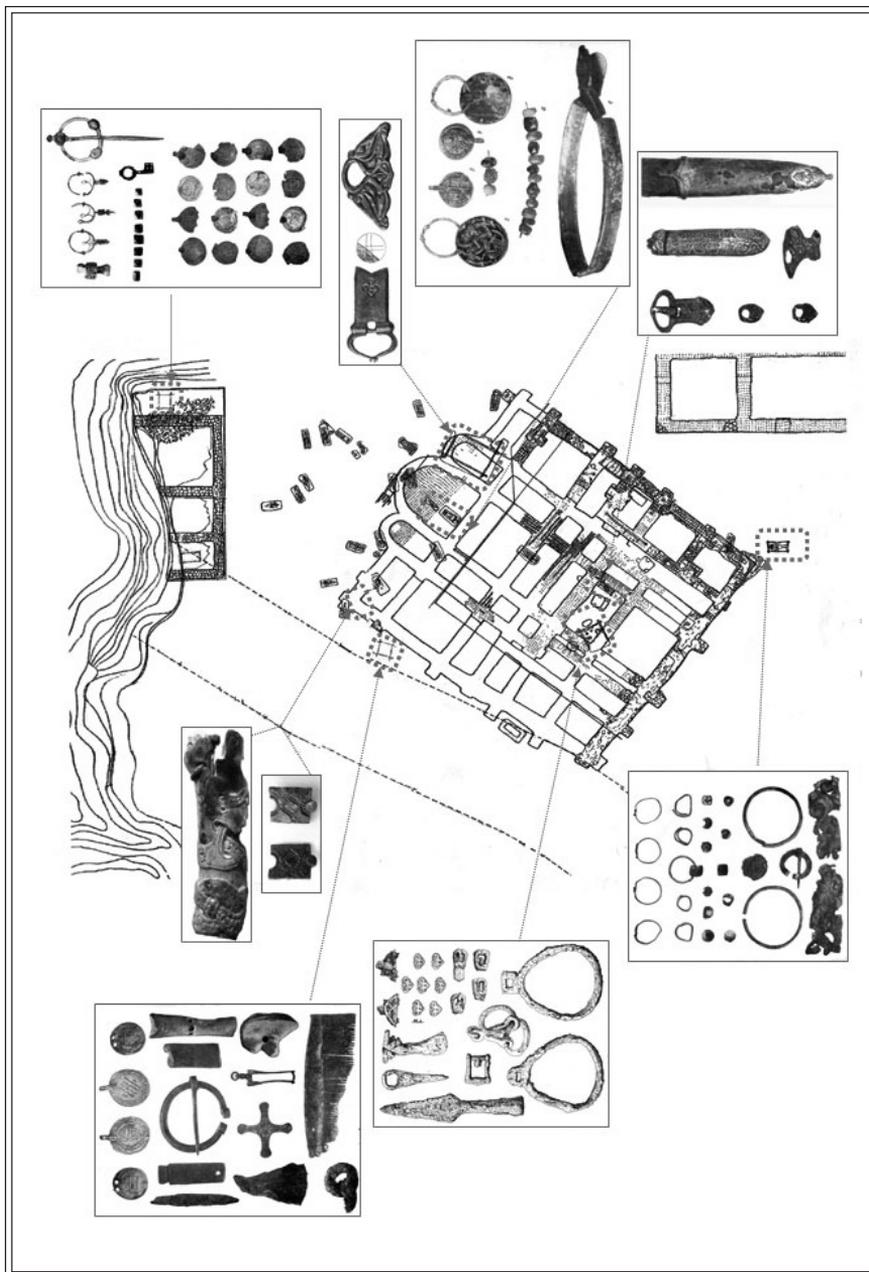


FIGURE 73: Distribution of Viking Age inhumation graves below and around the Tithe church in Kiev (by author).

recorded.<sup>24</sup> Up to now, only the cemetery below the Tithe Church in Kiev was considered Christian. Before going into more detail, it is necessary to present a short survey of Kiev at the end of the 10th century. We need to examine the site on which the city was constructed to understand it better.

Two main structural components of the early Kiev townscape have been recorded in both written and archaeological sources: the upper town area called *Gora*, and downtown called *Podolje*. In Old Russian chronicles, the term *Gora* probably referred to several hills including the so-called Starokievs'ka, Zamkova and Detinka. The historical core of the medieval town stood on the hills of Zamkova and Starokievs'ka where cultural layers and objects from the beginning of the Migration Period have been detected. Owing to very fragmentary evidence concerning the size and character of settlements in this period, we shall not discuss them in this chapter (see above, Chapters 1 and 2). I would instead like to present some reflections on the emergence, character and position of early Christian cemeteries in the townscape of early medieval Kiev.

In the 10th century, *Zamkova Gora* (Zamkova Hill) and *Podol* were two important areas of the townscape. Archaeological excavations have shown that people occupying plots in downtown Podol were traders and craftsmen, while residents of Zamkova Hill were aristocratic hunters and produced fine jewellery. It should also be added that a hoard of Chersono-Byzantine coins deposited c. 970 was discovered on Zamkova Hill.<sup>25</sup> Strategically, the position of Zamkova Hill dominated Podol and the Dnieper. The only problem was that the hill was not protected on its southern side, where the high plateau of Starokievs'ka Hill lies. To avoid attacks from this direction a rampart and ditch were constructed. It is believed that this simple fortification was already built in the Migration Period. It has recently been shown that it was also functioning in the 10th century. There is no clear evidence of 10th-century dwellings within this large fortress, which covers two hectares; at that time, it seems, it was used only as a place of refuge.

The time of the first Christian graves in Kiev has always been linked to the character and dating of the inhumation graves discovered beneath the foundation of the Tithe Church – the first stone structure built in Rus' (Fig. 73). According to some scholars, these graves are Christian and the choice of location for the church was not accidental.

The presence of child inhumation graves may indicate Christian burials. According to the *Grágás* (Gray Goose Laws) – a collection of laws from the Icelandic Commonwealth period – an infant who died having received the *pri-*

<sup>24</sup> Ivakin 2008, 15 and 44, figs 1 and 15.

<sup>25</sup> Kropotkin 1962, 32, № 177; Zocenko 1991, 63.

*ma signatio*, would be buried on the outskirts of the churchyard, where the consecrated and unconsecrated earths met.<sup>26</sup> This rule is reflected in the topography of grave N<sup>o</sup> 110, which was discovered outside the wall north of the gallery of the church, on the edge of a ditch separating the cemetery from the settlement area. It was a chamber grave containing a child, and produced a penannular brooch, two silver buttons, the iron fittings off two buckets, ceramic items, a spoon made of antler, a set of bone gaming pieces, a fragmentary comb, a small iron axe, two whetstones, an iron knife, three wild boar's teeth perforated for suspension, a number of shells and several indefinable objects of iron and bone or antler. A cross-shaped silver mount and two Arabic coins dated to 911–912 were also discovered in the grave. One of the coins has a cross symbol scratched on one side. The presence of Christian symbols in this grave should be seen in light of the other inhumation burials excavated in the vicinity of the church and beneath its foundations.

Grave N<sup>o</sup> 122, discovered beneath the central apse, contained a body in a nailed coffin accompanied by beads of stone, glass and silver with granulation, a silver imitation of a Byzantine coin of Basil and Constantine (869–879) and a cauri shell. In the area of the breast, a circular gilt silver brooch decorated in the Jellinge style was discovered.<sup>27</sup> Two undefined items, two bronze buttons, iron bands from a pail and a silver mount off a wooden vessel were also found in the grave.<sup>28</sup> The Jellinge style got its name from a particular ornamentation of a small silver cup and some wooden carvings, excavated in the chamber grave of the northern mound at the royal residence of Jellinge in Denmark.<sup>29</sup> The construction of that chamber is dated to c. 958/959, while objects decorated in this style are dated to the middle of the 10th century.<sup>30</sup>

Another example of the Jellinge style is represented by a carved pointed tool of antler with an animal head found in a cremation grave that was damaged in the construction of the Tithe Church. The grave was discovered close to the northeastern corner of the church and also contained two bronze belt fittings.<sup>31</sup> This decorative tool is a good specimen of south Scandinavian carving dated to the later 10th century. Grave N<sup>o</sup> 2, on the western side of the northern apse of

<sup>26</sup> *Grágás*, ed. Karlsson, Sveinsson and Árnason 2001, 4–5: “Ef barn andast prímsígnit, og hefir eigi meiri skírn, og skal þat grafa út við kirkjugarð, þat er mætisk vígð mold og óvígð.” Engl. trans. in Dennis, Foote and Perkins 1980, 26: “If a child dies who has received the *primum signum* but not been baptized, it is to be buried out by the churchyard wall, where hallowed and unhallowed ground meet”.

<sup>27</sup> Group IA1 after Jansson 1984a, 60; ; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, N<sup>o</sup> 26.

<sup>28</sup> Karger 1958, 205–206, pl. XXVI:a-g.

<sup>29</sup> Fuglesang 1991, 95.

<sup>30</sup> Jansson 1991, 272.

<sup>31</sup> Ivakin and Ioannesjan 2008, 205, fig. 13:1,3; ; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, N<sup>o</sup> 27.

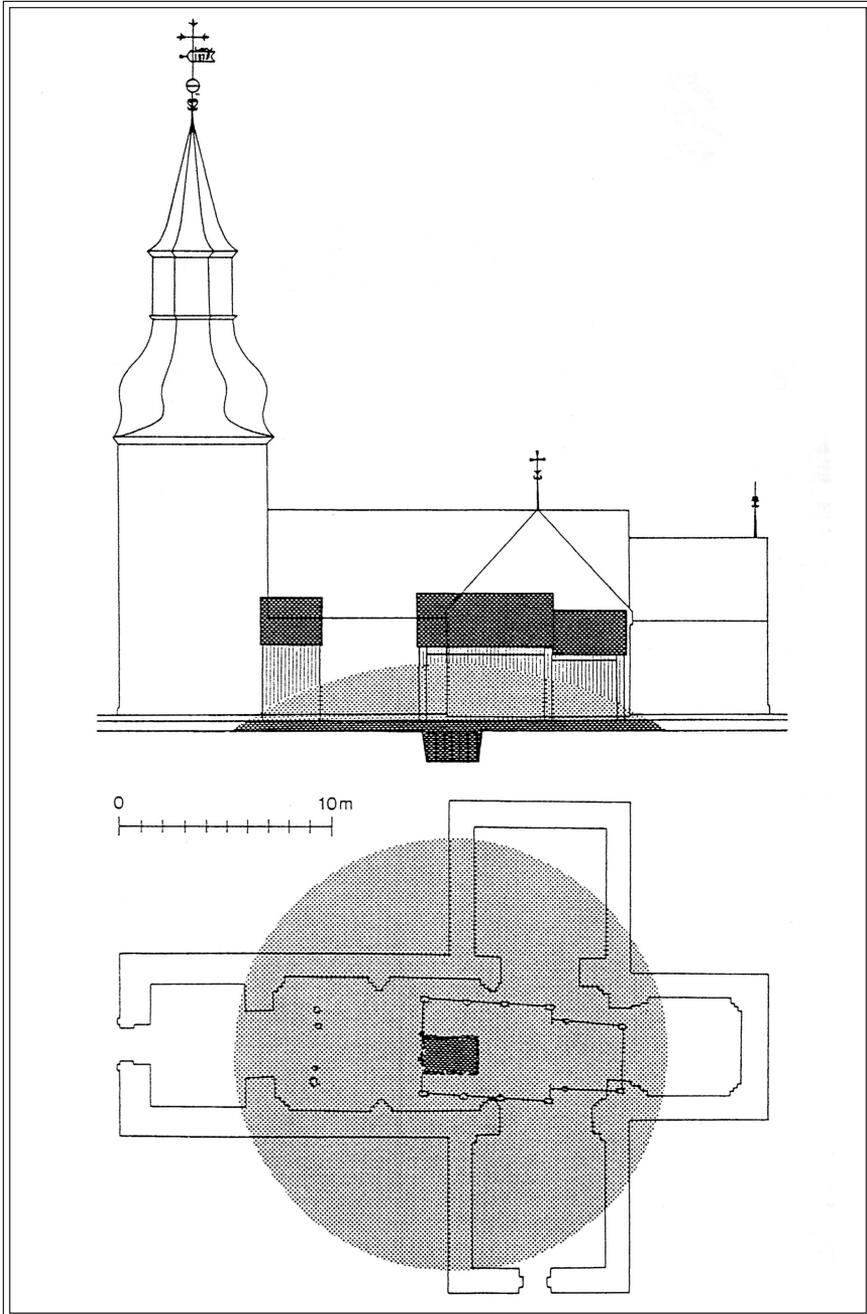


FIGURE 74: Relation between the modern church, older stave-built church and large Viking Age mound at Hørning, Denmark (after Krogh and Voss 1961).

the church, contained a nailed coffin. It contained only an iron knife.<sup>32</sup> Chamber grave № 113 was situated to the west of the central apse of the church and yielded a spearhead, an axe, bronze belt fittings, the remains of iron mounts from a quiver with a silver suspension mount, arrowheads, two stirrups, four iron buckles, the iron fittings off a bucket and a fragmentary clay vessel.<sup>33</sup> Both the type of quiver and the ornamentation of the belt fittings have parallels in Hungarian graves of the 10th century.<sup>34</sup>

There were only a few fragmentary human bones found in chamber grave № 109, which was located below the south apse of the Tithe Church.<sup>35</sup> However, some clay sherds, indefinable iron objects, a buckle and a suspension mount of bronze for a quiver, and three coins were discovered on the floor of the chamber. One of the coins has an X-shaped double cut while the suspension mount is of the same type as the one from chamber grave № 113. A similar mount came from another chamber grave in Kiev where it was found in association with a sword, a Byzantine buckle and four copper coins (the latest coin was minted c. 920).<sup>36</sup> As has been shown above, Hungarian objects, along with various elements of equestrian equipment, appeared in Old Russian graves around the second half of the 10th century (see further below in "Some Final Remarks").<sup>37</sup>

On the discovery of chamber grave № 109, an interpretation was launched that it was a house of the Varangian-Christians mentioned in the Old Russian chronicles.<sup>38</sup> One reason for this was the size of the wooden construction which, at 4.8 × 4.2 m, was considered unusually large for a chamber grave. However, it must be pointed out that very large chamber graves do appear in Denmark. The closest parallel is probably a rich grave of the second half of the 10th century discovered at Søllested, in southwest Fyn. It contained a wooden chamber that measured at least 4–5 m along one side.<sup>39</sup> As it happens, recent re-excavation of the Søllested grave combined with studies of older documentation records make it possible to interpret the structure beneath the southern apse of the Tithe Church as a large chamber grave.<sup>40</sup>

To finish our survey of graves, it may be concluded that some of those discovered beneath the foundations of the Tithe Church (specifically those holding both Scandinavian and Hungarian artefacts) may be dated to the second

<sup>32</sup> Karger 1958, 140, № 1; Kozjuba 2005.

<sup>33</sup> Karger 1958, 182–185.

<sup>34</sup> Fodor 1996, 74–75, fig. 7; 153, fig. 3.

<sup>35</sup> Karger 1958, 174; Ravdina 1988, 73; Kozjuba 2005, 253.

<sup>36</sup> Movchan 2007, 221–223.

<sup>37</sup> Androshchuk 2004a, 45–46; Ambrosiani and Androshchuk 2006, 8.

<sup>38</sup> See a recent survey in Lukin 2008, 91–93.

<sup>39</sup> Pedersen 1997b.

<sup>40</sup> Kozjuba 2005, 190; Ivakin and Ioannesjan 2008, 197.

half of the 10th century. However, we should remember that the remaining graves and some of those situated in the east of the apse, not yielding any finds, may theoretically belong to an earlier period.

Recent excavations of the church area have shown that mounds were constructed over some of the burials. Such cases are also well known in Denmark. Let us take Hørning Church, built in the 11th century, as an example. It contains a burial mound of more than 20 m in diameter erected above a chamber grave of the 10th century<sup>41</sup> (Fig. 74). According to E. Roesdahl, the choice of the site for Hørning Church “may indicate the importance of the notion of continuity. Perhaps this was also a sophisticated way of ‘*translatio*’: giving pagan great-grandmother a Christian burial without moving her from her grave.”<sup>42</sup> It is clear that large mounds were not particularly convenient places beside which to build a church. Particularly so in the area of the south apse at Kiev, where – due to the presence of the largest chamber grave in the whole area (no. 109) – the builders were forced to dig the foundations 0.2 m deeper (the bottom of the chamber grave was 0.25 m lower than the bottom of the trench for the main foundation). Bearing in mind the recorded date of the church construction, i.e. 996, and the dating of the above-mentioned graves, it is possible to suggest that they were only one generation apart. That means that people could still remember who was buried in the grave. K. A. Michailov has suggested that the lack of human bones in the grave could be explained by their re-location before construction work on the church began. He supposed that relatives of Prince Vladimir Svjatoslavič may have been buried in this part of the cemetery.<sup>43</sup>

Michailov’s suggestion is not without grounds if we take another precedent into consideration: the removal of king Gorm’s remains from his mound and their reburial in Jellinge Church by his son Harald Bluetooth.<sup>44</sup> The construction of Jellinge Church is dated to the period before 990, that is, shortly before the building of the Tithe church in Kiev. The above-mentioned origin in south Scandinavia of jewellery from some of Kiev’s graves makes it possible to assume that, along with contacts between both regions, some information about royal reburial in Denmark might have reached Kiev. Furthermore, we may recall the famous account of the transferring of Egil Skalagrimson’s bones to the church constructed by his relatives. It is remarkable that, according to the saga, Egil’s bones were found beneath the altar,<sup>45</sup> and this is very similar to the location in the Tithe church where chamber grave N<sup>o</sup> 109 was discovered. Two cases of

<sup>41</sup> Krogh and Voss 1961; Voss 1991.

<sup>42</sup> Roesdahl 1997.

<sup>43</sup> Michailov 2004, 42.

<sup>44</sup> Krogh 1993.

<sup>45</sup> *Egil’s Saga*, ed. and trans. by Óskarsdóttir and Scudder 2004, 86.

“transference” of bones are recorded in northern Iceland. In one grave, female bones were added to a male grave. Another grave was dug in front of the church altar and contained a skeleton which lacked heel bones. It was suggested that the bones were transferred to the Christian grave from a nearby pagan site.<sup>46</sup>

According to the church canons, when a church was about to be consecrated, all graves of the unfaithful had to be removed from it. Burials of the faithful could remain underneath the floor so as not to be visible. The main reason for this was a belief that sacral places were not intended to be graveyards.<sup>47</sup> Another important point was that unbaptised individuals were not permitted to be buried in Christian ground; it was believed that the presence of their corpses would contaminate it.<sup>48</sup> With this in mind, we must conclude that graves situated beneath and in the vicinity of the Tithe church were Christian and that the place itself was a consecrated area. It is known that the size of this sacred area in a church or a temple, providing the right of asylum, was about 30 to 60 “steps”<sup>49</sup> depending on the size and status of the church. A protecting wall also sometimes marked off this space. Some Christian burial places might have been established within the limits of the consecrated area even before the church was built and dedicated.<sup>50</sup> Another important statute of Christian canon law dealt with the defilement (in Latin terms *exsecratio* or *pollutio*) of consecrated places, caused for example by damage to the church, knocking down the altar or killing or violence taking place in the church. Even the burial of heathens was considered a desecration of the holy ground. In all these cases, the church had to be newly consecrated.<sup>51</sup>

Returning to chamber grave № 109, written sources provide us with several important options for a date at which the reburial in the Tithe church may have taken place. We learn from the *Russian Primary Chronicle* that in 1007 “the holies were brought to the church of the Holy Virgin”.<sup>52</sup> We do not know what the author of the chronicle meant with this entry and what these “holies” were. However, church altars were often built to contain the relics of holy martyrs, were erected on the sites of murders or over the graves of martyrs.<sup>53</sup> Based on

<sup>46</sup> Zoega and Traustadóttir 2007, 227.

<sup>47</sup> Nilsson 1989, 115 and 159.

<sup>48</sup> Pavlov 1897, 318–319; Nilsson 1989, 146 and 243.

<sup>49</sup> According to written sources, one “church step” was about 1.5 m; see Nilsson 1989, 123.

<sup>50</sup> Nilsson 1989, 75.

<sup>51</sup> Nilsson 1989, 85–91.

<sup>52</sup> PSRL, I, 129.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Schaff 2005, 798: “Let reliques of the Holy Martyres be placed in such churches as have been consecrated without them, and this with the accustomed payers. But



FIGURE 75: A Byzantine processional cross found in the north-eastern palace of 10th-century Kiev (photo by Dmytro Klochko)

this, it is quite possible that “the holies” mentioned here were relics of important individuals. In the following I shall present a list of possible candidates.

**Princess Olga.** We know that Olga was Christian and died in c. 969. The place of her burial is not recorded, except for a short note in the *Russian Primary Chronicle* claiming that Olga “had given a command that funeral feast should not be held for her, as she had seen a priest who performed the last rites.”<sup>54</sup> There is a mention of “a small stone coffin” holding Olga’s remains in a source from the end of the 11th century.<sup>55</sup> This is usually interpreted as a sarcophagus,<sup>56</sup> but the reference to the small size of the coffin and a description of a window in the upper part of it allows us to suggest that we are dealing with a reliquary box. Olga’s relics are described by the source as imperishable, which is considered as evidence of her holiness.<sup>57</sup> There is also a direct statement in a recent compilation of Olga’s biographies that Prince Vladimir transferred Olga’s relics to the Tithe Church.<sup>58</sup>

**Two Varangians.** The entry for 983 in the *Russian Primary Chronicle* describes the murder of a Christian Varangian and his son by heathens in Kiev. The chronicle identifies the Varangian homestead as the place where Vladimir constructed the Tithe Church. However, the Chronicle also claims that “no one knows where they are buried.”<sup>59</sup> Some scholars regard the location of the site as a late interpolation.<sup>60</sup>

**Relics of Saints.** According to the written sources, during his devastation of Korsun-Chersonesos, Vladimir took vessels, icons and relics of St Clement, Phoebus and “other saints.”<sup>61</sup>

whoever shall consecrate a church without these shall be deposed as a transgressor of the traditions of the Church”.

<sup>54</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 86.

<sup>55</sup> Zimin 1963.

<sup>56</sup> Archipova 2005, 48.

<sup>57</sup> Podskal’skij 1996, 201.

<sup>58</sup> Golubinskij 1901, 84, n. 1.

<sup>59</sup> PSRL, I, 82, and II, 69–70.

<sup>60</sup> Vvedenskij 2009; Lukin 2008, 93.

<sup>61</sup> PSRL, I, 116, and II, 101; Engl. trans. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 116. See also Zimin 1963, 300–301 and 305.

**Princes Jaropolk and Oleg.** The entry in the *Russian Primary Chronicle* of 1044 states that the remains of the two princes Jaropolk and Oleg were exhumed, then baptised and laid in the Church of the Holy Virgin.<sup>62</sup>

To sum up, “the saints” mentioned by the chronicler in the entry of 1007 may refer to the relics of Olga, St Clement and Phoebus. However, the above-mentioned find of a suspension mount of a quiver from the grave beneath the Tithe Church apse (grave № 109) shows that a male rather than a female individual was buried in that grave. Moreover, since there is no early evidence of the obtaining of Olga’s relics, we must leave the priority to other candidates.

We know that around 1017 the Tithe Church was known as “the Church of Christ’s martyr and Pope Clement”,<sup>63</sup> and it seems that St Clement’s relics formed the main shrine of the Tithe Church. The Christian Varangians have to be excluded from the list because the location of their burials is not known. Oleg Svjatoslavič perished in 977 and was buried in a mound near Ovruč,<sup>64</sup> while Jaropolk Svjatoslavič was murdered in 980 in Kiev.<sup>65</sup> Both these dates are in close approximation to the circulation of Hungarian objects in Rus’, which makes it highly likely that, in fact, Prince Jaropolk Svjatoslavič was buried in the chamber grave.

Judging from the orientation of two early stone structures and some finds in the area of the Tithe Church, it seems that two palaces once stood here. It is remarkable that one of them was constructed close to chamber grave № 112, which contained Scandinavian and Byzantine artefacts and Arabic coins of c. 922/923. I would also like to draw attention to a remarkable object discovered on the floor of the large room of the palace, namely a Byzantine processional cross dated to the end of the 10th century (Fig. 75). Since some decorative slabs with the symbol of Vladimir were discovered in the ruins of the palace, we may conclude that the building could be dated to the time of that prince, and the cross probably indicates that it was a multifunctional building where religious services might take place. In any case, I assume it could be one of several objects captured by Prince Vladimir in Byzantine Chersonesos, kept here as a shrine. There is a possible parallel to this in an illustration in the famous *Chronicle of Skylitzes* depicting the erection of “captured crosses” by Nikephoros II in Hagia Sophia.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>62</sup> PSRL, I, 155, and II, 143; Engl. trans. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 139.

<sup>63</sup> *Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*, trans. Warner 2001, 359 (Ch. 74).

<sup>64</sup> PSRL, I, 75, and II, 62.

<sup>65</sup> PSRL, I, 78, and II, 66.

<sup>66</sup> Illustrated chronicle of John Skylitzes, ed. Tsamakda 2002, 384 (fol. 152r).

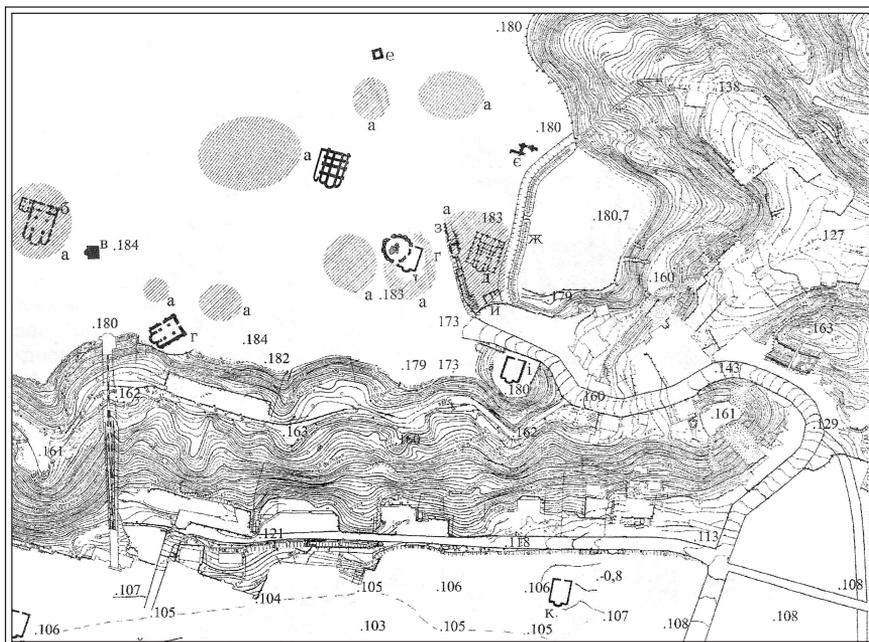


FIGURE 76: Distribution of 10th-century cemeteries in relation to 11th- to 12th-century churches and monasteries in Kiev (by author).

It is important to point out that the remains of at least five cremation graves were recorded in the territory of the Tithe Church.<sup>67</sup> A close analogy is provided by the above-mentioned Christian cemetery located north of the hillfort Borg in Birka, which also contained several cremation graves. At the same time, the concentration of chamber graves, graves with coins, silver and gilt objects, items of Byzantine, Scandinavian and Magyar origin as well as weapons are all evidence that the main impulses for the location of the Tithe Church were the social status and possible family connections with those buried in that part of the town's cemetery. Of course, it cannot be claimed that most of the rich graves were located here. Another quite large concentration of inhumation graves was found in the area of St Michael's Monastery; 22 (including three chamber graves) are dated between the 10th and 11th centuries.<sup>68</sup> Finds from some of these graves consist of bronze, silver and gold object; Byzantine, Magyar, Scandinavian and Slavonic jewellery; beads of glass and stone; and

<sup>67</sup> Kozjuba 2005, 179; Ivakin and Ioannesjan 2008, 205. This fact has also been noted by Shepard 2009b, 206, who came to the conclusion that "no separate Christian burial ground seems to have been instituted on Starokyevskaia Hill".

<sup>68</sup> Ivakin and Kozjuba 2002; Ivakin 2007, 180, 186–189.



FIGURE 77: Distribution of jewellery of Danish origin found in early medieval Kiev (by author).

glass vessels. Cross-shaped pendants were found in two graves. There were also some scattered habitation plots situated close to the cemetery until at least the mid 11th century. From the middle of the 11th until the beginning of the 12th century, these living areas coexisted with the St Dimitrios Monastery and the Church of St Peter, founded by Princes Izjaslav Jaroslavič and his son Jaropolk

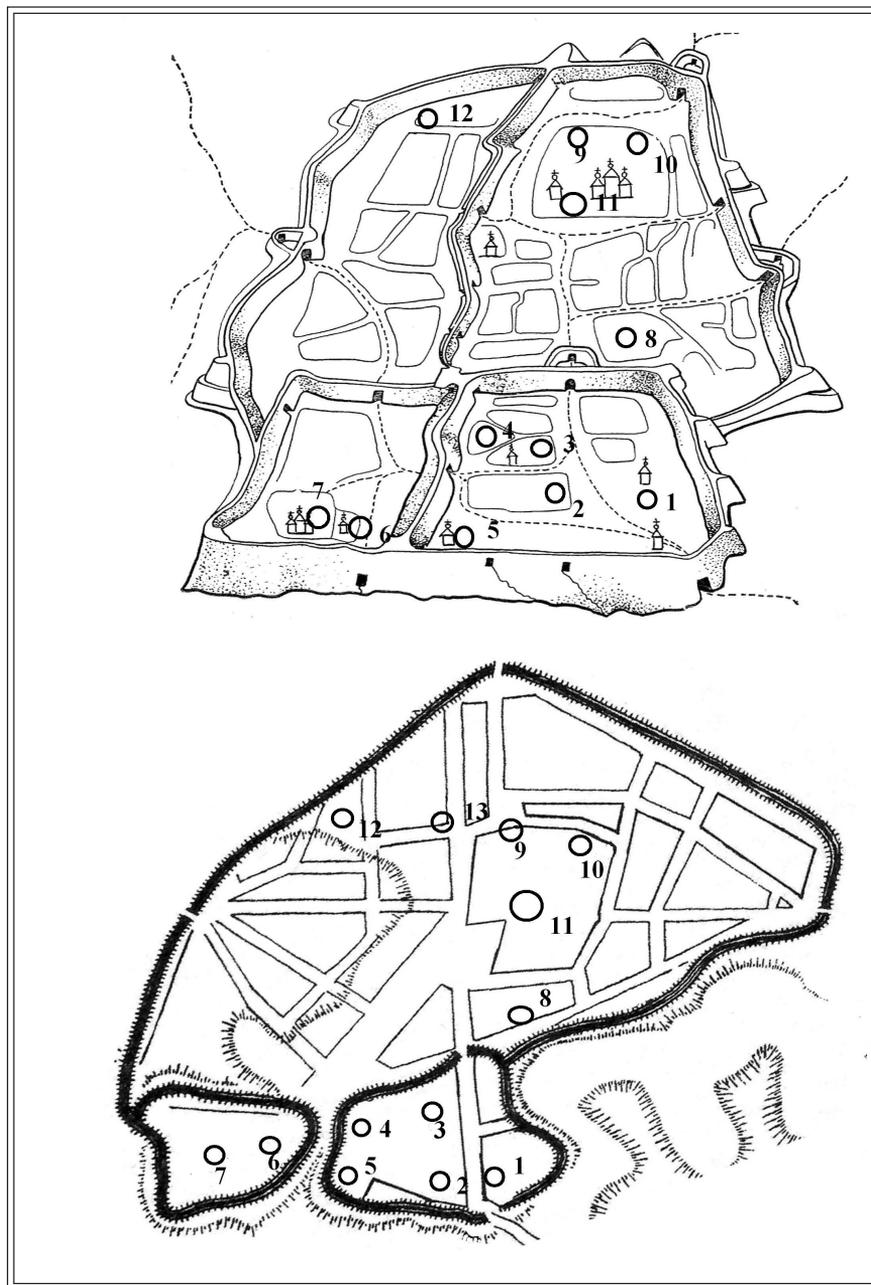


FIGURE 78: Relationship between early mediaeval plots as depicted on a map from 1695 and the locations of churches and graveyards from the 11th to the 13th century (by author).

(before 1085). The buildings were demolished before the construction of the St Michael Monastery by Prince Svjatopolk Izjaslavič in 1108.

The 10th-century cemetery of Kiev consisted of several groups of mounds which have also been traced beneath and in the vicinity of churches and monasteries constructed in the 11th and 12th centuries. The groups of mounds could be associated with burials of particular factions of townspeople. These include the Tithe church, the monasteries of St Andrew,<sup>69</sup> St Theodore and St Dimitri and the cathedrals of St Michael and St Sofia (Fig. 76). In Birka, a Christian cemetery was established by a group of people united by a common belief, while in Christian Sigtuna, the cemeteries were the burial places of the owners of various plots in the town. As mentioned before, the ruling representatives of the Rjurikid dynasty chose specific burial grounds in Kiev on which to construct their churches and monasteries. Apparently, they did so not only because some of the graves contained Christians, but also because they considered these plots to be their own property and the graves themselves to be *odal*-mounds. The burials also include jewellery made in the southern Scandinavian tradition, such as the Jellinge and Hiddensee styles (Fig. 77). This is an important feature, common to all of these graves, which supports this interpretation. I would also like to quote the *Chronicon* of Thietmar of Merseburg, claiming that “the city [Kiev] gains its strength from fugitive serfs who converge on this place from everywhere, but especially from areas overrun by the fast-moving Danes”.<sup>70</sup> Though biological relation to the Kiev princes was a probable factor in determining who could be buried in these graves, we cannot claim, of

<sup>69</sup> The St Andrew monastery was founded in 1086 by the daughter of Prince Vsevolod Janka. In 1105, the vault of the church collapsed and in 1131 the church was reconsecrated (PSRL, II, 294). The possible location of the monastery has been discussed by Toločko 1972, 109, who rejected Chojnovskij 1893, 50, suggesting that it was situated on the site of the former Trubeckoj family plot. However, it must be noted that this site contains the remains of several 10th-century inhumation graves, a large 12th-century clay oven and the ruins of two stone buildings; see Toločko and Borovs'kij 1979a. One of the structures was dated to the later 12th or the early 13th century and was built over an earlier building – a stone church decorated with frescoes, mosaic and marble; see Toločko and Borovs'kij 1979b, 100. It appears, however, that the church should be dated to an earlier period, namely the 10th or 11th centuries; see Androshchuk 2004a, 30–31, n. 73. Borovs'kij 2002 has interpreted this structure as the ruins of the St Basil wooden church founded by Prince Vladimir, but the evidence indicates that this is a stone rather than a wooden church. This stone building should most probably be considered the remains of St Andrew's Church, which was later replaced (?) by the St Theodore monastery. A number of 10th–12th century inhumation graves have been excavated east of the ruins; Chojnovskij 1893 and Karger 1958, 147–151, N<sup>os</sup> 35–80.

<sup>70</sup> *Chronicon* of Thietmar of Merseburg, Engl. trans. Warner 2001, 384.



FIGURE 79: Distribution of early medieval Christian cemeteries in the Podil area of Kiev (after Ivakin 2008).

course, that everyone buried here were their relatives; rather it was probably sufficient to have common geographic, cultural or social connections.

It is reasonable to suggest that churches, monasteries and graveyards in Kiev were established on the plots of land owned by princes or townspeople. Let us examine the relationship between early medieval plots and the locations of churches and graveyards as depicted on a map from 1695 (Fig. 78).<sup>71</sup> As may be seen, generally a church or graveyard was located within the borders of each town plot. Actually, we cannot claim that each church built in the 11th and 12th centuries in Kiev had its own churchyard. So far, archaeology has shown that in this period only the burials of princes in stone sarcophagi were placed inside or in the immediate vicinity of churches.<sup>72</sup> Graveyards, which were often situated close to these churches, contained graves with reused bricks, copper-alloy *polykandelon* or other details of church furniture,<sup>73</sup> indicating that they were

<sup>71</sup> Alferova and Charlamov 1982, 33 and 89.

<sup>72</sup> Androshchuk, Pančenko and Kovaljuch 1996, 43; Sedov 2003; Panova 2004, 44–57.

<sup>73</sup> Chojnovskij 1893, 31, pl. VI, VII:81; VIII:74; XIII:60; Golubeva 1949, 117; Karger 1958, 148–150, N<sup>o</sup>s 36, 40–43 and 45; Borovs'kij and Kaljuk 1993, 32.



FIGURE 80: Topography of the churches in Lund, c. mid 11th century (after Johansson Hervén 2008).

established on the sites of old ruined churches. It seems that in this way such places were considered consecrated and were therefore chosen for cemeteries.

Such a phenomenon is also known in Byzantium, where, before the 6th and 7th centuries, the dead were buried in cemeteries outside towns and villages. Then, graves furnished with grave goods, including jewellery, gradually began to “invade” the central areas of cities, including marketplaces.<sup>74</sup> In Chersonesos, many single burials and cemeteries for the residents of town districts were discovered to have been established on the sites of deserted monasteries or ruined churches.<sup>75</sup> It is known that public cemeteries were not established in Ukraine until 1770. Before that, people were buried in churchyards, private gardens and backyards, close to their dwellings. The only restraints were that they should not be on high ground and not resemble heathen mounds.<sup>76</sup> It seems that the same situation existed in Kiev from the 11th to the 13th centuries. Here, a few single and mainly child graves, situated on the town plots, have been excavated.<sup>77</sup> Although in both Byzantium and Rus’ there were particular prohibitions against burial in churches, this practice continued for some members of society.<sup>78</sup> The appearance of churchyards in Kiev could be dated to between the 13th and the 18th centuries. During earlier periods, graveyards outside churches were most common. Bricks and stones discovered under the heads and feet of buried individuals in the already-mentioned graveyards in Kiev have definitely symbolized “sleeping” persons. In order to show that buried persons are not dead but “asleep”, the bishop of Constantinople, John Chrysostomos (398–404), calls the cemetery a *koimeterion* (“sleeping place”) in his homily *On the Name of the Cemetery*.<sup>79</sup>



As may be seen from their distribution (Fig. 79), Christian graveyards were established on almost every town plot in Kiev’s lower area of Podol, which means that these were places of burial for the residents of the plots. According to the *Chronicon* of Thietmar of Merseburg and the *Laurentian Chronicle*, there were hundreds of churches in Kiev in the 11th and 12th centuries.<sup>80</sup> Even if this number is exaggerated, we must conclude that this was the impression,

<sup>74</sup> Golubinskij 1901, 453–454; ODB, 396; Nalpandis 2002.

<sup>75</sup> Golofast 2009.

<sup>76</sup> Konstantinovič 1879, 182.

<sup>77</sup> Ivakin 2008, 102–104.

<sup>78</sup> ODB, 340. In relation with this, Old Russian homilies are of particular interest; see Ponomarev 1898, 165–166, noa 4–6.

<sup>79</sup> ODB, 396.

<sup>80</sup> Stated as 400 and 600 respectively in *Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*, trans. Warner 2001, 384; PSRL, I, 293.

owing to the number of wooden parish and private churches which were located on different plots in the town. In my view, the topography of churches and graveyards in Kiev was quite similar to that which we know of in Lund, where each plot of the town had its own church (Fig. 80).<sup>81</sup> This is another “Danish connection” which makes the regions of Scandinavia and Rus’ analogous and, thus, deserving of further study.

<sup>81</sup> Andrén 1984, 56, 62 and 66; Johansson Hervén 2008.



## Some Final Remarks: Vikings in the East – Cultural Adaptation and Shaping Identities

I would here like to summarize the main conclusions of my case studies and show how they fit into the general historical development of the 9th to 11th centuries as reconstructed on the basis of written sources and archaeology.

On the eve of the emergence of Rus', the vast territory of Eastern Europe consisted of a conglomerate of various tribes. Largely covered by impassable forests, the territory could only be crossed by using the rivers, especially Volchov, Dvina, Dnieper, Pripet', Bug, Desna and Volga. Hunting, cattle raising and farming were the main resources of the local population. Villages consisting of clusters of dwellings and sheds and storage pits for grain were features of the cultural landscape of that period. Small hill-forts were used for protection. Some of them were built already by the Early Iron Age and some were used only as shelters. Others were centres of local power where tribute was collected and accumulated.

Very little is still known about the social structure of the local population of Eastern Europe. On the basis of Arabic sources, we may assume that there were free farmers as well as local chieftains among the Slavs. The latter supposedly had retainers equipped by javelins, lances and shields.<sup>1</sup> Finds of glass beads, jewellery and even amphorae indicate exchange or other contacts of the Slavs with Khazaria and Byzantium long before the Scandinavians arrived.<sup>2</sup> Single objects of Khazarian and Byzantine origin have been recorded at Rjurikovo gorodišče and the area of Lake Il'men'. The find of a Byzantine seal of a 9th-century *Protospatharios* in the vicinity of Novgorod indicates the presence of a centre of power which could be related to the hill fort at Rjurikovo gorodišče. This assumption can be supported by contemporary finds of Byzantine seals of a military dignitary in Danish Hedeby, Ribe and Tissø, i.e. centres under the protection of the local royal power. On the other hand, the mainly male character of the Scandinavian objects at Rjurikovo gorodišče indicates that the Byzantine administration – here as in Denmark – was looking for mercenaries.

<sup>1</sup> Novosel'cev 1965.

<sup>2</sup> Mezenceva 1965, 96; Petrašenko 1992, 85; Suchobokov 1992, 24 and 43; Mychajlyna 2007, 151.

The Volga River, heading south and east toward Khazaria and further to the lands of Byzantium and the Caliphate, was the main attraction for the Scandinavians in the early period. The originally episodic penetrations of armed bands gradually began to take the form of a planned settlement, which may be seen through the finds of female oval brooches of the 9th century in the south-east Ladoga Lake area and the upper part of the Volga river. The Sarskoe hill fort and Timerëvo are the most characteristic settlements of this period in the Volga area.

The topography and character of Timerëvo, Michajlovskoe and Petrovskoe allows us to conclude that they represent large rural settlements typical of this region. Situated quite far from important waterways, they do not reveal any of the characteristics typical for local political centers. Natural resources such as water, land, pasture and hay were main attractions for the settlers. Contrary to Sarskoe, the unfortified Timerëvo, Michajlovskoe and Petrovskoe appear as settlements indicating agricultural colonisation of the Volga region in the 9th–10th centuries. We can assume that the social kernel of the settlement was represented by powerful farmers, Old Norse *bændr*, who could manage both the running of a household and the handling of sword.

Judging from the archaeological material, the exploring of the Dnieper waterway by Scandinavians can hardly be dated before the beginning of the 10th century. The emergence of an agglomeration of farms, a hill-fort, a huge cemetery and a harbour at Gnëzdovo on the upper Dnieper can be dated to this period. The appearance of Gnëzdovo can be explained by a re-orientation of the commercial routes and the role of the Dnieper as the main route of direct communication to Byzantium. I would suggest that the re-orientation of commercial routes took place in combination with a colonisation of new groups of Scandinavians, who settled here as both farmers and traders. Compared to Ladoga and Rjurikovo gorodišče, Gnëzdovo represents a new “Dnieper type” of centre. These new sites are characterized by the presence of at least one hill fort dominating the surrounding settlement area, a harbour, an agglomeration of satellite settlements and large cemeteries. The enormous cemeteries of Gnëzdovo may be explained by the unstable composition of residents, since some were staying here only in wintertime. The repairing and preparing of boats for the sailing season was probably one of the most characteristic business here. Jewellery and tar making were other important industries, but a considerable number of oriental and Byzantine objects indicate trade and exchange as the most profitable business at Gnëzdovo. Objects which might be associated with the presence of a local power are large mounds, the hill fort, weaponry, hoards, and the only pendant so far with the Rjurikid symbol.<sup>3</sup> Gnëzdovo is thought to be identified

<sup>3</sup> Beleckij 2004, 252, № 40.

with *Miliniski*, Smolensk, mentioned in the Byzantine treatise *De Administrando Imperio* and in the *Russian Primary Chronicle*. According to the latter source, Prince Oleg took the city from the Krivičians and left his administration here.

Despite the mention of the towns of Ljubeč and Perejaslav in this period, it seems that they are a pure inventions of the compiler of the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, because there is no archaeological evidence that they exist before late 10th century. Nevertheless, the flourishing of Šestovycja, Černihiv and Kiev fits perfectly with the here assumed orientation of commercial routes to Byzantium. It is thus clear that all these centre did not appear at the same time. Gnězdovo seems to have been the earliest residence of Scandinavians established by the Dnieper, though we have clear traces of episodic penetrations of Scandinavians into the south in an earlier period.

Until recently we had no direct evidence of the appearance of Scandinavians east of the Dnieper river in the 9th century. However, it has been suggested that the construction of the stone fortress Sarkel on the lower Don between 834 and 837, as well as a chain of stone fortresses along the river Siverskij Dinec', was initiated by the Khazars for their protection against enemies from the west, perhaps Scandinavians.<sup>4</sup> Now we have material evidence which supports this idea. One piece of evidence is a stray find – a fragmentary sword of type E found at Tatjanovka, on the Siverskij Dinec' river.<sup>5</sup> The second object is an upper guard of an H sword, also a stray find discovered on the Saltovo-Majackaja hill fort Majaki on the same river. Finally, there is a boat rivet which came to light in a cultural layer of the 9th century at the Majaki hill fort which belongs in the Khazarian period.<sup>6</sup> These few finds bear witness to two things: military activity and clear interest on the part of the Scandinavians in the territory of the Khazars. The last observation may be further supported by written sources indicating the presence of Rus' in the army of Khazars.<sup>7</sup> There may, of course, be other reasons for Scandinavian activity in this region. Passing along the Desna-Sejm, Siverskij Dinec' and Don rivers and the Strait of Kerč it was possible to reach the Black Sea and then the city Tamartarcha,<sup>8</sup> where a possible military Scandinavian presence by the end of the 10th century is attested by the pommel of an R sword.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Afanasjev 2011, 108–119.

<sup>5</sup> Androshchuk 1999, fig. 60.

<sup>6</sup> Kravčenko, Petrenko and Šamraj 2009. See also Archive of the Institute of Archaeology, National Academy of Ukraine, № 2008/82, 5, 14 and 36 with figs 11:3 and 27:10 and photo 40:7.

<sup>7</sup> Konovalova 1999, 221.

<sup>8</sup> Shepard 2006 and 2009a; Čhaidze 2008.

<sup>9</sup> I am grateful to Sergej J. Kainov (Moscow) for information about this find.

It seems that the emergence of Šestovycja on the Desna river reflects, at least partly, intentions to gain access to both the Dnieper and Khazarian routes. The site was founded in a place very convenient for repairing and equipping boats and spending the winter. Finds of complete and fragmented boat rivets, developed pitch making and smith production, as well as a large cemetery situated in a low place close to the water, support this interpretation. In Šestovycja there are a large settlement and a cemetery, along with a hillfort, which allows us to consider this site as a local centre of power. There were never any large monumental mounds here, but we know that such mounds were constructed in the middle to later part of 10th century only 14 km to the northeast, in the place where the early medieval town of Černihiv was founded. Šestovycja is a good example of the fact that a clear idea was not yet developed of what early towns or centres of power should be like. Perhaps ideas of a central place began to emerge only with the installation of the Rus' in Kiev. In the reign of Svjatoslav, who was planning to establish his seat in Perejaslavec on the Danube, the idea of a capital was still unstable and rather associated with a simple image about a place where "all riches are concentrated".

There are common traits between Gnězdovo, Šestovycja and Černihiv. Apart from a common material culture with a prominent Scandinavian profile, they are also connected by the Desna river, which has its source in the Smolensk upper land. The Desna river is approaching both to the upper part of the Dnieper and Ugra – a tributary of the Oka river which makes it an important communication route. Communication along the Dnieper between Gnězdovo and Vyšgorod in the 10th century is not documented by Scandinavian archaeological material. By contrast, the connection along the Desna River is well-documented by a unique golden equal-armed brooch as well as golden Byzantine coins of Constantine VII (945–959) and Romanus II (945–959) which are recorded in the vicinity of Brjansk.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, the Scandinavians came by the Desna River to the middle Dnieper area from Gnězdovo, and Šestovycja was probably their last station before departure down by the river to Kiev. Judging from the concentration of Scandinavian objects, various weaponry and Byzantine objects including seals, it seems that Šestovycja was the earliest residence of Scandinavians in the Middle Dnieper area, in function before the installation of the Rus' in Kiev.

The *Russian Primary Chronicle* places the appearance of Scandinavians in Kiev at 862 and relates it to the names of Oleg's bojars Askold and Dir who came down the Dnieper River and took over the Slavonic town Kiev. However, archaeology can prove nothing like this. In both upper and lower Kiev, the

<sup>10</sup> Eniosova 2009.

appearance of Scandinavian artefacts may be dated only to the second quarter of 10th century, i.e. to the time when the lower district of the town was already established. This means that any Scandinavian influence on the urban development of Kiev is very questionable. The central role of Kiev in this time is attested by the Byzantine *De Administrando Imperio* and makes it possible to conclude that it was considered the heart of what the Byzantines called *Rhosia*. According to *De Administrando Imperio*, this *Rhosia* was located on the upper Dnieper and close to the Pechenegs, who were a permanent threat and a serious obstacle on the route of the Rus' to Byzantium.<sup>11</sup> The land of the Pechenegs was only one day's journey from *Rhosia*,<sup>12</sup> which placed the Rus' in permanent danger. The Rus' did not deal with agriculture or cattle-raising, which make them different from the Scandinavians who settled in the south-east Lake Ladoga and the upper Volga regions. They bought cattle, horses and sheep from the Pechenegs.<sup>13</sup> The main occupation of the Rus' was collecting tribute from their Slav tributaries and sale, especially slaves to Byzantium.

This huge area was, of course, unevenly explored by the Rus'. A site of less importance seems to have been Nemogard (Novgorod), where the underage Prince Svjatoslav resided. It is significant that Ladoga is totally ignored in *De Administrando Imperio*, which indicates that for the Scandinavian elite "Outer Russia" was no more a priority. The new attraction was rather the south with its new towns (Smolensk, Vyšgorod, Kiev, Černihiv and Vitičev) and consequently new career opportunities. Despite the obviously legendary character of the tale about Oleg's raid to Byzantium in 907, the mention of his request for silk and linen sails for the Rus' and Slavs is important because it indicates that silk was considered to be a prestigious commodity. It is also noteworthy that the Rus' were among those barbarians who claimed certain imperial vestures, diadems or state robes in return for certain services or offices,<sup>14</sup> which indicates that there was some Byzantine influence on the shaping of ideas about status and social prestige.

The main reason for the installation of the Rus' in the Middle Dnieper area was an ambition to collect tribute from the surrounding tribes and exchange the profit with Byzantium. It coincided with the wish of Byzantium to get hold of wax, honey, grain and rare furs. At the same time, some parts of this trade were in need of special regulations, especially from the Byzantine side. Unresolved trade issues were probably the main reason for Igor's raid on Byzantium in 941. The 944 treaty was an important step to the successful negotiation of the

<sup>11</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenetos, *De Administrando Imperio*, chapters 1, 2, 4 and 42.

<sup>12</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenetos, *De Administrando Imperio*, chapter 37.

<sup>13</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenetos, *De Administrando Imperio*, chapter 4.

<sup>14</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenetos, *De Administrando Imperio*, chapter 13.

Russo-Byzantine trade. Judging from the large number of merchants in Olga's embassy to Byzantium in 946 or 957, her real merit was the development of the trade connections. It is not an accident that, from the middle of the 10th century, objects of Byzantine origin, including coins and silk, were introduced into the material culture of the elite of *Rhosia*. Moreover, it is not a coincidence that this elite established a strict control over the collecting of tribute, which apparently was necessary for the development of further trade connections with Byzantium.

It is accordingly reasonable to conclude that around the middle of the 10th century, the particular role of south Rus' became clear. The most important residences of the Scandinavians were Šestovycja, Černihiv and Kiev. From the very beginning these centres were considered as "Russian" because they were under the jurisdiction of the grand prince. Gradually a redistribution of some functions of these centres took place. Šestovycja was still operating the waterway along the Desna River and was also a place for spending winter, while Černihiv became a local administrative and political centre. To judge from the finds of lead seals, the tight connection between the princess and Šestovycja was still strong in the 11th and 12th centuries.

It might be interesting in this connection to consider the situation of Swedish Birka. I would argue that the decline of Birka in the second part of the 10th century was a direct consequence of the rise of Southern Rus'. The main attractions became the silk trade and other kinds of exchange with Byzantium. This business was controlled by the authorities in both Constantinople and Kiev. The social composition of the population in Birka consisted largely of people on the move who perhaps did not get any inheritance from their parents and were forced to make a living based on trade and military raids. The East could offer them better career opportunities and unimaginable wealth. It may not be a coincidence that Birka's decline is dated to around 970. We know that in the summers of 968 and 969, Kiev's Prince Svjatoslav invaded Bulgaria and was about to transfer his capital to Preslav on the Danube. From the Byzantine sources we know that there were Scandinavians and Magyars among Svjatoslav's warriors. After he had lost his position in Bulgaria, he was killed by the Pechenegs in 971 AD on his way back to Kiev. The remains of his army may be traced in Kiev, Černihiv, Šestovycja, Gnězdovo and even in single graves from the final phase at Birka, which contain belt fittings and weaponry of Magyar origin.<sup>15</sup>

The further widening of Kiev's authority west-, south- and eastwards was to some extent reflected in the spread of military presence in a number of sites in the rural areas of southern Rus'. Scandinavian objects such as swords, spearheads, scabbard chapes, brooches and belt fittings dated to 10th and 11th

<sup>15</sup> Ambrosiani and Androshchuk 2006.

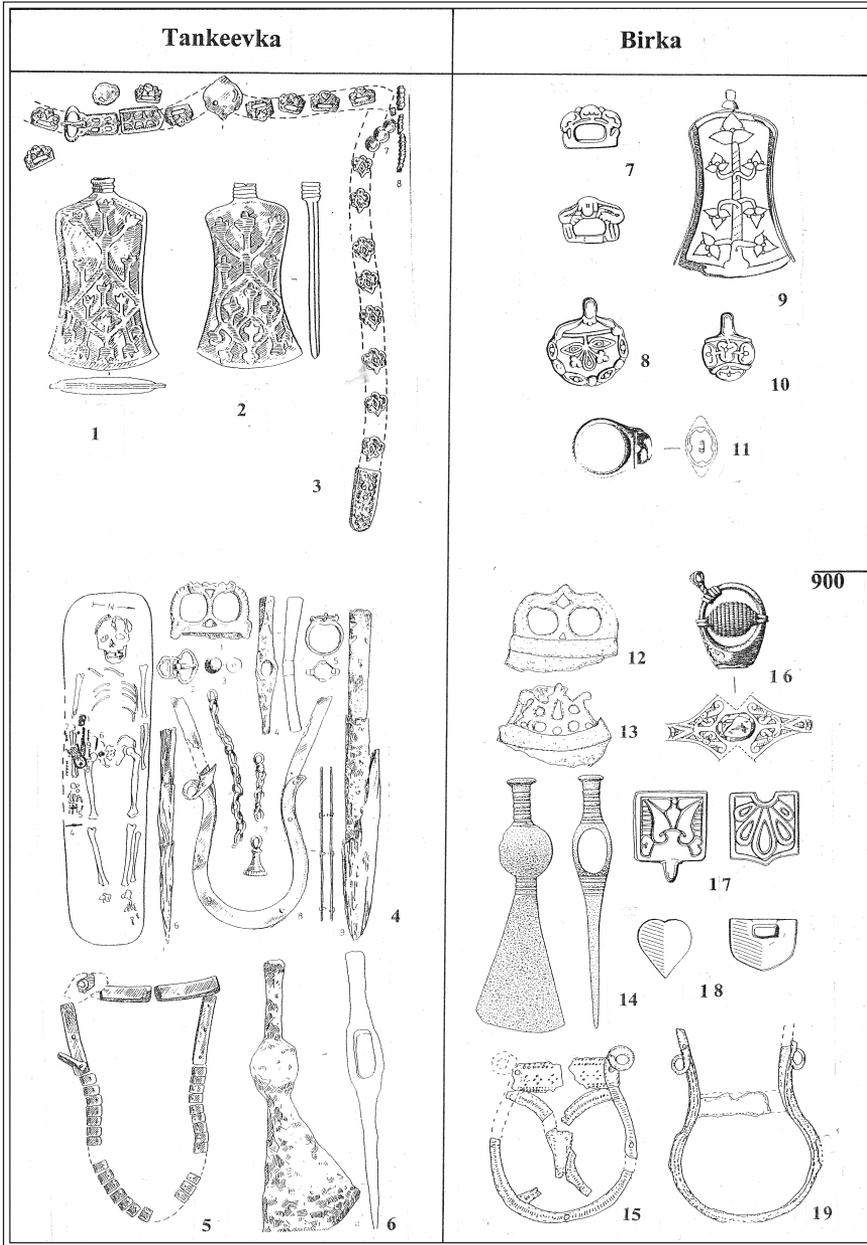


FIGURE 81: Objects of Volga-Bulgarian origin in Birka and their parallels in the Tankeevka cemetery in Tatarstan (drawing by author).

centuries also appear on these sites. It is important to underline the presence of both female jewellery and male equipment dated to this late period. The pattern of distribution of this material shows that the Scandinavian objects did not reach these sites by commercial routes; rather, they reflect the active participation of their owners in the process of shaping both a territorial and administrative structure of the “Russian land”. As we have seen, contemporary Islamic and Byzantine as well as later Old Russian and Scandinavian sources provide evidence for military and trading activities of Scandinavians in the East. Archaeological sources show that the real picture was more complicated and that the importance of trade between Rus’ and Scandinavia seems to have been exaggerated.<sup>16</sup> Scandinavian connections with the East during the 9th and 10th centuries are most conspicuous in Birka, where a number of items point eastwards.<sup>17</sup> The bulk of this material evidence can be divided into three main groups with regard to origin.

The first group dated to the 9th century is represented by items originating in the Volga–Bulgaria area (Fig. 81). The second group of artefacts contains a number of objects dated to the 10th century which are common for Hungarian graves of the same period (Fig. 82). The third group of eastern objects in Birka is represented by a number of artefacts of Byzantine origin, in particular coins and pieces of silk.<sup>18</sup> In some male graves, bronze buttons have been detected. These finds allow us to suggest the use of a type of belted caftan probably corresponding to that particular type of Byzantine garment known as a *skaramangion*. We know that *skaramangia* were given in payment at the courts of Byzantine emperors.<sup>19</sup> Along with dress style, some symbols were also borrowed by the Northmen when in Byzantium. These include cross-shaped cast motifs on a bronze mount from a scramasax found in grave N<sup>o</sup> 944 at Birka.<sup>20</sup> Ture J. Arne pointed to a possible eastern origin for a bird motif that occurs on some Scandinavian bronze scabbard chapes.<sup>21</sup> As a further development of this idea, I would like to draw attention to the finding of such chapes in association with both Byzantine and Magyar objects, for instance in Šestovycja<sup>22</sup> and Kiev.<sup>23</sup> These indicate that Northmen settled in these centres after they had visited

<sup>16</sup> Cf. the different view suggested by numismatics in Jonsson 2009.

<sup>17</sup> See e.g. Arne 1914; Jansson 1988; Ambrosiani and Androshchuk 2006; Hedenstierna-Jonson and Holmquist Olausson 2006; Hedenstierna-Jonson 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Found in about 60 female and male graves, according to Hägg 1974, 69–82; Jansson 1988, 636.

<sup>19</sup> Piltz 1997, 43 and 45; Muthesius 2004, 98.

<sup>20</sup> Duczko 1997, 300, fig. 4:3.

<sup>21</sup> Arne 1913, 382.

<sup>22</sup> Blifel’ d 1977, 147–148, 164–165, 175–177.

<sup>23</sup> Movchan 2007.

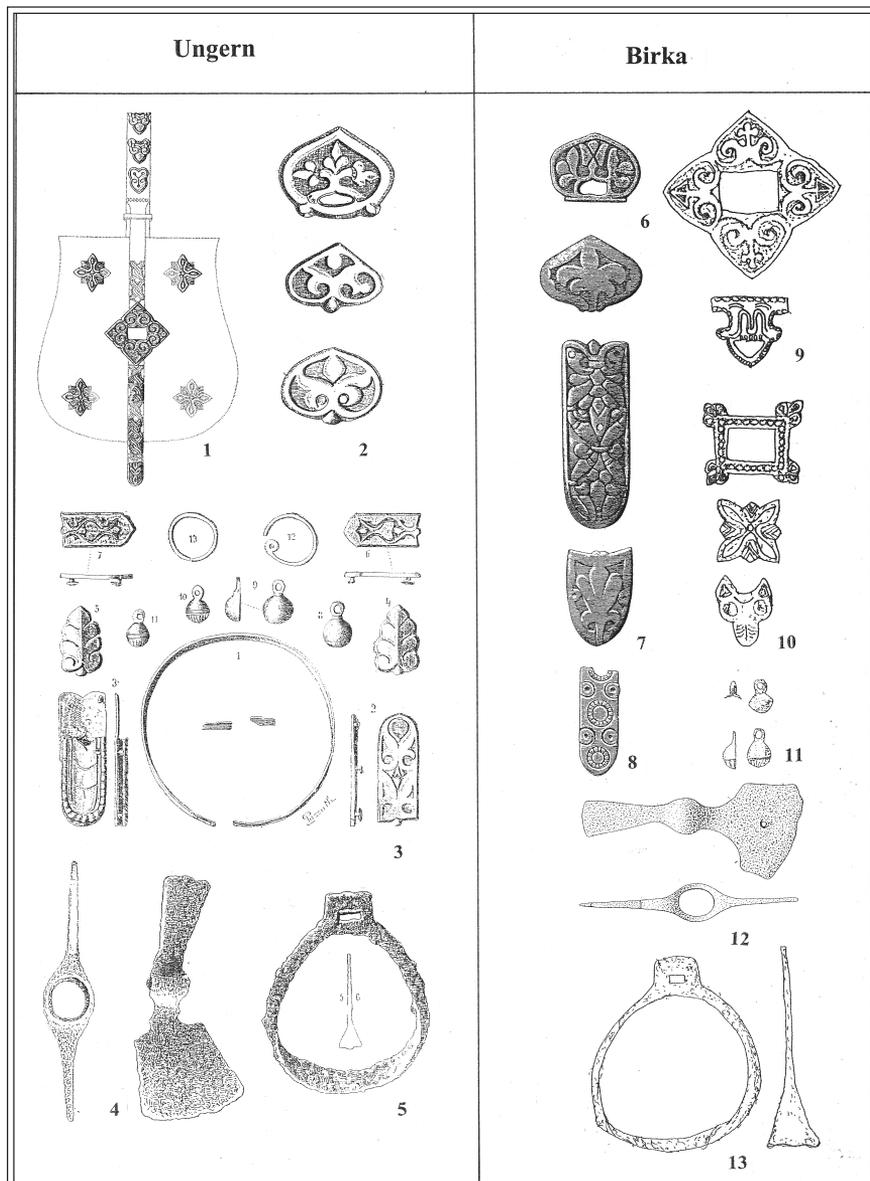


FIGURE 82: Objects of Hungarian origin from the Birka cemeteries (drawing by author).

Byzantium. To my mind the adaptation of this motif by the Northmen went hand in hand with the distribution of silk cloth. The *skaramangion*, which as we have seen could change hands as payment or gift, was sometimes decorated with images of eagles and other imperial symbols.<sup>24</sup> Every individual troop commander of the Byzantine army had a distinctive type of cloth corresponding to his “range”. Silk was used for military cloth and figures of eagles were very common on *skaramangia*.<sup>25</sup>

The fact that Scandinavian, Byzantine and Magyar objects appear together in Scandinavia and Rus’ raises the question of the feasible circumstances of these contacts. On the basis of Byzantine written sources, several suggestions are possible.<sup>26</sup> It is known that in 934/943 the Magyars were at war with Byzantium. In 945 they made peace; however, in 959 we learn that the Magyars were devastated by the Byzantines. At the time of Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969), Magyars served in the Byzantine army. Yet, by 970, they were allied with the Prince Svjatoslav in his campaign against John I Tzimiskes (969–976).<sup>27</sup> Thus Bulgarian and Byzantine contexts seem to be the most possible settings in which these contacts took place. In Bulgaria several bronze scabbard chapes and swords, which are common among Scandinavian finds, were recently discovered.<sup>28</sup> They can be dated to the time of Svjatoslav’s campaign or slightly later.

In connection with Svjatoslav’s military activity in the Balkans, an important change in the battle techniques of the Vikings is worth mentioning. We know from Leo the Deacon that Northmen served as naval troops in the Byzantine army during military campaigns in Italy (935) and Crete (945 and 965),<sup>29</sup> and that their first appearance in the cavalry was at the battle of Dorostolon in Bulgaria in 971.<sup>30</sup> The introduction of horses into battle was the result of a tactical contribution by the Magyars to the military art of the Vikings. It seems also that a new type of weapon appeared with the arrival of cavalry – the scramasax – which is mainly found in graves containing horses and objects of eastern origin.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Haldon 1999, 27; Muthesius 1992 and 2004, 90.

<sup>25</sup> Muthesius 2004, 92.

<sup>26</sup> Moravcsik 1970, 55.

<sup>27</sup> Leo the Deacon, *History*, ed. Hase 1828, 108; Engl. Trans. Talbot and Sullivan 2005, 158, n. 109.

<sup>28</sup> Jotov 2004, figs 13, 14, 17–19.

<sup>29</sup> Haldon 1999, 125.

<sup>30</sup> Leo the Deacon, *History*, ed. Hase 1828, 143; Engl. Trans. Talbot and Sullivan 2005, 187–188. Cf. John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum* in Wortley 2010, 286.

<sup>31</sup> Arbman 1940–43, 188–190, fig. 143:221–226; fig. 183:304; pl. 253:368; fig. 321; Blifeld 1977, 128–131; Androščuk and Zocenko 2012, №s 92, 125, 139, 150, 160, 186–187, 191–

It is important to underline that the process of adaptation of eastern cultural elements occurred in parallel with this process in the lands of the 'Svear' and the Rus'. Roughly speaking, it is possible to claim that in both regions, in towns such as Birka, Gnëzdovo, Kiev and Šestovycja, there were people who dressed in the same way, went on the same raids and spoke the same languages. Being constantly on the move, they probably represented a united front of apparently noble members of society, which confused others as to their homelands.

The common concept of what contemporary writers called Rus' (also termed by historians and archaeologist as *Kievan Rus'* or *Old Rus'*) as a well-defined area with fixed borders is a result of our familiarity with modern geographical and political maps. However, this view would have been alien to the people living in the Viking Age. There is no word in the *Russian Primary Chronicle* equivalent to the modern word "state", and even the concept of a capital town did not exist until the 11th–12th century, when a borrowed Greek word, *metropolis*, is cited for "town" when relating Prince Oleg's statement, proclaiming Kiev as "the mother of the Russian towns".<sup>32</sup> The absence of a clear concept of a capital in Rus' in the 10th century is emphasized by the story in the *Russian Primary Chronicle* telling how Prince Sviatoslav felt able to consider abandoning Kiev, and moving to the Balkans where "all the riches are concentrated: gold, silks, wine and various fruits from Greece".<sup>33</sup>

The Scandinavian penetration into Eastern Europe did not only come from the North. The context of the northern finds in Kiev, Černihiv and Gnëzdovo indicate that many people settled there after they had visited the Byzantines, Bulgars and Magyars. Their presence in these lands is marked by their introduction of a new type of dress, belts with decorated bronze fittings, and even weapons, axes and new types of bows, arrowheads and helmets. From a modern point of view it is possible to trace Scandinavians among long-term residents in both urban and rural settlements of Old Rus'. Functional female jewellery such as oval brooches and finds of some unfinished ornaments in Staraja Ladoga, Rjurikovo gorodišče (Fig. 83) and Pskov, as well as runic inscriptions and cult objects, testify to the fact that many lived there permanently with their families. Their tribal name had changed over time, shifting from Rhos/Rus' to Varangians.

It has been concluded recently that by the first quarter of the 10th century, some Scandinavians were able to speak Old Russian. The only basis for this

192, 194, 199, 203, 210 and 251.

<sup>32</sup> Toločko 1991, 15–16.

<sup>33</sup> *Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Cross 1930, 173; Engl. trans. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 86.

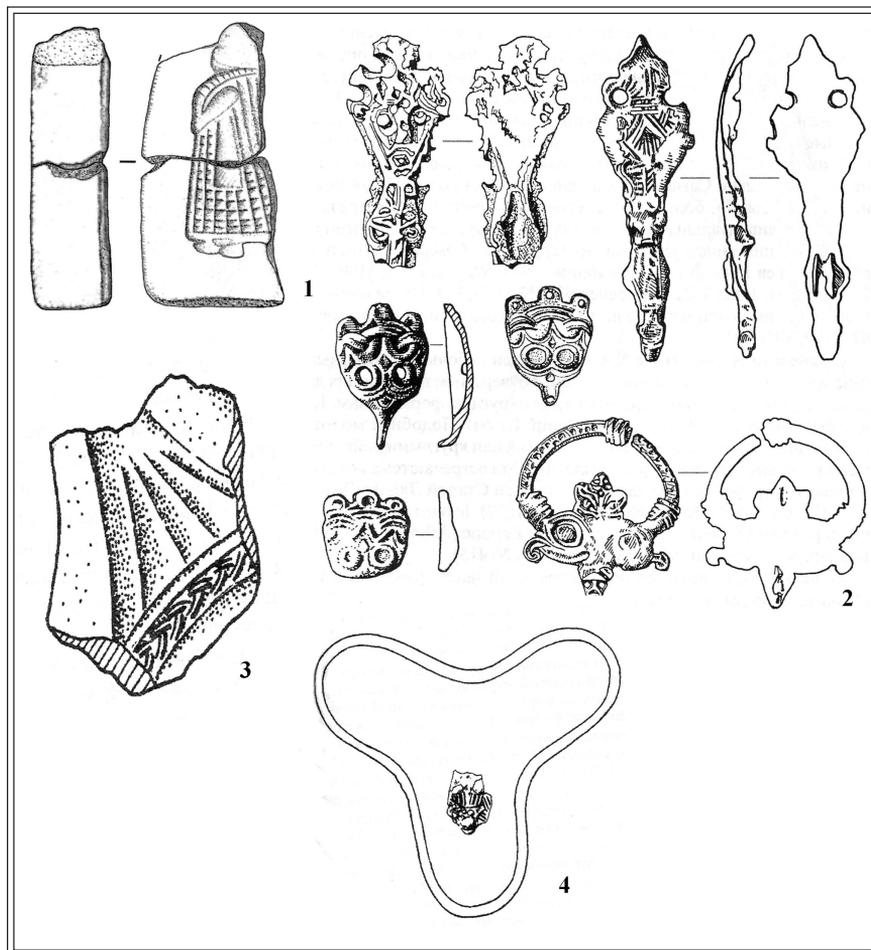


FIGURE 83: Clay moulds for Scandinavian ornaments and unfinished objects of Scandinavian origin found in Staraja Ladoga, Rjurikovo Gorodišče and Gnězdovo. 1. after Plochov 2007; 2. after Chvoščinskaja 2007; 3–4. after Eniosova 2001.

conclusion is the famous cremated boat-grave from Gnězdovo, which contained such typical Scandinavian traits as a broken sword, an oval brooch and a ring of Thor's hammer pendants, together with a Byzantine amphora with the Cyrillic inscription *gorouhša* or *goroušča*.<sup>34</sup> Despite the uncertain reading of the inscription, it is still considered to be the oldest in Russia. Nevertheless,

<sup>34</sup> Melnikova 2003, 456.

as has been shown, there were also other objects of Byzantine origin in this grave, which makes it possible to conclude that a previously inscribed amphora came to Gnězdovo from the area of Bulgaria on the Danube.<sup>35</sup> This means that there is still no good evidence for the existence of a bilingual milieu among the Northmen in the East in this period. Some scholars have argued that the most significant confirmation of the cultural assimilation of Scandinavians is that they stopped speaking their native language and ceased writing in runes.<sup>36</sup> However, Runic inscriptions on various artefacts from the 9th to the 12th centuries in Staraja Ladoga, Riurikovo gorodišče and Zvenigorod indicate that at least some Scandinavians held onto their native language.<sup>37</sup>

Other evidence of the preservation of Scandinavian identity is the personal names in Old Norse that appear in some inscriptions on the wall of St Sofia cathedral in Novgorod, and the birch-bark letters excavated there.<sup>38</sup> According to these records, the bearers of these names lived in the northeastern rural areas of the Novgorod territory and kept their Scandinavian identity well into the 14th century. On the basis of this data, it has been concluded that in these rural areas, the process of assimilation developed much slower than in the towns.<sup>39</sup>

Thus the Nordic identity of some of the residents in the East was preserved by these means, and even more so by the preservation of burial customs. Individuals with Scandinavian backgrounds became important inhabitants of the towns of Rus'. Some of them were obviously founders of rich boyar families. Their residences surrounded by family graveyards contributed to the shaping of particular cultural landscapes in towns such as Kiev and Černihiv. Being permanently on the move, the Northmen were an excellent social vehicle also for spreading Christianity into the aristocratic environments of Scandinavia and Rus'. With the coming of Christianity to Rus', some churches and monasteries were founded in or near their homesteads. The chamber graves, common to most prominent centres of Northern Europe, obtained a new symbolical and ritual value in Rus'. Their structures reveal characteristic features of the local building traditions. Double graves and chamber graves, in which the deceased is placed in a sitting position, suggest burials of eminent ancestors with the help of whom the new "homeland" was "settled". The great mounds in Černihiv indicate a knowledge of the rituals connected with the cult of Thor, the Norse god of thunder and lightning. This cult found an imported continuation in the foundation of a monastery dedicated to St Elias (the protector from thunder

<sup>35</sup> Arne 1952, 342; Nefedov 2001, 66; Gippius 2004, 185.

<sup>36</sup> Melnikova 2003, 455.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. 456.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. 462.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 464.

and lightening). In the south Rus' area, some Scandinavian descendants established powerful elite families but still maintained their original identity by preserving "biographical objects" which appear in their hoards.



A series of case-studies have been presented in this volume. They do not cover all important issues of contacts between Byzantium, Rus' and Scandinavia, but the choice of topics reflect rather the current state of available sources, my own professional experience and my personal understanding of what is most important to the field. My purpose has been to highlight the importance of various contacts and their impact on the shaping of local communities along "the route from the Varangians to the Greeks", as well as the emergence of the land of Rus' – a new political and cultural structure in Eastern Europe. I hope that this perspective will prove to be stimulating for further investigations from new perspectives into this old but still highly interesting problem.





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