

*The Historiography of Normanist and  
Anti-Normanist theories on the origin of Rus'*

*A review of modern historiography and major sources on Varangian controversy and other  
Scandinavian concepts of the origins of Rus'*



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*“The country of the Rus’ is an island in a lake; the island is a three days’ journey through forests and swamps, and it is a damp morass, such that when a man puts his foot on the ground it quakes owing to the moisture...The Rus’ go out to raid the Slavs in boats and they*

*take prisoner and sell them to the Khazars and the Bulgars. They have no cultivated lands, and obtain grain from the Slavs.”*

*Ibn-Rusta, the Oriental writer of the 10<sup>th</sup> cen.*

## Introduction

The term "historiography" has two meanings. Firstly, it signifies the writing of history, systematic presentations of the historical past of one country or another and its people, monographic research, articles dedicated to certain issue and so on. Secondly, the term historiography is used in a broader sense. It studies the history of historical knowledge, the history of science about the development of human society and historical thought as a whole.

In this thesis, my primary goal is to present the views and works of modern Ukrainian, Russian and Polish historians on the Varangian and non-Varangian (though Scandinavian) origins of Rus'.<sup>1</sup> These works are little known in the West, mainly because of the language barrier. By Ukrainian historiography, I imply Ukrainian 19th century historical schools in both parts of divided Ukraine: Austria's Western Ukraine (*Galizien* in German / *Galicia* in English – formerly a crown land of Austrian empire, in some works also called *Ruthenia*) and Russia's Eastern Ukraine (so-called *Mallorossiya* by tsar's regime). Most of Western Ukraine (the historical area known as Galicia with main city Lemberg, today's Lviv) had been part of Habsburg empire of Austria-Hungary from 1772 until its final collapse in 1918. Due to the ban on Ukrainian language in the imperial Russian part of Ukraine, much of the research concerning national life was concentrated in Galicia through 19th century.

My focus will be on modern historiography, since in the historiography of Ukraine-Rus' preceding the 19th century, source criticism is nearly absent. A review of the main

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<sup>1</sup> Why Rus' and not Russia: the term Ukraine (**Україна**) first appeared in 1187 as synonym for Rus' (**Русь**) in its narrow sense. Originally, the term Ukraine was used in a geographical sense to refer to the lands on the periphery of Kyiv (**Київ** in Ukrainian, **Киев** in Russian). During the historical development it had substituted the term Rus' (after term *Rossija* – **Россия** started to be applied for Muscovite state from 18th century onwards) used earlier in its nucleus meaning for what is now Ukraine. This is generally agreed not only by Ukrainian but also by major Russian historians, Rybakov for instance, as I read. While the artificial term *Rossija* (**Россия** in Russian) had started to be applied for Muscovite state (**Государство Московское**) after the order of reformist tsar Peter the Great only from 18th century, as noted. Thus for objectiveness reasons, it is essential not to confuse the two. This crucial difference exists also in Russian language itself, where two different terms are used: term "Rus' - **Русь**" for old Kyivan Rus' state and "Rossija - **Россия**" for what we know as Russia today. The first of these (Rus' – **Русь**) used for Kyivan state is not applied to modern Russia in Russian language at all. While in English, the terms got to be confused and very often are being translated and referred under one term "Russia", mistakingly mixing two historical traditions.

sources will be presented. Scientific application of sources and scientific-critical approach to research of history of Ukraine starts from the second quarter of 19th century and acquires a wide scale and scientific importance in the later part of the century. Due to the fact that Ukrainian historiography reached significant success in the first half of 19th century, a great part of my chapter, will be dedicated to this period. I will include a review of representatives of nationalist trends: namely P.Kulich, V.Bilozersky, M. Kostomarov, O. Partytsky, examining the views of a leading Ukrainian historian Hrushevskyy (author of 11 volumes of History of Ukraine-Rus') and his school, which has been regarded as Ukrainian "bourgeois-nationalist" by Soviet historians. I will also present Ukrainian historiography on the West, which was considered as a "falsification of the history of Ukraine" by the Soviet regime.

Russian historiography has suffered from a serious defect, which might be called a Muscovite bias and Russian egocentricity. Many outstanding writers persistently neglected peripheral influence on the general course of Russian national development. Thus, for instance, the Kyivan period<sup>2</sup> was most scantily treated, and some still treat it as a casual chapter, a mere episode that only served as a prologue to the rise of the Muscovite state. In most histories, the Kyivan era seems to vanish after the middle of the thirteenth century as mysteriously as it reappeared in the middle of the seventeenth century. The period between leaves one with the impression of a vacuum in the history of Eastern Europe. The period that precedes 1240 is often presented as a political dress rehearsal for the national state destined to rise in the North. Hrushevskyy like many other Ukrainian historians regarded the Kyivan period as an exclusively Ukrainian chapter in history rather than as a part of Great Russian or Muscovite history. Kyivan Rus' could not be allowed suddenly to disappear in the mist of the past, without accounting for the transitional period of peripheral areas. In the final analysis this model leaves no room for objective historical scholarship. It obliterates the historical past of Ukrainian people.

Talking about Russian historiography on the question, it all starts in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Several German scholars in Russian service, such as G.Bayer, G.Mueller and A.L.Schloezer (each will be considered separately below) developed the so-called Normanist theory of Rus' origins, as we know. Angered by the implication that Slavs were incapable of organizing their

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<sup>2</sup> Due to modern transliteration rules applied in Ukraine and abroad, I will use Ukrainian term *Kyiv* (**Київ** instead of Russian based term **Киев** - *Kyiv*). The same with Kyivan (= **Київська** in Ukrainian for **Киевская** - Kyivan in Russian; Lviv - Lvov; Odesa - Odessa; Zaporizhzhya – Zaporozhye; Volodymyr / **Володимир** — Vladimir / **Владимир**; Oleh – Oleg; Olha – Olga; Dnipro – Dniepr; Ukraine – the Ukraine for instance.

own state, M. Lomonosov's publications ignited a controversy that has continued to this day. The Normanists contend that Rus' stems from *Ruotsi*, a Finnish word for Swedes. The anti-Normanist explanation associates Rus' with the names of the Rus' and Rusna rivers in central Ukraine. Another hypothesis raises the possibility that the term is related to Roxolany, a Sarmatian and Iranian-speaking nomadic tribe (non-existent now) in what is now southern Ukraine, whose name is derived from Iranian word *rhos*, meaning "light". Each of these hypothesis has serious weaknesses, none has won general acceptance.

The list of Ukrainian and Russian historians who dealt with the subject is immense. However, here we shall also focus on the Western historians. The thesis will present a historiographical review of the Normanist versus Anti-Normanist controversy mainly in a classical period, albeit I will touch upon the modern stance on the issue. My goal was not to go into the controversy itself but to give a broad review of the historical – linguistic opinions and theories as for the controversy. My subject as outlined above is “Historiography (historical writing and historical sources) on the Origins of Rus'” and not archaeology or numismatics on the Origins of Rus', as I am not an archaeologist or numismatist. However, I will touch on the archaeological and numismatical aspects of the problem as well, due to their importance in shedding a new light on the problem.

In the last part I shall give a short review of Soviet period history writing and a short review of Western historiography on this issue. The Soviet concept and view of Normanist theory lacked objectivity and was ideologically biased. Therefore, historiography in Soviet Ukraine had no chance for an objective research. All can be summarized in a short passage from the History of the USSR: "...The efforts of the Normanists to present the legend of the "invitation of the Varangians" as the historically authentic relation of real events are also groundless. Scholars who have studied the Rus' chronicles have proved beyond doubt that the tale of the "invitation of Varangians" was invention of a Novgorod chronicler living in the 11<sup>th</sup> century Novgorod, when Novgorod people did invite to their city princes that were to their liking...Although Riurik and Oleh were of Varangian origin, the state was Slavic not Varangian..." It should be noted that in the Soviet Union (and to a great extent in modern Russia) the Anti-Normanist thesis holds the field, while outside the ex-Soviet Union the great majority of scholars adopt the opposite view.



I will use mainly the term Varangian (and not Viking) to define the Norsemen on the East. The major distinction between the application of two terms is that the name Varangian (*Værings*, *Varjag*, *Varyag* in Russian and □□□□□- *Variah* in Ukrainian) defines the Scandinavians who traveled east of the Elbe, while term Viking stands for a Scandinavian traveling west of the Elbe. It seems to be true that as the Russian scholar J. D. Bruckus theorized, Varangian means *one who walks*, or from this author's perspective, *one who travels*. Less likely however, is his assumption that it comes directly from the Turkish term *varmak* or *barmak* but it undoubtedly comes from some related language form. It is more likely that the Russian / Ukrainian term for Varangian (**Варяг** – variag / variah, adj. **варяжский / варязький**) is related to the Greek **Βαραγγοί** (varaggi, pl.) or **Βαραγγος** (varaggos, sing.) and that the Greek term itself comes from the Ancient Greek **Βαρβαροί** (pl., varvari) defines *those who do not speak Greek (barbarians)* which, in turn, came to mean **Βαρβαρικός** (pl. **Βαρβαρικοί** - varvariki, sing. **Βαρβαρος**) *one who is foreign or a foreigner*, hence *a traveler or some one who travels*. Whence came the Old Rus'ian version, *Variagi*, (**Варяги**) came into use, and is still seen in Russian as baryg (**Барыг**) meaning “itinerant peddler.” Thus, in Byzantium, the term *Varangian* did not only apply to Scandinavians, but anyone of nationality other than “Greek”. Thus there were *Scythians*, and *Boyars*, and undoubtedly many other nationalities and groups who served in the Varangian guard.

The Byzantine texts talk about the Varangian guard in terms of distinctive nationalities. There is reason to believe then, that Varangian was a collective term used for a foreigner in the service of the Byzantine Government. This name would have travelled back with traders and other Scandinavians who had finished their service, and were returning to their home land. This concept is substantiated by the Russian form of barbarian “varvar” (**Варвар** - spelled as “vår-var”) which is very similar to the Greek form of barbarian (**Βαρβαριον** - varvariòn). Thus Viking and Varangian are essentially the same term, meaning “someone who travels or is passing through” a term which may be applied to anyone who passed through, whether merchant, mercenary, or marauder.

A special accent is made on the Ukrainian (also Polish) historiography, as it has rarely been reviewed in the historiographical debate on the issue. I stress "other Scandinavian elements" due to the fact that many historians debated and linked Rus' origins with Germanic tribe of *Rugi* (from which names of *Rügen* island in the Baltic as well as *Rogaland* in Norway derive) as an example only. Therefore, I would not limit the review only to the writings on the

Varangian (one refer to it as "Swedish") issue but also to any other research done in a broader Scandinavian or Baltic scope. I will present also some background study and information, which is necessary for an accurate and complete comprehension of the discussion.

## **Chapter I:**

**Ideological background, political implications stemming from the Rus' problem and importance of the issue.**

The debate on Rus' and its legacy belongs to one of the most "painful" topics both in Ukrainian and Russian history. This discussion took a political form and "Rus' legacy" being claimed by "three groups" as their own: Russian (claims that Rus' was the start of modern Russian nation), Ukraine (considers Kyivan Rus' heritage as a glorious page of Ukrainian history) and Scandinavia (assumes that the Rus' initially was a purely Scandinavian formation). The ideological and interpretation and usage of the past is not a new phenomenon. The Nazis have made one of the most serious misinterpretations of the past of the Vikings, for example. For a more detailed insight into the discussion as for the legacy of the Rus', see the publication by Jaroslaw Pelenski: *The Contest for the Legacy of Kyivan Rus'*.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.1 The development of the name Rus' and its application

Before putting a question on Historiography of Origins of Rus',<sup>4</sup> one should answer the question what the term *Rus'* stands for. Which land was it originally applied to? Which were main attributes (such as language or territory) of this "nation"? Consequently, I would like to present the development of the usage of this term and its variations as well as a brief answer to question what was Kyivan Rus' as a state.

As we know, Kyivan<sup>5</sup> Rus' (often transliterated as *Kyivan Rus'* from Russian, note that is not the same as Russian in sense we perceive today) was a medieval state of proto-Ukrainians, where modern Ukraine lands played the key role, being the centre and the heart of this state, with expansion from Kyiv to the North, populated mainly by Baltic and Finno-Ugric tribes which were slowly being absorbed by Slavic colonists from the south. This northern Finno-Ugric element that influenced old Rus' language (proto-Ukrainian) gave rise to what we know today as Russian language.<sup>6</sup> The same concerns the modern Russian nation,

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<sup>3</sup> Pelenski, J. *The Contest for the Legacy of Kyivan Rus'*. Columbia University Press: East European Monographs, no. 377, Jan. 1996.

<sup>4</sup> In Ukrainian, Russian, Belarusian and Polish, the term Rus' is spelled as "roos'" with a soft sign after "s".

<sup>5</sup> Kyivan (Kyjivs'ka) is in Ukrainian, while Kyivan (Kijevskaya) is in Russian. Such terms as Kyivan Rus', Southern Rus' and their derivatives as southern Rus' dukes, Northern Rus' or Moscow Rus' that are constantly used are not more as a special invention, that aims to strengthen claims for Kyivan heritage. Term "Kyivan Rus'" is not found once in medieval chronicles. These anti-historic terms are anti-scientific in their essence. They were created by Russian tsarist ideologists for clear political purposes serving the goals of imperialistic policy.

<sup>6</sup> Ukrainian, like Russian and Belarusian, is an Eastern Slavic language. It is one of the three Eastern Slavic languages which is the closest to the original 9th century Slavic used in Kyiv before the more formal Church Slavic from Bulgaria was introduced with Christianity in the 10th century. Despite being watered down by

which in ethnic terms was formed in strong intermingling with now assimilated Finno-Ugric tribes of North East part of modern European Russian (such as *Muroma*, *Vepsa*, *Ingerians*, *Meria*, *Vote* and *Meshchera*). For example, since the 12th century the Vepsa history is intimately connected first with Novgorod and then with the centralised Rus' state, thus playing a decisive part in the ethnic and cultural development of the northern Slavs, whereas the Russians are descended from a mixture of Finno-Ugric and more northerly Slavic tribes such as the Sloviany and Viatychi, Ukrainians can claim Rus' as Ukrainian state and the land and people of Ukraine formed the core of Rus' state.

We cannot claim that Kyivan state was a common state for Belarusian nation, either. Belarusian historians deny that Kyivan Rus' was ever a monolithic kingdom, and assert that the North-Eastern Marshes (the "city states" of Polatsk and Novahradok<sup>7</sup>), were in fact embryonic Belarusian states in more or less constant warfare with Kyiv. Soviet historiography even denied the very possibility of a separate Belarusian history by asserting that Belarusians and Russians (and Ukrainians) were descended from a single 'old Rus' nation', that is the Orthodox population of Rus'. The Russian annexation of Belarusian lands in 1793-5 was therefore 'reunion' rather than (re-) conquest. While the history of Estonia or Georgia was subject to mere misrepresentation and distortion, the Belarusian past was simply washed away. Belarusian nationalists, by contrast, argue that the Eastern Slavs were always divided; intermingling between local Balts and the Kryvichy (Kryvichians) tribe, who founded the city of Polatsk, created the foundations the Belarusian ethnic group.

Rus' may be regarded as the earliest predecessor of modern Ukraine, encompassing territory that included parts of modern West Russia, Ukraine, Eastern Poland, and the Northern Caucasus. This state flourished from the 10th to the 13th centuries. According to the *Primary Chronicle*, the Varangian Riurik (Riuryk / Rørik) established himself at Novgorod c. 862 and founded a dynasty. His successor Oleh (Oleg / Helge d. c.912), shifted his attention to the south, seized Kyiv (c.879), and established the new Kyivan dynasty. The Varangians were also known as *Rus'* or *Rhos*; it is possible that this name was early extended to the Slavs of the Kyivan state, which became known as Kyivan Rus'. Other theories trace the name *Rus'* to a Slavic origin.

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Polish and Russian and being banned by Tsar Alexander II in 1876, the Ukrainian language persevered and is becoming more widespread. It was adopted as the country's only official language in 1990.

<sup>7</sup> BelaRusian names. Russian transliterated names *Polotsk* and *Novogrodok* are more known;

In Western historiography, terms “Russia” in English, “Russie” in French, “Russland” in German designates indiscriminately the Kyivan state (Rus’) from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Grand Duchy of Moscow (Muscovy) from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Empire of Peter the Great (who artificially introduced a Greek spelled term *Rossia* for the new empire, having adopted the name from the Old Rus’, i. e. Ukraine) and of his successors from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This has led to many misconceptions in historical literature and to a great confusion of ideas. For instance, originally, the term Rus’ in its geographico-ethnic meaning referred to Kyiv area and all sources agree on that. It should be stressed that *Rus’* was primarily a geographical and ethnic term bound to a certain territory in Ukraine. Let us take some examples from the Primary Chronicle to illustrate the problem:

Under the year 1152 it is said of the meeting of the Kyivan Prince Izyaslav with the king of Hungary:

- I. 1152 A.D. *And they went away, the King to his country, Hungary, and Izyaslav to the land of Rus’*. Or other examples:
- II. 1180 A.D.: *Prince Svyatoslav, son of Vsevolod...marched from Rus’ to Suzdal* (city near Moscow in modern Russia)
- III. 1193 A.D.: *Svyatoslav sent his envoys to Riurik (to Ovruch) and said to him: Come now to Rus’....; Riurik...came with all his troops to Rus’*
- IV. 1231 A.D.: *Danylo (of Halych) captured the town of Torchesk* (in modern Central Ukraine) *belonging to the land of Rus’*.
- V. 1132 A.D.: *In this year, Vsevolod went forth* (from Novgorod) *to Rus’, to Pereyaslavl’*.
- VI. 1141 A.D.: *Fleeing from Novgorod, Svyatoslav went to Rus’, to his brother...*
- VII. 1140 A.D. *Mstislav, Prince of Kyiv, summoned the Prince of Polotsk to Rus’...*
- VIII. 1147 A.D. *...Go to Smolensk...I order you not to stay in the land of Rus’*.
- IX. 1175 A.D.: *(At the moment of Andrew’s death) his little son was staying at Novgorod and his brothers were in Rus’*.<sup>8</sup>
- X. 1152 A.D.: *Yuri went forth with the men of Rostov, Suzdal and Ryazan to Rus’....*

It appears from these quotations that Rus’ is obviously a geographical term. It implies above all the territory of Kyiv. We see also that, the above cited cities of Novgorod, Ryazan, Rostov, Smolensk, Polotsk and Suzdal (all in modern Russia and Belarus) were not in Rus’.

<sup>8</sup> Paszkiewicz, Henryk. *Origin of Russia*. London; George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1954, pp. 6-7.

Nestor stresses the dependence of these lands on Rus' (Kyiv territory), contrasting these conquered territories. The bulk of the settlements in the territory of Kyiv were concentrated in the triangle formed by the Dnieper and its two western tributaries, the Irpin' and the Ros'). On the left bank of the Dnieper, Rus' consisted of two provinces: those of Chernihiv and of Pereyaslavl'. The southern and eastern boundaries of the Pereyaslavl' were fluid disappearing into the steppes. There is no doubt that the geographical notion of Rus' originated in the land of Kyiv, which was a political centre.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to its geographical and political meaning, Rus' had yet another sense, which referred to its creed (the followers of Eastern Church subject to the Metropolitan of Rus' in Kyiv) or *yazyk of Rus'* (creed of Rus'). At this meaning the term Rus' is used in a wide sense transcending all provincial limits (far beyond *the ethnic Rus'* Kyiv – Chernihiv – Pereyaslavl' territory) and even the limits of Eastern Slavdom. Another term which occurs in the sources is *the land of Rus'*. It designates the country inhabited by the Rus'ian Christians (very broad meaning).<sup>10</sup>

The remarks we have made on the theme of Rus' may serve as a starting point before we go into the subject of the origins of Rus'. The primary part of the Chronicle is the key to the understanding of Rus' history not only of the 12<sup>th</sup> century but of earlier periods too.

## 1.2 Rus' - Русь, Ruthenian - руський and Russian – русский: The difference

In order to avoid confusion, the most important for a western reader is to note that in Russian and Ukrainian (or руська - Ruthenian as it was called before) languages (unlike in English), there are two words which are often indiscriminately translated as Russian (русская), but which have quite different meanings. One is *Rus'* (where apostrophe marks a soft sign and corresponds to Русь in Ukrainian and Russian), which is the generic word denoting an abstract fatherland of all who speak an Eastern-Slavic tongue, are of Eastern-Slavic race, professing the Greek-Slavic Rite (that can be Greek – Catholic as people in Western Ukraine do or Orthodox as the rest of Ukraine and Russian does). The term *Rus'* (Русь) is of wide and comprehensive meaning. The other word is *Rossiya* (Россия) from Greek transliteration *Rossia*), is a word of restricted meaning and refers only to the actual

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 6 - 9.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 11 - 12.

Russian, as constituted to-day. The former word *Rus'* may be applied to a land or people very much the same as English word "Anglo-Saxon" is to the English or the Americans. From the word *Rus'* we get the derivative *Rus'kyu* (руський in Ukrainian, *ruski* in Polish), which may therefore be translated in English as "Ruthenian" as well as "Russian", since it is older than the present Russian state. In Ukrainian and Polish languages term *Rus'kyu* (руський, in Ukrainian) and *Ruski* (in Polish) are applied strictly as adjectives for old *Rus'* state but not at any case the modern Russian. And the derived from Greek term *rosiys'kyu* (російський, in Ukrainian), *rosyjski* (in Polish) are adjectives applied to define modern Russian state (Росія - *Rosija* in Ukrainian and *Rosja* in Polish).

In modern Russian language the term "Russkiy" (русский) is however used as adjective not only to the old *Rus'* (and this makes it confusing for Ukrainians or Poles) but also modern Russian and everything related to Russian nationality. Moreover in Russian there is also term *rossiyskiy* (российский, a derivative from *Россия* – *Rossiya*: *Россия*), which can never be translated otherwise than by "Russian" again, pertaining rather to a Russian citizen (it may be Yakut, Tatar, Bashkir or any Mordvin, who have nothing in common with the Slavs at all).

On the other hand the word "Ruthene" or "Ruthenian" (руський – *rus'kyu* but not русский - *russkiy*) seems to have been an attempt to put the word *Rusin* (definition in Ukrainian and Polish which was used to apply to define a Ukrainian person and which is stemming from noun *Rus'* - *Ruś* in Polish, *Русь* in Ukrainian) into a Latinised form, and the medieval Latin word *Ruthenia* was often used as a term for *Rus'* (Russia) itself before it grew so great as it is to-day.

Ruthenian (*Rutheni*, Русини - *rusyny* in Ukrainian, *Rusini* in Polish) is found for the first time in the old Polish annalist, Martinus Gallus, who wrote towards the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth century; he used this name as one already well known. The Danish historian, Saxo Grammaticus (1203), also uses it to describe the Slavs living near the Baltic Sea. These Slavs were Christians and the name was probably used to distinguish them from the pagans. The term Ruthenian was well known in the 11th century and its origin seems to be considerably older. It is something assumed to have been derived from the Latin name of certain tribes in Gaul *the Rutheni*.

The Ukrainians (Українці or Ruthenians - Русини in older definition) may well claim to be the "original Rus'ians". Theirs was the land where St. Cyril and St. Methodius converted the Slavic peoples in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and that land, with Kyiv as the centre, became the starting point of Greco-Slavic Christianity. From 988 onwards it was the religious and political capital of whole Rus'. Great Russia (what we know today as Russia) was then merely a conglomerate, of Swedish, Finnish, and Slavic tribes.

Very often it is considered that ethnonyms belong to political, abstract terms, which have broadly interpreted content, which may change according to whom and to what purpose interprets them. "Ethnonyms represent certain characteristics of those named. Ethnonyms bears also ideological function, serving as "appeal", "flag".<sup>11</sup> "National name is a voice of ancestors, through which they speak to descendants and generations, foster together into national community, which becomes an internal and external force creating its history and culture, by what it can cause interest and respect to itself. Connections of nation to national name are not formal but internal, moral, spiritual, full of love and coherency. Natural name of people is a base for its moral and school. Patriotism itself is related to ethnic group and its name".<sup>12</sup>

One and the same ethnonym may through historical times have served to define different peoples. For instance, the classical Romans, who consisted of a number of tribes, and subsequently created numerous Romance peoples: Italians, French, Portuguese, Spaniards, Catalonians, people of Provance, Romanians and others. Though Ukrainians' southern neighbours Romanians live on the far edge of the empire and Romanian language is far from Latin, still the name of their land means "the land of Romans". Similarly, a change of ethnonym took place in the history Ukraine. Kyivan Rus' became the issue of "passionate" and long lasting dispute between Ukrainian and Moscow historians, a dispute that lasts until today. The main question of this issue is: which people and whose culture did Rus' state represent?

It seems that the answer to this question is very simple. It is given in the name itself of Kyivan state. If Kyiv was and remains the Ukrainian capital and is a symbol of Ukraine, then

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<sup>11</sup> Etnonimy (Ethnonyms). Moscow: Nauka, 1970, p. 3;

<sup>12</sup> Shelukhyn S. Ukrayina – nazva nashoyi zemli z naydavnishykh chasiv (Ukraine – name of our land from the earliest times). Prague, 1936, p. 88;



Kyivan Rus' was Ukrainian state and Ukrainians are inheritors and continuers in modern times. But in reality the fight for Kyivan inheritance led to paradoxical results: Ukrainians not only lost their state but also Ukraine's original name Rus' was overtaken by northern winner - Moscow. Having named itself Russia (*Rossiia*) or Great Russia (Великороссия - *Velikorosiya*), the Muscovy (Московия) claimed itself as inheritor of medieval (Kyivan) Rus' state and claimed by this "sobiraniye zemel Russkikh" (*gathering of Russian lands*). Despite the fact that Moscow state historically represented different formation from Kyivan state, the northern tribe of Muscovites took over the name Rus' after the Mongol invasion, and referred to its ties with the old Kyivan dynasty.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Normanism**

#### **2.1 Normanist (Varangian) Theory – Short Introduction**

*The Normanist (Varangian) theory* is a theory that formed the basis for Normanism – a direction in Ukrainian and foreign historiography of the 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The adherents of normanism regard the Normans (from Scandinavian term of Norseman – a northern man in chronicles - Varangian) to be the founders of Eastern Slavic statehood including the Kyivan Rus'. The Normanists believe (the word believe is used here to characterize the intellectual atmosphere in the debate) in the Norse roots of the term Rus'. They regard the Norsemen to be the key founders of political and state life, first on the banks of Lake Ilmen near Novgorod and later on the slopes of the Dnieper shores in Kyiv in present-day Ukraine. The creators and founders of the Normanist theory were the German historians G. S. Bayer, G. F. Miller and A. L. Schlözer, who all worked at St. Petersburg Academy of Science in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The basis for the conclusion about the Scandinavian origin of Rus' (of state and name in particular) was a free interpretation of written sources, first of all of the paragraph under the year 862 from the third version of Nestor's Primary Chronicle (*Tale of Bygone Years*) about calling of three Varangian dukes (Riurik, Sineus and Truvor) to rule over the Slavs. The Normanist theory is based on the presumption of state creation as such which results from the activity of a prominent historical person (Scandinavian dukes, in this case). In the beginning, the theory had a political color by presenting the Eastern Slavs as non-capable to an independent state-formation process. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the key Normanist issues were advanced by the Russian historians M. Karamzin, S. Solovyov, M. Pogodin and Danish slavist V. Thomsen. At the change of the 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the theory underwent a significant modification in the works of foreign and Russian historians, primarily F. Braun, K. Pander, S. Rozhnetsky, V. Vestberg. Not denouncing the concept of a traditional Norman subjugation, neo-Normanist scholars (Germans H. Jankuhn, T. Capelle, G. Stökl, Dane A. Stender-Petersen, R. Pertner, Swede H. Arbman, V. Moshin, M. Taube, Y. Vernadsky and others) proceeded with new theories of gradual change of foreign rule over the Slavs, peaceful Norman colonization. A crucial role of the Varangians in the formation of the social upper stratum of Kyivan Rus' and their decisive influence on the development of the country.

One of the major Normanist arguments was that the Rus received their name from Finnish term *Ruotsi* (defines Sweden in modern Finnish language. Hence, in Finnish: *Ruotsilainen* – Swede, *Ruotsin* – Swedish, *Ruotsin kieli* – Swedish language, *Ruotsissa* – in Sweden, *Ruotsista* – from Sweded, *Ruotsia* – to Sweden). This term was adopted by the Finnish population in Finland and North East Russia (where the bulk of population in the Middle Ages was predominantly Finnic) from the Sweden's major maritime district *Roslagen*

(*Róðlagen* in Old Norse). The inhabitants of Roslagen were *Róðkarlar* (from *róðr* a rowing or pulling). In a modified etymological explanation, as suggested by R Ekblom and Ad. Stender-Petersen among the others, Rus' stemmed from *róð(er)s-byggjar* "the inhabitants of straits between islands" (from *róðer*).<sup>13</sup> However, there was no tribe or nation called Rus' ever known in Scandinavia, and it is never mentioned in any of the Old Norse sources, including the sagas. The last fact seriously undermines this theoretical postulate that has been taken for granted by many historians of the last three centuries. Also etymological link of Ruotsi to Roslagen was undermined with a theory by linking Ruotsi to Ruzzi, not Rus'.

Normanists also used the Arabic sources to advance their views, since the Arabs made a clear distinction between the Rus (ar-Rūs) and the Slavs (aṣ-Ṣāqaliba). Furthermore, the same difference was made by Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogennitos in his book *De administrando imperio* (written c. 950), where he quotes the names of the Dnieper cataracts in both Slavic and Rus'ian. Most of the Rus'ian names show derivation from the Old Norse language.

The *Annales Bertiniani*, a contemporary source that provided the next argument for the Normanists, said that c. 839 the Rhos envoys (Rhos vocari dicebant), who came from the Byzantine Emperor Theophilos to the Emperor Louis I in Ingelheim and whose ruler had the title Kagan (Eagan, also appearing in contemporary Islamic and later Kyivan Rus' sources), proved to be Swedes (eos gentis esse Sveonum). To oppose this fact, Anti-Normanists claimed these Swedes to be mere representatives of the Slavic Rus' dukes, specialists who carried out commercial and diplomatic tasks. That is why they were looked upon as men "of Rus' descent" (rus'kohu rodu / ot roda russkago).<sup>14</sup> This Anti-Normanist explanation, which maintains that the possible existence of Scandinavian specialists at the court of some East Slavic Rus' princes does not necessarily prove the identity of the Rus' with the Scandinavians and on other hand the explanation, cannot be easily dismissed.

More detailed review of these sources along with other related source material (and references to the primary literature) used by the Normanists, is presented in chapter 4 (subsections 4.1, 4.3, 4.4)

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<sup>13</sup> Stender-Petersen, Adolf. *Zur Rus'-Frage* (Regarding the Rus' question) in *Varangica*. Århus, 1953. P. 82.

<sup>14</sup> Pritsak, O. The Origin of Rus' in *The Russian Review* (July 1977), pp. 249-273.

The famous route *from the Varangians to the Greeks* served as one of key threads and basis to propagate the Normanism. This route had ceased to function effectively before the Mongol invasion of Rus' not only because salt routes had been cut off by the nomads, but also primarily, because the commercial interest of the territorial states found new avenues and better opportunities outside the old framework. The cutting off of this route by steppe peoples had contributed to the decline of (Kyivan) Rus' state.<sup>15</sup>

Criticism of the Normanist theory (anti-normanism) was initiated by Russian historian M. Lomonosov in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Russian-Decembrists, Slavophiles, and later eminent Russian scholars such as S. Gedeonov, D. Ilovayski, V. Vasilevsky all set forward a number of theories (Balto-Slavic, Lithuanian, Gothic) opposing the Normanist theory. This caused the development of the discussion at a new level. A strong influence of Normanist theory had been felt in early Soviet historiography but at the same time its scientific criticism was started by leading Soviet historians. A major contribution to simplify and reject the major points of Norman theory was made by B. Grekov, M. Tikhomirov, B. Rybakov, L. Cherepnin, V. Mavrodin, V. Pashuto, D. Likhachov, I. Shaskolsky and Polish scholar G. Lowmianski.

The Normanist theory had less significant influence on the Ukrainian historiography. The author of "Istoriya Rusiv" (*History of Rus'ses*) considered the name Rus', as a state of Eastern Slavs emerged on a local ground. M. Kostomarov in his criticism of Normanist theory attempted to prove a Lithuanian origin of Rus'. Neither Antonovych nor representatives of his school gave any importance to the normanism. Famous Ukrainian historian M. Hrushevsky defended the idea about "*the existence of Rus' in southern lands already before the first Scandinavian-Rus' duke Ihor (Igor - Ingvar) with his brothers came to this world*".<sup>16</sup> He argued that Norman theory is unnecessary to understand the emergence of Rus', but admitted a certain influence of the Varangian military organization upon the unification process of old Rus' lands under the power of Kyiv. His students and followers shared his views. However, some historians of "Ukrainian state school" agreed with certain arguments of Norman theory. Among these were representatives of Western Ukrainian historiography of 1920-1930s.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Illiritskiy V and Kudryavtsev I. *Istoriografiya Istorii SSSR (Historiography of the history of the USSR)*. Moscow: Publishing House of Social Economic Literature, 1961, p. 32;

<sup>16</sup> Hrushevsky M. *Istoriya Ukrayiny Rusy (History of Ukraine-Rus')*. Vol. 1, p. 624;

<sup>17</sup> Western Ukrainian lands were part of Poland at this time (1918-1939).

namely S. Tomashivsky, M. Korduba, M. Chubaty and B. Krupnytsky. Ukrainian historians D. Bahaliy and V. Parkhomenko that worked in scientific establishments of Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic maintained the positions of anti-normanism, as it was rather dangerous to be a normanist in late Soviet period.

Modern Ukrainian historiography represented by the works of P. Tolochko, M. Braychevsky, M. Kotlyar, V. Baran and others argue that the Normanist theory of origins of Kyivan Rus' has lost its importance. In favor of this view is cited the existence of proto-state formations in the Dnieper area, Galicia and Volhynia a long before the chronicle's account of calling of the Varnagians. A row of modern Russian historians (D. Machinskiy, G. Lebedev, O. Melnikova) share the views of Normanism and argue for the northern origin of Rus'.

In old Rus' lands (West Russia, Ukraine and Belarus), where statehood was brought by the Norsemen (from the Swedish Roslagen County) as Normanists claim, thousands of persons are still named Oleh (*Oleh* in Ukrainian, from Helge), Olga (*Olha* in Ukrainian, from *Helga*, **Ελγα** – *El'ga* in Greek as cited in Constantine Porphyrogennitos' *De administrando Imperio*, which will be reviewed consequently)<sup>18</sup> and Igor (Ihor in Ukrainian) - from the names of the Viking gods Helge, Helga and Ingvar. When Russians address each other as *gentlemen* (*gospodin* in Russian, while *pan* in Ukrainian), the word comes from the Old Norse word *husbonden*.

## 2.2 The background implications for the Normanist theory

In Russian historiography of the 18<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the concept of Normanists (despite its obvious anti-patriotism for the Russians themselves) took the form of the official version of origins of Rus' state. M. Karamzin saw even some special merits of Eastern Slavs because they "voluntarily had chosen" monarchic state administration in calling foreign Norman rulers. Such an openly anti-patriotic attitude of Russian historians had its political

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<sup>18</sup> Constantine Porphyrogennitus. *De Administrando Imperio*, Greek text edited by G. Moravcsik, English Transl. by R. Jenkins, Corpus Ffontium Historiae Byzantinae, Trustees for Harvard University, vol. I, Third Impression, 1993 (1948), Washington.

reasons. Soon after Peter the Great, the Russian throne had been taken over by a German dynasty. The Romanov dynasty in its direct masculine line died with Peter II. In feminine line it died with Elisabeth (Yelisaveta Petrovna). From 1761 until March 1917 the Russian empire was ruled by the German dynasty of Holstein - Gottorp. With the help of the genealogical equilibristics it was still officially called Dynasty of Romanovs but the truth was never a secret.

Tsars of this dynasty traditionally married German princesses. Peter III: the princess Sophia Augustina of Zerb (future empress Catherine II); Peter III: the German princess Sophia Augustina (future impress Catherine II. Both Peter III and Catherine II had been born in Germany). Their son Paul I married princess Sophia Dorothea of Württemberg. Their son Alexander I married the princess Louisa of Baden. Their son Nicholas I married the princess Frederica Louisa Charlotte Wilhelmina. Their son Alexander married the princess Maximilliana Wilhelmina of Hessen Darmstadt. Alexander III married the princess Dagmar of Denmark and the last Russian tsar Nicholas married the princess Alicia of Hessen. German origin of Russian rulers caused the alienation of the upper classes in Russia.<sup>19</sup>

The Germans in Russia composed only 1 % of the total population of Russian empire in the 19th century. But in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, they (the Germans) composed 57 % of the officials. In the Russian Ministry of Defence - 46 % were Germans, Ministry of Post and Communications they composed 62 %. The chief of the Third Department and police head O. Benkendorf did not know Russian at all.<sup>20</sup>

These facts help to explain one of the reasons why Russian official circles favoured the Normanist idea, as it could be taken to justify the rule of Germans in the Russian empire and their support for the Germanic origins of Origins of the Rus' state.

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*Constantine VII* (Constantine Porphyrogenitus 905–59) - was a Byzantine emperor (913–59). He acceded after the brief reign of his uncle Alexander, who succeeded Constantine's father, Leo VI. A regency (913–20) was followed by the rule (920–44) of the usurper Roman I.

<sup>19</sup> Nakonechny, Y. *Ukradene Imya (Stollen name)*. Lviv: Lviv I. Stefanyk Library - National Academy of Ukraine, 1998. pp. 20 – 21;

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

After the monarchic tsarist rule had been overthrown, the Normanist theory lost its political meaning for the Russian historians. Now, all the Soviet historians took the positions of natives and the views of normanists were instead denounced as ideologically harmful.

### **2.3 Original Rus' territory is not in Russia but in Ukraine. Two meanings of Rus' – ethnic and territorial**

It should be stressed that despite the wide common opinion nowadays, the core territory of modern Russia had never been called or referred as Rus' but Muscovy. Term Rus', on other hand, was applied to define the core of old Rus' lands (what is now Ukraine and partly Belarus). This false presumption had been popularised among through schooling, scientific publications and literature among the wide circles and layers of Eastern European peoples. It is hard to find a better example of deliberate falsification of historical knowledge than this case. Russian historians are well familiar with the fact that the territory of modern Russian had never been called officially as Rus' either during the epoch of Kyivan state, or in later periods. This fact had been generally recognized and agreed among the specialists and does not make any doubts or controversies. Russian scientific historical literature always acknowledges this, but the opposite view is given in Russian school handbooks, popular books, literature and media.

As in each multinational state, the name of Kyivan state (Rus') has been used in a double meaning: ethnic and political. Or, as later Rybakov writes, in old Rus' sources the term Rus' is represented in two meanings: narrow (ethnic) and wide (territorial).<sup>21</sup> While the name Russia, as Paszkiewicz notes got finally accepted during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and specially connected with Moscow, has entirely different connotation to that of the old Rus'.<sup>22</sup>

As noted, in the medieval times, Novgorod, Polotsk, Smolensk, Suzdal, Ryazan, Halych did not belong to Rus' in the ethnical sense but, following the faith of Rus', they formed part of it in so far as Rus' stood for a creed.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Rybakov V. A. *Drevniye Rus'sy (Ancient Rus'ses) in Sovetskaya Arkheologiya (Soviet Archaeology)*.

<sup>22</sup> Paszkiewicz, H. *Origin of Russia*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1954. p. VII (foreward).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* p. 176.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Anti-Normanism**

#### **3.1 Anti-Normanist Theories**

Unlike the Western opinion that Riurik's band (which is mistakenly referred as people) brought the name "Rus'" to the Eastern Slavs, anti-Normanists (of "native" tradition) believe that Rus' is a much older term of Slavic origin and had been in common use several hundred years before Riurik. Anti-Normanists used a couple of facts that serve the evidence that the word "Rus'" has nothing to do with Riurik:



- The Eastern Slavs never used word "Rus'" to describe the Vikings (including Riurik's band). They had used a word "varyagi" or Varangians (that stems from the Greek term Βαρβαροί - varvari').
- The word "Rus'" has been used by Greeks in their chronicles as long ago as II century A.D.
- Arabs in mid-8th century were very specific in defining the location of Rus' as a Kingdom on the middle Dnieper around Kyiv, in the lands of an Eastern Slav Polyanians tribe. Interestingly, the Varangians do not appear in Kyiv until 860 AD, in fact, their first arrival in Rus' lands is dated at around 750 AD in Staraya Ladoga.
- River Ros' flows through the lands populated by a Slavic tribal union of Polyanians at the centre of the future Kyivan Rus', in the area directly adjacent to Kyiv.
- When Andrey, the prince of Vladimir (city and principality in Muscovy) planned an attack on Kyiv, he said that he was "going against the Rus'". This and other evidence supports the opinion that even in Kyivan Rus', the word "Rus'" implied the Southern Rus' lands, namely the principalities of Kyiv, Chernihiv, and Pereyaslavl' (possibly, even Halych and Volhyn). Question then is why would one not use the word Rus' for Novgorod, where Riurik had taken up power initially.

**Local (Native) theory** – was set forward by Ukrainian historian M. Maksymovych yet in 1837. But its beginnings are rooted already from Hustynian (Hustynsky) Chronicle, 1670. The theory claims the historical connection between the term Ros' and such river-names as Ros', Rosava, Rusna, Rostavytsya (according to O. Potebnya). The Varangians are regarded to be military and commercial detachments consisting not only of Swedes. The Varangians represented a multiethnic group that included also Slavs.

**Iranian theory** – traces the name Rus' from the name of the tribes of Iranian origin – Roxolans (Iranian word rokhs means "light"). This theory well explains the early names but is weakly connected to the historical and geographical realities, as Roxolans lived on the Don

and the name Rus' was first used to define the lands around Kyiv. Therefore, it is dubious to consider that this name was transferred from Don to Kyiv. Basically, the concept is a search for a compromise with the Varangian – Norman theory.

In regard to the above noted Local theory, that associates Rus' with the river Ros' area, Soviet historian and anti-Normanist Grekov wrote: *The nation of the Ros' has nothing in common with the Scandinavian Rus'...A whole series of toponymical appellations derived from the root "ros" directs us clearly towards the southern part (Ukraine) of the Rus' state...*<sup>24</sup> However, the problem of Rus' cannot be resolved in the field of toponymy. The supporters of this method interpret geographical terminology with disconcerting arbitrariness and levity. The idea that such arguments could arise doubts as to the Norse origin of the Rus', verified by so many sources cannot be taken seriously, concludes Polish Normanist Paszkiewicz.<sup>25</sup>

### 3.2 Objections to evidence offered in support of the Varangian Theory:

Only a few "anti-Normanist" criticismsThe so-called Primary Chronicle is well known, and only a few Anti-Normanist criticisms need to be mentioned. First what is usually pointed out is its rather late date, the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, and the fact that it contains some anachronisms. For example, it lists amongst the various Varangian tribes, the English, which is out of place in the 9<sup>th</sup> century but fits the time of the Chronicle very well. After the Norman conquest of England, many English went east to serve in the Varangian Guard of Byzantium. Harold Godwinson's daughter actually married Yaroslav The Wise. This English influence might be perhaps at work in the legend of the "Summoning of the Varangians". It is somewhat similar to the "Summoning of the English" by Vortigern. In particular it resembles Widukinds "Res gestae Saxonicae". Perhaps a literary borrowing took place. The fact that Riurik is said to have arrived in the North with his two brothers also points to its mythical character. Other triumvirates occur in chronicle's legend such as Kiy and his brothers, the founders of Kyiv.

It is interesting to note that Von Herberstein, in his "Description of Moscow and Moscovy", offers several current Russian etymologies of the name "Rus'". One of these was

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<sup>24</sup> Grekov, B. Preface to G. Kochin's study, *Pamyatniki istorii Kievskogo gosudarstva IX – XII vv* (Monuments of history of the Kyivan state of the 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> centuries). 1936, p. 5.

<sup>25</sup> Paszkiewicz, H. Origin of Russia, 1954. p. 132.

that the name referred to a Prince Rus' so, brother of the Polish Prince Lech, who came to rule there and passed his name to the country. Perhaps the original legend said "Polianian" rather than "Polanian", the same word in different dialect.

Two of the statements the Chronicle makes are difficult to reconcile with an orthodox "Rus' are Scandinavian" stance. The Chronicle says that the language of the "Rus'" and the Slavs was the same. It also says that all the present population of Novgorod (the 12th century) was descended from these "Varangian Rus'" where before they were Slavs. This should have warned everyone that the Chronicle was either confused or was using the term "Varangian" in a different sense from modern usage, merely to describe mercenaries with no racial connotation at all. If that is the case then what the Chronicle has to say can be taken at face value. These "Rus'" were Slavs from the south of East European lands (Ukraine), connected in some way with the Polianian tribe there. In addition it has been recognized that the stories about Oleh (Helge) are related to the Scandinavian Orvar-Odder Saga, especially the section concerning his death (see "The Beginnings of Russian History" Appendix II by N. Chadwick). Some have noted that the Scandinavian names of his followers, found in the Treaties section of the Chronicle, do not resemble Norse names of the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> centuries but rather they are like the names from the Sagas. And it should be added that this treaty is written in both Slavic and Greek, not Norse, and that the "Rus'" swear by Slavic gods. This also points to a late, and probably mythical origin. The Chronicle was a sophisticated literary product of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, not a naive factual narrative. Like Geoffrey of Monmouths "History" it contains kernels of truth but viewed through the understanding and intent of the medieval author.

To fully understand what the Chronicle says one must know more about its author's patron and his political and family ties. The whole point of locating the "Rus'" in the north seems to have been to give in some way political primacy in to that region, and the "Varangians" were the device used to accomplish this goal. Novgorod had a long history of wishing to rule itself. Separatist tendencies were already established there by the early 11th century and by the time the Chronicle was written Novgorod was inviting Princes to rule over it without the consent of the Grand Prince of Kyiv. The story the Chronicle tells seems designed to establish Novgorod's relationship with the Russian Princes as ancient in origin, making the very existence of the Princes authority subordinate to it.

Outside the Primary Chronicle, very little evidence can be mustered to support the contention that the "Rus'" were Scandinavian. And that evidence is of a different kind than the Arabic sources, which support a Slavic origin. Specifically, when the Arabic authors refer to a Slavic "Rus'", they are talking about a large group of people while the evidence as to a Scandinavian "Rus'" is always speaking of individuals.

There are only a few pieces of evidence to consider. One is an entry, from 893 in **the Bertinian Annals**, which makes reference to a visitor to the Ingelheim court by men from the "Khakan-Rus'".<sup>26</sup> They were unable to return home because of the wars with the Steppe nomads and turned out to be Swedes. The fact that the Chronicle of St Bertin makes the distinction between Swede and "Rus'" shows the terms were not synonymous. And at this point we must look to the "Heimskringla" of Snorri Sturluson. In his tale of Olav Tryggvason he says that after returning from Russia, Olav always referred to himself as a Rus'ian. Olav had been adopted at the Kyiv court in Rus' (in present-day Ukraine) when young and spent much time there. What is important here is that it was possible for even a high-born Norseman to call himself a "Rus'" just because he had spent time there. In other words, the name had no racial connotation at the time of Snorre, ca. 1220.

Ibn Haukal, in the 10th century wrote, "Similar to 'Khazar' and 'Serir', 'Rus' is the name of a state and not of a city, *nor of a people*." As a state, the term "Rus'" would have been used by many people of many different languages.

The Princes of Kyiv used Norse mercenaries as much as Byzantium and many of these men probably considered themselves "Rus'". This can be seen in the next source that we are going to consider. The Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennitos, in the mid 10<sup>th</sup> century in ***De Administrando Imperio***, gives a list of names for the Dnieper rapids in Slavic and in "Rusian". These "Rusian" names have been interpreted to be Norse, though some have questioned that. The Primary Chronicle, in fact, says the language of the Slavs and "Rus'" was the same, and this "language of the Rus'" is mentioned nowhere else. At any case, he obviously got the names from somebody or some small group of people, as opposed to a

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<sup>26</sup> *Annales Bertiniani in Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi*. Ed. Waitz, Georg, Hannover, 1883. See also: French ed.: *Annales Bertiniani. Annales de Saint -Bertin, publiques par Felix Grat, Jeanne Vielliard et Suzanne Clemencet, avec une introd. et des notes par Leon Levillain*. Paris : C. Klincksieck, 1964. 209 pp.; English ed.: *Annales Bertiniani. The Annals of St-Bertin*. Translated and annotated by Janet L. Nelson. New York : Manchester University Press, 1991.

whole race, which of course would be impossible. This is evident in the names he gives for the "Rusian" cities. They are very distorted and show Norse influence. For example he renders Novgorod as Nemogardas. Its Norse name was Holmgard. The names seem to have been jumbled by someone of Norse speech. Once again we see how it is very possible that he got these names from some individual Scandinavian living in Rus' lands and calling himself a "Rus'", possibly a soldier from his own Varangian Guard.

Aside from this, the date of the *De Administrando Imperio* should be pointed out. It was written in 952 when "Rus'" obviously referred to the East Slavic Kingdom of Kyiv. It is dangerous to assert a Norse origin for the Rus' based on a document of this late a date. Throughout the 10th and the 11th centuries, Scandinavian mercenaries (Olav Haraldsson, Olav Tryggvason and others) were employed by the Kyivan Princes and so their presence should be no surprise. This is, however, no evidence for the Scandinavian origin of the name nor the state. One Arabic author likens the men who raided Seville in 843 to the *Ar-Rūs'*, though this is mainly because he recognized the similarity in operation of the two peoples, i.e. making war from ships. The Rus' were already raiding Muslim lands at this time and many Scandinavian mercenaries were amongst them. But it is important to add that the Vikings in the West are never referred to as "Rus'" and no one seriously suggests they were. Confusion in the sources is to be expected and all the evidence must be assimilated to make a picture that is realistic.

One of the greatest objections to the "Rus'" being Norse comes from Scandinavia itself. Rus' lands were well known to the Norse. They called it Garðariki, the land of castles or cities, and spoke in glowing terms of its wealth. The Kyivan royal house had a number of connections with Scandinavian dynasties.

Aside from Olav, mentioned above, St. Volodymyr's mother was a Swedish princess and he was married to another Swedish princess. Harald Hardrada, King of Norway, was married to a Rus'ian princess Elisabeth (Ellisif Jarizleifsdyttir), a daughter of Prince Yaroslav the Wise of Kyiv in Ukraine. Elisabeth married the Crown Prince of Norway Harald Harðráða Sigurðsson, a famous warrior who lived a long time in Rus' and who later became King of Norway. Her daughter with Harald Harðráða was Ingigerðr, who married the Swedish king, Philippus Hallsteinsson (1112-1118). And Elisabeth herself had King Hakon Eymundarson of Sweden, as her second husband.

Several other Kyivan rulers had Scandinavian connections. Despite this, there is not one mention in Norse literature of a Scandinavian tribe called "Rus'" in any variation of spelling and no mention that the "Rus' tribe" of Gardiriki was of Norse origin. This is rather devastating to the Norse "Rus'" identification. It is immaterial whether or not some of the early princes of Russian were Norse by birth. What needs to be understood is that the early "Rus'" culture was East Slavic in character and whatever a Viking did there was done in a cultural context already prepared for him.

Furthermore, the name Rus' was not originally connected with Great Novgorod or with Ladoga in the north, but with Kyiv in the south. Moreover, the Rus' existed in the Kyiv area from times immemorial. To support this thesis, anti-Normanists present two arguments: The first one is the toponymic: the existence of the names of several rivers in that area such as the Ros', Rusna and a number of placenames that contain the prefix of Ros' and Rus' and are strictly bound to the old primary lands of the Slavs in southern territories of the Eastern Slavs.

A further Anti-Normanist argument was the existence of "Church History" (often referred as *Historia Miscellanea*) of Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, a Syrian source compiled sometime inbetween 555 – 569 A.D. (long before the invitation of the Varangians) which mentions the *Hros*, or Rus' in relation to some North Caucasian peoples to be found south of Kyiv.<sup>27</sup> However, the Syriac *hros* (introduced into East European history by J. Markwart in 1903) proved to have no relation whatever to Rus'.<sup>28</sup> Rhetor mentions *hros* in the list of Hunnic tribes of the North Caucasus in connection with a Christian mission among these Hunns. However, the learned copier merely borrowed an Amazon episode from a Middle Persian version of the Alexander ballad, in which the Greek term *heros* (hero!) is used for the gigantic mates of the Amazons. In the Syriac adaption, this Greek term assumed thus the form *hros*.

The last anti-Normanist argument is that the Archaeological material from the towns and trade routes of Eastern Europe indicates that few Scandinavians were present in this area. The British archaeologist David M. Wilson take courage to dismiss the last point by the analogy:

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<sup>27</sup> *Historia Miscellanea*, often referred to as *Pseudo-Zacharias*, was composed in Syriac in twelve books by an unknown author who seems to have lived at Amida. Though the work was completed in 569, he seems to have used part of the history of John of Ephesus, which was finished only in 571. Certain parts were written earlier (or are borrowed from older writers), VII, xv before 523; X, xii in 545; XII, vii in 555; XII, iv in 561. The first book contains a quantity of legendary matter from Greek sources that are still extant; a few words are added on the Syriac doctors Isaac and Dodo.

*In England, the only town to produce really convincing Viking antiquities in any number is York, and this number has been rather exaggerated. Structures of the Anglo-Danish period in York are rarely found and even when they are, they are not specifically Viking in character. The other Viking towns in England have produced hardly any Viking antiquities. We know that the Vikings were there, just as we know that there were Vikings in Novgorod and Kyiv<sup>29</sup>*

### **3.3 New multilateral approach: Normanist controversy is out of question? Vendish-Norman – Khazar commercial interaction theory**

A few modern historians, such as the American Ukrainian Orientalist Pritsak and American historian and numismatist Thomas Noonan suggested that the whole Normanist controversy as for the ethnic origin of Rus' is not essential. Initially Rus' was a multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic trade union. In its attempt to establish control over trade routes between the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas, it had created a political unity named Kyivan Rus'.

Noonan claims that Rus' was a product of a number of different historical processes. Each of these developments left its own footprint on the society that emerged. Many of these historical developments stand out clearly and their significance has been discussed since the very beginning of Russian historiography. Such has been the fortune of the "Normanist" Controversy over the Varangian role in the formation of early Rus' state. Other processes were just as important. Among other developments Noonan lists: the impact of Byzantium along with the conversion of Rus' to Eastern Orthodoxy and the status of the Eastern Slavic tribes on the eve of the Kyivan period as well as their role in shaping Kyivan society.

The third case in point was the role of trade. The same opinion about multi-element and multi-ethnic origin of Rus' was expressed by Russian historian Lomonosov. Also Pritsak explains the birth of Kyivan state as a result of Vendish-Norman and Khazar interaction. The Khazars were a powerful people occupying the area along the southern flow of Volga and its estuary.<sup>30</sup> They (or at least many of their leaders) converted to Judaism, were eventually

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<sup>28</sup> Markwart, Josef. *Osteuropäische und Ostasiatische Streifzüge*, Leipzig, 1903, 557 pp.

<sup>29</sup> Wilson, D. "East and West: A Comparison of Viking Settlement" in *Varangian Problems* (Scando-Slavica Supplementum 1) Copenhagen, 1970. P. 113.

<sup>30</sup> *The Khazars* were a nomadic Turkic - Tatar tribe (who spoke a Turkic language) from the eastern European and western Asian steppes who settled along the southern flow of Volga by the mid-5th and 6th centuries. In about the year 865, Bulan, the Kagan of Khazaria, converted to Judaism. The ruling classes also converted soon afterwards. Judaism became the official state religion. The capital of Khazaria was Itil at the estuary of Volga. Itil was attacked by Rus' in 962. The Khazar stone fortress of *Sarkel* (Biela Vezha - the White Abode) on the

defeated and disappeared. Their descendants were either assimilated amongst the Jews or became Sabbath-keeping and “divergent” Christians. Knowledge of the Khazars is useful for several reasons. Evidence suggests that the Khazars were descended from the Lost Tribes of Israel. According to D.M. Dunlop of Columbia University, the foremost American scholar of the Khazars, the reason the Khazars are not generally known by the public is that the historical records survive only sketchily in Arabic and Turkish texts. Also, the thrust of history as taught in the schools concerns itself mostly with Greece, Rome and Western Europe. The Khazars were never a nation in the real sense. They were mainly a trading organization and a confederation. They were the law west of the Pecos - and the Volga, Dnieper, and Don for that matter.<sup>31</sup>

### **3.4 Khazar – Norman theory: Rus’ state as a result of the Khazar - Varangian impact**

The American – Ukrainian historian and orientalist Omelyan Pritsak attempted to combine two theories: Khazar and Norman. According to his concept, Khazars dominated Kyiv up to 930 s. The city itself was founded as a Khazar outpost on the western borders of the Khazar kaganate and the name Kyiv is derived from the name of a Khazar ruler Kuy, who established a fortress there. By the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Khazars started to lose control over Kyiv. The Normans took over the domination. Already during the rule of Askold and Dyr (first known Scandinavian princes, ruled in Kyiv during 60 - 80 of the 9th cen) the Khazar expansion had been slowly overtaken. Scandinavian – Slavic prince Oleh (Helge) freed the Siverianians and Radymichis<sup>32</sup> from the Khazar tribute. The Khazar tribute was finally overthrown by the Normans - Slavs during the reign of Sviatoslav. Pritsak suggested also that the name Rus’ was brought to Eastern Europe by a "Ruthene-Frisian-Norman" trade community.

Israeli scholar Yair Davidi (the author of *Joseph and Ephraim*, 2001; *The Tribes*, 1993, *Lost Israelite Identity*, 1996 and numerous articles in the magazines *Tribesman* and *Brit-AM* for the study and identification of the lost tribes of Israel) in his his discussion of the Khazars notes that when around the 700s the Varangians began to penetrate in the interior of Rus’, they were in confederation with the Khazars. It might be that the Khazar entity was

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Don river was created in the 9th century with the assistance of Byzantine emperor Theophilus. The fortress allowed Khazars to control Rus' trade routes. Sarkel was destroyed in 965.

<sup>31</sup> Dunlop D.M. History of Jewish Khazars. New York: Schocken Books, 1967.



referred to as the *Varach'an* (Warathan) Huns, continues Davidi.<sup>33</sup> The Israeli scholar also suggests that the name Varangian (Variag in Russian / Ukrainian) may be also derived from the Hebrew **בעיריב** *Beriah* (spelled as “Veri-a-g”) which name was given to a son of Asher (Genesis 46:17), a son of Ephraim (1-Chronicles 7:23), and a son of Benjamin (1-Chronicles 8:16).<sup>34</sup> In ca. 800 A.D. a group of Varangians appeared at the Byzantium court. They called their king *kagan* which title is considered to have been that of the King of Khazaria.<sup>35</sup> The title *kagan* was originally the Hebrew **כהן** – *Cohen* and means “priest” or “officiate”.<sup>36</sup> Pritsak went further suggesting that it was on the Khazaria’s Volga, that “the Old Norsemen most probably adopted the idea of *konungr* (man of divine origin) and the rules of reformed writing, i.e., younger Futhark, because it was suitable for use in a military-commercial multilingual pax”.<sup>37</sup>

According to the Primary Chronicle Kyiv had been founded by Kyi (Kyy) along with his brothers (Shchek, Khoryv) and sister (Lybid’), who presumably were the foreigners (likely to be Khazars according to Pritsak<sup>38</sup>) and ruled over the Polyanians. Nestor tells that the Polyanian natives of Kyiv told the Varangians that originally “there were three brothers...they built this town and perished. We are sitting [here] and pay tribute to their kinsmen the Khazars...” Originally Kyiv had been known as *Sambat* (according to Constantine Porphyrogennitos). This name (explained ethymologically as of Khazar origin) links it to the Lost Ten Tribes.<sup>39</sup> Davidi presumes, that in the beginnings Kyiv Varangians acknowledged Khazar suzerainty. In the meantime as amongst the Varangians of Kyiv Christianity had been spreading and the Varangians were intermarrying with the Slavs, the Slavic elements were entering Varangian ranks, the Varangians-Slavs became hostile to the Khazars. Abraham Polak was a foremost scholar of Khazar history. He wrote an authoritative work (in Hebrew) about them and considered them essentially an offshoot of the Goths.<sup>40</sup> Thus, according to Polak the Scandinavian element amongst the Varangians was basically pro-Khazar whereas the Slavic one was not. The more Christian and Slavicised the Varangians became the more

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<sup>32</sup> *Siverinians*, also *Siverianie / Severyanye* and *Radymichi* - Eastern Slavic tribes

<sup>33</sup> Vernadsky G. History of Russia. Vol. 1, New Heaven, 1955;

<sup>34</sup> Davidi, Yair, *The Tribes: The Israelite Origins of Western Peoples*. Hebron: Russell-Davis Publishers, 1993; See also: Koestler, Arthur. *The Thirteenth Tribe*. London, 1976. p. 147;

<sup>35</sup> Vernadsky, “The Origins of Russia”, p.244;

<sup>36</sup> Davidi, Y., 1993;

<sup>37</sup> Pritsak, O. *The Origins of Rus’*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981. p. 582. See also pp. 232 – 236;

<sup>38</sup> Pritsak, O., 1981, pp. 68 – 69;

<sup>39</sup> Davidi, Y., 1993.

<sup>40</sup> Polak, Abraham. *Kazaria: Toldot mamlaka yehudit be-eropa* [Khazaria: The History of a Jewish Kingdom in Europe] Tel Aviv: Mossad Bialik and Massada, 1943.

distance they kept from Khazar alliance. Itil, one of the Khazar capitals was attacked by the Varangian-Rus in 962-963 and again by the Turks in 965. After these attacks the Khazar steppes became dominated by the Turks and Mongolians. Khazaria was never the same after the Rus and Turkish attacks but some degree of partial recovery may have been achieved.<sup>41</sup>

In 2002, a coin from the Viking "Spillings Hoard" (Spilling, Gotland) was identified as having been struck by Jewish Khazars, due to its markings and its inscription *Moses is the messenger of God* in place of the usual Muslim inscription *Muhammad is the messenger of God*. It can be connected to an issue of coins with the name of the mint, *Ard al-Khazar* (the land of the Khazars), as a part of its stamp. The coin is an imitation of Arabic coinage and contains the fictitious mintmark *Madinat as-Salam 779-80*. Some of them have been examined and classified by Gert Rispling, Orientalist at the County Museum of Gotland. The unique coin was discovered during this task. Numismatist concludes that it was actually minted between about 830 and 840 in Khazaria. The finding had a big resonance around the world and it has been on display at The Museum of National Antiquities in Stockholm.<sup>42</sup>

As far as Kyiv is concerned, some historians (Pritsak in particular) claim it to be originally founded by Khazars, not by the Varangians or Slavs. Snorri's Tyrkland indeed existed: it was the Turkic Khazar Kaganate, that was responsible for the thousands of cufic coins found in Scandinavia, concludes Pritsak.<sup>43</sup> This numismatic evidence is unquestionably strong to make Old Norse - Khazarian relations a true historical event that both historians and archaeologists can agree to. That is why Ari Thorgilsson inn fróði (d. 1148) in his *Íslendingabók* may possibly have had a basis to start his genealogical description with a *Tyrkja konungr*, that is, with a Khazar emperor. When in his *Íslendingabók* (written ca. 1120 – 1130) Thorgilsson mentioned Yngvi (the god Yngvi-Freyr) as the progenitor of the colorful Ynglingar dynasty, he referred to him as *Tyrkjakonungr* (king of the Turks).<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> See Sweden's Viking Heritage Website at: <http://viking.hgo.se/Files/Sweden/Gotland/spillingscoin.html>

<sup>43</sup> Pritsak O., 1981, pp. 239 – 244;

<sup>44</sup> Ari Thorgilsson inn fróði. *Íslendingabók*. The book of the Icelanders. Edited and translated with an introductory essay and notes by Halldor Hermannsson. New York: Kraus Reprint, 1966. 89 pp. See also: Pritsak, Omeljan. *The Origins of Rus'*. Cambridge: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute - Harvard University Press, 1981. Pp. 182, 237, 239, 242.

## Chapter 4

### Major Sources

#### 4.1 Primary Chronicle (*Повість Минувших Літ* – *Tale of Bygone Years*) - as the main source

The beginnings of chronicle writing in Rus' have very deep roots. But we do not have preserved the most ancient manuscripts that emerged yet in the first half of 11th century. The earliest manuscript that we have is "Povest Vremennykh Let" (*Повість Минувших Літ* - *Tale of Bygone Years* or *Primary Chronicle* as it is mainly known in English literature) which dates from early 12th century and relates the historical events up to the first decade of the same century.<sup>45</sup>

The well-studied Primary Chronicle constitutes the first major component of both the Laurentian Codex and the Hypatian Codex and amounts to 283 columns in each of the

printed editions and embraces the period from the year 852 to 1110 (a total of 258). While the Kyivan Chronicle for example comprising 431 columns and covering a period of about 80 years, has received inadequate attention in scholarship.<sup>46</sup>

This compilation is known in a row of chronicle collections that are preserved in codices among which the best and the oldest one is "Laurentian" (*Lavyrentyevskiy* in Russian / *Lavrentiivs'kyi* in Ukrainian, 1377) codex. It contains north Rus' chronicle compilation that relates the events of Suzdal lands until 1305. Along with Laurentian Codex, we also have already mentioned Hypatian (*Ипатьевский* - *Ipatyevskiy*) Codex from the 20s of 15th century. Hypatian Codex includes Primary Chronicle and also south Rus' compilation which presents the events of Kyivan and Galician-Volhynian lands up to 1292. Among copies from the third decade of 14th century, we also have Novgorod chronicle compilation that narrates the history of North Western Rus' lands.<sup>47</sup>

The emergence of the Primary Chronicle was preceded by the formation of the historical knowledge among Eastern Slavs in the form of legends, tales, separate written records, first copies of chronicles (which are not preserved, but were used by the authors of the Primary Chronicle). The emergence of this chronicle coincides with the period of greatest political and cultural flourish of Kyivan state.

Since the Primary Chronicle incorporated a great deal of legendary material, tales and stories, it is of a great interest for any historian researching old Rus' literature. It reflects oral poetic traditions about different historical personalities who in many cases are refurbished with the motives and elements from the legacy of international wanderers' and vagrant tales.

The authorship of the chronicle is attributed traditionally to the names of learned monks of Kyivan monasteries such as Nestor (*Нестор Лѣтописецъ*, first version) and Sylvestre (*Сильвестер*, second version)

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<sup>45</sup> The Russian Primary Chronicle. In *The Medieval Academy of America*. Publication No. 60 English translation and commentary by Hazzard Cross, Samuel and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, Olgerd P. Cambridge: Medieval Academy, 1953.

<sup>46</sup> Pelenski J. *The Contest for the Legacy of Kyivan Rus'*. New Yor: East European Monographs, Boulder, 1998, pp. 194 - 195;

<sup>47</sup> *Khrestomatiya po drevney Rus'skoy Literature (Anthology of old Rus' literature)*, compiled by N.M. Gudziy. Moscow: Uchpedgiz, 1947, p. 82.

The greatest Ukrainian historian Hrushevsky considered that *Hypatian Codex of Primary Chronicle* was written by the Ukrainian who presented the oldest history of Ukrainian lands. With this he initiated the start of Ukrainian historiography. However the author of the Laurentian copy of Primary Chronicle was a Russian according to Hrushevsky. Thus he considered the Hypatian version as a southern one and Laurentian as a northern one. However, no matter where the codices were copied, both of them had been compiled in Kyiv originally.<sup>48</sup>

As Russian historian K.N. Bestuzhev-Ryumin noted the Primary Chronicle represents "the archives that contains the traces of works of primary literature of our lands".

The Primary Chronicle includes **Русь** - Rus' among the Varangian (barbarian or foreign) peoples from beyond the sea, the **Свіе** - Svie (Swedes), **Урмане** - Urmanie (Norwegians), **Анѣглыне** – Angljane (Englishmen) and **Готе** - Gote (Goths). This was an argument for the Normanists.<sup>49</sup>

Primary Chronicle has also a great number of references as to the Varangians. That chronicle states, among other things, the following:

*"The Volga...flows to the east and discharges through seventy mouths into the Caspian Sea...Along the river Oka (which flows into the Volga) the Muroma, the Cheremissians, and the Mordva preserve their native languages... The following are other tribes which pay tribute to Rus': Chud', Meria, Ves', Muroma, Cheremis', Mordva...After two years, Sineus and his brother Truvor died and Riurik assumed the sole authority. He assigned cities to his followers, Polotsk to one, Rostov to another, and to another Beloozero. In these cities there are thus Varangian colonists, but the first settlers were: in Novgorod, Slavs; in Polotsk, Krivichians; at Beloozero, Ves'; in Rostov, Merians; and in Murom, Muromians. Riurik had dominion over all these districts"*

So we may presume that the Varangians were the colonists among the native population (as we see mostly non-Slavic one!) of northern Rus' lands in the cities listed above. This passage (along with other similar ones) was quite skillfully "accustomed and

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<sup>48</sup> Kovalenko L.A. Istoriohrafiya istoriyi Ukrayinskoyi RSR (*Historiography of the History of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic*). Kyiv: Vyshcha Shkola, 1983, pp. 10 - 11;

<sup>49</sup> Pritsak, O. *The Origins of Rus'*. Harvard University Press, 1981, p. 5.

adjusted” by the compilers of the Muscovite chronicles. Muscovite bookmen, however, readjusted the geographic boundaries of the tribute-paying areas from the Oka to the river Kama and expanded them along the Volga to the Caspian Sea without naming the individual tribes with other changes as an attempt to substantiate Muscovite imperial ambitions.<sup>50</sup>

In the center of historical narrative of Primary Chronicle we find Kyiv and Kyivan dukes. Along with this, the chronicle also includes the stories related to other areas of Kyivan dominion (Novgorod, Chernihiv, Suzdal lands etc). We find many citations from the Bible in it as well as other details of church history and miracles.<sup>51</sup>

Primary Chronicle continuously speaks of the “Rus’” and of the “Slavs”. These two terms are closely related, they figure side by side and react upon one another, and yet they differ fundamentally. Nestor derives the Riurikides from Scandinavia, but some historians doubt the truthfulness of this version, because the Norse sagas are silent on the Norse descent of the princes of Rus’.

Soviet historian Grekov considered that “the chronicler (Nestor), being the representative of a certain class, has a political viewpoint of his own.”<sup>52</sup>

## 4.2 The Chronicle of Novgorod

Chronicle writing in Novgorod started at a very early stage, obviously before the 11th century. There are many indications in the Primary Chronicle (from 1110) that demonstrate that monk Nestor (author of Primary Chronicle) used a number of items from Novgorod chronicle. As an example, Nestor writes that in 1063 Volkhov flowed backwards for six days foreboding disaster, and four years later Novgorod was burned by the Prince Vseslav of Polovtsk. Shakhmatov concludes that this information could have reached Kyiv (where the Primary Chronicle was composed) only through the channel of a Novgorod chronicle and presumes that the latter was probably composed and kept in the Bishop’s Palace. Also

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<sup>50</sup> Pelenski J, 1998, pp. 194 - 195;

<sup>51</sup> Illiritskiy V and Kudryavtsev I. *Istoriografiya Istorii SSSR (Historiography of the history of the USSR)*. Moscow: Publishing House of Social Economic Literature, 1961, p. 32.

<sup>52</sup> Grekov, B. *Pervyy Trud po istorii Rossii* (First work on the History of Russia) in *Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, Moscow, 1943 (11 – 12), p. 66.

because the entries in the Chronicle from the 12th to the 15th centuries largely relate to the Archbishop of Novgorod.

After having analyzed the text of the Chronicle of Novgorod in the Synodal and other transcripts, Shakhmatov suggests that in 1167 the archiepiscopal chronicle was rearranged as an historical compilation on a larger scale. The basis for this were formed by incorporation in it of the text of Primary Chronicle and adding to this all the annual events made in Novgorod. The Synodal Transcript<sup>53</sup> had as its foundation, an historical compilation put together by a priest of Novgorod Church of St James, one Herman Voyata, since the author speaks of himself in the entry for A.D. 1144 (when he was appointed priest). Many consequent rearrangement were made to this chronicle:

During 1330-1335 new rearrangement of the archiepiscopal chronicle undertaken probably on the initiative of Archbishop Basil 1420-30 fresh rearrangement of Basil's compilation enlarged by annual entries made uninterruptedly at the Archbishop's Court. 15th century rearrangements resulted in a new Commission Transcript (belonging to the Imperial Archaeological Commission), Academy Transcript (belonging to the Imperial Academy of Sciences) and Tolstoi Transcript (belonging to the Imperial Public Library).

I will present a short overview of passages on the Varangians and Svei (*Свей* - the Swedes). The chronicle itself begins with this story:

*A.D. 1016...Yaroslav kept many Varangians in Novgorod, fearing war and the Varangians began to commit violence against the wives of the townsmen. The man of Novgorod said: "We cannot look upon this violence" and they gathered by night, and fell upon and killed the Varangians in Pomoron's Court...Prince Yaroslav hearing of this gathered a thousand of soldiers in Slavno (quarter of Novgorod) and by craft falling on those who had killed the Varangians, he killed them"*<sup>54</sup>

Later, the chronicle speaks of prince Yaroslav (Ярослав) going against prince Svyatopolk (Святополк) in Kyiv (who established himself in Kyiv after the death of Great

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<sup>53</sup> So called because in the possession of the Synodal Library in Moscow.

<sup>54</sup> *Novgorodskaja letopis'*. The chronicle of Novgorod, 1016-1471 / translated from the Russian by Robert Michell and Nevill Forbes; With an introduction by C. Raymond Beazley, and an account of the text by A. A. Shakhmatov. New York: AMS Press, 1970. p. ?

prince Volodymyr). He gathered 4.000 soldiers: there were a thousand Varangians, and 3.000 of the men of Novgorod and he went against him and takes the throne.

A.D. 1152 *eight churches were burnt down, and a ninth the Varangian one...*

A.D. 1181 *On the third of the month of June the Varangian Church in the market place was set fire to by thunder at 10 of the day, after evening service...*

A.D. 1188 *the men of Novgorod were plundered by the Varangians in Gothland and by Nemtsy<sup>55</sup>, in Khoruzhk and in Novi-Torg, and in the spring they let no man of their own go beyond sea from Novgorod, and gave no envoy to the Varangians, but they sent them away without peace.<sup>56</sup>*

## **Kyivan Chronicle**

Kyivan Chronicle covers the years 1118-1199 (i.e later period if to compare with the Primary Chronicle that covers the years 872-1117). Thus it is of a less interest to us. The Kyivan tales (1190 and 1198) are based on the Chernihovan story, but they appeared under different political and military circumstances. The tale of 1190 in Kyivan Chronicle of duumvirs Sviatoslav and Riurik (Later Riurik) is neutral. It mentions the Slavonic territories as “subject to Rus’”, which “pay tribute to Rus’”, and thus clearly contrasted with the Rus’ itself, although politically dependent on Kyiv.<sup>57</sup> Chronicle’s information, which identifies the Varangians and the Norsemen, is borne out by Arab, Greek, and Scandinavian sources.

### **4.3 Arabic writers:**

#### **Al-Masudi, Miskawayh, Ibn Khurradāhibh, Ibn Rusta and Ibn-Fadlān about the Rūs**

##### *Review of Arabic Sources Relating to the Varangians and origins of Rūs*

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<sup>55</sup> Literally: *the dumb or incomprehensible folk (Himūi)*, a term applied by the Slavs to all foreigners of Germanic race, sometimes including Scandinavians.

<sup>56</sup> *Novgorodskaja letopis*. The chronicle of Novgorod, 1016-1471. New York, 1970. p. ?

<sup>57</sup> Cross, pp. 182 – 183.



Arabic accounts of the ar-Rūs (also: ar- Rūsiya)<sup>58</sup>, the Varangians were sometimes crucial for many historians to support and substantiate their theories and views. Thus I will present a short overview of the bibliography of Arabic sources dealing with the role of the Normans (Varangians) in the origins of Rūs.

Especially since the popular fictional movie *13th Warrior* appeared, based on author Michael Crichton's *Eaters of the Dead* and supposedly on the writings of Arabic author **Ahmed Ibn Fadlān**, there has been a lot of popular interest in Arabic accounts of the Vikings activities in Rus' lands. The Vikings traded extensively via Rūs lands with the Arabic peoples, obtaining silver, carnelian, and other precious goods, usually in trade for furs and slaves. While native accounts in Old Norse are extremely important in learning about the life and times of the Viking Age peoples, accounts by foreigners outside of the Viking culture are just as important, providing insights that Scandinavian authors might not ever note.

The Rūs were described in 922 by the Arab diplomat Ibn Fadlān thus:

*“Never before have I seen people of more perfect physique. They are tall as date-palms, blonde and ruddy.”*<sup>59</sup>

However, he also said of them:

*They are the filthiest of Allah’s creatures; they do not wash after shitting and peeing, nor after sexual intercourse, and do not wash after eating. They are like wayward donkeys.*<sup>60</sup>

According to Ibn Fadlān, the Rūs he encountered did wash once a day, but all used the same water, and their ablutions included spitting and blowing their noses into the communal washbowl and handing it to the next person. He may have been exaggerating to shock his fastidious Arab audience. The Rūs in Ibn Fadlān’s time were followers of the pagan Scandinavian gods. He describes their burial practices, involving animal and human sacrifice, and the funeral pyre of a chieftain in his longship. One Rūs explained to him that cremation was much better than the Muslim custom of burial, saying: *We burn him in fire in a moment, and he goes at once to paradise.*<sup>61</sup> Ibn Fadlān also describes the Rūs habit of imbibing great

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<sup>58</sup> Also modern Arabic term used for Russia nowadays.

<sup>59</sup> Roesdahl E., *The Vikings*, Penguin Books, 1991, pp

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

quantities of nabid, an unspecified alcoholic drink, and said that they are often found dead still grasping a beaker of it.

The “Golden Age” of Arabic literature (750-1055) corresponds to the Viking Age period. The Scandinavians are referred mainly under two names: ar-Rūs (also: ar- Rūsiya), in particular those in Kyivan Rus’ lands of eastern dominion (the Varangians); and al-Majūs used mainly in Andalusian and North African Arabic sources (of the Vikings). Other names used by the Arabs include: Warank and al-Urman<sup>62</sup> (from Old East Slavonic language where term **Урмане** - Urmane, as used in the Primary Chronicle, defined the Norwegians, as in Latin Nordmanni).

**Al-Masudi** (d. 956) one of the key figures in medieval Arabic letters, cites the Rūs, the Majūs and northernmost Europe in his works. We learn from his stories about Rūs mercenaries in Byzantine service as well as of unsuccessful Rūs expedition to the Caspian in 912. According to Al-Masudi, there were seven judges in Khazaria’s largest city Itil: two for the Moslems, two for the Jews, two for the Christians, and *one for the Slavs, the Rūs, and the other heathen: he tries them in accordance with the Natural Law, that is with reason.*<sup>63</sup> As we see Al-Masudi lists *Rūs* as a separate group from the Slavs.

Rūs activities on the Caspian are also described by **Ibn Miskawayh** (d. 1030). The author illustrates the Rūs invasion of town Bardha’ah (in modern Azerbajdzhan) in 930.<sup>64</sup> However they had to withdraw by disease and by the local Muslim ruler.<sup>65</sup>

**Ibn Rusta**’s geography (compiled ca. 903 – 913) contains a quite elaborate ethnographical account of Rus’ (most likely those from Novgorod). Ibn Rusta describes their

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<sup>62</sup> *Al-* corresponds to the English definite article *the-* in Arabic.

<sup>63</sup> Al-Masoudi. *Les Prairies d’or*, Arabic text and French translation by C. Baraber de Meynard et Pavet de Courteille. (9 volumes. Paris, 1861 – 1877). ii. II.

<sup>64</sup> *Barda’ah* was an important trading center of the Caucasus that has been looted by the Rūs in 943-944, some 20 years before their destruction of the Khazar state. See also: O. Pritsak. *Origins of Rus’*, p. 436.

<sup>65</sup> Margoliouth, D.S. The Russian Seizure of Barda’ah in 943 A.D. in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, London Institution 1.2 (1918). Pp. 82 – 95.

attacks on the “Slavs” (aş-aqāliba)<sup>66</sup>, speaks of their slaves, many towns, physical appearance, clothing, arbitration system, duels, sacrifices and burial customs (cremation and suttee).<sup>67</sup>

The oldest notice we find in a work by **Ibn Khurradādhbih** (ca. 825 – 912). The author tells how the Rūs merchants carry their wares (furs, swords) along the large Ukrainian and Russian rivers to the Black Sea and the Caspian. He mentions that often they travel the length of the Caspian to Jurjān and thence by camel to Baghdad.<sup>68</sup> The author also clearly calls the Rūs a tribe of Slavs.

Al-Bakri’s description of Slavic lands based on the report of the Jewish merchant from Spain, Ibrahim ben-Jakub (956/966) among the “northern” peoples who speak Slavonic the Khazars and Rūs’es are mentioned.<sup>69</sup> The very fact that the Rūs’es spoke a Slavic language was used by the anti-Normanists later. But ben-Jakub also notes that ar-Rūs’ (Norsemen?) spoke Slavic language due to their close relations with aş-aqāliba (the Slavs).

I will cite the Arabic (and the ones on the subject itself) sources that offer a new set of views of the Viking activities on the East:

- Dunlop, D.M. *The History of the Jewish Khazars*. Princeton Oriental Studies 16. Princeton. 1954.
- Al-Masudi. *Meadows of Gold*. trans. A. Sprenger. London. 1941. [Describes the Rus’ market of Bulghur prior to 947.]
- Al-Masudi. *Les Praries d’Or*. trans. C. Barbier de Meynard and P. de Courtielle. Paris. 1863.
- Al-Masudi. *The Meadows of Gold: The Abbasids*. Paul Lunde and Caroline Stone, trans and eds. Kegan Paul International. 1989.

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<sup>66</sup> Term aş-aqāliba (Sklav- / Sclav later Slav-) was introduced to the sphere of Mare Nostrum from the Bosphorus sometime during 6th century. Saqlab (Sclav) meant "fair-headed slave," and was known earlier than the name Rus.

<sup>67</sup> Perkins, Richard. Arabic Sources for Scandinavians in *Medieval Scandinavia*. Ed. By P. Pulsiano. New York: Garland Publishing, 1993. P. 18.

<sup>68</sup> Hrbek, Ivan. The Russians in Baghdad in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century in *Archiv orientalni*, 36 (1968), pp. 563 – 566.

<sup>69</sup> Kowalski, Tadeusz. *Relacja Ibrahima ibn Jakuba z podróży do krajów słowiańskich w przekazie al-Bekrego*. (Story of Ibrahim ibn Jakub from the travel to Slavic lands as described by al-Bakri). Cracow, 1946. p. 52. Also: Lewicki, T. *Ze studiów nad źródłami arabskimi* (From the studies on the Arabic sources), Part II, *Slavia Antiqua*, V (1954), 166.

- Al-Muqaddasi. *Descriptio Imperii Moslemici*. ed. M.J. de Goeje. Leiden. 1877. [Account ca. 985 of Varangian trade practices in Bulghur (ancient Bulghar, modern Tatarstan in Russia, in the Volga region)]
- Haegstad, Arne. Har at-Tartushi besøgt Hedeby (Slesvig)? in *Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og historie*. 1964. [Ibrahim ben Ya'qub Al-Turtushi, a Spanish Jew from Cordova, chronicled his encounters with the Vikings of Salsawig during the tenth century, presumably the Danish town of Hedeby or Slesvig, although some scholars make a case for the account to have been describing the Slavic Jumme or Wolin - island in north west Poland.]
- Ibn Athir. Les Mosafirides de l'Adherbaidjan in *A Volume of Oriental Studies Presented to E.G. Browne*. trans. C. Huart. Cambridge. 1922.
- Ibn Battuta. *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*. trans. H.A.R. Gibb. Hakluyt Society 2. Cambridge. 1962.
- Janicsek, S. "Ibn Battuta's Journey to Bulghar." *Journal Royal Asiatic Society*. 1929. pp. 792-800.
- Smyser, H. M., trans. "Ibn-Fadlan's Account of the Rus' with Some Commentary and Some Allusions to Beowulf." *Franciplegius: Medieval and Linguistic Studies in Honor of Francis Peabody Magoun Jr.* eds. Jess B. Bessinger and Robert P. Creed. New York: University Press. 1965. pp. 92-119. [A translation of the Arabic text describing ibn-Fadlan's journey among the Rus' or Russian Vikings ca. 921. This account dates to the early 1200's.]
- Frèahn, Christian Martin Joachim. *Ibn Foszlan's und anderer Araber Berichte über die Rus'sen alterer Zeit*. St. Petersburg. 1923. [The Arabic text of Ibn Fadlan's Risala, with German Commentary.]
- Ibn Hauqual. *Le Livre de l'avertissement*. B. Carrera de Vauz, trans. Paris. 1896. [Describes the Rus' market at Bulghur in the Volga region. ca. 965]
- Ibn Isfandiyar. trans. E.G. Browne. London. 1905.

As for the Arabic sources, the Normanists managed to use them to support their views. Many of Arabic writers speak of Rūs'es as tall and blonde people. Thus one could think they

were the Scandinavians. But these ethnographic conclusions are very weak since many traits as in regard to the traditions of the Rūs'es, indicate to be Slavic. Though the difference is made by the later Arabic writers between ar-Rūs and aṣ-aqālība (the Slavs), the earliest Arabic writer, already mentioned, Ibn Khurradādhbih (who wrote ca. 840 – 880) writes Rūs' to be a tribe of Slavs. Furthermore, **Al-Bakri** listed Rūs' among the people who spoke Slavic language.

Al-Bakri, al-Istarkhi, Ibn-Khaukal and others mention three centers of Rus': *Slavia*, *Kuyaba* and *Artania*. In the historiography on the issue, it is generally agreed that the first stands for Novgorod, the second stands for Kyiv and the last one remains to be discovered and opinion differ.

At any case, the Arabic sources lead us into a kind of confusion. Mavrodin presumed that the Arabs also called people of non-Slav origin *aṣ-aqālība* (the Slavs, as thought by the most).<sup>70</sup> All this confusion is not surprising, as to the Arabic writers, Eastern Europe was rather a remote and inaccessible land. Arabic geographers and travelers never extended their journeys beyond the lower Volga and not proceeding very up the Volga. The Arabs observed only the life of the Khazars and Bulgars (who partly were Muslims being culturally much closer to them) and in relation to other Norse and Slavic merchants. This lack of sufficiently accurate and concrete data deprives the work of the Arabic writers of lucidity, notes Paszkiewicz.<sup>71</sup>

#### **4.4 Jewish Sources: Abraham Ben-Jakub and Hebrew Chronicle of Yosippon**

In relation to this question, Jewish sources are of a particular importance, namely the one of Ben-Jakub, as he describes the reality of his time and writes in 966 A.D., shedding the light on the problem from the West. The Spanish Jew from Cordoba, traveller Abraham Ben-Jakub (Ibrahim Ibn-Yakub) personally visited Central Europe: eastern Germany and the Slavic Obodrites who, in consequence of the position of their land, had close contacts with the Norsemen. Ben-Jakub went also to Bohemia, and he noted, the Rus' used to resort in Prague

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<sup>70</sup> Mavrodin, D. *Drevnyaya Rus'. Proiskhozhdeniye russkogo naroda i obrazovaniye Kyivskogo gosudarstva* (The Ancient Rus'. The origin of Russian people and creation of Kyivan State), 1946, p. 97.

<sup>71</sup> Paszkiewicz, H. *Origins of Russia*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1954. p. 115.

as merchants. He distinguishes Rus' from the Slavs. I will list the information of interest to us in the work of Ben-Jakub:

- 1) And the northern tribes seized some of them (of the Slavs) and up till now lived among them (among the Slavs).
- 2) The town of Praga is built of stone and lime and is the richest of towns in trade. There come to it Rus' and Slavs from the side of the city of Cracow with merchandise, and from the lands of the Turks (i.e, Hungarians) come Mohammedans, Jews, and Turks, also with merchandise...
- 3) To the East (of the country) of Meshek<sup>72</sup> (Poland) the Rus' are bordering and on the North the Brus<sup>73</sup> (Prussia). The dwelling of the Brus is near the surrounding sea. And they have a separate language, they do not know the language of the neighbouring peoples...The Rus' invade them on ships from the West.
- 4) Their (the Slavs') wares by land and sea reach the Rus' and Constantinople.
- 5) And the chief of the northern tribes speak Slavonic because they mixed themselves with them (the Slavs)...<sup>74</sup>

Ben-Jakub also notes that *ar-Rūs'* (Rus', above in the text) spoke Slavic language due to their close relations with *aṣ-aqāliba* (the Slavs, above in the text). In relation to the territory occupied by Rus', point 1 speaks of northern tribes, point 3 of the Rus' attacking Prussians from the West by sea; point 4 refers to Slavonic merchants reaching Rus' on board ship. Furthermore, Ben-Yakub treats Rus' in the same category as the Prussians, Khazars, Slavs etc.

### **The Hebrew Chronicle Yosippon**

The Hebrew Chronicle *Yosippon* from the second part of the 10<sup>th</sup> century (the same period as Ben-Jakub's note), that probably originated in Italy, contains a detail of some importance for the problem of Rus', which has surprisingly enough, hitherto been overlooked by the historians dealing with the Rus' problem. The author of *Yosippon* mentions Rus' at the same time as the Saxons and the Angles, a fact which proves, as has been pertinently

<sup>72</sup> *Meshek* - The country of Mieszko (Mieshko), the first historical ruler of the Piast dynasty, signified Poland.

<sup>73</sup> *Brus* – Ben-Jakub implies the Prussians, a Baltic speaking tribe close to the Lithuanians, settled along the sea-coast between the Vistula in Poland and the Nieman in Lithuania.

<sup>74</sup> Paszkiewicz, Henryk. *Origin of Russia*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1954. pp. 30 – 31.

remarked by Flusser, that he numbered among them the Norsemen. But at the same time, the chronicler knew that Rus should somehow be related to Kyiv.<sup>75</sup>

Czech historian Flusser published an in-depth commentary and a review of the Yosippon Chronicle in its information pertaining to the Slavs and Rus', in Czech Historical Journal (*Česky Časopis Historycky*).<sup>76</sup>

### **Persian writers and other sources**

Ibrahim al-Istarkhi, a Persian by descent, living in the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, remarks that the Rus' inhabit territories situated between the Bulgars and the Slavs. We also possess a Persian geographical treatise by an unknown author of the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, entitled *Hudud al Alam* (The Boundaries of the World) in which Rus' are contrasted with the Slavs. Therefore, the Oriental writers state quite clearly that the Rus' were not Slavic.

A Persian geographical treatise by an unknown author of the last part of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, entitled *Hudud al Alam* (The Boundaries of the World) also contrasts Rus' with the Slavs.

*The Bavarian Geographer*, in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, when enumerating many central and eastern European tribes, such as the Hungarinas, Khazars, etc., mentions also the *Ruzzi*.<sup>77</sup> Another source that should be noted is the document *Dagome index* was drawn up about the time of the baptism of St. Volodymyr (988). It alludes to Rus' as geographical entity and signifies the country around Kyiv.<sup>78</sup>

### **4.5 De Administrando Imperio of Constantine Porphyrogennitos and other Byzantine sources**

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid. p. 124.

<sup>76</sup> Flusser, G. *Zpráva o Slovelech v hebrajske krinice z konca X stol.* (Information on the Slavs in a Hebrew Chronicle from the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> cen.) in *Česky Časopis Historycky*, Praha, 1949.

<sup>77</sup> Zakrzewski, S. *Opis grodow i terytoriow z polnocnej strony Dunaju czyli t. zw. Geograf Bawarski* (Bavarian Geographer) in *Archiwum Towarzystwa Naukowego we Lwowie*. Wydział Historyczno-Filozoficzny. IX (I), 1917. p. 4.

<sup>78</sup> Chubaty, N. The Ukrainian and Russian Conceptions of the History of Eastern Europe, in *Proceedings, Shevchenko Scientific Society*, I, Kyiv: 1951. p. 17.

*De administrando imperio* (On the Administration of the Empire), written around the year 950 by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennitos (913-959 AD), is a detailed and remarkably informative political geography of his contemporary world. Constantine VII was the son-in-law of Roman I (Romanos Lecapenos) who usurped the throne.<sup>79</sup> The reign of Constantine VII has been viewed as the apogee of Byzantium, flourishing in culture and learning. The exaltation of book learning by Constantine was in the tradition of his father Leo The Wise. *De Administrando Imperio* was a secret book devoted to foreign peoples and compiled in order to instruct his young son so that foreign nations *shall quake before thee as one mighty in wisdom*.<sup>80</sup> The texts of the *Administrando* include one of the best descriptions available of the political geography of the parts of the steppe controlled by the nomadic Pechenegs.<sup>81</sup> The description of *the Rus* is extraordinarily important, and, as with much of the other material in the book, seems to be based on the evidence of contemporary eyewitnesses. One should be aware, that terms used in *Administrando* do not mean exactly what one might assume - hence "Rus'ians" where the original Greek has **Ρωσ** (Rhos); the Romans (**Ρωμανοί**) are the Byzantines; Romania is the Byzantine Empire. **Ρωσ** - Rhos, Rus or Russi (**Ρωσσοι**) are the earliest words used by Byzantines for the people that came to them from the direction of Kyiv.

Luitprand of Cremona, writing of a visit to the Emperor in c. 968, as ambassador of Emperor Otto I, enumerates the **Ρωσ** (Rhos) among the neighbours of the empire, such as the Hungarians, Bulgarians, Pechenegs and Khazars.<sup>82</sup> The artificial term **Ταυρο-Σκυθοι** (Tauro-Scythians)<sup>83</sup> was an alternative used by some Byzantine writers.

Constantine Porphyrogennitos gives both the Slavic (**Σκλαβημιστί** - *sklavisti*) and Rus'ian (**Ρωσιστί** - *rhosisti*) names for the Dnieper cataracts (near Zaporizhzhya in Ukraine). Most of the Rus'ian names appear to be derived from the Old Norse, such as: **Ούλβορσί**

<sup>79</sup> Shepard, Jonathan. Byzantium in equilibrium, 886 – 944 in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*. Vol III c. 990 – c. 1024. Edited by Timothy Reuter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. p. 561 – 562;

<sup>80</sup> Shepard, J., Byzantium expanding, 944 – 1025 in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol III. p. 586;

<sup>81</sup> *Pechenegs*, nomadic people of the Turkic family. Their original home is not known, but in the 8th and 9th cent. they inhabited the region between the lower Volga and the Urals. Pushed west (c.889) by the Khazars and Cumans, they drove the Magyars before them and settled in S Ukraine on the banks of the Dnieper. They long harassed Kyivan Rus and even threatened (934) Constantinople. After unsuccessfully besieging Kiev (968) and killing the Kyivan duke Sviatoslav (972), they were defeated (1036) by Yaroslav and moved to the plains of the lower Danube. Attacked (1064) by the Cumans, many Pechenegs were slain or absorbed. After once more besieging Constantinople (c.1091), they were virtually annihilated by Emperor Alexius I. Later there were significant communities of Pechenegs (*Beszenyo* in Hungarian) in Hungary.

<sup>82</sup> Paszkiewicz, H. *Origin of Russia*. London, 1954, p 114



(*ulvors* - from Old Norse (*h*)*ulmforsi* dat.-loc.) corresponds to the Slavic *ostrovni prakh* (Ὀστροβουπραχ) and Greek τό υησίον του φραγμου – the island of cataract.

Most of the names of Rus' envoys who appear in the treaties with Byzantium (911, 944) are obviously of Scandinavian origin, e.g., Karly, Inegeld, Farlof, Veremud, etc. (911).

In the Slavonic translation of Georgios Monachos (Hamartolos) it is said that the Rus' who attacked Constantinople in 941 were of the Varangian descent (*от рода варяжеска цуцум*).<sup>84</sup> It is an explicitly noteworthy detail to us. The Greek writers, Theophanos Continutaos and Symeon Logothes, relate that the Rus' belonged to the tribe of Frangs. Brutskus supposes that the Frangs, Farangians or Varangians are the Norse Varangians.<sup>85</sup>

#### 4.6 Heimskringla and Sagas on Eastern Europe, Oðinn and Tyrkland

The Varangians must have been impressed by the great number of the fortified settlements they found among the Slavs because they referred to the area from the Baltic to the Black Sea as "Garðaríke" which means "land of towns and settlements." The Icelandic historian Snorre Sturlason (1178-1241) uses the word "Garðaríke" or simply "the east" to designate Kyivan Rus' in his valuable account, *Heimskringla*, or *The Lives of the Norse Kings*.

First, a detailed geographic description of Eastern Europe is found in the prologue of Snorra Edda as well as in Ynglinga Saga of Heimskringla. Interestingly what is now Ukraine (the land north of the Black Sea) is referred by Snorri as Sweden the Great<sup>86</sup> or the Cold (Svíþjóð in mikla eda in kalda). However, Snorri says that the northern part of Sweden (Svíþjóð) is uncultivated due to frost and cold, may be he referred to the greater Rus' land (Ukraine, Belarus, West Russia) as uncultivation due to the frost and cold occurs only in the northern part of the old Rus lands (North West Russia). He continues that in Sweden the Great

<sup>83</sup> *Tauria* (Tavria / Taurida) – is region in southern Ukraine (the Crimea and surrounding area). The extinct and presumable non-Indoeuropean people of Taurians were first cited by Herodotus. See also the note on Scythians on the next page.

<sup>84</sup> This translation has been published by V. Istrin, *Khronika Georgiya Amartola v drevne slavyano-russkom perevode* (Chronicle of Georgios Hamartolos in Slavic Russian translation), I, 1920, II, 1922, III, 1930.

<sup>85</sup> Brutskus, Y. *Varyagi i kolbyagi* (Varngians and Kolbiags) in *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, VII, 1935. pp. 88 – 90.

<sup>86</sup> Compare the usage of term *Greece* and *Greece the Great* (Southern Italy, colonized by the Greeks in antique times). The same relates to the term *Asia Minor* (Turkey, historical Asia) and *Asia* in general.

(Svíþjóð in Old Norse equals in meaning to Σκυθία – Scythia in Old Greek, Σκυθης – Scythian, sing.)<sup>87</sup> there are many large provinces (indeed Rus' consisted of many provinces and principalities as we know). There are also many tribes and many tongues. Then he tells about river Tanais (modern Don) that runs through Sweden the Great (Svíþjóð) and divides the three continents. Snorri presents quite an interesting story about Óðinn. While speaking of him, the author says he lived and ruled in Ásgarðr, the capital of Asaland (the land east of Tana-kvísl, that is of Don). This story led the Norwegians Thor Heyerdahl and Per Lillestrøm to seek Óðinn's real home in Azov (*Азис* - Aziv in Ukrainian) area.<sup>88</sup> And historically and geographically speaking, judging from the description (which coincides so rather amazingly and precisely with the modern geography of the area) there are might a deal of truth in it. Snorri also informs (in prologue of Snorras Edda) that both Óðinn and his wife had the gift of prophecy and by names of this magic art he discovered that his name would be famous in the northern part of the world and honoured above that of all kings. For this reason he decided to set on a journey from (the town of) *Tyrkland*. In the parallel passage of *Ynglinga saga*, author notes that South of the (Riphaean) mountains it is not far to *Tyrkland*, there Óðinn had large possessions.<sup>89</sup> In relation to this Pritsak wrote: *...the gelehrte Urgeschichte of the Old Scandinavians and their Germanic ancestors has been de-mythicized, and evidence has been adduced that their prolonged stay in Tyrkland on the Tanais (Don) river corresponds to the Germanic-Khazarian encounters that took place in eastern Ukraine between the eighth and the tenth century.*<sup>90</sup> Norwegian explorer and traveller Thor Heyerdahl attempted to present Óðinn's homeland in *Tyrkland* (in ones Khazaria's Azov area) as a fact.<sup>91</sup>

Sturlason makes no mention of the fact that by the time of Harald Hardrade's visit, Kyivan Rus' had become officially a Christian state. Grand Prince Yaroslav's own father, Volodymyr I, made the crucial decision in 988 to accept Christianity from Constantinople rather than Rome, after rejecting the notion of adopting other faiths such as Judaism (already

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<sup>87</sup> Term **Svíþjóð** (Sweden the Great) can corresponds to the Greek term **Σκυθία** (Scythia in English). **Σκυθία** (**Скитія** in Ukrainian, **Скифия** in Russian) was a Greek name for the area between the Carpathians and the river Tanais (Ancient Greek term for river Don), what is now Ukraine. The Scythians were Iranian speaking people who moved into Ukraine and the Caucasus after 1000 BC. They fought with the Medes and limited the power of the Iranian Cimmerians (biblical Gomer). The Scythians were allies of the Assyrians during the time of Esarhaddon (681 - 669 BC). Snorri used the term **Svíþjóð** exactly in the same context as Greek antique writers used term **Σκυθία**.

<sup>88</sup> Heyerdahl, Thor og Lilliestrøm, Per. *Jakten på Odinn*. Oslo: J.M. Stenersens Forlag AS, 2001.

<sup>89</sup> Sturluson S. *Heimskringla. History of the Kings of Norway*. Transl. By Lee M: Hollander. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999. p. 6.

<sup>90</sup> Pritsak, O. *The Origins of Rus'* Cambridge: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1981, p. 582.

<sup>91</sup> Pritsak, O., p. 230.

adopted by a Turkic people known as the Khazars, who lived near the Volga River to the east).

Two sagas that contain valuable information about the Rus are the Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar (St Olav's Saga) and Haralds saga Harðráða describing Olav's and Harald's voyages and stay in Rus'. The remarkable St Olav's Saga, full of historical detail tells how this Scandinavian hero at the court of Rus' konung Valdamarr (St. Volodymyr) and while returning home on the ships was carried away by a storm into Pomerania, into the possessions of belligerent queen Geira Burislavna. As he did not wish to tell his title, Olav presents himself as Gardar's merchant (i.e. Rus'ian). Elena Rydzevskaya analyzed both of the sagas, as well as Eymundar Þattir.<sup>92</sup> A similar recent study about four Norwegian konungs in Rus' (Olav Tryggvason, Olav Haraldsson, Magnus Olavsson and Harald Sigurdsson) was done 70 years later by Tatyana Jackson.<sup>93</sup>

In the Life of St Olav we also read of a certain Varangian, whom being in Rus', bought a young slave of unknown origin because the latter was skilled at making the arms used by the Varangians. The question emerges whether the products of artisans such as this slave were completely Norse models or not and whether during the Varangians long stay on the Volga or the Dnieper, the local Slavic or Fennic (Finnish) population influenced them and to what extent were these Norse-Slavic co-influences.

The Norse sagas make no mention of the Norse descent of the princes of Rus'. However this argument (used by Anti-Normanists) is not convincing. The sagas are also silent on the ancestry of Volodymyr the Great, and only sketch the beginning of his reign very indistinctly.<sup>94</sup>

#### 4.7 Eastern Europe in Icelandic Annals

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<sup>92</sup> Rydzevskaya, E. *Eymundar saga i ruskiye letopisi* (Eymundar saga and Rus'ian Chronicles), BAS-H, Leningrad, 1926. no. 12, pp. 1061 – 1086; *Saha pro Olafa Trihvasona j litopysne opovidannia pro Ol'hu* (Saga on Olav Tryggvason and chronicle story on Olha) in *Ukrajina* 18:4 (Kyiv, 1926) pp. 3-22; *Bylina o Solovye Budimiroviche i saga o Garolde* (Ballad about Solovey Budimirovich and Harald's saga) in *Sbornik v chest A. I. Maleina*, Petrograd, 1922. pp. 94 - 136

<sup>93</sup> Jackson, Tatjana. *Chetyre norvezhskikh konunga na Rusi: iz istorii norvezhskikh politicheskikh otnoshenij posledney treti X – pervoy poloviny XI v.* (Four Norwegian konungs in Rus': from the history of political relations of 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> cen). Moscow: Jazyki Russkoy Kultury, 2000. 188 pp.

<sup>94</sup> Paszkiewicz, H. *Origin of Russia*. London: George & Allen Unwin Ltd., 1954. p. 159

The extant Icelandic annals are of late origin (the third quarter of the 13th century). Very few events are mentioned in the annals that refer directly to eastern Europe, and those few all identical with events found in the sagas of the kings of Norway, Olav Tryggvason (995 - 1000) and St Olav (1015 - 1030) and St Olav's son, King Magnus inn góði (1035 - 1047). The events in chronological order are as follows:

971 Olav Tryggvason is brought by the pirates to Estland

977 he arrives in Garðariki

986 he leaves Garðariki

994 The battle of the Jomsvikingar at Hjorungavágr

1019 St Olav marries Ástriðr and Jarizleifr (Jaroslav) the king of Hólmgarðr, takes to wife Ingigerðr, the other daughter of the Swedish king Ólafr

1029 St Olav goes east to Garðariki

1043 King Magnus burns Jómsburg<sup>95</sup> and defeats the Wends at Lýrskógsheiðr.<sup>96</sup>

In the Norse sagas a great deal is said about Hólmgarðr (Novgorod) but very little about Kænungarðar (Kyiv). All these observations seem to indicate that it is not possible to speak of Kyiv, before the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, as “the mother of Rus’ cities” and of existence of a Kyivan Rus’ state, notes Paszkiewicz.<sup>97</sup> However, Kænungarðar, due to its geographical location was of considerable importance to the Norsemen. The Byzantine emperor Constantine VII states that the Rus’ from many northern countries assemble in Kænungarðar on their way South, and to Kænungarðar as they return from the Black Sea border, again to scatter in many directions. Kænungarðar, therefore, was an important station on the Norsemen’s long routes, a place for rest, for concentration, and for the organization of further expeditions as Eastern Europe itself was not an end itself for the Varangians, but only a zone of transit, a gate leading to other more distant but very rich countries. The Norsemen of Scandinavian forests were attracted by the wealth of the Byzantine Empire and its famous Miklagarðr (Constantinople / Istanbul), Tyrkland (Khazar Kaganate) and Serkland (Arab Califate).<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> *Jómsborg* (Jóm, Jomborg, Jumna, Jumnetta, Wollin) – famous Baltic commercial and military center of the Wends (Vends = Baltic Slavs). It was far larger and richer than any other port in the Baltic Sea at the time. For a few centuries the Wends held the coastline from Wagria in the west to Lithuania in the east. Nowadays, Wolin (island) is in Poland.

<sup>96</sup> Pritsak, O., 1981, p.575.

<sup>97</sup> Paszkiewicz, H., 1954, p. 163.

<sup>98</sup> Paszkiewicz, H., p. 163.

## 4.8 Eastern elements in Skaldic Poetry

We can get a good glimpse of skaldic poets' knowledge of eastern Europe from the remnants of the works of skaldic poets from the ninth to twelfth century. The first references to the East found in skaldic poetry (from the late 9th / 10th centuries) were *Austrvegr* "the eastern way". This term defined the North Eastern coast of the Baltic Sea, while terms *Sýsla*, *eistnesk*, *eistr* related to Estonia. All of these we find in the poems of the skald Þjóðólfr or Hvini (late 9th century).

The tenth century Skaldic poetry, in particular the works of Egill Skallagrímsson (c. 937 A.D.), Glúmr Geirason (d.ab. 970) and Einar Skálaglamm (c. 986 A.D.) the name *Vina* (the river of Northern Dvina) occurs.

Later in chronological order of 10th century, we find terms *Vindr* for "Baltic Slavs" (*Guttormr sindri*) and *Húnaland* (in *Kormákr Qgmundarson*), term that stood for the former state of the Avars in what is now Hungary.

Among the most frequent geographic names used by the skalds, we find *Vindr* (Wends – Baltic Slavs) and *Garðar / Garðr* (Novgorodian Rus'). Term *Vindr* occurs in sixteen skaldic works by fourteen different skalds. While term *Garðar / Garðr* is found in thirteen poems by ten skalds. Interestingly the relation between the Baltic Slavs (Wends) and the Scandinavians were frequently hostile. This we can see from the epithets the skalds "honoured" the Norwegian and Danish kings: *Vinda myrðir* (slayer of the Wends), *Vindum háttr* (Wends' terror), *Vinda fergir* (oppressor of the Wends). The title *Vindum háttr* was given to St Olav and *Vindum myrdir* "were" earl Hakon Sigurdarson, Olav Tryggvason and Eirík Hákanarson.<sup>99</sup>

Rus' king Volodymyr (Vladimir or Valdamarr in Old Norse) was known to skald Eyjolfur dadaskald (from ca. 1000) while Rus' king Yaroslav (Jaroslav or Jarizleifr) was known only to Þjóðólfr Arnórsson. Also Yaroslav's name is found in one song of Poetic Edda, *Gudrunarkvida II* (strophe 19, line 1) from the 12th century. Both Volodymyr and Yaroslav are mentioned by the skalds due to the military aid they got from the Varangians.

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<sup>99</sup> Pritsak, O., p. 299.

In relation to the eastern exploits of St Olav and Harald Harðraði, skaldic poets mention such interesting terms as *Væringjar* (Varangians), *Bolgarar* (Volga Bulgars), *Austr-Vindr* (Eastern Wends / Slavs), *Læsir* (Poles or Western Slavs) and *Serkland* (the Muslim East, in Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, 11th cen.). Skaldic poetry had in its vocabulary also "Byzantine" terms: *Miklagarðr* (Constantinople), *Girkir / Grekir* (Byzantines / Greeks), also *Jórsalir* (Jerusalem) and *Jórdán* (Jordan).

Skalds were writing also about such significant military events as the burning of Old Ladoga (*Aledeigja*, in 997 by Earl Eiríkr Hákanarson) and struggle with the Danes for Estland (Estonia), Yaroslav's campaign against the Poles (*Læsir*) in 1047 (Þjóðólfr Arnórsson).

A few other Eastern European terms were used by the skalds: *Syrgizðalir* (Suzdal, city in territorial Rus') occurs in the saga about Eyjólfur Valgerðarson (985), *Hólmgarðr* (Novgorod) in GQngu-Hrolfs saga.

Glossaries with the names of foreign rivers (late 12th century) contain the following names: *Dún* (Don), *Dýna* (Western Dvina), *Vína* (Northern Dvina), *Olga* (Volga), *Nepri* (Dnieper) and *Dröfn* (a river near Polotsk).

There is also a great number of social, military and other terms related to Eastern Europe (as *salr* - Wendish dwelling, *i salt et eystra* - in the Baltic Sea, *med Gerzku reiði* - with Rus'ian tackle, *gerzkum malmi* - with the Rus'ian sword etc.) but we will limit ourselves to the geographic ones, as this evidence reflects the political-geographic compass of skaldic poetry and their familiarity with the Rus' lands.

#### 4.9 Yngvar's Saga and Eymundar Þátr

Yngvar's Saga and Eymund's Saga (Eymundar Þátr) contain stories of the Varangians who travelled East to the Black Sea and Byzantium as well as much valuable information on the history of Novgorod duke Yaroslav the Wise.<sup>100</sup> *Eymundr Hringsson* (Eymund, Eymundar, Emundr) was a relative to St. Olav (St. Óláfr), son of Áki and brother to Dagr. He

<sup>100</sup> Cross, S. Yaroslav the Wise in Norse Tradition, in *Speculum* IV, 1929, pp. 177 – 197. Also: Braun, F. Das Historische Russland in Festschrift Eugen Mogk zum 70 Geburtstag, 1924, p.p. 161, 179 – 182; Lyashchenko, A. Eymundar Saga i russkiye letopisi (Eymundar Saga and Rus'ian Chronicles) in *Izvestiya Akademii Nauk SSSR, Seriya Istorii i Filosofii*, 1926, pp. 1061 – 86.

had a child named Almveigu Eymundsdatter. Eymund was forced to leave Scandinavia for maintaining friendly relations with Ingigerðr, the daughter of Eiríkr's successor, King Óláfr skautkonungr. During 1015 to - 1020 after Ingigerðr had married Yaroslav (Jaroslav) of Novgorod, Eymundr entered the service of Yaroslav, helped him in his struggle with his brother Sviatopolk, and gained great fame. Soon after he returned to Scandinavia, married a daughter of some powerful man, and had a son, Yngvarr. We do not know for certain how many men-at-arms Eymund had, but there is indirect evidence that they were not very numerous. Eymundr and his Varangian men-at-arms were prepared to serve any prince as long as they were paid.

The Eymundr Saga gives a very vivid picture of negotiation between Prince Yaroslav and the Varangian men-at-arms:

- Eymundr, offered timely aid to Yaroslav against Sviatopolk.
- Yaroslav replied: *We very much need your men-at-arms and your efficiency, because you are brave Norse men. But I do not know the payment you require for your services.*
- Eymund answered: *First of all, you shall grant us something to take home, for me and my men, and shall not refuse us anything from your best supplies of which we may have need.*
- Yaroslav replied: *I am agreeable to this keep.*
- Eymundr added: *You are also to pay every one of our warriors an ounce of silver, and a further half ounce to every commander.* This was apparently too high a price and Yaroslav refused.
- Eymund then offered a compromise: *Instead of the silver -- beaver and sable skins and other goods which abound here, in your land. Their value shall be estimated by us and not by your warriors. And if there be booty you can grant us pfennigs. If we are idle you shall grant us less goods.*

With these stipulations the agreement was concluded for a period of 12 months. Under the treaty a keep was built for the Varangians in Novgorod. Eymundar Saga says that it was made of stone (which is very doubtful) and upholstered with red cloth. This fact is supported by an item in the Chronicle for 1015, which tells how the Novgorodites resented the behaviour of the Varangian men-at-arms and destroyed them. The hired Varangian detachment was destroyed in a single bailey, apparently the same building, or one very similar to it.

- When the term expired, Eymund said to Yaroslav: "*We have lived in your possessions for some time, king; now choose whether our agreement shall stand or do you wish to destroy your comradeship with us, and we shall have to look for another leader, because the payment of pfennigs was slow.*"

- Yaroslav replied: *I think that I do not need your men as I did before. It is too great an expenditure of wealth for us to pay you the price you demand.*

Eymund reminded Yaroslav that his chief enemy Sviatopolk was still alive, and Yaroslav then agreed to extend the agreement for another year. When that term expired, Eymund concluded an agreement with Bryachislav of Polotsk, one of Yaroslav's enemies.<sup>101</sup>

British saga translator and editor Robert Cook along with Hermann Palsson and Paul Edwards wrote a broad commentary regarding this story.<sup>102</sup>

## Chapter 5

### Ukrainian Historiography on Normanist Theory

The views of the most influential Ukrainian historian had strong impact on the development of Ukrainian national historiography. **Mykhaylo Hrushevsky** (1866–1934) was the Ukrainian historian and statesman. He was born in Kholm (now Khelm in south-east Poland, formerly in Ukraine) and studied at the University of Kyiv under his most admired professor V.B. Antonovych. Later Hrushevskyy taught at the same university only for a brief period. Because of cultural discrimination, the ban on the Ukrainian language, and his personal views, Hrushevsky's difficulties with the administration kept mounting and a final breach became unavoidable. In 1894, he accepted a chair at the University of Lviv (Lemberg), then in Austria's Western Ukraine, where he anticipated a greater degree of cultural freedom and a milder political climate. To Hrushevskyy history was a tool for implementing his beliefs, yet, it must be noted, he never vulgarized it but rather remained loyal to the scholarship. Unlike others he never employed his historical knowledge for popular writing,

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<sup>101</sup> Vikings in Russia: Yngvar's Saga and Eymund's Saga. Translated and introduced by Hermann Palsson and Paul Edwards. Edinburgh: Polygon, Edinburgh University Press, 1989. 102 p.

<sup>102</sup> Pálsson, Hermann, Edwards, Paul, Cook, Robert. Vikings in Russia: Russian History, Icelandic Story and Byzantine Strategy in Eymundar Pátrr Hringssonar, in: Viator 17, 1986



for propaganda pamphlets or romantic narration. Hrushevsky's monumental *History of Ukraine* (10 vol., 1899–1937) covers the period to 1658. It is among the standard works in the field. The author worked on it half of his lifetime writing it. Other works of the scholar include *A History of Ukraine* (tr. 1941) and *History of Ukrainian Literature* (5 vol., 1922–27). Hrushevsky argued that the period of the Kyivan state (10th–13th cent.) belonged to Ukraine only, thus repudiating the Russian nationalist tradition that traced the history of Russian from ancient Kyiv. He became president of the republic of Ukraine on its proclamation in January, 1918. After the German occupation of Ukraine, he fled (1918) to Austria, returning in 1924. In 1930 he was exiled from Kyiv by the Soviet authorities.

Generally speaking about historical writings of Hrushevsky, we may conclude that he had a tendency to examine the events of Ukrainian history as such, which stem from its own root. He rarely recognized foreign influences. So, he considered the name "Rus'", originating not from foreign comers Varangians, but from tribe of Polyans and Polyanian territory with river "Ros'" and so on.<sup>103</sup>

### 5.1 Hrushevsky: The Varangian puzzle

Hrushevsky clearly admitted a strong Scandinavian influence in early Kyivan state but refuses the concept of Scandinavian origin of Rus' state itself, in other words we would call him as "anti-Normanist". He argued that Kyiv had much higher level of cultural development, organization and standing at the Viking period. According to Hrushevsky, Kyivan military units consisted of locals and strangers (Varangians) in the 9th and 10th centuries. He admits, that: *In the first half of 10th century we see so many Varangians among the chieftains of Kyivan nobility, so the local people were pushed into the background. We have the names of ambassadors of Kyivan duke in his treaties with Byzantium (in 907, 911, 944) and among them there are more Scandinavian names than Slavic ones.*<sup>104</sup> Hrushevsky suggests that the reason lies in this period, as a the time of internal power struggle within Sweden and Norway and many chieftains "konungs", different noble people, and after them a number of normal soldiers sailed out in order to get new settlements or to serve for different kings.

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<sup>103</sup> Krupnytsky B. *Istoriografichni Problemy Istoriyi Ukrayiny. Zbirnyk Stattey* (Historiographical Problems of History of Ukraine. Collection of Articles). Munich: Free Ukrainian University, 1959, p. 98;

He continues: *Before the first half of the 11th century (until the death of Yaroslav), we encounter Varangian military servicemen at the courts of our dukes. They were very good army for them: good soldiers, brave, smart and not bound to any land or people, no matter against strangers or ours to send them...Because there were so many of these Scandinavian soldiers among Kyivan "Rus'" people, very often "Rus'" itself was referred as Scandinavian or Norman people, after the Normans, or Norsemen as they were known on the West, where they also often coming to loot. So in our lands, they were called as "Variahy" - Varangians. And Kyivan chronicle writer invented the theory, that the Rus' name itself came with the Varangians from Sweden...*<sup>105</sup>

Hrushevsky also worked in archaeology, publishing a series of articles and attempting the first synthesis of the archaeology of Ukraine in vols 1-3 of the above noted *Istoriya Ukrainy-Rusy* (History of Ukraine Rus').

### **M. Kostomarov:**

A more colorful and productive member of the Ukrainian Federalist School was Mykola Kostomarov (1817 – 1885). His father (a Russian nobleman) was murdered by his own serfs and his mother was of Ukrainian origin, a former serf girl on his father's estate. Therefore Kostomarov received from his mother both an interest in Ukraine and sympathy for the oppressed peasant masses. In his opinion true history must deal with life of the peoples who make history, with their aspirations, their vices and virtues, morals, manners. As a member of the Archaeological Commission he was responsible for editing a nine-volume collection of historical documents on Ukraine. The Ukrainian advancements in the field of archaeology are due to the efforts of Kostomarov. His main works are concerned with the Ukrainian people and their struggle for independence against aristocratic Poland and for autonomy against absolutist imperial Russia. He viewed the Ukrainians and Russians as representatives of one Rus' ethnicity. This view was presented in his *Two Rus' ethnic groups*<sup>106</sup>, where he also notes:

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<sup>104</sup> Hrushevsky, M. *Istoriya Ukrainy-Rusy* (History of Ukraine-Rus'). Vol I: From Prehistory to the Eleventh Century. Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1997. Pp. 4 – 10.

<sup>105</sup> Hrushevsky, M., pp. 4 – 10.

<sup>106</sup> Kostomarov, M. *Dvi Rus'ki narodnosti* (Two Rus' ethnicities) in *Osnova*, III, Kyiv, 1861.

*“In the beginnings, the Varangian dukes along with multi-tribal retinue got established in Kyiv. These Varangians pushed the Polyanians (local Slavic tribe in Kyiv area) to the activity and those ones (Polyanians) came to be “the conquerors” of the peoples. The domination idea emerges, the need for a center that could attract the lands. However, even then, no competition was noted in order to strengthen the rule over these lands. Kyiv was not capable to be a capital of a centralized state and did not pretend to be it, it did not even manage to hold the supremacy over the federation...The Ukrainians did not have luck to violate, destroy. There was no politics of a cold consideration, no affirmness in reaching the goal.”*<sup>107</sup>

According to him, the Varangians just pushed the Polyanians to the activity, but the Polyanians were not capable to maintain their domination for Kyiv. This resulted in a split of Kyivan state in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The scholar contributed greatly to the debate on the origins of Rus'. Author of *Slavic Mythology* (1847),<sup>108</sup> *History of Russia in the life-descriptions of its greatest people* (where he does not even mention of the first chroniclers), *A split – The beginnings of in the Old Rus' autocracy* (1994).<sup>109</sup> Kostomarov was a convinced anti-Normanist. In 1860, in his *Beginnings of Rus'* Kostomarov advances a new theory tracing Rus' from Lithuania (so-called *Lithuanian theory*, that searched for Rus' in the Nieman river area). On the March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1860 a dispute on the issue took place at St Petersburg University (where Kostomarov was a professor). However, it did not give any results. The Normanists remained at their positions. Albeit, the theory and argumentation were weak and later Kostomarov refused his concept (such cases were quite rare) the critical pressure upon the Normanism continued.

## **5.2 Main traits of Ukrainian historiography in post reform period (1860-1890)**

Russian historiography represented by K.M. Bestuzhev-Ryumin, V.O. Kluchevskiy and representative of "official trend" D.I. Ilovaysky did not bring anything essentially new in the research on the Ukrainian history compared with the Russian state school (S. Solovyov).

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid. pp. 1 – 2.

<sup>108</sup> Kostomarov, M. *Slavyanskaya Mifologia* (Slavic Mythology). Kyiv, 1847.

<sup>109</sup> Kostomarov, M. *Raskol // Nachalo edinoderzhaviya v Drevney Rusi* (A split – The beginnings of in the Old Rus' autocracy). Moscow, 1994

Russian historiography, which researched the questions of Ukrainian past, was represented mainly by those Russian historians who worked in Ukraine.

Valuable documentary material and articles of progressive historians had been published on the pages of "Kyivskaya Starina" (Kyiv Antiquities), when its editor was O.M. Lazarevsky.

Ukrainian historiography of the second half of 19th century accomplished great research work, introduced a great number of new documentary material, considerably improved research and study of many important historical problems. Many works had been published, which are of much value because of the factual and data material.

Antonovych is the author of the concept about "eternity of Ukrainian nation" and its "non class form". He developed the idea of Kostomarov about so called democratism of Ukrainian people, opposing it to the Russian people, set forward the claim that Ukrainians belonged to the category of "non state nations", for whom the main essence of historical process are national aspirations.

Antonovych was followed by a whole group of Ukrainian historians, who in their concrete research developed the nationalist scheme of this historian. M.V. Dovnar-Zapolsky (Antonovych's follower and his successor at the department) and F.I. Leontovych.

Historians of Antonovych school paid much attention to the old Rus' state and period of feudal divisions. Kyivan Rus' was considered only as a page in the history of Ukraine. This approach can be demonstrated in the historical research of M.P. Dashkevych, M.V. Dovnar-Zapolsky and F.I. Leontovych. Antonovych and his followers (M. Bilyashevsky and F. Vovk) studied also the archaeological past of Ukraine.

There was a whole array of historians also on western Ukrainian lands: V. Ilnytsky (work on the history of Galician-Volhynian principality), K. Zaklynsky (studies on "Rus' chronicles and chroniclers of 17th century), A. Petrushevych (The main Galician Rus' chronicle, Lviv 1878-1889). Franko characterised Petrushevych as "one who has no scientific

method, complete absence of logical composition...subjective bias of the author".<sup>110</sup>

### 5.3 Scandinavianism in Old Rus' by O. Partytsky: Return after 113 years

West Ukrainian developed in relation to a general, cultural and ideological life in Ukrainian Galicia (Galizien), which after the divisions of Poland became part of the Austrian empire in 1772. As earlier, the key role in economical, political and cultural life of Galicia was played by Polish noblemen and eventually a young Polish bourgeoisie began to emerge.<sup>111</sup>

Lviv born Omelyan Partytsky (1840 - 1895) was a linguist, ethnographer, historian and teacher who worked most of his life in the Pedagogic Seminary. We can imagine what were capabilities and zeal of young scholar who being 27 years of age managed to publish a German -Ukrainian Dictionary of 35.000 words (right after Emms Order of Prohibition of all Ukrainian in Dnieper Ukraine). In his free time, he created a row of handbooks of Ukrainian language and literature for the People's School, administered the biweekly "Hazeta Shkilna" (1875 - 1879) and also the first issues of Ukrainian educational society "Prosvita" (Enlightning). In 1880 Partytsky founded and published the magazine "Zoria" (Dawn) at his own costs for six years. "Zoria" published an array of brilliant contemporary Ukrainian writers: I. Franko and Lesya Ukrayinka, B. Hrinchenko and M. Hrushevsky, M. Kotsyubynsky and O. Kobylanska, M. Voronyy and A. Krymsky.<sup>112</sup>

Being closely familiar with the achievements of European comparative-historical linguistics. O. Partytsky contradicted the theories of P. Svystun and D. Ilovayski (1832-1920). Ilovayski was Russian historian-monarchist, author of work "Razyskaniye o nachale Rusi" - *Search about the beginnings of Rus'* (1876).

To publish his work, Partytsky had chosen a leading Galician newspaper "Dilo" (labour), which was published three times a week. Newspaper "Dilo" had been founded by

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<sup>110</sup> L.A. Kovalenko. Istoriohrafija Istoriji Ukrajins'koji RSR vid najdavnishykh chasiv (Historiography of the history of Ukraine) Kyiv: Publishing society "Vyscha Shkola", 1983. pp. 68 – 71;

<sup>111</sup> Austrian Kingdom of Galicia (modern Western Ukraine, formerly Kyivan Rus' and later independent medieval principality of Galic/Halych) with capital in Lemberg (modern Lviv) was a multi ethnic society of Ukrainians, Poles and Jews and some Germans, Czechs. In its most, the bulk of population was Ruthenian / Rus'yn (outdated term for Ukrainian) peasantry, while urban population was mainly Polish and Jewish.

<sup>112</sup> Tyshchenko K. *Skandinavshchyna v Davniy Rusi: Povernennya cherez 113 rokiv* in Stoholosnyk. Kyiv, 2000, p. 63 – 65;

the “narodovtsi” (people oriented)<sup>113</sup> in 1879 in opposition to the Russophil publication “Slovo” (word). The purpose of “Dilo” was “to move ahead to the better not by *word* but by *labour*”. Pratytsky named his rather polemic historical-philological work “Skandynavshchyna v davniy Rusi” (*Scandinavianism in ancient Rus*’), which fully corresponds to the contents of the work. After having published his work in *Dilo*, O. Partytsky collected separate issues of his publication and published them as a book in 1887. It should be noted that “Skandynavshchyna” was his first major scientific work. Well-motivated conclusions of the author about Germanic origins of ancient Rus’ of 10th century and later dissolution of Scandinavian elements in Slavic linguistic-ethnic surrounding during few generations. In 1883 he published another book about the “blank areas” in “Slovo o polku Ihorevi” (The Song of Igor’s Host) with his own translation. In these books, as well as in his articles in “Zoria”, Partytsky researched in a great detail the Scandinavian influences on the history, law, and religion of ancient Rus’ people in the light of modern (by those times) accomplishments of linguistic and historical science.

Partytsky divided his book into the following 12 chapters:

- Ethymologic analysis Rus’ personal names (antroponyms, chapters 1, 2, 3), gods (theonyms – chapt. 11), peoples names (ethnonyms – chapters 1, 12), names of geographical objects (toponyms – chapter 5) which were all known from the historical sources of 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries. In total book consisted of over 100 pages.
- Comparative historical analysis of Slavic and Germanic layers in “Rus” law (chapter 10), mythology and legends (chapters 11 and 2).
- Conclusions about the Germanic origin (“Scandinavianism) of the ancient “Rus” of the 10<sup>th</sup> century and about later “dissolution” of this “scandinavianism” in Slavic lingual-ethnic surrounding.<sup>114</sup>

In this work of 1887, Partytsky had already reached the main points of understanding, which became commonly accepted only in the recent times.

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<sup>113</sup> Narodovtsi – nationalist movement among western Ukrainians in 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was opposed to the Russian oriented Rus’sophile (so called “moskvofily”) stream among the local intelligentsia.

<sup>114</sup> Tyshchenko K., p. 63 – 65.

## 5.4 Partytsky reasearch of Rus' Old Norse personal and geographic names

Partytsky's problem was to figure out what "Rus'" meant to people of 10<sup>th</sup> century. Was in fact so, as Ilovayski claimed that already then term "Rus'ky" (Rus'ian) marked the same as today's term "Russian" (that is adjective applied solely to the Moscow state)? Was it possible that beginnings of this miraculous Rus' could be non-Slavic at all? Looking for answers to these questions, Partytsky engages himself into the linguistic analysis of Rus' lingual source appearances – the names of "Rus'" dukes, princes, princesses, nobility, warriors' names, ambassadors and geographic objects known from the historical sources. Luckily we have a lot of such names preserved but they sound somehow "not Rus' way". In order to strengthen and make this contradiction (their non-Slavic character) more obvious, Partytsky uses a special rhetoric method – numerous repeating, accumulating phrases which are obviously contradictory. So he presents a number of the names of Rus' ambassadors from the accord of Oleh with Greeks (911): Rus' messenger Farlof...Rus' messenger Frelav...Rus' messenger Frelaf...Rus' messenger Vermud...Rus' messenger Groald...Rus' messenger Truan...Rus' messenger Ulfof...After each name he presents its ethymological explanation: *far* (front) + *lof* (glory), *ver* (to defend) + *mund* (good), *hród* (glory) + *vald* (power), *hród* (glory) + *har* (army), Scandinavian personal name Thróand (lucky in deeds), *ulf* (wolf) + *fast* (strong) and so on.

After 34 years a new treaty of "Rus'" princes was concluded with Byzantium (945 A.D.) and again the names sound foreign: Rus'ian prince *Harfast* (from *har* – army + *fast* – strong), Rus'ian prince Hakon, Rusi'an prince Turd (from *Thór*), Rus'ian prince Hamund (from *ha* – tall + *mund* gift), Rus'ian prince Gunnar (from *gunn* – war + *har* – army), Rus'ian prince Eton (from *jötun* – giant). Among these princes, there is also Igor (Ingvar). However this also a Scandianvian name and its components are *ing* + *var*, that is "guarded by god". The names of 24 princes are followed by the next 24 names of the ambassadors (each from every prince) and again: Ivor, Vujefast, Ulb, Grimm, Kari, Schichbern, Schibrid, Sfirka and 30 Rus'ian merchants: Adun, Adulb, Ingivlad, Ulib, Turbid, Fursten, Frasten, Gunastr, Ruald, Ingeld, Turbern. Partytsky concludes "So far I have discussed up to 90 personal names...of the first Rus'ian princes: all the names themselves are Scandinavian, except of three in the

treaty of Igor (Sviatoslav, Volodyslav, Predslava).”<sup>115</sup> This way, the scholar vividly demonstrated that all these “Rus’ names” are proved to be common or general names among Danes, Frisians and other Scandinavians.

Partytsky was the first to propose a Scandinavian ethymological explanation of the chronicle name *Sud* (for *the Golden Horn* bay in Constantinople / Istanbul where it is referred as **Haliç** in Turkish), one of Kyiv’s historical names *Sambatas* (Sambat), Rus’ian names of Dnieprovian cataracts as mentioned in *De Administrando Imperio* by Constantine the 7th. Since the very beginning of Rus’ invasions upon Constantinople, the Golden Horn bay is mentioned (as **Суд** - the Sud) a number of times in the Primary Chronicle.<sup>116</sup> For instance:

“866 A.D. – And entered (Rus’es of Askold and Dir) in the midst of the Sud, and slayed many Christians...” or: “955 A.D. After Olha having accepted Christianity returned to Kyiv and the Greek tsar sent the messengers to her reminding of the gifts she promised, Olha answered to the tsar through the messengers: When you, says, will remain at my place in the Pochayna<sup>117</sup>, just as I have stayed in the Sud, then I will give you the gifts.”<sup>118</sup>

Partytsky as the first paid attention to the fact that this word (Sud) got adopted in Old East Slavic language through the influence of the first “Rus’es”, who referred to the sea straits as “sund” (cf. present names *Kalmarsund*, *Sunde*, *Sunds*, *Sundvall*, *Egersund*, *Ålesund* and *Sundsberg*). The consonant “n” fell away during the borrowing process, as the East Slavic tongue do not have the nasal “n”.<sup>119</sup>

The unique and archaic Kyiv’s name of Sambat (Sambatas) is explained by Partytsky as deriving from *sam* (together) and *bât* (boat) – that is a collective place for the boats that well relates to the Varangian context in this case. He considered as unsatisfactory, the proposed (by Thomsen, Bunge, Dombrovsky and Vigfusson) Scandinavian ethymologies: *sand-bakki*, *sand-bakkaasś* (sand hill), *sand-vađ* (sand ford).

<sup>115</sup> Partytsky, O. *Skandinavshchyna v davniy Rusi* (Scandinavianism in the Old Rus’). Lviv, 1887. Pp. 45 – 47.

<sup>116</sup> Tyshchenko, K., p. 68.

<sup>117</sup> *Pochayna* – a tributary of the Dnieper in Kyiv.

<sup>118</sup> Tyshchenko, K., p. 70.

<sup>119</sup> Tyshchenko K., p. 71;



The Scandinavian names (from the Byzantine source of *De Administrando Imperio*) of the Dnieper cataracts in Ukraine are explained by Partytsky the following way: *Hólmfors* – the island cataract (Острівний поріг), *Gellandi* – clanging (Звонець), *Eifar* – fangerous (Ненаситець), *Varafors* – wavy (Вовнич), *Lôanti* – boiling (Веручий).<sup>120</sup>

### 5.5 Ukrainian Normanists: Zubrytsky and Tomashivsky, Normanist arguments

All three leading Ukrainian Normanists (already noted Partytsky, Zubrytsky, Tomashivsky) were from the Austrian empire's Western Ukraine (Galizien / Galicia). Western Ukrainian historiography developed in relation to a general, cultural and ideological life in Ukrainian Eastern Galicia, which after the divisions of Poland became part of the Austrian empire in 1772. As before, the key role in economical, political and cultural life of Galicia was played by Polish noblemen, and eventually a young Polish bourgeoisie began to emerge.<sup>121</sup> The key person in Ukrainian Normanist historiography in Eastern Galicia was Denys Zubrytsky (1777-1862). He was born in Batiatycze near Lemberg (Lviv), where he later studied. He started to write in Polish and later in a so-called "slang" (jazyczije), a mixed language used in Galicia by many educated people. In his early years he kept a Polish noble orientation. However, in his twenties his national views in Galicia had been radically changed after he got acquainted with folk life, especially with Ukrainian oral folk tradition. He published a collection of Ukrainian Galician folk songs (*Pisni ludu galicyjskiego*, 1822). He published (in Polish) research on the history of printing in Eastern Galicia. Works of Zubrytsky became popular among many renown historians of Slavic countries. In his late career he wrote *History of ancient Halych – Rus' principality* (Rus' principality of Galič / Galicia). The two first volumes present the introduction to a great special work with genealogical appendix of Rus' dukes and kings, whom Zubrytsky, taking a Normanist stance, assumes to be descending from the Varangian family of Riuriks. This work was published in 1852 and was devoted to the so-called millennium of Rus', according to the historians of monarchic trend. The third volume of Zubrytsky is devoted to the political history of Rus' united Galician – Volhynian principality. He did not manage to publish the fourth volume though. He published instead passages from annals under the name "Anonim of Gniezno and

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. p. 71;

<sup>121</sup> Austrian Kingdom of Galicia (modern Western Ukraine, formerly Kyivan Rus' and later independent medieval principality of Galic/Halych) with capital in Lemberg (modern Lviv) was a multi ethnic society of Ukrainians, Poles and Jews and some Germans, Czechs. In its most, the bulk of population was Ruthenian / Rus'yn (outdated term for Ukrainian) peasantry, while urban population was mainly Polish and Jewish.

Jan Dlugosz. Latin excerpts from works and articles related to the history of Galician-Volodymyrian Rus' from 1377 – 1387, translated with critical research". Zubrytsky regarded Pogodin and Normanists to be his "ideological fellows".

**Stepan Tomashivsky** (1875 – 1930) was a prominent Ukrainian historian, writing in Austria's and later Poland's (1918 – 1939) western Ukraine in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was a member of Ukrainian National Democratic Party, active political figure of short-lived Western Ukrainian National Republic. First Tomashivsky taught in lyceums in Peremyshl, Berezhany and Lemberg (Lviv), later in 1912-14 he lectured in Austrian history at the Lemberg University. During the First World War Tomashivsky lived in Transcarpathia and Vienna and in 1921 – 1925 in Berlin. Author of *Uhorshchyna i Pol'shcha na pochatku 18 st.* (Hungary and Poland at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> cen, 1908), *Vstup do istoriyi Tserkvy na Ukrayini* (Introduction to the history of Church in Ukraine, 1932), *Die West-politische Bedeutung Galiziens* (1915) and other historical works. His own concept of Ukrainian history he presented in *Istoriya Ukrayiny. Part I. Starodavni I Seredni Viky* (History of Ukraine. Ancient and Medieval times, 1919, 1948). *Vatykans'ki Materialy do istoriyi Ukrayiny...* (Vatican Materials regarding the History of Ukraine. Reports of the Roman nuncios on Ukraine 1648-1957 (1919). Tomashivsky published a great number of documents regarding the history of Galicia (West Ukraine). In his *Nova Teorja o poczatkach Rusi* (New theory on the Origins of Rus', 1929.)<sup>122</sup> he suggests that the processes of the historical developments of Ukraine were determined by three defining ideas, that stemmed from its geographic location: fight with the steppe (nomads), competition with Poland (as expression of political-cultural contradiction of the East and West) and fight with dominance of Muscovy and Russia (in which he saw a political-economic contrast between the South and North). His historical interests stretched from the early period of Kyivan state to the early post First World War period. Tomashivsky defended Müller's theory of Norse origins of Rus'.<sup>123</sup> Separation from its *Руськість* (-Rus'kist' or Rus'-self-identity) was one the stages needed for Ukraine for creation of a separate national-cultural individuality and gaining of independence. Rus'

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<sup>122</sup> Tomashivsky, S. *Nova teorja o poczatkach Rusi* (New theory of origins of Rus') in *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 43 (Lviv, 1929) pp. 289 – 290.

<sup>123</sup> On Sept. 6, 1749 Gerhard Müller, the official Russian imperial historiographer, delivered a speech on the Origins of Russia entitled *Origines gentis et nominis Russorum* presenting Bayer's research that introduced *Annales Bertiniani* and Byzantine *De Administrando Imperio* and his theory that the Rus' state was founded by Norsemen. Müller never finished his lecture. As he spoke tumult arose among the Russian Imperial Academy members in protest against "infamous". One of them exclaimed *Tu, clarissime auctor, nostrum gentem infamia afficis!* (You infamous actor, dishonor our nation!). The affair was brought to the empress. Frightened Müller eventually redirected his work to the history of Siberia.

self identity should be replaced by Ukraine's self-identity, as the name Rus' was foreign to Ukraine, claimed Tomashivsky.

Albeit he was a pupil of Hrushevsky and a follower of his school, unlike his tutor, Tomashivsky was a convinced Normanist. He used the same arguments as the most of Normanists:

- The Rus' received the name from Ruotsi, a Finnish name for Sweden (from - Roðlagen)
- The Primary Chronicle includes Rus' among the Varangian people from beyond the Sea: Rus', Svei (Swedes), Urmene (Norwegians), Angl'ane (English), Gote (Goths).
- The Scandinavian names of Rus' (Karly, Inegeld, Farlof, Veremud and others) envoys in treaties with Byzantium (941, 944 A.D.)
- The Annales Bertiniani says the Rhos envoys to Louis I were the Swedes (eos gentis esse sveonum)
- Ru'sian names for the Dnieper cataracts, as given by Constantine VII, are Old Norse
- Arabic geographers make a clear distinction between *ar-Rūs* and *aş-Şaqâliba* (the Slavs).

## 5.6 Modern Ukrainian Historiography

### M. Braichevsky (1924 – 2001)

Among modern Ukrainian historians dealing with medieval Kyivan state and earlier epochs, one of the most eminent was Mykhaylo Braichevsky (Braichevsky). He was born in 1924 in Kyiv. He studied at Kyiv University and defended his PhD dissertation "Rymska Moneta na Terytoriyi Ukrayiny" (*Roman coin on the territory of Ukraine*). From 1960 he has worked in the Institute of history of the Academy of Sciences of Soviet Ukraine and was one of initiators of establishment of *Ukrainian Society for Preservation of Monuments of History and Culture*. During his last years he was a professor of Kyiv Mohyla Academy (in Ukraine), permanent member of the Free Ukrainian Academy in the US, member of Ukrainian Historical Society (in America). He published nearly 500 works, among which 10 are monographs. Most of them deal with old Slavic and ancient Rus' subjects. Scientific and personal views of the author were often were opposed to the official Soviet views. Even

during Soviet totalitarian times Braychevsky was an honest historian outspokenly expressing his views on the history of Ukraine. Braychevsky published his articles “against the stream of Soviet authorities” also in Russian magazines where the censorship was lighter. In consequence, his books were banned from the publishing houses and the author was dismissed from his work at the Institute of Archaeology of Academy of Sciences of Soviet Ukraine and his name was not to be mentioned or referred to. Braychevsky’s profound work “Pryyednennya chy vozyednannya” (*Occupation or Unification*)<sup>124</sup> criticized the Soviet Russian concept that forbade the sovereignty of historical development of the Ukrainian people. This work became the next reason for repressions – in 1968 he was freed from work at the Academy. Having experienced persecutions, after many years of non-recognition of his works, Braychevsky returned to academic science only in the end of the 70s. As a historian, he was interested in crucial events that determined the flow of the history. His scientific interests reached far back the roots of origins of Slavs, Kyivan Rus’ and Cossack times. His most important monographs are *Pokhodzhennya Rusi* (Origins of Rus’, 1968), *Koly i yak vynyk Kyiv* (When and how Kyiv emerged, 1963), *Bilya Dzherel Slovyanskoyi Derzhvsnosti* (At the beginnings of Slavic statehood, 1964), *Utverdzhennya Khrystyianstva na Rusi* (Establishment of Christianity in Rus’, 1988), *Konspekt Istoriyi Ukrayiny* (Notebook of History of Ukraine, 1998), *Pokhodzhennya Slovyanskoyi Pysemenosti* (Origins of Slavic writing, 1998)<sup>125</sup>

His book *Pokhodzhennya Rusi* (Origins of Rus’) is devoted to the problem of origin of Eastern Slavs. This problem has been of a great interest not only for the specialists but also for the general public in Ukraine. On the basis of careful study of historical, archaeological and other sources, Braychevsky gives a broad picture of ethnic development of the ancient population of the Eastern Europe. He was looking for the grounds which preceded the formation of a united Kyivan state of the late 10<sup>th</sup> century.

For Braychevsky, the question of origins of Rus’ was within the sphere of Slavic peoples opposing such Russian historians as A.A. Kunik or M. Pogodin who regarded the Rus’ as Norman rather than Slavic, and did not discuss the origin of the Slavic Rus’. Braychevsky criticized Kunik, Pogodin and Bayer for transferring of the problem of the

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<sup>124</sup> In 1654 Bohdan Khmelnytsky, Ukraine's Cossack leader hard-pressed by the Poles, formed a “federal union” with Russian. The ink was not yet dry on the signatures when the Russians began their encroachments.

Ukrainians generally are convinced that the “union” was an error.  
<sup>125</sup> “Den” (major Ukrainian newspaper), no. 221 from 01.12.2001;

origins of Rus' to the area of the history of Scandinavian peoples, leaving the Slavs in the role of a sluggish mass, a mere base for historical activity of Norman strangers.<sup>126</sup> Braychevsky puts very controversial question:

*“Was in this case any need to find out, where does this sluggish mass that populated Eastern Europe originates from before Scandinavians appeared here? A mass which according to these researchers did not have a sense of own nationality, neither statehood nor citizenship? Unfortunately, we have to admit that the anti-Norman trend which opposed this tendency, did manage to advance higher of the 18th century's level and after all it had been limited to repeating of less likely statements regarding the Slavic origin of Sarmatians, Roxolans and even Hunns (for example in works of D. Ilovayski). But in new circumstances of applying of critical methods of sources analysis, such statements could not to rely upon any success”<sup>127</sup>*

Braychevsky points out that the Old Rus' chronicles always begin with the presentation of ethnographic problem, but this presentation usually could not have a scientific character and was relatively naive. In essence, whole subject was led to the attempt to trace the genealogy of Rus' to the worldwide flood, thus connecting history of Eastern Slavs with Biblical history. Classical sample of such solution we find at the most significant work of that time, namely the Primary Chronicle.

Braychevsky further concludes that the lack of progress in the discussion of the Rus' as Norman or Slavic was caused mainly by the Norman tendency that became prevailing in historiography after M. Karamzin, especially in connection with creation of so called theory of "family household" by I.F. G. Evers, S.M. Solovyov, K.D. Kavelin, concludes Braychevsky.<sup>128</sup>

Thanks to the success of comparative historical method, the problem of Slavic ethnogenesis acquired a new shape and content. The major question in mind of the 19<sup>th</sup> century researchers in this field became the question of Slavic territorial motherland. Most of researchers indoeuropanists saw a few stages in the process of formation of Eastern Slavic peoples. It had been considered that in the beginning Eastern Slavic unity – Rus' has been

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<sup>126</sup> Braychevsky M., *Pokhodzhennya Rusi (Origin of Rus')*. Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1968, p. 7;

<sup>127</sup> Braychevsky M., p. 7;

<sup>128</sup> Braychevsky M., pp. 7 – 8;

formed which later split into three nations – Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian. O. Shakhmatov admitted even one more previous stage: according to his views, proto-Slavic entity consisted first of two great tribal groups – Western Slavs and South Eastern Slavs.

## **P. Tolochko (1938 - )**

Petro Tolochko was born in 1938 in Kyiv region. He is one of Ukraine's most prominent historians today. He is the author of both popular publications and serious research works that have laid the foundation for the research works on the place and role of Ukraine in the world history.

He is among the most persistent parliamentarians who champion legislative regulations of education and research activities in Ukraine. He is the author of the bills on higher education, on archaeological heritage protection, and on placenames. He is doctor of history, professor, member of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, member of presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Member of the Academy of Europe, member of the International Union of the Slavic Archaeology, Ukrainian politician (parliamentary deputy, member of a radical *Batkivshchyna* (Motherland) party. P. Tolochko has received with numerous state awards.

His key interest is the history of Rus' state, its origins and medieval period in Ukraine. He is the author of more than 300 research works and 100 popular publications. Tolochko's most important works are: *Arkheolohichni doslidzhennya starodavnyoho Kyieva* (Archaeological research of ancient Kyiv)<sup>129</sup>, *Starodavniy Kyiv (Ancient Kyiv, 1966)*<sup>130</sup>, *Vid Rusi do Ukrayiny (From Rus' to Ukraine, 1997)*<sup>131</sup>, *Kyivska Rus' (Kyivan Rus', 1996)*<sup>132</sup>, *Volodymyr Sviaty. Yaroslav Mudryi (Saint Volodymyr. Yaroslav the Wise, 1996)*<sup>133</sup>, *Litopysy Kyivs'koyi Rusi (Chronicles of Kyivan Rus', 1994)*<sup>134</sup>, *Kochovi Narody Stepiv ta Kyivs'ka Rus' (Nomadic Peoples of the Steppes and Kyivan Rus')*<sup>135</sup>, *Istorychna Topohrafiya davnioho*

<sup>129</sup> Tolochko P. *Arkheolohichni doslidzhennya starodavnyoho Kyieva* (Archaeological research of ancient Kyiv), Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1976;

<sup>130</sup> Tolochko P. *Starodavniy Kyiv (Ancient Kyiv)*. Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1966;

<sup>131</sup> Tolochko P. *Vid Rus'y do Ukrayiny (From Rus' to Ukraine)*, Kyiv: Institute of Archaeology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 1997;

<sup>132</sup> Tolochko P. *Kyivs'ka Rus' (Kyivan Rus')*. Kyiv: Abrys, 1996.

<sup>133</sup> Tolochko P. *Volodymyr Sviaty. Yaroslav Mudryi (Saint Volodymyr. Yaroslav the Wise)* Kyiv: Artek, 1996;

<sup>134</sup> Tolochko P. *Litopysy Kyivs'koyi Rusi (Chronicles of Kyivan Rus')* Kyiv: Eurobusiness Academy, 1994;

<sup>135</sup> Tolochko P. *Kochovi Narody Stepiv ta Kyivs'ka Rus' (Nomadic peoples of the Steppes and Kyivan Rus')*. Kyiv, 1999;

Kyyeva (Historical Topography of ancient Kyiv, 1970), *Chernihivska Starovyna. Zbirnyk naukovykh prats' prysvyachenykh 1300 richchyu Chernihova* (Chernihiv Antiquities. Collection of articles on the occasion of 1300 anniversary of Chernihiv, 1992)<sup>136</sup> and many other publications.

His views and ideas as for the Normanist theory of origins of Rus' and the role of the Varangians in it, are explicitly stated in the extensive article *Spirni pytannya rannyoyi istoriyi Kyivs'koyi Rusi* (Controversial issues in the early history of Kyivan Rus') published in "Slavyane i Rus' v zarubezhnoy istoriografii" (Slavs and Rus' in foreign historiography, 1991)<sup>137</sup> where Tolochko views are reflected in a summary:

*"As we see, the analysis of the archaeological material shows that the relations and exchange between Rus' and south- Scandinavian area had been proportionally equal through 9-11<sup>th</sup> cen. Both sides had trade representatives on the territory of each other. Scandinavian trading house and St Olav church were in Novgorod. While Rus' merchants had analogical trade house on the island of Gotland. The foundations of two stone Slavic churches had been discovered here.*

*In relation to the question of co-influence of Scandinavia and Kyivan Rus', the quantity aspect is not so much important as Greek presence in Rus' lands had been felt much less than Norman one during this period, however the impact of Byzantium on different aspects of life happened to be incomparably stronger than the Norman one. It might be explained by the fact that Scandinavia and Kyivan Rus' were more or less at the same level of social and historical-cultural development but Byzantium stood a level higher from both. The Scandinavian culture for Rus' (and the opposite way) had not been prestigious and could not receive any significant development. Virtually none of Scandinavian brought the craft- items became a sample for copying for Rus' craftsmen. The exception is in regard of the arms and weaponry but this had an international character.*

*Therefore neither written nor archaeological sources give any basis to see in the Varangians a force that would cause a significant influence on the formation process of social-political and social-economic development of Eastern Slavs. Varangians who were*

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<sup>136</sup> Tolochko P. *Chernihivska Starovyna. Zbirnyk naukovykh prats' prysvyachenykh 1300 richchyu Chernihova* (Chernihiv Antiquities. Collection of articles on the occasion of 1300 anniversary of Chernihiv) Chernihiv: Siverianska Dumka, 1992;

<sup>137</sup> Tolochko P. *Spirni pytannya rannyoyi istoriyi Kyivs'koyi Rusi* (Controversial issues in the early history of Kyivan Rus') in *Slovyany i Rus' v zarubizhniy istoriografii. Zbirnyk Statey* (Slavs and Rus' in foreign historiography. Collection of Articles). Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1990.

*coming to Rus' in minor quantities, merged into already existing social structures that had been developing a long before their arrival and independently from them.*"<sup>138</sup>

## **5.7 Ukrainian Historians abroad: D. Doroshenko and O. Pritsak – compromise approach**

Among the Ukrainian historians abroad, one would name Orest Subtelny and famous orientalist Omeljan Pritsak, along with Polonska-Vasylenko and Doroshenko. O. Subtelny of the University of Toronto claims that the Scandinavian impact on East Slav society and culture was minimal and views the rise of Kyiv, not as the exclusive achievement of one ethnic group or another, but as a result of a complex Slavic/Scandinavian inter-relationship. Whereas, Omeljan Pritsak has taken this issue further and argued that the entire question of the ethnic origins of Rus' is irrelevant. In his view, the original Rus' was a multi ethnic and multilingual trading company that tried to control the trade routes between the Baltic and the Mediterranean and in the process established the political entity called Kyivan Rus'. D. Doroshenko, the author of two volumes "History of Ukraine") maintain a compromise approach. *"Word Rus', as we may think belonged to a foreign tribe that took over the control over the southern tribes of East Slavic (the Ukrainians) group. This foreign tribe organized a state among them and disappeared, having left only a name. This name became a definition term for our people and new state. This name Rus' had become our national term that has been used among us for a long time."*<sup>139</sup>

## **5.8 Omeljan Pritsak and his "The Origins of Rus'":**

### **Rus' state as common establishment of the Varangians and Khazars**

Interesting theory and view upon the origins of Rus' is presented in the first volume of the "The Origins of Rus'" published in English by the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute. Pritsak arrives at an interesting conclusion. He claims that the "the ideas of statehood do not emerge in a spontaneous way but are merely shifted from one region the other. The bearers of these ideas and the founders of the states appear to be the traders and soldiers, who as the first

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> 5. D. Doroshenko. *Narys Istoriyi Ukrayiny* (Sketches on the History of Ukraine) in two volumes. Lviv, 1991. Vol. 1., p. 24.



ones detached themselves into professional groups of the population". From his next statement, we see that statehood was not brought to France, Germany or Khazaria but was spontaneously born there. But on other hand, the statehood of Eastern Slavs was brought from two sides: the West and the East. A sort of a trade community called "Rus'" that emerged somewhere in Gaul (in France) directed its interests towards the East. At the same time (about the middle of the 7th century) the analogical community of Eastern traders (the Khazars) streamed its interest to the West. Two streams encountered each other at Volga and with common efforts created the Old Rus' state. Initially this state consisted of two parts: the Northern one (where the rulers were the Vendish and Gothic clans) and the Southern one (ruled by the Avars, Bulgars and Khazars).

Where are the Slavs then? Pritsak put many efforts in order to prove the fallacy of the concept of Slavic origins of Rus'. According to him, even the Polianians<sup>140</sup> were not the Slavs but Khazars. In recently published work dedicated to the so-called "Kyivan Letter of the 10th century", Pritsak attempts much attention in order to prove that the Polianians and Khazars represented the same group of people. This presumption of Pritsak is based upon a Kyivan letter written by a Khazar Jew. It contains a few Khazar names and terms. The Khazar names are found also in another Khazar-Jewish document written in Kyiv in the beginning of the 10th century. The Primary Chronicle informs also about the area "Kozare" (*Козаре*, a locality populated by the Eastern traders) in Kyiv. Pritsak assumes that Kyiv appears to be a Khazar city, built on the Western border of Khazaria (that passed along the Dnieper). Using the etymological construction, Pritsak tries to show that the name Kyiv is derived from a personal name "Kuya", owned by a Khazar ruler, who built a fortress in Berestovo area of Kyiv placing Onoghur<sup>141</sup> garnison there. Thus the Kyiv area "Uhors'ke" (Угорське) is derived from the old form Ohryn (Onoghur and apparently the Vanir of old Eddaic tradition).

At any case, Pritsak overestimates the Khazar element in the Origins of Rus'. The Khazar influence upon the formation of economic and political structures in the Eastern Slavic realm was clearly significant. It had not been accidental that the Kyivan princes borrowed the title of kaghan<sup>142</sup> from the Khazars. But we should remember that Rus' state developed not under the patronage of the Khazars but in a constant fight with the Khazar

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<sup>140</sup> Polianians (Поляне - Polyanians) – one of central Slavic tribes (listed in Kyivan Chronicles as Slavic one)

<sup>141</sup> Name of a nomadic people Ono-ghur.

<sup>142</sup> *Kaghan* - title of a Khazar ruler. Terms stems from Hebrew title Kohen (a priest)

expansion. And already during the rule of Askold and Dyr (first known Scandinavian princes, ruled in Kyiv during 60 - 80 of the 9th cen) the Khazar expansion had been slowly overtaken. Oleh (Helge) freed the Siverianians and Radymichis<sup>143</sup> from the Khazar tribute. The Khazar tribute was finally overthrown by the Normans-Slavs during the reign of Sviatoslav.

So, Pritsak attempts to combine two theories: Khazar and Norman. According to his concept, Khazars dominated Kyiv (the city founded as a Khazar key-post on the western ends of the Khazar kaganate) up to 930 s and afterwards the Normans took over the domination. And the name Rus' was brought to Eastern Europe by a "Ruthene-Frisian-Norman" trade community.

Pritsak gives a vast and an in-depth review of any remnants of the Old Scandinavian experience in Eastern Europe analyzing the Old Scandinavian Sources other than Sagas. On the problem relating specifically to the origin of Rus', the results presented in Pritsak's first volume include the finding that several Varangian charismatic clans were active in Eastern Europe between A.D. 750 and 930. The author presents a new clearer data on the role of Aldeigjuborg (Old Ladoga, with Old Norse as its lingua franca) as a political and cultural center in the ninth century.

Based upon the Scandinavian material, Pritsak finds the corroboration for the migration of some West Baltic Slavic groups (Wends) to Eastern Europe, as mentioned in the Primary Chronicle, and for the Wendish origin of Great Novgorod.

Pritsak suggested also that in Khazaria the empire-building Old Norsemen most probably adapted the idea of a *konungr* ("man of divine origin") and the rules of reformed writing, such as younger Futhark, as it was more suitable for usage in a military-commercial multilingual pax.

In a detailed study Pritsak also discussed this thesis that the Oleh (Old Norse Helgi) of the Primary Chronicle is a composite of two personages: Oleh the Seer, an epic hero, and Oleh, the grand prince (king) of Rus' whose base in the early tenth century was Polotsk. According to Pritsak, the decoded Scandinavian traditions presents the same picture. The two Olehs have their counterparts in the two Helgis of the Scandinavian sources: Helgi, the cult

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<sup>143</sup> Siverinians, also Siverianie / Severyanye and Radymichi - Eastern Slavic tribes

figure of the ultimately Suebian myth, and Helgi / Lotha Knut, the scion of the Danish royal dynasty (Ylfingar). The latter Helgi was expelled from his native land by a Swedish clan. In about A.D. 900 he departed for Eastern Europe, accompanied by his Baltic Slav subjects who later settled along the Eastern coast of the Baltic Sea.<sup>144</sup>

The first volume of Pritsak's work also provided new philological explanations for a few Old Norse geographic definitions indicating that they belong to the category of "movable" terms. So to the established movable name Reithgotaland now are added Gardar, Gardariki, Gardr, (Rus'), Huns, and Koenugardr.

Pritsak main idea is that the ethnic origin of Rus' is not essential. Initially Rus' was a multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic trade union. In its attempt to establish control over trade routes between the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas, it created a political unity named Kyivan Rus'.

However, Pritsak just gathered this material in order to evaluate the Varangian contribution to the history of Eastern Europe and West Central Asia from the tenth to the twelfth centuries. The volume can be referred as historiographical, literary, historical and bibliographical introduction to the subject itself.

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<sup>144</sup> Pritsak, Omeljan. 1981. *The Origin of Rus': Old Scandinavian sources other than sagsa*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

## Chapter 6

### Russian and Polish Historiography on the Origins of Rus'

#### 6.1 Polish historians

There are three Polish historians that I would like to present briefly since they contributed greatly to the issue: the Polish encyclopedist of Slavic antiquity - Henryk Lowmianski, the British Polish Russo-Slavist Henryk Paszkiewicz and the Polish normanist and orientalist Józef Sękowski.

#### H. Lowmianski (1898 – 1984)

Lowmianski was one of the most prominent Polish historians and medievalists. His is the author of most authoritative and full work on the subject entitled *Zagadnienie Normanów w genezie państw słowiańskich* (Problem of the Normans in the genesis of Slavic states) as well as author of monumental *Początki Polski: z dziejów Słowian w I tysiącleciu* (Beginnings of Poland: from the history of Slavs in the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium). He wrote also *Religia Słowian i jej upadek* (Religion of Slavs and its Decline), *Polska i Litwa w Dziejowym Stosunku* (Poland and Lithuania in Historical Relation).

Lowmianski regarded that the linguists who tried to derive the term Rus' from Ruotsi went to far beyond the research possibilities and assumed that both terms could develop independently from each other at the same time. According to him, the name Rus' had a geographical meaning in the beginning and originally defined the land of the Middle Dnieper. When the state had been established here, the term became the name for a state and later it took likely the form of ethnic and social meaning. Careful study and reading of the chronicle (even in its corrected version by Mstyslav Volodymyrovych) does not give a reason to see in Rus' something alien and foreign for the Eastern Slavs.

Furthermore, Lowmianski thought that under Rus' one should imply a military organization that originated, most probably, in the region of Lake Ladoga, and consisted of diverse ethnic elements, Slavic, Scandinavian and Fenno-Ugric (Finnish) but with the Slavic domination.

In the above work "Problem of the Normans in the genesis of Slavic states" (in Polish, also translated into Russian) Lowmianski expresses an interesting thought regarding the term Rus': Could not it stem to a Scandinavian root *rauð* (red, whereas *rusy* stands for brownish-haired in Slavic languages) some trait of the territory (or possibly a red-haired people, as Norwegian historian Håkan Stang suggested). The presumption of Lowmianski came to be influential.<sup>145</sup>

## 6.2 H. Paszkiewicz and his *Origins of Russia*

H. Paszkiewicz was a professor of history at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. Later he spent most of his life in London, where he wrote many books becoming a reknown historian in England. His classical studies deal with ancient Rus' history and making of Russian nation. His main work is entitled *Pochodzenie Rusi* (Origins of Russia, 1959). Both English (published in London in 1954 under the title *Origins of Russia*) and Polish versions of it were published. His view can be classed as Normanist. Paszkiewicz greatly stressed the role of the Varangians in origins of the Rus' state and the Norsemen played a decisive factor in formation of the Rus' state, claimed the scholar.

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<sup>145</sup> Lowmianski H. *Rus' i normanny* (Rus' and the Normans). Moscow, 1985. p. 18.

Of major interest to us are the sixth and seventh chapters of Paszkiewicz's *Origins of Russia*. In the sixth chapter (The Rus' in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries) the author discusses: the "Normanists" and "Anti-Normanists", protracted polemics among the scholars on the subject, Arabic, Greek and West-European Sources on the People of Rus', the Primary Chronicle on the earliest history of the Rus' and Byzantine influences on the Chronicle (pp. 133 – 154).

The seventh chapter is entitled "The Norse period in the history of Eastern Europe" where the author presents an interesting, detailed review and study of the problem of Rus' in its earliest phase. Here, he defends a Normanist stance regarding the Norse expansion in the East, the Norsemen and the Vanquished population, the Norse descent of the Riurikides, Kyiv as a capital of Rus' and the chronological limits of the Norse period (pp. 155 – 181).

Paszkiewicz claims:

*"The Slavs from lake Ilmen, from the banks of the Dvina and the Dnieper, divided into various tribes and dispersed over the vast areas, were incapable of consolidating their forces by forming larger unions, and succumbed to (the Varangian) onslaught... Thus, the State of Rus' was the achievement of great efforts on the part of more than one generation of Norsemen."*<sup>146</sup>

Paszkiewicz was nearly mocking Russian anti-Normanists the way he was writing: *"In historical works, one often encounters the theory (Russian anti-Normanist, by R.Z.) that "the Eastern Slavs", before the arrival of the Norsemen, already formed wider political organizations. Unfortunately, the sources lend no justification for such a conjecture, and know no term with which to define a supra-tribal entity. The so-called Dulebian League so frequently quoted in this connection is a fiction. "Nestor" under the year 859, divides the Slavonic tribes into two groups, one northern and the other southern, but only in connection with their dependence on foreign invaders, the Varangians and the Khazars."*<sup>147</sup>

Paszkiewicz's view is much influenced by a common "pro-Polish" national stance and "separation" from the Russians and Eastern Slavs in general, as he also claimed for instance that "Russians are nearly pure Ugro-Finns, who after Christianization took the Slavic language but did not include into themselves any significant component of proto-Slavic

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<sup>146</sup> Paszkiewicz, Henryk. *Origins of Russia*. London: George Allen & Unwin., 1954, pp. 155 – 156.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

population, while Ukrainians are more Slavic than their Northern neighbours.”<sup>148</sup> As a result, the Varangians coming to modern North West Russian had to deal not that much with Slavs as with the local bulk Ugro-Finnic population. The same concept Paszkiewicz defends in other related publication “Are the Russians Slavs?”<sup>149</sup>

### 6.3 Polish Normanist Józef Sękowski (1800-1858)

#### *and Antiquités Russes d'après les monuments historiques des Islandais et des Anciens Scandinaves*

Józef (Julian) Sękowski (Osip Senkovskij in Russian) was a russified Polish orientalist, Russian writer and journalist of Polish background, from a noble Polish family, born in 1800 in Antagonka near Wilno (now Vilnius). Sękowski was a pioneer of Russian Orientalistics. During 1822-1847 he had been professor of St. Petersburg University, since 1828 member of St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences. He is the author of many grotesque novels, being one of the first who started the fantastic trend in Russian literature, later continued by V. Odoyevski, F. Dostoyevski and M. Bulgakov. In 1819-21 he travelled in Syria and Egypt. This expedition is described in *Wyiątek z opisu podróży do Nubii i wyższej Etiopii* (Excerpt from the description of travelling in Nubia and upper Ethiopia, 1822) and *Otryvky iz puteshestwiya po Egipciu, Nubii i verkhney Efiopii* (Notes from travelling in Egypt, Nubia and upper Ethiopia). It is noteworthy that he reached the sacred temple of Ramses II in Abu Simbel (discovered just four years earlier by G.B. Benzoni). During 1834-1847 he led the bimonthly *Biblioteka dla chtyeniya* (Library for the reading), where he published short essays, humoristic sketches and “eastern stories” under the pseudonym Baron Brambeus.

Sękowski’s interest in Normanism was evoked by a booklet *Eymundi et Ragnaris, Norvegiorum principium, tandem Polteskae vel Polociae<sup>150</sup> in Russia Dynastorum. Vitae et*

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.; 2) Paszkiewicz H. Początki Rusi. Krakow: PAU, 1996;

<sup>149</sup> Paszkiewicz H. Are the Russians Slavs? Rome – London: Institutum Historicum Polonicum. Societas Poloniac Scientiarum, 1970;

<sup>150</sup> *Poltesk* and *Polocia* – Latin terms for city of Polotsk and Polotsk area correspondingly.

*gest, in originali islandico*.<sup>151</sup> It was written by the Danish historian Carl Christian Rafn (secretary of the Royal Nordic Antiquarian Society in Copenhagen). Rafn directed attention to the *Eymundar Pátttr*, rightly suspecting that it contained the valuable information to the history of Rus'. Only 70 copies were printed and all 70 of them were sent to scholarly establishments in Russia.<sup>152</sup>

Sękowski devoted particular attention to this publication. He was about to change his profession from a researcher to a journalist and immediately began to study Old Norse and the first volume of the 1834 yearbook of his *Biblioteka dla Chteniya* already contained his enthusiastic article on the value of the sagas as sources for Russian history. Here he compared two kinds of sources: the eloquent *Primary Chronicle* and the colorful *Eymundar Pátttr*.<sup>153</sup> The second volume contained Sękowski's Russian translation of the saga with the original text and large commentaries.<sup>154</sup> By defending Normanists, Sękowski expressed thoughts that Rus'-Scandinavians subjugated Slavs and partly Finns, who were "Rusified", mixed with "Scandinavian Ruses" and became Slavs having accepted the name "Rus". According to him, Slavs and Finns became "Scandinavians after their way of thinking, customs and even traditions." Sękowski considered the language of Ruses as combination of Slavic and Scandinavian-Germanic with some Finnish mixture. He also claimed even that Ukrainian Zaporizhzhya cossacks<sup>155</sup> spoke a Scandinavian language and he connects the beginnings of the Ukrainian folk dumas with Icelandic sagas tradition. He calls the Ukrainian Zaporizhzhya Cossacks "Dnieprovian Scandinavian Rus'" (note that Zaporizhzhya Cossacks were active as independent peasantry warrior formations in the 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries). However, the Ukrainian historian Maksymovych considered such approaches of Sękowski as "anti-scientific concepts". So there was a bitter controversy with radical views on both sides.

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<sup>151</sup> *Eymundi et Ragnaris, Norvegiorum principium, tandem Poltescae vel Polociae in Russia Dynastorum; Vitae et gest, in originali islandico e membrana Bibliothecae Daniae regis unacum latina versione et brevi introductione edidit Societas Regia Antiquariorum Septentrionalium*, Copenhagen, 1833, 60 pp.

<sup>152</sup> O. Pritsak. The Origin of Rus'. P. 94.

<sup>153</sup> See also: Cook R., Russian History, Icelandic Story and Byzantine Strategy in *Eymundar Pátttr* Hringssonar, in: *Viator* 17, 1986.

<sup>154</sup> Bimonthly *Biblioteka dla Chteniya* 1: 3 (S. Petersburg, 1834), pp. 1-77. Sękowski's essay was translated into Danish by Leopold Keyper: *De islandske sagaer I deres forhold til den russiske historie in Annaler for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie*. Copenhagen, 1847, pp. 3-77.

<sup>155</sup> *Zaporizhzhya Cossacks* (zaporiz'ki kozaky) were peasantry Viking-like military manly formations of "peasant warriors" in Zaporizhzhya, South-East steppe Ukraine. They used finest boats-building techincs big long roar boats (known as "chajka"-sea gull) to sail across the Dnipro and Black Sea invasions. Regarded as national heroes in Ukrainian tradition, being the rallying point for Ukrainian struggles against social and national oppression.



Sękowski's efforts and appeal in the first publication caused the Russian reading public to found a national establishment to prepare and publish old Scandinavian sources. The Russian minister for public education S. Uvarov took interest in the matter, that resulted in opening of the Section Russe in the Nordic Antiquarian Society in Copenhagen. A special commission was appointed to study the early Rus' (Russian) history. The Commission included Carl Rafn, the Society's vice president, the Icelandic textologist Finnur Magnússon (Finn Magnusen), Anders Johan Sjörgen (leading Russian Finno-Ugrist), Stefan Sabinin (archi-priest, first Russian specialist on Old Norse), Mikhail Pogodin and Friedrich Kruse – two Russian normanist “spearheads”. The main responsibility for the preparation of the work was laid upon Rafn and Icelandic associates Finnur Magnússon and Sveinbjörn Egilsson (translator from Icelandic to Russian). Shortly after Magnússon died and his work was overtaken by the Norwegian historian and saga specialist Peter Andreas Munch (1810 – 1863). Munch's advisers in Old Norse textology were the Icelanders Jón Sigurdsson (1811 – 1879) and Brynjólfur Snorrason (1820 – 1850). Common efforts of all these scholars led to a solid publication entitled *Antiquités Russes d'après les monuments historiques des Islandais et des Anciens Scandinaves éditées par la Société Royale des Antiquaires du Nord* (Rus'ian antiquities according to the Icelandic historical monuments published for the Royal Nordic Antiquarian Society). *Antiquités Russes* contained passages from the Poetic Edda, Snorra Edda, heroic and mythical sagas, king's sagas, family sagas, some geographical works, accounts of voyages (Ohthere, Wulfstan), Icelandic Annals, Old Scandinavian legal codes and text of two treaties between the Scandinavian kings and their Novgorodian partners (from 1323 and 1326).

## **Russian Historiography**

### **6. 4 Russian Historiography of the first half of 18th century**

There were mainly foreigners who worked at the Russian Academy of Sciences at that time: G. Z. Bayer, I. E. Fisher, G. F. Müller, F. G. Shtrube de Pirmont and others. Soviet historiography books write that by this, the national value of Russians was mocked by the only fact that they (Russians) were removed from taking part in the Academy's work and study of Russian history and this work was entrusted to the German scholars, who knew very little about either the Russian language or the Russian country. Publication of works on Russian history became complicated. Strong polemics initiated especially regarding the

subject of emergence of Rus' state. This issue began to take a shape of political and national importance, as the Normanist theory had been used by the German nobility (in Russian) with the purpose of diminishing "the national value and virtue of Russians, who already at the rise of their history were not capable to follow social-political development without the Varangians coming from aside to rule. Such a way of problem setting provoked a "passionate polemics" and had become considered as "non scientific" by Soviet historians. It all started with from the speech of Tatishchev against G. Z. Bayer and was continued by M. F. Lomonosov, who voiced against the theories of G.F. Müller.

However, all this does not give any right to make such a conclusion as it is written in the "Ocherki istorii istoricheskoi nauki v SSSR" (Sketches on the history of the historical science in the USSR): "...the activity of foreign academics brought not so much benefit as a damage to Russian historiography, setting it on a wrong way of non-critical repeating and copying of foreign historical literature". Such an approach is a reaction to the statements of N.L. Rubinshteyn, who clearly underestimated the level of development of Russian historiography in 18th century. He associated and connected its achievements first of all with western influences. Definitely Rubinshteyn was mistaken. Russian historiography obviously already had significant old traditions. It had been developing along with the needs of social-economic development. Along with the tasks demanded by the gentry state, we find a reflection of the process of the formation of Russian nation.

The activity of another Russian normanist **Gottlieb Siegfried Bayer (1694 - 1738)** had received very contradictory appreciation in the Russian and Soviet historical literature. S. Bayer was invited to the Russian Academy of Sciences from Germany in 1725 and arrived in St. Petersburg on February 6, 1726. Being hardly thirty two years of age, Bayer had already proved himself a noted scholar in the areas of philology and history. Rubinshteyn highly appreciated Bayer's role in the development of Russian science: "Bayer's wonderful knowledge of Byzantine and Scandinavian sources gave new light onto the row of the subjects of old Rus' history. He was the first to familiarize the Russian reader with these issues". Rubinshteyn stresses Bayer's research on the Varangian-Rus' questions, as the one based on the direct study of Scandinavian materials as well as his first research into the

historical geography of Kyivan Rus' (*Geographia Russica ex Constantino Porphyrogenio*).

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Bayer has been justly regarded as the founder of the so-called Norman (or Normanist) school, which expounded the theory that the Rus' state was of Scandinavian origin. But as we noted above, the decade 1730 – 1740 in Russian history is known for the ascendancy of the German party at the court of St. Petersburg. In the light of what was taking place during that period, it seems understandable that some observers might have deduced the Norman theory.

As a linguist, Bayer arrived at his deductions largely by means of comparative philology, collating the names and terms in the Russian and Scandinavian languages, associations that were at times neither sound nor convincing. The Norman theory led in some cases to curious allegations, such as a statement that anything constructive to be found in the formative process of the Russian state was due entirely to the invited Normans.

Special articles of Bayer are devoted to pave the way and establish a basis for Normanist theory as: "O Varyagakh" (About the Varangians), "O proiskhozhdenii Rusi" (On the origins of Rus'), "Geografiya Rusi i sosednikh oblastey po dannym severnykh pisateley" (*Geography of Rus' and bordering areas according to the data of Northern writers*) and neighbouring regions according to the data of northern writers). In all these works, Bayer concludes the Scandinavian origin of Rus'. Meanwhile, Cherepnin notes: "The argumentation of the author is not quite convincing, for example, he attempts to trace a row of Slavic names from Scandinavian language".<sup>157</sup> Tatishchev spoke against some of Bayer's conclusions, while he incorporated some of his articles (as "On the Varangians" and "From the Books of Northern Writers") in the *Istoriya Rossiyskaya* (Tatishchev's History of Russian). Tatishchev noted also obvious tendency directed bias in the works of Bayer, seeing in this his intention to "rob and diminish the virtue of Russian people". Tatishchev wrote: He showed himself being passionate to enlarge Russian possessions and to destroy the Russian ones"

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<sup>156</sup> Mazour A. *Modern Russian Historiography. A Revised Edition*. London: Greenwood Press, 1975, pp. 32-33;

<sup>157</sup> Cherepnin A. V., *Russkaya Istoriografiya do XIX veka. Kurs Lektsiy*. Moscow: Moscow University, 1957. pp. 188 - 191.

Bayer's eight-year stay in Russian had a strong effect since it not only initiated a debatable hypothesis, but also stimulated an opposition that was forced to study the past and thereby encourage historical research.

Although the feelings against the German members of the academic family in Russian were not always cordial, the antagonism was grounded on an emotional rather a rational base. Because of this, the clashes resulted in more heat than light.

### **6.5 M. Lomonosov: anti-Normanist perspective**

An eloquent anti-normanist was Mikhail Lomonosov (1711 – 1766). He strongly criticized the works of Bayer and especially of Miller. Mikhail Vasilyevich Lomonosov had not been a professional historian himself but his works in the field of study of the past of his motherland, became "a new word" in the science. For Lomonosov, the study of history was a work connected to the formation of national consciousness, for the political and cultural independence of Russian. He was outcomer from the simple laymen, he naturally nurtured and carried through his life the feeling of great patriotism, which we can trace in all his works.

Also, he was not merely a historian in the narrow meaning of this term but also a poet and philologist, father of Russian science and scientific research, especially in the field of physical chemistry. He was productive and proficient in physical research as well as conducted astronomical studies. After all he was an enlightened and well-educated Russian patriot, active in the humanities and applied sciences. He did the first experiments in quantative analyses and made a mosaic of Russian tsar Peter the Great.<sup>158</sup>

One of Lomonosov's major works is "Ancient Russian history". He started working on it in 1751 after an official assignment and request from Russian authorities. For 3 years, he had been studying the sources writing down notes from them and in 1754 he completed the first chapter "*O Rossii prezhde Riurika*" (About Russian before Riurik), which is of special interest for us in regard to the old Rus' history. He identifies Sarmatians as Slavs. He includes

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<sup>158</sup> Illiritskiy, pp. 86 – 87;

also the Balts as being referred as Sarmatians. On the Eastern borders of Slavic settlement, the name of Roxolans (native Iranian speaking population of Northern Caucasus / the ancient Alans - modern Ossetians) was associated with this large group of western neighbors: Sarmatians-Slavs / Basts. In the name of Roxolans, Lomonosov saw the indication upon the ancient relation between these Rox-es (Ros or Rus') and the Slavs. Along with this he attempted to establish and prove the existence of constant movement from the East to the West and thus shifting of the name Ros westwards. As a result we find the name Ros' to be a common root among many place-names of different Slavic territories to the west.

### **Varangians – multi-ethnic group of soldiers?**

While explaining the term Varangian (or Varing as he calls it), Lomonosov claimed it to be a general term that defines "the Northern Soldiers" – a detachment of multi-ethnic structure (according to one of the definitions in the Primary Chronicle). Varangians - Roxes / Rus'-es represented for him one of Slavic - Sarmatian tribes of Lettonian-Lithuanian stock (Baltic linguistic group). Consequently the name of an extinct Baltic speaking people of Prussians (Po-Russians / Russian-like) stems from them too. Because of this community and proximity between Slavs and Balts it was so easy for a Varangian (=Baltic) duke Riurik to establish his rule among co-tribesmen of Novgorod Slavs. Lomonosov's observations and statements have been further developed by future historians.<sup>159</sup>

Lomonosov's anti-Normanist views were reflected also among the Ukrainian historians, first of all in works of M. O. **Maksymovych** (1804-1873), who was a follower of Lomonosov in the controversy. He actively developed his teachings in new circumstances of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike Normanists, Maksymovych considered Kyivan Rus' not as beginnings of old Rus' state, but as a final stage of extended and long-lasting process of Eastern Slavic history. For Maksymovych, the name Rus' bears local Eastern Slavic character. Though his major field of research was so called "Koliyivshchyna".<sup>160</sup> Maksymovych's first work on the anti-Varangian theme was "From where Rus' land derives...", published in Kyiv in 1837. In this work he sets forward the question about "Ruses and Varangians". Analyzing old annals, Maksymovych, like the Russian historian Rybakov correctly noted original territory of Rus' mainly in limits of land of Polyany tribe (what is

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> *Koliyivshchyna* - 18th century uprisings in Ukraine.

now central Ukraine). However by term "Rusy" (Ruses) he understood mainly a duke-retinue element. He considered this element to be non-Varangian but of Rus', i.e. Eastern Slavic.

Other Russian historian **Boltin** (1735-1792) first challenged LeClerk's Normanist theory that Rus' political life began with the coming of Scandinavians. According to the chronicles Boltin argued, Novgorod had been a self-governing state long before the Scandinavians arrived on the national scene, the level of Slavic civilization was much the same as throughout medieval Europe. Culturally the Scandinavians who descended on Kyiv were no further advanced than the Slavic peoples with whom they came in contact. He correctly declared that the "Primary Chronicle" of Nestor must have been preceded by other chronicles. Boltin was one of the first Russian historians to attempt an analysis of historical processes.

## **6.6 Varangian question in Russian historiography of 19<sup>th</sup> century:**

**N. Karamzin (1766-1826)** was one of greatest Russian historians whose writing of history served the purposes and interests of Russian tsarist monarchy. He was the first historian to present a portrait of Russia in an imperial style. The many-volumed labour, "The History of the Russian State", became the work of Karamzin's life. By the end of 19th century Karamzin's tremendous work was in the dustbin of history. It has been preserved intact to this day. For Karamzin, autocracy was the defining power of Russian history. He identified history of the country with the history of autocracy. Karamzin created the periodization of Russian history as completely dependent on the history of autocracy. Nevertheless, he started his "History" from the far past of Russian lands but all this for him was merely pre-history. According to him, the real beginning of Russian history starts with the "invitation of the Varangians" and creating of Russian state by them. Karamzin was a consistent follower of Norman theory of origins of Rus' state and he uses this theory to describe the ancient Rus' history. Structure and the text of "The History of Russian state" (*Istoriya Gossudarstva Rossiyskogo*) allow us to define quite clearly a concrete periodization of Russian history, used by Karamzin. And the first period starts with the calling of Varangian princes and lasts until Svyatopolk reign (862 - 1015). The period starts with the rule of Riurik, "the first Russian autocrat" (as Karamzin calls him)<sup>161</sup>. In general, Karamzin circumvented the Normanist theory, with its legend of the "invitation" extended to the Varangians "to come to

rule and reign over the Slavs". He dismissed the entire story as of no importance basically by giving the general impression of a Varangian admixture in the early Kyivan state and nothing more.

His interpretation of the history was traditionally "Great Russian", the theory that entire process was centrifugal rather than centripetal, a theory later vigorously opposed by the "Federalist" historians, particularly by the Ukrainians, as already mentioned M. Hrushevsky.<sup>162</sup>

The second period stretches from Svyatopolk until Yaroslav II (1015 - 1238). It ends with the reign of Volodymyr who divided the state into the inheritance lots. This first stage represented the period of fast growth of might and flourishing of the Rus' state, thanks to the "lucky authority and management of the monarchic power".<sup>163</sup> This was the period of a gradual extinction of the autocracy, disintegration of the state into the smaller principalities.

Karamzin came to be the first defender of Normanist concepts. It was he, who spread the Normanist ideas in his works. Later Varangian ideas were promoted by Russian monarchy ideologist M.P. Pogodin (1800-1875), who the most clearly expressed and developed the Normanist views in his work *O proiskhozhdenii Rusi* (On origins of Rus') in his course "Russian history" and especially in three volumes work *Issledovaniya, zamechaniya i lektzii* (Research, notes and lectures). Pogodin not only developed Normanist views of 18<sup>th</sup> century, but also tried to construct them in a fine structure, which would serve the ideological basis for Russian 19<sup>th</sup> century imperialism.

**Sergey M. Solovyev** (1820-1879) was born in Moscow, entered the Moscow University, where he was a pupil of both Pogodin and T.N. Granovsky. Later he was appointed to a faculty of the University of Moscow to teach Russian history. As a writer Solovyev stood forth as the champion of the theory of national development as an "organic whole" being a determined opponent of the old periodizations in Russian history, whether Norman, Mongolian, appanage or any other. In his "History of the relations Among the Russian Princes of the Riurik Dynasty", Solovyev stressed the internal rather than external

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<sup>161</sup> Karamzin N.M. *Istoriya gosudarstva Rossiyskogo* (History of Russian State), vol. 1, p. 122;

<sup>162</sup> Mazur, A., p. 82;

<sup>163</sup> Karamzin N.M. p. 113.

factors that contributed to the consolidation of the Rus' state. Later on, the idea was developed further and he brushed aside the Normanist as well as the Mongolian theories. In 1851 the first volume of his famous History of Russian from earliest times appeared. In the next 28 years there followed volume after the volume, 29 together.

The name of **Vasily Kluchevskiy** (1841 – 1911) is a landmark in Russian historiography. He presented the past in poetic prose and represented at the same time a rare combination of critic, pragmatist and artists all wrapped in one. He had a genius to extract from the past fascinating contents in an artistic style. Kluchevskiy introduced into the Russian historical literature a subject that would hardly be considered proper either by his predecessors or his contemporaries – the economic aspects of national history, including trade, finance, population, national production, and the rise of towns. And in the same mainly “economic way” he viewed the Varangian impact and activities in Rus' lands.

Kluchevskiy interpreted the history from a sociological point of view, he emphasized geographic and economic conditions as the determining factors of social change. Kluchevskiy considered colonization a distinctive feature of Russian development and an important factor in the rise of a strong central state. Among his many writings, noted for scrupulous research and documentation, is his *Course of Russian History*.<sup>164</sup>

According to Kluchevskiy, the first political form which was shaped in Rus' by the middle of 9<sup>th</sup> century, was "gorodovaya oblast", city region, administered by fortified settlement (as *borg* in Norse terminology), which served also as trade and artisan center of this district. These districts were called by the names of these main cities (as Halych, Novgorod, Kyiv, Suzdal or Pereyaslav for example). And when Great Duchy of Kyiv was formed, these ancient city districts, earlier independent became administrative units of the duchy. Creation of this first kind of political formation in Rus', was accompanied by secondary and also local formation of "Varangian duchy". So Kluchevskiy considers Varangians as a kind of "separate formation" which coexisted with Rus' state. In those commercial centers, where the Varangians came, they (Varangians) quickly transformed from "commercial partners" into owners and rulers. The chiefs of those Varangian military commercial expeditions transformed into military heads of the cities they protected. Such

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<sup>164</sup> Kluchevskiy V.O. *Kurs Rus'skoy Istorii* (5 vol., 1902–21; tr. *A History of Russia*, 5 vol., 1960).



chiefs were known as konungs or Varangians and these two words came into East Slavic languages as *knyaz* (duke) and *vityaz* (hero or brave-man).<sup>165</sup>

## F. Uspensky:

Years ago, another Russian imperial historian F. Uspensky (author of *Rus' and Byzantium in the 20<sup>th</sup> century*, 1888) wrote:

*If we were asked which school I should prefer to join, I should answer: the Normanist, though with some regret. Common sense and the logic of the extant sources speak for the Normanists, but sentiment draws one to the opposite school.*<sup>166</sup>

## 6.7 E. A. Rydzevskaya and her research on the Scandinavian placenames in Eastern Europe

E.A. Rydzevskaya (b. 1890 – d. 1941) was a specialist in the study of Scandinavian sources on history of ancient Rus' and Rus' - Scandinavian relations in 9th and 14th centuries. Under the guidance of F.A. Braun, she started to study old Rus' - Scandinavian relations, first of all based on Scandinavian written sources. Before 1918, she had written two major works, which were dedicated to the etymology of the Scandinavian names Holmgarðr - Novgorod and Garðaríke - Rus'. In both works she came to conclusion that these name are not clearly Scandinavian and they should not be translated "city on the island" and "land of cities", as it is used in historiography. She concluded that the term "Rus'" is not Scandinavian. The Viking age did not know this term. In runic inscriptions Rus' was referred as "Garðar" and in Old Norse literature also as *Garðaríke* and rare term *Rusia* is only literary, taken not from a live speech. In monuments, written in local languages, and not in Latin, geographic and ethnic definitions deriving from Rus' appear not earlier than 13 - 14 th centuries. She writes that the most likely explanation is the origin of the name Rus' via Finnish name for Swedes "Ruotsi"

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<sup>165</sup> Kluchevskiy V.O. *Kurs Russkoy Istorii. Chast I-ya* (Course of Russian History. Part I). Moscow: Mysl, 1987, p. 151;

<sup>166</sup> Uspensky F., *Rus' I Vizantiya v X veke* (Rus' and Byzantium in the 10<sup>th</sup> century), St. Petersburg, 1988, p. 13.

(as those coming from Roðlagen, the area on the Swedish coast opposite Finland (analogical to old Rus' term Sum' from Suomi)'. But she notes that Rus' from Ruotsi has weakness in phonetic relation. The root "Rus'" - "ros" is widely used in toponimics of Eastern Europe from Novgorod land to Kyiv one, from Neman to Volga, if to take into consideration its old name (Ra - Rha).

### **Rydzevskaya: the Term Rus' is mainly restricted to the south (modern Ukraine)**

From the first half of 9th century, already according to written testimonies of Byzantine and other authors, we find term "ros" - "Rus'" strictly connected with the south (i.e. Ukraine), with all geographic and ethnic terminology related to it, and a total absence of this term in northern areas (modern Russia), such as sub-Ladoga region or Upper Volga areas. If one takes into account the great number of local place-names with "ros" not only in sub-Dnieper and the north Black Sea area, but also in Galicia and Volhynia, and regards these names as more ancient than the creation and enlargement of Kyivan state in 9th - 10th centuries, then "ros" - "Rus'" appears to belong to the main territory of Eastern Slavs.

Rydzevskaya also analyzed the placenames of Novgorod land and Ladoga area, which were supposed to have Scandinavian roots (according to M. Fasmer and R. Ekbl). Her conclusion contradicted to that of Fasmer. She argued that in reality, these names do not give any grounds to support Arne's theory of Norman colonization of this area. It was also vital that Rydzevskaya stressed the importance of taking into consideration not only inter-ethnic relations in Rus' state but also social ones. However, she spoke only against certain concepts of Norman theory and not against the Norman theory in the whole.<sup>167</sup>

Rydzevskaya, together with Lyashchenko also analysed the Eymundar Þattr, the Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar and Haralds saga Harðráða. Her other research subjects included: Old Ladoga in Scandinavian sources, the problem of the name Holmgarðr used for Novgorod, Volodymyr the Great and Yaroslav the Wise as they appear in particular Scandinavian sagas. Unfortunately her untimely death during the German siege of Leningrad (in 1941) cut short her work.

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<sup>167</sup> Rydzevskaya E. *K variashskomu voprosu. Mestnye nazvaniya skandinavskogo proiskhozhdeniya v svyazi s voprosom o variagakh na Rusi* (Local place-names of Scandinavian origin in relation to the problem of the Varangians in Rus') in *Izvestiya Akademii Nauk SSSR*, 7th series, Section of Social Sciences, 1934, no. 7, 8;

## **Mistaken identification by the Greeks**

According to Rydzevskaya, the Rus' with whom Greeks had to do, represents the social upper stratum, which stood in the forefront of military-trade enterprise. It was composed also of newcomers from the North (mainly from Sweden) - soldiers, traders, duke's kinsmen. Byzantium and the East did not have to do with wide masses of population but with upper narrow class, hence identification of Slavs with Normans.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Norman issue in Soviet historiography**

Soviet historiography from its very beginning started “re-consideration of values” – a total re-arrangement of all the legacy of previous generations in the light of Marxism-Leninism. Definitely, this “new scheduled task process” could not be accomplished during a short time. According to Soviet historians, the Kyivan state emerged in consequence of the

evolution of economical and social conditions, it was the work of Slavs exclusively, foreign elements played no noteworthy role in this process. Such opinions in the Soviet Union were usually propounded in a most positive tone. For instance, B. Grekov noted: “It would be extremely naïve to believe that the reunion of the East Slavs and of non-Slavic peoples under the overlordship of Kyiv was the result of the action of any external causes.”<sup>168</sup> Soviet historical science inherited the old staff and scientists, who were not right away ready to this reconstruction that was scheduled on the agenda. In the first post-revolutionary years, such widely acclaimed historians as O.O. Shakhmatov, S.F. Platonov and other continued to work entering the new era with quite established views formed in the spirit of traditional concepts.

The main attention of first Soviet historians – materialists was directed onto the solution of social-economic problems that were little studied by the pre-revolutionary historiography. The questions of ethnic history were set on the secondary plan and the problem of the emergence of Rus’ was explained on the basis of traditional indoeuropaeism (works of Y.V. Gotye, V.A. Prakhomenko, V.A. Brim and others). Research of this period brought a number of interesting (sometimes very original as at Parkhomenko) ideas, however, they did not aimed to create crucially new concept of ethno-genesis in general, which could oppose the Indo-European theory.

In the 1930s, Soviet scholars started a contra-attack against the Norman “claims”. The Norman theory was pronounced as politically harmful because it denied the capability of Slavic peoples to create an independent state. Along with this, Soviet scholars stressed the bias of chronicler Nestor (a monk who wrote the Primary Chronicle). Pointing to the many internal discrepancies in his story and also on the fact that the data of archeological excavations do not confirm a wide spread presence of the Varangians in Kyivan Rus’. As result they concluded that Kyivan Rus’ State had been established by the Eastern Slavs.

## 7.1 First years after the revolution

In the period between the revolution in 1917 and 1920, there were published only two major works dealing in Norman problems. Among those first we should name the book by major A.A. Shakhmatov. It is entitled “Drevneyshiye Sudby Rus’skogo Plemeni” (*The*

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<sup>168</sup> Grekov, B. *Kiyevskaya Rus’ (The Kyivan Rus’)*. Moscow: *Gosudarstvennoe ucebno-pedagogiceskoe izdatel'stvo*, 1944 (1954). p. 8, 9.

*ancient fates of Russian tribe*) which is dedicated to the problems of origins of Eastern Slavs, Russian people and Russian state.<sup>169</sup>

## **A. Shakhmatov**

Aleksey Aleksandrovich Shakhmatov (1864 - 1920), a most remarkable Russian linguist, historian and one of the greatest authorities on the language of the chronicles. He was one of the most interesting and challenging Russian historians and linguists from the turn of the century. Philology was one of the instruments with which Shakhmatov attacked the problem. The primary weapon he used was the inductive historical narrative. For him each textual component represented a product of certain historical circumstances. Shakhmatov handled the problem by employing historical, rather than textual criticism. Each examined part was considered as a reflection of the surrounding historical climate in which it must have been written. The task of Shakhmatov was to discover "the most complete and most accurate, authentic Nestor Chronicle." Applying a skilful comparison method of the chronicles, he came to establish not only the dates of the various documents but also their origin, place, the character of the surrounding in which each document was written and motives used by the author.

Another of his conclusions was that the Great Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian languages developed independently, though stemming from a common Old Slavic mother tongue. And this was merely "unacceptable" to extreme Russian nationalists, who severely criticized Shakhmatov for even admitting the very existence of independent languages.<sup>170</sup>

Shakhmatov's views upon Normanist theory had always been non-ordinary and complicated. Objectively speaking, his works on the history of chronicle writing played an eminent role in criticising of Normanism. They undermined one of the tenets of Normanist theory and proved the non-sufficient and late character of chronicle story that describes calling of Varangian dukes. However, subjectively speaking, Shakhmatov stood at the Norman positions and viewed the initial history of Rus' state in Norman framework. So we can him as a Normanist.

## **7.2 Shakhmatov's theory of three Norman states:**

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<sup>169</sup> Mavrodin V.V. *Sovetskaya Istoriografiya Kiyevskoy Rusi*. Leningrad: Nauka, 1978, pp. 152 – 155;

<sup>170</sup> Mazour A., pp. 154 - 155;

He attempted to reconcile the contradictory testimonies of Primary Chronicle and the non-Rus' sources about the ancient period of history of Rus'. The emergence of Rus' statehood was seen by Shakhmatov in the frame of a gradual rising of three Scandinavian states as a result of fight between these states. First among these three states was created by the newcomers from beyond the sea: the Normans - Rus' in the beginning of 9th century in Ilmen lake area, the region of future Staraya Rus'sa (*Old Rus'sa*).<sup>171</sup> Namely this first state formation was a "Rus' kaganate" described in the Bertine Annals. From here in 840s Norman Rus' moved to the south in Sub-Dnieper area, having founded there a second Norman state with the center in Kyiv. In 860s northern Eastern Slavic tribes rebelled and expelled the Normans and Rus', having invited new Varangian army from Sweden creating this way the third Norman Varangian state headed by Ryrik. The Varangians (the second wave of Scandinavian newcomers) started struggle against the Normans Rus', that came here earlier. Having overcome their "older countryfellow enemies", the victorious Varangian leadership united Novgorod and Kyiv lands into one Varangian state, that took the name Rus' from the triumphal Kyivan Normans. In accordance with Norman tradition, Shakhmatov derived the name Rus' from Finnish "Ruotsi", a defining term for Swedes in Sweden.

S. F. Platonov continued and developed one of Shakhmatov's assumptions about the existence of Varangian center on southern shores of Ilmen lake, yet before Novgorod emerged.<sup>172</sup>

On other hand, soon after publication of Shakhmatov's work, Parkhomenko demonstrated that his hypothesis of establishing of three 9th century Scandinavian states in Eastern Europe is too far-fetched, complicated and too distant from the factual base of the sources.<sup>173</sup> The same criticism was voiced by Polish historian H. Lowmianski, who published a book about the role of Normans in ethno-genesis of Slavic states.<sup>174</sup>

### 7.3 Smirnov: Norman state on the Middle Volga

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<sup>171</sup> *Staraya Russa* is the third town in Novgorod province. Many historians associate the name of the ancient Rus' State - with this locality. Supposedly, the definition "*Staraya*" or "*Old*", proved the fact that the town Russa was older than the new town - Novgorod. From 12th to 16th century in the name of the town there was only one letter 's'. And, only when there appeared other 'Rusas', the town with this name located in Novgorod province started to be called "*Staraya Russa*", being spelled with double 's'.

<sup>172</sup> Platonov S.F. *Rusa - Dela i Dni* (Rusa - Deeds and Days), St. Petersburg, 1929, book 1;

<sup>173</sup> Parkhomenko V.A. *Iz drevneyshey istorii vostochnogo Slavyanstva in Izvestiya Otdeleniya Russkogo Yazyka i Slovesnosti Akademii Nauk SSSR*, Moscow: 1922, vol. 23, p. 484;

<sup>174</sup> Lowmianski H. *Zagadnienie roli normanów w genezie państw słowiańskich (Problems on the role of Normans in genesis of Slavic states)*. Warszawa, 1957, pp. 135 – 137;

P. P. Smirnov wrote the second major work defending Norman views in early Soviet historiography of 1920-s. His book is called "Volzhskiy Put i Drevniye Rus'y" (Volga Route and Ancient Rus). Here the author widely uses the material of Arabic writers of 9th - 11th centuries. Smirnov began to search the emergence territory of ancient Rus' state not on the famous way "from the Varangians to the Greeks" (as it had been done by all previous historians) but on the Volga route - the way from the Baltic along the Volga to the Caspian Sea. According to his concept, the first state created by Rus' - so called Rus' Kaganate (he identifies Rus' with the Normans) was formed in the basin of middle Volga. Here, he looked for "three centers of Rus'" that are mentioned in Arabic sources of 9-10th centuries. The Norman-Rus' moved from Volga in the middle of 9th century, being pressed by the proto-Hungarians. Smirnov claims that they went to Sweden and from there after "calling of the Varangians", Norman Rus' moved back into Eastern Europe, settling in Novgorod land this time.

This theory of Smirnov turned out to be quite original, however not persuasive. Therefore, it gained even the interest of the adherents of the Norman theory.

#### **7.4 V. A. Brim: Combining Rus' and Ros**

Young scandinavianist V.A. Brim became known mainly because of his article, where he presented a new interpretation of the origin of the term Rus'. His approach on the subject was of a compromise character as he attempted to reconcile two viewpoints established in the science a long before. He had acknowledged and supported the traditional Norman interpretation that the term Rus' derives from the Finnish "Ruotsi" and served as definition for the Normans - Swedes, who were coming from beyond the Sea into the Northern Eastern Slavic lands (widely populated by Finno-Ugric tribes at that time). But at the same time, Brim was the first one among the Normanists, who admitted the fact (proved and promulgated by the anti-Normanists) of a wide presence of the name Ros in Ukraine, BelaRus' and South-West Russian lands through the whole first millenium. The term Ros can be widely traced in these areas among the placenames and ethnic names. That is why Brim suggested that when the Varangians appeared in the Dnieper area, the Scandinavian term Rus' merged in Ukraine with the local ethnic term Ros' into a sole common name that got maintained after the ruling tribe that dominated in Kyiv, i.e. the Varangians.



Brim also attempted to present a new explanation and primary meaning of the Finnish word "Ruotsi". He suggested that Finnish "Ruotsi" originates from old Norse word "drot" - a *chieftain*, or *chieftain's retinue* and in the beginning it was used to define the Swedish military unit servicemen who were coming into Finnish and Slavic lands. Consequently, the term Rus' was the name for the Varangian detachments and at the same time it transformed into an ethnic term to define the Varangians.

Such assumptions in 1930s - 1940s represented a step ahead in a rich historiography on this topic. That is why it was warmly supported by A.E. Presnyakov and B.D. Grekov. The latter included Brim's concepts on the term Rus' in his first edition of a book on Kyivan Rus'. However in his second edition of Grekov refuses this theory since after a careful study the new concept did not present a persuasive solution of the problem.<sup>175</sup>

In another work, Brim presented a study of "The Route from the Varangians to the Greeks" that is of a great importance for the Norman school.<sup>176</sup>

Up to the beginning of 1930s, most of Soviet historians thought that the Norman problem had been solved already a long time ago in a Norman spirit. The critique of the Normanist theory among Soviet scholars starts from early 1930s.

## **7.5 On the Normanist pathway: Yushkov, Artamonov, Lebedev, Panov and Tiveriadskiy**

Soviet historian of 1940-s S. Yushkov supposed that the higher social group known as Rus' emerged from the general Slavic masses in consequence of military and commercial needs, although the name itself may not be of Slavic origin.<sup>177</sup> A similar view was expressed by M. Artamonov. "Rus' – writes Artamonov – (which was known to Byzantine, Arabic, and other writers) which undertook warlike and commercial expeditions...was not a tribe but a social group, a princely retinue, which included Varangians but was not composed of them

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<sup>175</sup> Grekov B.D. *Feodalnye otnosheniya v Kiyevskom Gossudarstve (Feudal Relations in the Kyivan State)*. Moscow - Leningrad, 1935, 1936, 1937. 2) Grekov B.D. *Kiyevskaya Rus'' (Kyivan Rus')*. Moscow - Leningrad, 1939, 1944.

<sup>176</sup> Brim V.A. *Put' iz variag v greki (Route from the Varangians to the Greeks)* in *Izvestiya Akademii Nauk SSSR, Series VII, Section of Social Sciences*, 1931, no. 2;

<sup>177</sup> Yushkov, S. *K voprosu o proiskhozhdenii russkogo gossudarstva (Regarding the question of the origins of the Russian state)*. Moscow, 1940. This work I only know from reviews in other publications.

exclusively. Rus' was an old ethnical term, linked with the Slavic tribes of the Dnieper, and designating among them a political organization with its capital in Kyiv."<sup>178</sup> Lebedev and Panov affirm that in the South (Ukraine) the prince's retinue, and in general the upper strata of society, were called Rus'. The Varangians were its counterpart in the North, and both the Rus' and the Varangians were contrasted with the Slavs who were dependent on them.<sup>179</sup> On the contrary, Tiveriadsky assumed that the term *Varyagi* (Varangians) designated an upper group among the Norsemen, a Norse retinue, while Rus' indicated a group that was purely Slavic. However, when the Varangians appeared among the Eastern Slavs, both these privileged groups united under the name Rus'.<sup>180</sup>

Quite surprisingly, The Concise Soviet Encyclopaedia asserts that between the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> century the ruling class, composed mostly of Varangians, was called Rus'.<sup>181</sup>

### **Trubachev on the river name *Ros'***

Regarding the Anti-Normanist argument suggesting the origin of the term Rus' from the Ukrainian river name Ros'. Trubachev, leading Soviet - Russian linguist in his *Nazvaniya Rek Pravoberezhnoy Ukrainy* (Names of rivers of right bank Ukraine) analyzes this river term Ros' and other related hydronyms with the same unusual -s' ending:

*"We do not find any structural or word-formative proximity between a few river names ending with -s' in Ukraine, namely Tes' (left tributary of Rzhavets', right trib. of Prypyat'), VYS' / VIS' / V. VYS' (left tributary of Synyukha, left tributary of Southern Buh), ROS' with its numerous variations Rs', Rus', Urs', Royss, Rossa and others. On our opinion, the name Ros' has not been sufficiently studied ethymologically. Gus' (twice at river of Sula and Prypyat') - clear appellation, so is Khus' also (basin of Sula)."*<sup>182</sup>

<sup>178</sup> Artamonov, M. *Spornye voprosy drevneyshey istorii slavyan i Rusi* (Controversial questions of the ancient history of the Slavs and Rus') in *Kratkiye Soobshcheniya o Dokladakh I Polevykh Issledovaniyakh Instituta Istorii Materialnoy Kultury*, Moscow, 1947. pp. 13.

<sup>179</sup> Lebedev V., Panov V., *Drevnerusskiye letopisi* (Old Rus'ian chronicles), Moscow: 1936. Commentary no. 67.

<sup>180</sup> Tiveriadsky, K. *K voprosu o proiskhozhdenii Rusi v svyazi s etnogenezom Slavyan* (Regarding the issue of Rus' origin in relation to the Slavic ethno-genesis) in *Istoricheskiye Zapiski* XIII, Moscow, 1942, p. 49.

<sup>181</sup> *Malaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* VII, 1931, p. 529. Compare: *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (the special volume: Soyuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik), 1947, p. 303.

<sup>182</sup> Trubachev O.N. *Nazvaniya Rek Pravoberezhnoy Ukrainy* (Names of Rivers of Right bank Ukraine) Moscow: "Nauka", 1968, p. 237

To summarize the Soviet approach to the problem, I will cite N. Yakovlev, who in the periodical *Bolshevik* of November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1947, declared that the Normanist theory is “politically harmful”, because it “denies the ability of the Slavic nations to form an independent State by their own efforts.”

## 7.6 Modern Russian and Russian historiography abroad on Norman issues:

Vernadsky suggested and stated that Norsemen merged with the group of Alano-Slavic tribe<sup>183</sup> of Rus’ and assumed their name. But not the opposite as modern Scandinavian scholars regard. Generally speaking he put much weight on Alanic element in history of Rus’ state. He believed that Rus’ and the Norsemen originally belonged to the same background – that of Alanic – Tokharian sphere, believing that it was possible that part of Norsemen might have merged with the Rus’ long before the era of the Vikings but taking into account a great number of considerations, he concludes that this Alano-Slavic tribe of Rus’ merged with a group of Norsemen only as late as the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. It is that time as Rus’ emerged as aggressive and expansive factor in the turbulent political history of Ponthic area and the Caucasus.<sup>184</sup>

The name of Rus or Ros’, according to Vernadsky, was originally connected with one of the Alanic clans, that of Light As (Rukhs-As). The name was taken by the Slavs, when they were subordinated to the Rukhs. In addition to all this, later the Scandinavian warriors penetrated to the South too and became known as Rus’. Furthermore, Venrdasky distinguishes two northern Rus’: the Swedish one (that founded Rus’ kaganate on the Don) and a later Friesian Rus’, founded by Riurik.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Alans were one of a few Sarmatian and Iranian speaking tribes, along with Yazygs and Roxolans. Sarmatians (hence the name *Sarmatia*, Lat. *Sarmatae*) populated modern Ukrainian lands. from the 3d cent. B.C. through the 2d cent. A.D. The term is vague and is also used to refer to the territory along the Danube and across the Carpathians where the Sarmatians were later driven by the Huns. The Sarmatians, who until c.200 B.C. lived E of the Don River, spoke an Iranian language and were a nomadic pastoral people related to the Scythians, whom they displaced in the north of the Black and Azov Seas region. The main divisions were the Rhoxolani, the Iazyges, and the Alans or Alani. They came into conflict with the Romans but later allied themselves with Rome, acting as buffers against the Germanic peoples. They were scattered or assimilated with the Germanic and Slavic tribes by the 3d cent. A.D.

<sup>184</sup> Vernadsky, George. *The Origins of Russia*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959, p. 174

<sup>185</sup> Paszkiewicz, Henryk. *Origin of Russia*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1954, p. 110.

Another Russian American historian Alexander Valentinovich **Riasanovsky** gave a review of the Normanist theory in his Stanford University dissertation entitled *The Norman theory of the origin of the Russian state. A critical analysis*.<sup>186</sup>

### **V. L. Yanin on the archaeology of Novgorod:**

Modern Russian archaeologist Yanin in his study on the Archaeology of Novgorod in historical perspective, on the issue of the emergence of Novgorod and Rus' states that the issue is a highly complex one, also from the archaeological perspective. He presents a number of reasons. First, the most ancient strata excavated in Novgorod traces to the first part of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. In the meantime, the story of Riurik's invitation of the Varangians is dated half a century earlier from 862 or 859. Second, according to Yanin, the possibility of finding layers that dated back to the second part of the 9<sup>th</sup> century seemed limitless and must be confined to the three original centers of early Novgorod: the Lyudin, Narevsky and Slavensky. Regarding the population of Novgorod, Yanin views it as alliance of the Slavic tribes (Slovenes and Kryvichi) with Fenno-Ugric tribes (Veps and Merya / Nareva) referred to by a collective term *Chud'*. This alliance is supported by the fact that the Varangian princes were sent a joint invitation by this tribal union of Novgorod. The Varangian prince and his armed guards were based in Gorodishche, founded and developed by the Normans in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The Scandinavian warriors were present in Gorodishche since the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Yanin notes an interesting fact that the first date available for the existence of Gorodishche residence coincides with the period of the 850s – 860s, i.e. the Primary Chronicle's date of "the invitation of the Varangians". This essential detail, says Yanin, substantiates the legend. Meanwhile, Novgorod (founded by the 10<sup>th</sup> century) was the home of the Slavic-Fenno Ugric tribal union that invited the Scandinavian princes. The relations between the two parties were complex.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Riasanovsky, Alexander Valentinovich. *The Norman theory of the origin of the Russian state. A critical analysis*. Stanford, Cal.: Dissertation, Stanford University, 1959.

<sup>187</sup> Yanin, V.L. *The Archaeological study of Novgorod: An Historical Perspective*. in *The Archaeology of Novgorod, Russia*. The Society for Medieval Archaeology, 1992. pp. 67 – 106;

Among modern Russian historians working in the field of Scandinavian history, we should note already mentioned T. Jackson, who published numerous works in the field of Ru's – Scandinavian relations.<sup>188</sup>

## Chapter 8

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<sup>188</sup> Jackson, T. *Tsjetyre norvezjskikh konunga na Rusi : iz istorii norvezjskikh polititsjeskikh odnoszenij posledny treti X - pervoj poloviny XI v.* (Four Norwegian konungs in Rus') Moskva: Jazyki Russkoy Kultury, 2000. 188 pp.; Jackson, T. *Islandskije korolevskije sagi o Vostotsjnoj Evrope (serdina XI - seredina XIII v.) : teksty, perevod, kommentarij* (Icelandic Royal Sagas on Esatern Europe. 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> cen.). Vol 3. Moskva: Ladomir, 2000. 362 pp.; Jackson T. *Islandskije korolevskije sagi o Vostotsjnoj Evrope (pervaja tret XI v.): teksty, perevod, kommentarii* (Icelandic Royal Sagas on eastern Europe, first quarter of the 11<sup>th</sup> cen.) Vol 2. Moskva: Ladomir, 1994. 254 pp.; Jackson, T. *Austr iGordum: Drevnerusskije toponimy v drevneskandinavskikh istotsjnikakh.* (Old Rus' placenames in Old Scandinavian Sources). Moskva, 2001. 207 pp.

## Norman Question in Western Historiography

During the tsarist period, the Normanism was trend within the Russian historical science (if we accept as Russians the German scholars who worked in Russia). In the 18th, 19th and early 20th century, western scholars admitted the theory of founding of Rus' state by the Normans. For almost two centuries, there had been only a few scholars-normanists on the West. Among the latter ones W. Thomsen and T. Arne stand out. Thomsen's study "The beginnings of Russian state" (published in Russian in 1891) for many signified the victory of Norman concept of the history of ancient Rus'. The situation changed after the Russian revolution, when the interest in Russian history became greater. In the 1920s a number of works on Russian history were published, including publications on old Rus' history. However, all of these were written from the Normanist positions.

### 8.1 Swedish Historiography on the Eastern Problem

#### Ture Arne (1879 – 1965)

T. Arne was a Swedish archaeologist and historian whose main interest was the subject of Varangian activities and colonization of the Eastern lands from Sweden in the early Rus' period. He studied also the Swedish trade- and cultural relations with the East during the Iron Age and Viking Period. Shortly before the Russian revolution, he published his monumental work *La Suède et l'Orient* (Sweden and the East), where he advocates the theory of Norman colonization of Eastern Slavic lands and attempts to prove the existence of Norman colonies in major centers of Rus' lands in 9th through 11th centuries.<sup>189</sup> His new concept became well acknowledged and seemed to be proved among the scholars researching the Ancient Rus' in 1920s.<sup>190</sup>

However, in the end of 1920s and beginning of -30s, the archaeological research presented the material that contradicted Arne's claim. Soviet archaeologists worked out new criteria to explain the problem of ethnic identification of burial items and monuments, claiming that the presence of certain things in a burial is not decisive, rather the whole burial complex determines the ethnicity.

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<sup>189</sup> Arne T. J. *La Suede et l'Orient* (Sweden and the East). Uppsala, 1914;

<sup>190</sup> *Store Norske Leksikon*. Oslo: Aschehoug og Gyldenals, 1986, Vol. 1, p. 469;

The well-known Russian archaeologist V. I. Raudonikas (from St. Petersburg University) after having conducted excavations of burial mounds in the South-East Ladoga region, criticized Arne's theory suggesting the mounds to be Norman (Arne used this to support his Norman colonization concept). He discovered that most of these burials belong to the local Baltic-Fennic tribes. These views he presents in his publication in German entitled "Die Normannen der Wikingzeit und das Ladogagebiet" (*Normans of Viking times and Ladoga area*)<sup>191</sup> as well as in other articles.<sup>192</sup> In 1933, Raudonikas delivered a paper criticizing Arne's concept of the Norman colonization of Rus' lands.

Since Arne's colonization theory was based on the archaeological material, it gained interest and support among the linguists as R. Ekbl and M. Fasmer, who attempted to prove the existence of numerous Norman colonies in the areas by analyzing the place-names of Novgorod land and other Rus' areas. However Fasmer's claims were later criticized by Rydzevskaya who did the same analysis of place-names in Novgorod area.<sup>193</sup>

Arne argued that the Eastern colonization was firmly connected to the trade between Sweden and Eastern lands. Arne, his followers and other archaeologists like Holger Arbman and Hugo Valentin, had, due to a congenial tradition of the early 20th century, a perspective of international exchange, thus very correctly interpreted Birka as part of a broad international economic-political context, between east and west.

Arne was one of the first one to bring the archaeological data into the discussion. Years ago before Arne's theory, **Russian archaeologist Artsikhovskiy** noted that "The (Slavic) remains of the past, when they are discovered in barrows of a Scandinavian type, do not testify to the existence of Swedish colonization nor yet to that of trade with Sweden, but simply to Swedish cultural influences."<sup>194</sup> It was Artsikhovskiy, who as the first one (in 1932)

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<sup>191</sup> Raudonikas W. "Die Normannen der Wikingzeit und das Ladogagebiet" (*Normans of Viking times and Ladoga area*). Stockholm, 1930;

<sup>192</sup> Raudonikas W. "Die Grabriten in den finnischen Kurganen im sudostlichen Ladogagebiet (*Burial rites in the Finnish burial mounds of South East Ladoga region*)" in *Eurasia Septentrionalis Antiqua*, Helsinki, 1929, no. IV. 2.) Raudonikas W. *Svenskt och finskt i Gardarike - Forvannen*, Stockholm, 1931;

<sup>193</sup> See previous chapter where Rydzevskaya is discussed;

<sup>194</sup> Artsikhovskiy A., *Arkheologicheskiye dannye o vozniknovenii feodalizma v Suzdalskoy I Smolenskoy zemlyakh* (Archaeological data on the emergence of feudalism in Suzdal and Smolensk lands) in *Problemy Istorii Dokapitalisticheskikh Obshchestv*, Moscow, 1934 (11- 12), p. 48.

embarked upon archaeological excavations and study of Novgorod, which have been continued by other Russian scholars later.<sup>195</sup>

## **8.2 Holger Arbman (1904 - 1968): Swedish subjugation of Eastern Slavs**

Among the Swedish researchers and archeologists of the 1960-70s, Holger Arbman should be mentioned. He was one of the most convinced Norman adherents. However, in his monographic work devoted to the history of the Vikings, we see a split view and a double approach. On the one hand he claims that the Swedes while moving eastwards and southwards subdued local Slavic population giving a political organization to it. On other hand, he was disappointed with the very few Scandinavian finds in old Rus' cities. Having presented the information on the excavations of Novgorod, Arbman notes the small quantity of the finds: a 10th century's oval brooch and a few other ring brooches - are all that indicates contacts with the Scandinavians. There is no archaeological evidence of Scandinavian settlement in Kyiv before the 10th century. In order not to reject an illusion of Scandinavian political priority in Rus' already in the 9th century, Arbman expressed an assumption that it might be possible that the early Scandinavian materials have not been found yet in these cities.

Nearly all the historians who defend the Scandinavian role in forming of Rus' use The Primary Chronicle as their main source, since the Primary Chronicle contains several passages to support their idea. Nobody says however when and by whom these passages were introduced into the chronicle. H. Arbman describes the Primary Chronicle as non-reliable source in regard to the Swedish expansion to the East. Not because it was composed by an unknown author but because the story is not complete: there is no information about the times before Riurik.

### **Mårten Stenberg:**

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<sup>195</sup> Yanin, V.L. The Archaeological study of Novgorod: An Historical Perspective. in *The Archaeology of Novgorod, Russia*. The Society for Medieval Arachaeology, 1992. pp. 67 – 106;



The Swedish archaeologist Mårten Stenberg claims that in Kyiv as well as other Rus' cities founded by the Varangians, the Swedish hegemony had lasted only for a short time. Their trade was necessary first of all to the Swedes themselves and their dominion over certain center on the great rivers was merely an episode in the life of Eastern Slavs.

I will also mention a Swedish Scando-Slavist and a linguist **Richard Ekblom** (of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and 1920-s), who dealt primarily in Slavic and Baltic (Lithuanian in particular) philology and published a number of works on the Slavic pronunciation. Ekblom wrote a comprehensive work on the Varangian – Rus' subject: *Rus' and the Varangians in the placenames of the Novgorod region* (published in French in Uppsala in 1915).<sup>196</sup> Ekblom supported T. Arne's theory of colonization on the East.

### 8.3 German view (Jankuhn, Stökl and Capelle)

#### **Herbert Jankuhn:**

The German archaeologist H. Jankuhn expressed the view that the Northern European Varangians, who were called as Normans on the East, were here (in Rus') not only merchants but also warriors. He supposed that the Swedish Normans dominated the area with the help of key fortified centers in Novgorod, Kyiv and a system of other strongholds. Mentioning the Varangian Black Sea trade, H. Jankuhn claims that it was conducted in goods mainly in the form of tribute paid by the subdued Slavic tribes. Jankuhn's major work was "Der fränkisch-friesische Handel zur Ostsee im frühen Mittelalter".<sup>197</sup>

#### **Günther Stökl:**

Another German Slavist G. Stökl assumed that the Swedish Varangians and their domination in Rus' came to serve as a pushing force for the state development in Rus'. This

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<sup>196</sup> Ekblom, R. *Rus et Vareg dans les nomes des lieux de la région de Novgorod* (Rus' and the Varangians in the placenames of Novgorod region). Uppsala, 1915. 70 pp. + Map.

<sup>197</sup> Jankuhn, Herbert. *Der fränkisch-friesische Handel zur Ostsee im frühen Mittelalter* (Frankish-Frisian trade in the Baltic Sea in the Early Middle Ages). Vierteljahrsschrift für Slavic Philologie 40 (1953).

first Eastern Slavic medieval state grew out of combination of many elements. The Varangians were one of these key elements, one historical force among the others. Rus' history only because of the Varangians is just the same fiction as Rus' history without the Varangians.<sup>198</sup>

### **German archaeologist Torsten Capelle:**

German archaeologist Torsten Capelle suggests that there are a number of important centers (in Russia and Ukraine), which owe their origins to the Vikings. Among he mentions Staraya Ladoga, which had been to a great extent a Scandinavian center during the whole 9th century...In ancient Novgorod, the Swedes had lived already before the emergence of a proper medieval city, as the finds suggest. In Gniezdovo near Smoliensk, we find find numerous Viking burials with typical Swedish jewelry and weaponry. The main center of Scandinavian activity was Kyiv, where the presence of the Scandinavians is indicated not only by the Primary Chronicle but also by the archaeological finds.<sup>199</sup>

### **8.4 Thomas Noonan: The Vikings and The Dnieper Trade Route**

The American numismatist and historian Thomas Noonan has written several works dealing with the Kyivan Rus'. Noonan's particular interests are the economic history of ancient and medieval Ukraine and Russia and Rus' archaeology and numismatics.

One of his key monograph's *The Dnieper Trade Route in Kyivan Russia* is primarily concerned with the trade and commerce along the Dnieper waterway. Here he presents new and relevant observations for the Varangian presence and establishment on the East. The Dnieper trade route in the Kyivan period was little affected by the nationalistic fervour that has nurtured and sustained the "Normanist" controversy. Noonan notes that the Vikings were not the first ones from Scandinavia to establish themselves along the Dnieper waterways. Several centuries before the Viking Age commenced in Scandinavia, the Goths had used the Dnieper route to reach the southern cities of the late Roman era. Nor did the Goths discover

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<sup>198</sup> Stökl, Günther. *Geschichte des Frühmittelalters und der Germanenmission. Geschichte der Slavenmission*, 2., erg. Aufl. 1976; See also: G. Stökl, *Russische Geschichte Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, 1985;

<sup>199</sup> Capelle, Torsten. *Die Wikinger*, 1984; *Die Sachsen des frühen Mittelalters*, 1998; *Holzsnitzkunst vor der Wikingerzeit* 1980; *Kultur- und Kunst Geschichte der Wikinger* 1986, *Metallschmuck in Haithabu* 1968 and others.

the route. The Dnieper route dates back to antiquity and did not originate in the immediate pre-Kyivan period. A long time before the Rus' - Byzantine trade had first developed, Scythians and Greeks had already established many of the basic patterns of this commerce.<sup>200</sup> Noonan's point would be a good argument for the anti-Normanists.

Noonan devoted much attention to the study of the coins as an important supplementary source and information about the Varangians in Rus'. According to him: *The archaeological and written evidence of Viking activity in the east leaves much to be desired... Given the many problems with these sources, there is, quite naturally, a hope that dirhams can serve as a more objective source of information about the Vikings in the East... Dirhams reflect a continuum and, because there are so many of them, there are few lacunae.*

Noonan's conclusion: Coins were objects of trade and dirhams deposited in Scandinavia and the Eastern Europe present the consequence of Varangian – Rus' trade. This trade was initially centered around Ladoga, where the Varangian presence dates to 750 – 760 and in the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century the Varangian group moves its base to Kyiv on the Middle Dnieper, the main trade and collection center for shipping the goods and people to the Black Sea and Byzantium. At the early period the Scandinavian Eastern commerce was made possible by the *Pax Khazarica* in the steppe. In the second part of the 9<sup>th</sup> century Khazar domination was undermined with the invasion of Pechenegs and establishing of Rus' in Kyiv. Rus' replaced the Khazars as trade intermediaries of the Middle Dnieper. The Scandinavian Eastern trade flourished between 940 and 979. The dirham imports started to decline from 950 A.D and during the 980s and 1010s comes the end to dirham imports into the Baltic. Gotland merchants were the beneficiaries in the commerce between Islamic World and Eastern Europe in the post-900s, as 41 % of all dirhams found in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe from post 900s are deposited in Gotland.<sup>201</sup>

Other two works by Noonan in the field of Scandinavian – Rus' relations should be mentioned are: *The Islamic World, Russia and the Vikings, 750-900: The Numismatic*

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<sup>200</sup> Noonan, Thomas. *The Dnieper Trade Route in Kyivan Russia (900 - 1240 A.D.)*. Bloomington: Indiana University, 1965, p. 8.

<sup>201</sup> Noonan, Thomas. *The Vikings in the East: Coins and Commerce*, in (eds) Ambrosiani, B. and Clarke, H. *Developments around the Baltic and the North Sea in the Viking Age*. Viking Congress, Stockholm, no. (3) 1994, pp. 215 – 236.

*Evidence as well as The Relations between Scandinavia and the Southeastern Baltic/Northwestern Russia in the Viking Age.*<sup>202</sup>

### **T. S. Noonan: Scandinavian role in the formation of Kyivan Rus' - only one of many developments**

According to Noonan, Kyivan Rus' was a product of several different historical developments. Each of them set its own stamp on the institutions and society that emerged and some profoundly influenced the future course of Rus' history. Many of these historical developments stand out clearly and their significance has been discussed since the very beginning of Russian historiography. Such has been the fortune of the "Normanist" Controversy over the Scandinavian role in the formation of early Rus' state. Other processes were just as important although historical records contain very little information about them. Among other developments Noonan lists: the impact of Byzantium along with the conversion of Rus' to Eastern Orthodoxy and the status of the Eastern Slavic tribes on the eve of the Kyivan period as well as their role in shaping Kyivan society.

The third case in point was the role of trade and especially foreign commerce in the formation and evolution of Kyivan state. This has long been recognized although the extent of its significance is a subject of debate in Russian historiography. The Kyiv-Novgorod axis formed the heart of the known route from the Varangians to Greeks. The Varangian-Greek route led from the Baltic to the Dnieper and then downstream to the Black Sea and Constantinople. Not merely the Varangians but mercenaries, adventurers and traders from the whole of Baltic and Eastern Europe all followed this pathway south to rich, famous cities of Byzantium. From its very beginnings the Rus' state lay along this international link between the Baltic and the Black Sea. Economic processes and commercial developments along the whole Varangian-Greek pathway had serious impacts on the Rus' economy and thus its political life, while changes in the Rus' economy and politics had their ramifications on the Varangian-Greek route.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Noonan, T.. *The Islamic World, Russia and the Vikings, 750-900: The Numismatic Evidence*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998. 2) Noonan T. "The Relations between Scandinavia and the Southeastern Baltic/Northwestern Russia in the Viking Age," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 13:3 (1982): entire issue.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid. pp. 1 - 2.

The approach of Noonan coincides with that one of Pritsak and indicates that the whole Normanist controversy is not essential to the question of the formation of Rus' state. The emergence of that state was due to many factors, including the international trade along the Dnieper route, which had existed since the antiquity.

## 8.5 Norwegian historians

The modern Norwegian archaeologist dealing in old Rus' relations with Scandinavia, is first and foremost Anne Stalsberg. Stalsberg has published a number of articles on the subject of Scandinavian Viking finds in Rus' lands. She concentrated on the Scandinavian archaeological items as a sign and evidence to explain the trade relations.<sup>204</sup>

Her key interest was on women's Viking items that have been found in Russia and Ukraine. She explains this focus by the fact women's jewellery makes up a great and important part of the finds and their interpretation must have consequences for better understanding of Scandinavian reality in Eastern Europe during the Viking times. In her calculations, 60 % of Scandinavian graves (out of 99 in all Rus' lands from period between ca. 800 - 1000) were of women and 55 % those of men. Of these, she identified the sex as 125 women, 36 couples, 91 men, 2 women + children, 3 men + children and 3 children. Women finds present the essential grounds in discussion of what Scandinavians did in Rus' lands.<sup>205</sup>

The evidence from graves that are accepted as Scandinavian, leads Stalsberg to synthesize a picture of these Scandinavians as intermingling with the local population in a non-hostile relationship. The immigrants frequently brought their wives with them and were not the lowest class in the society. This, in turn, implies to some extent that the Scandinavians were traders.

The material found also proves that the Scandinavians had a continuous contact with home Sweden. Weaponry, jewelry are designed the same way as in Sweden. The most common types in Sweden are the most common types in Russia.

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<sup>204</sup> See her publication: Stalsberg A. Scandinavian Relations with Northwest Russian during the Viking Age: the Archaeological Evidence in *Journal of Baltic Studies*. Vol. XIII, no. 3 (1982).

<sup>205</sup> Stalsberg A. *Skandinaviske vikingetidsfunn fra Russland*. Oslo, 1984.

Stalsberg presents also a detailed review of Scandinavian finds in Rus' in her study *The Scandinavian Viking Age in Rus'. Overview and Analysis*.<sup>206</sup> The earliest Scandinavian finds are of pre-Viking Age but connected with the Viking Age finds. It is an oval brooch and set of tools found on the very bottom of the earliest archaeological cultural layers in Staraya Ladoga. These finds date to the 750s. The second in terms chronology is a hoard of coins from c. 804 – 805 A.D. For a more detailed review of Scandinavian finds in Rus', see the maps no. 14, 15, 16 (in appendices). The finds reflect the nature of Scandinavian – Rus' relations and present a new source for approaching the issue of the Varangian role in the formation of Rus' state.<sup>207</sup>

## Danish historians

### V. Thomsen (1842 – 1927)

Vilhelm Thomsen was Danish linguist, professor of comparative linguistics at the University of Copenhagen (during 1887 – 1913). He was a specialist in the field of historical linguistics. His work encompasses Indo-European and Finno-Ugric languages. He was the last important linguist in the Rasmus Rask tradition and like Rask he was eager to use philology as a tool for the historian. In 1876 he gained international attention with a series of lectures at Oxford in which he examined the connections between ancient Rus' state and Scandinavia and demonstrated the role played by the Scandinavians in fashioning the first Kyivan state. He became especially known 20 years later when he founded modern turkology by interpreting *the Orkhon inscriptions* from Mongolia. Thomsen demonstrated that they were written in an ancient Turkic dialect. He contributed greatly to the research of Lycian and Etruscan languages. In 1902 he published “Sprogvidenskabens historie. Samlede afhandlinger” that came out in-between 1918 – 1934 in four volumes.<sup>208</sup>

His book “The Relations between Ancient Russia and Scandinavia and the Origin of the Russian State” appears in 1877. As for the term “Varangian”, Thomsen derives *var-* from a North Germanic stem “pledge”. But it was not often used in Sweden for expressing a warrior

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<sup>206</sup> Stalsberg, A. *The Scandinavian Viking Age in Rus'. Overview and Analysis in Odenburg-Wolin-Staraja Ladoga – Novgorod – Kiev*. Mainz am Rain: Philipp von Zabern, 1988. pp. 448 – 471.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Aschehoug og Gyldendals Store Norske Leksikon. Oslo: Kunnskapsforlaget, 1994. Vol. 13, pp. 533 – 534;

pledge. “That famous name”, writes Dr. Wilhelm Thomsen, “first appears in Greek and Latin writers of the ninth century in the shape of an indeclinable word, ‘the Rus’ as if it stood for some unintelligible abstraction. It soon became familiar at Constantinople as the name of sea rovers, whose fleets from the rivers of the Black Sea insulted and threatened the great capital.”

Wilhelm Thomsen explains the Sineus (one of three Varangian brothers, from the invitation of the Varangians to rule over Rus’) as being derived from Old Norse signiutr / signjotr “who enjoys victory”. Thomsen’s etymology is not very convincing from the standpoint of linguistics, the name Signiutr / Signjótr is completely unattested in any known Scandinavian source for members of charismatic clans.<sup>209</sup> Another Varangian name Truvor mentioned in the Primary Chronicle, Thomsen derived from Old Norse Þórvarðr (from Þór-r “the god Thor” and varð-r “vQrð-r, ward, warder). Though it was suggested by Holthaussen that the second part could be –vē-r “warrior”.<sup>210</sup>

## Conclusions and Afterthoughts

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<sup>209</sup> Pritsak O. *Origins of Rus’*. Cambridge: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1981. p. 156.

The Normanist theory is one of the main controversial aspects in the history of Rus' / Russian / Ukrainian. Generally speaking, to most Russian and Ukrainian historians, this theory has been a "barbarian one" in relation to the Russian and Ukrainian history and its origins. Practically speaking, being based on this theory, whole Russian / Ukrainian nations was assigned some "horrible non-capability" even in purely national questions. This was one of the reasons that ignited the controversy. For many decades, the Normanist theory of origins of Rus' has been firmly considered to be correct. However during the last century its basic grounds and commonly used postulates have been undermined and strongly criticized.

As an example - one of the views advanced in the Normanist teaching was the Scandinavian toponymics (place-names) in the Rus' lands. Such placenames had been researched in the works of M. Farsmer and E. Rydzevskaya. Altogether they discovered 370 placenames and river-names. But if we take into account that there were 60.000 named-places in the researched territory, this fact turns to be not much appealing (7 Scandinavian names for 1000 placenames). So we can rather speak of commercial links rather than the Varangian expansion or colonization, as a leading Normanist Ture Arne concluded.

Adherents of the Normanist theory also stressed the abundance of Scandinavian terms in the Russian language, especially in regard to the hydronyms (river / water / sea related terms): terms *lahta* (gulf), *motka* (way), *voloknema* (cape), *sora* (river-branch) and a few others seem to be of Scandinavian origin. However, it has later been proved that those words are of local Finnish (Ugro-Finnic to be more precise) origin. The same fortune encountered many other major Normanist statements.

Also, in the words of V. Moshin, "one finds oneself in a quagmire when one begins to operate with terms derived from *rus* or *ros*."<sup>211</sup>

A leading Soviet historian B. Grekov wrote: "It is not easy to do with the evidence of the Normanists. I am convinced that it will never be completely suppressed. All too many

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<sup>210</sup> Holthausen, F. Vergleichendes und etymologisches Woerterbuch des Altwestnordischen. Goettingen, 1948. p. 337.

<sup>211</sup> Moshin, V. *Nachalo Rusi, Normanny v Vostochnoy Evrope (Beginnings of Rus', Normans in Eastern Europe)* in *Byzantinoslavica* 3. (Praha, 1931) p. 539.



facts have been verified by this school.”<sup>212</sup> But in 1942, the same author affirmed that the Normanist thesis was the work of “fascist falsifiers of history”.<sup>213</sup>

While summarizing the discussion, one must be critical of those historians and scholars who have viewed the problem from a narrow perspective with nearly a total concentration on the term Rus’. Such an approach to the issue can be compared to studying the etymology of the name America in order to understand the emergence of the American state as such.

That the debate has continued non-resolved to this day seems to be, to the following reasons: historians have often substituted political (or patriotic) issues for improved techniques of historical methodology in their discussions; they have had limited knowledge of world history; and they have used source materials in a biased way. The work of the historians can be compared to mosaicists who piece together excerpts from sources of different provenance, and who often disregard the semantics of the original, since they have usually relied on simple translation instead of acquiring knowledge of the sources and their cultural sphere. This was one of the thoughts expressed by Pritsak.<sup>214</sup> The scholar carried out the most serious and up-to-date historical in-depth research on the subject.

The lack of written and archaeological sources posed the major problem in the discussion. In this respect, T. Noonan notes: *The controversies about the truth to be found in written and archaeological sources have generated several academic industries which will undoubtedly continue to flourish regardless of the fluctuations in the real economy...*<sup>215</sup> Noonan, being a numismatist stressed that the dirhams (deposited in Eastern and Northern Europe during the Viking Age) can serve as a more objective source on the Varangian activities in the East. However the value of the archaeological material should not be underestimated. The archaeological studies showed that the foundation of Gorodishche residence (Scandinavian settlement in Novgorod) coincides with the period of the 850s –

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<sup>212</sup> Grekov, B. *Drevneyshiye sud'by slavyanstva v prikarpatskikh oblastiakh* (The ancient fortunes of Slavdom in Sub-Carpathian regions) in *Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSSR*, 1940 (11-12), p. 36.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., *Na zare russkogo gosudarstva* (At the dawn of Russian state) in *Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, 1942 (7), p. 25.

<sup>214</sup> Pritsak, Omelyan. The Origin of Rus'. in *The Russian Review* (July 1977), pp. 249-273

<sup>215</sup> Noonan, Thomas. The Vikings in the East: Coins and Commerce. pp. 215 – 236.

860s, that is with the date of “the invitation of the Scandinavian princes: Riurik, Truvor and Sineus” given in the controversial Primary Chronicle.<sup>216</sup>

In my opinion, an up-to-date approach to this controversy, would be the recent studies and theories offered by above noted Pritsak and Noonan, who claim that the whole issue of the ethnic origin of Rus’ is not essential. Initially Rus’ was a multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic trade union. In its attempt to establish control over trade routes between the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas, it had created a political entity named Kyivan Rus’.

The two-hundred-year-old Normanist versus Anti-Normanist discussion has been incapable to offer a solution to the question of the origin of Rus’. Thus, in recent studies it had been replaced by another suggestion that based itself on the historical criteria and in the broader scope of universal historical processes.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries there emerged a multiethnic, multilingual, unified social and economic entity represented by the maritime and trading society of the Baltic Sea. It took more than two centuries for the multiethnic and multilingual commercial ventures to trashape this into a Christian and linguistically Slavic high culture that came to be the powerful Eastern European Rus’ state during the reigns of Sviatoslav, Olha, Volodymyr and Yaroslav.

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<sup>216</sup> Yanin, V.L. *The Archaeological Study of Novgorod: A Historical Perspective*. pp. 67 – 106.

## Appendices

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Title page: 12th century image of Varangians crossing the Baltic (source: internet site)

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20. Eastern Europe in the 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

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