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# The Baltic Finnic People in the Medieval and Pre-Modern Eastern European Slave Trade

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## Abstract

Raids and the kidnapping of humans in East Europe together with a late medieval and pre-modern Black Sea slave trade are well known in the scholarly literature. This kind of slave trade also extended via the Volga to Caspia and Central Asia. Besides young male slaves, there was a market for small blond boys and girls in both regions, where they were expensive luxury items. Gangs from the Volga, at least, launched raids towards the north, and it is possible that the northern kidnapping raids and the transportation of prisoners from the northern forests to Novgorod were also connected with the southern slave trade.

## Keywords

slave trade – Volga trade – prisoner kidnapping – Fenno-Russian relations

## The Problem

The Eurasian forest zone north of the living areas of the East Slavic populations were populated by Fenno-Ugrians, of whom those in the western part, around the Baltic Sea, were Christianized and belonged to the realms of Sweden, Novgorod and the German Ordenstaat during the High Middle Ages, while the rest remain outside the domain of the Christian powers until

the pre-modern period.<sup>1</sup> The Vikings were running a slave trade around the North Sea, in the Baltic Rim and along the Russian rivers in the early Middle Ages,<sup>2</sup> while the trading areas of the medieval and pre-modern South European, Central Asian and Middle Eastern merchants included the East European steppes and their rivers.<sup>3</sup>

The Russian medieval chronicles record about 90 raids conducted into the areas of southern Lapland, Central Finland, Häme, the Karelian Isthmus and Karelia, and further raids into northern areas east of Lake Onega. The raiders often took prisoners from among the local population.

The explanation for the taking of prisoners was either the extraction of a ransom, the slave trade or just uncontrolled devastation of the areas, all of which were well-known aspects of medieval and early modern wars.

TABLE 1 *Raids from x to y. The first figure is the number of raids, the figure in parenthesis indicates how many involved the taking of prisoners, and the percentage indicates the proportion of raids in which prisoners were taken.*

	Russians	Finns	Karelians	Unspec. Finns	Northern Dvina area	Total
<b>Russians</b>		18(8) 44%	1(1)	30(10) 33%		49(19) 39%
<b>Finns</b>	5(2)	2(0)	1(0)			8(2) 25%
<b>Karelians</b>		1(0)	2(0)		2(2)	5(2) 40%
<b>Total</b>	5(2)	21(8) 38%	4(1) 25%	30(10) 33%	2(2)	62

1 Jukka Korpela, *The World of Ladoga. Society, Trade, Transformation and State Building in the Eastern Fennoscandian Boreal Forest Zone, c. 1000–1555*. Nordische Geschichte 7, (Berlin – London: Hopf, 2008), passim.

2 Tore Iversen, *Trelldommen – Norsk slaveri i middelalderen*, (Bergen: Historisk institutt, Universitetet i Bergen, 1994), 3, 28–40, 68–87, 112–17, 126–30, 145–65, 168–210, 458–64.

3 Youval Rotman, *Byzantine Slavery and the Mediterranean World*, (Cambridge (Mass.) – London: Harvard University Press, 2009), passim, 47–52, Danuta Quirini-Popławska, *Włoski handel czarnomorskimi niewolnikami w późnym średniowieczu*, (Cracow: Uniwersytet Jagelloński, 2002), 99, A. A. Novosel'skii, *Bor'ba Moskovskogo gosudarstva s Tatarami v pervoi polovine XVII veka*, (Moscow – Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1948), 434–6, S. O. Shmidt, "Russkie polonyaniki v Krymu i sistema ikh vykupa v seredine XVI v" *Voprosy sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi istorii i istochnikovedeniya perioda feodalizma v Rossii. Sbornik statei k 70-letiyu A. A. Novosel'skogo*, ed. N. V. Ustyugov, (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1961), 30–33.

The reason for engaging in the troublesome transporting of prisoners over long distances to the south could only have been trade in humans. Such transportation was a fact, because the Novgorodian chronicle writers who were telling these stories knew the every-day situation in their home town, which was the destination for the prisoner convoys. The stories do not contain any further information about the fate of the prisoners.<sup>4</sup>

I will try here to view the future fate of the prisoners in the context of the Russian-Eurasian slave trade, to elucidate their destiny after Novgorod and the role they played in the Eurasian slave trade from the Middle Ages to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

My source material consists of chronicles, administrative documents (e.g. tax and land registers, customs books, diplomatic reports) and travelogues. They all have their limits, however. Administrative documents were drawn up for administrative purposes and did not directly record evidence of illegal business or robbery, while the travellers' interests varied and they were telling their stories not for us but for their contemporaries. The chronicles, for their part, focused on the interests of their institutions (a monastery, church, or prince), which were not very often connected with the slave trade.

### The Slave Trade and Slavery in Eastern Europe

According to Novosel'skii, between 1,000 and 10,000 Muscovite slaves were sold in the Crimean markets each year during the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This number was probably reached in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, too, and more slaves came onto the market from the Ukraine, Moldova and Transylvania.<sup>5</sup> The trade was by no means a pre-modern novelty, either, for the kidnapping of people into slavery was endemic to Eastern Europe, the Black Sea area, the Caucasus, the Mediterranean and the Near East. The commercial connection along the Volga to the northern areas is also well known in Arabic literature throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>6</sup>

4 Jukka Korpela, "'...and they took countless captives along' – Finnic Captives and East European Slave Trade during the Middle Ages" *Slavery, Ransom and Liberation in Russia and the Steppe Area, 1500–1860*, ed. Christoph Wizenrath (Ashgate (in press)).

5 Novosel'skii, *Bor'ba*, 434–436, Shmidt, *Russkie polonyaniki*, 30–33.

6 Rotman, *Byzantine Slavery*, 57–66, Ibn-al-Asir, *Tarih-al-Kamil. Materialy po istorii Azerbajdzhana. Iz Tarik-al-Kamil' (Polnogo svoda istorii) ibn-al-Asira*, (Baku: AN SSSR Azerbaidzhanskii filial, institut istorii. Izdatel'stvo AzFAN, 1940), V:58, 69, 78, 95 (pp. 26, 29, 32–33), VI:174–175 (p. 57), VIII:146–147, 205, 217 (pp. 96–98, 109–10), IX: 194, 203 (pp. 115–6), XII:166–167 (pp. 144–5), *Ibn Fadlan's Journey to Russia. A tenth-century Traveller from Baghdad*

During early medieval times the Black Sea slave trade was in the hands of the Vikings and Byzantines, but from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards the Italians were the most important traders.<sup>7</sup> They transported slaves in huge convoys from the Tatar markets on the north coast of the Black Sea to Constantinople and on to Cyprus, Chios and Crete. The final destinations were Antioch, Alexandria, towns in northern Italy and places in the western Mediterranean.<sup>8</sup> Slaves from the Saracen markets were replaced by ones from the Black Sea markets in Genoa during the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the latter came to compose 77–90% of all the slaves there by the end of the century. In Venice, 66% of the slaves came from the Black Sea markets. Slaves formed 4–10% of the late medieval urban population of Venice, Florence, Genoa and Naples, and according to Charles Verlinden the percentages in Genoa and Palermo were even higher.<sup>9</sup>

According to the 17<sup>th</sup> century writer Yurii Krizhanich, the Turkish galleys contained only Russian slaves. In fact, there were so many Russian slaves in the towns and villages of Greece, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Anatolia and the Ottoman Empire that people used to ask whether there were any people left in Russia.

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*to Volga River*. Translated with commentary by Richard N. Frye, (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2006), 63–65, *The Travels of Ibn Battūta A.D. 1325–1354*, translated with revisions and notes from the Arabic text edited by C. Defrémery and B. R. Sanguinetti by H. A. R. Gibb, Vol. I–III, (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1993), translation completed with annotations by C. F. Beckingham, Vol. IV, (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1994), index to volumes I–IV compiled by A. D. H. Bivar, Vol. V, (London: The Hakluyt Society, 2000), 491–2.

- 7 Quirini-Popławska, *Włoski handel*, 77–106, Elena Č. Skržinskaja, “Storia della Tana” *Studi Veneziani* 10 (1968): 8.
- 8 Arsenio P. Martinez, “The Eurasian Overland and Pontic Trade in the Thirteenth and the Fourteenth Centuries with Special Reference to their Impact on the Golden Horde, the West, and Russia and to the Evidence in Archival Material and Mint Outputs” *Archivum Eurasiae Mediae Aevi* 16 (2008/2009): 183, Brunhilde Imhaus, *Le minoranze orientali a Venezia 1300–1510*, (Rome: Il Veltro editrice, 1997), 49–60, 157, 435–562, Domenico Gioffré, *Il mercato degli schiavi a Genova nel secolo XV*. Collana storica di fonti e studi diretta da Geo Pistarino 11, (Genua: Fratelli Bozzi, 1971), 120, Jacques Heers, *Gênes au XVe siècle. Activité économique et problèmes sociaux*. École pratique des hautes études. VIe section centre de recherches historiques. Affaires et gens d'affaires XXIV, (S.E.V.P.E.N. 1961), 31, 117, 370–1, 402–4, M. N. Berezkhov, “Russkie plenniki i nevol'niki v Krymu” *Trudy VI arheologicheskago s'ezda v Odesse (1884 g.)*, *Tom II*, (Odessa: n.p., 1888), 356–9.
- 9 Imhaus, *Le minoranze*, 49–60, 157, 435–562, Gioffré, *Il mercato*, 13–21, Charles Verlinden, “Ist mittelalterliche Sklaverei ein bedeutsamer demographischer Faktor gewesen?” *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 66:2 (1979): 170–3.

According to Mikhalon the Lithuanian, a Jew who had seen a slave market in Crimea made a similar comment in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup>

### The Islamic Connection

The most important customers were the medieval and pre-modern Islamic societies of Egypt, Syria, Anatolia and Persia, which needed large numbers of slaves as civil servants and military personnel, and also as eunuchs and concubines.<sup>11</sup> Expensive slaves played a role as gifts between rulers and other rich people in Islamic societies. The giving of gifts was generally a well-developed institution in Asian and Russian societies, so that when the Arab traveller and scholar of Islamic law Ibn Baṭṭūṭa planned a pilgrimage to Mecca, the Sultan of Delhi, Muhammad ibn Tughluq, presented him with gifts, among them slaves of both sexes.<sup>12</sup>

Since Islam did not allow the enslaving of Moslems, the Islamic realms were forced to buy Christian or pagan slaves. On the other hand, as Christians were

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- 10 Yurii Krizhanich, "De Providentia Dei = O promysle. Sochinenie togo zhe avtora kak i "Russkoe gosudarstvo v polovine XVII veka". Svedeniya ob otkrytoi rukopisi P. Bezsonova, (Moscow: n.p., 1860), (principium) p. 9, Michalonis Litvani De moribus Tartarorum, Litvanorum et Moschorum, Fragmina decem. Multiplici Historia referta. Izvlecheniya iz cochineniya Mihalona Litvina: "O nrvakh tartar, litovets i moskvityan." Perevod s latinskago E. Shestakova. Otdelenie pyatoe. Izledovaniya akty na inostrannykh yazykakh po chasti drevnei istorii russkago prava v perevodakh i izvlecheniyakh. *Arkhiv istoriko-yuridicheskikh svedenii otnosyashchihsy do Rossii izdavaemyi Nikolaem Kalachovym, Kniga 2:2*, (Moscow: n.p., 1854), fragmen primum, p. 20, Berezhkov, *Russkie plenniki*, 345, 355–6.
- 11 Subhi Y. Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens im Spätmittelalter (1171–1517)*. Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte. Beiheft 46, (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1965), 329, Linda S. Northrup, "The Bahri Mamlūk sultanate, 1250–1390" *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, 2 vols. *Volume one. Islamic Egypt, 640–1517*. Edited by Carl F. Petry, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) (=CHE 1998), 247, 251–2, 258, 278–86, Jean-Claude Garcin, "The regime of the Circassian Mamlūks" *CHE 1998*, 290–1, Jonathan P. Berkey, "Culture and society during the late Middle Ages" *CHE 1998*, 390–1, Hallil İnalçik, *The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age 1300–1600*, London: Phoenix, 1994), 77–8, 85–7, Bert Franger, "Social and Internal Economic Affairs" *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 7 vols. *Volume 6. The Timurid and Safavid periods* - Edited by Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) (=CHI 6), 492–3, Dick Harrison, *Slaveri. En världshistoria om ofrihet. Fortiden till ränessansen*, (Lund: Historiska Media, 2006), 304, 308–9.
- 12 *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, 767.

similarly barred from selling other Christians into slavery, Jewish traders and Moslem corsairs played an active role in this business in the Mediterranean. It also meant that trade was directed more towards Africa and the Russian steppes, because there were suitable people available there (animists, heretical Christians, etc.).<sup>13</sup> According to Pero Tafur, the traders of Caffa had ordered a Papal bull to permit the trade of heretics to Italian towns, as in this way heretical Christians would not be sold to pagans and were not in danger of losing their Christian faith, albeit a heretical one. The Venetians organized a slave contract system for Balkan Christians on the same grounds.<sup>14</sup>

Although Islam and Orthodox Christianity prohibited the mutilation of humans, their societies needed eunuchs, which meant that castration had to take place outside the area of Islam and the Eastern Orthodox Church. In early medieval times this was done in the realm of the Franks and in Bohemia, and later it spread to Upper Egypt and Central Asia,<sup>15</sup> and perhaps also to southern Russia.<sup>16</sup>

### The Crimean and Caspian Slave Markets

Slaves were for sale in all the Central Asian market places,<sup>17</sup> with Crimea and the shores of Volga as the main export centre. According to Pero Tafur, Caffa

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- 13 Heers, *Gênes*, 69–72, Verlinden, *Ist mittelalterliche Sklaverei*, 158–61, Rotman, *Byzantine Slavery*, 42–43, 57–58, 62, 64, 66–67, *Régestes des délibérations du Sénat de Venise concernant la Romanie*. Documents et recherches sur l'économie des pays Byzantins, Islamiques et Slaves et leur relations commerciales au moyen âge sous la direction de Paul Lemerle I, II, IV. École pratique des hautes études-Sorbonne, VIe section. Tome premier 1329–1399; Tome deuxième 1400–1430; Tome troisième 1431–1463. Par F. Thiriet, (Paris: Mouton & co La Haye, 1958–1961), tome I: 468, 683, tome III: 2956.
- 14 *Andaças é Viajes de Pero Tafur por diversas partes del mundo avidos (1435–1439)*. Coleccion de Libros Españoles raros ó curiosos tomo octavo. Ed. D. Marcos Jiménez de la Espada, (Madrid: Miguel Ginesta, 1874), 162, Imhaus, *Le minoranze*, 63–64.
- 15 “Eunuch”. *Lexikon Arabische Welt. Kultur, Lebensweise, Wirtschaft, Politik und Natur im Nahen Osten und Nordafrika*, eds. Günther Barthel-Kristina Stock (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1994), 189, C. Edmund Bosworth, “Eunuchs III. The Early Islamic Period” *Encyclopaedia Iranica (= EI)*, Volume IX, Ethé-Fish. Edited by Ehsan Yarshater, (New York: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 66, Harrison, *Slavery*, 306–7, Rotman, *Byzantine Slavery*, 73, 75.
- 16 *Michalonis Litvani*, fragmen primum, p. 20.
- 17 *Poso'skaya kniga po svyazyam Rossii s Nogaiskoi Ordoi (1576 g.)*. Podgotovka k pečati, vvedenie i kommentarii V. V. Trepavlova, (Moscow: Institut rossijskoj istorii RAN, 2003), 19–20 (l. 344ob.-345), 29 (l. 360), 48 (l. 385), 53 (l. 390), Bi-Arslan Balbekovich Kochekaev,

had the biggest slave market in the world, a fact which is confirmed in other sources.<sup>18</sup> The great majority of the slaves came to the markets from the steppes of south-eastern Europe, but prisoners were also transported there from the east and north. Italian traders travelled widely in the inland areas of East Europe from Poland to the Volga. The eastern trade routes ran from north to south passing along the Volga to the Caspian Sea, with a connection to Persia and Central Asia, and along the Don to Crimea, while the western route ran along the Dnepr to the Black Sea.<sup>19</sup>

Egyptian and Central Asian traders did business in the markets of the Volga during the medieval period,<sup>20</sup> while the Muscovite traders went south. Afanasii Nikitin made a long journey to India and Ethiopia in 1468–1474,<sup>21</sup> and a delegation from Ivan III visited the court of Abu-Said in Herat in 1484.<sup>22</sup> Conversely, an Indian delegation from Mughal sultan Zahir ud-din Muhammad Bābur headed by the hajji Hussein came to Moscow in 1532. Leontii Yudin was running a business in India and Buhārā for seven years until he was killed in Khīva in 1603, and a Muscovite tradesman by the name of

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*Nogaisko-Russkie otnosheniya v XV–XVIII vv.*, (Alma-Ata: Izdatel'stvo Nauka Kazakhskoi SSR, 1988), 34–37.

- 18 *Andaças é Viajes de Pero Tafur*, 161–162, *Bartholomaei de Jano ordinis Minorum, Epistola de crudelitate Turcorum*. *Patrologia Migne Graeca*, 158, '(Athens: Centre for Patristic Publications, 2006), col. 1063, *Michalonis Litvani*, fragmen primum, p. 24, *Opisanie Kryma (Tartariae Descriptio) Martina Bronevskago*. *Zapiski Odesskago obshchestva istorii i drevnostei*. Tom VI s IX litografirovannymi listami, (Odessa: n.p., 1867), 359, 362–3, *Yuriy Krizhanich, "De Providentia Dei*, (principium) p. 9 (= O promysle. Sochinenie togo zhe avtora kak i "Russkoe gosudarstvo v polovine XVII veka". *Svedeniya ob otkrytoi rukopisi P. Bezsonova*, (Moscow: n.p., 1860), Quirini-Popławska, *Wloski handel*, 77–106.
- 19 Quirini-Popławska, *Wloski handel*, 77–106, 197–223.
- 20 Boris N. Zakhoder, Shirazskii kupets na povolzh'e v 1438 g. *Kratkie soobshcheniya instituta vostokovedeniya AN SSSR XIV*, 1955, 14–17, Audrey Burton, *The Bukharans. A Dynastic, Diplomatic and Commercial History 1550–1702*, (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1997), 392–399, Labib, *Handelsgeschichte*, 327–9, V. G. Tizengausen, *Sbornik materialov, odnosyashchysya k istorii Zolotoi Ordya. Tom I. Izvlecheniya iz sochininii arabskikh*, (Saint Petersburg: n.p., 1884), (predislovie) xi – xii.
- 21 *Khozhenie za tri morya Afanasiya Nikitina*, eds. V. P. Kozlov, L. M. Sorina, G. S. Gorevoi, L. A. Timoshina, S. N. Kisterev (Tver': Arkhivnyi otdel Tverskoi oblasti, 2003), 1.1930b–1960b (pp. 99–101), l. 218–219 (pp. 110–1).
- 22 N. B. Baikova, *Rol' srednei Azii v russko-indiiskikh torgovykh svyazyakh (pervaya polovina XVI – vtoraya polovina XVIII v.)*, (Tashkent: Izd. FAN UzSSR, 1964), 43, V. G. Tizengausen, *Pervoe russkoe posol'stovo v Herate. Zapiski vostochnago otdeleniya imperatorskago russkago arkheologicheskago obshchestva I:1* (1886): 30–31.

Feodot Afanas'ev syn Kotov travelled to Persia, the Ottoman Empire and India in the 1620s.<sup>23</sup>

Ibn Baṭṭūṭa met a slave girl of Persian origin, “Gulistan” in the Maldiv Islands,<sup>24</sup> and Bonacurso de Petrasancta bought a black slave who came from India in Caffa in 1289.<sup>25</sup> As the Indians were not “black”, this slave may perhaps have come originally from East Africa, which had connections with the Indian markets.<sup>26</sup>

Anthony Jenkinson, on his trip home from Buhārā, encountered 25 Russians who were returning home after slavery in Central Asia.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Muscovites were kidnapped by Nogais or Qalmāqs and transported to Mā-warā'-al-nahr.<sup>28</sup> The documents of the Samarkand Qadi office record Russian slaves, and there are Posol'skii prikaz lists from the 17<sup>th</sup> century concerning Russians in slavery in Central Asia.<sup>29</sup>

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- 23 *Russko-indiiskie otnosheniya v XVII v. Sbornik dokumentov*, eds. K. A. Antonova, N. M. Gol'dberg, T. D. Lavrentsova (Moscow: Izd. vostochnoi literatury – Institut vostokovedeniya AN SSSR, 1958), nr. 5, *O khodu v Persidskoe Tsarstvo i iz Persidy v Turskuuyu zemlyu i Indiyu i v Urmuz gde karabli prikhodyat*. Soobshch. D. Ch. M. P. Pogodinym. Vremennik imperatorskogo moskovskogo obshchestva istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh XV (1852): materialy n:o 2, pp. 1–22, *Patriarshaya ili Nikonovskaya letopis'*. Polnoe sobranie russkii letopisei (= PSRL) 9–13, (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1965), 7041 (1532), Introduction to *Khozhenie* of Kisterov, pp. 9–12, Laurence Lockhart, “European Contacts with Persia, 1350–1736” *CHI* 6, 377, Baikova, *Rol' srednei Azii*, 44–45.
- 24 *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, 836.
- 25 *Génes et l'outre-mer tom. I. Les actes de Caffa du notaire Lamberto di Sambuceto 1289–1290* ed. Par Michel Balard. Documents et recherches sur l'économie des pays byzantins, islamiques et slaves et leurs relations commerciales au moyen age sous la direction de Paul Lemerle, XII, (Paris: Mouton & co, La Haye, 1973) (= *AdC*), 388.
- 26 H. Neville Chittick, “The East Coast, Madagascar and the Indian Ocean” *The Cambridge History of Africa*. Volume 3 from c. 1050 to c. 1600. Edited by Roland Oliver, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 183–5.
- 27 *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia by Anthony Jenkinson and other Englishmen with some account of the first intercourse of the English with Russia and Central Asia by way of the Caspian Sea*, ed. E. Delmar Morgan, member of the Hakluyt Society; and C. H. Coote of the British Museum, vol. I-II (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1886), I, 89, 95, Ronald Ferrier, “Trade from the mid-14th century to the End of the Safavid period,” *CHI* 6, 428.
- 28 Burton, *The Bukharans*, 50–51, 379–80, 429–30, 448–51.
- 29 *Kaziiskie dokumenty XVI veka*. Tekst, perevod, ukazatel' vstrechayushchihsiya yuridicheskikh terminov i primechaniya podgotovili P. P. Fitrat i B. S. Sergeev, (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo komiteta nauk UzSSR, 1937), nr. 15, 17, *Materialy po istorii uzbekskoi, tadzhikskoi i turkmenskoi SSR*. Chast' I: Torgovlya s Moskovskim gosudarstvom i mezhdunarodnoe polozhenie Srednei Azii v XVI-XVI vv. Trudy istoriko-arkheograficheskogo instituta i instituta vostokovedeniya AN SSSR, Tom VI. Materialy po istorii narodov SSSR, vypusk 3,



Trading stations maintained by Jewish, Indian and other merchants in Buhārā, Eṣfahān and other Central Asian centres linked traders from Muscovy, Siberia, China, the Far East, India, Persia, the Osman Empire, Egypt and the Near East together.<sup>30</sup> According to Qalmāq sources, regular slave trading took place between the Crimean rulers, the Muscovites and the Qalmāqs,<sup>31</sup> and these relations could have meant that northern slaves ended up in India, Tibet, China and East Asia.<sup>32</sup>

The idea of transporting humans in convoys from the Arctic area to North Africa and Central Asia along roads and rivers and across lakes and seas by walking, rowing, paddling, sailing and carrying each other does not sound very reasonable in medieval circumstances. The price of such a prisoner would have risen to unrealistic heights in the marketing chain due to transport costs, waste, food, taxes and the profits made by intermediaries. The long-distance trade in luxury goods, however, was another matter, as pearls, precious fabrics, furs and other rare specialities were expensive enough, so that the additional cost of transportation was immaterial.<sup>33</sup>

The major open question is thus how the northern raids and the transportation of prisoners to Novgorod were connected with the southern slave markets. Did the prisoners remain in the north, did they have extraordinary qualifications which could increase their value in the south and explain their transportation there, and was there any real evidence for such transportation?

### Price, Ethnicity, Colour, Sex and Age

The prices of slaves varied from one year to another, and also from case to case. Prices were lower after major raids had taken place than they were in peaceful years, and the price of an individual depended on individual bargaining. If relatives were able to pay handsomely for a slave's freedom, the price of that slave would be high.<sup>34</sup>

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(Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1933), Part II: nr. 2 (year 1623), nr. 2–9 (late 17th century) and Part III: 386–97.

30 *O khodu v Persidskoe Tsarstvo*, pp. 9–11, Burton, *The Bukharans*, 5–6, 363, 448–51, 502–3.

31 *Kalmytskie istoriko-literaturnye pamyatniki v russkom perevode*, (Ellista: Kalmytskie nauchno-issledovatel'skii institut yazyka, literatury i istorii, 1969), (Torgoutovskii taishi Shukur-Daichin i syn ego Puncuk), 53–62.

32 Baikova, *Rol' srednej Azii*, 36–39, 43–45.

33 Rotman, *Byzantine Slavery*, 57–66.

34 Brian J. Boeck, "Identity as Commodity: Tournaments of Value in the Tatar Ransom Business" *Russian History – Histoire Russe* 35:3–4 (2008): 259–66.

According to Novosel'skii, a good individual generally cost between 10 and 20 rubles in Crimea, but might have cost as much as 100 rubles. The average price may have been between 40 and 80 rubles.<sup>35</sup> Brunhilde Imhaus concludes that slaves on the Black Sea market usually cost between 40 and 70 ducats,<sup>36</sup> and Andrzej Dziubiński presents similar evidence with respect to the Black Sea area in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>37</sup>

According to the archive of Bahcisaray, Kenan-bey bequeathed a 12-year-old slave girl to his wife in 1608/9. The value of the girl was 2,400 osman, which made her the most valuable single item in his will. The sons of Kenan-bey, Muhammed and Omar, received the house and vineyard, their combined value for each being 3,600 osman.<sup>38</sup>

Some very low prices are also mentioned in the sources, however. After the war in the 1550s, people in Astrakhan' were living in such poor conditions that they would sell their daughters for an amount of corn which cost six pence.<sup>39</sup> According to Georg Tectander, a Tatar slave girl cost 4–5 florints in Astrakhan' at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, a Danish delegation recorded that there were poor Livonians for sale in Novgorod in 1578 and that Muscovites were buying them for a couple of coins ("enn ringe pending").<sup>41</sup> Karelian-Finnic prisoners usually cost a few rubles in the north, but in the war year of 1556 a girl would cost only five altyns.<sup>42</sup>

35 *Zapisnaya kniga krepostnym aktam XV-XVI vv. Yavlennym v Novgorode d'yaku D. Alayab'evu. Izdannie arkhiegraficheskoi kommissii. Russkaya istoricheskaya biblioteka izdavaemaya imperatorskoyu arkhiegraficheskoyu kommissieyu tom XVII, (Saint Petersburg: Imperatorskaya Akademiya Nauk, 1898), col. 63–64 (no. 177), col. 142–143 (no. 388) col. 165 (no. 448), Novosel'skij, Bor'ba, 436.*

36 Imhaus, *Le minoranze*, 35, 120–1, 157.

37 Andrzej Dziubiński, *Handel niewolnikami polskimi i ruskimi w Turcji w XVI wieku i jego organizacja. Zeszyty historyczne III* (1963): 42–43.

38 Vypisi iz kadiaskerskago sakka (kniga) 1017–1022g. hidzhry (1688/9–1613 g. Khr. let) khranyashchagosya gubernskago pravleniya. *Izvestiya tavrisheskoi uchenoi arkhivnoi kommissii* 8 (1889): nr. 1 (pp. 41–42).

39 *Early Voyages*, I, 58.

40 *Iter Persicum (Georgius Tectander & Stephanus Kakasch). Kurze/doch aussführliche und wahrhaftige beschreibung der Persianischen Reiß*, (Altenburg: n.p., 1610), 70.

41 *Jacobi, Nobilis Dani Friderici II. Regis Legati, Hodoeporicon Ruthenicum = Yakob Ul'fel'dt, Putechestvie v Rossiyu*, eds. John Lind, Anna Khoroshkevich. *Studia Historica* (Moscow: Yazyki slavyanskoi kul'tury, 2002), pp. 207–8, "Vyderzhki iz dnevnika anonima i perevod", eds. John Lind-V. A. Antonov-Natalia Ohotina Lind) in: *Jacobi*, p. 72, Alexander Filyushkin, *Ivan the Terrible. A Military History*, (London: Frontline Books, 2008), 251.

42 *Patriarshaya ili Nikonovskaya letopis' 7064* (1556).

According to Afanasii Nikitin, a black slave cost only 4–5 silver coins in India in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, and the prices would sink to just a few small coins after a big military campaign.<sup>43</sup> Ibn Baṭṭūṭa bought a very beautiful girl for one golden denar in Bengal in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, and his travelling companion bought a young boy for two golden denars.<sup>44</sup> The prices of slaves were low by comparison with those of furs, for according to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa an ermine cape cost 250 golden denars.<sup>45</sup> They were also low by comparison with prices at other markets, too, because Ibn Baṭṭūṭa paid 40 golden denars for a “Greek” slave girl in Ephesus.<sup>46</sup> It is possible that the prices of slaves from the north did not make their transportation a sound business proposition at that time. Afanasii Nikitin did not see any Russian slaves at those markets, although expensive horses were being imported into India from South Russia, furs from North Russia and at least there were Russian slaves in India some time later.<sup>47</sup>

The main suppliers to the Buhārān markets were nomads moving between the Caspian Sea, Lake Aral and South Siberia, who used to buy from one to seven prisoners from suppliers at a price of 3–25 rubles each and transport them to Buhārā. Muscovite slaves were more expensive than people from the steppes however, as they cost 40–50 rubles in the 1670s, whereas a prisoner from the steppes could be bought for 5–8 rubles.<sup>48</sup> One reason for the higher prices of Muscovites was the readiness of the realm to pay ransoms from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>49</sup>

The slaves on the market differed from each other in many respects, and were customarily classified on principles such as age, colour, origin, sex, skills etc. Ivan IV ordered all Swedish craftsmen to be sent as prisoners to Moscow on account of their skills, but the troops seem to have sold them to Lithuanian slave traders, perhaps because there was a demand for such qualifications.<sup>50</sup>

The Italians registered the origin of their slaves, so that “de proienie majar/maniar” referred to Hungary, “de proienie lacha” to Poland–Lithuania and “de

43 *Khozhenie*, l. 205–2050b (p. 105), 217 (p. 110).

44 *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, 867–9.

45 *Ibid.*, 492.

46 *Ibid.*, 445.

47 *Khozhenie*, l. 200 (p. 102), *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, 478–9, 492, Baikova, *Rol' srednei Azii*, 36–39, 43–45, Shmidt, *Russkie polonyaniki*, 31.

48 Burton, *The Bukharans*, 379–80.

49 Shmidt, *Russkie polonyaniki*, 30–34.

50 A. Lokhvitskii, *O plennykh po drevnemu russkomu pravu* (XV, XVI, XVII veka). *Izsledovanie*, (Moscow: n.p., 1855), gl. I, 9–10.

proienie rubea" implied more easterly areas. The exact origins of the Bulgarian and Gypsy slaves nevertheless remain obscure.<sup>51</sup>

Many slaves were "de proienie jarchaxia", which literally refers to a Circassian origin. The Circassians were active in the northern Black Sea slave trade, but it is difficult to make a distinction between the Gypsy and Circassian slaves, and slaves who were "de proienie comana" or "de proienie advogasia."<sup>52</sup>

The Italians also classified slaves according to colour, those in Venice being deemed "white", "brown", "olive brown" or "black."<sup>53</sup> In Genoa they were divided into "white", "black", "indigo", "mulatto" (lauro) and "olive."<sup>54</sup> The Qadi office in Samarkand similarly documented the colours of slaves, an Indian slave named Karma was olive brown, the slave boy Nazir from Badakhshan white and an Afghan slave woman Niki brown. A Russian, Akkuz, was white and Fatima brown. A slave boy named Davlet from India was olive brown, a local-born slave woman Tamam was white and Mirza-Muhammed had dark eyes but his skin was wheaten in colour.<sup>55</sup>

Colour and ethnic origin do not match well in these sources. White slaves could be of Circassian, Rus'ian, Polish, Bulgarian, Gypsy, Hungarian or Abkhazian origin,<sup>56</sup> while brown slaves could originate from Circassia, Abkhazia, Poland or from among the Gypsies.<sup>57</sup> A "white" Bulgarian or a "white" Gypsy would nevertheless sound odd. Moreover, one might have found "white" slaves on Spanish markets labelled as Saracens, possibly originating from the southern Russian–Central Asian markets.<sup>58</sup>

Personal names do not reveal anything about ethnic origin, because the slaves were converted and registered with Christian names in Christian societies and Moslem names in Islamic societies. The large body of material compiled by Danuta Quirini-Popławska also features pagan names, but nothing to

51 *AdC* 101, 277, 593, 697, 714, 766.

52 *Ibid.* 75, 594, 708, 711, 767, 832, Gioffré, *Il mercato*, 17–27, 58, 175–6.

53 *AdC* 75, 93, 99, 100, 101, 112, 120, 123, 189, 277, 240, 302, 388, 487, 497, 542, 579, 593, 708, 711, 770.

54 Harrison, *Slaveri*, 282, Gioffré, *Il mercato*, 31–33.

55 *Kazijskie dokumenty*, nr. 2, 6, 16, 17, 19, 21, 61, 62.

56 *AdC* 112, 123, 189, 240, 285, 289, 708, 770, 94, 579, 101, 277, 593, 542.

57 *Ibid.* 75, 99, 100, 120, 302, 487, 497, 93, 711.

58 Joaquín Miret y Sans, "La esclavitud en Cataluña en los últimos tiempos de la edad media" *Revue Hispanique* XLI (1917): 10, 12–14, 23, 41–43, mainly female with Moslem names, Gioffré, *Il mercato*, 31–33. There are in his register (pp.185–326) 16 cases of Saracenic origin white slaves. They are between 8 and 26 years old and 14 are female slaves.

refer to the Finnic languages. The suppliers had probably named their commodities according to their own customs.<sup>59</sup>

As we move on geographically to more distant markets, we find that the ethnic concepts could change, too. The delegations of the Khan of Buhārā and the Shah of Persia were buying “nemtsy slaves” (for “nemtsy” cf. p. 114) on the Muscovite markets,<sup>60</sup> but there were no “nemtsy” slaves recorded in Central Asia. The Russian slaves in the Samarkand Qadi office documents and elsewhere were probably people who were bought at Russian markets. Thus the ethnic reference in the documents does not refer to the actual ethnic origin of the people concerned but to the trading origin, i.e. to the market where they had been bought immediately before registration.

The real ethnic origin did not matter in these slave owner societies. Even the origins of the concubines of the Ottoman sultans are unknown, and in Mamlūk Egypt the ethnic specification was connected with colour as an administrative classification, so that a white slave would be registered in the “rūmi” (Roman) group.<sup>61</sup>

The market origin was a trade mark, denoting the “quality” of the goods. Mikhalon the Lithuanian states that Russian slaves (*moschorum* genus) were cheaper on the Crimean markets because they were treacherous and guileful (*dolosus et fallax*), while Pero Tafur maintained that Tatar slaves cost 1/3 more because they did not betray their masters. Likewise, the Dominican friar Jean de Luc wrote that Circassian slaves were the most expensive because they were good looking and had other qualifications.<sup>62</sup>

According to Imhaus, the slaves in Venice were mainly female and between 14 and 30 years old, while Quirini-Popławska has calculated that 80% of the objects of the Black Sea slave trade were women between 8 and 24 years. According to Henry of Livonia the girls were the only people left alive by the

59 Quirini-Popławska, *Włoski handel*, 261–2, 265–7, 278–80, Imhaus, *Le minoranze*, 157, 394, 556, Heers, *Gênes*, 98–103, Gioffré, *Il mercato*, 185–326.

60 Cf. below p. 000, Burton, *The Bukharans*, 60–61, 469–70.

61 Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem. Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*. Studies in Middle Eastern History, (New York – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 31–32, 58–63, Shaun Marmon, *Eunuchs and Sacred Boundaries in Islamic Society*. Studies in Middle Eastern History, (New York – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 39, 126 (note 48), 133 (note 103).

62 *Michalonis Litvani*, fragmen primum, p. 22, *Andaças é Viajes de Pero Tafur*, 162, *Opisanie Perekopskikh i nogaiskikh tatar, cherkesov, mingrelov i gruzin*, Zhana de Lyuka, *monakha dominikanskago ordena* (1625). *Zapiski imperatorskago odesskago obshchestva istorii i drevnostei*, tom XI (1879): 491.

troops plundering the Balticum region during the early 13<sup>th</sup>-century wars, and other sources confirm that girls and women formed the core of the prisoner business in the Russian area.<sup>63</sup>

According to Martin Bronevsky, there were miserable prisoners all over Crimea that were handled in a cruel manner, like cattle.<sup>64</sup> Mikhalon the Lithuanian reported that prisoners were sold in auctions, shackled in groups of ten, although exceptional individuals might be sold separately direct to foreign dealers at a high price.<sup>65</sup>

Slaves for production work were mostly recruited from the sub-Saharan area through the African markets for sale to Islamic areas and for use on the large farms of southern Europe.<sup>66</sup> Many slaves intended for use as soldiers came to the Islamic realms from the East European steppes, and galley slaves were similarly recruited from southern Russia and the Ukraine.

The exceptional slaves discussed by Mikhalon were transported from Crimea to “Sarracenis, Persis, Indis, Arabibus, Syris et Assyrijs” and often served in high positions there. The individuals to be educated to the level of civil servants, eunuchs, concubines and wives were young, because their training took time.<sup>67</sup>

According to Mikhalon, slave girls were made up to be more beautiful and attractive in order to increase their market price.<sup>68</sup> Appearance mattered, and obviously the colour was essential, because it was a classification principle. Generally whiteness was a highly valued quality, and it would sometimes be stressed in the Crimean registers in a striking way, such as “esclave blanc aux cheveux blonds” (white slave with blond hair).<sup>69</sup> Whiteness was highly valued in India, too, and it was a quality that improved the career promotion

63 *Heinrici chronicon Livoniae* (ed. L. Arbusow – A. Bauer), *Ausgewählte Quellen zur Deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters*, Band 24, (Würzburg: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1959), 12.6, *Novgorodskaya chetvertaya letopis'*. PSRL 4, (Moscow: Yazyki Russkoi kultury, 2000), 6883 (1375), *Vologodsko-Permskaya letopis'*. PSRL 26, (Moscow – Leningrad: Nauka, 1959), 6883 (1375), Matthias de Mechow, *Chronica Polonorum. De Sigismundi regis temporibus*, (Cracow: n.p., 1550), liber III, 112, *Jacobi*, p. 203, Imhaus, *Le minoranze*, 157, Quirini-Popławska, *Włoski handel*, 286, Verlinden, *Ist mittelalterliche Sklaverei*, 171.

64 *Opisanie Kryma (Tartariae Descriptio) Martina Bronevskago*, 357, 363–4.

65 *Michalonis Litvani*, fragmen primum, 22.

66 Verlinden, *Ist mittelalterliche Sklaverei*, 170–3, Heers, *Gènes*, 135–7. Harrison, *Slaveri*, 271, 279–83.

67 *Michalonis Litvani*, fragmen primum, p. 22.

68 *Ibid.* p. 22.

69 AdC 94, 285, 289.

prospects of slaves in Mamlūk Egypt.<sup>70</sup> Eunuchs were divided into “black” and “white” categories, and the “white” ones could eventually be promoted to posts as high as vezir in the Ottoman court.<sup>71</sup>

The most expensive slave on the Caffa register was a 14-year-old white boy referred to in the source text as “Jarcaxius” (“Circassian”?), who was sold for 750 aspers, and there were other slaves with good colour qualifications that seemed to carry an above-average price. One four-and-a-half-year-old Rus’ian “white” boy cost 185 aspers, although such young children were usually very cheap on account of their high mortality rate. “White” Saracen slaves were also overpriced in the Genoese registers, and blond boys and girls were expensive on the Italian markets, too.<sup>72</sup>

Whiteness was not a practical qualification in southern climates, however, so that its value must have depended on the fact that it was rare. Blackness was similarly well valued in the north because it was exotic. A 14-year-old black Indian slave girl, Arcona, cost 640 aspers in Crimea, which was well over the average price, and Isabella of Aragon, the wife of Giangaleazzo Sforza, ordered her servant to buy a black slave girl in Venice in 1491 with the proviso that she “should be more black than the former one.”<sup>73</sup>

It was noted in Arab literature that the Nordic people were white, their eyes blue and their hair blond from childhood. This was indeed sometimes the only fact mentioned concerning the land of darkness (“ardh azh-zhulmat”) which extended north from the Ural Mountains to Finland and was the place where expensive furs came from. It was also known as an area where one hunted for prisoners.<sup>74</sup>

70 *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, 595–6, *Khozhenie*, l. 1960b (p. 101), l. 200 (p. 102), l. 205–2050b (p. 105), 2070b (p. 106), l. 208–2080b (p. 106), the commentary text note 109, Marmon, *Eunuchs*, 26, 126 (note 48).

71 Bosworth, *Eunuchs III*, 66, Kathryn Babayan, “Eunuchs IV. The Safavid Period” *EI IX*, 67, R. M. Savory, “The Safavid Administrative System” *CHI 6*, 355, İnalçik, *The Ottoman*, 79–80, 82, 86, Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 11–12, Marmon, *Eunuchs*, 3–6, 11–12, 39, 62, 126 (note 48), 133 (note 103).

72 *AdC* 240, 770, Gioffré, *Il mercato*, 185–326, Harrison, *Slaveri*, 283, Imhaus, *Le minoranze*, 120–1. Asper or akça is an Osman silver coin (1.15 g), S. Faroqhi, “III. Osmanischer Bereich. Währung.” *Lexikon den Mittelalters*, 9 vols. (München: Lexma, 1997), 7: 1926–7.

73 *AdC* 388, Chittick, *The East Coast*, 183–5, Heers, *Gênes*, 120.

74 Ibn-Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah. An Introduction to History*. Translated from the Arabic by Franz Rosenthal in three volumes. Bollingen Series XLIII, (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1980), 3<sup>rd</sup> prefatory discussion, 152, (I: p. 172), Karl Jahn, *Die Frankengeschichte des Rashid ad-Dīn*. Einleitung, vollständige Übersetzung, Kommentar und 58 Texttafeln. Veröffentlichungen der iranischen Kommission, ed. Manfred Mayrhofer, Band IV.

## Northern Prisoners

Raids were an endemic phenomenon from the Upper Volga to eastern Finland. Novgorodian raiders reached the shores of the Volga and Vyatka fairly often from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards,<sup>75</sup> the Tatars raided Perm' and Mordva in 1288, 1319, 1377 and 1380,<sup>76</sup> and they also carried out regular raids from Kazan' into Ustyug and along the Volga, Yug, Kama, Oka and other rivers of the Volga waterway system and into Vyatka.<sup>77</sup>

The Novgorodian warlord Prokopii conquered the town of Kostroma in 1375, imprisoned many local men, women and girls and continued his raid along the Kama and Volga to the town of Bolghar, where the party sold all their Christian prisoners, "young girls and women," to Moslem traders. Finally the gang proceeded to Astrakhan', where they were executed, obviously as bandits, by Khan Salchei.<sup>78</sup>

The Novgorod posadnik Yurii Dmitrievich, Vasilei Sinets and the posadnik Timofei Yur'evich raided "za Volok" in 1398, taking "countless prisoners" at Beloozero and continuing to Lake Kubenskoe, Vologda and Ustyug, where they again took "countless prisoners". Some they set free, partly on payment of a ransom, because their vessels did not have the capacity to transport them all (to Novgorod?).<sup>79</sup>

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Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Denkschriften, 129. Band, (Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1977), 50.

75 *Novgorodskaya chetvertaya letopis'*, 6877 (1369), 6878 (1370), 6885 (1375), 6906 (1398), 6933 (1425), S. M. Shpilevskii, "Drevnye goroda i drugie bulgarsko-tatarskie pamyatniki v kazanskoi gubernii", *Izvestiya i uchenyya zapiski imperatorskago kazanskago universiteta* God XLIV, No 4 (iyul'-avgust), 1877, 128–9, 169–7.

76 H. G. Gimadi, *Narody srednego Povolzh'ya v period gospodstva Zolotoi Ordy*. Materialy po istorii Tatarii, (Kazan': Tatgosizdat, 1948), 193–4.

77 E.g., *Ustyuzhskaya letopis'* (spisok Matsievicha), PSRL 37, (Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1982), 6954 (1446), 6970 (1462), 6976 (1468), 6977 (1469), *Ustyuzhskaya letopis'* (arkhangelogorodskii letopisec), PSRL 37, (Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1982), 6963, 6970 (1462), 6976 (1469)-6979 (1472), *Vologodsko-Permskaya letopis'*, PSRL 26, (Moscow – Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1959), 6986 (1478).

78 *Novgorodskaya chetvertaya letopis'*, 6883 (1375), Shpilevskii, *Drevnye goroda*, 177.

79 *Novgorodskaya pervaya letopis' mladshego izvoda*, PSRL 3, (Moscow: Yazyki Russkoi Kultury, 2000), *Novgorodskaya chetvertaya letopis'*, *Dvinskoi letopisec* (kratkaya & prostrannaya redakciya), PSRL 33, (Leningrad: AN SSSR 1977), *Ustyuzhskaya letopis'* (arkhangelogorodskii letopisec & spisok Macievicha), 6906 (1398).



The troops of the Grand Prince of Muscovy attacked “Zavoloch’e,” the Northern Dvina, the River Emcha, the Kholmogor region and the River Vaga in 1401, 1417 and 1452, collecting booty and prisoners.<sup>80</sup>

Raids into the western area of modern Finland continued in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, reaching more northerly regions such as Lapland. The Novgorodians attacked “Semidetskaya Korela” in 1375 and the town of Oulu in 1377,<sup>81</sup> while the warlord Ivan Loshinskoi raided Central Finland in 1431.<sup>82</sup> The princes Vasiliï Ivanovich Kosovo and Andrei Fedorovich Chelyad attacked the “nemtsy” in Karelia in 1496.<sup>83</sup>

In spring 1496, Prince Ivan Fedorovich Lyapunin and his brother Prince Petr Ushatyï raided “na Kayany” with troops from Ustyug, Northern Dvina, Onega and Vaga and proceeded to the rivers “Polna,” “Kolokol,” “Ovlui,” “Sigovaya,” “Gavka,” “Putash,” “Tornova/Torma” and “Snezhno” The River Polna refers to a waterway system in eastern Finland, Tornova to the parish of Torneå on the Swedish-Finnish border in southern Lapland and the other names to the rivers Kalajoki, Oulujoki, Siikajoki, Haukipudas (Kiiminkijoki), Pudasjärvi (Iijoki) and Simojoki, all localities in South Lapland and on the shores of the Gulf of Bothnia.<sup>84</sup>

These troops again took “countless prisoners.” We can identify such raids almost once in every ten years in sources from the mid-14<sup>th</sup> to the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, which is a very high frequency in view of the fact that this area lay outside the interests of the late medieval realms. Swedish sources begin to record events in this region only from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards, while the attention devoted to it by the Novgorodian and other Russian chronicles varies depending on the ruler’s interests.<sup>85</sup>

The raiders can be divided into two groups: private warlords and princely troops. Booty was the main idea of the raids of the Novgorodian “razboinichie ushkuinitsy” (“marauding boatmen”) and other private raiders, while for the

80 *Novgorodskaya pervaya letopis’*, 6909, (1401), *Ustyuzhskaya letopis’* (arkhangelogorodskii letopisec) 6925 (1417), *Vologodsko-Permskaya letopis’*, 6960 (1452).

81 *Novgorodskaya chetvertaya letopis’* 6883 (1375), 6885 (1377), *Novgorodskaya pervaya letopis’*, 6885 (1377).

82 *Dvinskoi letopisets* (kratкая, prostrannaya redaktsiya), *Kholmogorodskaya letopis’*, PSRL 33, Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1977), 6939 (1431).

83 *Ioasafovskaya letopis’*, ed. A. A. Zimin (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1957), 131.

84 *Ioasafovskaya letopis’* 7004 (1495), *Ustyuzhskaya letopis’* (arkhangelogorodskii letopisets) 7004 (1496), Jukka Korpela, *Viiipurin linnaläänin synty*. Viipurin läänin historia II, (Helsinki: Karjalan kirjapaino, 2004), 32.

85 Korpela, “...and they took” (in press).

princely troops the taking of prisoners was only an incidental matter. The grand princes of Muscovy and the Tatar rulers were concerned about these independent gangs, and Metropolitan Gerontii was furious with the gangs that robbed churches and kidnapped people in Vyatka. From the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century onwards concern over these bandits became a standard element in agreements between the emerging realms of Central Eastern Europe (from Sweden through Lithuania and Poland to Caucasia), because this activity was at variance with the integration efforts of the sovereign rulers.<sup>86</sup>

Russian traders were an everyday sight in medieval Baltic towns, and Armenian businessmen were also recorded in Novgorod and Balticum from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>87</sup> The Jews were active slave traders on the Crimean markets, but many of them came from Lithuania. Mikhailon the Lithuanian describes how huge caravans would arrive in Kiev from Crimea, transporting various kinds of merchandise from Asia, Persia, India, Arabia and Syria to the northern markets of Muscovy, Novgorod, Pskov, Sweden and Denmark. A slave trade in both directions took place in the framework of this activity as well.<sup>88</sup>

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- 86 *Ustyuzhskaya letopis'* (arkhangelogorodskii letopisets) 6979 (1471), 6994 (1486), *Akty istoricheskie, sobrannye i izdannye arkheograficheskoyu komissieyu*. Tom pervye. 1334–1598, (Saint Petersburg: Imperatorskaya Akademiya Nauk, 1841), n:o 98, *Akty, otnosyashchiesya k istorii zapadnoi Rossii, sobrannye i izdannye arkheograficheskoyu komissieyu*. Tom pervyi 1340–1506, (Saint Petersburg, 1846), n:o 39, 50, 51, 79, 192 (pp. 289, 338, 340), *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh snoshenii Moskovskago gosudarstva s Krymskoyu i Nagaiskoyu ordami i s Turtsiei*, n:o 2, 23, 66, 68, *Gramoty velikago Knyazya Joanna Vasil'evicha k Nagaiskim Mursam i ikh k velikomu Knyazyu Ioannu Vasil'evichu*. Prodolzhenie drevnei rossiiskoi Vivliofiki, (Saint Petersburg: Imperatorskaya Akademiya Nauk), tom VIII, 1793, pp. 152–154, and tom IX, 1793, p. 137, Shpilevskii, *Drevnye goroda*, 169–77.
- 87 *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh snoshenii Moskovskago gosudarstva so Shvetsiei 1556–1586 gg.* eds. N. P. Likhachev-V. V. Maikov. *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh snoshenii drevnei Rossii s derzhavami inostrannymi po vysochaischemu povelению izdannye Imperatorskim Russkim Istoricheskim Obshchestvom*. Sbornik Imperatorskago russkago istoricheskago obshchestva, tom 129, (Saint Petersburg: Imperatorskaya Akademiya Nauk, 1910), nr. 9 (pp. 97–98), *Armyano-russkie otnosheniya v XVII veka. Sbornik dokumentov*. Tom I, ed. B. A. Parsamyana, (Yerevan: Izd. AN Armyanskoi SSR, 1953), nr. 72, 83, 84, 85, 86, 89, 90, 92, 96, *Hanserecesse von 1477–1530*, ed. D. Schäfer. *Hanserecesse Dritte Abtheilung*, (Leipzig: Verein für Hansische Geschichte, 1905), Band VII, n:o 413 § 219 (29.5. – 11.6.1521), Korpela, *Viipurin*, 174–83.
- 88 *Opisanie Kryma (Tartariae Descriptio) Martina Bronevskago*, 357–358, 363, *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh snoshenii Moskovskago gosudarstva s Krymskoyu i Nagaiskoyu ordami i s Turtsiei*. Tom I. C 1474 po 1505 god, epokha sverzheniya mongol'skago iga v Rossii, ed. G. F. Karpov. *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh snoshenii drevnei Rossii s derzhavami inostrannymi po vysochaischemu povelению izdannye Imperatorskim Russkim Istoricheskim*

The land of Novgorod was well connected by water routes to the Upper Volga, which was a highway for Central Asian trade. Novgorod was also connected to the River Dniepr, which was the route to the Black Sea. Both of these routes provided a connection from the north to Crimea.<sup>89</sup>

Apart from large international markets like Astrakhan' and Kazan' there were also other slave markets in the area between Novgorod and the Central Volga.<sup>90</sup> Raiders used to sell their booty on the Volga markets, and Central Asian traders would buy northern prisoners there.<sup>91</sup> There is also evidence of the transportation of slaves to the south. Grand Prince Ivan III was waiting in Novgorod for raiders to return from Finland in winter 1496 and he left the city for Moscow only a few days after the troops arrived bringing large numbers of prisoners with them.<sup>92</sup> The Danish diplomat Jacob Uhlfeldt appreciated how the trade in prisoners connected the markets of Novgorod and the Volga region, and we can read similar accounts in diplomatic documents concerning imprisoned subjects of the King of Sweden and in the chronicle of Balthasar Russow.<sup>93</sup>

There was a connection between Novgorod and Volga, and it was this that enabled the Crimean markets and their traders to function. If the transporting

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Obshchestvom. Sbornik Imperatorskago russkago istoricheskago obshchestva, tom 41, (Saint Petersburg: Russkoe istoricheskoe obshchestvo, 1884), nr. 10, 20, 29, *Michalonis Litvani*, fragmen novum, *Skazanie o nevol'nikakh, osvobodivshisya iz turetskoi katorgi*. Memuary II. F. Evlashevskii, Ya. Sobeskii. Pokhody 1625 i 1628 gg., S. Okol'skii, G. Boblan, Osvobozhdenie nevol'nikov, B. Mashkevich. Perevod K. Mel'nik, ed. V. Antonovich (Kiev: n.p., 1896), 392–7, Quirini-Popławska, *Włoski handel*, 211–23 Shmidt, *Russkie polonyaniki*, 31, Berezhkov, *Russkie plenniki*, 357.

89 Anatoli N. Kirpichnikov, "Velikii Volzhkii put': Gosudarstva, glavnye partnery, torgovye marshruty", *Skandinavskie chteniya*, 3 (2002): 7–19, Korpela, *Viipurin*, 38–39.

90 E.g., *Materialy po istorii uzbekskoi*, Part I: nr. 4, *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh i torgovykh snoshenii Moskovskoi Rusi s Persiei*, ed. N. I. Veselovskii. Tom 1. Tsarstvovanie Fedora Ioannovicha. Trudy vostochnago otdeleniya imperatorskago russkago arkheologicheskago obshchestva, Tom XX, (Saint Petersburg: Imperatorskaya Akademiya Nauk, 1890), 306, Herberstein, 57–58, *Early Voyages*, I, 49–50, M. N. Berezhkov, "Staryi Holopii Gorodok na Mologe i ego yarmarka". *Trudy sed'mago arkheologicheskago s'ezda v Yaroslavl', 1887*, ed. Count Uvarov. *Tom I*, (Moscow: n.p., 1890), 40–47.

91 E.g., *Novgorodskaya chetvertaya letopis'*, 6883 (1375).

92 *Ioasafovskaya letopis'*, 131.

93 *Jacobi*, p. 203, 207–208, *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh snoshenii Moskovskago gosudarstva so Shvetsiei*, n:o 2 (p. 41), 3, 7, 9 (p. 104), *Chronica der Provintz Lifflandt*, 1584 = Balthasar Russow's *Chronica der Prouinz Lifflandt*, in erneuetem Wiederabdrucke, mit Wörterbuch und Namenregister versehen, (Riga: Hummel, 1857), 49a, 92b, 93b, 94a, 105b–106a, 115a, 123b.

of northern prisoners to the south offered reasonable business prospects, the means were there to do it, and we have evidence that this was in fact done.

### “Nemtsy” Prisoners Brought to Rus’

The difficulties with trading in Moslem and Christian slaves may have increased the demand for northern slaves, because the Finnic populations were still mainly non-Christian, only those in the western part of the region being Roman Catholic.<sup>94</sup> This may explain why Novgorodian raiding in the north continued after the early 14<sup>th</sup> century even though international trade with the northern inland area declined and slavery in Baltic Rim stopped at that time.<sup>95</sup>

The area between the Gulf of Bothnia, Balticum and the Arctic Ocean formed a direction of expansion for the princely powers of Stockholm and Moscow in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>96</sup> The hunting for prisoners was taken up by the western realms, too, because they regarded the populations here as their own (tax) resources. This increased the numbers of accounts in the sources and made them more detailed from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards. We may assume that in fact the new feature in the business was the imposition of restrictions on the slave trade by the new sovereign rulers. The trade had scarcely changed or increased very much, but now it was registered and the role of independent warlords in it was strictly limited.

The first account of a Muscovite raid into Livonia to take prisoners dates from the year 1477, while according to the Estonian (German) priest and chronicler Balthasar Russow, the Muscovites killed and imprisoned 40,000 people in Livonia in 1502, which at least implies that very large numbers of people were involved.<sup>97</sup>

Prisoner hunting became visible in Swedish documents during the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. King Christian told the Pope that the Russians had taken a large number of people captive in Finland in 1463, and the priest Martinus Olavi asked the Pope in 1473 to bless an indulgence for those who attended the parish church of Kymi in SE Finland, as the Russians had killed

94 Korpela, *The World*, passim.

95 *Novgorodskaya chetvertaya letopis'* 6883 (1375), 6885 (1377), *Novgorodskaya pervaya letopis'*, 6885 (1377).

96 Korpela, *The World*, 143–50.

97 *Chronica der Provintz Lifflandt*, 21a, 23a., Jukka Korpela, “Keskiajan idänuhka” *Suomalainen sotilas. Muinaisurhosta nyhtiin*, ed. Hannele Klemettilä (Hämeenlinna: Weilin + Göös, 2010), 108–13.

and kidnapped many members of the parish. Archbishop Jacobus Ulfsson of Uppsala left money in his last will in 1496 for redeeming from Russia. Meanwhile a crusading letter written by Pope Alexander VI in 1496 described the subjection of Finns to permanent slavery.<sup>98</sup>

The first local-level story about a Russian raid and the taking of captives is in a letter sent by the parish of Kemi in northern Finland to “the noble lords of the Kingdom” in 1490 complaining that the Russians had plundered the land and kidnapped women and children. The process of paying ransoms followed the international pattern: some peasants bought their relatives out of slavery and the rest were allowed this option but were too poor to do so and thus lost their relatives into slavery.<sup>99</sup>

Balthasar Russow, describing the devastations of the Livonian war (1558–1583), reported that many people were imprisoned in Muscovy and the lands of the Tatars.<sup>100</sup> Tatar troops also raided Finland from across the Gulf of Finland, and returned in winter 1577 with many prisoners, young and old, having left only the small children on the ice to die.<sup>101</sup> Muscovite troops raided the area of Karelia in 1555 and 1556 and captured countless people, and again there were Tatar contingents involved, headed by Mirza Aibulat, the son of Ahku-bek, Khan of Astrakhan'. The troops took so many prisoners that the market prices fell.<sup>102</sup>

Prince Fedor Ivanovich Mstislavskoi and Prince Fedor Mikhailovich Trubetskoi attacked the same area in 1592, conquering seven castles and taking countless prisoners,<sup>103</sup> while in the same year Grigorii Volkonskii raided the Kajani (Central Finland) region and “took many prisoners to the monastery of Solovki” on the White Sea.<sup>104</sup> Muscovite Cherkess troops under the command

98 *Finlands medeltidsurkunder samlade och i tryck utgifna af Finlands statsarkiv genom Reinh. Hausen (= FMU) IV*, (Helsinki: Statsrådets tryckeri, 1924), 321, 355, *FMU VI*, (Helsinki: Statsrådets tryckeri, 1930), 4650, 4682.

99 *FMU V*, (Helsinki: Statsrådets tryckeri, 1928), 4286, Boeck, *Identity as Commodity*, 259–66, cf. also Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier. The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500–1800*, (Bloomington – Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 21–6, Filyushkin, *Ivan*, 251–2, Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters. White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800*, (Basingstoke: Plagrave, 2003), 3, 19–21.

100 *Chronica der Provintz Lifflandt*, 49a, 105b–106a.

101 *Chronica der Provintz Lifflandt*, 98b, 99b.

102 *Patriarshaya ili Nikonovskaya letopis'*, 7064 (1556), *Dopolneniya k aktam istoricheskim sobrannyya i izdannyya arkhograficheskoyu kommissieyu*, tom pervyj, (Saint Petersburg: Imperatorskaya Akademiya Nauk, 1846), n:o 70, Filyushkin, *Ivan*, 147.

103 *Vologodskaya letopis'*, PSRL 37, (Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1982), 7100 (1592).

104 *Novyi letopisec*, PSRL 14, (Moscow, 1910), c. 33.

of Ataman Vasilii Halettskii raided Kajani in 1589, 1590 and 1593 and took a great deal of booty.<sup>105</sup> According to the sources, the prisoners kidnapped in the raids were mainly women and children, which fits well with the picture of the Black Sea and East European slave trade.

The taking of prisoners is partly reflected in the Novgorodian documents. The Don Cossack Grigorii Ivanov sold his prisoners Matts Manuelsson and Anna Michaelsdotter from Vyborg to Ivan Matfeev in 1591, Stepan Petrov sold his prisoner from Vyborg, Birgitta, to Ivan Samarin in 1593, and Prince Timofei Afanasev Meshcherskii sold his prisoner from Vyborg, Feklitsa, in 1597.<sup>106</sup>

The Danish ambassador Jacob Uhlfeldt met with Tatar traders and their large convoy of prisoners from Livonia in Tver' in the late summer of 1578, and ascertained that they were intending to sell the women and girls to Russians and Tatars, while the men would be sent directly to the markets of Kazan' and Astrakhan'.<sup>107</sup> Later Ulfeldt reported that there were a thousand old and young male and female prisoners on sale in Novgorod. The prisoners originated from Livonia and Karelia and were western Christians. Some of them the Tatars sold in Novgorod and others were transported on to Moscow, Kazan' and Tataria.<sup>108</sup> Diplomats of Ivan IV admitted to a Swedish peace delegation in Moscow in 1556 that Swedish prisoners had been sold to distant places, foreign countries and even converted to the Moslem religion.<sup>109</sup>

The Russian sources refer to all these western people and prisoners as "nemtsy". Early medieval texts use this word for West Europeans, Scandinavians being designated in this way after the late 12<sup>th</sup> century and the Baltic peoples and Finns proper after the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, when they were included in the western process of state formation. Earlier sources used an "ethnic terminology".<sup>110</sup> There were now large numbers of nemtsy prisoners of this kind for sale in the Muscovite markets.

105 *Letopisec Soloveckii* na chetyre stoletiya ot osnovaniya soloveckago monastyrya do nastoyashchago vremeni, to est' s 1429 po 1847 god. Izdanie chetvertoe, vnov ispravlennoe i dopolnennoe iz arkhivnykh monastirskikh del i starinnykh dokumentov, trudami nastoyatelya sego monastyrya, arkhimandrita i kavalera Dosifeya, (Moscow: n.p., 1847), 7097 (1589), 7098 (1590), 7101 (1593).

106 *Zapishnaya kniga*, col. 142–143 (no. 388), col. 165 (no. 448), col. 63–64 (no. 177).

107 *Jacobi*, 203.

108 *Jacobi*, 207–8, *Vyderzhki iz dnevnika anonima*, p. 72, Filyushkin, *Ivan*, 251.

109 *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh snoshenii Moskovskogo gosudarstva so Shveciei*, n:o 2 (p. 41), 9 (p. 104).

110 Jukka Korpela, "North-Western "Others" in Medieval Russian Chronicles" *Uchenye Zapiski Petrozavodskogo gosudarstvennogo Universiteta*, 2 (93) (2008): 42–55.

Some Livonian (German) nobles were kidnapped in the Baltic region, but they did not end up as slaves, and Swedes were also few in number among the prisoners, except for some military officers. Poles were also rare among the prisoners traded in the northern slave markets, as they ended up on the Crimean markets. Besides, the Russian sources very seldom call Poles “nemtsy,” and never Lithuanians.

The lack of correspondence over the payment of ransoms indicates that Livonian (German) and Swedish nobles must have been few in number in the southern slave trade. The Swedish and German-speaking nobility and merchants had interests, channels and means of bargaining and conducting correspondence of course, and the Swedish kingdom had diplomatic relations with various khanates, but even so there are still only a few letters on this subject in the Tallinn City Archives and none in the Swedish State Archives (Riksarkivet) in Stockholm.<sup>111</sup> The Finnic-speaking ordinary people did not have the means at that time, and they were still in the process of integrating smoothly into the structure of the realms.

Therefore the core group of “nemetskoi polon” must have consisted of poor Latvians, Estonians, Karelians and Finns. After the truce of Jam Zapolsky in 1582, Muscovite raids in the Baltic region came to an end and the importing of slaves ceased. Thus any new “nemtsy slaves” reported after that must have been from Swedish Karelia.

### “Nemtsy” in the Muscovite Landscape

Current research suggests that the prisoners were settled as peasants, constituting a part of the strong population of serfs needed for the expansion of the pre-modern realm of Muscovy, a process that began with the reorganization of land ownership and the registration of the people as subjects of the realm. This took place first in central regions but was soon expanded as far as the banks of the Volga and western Siberia, where foreign inhabitants were recorded in documents dating from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. Among people

111 Tallinn City archive: B. G. Polonica: Nr. 8 (Bittschriften um Befreiung aus Tatarischer Gefangenschaft), e.g. l. 1, 3ob, 4ob, 5ob, 6, 7, 7ob, 8, 8ob, 9, 10, 11, 18, 20, In Riksarkivet (Stockholm) there is none in *Diplomatica: Turcica Bihang vol. I* (Svenska sändebuds brev och depescher), *Persica, Polonica, Turcica*. The first factual Tartar document is from the year 1637, Karl V. Zetterstéen, “De krimiska tatarernas diplomatiska korrespondens med den svenska regeringen”, *Kungliga Humanistiska Vetenskaps-samfundet i Uppsala Årsbok* (1952): 8.

registered were East Slavic peasants, local indigenous people of Tatar or Fenno-Ugric origin, North European newcomers, prisoners, escapees and freely migrating citizens.<sup>112</sup> The concept of “nemtsy” refers in these documents to newcomers from the west or north-west who were or had been western Christian.

Very often such “nemtsy” were also “novokreshchen,” “newly baptized.” Peasants of this kind were common in the lists of taxpayers in Muscovite Karelia and the Kola Peninsula,<sup>113</sup> as also in the upper and central Volga region.<sup>114</sup> The registration of a person as newly baptized indicated a non-Orthodox Christian or a Moslem or animist who had integrated into Muscovite society. Slaves were frequently baptized everywhere,<sup>115</sup> and the practise was also known in the case of Finnic prisoners in Muscovite society. One Baltic prisoner, Indrik, was renamed Ivashko in 1544, and the prisoner Feklitsa from Vyborg became Avdotiya in 1597. Matts Manuelsson and Anna Michaelsdotter became Lev and Olenka in 1591, and Birgitta from Vyborg likewise came to be known as Solomanitka after an Orthodox baptism in 1593.<sup>116</sup>

Most probably the immigrants recorded in the Kola region and Northern Karelia came there freely, because the way of life in the whole area of Eastern Finland, Northern Karelia and Kola was based on migrations. The border played a role between the realms of Muscovy and Sweden but not in the local life.<sup>117</sup> The immigrants in the more southern areas could well have included prisoners, however.

The copybook of Novgorod d'yak Alyabe'ev opens up a perspective on the roles of slaves (“kholop”) of various kinds in local society in the land of Novgorod, which was the end point for the prisoner convoys according to the chronicles. The book was compiled in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century but contains documents (appeals, administrative decisions, court orders) from the end of

112 *Pistsovaya kniga kazanskogo uezda 1602–1603 godov*. Publikatsiya teksta, (Kazan': Izdatel'stvo Kazanskogo universiteta, 1978), 103ob., 104, 109, 132ob., 138, 138ob., 177, 180ob., 220ob., *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh i torgovykh snosheniü Moskovskoi Rusi s Persiei*, p. 265.

113 Korpela, *The World*, 283–4.

114 *Pistsovaya i perepisnaya knigi XVII veka po nizhnemu Novgorodu*. Izdannyya arkhеоgraficheskoi kommissiei. Russkaya istoricheskaya biblioteka izdavaemaya imperatorskoyu arkhеоgraficheskoyu kommissieyu tom XVII, (Saint Petersburg: Imperatorskaya Akademiya Nauk, 1896), col. 173–178.

115 Imhaus, *Le minoranze*, 37, 435–562, Heers, *Gênes*, 98–103.

116 *Zapishnaya kniga*, col. 20 (no. 61), col. 37 (no. 109), col. 63–64 (no. 177), col. 69 (no. 191), col. 101 (no. 283), col. 114 (no. 315), col. 142–143 (no. 388), col. 165 (no. 448), col. 182 (no. 499).

117 Korpela, *The World*, 195–201, 281–3, 269–71.



the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The “kholopstvo” was a very heterogeneous concept that ranged from “real” slaves and serfs to civil and military servants of the rulers. In our sources it refers to “unfree farmhands.”<sup>118</sup>

This slave population included some people who were prisoners from Sweden or the Baltic region. Marinka, mentioned in 1588, was a “kholop” and Lithuanian prisoner, Palagiitsa, the daughter of Petrov, was a Livonian taken prisoner in 1578, and Yurka, a western Christian and prisoner, was abducted from Vyborg in 1593. Ovdokimko, recorded in 1597, was a “nemchin” prisoner from Tartu, while Ofimka was a Livonian girl taken prisoner in 1565. Another Ofimia was a Livonian girl captured in 1566, and Oleshko a prisoner from Polotsk in 1565. Mitka, recorded in 1595, was a prisoner from Pärnu.<sup>119</sup>

The prisoners were for sale. Grigorii Ivanov, a Cossack from the Don, sold his two prisoners from Vyborg, Matts Manuelsson and Anna Michaelsdotter, to Ivan Matfeev Kuzminskii for one and a half rubles in 1591, and the Vyborg prisoner Birgitta cost two rubles when Stepan Petrov Obolnyaninov sold her to Ivan Isopov Samarinin in 1593. When Prince Timofei Meshcherskii sold a “Latin” female prisoner from Vyborg by the name of Feklitsa to his brother Semen the price was 6 rubles.<sup>120</sup>

Such people belonged to the household, as was the case with the Latin Christian prisoner Petrush and his wife and children, the prisoner Opinko and his family and Ivashko Latysh and his family in 1588, and it was possible to donate or inherit them, as happened to the Lithuanian prisoners Anka and Sprik in 1540 and Marishka, also a Lithuanian, in 1567. Marya Ivanova gave the Lithuanian prisoner girl whom she had bought earlier away in 1573, and when Olfrei, Stepan and Oleksei Mikitin distributed their late father’s estate in 1562 the slaves included the “nemtsy” prisoner Senka and his wife, and also their daughter Molchanka, who was also a “nemtsy” prisoner.<sup>121</sup>

Annitsa, the wife of Timoshka Fomin, was a “nemka”, and their son Mishka was born in slavery, so that at least one of his parents must have been a slave. Kushemko, a debt slave of Prince Matfei Meshcherskii and his son Feodor, had married a “Latin” prisoner, and they had children who were born in slavery,

118 Richard Hellie, *Slavery in Russia 1450–1725*, (Chicago – London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 18–21, 33–36.

119 *Zapishnaya kniga*, col. 14 (no. 41), col. 18 (no. 54), col. 18–19 (no. 55), col. 101 (no. 284), col. 104 (no. 292), col. 165 (no. 449), col. 195 (no. 526).

120 *Zapishnaya kniga*, col. 63–64 (no. 177), col. 142–143 (no. 388) col. 165 (no. 448).

121 *Zapishnaya kniga*, col. 179–181 (no. 495), col. 182 (no. 500), col. 199 (no. 531), col. 210–211 (no. 551), *Akty zapisanye v krepostnoi knige XVI veka soobshcheny A. B. Lakierom. Arkhiv istoriko-yuridicheskikh svedenii otnosyashchikhsya do Rossii izdavaemyi Nikolaem Kalachovym, Kniga 2:1*, (Moscow: n.p., 1855), IX: 1.

while another slave of the Meshcherskij family, Feklitsa-Avdotiya, was married to Larko Vasiljev and had a son by him, Ivashko, who was likewise a slave. The Livonian slave girl Ofimia was married to Timoshka Sergiev, and they had two sons.<sup>122</sup>

It is almost impossible to identify Finnic newcomers in the tax registers of the city and land of Novgorod, because the registers were not composed from this perspective. Ethnic definitions and information on persons who have been newly baptized are very few. In the context of the city, the word “nemtsy” refers to western merchants or Swedish occupation troops. The names do not help either, because prisoners were frequently re-named and re-baptised. There are nevertheless a few non-Slavic names that reflect the local indigenous Finnic population.<sup>123</sup>

Another aspect is to find out who the individual slaves mentioned in the sources were. They and their owners were documented fairly often, which indicates that slaves were an everyday phenomenon,<sup>124</sup> but there is nothing to indicate the presence of Finnic people among the slaves.

The tax books of the region of Staraya Russa sheds light on the situation a little further south from the late 15<sup>th</sup> to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. The registers have few ethnic references, but those that do exist are family names such as Ivashko Nemchin, Yakim Korelyanin and Bogdan Latysh. There are also people with foreign names, like Larion Kren', and one person is even designated as “novoprikhodets,” a newcomer. These could all have been either immigrants or prisoners.<sup>125</sup>

The area of Kazan' is interesting from the perspective of the slave trade, because its markets were a possible destination for slaves transported from

122 *Zapishnaya kniga*, col. 47–48 (no. 138), col. 48 (no. 139), col. 63–64 (no. 177), col. 165 (no. 449).

123 *Novgorodskie pistsovye knigi 1490-h gg. i otpisnye i obrochnye knigi prigorodnykh pozhen novgorodskogo dvortsa 1530-h gg.* ed. K. V. Baranov. *Pistsovye knigi Novgorodskoi zemli*, tom I, (Moscow: Drevlekhranilishche, 1999), 342–3, *Pistsovye knigi bezhetskoi pyatiny XVI veka*, ed. K. V. Baranov. *Pistsovye knigi Novgorodskoi zemli*, tom III, (Moscow: Drevlekhranilishche, 2001), p. 74, *Pistsovye i perepisnye knigi Novgoroda Velikogo XVII-nachala XVIIIvv. Sbornik dokumentov*, ed. I. Yu. Ankudinov, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003), 1–65, the references on 6, 10–11.

124 *Novgorodskie pistsovye knigi*, pp. 217, 223–225, 239, 360, 336, 331, *Pistsovye knigi bezhetskoi pyatiny XVI veka*, 56, 94.

125 *Pistsovye i perepisnye knigi Staroi Russy konca XV–XVII vv.* eds. I. Yu. Ankudinov, K. V. Baranov, A. A. Selin, I. Yu. Ankudinov, (Moscow: Rukopisnye pamyatniki Drevnei Rusi, 2009), 4 (l. 140 ob.), 4 (l. 141), 26 (l. 94 ob.), 35 (l. 4), 36 (l. 7), 43 (l. 29), 52 (l. 63), 71 (l. 136), 104 (l. 285), 136 (l. 60), 151 (l. 93), 179 (l. 164ob.), 225 (l. 274ob.), 254 (l. 348ob.).

Novgorod. The register of townspeople in Kazan' compiled in 1565–1568 contained some “nemtsy,” but they were all mercenary soldiers.<sup>126</sup> The inhabitants of the land of Kazan' were not registered until the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, by which time Tatar names were common and people were often referred to as Chuvash. The figures quoted do not reflect the ethnic composition of the population, because the registration was incomplete and covered only those who were under the control of the realm. The register does indicate, however, that people had arrived in the area from outside.

The sources contain few nemtsy slaves. The “Tatar civil servant” Bek-Bulat Begishev had a “nemetskoi (latysh) polon” on his estate in the region of Sviyazhkoi, near Kazan', who had escaped with his wife and children in 1621.<sup>127</sup>

A “newly baptized” category is to be found here and there in the registers, as if referring to certain prisoners. Some of those who had been baptized had Tatar names, such as Vasili Khasanmurzin, and sometimes the newly baptized people were put into the same group as the Tatars, e.g. “the 40 houses of newly baptized, translators and service Tatars,” or “the villages of the people of the archbishop, monastery people, the newly baptized, Tatars and Chuvash.”<sup>128</sup>

“Nemtsy” are no longer recorded in the register for Kazan' by the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, but some family names refer to “nemtsi,” e.g. Ontoshka Prokof'ev

TABLE 2 *Ethnic Definitions in the tax register of the Kazan' region for 1602–1603.*<sup>129</sup>

Newly Baptized	Cheremiss	Chuvash	Tatars	Nemtsy	Others	Total
180	10	204	139	10	537	1080

126 *Pistsovye knigi goroda Kazani 1565–1568 gg. i 1646*. Materialy po istorii Tatarskoi ASSR. Trudy istoriko-arkheograficheskago instituta AN SSSR, tom IV. Materialy po istorii narodov SSSR, vypusk 2, (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1932), 21–22 and commentary tablitsa 3, p. 183.

127 *Akty istoricheskie i yuridicheskie i drevniya tsarskiya gramoty kazanskoi i drugikh sosedstvennykh gubernii sobrannye Stepanom Mel'nikovim*. Tom I, (Kazan': n.p., 1856), n:o 7.

128 *Pistsovye knigi goroda Kazani*, pp. 18, 20, 28, 29, 35, 51, 61 and commentary tablitsa 10, p. 196.

129 The numbers are collected from the index of the edition and therefore only approximate figures.

Nemtsyn, and there was a village called Nemchino on the “Nogaiskaya doroga.”<sup>130</sup>

Records are available for Nizhnii Novgorod, which is also an interesting area from the perspective of the slave trade, only after the 1620s. A village termed “Staraya Nemetskaya sloboda” and a burial ground, “nemetskoe kladbishche,” were located on the River Oka, and there were several people referred to as “nemech” living in the area, some of whom were “novokreshchen” and had typical Russian names, such as Ivan Yakovlev. Further along the River Oka there was a village described as “Sloboda nizhegorodtskikh nemets i litvy,” with an explanation that it was inhabited by “inozemtsi” (foreigners), who were also called “nemtsi” even though their names were mostly Russian ones, with certain exceptions such as Ganko Prokoev, Tomilko Ostaf’ev, Adam Sviderettskii, Adam Ivanov and Indrik Miller. These people were from Livonia or Sweden and may have been free migrants, prisoners of war, slaves or a combination of all these.<sup>131</sup>

The tax registers do not support the idea that the prisoners had been put to work in agriculture to any considerable degree, which is understandable as the productivity of the land was far too low and the climate too cold for any large-scale production on the strength of slavery. The few who came soon joined the local society by virtue of baptism. The register of Alyab’yev and other similar source collections<sup>132</sup> confirm this picture. Prisoners were sold in the countryside but they were like all the other ordinary people: free peasants, immigrants and debt slaves. They married and had families, they joined the local society through baptism and changed their names. The memory of their origins must have eventually disappeared after a few generations and a language shift. Their number was small, however, so that their existence does not explain the fate of the huge number of prisoners.

Another view of the possible recruiting of Finnic slaves to the noble households is provided by “Domostroï,” a 16<sup>th</sup>-century guide to housekeeping, which describes a noble Muscovite (urban) household in which there were numerous slaves. Although it uses expressions such as “sluga,” “chelyad” and “rab,” the most common word is “domochad’ts,” denoting a “house-born” as opposed to a “bought” slave. This again does not point to any very great demand for foreign slaves and thus confirms the picture conveyed by the tax books and the register

130 *Pistsovaya kniga kazanskogo uезда 1647–1656 godov*, (Moscow: RAN Institut Rossiiskoi istorii-Kazanskii gosudarstvennyi universitet-Institut istorii AN respublikii Tatarstan, 2001), 162, 387ob.

131 *Pistsovaya i perepisnaya knigi XVII veka*, col. 173–178.

132 *Akty zapisannye v krepostnoi knige*, I: 1–3, III: 1–3, IV: 10, 12, 20, 21, IX:1, 3.

of Alyab'yev. The overall situation does not change, although we know that some Tartar nobles in Novgorod such as Sain-Bulat of Kasimov had many “nemtsy wives” (six of them in his case) and another prince in Tver' had his own gynaikeion consisting of 50 Livonian girls.<sup>133</sup>

### “Nemtsy” Girls and Clandestine Finns

The case of Sain-Bulat and its likes are nevertheless connected with the key issue in this business. When the Nogai ruler Izmail-bek sent a delegation headed by the high-ranking diplomats Temer and Bek-Cüra to Moscow in the late summer of 1561 one of the things he ordered Bek-Cüra to buy was two nemtsy girls.<sup>134</sup> Similarly, the returning Persian delegation of Butak-bek and Andi-bii in 1588 bought slaves in Moscow and in passing at Kasimov,<sup>135</sup> while the Buhārān delegation of Muhammed-Ali, Dostum and Kadysh in 1589 bought nemtsy slaves in Kasimov, Kazan', Pereyaslavl', Nizhnii Novgorod and Sviyansk.<sup>136</sup> The following year the Persian delegation headed by the ambassador Iskender bought five nemtsy slaves.<sup>137</sup>

The Persian delegation of Kaya and the hajji Hosrev was ordered to buy three girls and three nemtsy slaves in Moscow for Shah Abbās in 1592–1593 and a further 30 nemtsy slaves in Kazan' on their journey home. The next winter the Persian ambassador, hajji Iskender, was given a long shopping list from the Shah of merchandise to look for in Moscow, including 20 slaves in addition to various kinds of furs, wax, birch bark and many other items. In the event the Muscovites allowed Iskender to buy five more “nemtsy” slaves on his way home.<sup>138</sup>

The Persian delegation of Andi-bek and Ali Hosrev bought most of their “nemtsy” slaves on their return journey to the Volga in 1596,<sup>139</sup> and the

133 *Domostroi*, eds. V. V. Kolesov, V. V. Rozhdestvenskaya. 3-e izdanie, (Saint Petersburg: Nauka, 2007), gl. 1, 6, 13, 15–18, 23, 25–29, 32, *Jacobi*, p. 219, 203, I.I. Sreznevskii, *Slovar drevnerusskogo yazyka*. Reprintnoe izdanie, I,1, (Moscow: Kniga, 1989), 699.

134 *Gramoty velikago Knyazya Joanna Vasil'evicha k Nagaiskim Mursam i ikh k velikomu Knyazyu Ioannu Vasil'evichu*. Prodolzhenie drevnei rossiiskoi Vivliofiki, tom X, (Saint Petersburg: Imperatorskaya Akademiya Nauk), tom X, 1795, p. 174.

135 *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh i torgovykh snoshenii Moskovskoj Rusi s Persiei*, 151–4.

136 *Materialy po istorii uzbekskoi*, Part I: nr. 4, 6, 12, Burton, *The Bukharans*, 60–61, 469–70.

137 *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh i torgovykh snoshenii Moskovskoj Rusi s Persiei*, 213.

138 *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh i torgovykh snoshenii Moskovskoj Rusi s Persiei*, 165, 170, 190, 204, 213–214.

139 *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh i torgovykh snoshenii Moskovskoj Rusi s Persiei*, 306.

ambassador of Shah Abbās, Perkuly-bek, together with a tradesman by the name of Muhammad, are known to have engaged in slave dealings in Kasimov and Kazan' in 1600.<sup>140</sup>

It is clear that Nogai, Tatar, Persian, Caucasian and Turkmen nobles and tradesmen were interested in “nemtsy” slaves, especially female ones. Those traditionally available on the Volgan market were an expensive luxury, for Izmail-bek gave his envoys Temer and Bek-Cūra 400 rubles for two girls, whereas according to Novosel'skii the average price for a good slave in Crimea was 40–80 rubles.<sup>141</sup> According to a war story dating from 1556, a Finnic girl cost 5 altyn in Karelia.<sup>142</sup> This starting price in Karelia coupled with a price level of 200 rubles in Moscow made the business a profitable and sound one, as 200 rubles is equivalent to 6,666 altyns (1 ruble = 33 altyns + 1 kopeck)! Thus these slaves represented a fortune for their owner, as did other expensive objects, and this led Tatar princes in Russia such as Sain-Bulat, and also rulers in Central Asia, to collect them in gynaikeia.

Although the concept of “nemtsy” denoted people of North European, German or Swedish origin, it was first and foremost a trade mark, which referred to an already established extra quality, because it was a specific requirement in many instances. Otherwise it would have been absurd to transport ordinary slaves as far away as Persia, to ask official permission to buy them and to pay a high price for them. Ethnicity as such did not play any role among the slaves, as explained above.<sup>143</sup> The problem, however, is that although the concept of “nemtsy” was used in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Muscovite translations, we do not know what the original Persian/Turkic expression was. It is possible, of course, that the same expression was used, as a loan word, but in any case this situation indicates that the concept and phenomenon were well established and the term had an exact meaning.

Looking at the qualifications which played a role in the slave trade, “whiteness” and non-Moslem status were the only extraordinary qualities that the North European prisoners possessed. The key question is when and in what connection this “whiteness” was in demand. It was not an issue in the slave

140 *Posol'stvo v Persiyu knyazya Aleksandra Fedorovicha Zhirovogo-Zavekina*, ed. N. Veselovskii. Trudy voctočchnago otdeleniya imperatorskago russkago arkhologicheskago obshchestva. Tom XXII, (Saint Petersburg: Imperatorskaya Akademiya Nauk, 1892), pp. 57–59, 72, 110, 121, 124.

141 *Gramoty velikago Knyazya Joanna Vasil'evicha*, tom X, p. 178, Novosel'skii, *Bor'ba*, 434–6.

142 *Patriarshaya ili Nikonovskaya letopis'*, 7064 (1556).

143 For a list of items, see, for example, *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh i torgovykh snoshenii Moskovskoi Rusi s Persiei*, 311.

trade within the Baltic Rim, because virtually all the prisoners were “white”, and therefore this aspect was not stressed in the northern documentation. But further south colour started to be an additional feature which mattered, and this may also have increased the demand in the north, too. On the other hand, the northern Russians were “white”, too, so that colour could not have been the only criterion.

According to the doctrine of Mercantilism, trading in strategic goods was limited, and so also in the Muscovite realm the exporting of such “zapovednye tovary” was forbidden without a licence after the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. The pre-modern rulers regarded their subjects as taxpayers and as their own property, and therefore tried to prohibit the exportation of slaves, just as they had tried earlier to stop raids conducted by private warlords. Nogai mirza Izmail criticized this new obstacle in a communication to Tsar Ivan IV, explaining that his servant, Yanbulat, had bought a slave girl in Kasimov but the Muscovite authorities had confiscated her because Yanbulat had no valid export licence for such a slave.<sup>144</sup> In the 1590s there was a more serious conflict concerning restrictions placed on the slave trade in the Terek valley. Türkomil, the envoy of Khan Ahmet protested because the Muscovite authorities had forbidden the traditional export of slaves from the Cherkessian area to Persia a couple of years earlier, and this led the Tsar to order a re-opening of the trade this time and to return the confiscated slaves to the Persians.<sup>145</sup>

This substantially re-oriented the slave trade. The authorities in Tara, for instance, ordered Algachak, Dalan and Chedutay, envoys of Qalmāq taisha Turgen and Dalay-Bogatyr’, to return all kidnapped taxpayers in 1614, although the purchase of non-taxpaying natives of Siberia was still allowed in 1697.<sup>146</sup>

Muhammad-Ali, ambassador of the Buhārān Khan Abdallāh, was allowed to buy “nemtsy” slaves in 1589 but forbidden to take baptized ones, while the Muscovite officials refused to sell the hajji Iskender, the ambassador of Shah Abbās, baptized slaves and insisted that he should buy unbaptized ones. The authorities even followed the delegation of Andi-bek, Ali Hosrov and the hajji Hussein along the Volga to ensure that no baptized “nemtsy” slaves were taken

144 *Gramoty velikago Knyazya Joanna Vasil'evicha k Nagaiskim Mursam i ikh k velikomu Knyazyu Ioannu Vasil'evichu*. Prodolzhenie drevnei rossiiskoi Vivliofiki, (Saint Petersburg: Imperatorskaya Akademiya Nauk), tom XI, 1801, pp. 52, 65, cf. also *Early Voyages*, II, 321.

145 *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh i torgovykh snoshenii Moskovskoi Rusi s Persiei*, pp. 157–60.

146 *Materialy po istorii russko-mongol'skikh otnoshenii. Russko-mongol'skie otnosheniya 1607–1636. Sbornik dokumentov*, eds. L. M. Gataullina, M. I. Gol'man, G. I. Slesarchuk, I. Ya. Zlatkin, N. V. Ustyugov, (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoi literatury, 1959), nr. 12, Burton, *The Bukharans*, 469–470, 483–4, 489, 533.

to Persia. Likewise, the Moscow authorities allowed the trader Muhammed to buy only unbaptized “nemtsy” (girl) slaves for Shah Abbās in 1600.<sup>147</sup>

The prohibition on selling Christians was an obstacle to the slave trade, and pagans were a convenient solution. The point was not only one of religion, but baptism also meant registration as a subject of the Muscovite ruler. Since the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Orthodox Church of Moscow regarded Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians as non-Christians, this opened a way of getting round this restriction, because these people existed neither for the ruler nor for the church.<sup>148</sup> As the Swedish peace delegation was told in 1556 and the Danish ambassador, Jacob Uhlfeldt, noted in 1578, many (western Christian) prisoners were sold directly to the land of the Tatars, where the Muscovite regulations were not in force, and thus the supply and demand matched perfectly even though the priests had no time or desire to baptize prisoners.

An Orthodox baptism was a security measure that was worth taking from the perspective of a prisoner or other immigrant. Besides gaining the protection of the Church, the people became subjects and the “property” of the ruler, who would not let them be sold. In the central areas for the slave trade, such as the Nizhnii Novgorod region, there were even villages of “nemtsy” where large numbers of newly baptized people were living.<sup>149</sup> On the other hand, we must bear in mind that this was the official view. The main flow may have taken place through individual and illegal/semi-illegal connections on uncontrolled roads. Jewish and Tatar traders had no bad feelings about selling baptized nemtsy, and Persian traders had no obstacles to buying them, because they had all the necessary qualifications from the latter’s perspective.

The trade in nemtsy girls was probably anything but a novelty in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, for although our sources are from this period, the concept seems to have already been well established. The only new thing may have been the price explosion, which could be explained by the controls and restrictions that came to be imposed by the Muscovite administration, which greatly limited the amount of possible “merchandise.”

147 *Materialy po istorii uzbekskoi*, Part I: nr.12, *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh i torgovykh snoshenii Moskovskoj Rusi s Persiei*, 214, 306, 310, 312, *Posol'stvo v Persiyu knyazya Aleksandra Fedorovicha Zhirovogo-Zavekina*, 57–58.

148 A. Selart, *Missionerskaya deyatel'nost' Petcherskogo igumena Korniliya vo vremya Livonskoi voiny (1558–1582)*. *Arkheologiya i istoriya Pskova i pskovskoi zemli*, ed. I. K. Labutina & alii, (Moscow – Pskov: IARAN, 2011), 69, 72–74, this is evident, because the Muscovites baptized western Christians and called them “God-less”, cf. *Letopisnoe skazanie ob izbavlenii grada Ustyuzhny ot bezbozhnyh lyahov i nemets v 1609 godu*, (Saint Petersburg: Kolokol, 1911), 7, 10–11.

149 *Pistsovaya i perepisnaya knigi XVII veka*, col. 173–178.



## Conclusions

Prisoner hunting from Novgorod took place in the northern forests, followed by the transportation of slaves to the south, and the principal object of this long-distance slave trade may well have been “nemtsy girls.” These were a sufficiently expensive luxury to ensure a sound business, and the terminology concerning them and the demand for them both seem to have been well established. Our sources regarding them were created in the course of administrative procedure and the growth of control over the trade, and for this reason it is important to be able to separate the beginnings of the trade itself from the start of the official records regarding it. Most probably it already existed early in the Middle Ages, but documentary evidence is available only from the commencement of realm formation and the organization of early modern administrative and border control systems. This must be taken into consideration when we speak about numbers.

The numbers of northern people who finally reached the southern markets cannot have been large. The total number of people captured in the north in a year must have been a few dozen or at most a few hundred, and losses among these must have been considerable if we include those who remained in local service in the northern regions, those who were deemed unsuitable for the southern trade and those who were re-baptized. Thus the number available for sale in the south may have been two or three per year, or perhaps ten or so in the best cases. This would nevertheless have amounted to several hundred people over a long period of time.

By comparison with the tens of thousands of Slavic prisoners on the Crimean market, the hypothetical number of a few dozen Baltic Finns is next to nothing, but as a phenomenon this trade is still an interesting detail. It shows how information was distributed under primitive conditions and how this was enough to make the demand for slaves with exceptional qualities result in the organization of a long-distance trading network. It also shows that this trade proved profitable and could be organized in terms of networks of robbers, traders and ruling-class customers operating along water routes and through specific markets. Finally its decline proves the power of the control exercised by the emerging structure of European states.