

OF THE COMING OF THE RUSSIANS IN SINGLE-STRAKED SHIPS(MONOXYLON)  
FROM RUSSIA TO CONSTANTINOPLE.

The single-straked ships(monoxyła)which come down from outer Russia to Constantinople are from Novgorod, where Sviatoslav, son of Igor, prince of Russia, had his seat, and others from the city of Smolensk and from Teliutza and Chernigov and from Busegrad.

All these come down the river Dnieper, and are collected together at the city of Kiev, also called Sambatas.

Their Slav tributaries, the so-called Krivichians and the Lenzanines and the rest of the Slavonic regions, cut the single-strakers(monoxyła)on their mountains in time of winter, and when they have fastened them together, as spring approaches, and the ice melts, they bring them on to the neighbouring lakes. And since these lakes debouch into the river Dnieper, they enter thence on to this same river, and come down to Kiev, and draw the ships along to be fitted out(eis tån exartisin), and sell them to the Russians.

The Russians buy these bottoms(skafidia)only, furnishing them with oars(pellas)and rowlocks(skarmous)and other tackle from their old single-strakers, which they dismantle(monoxyła katalyontes), and so they fit them out.

And in the month of June they move off down the river Dnieper and come to Vitichev, which is a tributary city of the Russians, and there they gather during two or three days, and when all the single-strakers are collected together, they set out, and come down the said Dnieper river.

And first they come to the first barrage, called Essoupi, which means in Russian and Slavonic "Do not sleep!"; the barrage itself is as narrow as the width of thw Polo-ground(i Bysans); in the middle of it are rooted high rocks, which stand out like islands. Against these, then, comes the water and wells up and dashes down over the other side, with a mighty and terrific din. Therefore the Russians to not venture to pass between them, but put in to the bank hard by, disembarking the men on to dry land but leaving the rest of the goods on board the single-strakers; they then strip and, feeling with their feet to avoid striking on a rock ---.

This they do, some at the prow, some amidships, while others again, in the stern, punt with poles; and with all this careful procedure they pass this first barrage, called in Russian Oulvorsi, and in Slavonic Ostrovouniprach, which means 'the Island of the Barrage.' This one is like the first, awkward and not to be passed through.

Once again they disembark the men and convey the single-strakers past, as on the first occasion.

Similarly they pass the third barrage also, called Gelandri, which means in Slavonic 'Noise of the Barrage,' and then the fourth barrage, the big one, called in Russian Aeifor, and in Slavonic Neasit, because the pelicans nest in the stones of the barrage.

At this barrage all put into land prow foremost, and those who are deputed to keep the watch with them get out, and off they go, these men, and keep vigilant watch for the Pechenegs.

The remainder, taking up the goods which they have on board the single-strakers, conduct the slaves in their chains past by land, six miles, until they are through the barrage.

Then, partly dragging their single-strakers, partly porting them on their shoulders, they convey them to the far side of the barrage; and then, putting them on the river and loading up their baggage, they embark themselves, and again sail off in them.

When they come to the fifth barrage, called in Russian Varouforos, and in Slavonic Youniprach, because it forms a large lake, they again convey their single-strakers through at the edges of the river, as at the first and second barrages, and arrive at the sixth barrage, called in Russian Leanti, and in Slavonic Veroutzi, that is 'the Boiling of the Water,' and this they pass similarly.

And thence they sail away to the seventh barrage, called in Russian Stroukoun, and in Slavonic Naprezi, which means 'Little Barrage.'

This they pass at the co-called ford of Krarion, where the Chersonites cross over from Russia and the Pechenegs to Cherson; which ford is as wide as the Hippodrome (i Bysans), and is as high from below up to where the friends of the Pechenegs survey the scene as an arrow might reach of one shooting from bottom to top.

It is at this point, therefore, that the Pechenegs come down and attack the Russians.

After traversing this place, they reach the island called St Gregory, on which island they perform their sacrifices because a gigantic oak-tree stands there; and they sacrifice live cocks.

Arrows, too, they peg in round about, and others bread and meat, or something of whatever each may have, as is their custom.

They also throw lots regarding the cocks, whether to slaughter them, or to eat them as well, or to leave them alive.

From this island onwards the Russians do not fear the Pecheneg until they reach the river Selinas. So they start off thence and sail for four days, until they reach the lake which forms the mouth of the ri-

ver, on which is the island of St Aitherios.

Arrived at this island they rest themselves there for two or three days. And they re-equip their single-strakers with such tackle as is needed, sails and masts and rudders, which they bring with them (Kai palin ta auton monoxyla, eis hosas an limontai chreias, peripoiontai, ta te arma kai ta katartia kai ta avchenia, haper epiferontai).

Since this lake is the mouth of the river, as has been said, and carries on down to the sea, and the island of St Aitherios lies on the sea, they come thence to the Dniester river, and having got safely there they rest again.

But when the weather is propitious, they put to sea and come to the river called Aspos, and after resting there too in like manner, they again set out and come to the Selinas, to the so-called branch of the Danube river. And until they are past the river Selinas, the Pechenegs keep pace with them.

And if it happens that the sea casts a single-straker on shore, they all put in to land, in order to present a united opposition to the Pechenegs. But after the Selinas they fear nobody, but, entering the territory of Bulgaria, they come to the mouth of the Danube.

From the Danube they proceed to the Konopas, and from the Konopas to Constantia, and from Constantia to the river of Varna, and from Varna they come to the river Ditzina, all of which are Bulgarian territory. From the Ditzina they reach the district of Mesembria, and there at last their voyage, fraught with such travail and terror, such difficulty and danger, is at an end.

The severe manner of life of these same Russians in winter-time is as follows:

When the month of November begins, their chiefs together with all the Russians at once leave Kiev and go off on the 'poliudie (polydia), which means 'rounds', that is, to the Slavonic regions of the Vervians and Drogovichians and Krivichians and Severians and the rest of the Slavs who are tributaries of the Russians.

Here they are maintained throughout the winter, but then once more, starting from the month of April, when the ice of the Dnieper river melts, they come back to Kiev.

They then pick up their single-strakers, as has been said above, and fit them out, and come down to Romania.

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