The Unesco Courier

A window open on the world

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The Slavs
a culture in close-up

Photo © Archaeological Museum of Sofia, Bulgaria

TREASURES OF WORLD ART

134

Bulgaria

Animal art of ancient Thrace

A lion crouches on its prey, a stag, in this detail from a silver plaque wrought by a Thracian craftsman in the late 4th century B.C. The Thracian metalsmiths of Antiquity produced outstanding miniature hunting scenes as well as depictions of ritual events and animal combat, conveying a sense of flowing movement and drama through a masterly use of stylization. Today in the Archaeological Museum of Sofia, this plaque (8.7 cm long) is one of many Thracian treasures unearthed in Bulgaria.

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Cover

This double issue of the *Unesco Courier* is entirely devoted to the history of the cultures of the Slav world, whose study forms a major part of Unesco's programme in the field of culture. Cover shows a detail from a fifteenth-century Russian icon of the Nativity (Pskov School). Following the star with outstretched, pointing hands, the Three Kings serve as an introduction to our issue and also herald other triumphs of Slav art.

The flowering of Slav culture

Famed for the fanciful carvings of warriors, fantastic beasts and masks that cover its walls, the tiny cathedral of St. George is the pride of the town of Yuryev Polsky, 200 kilometres north-east of Moscow. Construction of the cathedral, which was completed in 1234, is said to have been personally supervised by Prince Svyatoslav Vsevolodovich. Right, pointed mask over the north portal is thought to be the likeness of the Prince.

by Dmitri Markov

ALONG with the Latin and the Germanic peoples, the Slavs form one of the major ethnic groups of Europe. Slavonic languages echo from the austere shores of the White Sea to the sun-bathed Adriatic coast, over the vast expanses that stretch from the Baltic to the Ural mountains (Europe's frontier with Asia), and further still, in Siberia and the Far East.

Jordanes, the sixth-century historian of the Goths, tells us of the *Antae* (a group of Eastern Slavs), who sacrificed oxen to their Thunder God, Perun, who believed in *rusalki,* or stream nymphs, and who worshipped rivers and woodlands.

Byzantine historians are unanimous in recording the valour, integrity, hospitality and, above all, the love of freedom of the Slav tribes, to whom, in contrast with the rest of Europe at the time, the institution of slavery was virtually unknown.

This was a time when a page of history was turning, when the Middle Ages were replacing Antiquity and when the ancient slave-owning societies were giving way to new, feudal States. The Slavs played their part in this process which affected the whole of Europe. The kingdom of Great Moravia, Kievan Russia and the Republic of Dubrovnik, to name only three of the Slav States, wielded considerable political influence among their neighbours, not only because of their economic and military strength (in 911 A.D. Prince Oleg of Kiev celebrated his victories by nailing his shield to the gates of Constantinople), but also because of their highly developed, diversified and original culture.

The name of Great Moravia calls to mind the unique achievement of two brothers from Thessalonica, Cyril and Methodius. The twenty-year adventure of the two "Apostles of the Slavs" began in 863 A.D., when the Moravian prince Rostislav sent to Constantinople for missionaries who could instruct his people in the Christian faith, in their own Slavonic tongue. An ancient "Lives of the Saints" tells us that when he was taking leave of the Byzantine Emperor, Cyril declared: "Teaching without an alphabet and without books is like writing upon water", and before they set off on their hazardous journey he and his brother Methodius devised a Slavonic alphabet, thus laying the foundations of Slavonic literature.

The cultural and educational activities of Cyril and Methodius had far-reaching effects in Moravia, Pannonia and the other West Slav countries. And although their great undertaking met with implacable opposition on the part of the Catholic Church, which cruelly persecuted the missionaries, their disciples quickly took up the struggle in neighbouring Bulgaria. Access to writing was an epoch-making event for all the Slav peoples, and consequently for the history of the culture of the world.

The age of Kievan Russia (whose heyday was at the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries) saw unprecedented advances in city-building, craftsmanship and commerce, intense international political activity, and a corresponding flowering of the arts. Our appreciation of mankind's cultural accomplishments is in no way complete if we neglect the inimitable creations of the Kievan age in architecture, literature, painting and the applied arts, which have given such profound aesthetic delight to successive generations of Slavs and non-Slavs alike.

The perfect moulding and the succinct yet picturesque language of the *Slovo o Polku Igoreve,* a contemporary epic poem, place it on the same artistic and spiritual level as the *Nibelungenlied* and the *Chanson de Roland.* This "Lay of Igor's Campaign" carries in its lines the whispering sound of the feather-grass of the steppe across which, in the year 1185, Prince Igor of Novgorod-Seversky rode out against the Polovtsians; its language echoes the clash of swords and the gasps and groans of horsemen locked in mortal conflict. Indeed, the *Slovo* constitutes an invaluable and eloquent account of distant days, and of the feelings and thoughts of the people of medieval Russia.

Mention of Dubrovnik calls up memories of its outstanding role in the development of European humanism. Over a period of several centuries, despite constant warfare and the re-shaping of frontiers, the city-republic conserved its independence. It rivalled mighty Venice in terms of both commerce and culture, to such an extent that a special item was placed on the agenda of the Venetian Senate: "Every Friday—a discussion on ways and means of crushing Dubrovnik!" (See article page 43).

Dubrovnik was a centre of study for famous mathematicians and poets, historians and philosophers. Between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, the combined labour and talents of architects and engineers, of anonymous stonecutters and masons, produced an ensemble of rare harmony which, in its magnificent and lavish natural setting, made it seem to be an eighth Wonder of the World and a fitting destination, as Bernard Shaw suggested, for those who are looking for heaven on earth.

The fortress of Dubrovnik and its princely palace are visible symbols of the independence of Dalmatian humanism, which evolved in keeping with the historical development of the country of the South Slavs, in intimate contact with the wealth of their national culture and in accordance with their original life-style.

The Slav peoples contributed in a variety of ways to the intellectual and spiritual life of medieval Europe, and provided much of the ideological background to the European anti-feudal and anti-clerical movements which resulted in numerous popular uprisings. Thus, for example, the Bulgarian

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sect of the Bogomils laid the foundations of the dualistic teachings adopted by the Cathars, the Albigenses and the Templars. It is worth mentioning here that in French dialects of the Middle Ages, the word *bogre* (Bulgar) was synonymous with "heretic".

Protest was inherent, too, in the sermons preached by the religious reformer, Jan Hus, who was burnt at the stake in 1415 on the orders of the reactionary Council of Constance. From his martyr's pyre blazed up the purifying flame of the Reformation which spread throughout Europe. The great Martin Luther humbly called himself a Hussite, while the teachings of the Bohemian preacher became a foundation-stone of the revolutionary ideology of burghers and peasants alike.

During the Middle Ages, the Slav peoples were to taste the gall of foreign oppression. Poland and Russia, for example, found themselves under constant pressure from their east European neighbours, and this obviously affected their own cultural development. Nevertheless, when medieval European culture was refreshed

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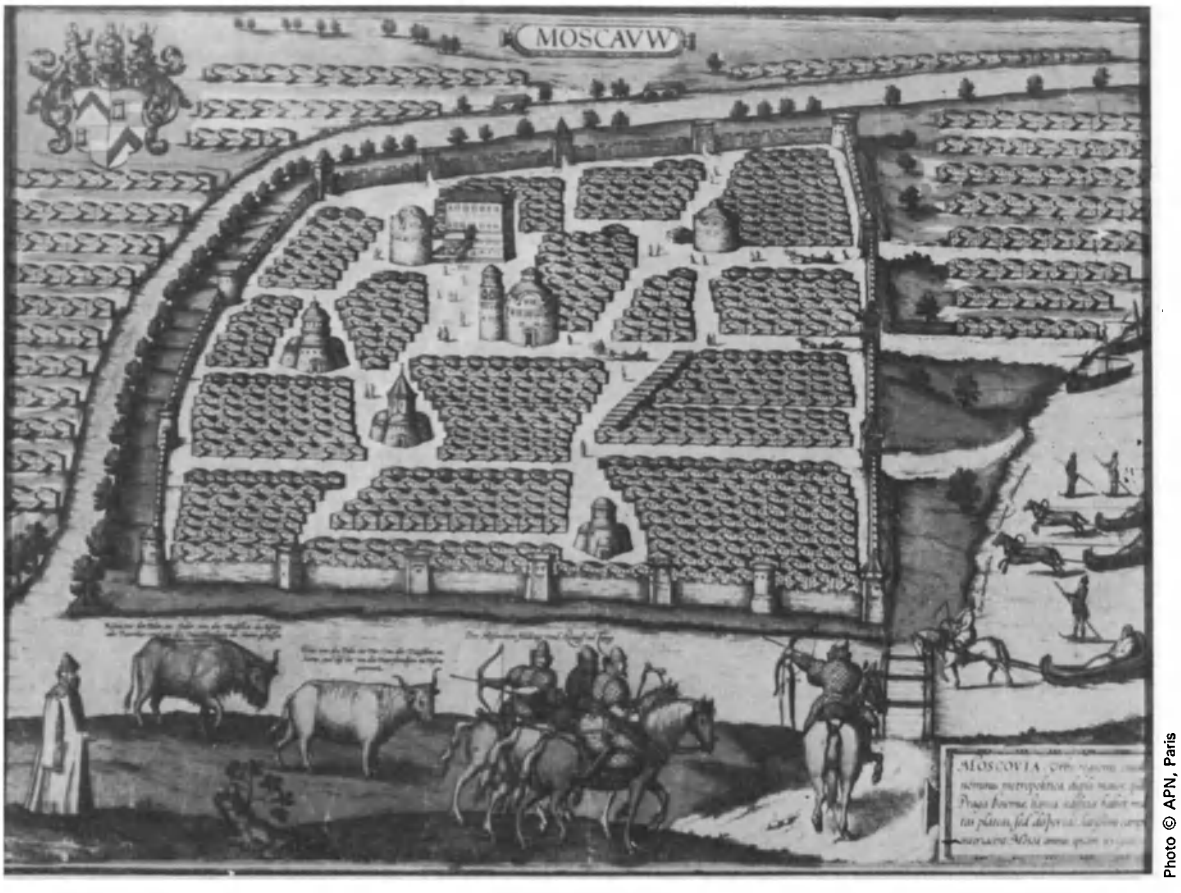
The Kremlin down the ages



2 Photo © APN, Paris

and renewed by the irresistible tide of the Renaissance, the Slavs were able, to the extent that their historical circumstances permitted, to play an active role in the great spiritual movement of humanism.

In the space of a few generations, the great figures of the Renaissance elaborated a new vision of the world and a new conception of man himself. Their ideas were reflected in the artistic masterpieces and forward-looking scientific achievements of the age. And among the great Renaissance men were numbered many Slavs.

Pride of place must be acorded to Nikolaj Kopernik, the Polish astronomer Copernicus (1473-1543), who overturned the image of the world that the Church had sanctified for more than fifteen hundred years (see *Unesco Courier,* April 1973). His revolutionary theory that the planets, including the earth, revolve around the sun, enabled the Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) to extend the frontiers of the universe still further, and postulate the existence of countless solar systems similar to our own.

There is considerable evidence of the importance which Copernicus's contemporaries attached to his work. As a young man, Jan Amos Komensky, better known to us as Comenius, while visiting Heidelberg in 1614, came across a copy of Copernicus's treatise *De Revolutionibus Coelestium Orbium;* without hesitation, he emptied his pockets to pay for the manuscript, and was consequently obliged to make the long journey home to Moravia on foot.

Komensky himself (1592-1670) was an-

other Slav scholar who made a unique contribution to the culture of the new age. He devised a complete educational system, and was one of the first to understand that the transformation of society and its advance along the path of historical progress depended in great measure on the all-round development of man.

Komensky stood at the watershed of two great European cultural epochs, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. It was the latter movement which, in its confirmation of the unlimited power of human reason, finally dethroned the scholasticism of the Church as the ultimate authority as far as the perception and explanation of the world was concerned. Built on the foundations of outstanding scientific achieve-

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Photo © APN, Moscow

4

The Kremlin, or citadel, formed the defensive core of the great medieval cities of Russia. Pskov, Novgorod, Smolensk and Rostov were all built round Kremlins, which generally contained cathedrals, the palaces of princes and bishops, government offices and an arsenal. The Moscow Kremlin, the most imposing of all, was originally a wooden fortress erected in 1156, but it was enlarged and rebuilt many times. Photos (1) View of Moscow in the 16th century from a book by the German traveller Adam Olearius. (2) The first known plan of Moscow, published in 1556 in a book by the Austrian ambassador Sigismund Gerberstein. (3) The Palace Square in the heart of the Moscow Kremlin in the 17th century. (4) 16th century engraving of the stonemasons of Moscow. The inscription reads: "That summer [1367] the Grand Duke Dmitri built Moscow in stone, and from that time Moscow was built only in stone." (5) The Kremlin in the 18th century, as seen from the River Moskva. Copper engraving by the Russian artist Michael Makhaev.

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ments, the Enlightenment threw open the doors to the further development of the natural and human sciences.

The brightest star in the brilliant firmament of eighteenth-century Slav science was undoubtedly Mikhail Lomonosov (1711-1765), the great Russian scholar and encyclopaedist, and a truly "universal man". An urbane, yet poetic figure, Lomonosov combined the talents of physicist and chemist, geologist and geographer, historian and philologist. He was a versatile and accomplished naturalist, and rightly shared with the distinguished French chemist Lavoisier the honour of discovering the law of conservation of matter and energy.

The age of Enlightenment saw an affirmation of the need to place scientific knowledge at the disposal of the public as a whole, and to create a non-clerical, secular system of education, and it was not long before this principle was put into practice. The "Educational Commission" established in Poland in 1773 was the first independent European "Ministry of Education".

The period between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, rightly known as "the age of national regeneration", was rich in consequence for the development of Slav culture. In all spheres of social life, the cultural element expanded at an unprecedented rate. Literature, art and science reflected a nation's greatness, and served as its "visiting-card" as far as other peoples and States were concerned.

The sudden flowering of Slav culture was conditioned by (and inseparable from) the national liberation movements of the Slav peoples or, as in the case of Russia, by the development of progressive social and political ideas. Thus, the Russian poet of freedom, Alexander Pushkin, echoed the ideals of the "Decembrist" revolutionaries (1); the struggle of the Czechs for their own National Theatre, which was conducted under the slogan "By the people for the people", was both a consequence and a reflection of the upsurge of the national movement; the Bulgarian writers Hristo Botev and Ljuben Karavelov participated directly in the armed struggle for the independence of their country.

Culture was a driving force in the political education of peoples, and in making them aware of their identity as nations. In March 1794, for example, the Poles reacted to the first performance of *Cracovians and Mountaineers,* a musical comedy by Woyzeck Boguslavsky, the "father of the Polish theatre", in much the same way as the French Revolutionaries had reacted to Beaumarchais' *Le Mariage de Figaro*.

Each new decade of the nineteenth century saw an increased contribution by the Slavs to the culture of Europe and of the world. This was particularly evident in literature, especially with the works of the great Russian authors, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Turgenev, whose impact was worldwide, while Poland was brilliantly represented by Mickiewicz and Slovatsky, and the Ukraine by Taras Shevchenko. At the same time, outstanding Slav composers like Glinka, Chopin, Tchaikovsky and Smetana set new standards of excellence in the music not only of their own countries, but also of the world.

The theatre of the Slav countries underwent remarkable development, as may be seen from a single example—that of the Moscow Arts Theatre, founded in 1898 by the great actor-producers Konstantin Stanislavsky and Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko.

In the twentieth century, the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia set in motion a revolutionary process whose impact on the development of modern culture has been felt far beyond the borders of the Slav countries. The vitality of the ideas which provoked this development was put to a severe test during the struggle of Slav and non-Slav peoples alike against Fascism, a death-dealing movement which also resulted in the mindless and pitiless destruction of cultural monuments thousands of years old.

Today, Unesco's programme of cultural studies is making cultural exchange even more meaningful. A major component of this programme is the study on Slav cultures, which reflects the increasing worldwide interest in the centuries-old cultures of the Slavs, and in the economic and cultural achievements of the modern Slav States.

Unesco has enlisted scholars and intellectuals and representatives of the mass media and of educational institutions in Europe, America and Asia in the implementation of this project, a natural outcome of which has been awareness of the need for an international pooling and co-ordination of efforts in the complex study of Slav cultures, and in the dissemination of knowledge about the Slav peoples, the way they live today and the contribution they have made, and are making, to the civilization of the world.

■ **Dmitri Markov**

(1) The 'Decembrist rising' in Russia, so-called because it occurred on 18 December 1825, was an ill-fated palace revolution against the Tsarist autocracy.

The Slav cultural tradition, still very much alive today, now incorporates revolutionary motifs. Known as "October Song", this porcelain dish is one of a series of decorative objects produced by Maria Lebedeva in 1919-1920. The words of the "Internationale" are reproduced on the inner rim.

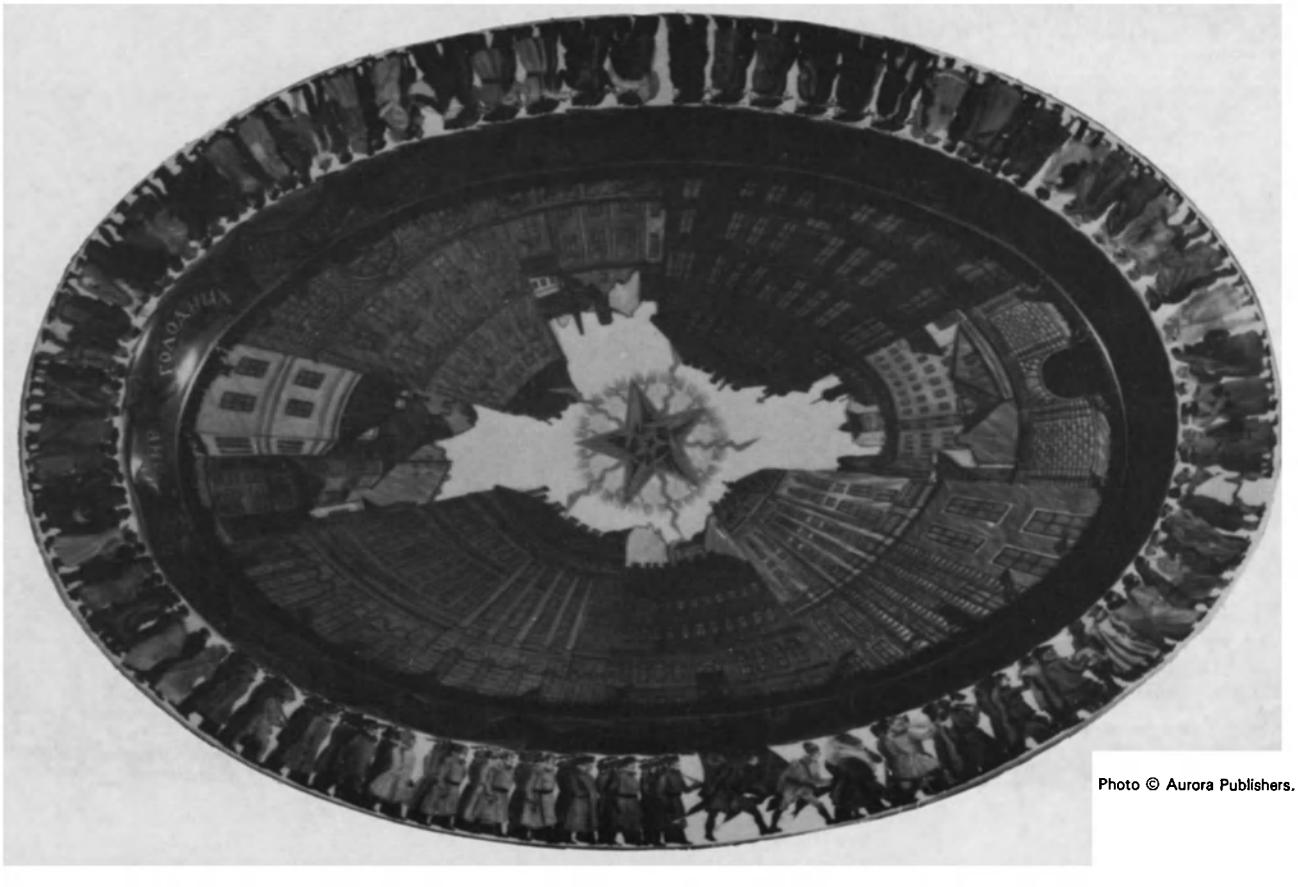

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Photo © Progress Publishers, Moscow

Gold ornamental plaque from a horse's trappings, found in a Sarmatian tomb in the Caucasus region. It was probably made for a Sarmatian noble by Greek craftsmen who have deliberately adopted a "barbarian" style. The two central figures are representations of Dionysius and Athena.

The making of the Slav community

by Vladimir D. Korolyuk

HISTORY portrays nomad peoples such as the Sarmatians, the Huns and the Avars as the main driving force behind the great migrations of barbarian peoples which crushed the Roman Empire, leaving the ruins and ashes from which feudal Europe was later to emerge.

Early written sources abound in graphic descriptions of the nomads in action: storming the ramparts of the Roman Empire, besieging cities, subjugating the peoples of the Roman provinces or putting them to flight. Most of these accounts relate to south-east Europe where nomad hordes wrought havoc on Roman territory, turning it into pastureland and enslaving part of the local population.

Yet the Slav tribes, for the most part farmers and herdsmen, played a role of major importance in these great migrations, for the economic system of the nomads could not survive without agriculture. When the Avars settled down in the sixth century they turned to agriculture, and the toil of Slav farmers (as well as the blood shed by Slav horsemen recruited into the mounted hordes) was a decisive factor in the emergence of the terrible and ruthless force known as the Avar Khaganate.

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But such States of nomadic origin were short-lived. In 622-623, Samo led the Slavs in a large-scale rebellion against their Avar masters, and two centuries later, in 803, the Emperor Charlemagne destroyed the Khaganate and the Avars ceased to exist as a political force.

It was, therefore, pre-eminently as farmers and urbanized craftsmen and traders that the Slavs first reached the level of economic development attained by the other European peoples. In eastern Europe, where they had long been established, and in central and south-east Europe where they settled after the great invasions, Slav tribes took the road to feudalism. Distinctive Slav nations and governments began to appear.

As for the nomadic tribes, some "perished like the Avars" (to quote an ancient Russian proverb), while others, such as the Proto-Bulgars, a Turkic people which had emerged from Asia with the invading hordes, found their destinies linked with that of the Slavs. The Proto-Bulgars intermingled with the sedentary Slav farmers, while the Hungarian people also absorbed an element of the Slav farming population, adopted their practices, and entered European history as a farming people.

The earliest written sources to give a general idea of the areas occupied by the Slavs in the vast expanses of eastern and central Europe date from the first centuries A.D. From then until the age of the great migrations there is a virtually uninterrupted flow of information, the most interesting of which is found in the works of two sixth-century historians: the Goth Jordanes and the Byzantine writer Procopius of Caesarea.

According to the historians of Antiquity, central and eastern Europe were divided into two geographical regions, Germania and Sarmatia. Some ancient authors, followed by later Byzantine writers, held that the Slavs were from Sarmatia (or Scythia), but this was contested by their better-informed contemporaries.

The Roman historian Tacitus, writing in the 1st century A.D., made a sharp distinction (based partly on economic criteria) between the Slavs and the inhabitants of Sarmatia. The *Venedi*, he wrote (using one of the early names given to the Slavs) were rather "to be classed as Germans, for they build houses, carry shields and travel on foot at great speed, in all these respects differing from the Sarmatians, who spend their lives in waggons or on horseback".

These differences of opinion are seemingly due to the fact that the Slavs occupied a region straddling Germania and Sarmatia, where western and eastern cultural influences intermingled. The strong resemblances between the Slavonic and Baltic languages suggest that the Slavs shared this area of forest and forest-steppe, which stretched southwards through eastern Europe as far as the northern foothills of the Carpathians, with the Balts (the ancestors of the modern Latvians and Lithuanians).

The historians of the sixth century located the land of the Slavs with even greater precision and maintained that it covered a vast area stretching from the Baltic to the Carpathians, eastwards to the Dnieper, and even as far as the lower reaches of the Don and the Sea of Azov.

Twenty years ago, the discovery of traces of agricultural activity as well as objects dating from between the seventh and fifth centuries B.C. suggested that the early Slav settlements were also centres of craftsmanship. Since then, discoveries by Ukrainian and Polish archaeologists have provided a virtually continuous picture of the development of the material culture of the Slavs from the dawn of the first millennium A.D. up to the tenth and eleventh centuries. The fact that the artefacts produced in this vast territory over such a long period bear a strong mutual affinity, overriding local variations, points to the existence of a Slav ethnic community.

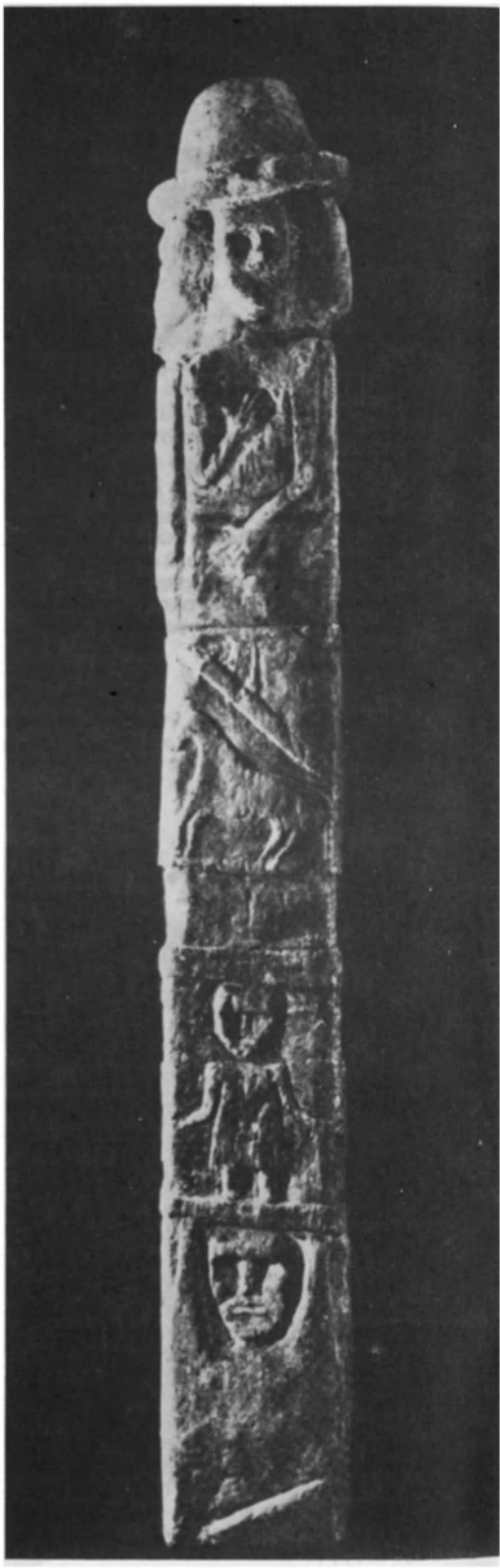
Written testimony exists concerning the unity of the Slavs, but refers to them by different names. The most detailed accounts date from the sixth century and speak of two main groups, the *Antae* and the *Sclavini,* which are described as military and political federations of Slavs governed by an elite class and under the overall leadership of a warrior chieftain or prince.

The Antae, despite certain features which distinguished them from the Sclavini (notably their types of pottery and the nature of their fortified settlements in the sixth century) were undoubtedly kinsmen of the latter in all other respects, and shared the same life-style, appearance and language.

The irruption of the Goths, the Huns and the Avars into the territory of the Slavs broke up their unity. But the invaders failed to shatter a way of life based on a common language and customs, economic activities and marriage ties, and this ensured the survival of the Slav community.

Early historians also show that the Slavs were united by a common mythology. Procopius tells us, for example, that "both these barbarian tribes [the Antae and the Sclavini] lead identical lives and have the same laws. They recognize one god, the author of lightning, the only master of the universe, and they bring him sacrifices of cattle and perform other devotions in his honour."

The literary sources do not contain, unfortunately, sufficient material for a reconstruction of Slav mythology in all its details. But a description of the reforms introduced by Vladimir, Grand Prince of Kiev in the tenth century, contains a list of the old Slav gods. The supreme deity was *Perun,* god of thunder and lightning, who brought life-giving rain to the crops; he had affinities with another deity, *Stribog. Chors* and *Dazhd-Bog* (*bog* means "god" in the Slavonic languages) were the gods of daybreak and the sun. *Volos* (or *Veles*) was the patron of flocks and herds, livestock-raising and pastoral activities. *Mokosh* was the goddess of fertility, weaving and spinning. Latin chronicles and archaeological finds dating from the eleventh and twelfth centuries indicate the existence of a similar patheon of pagan gods on the western Bal-



tic coastline and among the group of Slavs known as the *Ljutici*.

Traces of many ancient beliefs survive in Slav folklore: *vily* and *beregini*, who haunted woodlands and hills and above all rivers and lakes and other watery places; *Yarilo*, a god of fertility associated with springtime; *Kupala*, apparently related to the sun; and a host of household and family gods reflecting the patriarchal organization of the Slavs.

Conversion to Christianity broke up this mythological world, although a number of pagan cults and rituals were incorporated in the new religious practices, and the medieval ideology of the Christian Slavs still contained echoes of the beliefs of their heathen ancestors.

Common beliefs, a common material culture, linguistic continuity and a tradition of intermarriage all point to the persistence of a Slav community.

Photos V. Vasilenko © Iskusstvo Publishers, Moscow

Pagan Pantheon

The Slavs decorated their pagan temples with beautifully carved images of their many gods and goddesses. These were generally carved in wood and as a result few of them remain, but some of the rare stone idols still exist. Left, a typical four-sided, sacred stele (or Svietovit), dating from the 10th century, which was found in the silt of the bed of the river Zbruc, in the Ukraine. It is thought to represent "Mother Earth", the protectress and symbol of fertility. Above, a stone statue known as the "Idol of Shklov".

The map called Peutinger's *Tabula* (one of the oldest maps of Europe) offers the only indication that the Slavs (the *Venedi*) moved south-westwards in the third century.

Later, between the fifth and the seventh centuries, they moved in a great wave into central and south-east Europe, and settled in the Balkans, the Dinaric, the Karawanken and Julian Alps, in the Danube basin, and in the land east of the Elbe. Confrontation with the Slavs resulted in the transformation of the slave-owning Eastern Roman Empire into the medieval feudal State of Byzantium.

But let us now return to the Antae and the Sclavini. Jordanes and Procopius tell us that these two peoples played an equally important role in the Slav migration into the Danube basin and the Balkans. These two federations of tribes, closely related by language and customs, undoubtedly possessed a highly developed sense of ethnic identity. But when, during the concluding stages of the great migration, the Slavs settled in south-east Europe, the Greek name *Slaveni* (which the Latins transliterated as *Slavi*) was extended to include the whole of the Slav world, while the name *Antae* disappeared.

This sudden upsurge of Slav consciousness, which occurred at the turn of the sixth and seventh centuries and was reflected in the adoption of a single name, was largely due to the fact that the Slavs, after centuries of confrontation with the Germans, the Finns and all the nomadic tribes that had come storming out of Asia, now found themselves face-to-face with the Eastern Roman Empire, and in doing so became more keenly aware of their own identity.

The consolidation of the Slav community was followed by a complex process in which the Slavs separated into three branches, eastern, southern and western, each of which evolved according to different historical, geographical and economic circumstances, absorbing in the process the indigenous population of the territories it had occupied. At the same time, Slav nation-states began to be created. The Slavs were firmly set on the road to feudalism.

There can be no doubt that the Slavs who occupied the former Roman provinces of south-east Europe and the lands which bordered on Byzantium evolved more rapidly than their kinsmen who had remained closer to the original homeland. It was here that they created the first central and south-east European States, Great Moravia

Photo B. Skobeltsin © Iskusstvo Publishers, Leningrad

Detail showing the blind arcading and the faience tiles that embellish the tambour supporting the single cupola of the late 15th century church of St. George-on-the-hill, at Pskov.

and the first Bulgarian Kingdom. It was not until the tenth and early eleventh centuries that the rest of the Slav world reached the same level of development.

The greatest medieval Slav State was Kievan Russia which, like all the early feudal States, owed all its trappings of royalty and aristocracy, and its secular and ecclesiastical "Establishment", to the back-breaking labour of the peasantry.

The former forest regions were cleared and put under the plough, and by the thirteenth century, arable farming may be said to have predominated everywhere. But horticulture continued to be important: the Slavs cultivated beans and peas, lentils, poppy-seeds and turnips, as well as carrots and gherkins, while—in the words of an old Russian folk-song—"apple and pear-trees flowered" in their orchards in the springtime. The country people supplemented their diets by bee-keeping and fishing, by gathering wild berries, roots and mushrooms.

The development of arable farming with the use of draught animals implies that livestock-raising was also an important activity. The Slavs indeed bred oxen and horses to pull their ploughs, as well as large numbers of cows and pigs. Goats and sheep were also reared, notably in the pasturelands of the Carpathians and the Balkans.

But it was not "all work and no play" for the Slav peasants, and their daily life was enlivened by three cycles of festive occasions—one involving rituals and ceremonies related to cultivation, another connected with the raising of animals, and the third with the mysteries of marriage and fertility.

The development of Slav cities as centres of craftsmanship and trade dates from the eighth and ninth centuries, but subjection to Byzantium a century later temporarily slowed down the expansion of South Slav towns. Urbanization in the countries of the East and West Slavs continued throughout the tenth and especially the eleventh centuries; their cities were fortified with ramparts, moats and towers, special attention being paid to the security of their gateways.

These fortress-cities were built by the Slavs themselves, who became metal-workers, blacksmiths, locksmiths, armourers, potters, glass-makers, stonemasons, cobblers and shoemakers. The craft of wood-working was practised by turners, coopers and wheelwrights. The Slavs also proved to be accomplished jewellers, while Russian craftsmanship, especially in the form of steel blades and chain mail, enamelled golden ware and objects carved out of bone, was highly valued in the markets of East and West alike.

The fortunes of all medieval cities depended essentially on the creation of local markets capable of absorbing the production of their craftsmen. The foundation and expansion of the Slav cities in particular reflected the acceleration of a trend which had begun at a considerably earlier date—namely the separation of craftsmanship from agriculture. Cities with large permanent populations of craftsmen and traders, and with a transient population of foreign merchants, rapidly became flourishing commercial and diplomatic centres.

In the streets of Prague and Wolyn, Kiev and Novgorod, ambassadors and missionaries rubbed shoulders with merchants who had come to sell cloth and precious stones, silverware, jewellery and exotic spices, or to exchange them for slaves or prisoners-of-war, furs or locally-produced goods.

Busy trade routes ran from the Caspian Sea along the Volga to Novgorod and the Baltic, "from the Vikings to the Greeks", and from Kiev to Cracow, Prague to Regensburg. Arabic, Greek, German, Nordic as well as Slavonic languages were all to be heard in the markets, princely palaces and aristocratic mansions of Kiev, Novgorod and Smolensk. The picture was much the same in the cities of the South Slavs, while in Dalmatia, where the population combined Slav and Latin elements, merchants from Italy were much in evidence.

A cultural tradition took root in the great Slav cities where its basis existed already in the form of sagas and songs recounting the exploits of kings and princes, and where story-tellers entertained the nobility with *byliny,* or epic poems. It was in these centres that architecture and painting developed, and especially literature which, throughout the early medieval Slav world, lost no time in putting to use the alphabet invented in the ninth century by Cyril and Methodius for the transcription of the Slavonic language. The texts inscribed on birch-bark discovered by Soviet archaeologists (see page 25), which contain simple accounts of everyday affairs, offer outstanding evidence of the cultural level attained by the society of early Russia, largely as a result of this leap forward in Slavonic letters.

■ **Vladimir D. Korolyuk**

Magic, marriage and merry-making

by
Aleksandr A. Gura, Olga A. Ternovskaya, and Nikita A. Tolstoy

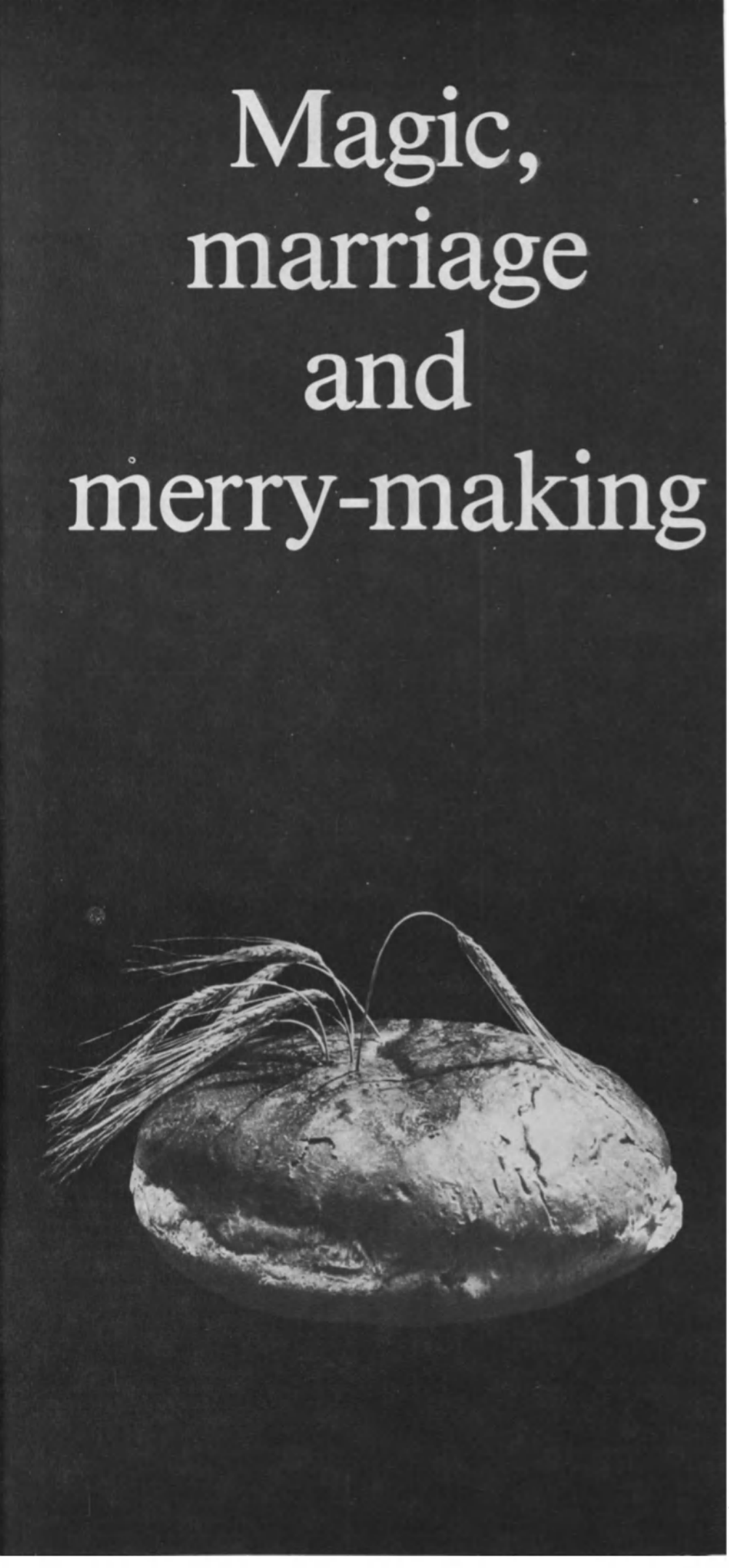


Photo © Unesco Courier, Russian Edition

FROM time immemorial, the life of the Slavs has been bound up with agriculture, and for this reason, ancient rites and rituals connected with the seasons of the farming year figure prominently in their culture.

One such ceremony, commonly celebrated until quite recently, was the *dozhinka*, or harvest festival. This took varying forms among the different Slav peoples, and may thus serve as an indicator of their separate yet similar development from a common origin.

The rites which accompanied the end of harvesting comprised a sequence of events, carefully structured in space and time and based on different combinations of three distinct ceremonies, each centred on a specific object. These objects, of which there were a great number of variants, were fashioned by the reapers out of ears of corn, straw, branches, flowers, thread and ribbon.

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One of these objects, the *dozhinochny venok,* or harvest garland, was a head-dress woven from flowers, branches, ribbon and other materials. The end of harvesting was considered as a sort of marriage, and the preparation of the garland was accompanied by rites reminiscent of the wedding ceremony. The garland was worn by the best and prettiest of the women reapers who took the role of the bride in these rituals whose magic, incantatory nature is reflected in an old Byelorussian harvesting song, with the refrain "The more you kiss the mistress, Master, the more corn will there be..."

Moreover, the other *dramatis personae* of this rjtual adopted the names of the principal participants at a wedding, so that the terminology of the latter permeated the harvest ceremony.

The ritual weaving of the garland was common in the Ukraine, southern Byelorussia, Slovakia and Poland, but rare among the Bulgarians and quite unknown in Russia.

Another ceremonial object was the last sheaf, or ą symbolic representation in the form of a man of straw. This sheaf differed from the harvest garland in that it was not an adjunct of a leading human participant in the ritual, but actually presided over the events. For this reason, it was often given anthropomorphic names such as *baba* (granny), *ded* (grandpa), *kumushka* (the merry wife) and *nevesta* (the bride). In north-east Russia this sheaf was even considered as the master *(khozjain)* of the household ; and in Russia as a whole this word is one of those most commonly used to denote the guardian spirit of the family home.

The ritual involved in the preparation of the sheaf was widespread among the West Slavs and the western group of the South Slavs ; it existed also in northern and western Russia and was found in north-east Byelorussia.

The most important ritual accompanying the end of harvest-time among the Slavs had as its focal point a patch of the crop which was left uncut. The standing ears, which the East and South Slavs called the *boroda* (beard) were fashioned in a specific manner—plaited together, for example, partly broken or knotted in some way—and then served as the decor for various rites. The womenfolk turned somersaults; the young men wriggled under the bent stalks; a girl danced in front of them; they were sprinkled with vodka or water; little piles of flax or stones, or of bread and salt were placed beside them, and so on. After these

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Photo Ribeyrol © Musée de l'Homme, Paris

Seasonal rites

Harvest-time in Poland, left, was celebrated with traditional ritual. Wearing an elaborate crown of wheat and escorted by the village musicians and the other villagers, the prettiest of the village maidens led the procession to the village church. After the priest had blessed the crown, the procession moved on to the village hall. There the mayor placed a cock on top of the crown and it began to peck at the ears of corn. If the cock crowed, this was taken as a good omen signifying a plentiful harvest. Finally, the procession wound its way to the house of the local squire who distributed gifts to those considered to have worked hardest during the harvesting. The day ended in feasting and dancing. Right, in Moravia, Czechoslovakia, the arrival of spring is marked by the making of a "smartka", a figure representing the death of winter. In Bulgaria, bottom left, this figure is replaced by a villager wearing an elaborate mask.

Photo © Ethnographic Museum, Prague

rites, the South Slavs cut or pulled up the *boroda;* the East Slavs left it standing in the field.

Traditional Slav weddings were complicated affairs, in which ritual and mythological play-acting were interwoven with the recital of poems and with singing, music and dancing. The relatives, friends and acquaintances of the bride and groom all participated in these activities; everyone had a role to play, and was simultaneously an actor and a spectator. The list of wedding-guests often included professional match-makers *(svaty),* lamenters who could be relied upon to produce a few tears at the right moment, a master of ceremonies, sorcerers and soothsayers to protect the newly-weds from witchcraft, and a jester to amuse the assembly with his jokes and witticisms.

The first stage in the process of getting married involved the arrival of the match-makers at the bride's house, where they engaged in a conversation full of symbols and ambiguities with her parents. They were travelling merchants, they said, or hunters of martens and foxes; they were looking for a lost heifer; were there any stray ducks or geese in the vicinity; or did the family have a young ewe-lamb or a little wheat for sale? On rare occasions, when the married couple was to set up home in the bride's, rather than the bridegroom's household, the match-makers addressed themselves to the bridegroom's family; sometimes the bride went to offer her hand in marriage. All these ceremonial negotiations ended with an official betrothal; the engaged couple began to prepare for the wedding and drew up the list of guests.

Once betrothed, the status of the fiancée changed; no longer a spinster, she was not yet a married woman; her former social and family ties and relationships had been loosened, but new ones had not yet taken their place. In popular belief, she was exposed during this transitional period to the dangerous influence of witchcraft and the evil eye, and for this reason she was excused from all her normal domestic duties. Sometimes, for fear of harm, she did not even leave the house.

In the Russian north, this was the period when the professional weepers entered the scene, some of them rubbing their eyes with onions for increased effect. Ritual weeping and wailing continued until the end of the wedding ceremony.

The state of betrothal was also reflected in details of the clothing, head-dresses and hair styles of the *nevesta*—the future bride.

The eve of the wedding was a special occasion among all the Slav peoples. In Russia, this was the moment when the bride took leave of all her girlhood friends. Ritual bathing was practised by the Russians and the South Slavs, while in Russia and sometimes in Byelorussia, Poland and Bulgaria, the bride ceremonially let down her hair. The East and West Slavs decorated a "wedding sapling"; in the western Ukraine, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Serbia, the girls plaited garlands; the South Slavs and Slovaks prepared a wedding banner. In Russia (particularly the south), Byelorussia, the Ukraine and Bulgaria, the eve of the great day was the time for baking the wedding bread.

The baking of this *svadebny khleb* was a well-established tradition among the Slavs. The bread, decorated in a variety of different ways, was offered to the wedding-guests with many ritual gestures and songs, in which it was compared to the sun and the moon. The bride and groom bowed low before the round loaf and kissed it; their parents blessed them with it and it was used in the "bread and salt" ceremony which greeted them after they were pronounced man and wife, as a symbol of Slav hospitality; and the newly-weds were bombarded with handfuls of grain, to wish them happiness and wealth.

The procession from the bride's house to the wedding, and to the bridegroom's house after the ceremony, was considered to be a dangerous moment. The East Slavs frightened each other, for example, with tales of whole wedding parties being transformed by witchcraft into wolves. For this reason, the guests took particular care to protect themselves from sorcery.

Photo © Aurora Publishers, Leningrad

One hundred kisses

"Luboks", or humorous engravings of scenes from daily life, became very popular in Russia towards the end of the 18th century. Left, a village wedding feast is in full swing. The figure in the centre, a relative of the bride, calls on the bride and groom to "sweeten the vodka", whereupon the newlyweds are obliged to kiss each other one hundred times, while the guests in chorus count each kiss. The children perched on the bunk over the stove seem more interested in stuffing themselves with handfuls of nuts. Right, from Czechoslovakia, an elaborate wedding cake representing Adam and Eve before the tree of knowledge.

The wedding festivities included an important act: the changing of the bride's hair-style and head-dress to match her new status as a married woman.

The newly-weds were seen off by the guests, usually from the groom's house, to the bridal bedchamber. Oddly enough, the wedding night was generally spent in unheated quarters—in a store-room, a barn, or even a cow-shed !

The next day was devoted to fun and games. Tricks were played on the young couple; the match-makers were "punished"; men dressed up as women and vice versa; the party wandered through the village disguised as mummers or gypsies, and so on. Sometimes, as in the Byelorussian region of Polesie, for example, the guests re-enacted a parody of the previous day's ceremony, with actors playing the parts of bride and groom.

The last act of the wedding included a ritual visit by the newly-weds to the village bath-house, a symbolic "testing" of the bride, and visits by the in-laws to each others' homes.

To this day, the arrival of summer is celebrated in Byelorussian Polesie on 7 July, which corresponds in the new calendar to the old Slavonic festival of Midsummer Day and the Feast of St. John the Baptist. Despite centuries of religious persecution, the occasion remains full of colourful relics from pagan times.

On the eve of *Ivan Kupala,* as the occasion is called, huge bonfires of brushwood, straw, etc. collected by the boys and girls are lit at twilight on the river banks or on the little hills of this wooded and marshy region. The fires are usually grouped in threes, and are sometime topped by straw "guys" which are either consumed in the flames, or thrown into the river to "drown".

The fires burn until midnight or until dawn. When the flames have died down, the merry-makers jump over the embers, beat the ground with fire-brands and generally amuse themselves. Just before first light, they gather piles of grass, and tell each other the legend of the mysterious flower of the fern which brings good fortune to anyone who chances to see it.

What looks like just plain mischief by the country boys and girls (they block up the chimneys of cottages so that smoke from the stoves cannot escape, take gates from their hinges and throw them on to other people's vegetable patches, or pull buckets and chains out of the wells and drag them noisily through the village) is, in fact, the survival of ancient rites which, like jumping over the fire or beating the ground with burning sticks, were connected with exorcism, purification, fertility and so on. Now, however, they are merely the signs of uninhibited gaiety, in which the whole population stays up all night to join in the fun.

On Midsummer Eve in Poland, along the lower reaches of the Bug river, the unmarried girls push little wooden cups with lighted candles and posies of flowers out across the water. A girl whose cup sinks will be married during the year; but if the cup floats on, she will remain a spinster. In the Ukraine and in Byelorussia, the girls also throw garlands of flowers into the water and tell their fortunes with them.

On Midsummer Eve in Slovakia, the girls dig holes in the ground with their bare heels and fill them with sugar or bread. At dawn, they come back to see what has happened: if the sugar and bread are still there, they are destined to remain old maids; if they have disappeared, a death in the family may be expected. A girl who finds ants in the hole she has dug will marry a good lad; but if it contains a starling, she will have to content herself with a widower.

According to ancient superstition, witches were abroad on Midsummer Night, and the Slovaks and the people of Polesie took pains to protect themselves from all manner of sorcery. To sting the witches (who among other devilments were liable to steal milk from their cows) and drive them away, they put nettles on their window-sills and strewed them across their thresholds.

The Slovaks set great store by the magical properties of grass gathered on Midsummer Night, a time when, so they believed, every blade of grass was silently crying out "Cut me! Cut me!" Among the

Cribs and nativity plays are important features of the Christmas festivities. Over the years, in Poland, a traditional spectacle known as "The Herods" has developed around the nativity story and in particular the journey of the Three Wise Men. This spectacle, in which the principal characters are Herod, Death and the Devil, is now a colourful feature of carnivals as well as of the Christmas and New Year festivities.

Photo Desfable © Musée de l'Homme, Paris

Serbs, the holiday was known as *Sveti Jovan Bil'ober* (St. John the Grass-cutter). Similarly, the Bulgarians, on the day they called *En'ov den* (John's Day), gathered grass, and protected their cattle and fields from the evil spirits which threatened their milk and harvest, while the young girls told fortunes to find out who their future husbands would be. This was the day on which, according to the Bulgarians, *En'o* "threw a sheepskin coat over his shoulders, since snow was on the way..."

The Croats and the Slovenes also greet Midsummer Day with bonfires, thus joining in the celebration which links the Slavs with the other peoples of Europe. In medieval France, the king himself applied the torch to "le feu de la Saint-Jean", and Midsummer Night bonfires flickered over Denmark, Italy, Scotland and England as well, although they were banned in London in 1539.

Where these ancient rituals are still practised, the participants are almost always unaware of their initial magical significance. But as they make merry in the sunlight or in the glow of a blazing fire, as they welcome the flowers and the harvest, and the rippling fields of summer grass, they are looking hopefully towards the future. Similarly, the distant forbears of the Slavs rejoiced in all these things, feeling that they were a part of Nature's forces, as children of the forests, the water and the sun.

■ **Olga Ternovskaya, Aleksandr Gura and Nikita Tolstoy**

Photo © CAF, Warsaw

1

Colour page

Contrasted images of serenity and suffering in Slav religious art. Left, the *Saviour,* an icon painted between the 11th and 13th centuries. It was repainted several times and this is the first published photo of the icon since it was restored in 1967-77 by M. Barutsin at the Andrey Rublyov Museum, Moscow. Right, detail of a figure from the majestic high altar in the Church of St. Mary, Cracow. Carved in limewood and painted, the altar was executed by the great sculptor Wit Stwosz between 1477 and 1489.

Hidden splendours of early Russian art

Many masterworks by early Russian painters were disfigured by later artists seeking to "improve" or restore the original. Some were even repainted entirely to suit changing tastes and fashions. Many of these hidden treasures of Russian art have now been restored to their full glory thanks to highly skilled and dedicated work by Soviet specialists. Removing the layers of often crude overpainting as well as age-old encrustations of grime requires immense patience and skill and, although modern scientific methods are extensively used, the success or failure of the operation still hinges on the talent and intuition of the restorer. Restoration work in recent years has highlighted the importance of regional schools of painting in such localities as Novgorod, Pskov, Vladimir and Tver, and also shown how foreign influences were assimilated to create a form of iconography that was distinctively Russian. Photos 1, 2 and 3 show three stages in the restoration of a 16th-Century icon of the Apostle Paul. Restored between 1970 and 1973 by I. Gromova, it is now in the Museum of Yaroslavl-Rostov.

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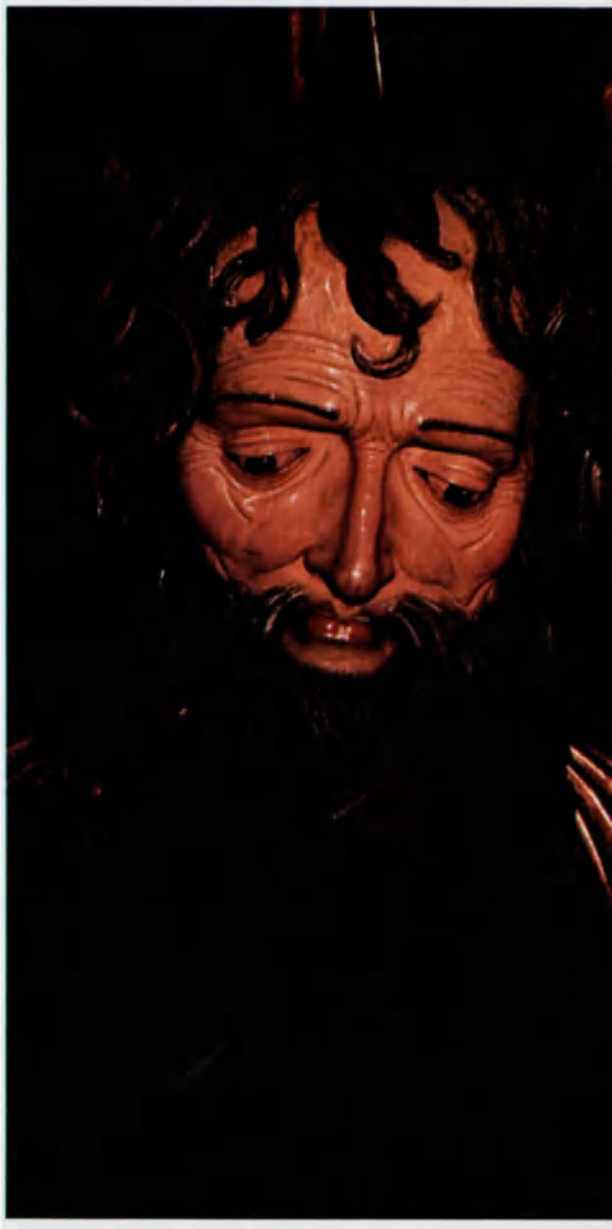

The astonishing metamorphosis of a 13th-century icon, entitled *The Assembly of the Archangel Michael,* which was concealed beneath a mediocre composition by a later artist. The restoration work was carried out by Soviet specialist A. Baranova and took six years (1962-1969).

Photos S. Zimnokh © Figurative Art Publishers, Moscow

A great artist-monk

Andrey Rublyov (1370-1430) was one of the great masters of icon-painting of the Moscow school. His icons, in particular his *Trinity* and his *Saviour,* rank among the masterpieces of world art. The *Saviour* (below right) was discovered in a storeroom of the Cathedral of the Dormition at Zvenigorod, near Moscow. Though damaged and incomplete, it exudes the new spirit that Rublyov introduced into Russian painting. The sensitive and profoundly expressive image of the risen Christ, with its combination of dignity, gentleness and compassion, contrasts strongly with the stern severity that characterized the earlier Byzantine conception. The icon is now preserved in the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow. Below left, 16th-century miniature portraying Rublyov at work on a fresco at the Church of the Saviour at the St. Andronikov monastery, Moscow.

Photo from *Illustrated History of the U.S.S.R.* © APN, Moscow

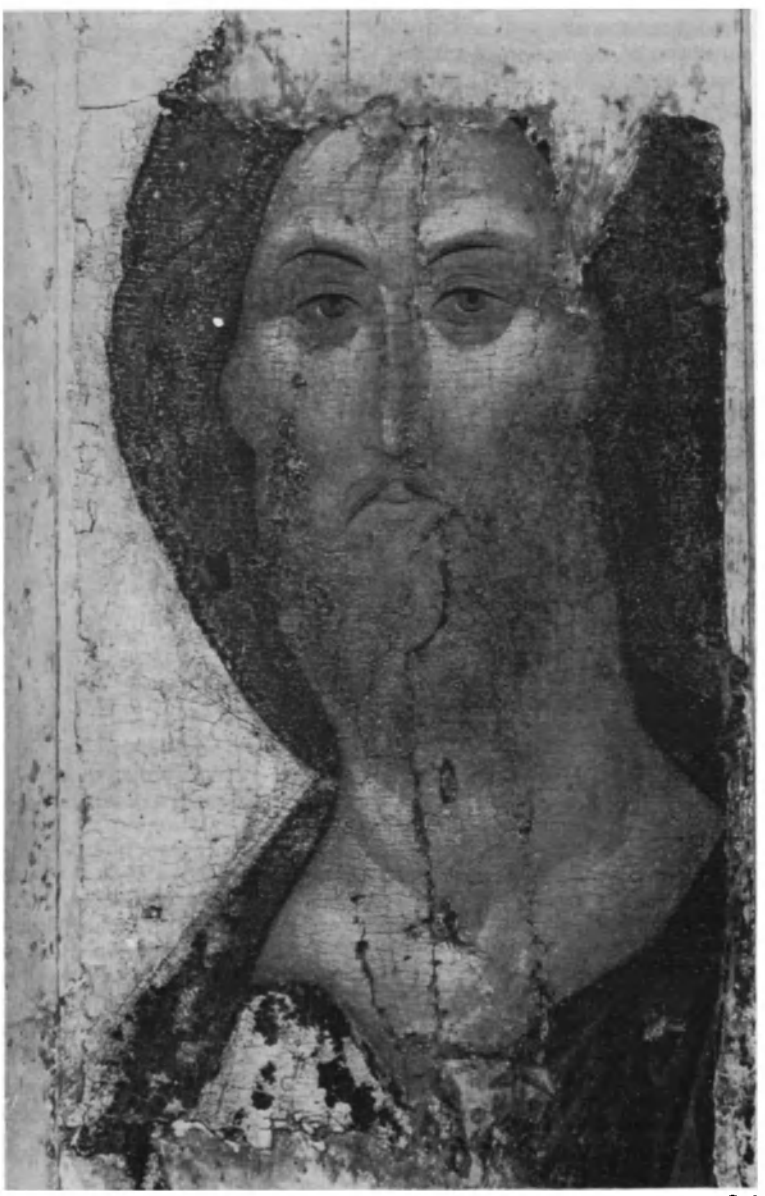

Photo © APN, Paris

Colour page

St. Boris and St. Gleb

Now in the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, this 14th-century icon depicts two celebrated figures from early Russian history. Boris and Gleb, two younger sons of Vladimir, ruler of Kiev from 980 to 1015, were victims of fierce family quarrels for the succession, being put to death by their elder brother Prince Svyatopolk. Their cult was widespread from the 11th to the 13th century and many churches were dedicated to them. The icon is bordered with scenes from their brief lives.

Photo © APN, Paris

The Slavs and Byzantium

by Dimitr Angelov and Gennady Litavrin

STANDING astride Europe and Asia and spanning a period of time stretching from classical antiquity to the Renaissance, the Byzantine Empire linked different worlds and different ages. This gave a special dimension to the cultural interactions of Byzantine civilization with those of neighbouring countries and peoples—interactions which were vast both in range and scale.

Heir to antiquity and the culture of the Hellenes and until the twelfth century the leading power in Europe and the Near East, the Byzantine Empire was the nucleus of a vast area in which the Orthodox Church, the eastern variant of Christianity, was, throughout the medieval period, the dominant form of expression of spiritual life.

The frontiers of Eastern Christendom were largely established by the early years of the eleventh century. By this time they encompassed huge tracts of south-eastern and eastern Europe. In the Near East, in north Africa and in the western Mediterranean region, however, Byzantium had lost considerable ground, as a result of confrontation with the Muslim world (first with the Arabs and then with the Turks) and with the Latin West and the Papacy.

Misunderstandings between Rome and Constantinople came to a head with the Schism of 1054, and the rupture became final with the struggles and disputes arising from the crusades. In the lost lands, the once dominant Byzantine culture disappeared with the passage of time and the implantation of other civilizations.

In the northern regions of Eastern Christendom matters evolved differently. Here, the population, for the most part Slav, had progressively been drawn into the orbit of Byzantium throughout a thousand years of stable and lasting cultural relations. Only the West Slavs (including the Poles, the Czechs, the Slovaks, the Baltic and Polabian Slavs), the Croats and the Slovenes, remained outside the pale of Eastern Christendom, as the result of political events during the ninth and tenth centuries, coming instead within the sphere of influence of Western Christian civilization.

Relations between the Slavs and Byzantium were complex. The initiative in establishing contacts was generally taken by the Slavs, and early links were strengthened with the formation of the Slav States.

The first historically recorded contacts date from the end of the fifth century A.D. during the closing stages of the Great Migration, which had seen the establishment of Slav peoples over vast areas of eastern, central and south-eastern Europe. In the seventh century, they arrived in the north of the Balkan peninsula, and settled in large numbers in Moesia, Macedonia, Illyria and northern Thrace. Groups of Slavs also moved into Thessaly, northern Greece, the Peloponnese and the Aegean islands.

The aim of Byzantium, as it faced up to its new neighbours, was not to dislodge them, but to secure control over them, to transform them into Christians and to absorb them as vassals of the Empire. These contacts and the occupation of lands which had been intensively cultivated for ages past and which contained centres of sophisticated urban life had a catalytic effect on the social development of the Slavs. In a great many cases, they did not oust the original inhabitants but merged peaceably with them.

The arrival of the Slavs in the Balkans was also a matter of great importance for the Byzantine Empire. They filled the vacuum left by the devastating campaigns of the Goths, Huns, proto-Bulgars, Avars and earlier Slav tribes.

The Slavs who settled in the former Roman province of Moesia found themselves in a particularly favourable situation, with all-round natural protection afforded by the Danube, the Black Sea and the Balkan Mountains. It was here, during the last quarter of the seventh century, that the Slav settlers joined forces with and accepted the temporary leadership of a relatively small but militarily well-organized group of new arrivals, the proto-Bulgar horde of Khan Asperuch, and created the first Slav State on Byzantine soil—Bulgaria.

Byzantium maintained close and lasting contacts (at times peaceful and at times hostile) with this new State and, towards the middle of the ninth century when independent States were founded in the western and north-western parts of the Balkan peninsula, the Empire entered into regular political relations with the Serbs and the Croats; similar relations with the Russians began after the year 860.

Among the instruments of Byzantine politics and diplomacy, conversion to Christianity was a powerful and well-tried tool. According to time, place and circumstance, it was used as a first step towards expansion of the Empire, as a method of securing friendly neutrality, of strengthening political influence or of acquiring allies and vassals. Among those Balkan Slavs who had not yet organized themselves into States, for example, conversions to Christianity served the Empire's purposes of subjection and assimilation. Missionaries either preceded, or followed in the footsteps of the Byzantine armies.

The civil servants and ecclesiastics of Byzantium had acquired great experience in proselytizing and subduing alien neighbours. Unlike the Latin West, they allowed newly converted peoples to worship in their own language, particularly when the political possibilities of absorbing them appeared unrealistic.

In 863 A.D., just two years before Bulgaria followed the same path, the kingdom of Great Moravia became the first Slav State to accept the Christianity of Byzantium as its official religion. The same period saw the invention by Constantine (better known by his monastic name of Cyril) and Methodius of a Slavonic alphabet. The two brothers also translated into Slavonic all the canonical and liturgical literature that was required for the normal functioning of the Church. They became the leaders of a devoted group of Slav disciples and pupils and their work launched a revolutionary process in the cultural development of Bulgaria, Serbia and ancient Russia.

During the last third of the ninth century, and the century that followed, Slavonic letters made triumphant progress in all the Slav countries and became accessible to virtually every segment of society. The principal role in spreading literacy among the Slavs, and in disseminating the so-called "Old Slavonic" literature belonged to the kingdom of Bulgaria.

Although none of the independent States which surrounded Byzantium, including those created by the Slavs, and which accepted Christianity from Constan-

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Photo Unesco

The murals of the church of Boyana, at the foot of Mount Vitosha to the south of Sofia, Bulgaria, are ranked among the masterpieces of 13th century painting. Dating from 1259, the Boyana frescoes herald the introduction of the new realism that marked the "Palaeologian style" of the late 13th and early 14th century. Above, St. Ephraim by the unknown master painter of Boyana.

tinople, was actually coerced into doing so, Byzantium adopted a somewhat firmer stand during the Christianization of Bulgaria than it had during the conversion of Great Moravia.

When, in 865 A.D., Bulgaria adopted the Christian faith, the Byzantines, for political reasons, deliberately refrained from providing the new Church either with clerics of Slav background or with church books in the Slavonic language, and services had to be conducted in Greek.

In 893, however, things changed. Shortly after the accession to the Bulgarian throne of Tsar Symeon (893-927), who was to become the country's greatest medieval ruler, Greek, which had remained the official State language, was proscribed. Worship in the Slavonic language was introduced in the churches, and the Greek clergy were expelled. Under the inspiring influence of the seminaries created at Ochrida and Preslav by Clement and Naum, two disciples of Cyril and Methodius, the number of educated people sharply increased, and the foundations were laid of an original and, for the period, highly sophisticated spiritual culture which made itself felt in the neighbouring Slav countries, and in Serbia and Russia in particular.

This was the Golden Age of Bulgarian literature, reflected in the works of talented writers like John the Exarch, Chernorizets "the Courageous", Bishop Constantine and others, whose work was actively encouraged by Tsar Symeon himself. The close similarity between the written language and the popular speech of Bulgaria was of no small significance in the development of national education, while the same period also saw a flowering of architecture, painting, mosaics, ceramics, glassware and other applied arts.

The second great leap forward in the cultural development of Bulgaria occurred at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. During this period, the Bulgarian Zograph monastery, founded on Mount Athos in the twelfth century, played an important role in strengthening cultural contacts with Byzantium, Serbia and Russia.

Outstanding developments in Serbian culture, and in literature in particular, date from the twelfth century onwards. Serbia's first Golden Age was linked with the coming to power of the Nemanja dynasty, and in particular with the reign of Stephen Nemanja ("the first-crowned") and the

activities of his brother, Saint Sava, who founded an important cultural centre, the Serbian monastery of Hilendar on Mount Athos, and was also Serbia's first Archbishop.

Relations between Byzantium and Russia began to develop at a somewhat later date. Early Russia, or *Rus'*, as it was called, was situated so far from the frontiers of the Empire that there was no danger of direct Byzantine aggression.

Through an alliance with the Pechenegs, Byzantine diplomacy aimed to contain the military forays of the Russians and to deny them access to Byzantium's markets. The attempt failed, and even before they were united in a single State, the Russians had established trading relations with Kherson and Byzantium's Crimean colonies. Pressing on still farther, the Russian merchant adventurers, part-traders and part-soldiers, reached the Byzantine commercial centres on the southern shores of the Black Sea, and in 860 A.D. their ships dropped anchor beneath the walls of Constantinople itself.

Whilst gradually yielding ground to Russia in the economic and political spheres, Byzantium exercised on the young State an increasingly far-reaching cultural influence. During the decade which followed the arrival of the Russians off Constantinople, a number of their leaders were converted to Christianity. At the beginning of the tenth century, a Christian church dedicated to St. Il'ya (Elias) existed in Kiev. In the middle of the same century, Olga, the widow of Prince Igor, who had become the Russian ruler, was baptized during a visit to Constantinople; and in 989, Prince Vladimir accepted Christianity as the religion of his country.

Bulgarian experience and the already rich stock of Bulgarian literature were of considerable service in the enlightenment of Russia. Immediately after his conversion, Vladimir turned to Slavonic letters as the basis for the organization of ecclesiastical affairs and State business. It is probable that the first officials to be entrusted with this task were trained with the assistance of "experts" from the South Slav Orthodox States.

Less than half a century after conversion, Kievan Russia entered a period of cultural development that was to reach its zenith in the twelfth century. That literacy was widely disseminated is amply borne out by the hundreds of birch-bark documents discovered by Soviet archaeologists since the 1950s, containing the accounts kept by quite ordinary people of their everyday affairs. This period saw the construction of magnificent palaces and churches. Painting and the applied arts flourished, and the splendours of eleventh-century Kiev, including its Cathedral of St. Sophia and the Golden Gate, made the city a worthy rival of Constantinople itself.

The influence of Byzantine models was particularly apparent in religious and moralistic didactic literature, architecture in stone and mosaic work, stained glass, icons, monumental painting and book illumination. In all these fields, however, the Slavs began, a century and a half or so after conversion to Christianity, to develop their own artistic schools, language and idiom, which reached back into their pre-Christian traditions and pagan art and culture. The result was a creative re-modelling of Byzantine examples, and their adaptation to local tastes and requirements.

Byzantine influence was less marked as far as secular literature was concerned. This was especially true in the case of chronicles, *poucheniya* (written "admonitions" or testaments generally left by rulers for their successors) and accounts of journeys, and of music and singing, the applied arts, ornamentation, festive rituals, clothing and interior decoration.

When it escaped from the constraints of "official" religious ideology, spiritual life was clearly influenced by local traditions going back to farthest antiquity. And even today, without knowledge of the living traditions of the pagan culture of the Slavs it is impossible to begin to understand Serbian heroic songs, the popular festivities of the Bulgarians or the epic poems *(byliny)* of ancient Russia.

Cultural interchange between Byzantium and Slavdom was conditioned in great measure by the selective approach which the latter adopted as far as the Byzantine legacy was concerned. Indeed, selectivity on both sides reflected the single-minded policies of the rulers of each: Byzantium refrained from transmitting matters which it considered dangerous for neophytes (the latest acute theological controversies, for example), while the rulers of the newly-converted countries rejected importations which seemed alien and potentially harmful (such as the employment of eunuchs as State officials, or organized horse racing tournaments).

N even more important reason for selectivity in the adoption of Byzantine civilization was the incompatibility of many of its aspects with the Slav environment. The various collections of Byzantine legal texts which circulated widely throughout south-east Europe during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries underwent, in their Slavonic versions, substantial amendment in the form of abbreviation, addition and modification. Byzantine temporal law had virtually no impact in Russia, whose legislation took the native form of *Russkaya Pravda,* a collection of laws whose origins could be traced back to pagan times.

In the Latin West, the period from the ninth to the twelfth century saw the formation of original cultures in all the major States, despite the levelling influence exercised by a single ideological and ecclesiastical centre (the Papacy) and a single language (Latin) which, although incomprehensible to the bulk of their populations, dominated religious life, affairs of State, science and culture.

In the Slav countries of Eastern Christendom, however, original cultures ripened more rapidly for a number of reasons: their Churches were less dependent on Constantinople than their Western counterparts were on Rome, and the language of literature and of the church was not Greek, but their own Slavonic language which was comprehensible to the peoples of Bulgaria, Serbia and Russia alike.

Half a century to a century after their conversion to Christianity, these countries all had their own identifiable culture. When, after a century and a half (1018 to 1185) Byzantium managed to acquire undivided control over the Balkans, to liquidate the kingdom of Bulgaria and to annex the Serbian principalities, the cultures of these countries were sufficiently well-established to resist not only assimilation but also any substantial degree of transformation. The historical memory of their early independence, the persistence of their own literacy and literature, their own customs and lifestyles, and their ethnic self-awareness served as banners in the armed struggle to reconquer their freedom, which they regained during the last quarter of the twelfth century.

The sharpest confrontations in Eastern Christendom occurred where Byzantium was particularly stubborn in its attempts to convert the cultural commonwealth it had created into a hierarchical system of political and administrative units under overall Byzantine direction.

Thus, from as early as the tenth and eleventh centuries, the pronounced historical, ethnic and cultural individuality of the Slavs within the Orthodox sphere of influence precluded their assimilation with Byzantium, though, paradoxically, the development of this individuality was accelerated by the acceptance of Christianity from Byzantium.

It is not surprising, therefore, that a deep mutual sympathy grew up between the South and East Slavs and the Greek people that was to last for many centuries. Nor is it surprising that when, with the fall of Byzantium and the South Slav countries, Russia remained the last bastion of European Orthodox Christianity, the peoples conquered by the Ottoman Turks should look to Russia for deliverance. And finally, it is not to be wondered at that their hopes were finally to be fulfilled.

■ **Dimitr Angelov and Gennady Litavrin**

The making of an alphabet

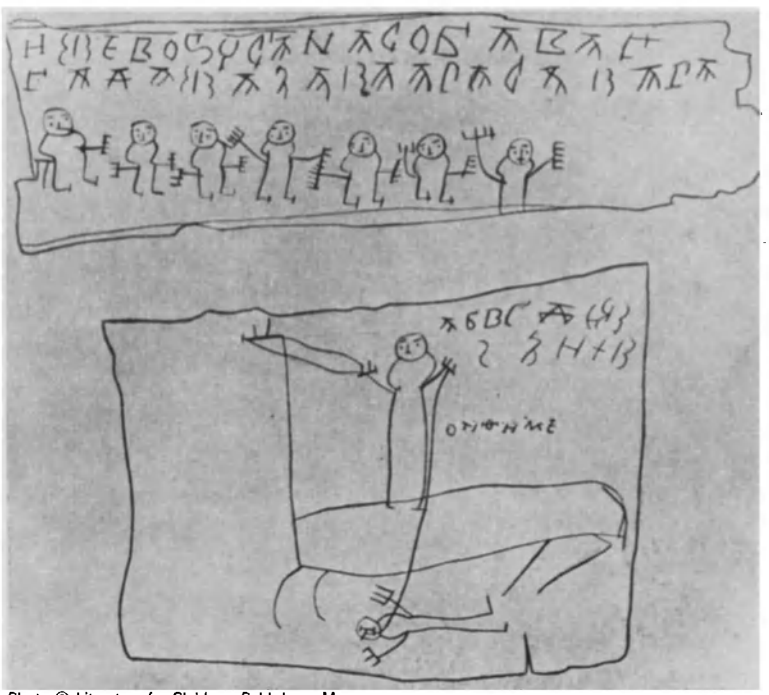
The Cyrillic alphabet was invented in the 9th century by the scholar-missionary brothers St. Cyril and St. Methodius so that they could instruct the people of Moravia in the Christian faith in their own Slavonic tongue. Use of the 43-letter alphabet spread quickly throughout the West Slav lands, finally reaching Russia in the 10th century. Over the years the alphabet was gradually modified and during the reign of Peter the Great a simpler version was elaborated which today is used not only by the Slav nations but also by many non-Slavs including the Aleuts and Eskimos. The spread of literacy that the new alphabet made possible was rapid and widespread. A number of letters and documents written by ordinary citizens on birch-bark scrolls, found at Novgorod in 1951, indicate that the new literacy was not confined to an elite class. Photos : (1) A 14th-century manuscript shows St. Cyril and St. Methodius, "the apostles of the Slavs", transcribing the Scriptures and liturgical texts into the Slavonic language. (2) Detail of a fresco on the façade of a 13th-14th century church at the village of Berenda, in Bulgaria, depicting St. Cyril the Philosopher.

1 Photo © Editions du Seuil, Paris

2 Photo © The Bulgarian Artist, Publishers, Sofia

3 Photo © Unesco Courier, Russian Edition

(3) An 18th-century wood sculpture of St. Clement of Ochrida, a disciple and companion of Cyril and Methodius. (4) This remarkable document shows two letters written on birch-bark some 750 years ago by a seven-year-old boy from Novgorod called Onphime. At top, the alphabet followed by drawings of Onphime and his friends. Below, self-portrait of Onphime astride a charger with an enemy dead at his feet.



4 Photo © Literature for Children, Publishers, Moscow

An Arab traveller to an Antique land

Photo B. Fabritsky, I. Shmelov © Progress Publishers, Moscow

The longest river in Europe, the Volga rises in the Valdai Hills, north-west of Moscow, and discharges its waters into the Caspian Sea 3,690 km to the south. Known in ancient times as the Ra and during the Middle Ages as the Itil, the Volga has always been of immense importance as a cultural and commercial highway. Today, the Volga and its navigable tributaries carry some two-thirds of all Soviet inland freight. Opposite page, the Volga at sunset. Right, carved wooden prow of an 18th century Volga rivercraft.

Photo © APN, Paris

Ibn-Fadlan was a member of the embassy sent by the Arab Caliph Al-Muktadir to the rulers of the Bulgars of the Kama and Volga rivers in 921 A.D. He visited Itil, the capital of the Khazars, and travelled to the capital of the Bulgars, Great Bolgar, which stood near the junction of the Kama and the Volga. It was in Itil or in Great Bolgar (ruins of which have survived to the present day) that he came into contact with the Slavs. We present here an extract from "Ibn-Fadlan's Journey to the Volga", an account of his travels edited by I.Y. Krachkovsky and published in Moscow-Leningrad in 1939.

I saw the Russians, when they came with their goods and established themselves on the banks of the river Itil (1). Never have I seen men of more perfect stature; they are like palm trees. They are red-haired, and wear neither jackets nor kaftans, but the menfolk wear cloaks, throwing one side over the shoulder so that an arm emerges from beneath. Each of them has a sword, a knife and a pole-axe, and from these they are inseparable. Their swords are broad and curved like waves; the blades are of Frankish make. From head to toe they are painted with marks depicting leafy trees, pictures and designs of all sorts. Each of their women has pinned to her breast a little box made of iron or copper, or silver or gold, according to the status and wealth of her husband. Each little box has a ring, to which a knife is attached.

Around their necks they wear chains of gold and silver, for when the husband has ten thousand dirhams, he gives his wife a chain; when he has twenty thousand dirhams he gives her two chains; in similar fashion, he gives her another chain for each ten thousand dirhams, so that she often has many chains around her neck. Their most beautiful ornaments are the green beads made out of clay, which are sometimes to be seen on their ships; they try to get hold of these beads at all costs, pay a dirham each for them and thread them into necklaces for their women...

They come from their country and drop anchor in the Itil, which is a mighty river, and set up large wooden houses on its banks; and they gather together, ten or twenty, more or less in each house. Each of them has his own bench, on which he sits... to do his bargaining...

When their ships come to the anchorage, everyone comes ashore with bread, meat, milk, onions and some kind of fiery beverage. He goes up to a tall pillar which bears a face on it, resembling a human face; and around it there are smaller images set in a circle; and behind these images there are tall pillars stuck into the ground. He goes up to the biggest image, prostrates himself in front of it, and says: "O Lord! I have travelled a great distance... and with me I have so many head of cattle, so many sable furs, so many skins..." and so on, until he has enumerated all the goods that he has brought for trade. Then he says: "And this gift, I have brought for you", and places what he has brought before the pillar, saying: "I beg you to send me a buyer who has dinars and dirhams, and who will buy from me all that I wish to sell him, and who will not contradict me in what I say to him." And then he goes away. And if the selling is difficult and lasts a long time, he comes back again with a gift, and yet again. And if his wishes still remain unfulfilled, then he brings a gift to one of the smaller images, and seeks its intercession, saying: "This is for the wife of our God, and his daughters", and from each of the images without exception he solicits intercession... Often the selling is easy for him, and when he sells his goods, he says: "My god has answered my prayer, and I must thank him for that." So he takes a certain number of cattle and sheep and slaughters them, and distributes part of the meat among the poor ; the rest he takes and throws down before the big image and the little images surrounding it, and hangs the heads of the cattle and sheep on the pillars stuck into the ground. And after nightfall, the dogs come and eat the meat, and he who made the offering says, "My god has deigned to eat my offering". ■

(1) The River Volga

Tea and sympathy

An intricate network of trade and cultural links with the Orient

by Olzhas O. Suleimenov

Right, 17th-century drawing of a Mongolian horseman. Slav travellers brought back many novelties from the Orient including tea, the abacus and ginseng.

Photo from *The Slavs and the East* © Unesco

THE earliest contacts between the Slavs and the peoples of the East are shrouded in a mystery which we can only attempt to pierce by fitting together a jigsaw of fragmentary evidence: scattered allusions by Latin writers, the testimony of folklore, and linguistic and archaeological data.

It is not until the sixth century A.D. that the picture becomes clearer. From that time and later, writings have survived which, disjointed and incomplete though they are, shed much light on the age when the Slavs began to be known in Byzantium and when, through the Greeks, the word *Slav* began to be heard in the Orient.

Later chroniclers recorded the traditions of this early period, along with information culled from pre-Islamic annals. By the eighth and ninth centuries Arab authors were calling the Don "the river of the Slavs" and the Black Sea "the Russian Sea".

Some Arab geographers of the early Middle Ages gave the word Slav so broad a meaning that they applied it to peoples of Germanic origin. This was no simple "mistake" on their part; the confusion arose because the Slavs and the eastern merchants followed such a vast and intricate network of trade-routes and because the Slavs played such a prominent role in the relations between East and West.

Trade between the countries of the Arab Caliphate and those of eastern Europe and the Baltic seaboard began to expand in the eighth century. Right from the start much of this commerce flowed along the Volga on the boats of eastern merchants who plied northwards through the rich trading centres of Itil (near present-day Astrakhan) and Bolgar, which lay south of the con-

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Photo © APN, Moscow

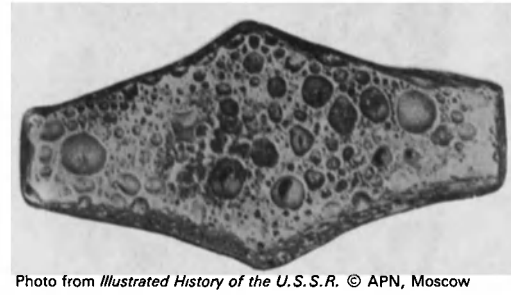

Photo from *Illustrated History of the U.S.S.R.* © APN, Moscow

A distant ancestor of the rouble, this silver "grivna" or ten-kopeck piece was used in 9th-century Kiev as both an ornamental weight and a coin.

Overlooking Red Square, Moscow, the 16th-century Cathedral of St. Basil the Blessed strikingly illustrates how Eastern styles were incorporated into Russian architecture. Built under Tsar Ivan the Terrible to commemorate the conquest of Kazan and Astrakhan, the cathedral is actually a complex of nine churches, the central one being topped by a traditional Russian "tent-shaped" roof.

fluence of the Volga and the River Kama.

These merchants were attracted by the legendary riches of the northern lands, and chiefly by their furs: silver fox, sable, marten, ermine, beaver and the pelts of other animals. Such treasures were highly prized in Baghdad, Bokhara, Khorezm and Cairo. Poets sang their praises, and kings, emirs and potentates strove to outdo each other with magnificent gifts from the distant northlands. They also imported wax, honey and slaves from eastern Europe.

In return, the Slav countries received the handiwork of eastern craftsmen, in particular silver coins. Throughout the vast area in which the East and West Slavs were settled, hoards of silver coins of the eighth to the tenth centuries are still often discovered, evidence of intense commercial activity. *Torgovye gosti* ("trading guests") from Slav lands were familiar figures in various towns of the Caliphate. Their boats sailed down the Volga and the Don to the Caspian and the Black Seas, and from there they transported their wares by camel to Baghdad.

The growth of trade between the Caliphate and the Slav countries whetted the appetite of Arab scholars for information about their northern neighbours. Arab geographers and historians writing between the eighth and the tenth centuries discuss the origin of the Slavs, their relations with other peoples, their churches and their religion, the life and customs of the different tribes, and the first Slav States.

As for the Slavs, they obtained their knowledge of the East both from eyewitness accounts and from written sources. Russian, Polish and Czech annals (such as the Polish chronicle of Gallus Anonymus and the Czech chronicle of Cosmas of Prague), compiled in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, contained information about the civilizations of the East: Egypt, Assyria, Media and Iran. The early twelfth-century Russian text known as the *Russian Primary Chronicle* speaks of the trade route along the Volga to the Caspian and thence to Khorezm. Many references to the ancient and medieval peoples of the East are contained in the historical work of the fifteenth-century Polish author Jan Dlugosz.

The Pechenegs and later the Polovtsians, fierce Turkic nomad tribes who lived to the north of Slav territory, often became political enemies of the Slavs but did not hinder the development of cultural contacts. They allowed Slav merchants to pass through their territories, and sometimes even served as middlemen.

Indeed, an important feature of modern studies of the cultural relations between the Slavs and the East is the current reappraisal of the role of the Turkic peoples, who served as intermediaries in the lasting contacts which the Slavs established with the vast and variegated cultural region known as "the East".

These Turkic peoples, both nomadic and settled, were the closest eastern neigh-

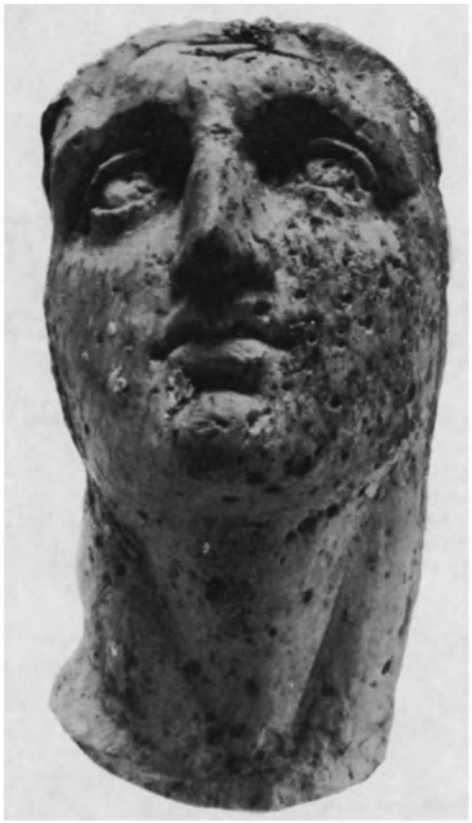

Photo © Spyros Tsavdaroglu, Athens

Ivory head (above) recently unearthed at Vergina (Greece) is thought to depict Alexander the Great as a young man. In the Middle Ages the story of his epic expedition became part of Slav folklore.

Photo © from *History of the Byelorussian Book of Krivia* by V. Lastovski, Kovno 1926

Men are transformed into fabulous beasts in this illustration from a 16th-century Byelorussian version of the Alexander romance.

bours of the Slavs; and whereas relations between the Slavs and the Arabs, Iran and the Far East were largely confined to trade, the Slav-Turkic relationship was closer and more enduring. It is impossible to examine the subject of Slav culture, economics and political organization without taking into account this "Turkic factor". (1)

Total harmony has never reigned during the creation and development of civilizations. It was often armour-clad and sword in hand, rather than with caravans of goods, that the people of one country set off towards their neighbours. Contact sometimes turned into tragic confrontation. And this was the case of the East Slavs at the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the nomad hordes led by the Mongolian Khagan Batu (the grandson of Genghis Khan) swept westwards out of the steppes to invade their lands.

Kievan Russia and many other independent Russian principalities collapsed under this onslaught. By their struggle against the Tartar yoke, the East Slavs hindered the nomads' westward drive, but their own culture was thereby condemned to develop for the next three hundred years or so under foreign domination. Their struggle for liberation contributed to the unification of Russia, the establishment of a centralized Russian State, and the appearance and development of new forms of culture. Throughout all this period, however, contacts between the Slavs and the East were maintained.

After their adoption of Christianity, Russians began to travel to the East on pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Pilgrims' tales of Constantinople, the Byzantine Empire and Palestine appear in Russian chronicles from the twelfth century onwards. As early as the eleventh century, the Russians had a special quarter in Constantinople where their merchants lived. Colonies of Russian monks were established in the monasteries of Constantinople. Some of these monks translated books by Greek authors and also transcribed works by South Slav writers and sent them to Moscow.

From ancient times, India had captured the imagination of the Slavs. The fantasy-embroidered story of Alexander the Great's journey to the East, to a land known as "Aleksandrija", was familiar to both East and West Slavs. Information about this *strana chudes* ("wonderland") first reached the Slavs indirectly, through Central Asia, Transcaucasia and Iran.

The first Russian traveller to see India with his own eyes was Afanasi Nikitin, a merchant of Tver, who visited it between 1466 and 1472. He described his journey in a book entitled "Travels Beyond Three Seas". In contrast with many travellers, Nikitin was able to mingle with the Indians, and to acquire a sound knowledge of the country and its customs.

In the sixteenth century, when the age of great geographical discoveries began, and Europe was fascinated by news of the incalculable riches of India and China, the Slavs were a major link in the expanding commercial and cultural relations between western Europe and the East. At the beginning of the century, the Muscovite ambassador in Rome, Gerasimov, launched a project for the discovery of a northern sea route to China. Tsar Ivan the Terrible, who was interested in the East, promised a substantial reward to anyone who reached China by the northern seas; and it was only in the second half of the seventeenth century that efforts to do so were abandoned, when it was found that China could not be reached by sea, "because of great ice, frost and darkness".

The widening and steadily strengthening pattern of relations between the Slavs and the eastern peoples, and the mutual interest which grew up between them, led to the establishment and development of contacts between and an intermingling of their different cultures. The eastern nomadic tribes, for example, were strongly influenced by their encounters with the settled Slavs, whose sedentary way of life they gradually began to adopt.

Not infrequently, however, cultural influences arrived via intermediary peoples, absorbing in the process elements of many different cultures. It was by no means always a matter of simply borrowing from alien cultures; creative receptiveness and modification were more often the rule.

Tillers of the soil from time immemorial, the Slavs took a keen interest in the agricultural practices of the eastern peoples. It was thanks to Byzantium and the Arabs that rice came to Europe from the distant countries of the East; in Russia it was known as "Saracen millet". As early as the seventeenth century, Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich had a special garden laid out close to Moscow, where plants from the East were grown on an experimental basis. Russian ambassadors always endeavoured to bring back new types of plants from eastern lands, and more than one envoy to China was instructed to procure "tea bushes".

Rare animals, including lions, tigers, camels and elephants, were also brought back from the East to the Slav countries. Camels arrived in Poland as early as the tenth century; Prince Mieszko I sent one as a gift to the German Emperor. In the sixteenth century the Shah of Iran presented a number of elephants to Ivan the Terrible, and in 1741 fourteen of them arrived simultaneously in Saint Petersburg. A special "elephant court" was built for these exotic animals, who were looked after by Indian keepers. News of these fantastic creatures from beyond the seas spread by word of mouth through the towns and villages of Russia, and, transformed in appearance by popular imagination, they began to figure in the wood carvings with which the peasants decorated their houses.

Articles made by Oriental craftsmen were imported into the Slav countries, while Slav craftsmanship was highly esteemed in the East. It was no coincidence that experienced master craftsmen of Slav origin were to be found at the courts of many eastern potentates. In the thirteenth century there was a whole colony of Rus-

(1) The Turkic peoples: a number of tribes and peoples who in the sixth century A.D. founded an empire stretching from Mongolia and the northern frontier of China to the Black Sea.

sians in Karakorum, the Mongol capital. One of them, a skilled goldsmith named Kosma, built a throne for Khan Koyuk, and fashioned the great seal of state whose imprint is preserved on a letter from the Khan to the Pope.

Cultural relations with the countries of the East also influenced the daily life of the Slav peoples. It was in Mongolia that the Russians first came across tea, at a reception given by Altyn-Khan in 1616. The Russian ambassadors were treated to milk with melted butter, "with leaves of some kind in it". They at first declined to accept tea as a gift for the Russian Tsar, but finally agreed. Tea thus came to Russia considerably earlier than to Holland and England, and for a long time afterwards it remained the main Russian import from China.

The habit of drinking tea, together with its Chinese name, *chai,* became widespread during the eighteenth century in Russia, Central Asia, Iran, Turkey, Syria and Egypt. The vessel which, in its native land, China, was used for mulling wine was adapted for infusing tea, while water was boiled in a Russian invention, the samovar. Many eastern peoples became acquainted with the samovar of Russia, which proved extremely popular in Central Asia, Turkey,

Photo from *The Slavs and the East* © Unesco

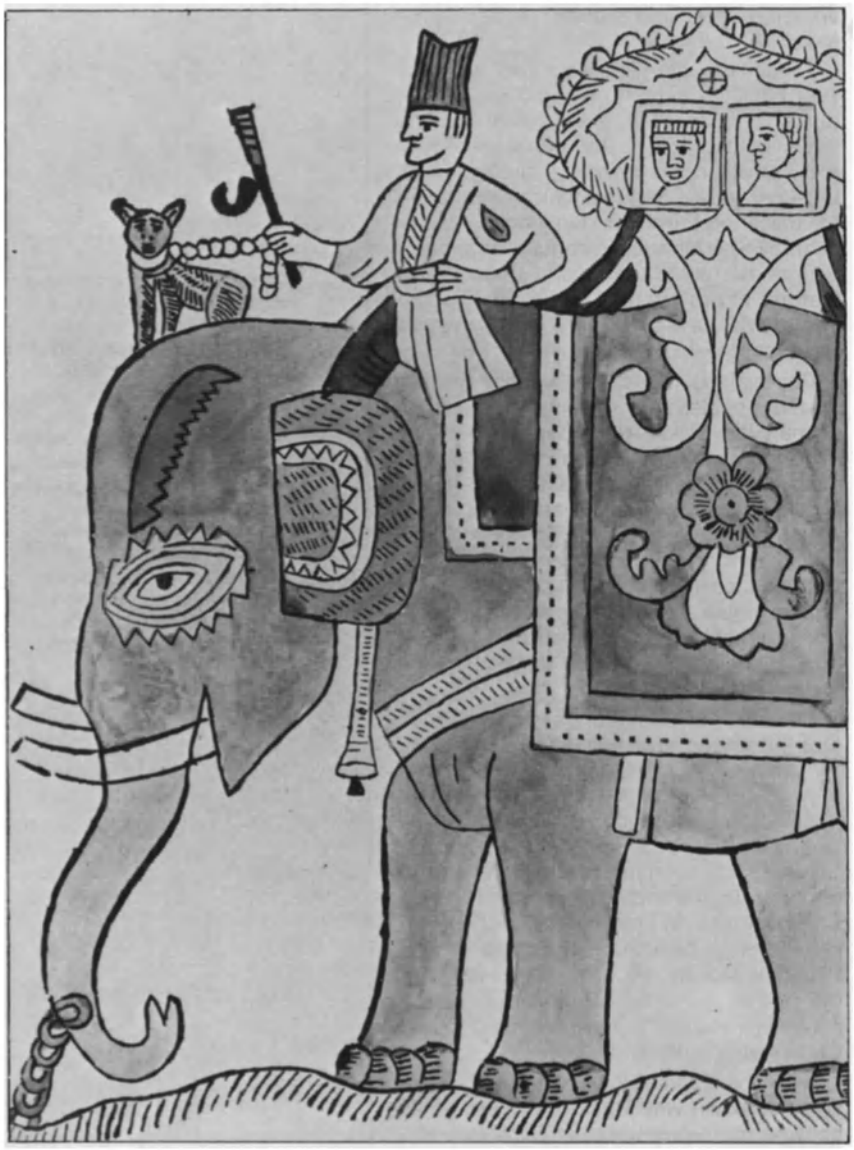

Photo from *Lubok* © Iskusstvo publishers, Moscow

Elephants and envoys

Shown here are two of the many lively and picturesque works of art which record the relations between the Slav countries and the East. Left, a Japanese artist's impression of the famous Russian traveller and diplomat Nikolai Rezanov, who led a mission to Japan in 1804. Every detail of his uniform is carefully described. Rare animals such as lions, tigers and elephants were sometimes sent as gifts to Slav rulers by eastern potentates. When the first elephant seen in Moscow arrived from Persia in the early 18th century, the event was commemorated by a popular woodcut (above).

Iran and the Arab countries. In Kashmir, it has even kept its Russian name.

The Europeans, the Slavs among them, learned much about science, including mathematics, from the eastern peoples. The numerals still employed today are called "Arabic" (although they really originated in India). For their part, the Slavs took a keen scientific interest in the East. Peter the Great with his own hand corrected an inaccurate map of the Caspian Sea and Central Asia.

During the seventeenth century, Yuri Krzanic, a Croatian living in Russia, compiled descriptions of Serbia, Mongolia and China. Returning in 1680 to his native land, he presented his *History of Siberia* to the Polish king, Jan Sobieski, thereby making an important contribution to knowledge of the Far East among the West Slavs.

The age-old lore of eastern folk-medicine was highly regarded by the Slavs, who in turn played a major role in the introduction of western medical science in the East. In the mid-nineteenth century, Russian doctors founded the first hospital in Japan. The first doctor in Mongolia, Pavel Shastin, was a Russian. His methods of treatment made such an impression on the Mongolians that for a long time the words

vrach (doctor) and *shastin* were synonymous.

These long-standing relations with the East left their imprint on the Slavonic languages. Historically and genetically the Slavs belong to the Indo-European peoples, and for this reason their languages preserve certain features which relate them to the Indo-European languages. Moreover, all Slav languages contain large numbers of borrowed words and grammatical features of eastern (and particularly Turkic) origin, while a whole series of Slav words have, as it were, "gone East".

Generations of descendants of ancient eastern peoples have remained in the lands of the West Slavs. At the beginning of this century, a Polish Orientalist visited one such group, the Karaims, and came across an old glossary of Polovtsian words in the house of a Karaim family. To his great astonishment, the seven-year-old daughter of the house explained the text to him as he read it aloud. From generation to generation, this family had handed down a language which had ceased to be spoken many centuries earlier.

Slavonic architecture came under a strong eastern influence. In its early days, the Byzantine tradition had a powerful impact, while somewhat later Muslim architecture, introduced by the Turks, left its mark on the buildings of the South Slavs. Eastern influences are less pronounced in the architecture of the West Slav countries, in Poland and Czechoslovakia, although here too monuments of eastern type may be found side by side with old Gothic churches. Monuments built by Armenian architects have survived in the Ukraine and in Poland.

After the union of the Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan with Russia, eastern motifs became more prominent in Russian architecture. The famous Pokrovsky Church (Cathedral of Saint Basil the Blessed), situated on Red Square in Moscow, was built in the national Russian *Shater* (or tent) style of ecclesiastical architecture, but also incorporates a number of eastern elements.

Traces of eastern influences may also be found in ancient Russian folklore: several tales *(byliny)* contain echoes of Turkic epics. Many of them refer to heroes with Turkic names, and the events they describe reflect the history of the relations between various branches of the Turkic peoples.

The intermingling of Slav and eastern cultures was not only a source of mutual enrichment, but also made a substantial contribution to world civilization as a whole. Today, the launching of an Indian satellite by a Soviet rocket or the practice of ancient Tibetan medicine on the shores of the Baltic occasion no more surprise than the appearance of a turbanned Indian on the streets of Prague or of a fair-skinned European amid the hubbub of an eastern bazaar.

Any major culture is the product of contact and intermingling with many others, great and small. History has shown that creative borrowing is an essential factor in cultural development and that attempts at cultural isolationism lead inevitably to impoverishment.

■ **Olzhas O. Suleimenov**

Photo © Mistetstvo Publishers, Kiev

This 11th-century bas-relief sculpture on slate depicts Cybele, Mother of the Gods, reclining on a chariot drawn by lions. It was discovered in Kiev's Pecherskaya Lavra Monastery, Russia's oldest monastic establishment, whose monks lived in cells hollowed out of cliffs overlooking the River Dnieper. Mythological motifs from Antiquity, especially Hercules and Cybele, often figure in Kievan 11th-century art.

KIEV

The mother of Russian cities

by Yuri Asseyev

YURI ASSEYEV, *Soviet architect and professor of the history of architecture, is assistant to the rector of the Kiev Institute of Art.*

THE heyday of the ancient Russian State, whose territory stretched from the White Sea to the Black Sea and from the Carpathians to the steppeland of the Volga, began in the tenth century with the unification of the East Slav tribes around Kiev. It lasted until the fourth decade of the twelfth century, when the development of feudalism led to a process of fragmentation. During these centuries the most outstanding masterpieces of ancient Russian art and architecture were created.

The roots of Kievan art were threefold. The first ran backwards in time, towards the rich cultural heritage of the East Slavs themselves. The second grew out of the living conditions and the demands of the State in ancient Russia. The third stretched beyond the frontiers of Russia itself towards the accumulated experience of other countries and above all of Byzantium, the custodian of the great cultural traditions of Antiquity.

The golden age of ancient Russian art was eulogized in oral epics and in written works alike, and nowhere more so than in the cycle of poems (*byliny*) which commemorate the exploits of the Kievan warriors Ilya of Murom, Dobrynya Nikitich and Alyosha Popovich. Conserved in the popular memory over the centuries, these poems transmit a message of pride and admiration inspired by the grandeur and power of the Kievan State.

The same sense of belonging to a great and illustrious country permeates the *Discourse on Law and Grace* composed in the mid-eleventh century by Hilarion, the Metropolitan of Kiev. Praising the princes of Russia, he writes, "Not in some miserable and unknown country did they rule, but in the Russian land, whose name is known and whose voice is heard in the four corners of the universe".

The adoption of Christianity in 989 A.D. brought Russia into closer contact with the Christian world, and above all with the world of Orthodox Christianity. By then the Russians had a written language, and they were able to practise the new religion in their native tongue. This was a powerful stimulus to the development of original features in their art.

Patriotism was an important component of the ancient Russian sense of beauty, and had a strong influence on lyrical poetry. Indeed, love for the homeland and the natural environment is a leitmotif which runs through ancient Russian art, particularly the epic poems. It echoes through the Russian chronicles; it lies at the heart of the famous *Lay of Igor's Campaign*; and it finds expression in the *Tale of the Ruin of the Russian Land*, whose author proclaims: "O Russian land, how radiantly bright and beautifully adorned you are! Many and surprising are your charms: your lakes, your rivers and your sacred springs, your steep mountains and your lofty hills, your thick, leafy forests and your lovely fields, your monastery gardens and your churches..."

The building of cities, fortresses and castles was an extremely important activity which provided Russian architects with a wealth of opportunities for developing and perfecting their skills. The early cities, whose buildings, naturally enough in a country of forests, were for the most part made of wood, usually consisted of a fortified nucleus (the *detinets*) whose precincts contained the palaces of princes, nobles and their retinues. Around this central area lay the outer city, whose ramparts sheltered the bulk of the population. At the edge of the city were the districts where the craftsmen and tradesmen lived. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the populations of Kiev, Novgorod, Smolensk, Chernigov, Vladimir Volynsky and other major Russian cities numbered tens of thousands, which made them among the most densely populated centres of Europe.

With their ornately constructed and high-towered wooden palaces, their many wooden and stone-built churches and monasteries, the Russian cities were an impressive sight to the merchants from Germany and Central Asia, from Italy and the Arab Caliphate, from Scandinavia and Byzantium, who made their way towards their crowded market-places. These visitors, together with the Russian merchants themselves, who travelled from their homes in Kiev, Novgorod and Smolensk on long journeys overseas, brought to Russia a great variety of goods and articles of foreign make, which served as models and as inspiration for the local craftsmen.

The tenth century saw a sharp rise in Russian standards of craftsmanship and in the output of Russian craftsmen. In Kiev alone sixty different crafts were practised. Jewellery made in this city was particularly prized, and won praise from the Byzantine poet Tzetzes and from Theophilus of Paderborn, a tenth-century German author who wrote a voluminous treatise on the jeweller's craft.

Foreign visitors to Kiev exclaimed that nowhere else had they seen such beautiful things, and this is not surprising if we take as a single example the small piece of jewellery, preserved to this day, consisting of no less than 5,000 soldered ringlets 0.06 cm in diameter, in the centre of each of which is a tiny precious stone measuring 0.04 cm. On a surface measuring eight square centimetres, the jeweller fixed 120 golden flowers on thread-like gilded stems.

The first mention of the use of stone for the construction of a palace dates from 945 A.D., but this material only began to be widely used for building at the end of the tenth century. Even at this early stage, specifically Russian architectural techniques and forms appeared, as distinct from those employed in Byzantium. One original feature of Russian churches is the onion-shaped cupola, which in the opinion of many specialists was inspired by the helmets of the Russian warriors.

The most precious treasure of Kievan Russia is the Cathedral of Saint Sophia. According to the oldest surviving manuscript, the *Russian Primary Chronicle,* it was founded in 1037 on the site where, a year earlier, Yaroslav the Wise had finally routed the Pecheneg nomads. Beneath later additions and the reconstruction carried out during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the cathedral has to a remarkable extent conserved its original outline.

With its majestic and harmonious architecture, Saint Sophia is a brilliant symbol of Russia's new-found unity under the authority of the Kievan prince, as well as a memorial to victory over the nomads. Particularly outstanding are the frescoes decorating the staircases which lead to upper galleries in two of the towers. They depict scenes of princely entertainment: wrestling matches, horse-races, hunting, bird-snaring, dancing, music-making and other activities. Beneath the galleries are portraits of the family of Yaroslav the Wise, including his daughters Anne, Elizabeth and Anastasia, whom he married to the kings of France, Norway and Hungary.

Photo © Mistetstvo Publishers, Kiev

ILLUMINATED MINIATURE of St. Mark from a page of the Ostromir Gospel, a masterpiece of Kievan art. Copied in 1056-1057, this Slavonic manuscript was lost for centuries and accidentally rediscovered in the 18th century in the wardrobe of Catherine the Great. It is now preserved in the Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library, Leningrad.

LUXURIANT FRESCOES AND MOSAICS cover the columns, walls and vaulted ceilings of the 11th-century cathedral of St. Sophia in Kiev. Predominantly Byzantine in their symbolism, execution and arrangement, they portray Apostles, Saints and martyrs and depict episodes from the Old and New Testaments. Right, detail of fresco illustrating the Visitation of the Virgin Mary to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist.

Some 2,000 square metres of eleventh-century frescoes have been uncovered from beneath later inscriptions and restored, and these constitute only a fraction of the original decoration.

The mosaics covering the pillars, vaulting and walls of the luminous central area of the cathedral are equally striking, and the representation of the Eucharist and the Church Fathers in the central apse is a masterpiece of composition. Among the portraits of the Church Fathers, those of Saint Lawrence, Saint Gregory Palmyras and Saint John Chrysostom are executed with supreme artistry.

Approximately 650 square metres of mosaic have been preserved in the cathedral. In the opinion of Soviet specialist Victor N. Lazarev, they are the work of at least eight master craftsmen. The artists employed a wealth of colour, 177 different tones in all, including 34 shades of green, 23 shades of yellow and nine shades of grey.

Another celebrated architectural monument of Kievan Russia is the Cathedral of the Transfiguration in Chernigov, which was founded, according to the chronicles, around 1035-1036.

In the middle of the eleventh century, the development of feudalism in Kievan Russia strengthened the self-confidence of individual regions, and the establishment of new centres opened a fresh chapter in the history of Russian art and architecture. The separatist tendencies of different princes weakened the hold of Kiev, while the influence of the Church grew stronger and monasteries sprang up all over the land.

Kiev, however, was still the Russian capital, and the main source of cultural and artistic inspiration, much of which originated in the Pecherskaya Lavra Monastery.

The Church of Saint Michael with the Golden Roof, founded between 1107 and 1113, contained magnificent mosaics and frescoes, its main apse being decorated with a mosaic of the Eucharist, like those of Saint Sophia and the Church of the Assumption in the Pecherskaya Lavra. But this large-scale composition is quite different from the Saint Sophia Eucharist. The figures are portrayed with far greater freedom of expression, more attention is paid to the delineation of their psychology, the colours are bright and intense. The individual heads are more diversified and their expressions and gestures are more animated. These features, together with the inscriptions which accompany the portraits, suggest that the mosaic was produced by local masters. Some specialists believe that one of them was the legendary Russian icon-painter Alipi.

Photo from *Kiev's Hagia Sophia* © V. Moriejenko and V. Solovskogo, Kiev

The life and work of Alipi are described in detail in the *Pechersk Paterik,* a collection of writings on the religious and cultural activities of the Pecherskaya Lavra. According to the *Paterik,* Alipi "was not concerned with growing rich". He painstakingly collected old icons by other masters and restored them, while his own works were so beautiful that the Kievans believed that the angels had a hand in their production. The power of healing was attributed to the paints he used.

Many archaeological discoveries and literary sources attest to the Russian attachment to pagan works of sculpture. This attachment probably explains why Prince Vladimir brought back ancient statues from Khersonesus in the Crimea to decorate the central square of Kiev.

Sculpture was associated with paganism and the Byzantine Church disapproved of this medium being used to depict religious themes: the sculptures in Saint Sophia in Kiev and in the Cathedral of the Transfiguration in Chernigov are purely ornamental.

Another major centre of Kievan architecture was Novgorod. Three of its early twelfth-century churches and monasteries have survived in good order up to the present day: the Cathedral of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker (1113) and the Monasteries of Saint Anthony (1117) and Saint George (1119). Their cupolas, surmounted by a cross and supported by six piers, reflect the influence of the Church of the Assumption at the Pecherskaya Lavra.

At the same time, Novgorod's own Cathedral of Saint Sophia established a new tradition of powerful forms and austere stone and brick façades, in structures with three or five cupola-topped towers. A particularly splendid example of this style is the Cathedral of the Monastery of Saint George.

The surviving fragments of the frescoes of the Monastery of Saint Anthony, dating from 1125, are Romanesque in character, but are executed in a particularly energetic and free-handed manner that prefigures some of the features of later Novgorod painting.

Legend has it that Anthony of Rome, the founder of the monastery, arrived in Novgorod after sailing across the Mediterranean and Baltic Seas on a millstone. Meanwhile, some fishermen of Novgorod hauled up a barrel full of precious objects, which Anthony himself had thrown overboard at the beginning of his voyage. It was on these riches that the monastery was constructed.

Fantastic though it may be, this typically medieval legend contains a grain of truth: those of Anthony's possessions which have survived are of authentically European origin, and both literary and archaeological evidence show that the city of Novgorod enjoyed very close contacts with the West.

No trace has survived of Russian easel paintings from the late tenth and the early eleventh centuries, although the chronicles mention the icons which decorated the early churches. During the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, a great number of icons were imported into Russia from Byzantium. One of the most famous of them, "Our Lady of Vladimir", had a strong influence on the development of Russian icon painting.

Icons from Russia found their way to neighbouring countries, where they were held in high esteem; a notable example is Poland's celebrated Virgin of Czestokhova.

The production of illuminated books reached heights of perfection in Kievan Russia. Books had long been prized, carefully preserved and richly decorated in Russia. In the words of an eleventh-century chronicler, they were "rivers that quench the thirst of the universe, sources of wisdom whose depths are unfathomable".

The oldest surviving Russian book, the *Ostromir Gospel,* was written in 1056-1057 by the deacon Grigori, for Ostromir the *posadnik* (mayor) of Novgorod. It is decorated with a profusion of illuminated

initials, head-pieces and miniature portraits of the evangelists.

Interesting portraits of members of the family of Prince Yaropolk Izyaslavovich are to be found in the so-called *Codex of Gertrude* (also known as the "Psalter of Trier") which was compiled between 1078 and 1087 and is today preserved in Italy (at Cividale in Lombardy). Written in Latin at the command of Egbert, Archibishop of Trier, it came a century later into the hands of Princess Gertrude of Poland, the wife of Prince Izyaslav of Kiev, son of Yaroslav the Wise. While in her possession, the manuscript was further decorated with a number of miniatures, including portraits of Gertrude's son Yaropolk and his wife Irina.

From about 1130 onwards, ancient Russia entered a stage of "feudal distintegration". If an all-Russian tradition persisted, the different principalities created their own cultural and artistic centres, where local trends and tastes were intermingled with more general features of artistic development at that time. In the words of Academician Boris A. Rybakov, twelfth-century Russia was a co-author of the many forms of the Romanesque style.

By the fourth decade of the century, the typically Kievan tradition of building with a mixture of stone and brick had been abandoned, and Russian architects began to turn to locally available materials. In the Dnieper region and in Volynya, brick was used. In Galicia and Vladimir-Suzdal, limestone was at hand, and the façades of buildings are decorated with carvings in white stone. This feature finds masterful expression in the Church of Saint Dimitri at Vladimir (1194-1197) and in the Church of the Intercession built in 1165 at the mouth of the River Nerl.

The greatest masterpieces of Russian icon painting in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are those of Saint Dmitri, from the town of Dmitrov near Moscow, the Virgin of the Pecherskaya Lavra, and the Virgin of the Novgorod Dormition, all of which are now in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow.

If Russian art branched out in different directions as each feudal principality asserted its independence, its tap-root continued to draw strength from the original source—Kiev. And herein lies the significance of the art of Kievan Russia, as the art of a united ancient Russian people from which the art and architecture of the Russians, the Ukrainians and the Byelorussians would later develop.

■ **Yuri Asseyev**

Photo © Mistetstvo Publishers, Kiev

FOCAL POINT of Kiev's cultural, social and religious life was the cathedral of St. Sophia (dedicated in 1037), built by Prince Yaroslav the Wise as part of plans to emulate the splendours of Byzantium. Little of the ancient edifice, whose 13 cupolas symbolized Christ and the disciples, has survived, and the extensively-restored exterior (above, eastern façade) is largely baroque. A unique feature of St. Sophia is its cycle of secular frescoes depicting spectacles similar to those presented at Christmas to the Emperor at Constantinople. Over 130 merry-makers are shown juggling, disguised as fantastic animals, dancing, making music and hunting (below).

Photo © U.S.S R. Academy of Art, Leningrad

Colour Pages

OPPOSITE PAGE

The Entry into Jerusalem, a late 15th or early 16th-century icon of the Novgorod school. Icons of this period are often referred to as "mixed school" icons because they combine the vigorous naturalistic style of Novgorod with the elegance and spirituality of the Moscow school. Jerusalem is depicted with the towers and walls of Novgorod (top right). Christ looks back at a group of his disciples, whilst the people come out to welcome him, carpeting his path with their cloaks and with palm-tree branches.

Photo Bob Saler © Rapho, Paris

CENTRE DOUBLE PAGE

In the Moscow school of icon-painting, three great names stand out: Theophanes the Greek, Andrey Rublyov (see page 21) and Dionysius (1440-1508). Dionysius carried on the Rublyov tradition but his art was perhaps more luminous as well as more decorative and ornamental. This icon, attributed to Dionysius, came from the Cathedral of the Dormition in the Moscow Kremlin and today is preserved in the Tretyakov Gallery. Dating from about 1483, it portrays the Metropolitan Alexis holding the Bible in his left hand. The icon is bordered with scenes from Alexis' life.

Photo Bob Saler © Rapho, Paris


ОТ АЛЕКСИЙ
ЧУДОТВОРЕЦ

Photos © Miodrag Djordjevic, Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library, Leningrad

The Morava school of painting marked the golden age of Serbian art towards the close of the Middle Ages. Frescoes, icons and miniatures all demonstrate how artists of the Morava school succeeded in portraying vivid, living personalities within the framework of stylized forms. The four miniatures (across both pages, above) by the master-painter Radoslav come from a New Testament dating from 1429, now in the Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library, Leningrad. The miniatures depict the four evangelists listening to the words of God as whispered to them by the Spirit of Holy Wisdom. The symbols attributed to each evangelist can be seen in the top corner of each painting. From left to right: St. Luke, with a bull; St. Mark, with a lion; St. Matthew, with an angel; and St. John, with an eagle.

The art of the Morava School

Sensitivity and grace in fifteenth-century Serbia

by Svetozar Radojcic

Left, detail from a 14th-century fresco known as "The Saracens", from the Church of St. Archangel, at Lesnovo, Macedonia, Yugoslavia. The relationships between the Saracens, the name by which the Muslims were sometimes known in the West, and the South Slavs were often turbulent.

Photo © Yugoslav Cultural Centre, Paris

ANCIENT Serbian art began to flourish towards the end of the twelfth century, but went into decline after 1459, when Turkish invaders occupied the fortress-town of Smederevo, the capital of the Serbian Tsars. Nevertheless, this national art survived, under the Ottoman yoke, until the first decades of the eighteenth century. When the Turks finally retreated from the Danube basin, Serbian artists were ready to make their contribu-

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tion to the late Baroque period of central and western Europe.

Against the background of the turbulent history of the eastern Mediterranean region, the Balkan peninsula and the Danube basin, Serbian art, which had formed an integral element of Byzantine culture, followed its own path of development.

When the great Serbian Empire crumbled after the disastrous battle of the Maritza, in 1371, and the extinction of the Nemanja dynasty, the princely families of the Lazarevići and the Brakovići struggled to retain their hold in the narrow territory that stretched from the belt of land between the Danube and the Sava in the north to the two Moravas in the south (these two tributaries, which flow northward from the Macedonian border to meet in a single river that joins the Danube east of Belgrade, should not be confused with the Morava of Czechoslovakia, from which the vast region of Moravia takes its name).

It was here that the Serbian "despotate" (a term borrowed from the Byzantine hierarchy of government, and in no sense pejorative) had a short-lived existence between 1402 and 1459, as the last outpost of free Christianity in the Islam-dominated Balkans. In the struggle between the Christians and the Ottomans, this little Serbia of the south became the refuge of countless emigrants from Byzantium, Mount Athos, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Albania.

The roads leading to the despotate were crowded with refugees: princes chased from their principalities, bishops deprived of their bishoprics, monks without monasteries and seigneurs who had lost their fiefs and castles. In their train followed a motley retinue of writers, architects, painters, musicians and singers—the whole constellation of artists that surrounded the rich and powerful figures of the day.

TEPHEN Lazarević, son of Prince Lazar who fell in battle in 1389 at Kosovo-Polje, where the Turks finally established their supremacy over the Serbs, was a typical representative of his age. Bearing the title of "despot", conferred on him by the Byzantine Emperor, liegeman of the king of Hungary, vassal of the Sultan and commander-in-chief of his own army, warrior and patron of letters and himself a poet, he attracted scores of writers to his court at Belgrade. Sycophantic contemporaries called him "the new Ptolemy". He was the founder of the Resava school (so-called after the monastery that stood close to the river of that name). This was not merely a school of copyists, as has sometimes been slightingly suggested, but, as it was referred to at the time, of "translators".

Contemporaneous with the Resava school, and created under the same auspices, was a still more significant school. It has sometimes been said that art is the product of peaceful and happy times; the Morava school, as it is called by historians of Serbian art, which served as a nursery of sensitivity and grace during a dark, doom-laden period, provides ample evidence that nothing could be further from the truth.

From the twelfth century onwards, the quest for the aesthetic followed two paths with artists seeking both outward and inner beauty. These two contrasting and unevenly balanced trends, the point and counterpoint of which are most apparent in architecture, reached their apogee during the years of the despotate.

The churches of the Morava school, whose inner volumes were perfectly planned, and whose façades were covered with sumptuous decoration, were suited both to the routine of daily offices and to the occasional splendour of great ceremonies. Their floor plan took the form of rectangles with semi-circular ends, above which soared the great conches of the apses and the crowns of their domes. Their whole structure was adapted to the requirements of a complex liturgy involving numerous clergy, two choirs, and the spectacular processions depicted in contemporary frescoes. All the different sections, passages and partitions were functional and acoustically perfect.

The vocal music which completed the beauty of these churches has only recently been re-discovered. In fact it was not until after the Second World War that Serbian manuscripts dating from the turn of the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries and containing musical notations were deciphered and their notes transcribed. Two of the processions which appear frequently in ancient paintings—the "Grand entrance" and the "Communion of the Apostles"—can now be accompanied not only by the words, which were already known, but also by the authentic musical background which gives to the gestures of the depicted characters a strange, unfathomable, almost unearthly rhythm, a music which inspires in its listeners the sentiment of unshaken and unshakeable belief.

The earliest frescoes, painted in the mid-fourteenth century, portrayed the unusual figures of the "chapel-masters" in their richly decorated robes and strange, white, three-cornered hats. Now we not only know their names—Stefan, Isaija and Joakim—but also the music they composed.

The beauty of these hallowed, music-haunted places was enriched by a new style of wall painting, in frescoes which capture the same subtle and musical delicacy of tone and from which powerful and severe brush-strokes are entirely absent. The human portraits they contain are stylized, plastic, almost sculptural; like the music, the figures seem unearthly.

From this point onwards, the painters of the Morava school abandoned the techniques employed for earlier frescoes in favour of the more subtle approach used for painting on wood. Attitudes and movements are captured and, as it were, frozen for all time; yet the gestures remain gentle and harmonious. In the paintings of the Serbian despotate, scenes from Christ's life on earth are favourite themes: warrior-saints, monks, bishops and preachers alike are represented as "celestial men and terrestrial angels", glowing with outward beauty and inner perfection, inhabitants of a universe whose only dimensions were pictural, literary and musical.

This art is a faithful reflection of the mysticism of Eastern Christianity. There is something dramatic in the artistic expression of the wonder provoked by revelation. The sanctuary of the church, the "holy of holies", is hidden behind a partition to which icons are attached, the *iconostasis* which, like the *scenae frons* of ancient theatres, contains three doors draped with rich fabrics. At certain specific moments in the rituals, these curtains are raised. The larger churches were decorated with rich polychrome stone facings: broad ornamental bands, arcades and large, rose-shaped designs, and figures executed in low relief, especially around the windows. There was a great variety of decorative motifs: scroll-work, angels, mythical animals and enigmatic shapes, among which, at the Kalenić monastery, for example, stood the centaur Chiron, who taught music to the Greek hero Achilles.

HE ancient dichotomy of outer and inner beauty is a recurrent feature of works of the Morava school, revealed in its architecture, its frescoes, its icons, its rich brocades, its jewellery and above all its miniature paintings. Invariably the ornamentation expressed an outer beauty behind which transcendent, mysterious, barely perceptible values lay concealed.

This grandiose vision of a perfect world, evoked during an age of utmost peril, exercised a profound attraction on the survivors of Christian Byzantium; for the mystics and intellectuals who, during the fifteenth century, wandered between Italy and the distant Russian steppes, it had the value of a prophecy.

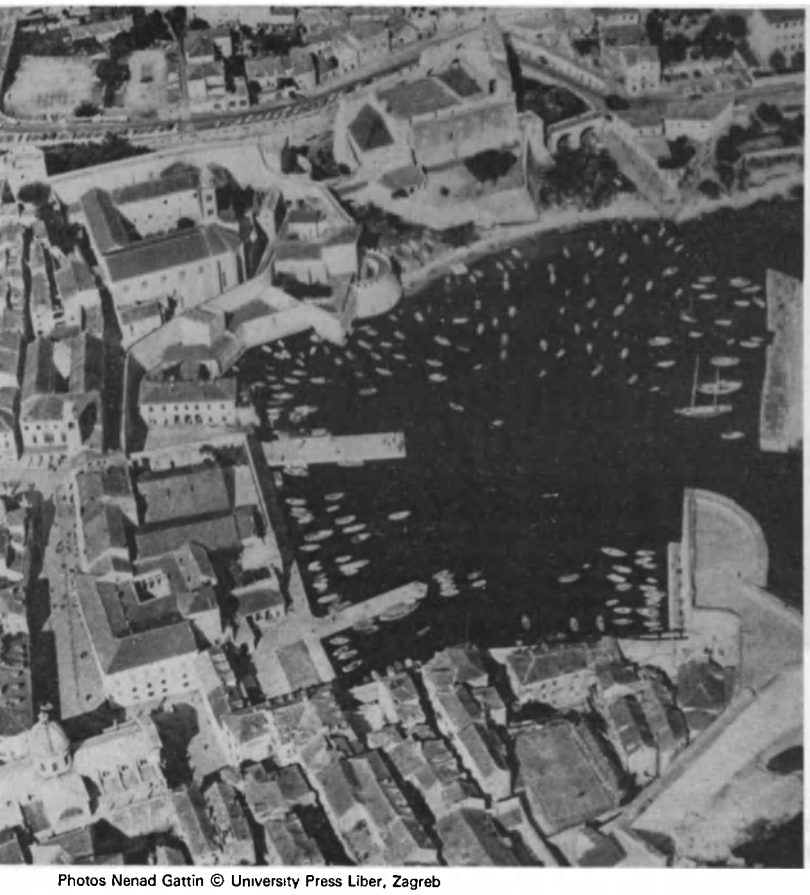
The merit of this fifteenth-century art, which emerged from a Serbia whose frontiers had been so reduced, which was both lordly and monastic and which was the product of luxury and asceticism alike, was that it reconciled the outer with the inner beauty. European art was at a crossroads: while the West turned its back on medieval thought and art, the East continued to cling to them tenaciously, adopting a sceptical attitude both towards matter, nature and the power of human reason, and towards the spirituality of antiquity from which, nevertheless, it derived its art—an art in which form alone resembled reality, yet was itself a symbol and an allegory. The figures of the writers embraced by the Muses in the miniatures of the master painter Radoslav are perhaps the finest examples of this complex, traditionalist culture, which found its most perfect expression in the art of painting.

■ **Svetozar Radojcic**

DUBROVNIK

Gateway to the Latin West

by Vuk Vuco



Photos Nenad Gattin © University Press Liber, Zagreb

Ever since medieval times when Slav and Latin settlements merged to form a single city on a promontory jutting out into the Adriatic, Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia (Croatia) has formed a link between East and West. Although the port was almost totally destroyed by an earthquake in 1667, vestiges of the ancient walls and bastions that once guarded its seaward approaches (above right) have survived to frame the modern port (aerial view above left).

THE seventh decade of the seventeenth century was an unhappy one for Europe. Throughout the 1660s waves of disasters and afflictions of all kinds swept the continent, from London to the shores of Asia Minor, from Sicily to Scandinavia. Wars and epidemics were rampant, and claimed hundreds of thousands of victims.

At this time one proud European city on the Adriatic enjoyed the blessings of peace and prosperity in such abundance that its citizens might have been forgiven for thinking that the kindly waters of their sea would protect them forever. This city, one of the most beautiful in seventeenth-century Europe, had a banner which bore the inscription *Libertas*—freedom. Its name was Dubrovnik.

On 6 April 1667, the Wednesday of Holy Week, a cloudless day dawned over Dubrovnik. A calm, unruffled sea stretched beneath an azure sky. By 8 o'clock that morning the sky was still clear and the waves lapped gently against the city fortifications. A group of notables strolled outside the palace, waiting for the bell to summon them to the Great Council, which met at Eastertide to pardon convicted criminals. In the palace chapel a religious ceremony attended by the ruler and by Dubrovnik's highest dignitaries was drawing to a close. The bishop was intoning a prayer of grati-

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tude for the peace and plenty that prevailed in the tiny republic and expressing his hope that they would long continue.

At that moment the earth began to tremble. Within a matter of seconds, amid a crescendo of noise, the entire city was transformed by an earthquake into a mass of rubble. Palaces, monuments, churches, fortifications—the pride of Dubrovnik—which had been lovingly and painstakingly created over the centuries, all collapsed like a house of cards.

The ruler of Dubrovnik, his retinue and the highest servants of State perished in the cataclysm along with three-quarters of the city's population. On the nearby island of Lopud, which was also hit by the earthquake no more than 400 of the 14,000 islanders survived.

Misfortunes never come singly. The earthquake was followed by a fire and a tidal wave. Then came an army of looters who for weeks on end pillaged the ruins and robbed the dead. The enemies of Dubrovnik, who until then had never dared to attack the mighty fortress, flocked by land and sea to the stricken and defenceless city.

Several times in its history Dubrovnik has risen from the ashes of disaster. Barely two centuries before the earthquake of 1667 the city had experienced and survived another terrible earthquake followed by an epidemic of plague which decimated the population. But neither natural catastrophes nor the vicissitudes of history could wipe this remarkable city from the map.

Many cities in the modern world pride themselves on their cosmopolitanism and boast that they provide a favourable setting for the intermingling of different cultures. Few can rival Dubrovnik as a cross-roads where the cultural heritage of the East and West have met and been mutually enriched. For Dubrovnik is remarkable not only for its vitality and its resilience in the face of ordeals, but as a gem which has been polished for centuries in the ebb and flow of East and West.

At the time of the great invasion of Dalmatia by the Avaro-Slavs, around 614 A.D., the settlement of Epidaurus (present-day Cavtat) was sacked and razed to the ground. Tradition has it that the survivors of this massacre went on to found a new colony, Ragusium, two hours' march northwards along the rocky coast.

Close by this settlement, whose name is derived from a Latin word meaning escarpment, was the Slav forest colony of Dubrovnik *(dubrova* in Serbo-Croat means "woody"). The initial antagonism between the two populations slowly disappeared, and the two colonies merged into a single city. By the beginning of the 13th century "Ragusium-Dubrovnik" had become a single community where different ethnic groups, cultures and religions developed a spirit of coexistence which still survives today.

Photo Paul Pougnet © Hapho, Paris

In the course of its long history, Dubrovnik has transformed its handicaps into advantages: it has turned poverty into wealth, calmed the warlike, and reconciled different religions and opposing economic forces. All this it has achieved by obeying whenever possible an ancient local proverb according to which "A bad quarrel is always better than a good war".

Right from the start Dubrovnik's economic life was based on seafaring and trade. In the ninth century sailors plied eastwards as far as the Black Sea and northwards as far as England, whence they set out on even longer voyages in the Atlantic. By the beginning of the thirteenth century its fleet was so large that the tiny republic began to challenge Venice for mastery of the seas. Through a combination of diplomatic and maritime skills, Dubrovnik had become a great seaport by the 14th century.

Dubrovnik rapidly became the main trading centre of the Balkan Peninsula, and its operations extended as far as Italy and other Mediterranean countries. Nor was the shift of maritime trade from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic a major drawback to the city's economic fortunes ; indeed it was in the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century that Dubrovnik achieved the very height of its prosperity.

To preserve its freedom, the city always had to pay a high price to the Venetians, the Byzantines, the Turks and the Slav kingdoms in the north. The Serb kingdoms cast particularly covetous eyes on the tiny independent state, attracted by the wealth it had garnered from the four corners of the earth but above all because it was an incomparable outlet to the sea. And yet the sea receded before them like a mirage as they advanced, for all their efforts to wage open war against Dubrovnik ended in failure. Powerful protectors—Slav Tsars and Latin Kings alike—rushed to aid the republic whenever danger threatened.

After two perilous centuries, a ruler who understood the true importance of Dubrovnik came to the Serbian throne in the person of Tsar Dusan. An able statesman and a prodigious expansionist, Dusan decided to withdraw the sword of aggression and extend the hand of friendship. Like the other Slav rulers, indeed like all the Slavs, he was mesmerized by Dubrovnik. But paradoxically, for he was after all a Serb, he felt that the city should be treated as a precious relic. In 1346, shortly after his coronation as Tsar, he set out for Dubrovnik on a peace mission.

The meeting between Dusan and the patricians of Dubrovnik beneath the gilded beams of the Great Council Chamber

Photo © Izdavacki Zavod, Zagreb

Customs house, mint and granary, the 16th-century Sponza Palace (above left) played a central role in Dubrovnik's economy. In niche beneath the roof is statue of St. Vlaho (St. Blasius), the city's patron saint. The early 16th-century artist Nikola Bozidarevic portrayed St. Vlaho holding a model of Dubrovnik in painting (above) which forms part of a triptych in the city's Dominican church.

marked a turning point in the history of the Serbian state and of the entire Slav world. It opened up a new channel of communication along which different traditions could flow and be exchanged. This fruitful alliance with Dubrovnik, a child of Western civilization, would open for the Slavs a gateway to European culture.

Medieval chronicles recount how certain Serbian dignitaries persistently urged Dusan to attack and conquer Dubrovnik and how he categorically refused, preferring instead to confirm the city's centuries-old freedoms and to shower lavish gifts on its churches and monasteries. Rather than trample on the banner of St. Vlaho, protector of the city, he would send young Slavs to Dubrovnik for their education. Contemporary writers report him as saying: "I respect the Senate of Dubrovnik for its signal virtues. Through its Latin erudition, its wealth and its trade, Dubrovnik is a fitting model for the edification and the prosperity of my reign; this fine city will be the trading centre of all the territories of my realm."

In more recent centuries Dubrovnik also had to pay a high price for its freedom. When it came under Napoleon's domination in 1806, and two years later ceased to exist as a free republic, the city fathers fomented a plot without parallel in history. As a gesture of protest and as a means of ensuring that no descendants of theirs should ever be subjected to foreign rule, the families of Dubrovnik vowed not to procreate until they were free once more. From that moment until the liberation of the city in 1815 no child was born to the nobility of Dubrovnik.

In a long history stretching over twelve centuries, Dubrovnik has never spared any effort to preserve its freedom. This passion for independence may be partly due to the fact that the city's geographical position makes it a point at which world cultural trends and influences converge. But this is only part of the story. Dubrovnik has succeeded in resisting threats and dangers from East and West because of its links with what is today Croatia, a hinterland from which it has drawn linguistic and cultural sustenance. The Renaissance saw a great flowering of Croatian literature in Dubrovnik whose lasting achievements in poetry and the dramatic arts are just as important as the city's architectural masterpieces. By drawing life from the Croatian artistic genius, Dubrovnik brought Croatia into the great movement which was the Renaissance in the West.

Travellers of the past penned ecstatic descriptions of their first glimpse of Dubrovnik from the sea. "An enchanting picture opens out before your eyes", wrote one of them. "The islands are deployed like ships right as far as the port of Dubrovnik. Your boat glides over the calm sea and rounds the lighthouse; it is as if you were entering wonderland..."

Today the spell is still unbroken. The modern traveller is transported into the past as he approaches Dubrovnik's marble and granite monuments eternally caressed by the sun.

The city's long main street, the Stradun, runs along a valley which was formely a marshy channel dividing the Latin settlement from the Slav colony. Seven hundred years ago the channel was filled in and became a thoroughfare along which Latins and Slavs would live together forever.

The people of Dubrovnik remain proud of their city and its cosmopolitan traditions. Walk along the Stradun today, especially in the summer months, and you will hear dozens of different languages being spoken. With its beautiful palaces, fountains and churches, Dubrovnik has remained faithful to its past. Each summer its music and drama festivals attract great performers from all over the world, further evidence that the cosmopolitan spirit still lives on. The Slavs—in our time the Yugoslavs—have preserved this gateway to the Mediterranean. This city on the shores of a sea which cradled more than one civilization, continues to be a focus for the exchange of traditions. Here where the history of Europe began it continues to be made and enriched.

■ **Vuk Vuco**

Photo A. Krylova © Progress Publishers, Moscow

The Nikolo-Karelsky monastery, built in the 16th century on the shores of the White Sea (where the town of Severodvinsk now stands) was fortified in 1692 with the addition of a wooden octagonal tower (right), a stockade and watchtowers. In 1932 part of this outstanding example of Russian fort architecture was transported to the Kolomenskoye Museum in Moscow. Eighteenth-century wooden carving of the sun (below) once adorned the mast of a Russian river-boat. Opposite page, a *sirin* or bird-woman. Her wings protectively unfolded, this guardian spirit of the household kept watch over the window of an *isba* (log hut) of ancient Russia. Unesco, in collaboration with the International Association for the Study and Dissemination of Slav Cultures, is currently preparing an illustrated book on the history of Slav wooden architecture and sculpture. Specialists from Byelorussia, Bulgaria, Poland, Russia, Czechoslovakia, the Ukraine and Yugoslavia are participating in the project, headed by Professor Andrej Ryszkiewicz of Poland.

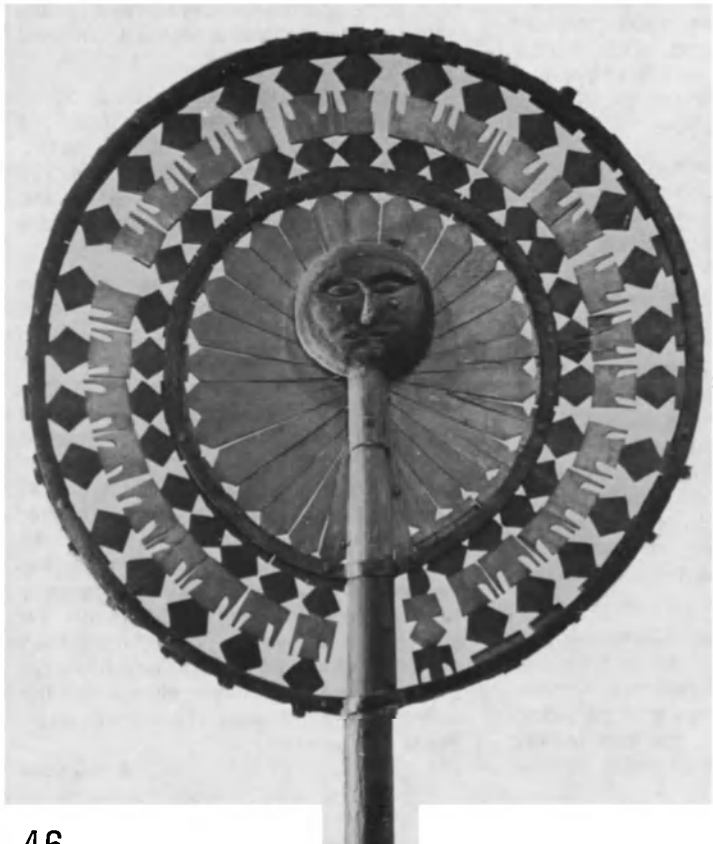


Photo B. Fabritsky, I. Shmelov © Progress Publishers, Moscow

Workmanship in wood

AMONG the tools and instruments of daily life in the countryside of old Russia, the distaff, not surprisingly, held a prominent place; for many months of the year it was the country woman's constant companion.

Bridegrooms gave distaffs and spinning-benches as wedding-presents to their brides, and for this reason, their carved decorations frequently depicted scenes related to the marriage ceremony: the journey of the groom to the bride's house, the couple's first encounter, their rendezvous and walks together. A brand-new spinning-bench distinguished the newly-married woman from her friends when they spent the long autumn and winter evenings

Photo B. Fabritsky, I. Shmelov © Progress Publishers, Moscow

Photo © APN, Moscow

together, while particularly beautiful specimens were handed down by the womenfolk from generation to generation.

In the Kalinin region of the U.S.S.R., archaeologists have discovered a perfectly preserved distaff dating from the second millennium B.C., which closely resembles nineteenth-century models in shape.

Both the form and the decoration of the distaff enable us to identify its place of origin. Thus, the craftsmen of the Vologodskaya region preferred ornamentation in the form of large-scale geometrical figures—circles, triangles or zigzag lines.

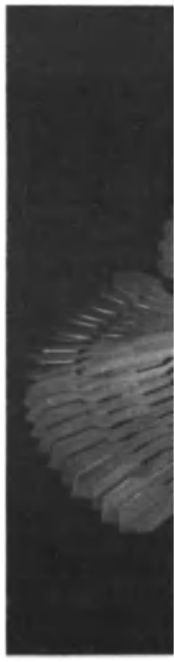
The painters of Mezen, using simple brush-strokes of black on a brown background, sketched galloping horses and deer and soaring flights of birds; those of the Lake Onega region preferred to portray luxurious flowers and bouquets in a setting of brilliantly contrasting colours. The distaffs painted by the descendants of the ancient Novgorodians, the village painters of the basin of the Severnaya Dvina, are highly distinctive; their decoration is a veritable pageant of colours, with a variety of themes depicting fantastic animals and birds, as well as exotic plants.

Wood was used not only for the construction of dwellings and outbuildings, but also for sacred images, churches, boats and domestic furniture. Master wood-carvers produced kitchen utensils and children's toys, together with decorations for their *isbas* (cottages) and the mastheads of their boats.

One of the most curious and widely distributed examples of domestic wood-carving in the Volga region is the *bereginya*, whose name indicates that its purpose was to protect *(oberegat')* the person or object with which it was connected. It would appear that such images, in their earliest form, were in the shape of *rusalki,* or water-nymphs, and were part of the carved decoration of boats; indeed, objects of this type are still known as *korabel'naya rez'ba,* or "boat-carvings". Their origins lie in the distant ages when people invoked the protection of a benevolent deity against evil spirits as they set off on journeys by water. Farther north protection was provided by the *okhlupen',* a huge larch log which was fixed to the roof of the cottage. The roots were left

Photo Bulgarian Delegation to Unesco

Photo © Dimitri Karadimchev, Sofia



The wooden figurine (top) is a household spirit or *domovoi* (from the Russian word *dom,* meaning house). Carved by a 14th-century craftsman, it was discovered during excavations at Novgorod (U.S.S.R). Above, "Original Sin", detail from a baroque iconostasis (the icon-adorned screen which separates the sanctuary from the nave in eastern Christian churches of Byzantine tradition) in the church of St. Marina in Plovdiv (Bulgaria). Right, sculpture evoking fertility is by a modern Bulgarian artist, Anton Doncev.

attached and shaped into a somewhat fanciful outline of a horse, a duck or a deer.

Originally revered as sacred animals, these objects acquired over the ages such perfect form that long after people had forgotten their function as protective symbols, they continued to be incorporated as essential decorative features of wooden buildings. In the Russian North, villages containing huts decorated in this manner may still be found today, whilst in some places the *okhlupni* from old buildings are incorporated in new constructions.

The bird of paradise, or *Sirin,* was another decorative element of peasant houses, and carried across the centuries the echoes of the old pagan beliefs of the northern countryfolk. Another creature of fairy-tale and myth was the lion, which clasped in its jaws the end of its own long tail. If its head was at times more like that of a dog than a lion, we must remember that the old village wood-carvers had never seen such exotic animals, and had to rely on their own imagination in portraying them.

Door frames and window frames also reflected the wood-carver's concern to decorate the *isba,* and resembled the old Russian napkins with lacy fringes which were traditionally used to decorate icons or portraits.

Popular imagination also found quaint expression in the beehives carved out of tree-trunks, in the form, for example, of a bear whose paw concealed the opening from which the honey was drawn, or decorated in relief with the figure of a woman whose eyes and mouth served as entrances for the bees.

Hollow vessels in the shape of ducks were carved from tree roots to hold alcoholic beverages. In northern villages, carved wooden "birds of goodness" were hung beneath the rafters of huts, over the large table with benches along the wall which served to receive guests in the "prettiest" corner of the hut. In the rising cloud of warm steam from the samovar, the "bird of goodness" rotated smoothly and solemnly as if surveying the cottage, in which dead wood had sprung to new life under the village craftsman's hand. ■

Photo © APN, Moscow

A traditional wedding present from bridegroom to bride, the distaff was both a symbol of domestic life and an indispensable piece of household equipment. Slav craftsmen excelled at fashioning highly elaborate distaffs and spinning-benches adorned with carvings, giltwork, polychrome decoration and pokerwork depicting scenes related to marriage and the home. The founding of a home and a family is evoked in 19th-century example (above): husband and wife bring together trunk and branches to form a fruitful family tree.

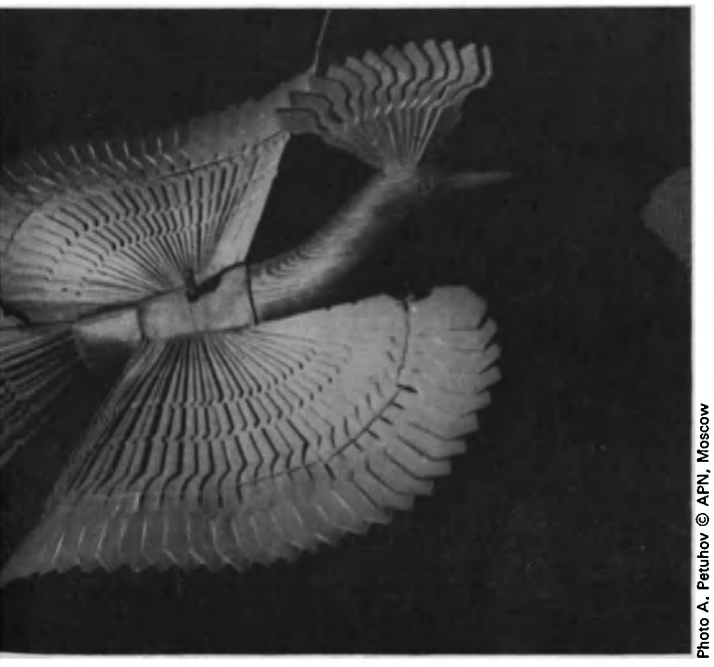


Photo A. Petuhov © APN, Moscow

A *dobraya* (literally "she who is good") or bird of goodness. Such small masterpieces of the woodcarver's art were found in homes throughout the Slav world. Suspended from the rafters, they gyrated slowly in the heat rising from the samovar.

A bear serves as the handle of this wooden utensil from Byelorussia, once used for "ironing" linen.

Photo V. Jileviten © APN, Moscow

Photo © APN, Moscow

An open-air museum of religious and secular architecture has been established on Kiji, one of the many islands that dot Lake Onega in Karelia. Photo shows some of the 22 cupolas surmounting the Church of the Transfiguration, the most remarkable edifice on the island. Not a single nail was used by the anonymous carpenters who built the church in 1714.

Fretwork patterns on the wall of an *isba* (cottage) at Vologda, some 300 km from Moscow, evoke the lace fringes of napkins traditionally used to decorate icons.

Photo © APN, Moscow

Photo Jerzy Langda © Polish Academy of Arts

Some country churches, such as this little 19th-century chapel in Poland, were simple wooden structures topped by a cupola and a bell-tower.

Photo P. Makuchenko © APN, Moscow

Left, wooden windmill constructed at the beginning of the 20th century in the Kharkov region of the Ukraine has been transported to the Museum of Popular Art and Traditions at Kiev (U.S.S.R). Below, anatomy of the interior of a windmill near Mogilev in Byelorussia.

Below, the Church of St. Paraskeva (who was the personification of Good Friday) in the village of Alexandrovka is a typical example of eighteenth century religious architecture in southern Ukraine.

Photo P. Makuchenko © APN, Moscow

Photo © APN, Moscow

Hives of good humour

Examples of wooden bee-hives which Slav craftsmen carved to represent animal and human forms which were by turns humorous, dramatic and caricatural. The bees came and went through the holes pierced in the chest of the Russian bear, through the poignantly dilated eyes of the Byelorussian woman and through the navel of the bearded Polish hermit whose skull cap could be lifted when it was time to extract the honey. Other hives take the form of a Slovak couple, a pipe-smoking patriarch from Yugoslavia, and two betrothed lovers from Poland.

Photo © Arkadi, Warsaw - Cracow Ethnographic Museum

Poland

Photo © APN, Moscow

Russia

Photo A.F. Rokicki © Arkadi, Warsaw

Poland

Photo © V. Vivod, Sazu

Yugoslavia

Photo B. Fabritsky, I. Shmelov © Progress Publishers, Moscow

Byelorussia

Photo Jan Deier © Slovak Museum, Bratislava

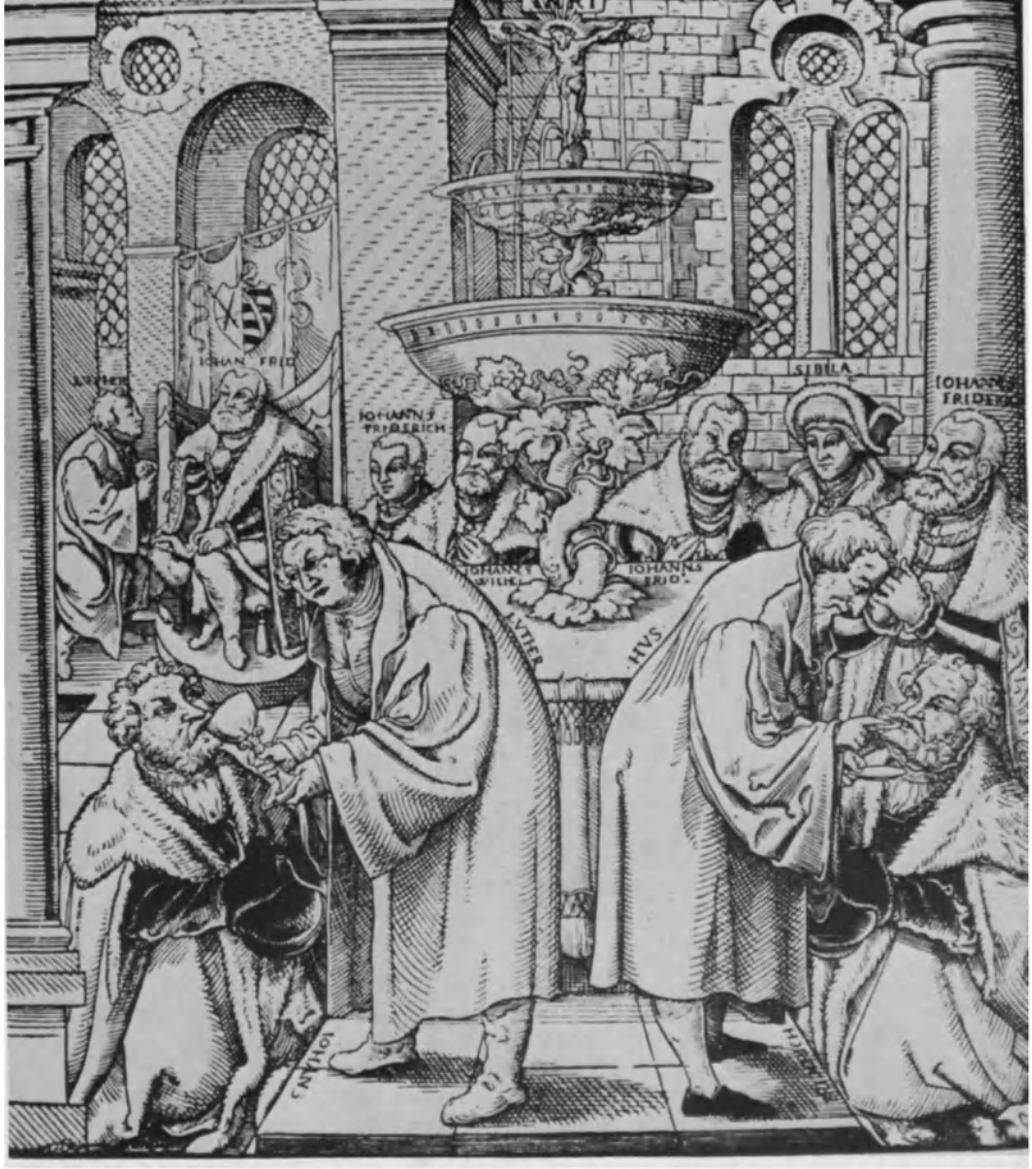
Czechoslovakia

Three expressive pieces of religious sculpture in wood from three parts of the Slav world. Right, King David, prophet, poet and musician, as depicted by an 18th-century sculptor of Smolensk in Russia. Below, portrait of the Apostle Peter sculpted by a 19th-century village craftsman from Gorodishche in the Brest-Litovsk region of Byelorussia. Below right, St. John of Nepomuk, an ecclesiastic of 14th-century Bohemia who died rather than betray the secrets of the confessional. He is here depicted by a 19th-century Polish wood-carver from the Limanova region.

Photo V. Jerko © APN, Minsk

Photo © Smolensk Regional Museum

Photo Jan Swiderski © Wladyslaw Orkam Museum, Rabka, Poland



The Bohemian religious reformer Jan Hus (1369-1415) and Martin Luther (1483-1546), the leader of the Protestant Reformation in Germany, pictured (symbolically but anachronistically) serving communion together in a 16th-century woodcut by the great German artist Lucas Cranach.

THE COMMON HERITAGE

A cultural community stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea

by Slavomir Vollman

THE non-Slav peoples became aware of the existence of the Slavs as an entity during the first eight centuries A.D., recognizing the relative uniformity of their spoken language and of their cultural, social and ethnic characteristics. Indeed, they painted colourful pictures of this group of Indo-European tribes at a time when the Slavs themselves, who had spread out in a massive and powerful movement of expansion over a vast area stretching from the west bank of the Elbe to the Volga, from Rügen on the Baltic to the Peloponnese and from northern Italy to Syria, had neither a written language nor any of the other means of communication with each other to sustain their self-awareness and their sense of unity.

The ancient Slavs undoubtedly referred to themselves as *Slovene,* and this was the name given to them by Latin, Greek and German writers, from the sixth-century historians Pseudo-Caesarius, Procopius and Jordanes onwards. The earliest Arab travellers who came into contact with the Slavs as they stepped on to the pages of written history agreed with these authors that they were tall, shapely and fair-haired.

The "national identity" of the Slavs preoccupied all those who wrote about them. The Byzantine historian Procopius said that "they are not subjected to the authority of a single leader, but have lived from ancient times under a democracy; consequently, everything involving their welfare, whether for good or ill, is referred to the people". Other sources mention their warlike character and virile courage. In the early Middle Ages, when the Slavs began to behave in a manner that was already common in the "civilized" (i.e. Latin) West, their adversaries complained that they were cruel and ferocious.

Thus, from a very early date, the non-Slav world had its preconceived notions about "Slav unity", "Slav character" and even about the "Slav soul", notions that were full of contradictions and frequent flights of fantasy, that blended fact with

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fiction and formed part of a complex "East-West" mythology.

At times the Slavs adopted the characteristics attributed to them by foreigners, when these coincided with their own feelings and experiences. Consciousness of their common origin and linguistic affinity, and awareness that they shared the same historical destiny are reflected in their earliest written literature, and appear in different forms throughout the whole of their history. At the same time, however, there began in the early Middle Ages the process of formation, transformation and "crystallization" of individual Slav peoples without which their subsequent interrelationships in the cultural, political and other fields could not have developed. This contradictory process, of integration on the one hand and differentiation on the other, was to leave a profound imprint on the development of their cultural relations from the ninth to the nineteenth century, when it became a subject of scientific study.

In 1826, in the Hungarian city of Buda, Pavel Jozef Safarik published the first serious attempt to present an overall view of the development of Slav culture, under the title *Geschichte der Slawischen Sprache und Literatur nach allen Mundarten* (History of Slav Literature and Language in all its Dialects). The theme and conception of this work, its language and its place and date of publication, together with the personality of the author himself, constitute a striking example of relations between the Slavs and the social and historical circumstances in which these relations evolved.

Safarik has a rightful place in the history both of Czech and of Slovak culture and literature. A Slovak by birth, and in his youth a poet in that language, he became a teacher in the Serbian high school at Novi Sad, capital of one of the provinces of the Hapsburg Empire. He was also a Czech scholar, and did not altogether favour the movement for the creation of a specific Slovak literary language, which reflected the nationalist aspirations of Slovakia at the time and which led to a rupture in the old Czech-Slovak linguistic and cultural community.

Safarik was neither an exception in his age, nor in Slav cultural history as a whole. Cultural relations between the Slavs have always been influenced to an important extent by the action of such bilingual figures who wrote in two languages. The Greek brothers Cyril and Methodius who, according to their biographers, were fluent speakers of the Slavonic tongue, used their knowledge of the dialect spoken by the Slav population of their native Thessalonica to lay the foundations of the first Slavonic written language, created in Great Moravia; they were also the authors of the earliest Slav literature which their Moravian disciples carried with them to the lands of the South Slavs, who participated enthusiastically in this further development. In their turn, and right up to the sixteenth century, hundreds of South Slavs settled in Russia, and contributed to the literary and cultural development of the East Slavs. The late tenth-century Archbishop of Prague, Voytech (Saint Adalbert), was a Czech who became one of the patron saints of Poland; the writer and humanist Bartolemy Paprocký, born in Poland, earned a niche for himself in the history of Czech culture. These are only two among many examples of the dual attachments which characterized Czech-Polish cultural relations from the early Middle Ages to the Renaissance and beyond.

In the seventeenth century, this tradition was continued by Jan Amos Komensky (Comenius), leader of the old Protestant church of the Moravian and Bohemian Brethren, who were expelled from their homeland by the agents of the Counter-Reformation and who settled in the Polish city of Leszno.

As an example of Ukrainian-Serbian "biliteral" relations, we may mention Emanuil Kozačinski: graduate of a seminary in Kiev, he became the founder of the Slav-Serbian theatre during the first half of the eighteenth century.

In addition to these and other well-known figures whose names have come down to us through history, there were, of course, a great number of anonymous intermediaries who took advantage of the similarity of language and the relative ease of assimilation in Slav countries other than their own. These included an uninterrupted flow of jesters, jugglers, singers and other "wandering players", humble people for the most part, who, long before the Slav nations emerged as modern States and long before Safarik, contributed to what the latter's friend the Czech-speaking Slovak poet Jan Kollar (another example of Czech-Slovak dual attachment) called the *Vzaimnost* or "togetherness" of the Slavs.

It is also worth noting that Safarik's *History* was published in the Hungarian capital, which was at the time an important centre not only of Hungarian nationalism, but also of the movement for national resurgence of the Slavs. Besides Buda, other non-Slav cities where cultural relations between the Slavs themselves deve-

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The great Czech educational reformer and Protestant leader John Comenius was born in eastern Moravia in 1592. Forced into exile by the persecution of the Catholic Emperor Ferdinand II, he settled at Leszno, Poland, in 1628. His fame spread with the publication of treatises advocating full-time schooling and new teaching methods and he was invited to England, Sweden and Hungary to advise on educational matters. In 1652, Leszno was occupied and destroyed, but Comenius escaped to Amsterdam where he remained until his death in 1670. Photos: (1) Comenius, detail of an engraving by David Loggan which formed the title page of a collection of his writings on education entitled "Didactica Opera Omnia". (2) Comenius advocated separate schools adapted to meet the requirements of the different stages of a child's development. (3) Engraving at the head of a chapter of his "Orbis Sensualium Pictus" (The Visible World in Pictures), the forerunner of the illustrated school book, depicts the various branches of man's intellectual activity.

Photo] from *Jan Amos Komensky*, by A.A. Krasnovsk, Moscow

Photos Unesco

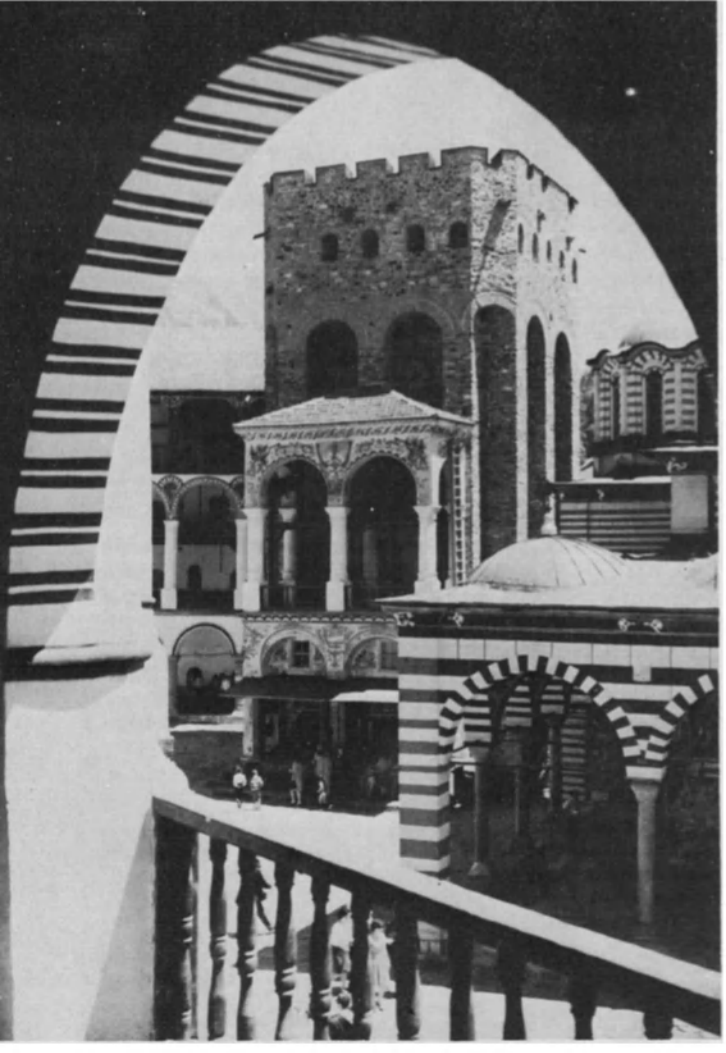


Photo © Pressfotobia, Sofia

Founded by St. John of Rila in the early 10th century, the Monastery of Rila stands on the southern slopes of the Rila Mountain in south-western Bulgaria. The imposing medieval tower is all that is left of the buildings erected in 1335 by the feudal overlord Prince Hreljo. Over the centuries the monastery was destroyed and rebuilt several times. Most of the present buildings were erected in the first half of the 19th century, following a disastrous fire in 1833, and constitute a fine example of the architecture of the "National Revival" period in Bulgaria. Throughout its chequered history, the monastery has maintained its high reputation as an important centre of European culture.

loped included Vienna, Leipzig, Dresden, Cluj in Romania, Venice and, later, Istambul and Paris.

These relations, moreover, rapidly acquired a European dimension, and became an integral component of cultural exchange and development throughout the world. Safarik, whose mastery of his native language was outstanding, deliberately wrote his *History* in German so that it might be of greater service in Slav and non-Slav cultural circles alike, and to the younger generation in particular.

The fact that translations and adaptations of Safarik's work were published in western Europe and America reflect its great relevance to the issues of the time. The concepts of a "world literature" enounced a year later by Goethe had the same objective: to set the creativity of his people in a universal cultural context at a time when, following the French Revolution and the establishment of the modern nations as fully-fledged actors on the stage of human affairs, the world was entering a new phase of development.

The movement which led to the emancipation of the Slavs, to their formation, self-determination or resurgence as nations freed from the feudalistic "prison-houses" of the Ottoman, Tsarist and Hapsburg empires, and to their mutual collaboration, found support in the ideas of the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder, who predicted a glorious future for the Slavs. But the feeling of affinity of the Slav peoples, their conviction of the significance of their own languages and cultures, including popular Slav culture, and awareness of the necessity to co-operate with each other in the struggle for national and social freedom, were founded on a thousand years of experience. Had not the Saxon historian Widikund written of the Slavs, as early as 967 A.D. that there was no suffering they would not bear for the sake of their beloved liberty *(omnem miseriam carae libertatis postponendes)...*

This steadfast attachment to freedom was growing from strength to strength at precisely the moment when Herder was ascribing a "dove-like" nature to the Slavs. And if Kollar, during the difficult period of the Holy Alliance, spoke of the Slav cultural community as being as harmless as "a gentle ewe-lamb in the life of the peoples", he probably did not share Herder's point of view. After all, the advocates of *Vzaimnost* were also freedom-fighters, and the struggle for liberty which had begun with the peasant risings of the eighteenth century bore clear signs of mutual collaboration between the Slavs.

Poles are known to have participated in the storm of revolt that swept over east and south-east Russia in 1773 under the leadership of the Cossack Emel'yan Pugachev. Pushkin's reference to this fact after the suppression of the Decembrist Revolt in Russia in 1825 and the Polish Rising in 1830-1831 (two of the most important rebellions against the same Tsarist tyranny) was highly apposite; his words conceal allusions to the clandestine democratic movements which existed at the time in Russia, the Ukraine and Poland, and which were preparing programmes for the liberation of the Slavs. One of these movements was even called the *Obshchestvo soyedinennykh slavyan* (the Society of United Slavs).

If the ideas and example of the French Revolution conserved their significance during the period of triumph of the European *anciens régimes,* it should be pointed out that in the Slav countries the seeds of freedom fell on soil already prepared by earlier generations. Already in 1775 seven thousand Czech peasants in the eastern part of the country had risen in armed revolt, with a rallying-cry of "Freedom or Death!" thus anticipating later events in France.

In 1824, as punishment for having belonged to a secret society of students in Vilno, the young Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz was exiled to Russia. The Tsarist authorities hoped thus to neutralize this militant member of the Polish national liberation movement and, if possible, to convert him to the imperial reason of the Romanovs. In fact, this short-sighted act on the part of the tyrants facilitated his contacts with the Decembrist rebels and all who shared their views, and created the conditions for the friendly intimacy and creative collaboration that characterized the association between the two greatest Slav poets of their age—Adam Mickiewicz and Alexander Pushkin.

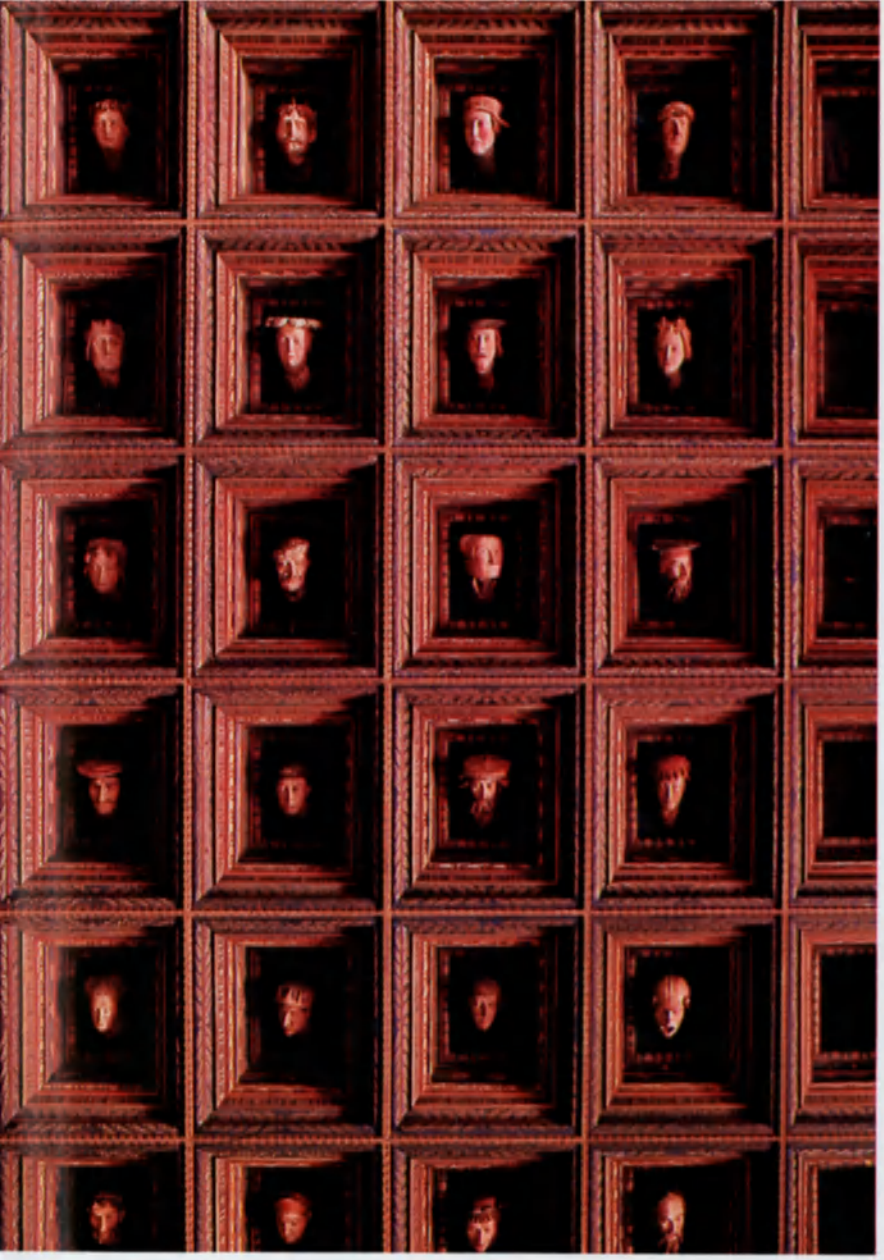
Pushkin and Mickiewicz undoubtedly reinforced each other's views concerning the importance of the poetry of the people in the new and genuinely national literature that they were creating. This is reflected in the former's *Songs of the South Slavs*, and in Mickiewicz's *Forefather's Eve* and *Pan Tadeusz*.

Interest in folklore, its collection, and the re-working of popular themes had begun during the second half of the fifteenth century, when the Hungarian poet Janus Pannonius creatively transposed into Latin verse the picturesqueness of Croatian

CONTINUED PAGE 72

Colour page

Slav art has many facets, from portraits of cossacks and courtiers to the churchman's cap fashioned with masterly precision. The cossack, a favourite theme in Ukrainian art, is here depicted by an anonymous 19th century painter. He is playing a bandore, a stringed instrument still used in the Orient and in some Slav countries. Top left, detail of the coffer ceiling of the Deputies' Hall in the Wawel Castle, Cracow (Poland). The Castle, whose origins go back to the early Middle Ages, was rebuilt between 1507 and 1536 by Italian and Polish craftsmen whose collaboration resulted in a highly original blend of Polish and Italian art. Carved by local Polish artists, the wooden heads in each panel of the ceiling form a gallery of symbolic studies and realistic portraits of court personalities. Top right, a gilded mitre produced by Muscovite jewellers in 1685. It was given to the Metropolitan of Kiev, Gedeon Sviatopolk, by Tsars Ivan V and Peter I (then ruling jointly) and the Tsarina Sophia.

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i die madyan · quia omnis violenta

Dialogue with the West

A fruitful interplay of ideas and talent

by Igor F. Belza

THE Curies, Polish scientist Maria Sklodowska and her French husband Pierre Curie, who played a major role in the discovery of radioactivity at the turn of the century, constitute perhaps the most striking, and romantic, example of the interplay of scientific and cultural ideas between the Slavs and the West. Yet this "marriage of minds" between Slav scientists and artists and their Western counterparts had begun long before. During the eighteenth century, Mikhail Lomonosov (1711-1765) in Russia and Antoine Lavoisier (1743-1794) in France each discovered independently the law of conservation of mass.

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The Sorbs, or Wends, of Lusatia (Lausitz) are the descendants of a Slavic people who settled in the 9th century in the Elbe valley between present day Dresden and Cottbus in the German Democratic Republic. Some 100,000 Sorbs still live in this area, maintaining their cultural and linguistic traditions. Below, Sorbian women in traditional costume.

Photo © Grosse, German Democratic Republic

Opposite page

One of the most important of the Slav manuscripts that remain from the Middle Bulgarian period (13th to 14th century) is the Tsar Ivan Aleksandur Gospel (or London Gospel), copied by the monk Siméon, in 1356, for the "Tsar of all the Bulgars and the Greeks", and now preserved in the British Museum. The miniature reproduced here (top half of page) portrays the Last Judgement. The artist has included a portrait of Tsar Ivan Aleksandur who is seen standing beside the Virgin Mary at the bottom left of the miniature. Bottom right of page, a pastoral scene from the *Liber Viaticus,* a 14th-century manuscript now in the National Museum of Prague. Bottom left, Satan dressed as a monk; a miniature from the Codex of Jena, a ferociously satirical illuminated manuscript dating from the end of the 15th century in which Hussite reformers attacked the hierarchy of the Church.

Photo © British Museum, London
Photos © Antonin Blaha, Library of the National Museum of Prague

Photo V. Zamaraev © Photokhronika Tass

'He sang of love, to love subjected'

(Eugene Onegin)

"He was the beginning of all beginnings", wrote Dostoevsky of Alexander Pushkin, the first in a line of towering figures in Russian literature. His was a brief but tumultuous life. "I have to spend much time in society," he wrote. "My wife is a woman of fashion, and it all requires money; but I can only acquire money through work, and work means solitude." Below, a painting of his wife Natalya. It was in defending her honour that, in 1837, he was mortally wounded in a duel.

Photo © Pushkin Museum, Moscow

Mickiewicz by Pushkin

Generally considered the greatest poet of Poland, Mickiewicz met Pushkin in Moscow in 1826. Both these great Romantic writers were strongly influenced by the English poet Byron.

Photos © Luc Joubert, Paris

Photos © Russian Museum of History, Moscow

Voltaire by Pushkin

Pushkin wrote of Voltaire that his every line was a precious gift to posterity. Like the children of most aristocratic families of the day, Pushkin learned to speak and read French at an early age.

Pushkin by Pushkin

One of over sixty self-portraits by the great Russian poet, this sketch shows how Pushkin visualized himself in old age, which, ironically, he was never to attain.

The same intermingling of Slav and Western names is found in the history of philosophy. Among the contemporaries of René Descartes, the father of rationalist philosophy, were the "Polish Brethren", hundreds of whose works (especially those of Simon Budny and Wolcogen) were published in Amsterdam in 1656 under the general title *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum*. The work of these writers was of great importance to the seventeenth-century Dutch philosopher Spinoza (especially in the elaboration of his *Ethics)* and also influenced the English philosopher John Locke, whose studies in their turn contributed to the development of French materialist philosophy.

Another contemporary of the Polish Brethren was the great Czech educationist and "teacher of the people", Jan Amos Komensky (Comenius), whose *Didactics* was well known in both Slav and Western countries. He believed that the principles of humanism should be assimilated at an early age, and devised a harmonious, all-embracing system of education. Echoes of his teachings can be found in the ideas and methods of the famous Swiss educational reformer Pestalozzi.

Investigation of the cultural history of the Slav peoples has drawn attention to a number of remarkable figures who were half-hidden in the shadows of the ages. One example is the educationist Gyorgi-Franciszek Skorina, Byelorussia's first printer, who acquired wide learning during his travels in the West. Another is the eighteenth-century Ukrainian Grigori Skovoroda, poet and self-styled "wandering philosopher". The names of Skorina and Skovoroda are today inscribed in the history of European humanism.

Slav thinkers (including historians, writers and artists, as well as philosophers) have always been profoundly attracted by moral and ethical issues, and it is in this field that the West has been most receptive to the artistic and intellectual values created by the Slavs. Nowhere is this more strikingly revealed than in the creative relationship and warm friendship that united the French painter Delacroix and the Polish musician Chopin. Delacroix met many writers, artists and musicians during his life and was on close terms with a number of them. None, however, impressed him more than Chopin. During the composer's last years, Delacroix frequently visited "this great man who is dying". A few months after Chopin's death, he wrote in his *Journal* for 13 February 1850: "Princess Marceline... played some pieces by Chopin. Nothing banal, perfect composition. What could be more complete? He resembles Mozart more than anyone else. Like Mozart's, his themes occur so spontaneously, one might have thought of them oneself."

Later he compared Chopin to Dante, and portrayed him as "the greatest of poets" ("altissimo poeta"), both in his decoration of the ceiling of the library of the Senate in Paris, and in a drawing inscribed "Cher Chopin" which was probably made shortly after his friend's death.

There is an undeniable similarity between the ideas and aspirations of the two masters. Many of Delacroix's paintings, including *Dante and Virgil Crossing the Styx, The Massacre at Chios, Liberty Guiding the People,* and *Greece Expiring on the Ruins of Missolonghi,* reflect a romantic perception of nature and a violent denunciation of evil and injustice.

In Chopin's sonatas, his *ballades,* his fantasias and many of his preludes and studies, Delacroix heard not only a Dantesque "outcry of anger", but also an incessant call to combat.

Masterpieces of Western literature have had a great influence on Slav writers. Writing of the summits of literary achievement, Pushkin set the works of Goethe on the same high level as those of Dante, Shakespeare and Milton. The Faustian theme of a passionate search for the absolute on earth has received highly original treatment in the works of some Slav writers. In one curious example, Mikhail Bulgakov's posthumously published novel *The Master and Marguerite,* the Faust theme is actually turned upside down, thus prompting one critic to dub it an "Anti-Faust".

The names of Gustave Flaubert and Ivan

Mickiewicz by Delacroix

Mickiewicz settled in Paris in 1832 and later taught Slavonic literature at the Collège de France. His friendship with Chopin drew him into the coterie that formed around George Sand and which included Delacroix.

Chopin by Delacroix

Delacroix was a fervent admirer as well as an intimate friend of Chopin. In this sketch, made probably just after the Polish composer's death, he depicts Chopin in the guise of Dante, the "altissimo poeta". The sketch bears Delacroix's touching inscription "Cher Chopin" (dear Chopin).

Photo © Hachette, Louvre Museum, Paris

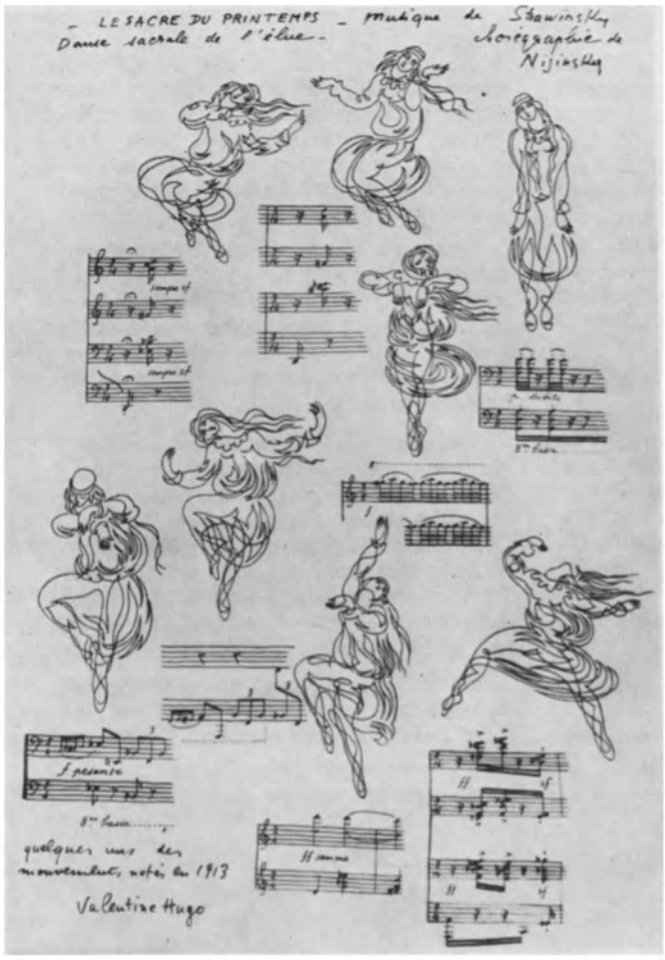

Photo © Roger Viollet, Paris

All the world's a stage

St. Petersburg became a world centre of ballet in the 19th century and produced some of the greatest ballet dancers of all time, including Anna Pavlova and Vaslav Nijinsky. The tradition is maintained today by the world renowned Kirov Ballet. Left, extracts from the score of Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring" with notations of the choreography created by Nijinsky for Sergey Diaghilev's Ballet Russes. They were sketched in 1913 by the French painter and stage designer Valentine Hugo.

Turgenev are in many ways symbolic of the creative union and mutual enrichment of Western and Slav literature. Turgenev's translation of Flaubert's *Légende de Saint Julien l'Hospitalier* is an outstanding example of the truth of Stendhal's dictum that affection for a writer's work is a prerequisite to successful translation.

Hundreds of characters from the "human comedy" throng the pages of Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky and Chekhov. Despite the specifically Russian aspects of their experiences, feelings and tragedies, they form part of the heritage of all mankind, along with the angry protests and satirical denunciations of social injustice, which reach the heights of intensity in Gogol's *Dead Souls* and *The Government Inspector.*

"I am sending you a morsel of contraband", wrote the Austrian Ambassador to Russia, Count Finkelmon, to Pushkin. The contraband in question was a new novel by Balzac, whose works had been banned by Tsar Nicholas I. And in 1850, the Czech educator Vaclav Bendl warmly observed in the *Journal of the Czech Museum* that the name of Pushkin had become a symbol of all who refused subjection.

In a conversation with the author of this article, a group of English specialists once declared that Chekhov's dramatic works marked the most significant development in the history of world theatre since Shakespeare. Their view was that the Russian dramatist had invented the "non-star" principle by breaking with the tradition whereby one central figure overshadows all the others. The judicious choice of a "star" to play Hamlet was enough, they said, to guarantee a successful performance of the play. But neither in *The Cherry Orchard,* nor in *The Three Sisters,* nor even in *The Seagull* is there such a central figure in the generally accepted sense of the term; what is developed is a *system* of interrelated characters.

There is no need to dwell on the recognition which the classics of Russian and Polish literature have attained in the West, nor on the reception accorded in the Slav countries to Italian, French, English, German, Spanish and Scandinavian masterpieces. It is worth mentioning, however, that it was not merely the artistic power of

Photo © VTO, Moscow

Above, Olga Knipper Chekhova in the role of Pernelle in Molière's "Tartuffe". She was a member of the company of the Academic Art Theatre of Moscow and married the great Russian author Anton Chekhov in 1901 after appearing in several of his plays.

Photo R. Kucherov © APN, Moscow

Left, Shakespeare as seen through the eyes of the great Russian director Georgei Tovstonogov. Actresses of the Gorky Drama Theatre, Leningrad, in a scene from "Henry IV, Part 1".

the great Slav writers that attracted the great masters of Western literature, but also the languages in which they wrote. In his eulogy of Pushkin, Prosper Mérimée observed that no European language, with the exception of Latin, could render the beauty and laconic expressiveness of the Russian writer's poem *Anchar* ("The Upas Tree"). To make his point, he went on to translate part of the poem into the language of Virgil.

In music, the cultural links between the Slavs and the West, which became particularly solid and varied, were established at an early date.

The works of Glinka, Borodin, Mussorgsky, Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Skriabin, Chopin, Szymanowski, Smetana, Dvorak and Janacek are all part of the established repertory of world music.

Both Glinka and Rimsky-Korsakov treated Spanish themes, while the latter turned to Ancient Rome for a scene in his opera *Sevilla*. Szymanowski portrayed medieval Sicily, while Dvorak included themes inspired by Longfellow's *Hiawatha* in his Ninth Symphony ("From the New World"). Rachmaninov and Moszkowski were both inspired by the poetry of Edgar Allan Poe.

It should also be said that Bach, and to an even greater extent the four great Viennese composers—Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert—introduced "Slavisms" into their works. Beethoven's three "Razumovsky Quartets", commissioned by and named after the Russian Ambassador in Vienna, contain the melodies of popular Russian songs. Haydn, who was born in the Croatian village of Trstnik (re-baptised Rohrau by the Hapsburg authorities), and who may well have spoken Croatian as his mother tongue in childhood, thought highly of the popular music of the Slav peoples. Mozart and other Viennese composers followed his example, and their works contain creative adaptations of the beautiful and profoundly emotional songs and dances of the Czech, Slovak, Polish, Ukrainian and other Slav populations of the "patchwork monarchy" of the Hapsburgs.

A picturesque example of this interplay of influences is to be found in the "pastoral intermezzo" which Tchaikovsky incorporated in his opera *The Queen of Spades*. The composer, who wished to give a Mozartian flavour to this section, borrowed a theme from one of Mozart's piano concertos. But Mozart himself had taken this theme from the gentle melody of a traditional Czech folk-song, *Mela jsem holoubka* ("I had a dove").

The attraction of Slav music in the West has persisted up to modern times. The world is familiar with the brilliant orchestration of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition,* created by Ravel who, like his older contemporary Debussy, warmly admired the five Russian composers (Balakirev, Borodin, Cui, Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov) who were known as "the mighty handful". This admiration was, and remains, mutual, as may be seen from the recent publication in Moscow of a multivolume edition of the works of Debussy and Ravel, and of studies of these great composers by Russian musicologists.

■ **Igor F. Belza**

Photo © Iskusstvo Publishers, Moscow

An amusing example of the Russian popular engravings known as "lubok", this late 17th-century woodcut is a satirical attack on Peter the Great (1672-1725) by the *Raskolniki* (Old Believers) who were fiercely opposed to his far-reaching reforms which affected every field of national life. He is depicted as "the Cat of Kazan". The neatly groomed whiskers are a jibe at the Tsar's own moustachios

Photo Helen Plukhina © Aurora Publishers, Leningrad

Peter the Great's 'Window on the West'

Leningrad, the U.S.S.R.'s second city, lies on the Baltic at the eastern end of the Gulf of Finland. Founded in 1703 by Peter the Great as a "window on the west", it was named St. Petersburg and became Russia's capital from 1712 to 1918. Famed for its wide boulevards, its palaces and public buildings, the city is threaded by many branches of the Neva delta and has countless bridges, most of them crossing canals such as the Winter Canal (above).

Photo © Tass, Moscow

Photo © Iskusstvo Publishers, Moscow

The State Hermitage Museum, one of some 50 museums in Leningrad, is world famous for its masterpieces. Founded in 1764 by the Empress Catherine II as a private gallery for the art she had amassed, it was first opened to the public in 1852. The Hermitage has rich collections of Oriental art, notably that of the Central Asian steppes, as well as masterpieces of west European painting since the Middle Ages and fine collections of drawings, coins and medals. Above, visitors throng the entrance to the Hermitage.

As part of his aims to westernize Russian institutions and customs, Peter decreed that beards should be shorn. Old Believers and merchants who insisted on keeping their beards had to pay a special tax. This *lubok* showing a barber cutting off the beard of an Old-Believer merchant may have been printed with the Tsar's permission.

These two spheres side by side evoke steps in the conquest of space from the Middle Ages to the present day. Copper Arab astrolabe (right) dating from 1054 was still being used at the Jagiellonian University (Poland) when Copernicus was a student there in the late 15th century. Opposite page: the historic link-up of a Soviet Soyuz-19 and a U.S. Apollo spacecraft on 17 July 1975 is depicted in this mock-up on permanent display in Moscow. (See *Unesco Courier,* Jan. 1978).

Photo © Almasy, Paris

From Copernicus to Korolev

A 500-year journey into space

by Bogdan Suchodolsky

A cosmonaut circles the Earth in a spacecraft. At a given moment, he steps out of his seemingly fragile vessel and walks among the stars. Such images come easily to the modern mind, now that space travel has become a fact. But before Man took his first "walk" in space, another long and arduous journey of discovery was necessary, during which thinkers puzzled out the laws of the universe and technologists created the means whereby the age-old dream of space travel could come true.

To conquer the force of gravity, Man had first to understand the world around him and to multiply his own strength. For centuries scientists in many countries grappled with the problem, interweaving hopes and aspirations, and philosophical and poetic reveries, with mathematical calculations.

Poland set off on this road to understan-

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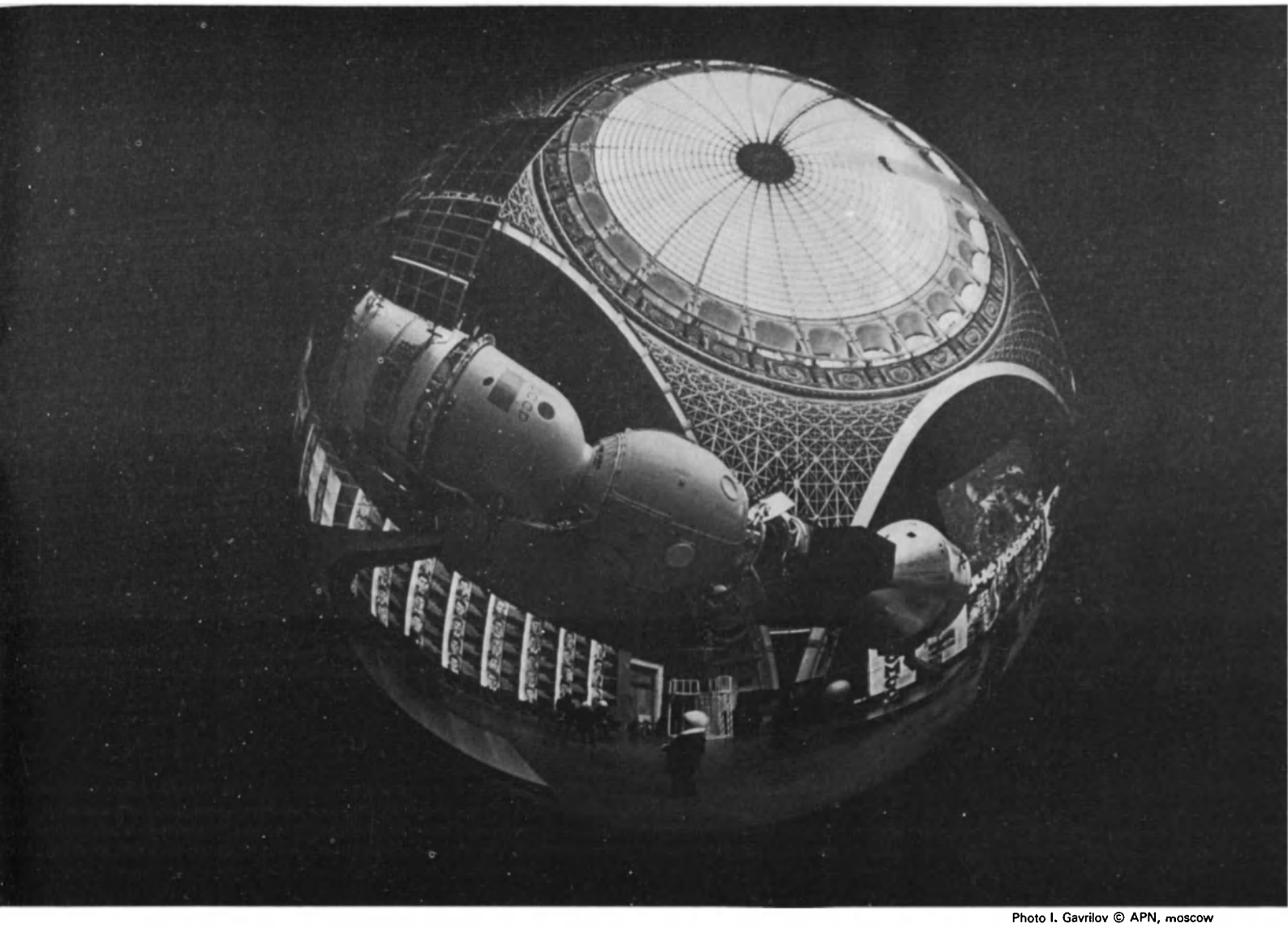

Photo I. Gavrilov © APN, moscow

ding during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In the thirteenth century, the philosopher Witelo developed a theory on the nature of material reality, the principles of mathematical reasoning, the analysis of natural phenomena (especially human physiology and psychology) and astronomy. His treatise on perspective, which is the only part of his great work to have survived, was transcribed many times during the Middle Ages, and often reprinted during the sixteenth century. Witelo's studies on the properties of light, used by the German astronomer Johannes Kepler in his own research at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, were a mixture of metaphysical speculation and physical science. What he called *lumen divinum* (or "divine light") was, he believed, the original form of existence of nature, and of man as capable of perceiving it.

Another Pole, Nicolas Copernicus, took a decisive step along the road to the stars. His daring heliocentric theory set the Sun at the centre of the universe and at the source of life. This theory is sometimes mistakenly reduced to the idea that the Earth is spinning through the universe. But if Copernicus "set the Earth in Motion", he also—and this was the most important thing—"stopped the Sun in its tracks." He not only rejected the traditional belief that the Earth was the centre of the universe, but spoke out against the school of thought according to which, and on the basis of evidence produced by the senses, it was the Sun, and not the Earth, that moved.

Copernicus had many disciples, in his own country as well as elsewhere. In his well-equipped private observatory, Jan Helvelius (1611-1687) carried out many complicated astronomical observations, and his *Selenography* (1647), a description of the Moon's surface, illustrated with splendid maps, made him famous throughout Europe. This treatise broke new ground, and combined the expression of mankind's nostalgic affection for Earth's silvery satellite with detailed descriptions based on meticulous research.

While Helvelius was devoting his attention to deciphering the Moon's secrets, another man, the engineer Kazimezh Semenovich, was examining the possibilities of actually getting there. His treatise on ballistics (1650) was translated into many languages, and astonishingly enough contains proposals for a multi-stage rocket.

Helvelius's astronomical calculations and Semenovich's intuitive technical conjectures were to be brought together in a single field of research and aspiration.

One of the leading popularizers of Copernicus's teaching was Bishop John Wilkins, the author of *Mathematicall Magick* (1648) and of a number of other works, and a founding member of the Royal Society in England. Drawing inspiration from the Polish astronomer's ideas, Wilkins posed a problem raised by the discovery of other worlds: the problem of interplanetary flight.

Although he wrote that a winged construction of some kind appeared to offer the best means of effecting such journeys, he himself, on the basis of his study of Galileo's mechanics in particular, favoured the solution of a "flying chariot".

Another self-confessed disciple of

Photo Hachette © Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

The great Polish astronomer Nicholas Copernicus (1473-1543) "set the earth in motion" and "stopped the sun in its tracks" by disproving the accepted theory, formulated in Antiquity by Ptolemy, that the earth was the motionless centre of the universe. His theory of a heliocentric system in which the earth was a moving planet laid the foundations for later developments in astronomy. Above, Copernicus as depicted in a 17th-century engraving by Edme de Boulonois of Brussels.

Reaching for the stars

Copernicus was the French poet Cyrano de Bergerac (1619-1655) among whose works was a science fiction novel, published posthumously, entitled "The States and Empires of the Sun". In this fantastic tale, the narrator describes how, after a scientific discussion with his friends, he returned home disillusioned with reading dry-as-dust learned treatises and determined to find out for himself whether the Earth was actually spinning through space, and whether life existed in distant worlds. Inspired by an original idea, he tied around himself a number of flasks filled with dew, believing that the dew would be transformed into steam by the sun's rays, and would carry him into the upper layers of the atmosphere.

This section of the novel, like many others, contains hypotheses whose fallacy has long since been demonstrated; but this in no way detracts from the work's significance. We should forgive Cyrano for his errors—after all, he lived in an age when the theory of gravity was still in its infancy—and by acknowledging the existence of innumerable other worlds, he struck a blow against conservatism of thought.

In the Slav countries, another step on the road to the stars took place during the eighteenth century. In western Europe during this period progress in the natural sciences was developing through the application of empirical and rationalistic methods in certain specific fields. Among the Slavs, however, these methods were utilized not only for piecemeal research, but also in an endeavour to create an interdisciplinary synthesis, through which the universe might be explained as a dynamic entity. This was a complex vision of things, the accuracy of which could only be partially established at the time and which consisted for the most part of bold hypotheses which would only be verified in subsequent centuries.

Two outstanding personalities should be mentioned at this point. The first was Roudjer Boskovich (1711-1787), a Croatian philosopher and scientist, whose work reflected the theories of both Newton and Leibniz and contained the seeds of future theories of relativity and non-Euclidian geometry. Boskovich attempted to construct a mathematical model of matter based on dynamic rather than mechanistic concepts, and prepared a draft outline of a philosophy of the universe which differed considerably from that which was generally accepted at the time.

The second great figure was Mikhail Lomonosov (1711-1765), the great Russian scientist and encyclopaedist, a member of the Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences and the founder of Moscow University. His research in chemistry and physics opened the way to the corpuscular theory of matter, while his philosophy, which was in direct opposition both to the rationalism of Descartes and the empiricism of Locke, was an attempt to unseat the mechanistic conception of the world.

Substantial progress was made in this direction during the century that followed. The "Copernicus of geometry", as the distinguished Russian mathematician Nikolai Lobachevsky (1792-1856) was called, was one of the creators of non-Euclidian geometry. His system played an important role in the development of modern science.

Not long after this began the career of Konstantin Tsiolkovsky (1857-1935), the Polish-born Russian scientist who was the founder of modern astronautics. His work entitled "The exploration of cosmic space with the aid of jet-propelled engines", published in 1903, set out for the first time a theory of controlled flight under both gravitational and non-gravitational conditions, and paved the way for the use of rockets for interplanetary travel. In 1929, Tsiolkovsky published a second, equally innovatory work, "Cosmic rocket ships", which laid the foundations for the first interplanetary flights.

Tsiolkovsky's activity brought to a close

Photo © Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

the long "pre-space" era and turned a new page which would be inscribed with the story of Man's final realization of his ancient dreams. The real conquest of space began in our century, as a result of further advances in the natural sciences, in technology and—more especially—in mathematics and astronautics.

A large group of Russian scientists worked on these subjects during the early years of the century. Nikolai Zhukovsky (1847-1921), known as "the father of Russian aviation", created in Moscow the first European Institute of Aerodynamics, and devoted much attention to the development of techniques of rocketry. The younger generation of scientists, technicians and pilots followed in the steps of their elders; S.P. Korolev (1906-1966) was a particularly outstanding Soviet scientist, whose work contributed to the creation of the huge rockets used for launching the first artificial satellites, the first flights towards the Moon, Venus and Mars, and the first journeys of the cosmonauts in outer space.

The activities of Korolev, the construction of the first *sputniks,* the first space flight by Yuri Gagarin and Aleksei Leonov's famous walk among the stars marked the final stages of a journey that had lasted for five centuries, and had led from an intuitive and theoretical understanding of the structure of the universe to the opening of its very doors.

■ **Bogdan Suchodolsky**

Photo © APN, Paris

"He was in himself our first university," wrote Pushkin of the Russian polymath Mikhail Lomonosov (1711-1765). A poet and linguistic reformer as well as a scientist whose research ranged from studies on metals and gases to astronomy and geology, in 1755 Lomonosov helped to found Moscow University, which is named after him. Left, portrait of Lomonosov by an unknown artist.

"The Astral System of Copernicus" is the theme of a stained glass window designed for Cracow's "House of Physicians" by Stanislaw Wyspianski (1869-1907), an outstanding figure in modern Polish art. Below, detail of the cartoon design for this composition, showing Apollo, symbol of the sun.

Photo Stanislaw Lopatka © National Museum, Cracow

Mankind has always dreamed of achieving mastery of space. Below left, illustration from *The States and Empires of the Sun* (1662), a science fiction novel by the French author Cyrano de Bergerac, a student of Copernican astronomy. The gravity-defying hero is clad in a space suit equipped with flasks containing dew which, he hopes, will be turned into steam by solar heat and propel him to the upper atmosphere. The dream became reality in 1961 when Yuri Gagarin became the first man to travel in space. Medal (below) was issued in the U.S.S.R. to commemorate his exploit.

Photo © Progress Publishers, Moscow

ARTS AND CRAFTS OF BYELO-RUSSIA

Byelorussia's first printed book

The work of the scholar and printer Gyorgi-Franciszek Skorina is a milestone in the history of Byelorussia's language and culture. Born at Polotsk in 1490, he obtained the degree of "bachelor of the seven liberal arts" at Cracow and then set off on a journey across Europe, staying in German towns, at Prague University and in Padua where he was made a doctor of medicine. During his years of wandering and study he conceived the great plan of publishing a Bible in his mother tongue, Byelorussian. "God sent me this language," he wrote, "I vow it shall become a language of books." Patiently and obstinately he raised money for his venture and recruited illustrators and engravers. Between 1517 and 1519 he translated and published 22 parts of the Bible, followed a few years later by the Acts of the Apostles. Exquisitely printed and illustrated, the Skorina Bible is widely considered to be one of the world's most beautiful books. Above, engraving showing Samson fighting a lion. Below, an episode from Exodus when the Lord commanded Moses to make a tabernacle: "And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold... And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten gold shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat."

Photos © *Engravings of Franciszek Skorina*, Belarusi Publishers, Minsk

by Evgeni M. Sakhuta

Photo © S. Sakhuta, Minsk

"Put me in the mud and I shall become a prince," says the grain of rye in an old Byelorussian proverb. According to tradition, the first seeds sown when the winter snows have melted are taken from the last sheaf harvested the previous autumn. The straw from the sheaf is laid out on the ground in the form of a cross, "so that Christ won't get his feet wet when he comes to bless the earth". Below, the first-fruits of the harvest are ceremonially knotted around the farmer's waist. Byelorussian artists create outstandingly beautiful works of art out of plaited straw. Left, detail of the remarkable "Tsars' Gate" in an 18th-century country church in the Pinsk region. Although made of straw it glows with all the majesty of gold leaf.

POPULAR decorative art holds a prominent and colourful place in Byelorussian culture. It is a highly original art, for although the objects made by Byelorussian craftsmen have much in common with those produced by their neighbours in Russia, the Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland, they have also been profoundly marked by the special circumstances of Byelorussia's social, political and cultural development as well as by the natural environment.

Only rarely has this art been created by organized groups of professional artists and craftsmen. For the most part it has been produced in a domestic setting. As a consequence it remained rooted in tradition until the early years of this century.

Working in wood, the most widely used material, Byelorussian craftsmen produced highly expressive forms of decoration, especially in the large objects such as mor-

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Photo © Institute for Studies on Art, Ethnography and Folklore, Minsk

tars, canoes, beehives and tubs which they hollowed out of tree trunks and boughs. Smaller vessels were often embellished with animal motifs, salt-cellars being carved in the form of ducks, and bucket handles being shaped to resemble the head of a horse or bird, a rooster's tail feathers or a cock's-comb.

Geometric patterns were incised on utensils used by women, such as distaffs (in the Brest-Litovsk region) and *tsurki* (sticks between 30 and 40 cm long to which sheaves were attached) which are found in central Polesie.

Pottery is one of the most ancient popular crafts of Byelorussia, and a number of old-established pottery-making centres are situated near the cities of Pinsk, Vitebsk and Minsk. Pots, basins, *zbanki* (pitchers) *sparishi* (twin vases), *sloiki* (jars) and other containers were all made out of clay. Some pottery towns specialized in producing black-glazed pottery which looked as if it were made of cast iron. This is a curious survival from prehistoric times, since Byelorussian pottery of this type has hardly changed either in shape or decoration since the Iron Age.

Other potters were renowned for their skill in making earthenware in the form of bears, lions and rams, also producing highly distinctive figurines of cockerels, ducklings, horsemen, ewes and dolls.

Along with wood-carving and pottery-making, weaving was one of the most widely practised crafts in Byelorussia, where countrywomen had little choice but to learn the art of the loom. Napkins, towels and *abrussy* (table-cloths) were woven in two or three colours arranged to form checkwork, diamond-shaped, hexagonal and other patterns. The region around Grodno specialized in rainbow-striped drapery which is today found in many parts of Poland. Geometrical patterns in white, black and red were the most common features of dress design.

The plaiting of objects out of birch-bark, willow wands, roots and straw is another ancient Byelorussian craft. Articles fashioned out of straw are particularly distinctive, as well as large wickerwork household utensils which derive their beauty from their sculptural form and from the rhythmic alternation of brown stripes of willow or hazel on a background of golden straw.

But the aesthetic potential of straw, a widely available material in Byelorussia, is best seen in decorative objects, in toys and in coffers decorated with raised wickerwork ornamentation in the form of diamonds. A masterpiece of Byelorussian craftsmanship in straw is the eighteenth-century "Tsar's Gate" in a little country church at Vabulich-Lemeshevich in the Pinsk region. Although made from the humblest of materials it glows with all the majesty of gold leaf.

The skills of Byelorussian village painters found their widest expression in the decorated coffers and chests which, from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, were increasingly used in daily life and figured prominently in the marriage ceremony. Owing to the great demand for such objects, it was inevitable that they should eventually be produced in studios by artists specializing in this form of decoration.

Since popular art was primarily utilitarian in character, it was bound to be affected by social and economic changes. Thus many domestic crafts declined in the second half of the nineteenth century and some (such as the hand-printing of textiles) died out altogether.

The radical transformation of rural life during the early Soviet period, and the improved standards of living which the workers began to enjoy, led to a temporary depreciation of many traditional utilitarian articles and reduced the people's reliance on home-made utensils, furniture, clothing and tools.

Concern for the preservation of popular handicrafts and the quest for new ways and means of promoting popular art led the Soviet Government to adopt in 1919 a decree "on assistance to domestic industry". Exhibitions of works by craftsmen and artists were organized, the problem was widely discussed in the press, and regional museums began to assemble their collections. Craft centres were opened to encourage the development and preservation of popular art.

In Byelorussia, and in the Soviet Union as a whole, popular arts and crafts are mainly produced by groups of craftsmen and artists in craft centres. As a result of their work, decorative objects of popular art, especially those made of plaited straw, are now becoming more widely familiar not only in Byelorussia but also abroad.

There has been a revival of traditional pottery-making, and weaving has taken on a new lease of life. The traditional two- or three-tone range of colours has been extended, and modern weavers are producing complicated multi-coloured patterns based on plant motifs.

The majority of modern Byelorussian wood-carvers today are creating small-scale objects inspired by traditional themes from history, folklore and everyday life, and are trying to revive the manufacture of traditional wooden utensils. Wood-carving for purposes of architectural decoration is enjoying widespread popularity.

Considerable attention is now being paid to the revival, conservation and development of popular arts and crafts. Whereas in the past national traditions and creative originality were handed down spontaneously from generation to generation, often within the same family, this task has now been assumed by professional artists, art historians and the staff of popular arts and crafts centres. A museum of popular art has recently been opened at Raubichi, near Minsk, and a museum of ancient crafts and domestic industries at Zaslavl. As well as displaying the traditional heritage, these institutions will help to train the Byelorussian craftsmen of tomorrow.

■ **Evgeni M. Sakhuta**

A PHOENIX RISING FROM THE ASHES

by Aleksandar Flaker

THE Second World War inflicted incalculable losses on Slav cultures. Monuments of rare magnificence, such as the National Museum in Belgrade with its priceless manuscripts and early printed books, crumbled under the impact of enemy bombs. The Nazis systematically plundered museums, carrying off their archives. Whole cities, Leningrad, Kiev, Minsk, Warsaw and many others, were virtually erased from the map.

All Slav intellectuals, including writers, were subjected to ruthless persecution. Here are just a few names from the long list of victims of this terror : Vladislav Vancura, a leading figure in the avant-garde of Czech literature, executed in 1942; a whole group of Croatian writers and critics, including August Cesarec, shot in 1941; Ivan Goran Kovačić, the Croatian poet and essayist, short-story writer and translator of Shelley, Keats and Rimbaud, savagely murdered in 1943; the Bulgarian poet Nikola Jonkov Vapcarov, shot in Sofia in 1942, who, before his death, addressed a moving and lyrical appeal to his wife and to the entire Bulgarian people.

Among those who fell in the ranks of the Yugoslav National Liberation Army were the Slovenian poets Karel Destovnik-Kajuh and Miran Jarc, the Croatian prose-writer Hasan Kikić, from Bosnia, the Serbian literary critic Milos Savković, the famous Macedonian poet Koćo Racin, and many others.

Yugoslavia alone lost at least 75 of her most talented writers, not to mention countless promising young poets who perished at the front or among the Partisans, while their Polish contemporaries were dying in concentration camps or in the flames of the Warsaw Rising and young Russians of the same generation were giving their lives in the struggle against the aggressor.

The war left indelible scars on the cul-

ALEKSANDAR FLAKER, *prominent Croatian-Yugoslav scholar in Slavic and comparative literature, is Vice-President of the International Association for the Study and Dissemination of Slav Cultures.*

Photo © Russian State Museum, Moscow

The Second World War left profound scars on the Slav world. This image of desolation, one of a series of Indian ink drawings entitled "It must never happen again", is by the Soviet artist Boris Prorokov, who lost both legs during the war. Many Slav writers and artists died in the struggle against Nazi barbarity.

Photo L. Heifetz © Russian Museum, Leningrad

Detail of a fresco of the Virgin Mary in the church of St. Nicholas, Novgorod. Used as a target by occupying forces in the Second World War, it evokes the fate of many works of art destroyed during the Nazi invasion.

tures of all the European countries. But this time of wholesale destruction, cultural annihilation and massacre on an unprecedented scale was also a period in which fresh literary and artistic values made their appearance, in which the foundations of a more fitting human existence were remodelled, and in which new horizons were opened for future relations between individuals, peoples and States. Thus, from the ashes of this hour of destruction arose, phoenix-like, a new literature and a new art, dedicated to the struggle towards the light and against the black forces of modern barbarism.

If, as the Soviet novelist Leonid Leonov puts it, culture is "mankind's memory", it is easy to understand why the red stain of their martyrdom remains imprinted on the cultures of peoples who endured such suffering during the 1940s, a dark age in European and world history, and yet who, among the ruins, laid the foundations of a new life.

Echoes from that wartime period are still heard in modern Polish literature, from the tragic evocation of the Warsaw ghetto in Andrzejewski's "Holy Week" to the latest prose works by the realist writer Miron Bialoszewski. Similar themes run through the new Polish cinema, from Kavalerowicz to Wajda, and the new cinema of Yugoslavia, represented by Veljko Bulajic.

The War is still a major subject in the Soviet novel, and permeates the works of Konstantin Simonov and Yuri Bondarev. Oles Goncar in the Ukraine, and Vasyl Bykau in Byelorussia draw on the war years for inspiration; the Croatian writer Miroslav Krleža has turned his attention again to the same period; and the novels of the Montenegrin writer Mihailo Lalić set wartime events in a new light.

The oppression of man, his resistance to constraints and terror of all kinds, and his liberation from the fear and threat of war, are themes which find reflection in the many sculptures and monuments which are familiar landmarks in countless Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian towns and villages. Similar monuments are to be found at the scene of battles and suffering which already seem a part of distant history, but which are not to be forgotten, for they were the battles and sufferings of whole peoples, indeed, of all mankind.

■ **Aleksandar Flaker**

THE COMMON HERITAGE

continued from page 56

songs and laments. During the nineteenth century, this tendency was to be transformed into a powerful and enduring current. The ancient Slav tradition inspired not only Pushkin and Mickiewicz, but also Killar Ljudovit Stur, the founder of the Slovak literary language; Vuk Karadzic, who established Serbo-Croatian on a similar literary footing; the Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko and many other prominent figures of Slav culture.

The general tradition of Slav folklore also gave rise to endeavours to create a new "national music". These attempts were at first reflected in the composition of "popular songs" which were often the product of cross-cultural collaboration. For example, Czech musicians were actively involved in the development of Russian music at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The works of Tchaikovsky and his lively contacts with other Slav composers, particularly Czechs, Dvorak's *Slavonic Dances* and the long career of Josef Suk as a composer and conductor in Russia are just a few examples of collaboration of this kind. Out of this current of "Slav music", fed by the tributaries of individual popular traditions, emerged the works of outstanding composers of worldwide renown, from the operas of Smetana, Glinka and Moniusko to Stravinsky's ballet *Petrushka*.

The work of the Czech composer Leos Janacek (1854-1928) is a brilliant example of inter-Slav cultural exchange. His cantata *Taras Bulba* is based on a poem by the Ukrainian Shevchenko; the libretto of the opera *Katya Kabonova* comes from a play by the Russian dramatist Ostrovsky; another of his operas, *From the House of the Dead*, is based on a novel by Dostoevsky; and finally, his *Glagolitic Mass* draws its inspiration from Slavonic literature and ancient Russian music. All these creations reflect at the same time the living tradition of popular Slav music, which Janacek had studied in great detail.

The continuation of the process of crystallization of their national musical culture may be observed today among different Slav peoples—among the Slovaks, for example, where imaginative adaptations of popular songs written by one of the founders of "national" Slovak music, Stefan Fajnor, are found alongside the operas of composers like Suchon and Cikker.

Constant awareness of their affinity and a feeling of belonging to a single family of peoples was natural to the Slavs, who could understand each other without interpreters and who recognized the great similarity between the historical destinies of their countries. And this awareness came to the surface in different social, spiritual and historical circumstances time and time again between the ninth and the nineteenth centuries. It formed the background to the development of all the various themes and forms of artistic creation, particularly among the common people, who also served as intermediaries for its transmission. It found an echo when the Slav peoples, one by one, were converted to Christianity, and lay at the foundations of their literacy. It facilitated the dissemination of the "heretical" ideas of the Bogomils, the Hussites, the Arians and the Moravian and Bohemian Brethren, and the circulation of the humanist ideals of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. And it made itself felt even more strongly during the age of Romanticism.

The founder of modern Czech poetry, Karel Hynek Macha, who was a contemporary of Mickiewicz and Pushkin, appears in the broad context of world literature and culture as a confirmed "Byronist". Closer examination, based on more detailed knowledge of cross-cultural influences between peoples of different regions, reveals him rather as a direct heir of the Polish pre-Romantic and Romantic tradition. This is merely one of many examples of the participation of the Slavs in the development of world culture, either anticipating major trends or joining in them. Throughout this participation is marked by the reciprocity and "togetherness" of the Slavs, mentioned above. Thus, Czech actors, singers and directors played an important part both in the creation of a national South Slav theatre, particularly among the Slovenes and the Croatians, and in setting this theatre in a broader European context.

The idea of a cultural "commonwealth" of Slavs, which found reflection in the works of so many Slav writers, was closely related to the ideals of justice, universal freedom and the common good. On the eve of the revolution of 1848, Taras Shevchenko praised, in a single line of verse, both Safarik and Jan Hus, the spiritual father of nationalist and anti-feudal revolt. In the same stormy year, the Slovak poet Karol Kusmany raised his voice in praise of all "who were inflamed with the desire for truth and were prepared to make the supreme sacrifice for it, and those who devoted their lives to the cause of human rights". The words, "sweet freedom" that appear in his verse echo the *liberté chérie* of a French song of the same period. And this should come as no surprise, since there was no such thing as a completely isolated and introverted "Slav world"; the leading representatives of the culture of the Slavs readily acknowledged that cultural relations between themselves only made sense when their purpose was to serve all mankind, and to contribute to "the general ordering of human affairs". This was the message of freedom and universal equality that Jan Amos Komensky had pronounced two hundred years earlier.

Jan Komensky (Comenius) himself is inscribed in history as an outstanding educationist, the founder of pedagogical science and the author of profoundly humanistic teachings concerning the achievement of universal peace and justice through mutual understanding and cultural and scientific collaboration between peoples, and through universal education, irrespective of religion, nationality, sex or class.

The noble concepts of Comenius, the "teacher of the people", might well serve for all time as a sure guide and a standard by which to measure the value and significance of cultural relations between peoples, and groups of peoples throughout the world.

■ **Slavomir Vollman**

Letters to the editor

RETURN TO THE HOMELAND

Sir,

I have read with interest, and a certain amount of sympathy, the article by M. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow appealing for the return of art treasures to their country of origin. *(Unesco Courier,* July 1978).

Surely a distinction should be made between those objects acquired illegally and those which were rescued, repaired, and have been exhibited with loving care, and which would otherwise have gone forever.

Some years ago I had the privilege of visiting New York's magnificent Cloisters at Fort Tryon. Until then I had regarded the Americans as "snappers up of unconsidered trifles", but after seeing tapestries collected piece by piece, cleaned and mounted to make a whole, I couldn't help remarking, "If that's how they look after them they are welcome to the rest."

D.M. Skippings
Yarmouth, Norfolk
U.K.

HARNESSING THE ATOM

Sir,

Congratulations on your June 1978 issue on energy sources; every article dealt with an extremely important aspect of the energy problem. However, one potential source was not discussed—that of the enormous energy, so far fortunately unused, stored in and for nuclear weapons. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), this energy amounts to one million times the force of the Hiroshima bomb.

If the world is wise and successfully urges the nuclear powers to dismantle their weapons and to place their plutonium gradually under the custody and at the disposal of the United Nations Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, humanity will have an invaluable and ready source of energy for years to come.

A. Loeff
Rotterdam
The Netherlands

THE WORLD'S FIRST WOMAN PH. D?

Sir,

In your July 1978 issue the young Venetian Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia, who received her doctorate at the University of Padua 300 years ago, is called the world's first woman Ph.D.

But she was *not* the first female doctor! That distinction belongs to Hypatia, who taught in Alexandria in the 5th century A.D.

1

2

The daughter of a mathematician, Theon of Alexandria, she was herself a prominent mathematician, astronomer and philosopher. She wrote a number of astronomical and mathematical commentaries, including one on conic sections.

After a rigorous education she became a professor, with the right to wear the philosopher's cape and to give lectures. A representative of pagan, Neoplatonist scholarship, she was murdered by fanatic Christians in the year 415 after the Archbishop of Alexandria had preached a sermon about "sinful women", especially meant for Hypatia, who had dared to give lessons to *men!*

Otto Ottesen
Sandefjord
Norway

RIDDLE OF A ROYAL HUNT

Sir,

Reading once again an interesting article in the October 1971 issue of the *Unesco Courier,* entitled "A Sassanian Royal Hunt", I noticed that the significance of the fifth-century A.D. relief shown on page 38 (see photo 2) has never been explained.

I was intrigued and curious to discover the meaning of the scene, with its group of four figures that appear to be lying down in front of a line of advancing elephants. After a careful study of all the illustrations of the article, I believe that I have found the solution.

The four figures are not marching, as they might appear to be. They are actually opening a gate to allow the elephants and beaters to enter the king's hunting area which, as one can see, was entirely enclosed. I also noticed that in the lower left corner the figure of a small dog is visible.

I came to this conclusion by comparing the figures with those shown at left of another relief (see photo 1) pictured on page 35.

In closing, I should like to congratulate the *Unesco Courier* on its excellent choice of articles and suggest for future issues an article on Alexander the Great, as well as one on the recent discovery of the tomb of his father , Philip of Macedon, at Vergina in Greece.

Walter Marques
Rio de Janeiro
Brazil

An ivory head believed to portray Philip of Macedon was shown on page 2 of our July 1978 issue, and on page 30 of the present number we publish a photo of another ivory head, presumed to depict Alexander the Great. Both these important objects were discovered in the tomb at Vergina which may have been Philip's burial-place. They were unearthed during excavations directed by Professor Manolis Andronicos, whose article on the Athens Acropolis, "Athenian Democracy's Grand Design" appeared in our October 1977 issue — Editor.

MEASURING THE WORLD'S WATER

Sir,

I agreed to cuts being made in my article "Will Deserts Drink Icebergs?" *(Unesco Courier,* February 1978) for reasons of space. As a result of these cuts, which were not submitted for my approval, certain facts and figures which I consider important disappeared from my text.

All published figures, even the most recent, concerning the amount of water on earth are highly approximate, but it is estimated that the total quantity is about 1,500 million cubic kilometres, 2.7 per cent of which (some 40 million cubic kilometres) is fresh water. It has also been estimated that the total volume of fresh water stored in ice-caps and glaciers is of the order of 30 million cubic kilometres (90 per cent in the Antarctic, 9 per cent in Greenland, 1 per cent in glaciers).

Thus 70 per cent of the earth's fresh water is stored in ice-caps and glaciers and 30 per cent is in liquid form.

This 30 per cent consists of: surface water (streams, lakes, swamps, etc.); ground water; moisture contained in soil, rocks, sand, plants, etc.; and atmospheric water (clouds, fog, etc.).

Estimates of these different "reserves" of water vary widely from one publication to another and are still extremely approximate and tentative.

One of the most reliable figures at present is that for the Greenland ice-cap (which was accurately measured largely through the work of French Polar Expeditions), followed by that for the Antarctic ice-cap (measured by a number of expeditions since International Geophysical Year in 1957).

Paul-Emile Victor
Paris

Bookshelf

Recent Unesco books and periodicals

• **Planning the Primary School Curriculum in Developing Countries,** by H.W.R. Hawes. (No. 17 in Unesco's "Fundamentals of Educational Planning" series) 2nd impression 1978, 50 pp. (8 F)

• **The Education of Migrant Workers and their Families.** Case studies undertaken for the National Commissions for Unesco of Finland, France, Sweden and Yugoslavia. (No. 27 in Unesco's "Educational Studies and Documents" series) 1978, 44 pp. (8 F)

• **Coral Reefs: Research Methods,** edited by D.R. Stoddart and R.E. Johannes. The most recent findings on the functional ecology of coral reefs. (No. 5 in Unesco's "Monographs on Oceanographic Methodology" series). 1978, 581 pp. (90 F)

• **Soil Map of the World 1: 5,000,000. Volume VI Africa.** Prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). This volume describes the soils of Africa and accompanies the 3 map sheets already published (price 50 F each). Co-published with the FAO. 299 pp. (75 F)

• **Communication Policies in the Republic of Korea** by Hahn Bae-ho. 1978, 50 pp. (10 F)

• **Exploring Global Interdependence** is the theme of Unesco's *International Social Science Journal* (Vol. XXX, No. 2, 1978). Each issue 23 F; subscription 70 F for one year or 116 F for two years.

• **Non-formal education** is the major theme of *Prospects,* Unesco's quarterly review of education (Vol. VIII, No. 2, 1978). Each issue 12 F; subscription 42 F for one year or 70 F for two years.

Unesco's literature translations series

IRAN

• **The Ilahi-nama or Book of God of Farid al-Din Attar,** translated from the Persian by John Andrew Boyle, with a foreword by Annemarie Schimmel. Manchester University Press, 392 pp. (£9.95)

ARABIC WORKS

• **Rusum Dar Al-Khilafah** (The Rules and Regulations of the Abbasid Court) by Hilal Al-Sabi. Translated with an introduction and notes by Elie A. Salem. Lebanese Commission for the Translation of Great Works, Beirut, 134 pp.

African technology get-together

Nine African countries have established the Association of African Industrial Technology Organizations to co-ordinate their efforts in industrial technological research and development. Member countries are: Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Uganda, Senegal, Sudan, United Republic of Cameroon, and Zaire.

Let the Village Hear

A workshop on information sharing, "Let the Village Hear", is being planned for Calcutta, India, in late November or early December 1978. People involved in village development in the Third World will take part in the workshop, whose goal is to increase information exchange in the developing world and to decrease reliance on the traditional north-south flow of technological aid. The workshop has been initiated by Rural Communications, a Third World service agency based in South Petherton, Somerset, U.K.

New guide to U.N. information services

The first comprehensive directory of the information activities of the U.N. system has been issued by the Interorganization Board for Information Systems (IOB) in Geneva. The 250-page *Directory of United Nations Information Systems and Services* contains particulars on over 100 information sources and covers subjects ranging from human rights to industry, science, technology and sociology. Published in English (French and Spanish editions will appear later in 1978) the directory is available free of charge to organizations, universities and libraries from the Director, IOB Secretariat, Palais des Nations, CH-1211, Geneva 10, Switzerland.

Unesco establishes Simon Bolivar International Prize

Unesco has set up an international prize, financed by the Venezuelan Government, to be awarded for noteworthy actions in line with the ideals of Simon Bolivar (1783-1830), *El Libertador* (The Liberator) of Latin America. The biennial prize of not less than $30,000 will honour contributions to the freedom, independence and dignity of peoples and to the strengthening of solidarity between nations by promoting their development and the advent of a new international economic, social and cultural order. It will be awarded for the first time on 24 July 1983, bicentenary of Bolivar's birth, on the basis of candidatures presented by Unesco Member States or Associate Members, and by intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations with consultative status or co-operative relations with Unesco. The award will be made by an international jury consisting of a representative of Unesco's Director-General, a personality named by the Venezuelan Government and five other representatives of the different world regions designated by the Director-General.

Saving the Mediterranean Monk Seal

An Action Plan to save the Mediterranean Monk Seal, threatened by pollution, overfishing and the destruction of its habitat, has been approved at a meeting convened by the Greek Government and co-sponsored by Greece, the U.N. Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), and the University of Guelph (Canada). The Plan will be co-ordinated with Monk Seal projects in Turkey and the West Mediterranean and with efforts to save other species and habitats.

Radio manual for population workers

Grassroots Radio, a radio manual by Rex Keating, has been issued by the International Planned Parenthood Federation, 18-20 Lower Regent Street, London SWI. The manual is not intended for professional broadcasters, but aims to teach the basic elements of radio production and writing and thus help family planning workers explain to listeners the purpose and practice of family planning.

U.N. Industrial Development Fund reaches $9.5 million

A donation of $1 million from Saudi Arabia, a pledge of over $1 million from the U.K., and contributions from Burundi and Venezuela have brought the money available to the United Nations Industrial Development Fund to over $9.5 million. Created by the U.N. General Assembly in 1976, the Fund consists of voluntary contributions to be used by the U.N. Industrial Development Organization in support of industry in the developing countries.

The *Unesco Courier* in Korean

We are pleased to announce the launching of a Korean language edition of the *Unesco Courier* (see photo). Published by the Korean National Commission for Unesco, P.O. Box Central 64, Seoul, the first issue of the Korean edition appeared in June. Publication of the Korean edition brings the total number of language editions of the *Unesco Courier* to 19: English, French, Spanish, Russian, German, Arabic, Japanese, Italian, Hindi, Tamil, Hebrew, Persian, Dutch, Portuguese, Turkish, Urdu, Catalan, Malaysian and Korean.

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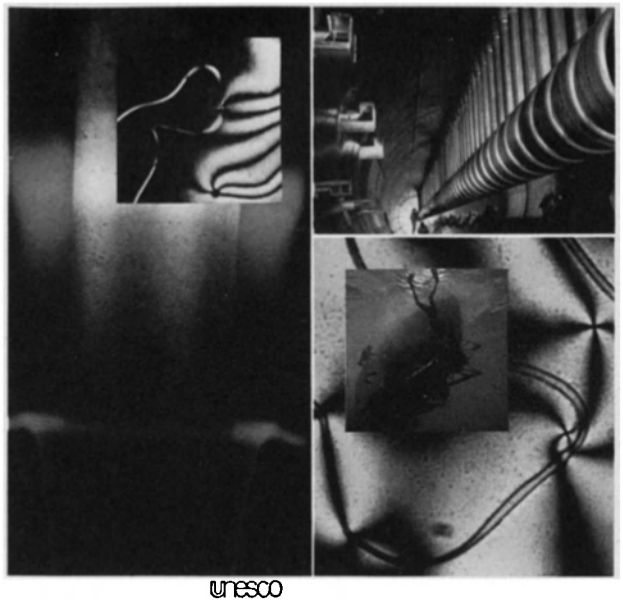
Adriano Buzzati-Traverso



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Avant-garde iconographer

Together with his compatriot Wassily Kandinsky, the Russian painter Kazimir Malevich (Kiev 1878-Leningrad 1935) was one of the founders of abstract painting. Malevich developed an abstract style known as "Suprematism" which stressed the primacy of simple geometric elements and pure colours and culminated in his famous *White on White* (1918). In this *Head of a Peasant* (1910), now in the Russian Museum, Leningrad, he sought to achieve geometric harmony through the use of flat, tubular and conical forms. Like many of Malevich's other works on the same theme, it suggests an affinity with the icon painters of medieval Russia.

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