INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND THE SOUTHERN LADOGA REGION

The extensive area of northwestern Eastern Europe was inhabited exclusively by Western Finnic peoples until the middle of the first millennium AD, at which point Slavic tribes began to migrate to the area. There are many theories regarding when, where, and under what circumstances the Finnic society emerged. Furthermore, there is disagreement over which archaeological sites reflect this process. Despite the range of opinions on the origins of the Western Finns, we can only speak with any certainty of their existence at the beginning of the first millennium AD, based on the mention of the "Fenny" by Tacitus.

The history of western Finnic territory, particularly of the region lying to the south of Lake Ladoga (Fig. 1), has only been partially studied, resulting in the impression that there was relatively peaceful development among local groups. We can draw further information about the population of this region from the historian of the Goths, Jordanes, who mentioned a people called the Chud' and the Ves'. This source is admittedly complex, allowing for a variety of interpretations. It does not provide sufficient information with which to reconstruct a geographical map of the peoples mentioned in these oblique passages. Jordanes does suggest, however, two points: that already in the sixth century distinct ethno-cultural groups had formed, which modern

2. И. И. Попов, Названия народов СССР (Ленинград: Наука, 1973), с. 221.
4. Иордан, О происхождении и дняхиях готов, ред. Е. Н. Скрыжинская (Москва: Восточная литература, 1960), с. 150.
researchers associate with the southern Ladoga region; and that contacts between these tribes had become so far-reaching that information about them had spread to Mediterranean Europe. Contacts among the populations of southern Ladoga continued to grow to such an extent that, in my opinion, they became one of the leading influences on the region. Upon entering into the network of early medieval international trade, the southern Ladoga region also began to place its own imprint on the system. The character, directions, and intensity of international trade in the area naturally changed more than once during the several centuries of southern Ladoga's history. These commercial ties reached their peak of intensity and diversity during the ninth to the twelfth centuries, a period when a unique historical-cultural society had formed on the southern shores of Lake Ladoga. Its material culture shows influences from such far-flung regions as Scandinavia, Western Europe, the Baltic, Islamic lands, the East European steppe, and Byzantium, among others.

The southern Ladoga region of the last quarter of the first millennium A.D. is marked by the appearance of a series of specific archaeological sites. Foremost in this group is the settlement at Staraja Ladoga, known simply as "Ladoga" during the Middle Ages. The defining characteristic of Staraja Ladoga is the variety of its material culture, which was a result of its devel-