

Summary

**THE SLAVIC WORLD
AT THE CROSSROADS BETWEEN TRIBAL LEAGUES AND EARLY STATES**

This paper is part of the introductory discussions within the comparative historical research on the oldest social institutes of Slavic peoples, which the author is currently involved in. It includes an expository overview of the oldest known Slavic tribes, tribes' leagues and the first early states in the period from the 7th to the 12th century, inhabiting the regions from the Baltic Sea to the Peloponnesus and from the Finish Bay to the Black Sea.

From a vast body of heterogeneous historical sources and literature about the oldest known Slavic tribes and tribes' leagues, the author has selected only those historical, social, economic and political facts which were of vital significance for the future of some of these ethnicities. Whenever possible, the author has traced the main disintegration currents of the tribal social organisation and the developments of some of these tribal communities towards an early state as a mode of overcoming the crisis of tribal organization. Wherever the original tribal structure was not directly transformed into an early state, the author briefly tracks either the ethno-genesis, or the assimilation, or the total disappearance of certain tribal groups from the ethnic and political map of Europe at the time.

This paper is unique both in the national and world historiography because it is the first comprehensive collection ever compiled in a single piece of work that includes all of the oldest Slavic ethnonyms which can be encountered in written historical sources. Making a straightforward selection of about eighty oldest (scientifically indisputable) Slavic ethnonyms, the author has implicitly drawn an unspoken but (for educated people) sharp enough boundary between a serious historical approach to this topic and the one increasingly booming in commercial, aggressive, pretentious and romanticized historiographic essay writing.