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Reports of the Slavs From Muslim Lands Part II – Radhanites, Eunuchs and the Rus

by torinoJanuary 17, 20155 Comments



In Nomine Jassa

Nos enim Poloni tres deos habuimus,
scilicet Lada, Nya, Iassa

Ibrahim Ibn Ya'qub wasn't the only only traveler from the Muslim world to note the Slavs. There were a number of others – we will bring you those reports over time beginning with four that are descriptive of the activities of certain early medieval trading groups.

One such group are the **Radhaniya** (*Radania*, *Radhaniyya* or Radanites in English) – a group of Jewish merchants that traversed the medieval world crossing boundaries between the Franks, Muslims, Byzantines, the Rus and the Slavs. In fact, they were able to reach Mesopotamia, Arabia, Persia, Central Asia's various *-stans*, India, perhaps Mongolia and even China.



Radanite merchants at an unspecified Antiochian tavern (their Saqaliba slave-to-be is seen growing into his role by serving warm handtowels)

As far as we can tell the Radhanites were principally traders carrying Western goods such as brocade, beaver pelts, marten, furs, swords but also (newly minted) eunuchs and, it appears, children – all to be sold into slavery. From the East they came back with musk, aloe wood, camphor, cinnamon, celadon, silk (this was before the Italians took over production) and other products of the Orient. In a way they were a more modest precursor to the Hanseatic league, the British East India Company or today's corporations – a trading guild (or perhaps just a loose network of trading associates) whose members likely served as both merchants, explorers and, likely, spies for the local potentates. It is possible that Ibrahim Ibn Ya'qub was also a "member" of this group – we will likely never know for sure (the fact that, when visiting Germany, he was surprised to see some of the Eastern wares and coins in the local markets, e.g., in Mainz – suggests that perhaps he was more of a diplomat traveler than a trader himself).

What the origin of the name is another mystery (Frankish, *Rhodan* River? The city of *al-Rayy/Rhages* in Persia? *Rhadan*, a province in Persia or Mesopotamia? Do they have anything to do with the Slavic *Rodanice*? Or Rod-a-niya (as in, ominously (!), 'destroyer' of the 'clan')?) and much ink has been spilled on this topic... (Moshe Gil's "Jews in Islamic Countries in the Middle Ages" contains some of the latest attempts at shedding light on this).

As regards slaves, the Radhanites themselves being principally intermediaries dealing in all kinds of merchandise, were not the ones who would capture human cargo – rather for that they relied on wars, the various local monarchs and raiders. We must remember that slavery never died out with the

collapse of the Roman Empire and as the Franks and then the newly-added Saxons began to fight the Polabian Slavs, a surplus of prisoners of war would most profitably be disposed off by selling them into slavery. In this fashion your enemies would never be heard from again and you would make a lot of money – a win win so to speak.

Similarly, local monarchs were no doubt to cash in on the action and send some of their political opponents on long-deserved vacations (see Bretislav in Bohemia who permitted the slave trade in Prague some one hundred years after the official adoption of Christianity). Finally, you had the various raiding nomads who continued to plague Ukraine and Russia much as the various Scythian and Sarmatian tribes before or the Mongols, Turks and Tartars after.

One such group was the south-Caspian based Khurasan. But another one that we now come to, one that monopolized all channels of commerce (downstream and upstream, so to speak) were the **Rus** warrior-merchants – most likely Varangians (much more on that later). Their reach was more limited than that of the Radhanites but they also penetrated far: first on the Dnieper then into the Black Sea and then all the way to Constantinople; or, sometimes, on the Volga to the Caspian Sea and all the way to Baghdad.



Rus merchant teaching discipline to a soon to be not-so-unruly Slavic captive (circa A.D. 902)

Unlike the Radhanites, the Rus captured their wares at their point of origin and delivered them all the way down to the final end users. They sold beaver and black fox pelts, as well as swords but also Slavs. They traveled through the Khazar Khaganate and the Byzantine Empire selling some of their goods there and paying customs duties to the local rulers as they traveled even further. While the Radhanites were likely to have to hire guards for their long voyages, the Rus were both merchants and guards. They liked to do things on their own and, one may conjecture, that the Rus' ultimate decision to get themselves "invited" to rule the Slavs (after first being thrown out) as Nestor in his PVL so diplomatically puts it, was simply an attempt to formalize the Rus-Slav relationship in a legal framework of "ownership" so as to enable the Rus to collect their bounty directly without having to resort to bothersome raiding activity.

It is also noticeable that, as the furs, swords, honey, wax, amber and Slavic slaves were sent to the East, the traders brought (in addition to bartered goods) tons of Abbasid silver dirham coins back with them, fueling the economic revitalization of Europe previously suffering the doldrums of trading collapse that occurred in the wake of the fall of the Western Roman Empire.

The first report comes from **Ibn Khurradadhbih** (c 820 – c 911) and was written sometime between 840s-880s, however, it may be that what he describes relates to an earlier period perhaps in the beginning of the IX century. Ibn Khurradadhbih was in the intelligence business working as a spymaster in the Persian province of Jibal (his official title being the director of the Abbasid Bureau of Posts and Intelligence). He was a friend of the caliph Mu'tamid. He is also the author of "The Book of Roads and Kingdoms" and that is where we find this first report.

The second report is one by **Ibn al-Faqih** (c 903?) of Hamadan (we have no idea who he was) and has been dated to 903. Ibn al-Faqih almost certainly copied portions of the earlier Ibn Khurradadhbih report as will become clear to the readers. It appears that what little survives of his writings is in the form of shorter versions that come from a monumental treatise which, alas, has been lost to us (it seems). Faqih's report is also curious because, while the first report (which predates Rurik's takeover of Slavic tribes of later Russia), arguably, describes the Rus and the Slavs as separate [but maybe not see below], the latter report calls apparently the same people just Slavs.

Third, as it seems to topically fit in here, we include a report by **Ibn Hawqal** (a traveler and geographer born in Nisibis c 920 – c 988; edited Istakhri's Book of Roads and Kingdoms which was in turn an edition of Ibn Khurradadhbih's version) regarding the trade in slaves and Slavic eunuchs which was written sometime before the year 988. We note that there had been Slavs around his home town of Nisibis (albeit in a military capacity) already a century and a half before his writings.

Finally, we present a report on the Rus and Slavs by **Ibn Rusta** (circa 903), a native of Isfahan and an author of a multi-volume encyclopedia of geography and history.

In terms of the organization, we start with reports on the Radhaniya and their trade routes, follow it up with a note on the eunuch trade and then go into the excerpts dealing with the Rus and the Slavs.

We note, up front, that the name for Slavs in Arabic is **Saqaliba**. Finally, note too that where possible we provide current place names but only once – if you can't locate these in the text above then we didn't provide any corresponding contemporary names (meaning you should know where the place is or what it is without help from us).

Ibn Khurradadhbih on the *al-Radhaniya*

"The routes of the Jewish merchants called al-Radhaniya; these merchants they speak Arabic, Persian, Greek, Latin, Frankish, Andalusian and Slavic. They journey from west to east, from east to west, traveling by land and by sea. From the west they export eunuchs [more on that later – these were largely Slavic captives brought to Al-Andalus], young girls and boys, brocade, beaver pelts, marten and other furs and also swords."

"They set sail from *Firanja* [the land of the Franks?] on the Mediterranean coast and then head for *Farama* in Egypt [Tell el-Farama, on the Mediterranean Coast, in the delta north of Suez]. There they transfer their merchandise to the backs of camels and travel to *Qulzum* [former Clysma, at the southern end of the Suez Canal] on the Red Sea, a distance of 25 farsakes [parsecs?]. They sail [from *Qulzum*] down the Red [Eastern] Sea to *al-Jar*, the port of Medina, and to *Jiddah/Gudda* [Jeddah], the port of Mecca. Then they continue on to Sindh [in Pakistan], India and China."

"They return from China with musk, alloe wood, camphor, cinnamon and other eastern products, docking again at *Qulzum*, then proceed to *Farama*, from where they again set sail on the Mediterranean [Western] Sea."

"Some of them head for Constantinople to sell their goods to the Byzantines. Others go to the palace of the King of Franks. Sometimes these Jewish merchants set sail on the Mediterranean from the land of the Franks to Antioch [then in Muslim hands before a reconquista in 969 by the Byzantines; now under Turkish administration]. They then proceed overland to *al-Jabiya* on the Euphrates, a journey of three days [somewhere in Syria – East of Antioch]. They sail down the Euphrates to Baghdad, then down the Tigris to *al-Ubulla* [East of Basra in the Tigre-Euphrates delta, served as the Persian Gulf "gateway" to India], from where they sail the Arabian Gulf to Oman, Sindh, India and China. All these lands are connected to one another."

"The overland routes of the Radhaniya are as follows; the Jewish merchants also follow a land route. Merchants departing from Spain or France sail to *as-Sus al-aqsa* [southern Morocco] and then to Tangier, from where they set off for *Ifriqiyya* [Tunisia/Tripolitania] and then to *Misr* the Egyptian [capital]. From there they head towards *Ramla* [today's Israel?], visit Damascus, *Kufa* [on the Euphrates in Iraq], Baghdad and *Basra* [southern Iraq], then cross the *Ahwaz* [in Persia], *Farz* [Persia], *Kirman* [Kerman, Persia], Sindh and India, and finally arrive in China."

"Sometimes they take a route north of Rome, heading for *Khamlij* [likely Attil close to the Caspian Sea shore] via the lands of the Saqaliba (Slavs). *Khamlij* is a Khazar capital [city?]. They sail the Caspian Sea, make their way to *Balkh* [in Bactria – today's Afghanistan], from there to *Ma wars an-nahr* [Transoxiana or Bactria, e.g, where the city of Samarkand is], then to the yurt [Wurt] of the *Toghuzghuz* [somewhere in Uighur countries or Mongolia – Toquz Oghuz means the (Turkish) Nine Tribes] and there to China."

Ibn al-Faqih on the *al-Radhaniya*

"Someone tells that it is stated in the Torah that *Rayy* [Persian, close to the Caspian Sea] is one of the ports of the earth and the place of commerce for mankind. [note that *ray* – also is Slavic for paradise] ... *Rayy* has a fine climate and its buildings are marvelous. It is the gate of commerce, the refuge of those seeking liberty, the bridegroom of the Earth [?], the highway of the world. It lies mid-way between *Khurasan* [northeast Persia], *Jurjan* [aka Gurgan in Persia on the Southeastern coast of the Caspian Sea], Iraq and *Tabaristan* [Tapuria on the southern Caspian Sea]. It is the most beautiful creation on Earth. It has the *Surr* and *Sarban* [presumably meaning those of the Pashtuns but there is always the question of the origin of the Serbs] quarters, and to it flows merchandise from Armenia, Azerbaijan, *Khurasan*, Khazaria and the country of the *Burjan* [Bulgar – probably of the Volga variety]."

[here the account begins to resemble what we know from Ibn Khurradadhbih]

"Merchants sail from east to west and west to east, carrying brocades and fine quality silk from the land of the Franks to *al-Farama*. Then they sail from *Qulzum* and cross the sea to China, carrying these products. Then they carry cinnamon and celadon and all the products of China until they come back to *Qulzum* and cross to *al-Farama*. These are Jewish merchants. They speak Persian, Greek, Arabic and Frankish. They embark from *al-Farama* and sell the musk and aloes wood as well as

everything they have brought with them from the kingdom of the Franks. Then they come to Antioch, then go to Baghdad and then to *al-Ubulla*."

Ibn Hawqal on the Trade in Eunuchs

"The country of the *Saqaliba* is so immense that on the East side it delivers slaves to Korassan, whereas on the West side it sends them to Andalusia. The Andalusians buy them in Galicia, in France, in Lombardy and in Calabria so as to make the eunuchs, and thereafter they ferry them over to Egypt and Africa. All the *Saqaliba* [Slavic] eunuchs in the world come from Andalusia."

"A well-known export from al-Andalus is slaves, *boys and girls captured in France and Galicia*, as well as *eunuchs from the Saqaliba*. All the Saqaliba eunuchs in the world come from al-Andalus. They are castrated near this country. The [cutting] operation is performed by Jewish merchants. The Saqaliba are descended from Japheth. Their country is vast and extend over a very great length. Raiders from *Khurasan* [or Khorassan] reach them through the territory of the Bulgars. They are led in captivity to that province, their manhood left intact, their bodies un mutilated. The territories of the Saqaliba are immense. The arm of the sea which extend from the Ocean into the lands of Gog and Magog crosses their territory all the way to a point west of *Trebizond* [Trabzon, east of Paphlagonia on the Black Sea in today's Turkey] then to Constantinople, thus dividing it into two halves. One of these, throughout all its length *is raided by the warriors of Khurasan*, who live on its borders, while the northern regions are invaded by *raiders from al-Andalus* via Galicia, France, Lombardy* and Calabria."

In another translation this text continues "so as to make the eunuchs, and thereafter they ferry them over to Egypt and Africa." [See Ibn Khurradadbihi above on the same route]

Finally, he also says of the people of Khwarezm or Chorasmia:

"Their entire wealth comes from trading with the Turks and from livestock. One imports to them the greater part of the Slavic and Khazar slaves and slaves from the bordering lands in addition to Turkish slaves and furs from the Korsak foxes, sables, foxes, beavers and other types of furs."

* Incidentally, Lombardy meant all of northern Italy all the way to Rome. In fact, in the Life of Saint Zachary we have, under the year 747, an entry indicating that it was the Venetians who acquired slaves here and then delivered them to Saracen countries. When the papal and imperial edicts forbade this practice, the Venetians began to use Adriatic and Mediterranean pirates to acquire slaves and hand them over to the Venetians. Many of these slaves came from the Eastern shores of the Adriatic where we know slaves were traded as late as the 15th century in, for example, Dubrovnik. However, in case you ask, it is highly unlikely that it is for this reason that those Slavs living in the area became known as the *Servi* as that name appears in many places and predates the events described here.

[Ibn Hawqal concludes this chapter with a piece of good news]



Ibn Hawqal – an eternal optimist

"Captives from these regions are still plentiful [!]"

Ibn Khurradadhbih on Rus Merchants

"**The routes of the Rus merchants** are as follows; the Rus, one of the Saqaliba people, journey from the farthest reaches of Saqlab [the land of the Slavs] to the eastern Mediterranean and there sell beaver and black fox pelts, as well as swords. The Byzantine ruler levies a ten percent tax on their merchandise. On their return they go by sea to *Samkarsh*, the city of the Jews [Tamatarkha, former Greek colony on the Black Sea off of the Crimea; then in the Khazar Khaganate – today in Russia], and from there make their way *back to Slavic* territory [?]. They also follow another route, descending the Don (Tanaïs) River, the river of the Saqaliba, and passing by *Khamlij*, the capital/city of the Khazars, where the ruler of the country also levies a ten percent tax on them. There they embark upon the Caspian Sea, heading for a point they know. This sea is 500 farsangs [parsecs?] long [in diameter]. Sometimes they transport their merchandise on camel back from the city of *Jurjan* to Baghdad. There *Slavic speaking eunuchs interpret for them*. They [the Rus] pretend to be Christians and, like them [Christians] only pay a poll tax."

Ibn al-Faqih on Rus Merchants

"Regarding the Saqalib merchants, they bring fox and beaver pelts from the depths of their country to the Mediterranean, where the Byzantine king imposes a ten percent tax on them. Then they go by sea to "*Samkarsh* of the Jews" [Tamatarkha, former Greek colony on the Black Sea off of the Crimea; then in the Khazar Khaganate – today in Russia]. From there, they either go on to the Saqaliba or take the way from the sea of the Saqaliba to the river of the Saqaliba (Don or Volga?), until they come to the gulf of the Khazars, where the ruler imposes a tax off ten percent. Then they go to the sea of *Khurasan* (the Caspian Sea), usually disembarking at *Jurjan*, where they sell all their goods, which are then sent to *Rayy*, and the most amazing thing is that this is the emporium of the world."

Ibn Rusta on the Rus (and Slavs)

"The Rus (*Rusiya*) live on an island in a lake. This island is three days' march across and consists of forests and thickets. It is pestilential and the soil is so damp that when a man steps on it, it quivers underfoot. They have a ruler called *khagan* Rus. The Rus raid the Saqaliba, sailing in their ships until they come upon them. They take them captive and sell them in *Khazaran* and *Bulgar* (Bulghar). They

have no cultivated fields and they live by pillaging the land of the Saqaliba.” [the island may be at *Gorodische* where *Volkhov* comes out of Lake Ilmen – aka [?] *Holmgarthr*]

A Note on the Global Slav Trade

It is clear that various raiding parties of slavers but also of traders drove into Slavic lands from both West and East. The people captured were then taken to processing centers – such as Prague and then towards slave markets of al-Andalus or similar establishments in the Middle East.



Saint Adalbert (Voytech) recommends the freeing of slaves to Boleslav II of Prague – slave traders sporting fashionable hats – slaves sporting leashes – source “Gniezno doors” reliefs

Some were castrated and sold off as eunuchs – note, for example, the above reference about Slavic eunuchs serving interpreters in Baghdad. Some remained in Spain. Others were taken far into Muslim lands (e.g., the above mentioned Slavic eunuchs serving as interpreters in far off Baghdad), perhaps as far as the Arabian peninsula and, maybe, even further onto India and China.



Some Slavic eunuchs thrived in their new environs functioning as dispassionate schemers and machers

Of course for the wheels of medieval globalization to turn you needed a number of factors to work just right.

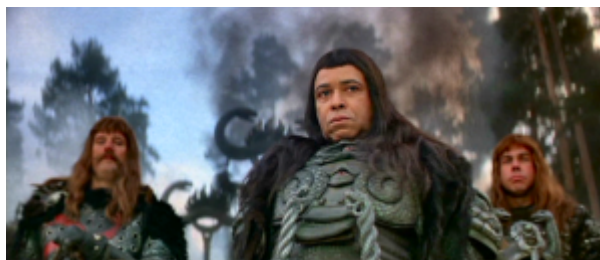


To others, their new circumstances
proved more of a shock

First, as elsewhere in history where slavery comes up, you had to have a bunch of relatively hapless people who were isolated and ignorant of the wider world – preferably not speaking the language of the lands they were heading to. These could be locals but, importantly, they could be strangers as in prisoners of war from other countries.

Second, you had to have brigand-raiders that would carry off the cargo. These included the various Arabs (and Muslims in general), the *Rus*, the Avars, likely also – at least initially – the Magyars (Hungarians then called the “Turks”) and the already mentioned *Khurasan*. As mentioned already, a great force in this trade seem to have been the Franks and, especially, the Saxons, who after (and during) their conversion to Christianity found a new cause in establishing marches for the Franks* among the various border tribes of the Slavs – their excursions into Polabian Slav lands were reminiscent of the later *Reisen* of the Teutonic Knights through the lands of the Old Prussians.

* The brutalization of the Saxons by the Franks – especially under the monstrous Charlemagne -may have contributed to their subsequent brutalization of the Slavs – no doubt psychologists might have something to say about this.



Khurasan raiders looking for slaves in a smoldering
Slav village

Third, things, no doubt, went more smoothly if you had coopted the local elites into this business.

These rulers and traders may have been looking for ways to boost their income and the rise of the various local standing “armies” may, perhaps, at least in part, been fueled by human chattel. Further, the extensive presence of Arab coinage from this time in Central and Eastern Europe may too attest to this phenomenon.

What can’t escape notice is that it was the continued willingness of Europeans to sell their countrymen (though not always countrymen, e.g., Franks selling Saxons, Franks and Saxons selling Slavs, one Slavic tribe selling members of another Slavic tribe) into slavery, that was a driver of this process (as much a backbone of this slave trade as the willingness of African chieftains to do the same a few hundred years later). This point of “Christians” selling other Christians to “Jews” was raised by Bishop Agobard of Lyons while otherwise complaining (including about the fact that Jewish preachings were better

received – by Christians – than Christian ones) to Louis the Pious (in 826-827) (though the bishop did not similarly object to the sale of pagan slaves – perhaps he felt that would weaken his argument to a Christian ruler or perhaps he cared less).^{*} More than a century later, in 948, Bishop Liutprand reports that the town of Verdun was a center of castration as the residents could make more money selling eunuchs to Al-Andalus rather than “regular” slaves.^{**} Later, further East, Thietmar reports of the accusations of selling people (“to the Jews” – again, presumably, the act of selling your own to others seemed worse) being lobbied against Margrave of Meissen, Gunzelin of Kuckenburg in 1009. See also the Life of Saint Adalbert. Another slave-dealing report dates even to the much-later times of Boleslaw III Wrymouth (of Poland). In each of those reports Jewish merchants are mentioned but we know that it was the Czech rulers who sold Poles, Pomeranian dukes who sold Obodrites (to Poles, Sorbs and Czechs), etc. In fact, another Spanish-Jewish traveler, Benjamin of Tudela, makes the following observation (as late as the 1170s): “Thence extends the land of Bohemia, called Prague. This is the commencement of the land of Slavonia, and the Jews who dwell there call it Canaan, because the men of that land [the Slavs] sell their sons and their daughters to the other nations.” While Benjamin’s sources here “may not have been entirely objective,” all evidence indicates that the maligned “Jews” – presumably, meaning the Radhanite merchants – served the same middleman role in the trade of human chattel as in the international trade of their other wares. While the Radhanites’ behaviour was clearly terrible by today’s (Western) standards, the role of the sellers and buyers who happened to be “Christian” and “Muslim” (though some “ultimate” buyers may have been Jewish) sometimes seems to be ignored – which is, let’s just say, “odd” (thus no one seems to be blaming the “Swedes” for the acts of the Rus slave raiders even though they actually *enslaved* free people in the first place; same for the Franks and Saxons or other fellow Slavs)). Without excusing anyone’s behaviour, one has to say that the slave trade was an acceptable practice of the times. (Whether Benjamin’s sources’ reference to Canaan originated from a different background is another story).

^{*} The council of Meaux-Paris in 845-846 did express concern about some pagan slaves: “(LXXVI) *Ut mercatores huius regni, christiani sive iudei, mancipia pagana, quę per tot populos et civitates fidelium transeuntes ad manus infidelium et sevissimorum hostium nostrorum perducunt, ex quo et ipsi infelices servi, qui, si a christianis emerentur, poterant salvari, miserabiliter pereunt et inimicorum regni maximus numerus augetur, coerceantur a piis principibus nostris et intra christianorum fines vendere compellantur, ne tam horrenda crudelitate et aperta infidelitate et animarum dampnis deus exasperetur et vires hostibus augeantur.*”

^{**} “*Carzimasium autem Greci vocant amputatis viribilis et virga puerum eunuchim; quod Verdunenses mercatores ob immensum lucrum facere, et in Hispaniam ducere solent.*” (Liutprand, *Antapodosis, seu rerum per Europam gestarum*, 6, 6)

Fourth, you had to have initial processing centers such as Prague and other places – maybe in Khazaria or Rus. We know that Prague got rather rich on these kinds of transactions and when wealth is involved, morals, too often give way to rationalization. As per Ibrahim Ibn Ya’qub: “The Rus and the Saqaliba go [to Prague] from Cracow, to trade, and so do Muslim merchants from the lands of the Turks, as well as Turks and Jews, with [*mathaquil al-marqatiyya* (?) weights (?)]. They carry away slaves, tin and various kinds of furs.”

Fifth, you had to have distribution centers closer to ultimate markets – e.g., in Andalus where the final product would be prepared for retail (e.g., the castration business above) – then sold off to customers

or shipped even further.

Sixth, you had to have a shipping/distribution network of traders/merchants who would be willing to take on such cargo – such as that of the Rus or of the more specialized al-Radhaniya (which, along with its successors, continued in the business well into the middle ages in Bohemia, Poland and Germany).

Of course, most importantly, you also had to have a willing buyer in need of soldiers, sex slaves or servants.



Slavic slaves offered something for everyone

While slaves were clearly not the only export of Slavic lands and neither were Slavs the only slaves (see reference above to French and Spanish child slaves) of the time, the extent of this trade seems to suggest that significant parts of the non-Slavic world may today have Slavic ancestors (unless, of course, the arrivals were eunuchs). It is no wonder that the Latin word *servitor* was replaced at this time by *slave*.

The unpleasant fate of those people who were, in effect, outmatched from birth by these global networks so as to be stolen from their families and their lands, forever, and sent to places that neither they nor any of their countrymen (including their initial wholesalers) likely ever dreamt of, suggests that, perhaps, at least in some cases, Slavic state formation may have been a defense mechanism against this kind of human poaching.

We also note that, at least some of the warrior slaves or, perhaps, eunuchs may well have accepted their fate and, in relative terms, prospered in their new “homelands.” As mentioned before, there is at least one report of a Slav warrior band revolt somewhere in today’s Morocco where the mutineers set up their own town – known as the “village of the Slavs”. We will return with some positives of what happened to some of these peoples in the future (there are a number of interesting reports!).

Obviously the fate of those who were brought in (male, female and, worst of all, children) to satisfy the prurient or deviant desires of local elites was, ahem, not so pleasant even if some may have ultimately won freedom somehow (some may have escaped).

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5 thoughts on “Reports of the Slavs From Muslim Lands Part II – Radhanites, Eunuchs and the Rus”

**MARK STASIK**

January 17, 2015 at 11:55 am

Well done. I read that the Czech Republic today is Europe's 3rd largest slave market, after Moldova and Albania? Farm/forest labor and sex trade. The numbers were quite large, in the tens of thousands. I appreciated your pathos at the end, and the follow-up thought that there must be quite a lot of R1A1 DNA in Arab cities and along the Indian coast. I thought I had read somewhere actual prices for slaves in Spain in the 900's A.D. A girl was twice as much as a boy, but a Eunuch was highest of all if I remember correctly. The trouble was, I don't recall comparative prices for swords and horses so I could understand how many slaves one had to capture to break even on your outfit. It also made me wonder about the Czech linen scarves that were used 10 to 1 for dirhams. I wonder if this was actually like a chit system for the slavers. Slavers are paid by the king in chits for slaves delivered to Prague. The king collects silver from traders in payment for the slaves. The king keeps the hard currency, and the slavers can redeem their scarves for goods while in Prague, whose merchants have to accept them as legal tender. I wonder if Prague scarves were also redeemable in Cracow? And since Ibn Jacub records Rus coming to Prague via Cracow with slaves, I wonder if the "Croats" of the former "Great Chrobatia" were depopulated by slave raids coming in a pincher move from Prague as well as Kiev? How else could the white Croats collapse and disappear in 10 years? It must have been a free-for-all with Croats only surviving in fortified compounds like Libice, Cracow and Przemysl, but even Przemysl and the Czervien Grods fell to Rus slavers under Vladimir and then again under Yaroslav. I wish someone was looking into that, since I've not been able to find much about it. We remember the Prussians being hunted to extinction, but I wonder if the Croats of southern Poland didn't also experience the same fate, just earlier?

[Reply](#)**MARK STASIK**

January 17, 2015 at 12:11 pm

Also I remember reading Bretislav transferring whole towns from conquered Great Poland back in Bohemia. Like the whole Piast fortress town of Giecz, among others. One "Christian" king enslaving whole towns of population from another "Christian" Kingdom. How pious. Looting churches too. I guess "Little Poland" (not called that yet) must have been depopulated by then. Afterwards, colonists from Great Poland must have been settled in "Little Poland" to give it that name, and erase the "Great Chrobatia" name, since the Croats were all exported.

[Reply](#)

**MARK STASIK**

January 17, 2015 at 12:22 pm

Maybe Croat refugees fled north to Kalisz, since that town's crest has a red and white checkerboard background behind it's Bulls head? Unusual in Polish crests.

[Reply](#)**TORINO**

January 17, 2015 at 8:55 pm

Interesting, maybe further research is required?

[Reply](#)

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