

THE ARCTIC DILEMMA: REFLECTIONS ON THE PAPER
BY B. OLSEN "INTERACTION BETWEEN
HUNTER-GATHERERS AND FARMERS:
ETHNOGRAPHICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES"

The paper by Bjørnar Olsen (1988), who represents the archaeological community of northern Norway relatively unknown in Poland, evokes interest not only because of the importance of the problem which it addresses but also because of the courage with which it treats ethnoarchaeological arguments. While maintaining my objections (P. Urbańczyk 1981) with respect to the methodological premises of applying "ethnoarchaeological explanation" in archaeology, I fully agree with the general conclusion of the author. B. Olsen suggest that the "symbolic" aspect of the process of neolithization of hunter-gatherer communities, so far neglected, should be considered in archaeological studies.

The phenomenon described in this paper, of the "symbolic" acceptance of some attributes of another socio-economic system, is supposed to have been accompanied by the penetration of new elements of material furnishing which functioned in the prestige rather than in the useful-instrumental sphere. This initial stage of relations between two different socio-economic systems might have been (1) an introduction to the transition to a new, technologically higher stage of exploitation of the natural environment, or, otherwise, may have been established as (2) a permanent model of formalization of mutual relations, which did not lead to a change in socio-economic structures.

This agreement with the general conception does not mean, however, the acceptance of the way in which it is exemplified. To illustrate the two phenomena characterized theoretically, B. Olsen used examples from the Norwegian Arctic, specifically from the northwestern coast of the Scandinavian Peninsula. In both cases his arguments are not convincing. To say the least, they are incomplete.

The first problem is related to the initial stage of neolithization, or in more general terms, the transition of hunter-gatherer communities to an economic system dominated by farming. The volunteer acceptance by hunter-gatherers, of some cultural attributes of their farming neighbours, acted with full awareness (if not premeditation), is supposed to explain the ease and efficiency of the spreading of Neolithic agriculture. Without disputing the heuristic value of this conception, I should like to discuss its efficiency as a hypothesis for explaining the spreading of agriculture in the Norwegian Arctic region (beginning with the middle Neolithic).

B. Olsen explains this "ecological paradox of farming in its marginal zone... [where] it was not significant as a means of living, going beyond the "paradigm of ecological functionalism which dominates in contemporary archaeology". However, in this special case his conception fails. The reason for this is the schematism of argument based on exotic ethnological examples and a radical simplification of the phenomenon being explained.

His conception of the symbolic adoption of chosen elements from the equipment of farming cultures can be recognized as probable in situations where researchers have at hand only artifacts or structures which, at the early stage of contacts between the two socio-economic systems, could really play the part of cultural "staffage" facilitating mutual communication. However, due to studies by K. D. Vorren (see the works cited by B. Olsen and K. D. Vorren 1975 and O. S. Johansen, K. D. Vorren 1986), we have evidence of still another kind from the area in question – pollen diagrams evidencing corn cultivation and the deforestation of large areas. Here, we go beyond the symbolic sphere, and we must take into account the real input of time and energy devoted to farming, which left a significant trace in bog sections, even if it did not provide a deciding amount of food.

The sea terraces, covered with sand sedimentation and moraine soils, are usually acid,

poor in phosphorus and potassium and require artificial enriching with nitrogen, which the metabolic processes in plants, slow due to the low temperature of Arctic summers, fail to provide. The lower amount of insulation is here compensated for by the length of the Arctic day, as a result of which during the growth period plants obtain the same amount of light as in those in regions lying much farther to the south. Complemented with a detailed characteristic of the vegetation zones by K. D. Vorren (1979, Fig. 1), K. Fjaervoll's map (1961) showing isotherms, illustrates exactly the theoretical range of the farming economy, restricted practically to barley and pasture cultivation.

The spreading of Neolithic farming to those areas was made possible by their extraordinarily favourable climate, bringing about the fact that the drop in mean temperatures further and further to the north occurs slower by a multiple factor than in any other region of the earth lying at the same latitude. The isotherms are parallel to the coast. At the same time, as one moves to the north, one comes closer to the richest coastal fishing areas in Europe, the largest birds' colonies on the continent and schools of seals and walruses which regularly come to those shores. Moreover, these sources of energy are most easily accessible exactly outside the period of agricultural work, constituting a guaranteed offer of food in winter and spring, which can be very difficult periods for purely farming communities. Therefore, the Neolithic "homo oeconomicus" may have been interested in this area which offered the opportunity of many directions of exploitation of different and rich resources, which occurred seasonally in sequence. Perfected by the experiences of successive generations, this strategy was fully developed in the 2nd half of the 1st millennium (see R. Jørgensen 1984).

On the other hand, there is a large risk related to the cultivation of land in the Arctic area, even with such a favourable climate: the short duration of the vegetation season brings about the fact that even the smallest weather changes can seriously reduce the crop. Therefore, agricultural cultivation demanded professional agricultural knowledge which hunter-gatherer natives could not have. Moreover, the continuity of the process of agricultural exploitation proved palinologically (with slight corn farming and variable pastures) of the region lying south of Vesterålen, beginning with about 1500 BC (K. D. Vorren, 1985, p. 82; O. S. Johansen, K. D. Vorren 1986, p. 744) indicates the consistent continuation of a specific economic system.

C^{14} dates from 5 sites in the Arctic provide evidence that the elements of agricultural economy had begun even before 1800 BC. (O. S. Johansen, K. D. Vorren 1986, table 1), while the finds of stone imports from this period indicate contacts with the area of farming cultures in southern Scandinavia. However, this only applied to a narrow coastal strip, while most of the area of northern Scandinavia was affected by the hunter cultures from the East (see the detailed considerations by R. Jørgensen 1986). A similar cultural dualism was determined by archaeological studies in northern Sweden (e.g., E. Baudou 1977) and in western Finland (e.g., C. F. Meinander 1954).

Despite the correlation between the range of the oldest traces of farming and the area showing contacts with the south, those who discuss the process of introducing the agricultural economy in the Arctic regions tend to avoid considerations on the causes and ways of the penetration of the new economic system on the southwestern coast of Norway. They restrict themselves to statements of a chronological nature, analysis in terms of space and that of the economic significance of new techniques to the exploitation of the environment. The main emphasis is put on the continuity of the socio-cultural development in the coastal strip from the end of the Neolithic and the early Bronze Age in opposition to the previously observed invasion theory (e.g., O. S. Johansen 1978, p. 24; 1979, p. 31; I. Storli 1985, p. 4; O. S. Johansen, K. D. Vorren 1986).

The fact that this subject is avoided probably results from the natural reaction to the previously dominating tendency to derive all new cultural impulses from the south and to connect them exclusively with the Norman ethnos. On the other hand, at the same time, the hypothesis of migration to the North by the farming population, one that is implicitly

accepted, though not explicitly formulated, is not opposed with alternative solutions. Therefore, the suggestion contained in the paper discussed here is an attempt to formulate new grounds for this discussion.

Pointing out the fact that the considered region lies on the margin of a zone making it possible to cultivate land, B. Olsen recognizes it as an argument for his hypothesis of the only symbolic meaning of the agricultural activity undertaken there. It seems to me that this is an argument for a precisely opposite hypothesis. For in such a zone a non-professional, random, or "symbolic" farmer had no chance of any success and would have quickly abandoned any attempts, painstaking as they were.

I understand the reluctance of the author to accept such ecological and functionalist argumentation, transferring even to distant times our contemporary attitude to reality, assuming that economic rationalism was the fundamental principle directing the activity of our ancestors. It may seem similarly obsolete to make the neo-evolutionist assumption that the socio-cultural system tends rationally in a continuous homeostatic process to higher and higher states of organizational equilibrium, reacting to changes in the social environment and consciously tending to more and more effective exploitation of natural resources. There is no doubt that the similar reduction of culture to adaptive behaviour and techniques, although efficient as a research tool, restricts interpretation and explanation of changes.

Nevertheless the geographic reality of the considered region is unambiguous. One should not mechanically transplant there the model of coexistence of two socio-economic systems drawn from the equatorial zone. Apart from ecological differences, one should also point out the essentially incomparable character of a boundary in the form of "islands" or "combs" (as the Mesolithic-Neolithic boundary in most areas of Europe probably had such a character) with the situation of the northwest coast of the Scandinavian Peninsula, where the region good for farming runs in a narrow strip along the sea.

For accepting the conception of the symbolic adaptation of elements of the farming economy requires permanent contacts between two socio-economic systems – partners in an exchange of goods and information assisted by symbolic gestures. Therefore, if the wish to develop relations with the farming population and the determination to continue symbolic gestures superseded the discouragement resulting from the complete lack of economic profitability of their efforts (even if economic effects were not the reason why they were undertaken), there does not seem to be any place for partners for whom they were supposed to do it, in keeping to B. Olsen's conception.

For if the evident, Neolithic traces of farming in the Norwegian Arctic have been left by hunter-gatherers "pretending" to be farmers, the closest "real" farmer communities would have lived at least a few hundred kilometres to the south, i.e., in southern Nordland or northern Trøndelag. Therefore, the communication with them could not (?) have had the nature of a permanent contact requiring special strategies improving the interaction. At any rate, the farming itself could not fulfill the role which the author assumes for it – a role in which some moveable elements of material equipment, manifesting the desired cultural messages, were above all useful.

Therefore, it seems to me that in this specific case (!) the migration-based conception of farming is the only (?) reasonable solution of the problem of the emergence of this new economic system in Arctic Norway. On the other hand, a separate question remains the cause of the establishment and later expansion of the new economic formation in this region which was marginal for it. Despite its low intensity and probably contingent character (T. Sjøvold 1962, p. 226; O. S. Johansen, K. D. Vorren 1986, p. 754), this phenomenon indicates the stability of the process of farming exploitation of the Arctic coast.

It seems to me that it was exactly symbolic factors of the prestige, or even quasi-ethnic character, that have played an important role in the persistence of primitive farming in this region which offered easily accessible, alternative sources of energy. A certain role must have also been played by stimuli coming from the farming south. The maintaining of

these contacts important for the inhabitants of the Arctic may have contributed to the continuation of farming activities. One cannot exclude either the next immigration waves which sustained the convergent socio-economic development. Another factor may have been the social differentiation of the coastal populations which was taking shape. It is perhaps to the period before the older Iron Age that the opinion by A. Schanche (1986, p. 127) can be referred that "farming played a small role in alimentation, while its economic significance resulted from its consequences for [social - P.U.] status".

Another problem was the influence of the permanent presence of the semi-settled, quasi-farming population (for hunting and fishing must have played a dominant role in the alimentation balance) on the population which maintained the hunter-gatherer economy. Here, the symbolic sphere played without doubt a large role. On the other hand, it is doubtful if it also included such complex activities as agrotechnical operations.

In all, it must be said that the interesting conception of Neolithization, although probable for many other regions, finds no logical justification in the case in which B. Olsen chose to illustrate the explanatory value of his hypothesis. And although he is right in writing that "the present archaeological evidence supports the hypothesis of immigration only to a small degree", so far there is no convincing argument against it either.

Another problem which raised my doubts is connected with the example which the author used to illustrate a situation contrary to that discussed above, namely when two different socio-economic systems persist almost unchanged side by side, although they maintain close contacts. Of the examples cited in the text for this phenomenon, the author paid more attention to the Lapps living in northern Fennoscandia (*Saami*), who for more than 2000 years "retained their ethnic identification and a separate economic base, coming in touch at the same time with the surrounding farming communities".

In this case my objection is not so much to the wrong choice of the example as to the trivializing of the problem in a few sentences concentrated only on overthrowing the myth of the economic exploitation of the Lapps by the Germanic inhabitants of the coastal strip in the Norwegian Arctic. Although I presume that this problem was not the main object of consideration in this study, it seems to me worthy of a broader elaboration, all the more so as it agrees with the title of the paper which contains, after all, no chronological limitations.

Today, when the hypothesis of the migration of farming communities from the southwest as late as the 1st half the 1st millennium A.D. has already been abandoned by most researchers, what remains is to consider the kind of ties between the Norman and Lapp populations and to determine if the coexistence between the two ethnoses was based on the domination by the settled farmer-fishermen Germanic inhabitants of the coastal zone and their exploitation of the semi-nomadic, hunter-gatherer Lapp groups inhabiting the interior and northern ends of the Scandinavian Peninsula, or also on a *sui generis* cooperation and mutual non-interference, based on the exploitation of different ecological niches, the complementarity of economic systems and the noncompetitiveness of ethnic codes.

Analyzing the data contained in sagas, one should not forget that their texts were compiled only in the late 12th century and the early 13th century, meaning that they cannot be referred indiscriminately to the dates suggested by the authors of their written version. The author of most communications about the Norman-Lapp relations was Snorri Sturluson, recognized as reliable and critical towards the sources on which he drew, i.e., the mainly oral tradition contained in the poetry of the skalds. It is interesting to note here the conflictless character of the contacts between the Norman chiefs and the Lapps which he described, although the military position of the latter was no doubt weaker. This can be considered a unique (?) phenomenon in the image of the Viking reality recorded in the sagas, which was full of bloody clashes and brutal scenes.

While the relation by Othere from the late 9th century emphasizes the compulsory character of services by the Lapps, which he called the "Finish tax", Snorri's sagas illustrate these relations in a different way, pointing out their commercial nature and the

profits gained from them by the Viking chiefs. In the next period too the trade in furs was so important an element of the economy of the early feudal state that even in the late 11th century it was recognized as *regale*. In about 1115 it was specified that this applied to regions south of the Vennesund strait.

The author of the "Sverris saga" informs that in the late 12th century the trade with the Lapps (*finnkaup*) and taxes from them were on behalf of King Sverre Sigurdson the job of the *sysselmann* for the area of Halogaland called Torgil. The author of the legendary "Egil saga Skallagrímsonar" (probably Snorri too – see, e.g., the opinion of G. Labuda 1974, p. 234) described the events from the late 9th century, but moved no doubt many elements of his own reality of the early 13th century to this remote past. For it is to that period, or even earlier (?) to the 2nd half of the 11th century that the mention could refer, speaking of winter expeditions being organized to the mountains to obtain the "Finish taxes" for the King.

Further data on this system of dependence are provided by the "Historiae Norvegiae" from about 1195. Its anonymous author informs that "every year they [the Lapps – P.U.] pay with furs... a great tax to the king of Norway to whom they are also subordinate". The taxes paid to the rulers of Norway with furs are also mentioned in the "Rimbegla" written down in the early 13th century.

It seems to result clearly from the data contained in historical sources that in the Middle Ages the Norman-Lapp relations underwent considerable essential evolution parallel to the process consisting in the increasingly strict inclusion of the northern borderlands in the state structure. Until about the mid-11th century there had functioned a system which had been shaped in the 2nd half of the 1st millennium, based on a volunteer mutual exchange of goods and services. Despite what B. Olsen claims, none (?) of the sagas speaks of "armies organized by Norwegian chiefs to invade and plunder the territory of the Lapps". Quite on the contrary, there is no mention at all of any armed clashes. Chiefs' body-guards served rather to defend them from rivals coming from the East and fulfilled prestige and transporational roles. However, it should be pointed out that it was the Vikings who went to the mountains to the Lapps, rather than the other way round. On the other hand, they returned from these trips with "great riches", which the sagas repeatedly pointed out.

Therefore, Olsen's suspicion that the image of mutual relations between the two nations was deformed by the "brag" by the fame-seeking Germans can only refer to Othere's relation, for he could really overemphasize his power over the Lapp neighbours wishing to gain admiration at a foreign court.

On the other hand, the reference to the "Egil saga" applies probably to the information about the "Finnish tax" collected by Torolf Kveldufsson for King Harald. As was mentioned above, it was probably an extrapolation into the Viking period of a situation probable only at the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries. It is only from that period that we know of documents confirming the efficiently organized fiscal intervention of the central state power in the Arctic region. It is interesting to mention, moreover, that the taxation included not only the Lapp hunters but also Norse fishermen. For it was as early as 1103-1107 that taxes were imposed on fishermen active in the famous fisheries near Vågan.

The above-mentioned sources referring to the 12th and 13th centuries are not, therefore, manifestations of Germanic megalomania but simply reflect the typical policy of the feudal state. At any rate, an analogous situation occurred also on the east side of the Scandinavian Mountains where Swedish rulers also levied "Lapp taxes" (*lapps-katten*) in furs from the region on the north part of the Gulf of Bothnia (N. Ahnlund 1946, p. 35 ff). In about 1200, Saxo Grammaticus wrote about this, specifying that every three years of every 10 of Lapps "a cart full of animal hides" was taken (according to I. Haetta 1980, p. 17). Further to the northeast, Karelians fetched furs from the Lapps. At the time the Karelians were subordinate to Novgorod, which became in the 13th century the European centre of trade in hides and furs. In the 13th century northern Fennoscandia thus

became a region with fundamental significance for three states which aspired at the same time to gain superiority over this region and the exclusive right to the profitable trade with the natives (see L. I. Hansen 1982, pp. 46-49).

The above review of the development of the economic and political situation was mainly based on written sources, thus very one-sided ones, for coming only from the cultural circle of one of the ethnical communities discussed. Here, the limitations of historical sources are obvious. Let us then look at those problems with the archaeologists' eyes.

The settlement coexistence of the two ethnoses was shown for the 13th-14th centuries in the insular region of Helgøy (T. Søbstad 1980; 1981; I. M. Holm-Olsen 1981, p. 89; P. Mathiesen 1981, p. 81). These studies carried within the complex regional studies also suggested the differentiation in the ways and ranges of exploitation of natural resources as the cause of the different location, but also the "peaceful coexistence" of the two ethnic groups (T. Søbstad 1980, p. 139).

K. Odner also suggested the existence of relations of cooperation based on the complementary nature of the two economic systems exploiting different ecological niches (K. Odner 1983, pp. 7, 27, 69; 1985, p. 6). He recognized the lack of finds which could be unambiguously attributed to the Lapps as evidence of the economically noncompetitive coexistence of the two communities, which did not require the necessity of emphasizing symbolically the ethnic difference.

In contrast to historians pointing out the compulsory character of services on the part of the Lapps (recently N. Bjørgo 1986b, p. 51), archaeologists tend to emphasize the commercial bases of the mutual contacts and profits gained by the two parties (e.g., T. Sjøvold 1974, p. 349; L. Stenvik 1980, p. 137). They emphasize the bases of the strong position of northern Norwegian chiefs other than the exploitation of the Lapps (I. Storli 1985, p. 159 ff). They point out also the social consequences of intense contacts with the farming population observed in Lapp finds.

I. Storli recently attempted to look in a complex way at the development of the situation in the early 2nd millennium, emphasizing at that time the accumulation of a number of phenomena reflecting the formation of new economic relations between the inhabitants of the early feudal Norway and the population in the interior of the Scandinavian Peninsula. It was exactly in the development of the economic situation that she saw the reasons for essential changes in the social structure, which was manifested in the emergence of a new type of Lapp cemeteries and settlements (I. Storli 1986).

It was at the same time that the earliest "hoards" of silver were deposited, with an inventory which I. Zachrisson (1984, pp. 99-103) convincingly interpreted as Lapp. The fact that they are mainly found on the Norwegian side of the Scandinavian Peninsula may suggest that the accumulation of property surpluses was connected with the development of economic contacts between the two communities. This hypothesis is confirmed by the dating of these finds to the period of about 1000-1350 (I. Zachrisson 1984, p. 104), i.e., the time when northern Norway flourished on the basis of the export of dried fish and skins acquired mainly from the Lapps.

The role of the Lapps in the indirect trade between the Norman population on the northwestern coast of Scandinavia and the regions farther to the East is less known. The mobile inhabitants of the mountain interior played no doubt an important role as "a link mediating between different national commercial systems: Danish-Norwegian, Swedish and Ruthenian" (N. Bjørgo 1986a, p. 24).

The close, long-term contacts between the Lapp hunters-gatherers and their farmer-fishermen neighbours not only thus did not essentially change their economic system but, it seems, also greatly contributed to the shaping of their ethnic separateness formed in opposition to the surrounding nations. Moreover, the variable dynamism of these contacts was also the driving force of internal structural transformations.

The conclusion of this commentary showing the actual unjustified nature of the hypothesis which was used to formulate the one-sided exploitation of the Lapps, and which, it

seems, is not supported today by Scandinavian researchers (contrary to B. Olsen's suggestion, should be the statement that the comparison of the situation on the Lapp-German border with examples from Africa, India or the Phillipines should be considered a misunderstanding. Although the superficially observed consequences of the long-term contact between farmers and hunters-gatherers were similar in all of these examples. In the Arctic, one could see also other strongly active factors which were absent in the equatorial zone.

In summary, it should be said that erroneously interpreted examples decrease the value of this very interesting study, which exemplified the results of a hasty use of ethnological analogies. Although I am certain that we could explain particular differences between our opinions in a constructive, direct dialogue, reaching no doubt a higher level of mutual understanding and agreement, the demand of making public a scientific discussion is that published texts should be used, burdened with the whole weight of the ambiguity of the written word.

However, taking this opportunity, provoked by B. Olsen's paper, I should also like to touch upon the problem, of the change, to be seen in historical and archaeological sources, which came in the character of ethnic relations and its consequences for the development of the Lapp ethnicity.

I understand B. Olsen's misgivings when he warns against the automatic acceptance, established by the ethnocentric tradition, of the assumption of the passive and subordinate role of the Lapps in their contacts with Norman political and economic organizations which exploited them. This results from his previous analyses of the state of research on the development of ethnic relations in the Arctic. Their conclusion was to reproach Norwegian archaeologists for giving in to the political (*sic!*) need for the "legitimization of contemporary social relations by extrapolating them into the past" (A. Schanche, B. Olsen 1985, p. 23), when the Norman population was to have been the sole carrier of the civilizational progress. However, the recent research work evidences that this situation has distinctly changed.

Today, it is rather necessary to discuss the determination of the meaning of different spheres of inter-group interaction for the formation and strengthening of the ethnic separateness of the Lapps. For it seems that the role of the different character of the two economic systems is overestimated. This may result from the popularity of the conception by Hodder (e.g., 1979), according to which ethnicity is automatically exteriorized in periods of sharper economic competition and contradictions resulting from the exploitation of the natural environment. The degree of the individual acceptance of ethnic group identification would be in inverse proportion to the range of free access to the resources of energy.

However, it is only in the anonymous "Historiae Norvegiae" from about 1195 that we find an interesting accusation that the Lapps fishing near "Christians" stole fish. This is a good example of real, provoked or imagined conflicts which would no doubt have arisen if the two ethnic populations had competed to a greater extent in the exploitation of the same resources of the natural environment. The noncompetitive exploitation is also confirmed by the results of archaeological excavations (T. Søbstad 1980, p. 139).

There was no threat of the penetration by the Norman socio-economic formation either, for both the expansion of farmers-fishermen into the interior of the Lapp territory and the transition of the inhabitants of the mountain interior to a more stabilized economic system were simply impossible for ecological reasons. Although one can imagine the permanent, farming-based settlement of the Lapps in the coastal zone, but the ampleness of extra-agricultural energy sources, the profits gained from the noncompetitive coexistence and exchange with farmers-fishermen, incomes from mediation in the commercial exchange between the East and the West, and also the lack of demographic pressure favoured exactly the continuation (with some changes) of the traditional economic system, without requiring the undertaking of the effort to change the way of life, which was one of the elements of ethnic identification. This process came on a larger scale only in the late Middle Ages, after the demographic and economic crisis caused by a series of epidemics in the 2nd half

of the 14th century had subsided. The process of the settlement of the Lapps in the coastal zone was, however, probably controlled or at least initiated by the central political and economic centre of the state and the church hierarchy which were interested in the reconstruction of fiscal profits gained from the Arctic settlement and increased control over the mobile Lapp population.

Therefore, I believe that in the earlier period the development of the ethnic self-awareness of the Lapps was not a reaction to the activeness of the Norman ethnos, which would be expressed in the competitiveness and aggressiveness of their potentially more effective socio-economic system, as the inevitable result of the "introvert" attitude of the inhabitants of the coast in the ideological and symbolic sphere. The establishment and development of the ethnic separateness of the Lapps in the Early Iron Age (after about 600 A.D.) were not so much a defensive reaction in opposition to the better organized, expansive neighbours as a natural result of the Norman self-isolation.

If we agree with K. Odner that the Germanic identification of the settlers on the northwest coast of Scandinavia can only be derived from the period after 300, when the "German material culture manifested itself relatively rapidly over a very large area" as a result of the process of internal social changes which brought about the fact that the "adoption of Germanic cultural codes became an imperative irrespective of the earlier ethnic membership" (K. Odner 1983, p. 117), it is from that period too that the phenomenon of the ethnic isolationism of the Arctic farmer-fishermen population should be derived and so should the almost programmatic self-restriction (in the social and ideological sphere) of the organizational structures developed by it.

It is from this side that there emerged an ethnic barrier and the development of self-identification in opposition to the surrounding socio-cultural environment. This was coupled with the political and economic process of the development of local autarkical chief-based system organizations, aggressive on the military plane, but not the ideological one, and with limited expansiveness in terms of settlement and economy. The system in which the stable central power controlled directly all activities (socio-economic, political, religious and military) of a given population, with the parallel inefficiency of market mechanisms, replaced by the redistribution system, prevented further expansion, since as the physical distance from the centre increased there must have come a loosening of ties of group identification and increased poverty (see E. R. Service 1962, p. 158).

The political character of economy based on the redistribution of production surpluses (see K. Polanyi 1968) and the concentration of all socio-economic activities around the centre made difficult the spatial development of such an organization. At the same time, they required a legitimizing, "inward"-directed ideology and the aggressive, though in fact defensive, protection of the state of possession and the symbolic emphasizing of its separateness. These limitations were only overcome by the development of the specialized institutions of the feudal state.

An argument supporting the above thesis of the passive role of the pre-medieval inhabitants of the Norwegian Arctic coast in the shaping of the ethnic separateness of the Lapps is seen in the observations by A. Schanche resulting from research carried out in the southern part of the Troms region. The author arrived at the conclusion that the distinct boundary of the Norman settlement cannot be explained by economic and ecological reasons, but had the character of symbolic restriction of their own ethnic area (A. Schanche 1986, pp. 100, 105 ff, 111). The cause of this was the symbolic encoding of the ethnically identifying territorial boundary established in opposition to the neighbouring Lapp populations, which, although they were connected by economic contacts, did not constitute part of the socio-political structure delineated by exact geographic borders. Moreover, the boundary established one-sidedly by populations with Norman self-identification was probably not seen in the same way by the Lapps who did not feel the need for identification with a strictly defined territory.

This almost institutional rigidity of Norman ethnic ideology found its extreme expression

in the fate of the Norman colonists in Greenland who until their tragic end did not undertake any attempt to adapt to one of the Eskimo ways of accomodating to the local environmental conditions which worsened systematically as a result of climatic changes (see T. McGovern 1980, 1981).

In continental Norway, a change in this defensive ideological strategy was brought about by the breaking up of local chiefs' communities by the early feudal state organization which had a built-in as it were mechanism of political and economic expansion, supported by the Church which was equally aggressive both in the ideological and economic spheres. Thus, the territorial self-identification gave way to acceptance of economic differences as the essential indicator of ethnic separateness, while the passive ideological isolationism transformed into an offensive feeling of civilizational superiority.

Medieval written sources distinctly emphasize the different styles of living of the Normans (permanent settlements along the coast, cultivation and animal husbandry) and the Lapps (rapid moving with all their belongings by means of reindeer and hunting). By such contrasting of economic systems the authors of sagas defined the ethnic relations of the medieval inhabitants of the Arctic. An example of such a distinction is a mention in the "Rimbegla" written in the early 13th century. Recalling the border of Finnmark inhabited by the Lapps which ran in the area of Malangen Fjord, the author found it sufficient to define the Norwegian settlers simply as "settled people" (*bumenn*).

At the same time, the spread of a new, universalistic religion made it possible to enrich ideologically the ethnic differences. Hence came the mentions of the procedures of black magic observed by the Lapps which were so frequent in medieval sources. The civilizational mission institutionalized by the Church, accompanying the political ambitions and fiscal appetites of the central state power, found its legible expression in documents informing about the foundation of a missionary church in Tromsø by Haakon Haakonson in about 1250, called *Sancte Marie de Trums iuxta paganos*, and in offering the Lapps tax reductions for conversion to Christianity (in a decree by Haakon V Magnusson from 1313).

The political, economic and ideological-religious changes which determined the beginning of the Norman Middle Ages must have also found expression in the development of the situation in the areas dominated by the Lapp population. The sudden increase in the ethnic legibility of archaeological traces of the Lapp presence in the analyzed region (row settlements of the "stalo" type, metal "hoards", rubble burials, the settlements in Eiterfjord and Vestvatn), which began in the same period, indicates that to an increasing extent they exteriorized their separateness.

It does not seem convincing to me to connect this intensification of the material manifestation of Lapp ethnicity from the beginning of the Middle Ages only with changes occurring in the economic sphere (E. Baudou 1981, p. 143 ff; I. Storli 1986, p. 20). The replacement of the local chiefs' redistribution system by the total state system operating on similar principles and the inclusion of Norway in the European market system stimulating the production of specific goods (e.g., dried fish) was significant above all for the Norman inhabitants of the coast. In turn, for the Lapps the institutionalization, monopolization and centralization of the commercial exchange by the state apparatus do not seem to have been of any greater significance, and may even have brought some gains in the form of the stabilization, better organization and uniformization of the principles of exchange.

The fiscal pressures from the state may have been some strain, though of unknown severity. However, just as before, it seems there was no danger of the Norman economic, military or demographic expansion, although already the early Middle Ages saw the settlements of farmers-fishermen entering deeper into the fjords. In turn, an essential change in mutual relations came in the ideological sphere, in the new offensive conception of Norman ethnicity manifested in the increased feeling of civilizational superiority. Therefore, I believe that it was exactly the growing conflict on the symbolic and ideological plane that accelerated the process of ethnic consolidation of the Lapp hunters-gatherers and the material manifestation of this separateness to be observed archaeologically.

Even if this conception of the interpretation of ethnic changes in northwestern Norway at the turn of the 1st and 2nd millenia is not an exhaustive alternative to previous ecological and functionalist hypotheses, it seems to show at any rate ways of enriching the discussion currently held.

REFERENCES

List of abbreviations

“NAR” – “Norwegian Archaeological Review”, Oslo

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PRZEMYSŁAW URBAŃCZYK

ARKTYCZNY DYLEMAT: ROZWAŻANIA W ZWIĄZKU
Z ARTYKUŁEM B. OLSENA "INTERACTION BETWEEN
HUNTER-GATHERERS AND FARMERS: ETHNOGRAPHICAL
AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES"

Streszczenie

B. Olsen postuluje w swoim artykule uwzględnianie w badaniach archeologicznych pomijanego dotąd „symbolicznego” aspektu procesu neolityzacji społeczności zbieracko-łowickich. Zgoda z generalną koncepcją, mającą stanowić alternatywę wobec dominującego we współczesnej archeologii paradygmatu funkcjonalizmu ekologicznego, nie idzie niestety w parze z akceptacją sposobu jej egzemplifikacji. Według B. Olsena łatwość i skuteczność rozprzestrzenienia się rolnictwa w arktycznej części Norwegii należy wyjaśnić dobrowolną akceptacją niektórych atrybutów kulturowych swych rolniczych sąsiadów przez działających z pełną świadomością zbieracko-łowickich tubylców.

Sugestia ta jest próbą sformułowania nowej podstawy do dyskusji o procesie neolityzacji terenów arktycznych i alternatywy wobec akceptowanej dotąd *implicite*, choć nie formułowanej *explicite* hipotezy migracyjnej. Analiza sytuacji geograficzno-ekologicznej każe jednak stwierdzić, że w tym konkretnym wypadku migracyjna koncepcja rozprzestrzenienia się rolnictwa jest jedynym rozsądnym rozwiązaniem problemu pojawienia się tego nowego elementu gospodarczego na omawianym obszarze.

Specjalne warunki klimatyczne i glebowe sprawiają, że niedoświadczony, przypadkowy czy też „symboliczny” rolnik nie ma tam szans na jakikolwiek sukces ekonomiczny i musiałby zaniechać wszelkich dalszych, bardzo pracołłonnych przecież prób. Równocześnie jednak tereny te mogły być bardzo atrakcyjne dla przybyszów z Południa. Znajdują się tam bowiem najrybniejsze łowiska przybrzeżne Europy, największe na kontynencie kolonie ptaków i stanowiska łęgowe stad fok i morsów. Co więcej, te alternatywne źródła energii są dostępne najłatwiej właśnie poza okresem prac rolniczych, stanowiąc gwarantowaną ofertę żywnościową w czasie zimy i wiosny, które mogą być bardzo trudne dla społeczności czysto rolniczych. Zatem neolityczny *homo oeconomicus* mógł być zainteresowany tym obszarem oferującym możliwość wielokierunkowej eksploatacji różnorodnych i bogatych, lecz występujących sezonowo zasobów energetycznych środowiska.

Jeżeli natomiast uznać, że ewidentne (potwierdzone diagramami pyłkowymi) neolityczne ślady rolnictwa pozostawili „udający” rolników zbieracko-łowcy, pragnący ułatwić sobie w ten sposób kontakty z sąsiadami o odmiennym systemie gospodarczym, to najbliższe, prawdziwie rolnicze społeczności, dla których podjęto te działania, mieszkałyby co najmniej kilkaset kilometrów na południe. Zatem komunikacja z nimi nie mogła mieć charakteru ciągłego, wymagającego specjalnych strategii poprawiających interakcje. W każdym razie samo rolnictwo nie mogłoby spełniać zakładanej przez B. Olsena roli, w której przydatne byłyby przede wszystkim jakieś ruchome elementy wyposażenia materialnego manifestujące pożądane komunikaty kulturowe. Wydaje mi się natomiast, że czynniki symboliczne, prestiżowe a nawet quasi-etniczne musiały odgrywać ważną rolę w trwaniu prymitywnego rolnictwa na tym obszarze oferującym łatwo dostępne, alternatywne źródła energii.

Drugi problem dotyczy trwania obok siebie dwóch odmiennych systemów społeczno-gospodarczych, które pomimo utrzymywania bliskich kontaktów nie ulegają zmianom, zachowując swoją samoidentyfikację etniczną i odrębną bazę ekonomiczną. B. Olsen przywołał tu między innymi przykład zamieszkujących północną Fennoskandynawię Lapończyków (*Saami*), którzy nie ulegli akulturacji mimo trwających ponad 2000 lat intensywnych kontaktów z otaczającymi ich społecznościami rolniczymi. Najlepiej zbadane i oświetlone przez źródła pisane i archeologiczne są ich stosunki z normańskimi mieszkańcami północno-zachodniego wybrzeża Półwyspu Skandynawskiego.

Obecny stan wiedzy nie pozwala już na podtrzymywanie twierdzenia, że to właśnie ludność normańska miała być jedynym nośnikiem postępu cywilizacyjnego, prowadząc przy tym politykę bezwzględnej eksploatacji gospodarczej koczowniczych mieszkańców górskiego interioru. Dzisiaj dyskusji wymaga raczej ustalenie znaczenia różnych sfer interakcji międzygrupowej w kształtowaniu się i umacnianiu odrębności etnicznej Lapończyków. W analizach poświęconych temu problemowi przeceniana jest rola odmienności obu systemów gospodarczych. Zarówno dane archeologiczne, jak i pewne wzmianki historyczne wskazują na niekonkurencyjną eksploatację środowiska naturalnego, a więc nie powodującą napięć wymagających wzmożonej manifestacji etnicznej przynależności grupowej.

Sądzę zatem, że w okresie wikingów rozwój samoświadomości etnicznej Lapończyków był nie tyle reakcją na aktywne działania etnosu normańskiego, ile nieuniknionym skutkiem introwertycznej postawy mieszkańców wybrzeża w sferze ideologiczno-symbolicznej. Nie była to reakcja obronna na działania sprawnej zorganizowanych, silniejszych i ekspansywnych sąsiadów, lecz naturalny skutek normańskiej samoizolacji. To właśnie z tej strony utworzono barierę etniczną i rozwijano samoidentyfikację grupową i terytorialną w opozycji do otoczenia lapońskiego. Polityczny charakter gospodarki wodzowskich organizacji wikingów wymagał legitymizującej, skierowanej „do wewnątrz” ideologii oraz agresywnej, choć w gruncie rzeczy defensywnej obrony stanu posiadania.

Zmianę tej defensywnej strategii przyniosło dopiero rozbitcie lokalnych wspólnot wódzowskich przez wczesnofeudalną organizację państwową, mającą niejako wbudowany naturalnie mechanizm ekspansji polityczno-gospodarczej wspieranej przez równie agresywny w sferze ideologicznej Kościół. Wtedy dopiero samoidentyfikacja terytorialna ludności normańskiej ustępuje akceptacji różnic gospodarczych jako wyznacznika odrębności etnicznej, a bierny izolacjonizm ideologiczny przekształca się w ofensywne poczucie wyższości cywilizacyjnej.

Te przemiany polityczne, gospodarcze i ideologiczno-religijne, jakie wyznaczają początek normańskiego średniowiecza, spowodowały też reakcję na obszarach zamieszkałych przez Lapończyków. Zapoczątkowane u progu II tysiąclecia n.e. nagłe zwiększenie etnicznej czytelności archeologicznych śladów obecności ludności lapońskiej na analizowanym obszarze (osady rzędowe, skarby metalowe, pochówki rumowiskowe, pierwsze stałe(?) osady w pobliżu wybrzeża) świadczy o narastającym zewnętrznianiu swojej odrębności. Sądzę zatem, że to nie rozwój sytuacji gospodarczej, kształtującej się raczej korzystnie dla producentów poszukiwanych na rynkach europejskich futer, lecz nowa, ofensywna koncepcja normańskiej etniczności stanowiła najważniejszą zmianę we wzajemnych stosunkach obu narodów. Wzrastający konflikt na płaszczyźnie symboliczno-ideologicznej spowodował przyspieszenie procesu etnicznej konsolidacji lapońskich zbieraczy-łowców i obserwowalną archeologicznie materialną manifestację własnej odrębności.

Koncepcja ta nie stanowi może wyczerpującej alternatywy w stosunku do dotychczasowych hipotez ekonomiczno-funkcjonalistycznych, ale wydaje się wskazywać kierunek wzbogacenia toczącej się dyskusji.

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