



**TÜBINGER ARCHÄOLOGISCHE
TASCHENBÜCHER**

3

**Peter F. Biehl,
Alexander Gramsch, Arkadiusz Marciniak (Hrsg.)**

Archäologien Europas/ Archaeologies of Europe

**Geschichte, Methoden und Theorien/
History, Methods and Theories**

WAXMANN

Archäologien Europas /
Archaeologies of Europe

Tübinger Archäologische Taschenbücher

herausgegeben von
Manfred K. H. Eggert
und Ulrich Veit

Band 3



Waxmann Münster / New York
München / Berlin

Archäologien Europas / Archaeologies of Europe

Geschichte, Methoden und Theorien /
History, Methods and Theories

Herausgegeben von Peter F. Biehl,
Alexander Gramsch und Arkadiusz Marciniak



Waxmann Münster / New York
München / Berlin

Die Deutsche Bibliothek – CIP-Einheitsaufnahme

Archäologien Europas : Geschichte, Methoden und Theorien

= Archaeologies of Europe / hrsg. von Peter F. Biehl

– Münster ; New York ; München ; Berlin: Waxmann, 2002

(Tübinger archäologische Taschenbücher ; 3)

ISBN 3-8309-1067-3

Gedruckt mit freundlicher Unterstützung
der Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung

Tübinger Archäologische Taschenbücher, Band 3

ISSN 1430-0931

ISBN 3-8309-1067-3

© Waxmann Verlag GmbH, 2002

Postfach 8603, D-48046 Münster, F. R. G.

<http://www.waxmann.com>

E-Mail: info@waxmann.com

Umschlaggestaltung: Pleßmann Kommunikationsdesign, Ascheberg

Umschlagzeichnung: Holger Singowitz (nach einem Motiv vom
unteren Tor von Schloss Hohentübingen aus dem frühen 17. Jh.)

Druck: Runge GmbH, Cloppenburg

Gedruckt auf alterungsbeständigem Papier, DIN 6738

Alle Rechte vorbehalten

Printed in Germany

LUDMILA N. KORYAKOVA

Present day Russian archaeology and the outside world¹

Introduction

During the last 8-10 years many changes have occurred within Russian archaeology. Some have already been discussed in print. The collection of papers presenting the realities of 1993-1994 by Russian authors was published in the *World Archaeological Bulletin* (WAB 8, 1996). At the same time, D. Anthony (Anthony 1995) shared his impressions about Russian-Ukrainian archaeology, mostly concentrating on organizational problems. Two years earlier, Lebedev's book *History of National Archaeology* was published; the last sections of the last chapter have been devoted to basic recent trends in Russian archaeology, which also were reviewed by L. S. Klejn in his book *The phenomenon of Soviet Archaeology* (Klejn 1993). He has also reminded us about the interrelations between archaeology and history in the Soviet tradition (Klejn 1993 a). P. Dolukhanov (Dolukhanov 1993) has made a short presentation of the situation in "post-perestroika" archaeology in the USSR. Y. Berezkin (Berezkin 2000) recently highlighted the problem of archaeological education in post-Soviet Russia. In most of these publications (except for Lebedev's review), the current state of Russian archaeology looks quite controversial and rather pessimistic.

In this paper, I shall attempt to outline some features of the current situation in Russian archaeology as I see them. I shall also try to assess the situation which issues from the new opportunities conditioned by the global and political changes that have occurred in the last decades. The term "outside world" is applied to the countries of closest proximity (so-called "*blizhneye zarubezhye*") – countries of the former Soviet Union and foreign (mostly Western) countries ("*dalneye zarubezhye*").

I have always been a practicing archaeologist from the so-called "periphery" (outside of Moscow and St. Petersburg), which had been open to Western contacts only recently. Therefore, my review may not cover all aspects of the theme, but it is based on my personal experience.

¹ I am very grateful to the organizers for inviting me to this conference and making my trip to Poznań financially possible. I also thank J. Chapman for correcting my English and discussing some issues of Western archaeology. This article was written with partial support of Russian-French grant PICS 585 -RFFI 98-06-22011.

Historical developments until 1989

The national tradition and long isolation during Soviet time contributed to the formation of specific structures, modes of thinking and practical research (*fig. 1*). Yet, in a general sense, Russian archaeology has been “ill” with similar “diseases” that were and still are characteristic of Western archaeology. It posed the same important questions: What is the subject of archaeology? What is its relation to science and history? What constitutes theory and method in archaeology? And many others. As D. Anthony similarly noted: “Both Western and Soviet archaeologists have struggled with the basic questions of the relationship between history and event, between long-term move from the artifact or the site to higher levels of abstraction and interpretation” (Anthony 1995, 184).

It is very important to remember that archaeology in Russia was always included within departments of history and that students were historically educated, not having direct access to the sciences. Such a situation was formed by the early 1930s, when the unified system of high education was established and archaeology was included into historical faculties in the framework of the history of pre-class societies (Lebedev 1992, 427). Since this time, archaeology has lost the independent status which it possessed before. Additionally, the concept of “prehistory” which linked Soviet archaeology with its pre-Revolutionary and European tradition, had disappeared from pages of books and articles, to be replaced by the “history of primordial society”.

However, in the 1920s (especially between 1922 and 1925), the multi-disciplinary approach was quite prevalent in research and in archaeological education. That is why many pioneering works combining archaeology, ethnography and anthropology were accomplished in that period. Later, the introduction of the theory of stages and Marxist ideology had reduced this diversity. At the same time, one cannot deny that this process had also some positive moments expressed in the greater attention paid to problems of social and economic dynamics, which influenced Childe’s theoretical concept of the “Neolithic” and other “revolutions” (Lebedev 1992, 429). “A great deal of work was done by Soviet archaeologists on the interpretation of the basic positions of the classical Marxist-Leninist authors and on the systematization of their direct pronouncements on various problems of early history and material culture” (Klejn 1977, 12-13). Although later Soviet archaeology met some difficulties on this path, discovering that there was no direct link between artifacts and social reality, the idea of an economic basis for social dynamics, the ‘processual’ nature of human culture and a positive attitude to generalization were emphasized by “New Archaeology”.

In fact, putting aside the most extreme and vulgar manifestations of orthodox Marxist ideology in Soviet archaeology, it will not be difficult to see that some particular “theoretical discoveries” were made independently on both sides of the “Iron Curtain”, especially those concerning processual and Marxist explanations. More essential is the difference in terminology and scientific language, which emphasized different operational concepts, flowing originally from different philosophical orientations. “There is more that unites Soviet and Western archaeology than divides them, ... if one ignores differences in scientific language and meaningless ideological declarations” (Kolpakov 1996, 85).

Organizational and Structural

Centralization:

Academy of Sciences: Institutes of Archaeology (Moscow, Leningrad), Institutes of History, Language and Literature (divisions of archaeology and ethnography), Institutes of History, Philosophy and Philology (divisions of archaeology and ethnography)

Universities: Historical Departments – within the chairs of the History of the USSR, the National History of Pre-class Societies; Laboratories of archaeology

Museums: Divisions of Primordial History, Archaeology and Ethnography

Centralized state system of publishing and literature distribution

Funding:

- State – programming archaeology, student training (practice), museum research
- Contracts – rescue archaeology (laboratories, expeditions).

Field Work Control

Ministry of Culture – Field Committee – Moscow

Communications:

Within the Soviet Union

Annual National Congresses

Thematic National and Regional conferences

Personal contacts

With the Outside World

Limited contacts – mainly accessible to important leaders from capital cities

General Theoretical Orientation

Evolutionism

Historical Materialism – Historicism and Determinism

Formation Approach – History of archaic formation – History of Primordial Society

Inductive reasoning

Special Theoretical Orientation

Archaeology as a part of history – Cultural-Historical Approach

System theory

Fig. 1. Soviet archaeology. Factors of development in the 1960s-1980s.

It is my impression that our Western colleagues exaggerate the role of Marxism-Leninism doctrine in Soviet and, especially now in Russian archaeology. It was and is still materialistic and rather evolutionist, but not purely Marxist. I can say this at least about the archaeology of my generation. As Berezkin says, "In the Soviet Union, Marxism meant that evolutionary ideas characteristic for the later 19th century were preserved for another hundred years" (Berezkin 2000, 155).

In the 1960-70s, many prominent students were coming into archaeology. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same about current situation – much fewer current students show interest in archaeology. Why? The *crux* of the matter is that the archaeology of the 1970s was much less politicized compared with other historical disciplines and it was consequently more attractive because of its independence from the Communist Party. Archaeological expeditions uniting students of various disciplines produced social and intellectual schools of thought. The rise of rescue archaeology in our country in this period resulted in the creation of many new research centers and many new expeditions working in all parts of the Soviet Union. There was a lot practical work done during these years. This greatly influenced developments in field methods so as to find the optimal correlation between large-scale excavations and the accuracy of information recording, storage and scientific analysis.

Yet, at the same time, these years were marked by quite significant theoretical discussions (*fig. 2*) about the subject matter of archaeology, cognitive processes in archaeology and its main operational concept – the 'archaeological culture' (Zakharuk, Kamensky, Klejn, Kovalevskaya – general review in Klejn 1977). It is curious to recall that, at that time, there was an unwritten rule for archaeologists to express their opinions on these concepts, especially on archaeological cultures, in dissertations, articles and books. The definition of an archaeological culture varied from its direct identification with a past society (*ethnos*) to the association with an abstract concept used as an instrument in research practice. The cognitive process in archaeology was regarded as consisting of at least two levels: empirical (source studying) and interpretive (theoretical). A high methodological level was based, by definition, on historical materialism. In the course of this discussion, an imbalance was noted between empirical and theoretical works in favor of the former (Klejn 1977, 28).

This discussion was in some extent a reaction to the rapid increase in excavation finds and the necessity to explain these finds. But, on the other hand, it was indirectly inspired by a growing interest in theoretical archaeology in the West. Another factor which stimulated this discussion was much less visible. It was rooted in the social situation in the Soviet Union, when the disproportion between official propaganda and reality was becoming increasingly clear. This was first of all clear to the educated part of the population. Soviet archaeology was developing quite intensively in the 1970s-1980s.

But this development was almost completely internal. Contacts with foreign colleagues were very limited. They were accessible only to important scholars in Moscow and Leningrad who, as a rule, should have been members of the Communist Party. Yet nothing had such negative consequences as limited overseas contacts for the majority of the archaeological community.

• **Object and Subject matter of archaeology**

Archaeology – independent field of knowledge studying history on the basis of archaeological records (sources) (Zakharuk, Masson, Viktorova and others).	Archaeology – source discipline that provides material to history, sociology (Klejn, Grigoryev, Lebedev, Bochkarev)
Object – past society/societies	Object – culture change
Subject – archaeological culture/cultures	Subject – artifacts

• **Cognitive process in archaeology**

Archaeological research – to obtain new material, resolve a problem situation and to find some regularity	1. Special theory of archaeology
1. Empirical level – Field work and material processing. Study of archaeological culture	- Basis – theory of communication
2. Interpretive (theoretical) – economic and social reconstruction	- Creation of professional language of archaeology
	2. Source-criticism
	3. Palaeo-historical synthesis (with participation of archaeology)

• **Archaeological culture and archaeological systematic**

Archaeological culture (AC) – the main category of archaeological analysis	AC – model of past society (Gening)	AC – abstract concept used as an instrument for scientific analysis (Grigoryev); It is not coincided with ethnos.
AC – reflects objectively certain past society (ethnos) (Zakharuk)	Archaeological-Ethnographic type	
Taxonomic nature of archaeological systematic:	Archaeological systematic =	
Type – cultural complex – local variant – archaeological culture – archaeological province – zone	Ethnographic systematic	

Fig. 2. Soviet archaeology. Theoretical discussion of the 1960s-1980s.

Recent changes since 1989

The situation dramatically changed after the liberalization of the political order (*fig. 3*). The results can be evaluated as having both positive and negative aspects. The internal negative consequences are quite well reviewed by Y. Berezkin (2000, 155-159).

The system of organization of education and science became much less centralized. Universities could now introduce new departments and new institutions (not, of course, without some bureaucratic interaction with the ministries). There is no longer such a strong hierarchy between central and "peripheral" institutions, which in turn, became more independent in the establishment of their own research programs. The only links, which connect peripheral and central institutions, exist in fieldwork control since the Federal fieldwork committee is still based in Moscow, and in informal scientific contacts between scholars. There also appeared some "commercial archaeological firms" which were quite numerous in the early 1990s. Reductions in state funding made archaeologists search for money from external sources and to get them in competition that, in a certain sense, stimulated innovative research.

Some of the negative consequences are related to the fact that interregional communications within country and especially within the territory of the former USSR have reached the lowest level and they only occasionally exist on a personal basis. Archaeologists in the former Soviet republics felt the consequences of this network breakdown very fast. The political situation in the majority of these countries is characterized by a deliberate emphasis on national specifics and the importance of local heritage. "The violence, literally, the machinegun fire, that accompanies change in our society, in the name of the rooting out of old values, is disillusioning and makes us doubt the seriousness of the professed intention for the introduction of new values. We are isolated by our unwillingness to participate in this process, our unreadiness to accept ideas about national or territorial limits to our freedom" (Gukin / Manzura / Rabinovich / Tkachuk 1996). This is a passage written in Moldavia. Another example comes from Kazakhstan, the archaeology of which is quite close to me because of my professional interest. The majority of Russian archaeologists working in northern Kazakhstan (Petropavlovsk) and central Kazakhstan (Karaganda) had to leave the country and to seek a job in Russia. Similar tendencies can be traced in other former Soviet republics.

On the contrary, contacts with Western countries became more active, embracing many new centers, including these that were closed for any international contacts before. This gives an opportunity for more flexible mutual exchange, which is expressed in several forms:

1. Visits of Russian scholars to Western universities within the framework of various programs and grants and vice versa.
2. More active participation of Russian archaeologists in international conferences.
3. Joint research projects, which currently run in several regions of the Russian territory (Altai, Ural, Southern Siberia, Volga area, Black Sea, Baltic Sea areas, Kalmykia, Polar area, etc.).

General:

- Liberation of political order
- Disintegration of Soviet Union – disintegration of a science organization
- Nationalistic tendencies
- Intellectual chaos – search of new national idea (eurasionism, religion, patriotism, nationalism...)
- Partial decentralization of system of education and science in Russia
- Economic crisis – Decrease of state funding – Decrease of rescue projects

Particular in Russian Archaeology**Structural and Organizational**

- Shock of the early 1990s
- Decentralization
- Independence in the establishment of research programs
- Variety of archaeological organizations
- Transition to multi-source funding
- Weakening of state site protection
- Regionalization of research and publishing

Funding

- Combined – project, program and grant system, contracts

Communications

- Breaking of formal contacts within area of former Soviet Union
- Activation and territorial extension of contacts with the West
- International projects, conferences, academic exchanges, publications
- Slow acceptance of Russian archaeology into world archaeology
- Continuation of mutual distrust between East-West
- Insufficient accessibility to data bases for scholars and students
- Incompatibility of educational programs

The Crisis of Theory?

- No theoretical discussions and a little special theoretical research
- Disappearance of theoretical divisions in institutions – it is very expensive
- Dissatisfaction with theory, **but**
- Thematic discussions in central editions (**new**)
- Publishing of more material about history of archaeology (**new**)
- Perfection of field methods
- Multidisciplinary researches

Fig. 3. Post-Soviet archaeology. Recent changes.

4. More publications in international editions. Compared with the preceding period, these changes represent an enormous step toward the openness of Russian archaeology.

But archaeology gained from this achievement less than other disciplines. Paradoxically, an archaeology which was not extremely politicized, compared with history, is being transformed into a real world science very slowly, as a result of various objective and subjective reasons. The language barrier, naturally, is one of the obvious reasons, but not the most serious. More important is the psychological fear of overcoming this obstacle. In our days, there is no longer a major ideological barrier, but the process of mutual understanding along the East/West axis is inadmissibly slow. This is caused not only by the consequences of the isolation of Soviet archaeology, but also in general by Western science, which has finally led to an obvious and critical separation. One of the strong inhibiting factors is connected to the general technical and financial backwardness of Russian archaeology. This is especially negative in the field of absolute dating, which is still in its infancy there. Western archaeologists do not trust Russian chronology and often do not understand it because of regional nuances; Russian colleagues who used to build quite sophisticated regional schemes of relative chronology are not in a hurry to spend their small funds obtained from rigorous competition on expensive dating analyses.

The enormous body of information accumulated by Western and Russian archaeology is still only partially accessible for scholars and, especially, to students of both sides. This problem is now getting more and more clear, leading to the appearance of an unfortunately still small number of journals and special editions publishing materials from the territory of Eurasia (e. g., *Eurasia Antiqua* published by the Eurasian Section of the German Archaeological Institute; *Archaeology, Anthropology and Ethnography* published in Novosibirsk). The European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) makes a significant contribution to this process.

However, it is also clear that it will take some time to reverse the results of this long separation. I assume that these are students, who will not be so strongly bound by the prejudices of our and our teacher's generations, and who will play a decisive role in this process. But as far as I know, the archaeology of the Old World is taught on a very limited scale in American Universities. The archaeology of Eurasia is not presented there at all, nor is it taught in Western Europe. Nonetheless, I could see a real interest in this field among the students participating in our international field school. Russian students would like to know more about world archaeology, but student exchanges are practically non-existent. One of the many ways to overcome this obstacle is to develop international education, enriching the universities' curricula by new programs and using new forms of education. This will undoubtedly lead to a greater understanding and appreciation between staff and students of the West and the East.

A review of recent theoretical trends

Sometimes I am asked by my Western colleagues: “What is the current intellectual state of Russian archaeology?” I must confess that the answer is not easy or at least, not readily expressed in a single way. It is true that archaeology in Russia is in some sort of structural crisis but it still exists and has managed to take advantage of new intellectual freedoms. Publication activity, which reached its lowest level in the early 1990s, has tended to be higher, with the appearance of a lot of regional publications. The problem is that, since the system of the centralized distribution of literature has collapsed, the exchange of publications is mainly based on personal contacts. The number of expeditions has decreased, but some of them became more multi-disciplinary as a direct result of international collaboration.

In a series of articles, G. Lebedev (1992) and L. Klejn (1993) distinguished seven basic directions within Soviet archaeology in the period of 1960s–1980s. I shall briefly review them from the standpoint of the current situation.

Archaeological history

Archaeological history – an approach regarding the archaeological record as a form of historical evidence. It is similar to the cultural-historical approach of Western archaeology. It goes back to the early stages of Soviet archaeology and the Marxist concept of the interdependence between the economic (material) base and the social components of history. It is still quite common among Russian archaeologists, remembering that all of them are educated in historical departments where students still use old-fashioned textbooks, which presents a basic description of archaeological cultures of the former USSR. But I should stress that the concept of “archaeological culture”, which totally determined the differentiating approach of the 1960s–1980s and the subject of the above-mentioned discussion, is now not so strongly supported. It is in many cases replaced by the integrating approach, using “groups of cultures” or “cultural-chronological horizons”, “communities”, “families of cultures”, etc. It has left its direct historical meaning as a marker of a certain set of similar archaeological sites. Strictly speaking, the concept of archaeological culture most likely will continue to be used in Russia, where despite intensive exploration, the density of excavated sites is less than, for example in other parts of Europe, despite marked territorial dispersion.

Ethnological archaeology

Ethnological archaeology – is a very traditional trend in Russian archaeology, conditioned by either national specifics (e. g., a large territory with multi-ethnic population) and by social and political conditions. It passed several stages: from a direct association between the archaeological culture with certain ethnos – through heated discussions between archaeologists, linguists and ethnographers – until an understanding was reached of the very complicated nature of relations between material culture and ethnos. Problems of the early development of the Indo-European, Uralic and Turkic peo-

ples are still very popular. Endless disputes continue about the reconstruction of the ethnic and historical disposition of the nomads who repeatedly occupied the Russian steppes in the Iron Age. Some scholars refuse to refer to written sources about various nomadic tribes because of their uncertainty and controversies, instead striving to create a unified terminology for nomadic studies (Yablonsky 1999).

Sociological archaeology

Sociological archaeology – an approach which combines traditional concepts of Russian archaeology with some “models” of Western cultural anthropology and sociology based on materialist assumptions. It was practiced mostly by scholars of the Leningrad school and has not been widespread in the archaeological profession. The interest in social questions is likely to increase now that the number of special conferences, books and articles devoted to social reconstruction is clearly growing. But theoretical models for reconstruction are predominantly taken from the *History of Primordial Society*, based in general on the developed theory of clan society evolution that, in many cases, does not satisfy the real needs of research.

New discoveries in archaeology, as a rule, stimulate a search for new theories and explanations. The relatively recent appearance of the Sintashta-Arkaim sites on the archaeological map of the Southern Ural made scholars re-think traditional and “old” practical problems. But this has also allowed the discussion of more theoretical questions concerning the tendency and form of social development occurring in the Eurasian territory in the Bronze and Iron Age. Zdanovich’s (1995) *Country of Towns* illuminated many uncharted waters, but first of all it showed the incompatibility of new discoveries with the old theory of primitive clan-based society. The evident contradiction between the character of the culture and theoretical model of primitive society, even at the stage of its decomposition, resulted in such unsatisfactory terms as “proto-urban civilization”, “quasi-urban culture”, the criteria for which were quite vague and gave rise to scholarly doubts. The need for new social concepts became more evident.

Ultimately, our archaeology was not ready for this challenge. Until recent times, it used the models provided by historians of primitive society, who widely used ethnographic material and models adopted from Western literature, applying them to Marxist schema and sometimes incorporating archaeological data. In current conditions, many historians/ethnologists abandoned this field of knowledge in favor of modern ethno-political specialization, which pays much better. Suffice it to look through the “Ethnographic Review” – a journal which used to be a basic source for all archaeologists. It is completely reoriented to the problems of modern times. The last large-scale publication on prehistory is the three-volume book *History of Primitive (Primordial) Society* (Bromley / Persits / Semenov 1983; Bromley / Persits / Shnirelman 1986; Bromley / Kubbel / Shnirelman 1988). Nowadays, archaeologists have to create social models on their own and interest in social archaeology is gradually rising.

Descriptive archaeology

Descriptive (analytical-statistical) archaeology – an approach, stimulated partly by “New Archaeology”, partly by the French school of J.-C. Gardin and aided by the gradual introduction of computers into research practice. It tried to work out a formal language and mathematical apparatus which could help to analyze large quantities of archaeological material, resulting in the appearance of various ‘semiotic codes’ for pottery (Gening 1973), mortuary sites (Kamenetsky 1983), settlements (Koryakova 1988), and other categories (Kamensky / Sher / Marshak 1975). This approach was extremely popular in the 1970s and 1980s, although from the beginning it was not officially supported by tradition-oriented scholars with leading positions. Despite this and a series of disappointments in the power of mathematical methods, through which archaeologists of my generation have passed, the analytical-statistical approach has changed the mental character of Russian archaeology toward the more strict perception and recording of material and made it easier to introduce scientific methods and computer technologies. Yet, the fatal lack of equipment and restricted access to new technologies is a big obstacle on this path. One can say that nowadays this approach formally does not exist as a separate direction. It is incorporated within concrete research strategies.

Technological archaeology

Technological archaeology – an approach used for the study of various kinds of technologies: pottery making (Bobrinsky 1978; Molodin / Lamina 1990), stone use (Semenov, Korobkova), metallurgical developments (Chernykh 1992; Chernykh / Kuzminykh 1989, Terekhova / Rozanova / Zavyalov / Tolmacheva 1997). This set of approaches is perhaps the most developed and influential direction in Russian archaeology. It stresses the hypothesis of the primary role of metallurgy in cultural, economic and social development. The model of metallurgical provinces (Chernykh 1992), combined with absolute and relative dating, serves as a basis for chronological and cultural modeling of the Eurasian Bronze Age.

Ecological archaeology

Ecological archaeology has quite a long tradition in Russia, going back to D. Anuchin’s ecological-ethnological school and developing in two related forms. The first one collaborates with natural sciences in the study of environments, climate, forms of human adaptations, exploitation of resources etc. (reference will be inserted). It is getting more popular and predominant in the creation of research programs. The second one emphasizes “culture-nature” relations in traditional societies. A good example is Kosarev’s (1991) study of Siberian cultures on the basis of abundant information provided by Siberian ethnography.

'Constructivistic' archaeology

Lebedev distinguishes also so-called "strict archaeology", which is named by Klejn (1993) "echeloned archaeology". I would call it "constructivistic" archaeology. It is based on a systemic and structuralist approach. This term is applied first of all to the series of publications of L. Klejn and his followers, developing the concepts of the object (cultural and historical process) and the subject (artifacts) of archaeology, which is regarded as a source-studying discipline (Klejn 1993, 341). According to this school, archaeology should have its own theory which creates a special apparatus – the language of archaeology – including various deductions beginning with the definition of the archaeological resource up to the determination of the structure and principles of multi-level analytical research. For this group, the main task of archaeology consists in decoding the artifact's language and "translating" it into the language of historical synthesis (palaeo-history, palaeo-sociology, palaeo-ethnology). The archaeologist creates an intra-disciplinary synthesis but historians should do the interdisciplinary synthesis. The question, of course, now arises: Where have these historians gone? Cultural change is considered a key problem of archaeology. For its study, the theory of sequences has been created and used in some research (Shchukin 1994). This theory is focused on the working out of such basic concepts of archaeology as 'culture', 'type', 'attribute', 'classification' and so on (Lebedev 1992, 439).

In fact, all these directions can be distinguished very conditionally, since elements of each approach can often be found combined in any concrete research. Moreover, there is an even greater variety of approaches than those discussed above; for example, the semiotic approach (Antonova 1984; Baiburin 1981; 1983; 1993) is similar to postprocessual archaeological developments (Hodder 1999; Tilley 1999). It is applied to the study of past mental systems and sometimes is done rather successfully, as in case of reconstruction of the model of the Scythian worldview (Rayevsky 1985). It showed definite potential in the study of medieval composite belts (Kovalevskaya 1970), as well as Iron Age pottery and funeral ritual (Koryakova 1988; 1994). This approach has deep roots in Russian semiotic schools in linguistics, philology, folklore, and ethnography (Bogatyrev 1971; Lotman 1970; 1973; 1978; Baiburin 1981; Freidenberg 1978). There is also a specific variant of the ecological approach, constructing the theory of ethnogenesis on the basis of similar landscapes and the cognitive specifics of different cultures, as seen in the works of Gumilev (Gumilev 1990; 1993). Originally, these studies were heavily criticized for the author's "geographic determinism" but now they are becoming increasingly popular among young scholars.

The crisis of theory

After the active theoretical debates of the 1970s-1980s there has not been any serious discussion on the theory of archaeology in Russia, excepting some articles of L. Klejn and his pupils. Those special theoretical divisions created during these years in several central institutions have slowly "died" as a result of repeatedly occurring staff shortages, conditioned, above all, by the financial crisis. One may conclude that Russian

archaeology could not afford theoretical studies, which in fact, by this time had lost their orientation. Compared with Western (mostly Anglo-American) archaeology, it is now hard to find theoretical articles and books in Russian archaeology. It does not, however, mean a total absence of theoretical (interpretive) research, the elements of which are usually included in concrete research so as not to be labeled 'theoretical'. Moreover, some central scientific journals such as Russian archaeology (*Rossiskaya archeologiya*, *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*) started to publish thematic discussions about mortuary rituals, the ecology of ancient societies, Sarmatian archaeology and so on. It is quite significant that Russian central editions came to publish materials about the history of archaeology, especially detailing the archaeology of the pre-revolution period, which was almost forgotten during the Soviet period.

It is evident that there is a difference in how a theory is understood in the West and in the East. Frankly speaking, discussions about archaeological culture were regarded by many archaeologists as rather scholastic. One of the late V. Gening's theoretical books, *The Object and Subject of Archaeology* (1983) did not inspire archaeologists to discuss this problem because of its heavy Marxist-Leninist philosophy and phraseology, although some of the author's ideas were quite clear and useful². So, theory became associated with boring disputes and in fact, theory and practice exist apart from each other in Russia. Some Russian archaeologists do not believe in the theory of archaeology at all and attempt to replace it by theoretical 'cultureology' (Trifonov 1996, 94). Or, they do not believe in a unified theory of archaeology because it usually uses theories and methods adopted from different sciences and disciplines. Archaeology can only develop general principles and methods of cultural and historical interpretation of archaeological data, without any hard and fast rules for their application (Kolkov 1996, 88). I am rather inclined to share this opinion. In this case, we have to conclude: "Archaeology is a sort of art".

Why not? It is well known that a substantial role in the understanding of a site during the fieldwork is played by intuition, even aspects of perception, such as the ability "to see a layer". Simply because this is the very beginning of archaeological process, it is very important because this field interpretation will serve as a factual record for work by later scholars. I offer one small example of such a dilemma. In the 1950s, the outstanding Russian scholar, V. N. Chernetsov, an expert in Siberian ethnography, excavated in western Siberia the Ust-Polui "fortress" and on its basis he distinguished the eponymous culture. The materials used to construct Chernetsov's interpretation were widely published and quoted. However, recent excavations showed the absolute incompatibility of the new data with his previous interpretation. But, destroying the myth is turning out to be very difficult.

Conclusions

A brief characterization of present-day Russian archaeology must conclude by saying that it is rather diverse, trying to find its own place in a fast-changing society. From

² V. F. Gening was my first teacher of archaeology. He had incredible field intuition.

this perspective, it can be compared with postprocessual archaeology as described in Hodder's latest book (1999). The only difference is that many Russian archaeologists neither know Hodder nor have an understanding of what postprocessual archaeology is. Like so many others, this book is not accessible to them. Where there is no book, there is no interest. A simple conclusion can be drawn from this situation – in order to understand each other, we should not (and now we cannot) ignore each other.

Bibliography

- Antony 1995: D. Anthony, Is there a Future for the Past? An Overview of Archaeology in Western Russia and Ukraine. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 3/3, 1995, 176-198.
- Antonova 1984: E. V. Antonova, Ocherki kultury drevnikh zemledeltsev Perednei i Srednei Azii. Moskva 1984.
- Baiburin 1981: A. K. Baiburin, Semioticheskii status veshchei i mifologiya. *Materialnaya kultura i mifologiya. Sbornik muzeya antropologii i etnografii* 37, 1981, 215-226.
- Baiburin 1983: A. K. Baiburin, Zhilishche v obryadakh i predstavleniyakh vostochnykh slavyan. Leningrad 1983.
- Baiburin 1993: A. K. Baiburin, Problemy izucheniya pragmatiki v arkhaiskoi kulture. In: L. N. Koryakova (ed.), *Znaniya i navyki uralskogo naseleniya v drevnosti i srednevekovye*. Ekaterinburg 1993, 3-15.
- Berezkin 2000: Y. Berezkin, Archaeology and education in Postsoviet Russia. *Antiquity* 74, 2000, 155-159.
- Bobrinsky 1978: A. A. Bobrinsky, *Goncharstvo Vostochnoi Evropy*. Moskva 1978.
- Bogatyrev 1971: P. G. Bogatyrev, *Voprosy teorii narodnogo iskusstva*. Moskva 1971.
- Bromley / Persits / Semenov 1983: Y. V. Bromley / A. I. Persits / Y. I. Semenov, *Istoriya pervobytnogo obshchestva: Obshchiye voprosy. Problemy antropogeneza*. Moskva 1983.
- Bromley / Persits / Shnirelman 1986: Y. V. Bromley / A. I. Persits / V. F. Shnirelman, *Istoriya pervobytnogo obshchestva: Epokha pervobytnoi obshchiny*. Moskva 1986.
- Bromley / Kubbel / Shnirelman 1988: Y. V. Bromley / L. E. Kubbel / V. A. Shnirelman, *Istoriya pervobytnogo obshchestva: Epokha klassoobrazovaniya*. Moskva 1986.
- Bulkin / Klejn / Lebedev 1982: V. Bulkin / L. Klejn / G. Lebedev, Achievements and Problems of Soviet Archaeology. *World Archaeology* 13, 1982, 272-295.
- Chernykh 1992: E. N. Chernykh, *Ancient metallurgy in the USSR: the Early Metal Age*. Cambridge 1992.
- Chernykh / Kuzminykh 1989: E. N. Chernykh / S. V. Kuzminykh, *Drevnaya metallurgiya Severnoi Evrazii*. Moscow 1989.
- Dolukhanov 1993: P. M. Dolukhanov, Archaeology in the ex-USSR: post-perestroika problems. *Antiquity* 6, 150-156.
- Freidenberg 1978: O. M. Freidenberg, *Mif i literatura drevnosti*. Moskva 1978.
- Gening 1973: V. F. Gening, *Programma statisticheskoi obrabotki keramiki iz arkheologicheskikh Raskopok*. *Sovetskaya arkheologiya* 1973/1, 114-136.

- Gening 1983: V. F. Gening, *Ob'ect i predmet nauki v arkheologii*. Kiev 1983.
- Gening 1983: V. F. Gening, *Arkheologija – tselostnaya nauchnaya sistema ili 'diletanskie vy-lazki' i 'polufabricat znaniya'* (Po voprosu konceptsii ob'ekta i predmeta arkheologii L. S. Klejna). *Sovetskaja arkheologija* 1983/3, 215-228.
- Gukin / Manzura / Rabinovich / Tkachuk 1996: V. Gukin / I. Manzura / R. Rabinovich / M. Tkachuk, Non-archaeological theory and the problem of cultural heritage. *World Archaeological Bulletin* 8, 1996, 9-17.
- Gumilev 1990: L. N. Gumilev, *Etnogenez i biosfera Zemli*. Moskva 1990.
- Gumilev 1993: L. N. Gumilev, *Ritmy Evrasii: Epokhi i tsivilizatsiji*. Moskva 1993.
- Hodder 1999: I. Hodder, *The archaeological process. An Introduction*. Oxford 1999.
- Kamenetsky 1983: I. S. Kamenetsky, Kod dlya opisaniya pogrebnogo obryada. In: Y. Krasnov (ed.), *Drevnosti Dona*. Moskva 1983, 221-250.
- Kamensky / Marshak / Sher 1975: I. S. Kamensky / B. I. Marshak / Ya. A. Sher, *Analiz arkheologicheskikh istochnikov*. Leningrad 1975.
- Klejn 1977: L. S. Klejn, A Panorama of Theoretical Archaeology. *Current Anthropology* 18/1, 1977, 1-42.
- Klejn 1981: L. S. Klejn, O jazyke veshchej. In: L. Chindina (ed.), *Meddologicheskiye aspekty arkheologicheskikh i etnograficheskikh issledovanoj v Zapadnoj Sibiri*. Tomsk 1981, 16-17.
- Klejn 1986: L. S. Klejn, O predmete arkheologii. *Sovetskaja arkheologija* 1986/3, 209-219.
- Klejn 1993: L. S. Klejn, *Fenomen Sovetskoi Arkheologii*. St. Petersburg 1993.
- Klejn 1993 a: L. S. Klejn, To separate a centaur: on the relationship between archaeology and history in the Soviet archaeological tradition. *Antiquity* 67, 1993, 339-348.
- Kolpakov 1996: E. Kolpakov, The end of theoretical archaeology? A view from the East. *World Archaeological Bulletin* 8, 1996, 83-92.
- Koryakova 1988: L. N. Koryakova, *Ranni zheleznyi vek Zauralya i Zapadnoi Sibiri*. Sverdlovsk 1988.
- Koryakova 1994: L. N. Koryakova, Pogrebnaya obryadnost naseleniya zapadnosibirskoi lesostepi v nachale zhelezno go veka. In: V. Kulemzin / L. Lukina (eds.), *Ethnic and cultural history of Western Siberia*. Vol. 2, Tomsk 1994, 113-170.
- Kosarev 1991: M. F. Kosarev, *Drevnyaya istoria Zapadnoi Sibiri: chelovek i prirodnyaya sreda*. Moskva 1991.
- Kovalevskaya 1970: V. B. Kovalevskaya, K izucheniyu ornamentiki nabornykh poyasov VI-IX v.v. kak znakovoi sistemy. In: B. Kolchin / Y. Cher (eds) *Statistiko-kombinatornye metody v arkheologii*. Moskva 1970, 144-55.
- Lebedev 1992: G. Lebedev, *Istoria otechestvennoi arkheologii*. St. Petersburg 1992.
- Lotman 1970: Yu. M. Lotman, *Statyi po tipologii kultury*. Vol. 1, Tartu 1970.
- Lotman 1973: Yu. M. Lotman, *Statyi po tipologii kultury*. Vol. 2, Tartu 1973.
- Lotman 1978: Yu. M. Lotman, *Dinamicheskaya model semioticheskoi sistemy*. *Semiotica kultury. Trudy po znakovym sistemam* 10. Uchenye zapiski Tartusskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta 463, Tartu 1978.

- Molodin / Lamina 1990: V. I. Molodin / E. V. Lamina (eds.), *Drevnaya keramika Sibiri: tipologiya, tekhnologiya, semantika*. Novosibirsk 1990.
- Rayevsky 1985: D. S. Rayevsky, *Model mira Skifskoi kultury*. Moskva 1985.
- Terekhova / Rozanova / Zaviyalov / Tolmacheva 1997: N. N. Terekhova / L. S. Rozanova / V. I. Zaviyalov / M. M. Tolmacheva, *Ocherki po drevnei zhelezoobrabotke v Vostochnoi Evrope*. Moskva 1997.
- Tilley 1999: C. Tilley, *Metaphor and material culture*. Oxford 1999.
- Trifonov 1991: V. A. Trifonov, Why so little known about modern Soviet Archaeology? Archaeological data in the USSR. Collection, storage and exploitation. *World Archaeological Bulletin* 1991/5, 77-85.
- Trifonov 1996: V. A. Trifonov, Contemporary archaeology: the silent conflict between theory and practice, *World Archaeological Bulletin* 1996/8, 94-102.
- Shchukin 1994: M. B. Shchukin, *Na rubezhe er*. St. Petersburg 1994.
- Yablonsky 1999: L. T. Yablonsky, Archaeological mythology and ethnogenetic reality. In: D. Zdanovich / N. Ivanova / I. Predeina (eds.), *Complex societies of Central Eurasia in the Third-First millennia BC: Regional specifics in the light of global models*. Materials of the conference. Chelyabinsk 1999, 287-292.
- Zakharuk 1978: Yu. N. Zakharuk, *Spornye voprosy ob'ekta i predmeta arkheologii*. *Kratkiye soobshcheniya instituta arkheologii AN SSSR* 152, 1978, 7-17.
- Zdanovich 1995: G. B. Zdanovich, *Arkaim. Aarii na Urale ili nesostojavchajzsja tsivilizatsija*. In: G. Zdanovich (ed.), *Arkaim: Issledovaniya, poiski, otkrytiya*. Chelyabinsk 1995, 21-42.