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NORWEGIAN ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PEOPLE WITHOUT (PRE-)HISTORY: OR HOW TO CREATE A MYTH OF A UNIFORM PAST

Björnar Olsen

Introduction

As in many of the newly liberated states of the Third World, the concern of aboriginal minorities with self-identification and claims to rights over land have come to involve archaeology in different parts of the world today. To a certain degree this is also the current situation in Norway, despite its varied history, due to the Saami minority's struggle for political and legal rights as the indigenous population of the northernmost areas of Norway. The scientific legitimacy of this involvement is, however, widely debated especially when this takes place in academically respectable Western Europe where a 'true' science is not expected to lend itself to pressure from such particular interests. Despite this, it is a well known fact that this so-called 'political abuse' of archaeology played an important rôle in establishing national identities in many European nation-states. By claiming this positivist ideal of a 'value free' and 'objective' science in the present-day context of Third and Fourth World struggle, Western archaeology is in fact serving the dominant social and political powers in the contemporary world. Moreover, it is precisely this positivistic delusion of a politically neutral science which makes it into a mainstay for these interests, just as it serves to conceal its own partisanship.

Working from the premise that the past does not entail any absolute, given truths, but is shaped largely by the image of the political present, this article deals with the situation of ethnic bias in Norwegian archaeology. Its outspoken neutrality and concern with political 'abuse' notwithstanding, a strong ethnic bias in favour of the past of the dominant group has already been documented (Schanche and Olsen 1983). Thus, despite the fact that the culture-historic situation in Norway entails the presence of two ethnic groups, the Norwegian and the Saami (the Lapps), it is only the former who has been honoured with a History, while the Saami have 'disappeared' into the domain of ethnography -- and have thus become a 'people without history'.

A major point in the paper is that this concealment of ethnic pluralism mirrors the ideological Utopia of the modern bourgeois nation-state -- uniformity; the presentation of an image of social and national

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uniformity within which no contradiction or group interest exists. As such, archaeology is part of an ideology; its most important contribution is to give historical 'reality' to the modern myth of an ethnically uniform Norwegian society. In other words, by shaping the past in the ideological image of the present, thus making it look natural, archaeology itself has become part of an ideological discourse, operating to reproduce the relationship between the dominant and the dominated.

Accepting the principle that our use of the past is to make the present 'look natural', this essay is written with an awareness of the wider development of a 'critical archaeology' during the recent years (e.g. Handsman 1980; Miller 1980; Kohl 1981; Leone 1982; Tilley n.d.; Shanks and Tilley n.d.). However, as will be discussed in the concluding sections of this paper, the limitation of the 'self-conciousness' approach which dominates many of these studies (e.g. Leone and Handsman), has to be overcome before any coherent 'critical archaeology' can be developed.

Archaeology as Myth-Production

> Each class which puts itself in the place of the one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aims, to represent its interests as the common interests of all members of society, that is expressed in an ideal form: it has to give its ideas the forme of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally-valid ones.
> (Marx and Engels 1969, 64-5)

For Marx and Engels, ideology was the instrument of the bourgeoisie to conceal class contradictions and exploitation of the workers in the capitalist society. It was a Camera Lucida which turned the world upside down, and made the bourgeois reality appear as 'rational' and 'natural' as constituted in the 'Nation' ('national interests'), 'Essential Man' ('it's only human nature') and 'Moral' ('God rewards virtue and the successful are virtuous') (Coward and Ellis 1977, 27; Wolf 1982, 389). Ideology then serves to make the world immediately self-evident and without contradiction. It presents us with a uniform image of the world which communicates the unambiguous message that any reference to classes and ethnicity in political discourse is supremely irrational and archaic (cf. Worsley 1984, 256-8). Ideological production involves, formally, the institutionalisation of codes, channels, messages, senders, audiences and interpretations (Wolf 1984, 396). Technically, it involves over-coding (Eco 1976, 133-5), an insistent imposition of connotation or symbols ('second order language') upon denotative signs, and makes their relation into a 'natural' unity (Barthes 1973, 111-27; cf. Wolf 1984). In this way, ideology confirms

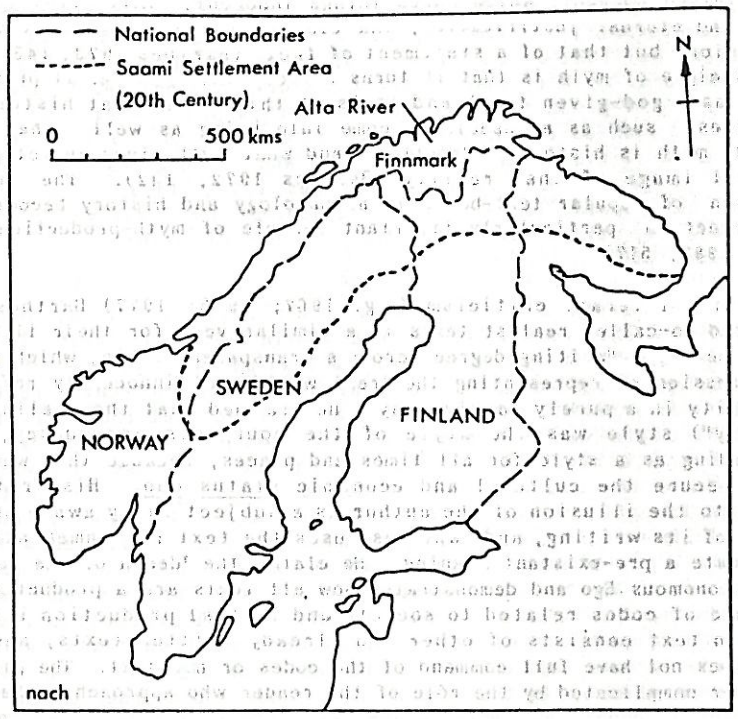

Figure 1: Scandinavia with 20th century Saami settlement distribution.

established positions by saying "that's the way it must be", and ideological production is characterised by the way it seeks to maximise the number of domains, contexts or occasions that proclaim the same insistent fiction (Wolf, 1984). It would thus be an illusion to believe that the growth of archaeology as a discipline within the bourgeois order left it unaffected.

One of the most penetrating critiques of the bourgeois ideology, or to use his own words, myth-production, is given by Roland Barthes (1973). Through his studies of literature and 'mass-culture', he has shown how myth naturalises certain meanings, and eternalises the present state of the world, in the interests of the bourgeoisie. He calls myth

"depoliticised speech", which makes things innocent, "...it gives them a natural and eternal justification, ...a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact" (Barthes 1973, 143). The very principle of myth is that it turns history into nature. It presents science as a god-given truth and it is at this point that historical disciplines, such as archaeology, come into being as well: what they supply to myth is historical 'reality', and what myth gives in return is a natural image of that reality (Barthes 1972, 142). The mass-production of popular text-books in archaeology and history become, in this respect, a particularly important vehicle of myth-production (cf. Sahlins 1983, 517).

In his literary criticism (e.g. 1967; 1975; 1977) Barthes has criticised so-called realist texts in a similar vein for their illusion of what he calls "writing degree zero"; a transparent style, which gives the impression of representing the 'real world', of innocently reflecting reality in a purely passive way. He claimed that the realist (or "readerly") style was the style of the bourgeois ascendancy, but masquerading as a style for all times and places, because that was the way to secure the cultural and economic status quo. His critique extends to the illusion of the author as a subject fully aware and in control of its writing, and, who just uses the text instrumentally to communicate a pre-existant meaning. He claims the 'death of the author' as an autonomous Ego and demonstrates how all texts are a product of a multitude of codes related to society and textual production itself, that each text consists of other and already written texts, and the author does not have full command of the codes or his text. The picture is further complicated by the rôle of the reader who approaches the text with different codes, and which opens for other multitudes of meanings. Barthes' work clearly has relevance for a wider critique of ideology and postitivist epistemology, as reflected in archaeological texts. There is no innocent "writing degree zero" in archaeology, nor autonomous scholars who, full of consciousness, carry out value-free and undistorted research. Archaeologists, as scholars, commit themselves to exactly the same social and textual constraints as novelists, and this commitment can only be concealed, not resolved, by the adoption of a positivist epistemology.

A Brief Historical Outline of the Ethnic Situation In Norway

The culture-historical situation in Norway (as in Sweden and Finland) is unique in a European context in that it entails the presence of an ethnic minority group, the Saami, belonging to the so-called Fourth World of aboriginal or indigenous populations. This situation resembles that of countries like Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand. In

contrast to these countries, however, the majority population in Norway (i.e. the Norwegians) is also 'indigenous' to the country, except from the northernmost regions which were colonised during the late Medieval and post-Medieval periods (AD 1300-1700). Contacts between 'Norwegian' (Germanic) groups and Saamis can be traced back to the Early Iron Age (AD 0-600). Interaction with surrounding farming societies was probably vital for the adoption of Saami ethnicity among the aboriginal hunting societies in northern Fenno-Scandinavia (Odner 1985; Olsen 1985). The Iron Age socio-cultural formations in Norway were characterised by 'chiefdom'-type 'Norwegian' (Germanic) farming societies in the south and along the coast of southern and central parts of northern Norway, with 'band'-type Saami hunting societies in the remaining interior and northernmost areas. In the Viking and Early Medieval Age, when the Norwegian State was formed, the Saami remained hunter-gatherers and this continued up to the 17th-18th century (and in some areas even later). At this time, social contradictions stimulated by trade, missionary activities and state expansion resulted in a transformation of Saami society in socio-economic terms. These transformations were apparent in reindeer pastoralism, specialised fishing and farming modes of production (Olsen n.d., 227-245).

Contrary to the situation in North America and the Antipodes, Norwegian archaeologists dealing with Iron Age and Medieval/post-Medieval archaeology have a 'choice' between 'our' past and 'theirs'. Given the fact that archaeology in Norway is carried out exclusively by members of the majority group, the preference of the 'Norwegian' past can easily be seen as reflecting the asymmetry and supression involved in the inter-ethnic relations for the last 100 years. The archaeology of Norway, has for the periods mentioned, largely become the archaeology of the Norwegians. As shown by Schanche and Olsen (1983, 127-34), it is commonly accepted that the study of Germanic farming settlements along the coast of Arctic Norway is the study of the Iron Age of Arctic Norway, and it is not regarded as necessary to give grounds for the omission of the Saami hunter-gatherers. (Strangely enough, the taxation of this 'non-existent' group is often claimed to be part of the economic basis for the Germanic farming settlement along the coast!).

The 'Norwegian' historical experience is further naturalised through popular books which propound the same course of events for the colonised people as well. This is illustrated, for instance, by the titles of such archaeology and history books as Norwegians Before Us, The Norwegian People in Ancient Times and The First Norwegians (Schanche and Olsen 1983, 127). However, this bias is more subtle as it could be argued along the official line that all inhabitants of Norway are by definition Norwegian and that 'Norwegian' is a formal, not an ethnic,

term. To reveal its political dimension and to understand how this production of the past operates as an ideological discourse, we have to understand the present majority-minority context in Norway more fully.

Norwegian Ethno-Politics, or how to become a Good Norwegian

Today, there are probably around thirty thousand persons in Norway who identify themselves as Saami. Of these, less than 10% are reindeer-pastoralists, often associated with the so-called 'Saami way of life'. However, this exclusive Saami niche has provided a reservoir for traditional Saami culture and a stronghold for Saami ethnicity, whereas more marginal groups (such as the coastal Saami) have suffered serious attrition from various programmes and constraints of a 'Norwegianisation' ideology over the last hundred years (Paine 1982, 1; 1985).

This ideology of Norwegianisation -- known officially as 'modernisation' -- has as its more or less outspoken aim, the transformation of the Saami into Norwegians, a task which the Norwegian State, especially in modern times, has tried to fulfil by imposing the ideal of homogeneity on an ethnic plural reality. In fact, until recently, this plurality has been concealed by, for instance, employing a bureaucratic vocabulary which omits any reference to Saami ethnicity. Therefore, when referring to the Saami people, the Norwegian administration normally employs terms like 'Saami-speaking Norwegians', 'reindeer-herders', or regional references, and not the ethnic term 'Saami'. Further, there are no areas in Norway which in any formal sense are administrated as Saami despite the fact that many communities are populated entirely by them and there is no official state bureaucracy for Saami affairs (Mathiesen 1978, 237-8). The Norwegian nation-state could, thus, be defined as a social system developed by, and for, Norwegians. 'Norwegian' is the only official legal ethnic status so if you are a citizen you are, by definition, a Norwegian (cf. Eidheim 1971, 90).

It thus becomes essential for those Saami who fight for political rights as an ethnic minority to contradict this homogeneous picture of the Nation State and make themselves 'visible'. Their political organisations, therefore, adopt strategies featuring an active ethnic dichotomy between 'Norwegian' and 'Saami'. When the ethnic term 'Norwegian', as used in titles of archaeological text-books, is not considered as value-loaded or political, we have to ask the critical question: for whom? For the Saamis who are fighting for political rights as an indigenous population, and who see the ethnic dichotomy between Saami and Norwegian as vital, or for those Norwegians who would prefer to see the Saami absorbed by the Norwegian nation? This divergence clearly demonstrates how the ruling ideology produces the

myth of a uniform Norwegian society by selectively turning terms like 'Norwegian' into a 'de-politicised' discourse, and correspondingly it turns terms like 'Saami' into a 'politicised' discourse -- as reflected, for instance, when Saami political leaders claim similar historical attention to 'The first Saamis'. It also shows that it is only the present political context in Norway which makes terms like 'Saami prehistory' look more political than 'Norwegian prehistory'.

Evolutionism and Peoples without History

The emergence of the 'Norwegianisation' programme took place in the second half of the 19th century when there was a considerable change in official Norwegian attitudes towards the Saami. Qualities which earlier had been emphasised as positive were now suddenly seen as reflecting 'primitiveness' and 'low moral standards' and it became normal to describe the Saami as lazy, dirty, immoral and drunken (Lorentz 1981, 77;). The transformation of the 'noble savage' into the 'ignoble', occurring simultaneously in all Western countries in the 19th century, is a classic example of how the emergence of evolutionary theories was used to give scientific legitimation to Western imperialism. According to the social evolutionary scheme, the Saami now suddenly became classified as 'backward' and 'primitive', doomed to extinction or assimilation, to give way to more modern ways of life (Gjessing 1974, 101-3; Worsley 1984, 268-71). Thus in 1863 a leading Norwegian politician, J. Sverdrup, declared that "...the only way out for the Lapps is to be absorbed by the Norwegian nation" (NOU 1984, 18). This was just the beginning of more than a century of campaigning aimed at making the Saami Norwegian.

Used as the moral basis for European imperialism, evolutionism was not a single invention in biology which spread to the social disciplines. The two 'founders' of social evolutionism, Spencer and Tylor, elaborated and published their doctrine before The Origin of Species was published, and without having read it (Levi-Strauss 1978b, 332). The way evolutionism legitimised imperialism was that it now could be argued to be a moral and biological imperative for the superior races to stimulate change and export civilisation. Since then, evolutionism has straddled Western social thought and is still the basic paradigm for our perception of the world, laid out in dichotomies like the 'developed' and the 'under-developed' world (Dahl and Hjort 1984). With its very specific direction, forward, it has made us turn history into a moral success story, "...a race in time in which each runner on the race passes on the torch of liberty to the next relay. History is thus converted into a tale...about how the virtuous win out over the bad guys" (Wolf 1982, 5). As noted by Levi-Strauss (1978b,

335), in order to treat some societies as 'stages' in the development of others, one would then have to admit that in these latter societies something was happening, while nothing (or very little) was happening in the former. This was further tied to the distinction between people 'with' and people 'without' history, or, to use another binary opposition, that of 'hot' and 'cold' societies (Levi-Strauss 1978a, 29).

This distinction has been institutionalised in the academic systems through the Volkskunde/Volkerkunde split, which developed in 19th century Europe. The former developed as a scholarly expression of nationalism, the study of the 'Volks' lineage as reflected in myths, folklore and national history, while the latter became the study of 'the others' -- 'the primitives' in foreign (non-European) countries (Gerholm and Hannertz 1982, 22, Worsley 1984, 273). The latter were believed to be 'time-less' and without change, and could thus be studied entirely within the domain of ethnography. Thus, in Norway, we have a Norwegian history and a Saami ethnography. By an institutionalised evolutionism, the latter became scientifically defined out of the field of history and archaeology. Thus, the study of some of Norway's inhabitants became the study of the "Strangers", they became "Volkerkunde".

Evolutionism has also contributed in two other specific ways to ethnic bias in Norwegian (and Scandinavian) archaeology. The first is constituted through its function as an epistemological system, and the second as a value-system. Though these are closely interrelated, the distinction is useful for analytical reasons. As an epistemological system, evolutionism is reflected in the basic archaeological conceptualisation of the past, such as Thomsen's Three-Age System, the typology of Montelius, and Nilsson's social evolutionist scheme. An outcome of this evolutionist epistemology is that when Scandinavian archaeologists are dealing with, for instance, the period AD 0-800, they are by definition dealing with the Iron Age and chiefdom-type farming societies. However, in Norway, the social development of only one of the two ethnic groups could be seen as 'fulfilling' this evolutionary scheme. In this period, the other group, the Saami, used stone tools and had a hunter-gatherer mode of production. They did not fulfil the archaeologists' expectations of how the archaeological data for this period should be, a fact with serious implications. Saami culture history was incompatible with the epistemological system, and thereby had to be denied or forgotten. Captured by its own epistemology, Scandinavian archaeology became unable to perceive 'cold' societies. To fulfil its expectation, Iron Age studies became concentrated outside the Saami settlement area where, in contrast, much Stone Age research was carried out (Schanche and Olsen 1983, 139).

As a value-system, evolutionism turned Saami history into an 'untouchable' category for archaeology as part of the Volkskunde. Even if Norwegian archaeology emphasised its strong national character (see below), it was also important to prove that Norway, despite its national individuality, was a part of a common European 'culture horizon', a 'Culture Nation' on a par with other European nation states (Schanche and Olsen 1983, 118). The reason for stressing the European family-membership is obvious: we are told, in the words of a Norwegian archaeologist, that we are concerned:

> ...with a people who later should bring the culture development further than any other people on the Earth. Even from the most ancient times Europe has appeared to demonstrate a much richer capacity for invention than the Oriental peoples. In the East a certain type can be preserved unchanged during a long period, while in Europe we face incessant change and improvement of even the simplest kinds of tools (Shetelig 1910, 59: transl. mine).

If Norwegian archaeologists shared this view, then it is perhaps not so strange that any plans for ultimately revealing Saami (pre-) history remained buried. Defined as 'ignoble', using stone tools even in the Iron Age, and practicing a general way of life which the rest of Europe believed it had left behind in 4000 BC, the Saami didn't fit well with the image which would re-establish Norway among the civilised nations of Europe. Contrary to the situation in, for instance, Britain, Norwegian scholars had to face the problem that 'primitives' did not mean 'non-European', the 'primitives' were among us! Close to the academic centres of Western Europe, ethnic respectability became an imperative for Norwegian archaeologists and research on Saami (pre-) history could easily lead to scientific stigmatisation.

The Formation of a Nation-State: the Shaping of a Myth

The transformation of the 'noble savage' into the 'ignoble', coincided with two other events in Norwegian History: the conception of a Norwegian nation-state and the birth of a Norwegian archaeology. During the 19th century there was a strong growth in national consciousness among the intelligensia and the bourgeoisie in Norway. After the loss of independence in 1537, Norway became a Danish colony until 1814, when it was given to Sweden as part of the peace-treaty following the Napoleonic wars. Because of Norway's weak position, politically and culturally, in contemporary Europe, it became necessary to question the legitimacy of a Norwegian nation (Dahl 1970, 36-7).

Following the Hegelian national doctrine, it was not enough to create a new consciousness; the Norwegian people had to be given a History. A 'new' past had to be invented to demonstrate the Volk's lineage (Worsley 1984, 273). One outcome of this process was a Norwegian archaeology. The individuality of the Norwegian people was sought and justified by emphasising special affinities in the archaeological material, and especially, where it appeared to be superior to the Danish and Swedish material (Schanche and Olsen 1983, 116). In this respect the Viking ship finds which, conveniently enough, were made precisely in this period, were of outstanding importance. These finds, superior to anything found in Sweden and Denmark, came as desparately needed contributions to the manifestation of a national identity. Their national importance is easily grasped in the following statement made by a leading Norwegian archaeologist (Brogger 1930, 9):

> What would we be today without the find from Oseberg, with its fantasy-creating milieu, its European horizon, and the heritage it has given us right now in a contemporary struggle to raise ourselves as an old culture nation (Transl. mine).

It is quite natural that a nation which finds problems in legitimising its right to exist, sought its most glorious past, the Viking Age, which was also more easily grasped through the Sagas and the Norse mythology. Further, in the contemporary context of European imperialism, the memory of the Viking raids also serves as some kind of metaphorical consolation for the frustration among the Norwegian bourgeoisie for not being imperialists themselves.

The consolidation of Norway as an independent nation state in the early 20th century gradually removed the need to prove national distinctiveness in comparison with Scandinavian neighbour-states, as this was now ensured by a political border. The original basis for an archaeology motivated by nationalist ideologies had thereby disappeared. However, this did not lead to any significant change in the nationalistic character of Norwegian archaeology and could, at least partly, be understood in terms of a change of focus from external to internal contradictions.

Due to the crisis in the Western economy, society and politics in Norway became heavily polarised in the 1920s and 1930s. The revolutionary tendencies among the working class, stimulated by the Russian revolution, represented a considerable threat to the 'uniform' ideal of the modern bourgeois nation-state. In such a situation of conflict, the ideological apparatus usually tends to emphasise national centripetal forces heavily and in the course of this, a nationalistic

archaeology could prove useful. Even an imperialistic adventure was tried, when the Norwegian Government supported the unfortunate (and unsuccessful) occupation of East Greenland in 1931. Greenland was one of the lost pieces in the old 'Norwegian Empire', but was it merely coincidental that just in these years, two of the most celebrated Norwegian archaeologists found it convenient to publish a series of books which dealt with Norwegian colonialism and expansion during the Viking period in a chauvinistic flavour (cf. Schanche and Olsen 1983, 122-3)?

Another problem for the Norwegian authorities was that the northernmost area of Norway, the province of Finnmark, not only had a border with Russia (after 1917 even worse: the USSR), but also had a population which to a large extent consisted of 'non-nationalistic elements' such as the Saamis and Finnish immigrants. Their presence gave additional support to the 'Norwegianisation'-programme, designed to ensure the 'correct' national identity and attitude among the population in this area (Eriksen and Niemi 1981). As the Norwegian claim to this area could be disputed, any reference to the Saami would not be useful. It therefore became important to claim a long-term Norwegian settlement in the area, a claim which could only be justified by historical and archaeological evidence (cf. Gjessing 1974, 22).

As the birth of Norwegian archaeology was clearly associated with the conception of the Norwegian nation-state, its nationalist character can hardly be disputed. Its outspoken aim was to serve national-political interests; to 'prove' that Norway was a historical nation, despite 400 years of foreign rule. To achieve this aim properly, it was neccesary to present a picture of a uniform and linear historical development. Shaped in the ideological image of the modern bourgeois nation-state, a myth of a uniform national past came into being.

Post-War Archaeology and Positivistic Science

The post-war years in Norway brought another and colder war, the rock'n roll revolution and NATO. The Norwegian Labour Party came to power, and everyone became 'free, equal and Norwegian'. Classes 'disappeared', and it became unpleasant to call the bourgeoisie 'the bourgeoisie'. In this period, especially from the 1960s, Norwegian archaeology attained a much more 'scientific' status, moving into close collaboration with the 'hard sciences'. Inter-disciplinarity became the new path to the 'real truth' about the past, and its ties to history and language, the Volkskunde, became weaker. In accordance with the general development of Western archaeology (Childe and Clark in the 1950s, and the New Archaeology from the 1960s), concepts such as 'ethnicity',

'people' and 'culture' were abandoned, and awareness of the political 'abuse' of archaeology grew (especially when done by Kossina, in the USSR, and in the Third World countries).

The late 1970s and early 1980s saw an intense public debate in Norway as to whether or not the Saami were an 'indigeneous' people according to the international ILO-Convention. The debate was fuelled by the intense Saami struggle against the Norwegian Government's plan to develop a hydro-electric project on the Alta River in the province of Finnmark. This struggle became symbolically transformed by the Saami into a confrontation in which the salient issues became those of their ethnic and cultural integrity and their political rights as the aboriginal population of the area (Cohen 1985, 78, Paine 1982; 1985). As this struggle also raised the more principal question about the status of the Saamis as an indigenous population, the debate soon focused upon historical 'evidence' and also therefore archaeology. At the Annual Meeting of Norwegian archaeologists in 1981, a resolution was proposed claiming that the Saami minority fulfilled the historical criteria for being defined as an indiginous population according to the ILO-Convention, based on historical and archaeological data. This resulted in a hot-tempered debate about archaeology and politics. It is worth considering a statement which was made in connection with the debate by one of the leading Norwegian archaeologists, Professor A. Hagen, to a Norwegian newspaper (Schanche and Olsen 1983, 136: transl. mine):

> We [the archaeologists] have no education which gives us any specific knowledge about ethnicity, sociology or politics, and when we make statements as scholars, we have to know what we are talking about...As a member of the society I have, of course, a view and a standpoint, but when I express it, it is as a private person, and not as an archaeologist...What is happening today in certain domains of the discipline reminds me of Professor Kossina's theories about the connection between tribes and types of ancient objects which were used for political purposes to show how German peoples had rights to certain areas due to their Germanic past. I had hoped that an end had been put to this kind of abuse of archaeology.

Two interesting points can be drawn from the above. First, that archaeology and contemporary socio-political conditions can, and should be, separated and that this split can/should also be upheld by the archaeologist himself, through the dividing line between 'scholar' and 'private' person. Second, the involvement of archaeology in a struggle by a suppressed ethnic minority to be accepted as an indigenous population in a nation-state, into which it had been incorporated without being asked, is not different in principle from its use to

legitimise German imperialist expansion in the pre-war years. Both points need further comments.

The first point reflects the classical positivist position of an 'objective' and 'value-free' science, separated from society and human interests. The scholar is a neutral observer who stands above and beyond classes and conflicts in society. The development of this notion of objectivity in science was based on the belief of an absolute distinction between fact and value. This separation of knowledge from human interests has been the object of a penetrating critique from the writers of the Frankfurt-school of critical thought (e.g. Horkheimer 1972, Habermas 1971), and combined with Barthes' works, it provides us with a useful weapon against the Weberian doctrine of value-neutrality. Habermas (1971, 311), notes that because science presumes that it must secure the objectivity of its statement against the pressure and seduction of particular interests, it deludes itself about the fundamental 'knowledge-constitutive' interests it serves. Archaeologists do not carry out research in a vacuum, but in a contemporary context of socio-political struggles. If, in order to fulfil the positivist criteria of non-partisanship, we were to refuse to take a position about the historical criteria for regarding the Saami as an indigenous population in Norway, then this too would be to take a political position. Refusing to take a political standpoint is a political stand in itself, which serves the ruling interests -- the status quo. As pointed out by Scholte (1981, 165), it is ironically those scholars who try to reveal this hidden political dimension of science, who are accused of attempting to 'politicise' it. In other words, when one indirectly serves the ruling interests by not opposing them, one is not 'political', which happens only when one's views are in contrast with the 'normal', accepted values. Hagen's separation between the archaeologist as a 'private' (political) person and a 'scholar' (non-political) reflects the same delusion of a strict dichotomy between 'fact' and 'value'. As noted by Barthes in his critique of the literary author as a subject full of consciousness (e.g. 1976; 1977), no one can escape from the codes imposed on us by social and textual constraints. Therefore, a scholar is a political person despite his/her personal wishes, and archaeology is, if anything, politics!

While Hagen's positivist ideal of a value-free science could easily be rejected, his second point is more subtle. He draws the parallel between the involvement of archaeology in a suppressed minority's concern with self-identification and its claims for political rights and the most reactionary way archaeology was used to legitimise German imperialism. In other words, the difference in context and aims does not have significance and every political use of archaeology has to be

condemned. Hagen's parallel is well-chosen, as it serves to criminalise archaeological concern with Saami prehistory and ethnic identity. He fails to draw attention to the political rôle archaeology played in the formation of his own Norwegian nation-state, because this would beg the more critical question about the reason for denying the Saami the same right to use the past for their political purposes. It is also convenient to forget the fact that the University Museum of National Antiquities celebrated their 150th anniversary in 1979 with the slogan "No Norwegian identity without a Norwegian archaeology" (Schanche and Olsen 1983, 117), as the same formula is denied for the identity of the minority group. No attention is paid to the fact that Hagen himself was the co-author of a popular book called The First Norwegians (Hagen and Hennum 1975) which starts off with the earliest Mesolithic finds from Norway and includes finds from the Saami settlement area. As argued above, this book clearly becomes a part of that ideological discourse which seeks to maximise the number of domains which proclaim the illusion that all inhabitants in Norway are (and were!) Norwegian. For those Saami who fight against this myth of a homogeneous Norwegian nation-state, and who are denied the use of the past for this purpose, such a statement is a provocative one.

Archaeology as Politics: Towards a Critical Archaeology

'New' Archaeology was once proclaimed to be the "loss of innocence" (Clarke 1973), but the self-consciousness proposed by Clarke led to a vehement advocacy of positivist methods for realising objective, validated knowledge about the past (Kohl 1981, 92). While self-criticism in other social disciplines led to "..questioning the possibility of impartial, value-free social science research" (Kohl 1981, 92), "...the New Archaeologists promoted positivism as a methodology capable of progressibly eliminating error and, in this, of assuring approximation to an ideal of objective and possible truth in knowledge claims about the past" (Wylie 1985, 133). Therefore, in political terms, its appearance on the stage can be better labelled as 'an achievment of innocence', as it created the illusory ideal of a deductive science which claimed to give archaeologists access to undistorted and objective knowledge about the past.

In accepting that the separation between knowledge and human interest is an illusion, and that archaeology is a political discipline, how do we cope with this 'new' situation? Does the "critical self-consciousness" advocated by such scholars as Leone (1982) and Handsman (e.g. 1980), provide us with any guidelines? Clearly it represents an important attempt to reveal the hidden political dimension of archaeology, as formulated neatly in the following paragraph from Leone (1982,

750):

> ...since we are members of a capitalist society with an ideology of its own, and since we know that one way ideology operates is to make the present look inevitable by making the past look like a precedent for modern conditions, then to what degree does our modern archaeology create the past in its own image?

This perspective of archaeological self-criticism seems to have as its purpose, the identification and correction of errors arising from the interest-laden presuppositions we bring to any investigation and their aim is to help modern people reconsider their past consciously (Wylie 1985, 140-2). But where does this leave us? In my opinion, their position proclaims a view that critical self-consciousness in itself will correct the 'errors' and give us a 'truer' picture of the past. In other words, we can reveal our research (and the past) from our interest-laden presuppositions by using the instrument of self-criticism. Thus Leone and Handsman are in agreement with the positivist aim of New Archaeology: the disclosure of the real and undistorted truth about the past -- it is just the methods which differ. For the development of a real critical archaeology, the belief in critical self-consciousness as the only salvation is a blindspot, because it once again deludes Western archaeologists with the view that if we are just critical and clever enough, we will be rewarded with the secret truth. We have to realise that all truth is context-dependent, that there exists no monolithic 'true' past viewed either from the present, or for the prehistoric actors themselves. Rather, as argued by Tilley (n.d., 29), there are multiple and competing pasts created in accordance with ethnic, cultural, gender, social and political values operating both in the present and in the past.

A real Critical Archaeology must do more than serve as a 'bad conscience' which corrects our value-loaded errors and guides us more safely along the road to the 'true' past. Accepting that no such past exists, and that our perceptions of the past are always political, a critical self-consciousness must be used to discover what interests our research is serving, and then to decide what interests we wish to serve. What a critical self-consciousness can reveal is the hidden partisanship, the 'writing degree zero' of Western archaeological thought, which serves as ideological legitimation of the ruling power structures in the contemporary world. A critical archaeology does not aim at 'politicising' archaeology, because archaeology is political. Its aim is to reveal this concealment, and to help us make archaeology relevant to the present (Tilley n.d.). However, I am certainly not arguing for any general political pluralism in archaeology; that any political use of

archaeology has to be accepted. An archaeology used to legitimise discrimination and suppression, and other damaging ideas and attitudes, cannot be tolerated. A critical perspective in archaeology plays an important rôle in bringing this, an often concealed dimension of archaeology into light, so that it can be criticised openly (cf. Shanks and Tilley n.d., 88). Instead, as proposed by Shanks and Tilley (n.d.), a radical, active pluralism must be brought into action in archaeology. Such a political pluralism does not hide its partisanship, but presents its point of view openly, so that it can be discussed and used to serve progressive interests.

Conclusion

As a Norwegian archaeologist working in the Saami area, I have after a while realised that the utopian aim of writing an objective, 'everybody's' (pre-)history for past and present inhabitants in Norway is an illusion. I have tried to show that such a perspective hides its own partisanship in an ideological discourse operating to reproduce the relationship between the dominant (Norwegian) and the dominated (Saami). This is because an 'everybody's' (pre-)history has conveniently been transformed into a Norwegian one, hidden behind the myth of a uniform Norwegian past. 'Archaeology with the State' has been preferred to 'archaeology against the State'. Accepting the importance of the past in the present, I suggest that there is a need for a Saami (pre-) history, also as written and used by the Saami to serve their own defensible social and political aims in the present.

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THE POLITICS OF ASSIMILATION IN JAPANESE ARCHAEOLOGY

Clare Fawcett

At first glance, the story of Hokkaido's native inhabitants, the Ainu, and their colonisers, the mainland Japanese, seems to offer obvious historical parallels with the European colonisation of North America. Hokkaido has long been the frontier of Japan. Over the past few hundred years, the Japanese have colonised the island and reduced the indigenous Ainu population, who were culturally, linguistically and physically different from the Japanese, to an almost completely assimilated minority group within the larger, mainly homogeneous Japanese population. The colonisation and subsequent incorporation of Hokkaido into Japan has differed, however, in key ways from the American experience. The Ainu language and culture have been almost completely lost, due to standardised Japanese education for Ainu children. Centuries of interaction have resulted in extensive physical assimilation of the Ainu into the Japanese population. The contemporary Ainu community, furthermore, lacks cohesion and a strong ethnic identity.

Another significant difference is in the attitude toward ethnicity and nationality in North America as compared to Japan. Canada and the United States are nations where ethnic and racial plurality is accepted and often encouraged. In Japan, by contrast, the notion of the Japanese nation comprising a linguistically, racially and culturally homogeneous people is deep-rooted. Ethnic differences are not readily accepted. The Ainu and other minority groups are expected to assimilate and try to blend in as best they can.

These factors, among others, have had an effect on the development of archaeological research in Japan. Japanese archaeologists consider the study of Hokkaido's past an integral part of general Japanese history. In North America, the colonisation of native Indian land by Europeans has resulted in the study of the Indian past as anthropology and the study of the Euroamerican past as history (Trigger 1980, 671). Hokkaido prehistoric research, in contrast, is anthropological only in the sense that it uses analogies from ethnographic research to try to reconstruct aspects of prehistoric social and economic life.

I will begin this paper by tracing the development of Japanese-Ainu relations during the years prior to, during and after the colonisation and incorporation of Hokkaido. Next, I will examine the history of Japanese archaeology, focussing specifically on issues pertinent to the study of both the Ainu and Hokkaido prehistory. Special attention will be paid to first, the politics of assimilation and second, the pre-war and wartime ultra-nationalist ideology, since official policies governing both of these have affected research aims and interpretations. Finally, I shall discuss whether recent movements to revive ethnic

(Archaeological Review from Cambridge 5:1 [1986])