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### On Archaeological Aspects of Uralic, Finno-Ugric and Finnic Societies before AD 800

This is part of an ongoing research project which was launched within a linguistic learned context. Clearly, the frame of inquiry adopted here is linguistic: it is assumed that long ago speakers of a certain language abandoned it and adopted another and that this left traces in the adopted language which are possible to reveal using linguistic methods. In this paper, however, I suggest that an archaeological approach can be made to be compatible with a linguistic approach and hence offer a possibility to tentatively extend lines of ethno-linguistic continuity back in time. Before moving on to the presentation of a scenario illustrating ethno-linguistic continuity, it is first necessary to begin with a presentation of the principles and methods of this interdisciplinary approach that combines the results of historical linguistics and archaeology. Within this frame it will not be possible to highlight details and reasoning.

The present project (see Preface) focusses on Slavicisation, which in this case means the substitution of Finnic for Slavonic. Many similar processes are known from historical written records and more are going on today all over the world, but what does language shift mean for societies and individuals involved in such a process? Is it something that is done or happens just like that, or does it imply broader and deeper aspects? A short answer is that there often are various strongly felt aspects attached to language shift. And language is often paralleled with ethnic identity. What then is ethnic identity?

Instead of referring to learned studies, I refer to the statement on the *Basis of Sámi Unity* which was first included in the Sámi Political Program issued at the 11<sup>th</sup> Nordic Sámi Conference held in Tromsø, Norway, in 1980 and subsequently revised at the 13<sup>th</sup> Nordic Sámi Conference, Åre, Sweden, in 1986, as follows (SPP 1986):

1. We, the Sámi, are one people. National boundaries cannot sever the unity of the Sámi people.
2. We, the Sámi people, enjoy our own history, traditions, culture and language. We have inherited the rights to land and natural resources, as well as the right to pursue Sámi livelihoods.
3. We, the Sámi people, possess the irrevocable right to preserve and develop our livelihoods and communities on our own terms. Together, we intend to protect our lands, natural resources and common traditions for future generations of Sámi.

This statement defined the Sámi as a people which had their own history and own traditions, their own culture and language. These four variables, in addition to land and natural resources, formed a balanced entity that should be protected against shocks caused by alien lingual and cultural (and economic) pressure and discrimination. It is clear that an imposed language shift would destroy the balance of such an entity and direct corrupting effects at the society and its individual members.

The conference delegates defined the Sámi as a *people*. A cultural anthropologist, again, would talk about the definition of an *ethnic group*. The statement was a definition of the fundamental substance from which the Sámi ethnicity emerged, their ethnic identity as seen from the inside.

But whatever the contents of ethnicity, an important question remains as to when it actualises and how it performs. The statement itself implies the answer. Ethnicity, ethnic identity, is a social phenomenon, a tie that connects the members of an ethnic group and separates it from alien groups. Ethnicity is present in language and culture, in countless features on different levels of social life, both spiritual and material, and this ethnicity creates and maintains cohesion within the group. Ethnic acts are actualised by meetings, encounters and confrontations. Ethnic acts are manifestations of ethnicity, which demonstrate solidarity within a group on the one hand, and social distance between groups on the other.

A completely independent source, the Medieval chronicle *Povest' vremennyx let* referred to by John Lind in his presentation at the Lammi Symposium, includes a description of ethnic markers from the point of view of an outsider (Lind 2006). The chronicle lists language, shared ancestors, tribe, law, habits and customs as variables when distinguishing peoples – ethnic groups – from each other. In principle, these markers correspond to those implied in the Sámi statement. And in both cases, the markers include elements of the material culture.

It is clear that the process of language shift is not merely lingual. Instead, it is a many-sided cultural process and one which transforms a person's ethnic identity both on a social and an individual level. This process is called acculturation. Acculturation may also take place on a voluntary basis but the outcome would be the same: loss of a language. However, either alternative will also bring about changes in the material culture and this has been observed in different parts of the world, not least in northern Eurasia. It is at this point that archaeology enters the scene. What then is archaeology?

As a field of study, archaeology addresses the remains of previous human activity, normally preserved in the ground (but sometimes visible above the surface or remaining under water). This activity manifests itself in artefacts, ecofacts and geofacts. Unfortunately, loss of information can occur as a result of the taphonomic processes, imperfect research methods as well as insufficient resources to carry out research projects. Central aspects of archaeological classification are typology, chronology and chorology through which the collected material is examined. As a result, areally and temporally limited distributions of types, defined as archaeological cultures, are distinguished. Yet what do we mean by an archaeological culture?

There is no consensus as to what exactly an archaeological culture stands for in relation to a past reality. For the present topic, I describe an archaeological culture as a sphere of internal communication. I assume that an archaeological culture reflects a group of people, a community, with a common tradition and a common communication system to sustain it. As a communication system, language is a reflection of the community and the culture it represents. The methods and products characteristic of a culture can be discussed within a community because the vocabulary signifying them exists. But also methods and products in themselves convey messages that, among other things, reveal the identity of a group. These are the kinds of messages archaeology tries to understand when examining the material remains of a culture discovered in the ground.

Ceramics are often used to define (Sub)Neolithic cultures. It is generally presumed that the manufacturing of clay vessels was the domain of women. If so, an archaeological culture is defined through the ceramic production of women who used the same "pattern book", i.e. women who shared a common tradition. This means that an archaeological culture appears as a region where the women shared a common tradition. In addition to other traditions supported by and sustaining a society, this was part of a *cultural identity* which I (in this context)

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consider to be a good approximation of *ethnic identity* – which includes a common language.

It is possible to distinguish waves of influence between areas and cultures in the collected archaeological material. By a *wave of influence*, I mean the spread of cultural traits, transmitted by (1) contact between groups, (2) movement of people, or (3), both. Contact between groups means spread caused by (a) reciprocal action or (b) directed “trading” activity. While the former usually appears as an exchange of miscellaneous goods between neighbouring communities, the latter kind of diffusion appears to have distributed (task-)specific artefacts and materials, often over long distances. The movement of people again is perceptible as the spread or shift to another area of a whole archaeological context representing the mode of life of a community.

It is often difficult to understand the character of archaeological waves of influence. This may be one of the reasons why many archaeologists have more or less denied the occurrence of demic movements. Another reason is that “migration” has furnished a basis for too many cheap solutions, some of which have tacit political objectives. However, there is ample historical record of people on the move from various parts of the world. I do not believe that such movements only have taken place since the beginning of local historical recording which began less than 800 years ago relating to Finland and almost 5000 years ago in Egypt and Mesopotamia.

I have a feeling that the attitude of archaeologists towards the concept of demic movement is often inadequate. A difference should be made between migration, infiltration and other possible modes of movement. In the study of demic movements, it is important to find the triggering factors, the push and pull effects. Through the millennia, the interaction between climate, availability of food and other indispensable goods and relative density of population, as well as war and social discrimination, have certainly been decisive factors causing both push and pull effects, for instance, among the societies in the steppe and forest zones of East Europe.

Returning to the beginning, I recall that Sámi delegates listed language as one of the variables defining the Sámi ethnicity and that, in general, language is often considered as being equivalent to ethnic identity. Slightly modified, this principle is applied to the identification of people as members of the ethno-political Sámi community.

Languages are not closed, unchanging entities but open to development and change and receptive to external influence. Indeed this is the domain of historical linguistics. Relative to language forms predating written documents, his-

torical linguistics works retrospectively. This means that a conclusion drawn on a previous state is inferred on the basis of a present state. Geographical distribution and chronology remain relative, which means that it is not possible to give exact absolute locations and dates.<sup>1</sup>

Archaeology again based on evidence known to provenance and date, can provide a regional and temporal framework with which one can attempt to correlate patterns produced by historical linguistics. As to correlation, the waves of influence mentioned above provide a very useful tool. I presume that (1) archaeologically discernible waves of influence also have transmitted lingual influence and that (2) waves of influence which have transmitted linguistic traits are also archaeologically perceptible. Linguistic influence includes loanwords referring to objects and other aspects of the material culture, the remains of which are part of the archaeological record.

After this condensed presentation of principle and method, as a background for the medieval Slavicisation process, I move on to an equally condensed presentation of a scenario illustrating the history of Uralic, Finno-Ugric and Finnic societies before AD 800. My presentation is based on selected archaeological events but within this frame, as mentioned earlier, I will not be able to go into detail or to explore more deeply the reasoning behind some claims.

My scenario begins by the end of the Ice Age (i.e. the *Weichsel-Valdaj* glaciation and the *Pleistocene*) when movements took place that were important for future development. The northern border of the populated part of western East Europe followed the Upper Volga and the Daugava (*Zapadnaja Dvina*) to the Baltic Sea. At that time, the population consisted of two main components: descendants of a local Ice Age population and descendants of reindeer hunters from Central and as far as West Europe. The population of the Kama-Ural zone again had a southern-southeastern background.<sup>2</sup>

The last eastward movements within the *Glacial* period brought representatives of the *Ahrensburg* culture from the North German Lowland and representatives of the *Svidry* culture from East Poland. While the *Ahrensburg* groups pushed mainly towards the SE side of the Baltic Sea, the *Svidry* groups moved towards Central Russia. Yet those movements led to an overlap and as a result, no sharp border formed between the cultures. Both these cultures were parts of the wide spread *Tanged Point* technocomplex.

<sup>1</sup> Glottochronology, which is claimed to provide dates compatible with the calendar time scale, suffers from the false basic assumption of a certain rate of change and is thus disregarded here.

<sup>2</sup> Sorokin (1989; 1999), Žilin (1996), cf. Sinicyna (1996).

Simultaneously with the transition from Glacial to *Postglacial* environmental conditions c. 9500 BC, the transition took place from a *Palaeolithic* to a *Mesolithic* cultural expression. It is important to note that East Europe, between the Baltic Sea and the Urals, was now divided into three longitudinal zones: Western, Central and Eastern, although there was overlap along the borders.

Three Early Mesolithic cultures formed in the Central Zone, the Volga-Oka interfluvium: (1) The *Resseta* culture continued the old local flint technology, (2) the *Ienevo* culture applied the *Postahrensburg* technology, and (3) the *Butovo* culture mainly continued the *Postsvidry* flint industry, which is an important archaeological marker that reveals that societies using this technique advanced as far east as the Kama outlet in the south and the Usa River in the northeast. Along the eastern border, the Postsviderian territory overlapped with the Kama-Ural Mesolithic culture, which originated in the south and southeast. The Butovo culture set the basis for the future development in the Central Zone.<sup>3</sup>

This, however, was preceded by the expansion of *Resseta* societies towards the northwest, including the East-Baltic region, which probably resulted in the formation of the *Kunda* culture. The early flint industry appears to reflect *Resseta* technical traits later complemented with a *Postsvidry* and a *Postahrensburg* component. The bone and antler industry also reflects both East European traits and a connection to the *Duvensee/Maglemose* complex of North Germany and Denmark. In fact, sometimes *Kunda* has conventionally been referred to as the “eastern *Maglemose*”. This may be due to the bone and antler industry which shows a general resemblance to the *Kunda* bone and antler industry. The structure and shape of the raw material may itself provide for a mutual general resemblance which also includes the *Butovo* culture. There are, however, types of tools with a special design that are found both in *Maglemose* and *Kunda* but not in *Butovo* and on the other hand, there are types of tools which are found in *Butovo* and *Kunda* but not in *Maglemose*. This, in addition to peculiarities in the flint industry, makes *Kunda* an interesting overlap between West and East.<sup>4</sup>

From the northern border line of the Late Glacial settlement, a movement towards the North began around 9500 BC and by 9000 BC a new hypothetical northern border of the populated part of western East Europe formed. The settlement site *Pulli* at the mouth of the River Pärnu (Estonia) in the southwest and the settlement site *Veret'e I* by Lake Lača on the upper Onega River (Archangel oblast') in the northeast were points on this line.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Kol'cov & Žilin (1999), Sorokin (1989; 1999), Žilin et al. (2002).

<sup>4</sup> Clark (1975), Indreko (1948), Sorokin (1999).

<sup>5</sup> Carpelan (1999; 2001), Jaanits & Jaanits (1975; 1978), Ošibkina (1989; 1997).

The Kunda culture still prevailed as did Butovo which had got a successor in the North around the upper reaches of the Onega river: the Veret'e culture. Some confusion has occurred concerning the connection of the Veret'e culture, as it sometimes has been called the "Eastern Kunda" (eg. Schulz 1996).

By 8000 BC (according to newly published radiocarbon dates), the front of the northward expansion had reached northern Finnish Lapland at 69° N latitude. The longitudinal pattern of the original cultural distribution appears to have prevailed through the whole period of expansion. It is likely that the cultural difference between Kunda and Butovo followed the moving societies, leading to the formation of a western and an eastern cultural zone in eastern Fennoscandia. But what does this division imply in terms of ethnicity and language?<sup>6</sup>

As indicated above, historical linguistics cannot provide absolute dates which are compatible with the calendar time scale. However, according to estimates proposed by Finnish linguists, it is not possible to extend the age of reliably reconstructed languages beyond 8000 or 6000 years before the present (Janhunen 2001; Koivulehto 1999). This means that the languages spoken by Mesolithic societies cannot be reconstructed. In spite of this, I have ventured to suggest that the successful spread of Postsviderian archaeological elements over the greater part of northern East Europe may have accompanied a corresponding spread of a language used as a *lingua franca*. Furthermore this language would have included elements on which a reconstructable *Proto-Uralic* later was developed in the Central Zone, or more precisely, the Volga-Oka region. In the Western Zone, i.e. the East Baltic region, the Kunda culture may again have represented the northeastern margin of an *Ancient European* block of languages due to a strong dependence on Ahrensburg and Duvensee/Maglelose. The origin of the Early Mesolithic population of the Kama-Ural region (Eastern Zone) is found in the south or southeast, without any connections to the populations of the two other populations. For this reason, I suggest that this zonal division had a lingual, hence ethnic, significance (cf. Carpelan 2002).

It was the Early Mesolithic that set the frames for the subsequent development in East Europe. The transition to the Sub-Neolithic, marked by the adoption of pottery, meant an archaeological turning point even though it did not change the previous regional setting. Obviously, the production of pottery spread to the East Baltic region from the Dnieper valley, whereas it spread along the Volga to the Volga-Oka region around 6000 BC, and from there to eastern Fennoscandia. While in the Volga-Oka region, for example, continuity in the flint technology indicates that no particular immigration of foreign men took

<sup>6</sup> Carpelan (1999; 2002), Pesonen (2005).

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place at that time, the mode of the spread of the pottery production remains unclear. As indicated above, pottery production is considered to be the domain of women.<sup>7</sup>

The Volga-Oka region had early on become an area that continuously generated a surplus of population and cultural creativity. This resulted in several waves of influence that, in addition to cultural elements, probably likewise transmitted lingual elements. The estimates of the chronological position of the formation of Proto-Uralic, indicated above, point to the Neolithic and appear to fit well with the formation of the *Ljalovo* culture in the Volga-Oka region around 5000 BC. From there, the *Ljalovo* influence spread towards all directions (Ošibkina 1996).

By 3900 BC, an important wave of influence reached NW East Europe, eastern Fennoscandia and the northern half of the Baltic region. The type of pottery called *Combed Ware Style 2* (also called Comb-Pitted Ware), based on the *Ljalovo* ware of the Volga-Oka region, is an important marker of this expansion which obviously was transmitted by a demic movement. This archaeological event corresponds well with an assumed spread of Proto-Uralic to the regions where the western and northern branches of the Uralic family later developed. At the same time, a similar wave pushed eastwards and brought Volga-Oka elements as far as the Vjatka and the lower Kama. A contact network formed that transmitted i.a. carbonic flint from the Valdaj region in addition to objects of Siberian Pine and copper from the Urals as far as Finland. This network also distributed green slate from Russian Karelia, red slate from North Sweden, asbestos from East Finland and amber from the south-eastern shores of the Baltic.<sup>8</sup>

The spread of the Uralic speaking societies represented by Combed Ware Style 2 to Finland, Estonia and Latvia brought about a replacement of the regionally spoken Ancient European. This again appears to have left substrate elements (both vocabulary and place names) in the replacing Uralic. Meanwhile, in the Volga-Oka region, *Ljalovo* was followed by the Eneolithic *Volosovo* culture around 3600 BC. The *Volosovo*, as all other earlier and contemporary (Sub-)Neolithic cultures of the region of interest, based its subsistence on hunting, fishing and gathering.<sup>9</sup>

Around 3200 BC, however, the *Corded Ware* culture, carried by a demic movement (although there are alternative explanations), pushed from the south

<sup>7</sup> Kol'cov & Žilin (1999), Ošibkina (1996).

<sup>8</sup> Carpelan (2004), Carpelan & Parpola (2001).

<sup>9</sup> Carpelan & Parpola (2001), Krajnov (1987a).

into the East Baltic and as far as the south and west of Finland. This culture had formed within a pastoral and agricultural context and linguistically, it is linked to *Proto-Northwest-Indo-European*. This would provide a plausible source for the Proto-Indo-European loanwords found in western Uralic (i.e. ancestor of Finnic). In spite of strong pressure, the western Uralic (north of the Daugava) persisted even though changes in the cultural identity occurred. The immigration of the Corded Ware Culture definitively divided Finland in two areas, eventually diverging both linguistically and ethnically. While in the south and west, a Finnic line of development began, development in the east and north led towards Sámi. South of the Daugava, Indo-European replaced the original Ancient European language.<sup>10</sup>

The Volosovo societies had contacts with steppe societies, who were probably speakers of Proto-Indo-European. On the other hand, between 2800 and 2600 BC Indo-European speakers came into close contact with Uralic/Finno-Ugric speakers in the Volga-Oka region, where the *Fat'janovo* culture (a variety within the extensive Corded Ware–Battle Axe entity), carried by a demic movement, pushed from the south-west and settled down in the midst of the local Volosovo societies. This repeated the situation experienced in Latvia, Estonia and SW Finland after the Corded Ware expansion. Also in Central Russia the Uralic/Finno-Ugric persisted in spite of strong pressure. No doubt *Fat'janovo* provided a source for Indo-European loanwords, although this is difficult to verify because Slavicisation extinguished the local Uralic/Finno-Ugric languages centuries ago. Moreover, the *Fat'janovo* expansion apparently broke the extensive east-west contact network indicated above. Later, before and after 2000 BC, waves of influence emanating from *Indo-Aryan* and *Iranian* steppe societies, represented by the *Abaševo* culture and varieties of the *Timber Grave* (esp. *Pozdnyakovo*) culture, transmitted additional linguistic elements.<sup>11</sup>

The combined influence of *Fat'janovo*, *Abaševo* and *Pozdnyakovo* on Volosovo resulted in the formation of a new Bronze Age cultural expression in the Volga-Oka region marked by *Fabric Impressed Ware* (often called “Net Ware” or “Textile Ware”). Soon a strong wave of influence, probably carried by a demic movement, brought this cultural expression to eastern Fennoscandia. At the same time, the *Sejma-Turbino* “cross-cultural network” distributed bronzes and, no doubt, also other cultural elements from East Russia as far as Estonia and Finland. This was a period of intensive cultural expansion which calmed down in the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC. As a whole, during the Bronze

<sup>10</sup> Carpelan & Parpola (2001), Edgren (1970), Koivulehto (2001).

<sup>11</sup> Carpelan & Parpola (2001), Koivulehto (2001), Krajinov (1987b).

Age, the Volga-Oka region and the Mid-Volga zone in particular underwent strong Indo-European pressure. In spite of this, the Uralic languages survived there until the Middle Ages and some, such as Mari, are spoken by minorities still today.<sup>12</sup>

In the west, again waves of influence emanating from the coasts of the southern Baltic Sea reached the Finnic region, first from the Baltic and then from the Germanic sphere. The latter was very strong and introduced several innovations, i.a. the custom of cremation burial covered by a cairn. This fits well with the early Baltic and early Germanic loanword strata found in early Finnic.<sup>13</sup>

As the Indo-European activity had calmed down in the Bronze Age, the waves of influence within the forest zone were the internal Finno-Ugric affairs. The position of the Volga-Oka region as a cultural innovator never faded. For a while, however, part of the initiative shifted to the Kama. It was the *Anan'ino* culture of the lower Kama (and its kindred culture *Axmylovo* of the middle Volga) that gave character to the Early Iron Age (800–300 BC) of the forest zone of East Europe and as far west as eastern and northern Fennoscandia. In addition, the influence originating in the *P'janyj bor* culture (300 BC – AD 200) was felt as far west as Finland.<sup>14</sup>

Simultaneously with *Anan'ino* and *Axmylovo*, in the Volga-Oka region, the *D'jakovo*-type culture appeared which, based on the Fabric Impressed Ware complex represented the age old continuity of the settlement and cultural development and again its influence expanded from there both westwards and northwards. During the third and final period (AD 200–600), *D'jakovo* had connections with the Balts in the west and southwest and it has been claimed that some Baltic immigration would have taken place (Krasnov 1974).

After *D'jakovo*, the Volga-Oka region was occupied by Finno-Ugrian cultures represented by the *Merya*, the *Muroma*, etc. The centre of the East-European activity towards Estonia and Finland remained in the Volga-Oka interfluvium until the 14<sup>th</sup> century AD. However, finds show that the (upper) Kama region, now represented by the two later phases of the *Nevolino-Lomovatovo* culture (*Demenkovo*, *Urino*; AD 650–900), also developed activity towards the west as far as Finland.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Černyx & Kuz'minyx (1989), Lavento (2002); cf. Kosmenko (1996), Patrušev (1992).

<sup>13</sup> Meinander (1954), Koivulehto (1995).

<sup>14</sup> Gening (1970–71), Xalikov (1977), Meinander (1966; 1985), Patrušev & Xalikov (1982).

<sup>15</sup> Carpelan (2004), Erdélyi et al. (1969), Goldina (1985), Leont'ev (1996), Rjabinin (1986; 1997); see also Juškova (2006) and Uino (2006).

The wave of influence emanating from the Lomovatovo culture is exemplified by an inhumation burial of a chief, discovered at Pappilanmäki, SW Finland, and dated to the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. The buried warrior had, among other things, a “Permian” belt, i.e. a leather belt with various bronze fittings of a kind common in cemeteries in the upper Kama region and representing the third phase of the Lomovatovo culture. It has been suggested that important Finnish warriors wore Permian belts as signs of membership in a trading network that extended from the Kama region to Finland.<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, the Pappilanmäki warrior was equipped with a sword with a gilded hilt of the ringed type. These extremely valuable swords have been discovered in various parts of the Germanic Europe and adjacent areas. This type of sword is thought to represent a token that a prince gave to a knight who swore loyalty as a member of the prince’s company or hird. The Pappilanmäki warrior was probably a member of the hird of a Swedish prince as were probably several other Finnish chiefs. This is indicated by the fact that several burials with a similar context of finds have been discovered in Finland (unlike Pappilanmäki these burials are cremations, however).<sup>17</sup>

About AD 700, the *Bolgars* established their presence around the great Volga Bend and started their commercial activity in which fur trade and connections with the Khalifate played major roles. Of course, the Bolgars benefited from the contacts with existing trading networks such as the one represented by “Permian belts”. The Pappilanmäki burial is an eloquent piece of evidence attesting to how members of the Finnish elite were involved in both eastern and western networks. It is likely that these were the men who opened their Scandinavian partners’ eyes to recognise the chances for exploitation there were along the East European waterways.

According to *saga* sources, which in spite of their imaginative character may well build on a historical reality, Swedish kings probably made eastward expeditions before the Varjags appear in the Old Russian annals. From about AD 700, simultaneously with the Lomovatovo connection, Finns Proper and Häme Finns extended their influence to the west and north coast of Lake Ladoga and the waterways leading to Lapland. Somewhat later Scandinavians directed their influence to the south side of Ladoga and the river routes leading from there to the Byzantine and Islamic worlds. Soon Slavic traders also found their way to the “Volga Route”. This was a pull effect but in the case of the Slavs, there were also push effects. Unrest around the homelands of the Slavs probably activated

<sup>16</sup> Carpelan (2004), Salmo (1941).

<sup>17</sup> Erä-Esko (1983), Hackman (1938), Schauman-Lönnqvist (1996).

people, individually or in groups, to decide on moving to more stable surroundings. However, such northward movement mainly took place after AD 800 and is not examined here. Furthermore, because both Juškova (2006) and Uino (2006) look at the lands between the uppermost Volga and Estonia, I omit an examination of this region.

Grahame Clark, the well-known Cambridge archaeologist, once formulated the issue of demic movement as follows: “Diffusion and migration can hardly be ignored, but can no longer be accepted as blanket explanations of change. Where they can be proved to have operated they are seen not as replacing so much as enriching the endowments of societies whose main characteristics have been their capacity to survive” (Clark 1977). The latter I find to be an over-optimistic generalisation, however. We know from historical records and contemporary observations that societies may not have the capacity to survive. Societies may become swamped and snowed in under pressure from stronger societies, cultures and/or economies. On the other hand, a society or part of one may have voluntarily strived to integrate into a successful society, culture and/or economy. Both alternatives, I believe, operated in the process under study, that of the Slavicization of several societies in the Middle Ages, which led to complete assimilation and the adoption of a strong Russian identity.

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