Bjørnar J. Olsen

SÁMI ARCHAEOLOGY, POSTCOLONIAL THEORY, AND CRITICISM

Bjørnar J. Olsen, Department of Archaeology and Social Anthropology, Faculty of Humanities, Social Science and Education, University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway, N-9037 Tromsø, Norway: bjornar.olsen@uit.no.

INTRODUCTION

Archaeological studies of the Sámi past have a long tradition extending well back into the 19th century. Understood as a more dedicated, focused and articulated field of archaeological inquiry, and to which the term Sámi archaeology is increasingly applied, we are, however, talking about a much more recent development mainly confined to the last four decades. This timing is, of course, not accidental. Sámi archaeology emerged at a time of an intense political debate about the Sámi minority situation, forefronting issues concerning their recognition and rights as an indigenous people. The debate soon raised questions regarding both past presences and the representation of the Sámi in hegemonic culture-historical discourses. In many ways this turmoil set the agenda for the emerging archaeological field.

It is thus hardly surprising that one of the persistent hallmarks of Sámi archaeology has been critical studies scrutinizing the political and ideological role of archaeology in the modern nation state (e.g. Schanche & Olsen 1983; Olsen 1986; Zachrisson 1994; Opedal 1996; Hesjedal 2001; Wallerström 2006; Bergstøl 2009; Ojala 2009; Ekeland 2016). Another 'obvious' topic early on was ethnicity, partly as a general concern with how to understand and define it, and partly as more specifically related to the emergence of Sámi ethnicity and the way it was maintained, negotiated and expressed in interaction with neighbouring groups (e.g. Kleppe 1977; Reymert 1980; Odner 1983; 1989; Olsen 1985; Schanche 1986; Baudou 1988; Zachrisson 1988; 1997; Olsen & Kobylinski 1991; Storli 1994; Wallerström 1997; Bolin 1999; Carpelan 2006; Bruun 2007; Hansen & Olsen 2014).

These 'originating' topics of concern may also provide a clue to explain the perhaps less expected fact that Sámi archaeology has been above average theoretically oriented, though initially more so in Norway than elsewhere. Almost from the very outset the influence from anthropological and post-processual thinking was very visible, and especially during the 1980s studies of the Sámi past contributed significantly to introducing new theoretical perspectives to Nordic archaeology. Moreover, emerging in a critical context contesting mono-cultural narratives and hegemonic disciplinary discourses, postcolonial theory soon became a ready-to-hand source of inspiration. This happened first in analyses of archaeological and historical representation (e.g. Olsen 1991a, 2000a, 2001; Baglo 2001a; 2001b; Hesjedal 2001), but was later applied to develop new understandings of cultural interaction and identity beyond the mantra of ethnic dichotomization (e.g. Spangen 2005; Immonen 2006; Bruun 2007; Bergstøl 2008; Hakamäki 2016).

Taking this into account, it is somewhat surprising to read the criticism that recently has been levelled at Sámi archaeology from scholars writing from a more or less pronounced postcolonial position (e.g. Hood 2015; Ojala & Nordin 2015; Spangen et al. 2015; Gjerde 2016). From these we get the rather dismal impression that Sámi archaeology is neither very theoretically minded nor internationally oriented, and despite having 'dealt with issues closely related to postcolonial theory and critique since the 1970s onwards' this has according to Spangen, Salmi and Äikäs, 'rarely been done with explicit mention or coherent use of this theoretical complex' (Spangen et al. 2015: 1; cf. Gjerde 2016: 65). Though less explicitly stated, Ojala and Nordin leave a similar impression of Sámi archaeology as somehow out of tune with and/or inferior to postcolonial and indigenous archaeology conducted elsewhere (Ojala & Nordin 2015: 15–6). From Hood we learn that Sámi archaeology has omitted colonialism and the post-medieval colonial context as an object of research, which he furthermore asserts is a direct consequence of setting symmetry and reciprocity 'as the default mode of Sámi social relations with Others, inhibiting study of asymmetrical colonial processes' (Hood 2015: 37). Since such processes are omnipresent in the early modern period, the alleged symmetrical orthodoxy of Sámi archaeological reasoning left little choice than to 'overlook' them and thus the very period itself.

In this paper I respond to these depictions, which I find misrepresent and ignore much relevant research conducted over the last decades. Being deeply involved with Sámi archaeology since the early 1980s onwards my opinions may of course be deemed subjective and defensive, but I nevertheless think they qualify for initiating some second thoughts on the matters dealt with. This also includes considerations on how this postcolonial criticism paradoxically seems to reaffirm an all too familiar hierarchy in the global political economy of research, whereby 'local' discourses continue to be subordinated to presumably more advanced 'international' ones.

CRITICAL BUT TRIVIAL THEORISTS?

Following the seemingly doctrinal distinction between postcolonial critique and postcolonial theory (see Källen 2015), it is claimed that while Sámi archaeology by its very name and critical focus may be seen as 'an example of postcolonial critique', its use of postcolonial *theory* is superficial and incoherent (Spangen et al. 2015: 3; Gjerde 2016: 64–5). Although frequently using some of its key concepts, such as *creolization* and, in particular, *hybridity*, this has according to Gjerde often happened 'without any explicit link to Bhahba and the development of the concept within postcolonial *theory*' (Gjerde 2016: 65, my translation, emphasis original). This, Spangen, Salmi and Äikäs warn us, 'can be problematic because the terms have a somewhat different use and meaning within the postcolonial theoretical context than in *everyday use*, which can easily result in misunderstandings' (Spangen et al. 2015: 3, emphasis added).

It is indeed not difficult to find critical inspiration from postcolonial studies and the very postcolonial project in Sámi archaeology. Despite not featuring in the new postcolonial archaeologists' accounts (see, however, *historian* Lehtola 2015), this inspiration was evident already in Norwegian archaeologist Gutorm Gjessing's book *Norge i Sameland* (En. Norway in Sápmi) (Gjessing 1973). Here Gjessing, who also was a well-known leftist politician, conceptualized Norse/Norwegian presence in northern Norway from the Early Iron Age onwards in an explicit, though somewhat simplified, colonial and imperialist framework. As critical archaeological studies of national and ethnocentric discourses developed from the late 1980s onwards, especially in Norway, and particularly at the University of Tromsø, the 'new' postcolonial theorizing associated with scholars such as Said, Spivak, Young, Hall, and Bhabha became increasingly important. This happened partly indirectly because of the indebtedness of this theorizing to post-structuralism, a school of thought already introduced through the early adoption of post-processual archaeology (cf. Olsen 1986; 1987a). However, it also happened directly, not the least through Edward Said's seminal work on *Orientalism* (1978), which became almost indispensable in analyses of archaeological discourses and representation (e.g. Olsen 1991a, 1991b; Olsen & Svestad 1994). Hence, at the turn of the millennium the significance of postcolonial theory was more than evident in Sámi archaeological studies of disciplinary discourses (cf. Olsen 2000a; 2001; 2004; Baglo 2001a; 2001b; Berg 2001; Hesjedal 2001).

It is quite strange, thus, to observe that this seems to have passed unnoticed among those who now proclaim the relevance of postcolonial theory for the study of the Sámi past. One telling example is the introduction to a thematic issue in *Arctic Anthropology* on precisely Sámi archaeology and postcolonial theory (Spangen et al. 2015).[1] After confidently asserting that 'postcolonial theory was first integrated in the archaeology of the Roman Empire.... and the frontier situation of colonial encounters between Native Americans and Europeans', Spangen, Salmi and Äikäs confine their comments on the use of such theory in critical research to mentioning studies of the 'close relationship between the development of archaeological practice and theory and the colonial process 1850–1930' (Spangen et al. 2015: 3; see also Gjerde 2016: 64), and with a short paper by Peter van Dommelen (2011) as the only qualifying reference. The omission of studies taking place in the authors' very area of attention is quite remarkable, not the least in light of the critical postcolonial thinking allegedly adhered to.

Neither do they show much concern for how anti-essentialist conceptions of cultural identity increasingly became discussed and integrated in studies of the Sámi past, especially among students and scholars at the University of Tromsø. Here, the works by Robert Young, Stuart Hall and Homi Bhabha played a particularly important role, as did those by Norwegian anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen (e.g. 1993; 1994). Through these scholars the concepts of hybridity and creolization came into our vocabulary, initially in a very tentative way (e.g. Skandfer 1997), but later in more full-fledged analyses of archaeological material, archives, and displays (Baglo 2001a; 2001b; 2011; Spangen 2005; Bruun 2007; see also Olsen 2000a, 2004). Though not dealing with Sámi material, Tori Falck was also part of this environment and her work on harbours as places, represents at the time one of the most explicit and critical discussions of postcolonial theory in archaeology, the concept of hybridity included (Falck 2000; 2003).

Strangely, this is not mentioned at all by the new postcolonial archaeologists, who otherwise seem well informed on studies of colonial encounters elsewhere in the world (see also Källen 2015: 84–5). Neither do they pay any serious attention to Inga Malene Bruun's elegant in-depth study of so called 'mixed-burials' in northern Norway, where issues about third-spaces and the formation of hybrid identities are discussed in detail (Bruun 2007; see also Spangen 2005). They rather prefer the unjustified conclusion, that 'it is only quite recently that there have been more specific attempts to contextualize postcolonial theory when looking at archaeological material' (Spangen et al. 2015: 3) – and, again, with no other references than the above-mentioned paper by van Dommelen (2011). With such selective referencing the innocent reader may well accept the repeated claim that while archaeologists working with the Sámi past often have used concepts coined within the postcolonial tradition, such as hybridity and creolization, they have done little to understand their theoretical underpinnings or postcolonial theory at large (Spangen et al. 2015: 3; Gjerde 2016: 65).

NOT INDIGENOUS ENOUGH?

A related, if less dismal, portrait of Sámi archaeology is provided by Ojala and Nordin (2015). Though having a very different point of departure, dealing with land conflicts caused by the recent mining boom in Sámi areas, the way they account for and situate Sámi archaeology in their discussion provides an equally skewed depiction. One of their main arguments is the importance of further exploring the colonial history in Sápmi, including its meaning and consequences today. While emphasizing the key role archaeology may play in this respect, they make the cautionary remark that, '[a]t the same time many issues concerning the ethics and politics of archaeology need to be discussed' (Ojala & Nordin 2015: 6). While few would disagree, they seem very reluctant to engage with the number of very relevant ethical and political issues that actually have been explored and debated in Sámi archaeology and Sámi studies at large (see references below). Thus in their account on Sámi archaeology, cultural heritage, and rights (Ojala & Nordin 2015: 12–5), few of the more principal and theoretical contributions are discussed or mentioned, and the emphasis is mainly on historical facts, empirical cases and examples. This in stark contrast to the way debates in postcolonial studies and indigenous archaeology in North America and Australia are dealt with, where theoretical significance and the debates' general and guiding importance are emphasized (Ojala & Nordin 2015: 15–6).

Also in their exposition of the Sámi situation there is a certain tendency of downplaying the wider significance of what has happened here. For example, in their discussion of heritage and Sámi cultural rights, Ojala and Nordin state that ‘[i]n recent decades, demands for greater self-determination in the field of cultural heritage management has been put forth by Sámi groups’ (2015: 13). Put forth? In Norway, where by far the most Sámi live, this has been implemented for the last 25 years or so. In the struggle for Sámi self-determination, resulting in the establishment of the Sámi Parliament in 1989, the right to self-management of cultural heritage had a central position. It was no coincidence that the administrative authority for managing Sámi heritage sites, which in 1978 had been provided special protection in the Norwegian Cultural Heritage Act, was the first law management function that was transferred to the Sámi Parliament (Schanche 1999; 2001; Holand 2004). Despite being a quite unique indigenous achievement also in global terms, Nordin and Ojala seem more impressed with what has happened elsewhere. At least they continue their discourse by referring to indigenous experiences in the USA and Australia, where questions relating to the right to ‘one’s own past’ (including control over and repatriation of cultural heritage), ‘have been discussed for a long time, during several decades’ but which to their regret ‘have not, until recently, attracted much attention among archaeologists in Sweden’ (Nordin & Ojala 2015: 13). If the latter is correct it is strange, yes, but it is even more curious that what has happened in Sámi archaeology across the national border (but also in Sweden) seemingly has escaped their attention.

Elaborating on the lessons to be learned from postcolonial studies, Ojala and Nordin (2015: 15) point to the self-reflexive, political dimension of this scholarship. They quote Lydon and Rizvi who assert that the postcolonial critique ‘has a fundamental ethical basis in examining oppression and inequality in the present, including those grounded in neocolonialism, race, gender, nationalism and/or ethnicities’ (Lydon & Rizvi 2012: 19). While this may be admired, one still has to ask why debates on the self-reflexive, political and ethical dimensions of research conducted in Sámi archaeology – not the least as related to inequalities in the present – are not considered equally relevant to account for and discuss, or at least worth mentioning? (cf. Schanche 1993; Mulk & Bayliss-Smith 1999; Hesjedal 2001; Olsen 2001; 2007; Skandfer 2001; 2009; Skandfer & Falch 2004; Bergstøl 2009; Mulk 2009; Ljungdahl 2010; 2011; Myrvoll 2012; Barlindhaug 2013; Svestad 2013; Mathiesen 2015; Spangen 2015; Ekeland 2016).

This question also comes to mind when Ojala and Nordin further assert that the ‘emphasis in postcolonial studies on identities as multidimensional, changing, and situated processes can provide concepts and approaches, which can be used to challenge the often simplified, static, and homogenizing notions of Sámi identity, culture, and history’ (Ojala & Nordin 2015: 15). By not mentioning that there already exist numerous studies within Sámi archaeology that have contested such simplified notions (e.g. Odner 1992; Olsen 2000a; Bolin 2001; Hansen & Olsen 2004; Spangen 2005; Bruun 2007; Olofsson 2010; Baglo 2011; Hakamäki 2016), one is left with the impression that they actually remain unchallenged. The same counts for yet another of their postcolonial recommendations for Sámi archaeology, urging increased attention to ‘colonial processes as more complex and varied than the often applied simplified dichotomy between the active colonizer and the passive colonized… [and] which aim to nuance and challenge static images of the colonial fields of power’ (Ojala & Nordin 2015: 15). At the risk of boring the reader with yet another repetition, I can do little but suggest some of the studies that in various ways have aimed at nuancing such static images (cf. Odner 1983; 1992; 2001; Olsen 1987b; Andersen 2002; Olsen et al. 2011; see also studies referred to above).

Since many of these studies are conducted in Norway, Ojala and Nordin may of course claim they fall outside their Swedish scope (Ojala & Nordin 2015: 7). This national confinement is rather strange, however, since they otherwise are keen on reminding us about how national borders as a colonial measure hamper Sámi research. Neither does their proclaimed national scope seem to put any constraints on their otherwise wide-ranging engagement with postcolonial and indigenous studies in North America, Australia, and other distant areas. It is thus quite intriguing to read Ojala and Nordin’s caution that generalized understandings ‘modelled mainly on the experiences and voices of indigenous groups in settler states such as the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, could risk becoming a dominant notion, which might suppress other indigenous voices and experiences in different historical and geopolitical contexts' (Ojala & Nordin 2015: 16). This is indeed an important reminder, but rather than countering this dominant notion by bringing to the table the wealth of experiences from Sámi archaeology and Sámi studies, their own contribution paradoxically contributes to sustain it.

It is also curious to note how seemingly self-evident Sámi archaeology is narrated as something other than indigenous (and postcolonial) archaeology, despite the author's stressing of the heterogeneity and dynamic character of the latter (Ojala & Nordin 2015: 15–6). Though emphasizing the 'contested nature' of Sámi archaeology that also involves understandings 'more closely related to discourses on indigenous archaeology' (Ojala & Nordin 2015: 17), this setting-apart is still effective through textual segregation, conceptual distinctions, and the semantics of the unsaid (cf. Said 1993). For example, addressing the challenges archaeologists face when studying colonial histories in Sápmi, Ojala and Nordin write, 'there can be much to learn from discussions in the field of postcolonial studies and indigenous archaeology' (Ojala & Nordin 2015: 15). While this indeed seems as an uncontroversial statement, the way the 'field', and the discussions taking place within it, is contextualized and addressed (without any felt need to add the spatial adverb of 'elsewhere'), it rather unambiguously conveys the message that indigenous archaeology (and postcolonial studies) is something taking place *there* rather than here. This implicit othering also concerns the 'community archaeology' carried out by many Sámi museums and institutions. Despite their active and important involvement with issues concerning indigenous rights and empowerment, and not least with Sámi heritage as living heritage, which Ojala and Nordin (2015: 15) otherwise find crucial to indigenous archaeology, the efforts of these institutions, though briefly mentioned, do not seem to be assigned quite the same guiding importance and theoretical-general relevance as those reported from their international peers (Ojala & Nordin 2015: 13, 15–6).

Needless to say, Ojala and Nordin certainly have no intention of downplaying or marginalizing contributions in Sámi archaeology. However, as with the criticism of postcolonial theory addressed earlier, the seemingly perpetual urge to look elsewhere for something 'more' and advanced (more indigenous, more postcolonial, more theoretical, etc.) easily produces such unintended outcomes. To argue this, of course, is not to plea for retreat and confinement but to engage with the diverse indigenous, postcolonial and archaeological contributions on more equal footing. Thus rather than pigeonhole the contributions in Sámi archaeology, it would be far more productive to integrate and debate them alongside other relevant contributions in postcolonial studies and indigenous archaeology. Continuing compartmentalizing the northern experience, textually or otherwise, just runs the risk of reaffirming an all too common oppositional hierarchy, whereby the local, particular and empirical are 'naturally' secluded from the international, general and theoretical, and where the latter always is given priority over the former (Olsen 1991b).

TOO SYMMETRICAL?

While Ojala and Nordin urge Sámi archaeology to nuance static images of an always- repressive hierarchy between colonizers and colonized, Bryan Hood expresses almost the opposite. His main criticism is that we have set 'symmetry and reciprocity as the default mode of Sámi social relations with Others' (2015: 37); and which, he later elaborates, 'tends to short-circuit study of the emergence of social asymmetries, which are a significant dimension of colonial processes' (Hood 2015: 39). Being a non-native English speaker there are often words which meaning, despite being regularly encountered, is difficult to fully grasp. Short-circuit is definitely not among them but what does *default* mode really mean? Consulting *Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary* I learn that default is 'a selection made usually automatically or without active consideration due to lack of a viable alternative'.[2] In other words, not only have we given far too simplistic and harmonic accounts of the Sámi's relations with others; we have also, due to our alleged 'default mode' of reasoning, been unable to consider any alternatives.

In line with his postcolonial peers, the Sámi archaeological works referred to by Hood are indeed limited, but even in those actually accounted for there is ample evidence speaking against his claims. For one thing, what Hood refrains from mentioning is the specific culture-historical context for which the notion of relative reciprocity (not symmetry!) has been proposed: the (Late) Iron Age of northern Norway. In this particular context of Sámi interaction with neighbouring Norse societies a number of time-specific social, economic, territorial, and cosmological features are argued to have led to a mutually beneficial relationship and even co-dependency (cf. Odner 1983; Schanche 1986; Storli 1994; Olsen 2000b; Hansen & Olsen 2014). This, however, without dismissing that asymmetrical relations of power could exist (Hansen & Olsen 2014: 48). In other words, 'the fact that the relationship involved degrees of reciprocity did not in itself exclude power to be exercised' (Olsen 1987b: 70). Hood, however, neither addresses the period nor the archaeological and historical material for which this 'default mode' of interaction is proposed. He rather prefers to deal with historical sources from the early modern period, and implicitly and explicitly asserts that what some of us have proposed for the Iron Age is also claimed valid for this period (Hood 2015: 39).

As mentioned, Hood does not refer to much Sámi archaeology in order to substantiate his unambiguous claim. Still, it may be worthwhile consulting the works he actually does refer to in order to find out what they say about Sámi interaction with 'their Others' in periods after the Iron Age. One of the few selected contributions is a paper by the present author (Olsen 2000b), where I spend most time accounting for my view of the situation in the Iron Age. However, the paper also explicitly addresses how this situation changed dramatically during the Viking Age and early medieval period:

> In the eleventh century, the local north Norwegian chieftains were defeated by the emerging all-Norwegian kingdom in a process which simultaneously converted Norwegian society to Christianity. The Saami… now encountered the power politics of surrounding state societies competing for control of the resources. The economic, social and religious changes in both the west and the east put the Saami in a far more pressed economic and cultural situation than earlier (Olsen 2000b: 39; cf. Olsen 2000c: 36).

For the medieval and early modern period, we may have a look at another work briefly referred to by Hood, the book on early Sámi history by Hansen and Olsen (2014) (see also Hansen & Olsen 2004; as well as numerous other works, e.g. Odner 1992; Wallerström 1995; Andersen 2002; 2008). In the chapter on the period 1200–1550 (Hansen & Olsen 2014: Chapter 4), we first describe how the settlement borders between the Sámi and neighbouring groups, despite a more strained and asymmetrical relationship, remained quite stable in the Early Middle Ages. During the High and Late Middle Ages, however, 'this territorial balance was disrupted and the relations between the Sámi and other ethnic groups changed dramatically' (Hansen & Olsen 2014: 352). This new situation was caused by changes on several levels:

> First, a direct colonization of Sámi land took place with neighboring groups settling permanently in previous Sámi areas and introducing their economy and administration. Secondly, the Sámi area became far more integrated into economic and political networks controlled by powers outside of northern Fennoscandia. A third factor that influenced ethnic relationships was Christianity's steadily stronger hold on non-Sámi communities. The consequence was not only the loss of the important cognitive and ritual ties to the Sámi that had existed earlier in the neighboring groups' pre-Christian religion, but also that Christianization and church building became an important strategy in the struggle to gain political control over Sámi areas. These three factors, colonization, integration, and Christianization, did not take place at the same time and they were subject to significant regional variation. From the Late Middle Ages, however, they constituted a new set of interacting conditions that most Sámi in one way or the other had to relate to (Hansen & Olsen 2014: 141).

In the latest period treated in this book, the early modern period (1550–1750) (Hansen & Olsen 2014: Chapter 5), we describe how the processes of colonization and political integration continued but, in contrast to the Middle Ages, how state authorities now to a much greater degree stressed institutional development in their governmental strategies:

> This resulted in enduring intervention into the Sámi areas and more or less ruined the basis for autonomous Sámi social systems. The indirect control that the states earlier exercised over the Sámi areas through taxation and trade was now replaced by direct control. Through the establishment of new bodies and institutions in Sámi territory, the Sámi were subjected to secular and religious jurisdiction from the outside. With the exception of some of the East Sámi siidas, the Sámi settlement areas were now definitively divided and unambiguously subjugated the respective surrounding states. The question of rights to resources hereafter increasingly became an issue of how Sámi resource utilization complied with the states' prevailing legal systems rather than something regulated by internal Sámi customs (Hansen & Olsen 2014: 353).[3]

Adding to this the brutality of the mission campaign, and the new constraints brought about by the church (Hansen & Olsen 2014: Chapter 6), one may wonder what Hood has read when he claims that we have overlooked oppression and political constraints on action, and 'short-circuited' the study of the emergence of social asymmetries? And how is it possible to conclude, without *any* reservations, that 'Sámi interaction with their Others is seen in terms of symmetrical rather than asymmetrical social relations. Long-term reciprocal relationship with Others are emphasized, from the trading relationships of the Viking period… to the taxation and commercial relations of the medieval and early modern periods' (Hood 2015: 39)?

Archaeology dropping out?

In his quest to explain 'this lack of an archaeological understanding of early modern colonial processes in northern Fennoscandia' (Hood 2015: 38), Hood asserts as yet another argument that any serious concern for this period would have abolished the ethno-historical image of a traditional Sámi society (drawn precisely from this period) on which Sámi archaeology, apparently, has relied in its 'back-projecting':

> Archaeologists have *always* needed to create a model of Sámi society in the pre-pastoralist era: that is, an image of the 'original' Sámi hunter-gatherers. The result has been the construction of a structural dichotomy between two images: a pre-modern egalitarian hunter society and a modern transegalitarian pastoralist herding society (Hood 2015: 38, my emphasis).

This is an elegant – and indeed exhaustive – explanation. Still, one wonders whether not the vast body of works published in Sámi archaeology over the last decades should allow for at least some nuances and modifications? Have scholars working within Sámi archaeology really unambiguously constructed an image of a pre-modern egalitarian hunter society? And have they all been 'filtering out the colonial context' (Hood 2015: 38) in their use and scrutinizing of the Sámi ethnographical and historical record? Since Hood refrains from spending much time on literature reviews, there is luckily a bulk of works that the readers may consult to make their own meaning on the matter (e.g. Odner 1992; 2001; Storli 1994; Zachrisson 1997; Schanche 2000; Baglo 2001a; Berg 2001; Andersen 2002; Price 2002; Spangen 2005; Bergman 2006; Bruun 2007; Olsen 2007; Bergman et al. 2008; Hedman & Olsen 2009; Halinen et al. 2013; Hansen & Olsen 2014; Norstedt & Östlund 2016).

Equally categorical is his related claim to Sámi archaeology's disinterest in the early modern period, where 'history takes over and archaeology pretty much drops out' (Hood 2015: 38). Contrary to what Hood seems to believe, however, there is actually a number of studies of the early modern period, including attempts at 'household' archaeology which he finds particularly promising (though only as a future option) (Hood 2015: 52). Without any claims of being exhaustive, one may mention Carpelan and others' studies of the Nukkumajoki settlement (e.g. Carpelan & Kankainen 1990; Carpelan et al. 1994; Carpelan & Lavento 1996; Inkiläinen 1999; Carpelan 2003), Odner's research on household and economy in Varanger (Odner 1992; 2001), Andersen and Sommerseth's studies of settlement and reindeer economies in northern Nordland and Troms counties (e.g. Andersen 2002; 2011; 2014; Sommerseth 2009), Grydeland's studies of households, demography and settlement in Kvænangen (Grydeland 1996; 2001), Søbstad's study from Helgøy (Søbstad 1980), Svestad's studies of Sámi burials (e.g. Svestad 2010; 2011; see also Hallström 1922; Simonsen 1959), the archaeological investigations of the silver works at Silbojokk (Awebro et al. 1989; Nordin 2015) and numerous other (e.g. Simonsen 1980; Olsen 1984; 1987b; Skandfer 1997; Immonen 2006; Halinen 2007; Broadbent 2010).

These studies may represent an archaeology that does not match Hood's critical standards, but to claim that it does not exist seriously misrepresents the actual state of the art. Besides, if the interpretations are found too simplistic and default, why not reanalyse and reinterpret the rich available archaeological record with some of the same eagerness as applied to the historical record? Because despite his advocacy of archaeology's superiority, 'going where history cannot go' (Hood 2015: 52), it is quite interesting to observe how Hood bases his own study entirely on historical sources. Thus, and notwithstanding his complaints about 'the lack of an archaeological understanding of early modern colonial processes in northern Fennoscandia' (Hood 2015: 38), his own contribution, paradoxically, merely provides us with more history.

Many of the referred to studies could also have informed Hood's otherwise interesting analysis of the constraints experienced by Sámi households in complying with state demands. This includes, for example, the strategies he proposes for furthering ecological resilience (Hood 2015: 49), which have been dealt with by archaeologists and historians (e.g. Nielsen 1990; Odner 1992; 2001; Andersen 2002; Hansen & Olsen 2014). They could have informed and nuanced Hood's interpretation of how state constraints interfered with these strategies, which becomes rather one-dimensional in its emphasis on asymmetries and negativities (for very different accounts, see Fjellström 1986: 63–7; Bergman & Edlund 2016). For example, did early modern Sámi economy, due to colonial demands, really become 'locked into' certain procurement systems, especially fur procurement, and the Sámi in turn thwarted from continuing earlier resilient practices of resource switching and mixing (Hood 2015: 49)? May not centuries of experience with fur trade, tribute, and taxation have made them well prepared? And what do the *archaeological* sources say about such 'locking in' (e.g. Odner 1992; Andersen 2002; Hedman 2003; Norstedt & Östlund 2016)?

Sometimes Hood's eagerness to read surveillance and control leads to scenarios that seem somewhat overdramatized, such as when he suggests that the 'Swedish state's need to control productive human bodies' (Hood 2015: 49) prevented inland Sámi from the 'resilience option' of moving to the coast when times got tough. Acknowledging the abundant data showing that such movements nevertheless frequently took place, the argument boils down to suggesting that 'some Sámi may have been hindered from exercising this option' (Hood 2015: 49), or that it 'was viewed as undesirable by the Swedish state, which wanted to maintain control over taxable productive bodies' (Hood 2015: 51). I am sure it did, but by what means could the Swedish state effectively prevent Sámi from moving in their vast territory? Given the sparse presence of colonial powers in the interior compared to the coastal region, the actual surveillance and control was most likely far stricter in the latter area than in the former. Another issue that becomes lost in Hood's critical reading is how the competition among colonial powers over the Sámi and their resources, also allowed for alternative actions, negotiations, and even led to Sámi privileges and rights to land and resources (Johnsen 1923; Tønnesen 1979; Bratrein 1984; Pedersen 1986; Hansen & Olsen 2014; Bergman & Edlund 2016). Though such rights and privileges clearly were part of a strategy to create loyalty and affinity with the respective state systems, they also represent an acknowledgement of Sámi agency and their possibility to choose otherwise if the situation turned intolerable.

In his paper Hood (2015: 51) interestingly deals with how the colonial system articulated with Sámi social norms and values, such as prestige. He suggests that one aspect of their entanglement in colonial relations 'was the nature of the intrinsic rewards within Sámi culture, which bestowed prestige on those who played the games of hunting and herding skillfully, providing motivation for the practical production activities that contributed to household subsistence, as well as sustaining state extraction processes' (Hood 2015: 52). The intrinsic social value of prestige, in other words, 'encouraged work investment that provided both practical benefits to the Sámi and surplus to be siphoned out to the state' (Hood 2015: 51). This is a significant point and related issues have been discussed in a number of Sámi archaeological studies (e.g. Olsen 1984; 1987b; Odner 1992; 2001; Andersen 2002). It was, for example, addressed in my own study of the transformation of the Varanger siida in the early modern period, interpreting the change as the combined outcome of internal social tensions and external pressure and constraints caused by the colonial situation (Olsen 1987b, see also Olsen 1984; Hansen & Olsen 2014: 204–6). While much may be questioned in this old Marxist-inspired analysis, it presents arguments related to some of those suggested by Hood (and partly with reference to the same 'practice theory' he now adheres to). Such as how increased local production, not the least to meet taxation demands from three states in late 16th century, hardly could have been realized 'without increased motivation in terms of prestige granted to the hunters, and a corresponding modification of the egalitarian norms and sanctions' (Olsen 1987b: 73). This study also emphasized another important issue: how Sámi societies themselves were far from frictionless entities, and that internal conflicts of interest could develop to the advantage of some individuals through the new colonial conditions by, for example, providing a social environment that aided and approved the social relations of production (e.g. property right) that came to characterize the new reindeer herding economy.

It thus seems somewhat exaggerated to conclude that 'unlike other parts of the world… the colonial context of Sápmi – the life space or nation of the Sámi – until recently seems to have held little attraction as a potential object of archaeological research' (Hood 2015: 37–8). The question is perhaps more how, and from which perspective, this colonial context is made relevant to the archaeology conducted. Hood has presented his vision but this should hopefully not rule out complementary or competing approaches, including those seeing colonial processes as 'involving a multitude of relationships between the colonizers and the colonized, in which identities and cultures change and influence each other in sometimes unexpected and seemingly contradictory ways… [and] which aim to nuance and challenge static images of the colonial fields of power' (Ojala & Nordin 2015: 15; cf. Olsen et al. 2011: 382; Bergman & Edlund 2016).

CONCLUSION: A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD?

In her concluding address to the collection of papers published in *Arctic Anthropology*, Anna Källén optimistically reassures us that 'there is a bright future ahead for the use of postcolonial theory in Sámi archaeology' (Källén 2015: 85). About its past she has, however, nothing to say. Anyway, she concludes by encouraging 'Sámi archaeologists interested in postcolonial theory to look to other, perhaps distant, fields for insights and inspiration' (Källén 2015: 85). Källén's conclusion is appropriately entitled 'looking out' and her advice is in many ways to be warmly recommended; there may indeed be a lot to learn at distance and from research and theorizing conducted at other and faraway places. Still, it is important to keep in mind that for most scholars situated outside the academic metropolises and subjected to the wider repercussions of language, cultural and economic dominance, this 'looking out' has actually been imperative rather than optional, and conversely, that the same hardly applies to those within. One outcome (and simultaneously a cause) is the inclination to think of the non-local and Anglophone as better, more interesting and theoretically advanced – a predilection that seems surprisingly common even among those marginalized by this very geography of power.

In his analysis of Sámi entanglement in colonial systems of dominance, Hood refers to Gramsci's ideas about how hegemony is maintained through consent (Hood 2015: 40), and maybe the same notion, perhaps equally appropriately, can be applied also to our trade. Gramsci asserted that the consent given by the 'great masses of people' to hegemonic ideological values and attitudes was produced by the 'prestige (and consequent confidence), which the dominant group enjoys because of its position in the world of production' (Gramsci 1971: 12). While Gramsci hardly had the world of academic production in mind, his notion may still be relevant to understanding why the contributions of local and native scholars persistently hold less prestige and are considered less significant than those produced by their supposedly 'international' peers (cf. Wolters 2013). It may also shed light on how colonial discourses and scientific colonialism continue to be historically effective in the global political economy of research, as witnessed in archaeology and elsewhere (Olsen 1991b).

As we have seen, such hegemony (and its consent) cannot be reduced to explicit statements of support or denouncement. Actually, as Said argued in his book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), colonial and cultural implications are often most conspicuously present in what is left unsaid, in the textual voids, and which requires a special kind of critical (or 'contrapuntal') reading to be disclosed. Hopefully, such readings will be less needed when succeeding scholars shall analyse the outcome of the bright future that has been proposed for postcolonial theory in Sámi archaeology. In the meantime it may still be worthwhile to pay some attention to what has already been said about such theory not only in Sámi archaeology, but also within the wider field of Sámi and northern studies (e.g. Gaski 1999; Kuokkanen 2000; Storfjell 2013; Huggan & Jensen 2016). And perhaps the very *raison d'être* of postcolonial theorizing is better cared for through a more humble and attentive approach; that is, one which also acknowledges the significance of contributions made within the very subject field being scrutinized.

NOTES

[1] *Arctic Anthropology* 52 (2), consisting of a collection of papers originally presented in a session at Nordic TAG, Stockholm 2014.

[2] 'Default' <Merriam-Webster.com> Read 15 June 2016.

[3] Hood presents a very similar summary to the ones above of how the Sami became entangled in colonial constraints through several 'component processes', stating how 'these processes actually began in the Middle Ages, but they were amplified during the Early Modern Period' (Hood 2015: 38). That these colonial component processes has been described in detail earlier by Hansen and Olsen (2004; 2014), he seems reluctant to say much about.

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