

N.A. Makarov, *Kolonizatsiia severnykh okrain Drevnei Rusi v XI-XIII vekakh*. Institut arkheologii RAN. Moscow 1997, 368 p.

One of the more interesting but largely unexplored questions of early Russian history is the Rus' colonization of northern European Russia during the XI-XIII centuries. Beginning with the V-VI centuries, East Slavic tribes moved from southeastern Europe to the northeast and came to settle the lands of the Novgorodian and Rostov-Suzdal' principalities by the IX-X centuries. From these lands, the Slavs (who now formed the core of the Rus') continued their expansion northward, reaching the Arctic Circle during the XI-XIII centuries. The study of the Rus' colonization of northern Russia goes beyond Rus' history; it is crucial for our understanding of the indigenous Finno-Ugrian peoples of this area who have been largely overlooked by most historians of medieval Russia. Although the colonization of northern Russia by the Rus' has been discussed by some linguists, ethnographers, and historians for over a century, few archaeological studies have been available until very recently. Consequently, Makarov's study affords an opportunity to see what insights archaeology can provide about this important process of Rus' emigration to the far north.

N.A. Makarov of the Institute of Archaeology in Moscow is one of the leading archaeologists of the medieval Russian north. Over the past fifteen years, he has published a number of important studies dealing with the question of Rus' colonization in northern Russia. His newest book, which is the subject of the present review, is the culmination of his research and attempts to explain when, how, and why the Rus' came to colonize this region beyond the Novgorodian and Rostov-Suzdal' principalities.

In the first of five chapters, Makarov reviews the scholarly literature on the Rus' colonization of the Russian north. In the process, he reassesses several long-held historical views about the areas colonized by the Novgorodian and Rostov-Suzdal' principalities. Many historians, for example, have assumed that Rus' colonization could be studied using written sources exclusively. A good example, cited by Makarov, is A.N. Nasonov's well known book on the formation of the Rus' lands (Nasonov 1951). Makarov, on the contrary, argues quite properly that an analysis of the archaeological data is essential for understanding the topic.

In Chapter II, Makarov examines those sites in northern Russia which he identifies as Rus'. He argues that the earliest Rus' contacts with the north, which

dated before the XI century, were made by bands of traders and hunters-trappers who did not leave either large permanent settlements or cemeteries. In the same vein, he believes that the imported artifacts of the X-XI centuries found in northern Russia were brought there by traders and tribute collectors as gifts, items of trade, or as personal belongings. They do not provide evidence for any permanent Rus' presence. This situation started to change in the XII century when Rus' tribute collectors reached the Bay of Bothnia and the Kola Peninsula in the northwest and the regions at the western foothills of the Urals in the northeast. As a consequence, Makarov believes that the areas along the Vaga, North Dvina, Pinega (and partially areas along the Onega) rivers were incorporated into the Novgorodian administrative units or pogosty. At the same time, the Beloozero, Kokshen'ga, and Ust'e regions (the later two located in the upper reaches of the North Dvina) had come under the domination of Suzdalia. In sum, by the XII century, the Russian north was slowly but surely being incorporated into the tributary dominions of Novgorod and Suzdalia.

Makarov's main thesis, explored in the next three chapters, is that the Rus' only began to establish permanent settlements in the north during the XI-XIII centuries. He maintains that it is necessary to study the portages of the Russian north in order to understand Rus' colonization there. In Chapter III, the author uses later historical records (maps, land registrars, customs and toll books, and eye-witness accounts), ethnographic sources, archaeological materials, and field surveys to identify, reconstruct, and analyze six major portages (Ukhtoma, Slavenskii, Badoga, Mosha, Emtsa, and Kena) dating to the XI-XIII centuries which connected the Novgorod and Suzdal' lands with the north. In addition to these six portages, with the use of historical documents, Makarov also examines eight others about which there is little specific information, but enough is known to suggest that they too were used during the XI-XIII centuries. These 14 portages were the key to Rus' colonization of the north.

Makarov's analysis of the remains in the Rus' settlements in the north leads him to conclude that the process of colonization followed the routes of the portages. Colonization was initiated and maintained due to the desire of the Rus' for trade and tribute collection. Based on later literary sources and archaeological sites dating to the XI-XIII centuries, Makarov concludes that the settlements located along the portages grew and gave birth to additional sites as new colonists or new family members of the older colonists moved further

and further away from the original settlements. They followed a "nest-like" process with one major center serving as the hub for a number of smaller settlements which were connected to the center.

According to Makarov, the first Rus' settlements along the portages date to the early-XI century. The Rus' settlements increased in number and size in the XII-XIII centuries. Since settlements had existed along these portages during the Stone, Bronze, and early Iron Ages, the Rus' were not the first ones to use these portages; they merely unitized well known routes leading to the Russian north. The main activity of the Rus' inhabitants of these portages seems to have been the servicing of commercial traffic (to maintain roads and provide horses for hunters, trappers, tribute collectors, etc.). In addition, these early inhabitants engaged in agriculture and some craft production. Based on the number of burials in the cemeteries adjoining these settlements, Makarov concludes that the size of their Rus' population was never great.

In Chapters IV and V, Makarov discusses the finds from the large and well preserved Nefed'ev cemetery (dating from the first half of the XI to the early-XIII centuries), situated along the Slavenskii portage, which he excavated in the 1980s. The site serves as an excellent case study since it was thoroughly studied and lays along one of the major portages leading to the north. In Chapter IV, the author provides a highly detailed list and description of the finds from Nefed'ev and concludes that the cemetery belonged to permanent Rus' colonists who were living side-by-side with the native Finno-Ugrians. From the first half of the XI to the early-XIII centuries, several waves of Rus' migrants settled along this portage. Based on skeletal remains, grave inventories and their layout, Makarov examines the average age of the inhabitants of this portage area, demographic changes over time, the genealogical relations of the people buried there, their occupations, the ratios of gender and age groups, marital status, social hierarchy, economic well-being, religious beliefs, and commercial contacts with the outside. Of particular interest are Makarov's findings that those living along this portage were relatively wealthy in comparison with the other Rus' inhabitants of the northern rural areas of the Novgorodian and Suzdal' principalities. The average family in the Nefed'ev cemetery reared between 4-5 children to adulthood, which is a very high number for the period. This constant population growth may well explain how and why the Rus' continued to migrate further north. Makarov also notes that some of the men buried at the cemetery were temporary visitors from the

south who came to the settlement to conduct some sort of business (e.g., tribute collection, administration) but died before returning home.

While Makarov's new book has many positive features, it also contains some significant shortcomings. Perhaps the greatest drawback in this study is its failure to study the native peoples with whom the Rus' came into contact after reaching the north. For this reason, it is a traditional but outdated account which examines the colonists without looking at the peoples being colonized. Recent scholarship recognizes that it is critical to include the native peoples in any study of colonization, whether it is in the Americas, Africa, or northern Russia.

Makarov spends considerable time discussing the Slavic or Rus' colonizers of the north. However, a discussion of the Finno-Ugrians is necessary to understand Rus' colonization of these areas. When reading Makarov's book, the reader may feel that the Finno-Ugrians were not even present in the Russian north in the X-XIII centuries. Perhaps the reason why the Finno-Ugrians received little attention in a study such as this is the belief of some scholars that the Finno-Ugrians were passive people who did not resist Rus' assimilation and, in general, made little if any contributions to the Rus' culture (Ligi 1993; 1994). In addition, there is a tradition among Soviet and Russian archaeologists, historians, and ethnographers to disregard any possible Finno-Ugrian influences on Russian culture. When discussing the cross-cultural contacts between the Finno-Ugrians and the Slavs, many of these scholars focus primarily on the Slavic influences upon the Finno-Ugrians (e.g., Zhrebtsov 1982, 117-156). Some scholars, such as the renowned Russian ethnographer, D.K. Zelenin, emphatically deny any Finno-Ugrian influences on the Slavs (1991, 33-34). However, a careful and objective study of all of the evidence available to historians strongly suggest that the Slavs adopted a number of elements of Finno-Ugrian material culture. Such archaeological and ethnographic materials are found in sufficient quantities; therefore, the incorporation of this data into the study of Rus' colonization can provide significant insights into the colonizing process.

In his introduction, Makarov notes that he deliberately avoided using ethnographic, anthropological, folklore, and linguistic materials in his study for fear of losing sight of the archaeological evidence. Notwithstanding, he aptly utilizes ethnographic and anthropological materials when addressing certain important historical developments, such as the evolution and dispersion of Rus' settlements in the Russian north.

Makarov draws on the ethnographic materials of the Finno-Ugrian Komi and Karel peoples to elucidate some of the ways the Rus' colonizers may have lived after settling in the north. However, he disregards the implications of these borrowings from the local peoples for understanding the new way of life amongst the colonists.

By excluding ethnographic and anthropological evidence from much of his study, Makarov neglects to discuss the cross-cultural borrowings between the Finno-Ugrians and the Rus' and their effects on their material cultures. Often forgotten are the Slavic migrants from the southern regions of Europe who had to adapt to new ecological, climatic, and geographic conditions which required the borrowing of certain cultural elements from the indigenous Finno-Ugrians. Archaeological and ethnographic materials clearly show that the Rus' colonists in the north were heavily influenced by the Finno-Ugrians in areas such as certain technologies and survival strategies, ornaments and ornamental styles, etc. For instance, Finno-Ugrian "blunt-tip" arrow-heads (used for hunting fur-bearing animals), skis, sleds, fishing and trapping devices, and other "technologies" were all found in the material culture of the northern areas of Kievan Rus', notably in Novgorod (see, for example: Smirnova 1994, 143-156; Gerd 1990, 88-90; Gerd & Karamysheva 1992, 180-186; Ovsianikov 1984, 195-197; Burov 1981a, 130, 1981b, 169). Despite the fact that many Soviet and Russian archaeologists prefer to avoid the question of the Finno-Ugrian origins of these materials, it is clear that many elements of the Finno-Ugrian material culture were absorbed by the Slavs on their arrival in the northern forests of European Russia. On the other hand, the Rus' brought more advanced methods of agriculture (certain cereal grains and tools), wheel-made pottery, and other innovations to the Finno-Ugrians. In this way, both peoples benefited by sharing their survival strategies and technologies. Although Makarov notes the finds of some of these materials (e.g., blunt-tip arrow heads, wheel-made pottery, cereal grains, etc.) at the sites colonized by the Rus', he does not discuss how these elements became part of the new culture of the colonists.

In addition to neglecting the native peoples, Makarov also advances a highly questionable theory about the culture of the Rus' inhabitants. Makarov's use of the terms "common Rus'" or "common Slavic culture" to describe the materials found at the colonists' settlements is very problematic. The use of this term, however, is common among Soviet and Russian archaeologists. Usually, it is used to describe the material

culture of Kievan Rus' towns. Some of the common components of this culture include the finds of certain artifacts (glass bracelets and beads, certain metal ornaments, pendant-crosses and icons, shards of amphorae, wheel-made pottery, rose-colored slate-spindle-whorls, certain weapons); signs of developed agriculture; craft production; etc. Despite several preliminary attempts to describe and study this so-called "common Rus'" culture (e.g., Kuza 1985, 36-104), archaeologists have never determined its specific components nor established how it can be used to distinguish Rus' culture from neighboring cultures with any precision. It is also not clear if "common Rus'" culture, usually used to describe the material culture of urban/cosmopolitan Rus' centers, is applicable in a discussion of rural Rus' settlements, particularly those on the periphery of the Rus' lands. We presently know relatively little about the "rural Rus' culture" if indeed such a monolithic entity ever existed or can be defined. Thus, it is not at all clear what "common Rus'" or "common Slavic culture" means to the author and how the reader is supposed to understand it. Makarov notes the finds of "Rus'-Slavic" wheel-made pottery, jewelry, tools, etc. at a number of settlements to show that they were "Rus'-Slavic" sites. However, typical Finno-Ugrian artifacts have also been found at the same settlements (e.g., "blunt-tip" arrow-heads). These finds point to contacts between the Rus' settlers and the Finno-Ugrians. The importance of clarifying the meaning of the term "common Rus'-Slavic culture" becomes even more evident when the author notes that the colonists of some of the settlements were originally Finno-Ugrian (Ves') and came from the Beloozero region (e.g., from Krutik). If they were, in fact, Finno-Ugrians, then it is not clear how they would have brought a "common Rus'" or "Slavic" culture with them to the lands which they colonized. Even after the Rus' colonists settled at the sites originally inhabited by the Finno-Ugrians, it is difficult to believe that the Finno-Ugrians did not retain many elements of their own material culture. In fact, many of the Finno-Ugrian traditions were adopted by the Rus' settlers who, naturally, lacked experience in living in the northern regions of Russia. It is likely that once all of the evidence on the Rus' colonization of the Russian north is evaluated, the so-called "common Rus'" or "Slavic" culture of the Rus' settlements may turn out to be substantially Finnic.

Another problem is Makarov's lack of a substantive conceptual and/or comparative framework in analyzing the process of the Rus' colonization. It would have been very useful to study the Rus' expansion in light

of other colonizations which are better documented and studied. For instance, the well documented Russian expansion east of the Urals comes to mind. Abundant literary sources and excellent secondary studies are also available on the English and French colonization of North America in the XVI-XVIII centuries. As in the cases of the Russian expansion into Siberia and the North American experience, the Rus' colonization of the Russian north took place in the northern climes of the globe. In all three cases, trade, particularly the fur trade, played a pivotal role in the colonization process which also involved native peoples and newcomers. Therefore, one might expect to find many parallels. An examination of the records on the Siberian and North American experiences would probably shed much light on how the Rus' came to settle in the Russian north, their relations with the indigenous population, how these peoples came to form a new "colonial" culture, and many other central issues. Thus, Makarov's study would have greatly benefited from a model of colonization or a comparative examination of the Rus' expansion north in light of the Siberian and North American experiences.

Lastly, the author neglects to discuss the impact of this colonization on the economy, demography, and culture of the Rus' state. Foreexample, what significance did the large-scale fur trade of the Russian north have on the Kievan economy? What was the role of the Rus' colonization in the development of Novgorod and Suzdalia as perhaps the two strongest Rus' principalities on the eve of the Mongol conquest? What role did the Finno-Ugrians play in the formation of the northern Rus' culture? Unfortunately, Makarov does not address these questions.

This monograph is not only a scholarly text, but a comprehensive compendium of X-XIII centuries sites and artifacts unearthed by archaeologists in the north of Russia. It includes an index, a guide to the location of the sites discussed, a bibliography, and a catalogue of archaeological sites with a meticulous description of the finds, accompanied by maps, charts, drawings, tables, diagrams, and photographs. A four-page English summary of the book is provided at the end.

Despite its several shortcomings, Makarov's book is a solid study which succeeds in shedding much light on the questions of when, why, and how the Rus' colo-

nized the Russian north. Therefore, it is a very welcome addition to the literature on the medieval northern Russia and will serve as a fundamental work on the topic for many years to come. It can be hoped that future studies dedicated to the question of Rus' colonization will include the indigenous Finno-Ugrian peoples and provide a discussion of their contributions to the formation of the northern Rus' culture.

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