CHAPTER I

From Birth to Collapse: On the History of Archaeological Studies in the Russian Arctic

It is astonishing that archaeological studies in the Arctic have a history of more than two hundred years. However, during most of this period the materials were collected sporadically, and the rare explorations were amateur in character. Sporadic professional expeditions were often focused on surveying for relics of a special character.

The excavations at the Eskimo site on Cape Bolshoi Baranov, east of the Kolyma River mouth, were carried out by Captain G.A. Sarychev (who was the leader of a special research team on the Billings expedition, undertaken in 1785–1793) on June 22 in 1787, and they are considered the starting point of Arctic archaeology (Sarychev 1802:95, 96). It must be stressed that it was not an occasional excavation and collection of strange objects but real excavations undertaken with the deliberate intention of getting information about the former inhabitants of abandoned ruins of semisubterranean houses seen near Cape Bolshoi Baranov. For Russia this fact is doubly remarkable, being the starting point of Russian archaeology in general (Khlobystin 1991).

Inasmuch as the present study deals with a vast territory, it seems logical to give a historical sketch of the archaeological studies in sequence with the main natural areas that make up the region under consideration: Northeast Europe (including the Kola Peninsula and the Malozemelskaya and Bolshezemelskaya Tundras), Northwest Siberia, the Taimyr Peninsula, and Northeast Asia.

Investigations in Transpolar areas of Northeast Europe, where the first notes on the archaeological sites are dated to 1592—from the records of the Russian ambassadors who visited the Kola Peninsula for negotiations on the disputed position of the Russian-Norwegian frontier and described stone features in Varanger Fjord and near Kola village)—began only in the late 19th century, though some archaeological finds were reported from time to time (Schmidt 1930; Gurina 1951).

Polar areas were gradually included in the sphere of scientific archaeology; the first expeditions to those territories were preceded by surveys of the southern Karelia, Vologda, and Vyatka Regions—carried out by N.F. Butenyev, I. Lerkh and I.S. Polyakov. The White Sea coast was also surveyed in the archaeological custom of that time by N.K. Zenger, assigned by the Committee of the Moscow Astronomy Exhibition. Zenger's expedition produced a lot of materials collected from sites along the White Sea coast (so-called Zimny Bereg ["Winter Coast"]) or from the indigenous population (Zenger 1877). A.I. Kelsiyev also participated the expedition that visited the Kola Peninsula. Some years before, in 1874, A.I. Schtukenberg, doing geological reconnaissance of the Timan Tundra (a locality surrounding Timan Ridge), discovered the first Stone Age site in the European Arctic (Schtukenberg 1875:XI). Data on relics coming out of

the European North were included in the famous monograph Russian Archaeology by Count A.S. Uvarov (1881), who summarized all the archaeological facts known that time.

The collection of archaeological materials moved forward in the 1890s. Thus K.P. Reva was the first to investigate a locality on the White Sea coast—Letny Bereg ["Summer Coast"], and later the Tersky Bereg of the Kola Peninsula (Reva 1898). Also in the early 1890s, a collection of stone tools found in the Timan Tundra were presented to the Imperial Archaeological Committee by F.M. Istomin (Khlobystin 1973:54).

Some episodes of archaeological activity took place at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1905 and 1907 naturalist A.V. Zhuravsky discovered sites providing rich collections in the Bolshezemelskaya Tundra (in the Kolva River valley). An abundance of stone tools were collected by geographer N.A. Kulik in the Bolshezemelskaya Tundra (near the Arctic Circle on the Adzva and Bolshaya Rogovaya Rivers) during expeditions of 1909 and 1910. His finds were reported in some articles (Zhuravsky 1909; Kulik 1914, 1915). Surprisingly, they were professionally recognized only much later, in 1950s, when N.N. Gurina (1951) and M.E. Foss (1952) reviewed the archaeological data from the Russian North. However, it should be mentioned that both Kulik and Zhuravsky had never overestimated either the significance or antiquity of the finds. For instance, A.V. Zhuravsky, commenting on the materials discovered, wrote that "the Stone Age on our extreme north ended in the epoch when Europe began true history and advanced civilization had moved far from a stone knife" (Zhuravsky 1909:207–209).

Concurrently, about the turn of the century, the first archaeological explorations were carried out in the Arctic islands, which still remain poorly explored. There were the excavations of the ruins of the Russian Pomor people, who visited Spitsbergen (Svalbard) in the 16th and 17th centuries (Starkov 1991:18).

The western Siberian North and the Taimyr Peninsula were also archaeological blank spots up to the second half of the 20th century. During all that time only the collection by geologist Novitsky, who gathered few artifacts at the Ob' River mouth, could be mentioned for the western Siberian North (Chernetsov 1953). Some episodes of archaeological survey took place there from 1920 to 1930 (Chernetsov 1935). As far as the Taimyr Peninsula is concerned, the first archaeological investigations were begun in the late 1960s by Leonid P. Khlobystin, who was my teacher and one of the most brilliant archaeologists ever to study the Arctic.

Studies in the archaeology of Northeast Asia—though the first excavations in the history of all Arctic archaeology were undertaken there—were sporadic. About 100 years later, in 1878, Alfred Eirik Nordenskjold carried out similar excavations during his famous voyage along the Arctic coast of Eurasia on the yacht Vega. Some test pits were dug in ancient semisubterranean Eskimo dwellings at Cape Schmidt (Nordenskjold 1936). Approximately the same time N.I. Popov published the finds of the Russian Church missionary Aleksey Argentov, who traveled on the lower reaches of the Kolyma River for several years (Argentov 1879), and the "axe of cryptocristalline rock" presented to the East Siberian Department of the Russian Geographic Society by Baron G.A. Maidel, a leader of the Chuckchi Expedition sponsored by the Russian Academy (Popov 1878:60). Unfortunately, these finds were not put on the map, but it

is obvious that few sites were discovered in intracontinental areas during this period because the numerous Eskimo sites known on the Northeast Asian coast were much more attractive to both amateur and professional archaeologists. These works also were rare, and we can mention only collections by Edward Nelson from the Vankarem Eskimo settlement (Nelson 1899:265–266), items from the Naukan Eskimo settlement gathered by Knuth Rasmussen (Dikov 1979:12), and artifacts presented to the Ethnographic Department of the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg by D.E. Bettak and N.P. Borisov in 1910. The latter artifacts were published later by A.V. Machinsky (1941). Few finds, discovered somewhere in the interior of the Anadyr Region about 1910, were presented to the Regional Museum in Khabarovsk and described later by Vladimir Arsen'yev, the famous Russian explorer of the Far East (1948:118–123). These finds were of great interest because broken and burned bones of mammoth and other animals comprising a Late Pleistocene faunal assemblage were collected there. Unfortunately that location was not known exactly.

Some archaeological work was carried out at that time in Yakutia where the southernmost areas were surveyed by amateur archaeologist M.P. Ovchinnikov, who excavated Neolithic graves near Olekminsk (Ovchinnikov 1890). The first Yakutian rock art was discovered during the same period by another researcher, N.A. Vitashevsky.

The years of the First World War, the Revolutionary and Civil War period, and the period of economic collapse in Russia—when all research was stopped for a while in the Russian Arctic—is in my view the natural upper chronological limit of the stage of initial archaeological studies in the Russian Arctic covering about 120–130 years. To briefly summarize the results, I should mention that scanty materials were sporadically found and collected that covered a long period of time: from relics of "historical contemporaneity" (Russian Pomor dwelling sites on the Svalbard Archipelago and Eskimo settlements of the Chukchi Peninsula) back to some periods of the Stone Age. The significance and antiquity of the finds were interpreted guardedly (Zhuravsky 1909), considering human habitation in the Arctic as rather late. Still, the ideas that appeared to be of much importance for further progress in Arctic anthropological studies were advanced, based on the results of discoveries by numerous and successful ethnographic expeditions (Jessup should be mentioned first) as well as natural science research. Scanty archaeological materials were used in hypotheses explaining similarities observed in the material cultures of different aboriginal ethnic groups that settled in the Arctic. These distinct features, noted by many students of anthropology, pushed forward a form of the "circumpolar culture" concept first advanced by F. Graebner (1911). His ideas were popular for a long time and supported or developed by scientists such as W.G. Bogoras (1929), F. Flor (1930) and others. Though those ideas were different in details from Graebner's original concept, they were rather close and based on the idea of convergent evolution. But the latter was most thoroughly substantiated by W. Talbitzer (1924) and F. Boas (1930), and ultimately all these ideas were combined by G. Hatt in North American and Eurasian Culture Connections (1934). Later, Gutorm Jessing (1944) applied the concept of a "circumpolar culture" based on ethnographic observations to the archaeological data. The studies of his scientific predecessors, such as Boas,

Bogoras, Jochelson, Talbitzer and others, were focused on a particular question of Arctic history—the Eskimo problem, including their origin, adaptations, and migrations in the American and Canadian Arctic and in Northeast Asia. In Russia a very detailed review of these works has been published by S.I. Rudenko (1947:4–28), S.A. Arutyunov and D.A. Sergeev (1969:7–26), and Yu. B. Simchenko (1969:7–10).

Undoubtedly, all of these studies comprise a classical background of current Arctic anthropology, but Gudmund Hatt was the first to make an effort to recognize different chronological levels of the Arctic cultures and the archaic components among them; thus is his indisputable distinguished contribution. Hatt's ideas were successfully elaborated by K. Birket-Smith, who applied them to Caribou Eskimo history, taking into consideration available archaeological data discovered by the Fifth Thule Expedition of Knuth Rasmussen (Birket-Smith 1929). Although the publications under consideration, as well as those thereafter, were published—from the chronological view—after the conventional end of the first (initial) period of studies in Arctic anthropology, it might be necessary to mention them now inasmuch as they were based on results obtained in the 19th or first decade of the 20th century.

The results of natural science research (geology, paleontology, paleozoology, paleobotany), undertaken during that period in both Northeast Asia and North America, were also of great importance for advancing anthropological studies concerning the problem of ancient migrations to (or through) the Arctic. That problem had been brought to the forefront because of archaeological finds of Palaeolithic character discovered in North America in the 19th century. Their age and therefore the ancient migration routes to the American continent appeared to be the most crucial questions. A historiography of these problems is outside the focus of the present study, but I will comment on some of the most significant points for the discussion. It could also be noted that in Russia the best review on these questions I have ever read was published by I.P. Laricheva in Palaeoindian Cultures of the North America (1976).

First of all, it is necessary to note that evidence (both artifacts and skeletal) of the Pleistocene age remains, pointing out the considerable antiquity of human habitation on the American Continent. This was fully recognized in the early 1930s only when the results of different fields of research were summarized in The American Aborigines: Their Origin and Antiquity, edited by D. Jenness (1933). All of the questions connected directly with the problems considered in this book were discussed there, in particular the problem of Late Pleistocene human migrations across the land isthmus between the Eurasian and North American continents. A theory on the land bridge that once existed at that place was advanced about ten years before, in the 1920s. This was concluded by the Russian zoologist A. Ya. Tugarinov, who studied the zoogeography of that area and was the first to use the term "Beringia." Another Russian scientist—anthropologist W. Jochelson—who left Russia in the pre-Revolutionary period, called that territory "Hol-Arctica." The latter, based primarily on Eskimo ethnography, concluded that the Eskimos originated when that land isthmus existed near the Pleistocene-Holocene boundary.

As early as 1926 W. Jonston, trying to join together the initial human migration to the New World and the most favorable climatic epoch, suggested for the first time the possibility of mi-

grations across the Bering Land Bridge about 20,000–15,000 BP, during the maximal stage of the Wisconsin Glaciation (Jonston 1926). Jonston's ideas were further developed by E. Antevs (1935) and later won worldwide recognition.

Therefore, in spite of the mosaic character of the data, the most important theories put into background studies carried out within later decades and up to the modern day—both in the archaeology and paleogeography of the East Arctic—were advanced by Russian and American scholars based on scanty materials obtained during the initial period of Arctic research. In this connection, it is very important to pay special attention to the opinion of Russian geologist I.D. Chersky (1891), who examined a collection of Quaternary faunal remains gathered by the expedition of Baron Edward V. Toll (1899), one of the famous Russian Polar researchers, on the New Siberian Islands. Before that time Chersky led the excavations undertaken due to construction of the Military Hospital in Irkutsk, assisted by A.L. Chekanovsky, where the contemporaneity of a mammoth fauna assemblage and man was first revealed in Siberia (Chersky 1872). That was a discovery of great importance and, keeping in mind both his own experience and the faunal composition observed, Chersky—as far back as in 1891—had advanced the hypothesis that East Siberia was populated by Palaeolithic man up to the northernmost land limits, and even farther northward into the Arctic islands. Polar researcher M.M. Ermolaev, who spent some years on the islands of the New Siberian Archipelago surveying the area and leading the Climate-Geomagnetic Observatory, reached the same conclusion (Ermolaev 1932). Vladimir Arsen'ev, who examined broken burned mammoth bones from the Anadyr River Region in the 1920s, considered that possibility to be indisputable (Arsen'ev 1948).

The next period of Russian archaeological research in the Arctic covers the extremely short chronological interval from the mid-1920s to the late 1950s, when regional interdisciplinary research centers were established. Archaeological materials of different chronology, primarily relatively recent, were discovered during that time and given to some museums and institutions. Gradual accumulation of collections was a background for the episodic professional archaeological projects that appear to be a very characteristic feature of the whole period. Sometimes the projects were promoted by examples of significant research carried out on neighboring territories. Thus, brilliant research by A. Nummedal (1929) in Finmarken, where evidence of the ancient peopling of the Norwegian North was revealed, resulted in a project ordered by the Soviet State Academy for Material Culture (GAIMK) and INQA. Led by geologist B.F. Zemlyakov, the project was rather successful; twelve sites ascribed to the so-called "Arctic Palaeolithic" culture were discovered and put on maps (Zemlyakov 1937, 1940). These were recognized later as sites of the Mesolithic Komsa culture, spreading throughout northern Scandinavia. Geologist G.A. Chernov, who gathered surface finds in the extreme northeastern European Trans-Polar area, had started collecting in the late 1930s. It is worth noting that though he was not a professional archaeologist, the major part of collections known from the extensive Bolshezemelskaya Tundra area and illumination of the period of human habitation in that area, from the very beginning in the Mesolithic up to the Dark Ages, are the result of Chernov's collecting. He published some articles and summarized his findings later in Atlas of Bolshezemelskaya Tundra

Archaeology (Chernov 1985). However, the artifacts found by Chernov as well as other amateur archaeologists (the most famous after Chernov is geologist A.I. Blokhin) were collected primarily from blowouts. Due to that custom assemblages are composed of the artifacts of different chronologies. Unfortunately, the collection from the Pechora site, published by N.N. Gurina in 1957, is of the same condition.

As a rule, projects carried out in other Arctic regions have given information on the most recent archaeology characterizing the latest stages of human habitation in the Arctic. Thus one should mention V.N. Chernov's expedition to the Yamal Peninsula in 1924, the results of which, together with archaeological materials excavated by V.S. Andrianov from the Ust-Polui site in Salekhard in 1935–1936, made it possible to discuss the formation of a specific pattern of maritime adaptation around the Yamal Peninsula (Chernetsov 1935; Chard 1963; Moshinskaya 1965). A series of artifacts found by D.N. Redrikov near Salekhard and R.E. Kols near the Taz River mouth (Chernetsov 1953) completes the listing of archaeological sites discovered in Northwestern Siberia from the mid-1920s to the late 1950s. Studies in Eskimo archaeology became rather popular during that period too. Two very successful projects were undertaken by the Leningrad Branch of the Institute for Material Culture History (IIMK). The first—led by S.I Rudenko who surveyed a significant part of Chukchi Peninsula coast—was supported by the Chief Department of the North Polar Route. The collection of abundant materials from Northeast Asian Eskimo sites for the first time and careful examination of them later placed Rudenko (1947) among the classics of Arctic archaeology. The second project carried out under the leadership of Aleksey P. Okladnikov—who was (and still remains) undoubtedly the most famous Russian scholar of Siberian archaeology—focused on excavations of the westernmost Eskimo dwelling site near the Kolyma River mouth, where Sarychev initiated excavations in 1787 and then began Arctic archaeology. Okladnikov's excavations at Cape Bolshoi Baranov in 1946 (Okladnikov and Beregovaya 1971) remain a unique Soviet-Russian project in Eskimo archaeology because since that time no archaeologist has excavated Eskimo settlements; subsequent projects were focused primarily on excavating burial grounds.

Information on the Trans-Polar (or Arctic) Stone Age remained rather scanty during that period, and there were areas where it was completely unknown—such as Northwestern Siberia, the Taimyr Peninsula, and Yakutia, excluding Lena River valley. For exactly the same reason excavations at the Neolithic Syurakh-Ary site in Yakutia by N.B. Kyakshto (1933) need to be mentioned, as well as isolated artifacts and small assemblages collected at interior locations of the Chukotka Region by geologists (N.N. Levoshin and N.A. Grave at the Yakitikiveem River and at Chirovoe Lake; A.K. Sayapin and N.A. Nekrasov at El'gygytgyn Lake and at the Vakarevo locality of the Anadyr River Valley), and also excavations near the Kanchalan River mouth by V.V. Naryshkin, who was a Director of the Chukchi Local Museum. Okladnikov considered these materials to be of great importance, on the one hand, for further archaeological surveying of the territories and, on the other, for a preliminary consideration of local cultural evolution in the Stone Age (Okladnikov 1950, 1953; Okladnikov and Naryshkin 1955; Okladnikov and Nekrasov 1957).

Information on the ancient populating of the greatest part of the Eurasian Arctic continued to be mixed in character. Due to the investigations of A.P. Okladnikov, who led the Lena Expedition of the Institute for Material Culture History in 1940–1946 (the project was not interrupted even by the World War), the Yakutian Region was surveyed along the Lena River valley where a large number of sites were discovered and excavated. Based on these collections, Okladnikov was able to propose a preliminary regional chronology covering the period from Palaeolithic times to the 17th century, when Russian sovereignty was extended to Northeast Asia and the Yakutian Region; other territories also became provinces of a unified state. In certain details Okladnikov's scheme of cultural sequences, published in a series of articles (Okladnikov 1945; 1946; 1950; 1955), is still rather important for Northeast Asian archaeology. Very few finds of Stone Age sites from the Chukchi Region were put into that scheme, extended by the author throughout Northeast Asia.

The archaeological results of Okladnikov's Lena Expedition were of great significance. Twenty-six Palaeolithic sites were discovered in the Lena River valley, with the northernmost (at that time) stratified Chastinskaya site being north of the Arctic Circle at 68° north latitude. The Chastinskaya site provided the first archaeological evidence of the populating of the East Siberian Polar areas during Palaeolithic times. In A.P. Okladnikov's view, two migration waves of Palaeolithic mammoth hunters penetrated into the present Yakutian Region in "pre-Glacial" and "post-Glacial" periods, but the territories were completely occupied only in the Neolithic (Okladnikov 1955:70, 71). Data on the Neolithic period of that area were much firmer; the Yakutian Neolithic was supposed to be comparable to Neolithic cultures in both the Baikal and Trans-Baikal Regions; regional Neolithic cultural chronology and some variants of local cultural evolution were revealed there. From the available data, Okladnikov concluded that Yakutian Neolithic cultures were in close connection (or relationship) with the contemporaneous cultures of the Far East, the Chukchi Peninsula, and probably the North American Neolithic cultures. This allowed him to assign a special role for Yakutian Neolithic cultures in "a worldwide cultural history of the Stone Age," mediating a cultural connection "between the ancient cultures of the Old World and the New" (Okladnikov 1955:30). However, in V.A. Argunov's opinion, the lack of data brought the researcher to the erroneous conclusion of uneven cultural development in some areas of the Yakutian Region during the Neolithic—supposed by A.P. Okladnikov to have been effected in the formation of the two cultural areas. Nevertheless, Okladnikov correctly noted the characteristics of these Middle and Lower Lena Neolithic cultural areas, and the data obtained later by N.N. Dikov on Chukchi Peninsula tend to support Okladnikov's view. In my opinion, the traits of cultural evolution observed in these two Neolithic cultural areas, responding respectively to tundra and forest zones, mark different adaptations caused by different ecology (Pitul'ko 1990b).

During the late 1940s and 1950s geologists from the Institute of Arctic Geology (P.I. Glushinsky, A.P. Puminov, F.F. Iljin, V.V. Zhukov) collected the first archaeological finds in the Trans-Polar basins of the Anabar and Olenek Rivers. Some of the artifacts were probably associated

with Pleistocene faunal remains (Glushinsky and Khlobystin 1966; Okladnikov and Puminov 1958; Khlobystin 1970).

The buildup of knowledge during the second period of Russian Arctic archaeological research made it possible to advance some regional generalizations. Besides Okladnikov's studies mentioned above, works by N.N. Gurina (1951) and M.E. Foss (1952) were dedicated to the Kola Peninsula Neolithic and to the Northeastern European Stone Age, respectively. At that time V.N. Chernetsov (1953, 1957) and S.I. Rudenko (1947) published research that dealt with the more recent archaeology of the Arctic and still remains classic. It is easily recognized that many authors of the 1950s focused their scholarly works on tracing back the ethnohistory of the different ethnic groups populating the Arctic at present. That scientific tradition—founded by Okladnikov, Chernetsov, and Rudenko—later affected research done by R.S. Vasil'evsky, N.N. Dikov, and L.P. Khlobystin, who were students of Okladnikov in one sense or another. That tradition can be recognized in some recent publications, such as M.A. Kiryak's monograph (1993). Therefore, a new generation of Russian Arctic anthropologists retained the main features of research intellectually following the brilliant scholars of the 1950s.

But it should be stressed that the appearance of the Origin of the Native Americans by G.F. Debetz (1951), developing ideas advanced by Russian and American researchers of 1920–1930, was of great importance even among the excellent works mentioned above. Debetz, taking into consideration both archaeological and ethnographic data and physical anthropology as well, advanced for the first time in Russia a well-grounded hypothesis on the peopling of the American continent in the Late Quaternary, out of Northeast Asia across the Bering land bridge.

The abundance of hypotheses and theories advanced from the 1920s to the mid-1960s is, in my view, a characteristic feature of that period when concepts on Arctic archaeology were finally formed. Some of them are of historical interest now, but nevertheless it was necessary to move Arctic anthropology forward as a whole. It is worth noting that in Circumpolar Stone Age Jessing (1944), who applied Hatt's theory to archaeological data from both the Old World and the New, also believed that contemporaneous intracontinental and maritime Stone Age cultures existed in the Arctic Region. These ideas, subjected to careful examination, were strongly criticized in Russia by Gurina, Moshinskaya, and Khlobystin, who based their objections on abundant archaeological materials from the Russian Arctic; V.I. Moshinskaya (1965) published the most precise discussion of Jessing's theory.

As in the case of Jessing's hypothesis, A. Nummedall's views on the Pre-Glacial migration from Asia to Northern Scandinavia are of historical interest (Nummedal 1929) as well as an alternative to E.F. Greenman's theory of the peopling of America. The latter (Greenman 1963) considered Native Americans as direct descendants of Upper Palaeolithic Magdalenians who had migrated to the New World from Europe in kayaks and canoes. In general, anthropologists negatively received these ideas; a discussion was published in Current Anthropology and only three people (of 18) were inclined to assume such a possibility. One of the supporting reviewers was Thor Heyerdall, who best illustrated Greenman's theory. It is worth noting that

Arctic anthropology has never lacked for fantastic theories, the most recent being advanced in the 1980s by Robert McGee, who assumed a migration of the ancestors of the Eskimos from Eastern Siberia westward to Greenland across the Arctic Ocean.

As for migration theories, H.-G. Muller-Beck's ideas (1966) still remain popular and suggest that a latitudinal migration of Eastern European Upper Palaeolithic hunters penetrated ca. 28,000–26,000 BP ice-free areas of the American continent, moving from West to East across Eurasia.

Successful research of natural evolution in the Arctic during the Late Quaternary was carried out within this period (B.F. Zemlyakov, G.I. Goretsky, V.N. Saks, N.N. Urvantsev, S.V. Obruchev, M.M. Ermolayev and others), making it possible to recognize the most significant natural shifts such transgressions, glaciation, etc.—also of great importance for the development of Arctic archaeology in Russia. After review of the second historical period, one could conclude that the most significant achievement of that time, from the point of view of the Arctic archaeology, was the discovery of evidence dating back to the Palaeolithic. In spite of that, permanent habitation in Trans-Polar, or Arctic regions—beginning from the Palaeolithic—was doubted; Arctic areas were considered to have been settled mainly during the Neolithic (Okladnikov 1955:130; Bader 1966:104).

If former periods of Arctic archaeological research were marked by the activity of "metropolitan" scholars (primarily from Leningrad-St. Petersburg), the third, contemporaneous one is characterized by the appearance of regional archaeological centers in Murmansk, Syktyvkar, Yakutsk, and Magadan, founded in the early 1960s. At the same time, long-term research projects are progressing on the Kola Peninsula (N.N. Gurina, V. Ya. Shumkin), the extreme Northeastern European area, and the Taimyr Peninsula (L.P. Khlobystin). G.A. Chernov continues to collect in the extreme Northeastern European area as well. To my mind, it is preferable to discuss these results in detail for different reasons: first, the history of Russian studies in Arctic archaeology deserves special research, and second, the present study considers the latest results to some extent. They are presented briefly below according to the main geographic subdivisions:

1.1. Kola Peninsula

From 1960 to 1990, field projects continued to be carried out by the Kola Expedition of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Archaeology of the USSR Academy of Sciences (now the Institute for Material Culture History)—led by N.N. Gurina in 1965 and from 1969 to 1982, and later by V. Ya. Shumkin. Southern areas of the peninsula were surveyed by expeditions from the Karel Department of Academy (Gurina 1971, 1973, etc.; Anpilogov 1969; Pesonen 1978). The projects resulted in abundant materials illuminating general cultural evolution and aspects of peopling from the ancient Mesolithic stage, dated at least to 10,000–9000 BP (Gurina 1987, 1989; Shumkin 1986, 1988).

1.2. Extreme European Northeast (Malozemelskaya and Bolshezemelskaya Tundra Areas), Trans-Ural Polar Area, and Northwestern Siberia

Most of the materials come from G.A. Chernov's amateur collecting (1985) and from professional surveys and excavations by V.E. Luzgin (1973ab), V.S. Stokolos (1986, 1988), L.P. Khlobystin (Khlobystin 1967, 1977, 1984, 1987; Khlobystin and Korolyov 1969; Khlobystin and Lashuk 1986), and in part the present author (Pitul'ko 1988, 1991f). Assemblages are numerous but provide extremely unequal representation for different periods of the Stone Age. Nevertheless, it could be supposed that the first human groups penetrated into the area as early as 9000–8000 BP (Khlobystin 1973; Vereschagina 1973, 1990). Archaeological materials, both collected and excavated primarily represent the Late Neolithic–Early Metal Periods, and some stratified complexes are valuable for consideration. Some types of discovered ceramics and stone tools repeatedly allow defining cultures or cultural types that existed around the Late Neolithic–Early Metal Period boundary. The Ortino (Khlobystin, Pyadyshev 1962; Pitul'ko 1991c, 1991d) and Chuzhyayol (Stokolos 1988) archaeological cultures, which existed approximately contemporaneously, as well as the younger Choinovty culture (Stokolos 1988).

1.3. Taimyr Peninsula

Archaeological survey of the territory was undertaken for the first time by the Trans-Polar Expedition of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Archaeology of the USSR Academy of Sciences (now the Institute for Material Culture History), which was led by Leonid P. Khlobystin from 1967 to 1981. Stopped in 1981, the explorations were not resumed after his death in 1988. Khlobystin surveyed southern (though still north of the Arctic Circle) areas of the Peninsula, both west and east, and discovered a great number of archaeological sites—primarily in the Pyasina, Dudypta, Kheta, and Khatanga valleys. Some sites were discovered near large lakes such as Labaz and Khargy. The artifacts collected were primarily surface finds, but there were a few stratified assemblages among them too. The latter, characterizing different stages of the Stone Age, became a firm basis for precise examination of the materials set in a chronology with the cultural evolution of neighboring areas. Thus original Neolithic cultures such as Glubokoye Lake, Maimeche, and Baikit were defined, and their cultural interactions with contemporaneous Neolithic cultures of the Yakutian Region, and especially with the Late Neolithic Ymyyakhtakh culture. It was noted that, in general, cultural evolution in the Taimyr Region was permanently affected by the cultural phenomena that originated and developed in Yakutia. Initial migrations to the Taimyr Peninsula are dated to no later than 8000 BP (Khlobystin 1972, 1973a, 1973c, 1976, 1978, 1982).

1.4. Northern Yakutia

About 10 years after A.P. Okladnikov's survey, Yu. A. Mochanov and S.A. Fedoseeva, who are recognized leaders in East Siberian archaeology now, began their explorations in southern Yakutia by surveying the basins of the Vilyui, Aldan, and Olekma Rivers, which are the largest tributaries of the Lena River. A number of stratified sites were discovered there. Excavated materials made it possible to recognize regional cultural evolution and to elaborate upon a cultural chronology from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Late Neolithic Period. Summaries published by Mochanov (1977) and Fedoseeva (1968, 1980) are undoubtedly much more advanced than Okladnikov's speculations, which is not a surprise because of the excellent and abundant materials they have. The research was extended northward, where N.K. Vereschagin and Yu. A. Mochanov discovered the northernmost Late Palaeolithic Berelekh site, located near the Berelekh Mammoth "graveyard" (Vereschagin, Mochanov 1971). Trans-Polar basins of the Anabar, Olenek, Indigirka, Yana, Alazea, and Kolyma rivers were surveyed by Mochanov's collaborators: I.V. Konstantinov, V.G. Argunov, and S.P. Kistenev. Mochanov, surveying Bolshoi Lyakhovsky Island in the southernmost island group of the New Siberian Archipelago, found an assemblage of Pleistocene faunal remains thought to be evidence of Pleistocene habitation on the New Siberian Islands.

1.5. Middle Kolyma River Area and Chukchi Peninsula

Professional archaeology was begun here by N.N. Dikov, who formerly surveyed the Eskimo sites along the coast. Assemblages discovered inland, though they illustrated some cultural definitions like the North Chukot and Ust-Belaya Neolithic cultures, were not numerous at first. Undoubtedly the area under consideration was populated (permanently or during some periods) much earlier than the Neolithic, but there was no evidence. The last projects, conducted there by Dikov from 1980 to 1991, were rather successful in that sense (Dikov 1980, 1985, 1990, 1993) but still failed to provide archaeological evidence of Late Pleistocene habitation near Bering Strait. The supposition that some materials are of Pleistocene age is, in my view, erroneous (Pitul'ko 1992a, 1993a), though a few indisputable and very interesting Early Holocene complexes were actually found. At the same time, cultural sequences of the Western Chukotka area, as it is known after M.A. Kiryak (1993), are better represented. Finally, very important materials were discovered by N.N. Dikov (1976a) south of the Arctic Circle; I refer to the Early Holocene Siberdik site located within the Upper Kolyma area. The Final Pleistocene–Early Holocene assemblages from Buyunda and Kheta, excavated by Sergei Slobodin (1992), and Druchak-B known from I. Vorobei (1992) are worthy of note too, though they and the Siberdik site are located to the south. Unfortunately, the above-mentioned assemblages are still fragmentarily published.

As can be easily seen, even a brief survey of Soviet-Russian studies in archaeology of the Arctic Stone Age gives real evidence of research activity and further progress during that time,

from 1960 up to the present, and the period from 1960 to 1990 could undoubtedly be named the Golden Age of Russian Arctic archaeology. Several hundred sites including multilayer settlements were discovered, and a series of scholarly works dedicated to summarizing materials accumulated and giving information on poorly or non-investigated territories were published during that time (Argunov 1991; Dikov 1977, 1979, 1993; Kiryak 1993; Mochanov 1969, 1977; Stokolos 1986, 1988; Fedoseeva 1968, 1980). Some results were summarized in a series of articles (Khlobystin 1970, 1972, 1973, 1978). Problems of Stone Age Arctic archaeology have been considered in dissertations, based on the materials discovered (Argunov 1989; Vereschagina 1989; Dikov 1971; Kiryak 1989; Mochanov 1976; Pitul'ko 1995; Fedoseeva 1984; Khlobystin 1982; Shumkin 1984). A directory of the Yakutian archaeological sites was published by Mochanov's research team (Mochanov et al. 1983, 1991). N.N. Gurina and L.P. Khlobystin (Gurina and Khlobystin 1975; Khlobystin 1990) published a brief review summing up preliminary achievements in the Russian (Eurasian) Stone Age Arctic archaeology. Reviewing the studies of that period, one notes traditional features of research, intellectually going back to Chernetsov and Okladnikov, and very distinctly displayed in works by Vasil'evsky, Dikov, Kiryak, and Khlobystin. I refer to the tendency to apply archaeological data to the genesis of different Arctic ethnic groups.

To complete the historical review of Russian Stone Age archaeology, I must point out that during the last (current) period of its development in the 1970s and 1980s, some Arctic islands were surveyed by archaeologists for the first time, although research of that kind had already been carried out in the Canadian Arctic and Greenland and produced well-known significant results. As for the Russian Arctic, some islands of Franz-Josef Land (Ivanov 1993) were surveyed, Vaygach Island where artifacts supposed to be dated to 4000–3500 BP (Pitul'ko 1988) were collected as well as a later, small assemblage that is at least Mesolithic (Ivanov 1991). T. Tein excavated the Chertov Ovrag Paleo-Eskimo site on Wrangel Island (Tein 1981). But the most surprising results came during excavations at Zhokhov Island at 76° north latitude (Pitul'ko 1991, 1993a, 1993b); these are discussed in detail below. All of these findings provided new opportunities to discuss the problem of ancient migrations northward, into the High Arctic, and the problems of development of adaptations as well.

Unfortunately, the favorable tendencies in the development of Russian Arctic archaeology that took place in the 1970s and 1980s were interrupted by the well-known result of political and economic circumstances, and Arctic archaeology has now collapsed along with Russian science in general. Single, more or less successful projects carried out by Andrew Golovnev's team or by Yuri Mochanov in the Sakha (Yakutia) Republic, in contrast, only emphasize the sad state of the current situation. Nevertheless, the potential capabilities of Russian Arctic archaeology and science still remain high and I believe will soon be revived.

In a few words, the history of Russian Stone Age archaeology can be presented in a sequence of three periods:

1. Pilot period (from the late 18th century)—characterized by occasional collecting and extremely rare professional projects; the Arctic relics are recognized and presumed to be a subject of study. The natural upper limit of that period is the First World War.

2. Renaissance of Arctic archaeology in Russia—mainly in the late 1940s and in the 1950s. Advancing conceptual ideas became the background for further studies. Sporadic professional archaeological projects focused on certain areas. The leading role belongs to metropolitan (Leningrad-St. Petersburg, Moscow) scholars.
3. Contemporary period—beginning with the foundation of regional archaeological centers in the early 1960s. The Golden Age of the Russian Arctic archaeology was in the 1970s and 1980s, only to collapse in the 1990s. What is to come?

*****

If the results obtained in the Russian Arctic (with respect to Stone Age archaeology) were put on a map, it would appear as a mosaic; both the High and the Low Arctic have been studied unequally. The territories of the Kola Peninsula and Yakutian Region and in some respect the Taimyr Peninsula, are in the best position when compared with the whole Eurasian Arctic. For instance, very few finds of Stone Age tools are yet known in Northwestern Siberia. At the same time, abundant materials collected in the extreme European Northeast and in Northeast Asia are very difficult to consider. A great number of the collections are of little value since they contain a mixture of artifacts from different periods, which was caused by local peculiarities of sedimentation. Many assemblages do not include diagnostic artifacts.

Unfortunately, the description above could be applied to the continental Arctic area of the Yakut Region as well. That area is the closest territory neighboring the Zhokhov Island location. However, a few assemblages containing Mesolithic artifacts are known in Northwestern Yakutia, though most of them lack interest because of the absence of diagnostic tools. The same could be said about Northeastern Yakutian sites where, except for the famous Berelekh site, individual artifacts that look old have been collected at a few points. Later sites share the same features of spatial distribution.

Reviewing the results of Arctic archaeological research as a whole, it might be appropriate to cite A.P. Okladnikov, who as early as 1945 wrote that Arctic archaeological research is about 150–200 years behind geological research. Despite the progress attained, especially in the last three decades, these words still ring true.