The White Sea Pomorye and Its Inhabitants

1. The White Sea Pomorye owes its name to a group of Slavic settlers living mainly on the so-called Pomor Coast, i.e. a fragment of the White Sea coast between the River Kem and Onega (Fig. 1). The present name of the White Sea became widespread at the beginning of the 17th century. Before that, the Slavic inhabitants of its coasts used a name Студеное Море, which means the Cold Sea, whereas on western maps, since the times of the reissue in 1568 of Claudius Ptolemy’s Geography, it appeared as Sinus Grandvicus (Granvicus, Grandvich). The name was taken from Norwegian sailors, for whom initially it probably meant the Western end of the Murmansk Coast.

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1 The term Pomors appeared for the first time in written sources in 1526, when: Поморцы с мора Океана из Кондоцкой губы зросли вместе с лоплянами устройства церкви. It functions quite commonly in the 16th century, both as a name of the inhabitants of the Pomor Coast, as well in the function of a proper name – I. Ul’janov: Strana Pomorja, 1984. From the second half of the 17th century, mainly because of Vasily Tatishchev, the author of the monumental Russian History, Pomorye was understood in three meanings: as 1) a territory of the White Sea coast from the Onega to the Kem, 2) the territory of the whole White Sea Coast, 3) the territory of the whole Russian North, including the provinces of Archangelsk, Vologda and Ononets.

2 Cf. B. Augustovič [pen name Osip Belomorsky]: Istoričeskij vzgljad na Varangerskoje pomor’e, “Morskij sbornik”, 62, 1862, 10, pp. 279–294. It proposes a thesis that Gandvik not necessarily had to mean the White Sea, as many authors claim. The proof would be still used name Gandvik on the southern bank of Varangerfjord (a small bay and a hamlet). The transfer of this name to the whole Murmansk Coast and later to the White Sea was quite natural in the Middle Ages. Also later such broadenings of a toponym like that are numerous (e.g. Canada). What is interesting, the name Гандвик functioned also among Pomors, probably taken over from Norwegians, with whom they carried out intensive trade until the revolution. The origin of the name of the White Sea from the ice that bounds it for more than 6 months seems too obvious and rather unquestionable. However, a possibility, which was omitted by Augustovich, should be considered, that locating, since the 15th century on maps of the White Sea, of Biarmia – which he himself refers to as White Sarmatia (Tataria Independente) could be one of the reasons of replacing Gandvik by...
The White Sea Pomorye encompasses two zones: boreal and sub-arctic. The northern Polar circle cuts that region more or less into halves, but the influence of the Atlantic makes the climate and natural conditions like those in the sub-arctic zone. All classical indicators of the Arctic prove that: the northern line of the range of trees, flora, fauna, characteristic of the sea waters.3

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Fig. 1. The White Sea Pomorie (orig.). Abbreviations indicate names of the White Sea coasts: MB – Murman Coast, TB – Terski Coast, KD – Kandalaksha Coast, KR – Karelian Coast, PB – Pomor Coast, OB – Onega Coast, LB – Summer Coast, ZB – Winter Coast, AB – Abramovski Coast, KO – Konyushinskyi Coast, KN – Kaninskyi Coast

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The White Sea is a small (area of 90 thousand km\(^2\)) inland sea belonging to the Atlantic Ocean Basin. It is connected to the Barents Sea with quite a wide, narrowing like a funnel, inlet (Voronka) turning into the Gorlo (about 50 km wide). It is generally shallow, only in the central part there are tectonically predisposed depths reaching 350 m. It freezes in October–November, and the icing, staying until May–June, is complicated by numerous ice hummocks (toros) caused by strong tides (up to 12 m in the Mezen Bay). The western part has a strongly developed coastline with numerous skerries. The eastern coasts are sandy with numerous shoals formed by strong tide currents\(^4\). Very difficult navigation conditions on the White Sea have always been the best school for the Pomorye sailors.\(^5\)

Bays and shoals of the White Sea and the southern coasts of the Barents Sea abound in fish and sea mammals\(^6\). Still at the turn of the 19\(^{th}\) and 20\(^{th}\) centuries, mass hunts took place here: in the Mezen Bay – the Harp Seal\(^7\), in the Dvina Bay – the Beluga\(^8\) and herrings, in the Onega bay – fish: the Herring and Navaga\(^9\), and in the Kandalaksha Gulf – herrings and salmons. Undoubtedly, in the ancient times also walruses\(^{10}\) were hunted there, which is reflected in the name of Morzhovets Island situated in Voronka near the entry to the Mezen Bay.

\(^4\) In Russian – кошки (cf. Polish: kosa = sandbar).
\(^6\) Specific variety and number of sea animals have been subject during the last centuries, as everywhere, of distinct decrease due to human activities.
\(^7\) All remaining North Atlantic seals (family Phocidae) used to live in Pomorye waters: the Hooded Seal *Cystophora cristata* (хоклач), the Bearded Seal *Erignathus barbatus* (морский заяц, лахтак), the Grey Seal *Halichoerus grypus* (серый мюлен, тевяк), the Ringed Seal *Phoca hispida* (колчатая нерпа). All of them, in particular the Harp Seal – *Phoca groendlandica* (in Russian гренландский мюлень от люсун) were hunted.
\(^8\) Beluga (*Delphinapterus leucas*, Rus. белуха) is a small whale reaching up to 5.5 metres long, belonging to family *Monodontidae*, including apart from it only the Narwhal. It lives in the Arctic waters. Migrates in summer in quite large, up to several hundred individuals, herds from open seas to shallower coastal reservoirs, sometimes coming quite far into the estuary fragments of big rivers. In the European part of the Arctic it is mainly found in the White Sea and the Barents Sea (along the northern coasts of the Kola Peninsula and in the area of Novaya Zemlya).
\(^9\) Nawaga – *Eleginus nawaga*, a fish in the cod family (*Gadidae*). Spawning takes place at the beginning of winter, when it is also caught.
\(^{10}\) Walrus – *Odobenus rosmarus* – the only representative of the walrus family (*Odobenidae*). It reaches the length up to 3.5 m, A male weighs almost 2 tonnes and its tusks reaching 1 m were subjects of long-distance trade. It the Middle Ages they were delivered through traders of the Wisu people and Kama Bulgars to the Arab and Middle Asian markets – A.P. Mocja, A.C. Chalikov: *Bulgar–Kiev. Puti – svjazi – sudby*, Kiev 1997, p. 27. The Fish Tooth treated equally with ivory, was used for making ornaments, sabres and dagger hafts. Its acquisition largely contributed to the extermination of walruses in the North of Europe.
The northern taiga dominated on the southern coasts, with severe and long
winters virtually making farming impossible.\(^{11}\) Those areas, however, abound in
hay meadows ensuring good conditions for animal breeding. The further north
the more tundra areas there are and the more difficult it is to breed animals.

The individual fragments of coasts were referred to using different names.\(^{12}\)
And so we have:

- **Murmanskiy Bereg (Murman Coast)** encompassing the southern coast of
the Barents Sea from the Varangerfjord\(^{13}\) and Rybachy Peninsula, and further
east along the Kola Peninsula to Cape Svyatoy Nos (Святой Нос). Rocky.
Numerous fjords with short but abounding in water incoming rivers. Meadows
and rare forested areas can be also found there. Southern shrub tundra domi-
nates. Apart from Kola, already mentioned in the 12\(^{th}\) century, and Murmansk,
created from founded in 1915 city Romanov-na-Murmane (Romanov-on-the-
Murman), practically no larger human settlements.

- **Terskiy Bereg (Terski Coast)** encompasses the coasts of Kola Peninsula from
Cape Svyatoy Nos to the Kandalaksha Bay.\(^{14}\) Spruce and birch forests growing
here create better conditions for settlement, but still the population density is
small.

- **Kandalakshskiy Bereg (Kandalaki Shore)** stretches from the estuary of the
River Varzuga west as far as the town of Kandalaksha. Skerry coast, covered
with the pine forest with numerous dome-like hills. Due to better natural con-
ditions, settlement has always been more numerous here than on previous frag-
ments.

- **Karel'skiy Bereg (Karelski Coast)** stretches from Kandalaksha towards south
to the estuary of the River Kem. The coastline is strongly developed here, nu-

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\(^{11}\) Only the introduction of potatoes resistant to severe climatic conditions slightly changed the
dependence of the local people on the delivery of corn and flour. Moreover, the Pomors very
quickly took up supplying the inhabitants of neighbouring Norwegian coasts with those products
(cf. E. Niemi: *Pomorskaja torgovla s točki zrenija norvežcev*, in: *Narody i kul'tury Barenceva

\(^{12}\) His tradition is not specifically Pomor and has a broader, not only Baltic-Scandinavian range
(cf. *Livonian Coast, Mosquito Coast, Ivory Coast*, etc.).

\(^{13}\) The mentioned part of the coast is, rarely today, called *Varanger Pomorye*. The failures of
Russian policy in the North of Scandinavia resulted not only in the loss of the Varanger Coast but
also of a large part of Murman Coast. Cf. B. Augustovič [pen name Osip Belomorskiy]: *Istoriičeskij
vzgliad ...*, pp. 279–294.

\(^{14}\) The name is supposed to come from Terfinns mentioned already in the account by Otter
from the 9\(^{th}\) century. G. Labuda: *Żródła skandyňańskie i anglosaskie do dziejów Słowiańszczyzny
[Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon Sources for the History of Slav Lands]*, Warszawa 1961, pp. 83–
85, Cf. further discussion on Terfinns.
merous deep gulfs and skerries. Low rocky shores, often boggy, covered with the pine northern taiga.

- **Pomorskiy Bereg (Pomor Coast)** or proper Pomorye, stretches from the Kem to the estuary of the Onega. It is the most densely populated and was a starting area for later Pomor expansion. Lowland, strongly boggy, covered with pine and spruce forest, relatively warmest areas, create good conditions for animal breeding.

- **Onezhskiy Bereg (Onega Coast)** encompasses south-western coast of the Onega Peninsula from the estuary of the River Onega to Cape Ukht Navolok. The peninsula is a rolling plain with small hills (Summer Mountains) covered with spruce forests and junipers with numerous meadows.

- **Letniy Bereg (Letni Coast)** encompassing the southern and warmer side of the Dvina Bay from the end of the Onega Peninsula to the estuary of the (North) Dvina.

- **Zimniy Bereg (Winter Coast)** stretching from the Dvina estuary to the north as far as Cape Voronov. Contrary to the previous fragment, it is much less friendly, has colder climate and is covered with the forest-tundra.

- **Abramovskiy Bereg (Abramovskiy Coast)**. From Cape Voronov to the Mezen estuary (this fragment is often treated as part of the Winter Coast). Only shrub tundra grows here. Both this and the previous fragments are scarcely populated.

  From the Mezen estuary, the eastern coast created by the Kanin Peninsula, suddenly turns north and its next, tundra and practically uninhabited, fragments are called **Konyushinskiy** and **Kaninskiy Bereg** respectively. The latter finishes with Cape Kanin Nos closing the White Sea from the east.

2. Current concepts on the ethnogenesis of the discussed region are conditioned by ideological and political prejudices. One of the most common ones is a para-

15 Contemporary Polish maps often show also the form *Onieżyński*. Polish geographical naming, due to the rarity of using some names, is not consistent. Commonly accepted Polish form of *Onega* is *Onega* and therefore indecision of many translations: *oneski – onieżyński*. *Oneski* seems to sound better (but – Yevgeniy Onegin!).

16 The author is consistent in claiming that both Dvinas: West and North, should have the same Polish name, not like most Polish geographers want: *Dźwina* and *Dwina*.

17 The research paradigm based on a mythological story taken from *The Tale of Bygone Years (TBY)* about inviting Rurik and his brothers *na knyaženye* (*to reign as a duke*) to Novgorod, transferred historical reality of the 11th–12th century to two hundred years before. Hence the concept of early Slavic character of this area, strengthened in the 19th century with Great Russian (and after
digm of “wildness” of this area, being reputedly represented by the lack of any, even proto-state, tribal or supra-tribal organisations.18

The earliest mentions about the North-Eastern Europe have a mythological character and are connected with the Hyperboreans.19 This subject, as a result of a huge and still growing need for a scientific myth, dangerously “drifts” towards science fiction20, therefore let us leave it to sociologists of science and go to archaeological and historical sources concerning that region.

One should remember at the same time, that contemporary, particularly the 15th and 16th century, natural conditions do not correspond to the existing earlier climatic optimum21, favourable not only to long-distance voyages but also to the different economy than in the Middle Ages. The mild climate finishes towards the end of the Middle Ages with cooling – so-called Little Ice Age. At the begin-

1918 with Soviet) anti-Germanism. Contemporary concepts, coming out of TBY criticism, based on archaeological data, force to seek new concept, which more and more often take into consideration the key participation of non-Slavic Ruses (Varangians) in the formation of Slavic Rus.

18 Even lying most to the north, and heartedly disputed, Bjarmaland had its own kings, many times mentioned by their names in the sagas (cf. A. Leontiev and M. Leontieva: Biarmija. Severna kolybel’ Rusi, Moskva 2007; Saga o Halfdanie synu Eysteinna, transl. by F. Kulewski, Sandomierz 2008). Regardless the fact what the rank of those local kings was, the mentions about the kings indicate at least a chieftom-type organisation.

19 The Hyperboreans (Υπερβόρειοι) already appear in Early Greek sources. Herodotus locates them as follows (Histories, IV 13–15): “[...] Aristeas however the son of Castrobios, a man of Proconnessos, said in the verses which he composed, that he came to the land of the Issedonians being possessed by Apollo, and that beyond the Issedonians dwelt Arimaspians, a one-eyed race, and beyond these the gold-guarding griffins, and beyond them the Hyperboreans extending as far as the sea (that is to the North Ice Ocean). And all these except the Hyperboreans, beginning with the Arimaspians, were continually making war on their neighbours, [...]”. Hyperboreans, commonly linked by Ancient Greeks with magic (Shamanism!), with the north-west, from where Boreas sends winds, with astronomy, mysterious knowledge and with Apollo and the land of happiness. It should also be added that Boreas = Bor is a Scandinavian god and father of Odin.

20 Particularly active in his matter was, dead two years ago, Valeriy Demin, the author of many books from the boundary of science and science fiction (Gierborea – uto civilizacii, Moskva 1997; Giperborea. Istoričeskie korni russkogo naroda, Moskva 2003; Rus’ Giperboreiskaja, Moskva 2002; Atlantida – Giperborea (co-author), Moskva 2003; Giperborejskie tajny Rusi, Moskva 2007) and initiator of numerous field research (Project Hyperborea realized for many years, mainly in the Kola Peninsula).

21 The course of climatic changes in the area of the North-Eastern Europe in the late Holocene show significant local differences (cf. L. Starkel: Paleografia holocenu [Paleography of the Holocene], Warszawa 1977, pp. 75–112; P. Černosvitov: Osvoenie Krajnego Severa, Moskva 1994, pp. 130–132). Quite good approximation of changes is the chronology of settlements. And so, Leszek Starkel (op. cit., p. 86) gives after Berglund the following dating intensive settlement phases in southern Sweden: 2200 – 1000 B.C., 200 B.C. – 450 A.D. and 800 – 1100 A.D. They are mainly connected with the improvement of climatic conditions. The last of them corresponds to the period of Norse (Icelandic) colonisation of Greenland, when even farming was tried there, although with a poor result. We can think then that climatic conditions were initially favourable to the Slavic expansion to the North-West of Europe.
ning of the Middle Ages, the North-Eastern Europe was inhabited by typically forest Uralic peoples who, from the north on the Arctic and Sub-Arctic coasts, neighboured with rather unknown dying out sea hunters. The southern part of the Scandinavian Peninsula was occupied then by Germanic peoples, whereas between the mass of Uralic people and them there were still remnants of mysterious Veneti.\textsuperscript{22}

3. Ethnic transformations of the White Sea coasts taking place in the period from the 9\textsuperscript{th} to the 16\textsuperscript{th} century have not been fully known. It particularly concerns the earliest period connected with the beginnings of the Great Novgorod. Originally, early Slavic settlement in this area was assumed and the hegemony of the Great Novgorod over the tribes inhabiting the area from Karelia to North Cape in the west and the Northern Ural in the east. In the light of such thinking the Pomor character did not require deeper analyses of relations between Slovens\textsuperscript{23} and local ethnic substratum. The shift in dating of Slavic settlement in the area of Mezhduzero\textsuperscript{24} and the White Sea to the 12\textsuperscript{th}–13\textsuperscript{th} century forces to take into consideration the participation of pre-Slavic substratum in the Pomors ethnogenesis.

The beginning of the Slavic expansion, coming in the shape of a wedge from the south to the shores of Lake Ilmen and the River Vokhov may be dated only for the end of the 8\textsuperscript{th} century, which is already after the formation of fortified trading posts founded by Rus’ (Varangians) on the strategically significant area on the Onega\textsuperscript{25} and the presence of Slavs in the lands lying to the south of the White Sea only from the 9\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{26} The discussion on the Rus’ people, \textit{the Rus’ Khaga-}


\textsuperscript{23} Mixed, in the ethnic sense, character of north Slavic tribe of Slovens (not Slavs!) that was the core of the peoples of Novgorod area is emphasised by most researchers.

\textsuperscript{24} This is an area between Lakes: Ladoga, Beloye and Onega. Mezhduzero was the first stage on the way to the expansion of Slovens from the south, the area of Lake Ilmen and Great Novgorod.

\textsuperscript{25} Numerous attempts to establish that Slavs were there before Rus’ people (Varangians) seem to be unjustified in the light of archaeological data – W. Duezko: \textit{Rus wikinger} [Vikings’ Rus], Warszawa 2006.

\textsuperscript{26} Although for more than a hundred years the presence of the Rus’ controlling East European transcontinental trade routes is indisputable.
nate²⁷, Gardarike²⁸ and the relations of Variangians with Novgorod (Holmgard), a subject of heated disputes of researchers, does not change principal findings concerning the ethnogenesis of the White Sea coast itself – we can talk about Novgorod’s hegemony in this region only after the fall of Gardarike (about 880).

4. Wandering off to the south, to Kiev, of Norman Rus’ allows to strengthen the Slavic presence on Ladoga and to form the Karelian ethnos.²⁹ Several-century-long domination of Novgorod over Karelians had mainly political, not ethnic and national, character. The uniqueness of a multiethnic trading republic created favourable conditions for mutual interethnic relations and cultural influences. We do not know for sure what were the relations between Korela³⁰ from the chronicles with later Karelians.³¹ Undoubtedly, however, the Karelian territory reached much broader than it is usually assumed – from Karelian Isthmus through the


²⁸ The Kingdom of Cities, more often referred to as simply Gardar.

²⁹ Then, under the Swedish pressure, out of West Finnish tribe Hjem and other Finnish groups from the southern coasts of the Gulf of Finland and the present Karelian Isthmus, with a certain participation of Saami people, Vesi (ancestors of today’s Vepsians), Karelians were supposed to emerge, whose range would limit to the Karelian Isthmus and part of Mezhduzero. This hypothesis, called the hypothesis of western origin, is usually referred to the 11th–12th c. – H. Kirkinen: Karjala idän kulttuuripiirissä. Bysantin ja Venäjän yhteyksistä keskijan Karjalaan, Rauma 1963. As a matter of fact the origin of Karelians is similarly placed in time by most Russian authors – S.I. Kočkurkina: Gipotezy proizhoždienija karil, in: Pribaltijsko-finskie narody Rossii, ed. by E.I. Klement’ev and N.V. Šlygina, Moskva 2003, pp. 160–161. Earlier researchers (eg. V.I. Ravdonikas, Problemy izučenija kult’ur epochi metala v Karieli, “Karelia, Yearbook KGM (1928)”, Pietrozavodsk 1930, pp. 53–69) also assumed the hypothesis of the eastern origin of Karelians, sometimes linking it with the fall of known from Scandinavian sagas Bjarmaland. In the way of the adoption of the eastern hypothesis stands the lack of appropriate archaeological evidence as well as the presence of numerous Saami groups in the Karelian Isthmus area sill in the 10th–11th c. Despite that, it is popular with Russian researchers, which was influenced, as one can assume, by political reasons and the fact that most of Karelians (and their partial assimilation) in the area of Karelian Isthmus settlement after the Russian-Swedish wars.

³⁰ Korela eventually consolidates in the face of Swedish and Finnish surge coming from the west. The western surge is experienced by Karelians with the strongest force after World War I, the result of which finally reduces the range of the Karelian ethnos and leads to its partial Finnisation. At the same time, continuing since the Middle Ages, acculturation and assimilation of Orthodox Karelians change them gradually into Russians.

³¹ It is also necessary to establish the relations between Kven people and Karelians. This undoubtedly original Finnish population of present Northern Finland was not identical with later Suomenlainen, i.e. “proper” Finns. Kven people survived in the north of Norway and their number, according to official information of the 4th World Congress of Ugro-Finnic Peoples (2004) is estimated to about 6 thousand.
whole of present day central Finland to the River Pyhäjoki estuary to the Gulf of Bothnia coast and from here as far as Kandalakha.\textsuperscript{32}

Settlement of the White Sea coasts by Slavs should not be identified with the penetration of this area by hunters and groups collecting taxes from local aboriginal people. The Russian expansion on the White Sea coasts was preceded by two Karelian settlement waves, which gradually pushed Saami to the north. The first one (12\textsuperscript{th}–13\textsuperscript{th} c.) included mainly Zaonezhe and reached only to the southern Byelomorye.\textsuperscript{33} Undoubtedly it was then that the ancestors of today’s Karelians incorporated part of former Vesi.\textsuperscript{34} The second one (15\textsuperscript{th} c.) reached much further to the north, as far as present-day North Karelia and Lake Segozero area, and in the east came to the Dvina estuary. Still in the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, Saami people on the River Ponoy on the Kola Peninsula complaint to the Tsar that Karelians collect taxes from them. Dispersed Karelian settlement was easily assimilated by the Rus’ elements reaching the White Sea coasts on the rivers. On the other hand, the significance of the influence of Karelian substrata (anthropological, linguistic and cultural ones) on the forming Pomor ethnos cannot be overestimated. It should be remembered that the loss of ethnic identity by part of Karelians was so strong that in the contact with the third wave of Karelian migration in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century, caused by wars with Sweden, formerly well-settled population already considered themselves Russian.\textsuperscript{35}

5. Bjarmaland, Ves’ and Chud’ Zavolotska. The area of the Karelian Isthmus and Mezhduzero until the 12\textsuperscript{th} century was a territory of strong ethnic changes connected with the clash of Varangian (and later Swedish) and Novgorod influences. They triggered (or increased) migrations of various groups of West Finnish and Saami (Proto-Saami) populations. They also influenced the formation of the Karelian ethnos and disintegration of the Vesi tribal federation.\textsuperscript{36} The tribal com-

\textsuperscript{34} D.A. Bubrich: Proischoženije karel’skogo naroda, Petrozavodsk 1947. The remains of former Vesi are Veps “discovered” in 1824 by Andrey Sheygren and still living in groups in Mezhduzero region, which is between Lakes Onega, Ladoga and Beloye (cf. A.M. Paškov, “Odkrytie” i izučenije vepsov v dorevolucionnoj Rossii, in: \textit{Pribaltijsko-finskie ...}, pp. 352–332).
\textsuperscript{35} Ethnic self-identification in his case was, however, as it should be assumed, very superficial – T.A. Bernshtam, \textit{Pomory ...}, pp. 57–61.
\textsuperscript{36} Ves’ is already mentioned in the 6\textsuperscript{th} century by Jordanes in the description of a state of the Gothic king Ermanaric (\textit{Vasinabroncas}) and in Arab sources (\textit{Wisū} people is mentioned by Ibn
position of the inhabitants of southern and eastern White Sea coasts in the early Middle Ages is unclear either. It is commonly thought that the western coasts were occupied by Saami people bordering on Baltic-Finnish\(^{37}\) Ves’ residing between Lake Onega and the Onega River. Further east lived Chud’ Zavolotska (Fig. 2) and Pechora.\(^{38}\) We know the least about the peoples of Kanin Tundra, although we may assume that already then first Samoyedic groups appeared there, from which later Western Nenets people were formed.\(^{39}\) The Slavic settlement from the 12th century certainly did not reach beyond the North Dvina basin yet\(^{40}\)

Fadlan in about 922 – T. Lewicki: Źródła arabskie do dziejów Słowiańskich [Arab Sources for the History of Slavic Lands], Wrocław–Kraków 1956, p. 136, cf. U. Lewicka-Krajewska: Arabskie opisanie Słowian [Arab Description of Slavs], Wrocław 2004, p. 190. Later Ves’ appears in Adam of Bremen’s writing in the 11th c. as Vizzi or Albani (most probably from Lake Beloye!). It is sometimes identified with legendary Bjarmaland (G. Lovmijan’skij: Rus’ i normanny, Moskva 1985; B.A. Rybakov: Jazycevstvo Drevnej Russi, Moskva 1987). It also often appears in the Tale of Bygone Years, and information contained there prove that it played a significant role. It should be thought that Ves’ was a federation, not a single tribal organism – one large tribe would have left more distinct traces. A.P. Mocja and A.C. Chalikov: Bulgar–Kiev ..., pp. 26–27, locate Visu (Isu/Visu) people 1000 km further to the south-east in the middle reaches of the Kama River, or in present-day Udmurtia, actually considering them as descendants of an old Proto-Bulgur people – Esgei. Visu, who has lively trade contacts with Great Bulgaria, were to trade themselves in the forest-tundra area and northern taiga (cf. A.M. Belavin, V.A. Obdorin: Posredničeskaja rol’ Volžskoj Bulgarii v trgovom oborote Drevnej Russi i Verchnego Prikami ja v X–XIII vv. Volžskaja Bulgarija i Rus’, Kazan’ 1986. Mentioned Mocja and Chalikov (Bulgar–Kiev ..., p. 27) claim that Varagians called Northern Bulgars Bjarmas! After the disintegration of the federation, not very numerous “aboriginal” Ves’ became the beginning of later Veps – L.A. Golubeva, S.I. Kočkurkina: Belozierskaja vies’ (po materialam posielnija Krutik IX–X vv.), Petrozavodsk 1991, pp. 187–196.


The question of dating of appearance of Nenets people in Kanin and Mezen Tundra is not entirely explained (cf. note no. 49) – P. Hajdu: The Samoyed peoples and languages, Hague 1963; O. Dolgich: Očerki po etničeskoj istorii nencev i encev, Moskva 1970; L.P. Chlobystin, G.N. Gračova: Pojavlenie olenevodstva v tundrovoy zonie Evropy. Zapadnoj i Srednej Sibiri, in: Formy perechoda ot prisvavajuščego chozjaistva k proizvodjaščemu i osobennosti razvitija obščestvennogo stroja, Moskva 1974; A.V. Golovinov: Kočovniki tundry: nency i ich folklore, Ekaterinburg 2004. Most authors consider Kanin and Mezen dialects to be the most archaic of Nenets dialects. Also many customs and elements of material culture of those groups prove the early arrival of Proto-Nenets people so far west.

that is the territory Pechora of the Chronicle; therefore it should be assumed that at least until that time Pechora had not played bigger role in ethnogenetic processes taking place in those areas.41

Chud’ in the Tale of Bygone Years is clearly divided into “proper” Chud’, that is Chud’ Pre-Zavolotska and Zavolotska (“[…]While in the Yafet division there sit: Rus’, Chud’ and all other peoples: Mera, Muroma, Ves’, Mordva, Chud’ Zavolotska42, Permians, Yamians, Yugra, […]”). The former Chud’ is usually considered the ancestors of today’s Estonians, maybe also of later West Finnish tribes – Vod’ and Izhora.43 The differentiating of the location of both Chud’s is undoubted. The tale’s author clearly writes about the former Chud’: “[…] while Lechites and Prussians and Chud’ people touch the Varangian Sea.”44 Thus, they are undoubtedly close neighbours of Novgorod Slovens, linguistically identified with the former Chud’ – people (peoples) living beyond Voloks.

We do not know either whether West (Baltic) Finns reached definitely further to the east, as far as the lower reaches of the Dvina in the area of later Dvina Land coming into existence in the 14th century, which for a long time has been the subject of historians’ discussion. Since the period of existence of Dvina Land comprises almost four century, one may expect numerous various changes of its original ethnic and population composition (substratum). It should be thought that there had been earlier a tribal organism (federation?) identical with Bjarmaland of

41 Most probably, the remains of Pechora were incorporated by ancestors Kanin and Mezen Nenets people (T.B. Luk’jančenko: K voprosu o “saamskom” substrate v kul’ture nekotoryh grupp naselnija Evropejskogo Severa, “Priroda i chozjaistvo Severa”, Murmansk 1983, vyp. 11, p. 90).

42 TBY, 1999, p. 4.


44 TBY, 1999, p. 4. The Varangian Sea means the Baltic here. Individual peoples are mentioned in turn from the south-west in the proper order. “Proper” Chud’ people are undoubtedly pre-Volok in terms of location, because Novgorod virtually lies in the region of voloks. But whether they should be identified with any Finnish tribe(s), as it has been so far commonly accepted, or Egorov’s concept (cf. V. Egorov: Rus’ i nova Rus’, http://www.ipiran.ru/egorov/hraith.htm) should be adopted that there are some Germanic people (remains of Goths?). Then Chud’ should be read as þjod, which is a Scandinavian version of þeut (Teuton). Since undoubtedly Chud Zavolotska in the age of the Chronicles (TBY) and an early stage of Pomor colonization was a real tribal organism (maybe in a similar way as Ves’ was a supra-tribal federation?) identified by some researchers with Bjarmaland of the Scandinavian sagas (cf. A. Leont’iev and M. Leont’ieva: Biarmia: severina kolybel’ Rusi, Moskva 2007), in the later period it became merely a legend. Both among Slavs and in the circles of relatively early Christianised Komi people, the term Chud’ becomes on the one hand a cosmological mythologem (cf. I.I. Limerov: Peredanija o čudi v kontekstie kosmogoních predstavlenij, “Trudy Instytutu jazyka, literatury i istorii Komi naučnogo centra UrO Rossijskoj AN”, 60, 1966, pp. 64–76), and on the other hand a term denoting all pre-Christian ethnoses in this area.
the Nordic sagas, whose ethnic composition could be diverse and include, apart from Baltic (West) Finns, also groups of Volga and Perm Finns, Proto-Saami people and unidentified Samoyeds (Proto-Samoyeds). The presence of groups of Wendish (Veneti) and Germanic (Gothic-Rus’). Unfortunately, so far there is no ethnic identification of archaeological data. Undoubtedly, the author of TBY does not know the name Bjarmaland at all. But, due to the fact that the chronicler clearly mentions Ves’, writing about Chud’ Zavolotska the author writes either about the remnants of former Bjarmaland people or peoples living even further east or north.

6. Saami people (Lapps). Saami people are still today a basic, although small (up to 2 thousand), group of indigenous non-Slavic inhabitants of Pomorye. Pushed from the coasts by Karelians and Pomors, and then resettled by the Soviet authorities in the area of Lovozero, they presently live only in the interior of the Kola Peninsula. In comparison to Karelians, the relations between Saami people and Russian settlers were completely different from the very beginning. Saami people, eventually Christianised much later than Karelians (as late as the end of the 19th c.), in the first stage of the Slavic expansion were treated as “savages”, from whom Great Novgorod, and later other Rus’ duchies and lands, collected a “fur” tax. Cultural differences were so large that Russians did not assimilate Lapps and for a long time did not form mixed marriages. Saami influences among Pomors appeared not earlier than in the 16th century and were distinctly territorially limited from the north-eastern end of Terski Coast and the Kandalaksha Gulf. They concern mainly fishing and hunting techniques and terminology.

The issue of Saami people origin remains open. It is not entirely known which of the ethnicons mentioned in old sources may be identified with them. It is commonly thought that Tacitus mentioned them for the first time, calling them

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46 Дикая лопь.

47 Karelians did it too.


49 It is also thought (cf. footnote no. 39) that the difference of Kanin and Mezen Nenets people from remaining groups of this people is an effect of overlapping of Samoyeds and remains of Proto-Saami, which remained in this region (T.B. Luk’jančenko: K voprosu ..., pp. 87–91). The prove would be some relics of the Saami material culture and customs of mentioned Nenets groups, as well as calling them by Pomor people with a term лопары (Lopary = Lapps).
Fenni. Next mentions are found in the 6th century in Procopius of Caesarea and Jordanes (Scritophinoi and Crefennae), in the 7th century in Cosmographer of Ravenna, in the 8th century in Paul the Deacon and others (Scritobini, Rere, Ser-delfinni, Rafenni, Crefenni). They are invariably referred to as hunters, travelling in winter on skis and living at the end of inhabited Scandinavia. It does not mean that we can directly identify them with one of numerous Saami groups – but we can well refer them to various groups50, on which at that time Proto-Lapps overlap in their migration.

In famous King Alfred’s Chronicle from the late 9th century Scrid-Finns and Terfinns appear. The Terfinns, about which Oththere51 tells king Alfred, most probably were one of Lapp or Proto-Lapp groups. Today, Ter is a name of the most eastern of Saami languages. Tracing this name from Finnish ter – “tree” should be considered wrong or, at the most, as folk etymology. “Forest” Lapps, or Лешая лопь (Fig. 3), inhabited in the 16th century present-day North Karelia52 and nothing is known that they resettled there from the area of Terski Coast, especially that Lapps moved towards the north pushed from the south! Explanations that Terfinns are Forest Saami53 certainly came into being already after the appearance of the term Leshaya Lop’. It could mean that Terfinns represent the southern group of forest origin. That would be a typical distinction “forest-tundra” result-


51 G. Labuda: Źródła, sagi i legendy do najdawniejszych dziejów Polski [Sources, Sagas and Legends for the Earliest History of Poland], Warszawa 1961, p. 28. Ohthere (Ottar) was a Norwegian voyager and hunter from Hålogaland, whose accounts from his voyages around Fennoscandia were placed by king Alfred in his work.

52 A. Nasanov in: “Russkaja zemla” i obrazovanije territorii drevnierusskogo gosudarstva, Moskva 1951, p. 115, places between the end of the 10th and beginning of the 13th century one of the Lopskie Pogosti on the south shore of Ladoga (!), and in the 16th–17th century the Lopskie Pogosti still encompass a broad area reaching from Topozero in the north to Syamozero in the south (Karely Karelskoj ASSR, Petrozavodsk 1983, p. 3).

53 Explanations like that have their basis also in traditional, although without any transformation to linguistic diversity, ethnographic division of Saami (Lapps) into three groups: Forest, Mountain, and Sea Saami. This division is repeated by Ernest Manker: Ø. Vorren, E. Manker: Lapończycy [Lapps], Warszawa 1980, although in the light of the theses by Yurij Simchenko and Leonid Khlobystin it seems to be secondary in relation to original divisions of archaeological cultures. The division strengthened by political borders into West Lapps and East (Kola) Lapps seems to be much more significant.
ing from general regularity functioning among peoples and cultures of sub-polar areas and consisting in a clear division of tundra groups from forest groups. If we take into consideration that Yuriy Simchenko\textsuperscript{54} derives the ethnonym \textit{Lapp} not from Finnish “far”, but from Samoyedic root “la” – lowland (tundra)\textsuperscript{55}; that could mean that Ohthere’s Terfinns and Lapps are two different groups.

![Map of the White Sea Pomorye and its Inhabitants](image)

\textbf{Fig. 3. “Forest” Lapps or Лешая лопь (acc. to G.E. Dubrovin [et al.], \textit{Istorija ...}, changed)}

7. The basic occupation of Pomors was fishing and hunting. Already in the late Middle Ages the range of \textit{pomorskie promysly} was considerable. Sailing towards the northern coasts of the Kola Peninsula from the Dvina estuary, they crossed the \textit{Gorlo} of the White Sea at its end and they followed further on at the base of Rybachy Peninsula. Here, the boats were portaged on land to avoid danger, and further on they went on the waters of Varangerfjord.\textsuperscript{56} The earliest account from this route in contained in a work by Sigismund von Herberstein, an Austrian diplomat and historian, author of one of the first descriptions and maps of Moscovia.\textsuperscript{57} Undoubtedly, Slavs sailed along the northern coasts of the Scandinavian


\textsuperscript{55} A.A. Kuratov: \textit{Osnovnye problemy ...}, p. 80, enumerating hypothetical tribes of Chud’ Zavolotska, gives an ethnonym “La” as a name of one of them, living on the Pinega River!

\textsuperscript{56} The fact that the Varanger Coast had initially been an area of Pomor exploitation was quite quickly forgotten after its loss to Norway (cf. Augustovič [pen name Osip Belomorskiy]: \textit{Istoričeskij vzgлjad ...}, p. 294).

\textsuperscript{57} S. Gerberštejn: \textit{Moskovia}, Moskva 2007, p. 324).
Peninsula much earlier. The sea route to Murman also had its land and river variant called *cherez* (чере́з), which means “through”. It led from Kandalaksha to the north, on rivers, lakes, by pulling ships on land to the Kola River and further to Kola Bay. It was also relatively easy to travel in winter and spring on skis and sleigh. Fish and sea mammals were caught in great numbers in the water of Murman. Dutch and English soldiers recollect that they met the whole flotillas of Pomor boats at the Kola estuary.

The full bloom of Pomor culture and consolidation of Pomor people as an ethnic group would not have been possible without properly developed boatbuilding, enabling relatively safe navigation in extremely hard northern conditions. The tradition of that boatbuilding resulted from the combination of various Slavic, Norse, Karelian, and Saami techniques. A characteristic feature taken from the local Uralic peoples was “sewing” boats, which is joining boards by means of appropriately prepared roots and sprouts, mainly of juniper (Fig. 4). This technology is widely known in the whole world and there would not be anything special in the Pomor koches and ладиях if not for their size and the fact that the seams were secured from inside with slats attached with iron staples. The ice reinforcement was achieved in this way and the boats were lighter and tougher. Pomors used about 20 various types of vessels (Fig. 5), from small river boats, to 2–3-mast ships with capacity of more than 20 tonnes, used on Novaya Zemla and Grumant (Spitsbergen) routes, more than 20 metres long, 6 metres wide and with 4.5-metre-high sides protecting against pouring over by sea waves. All of them had a small draught allowing to avoid shoals and special reinforcements on the water line. Pomors built them themselves, which quickly allowed them to repair

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58 It is possible that the land router is earlier than the sea one and is connected with a period when Novgorod collected taxes from Finnmark population, it is in the 12th–13th c. A. Kaaran writes about it in: *K istorii Russkogo severa: Russko-norvežskie otnošenija, “Izvestia Archangelskogo Obščestva isučenija Russkogo severa”*, 1910, 11, p. 27.

59 S. Barrow: *Anglijskie putešestvenniki v Moskovskom gosuadarstve v XVI v.*, Leningrad 1938, pp. 100 ff.


61 The Slavic ones were overestimated many years ago by Slavophils and were forgotten in the period of fascination with the Viking-Varangian age. Today, we can balance the proportions better.

vessels damaged by storms and ice. Only after Peter’s I reforms did the tradition of building Pomor boats fall.63
8. Next ethnic changes in Pomorye area were brought by the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Formation of large-scale reindeer breeding in Western Tundra and looking for new pastures led to moving of Komi64 herdsmen groups and Nenets people to the north-west, to the areas inhabited by Pomors. While we practically cannot talk about the assimilation of Nenets people, Komi-Izhemtsy – contacting Russians since the Middle Ages, easily formed mixed marriages. Murmanskiye promysly slumped at the beginning of the 20th century and the revolution and civil war brought about next changes. The soviet policy towards nations quickly quit the initial promoting of ethnic and national minorities, taking over old Great Russian tendencies and including them in the popularised model of “the Soviet Person”. It led to a specific “petrification” of local cultures and subethoses, and rare research on Pomorye and Pomors emphasised their historical character.65 Togeth-

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65 A notable exception is previously quoted famous monograph by T. Bernshtam: Pomory ...
er with the social changes in the 1990s, local societies in Russia were naturally activated and within emancipation movements they started to aspire to self-identification. This world-wide, not only post-Soviet, tendency is manifested in case of Pomorye and Pomors mainly by the increase of self-esteem and the feeling of pride, emphasising Pomor self-identification, the expression of which is more and more often used (sometimes even abused) adjective "Pomor". Numerous organisations and grassroots initiatives aiming at maintaining the Pomor tradition come into being. That is encouraged by the development of researches, especially those devoted to historical and ethnographic aspects of the region. The University in Archangelsk, renamed into Pomor University, plays an important role here.

The newest phenomenon is, on the one hand, active efforts of Pomors to obtain a formal status of an ethnic group, which would enable them to receive more assistance from the authorities of the Russian Federation, and on the other hand the emancipation of Saami people and their aspiration to create international, all-Lapplandish structures, which would guarantee Saami people a real independence after a thousand years of feudal dependence on the neighbours.

*Translated by Beata Zawadka*

**POMORZE BIAŁOMORSKIE I JEGO MIESZKAŃCY**

**Streszczenie**

Pomorze Białomorskie, obejmujące przede wszystkim wybrzeża Morza Białego, zamieszkane jest obecnie przez subetnos pomorski wchodzący w skład ludnościowego masywu rosyjskiego. Osadnictwo słowiańskie, datowane na drugą połowę średniowiecza, nałożyło się na tym terenie na liczne, nie do końca rozpoznane grupy etniczne, reprezentujące językowo głównie ludy fińskie. Część z nich wywędrowała na północ i zachód, pozostałe uległy asymilacji bądź ekstynkcji, wreszcie nieliczne (Saamowie, Karelowie) częściowo zachowały swoją odrębność. Pod koniec XIX wieku na obszar Białomorza zaczęły napływać grupy pasterzy reniferów – Nieńcy i Komi-Iżemcy.

Specyfika środowiska przyrodniczego wymusiła powstanie gospodarki wykorzystującej zasoby morza i wybrzeży, a tym samym rozwój szkutnictwa i żeglugi. Wpływę-

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67 21st September 2007 in Archangelsk.
ło to na formowanie się odrębnej, specyficznej grupy Pomorców, będących potomkami dawnych osadników i żeglarzy. Obecnie, po rozpadzie systemu komunistycznego, obserwuje się wyraźny wzrost samoświadomości i działania zmierzające do społecznej konsolidacji tej grupy.