

## 6 WALDEMAR BOGORAS AND THE CHUKCHEE: A MAESTRO AND A CLASSICAL ETHNOGRAPHY<sup>1</sup>

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Waldemar Bogoras, known in Russian as Vladimir Germanovich Bogoraz or under his pen-name 'Tan-Bogoraz' (1865–1936), was a monumental figure and one of the founding fathers of Russian, and later Soviet, Siberian ethnography. His life story and his many contributions to science, anthropological research and training in Russia, and government policies toward Siberian indigenous people have been related many times (see 'Sources'). *The Chukchee*, his masterpiece of almost 750 pages, was the main outcome of his two formative periods of fieldwork in Siberia, in 1895–1897 and 1900–1901. This work published in three parts in 1904–1909 in the proceedings of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition (hereafter JNPE) by the American Museum of Natural History (hereafter AMNH) in New York soon became a 20<sup>th</sup>-century ethnographic 'classic' and mandatory reading for many students in anthropology.

Despite its universal acclaim among Russian Siberian specialists and indigenous readers, Bogoras's masterpiece was never thoroughly examined for an English-reading audience. This chapter aims to introduce the life of Bogoras and the story of *The Chukchee* to a new generation of readers. It also seeks to provide much-needed details and additional sources for those, who might become interested in Bogoras, Siberian ethnography, the history of Northern anthropology, and the status of people surveyed by Bogoras more than 100 years ago.



Fig. 1 Waldemar Bogoras, 1900.

Detail from image #338343,

American Museum of Natural History Library.

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1 This chapter was also published as the foreword to the new edition of Bogoras's *The Chukchee* (Bogoras 1907–1909 [2017]). Here, I keep the original spelling, *The Chukchee*, when referring to Bogoras's publication in the Jesup North Pacific Expedition and citing earlier correspondence of the era. A modern version of the name, 'Chukchi,' is used in all other cases throughout the text. In a similar way, I use the established English version of Bogoras's name ('Waldemar Bogoras') in the text but apply its Cyrillic version ('Vladimir Bogoraz') when citing Russian sources.

## Bogoras's Brief Biography

Waldemar Bogoras was born Natan Mendelevich Bogoraz on April 15, 1865,<sup>2</sup> in a Jewish merchant family in the town of Ovruch in today's western Ukraine (then, the Volyn' Province of the Russian Empire). Soon after his birth, the family moved to the port city of Taganrog on the Sea of Azov. In contrast to the backwater Ovruch, Taganrog was more cosmopolitan port city frequented by foreign ships, with the stores of Greek, Italian, and French merchants. It was also home to Russian-speaking middle class and good Russian educational institutions. After graduating from the Taganrog gymnasium (eight-year classical high-school), Bogoras entered St. Petersburg University in 1880, beginning his studies in the Department of Physics and Mathematics and later switching to law.

From his earliest days at the university Bogoras participated in informal student groups studying Marxism, and he later joined socialist-leaning underground organization called the People's Freedom (*Narodnaia volia*). In 1882 he was arrested for his anti-government activities, discharged from the university, and sent back to Taganrog. With barely two years of university behind him and few prospects for a future career, he became a professional 'revolutionary agitator.' He participated in a series of underground actions initiated by the People's Freedom Party until he was arrested again in November 1886. He spent two and a half years in solitary confinement and was sentenced to a ten-year exile in the arctic Kolyma region of northeastern Siberia, where he lived from 1889 until 1898.<sup>3</sup>

Bogoras spent the first years of his Siberian exile in the small town of Srednekolymsk (population 450) on the Kolyma River, at 67° 10' N, six time zones away from central Russia. Srednekolymsk had a mixed population of Russian Siberian peasants, Cossacks, some settled indigenous families, and scores of exiled anti-government activists—Russians, Poles, and Jews. According to Bogoras's unpublished autobiography (Kolonteeva 1991:13; Mikhailova 2004:98–99), he soon started visiting nearby camps of Native herders and fishermen, as well as recording Russian Siberian lore popular among the Russian residents of the Kolyma River valley. He also began writing poetry. His first literary piece, a short story called "Lame," was published in 1896. In the same year, three Kolyma Russian epics (*bylinas*) from Bogoras's much larger collection of Russian lore appeared in the Russian ethnographic journal *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* in St. Petersburg (Bogoras 1896).

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2 The exact date of Bogoras's birth is unknown; he later acknowledged that his father helped him change the date in his personal papers so the boy could enter Russian high-school (gymnasium) at the earliest age possible and then apply to university at age 15 (!). The date of April 15, 1865, is according to the Julian calendar then used in Russia; the date according to the European (Gregorian) calendar is April 27, 1865.

3 For the most detailed coverage of Bogoras's early life, see Mikhailova 2004:95–99.

Bogoras's transformation from an underground political activist into a self-taught ethnographer of Siberian aboriginal people has been thoroughly covered elsewhere (Kan 2006; 2009b; Mikhailova 2004; Sirina 2010; Vakhtin 2001; Kasten, *this volume*). Many of his peers, including Waldemar Jochelson and Lev Shternberg, followed the same transition (see Kan 2009b; Kasten and Dürr 2016b). Unlike Jochelson and Shternberg, however, who upon their return from Siberian exile pursued strict academic careers, Bogoras remained active in politics throughout his life. Shortly after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia, he devoted his immense energy and political standing to developing new Communist government policy and institutions in support of Russian indigenous peoples.

### First Fieldwork: Kolyma Area, 1895–1898

Bogoras's entry into the field of Northern ethnography (anthropology) was initiated by another, much older former political exile, Dmitrii Klements (1848–1914), who was by that time an established scholar and executive secretary of the East-Siberian Division of the Russian Geographical Society (RGS). Klements followed on a generous proposal by a Siberian merchant, goldmine owner, and philanthropist, Innozentii Sibiriakov (1860–1901), to finance a three-year survey of the sparsely populated Yakutsk Province of northeastern Russia. A vast area of 3.5 million square kilometers, Yakutsk Province contained a quarter of Russia's Arctic coast and abounded in minerals, furs, and fish but was remarkably short of educated people. As he planned the Sibiriakov Expedition (1895–1897), Klements successfully lobbied the authorities to let him recruit exiled political 'criminals' as field workers in their respective residence areas. Out of 26 members of the expedition, 15 were current or former political exiles, including Bogoras, Waldemar Jochelson, and Klements himself. Bogoras's task during the expedition was to survey the communities of Russian old-settlers in the Kolyma River valley and two local indigenous groups—the Chukchi and the Even, a Tungus-speaking group then known as the 'Lamoot' (Sirina 2010).

According to Bogoras's report on his work for the Sibiriakov Expedition (Bogoras 1899), between February 1895 and October 1897, he covered more than 13,000 km on dog- and reindeer-sleds, boats, and horseback (Fig. 1) and surveyed the lower reaches of the Kolyma River and its eastern tributaries populated by the Reindeer Chukchi and Even. After a long struggle to communicate with the Natives through local interpreters, he became fluent in the Chukchi language and partly fluent in the Even language. His new language skills allowed him to travel on his own and made it possible for him as well to collect language and folklore materials on two aboriginal nations that remained poorly known to scholars and Russian authorities.

Altogether, Bogoras collected more than 200 Chukchi folklore texts, 35 Even texts, and more than 200 texts recorded from the Russian old-settlers (some going back to



Fig. 2 Bogoras in the Kolyma camp.  
Image #22402, American Museum of Natural History Library.

the 17<sup>th</sup> century; see Kolesnitskaia 1971). He kept detailed diaries, compiled preliminary lexicons, and took numerous photographs (currently preserved at the AMNH in New York). He also learned how to talk, travel, and live with his Native assistants and hosts. When the funding for the Sibiriakov Expedition expired in 1897, Klements helped him enlist as a local census taker for the first Russian Population Census of 1897 so that he could continue his fieldwork. This experience was invaluable in making Bogoras an acknowledged expert on the Chukchi people and their home area in the Kolyma River basin.

Upon completing his surveys in the fall of 1897, Bogoras was allowed to move to the town of Yakutsk, the administrative hub of the Yakutsk Province, to process his field records (Raizman 1967:6). In October 1898, he delivered a major presentation at the headquarters of the East-Siberian Branch of the Russian Geographical Society in Irkutsk, summarizing his three years of research on the Chukchi. The news of his successful studies spread rapidly. Impressed by the value of his materials, a group of members of the Russian Academy of Sciences lobbied the Russian Ministry of Interior to drop Bogoras's residence restrictions after he completed his 10-year sentence and to let him return to St. Petersburg 'on a temporary residence permit'. In January 1899 Bogoras arrived in St. Petersburg to continue his work on the Chukchi ethnographic collections and his language and folklore data (Mikhailova 2004:104–106; Raizman

1967:6). In a single year, he published eight papers in Russian academic journals, produced two books, including a 450-page collection of Chukchi folk tales (Bogoras 1900), and gave public talks to various Russian academic societies. Little did he know that he was soon to travel to Siberia again by his own choice, for his second major period of fieldwork among the Chukchi.

## Second Fieldwork: Jesup North Pacific Expedition, 1900–1901

Bogoras was still trekking among the Chukchi herding camps above the Arctic Circle for the Sibiriakov Expedition when a new research program unfolded thousands of miles away at the AMNH in New York. In 1896 Franz Boas, the new assistant curator in the Anthropology Department, lobbied his boss, Frederic W. Putnam, and later the museum director, Morris K. Jesup, to launch a new research and collection venture that Boas called the ‘North Pacific Expedition’ (Krupnik and Freed 2004; Vakhtin 2001). Boas envisioned a major study on both sides of the North Pacific, in Siberia as well as in Canada and Alaska, to explore cultural relations (‘affinities’) between the Native people of Northeast Asia and Northwest North America. In 1897 Jesup agreed to finance the entire venture, which was promptly named ‘the Jesup North Pacific Expedition’ (JNPE).

The JNPE lasted for six years, from 1897 to 1902. Six crews working on two continents eventually surveyed 17 Native nations on the American Northwest Coast and 10 nations in Siberia (Krupnik and Vakhtin 2003:17). Results of the JNPE were briefly summarized by Boas (Boas 1903; also Boas 1910/2001) but mainly appeared in the 11-volume *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition* series published by AMNH in 1897–1930. 100 years later they were revisited in a string of publications under the so-called ‘Jesup-2’ initiative (Cole 1999, 2001; Krupnik and Fitzhugh 2001; Kendall and Krupnik 2003; Kan 2009b). Several recent papers have explored the Russian portion of the Jesup Expedition and Bogoras’s engagement in JNPE in particular (Vakhtin 2001; Mikhailova 2004; Kan 2006; 2009b; Freed 2012; Shentalinskaia 2015). When the first candidate that Boas sought for his planned northeast Siberian fieldwork, a young Austrian scientist named Erwin von Zach, withdrew (Cole 2001:37; Vakhtin 2001:76), Boas contacted his colleague in Russia, Vasilii V. Radloff (1837–1918), then director of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology in St. Petersburg. He asked for a ‘young man’ eager to spend a year or two in northeast Siberia “studying the customs, manners, languages, and physical characteristics of that district” (Vakhtin 2001:77).

Radloff quickly recommended “[...] a gentleman willing to take part in your expedition, a Mr. Jochelson, who has just returned from an expedition to the Yukaghirs and among whom he has lived for two and a half years” (Radloff to Boas, 23 February 1898, AMNH-DA; see Vakhtin 2001:77). Radloff diplomatically omitted that “Mr. Jochelson” was a former political ‘criminal,’ then 43 years old, who had returned from

Siberia after a 10-year exile. Radloff added that, for the study of the Chukchi people, Jochelson enthusiastically advocated “a friend of his, a Mr. Bogoraz, who has lived two years among them and knows their language. It is my [Radloff’s] opinion that you would do well to secure the services of these two gentlemen” (*ibid.*). To Radloff’s credit, he similarly did not say that Jochelson’s ‘friend’ was another ‘political criminal,’ still serving his exile sentence in northern Siberia. Only when Bogoraz returned to St. Petersburg in January 1899 did he and Jochelson start corresponding with Boas, and the plans for the north Siberian portion of the JNPE began to take shape (Vakhtin 2001:82–85).<sup>4</sup>

After much negotiation, Bogoraz and Jochelson arrived in New York in late February 1900, received their instructions from Boas, and signed their contracts with Jesup on behalf of the AMNH. In late March 1900 they set out for San Francisco, where they boarded a steamer for Nagasaki and eventually for Vladivostok, their future logistical hub.

The two men had to lead two small crews that were supposed to work independently several thousand kilometers apart. Jochelson, the official leader of the JNPE’s joint ‘East Siberian party,’ could rely on his wife, medical student Dina Jochelson Brodsky (1862–1941), the young American zoologist Norman Buxton from AMNH, and a Russian student assistant, Alexander Axelrod. Bogoraz’s team originally consisted of him and his wife, Sof’ia Volkova Bogoraz (ca. 1870–1921), whom Bogoraz married during his exile years in Srednekolymsk (Mikhailova 2004; 2016). Eventually, both Buxton and Axelrod joined Bogoraz’s party, while Bogoraz spent two months with the Jochelsons studying the Reindeer Koryak.

In Vladivostok Bogoraz and Jochelson had to wait for several weeks until Dina Brodsky, Sof’ia Bogoraz, and Axelrod joined them. Eventually they parted ways; the Bogorases boarded a Russian steamer for Petropavlovsk on June 14. A month later, on July 18, 1900, they arrived at their destination, a small Russian administrative and trade station called Mariinski Post at the mouth of the Anadyr River, near today’s city of Anadyr (Fig. 3).

For the next thirteen months that Bogoraz spent in northeast Siberia (July 1900–August 1901), he was mostly on the move, traveling by dog- and reindeer-sled and skin boat. Within a year he surveyed an area stretching from the Bering Strait to the Sea of Okhotsk and the Kamchatka Peninsula, a distance roughly equal to the round trip from the Arctic coast of North America to British Columbia (Krupnik 1996:40). To anyone familiar with this rugged terrain, Bogoraz’s mobility under the traveling conditions of his era is nothing short of staggering.

Upon arriving at Mariinski Post, the Bogorases mostly stayed at or near the station for two months, with a few trips to the nearby Chukchi herding camps, where Bogoraz

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4 By that time, two JNPE researchers—Berthold Laufer and Gerard Fowke—were already working on the Sakhalin Island and in the Lower Amur River area (Cole 2001:36–37).



Fig. 3 Novo-Mariinsk. Image #2347, American Museum of Natural History Library.



Fig. 4 Street in the village of Markovo.  
Image #4104, American Museum of Natural History Library.

made his first ethnographic collections for AMNH. As soon as snow hit the ground in mid-October, they moved to the Russian village of Markovo, the main economic and administrative hub of the Anadyr River valley (Fig. 4). A few days later, Bogoras left on another journey to the Koryak village of Kamenskoe on the Sea of Okhotsk in north Kamchatka, where he joined the Jochelsons' winter camp on November 20,



Fig. 5 Bogoras prepares for his sled trip to Ungaziq.  
Image #2421, American Museum of Natural History Library.



Fig. 6 Bogoras and his party (summer 1901).  
Image #11117, American Museum of Natural History Library.





Fig. 7 Gambell, St. Lawrence Island.  
Image #6137, American Museum of Natural History Library.



Fig. 8 Scene in Ungaziq (Indian Point), June 1901.  
Image #2563, American Museum of Natural History Library.

1900. He stayed with the Jochelsons and worked with them for a few weeks collecting folklore and ethnographic data among the nearby Reindeer and Coastal Koryak.

In late December 1900, Bogoras once again parted from the Jochelsons (not to see them again until two years later) and went on a two-month survey of the southern Koryak and Itelmen camps across north Kamchatka Peninsula. He visited Native villages of Amanino on January 27–28, 1901, Napana on January 30–February 2; Kavran, Utkholok, Khairiusovo, and Sedanka on February 10–15; and Tigil on February 15–16. He then crossed the Kamchatka Peninsula and reached the Maritime Koryak village of Karaga on the Bering Sea coast by March 4, 1901. From Karaga he returned to Mariinski Post on March 26 via several Koryak and Kerek coastal communities. He was sick and needed time for recovery. Yet barely four weeks later, on April 21, 1901, he left on another long dogsled journey (Fig. 5) from Mariinski Post to the Siberian Yupik village of Ungaziq at Cape Chaplin, accompanied by Axelrod, five Native guides, and a Russian Cossack (Fig. 6). He stayed there for a month (until June 13), during which time he made a short boat trip to nearby St. Lawrence Island, across the Russian-U.S. border. He spent no more than three to four weeks in any of those places.

From Ungaziq, Bogoras returned to Mariinski Post after a four-week trip in an Eskimo skin boat loaded with his field crew, nine dogs, and all of the collections he had acquired. As he wrote to Boas from Vladivostok:

By good chance, we bought and repaired a large canoe [skin boat – I.K.] and set out for the south [on] June 20<sup>th</sup>. We were seven of us, Mr. Axelrod and me, one Cossack, three men of Markovo and a Chukchee boy of 16, who assisted Mr. Axelrod as some kind of translator. [...] The task was harder than I supposed. This part of sea is very rough and landing places or harbours are scarce [...] Two of my improvised crew got seasick and were of no use through the whole journey. Nevertheless, we reached the mouth of Anadyr in 24 days on July 13. (Bogoras to Boas, September 11, 1901; cited in Freed 2012:359)

They had a month to pack the collections (Fig. 9 and 10), before boarding a Russian mail steamer for the return voyage to Vladivostok, from where they traveled to St. Petersburg by train across Siberia.

A seasoned traveler and a man of great energy and physical stamina, Bogoras suffered enormous physical hardship on his yearlong trek. He was seriously sick during a portion of his travels and after his return from fieldwork. Bogoras hardly exaggerated his dire traveling conditions in a letter to Boas in April 1901:

My journey from the mouth of the Anadyr River through the Gizhiga district to Kamchatka and a long way [back – I.K.] along the sea coast to Anadyr took me five months. During that time I made 4,000 miles with dogs. A considerable part of my way was not made till now by any civilized man. Our journey went through an unpeopled country where we could not find any guide

and had to find our way being guided by the sun and following the rivers. I returned in a very poor state of health. There were a few days when I almost thought I will not be able to reach Anadyr at all (Bogoras to Boas, 1901; see Krupnik 1996:38).

His complete physical recovery took several months after he returned to St. Petersburg. For more than half a year, he was unable to travel to New York to process his field notes and collections at AMNH, or even to stand much physical exercise (Kuz'mina 1993).

The outcomes of his JNPE fieldwork—in terms of ethnological collections, photographs, folklore text, and song recordings—were monumental. Boas proudly cited Bogoras's report in his summary paper on the results of the Jesup Expedition:

The results of this [Bogoras's – I.K.] work are studies of the ethnography and anthropology of the Chukchee and Asiatic Eskimo, and partly of the Kamchadal and of the Pacific Koryak. These studies are illustrated by extensive collections embracing 5,000 ethnographical objects, 33 plaster casts of faces, 75 skulls and archaeological specimens from abandoned village sites and from the graves. Other material obtained includes 300 tales and traditions, 150 texts in the Chukchee, Koryak, Kamchadal, and Eskimo languages, 95 phonographic records, and measurements of 860 individuals. I also made a zoological collection and kept a meteorological journal during the whole time of my field-work (Boas 1903:115; Krupnik 1996:39).

To that list, we should add almost 700 photographs, now stored at the AMNH in New York, and several dozen field notebooks, now at the Archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. Though Bogoras did not procure all of these items himself (Shentalinskaia 2012, 2015), his remarkable productivity as a field ethnographer and collector was undisputed. Bogoras also took over the collection of the linguistic portion of Jochelson's field materials among the Koryak (at least checking them, as Jochelson himself acknowledged; see Kasten and Dürr 2016:18–19) and recorded language and folklore texts among the Kamchadal (today's *Itelmen* of Kamchatka). His one year of work for the Jesup Expedition eventually resulted in eight monographs: a three-part ethnography of the Chukchi (Bogoras 1904–1909); a volume of Chukchi mythology (Bogoras 1910; Dürr and Kasten 2016); and four volumes on the folklore and languages of other aboriginal Siberian nations: Yupik Eskimo, Koryak, and Russian Creoles (Bogoras 1913; 1917; 1918; 1949); as well as in scores of papers (see list in Krupnik 2001). According to one recent evaluation, no modern anthropologist has ever collected such a diversity of data (Freed et al. 1988:20). By all accounts, Bogoras made an outstanding contribution to the success of the Jesup Expedition and to Siberian anthropology in general.



Fig. 9 Waldemar and Sof'ia Bogoras with the JNPE collections.  
Image #1380, American Museum of Natural History Library.



Fig. 10 Bogoras and JNPE collections in Novo-Mariinsk.  
Image #22332, American Museum of Natural History Library.

### Writing *The Chukchee*

Under their contract with Boas and AMNH, Bogoras and Jochelson were supposed to arrive in New York after completing their fieldwork to process their collections and to write their respective contributions to the JNPE proceedings. Because Bogoras was sick upon his return from Siberia, he had to delay his trip by several months. He arrived in New York accompanied by his wife on April 17, 1902 (Freed 2012:359; Mikhailova 2016:114–115). There he immediately jumped into Boas's operation cataloguing the JNPE collections and the publication of its materials. Waldemar and Dina Jochelson, the last JNPE members to return from the field in spring 1902, joined Bogoras in New York six months later, in November 1902.

Living on a modest AMNH stipend, Bogoras spent a year and half in New York sorting his immense collections of almost 5,000 ethnographic objects, field notes, and photographs. He helped Boas stage a few temporary display cases at AMNH featuring Chukchi clothing and home life (Anonymous 1904a; 1904b)—the precursors of the permanent AMNH Siberian exhibits, still on display some 110 years later. With Boas's assistance, he published two papers based on his Chukchi materials in the *American Anthropologist*, the only professional anthropological journal in the United States at that time (Bogoras 1901, 1902). He started writing a major novel in Russian titled *Eight Tribes* (*Vosem' plemen*), in which he used literary fiction to introduce some of his ethnographic data. But first and foremost, he worked on the chapters for *The Chukchee*, his prime contribution to the JNPE publication series.

Unlike Jochelson and Shternberg, another Russian exile anthropologist whom Boas commissioned to write for the JNPE series (Kan 2001; 2009b), Bogoras had a solid command of English, which he had taught himself during his imprisonment in Russia and his exile in Siberia. It is unclear, however, whether he started writing *The Chukchee* in English, as he claimed years later in its Russian translation. Most certainly, his writing (or translation?) for the JNPE was facilitated by Alexander Goldenweiser (1880–1940), a Russian-Jewish student of Boas at Columbia University, originally from Kiev, who also translated Jochelson's volumes for the JNPE series (Kan 2009a). One way or the other, Bogoras made substantial progress on the first section of *The Chukchee*, 'Material Culture,' which reached almost 300 pages. In late 1903, Bogoras submitted it as Part 1 of his contribution to the JNPE proceedings series (Bogoras 1904). And in fall 1903, after a year and a half at the AMNH, the Bogorases left New York.

Of utmost personal importance to Bogoras was his friendship with Boas and the intellectual bond the two men forged during Bogoras's U.S. sojourn in 1902–1903. The two families even vacationed together in summer 1903 (Cole 2001:41; Mikhailova 2004:112). Bogoras, who had no professional anthropological training, was an avid student, and he came under the strong influence of Boas's personality and his scholarly method of historical particularism, which Bogoras nonetheless never fully

accepted (Kan 2006:35). Boas in turn viewed Bogoras positively, as “a man of fine sensitivity, intelligence, and enthusiasm” (Cole 2001:41).

As Bogoras’s (and Jochelson’s) JNPE funding was running out, Boas had to switch to payments of \$150 for each submitted chapter. That meant that Bogoras could write his JNPE contributions anywhere he liked. The Bogorases spent most of 1904 in Europe, where Bogoras attended the 14<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Americanists in Stuttgart, Germany, that summer. There he delivered a paper on Chukchi religious ideas (Bogoras 1906) and once again met with Boas, as well as with Jochelson and Shternberg. The 1904 paper on Chukchi religious ideas indicated that he was already working on his second issue of the JNPE proceedings on Chukchi religion. When he returned to Russia in September 1904, he was confident he could complete his obligations to Boas and AMNH. Events transpired, however, to put the work on hold for two more years.

The story of Bogoras’s involvement in the first Russian Revolution of 1905–1907, of his arrest in November 1905, and of Boas’s effort to rescue him and his precious Chukchi manuscripts from prison is well covered in the literature (Cole 2001:41–42; Freed 2012:361–370; Mikhailova 2004:113). As Bogoras jumped wholeheartedly into political activism in Russia, his commitment to Boas and to the AMNH weakened. The famous exchange of letters between him and Boas in April 1905 is a case study in how political activism may interfere with the most careful professional plans. Upon Boas’s reminder that no new chapters on the Chukchi had been sent to New York for months, Bogoras responded:

I am afraid you are right and I feel myself guilty of much neglect to all dear friends in America. But you will understand that an epoch like this happens only once in many centuries for every state and nation and we feel ourselves torn away with the current even against our will.

My work on sociology of the Chukchee [evidently, on the chapters on Social Organization – I.K.] is going on but slowly [...] Still I am doing something but little (Bogoras to Boas, April 6, 1905, AMNH, Dept. of Anthropology; cited in Freed 2012:362).

To that message, Boas offered his famous rebuke:

I fully appreciate the excitement of the present time, and the difficulty in concentrating yourself on scientific work; but if events like the present happen only once in a century, an investigation by Mr. Bogoras of the Chukchee happens only once in eternity, and I think you owe it to science to give us the results of your studies (Boas to Bogoras, April 22, 1905, *ibid.*; Freed 2012:362–363).

This exchange was followed by Bogoras’s arrest on November 27, 1905, in Moscow. He was imprisoned for two weeks and subsequently released, after which the Bogorases, with all the precious field papers, moved safely to Finland, a much quieter

place. Bogoras resumed his writing and eventually submitted the missing chapters on Chukchi religion for another issue of the JNPE proceedings (Bogoras 1907) and later delivered the third section on Chukchi social organization (Bogoras 1909). He continued sending his writings to Boas for an issue on Chukchi mythology (Bogoras 1910) and one on Asiatic Eskimo lore (Bogoras 1913). He even offered to write an essay on the Kamchadal (Itelmen) for another Siberian volume in the JNPE series, but that essay never materialized (Krupnik 2001:300).

After Bogoras's death, his massive stock of field notes, language, and folklore data collected during the JNPE years was deposited in the archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences and of the Institute of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg (Krupnik 2001:307–308). After Bogoras had fulfilled his obligation to Boas and the AMNH, Boas continued helping his Russian colleague publish his materials in the United States for almost 20 years. Collaboration, correspondence, and friendship between the two great men lasted until Bogoras's death in 1936 (Kan 2006).

### **Bogoras after *The Chukchee***

When Bogoras's last contribution to the JNPE series was released in 1913, he was almost 50 years old. A prolific novelist and publicist, an author of several internationally acclaimed anthropological volumes and papers, and a close partner of Boas, he had no formal training, no scholarly degree or professional position, and little acceptance in Russian academic circles. Like most of Russia's liberal intellectuals, he spent the rest of the decade marked by World War I, two Russian revolutions, and the Civil War in personal and political turmoil, isolation, and dire physical suffering. Boas did his best to support his Russian friends from abroad by offering them money, orders for new papers, and American venues to publish them (Bogoras 1917; 1918; 1922;—see Kan 2001; 2006; 2009b). Yet it was Lev Shternberg, a fellow former political activist and Siberian exile, who helped Bogoras reconstitute his professional standing after Russia's Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 (a revolution neither of them initially accepted).

The story of Shternberg and Bogoras's joint crusade to build a vibrant system of scholarly research, teaching in Northern anthropology, and training cadres for Russia's Arctic minority people has been told several times (Gagen-Torn 1975; Kan 2009b; Liarskaia 2016, see also *this volume*; Vakhtin 2016a; 2016b). It embraced scores of overlapping institutions, short-term initiatives, and ad hoc ventures, and thus required energy and imagination. Bogoras had plenty of both; he was also exceptionally resourceful. Unlike his friend Shternberg, Bogoras enjoyed political power and was comfortable sitting on many committees and being among government bureaucrats. He was one of the founding members in 1924 of the 'Committee on the North' (its full name was 'Committee on Assistance to the Peoples of the Northern Borderlands,' or *Komitet sodeistviia narodnostiam severnykh okrain*, in Russian) under the

Presidium of the Soviet Central Executive Committee, the main legislative body in Communist Russia (Vakhtin 1994). He served as an expert to the Soviet Government's Department on Nationalities and was on many administrative committees dealing with the peoples of the Arctic regions of Russia. He loved wearing many hats, and he skillfully used his new academic and political power to the advantage of his pet projects, students, and public venues, as well as for self-promotion.



Fig. 11 Shternberg, Boas, and Bogoras at the 21<sup>st</sup> International Congress of Americanists, 1924. Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography/Kunstkamera, St. Petersburg, #И-1371-4. (A slightly different photo is also available in the collection of the American Philosophical Society.)

The period between 1924 and 1932 marked the second peak of Bogoras's scientific productivity and international stature. He published broadly on many general issues, such as the origins of polar cultures, the peopling of North America and the Arctic, the geographic distribution of cultural elements, and the origin of shamanism (Bogoras 1925a; 1925b; 1926; 1928a; 1928b; 1929a). He renewed his communication with Boas and sent him several papers for publication in America. He also traveled widely.<sup>5</sup> He attended the 21<sup>st</sup> International Congress of Americanists in the Hague

5 In 1924–1927, Bogoras reportedly tried to lure his old friends, Waldemar Jochelson and Dina Jochelson Brodsky, who had emigrated to the United States in 1922, to return to Russia, citing ‘good research and financial conditions,’ to no avail (Vakhtin 2004:42–44).



and Göteborg (in 1924), where he and Shternberg reunited with Boas after an 18-year break (see Fig. 11), the 22<sup>nd</sup> Congress in Rome (1926), and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Congress in New York (1928), where he was hosted by Boas (Krupnik 1998:206–207). After the New York congress, Bogoras participated in a meeting on international research planning in the circumpolar zone attended by such anthropological luminaries as Franz Boas, Clark Wissler, Aleš Hrdlička, Diamond Jenness, Kaj Birket-Smith, William Thalbitzer, and Erland Nordenskiöld on behalf of their respective national institutions. At that meeting, Bogoras officially represented the Russian Academy of Sciences (Bogoras 1929b; Krupnik 1998:216).

Lev Shternberg's death in 1927 was a huge blow to their joint effort to rebuild Russian Siberian anthropology and a devastating personal loss to Bogoras. Soon after, the ideological winds in Soviet Russia turned sour. Ideological intolerance was on the rise, threatening the very fabric of anthropological enterprise that Bogoras and Shternberg aspired to build (Kan 2006:40–44; Krupnik 2008:208; Liarskaia 2016). Bogoras was repeatedly criticized by young radical Marxists for being 'soft,' 'wrong,' or 'not-Marxist enough' in his old writings about the Chukchi, and he had to respond with humiliating self-criticism (Bogoras 1930; 1931; 1934b). Neither he nor his many younger students could submit any new papers to international congresses, and Bogoras's own publications in Western professional journals ceased after 1930. He was not elected to the Russian (then Soviet) Academy of Sciences in 1928 (Kan 2006:40–41) and was not allowed to travel abroad after 1930. He was even forced to denounce his old friend and mentor, Franz Boas, in a humiliating preface to the Russian translation of Boas's paper 'The Aims of Anthropological Research' (Boas 1933) that Bogoras himself arranged for publication in the Russian academic journal *Sovetskaia etnografiia* (Bogoras 1933; Kan 2006).

Fortuitously, at the time of mounting challenges to his scholarly and public standing, the 'Yakut Commission' of the Soviet Academy of Sciences offered to produce a Russian translation of his old JNPE monograph on the Chukchi.<sup>6</sup> The origin of this effort, which Bogoras called an 'authorized (auto-edited) translation' from the original English edition, remains unclear. In his "Author's Introduction" to the first Russian volume of *The Chukchee* written in May 1934, he claimed that:

Throughout 1900–1914, it was impossible to find in Russia a publishing house eager to undertake such a monumental multi-volume publication, with numerous illustrations and Native texts. The possibility of a Russian translation of *The Chukchee* appeared after a twenty-year gap only. The translation

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6 According to Elena A. Mikhailova (personal communication, November 9, 2016), the translation was initiated in 1929 by the Soviet Academy of Sciences for a proposed large selection of Bogoras's earlier publications on the Chukchi, both in Russian and in English. According to the original plan, the translated JNPE text of *The Chukchee* was scheduled to appear in *two* volumes ("Material Culture" and "Religion and Social Organization") in 1930–1931, with several other materials in Russian to be added to the venture.

of my monograph was encouraged by the late Karl Ianovich Louks, the critical figure in the field of [Russia's] northern minority people [...] I made this translation, with the assistance of S. N. Stebnitskii and M. L. Stebnitskaia. For the first two chapters, we used the translation by a certain [A. I.] Stepanov that was forwarded to me for correction from the Yakut Commission of the [Soviet] Academy of Sciences. That translation was partially a retelling of the content, so that it could be used by segments only (Bogoras 1934b:xiv).

In fact, Stepanov most probably translated the entire set of *The Chukchee* in 1929–1930. His translation was later checked and corrected by Sergei Stebnitskii (1906–1942), one of Bogoras's anthropology students and once his part-time secretary and his wife, M. Stebnitskaia. Bogoras thoroughly reviewed and edited the final Russian manuscript, now preserved at the Archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg with his handwritten remarks (Vdovin 1991a:218; Mikhailova, personal communication, November 2016). Regardless of the identity of the translator, Bogoras's role in organizing the Russian edition was critical. First, he changed the order of the key sections of *The Chukchee*: the first published Russian volume was the section on Social Organization (Bogoras 1934a), which had been Part 3 of the original JNPE set. He also moved the chapter on Chukchi relations with the Russians to the front of the first Russian volume together with three more chapters—'Names and Habitat,' 'General Characteristics,' and 'Trade'—taken from the first JNPE issue, 'Material Culture' (Bogoras 1904). The book also featured a long preface by Ian Al'kor and an extended Russian Introduction written by Bogoras himself (1934b), filled with self-criticism of his old field methods and his 'lack of Marxist vision.' The book was published by the Institute of the Peoples of the North (*Institut narodov Severa*, INS), as Volume 5 of the proceedings of its 'Research Association'; it was poorly printed and lacked the photos and many other illustrations from the 1909 AMNH edition.

Strategically initiating a Russian edition of his master book was a wise decision in the darkening political atmosphere of Soviet anthropology, which was filled with acrimonious discussions on social structures and Marxist interpretation of the laws of social evolution. It was expected that two other translated parts of *The Chukchee* would soon follow. The release of the first volume in Russia in 1934 helped solidify Bogoras's stature as the preeminent Russian Siberian scholar for a while. The celebration of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1935 was marked by a major tribute written by Ian Al'kor (1935), the INS director, and a special 250-page issue of the journal *Sovetskaia etnografiia* (Soviet Ethnography) dedicated to Siberian and Arctic research and stocked with papers written primarily by Bogoras's and Shternberg's former students.

Nonetheless, the academic and public niche that Bogoras had carved for himself was rapidly shrinking. That same year, 1935, the Committee on the North was closed and all of its assets were transferred to the State Administration of the Northern Sea Route (*Glavsevmorput'*, see Vakhtin 1994). Another of Bogoras's favorite public

spaces, the ‘Society of Former Political Convicts and Exiles,’ was also shut down that year. Nikolai Matorin (1898–1936), the powerful director of the Leningrad Institute of Ethnography, was dismissed and imprisoned in 1935 (and subsequently executed), a precursor to the purges that would soon decimate the Leningrad academic, professional and administrative elites. Bogoras could not but feel that his days were numbered.

### **The Chukchee after Bogoras**

Bogoras was ‘lucky’ to die a natural death on May 10, 1936, at age 71. He passed away on the train to Leningrad (St. Petersburg), after visiting his younger brother, surgeon Nikolai Bogoraz, in the southern city of Rostov-on-Don (or on return from a southern vacation; Bogoraz L. 2009:9–10; Gernet 1999:38). He was honored with a high-level funeral ceremony by the Soviet Academy of Sciences, a burial place in the prestigious ‘Literary Section’ (*Literatorskie mostki*) at the Volkov Cemetery in Leningrad, a memorial festschrift (Meshchaninov 1937), and an obituary by his old friend Franz Boas in *American Anthropologist* (Boas 1937). Yet the system he had built over the last 15 years of his academic career was quick to unravel.

After his death, Bogoras was never officially demoted or disgraced in Soviet Russia, in contrast to many scholars, living or deceased, at the time. Rather, he was marginalized. He was mildly criticized for his ‘bourgeois idealistic misgivings’ and the lack of a ‘proper Marxist’ approach in his treatment of the Chukchi and other indigenous people. His favorite students (Nikolai Shnakenburg, Alexander Forshtein, Sergei Stebnitskii, Nikolai Spiridonov, A. K. A. Teki Odulok, and others), whom he personally trained to carry on his research among the Chukchi, Siberian Yupik, Koryak, and Yukaghir, all became victims of the Stalin-era terror or casualties of World War II (Krupnik 1998; 2008). Bogoras was honored by occasional official tributes on the dates of his birth or death (e.g., Ivanov 1946; Vdovin 1957; 1965; 1991b), but his main scholarly publications, though widely cited, were not reprinted in Russia for the next fifty-five years. His fiction writings, similarly, did not appear in new reprints until the 1960s or 1970s (Kolonteeva 1991).<sup>7</sup> For decades after his death, Bogoras remained an honored academic ‘elder’ of Russian Siberian ethnography but with little following, a truncated legacy, and no true assessment of his contribution (Krupnik 2008).

The second partial installment of the Russian version of *The Chukchee*, ‘Religion’ (*Religiia*), appeared in 1939, three years after Bogoras’s passing. Printed by another publisher (*Glavsevmorput*), it had another editor and author of an introductory essay,

7 Bogoras’s monumental ‘collected writings’ were published in 10 volumes in 1910–1911; this set contained his prose, poetry, and Siberian travel stories. It was reprinted as a condensed four-volume set in 1928–1929 and then reduced to a single volume episodically reissued in the late-Soviet and early post-Soviet era by local Siberian presses (in 1962, 1979, 1987, 1991, etc.).

Iuri P. Frantsov (1903–1969), who replaced Bogoras as the director of the Museum of the History of Atheism and Religion that Bogoras established in 1932. Frantsov's short piece injected a heavy portion of 'Marxist criticism' to Bogoras's masterpiece writing. The shift in tone and publisher was more than symbolic. Ian Al'kor, the author of the introduction to the first Russian volume of *The Chukchee* (Al'kor 1934), was already dead. One of the many victims of Stalin's 'Great Terror,' he was arrested and shot in 1938. Bogoras's treasured Institute of the Peoples of the North (INS) soon followed the fate of its director (Liarskaia 2016:160). Most of its staff members were imprisoned and shot or sent to gulag labor camps to serve terms in much harsher conditions than Bogoras and his peers from the 'People's Freedom' Party ever imagined. The Institute was subordinated to the 'Glavsevmorput' (Northern Sea Route Administration), a quasi-military organization in charge of maritime operations in the Russian Arctic; it was later transformed into a five-year pedagogical college serving Russia's northern regions. Bogoras's and Shternberg's research and educational enterprise came to an end (Liarskaia 2016; Vakhtin 2016b), and the field they created to train their students and indigenous cadres never recovered.

It was another 52 years (!) until the last—actually, the first—section of *The Chukchee*, 'Material Culture,' was published in Russia (Bogoraz 1991). The manuscript was reportedly the portion of the same Russian translation by A.I. Stepanov that Bogoras (and Stebnitskii) edited in the 1930s. The book was printed by Russia's main academic publishing house, 'Nauka' (Science), under the editorship of the leading Russian scholar of the Chukchi, Innokentii S. Vdovin (1907–1996), a former schoolteacher among the Chukchi and a student of Bogoras. Elena A. Mikhailova, a specialist in Chukchi and Yupik ethnology at the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, supervised the production of the book, which also contained most of the original illustrations from the AMNH edition of 1904. Unfortunately, the museum never followed up on its plan to publish the full Russian version of *The Chukchee*, as was later done for Jochelson's *Yukaghir* in 2005.

In 2005–2007, aides to then-governor of the Chukotka Area, Roman Abramovich, revived the idea of publishing a full Russian edition of *The Chukchee* simply by collating the three separate Russian volumes of 1934, 1939, and 1991 under a common cover. The plan failed to materialize. To this day Russian readers must rely on three separately published Russian sections of *The Chukchee*. According to online sources, all three were reprinted in 2011–2016 by the Russian press 'Librokom' from their respective earlier editions.

The English (AMNH) version of 1904–1909 remained a three-issue set for almost 70 years. It was widely cited in several publications and used as a course reading for general anthropology curricula in university programs (e.g., Anonymous 1923; Ford 1949; Kroeber and Waterman 1920; Leeds 1965). In 1975, the AMS Press in New York produced facsimile reprints of all of the JNPE publications, so that the three sections of *The Chukchee* finally appeared as one book, according to Boas's original vision. The

book is now available at more than 200 libraries on four continents (see the library site [www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org)). Unlike Bogoras's later contribution to the JNPE series, *Chukchi Mythology*, however, the AMS Press's edition of *The Chukchee* in one volume has not been reissued since 1975 and is now out of print. The three issues are accessible separately for free download at the AMNH website (<http://digitallibrary.amnh.org/handle/2246/5745>), but the complete single volume has not been made available in electronic form. Therefore, this *third* English edition of Bogoras's masterpiece, produced as both printed and on line book for the *Bibliotheca Sibiro-pacifica* series is a long-overdue gift to Northern anthropologists, students, and Siberian/Arctic lovers around the world.

### Today's Assessment of *The Chukchee*

The lasting value of *The Chukchee* derives from many factors. Bogoras, like Jochelson, could draw on the experience of two long fieldworks of 1895–1897 and 1900–1901 for his JNPE writings. He personally visited many (though not *all*) regional groups of the Chukchi, and he was the only JNPE researcher, except for James Teit among the Canadian Plateau nations and George Hunt among the Kwakwaka'wakw, who was fluent in local languages, was versed in Native customs, and had first-hand experience of Chukchi daily life. His knowledge of the Chukchi was thorough if uneven—better for the western and southern groups, and rather slim for the eastern divisions, particularly the large Maritime communities of eastern Chukotka. That eventually surfaced in the unequal coverage of Reindeer versus Maritime Chukchi culture in the book.

Bogoras was a self-taught anthropologist, but he was a competent author even after his first fieldwork of 1895–1897. Boas's careful tutorship over the course of the JNPE helped make Bogoras a first-class professional in ethnographic research, and *The Chukchee* an instant classic. By all accounts, Bogoras was a star of JNPE team, second only to Boas himself. As a result, his 750-page overview of the Chukchi culture made one of the best and most solid contributions to the entire 11-volume JNPE series.

He was also an exceptionally prolific writer. Over the 10 years from 1904 to 1913, he published four monograph-size issues on the Chukchi in the JNPE series under the AMNH *Memoirs* (Material Culture, Religion, Social Organization, and Mythology) and a short collection of the Asiatic Eskimo texts (1913). He later supplemented it with an extensive grammatical sketch of the Chukchi language (with some comparative comments on the Koryak and Yukaghir languages) in the Smithsonian *Handbook of American Indian Languages* (Bogoras 1922) and with several works on the folklore of the Koryak, Lamoot (Even), and the Yukaghir.

*The Chukchee*, when viewed as a single book of 750 pages, made a remarkably comprehensive ethnography of a Siberian indigenous nation poorly known to West-

ern scholars. It was rightly called “the best and the most detailed ever written on this people” (Schweitzer 2005:267). It was illustrated with 302 line drawings and 35 plates made from Bogoras’s field photographs and objects he collected for the AMNH. The volume also featured an excellent map of the distribution of Native groups in north-east Siberia (the map also appeared in Jochelson’s volume on the Koryak). Bogoras offered a good treatment of available Russian and foreign literature on the Chukchi in a bibliography attached to the first issue of 1904, although he was perhaps too critical of his immediate predecessor, Anadyr district governor and trained anthropologist Nikolai L. Gondatti, the author of several papers on the same area in 1897–1898.

Three factors color our assessment of *The Chukchee* today compared with its reception when it was published a century ago. First, it appeared in *three* individual thematic portions (issues) separated by several years (1904, 1907, and 1909). Though the issues then had a common pagination, it took the library binding—and the later AMS Press reprint in *one* large book of 750 pages—to grasp the overall breadth and value of *The Chukchee*’s original design. To its Russian readers, it is still known in *three* separate books under their individual titles (Bogoraz 1934a; 1939; 1991) and even in a reverse order. Hence, today we may have a clearer view of the strengths and gaps of Bogoras’s masterpiece than when it was published.

Second, *The Chukchee* appeared in separate sections within a monumental series of 32 issues, large and small (the shortest were just a dozen pages; the longest, 500 pages) printed over 30 years, between 1898 and 1930, according to a master plan envisioned by Boas. The first issue of *The Chukchee* (Material Culture, 1904) was published during the peak days of the JNPE series and thus received the most attention (see list of reviews in Kagarov 1935). The two latter issues were released when Boas had already left the AMNH for Columbia University and the museum desperately wanted the series to be completed. Of course, the unanticipated factor in the JNPE legacy was the failure by Boas, the expedition’s leader, to produce the concluding summary opus on its outcomes. That failure ultimately left each individual volume to stand on its own, a test that *The Chukchee* passed better than any other collated volume in the JNPE series.

The third factor was Boas’s well-known intention to make the JNPE volumes comparable to, if not competitive with, the monumental ethnographies (we now call them ‘classical ethnographies’) of the Bureau of Ethnology, later the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE) of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. Boas had ambiguous relations with the Smithsonian; he craved Smithsonian employment in his early years yet was highly critical of the institution’s anthropological and museum scholarship. Boas wanted his JNPE volumes to be on a par with the monumental BAE *Annual Reports* that featured many ‘classical ethnographies’ of Native American groups during the 1880s and 1890s, including Boas’s own *Central Eskimo* (Boas 1888; Krupnik 2016b) and other Arctic ‘classics,’ like Murdoch’s essay on the Inuit of Point Barrow (Murdoch 1892) and Nelson’s (1899) on Western Alaskan Eskimo. Bogoras’s *The Chukchee*, as well as Jochelson’s *The Koryak* (1908), matched the best BAE pub-

lications in terms of breadth and publication quality. These and other elements are important for today's assessment of *The Chukchee*.

As Bogoras returned from his JNPE fieldwork loaded with data and ideas, he was persuaded to accept a Boasian template of 'basic ethnography' for his writings for the JNPE series (Krupnik 1996:46). By modern standards, that template an ambitiously detailed handbook of a Native culture covering its every aspect—from habitat, physical features, and stone lamps to social rites, religion, lore, and mythology. Yet, unlike the independent monographs in the BAE *Annual Reports*, the JNPE proceedings followed a preliminary master plan that has not been intellectually completed. As a result, its individual issues were neither matched to each other nor analyzed according to Boas's original design.

In fact, Boas's monumental scenario for his 'North Pacific Expedition' (Krupnik and Freed 2004) was plagued by ambiguities from its very beginning. On the American Northwest Coast, where some basic coverage of many Native nations was already available (including by Boas himself: Boas 1890, 1891, 1897), JNPE researchers had a freer hand to concentrate on texts, masks, languages, facial paintings, and decorative objects—for the sake of future comparison that never materialized (Krupnik 1996:41). Boas was also careful to avoid overlapping with the areas of interest of the Smithsonian researchers (i.e., west and north Alaska) and with Lt. George T. Emmons's ongoing collecting efforts among the Tlingit and other Native groups in southeastern Alaska.

Siberian crews, in contrast, had to survey less-known ethnic groups, cover much larger areas, and cross extremely harsh terrain. Furthermore, they were given multiple tasks: they were not only to produce 'basic ethnographies' of the surveyed Native nations, but also to secure linguistic, folklore, anthropometric, and other evidence of Siberian-American connections *and* to collect ethnographic and physical specimens for AMNH. To the extent that the lead JNPE scientists in Siberia—Bogoras, Jochelson, and Berthold Laufer—could ever accomplish these tasks, they had to rely on their spouses and other assistants: Dina Jochelson Brodsky for Jochelson, Sof'ia Bogoras and Alexander Axelrod for Bogoras, and Gerald Fowke for Laufer on Sakhalin Island and in the Amur River region.

Under such harsh conditions and mounting pressure from Boas, Laufer mostly failed to deliver on his JNPE assignment, Jochelson endured, and Bogoras excelled. Although his main task from Boas was to collect ethnographic and other materials among his primary group, the Maritime Chukchi, he actually spent more time among other Siberian aboriginal nations: the Maritime Koryak (November 1900–February 1901), Siberian Yupik (May–June 1901), Itelmen (Kamchadal), Kerek, local Russians, and Russian Creoles. That, naturally, moved him toward *comparative* ethnography, in spite of the limitations of the JNPE 'basic ethnography' template (Krupnik 1996). The latter obviously ran against Bogoras's field skills; his personal interests in language, mythology, and lore; and his old populist sensitivities to the issues of economic exploitation, administrative injustice, and colonial treatment of the Siberian Natives.

Therefore, we should view the scope and structure of *The Chukchee* as an intersection of many conflicting forces. It is a book written by an experienced and extremely capable scholar, who was pressured to present his data under an academic template not quite to his personal liking. Bogoras skillfully organized the 750 pages of *The Chukchee* in 23 large chapters in three almost equal sections covering material, spiritual, and social life. He was highly innovative in treating Chukchi material culture by viewing it through the lenses of daily *economic activities* (reindeer herding, dog breeding, hunting, fishing, trade, etc.) rather than as a museum-framed list of respective tools and objects, as in the Smithsonian BAE monographs. Most unusual for a 'basic ethnography' of the era was his last chapter of 50 pages covering Chukchi contacts with the Russians and the structure of Russian administration in the region. That chapter showed Bogoras the historian, former census taker, and populist-socialist at his best.

Yet *The Chukchee* was meant to be a synopsis of a nation that possessed two distinctive types of culture and economy: those of the nomadic reindeer-herders and of the coastal maritime hunters. Overall, the treatment of the two groups differed, often substantially. Whereas the sections on clothing, housing, subsistence implements, and ceremonies were relatively balanced, those on social life were not. A forty-page description of marriage patterns and rituals among the Reindeer Chukchi stood next to a three-page section on the same traditions among the Maritime folk. The book called *The Chukchee* also abounds in randomly injected details and references to neighboring Native groups—the Yupik, the Even (Lamoot), and the Russian Creoles. Here, again, the template of 'basic ethnography' made the gaps and biases in Bogoras's knowledge of the various Native groups he surveyed even more visible (Krupnik 1996).

In spite of these and other shortcomings, *The Chukchee* was an outstanding example of a 'basic ethnography' monograph. That genre of scholarly ethnographic studies dominated the field for about 50 years, from the 1880s to the 1920s (Krupnik 2016a:6). It produced the priceless shelves of anthropological 'classics,' certainly for northern areas, including Alaska (Murdoch 1892; Nelson 1899), Canada (Boas 1888; 1901; Birket-Smith 1929; Jenness 1922; Mathiassen 1928; Stefansson 1919; Turner 1894), Greenland (Birket-Smith 1924; Thalbitzer 1914; 1941), and Arctic Russia (Jochelson 1908; 1910–1926; Seroshevskii 1896). Bogoras's oeuvre on the Chukchi was a prized member of this scholarly cohort. Again, no one said it better than his mentor, Franz Boas (1937:314): „His work on the Chukchee, [...] is proof of his deep insight into the life of the people among whom he was compelled to live. The clarity of his description is due to his scientific insight; but no less to his artistic gifts.“



**'Invisible partners'**

Among many controversies that Bogoras inherited from the 'basic ethnography' template was his failure to acknowledge the *collaborative* nature of his fieldwork and collecting among the Chukchi. From the beginning, his party included his wife, Sof'ia Volkova Bogoras, a seasoned Arctic traveler and former midwife during Bogoras's exile years in Sredne-Kolymsk. When Bogoras joined the Jochelsons' camp in November 1900, Jochelson sent his field assistant, Alexander Axelrod, to join forces with Sof'ia Bogoras in Markovo so that the two could complete Bogoras's JNPE assignment. In spring 1901, the two were joined in Markovo by AMNH biologist Norman Buxton, formally another member of the Jochelsons' crew.

One would look in vain for the names of these people in the 750 pages of *The Chukchee* or in many of Bogoras's publications (see a similar comment on Jochelson's *The Koryak*—Kasten and Dürr 2016:18). Also, whereas folklore texts recorded by Bogoras's crew were cited with their storytellers's names, references to specific ethnographic information supplied by particular local informants were all but absent. The text of *The Chukchee* abounds in specific, often individual details, but it bears few Native names—except those of Chukchi female shaman Telpiña, Yupik trader Kuvár (Quwaaren, in today's Yupik transliteration) from Indian Point (Ungaziq; see Fig. 12), and a few others—so the information is hard to connect to particular people and areas.



Fig. 12 Eskimo trader Kuvár (Quwaaren).  
Image #1351, American Museum of Natural History Library.

The failure to acknowledge contributions by Sof'ia Bogoras and Alexander Axelrod to the success of Bogoras's fieldwork looks more systemic. Only recently, thanks to new research by Russian colleagues (Shentalinskaia 2012; 2015; Mikhailova 2016), are we able to grasp Sof'ia Bogoras's true role in collecting ethnographic objects, particularly, musical and folklore texts (almost 200 recordings from Markovo and Novomariinsk), and caring for and packing expedition's collections for shipping to AMNH in New York (Fig. 9). Bogoras acknowledged her contribution only in passing, as in his letter to Boas from April 1901:

My wife and Mr. Axelrod accumulated and packed in 30 large crates a significant and very precious collection related to the Lamoot and the Russified people of the Anadyr River valley [that they collected entirely on their own – I.K. (DAA AMNH; cited in Mikhailova 2016:112)].

In a similar way, Bogoras ignored Alexander Axelrod's role in taking the bulk of physical measurements and at least 300 photographs listed under Bogoras's name in today's AMNH collection records. We know surprisingly little about Axelrod, both before and after the JNPE. He was a Russian Jewish émigré student from Switzerland whom Jochelson invited to join the expedition. With the Jochelsons and Buxton, he traveled to the town of Gizhiga on the Sea of Okhotsk, and he later accompanied the Jochelsons on their survey of the Penzhina Koryak in September–October 1900. Unlike Jochelson, Bogoras, and Buxton, Axelrod had no previous fieldwork experience in the North. When Jochelson sent him to Markovo to assist Sof'ia Bogoras, he tasked him with taking physical measurements and photographs of Native people and collecting ethnographic objects for the AMNH (Shentalinskaia 2015:153–154), under dire conditions:

“After leaving the Koryak village of Kamenskoye 11 December [1900], I reached the Russian village [of Markovo] on Anadyr river after 8 days traveling by sled. [...] While waiting for the Chukchi, I worked at increasing the collections, photographing and measuring the inhabitants of Markovo. It was difficult because of the poor light in winter months and because the people didn't want to be measured. [...] I left Markovo 16 Feb. and reached Zeropol (Yeropol – I.K.) late at night on 17<sup>th</sup>. I photographed, took measurements, made masks [casts] and got artifacts for the Lamoot collection. [...] It is very difficult to work among the Chukchi and the Lamoot during the fair. [...] It is almost impossible to measure them in their yourts; if it is cold, the smoke in there is very thick. In Warkem (?), Markovo or Zeropol I could have taken the measurements in Russian houses; but at the Anmanski fair it is impossible because the fair is in the woods on the bank of a small river. [...] Although I arrived a few days earlier, there was hardly any opportunity for taking measurements. I could only photograph and collect artifacts. [...] I left 16 March and after my



Fig. 13 Example of Axelrod anthropological photographs.  
Image #1365, American Museum of Natural History Library.



Fig. 14 Alexander Axelrod.  
Image #1389, American Museum of Natural History Library.

arrival in Markovo on 17<sup>th</sup>, I concentrated exclusively in organizing our collections, which were packed in 31 trunks. (Axelrod to Bogoras, April 14, 1901, Mariinski Post; copy at AMNH).

In April 1901, upon his arrival at Mariinski Post, Axelrod took at least 50 more measurements of the local Chukchi, as well as several photographs now attributed to Bogoras. Axelrod later accompanied Bogoras on his trip to Cape Chaplin along the southern shore of the Chukchi Peninsula in April–July 1901, where he took more physical measurements and an unknown number of photographs (Fig. 13) and assisted Bogoras in making ethnographic collections. Yet Bogoras never acknowledged Axelrod's contribution in *The Chukchee* or any of his many other publications. Axelrod appears to be featured in one photograph (Fig. 14) taken at a Chukchi camp near Mariinski Post in July 1901.

From today's perspective, it is hard to grasp the norms of team ethics and data ownership at the time of the JNPE. Axelrod's and Sof'ia Bogoras's service ensured the overall success of Bogoras's party and provided its leader with much-needed time to concentrate on collecting language and folklore material, his prime interest during his JNPE work. Readers should keep the presence of these 'invisible partners' in mind while enjoying the ethnographic riches of Bogoras's seminal book.

## Epilogue

I first touched *The Chukchee* as a young Ph.D. student in Siberian anthropology almost 45 years ago, in the library of the then-Institute of Ethnography in Moscow. I remember the awe and trepidation with which I browsed through the three issues of the old AMNH *Memoirs* bound together into a heavy folio-size volume. I have used this book ever since, now in the more practical format of the 1975 reprint. I have another personal copy of that book in my possession, a gift from Frederica de Laguna (1906–2004), another 'maestro' of northern anthropology. I received it shortly before her passing, after I asked her about the role of Bogoras, Boas, and the JNPE in her personal training as an anthropologist, which culminated in her three-volume 'classical ethnography' of the Yakutat Tlingit (de Laguna 1972). That copy of *The Chukchee* forever binds in my mind Bogoras, Boas, and Freddie, the giants of 20<sup>th</sup>-century ethnology on whose shoulders we stand today.

As I tried to argue in this chapter, Bogoras was perhaps the most talented among the JNPE participants, second only to Boas himself in his energy, his professional skills, and the size of his contribution. *The Chukchee*, Bogoras's masterpiece and the main outcome of his years of research on northeast Siberia, remains the primary source of ethnological information on the Chukchi and other neighboring Siberian nations, despite the fact that it appeared more than 100 years ago. Thanks to its

extended sections on the contact history of the Chukchi and other aboriginal groups, it is perhaps the most dynamic and contemporary framed volume in the JNPE series, which remains the monument to the Boasian vision of ethnology and our main pool of knowledge on North Pacific aboriginal nations at the eve of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Nothing of its kind has been produced ever since, certainly not about the Chukchi people, and it makes Bogoras's oeuvre an unchallenged source of ethnographic wealth and the best 'snapshot' of aboriginal culture soon to undergo a rapid transformation. Contemporary readers, particularly indigenous ones, should take this book for what it is—for its breadth of ethnographic material and its user-friendly style and structure, but also for its shortcomings, the products of the JNPE design, Bogoras's self-education in the craft of anthropology, and his penchant for evolutionary theories and non-stop traveling. No one said it better than Boas himself in his stern reminder to Bogoras, then in the fervor of the 1905 Russian Revolution, that "[...] an investigation by Mr. Bogoras of the Chukchee happens only once in eternity, and I think you owe it to science to give us the results of your studies." Based on the remarkable combination of Bogoras's personal knowledge and skills, Boasian research design, and Bogoras's deviation from it in search for the 'unknown,' *The Chukchee* is indeed a book that happens once in humanity's time.

### Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Erich Kasten for his invitation to write this chapter, first as an introductory essay for a new reprint of *The Chukchee*, a dream of many years. I also thank my colleague at the Smithsonian Institution, William Fitzhugh, who in 1991 introduced me to the idea of a centennial re-visit of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition and invited me to become a partner in the Smithsonian 'Jesup-2' initiative. That ignited my long-held interest in Bogoras and his legacy. Over the years, I benefitted from collaboration and many productive discussions on Bogoras, Boas, and JNPE history with Sergei Kan (Dartmouth College), Nikolai Vakhtin (European University, St. Petersburg), Elena Mikhailova (Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology, St. Petersburg), and Barbara Mathé (American Museum of Natural History, New York), my partners on the 'Jesup-2', to whom I am always grateful. Elena Mikhailova, Sergei Kan, Erich Kasten, Nikolai Vakhtin, and Heidi Fritschel offered valuable comments and added important details to the original draft.

### Sources (Further reading)

Peter Schweitzer's (2005) condensed summary of Bogoras's life and his major contributions is perhaps the best current source in English to familiarize the readers with Bogoras's legacy. Other English-language sources include Krader 1968, Cole 1999 and

2001, Vakhtin 2001, and Freed 2012. Elena Mikhailova's detailed essay (2004) is the best contemporary Russian source on Bogoras's life, professional career, and his many public activities. Earlier Russian sources include Al'kor 1935, Zelenin 1937 (from the posthumous festschrift), and several later biographic overviews (Kolonteeva 1991; Vdovin 1991b).

Several lists of Bogoras's publications were compiled at different times (e.g., Vinnikov 1935; Kolonteeva 1991); the one prepared in German by Katharina Gernet (1999) is the most detailed. The most recent online list, compiled by Viacheslav V. Ivanov (available at <http://www.kunstkamera.ru:8081/siberia/Bibliorg/Bogoraz.pdf>) includes all of Bogoras's published works between 1896 and 1991.

A number of sources cover specific aspects of Bogoras's professional work and legacy. On Bogoras's relations to Boas, see Kan 2006. On Bogoras's (and Shternberg's) formative role in establishing the Russian ethnographic school of Siberian studies, see Kan 2009b, Vakhtin 2016a and 2016b, and Liarskaia 2016, see also *this volume*. Kuznetsova 1957, Vdovin 1977, Shentalinskaia 2015, and Krupnik 1996 discuss specific gaps in Bogoras's coverage of Reindeer Chukchi rituals, Chukchi religion, Native and Russian Siberian folklore, and Siberian Yupik social organization, respectively. On the contemporary situation of the Chukchi and their development under the Soviet power, see Gray 2005, Kerttula 2000, Schweitzer 1999, and Vaté 2005. The best summary of the status of Soviet Arctic minority people, including the role of Bogoras and the 'Committee of the North' is Vakhtin 1994.

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