



Máttut - máddagat

The Roots of Saami
ethnicities, societies
and spaces / places

4.–6.9.2008

University of Oulu
International and Multidisciplinary
Conference

Giellagas Institute for Saami Studies
in cooperation
with the Laboratory of Archaeology

Organizers

The Giellagas Institute (www.oulu.fi/giellagas) has a nation-wide responsibility to organize, introduce and provide Saami language and cultural studies and research at the academic level in Finland. It is an independent organisation in the Faculty of Humanities, University of Oulu, and it is financed directly by the Ministry of Education. The Giellagas Institute houses two major academic subjects, Saami Linguistics and Saami Culture.

General archaeology is a major academic subject in the Faculty of Humanities. In the archaeology studies the focus is on the prehistory of Northern Finland and other northern areas as part of global prehistory. You can also study classical archaeology as a major in the University of Oulu, focusing on Antiquity, particularly on the Greek and Roman world.

Working group

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Máttut - máddagat

The Roots of Saami ethnicities,
societies and spaces / places
4.–6.9.2008 University of Oulu

Máttut - máddagat – *The Roots of Saami ethnicities, societies and spaces / places* is an international and multidisciplinary conference. It is held at the University of Oulu by Giellagas Institute for Saami Studies in cooperation with the Laboratory of Archaeology.

The aim of the conference is to approach the subject of Saami “origins” from different perspectives including ethnicities, societies and concepts of places and spaces. Linguistics, archaeologists and genetics are asked to take part in the conversation. Other aim of the conference is to bring together experts from different countries. The conference is open for both researchers and students with an interest for Saami prehistory and history.

The conference is divided into three sessions. Each session will include invited key note speakers as well as shorter 20 minutes' papers.

1. session: **Ethnicities**. The “origin” of Saami people has been much debated for centuries and the explanations have varied in different times and within different disciplines. This session will invite linguistics, archaeologists and genetics to share the recent knowledge on this subject and to discuss how the information from different disciplines can contribute to each other. One of the aims is also to study how relevant is it to discuss “the Saami ethnicity” or “Saami ethnicities”.

2. session: **Societies**. From historical times *siida* (lappby) has considered to be the basic form of the “traditional” Saami society but what were it’s early stages and what is the relation of the historical *siida* to the prehistoric societies and to the cycle of annual migration. And how did livelihood and connections to other peoples influence social system? How much can we generalize the forms of *siida* system considering differences in time (historical development) and and space (geographical circumstances)?

3. session: **Spaces / places**. This session will examine the spatial manifestations of changes in livelihood and culture. Landscape, language, dwelling places and hunting practices have changed and these changes have left their mark to the lived environment. Also human perceptions of spaces and places have altered. The alterations of mental landscapes can be reached from for example place names and rock art. In this session questions concerning tangible and intangible marks of cultural change in spaces and places will be raised.

The main title of the conference – *Máttut - máddagat* – is part of a poem by Nils-Aslak Valkeapää (in *Beaivi áhcázán* 1988, poem number 71) which ends:

*eanan lea earálágán
go diehtá
dáppe
máttut
máddagat*

*the land is different
when you know
here are
roots
ancestors*

(English translation by Ralph Salisbury, Lars Norström and Harald Gaski)

Programme

Every presentation includes ten minutes for discussion.

4.9.2008

9.00 –10.00

Registration

10.00–10.30

Opening of the conference

Prof. Timo Lauttamus, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities

Prof. Veli-Pekka Lehtola, Head of Giellagas Institute (on sabbatical)

1. Session: Ethnicities

10.30–10.50

Pekka Sammallahti

Linguistic Aspects of Saami Prehistory

11.00–11.45

Christian Carpelan

A scenario of Saami origins and the formation of the Saami village system

11.55–12.15

Petri Kallio

The Stratigraphy of the Indo-European Loanwords in Saami

12.25–13.30

LUNCH

13.30–14.15

Markku Niskanen

The Saami and their origins in light of biological anthropology

14.25–14.45

Antti Sajantila

Genetic studies of the Saami populations

15.00–15.30

COFFEE BREAK

15.30–15.50

Ante Aikio

On the origin of Saami ethnicity in light of linguistic substrate studies

16.00–16.20

Nadezhda Lobanova
Early Metal Age houses on the Karelian Shore of the White Sea

16.30–17.00

Discussion

17.00

Closing of the first conference day

18.30

WELCOME PARTY at Never Grow Old

5.9.2008

2. Session: Societies

9.30–10.15

Kjell-Åke Aronsson

Saami societies and the siida - reflections from an archaeological perspective

10.25–11.10

Janne Saarikivi

Emergence of Saami languages: a view from the east

11.20–11.40

Vladimir Shumkin - cancelled

Archaeology of the Russian Lapland

11.50–12.50

LUNCH

12.50–13.10

Jostein Bergstøl

From moose to reindeer. Hunting and trapping as ethnic motor in the south

13.20–13.40

Risto Nurmi

The others among us? – Saami artefacts in the 17th century urban context in the Tornio town, Northern Finland

3. Session: Spaces / places

13.50–14.10

Noel Broadbent

"Lapps", iron, animal husbandry and seals: heterogeneity and Saami ethnogenesis in northern coastal Sweden

14.20–14.50

COFFEE BREAK

14.50–15.35

Inger Zachrisson

Antlers on graves and sacrificial sites - in South Saami society 1-1850 A.D.

15.45–16.05

Petri Halinen

Change and continuity of Saami dwelling sites from the Late Iron Age to the 18th century

16.15–16.35

Nuccio Mazzullo

Sápmi: a symbolic re-appropriation of Lapland as Saamiland

16.35–17.00

Discussion

17.00

Closing of the second conference day

18.00–19.30 RECEPTION at the town hall

20.00

CONFERENCE DINNER at Sokeri-Jussin Kievari

6.9.2008

9.30–10.15

Ingrid Sommerseth

Archaeological perspectives on the transition from wild reindeer hunting to reindeer herding: Boazulihkku (Reindeer Luck) as a link between past and present reindeer landscapes

10.25–10.45

Arne Håkon Thomassen

Rock Art and Saami cultural history – new but old perspectives

10.55–11.15

Johanna Domokos

Identity, intimacy and locality crisis in Saami poetry

11.25–12.30

LUNCH

12.30–12.50

Terhi Vuojala-Magga

Just simple things but complicated skills

13.00–14.00

Conclusions, discussion and closing of the conference

14.00–14.30
COFFEE BREAK

15.00
EXCURSION

Abstracts

(in running order)

Pekka Sammallahti
Linguistic Aspects of Saami Prehistory

Christian Carpelan
A scenario of Saami origins and the formation of the Saami village system

The presentation begins with a brief review of the research history starting with the passage on the *Fenni* that Cornelius Tacitus included in his *Germania*, written in AD 98, i.e. 1910 years ago.

The scenario of Saami origins begins with a brief excursion into the methods. It is based on archaeological interpretation combined with interpretation of linguistic evidence. In short, archaeology, based on evidence known to provenance and date, can provide an areal and temporal framework, with which one can attempt to correlate patterns produced by historical linguistics. Here, archaeologically discernible waves of influence provide a useful tool: I presume that archaeologically discernible waves of influence have also transmitted lingual influence.

As to the origins, the initial Early Mesolithic populating of Fennoscandia, including the historically known Saami territory took place from two directions: Western Europe and Eastern Europe. These populations must have represented different languages. At some point of time the Uralic predecessor of Saami was adopted in Eastern Fennoscandia from a source in Eastern Europe. It was probably during the Kjelmøy period (650 BC–AD 300) that the consolidation of a Proto-Saami language and identity took place in Northern Scandinavia as a result of language change. Since the late Middle Ages and Early Modern times, the Saami of Eastern Fennoscandia were forced to acculturate and assimilate to expanding Finnish and Karelian colonists and so disappeared while the secondary Saami population of Northern Scandinavia survived.

As to the formation of the Saami village system, the appearance of fixed winter villages in the later part of the 16th century suggests that a new social system was adopted. This took place simultaneously with the taxation reform implemented by King Gustaf Vasa of Sweden. The formation of the historically known *siida* system is probably a result of an administrative reorganisation. The archaeological picture of the preceding periods point to a more flexible indigenous *siida* system among the Saami.

Petri Kallio
The Stratigraphy of the Indo-European Loanwords in Saami

Over the past few decades, our knowledge of the Indo-European loanwords in Saami has been increased dramatically, thanks to Jorma Koivulehto, Pekka Sammallahti,

and Ante Aikio. The objective of my paper is to present a state-of-the-art survey of the field that introduces non-specialists to this recent progress. I shall also discuss what the stratigraphy of these loanwords can tell us about Saami prehistory.

Markku Niskanen

The Saami and their origins in light of biological anthropology

The biological characteristics and thus biological roots of Saami have interested researchers for decades. Many researchers have pointed out the Saami's morphological and genetic distinctness. Traditionally, this biological distinctness has been interpreted to indicate non-European, presumably Siberian origins, of the Saami. In reality, their distinctive genetic and morphological traits are primarily due to the fact that they inhabit the northern periphery of Europe and that they were foragers until relatively recently.

Recent genetic studies indicate that their genetic roots are in Europe. Their genetic ancestors, as indicated by their maternal and paternal lineages (mitochondrial and Y-chromosomal DNA, respectively) derive from both the western (Franco-Cantabria) and the eastern (the South Russian Plain) Last Glacial Maximum refugiums of Europe. After the initial colonization of Fennoscandia over 10 000 years ago, their gene pool has been greatly affected by genetic drift and partial genetic isolation. Their cranial and somatological traits reflect genetic drift, partial genetic isolation, climatic conditions in the northern periphery of Europe and their relatively recent forager past.

Antti Sajantila

Genetic studies of the Saami populations

The presentation gives an overview of basic genetic concepts of population genetics analyses aimed to understand population history in genera, and that of the Saami in particular. In order to understand population history by use of genetic markers, one has to take into account both demographic parameters and molecular forces that may have influenced the population or population groups in question. It is important to realize that different genetic marker systems may reveal different or even contradicting pathways in the history of a population.

Recently, both Saami and Finnish populations have been in a focus of intense genetic studies, and these have revealed new insights for the human population genetics studies. The results have shown that both of these populations have distinct genetic features making them interesting target populations for further studies or serving as model populations for population history modeling. This presentation reviews these earlier studies, and some previously unpublished results are presented.

Ante Aikio

On the origin of Saami ethnicity in light of linguistic substrate studies

It is a common conception among both scholars and laymen alike that the presence of Saami peoples in Lapland spans thousands of years of prehistory. For instance, diverse archaeological cultures in Lapland, ranging from the early Iron Age all the way back to the end of the last Ice Age, are often surmised to be connected with the Saami. However, there have been relatively few attempts to test such hypotheses against linguistic evidence of the origin and development of Saami languages.

In my paper I will approach the origin of Saami languages and Saami ethnicity from the perspective of comparative linguistics, more exactly the field of substrate studies, which aims at uncovering evidence of prehistoric language shifts and spreads. Such evidence can be found, e.g., by tracing language contacts through various layers of loanwords and by examining the origin of place-names in a given region. Such an approach yields a picture of the ethnic prehistory of Lapland that is quite different from conventional scenarios.

The Saami languages show all the typical signs that suggest they rather recently - probably no more than 2000 years ago - spread from a rather limited region to cover their present wide territory. Evidence in the form of place-names and loanwords shows that this original core area of Saami was located in Southern Finland and Karelia, and that prior to the spread of Saami, languages wholly unrelated to them were spoken in what is now known as Lapland. These languages are now extinct and no direct documentation of them exists, but their former existence can be verified by the traces they have left to Saami in the form of loanwords and place-names. These linguistic findings have major consequences on how the Saami ethnogenesis must be interpreted in terms of space and time.

Nadezhda Lobanova

Early Metal Age houses on the Karelian Shore of the White Sea

Near the former Karelian village of Sonostrov (40 km away from Arctic Circle) 7 settlements dating from the Stone Age to the Early Metal Period were discovered in the years 2003–2005. The most interesting sites among those are Sonostrov I, III-IV dated back to Early Metal Age (approx. 1800–2000 BC). Uniquely for Karelia they contain house pits, including some arranged in lined-up chains of 3–7 structures. Similar dwelling complexes have been studied in Northern Finland (Kierikki area). Three house pits in sites Sonostrov I, IV and V were excavated. Previously, such sites had not been known from the White Sea coast.

The dwellings were relatively small (16 to 22 m² in area), rectangular in outline, with one or two entrances and unusual stone hearths. Finds in the houses are quite poor. Tools were made nearly exclusively of quartz material, which quality was very high. Slate and flint tools and flakes were totally absent. Fragments of vessels contained asbestos and some organic temper and belonged to the final stage of this type ceramics.

Excavated houses were all rather short-lived. They were perhaps used for one or two cold seasons. The facts indicating to their use in winter are stone heating structures inside the dwellings, predominant concentration of the finds within the pits, and the presence of only one or two ceramic vessels.

The sites in the Sonostrov area are of exceptional scientific interest, and require large-scope multidisciplinary investigation.

Kjell-Åke Aronsson

Saami societies and the siida - reflections from an archaeological perspective

The *siida* has been described as the original type of Saami social organisation and a form of primitive communism and collectivism. The classical work of Väinö Tanner about the Skolt Saami society has been very influential for archaeological, historical, anthropological and sociological research on Saami society. Despite some obvious local differences the assumption has been that the supposed pre-colonial *siida* showed certain basic Saami characteristics. The supposed *siida* has been used as a framework to put the archaeological material into Eastern as well as Western Saami areas.

For Tanner the East Saami *siida* represented an initial stage of primitive communism. From a critical perspective this view is not based on empirical observations but on ideas of cultural

evolution popular at his time. The progress of mankind was described as distinctive stages of economic and cultural evolution. The Eastern Saami *siida* was just put into a sequence of general cultural evolution. When the ideas and anthropological perspectives of New Archaeology became popular in Sweden in the 1970's the supposed pre-colonial *siida* was described as a form of band society of primitive hunters and gatherers.

During the summer of 2008 an archaeological test digging was carried to verify or falsify the existence of *siida* societies and winter camp sites in Western Saami area of the Lule Saami district. In the earlier research a winter camp site of the *Tuorpon* Saami *siida* have been pointed out near the village Maitum in the Jokkmokk area. The place-name *Talvatis* indicates of winter settlement and a number of hearths from fire-places inside the tents seem also to point to a winter camp site of a *siida* community. A nearby lake is called *Tuorponjaur*. In recent time the area in question is winter pasture ground for the *Tuorpon* Saami reindeer herding district.

The results from the excavation so far do not support earlier assumptions of a winter village site of a *siida* collective. The result points instead to repeated settlement of one or perhaps to families. The archaeological material is dated from about 1000 AD to the 1700's. Preliminary analyses of the osteological material show that fish, birds and reindeer were used as resources. From a critical point of view the written sources used in earlier research give no substantial support for *siida* societies of the East Saami type in the Lule Saami district. There is a need for new directions in research in Saami social organisation in the past.

Janne Saarikivi

Emergence of Saami languages: a view from the East

My paper handles the emergence of Saami languages, laying special emphasis to linguistic heritage of Saami in Russian toponyms and dialectal vocabulary. In this connection, the linguistic definition of 'Saami' languages is scrutinised from the lexical, phonological and typological point of view.

It will be shown that the process that ultimately lead to the emergence of present Saami languages, has left diverse traces in the toponymy of Karelian, Veps and Russian speaking territories south of the present Saami area. In this linguistic heritage, three geographically distinct layers can be separated:

1) Area in which the Saami linguistic substrate that is discernable in the present-day languages shows predominantly features pointing to (relatively) modern Saami substrate languages (Northern Karelia)

2) Area in which the linguistic substrate discernable in the present-day languages shows features pointing to languages that phonologically can be defined as Saami but that lacks specific toponymic notions common in modern Saami (such as *roavvi* 'burnt-land', *vuotna* 'longish bay', etc.; Central and Southern Karelia)

3) Area in which the linguistic substrate can be defined as Saami from a phonological point of view, but which lacks most of the central Saami toponymic notions (such as *geadgi* 'stone, *njarga* 'cape; headland', etc.; area east of Lake Ladoga and Lake Onega).

In the light of the toponymic material presented, the Russian historical sources mentioning Saami are given a possible interpretation. It will be proposed that in the Middle Ages, there have been diverse groups of people who have been identified as 'Lapps' in a large northern area. Only some of them seem to have utilised terminology characteristic of modern Saami languages. It means that these languages have been lexically closer to the Finnic languages than those Saami languages that have preserved up to the present date and which have contacted with the Palaeo-European substrate languages of Northern Fennoscandia.

Vladimir Shumkin - cancelled

Archaeology of the Russian Lapland

About 400 archaeological sites are presently known in Russian Lapland (in Kola Peninsula, Murmansk region). The study of this territory commenced much later than that of the adjacent Western or Southern regions; the main attention at the first stage was paid exclusively to labyrinths. In the following years almost all types of archaeological objects were discovered and partially studied: sites, settlements, workshops, cult places, new labyrinths, and graves. Chronological span of the sites is rather wide ranging from 10 thousand years BP till the 18th century A.D.

The present knowledge of the territory is quite uneven: the sea regions and the shores of some major lakes have been investigated better, while the inter-land territory has been less studied. At certain periods (the 1930s, 1960s and 1990s) the archaeology of Kola Peninsula was significantly boosted by ideas, discoveries and scientific practice of Norwegian and Finnish researches (A. Nummedal, J. Boe, K. Odner, P. Simonsen, K. Helskog, B. Olsen, C. Carpelan). The degree to which the different epochs have been studied varies, as a result of a combination of a number of objective and subjective factors. Confidently enough one can speak of populating the Northern shore from the West not later than ten thousand years ago, about continuous gradual development of the material and intellectual culture at least for the following six thousand years, about flourishing and a 'wealth climax' ultimately possible within an appropriating economy, about some extra-ethnic Eastern impetus taking place just at that time (Early Metal epoch, four to three thousand years ago).

The subsequent periods of local history have not been adequately studied. Yet it is just this time which is considered by most experts as the beginning of the development of a special, very peculiar in many respects Saami community (culture, nationality or nation?). Based on the modern archaeological and anthropological data the inhabitants of Kola Peninsula in the Early Metal epoch can be considered as one of the main constituents of the Saami population of Fennoscandia. Understanding of the process itself, of its nature and duration require deeper, systematic and goal-oriented efforts based, in the first place, on the field archaeological studies.

Jostein Bergstøl

From moose to reindeer. Hunting and trapping as ethnic motor in the south

Several researchers have pointed out that moose played a bigger role in the economy among the early (or pre-) Saami societies, especially in the vast forest areas in Norrland, Middle Sweden and Southern Norway. During the Late Iron Age, the reindeer became increasingly more important.

This paper offers one possible explanation to this shift in basic economy of prehistoric Saami societies. It is argued that the economic value of the trade with antlers and furs, combined with the Norse expansion into Saami territory, turned the Saami hunters more exclusively towards this very rich resource.

Risto Nurmi

The others among us? – Saami artefacts in the 17th century urban context in the Tornio town, Northern Finland

A common trend in North European archaeology is to separate Saami archaeology to its own separate branch of study, which is concentrated on studying the sites of Saami cultural origin. On the contrary, historical archaeology as a concept stands for the study of the influence of European

culture expansion around the world since the medieval. This colonial view considers Europeans in settlements as us and native populations in and around as the others.

The subject of this paper is the seven Saami characteristics antler spoons that were found from the archaeological excavations executed in the Tornio town in 2002. To illustrate the role of these spoons and their interpretation, I will, instead of just stating them as indicators of Saami influence and interaction, set a question; what was the role and meaning of these artefacts to the people in the 17th century town of Tornio? The traditional view interprets these spoons as the artefacts of trade, goods exchanged from the Saami population to be traded forwards or used in domestic use. The other approach in interpretation of the spoons is to ask whether the spoons were the manifesting or hidden artefacts of identity; the items that were used to show the family origins against the faceless system that categorised the people and dispelled the individual.

As an aim this paper is trying to illustrate how the archaeological artefacts can carry multidimensional symbolic and functional meanings that can provide a lot of information about the life of the contemporary people outside the records if assessed comprehensively. It also shows that the historical (urban) archaeology and Saami archaeology are not that separate of each other after all. Overall, the mission of archaeology is not to study artefacts but the people behind the artefacts.

Noel Broadbent

“Lapps” and Labyrinths: Heterogeneity and the quest for a lost coastal culture in Sweden

This paper summarizes the results of an archaeological investigation of nine site locales along a ca 460 km north-south transect in northern coastal Sweden dating to A.D. 1–1300. This material is put into the perspective of the deep past in coastal Västerbotten. Archaeological, chronological, archaeozoological, metallurgical and place-name results are presented. The main goal of the study has been to contextualize this material with respect to Saami prehistory and to define the trajectory of Saami ethnogenesis in this part of ancient Sápmi. The main theoretical perspective is based on resilience theory in which heterogeneity and episodic or punctuated changes are key elements.

Inger Zachrisson

Antlers on graves and sacrificial sites in South Saami society AD 1–1850 - and how to look upon South Saami culture and identity

Antlers of elk and reindeer had a great symbolical significance in the Saami culture. They can also serve as a starting-point for a discussion about South Saami culture and history, its relationship to Nordic culture, as well as to Saami culture further north-east. Archaeological investigations and surveys in the South Saami area show variation and change as well as tradition and continuity in the usage of antlers. Great changes in society can be seen during the 6th Century. After that, antlers are no longer found on graves, but on sacrificial sites.

Antlers attached to skulls of elk and reindeer bulls (*aavsie*) were deposited on graves c. AD 1 in connection with a new burial custom. Antlers crowned sacrificial sites (*tseegkuve*) with the bones of a reindeer beneath a cairn in the 19th Century. Locations on shores and mountain tops, liminal spheres, had a special importance. Traditions about the holy elk have survived especially in the South Saami area. Comparisons with ethnographic material and animal ceremonialism in northern Eurasia are made.

Petri Halinen

Change and continuity of Saami dwelling sites from the Late Iron Age to the 18th century

The aim of the presentation is to discuss what kind of changes and continuity can be observed in the archaeological material of the Saami dwellings and dwelling sites in the interior of the Northern Fennoscandia from the Late Iron Age to the 18th century. They are discussed by analyzing the intra site factors of the dwellings and between the dwellings. The paper presents also preliminary results of the field work of summer 2007.

Nuccio Mazzullo

Sápmi: a symbolic re-appropriation of Lapland as Saamiland

In this paper I shall focus on the ways in which Saami people engage with the landscape through place naming and how such an approach can be understood as a complex nexus where personal biographies, both human and non-human, converge.

From a phenomenological perspective on the perception of the landscape, I shall argue that place names are not markers of a separate physical space, standing metaphorically for an external reality. Rather the elicitation of place names, together with the mnemonic skills involved in recalling them, is a performative act. Place names are understood physically, symbolically and relationally, in the very process of tuning into and engaging with the landscape.

Finally, given the importance that place names have had among Saami people in the past, and still hold today, I shall suggest that place names have also played a pivotal role in defending Saami territory from external encroachment and represent an important way of securing and attending to their relationship to the land, in their personal everyday life, and to the ongoing process of political recognition of Saamiland.

Ingrid Sommerseth

Archaeological perspectives on the transition from wild reindeer hunting to reindeer herding: Boazulihkku (Reindeer Luck) as a link between past and present reindeer landscapes

The cultural diversity within the Saami in the interior of Troms county is reflected today in various types of monuments such as offering sites, dwellings and hunting pit systems, in oral traditions and in place-names. Huge hunting pit systems indicate that whole groups of hunters and fishers stayed far up in the mountain tracts during late summer or autumn and waited for the wild reindeer herd as they were migrating towards autumn and winter areas. *Stallo*-house sites situated near the hunting systems are dated between 600–1100 AD, indicates an active period of settlement and use of the interior landscape.

The transition period between reindeer hunting and a full scale reindeer pastoralism can be seen in the numerous *árran*, dated from the beginning of 15th century, which are situated in the same landscape used for hunting. From 1400 AD onwards, the Saami migrated annually with their reindeer herd from the interior east of the Swedish and Norwegian border (settled in 1752) to the coast.

Stories and events are connected to the migratory routes and related dwelling areas. The tradition of good wishes to a landscape, and remembering a good place through *yoik*, is crucial for getting along with the grazing land. Johan Turi (1910) writes that in reindeer husbandry and trapping, knowledge is not enough to make one successful- one must also have luck. There is a difference between reindeer luck and plain luck. Reindeer luck is not incidental but based upon a conciliatory spirit and the ability to get along with the world. The lecture articulates a reindeer Saami understanding, centred around the term *Boazulihkku* - reindeer luck, and relates the present term to past hunting, since luck in hunting was among the central themes in Saami mythology and ritual.

Shakhnovich Mark and Julia Kozhevnikova - cancelled

Excavations of Lapp" pit in North Karelia. To the question about the Saami monuments of Karelia

Our presentation deals with stone constructions located on the tops of different mountains in Northern Karelia. The archaeological expedition from Karelian State Regional Museum studied these objects from the end of 20th to the beginning of 21st century.

Arne Håkon Thomassen

Rock Art and Saami cultural history – new but old perspectives

Discussions about whether or not certain cultural artefacts found in Saami territories are Saami show that cultural artefacts are closely linked to identity. In this paper some views will be presented on the subject concerning rock art and its under-communicated connection to the Saami cultural history. Rock art is easily given symbolical meaning and content in today's society. On a world basis rock art is also something which involves indigenous peoples in the process of developing premises of documentation, preservation and guidance. 'Ownership' of the past and management of the cultural artefacts connected to it are not indifferent issues. In countries like Australia and South Africa this is taken for granted, something else would undoubtedly cause havoc.

Rock art has mainly been seen to be of such an old age that it is of no relevance to Saami culture, despite the fact that cultural heritage remains of the prehistory can be seen as a precognition of both Saami and non-Saami cultural history. For indigenous peoples, geographical knowledge makes up a physical and mental map that has no established borders, but rather countless locations where tangible and intangible cultural artefacts are related to sites on the map. Rock art can provide useful insight as to how it is also connected to the Saami cultural history, thus leading to a deeper understanding of their meaning.

Johanna Domokos

Identity, intimacy and locality crisis in Saami poetry

Intimacy is the ability and the choice to be an open, loving, real and immediate partner to others. It is an unfolding movement between autonomy and togetherness.

Identity is a created attitude affected by cultural and geopolitical contexts. It is a dynamic process fixed around the diverse, flexible and hybrid foundations of the self and the other. To achieve intimacy, secure and appropriate identities are needed. Both the sense of intimacy and identity are positively influenced by rootedness in a place. This study starts with a meditation on the Saami physical and mental space and place, and shows how rootedness in place and tradition effects the unfolding of the individual, personal and communal identities.

As a communicating medium, poetry provides suitable information about the conflict zones of the society regarding its identity, intimacy and locality crises. In the case of recent Saami poetry the major hot spots can be described as the conflicts regarding: (1) the domestic intimacy and personal identity, (2) the indigenous intimacy and collective identity, and (3) the ecological intimacy and cosmic identity. Each of these units are briefly described and exemplified through a Saami poetry volume available in English translation.

Terhi Vuojala-Magga

Just simple things but complicated skills

We gain our knowledge of our past either through history which is based on written documents or oral tradition, and/or through archaeology and its prehistoric findings. What can the anthropology of practical skill tell us about the past of northern people? The basics of the skills are connected to our everyday life and understanding. It can sound simple such as “we sleep when we are tired and we eat when we are hungry.” However, as soon as we get out from our practical way of being, our profound knowledge disappears, and the thoughts make us prisons of our bodies – in its deepest meaning we lose our technical skills of our personhood.

In this paper, I argue that the underestimated and fairly unknown praxis/skills of human beings are an essential part of human wisdom that is not fully seen in the studies of oral tradition or communication. By using the concept of enskilment e.g. experiencing and mastering the skills within one’s own environment, I define the very profound meanings of implicit knowledge and nonverbal communication. This can be understood as a poetry of human life and it can lead us to a deeper understanding of processes of life and change, that can add up new meanings to both knowledge of archaeological findings and to the present life of northerners.

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