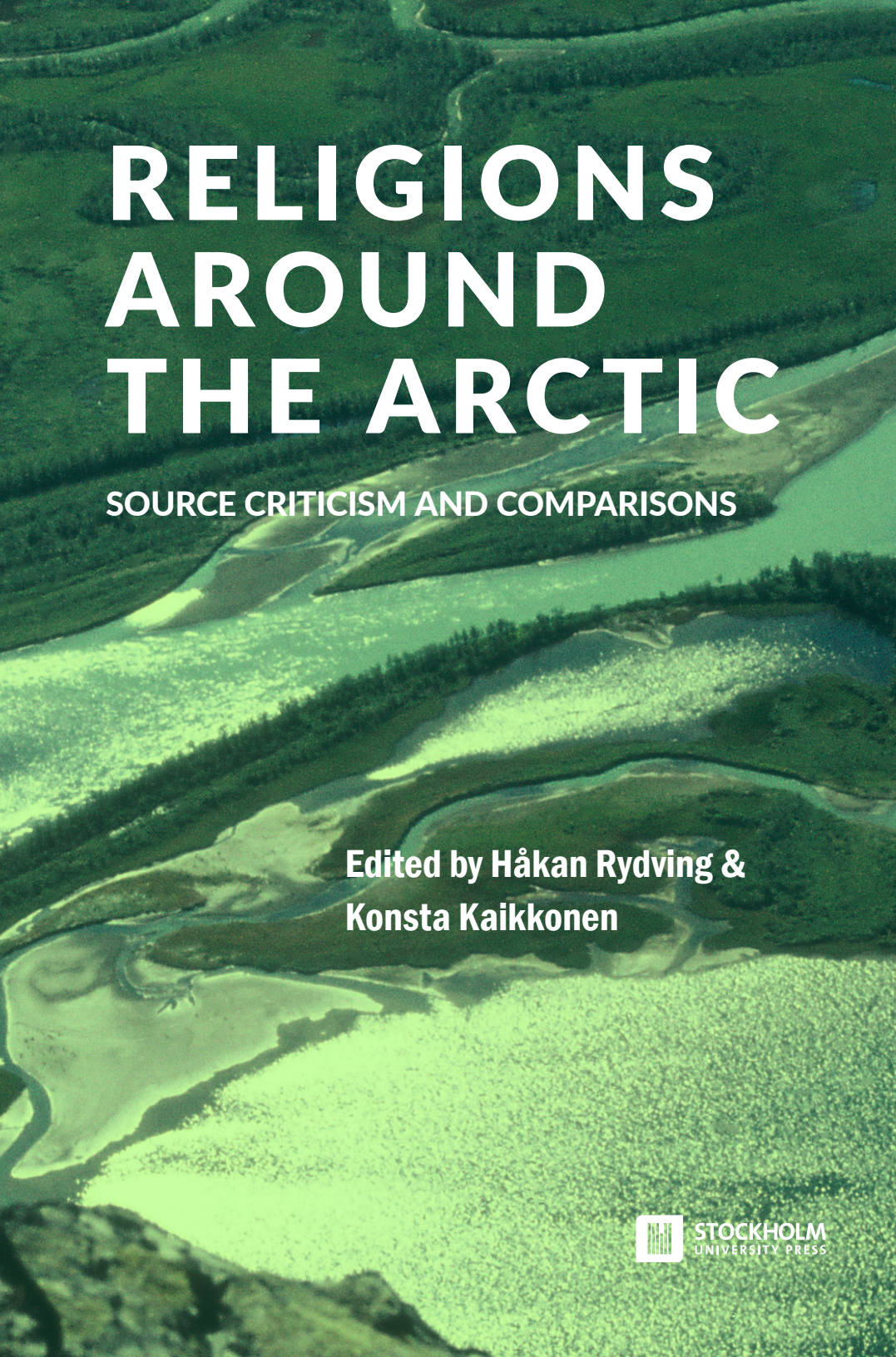
RELIGIONS AROUND THE ARCTIC
SOURCE CRITICISM AND COMPARISONS
Edited by Håkan Rydving & Konsta Kaikkonen
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Religions around the Arctic

Source Criticism and Comparisons

Håkan Rydving & Konsta Kaikkonen (eds.)

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Preface

This volume is based on papers read at the seminar 'Religions Around the Arctic: Source Criticism and Comparisons' at the University of Bergen, 10–12 September, 2018. We would especially like to thank the invited keynote speakers, Prof. Juha Pentikäinen, Dr Jelena Porsanger, and Dr Tom Sjöblom, for informative, inspiring, and thought-provoking presentations, and the Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies, and Religion at the University of Bergen for the financing of the seminar.

Thanks to the patience and good co-operation of the seminar participants who have accepted our invitation to publish revised versions of their papers in this volume, it is now finally due to be published.

To the editorial board of Stockholm Studies in Comparative Religion for having accepted the book, to Anna Silberstein and Christina Lenz at Stockholm University Press for invaluable help in the publishing process, to Prof. Thomas DuBois and the anonymous peer reviewer for very helpful comments, and to the Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies, and Religion at the University of Bergen for a generous publishing grant, we express our deep gratitude. They made it possible to realize the book project.

Bergen and Tromsø in September 2021,
Håkan Rydving
Konsta Kaikkonen

Contributors

Trude Fonneland (PhD in Cultural Studies, Bergen 2010)
Professor of Cultural Studies, The Arctic University Museum of Norway, UiT – The Arctic University of Norway.

Riku Hämäläinen (PhD in the Study of Religions, Helsinki 2011)
Adjunct Professor of the Study of Religions, Department of Cultures, University of Helsinki.

Eldar Heide (PhD in Scandinavian Studies, Bergen 2006)
Professor of Norwegian, Department of Language, Literature, Mathematics, and Interpreting, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences.

Konsta Kaikkonen (PhD in the Study of Religions, Bergen 2020)
Senior Lecturer in the Study of Religions, Department of Pedagogy, Religion, and Social Studies, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences.

Liudmila Nikanorova (PhD in the Study of Religions, Tromsø 2019)
Postdoctoral Researcher in the Study of Religions, Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies, and Religion, University of Bergen.

Stefan Olsson (PhD in the Study of Religions, Bergen 2016)
Independent Researcher.

Vesa Matteo Piludu (PhD in the Study of Religions, Helsinki 2019)
Postdoctoral Researcher in the Study of Religions, Helsinki Institute of Sustainability Science, and in Indigenous Studies, University of Helsinki.

Håkan Rydving (ThD in the History of Religions, Uppsala 1993)
Professor of the History of Religions, Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies, and Religion, University of Bergen.

Dikka Storm (M.Soc.Sci. in Geography, Bergen 1990)
Senior Researcher of Cultural Studies, The Arctic University Museum of Norway, UiT – The Arctic University of Norway.

Olle Sundström (PhD in Religious Studies, Umeå 2009)
Reader in History of Religions, Department of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies, Umeå University.

Liv Helene Willumsen (PhD in Literature, Bergen 2003; PhD in History, Edinburgh 2008)
Professor Emerita of History, Department of Archaeology, History, the Study of Religions, and Theology, UiT – The Arctic University of Norway.

Introduction

Håkan Rydving

The indigenous religious traditions of the peoples of the Arctic and Sub-Arctic areas were very diverse before they were superseded by Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam – and later by secularism. Despite their diversity, these traditions have, however, often been presented as more or less similar. But in recent research, diversity and the local have shifted towards the focus of interest. It was for this reason that we chose source criticism and comparisons as the theme for the conference where preliminary versions of the chapters in this volume were first presented. Source criticism and a new understanding of the sources combined with critical readings of earlier research are therefore basic methodological tools in all the contributions. In addition, the following essays test out different comparative approaches to historical material.

The nine chapters analyse material from different time periods, from the Middle Ages to the present. They address examples of ritual and narrative traditions among a selection of 'northern peoples': Estonians, Finns, Karelians, Samis, Scandinavians, and Irish in Western Europe; Khantys, Mansis, Nganasans, and Sakhas in Siberia; Assiniboines, Crees, Lakotas, and Ojibwas in northern North America. Some of the chapters focus on aspects of the traditional cultures of these peoples, others are critical readings of research about them. The themes of the chapters that deal with traditional practices and narratives vary from hostage traditions to ancestor mountains, from bear rituals and sweat baths to the ritual drum. The research historical chapters discuss source critical and terminological problems, or consider the contributions of scholars in the emergence of what eventually become identified

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as religions. The purpose of collecting these rather diverse texts into a single volume is to exemplify some of the ways in which the history of indigenous religious traditions of Arctic and Sub-Arctic peoples are studied today, with a focus on various forms of source criticism and comparison.

The book is divided into three parts, each with three chapters. The first part gives examples of comparative approaches to 'Localised practices and religions'. The historian of religions Stefan Olsson, an expert on hostage traditions in Fennoscandia and the British Isles during the Viking Age and the Middle Ages, discusses four place names, a Swedish one that Saxo Grammaticus Latinised as Gyslamarchia, the Karelian Kihlakunta, Kihelkonna on the Estonian island of Saaremaa, and the Irish Airgíalla. Olsson shows that even such minimal material can be the basis for interesting observations, because it is possible that all four names contain a word for 'hostage'. But is that really the case? And is it possible to draw any conclusion about medieval hostage traditions on the basis of an analysis of these names? These are two of the questions Olsson attempts to answer.

In recent decades, there has been a certain scepticism about earlier analyses of the indigenous religions of Fennoscandia that compared, for example, Sami and Scandinavian traditions and asked questions almost exclusively about origin. This is now changing and the leading researcher in the new endeavour of comparing and relating Old Norse and Sami religious traditions is the linguist Eldar Heide. In his contribution he returns to the earlier discussion about ancestor mountains with a new comparative analysis of the Icelandic Helgafell and the South Sami *saajve* complexes. He presents the sources, characterises the two complexes, and asks whether or not Helgafell and the *saajve* mountains were regarded as realms of the dead. Finding connections and similarities, he suggests how they could be understood.

In his doctoral dissertation, the folklorist and historian of religions Vesa Matteo Piludu investigated songs of Finnish and Karelian bear ceremonies. One type of these songs is *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky*, and it is these that Piludu takes as the basis for a comparative analysis here. The Finno-Karelian examples are compared to Ob-Ugric (Khanty and Mansi) songs of the

same type. In contrast to earlier research, which focused on the similarities, Piludu has investigated both differences and similarities asking questions like: What sources exist and how have they been analysed in earlier research? Were the bear songs in the two different cultural contexts used in the same or in different types of rituals? What is similar and what is different in the contents of these songs?

In the second part, 'Indigenous Sami religion: research history and source criticism', the three contributions focus on different source materials – a ritual drum and texts written by clergymen and missionaries, records of a court proceeding, and two introductory research texts. All three chapters, however, give ample proof of the necessity of source criticism. The historian and geographer Dikka Storm and the folklorist Trude Fonneland write about a North Sami drum that was found in the early 1990s and deposited at the Arctic University Museum of Norway in 2016. Storm and Fonneland discuss several interesting questions relating to the find: What period does the drum date from? What were the religious conditions within the area at that time? How was Christian work organised, and what do we know about the local forms of indigenous Sami religion? What were the religious identities of the Sami?

In the witchcraft trials of northernmost Norway during the seventeenth century, a comparatively large percentage of those who were accused, judged, and executed were Sami men and women. The contribution by historian Liv Helene Willumsen, the preeminent expert on these trials, presents an interpretation of the best known case, the one against Anders Poulsen in 1692. In a close reading of the court proceedings with recourse to the discourse analysis of the literary theorist Gérard Genette, Willumsen investigates the context of the trial, the 'voices' that played such a central part, and how Poulsen's interpretation of the figures on his drum can be understood. Finally, she asks whether the manuscript reveals anything about shamanism.

In the third source-critical investigation, the historian of religions Konsta Kaikkonen discusses an introduction to Sami indigenous religion, originally written by the Finnish clergyman Jacob Fellman. The introduction consists of two parts, a lexical one

that was written before the end of the 1830s, and a general one, probably written around 1850. However, the introduction remained unknown until its publication 1906 by Jacob's son Isak, who not only rearranged the material, but also, as Kaikkonen convincingly argues, added some sections. Kaikkonen discusses several source-critical questions, such as: To what extent is the introduction a compilation of earlier works and to what extent is it an independent source on Sami indigenous religion in Northern Finland? And how does the text relate to a similar manuscript from the same period, written by Fellman's Swedish colleague Lars Levi Laestadius?

In the third part of the book, 'Theories, comparisons, and the roles of scholarship', three historians of religions demonstrate how the use of carefully selected theoretical perspectives can illuminate empirical material from Native North America and Finland, from the Nganasan and from the Sakha in Siberia. Riku Hämäläinen makes two comparisons, first between the role of the bear rituals of the Eastern Cree on the one hand and of the Assiniboine and the Lakota on the other, and secondly between the Native North American sweat bath tradition and the Finnish sauna tradition. He interprets the bear rituals with the help of the ecology of religion model formulated by Åke Hultkrantz, and the sweat bath and sauna traditions with the help of the models for ritual analysis proposed by Arnold van Gennep and advanced by Victor Turner. In his conclusion, Hämäläinen discusses how the similarities and dissimilarities between the examples should be understood; in doing so, and in contrast to much earlier research, he places special emphasis on the importance of differences when studying religious traditions.

Although Olle Sundström's contribution analyses the technical terminology of Soviet ethnographers, his study is of considerable relevance even today to anyone studying world views other than those of the Nganasan. What technical term should one use for Nganasan *ŋuəˀ*: 'masters/mistresses', 'spirits', 'gods/goddesses', 'deities', or something else? How did the Soviet ethnographers justify their choice? How did they relate the choice of term to Marxist-Leninist theory? Starting out from a general theoretical discussion of the function of comparative categories such as

'spirit' and 'god', Sundström discusses these questions through an analysis and comparison of how four Soviet ethnographers translated and categorised the Nganasan *ŋuəʔ*.

Finally, Liudmila Nikanorova explores how scholars have, in their writings and other activities, found, claimed, and authorised certain Sakha practices as 'religious' and 'shamanistic', or helped to demonise the Sakha *oyuun*s (an important category of Sakha practitioners). In recent years, several attempts have been made to reawaken Sakha 'religion' or 'spiritual culture'. Nikanorova gives examples of three organisations that claim to represent authentic Sakha religion and poses critical questions about the roles of present-day legislation and scholars. She emphasises the necessity to contextualise the processes whereby 'religion' and 'shamanism' were constructed in pre-Soviet times, processes that still have practical implications for the Sakha today.

The historical study of the indigenous religious traditions of northern North America and northern Eurasia offers many interesting challenges for the researcher. One is the diversity of both the indigenous languages and the languages that research texts are written in. This puts great demand on the linguistic competence of the researcher. Another challenge is that the historical sources are not only of many different kinds but also problematic. Many were written by persons with very negative attitudes towards the traditions they were collecting material about. Many also lacked even the most basic linguistic competence in indigenous languages, which of course caused misunderstandings, even when the intentions were less biased. A third is the fact that the material is scanty and very variable. Some themes are dealt with at great length (naturally those that the compiler of the material found most interesting), others only hinted at, or entirely ignored. There are therefore many things about which we simply have no information. Also, themes that are central in the sources relating to certain peoples receive far less attention in sources relating to the traditions of other groups. In consequence, many researchers have felt tempted to fill the gaps in the information about the particular people, time and area in which they specialise with what is known from sources describing other peoples, other times and other areas. The assumptions behind this approach were, on the

one hand, that the religious traditions of each of these peoples were homogenous and static (which of course they were not), and on the other, that they can all be regarded as more or less similar (which is just as erroneous). Thus researchers did not hesitate to use material about some other people in order to fill out a description of some practice or narrative of the people they themselves were studying. Needless to say, this has not been regarded as an acceptable method in research texts about Buddhism, Christianity, or Islam, for example.

It is this research historical background that motivates the very different approach to indigenous religious traditions of northern peoples in this volume. Here, the emphasis is on differences and on nuances. Therefore, critical analyses of earlier research, different forms of source criticism, and comparative methods that look for more than just similarities are all applied as essential analytical tools.

PART I:
LOCALISED PRACTICES AND RELIGIONS

1. Place Names and Hostages

Stefan Olsson

Introduction

In ancient times, the use of hostages was a vital part of peace-processes since it was used as a tool to regulate borders between conflicting parties. These processes are still visible in some old place names in Scandinavia and the Baltics. In this paper, I will present some ideas about these place names in relation to the giving and taking of hostages during the Middle Ages and even earlier. By comparing place names, it is possible to illuminate the use of hostages in different areas but with certain similarities.

As a point of departure, I will mention some conclusions regarding the use of hostages in Scandinavia in my thesis *Gísl: givande och tagande av gisslan som rituell handling i fredsprocesser under vikingatid och tidig medeltid* ('Gísl: giving and taking of hostages as a ritual act in peace processes during the Viking Age and early Middle Ages'):[1]

1. The taking and giving of hostages was a ritual act. This could be compared to the social anthropologist Marcel Mauss, who understood the phenomena of hostage as a part of the gift economy system in the Germanic societies he described in *The Gift* (Fr. *Essai sur le Don*, 1925);[2] it had a similar function to gift giving, marriage and so on, even though Mauss never developed his idea regarding hostages within the gift economy.

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2. Hostages were given rather than taken. A person might be given as a hostage, but without acknowledgment from both sides (the hostage giver and the hostage taker) the hostage could not guarantee that the peace-terms were being fulfilled. Prisoners were taken, but the hostages were given. Thus, it was a matter of agreements.
3. The use of hostages was a part of the regulations of borders (e.g. in Medieval Scandinavian Laws). This has to do with visitations of the King during his ritual journey as a part of his coronation that is described in for example the *Elder Westrogothic Law* (Swe. *Äldre Västgötalagen*).[3] In the Norwegian medieval laws the hostage was used to regulate the retinues of the king's brothers – the dukes – during their journeys.
4. Hostages were a third party and used as a security for other persons during and after negotiations.
5. Hostages were not exchanged for ransoms, which was the case for prisoners (of war).[4]

In figure 1.1, there is a sketch of the conflict and conflict solutions in the societies of Scandinavia during the late Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages.[5]

These were societies on the verge of Christianity and in the processes of early state formations. The dominant elite much relied on social networks to maintain their spheres of influence. These networks included the use of so called bounds of 'friendship', which meant that competitive groupings arranged activities within the gift economy such as festivities and marriages. The use of hostages was a part of these activities too.

There were different power constellations with alliances and counter-alliances. This meant that borders were not as fixed as they are today. Borders and boundaries were areas, which had to be upheld communicatively through the social bounds, and I define these borders and boundaries – for the lack of a better word – as 'areas of confrontation'. I then rely on the definition in the *Oxford English Dictionary* of *confrontation* as 'the bringing of persons face to face; esp. for examination of the truth' or 'the coming of countries, parties, etc., face to face: used to a state of

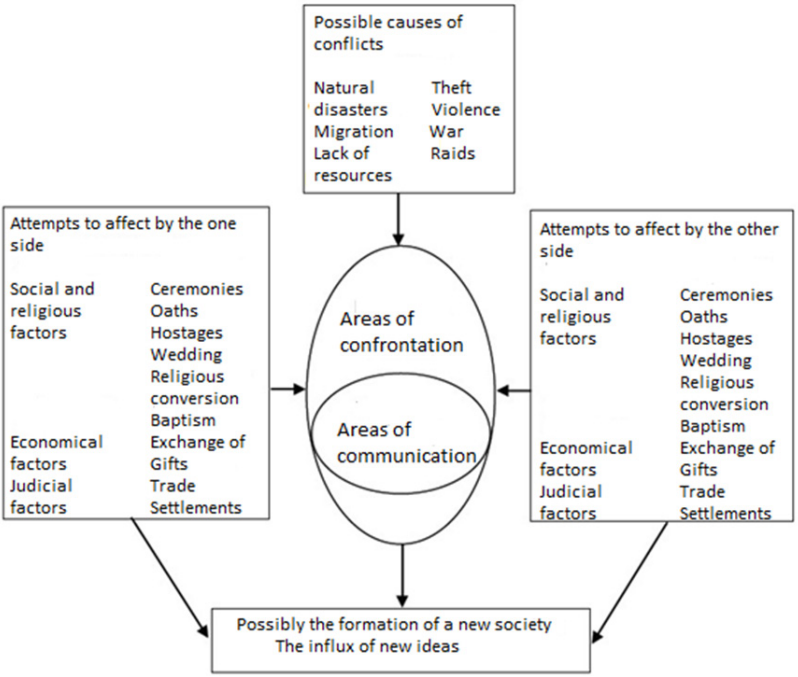

Figure 1.1. A schematic description of conflicts and conflict solutions in the late Viking Age and the early Middle Ages.

political tension with or without actual conflict'.[6] Thus, the confrontational aspect can be something more than just conflict.

In the areas of confrontation there were certain areas of communication. These were the things (or assemblies) where people could get together to make agreements on peace. Areas of communication could also include other places for peace meetings such as islands, rivers, mountains that separate territories: for example, the river of Junebäcken that runs between the Swedish provinces Västergötland and Östergötland. In the *Elder Westrogothic Law* it is mentioned that when the King should enter the provinces (Sw. *landskap*) he had to accept the hostage that was given by the Geats (or *Götar*). It is also mentioned in the law that a Swedish king called Ragnvald Knaphövde entered Västergötland in 1130 without taking hostages and was then killed by the Geats.[7] Similar structures may underlie a few place names like Gislamark in Sweden, Kihlakunta in Karelia, Kihelkond in Estonia, and

Airgíalla in Ireland. Researchers on hostages have not paid much attention to these place names. There are some problems with these place names: they can be mentioned in only one source, or in a source that is not contemporary to the Viking Age, the etymology can be ambiguous, and the place names can indicate other traditions than the use of hostages. Below, however, I will discuss these place names, and their relationship with the word they have in common: 'hostage'.[8]

Gummi of Gislamark

In the *Gesta Danorum* ('the Deeds of the Danes') by Saxo Grammaticus there is a place name called (Da.) Gislemark (Swe. Gislamark) that without ambiguity can be linked to hostage. The place name is described in Saxo's list of warriors from Svetjud (or Svealand), i.e. Sweden, in the army of king Ring, or Sigurd Hring, at the battle of Bråvalla (OI. *Brávellir*).[9] The battle – which is mentioned in several texts as the biggest in Scandinavia in ancient times – has attracted interest by many scholars. From being regarded as a historical battle, it is now regarded as legendary, 'mythical', or merely devised.[10] Saxo's list is attributed to, for example, the mythical, or legendary, hero *Starkaðr*, (Lat. *Starcatherus*); and the battle has been perceived to be based on the Ragnarǫk theme, or as a part of an Indo-European mythical heritage.[11] Nevertheless, it could be a purely fictionalized story.

I do not intend to make a position as to whether the battle took place or not, but just analyse and relate to a list of names of the Swedes who fought in the battle according to Saxo. In the Latin text, it says:

> At Sueonum fortissimi hi fuere: Ari, Haki, Keclu-Karll, Croc Agrestis, Guthfast, Gummi e Gyslamarchia.[12]

> The most valiant of the Swedes were: Ari, Haki, Keklu-Karl, Krok the Countryman, Guthfast and Gummi of Gislamark.[13]
>
> (Transl. Peter Fisher)

The name Gislamark would refer to a place where hostages would be used in a certain way (see further below). The modifer *Gisla-* would then be derived from the Swedish *gisslan* 'hostage'; the head *-mark* means 'woodland, field'.

In the fragmentary Old Icelandic saga *Sǫgubrot af fornkonungum* (about 1300) there is a list that partially corresponds to Saxo's:

> Þessir váru ofan af Svíaveldi: Nori, Haki, Karl kekkja, Krókarr af Akri, Gunnfastr, Glismakr goði.[14]
>
> These came from Svetjud above: Nori, Haki, Karl kekkja, Krok of Akri, Gunnfastr, Glismakr goði.
>
> (My free translation)

Instead of Gummi of Gislamark, *Glismakr goði* is mentioned. One can imagine that it is a matter of a rewriting by Saxo from Glismakr to Gislamark, which has been Latinized to *Gyslamarchia*.[15] However, this may not be the only possible explanation. Runic inscriptions or other text sources cannot confirm the personal name Glismakr. Perhaps Glismakr may be a misconception or rewriting of the place name Glimåkra, the name of an old church town in the province of Scania? If this is the case it is a matter of an entirely different region than Svetjud.[16] The philologist Axel Olrik pointed out in an article that the author of *Sǫgubrot* in his list must have perceived *goði* as a by-name to Glismakr, but Olrik thought that it was an 'unfortunate' corruption in the text of the name Gunni (Gummi) by the Icelandic scribe.[17]

Gesta Danorum was perhaps completed around 1208, while *Sǫgubrot* was fixed in writing about 1300. However, *Sǫgubrot* can build on the *Skjǫldunga saga* (from about 1180), which is now only found in some fragments and is considered to be based on the even older manuscript by Ari Þorgilsson: *conunga ævi*.[18]

Both texts do not appear to have had the same prerequisites when it comes to the sources. Saxo's list of King Harold Wartooth and King Ring's warriors is more detailed and could therefore have been manipulated, and embroidered, to a greater degree than *Sǫgubrot*'s version. Some elements can be explained as literary contributions, such as the presence of amazons. Names like the alliterative Skale Scanius may have been additions by Saxo just to include all the parts of the Danish realm of his time.[19] There are names of Jomsvikings (OI. *Jomsvikingr*) which belong to the eleventh century and not the eight century.[20] As a medieval writer, Saxo may have had an interest in allegorically depicting the battle against the Vices: the Swedes are described as idolaters. At the same time, Saxo has generally been reassessed by some

researchers, for example in the recent *Saxo og Snorre*.[21] Not everything in his writings is the result of literary inspiration and learned interpretations.

The historian Inge Skovgaard-Petersen considers the version of *Gesta Danorum* to be closer to the original than the list of *Sǫgubrot*.[22] The historian Nils Blomkvist believes that the list of Saxo – in addition to having more names than *Sǫgubrot* – latinizes the names in order to 'improve them', but when it comes to the names of the Swedes, 'he makes hardly any adjustments at all.'[23]

However, there are no other evidence of Gummi of Gislamark in either Old East Norse or Old West Norse text sources. The personal name Gunni (or Gunne) appears on 21 rune stones in the province of Uppland, but the name form Gummi (or Gumme) only in two cases.[24] Gislamark (or Gislemark) does not exist as a place name in Uppland or in the lake Mälaren region. Gisslemark and Gilmark, on the other hand, are surnames in Sweden today. But the Swedish Institute for Language and Folklore (Sw. *Institutet för språk och folkminnen*) has no further information about these names.[25] The theoretical possibility that remains is that the sixteenth-century editors of the *Gesta Danorum* manipulated the list. In my opinion, however, this is not very likely.

Thus, it is not possible to determine – with certainty – whether the personal name of Gummi, and the place name Gislamark, have been inserted at a later stage, or if they stem from a possible older version. Nevertheless, it is possible to relate to hypotheses about the origin of other place names with a similar meaning based on another source material.

Gislamark and *gisslalag*

In the *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (*A Description of the Northern Peoples*) from 1555, by the Archbishop (in exile) Olaus Magnus, there is a list of the most important areas in the Nordic region. In this list, Olaus Magnus mentions the place name Gislalagen (Lat. *Gislemarchia*).[26] Attempts have been made to find the origin of the place name Gislalagen in text sources, linked to Finland and the Baltics.

The ethnologist John Granlund identified Gislalagen with the medieval district called *gisslalag* (OSw. *gislalagh*), thus ascribing

the area to Finland, a part of the Swedish realm 1249–1809.[27] The *gisslalag* was a district where the inhabitants were obliged to pay taxes and a hostage was used as a security. The inhabitants were also obliged to treat and accommodate the king and his retinue on visit. However, the records from Finland are few for this territorial division. The earliest record is in the *Eric Chronicle* (Sw. *Erikskrönikan*, c. 1320), which mentions how the Swedes gave 14 *gisslalag*s to Novgorod (Russia) in the 1290s.[28] According to the treaty of Nöteborg (1323), Novgorod surrendered three *gisslalag*s to Sweden.[29]

This place name may not only occur in Finland. The ethnologist Kustaa Vilkuna ascribed the gisslalag (Fi. *kihlakunta*), as a place name, to Karelia, and suggested that there should have been a similar division of districts in both Finland and Karelia.[30] There was no permanent country organisation, but according to Vilkuna, the Swedes could receive a tax from some areas secured by the hostage.[31]

Vilkuna's hypothesis that the hostage may earlier have had its roots in an elderly institution in Finland has been questioned by other researchers. According to the historian Philip Line, there are no sustainable evidence before 1323 that these districts ever existed in Finland and Karelia.[32] But Line ignores the information of the *Erikskrönikan*, which can confirm that the *gisslalag*s functioned as an organisational form in Finland in the 1290s. Saxo's information about Gislamark from about 1200 can provide further support for the existence of this organisation in his own time, around 1200 (or possibly earlier?).

Vilkuna's statement that a 'king' would take hostages during his journey to the *gisslalag*s with the implied threat that they would be executed – unless the king and his men received the food and drink they expected – must also be considered. The hostage was primarily used as a third party to ensure the safety of a person or a group of people. In this case, it seems more probable that it was the king's person that should be secured. Food and other necessities were something that could be taken by violence. Vilkuna also makes no difference between Finland, Karelia, Ingria, Estonia and Courland. Different kinds of ruling powers have had varying degrees of influence over these lands in different times, which also

means that hostages may had been used with different purposes. Despite medieval Finnish evidence, it is unclear whether an organisational form of a *gisslalag*, or equivalents, ever existed in the eight to eleventh centuries. However, the Estonian word *kihelkond* is of interest because it is possible to relate it to earlier times. There have been hypotheses that it had a Scandinavian origin. I will summarize these hypotheses and interpretations of the meaning of the word.

Kihelkond and *syssel*

Vilkuna also believed that the hostage institution could have existed even before the Middle Ages, something that could be seen by an example from Estonia.[33] On the island of Saaremaa, there is a place called Kihelkonna, which can be deduced to the Estonian *kihelkond*, 'parish', a word that indicates a territory where the head *-kond* means 'area' and the modifier *kihla-* is a Nordic loan word (< ON. *gísl*, 'hostage').[34]

The historian Arvi Korhonen argued that small tax districts in Estonia already existed in the Viking Age before the German conquest in the thirteenth century. The philologist Paul Johansen made a hypothesis of a territorial division in Estonia organised by Scandinavians. At *Saaremaa* (OI. *Eysýsla*, OGt. *Oysl*, Fi. *Saarenmaa*), a tax collection system would have been organised by Scandinavians already in the ninth century.[35] A model of the Estonian *maa*-names may also have originated in Scandinavian medieval names of districts, the *syssel*s (ODan. *sysæl*, OSwe. *sysel*) which were administrative units in the Middle Ages in Scandinavia.

These interpretations have been questioned by the philologist Enn Tarvel. The modifier *kihla-* may be a Nordic loan word, but the meaning of the word in Estonian is according to Tarvel 'engagement', 'wooing quest' or 'engagement gift'.[36] Only in the Livonian language there is a word that can be translated as 'pledge' or 'hostage' without ambiguity: *kīʹl*. Tarvel mentions several reasons why a territorial division with the hostage as security could not have existed during the Viking Age and the early Middle Ages. The text sources are not convincing. The *Ynglinga saga* mentions Ivar Vidfamne (ON. *Ívarr inn víðfaðmi*), or Erik

Emundsson (ON. *Eiríkr Eymundsson*) and the Danish Canute the Great as conquerors of Estonia which cannot be confirmed by other sources.[37]

It may not be totally convincing that the concept of 'hostage' in the sense that Tarvel interpreted it really contradicts a hostage giving.[38] The *kunda*-areas may have had this function in addition to those described by Tarvel. The philologist Urmas Sutrop believes that the head *-kunta* is a loan word from the Germanic *hunta* (*hunda*) and may have occurred as early as in the second century, while the modifier *kihl-* may be (a younger?) loan word.[39] *Kihl-* had several meanings: *kihlused*, 'wedding arrangement', and *kihlvedu*, 'bet'; *kihlkonnad* also had the meaning of hostage giving. Tarvel claims that an over-rule was required for the establishment of an administrative unit. In my view, a supremacy is not necessarily the prerequisite for an organisation around hostages. In Estonia and Courland, it has not been the question of a Scandinavian overrule, but rather there have been different spheres of interest.

Regarding the development of a possible tax district organisation in Estonia, it may initially have emerged without Scandinavian influence. According to Line, it could be the reason for the emergence of special fortresses called (Est.) *Maalinnad* during the late Iron Age.[40] These fortresses could dominate a territory – i.e the *maa*-districts – which eventually became a *kihelkond*. Such fortresses belonged to a local elite. At the same time, these areas may occasionally have been in the spheres of interest of Novgorod and Kiev. The evidence for this to occur earlier than the 1100s is vague,[41] but the presence of the fortresses could indicate that these areas have periodically been subject to taxation (tributes) – and perhaps hostage-takings – from an external power. The establishment of fortresses in Estonia could also have been local defense measures against these charges, and the Kihelkond became an area subject to a local warrior elite. One possibility is that these districts were already organised when Scandinavians or other peoples carried out Viking raids, and later the crusades.

Perhaps the Scandinavians perceived these areas as *sýsla*. If the word *sýsla* ('county', 'district') is older than the Middle Ages, it can be related to the text sources that mention Scandinavian activities in the Baltic areas and on Saaremaa. The historian Jarl

Gallén described the sources for where the ON. word *sýsla* is used as the designation of Saaremaa (ON. *Aðalsýsla*) and Läänemaa (ON. *Wiek*).[42]

The presence of plundering (and trading?) Scandinavians in Estonia can be confirmed by several direct sources. Two boat graves dated to the eight century have been found at Saaremaa near the village Salme (1–2) with much grave goods.[43] Runic inscriptions also mention Scandinavians in Estonia, Livonia and Courland.[44] Rimbert describes in his biography of Ansgar (*Vita Ansgari*) how the Swedes received a hostage from the village of Apuolė in Courland 854.

The above may suggest that Scandinavians had a knowledge of taxation and hostages that they imposed on the Estonians and Curonians. Whether or not the organisational form originated from Scandinavians or Germans, was based on a domestic organisation, or was established under the influence of powers like Novgorod and Kiev, we can only speculate. Perhaps it was a combination of these forms.

During the peace negotiations between the inhabitants of Saaremaa and the invading armies that occurred during the crusades, the terms was dictated by the side that had the upper hand. For example, Valdemar II 'the Victorious' of Denmark tried to build a castle on Saaremaa in 1222.[45] The Saaremaa islanders allied themselves with the Estonians and besieged the castle. The Danes gave up, a hostage was given, including a brother of the bishop of Riga, to consolidate the peace.[46] A similar unilateral way of using hostages occurred several times after Christian victories over islanders as well as Livonians and Estonians.[47]

The Estonian word *kihelkond* is certainly ambiguous, but it cannot be denied that the activity of the taking and giving of hostages as well as plundering took place. If the hostage was the result of a permanent organisational form during the Viking Age in the eastern part of the country, where Scandinavians carried out plundering, it could give more weight to the argument that the place name Gislamark can be derived from the Viking Age or earlier.

In addition to the examples from Nordic areas, a comparison can be made with an Irish place name that also occurs in – and may be the result of – various peace agreements: Airgíalla.

Airgíalla in Ireland

In Ireland, hostages have had functions within peace processes and are mentioned in several sources. There is a place name, Airgíalla, that can be linked to the word for 'hostage' in Old Irish traditions. According to one interpretation, this place name might be understood as 'those who give hostages'.[48] Airgíalla was a federation of nine different peoples.

Ireland traditionally consisted of five major areas, 'fifths', or provinces, which were ruled by a provincial king (OIr. *rí ruirech*). The High King (*ard-rí*), had his seat in Tara, but this position was weak since no supremacy could be consolidated.[49]

The most powerful clan between the seventh and the tenth centuries in Ireland was Uí Néill. The clan claimed its relationship with Niall Noigíallach ('of the nine hostages').[50] Another influential clan was Connachta. According to the *Book of Rights*, Airgíalla would have matched the five major provinces and may have existed already in the fourth century.[51]

According to the historian Edel Bhreatnach, Airgíalla was probably a military federation. This is confirmed by a further list of dead from a settlement between two warlords.[52] In 743, Domnall Midi defeated the clan Chlomain Áed Allán of the Cenél federation who were allied with Airgíalla. They were, from time to time, allied with the Uí Néill. Thus, there were alliances and counter alliances over an area of confrontation.

The Airgíalla Charter Poem

The earliest written source, which gives information about the foundation Airgíalla, is *The Airgíalla Charter Poem*. According to Bhreathnach, there were two main events underlying the creation of the document: (a) the relationship between the dynasties that founded or formed Airgíalla; and (b) the formal definition of the relationship between the dynasties called Airgíalla and Uí Néill.[53]

According to the Celtologist Thomas M. Charles-Edwards, the agreement was a way of defining the relationship to Uí Néill, and should have been to Airgíalla's advantage.[54] In *The Airgíalla Charter Poem*, § 11, there is a reference to Áed Allán, which is

interpreted by Bhreathnach as an alliance that had existed between the Cenél-federation and Airgíalla between 722 and 743 and the poem might have been composed by then.[55]

The poem is divided into four sections with amendments. The first section consists of a historical prologue that deals with the land areas and genealogical relationships between Airgíalla and Uí Néill. In the second section, article 14, there is a case with hostages.

> 14. Ar-dlegat íarara co neuch ar-da-gíalla
> ar-dlegat fiadnaise it clethe for fíadna.
>
> 14. They are entitled to demands together
> with anyone who gives them hostages.[56]
> (Transl. Edel Bhreathnach & Kevin Murray)

Article 14 is about the rights of the Five Kindreds of Uí Néill vis-à-vis Airgíalla. The same rights they according to Charles Edwards against all used their subject territories.[57] The hostage, which Airgíalla gave the Five Kindreds, is not specified in this context. The article may be interpreted as an evidence that Airgíalla had certain rights (demands) in the same way as other territories; they were subordinated to Uí Néill and hostage givers.

> 18. Ar-dlegat a forbanda a suidiu fhlatho acht ma ar-da-gíallatar i rroï chatho.
>
> 18. They are entitled to their extra exactions from the seat of a ruler unless hostages are given to them on the field of battle.[58]
> (Transl. Edel Bhreathnach & Kevin Murray)

§ 18 belongs to the same section of *The Airgíalla Charter Poem* as § 14.[59] Airgíalla could share the requirements (*exactions*), or privileges, that a ruler (of the *Five Kindreds*) could put on a defeated enemy unless they could take hostage themselves on the battlefield.

> 23. Dlegair donaib Airgíallaib córus a ngíallnae slóged trí cóicthiges dïa téora blíadnae.
>
> 23. There is due to from the Airgíalla the proper arrangement of their hostageship, a hosting of three fortnights every three years.[60]
> (Transl. Edel Bhreathnach & Kevin Murray)

The next section of *The Airgíalla Charter Poem* is about the obligations regarding military service. § 23 is difficult to interpret, but in the edition of Bhreathnach and the philologist Kevin Murray, there is a word, *ngíallnae*, which they interpret as 'hostageship'.[61] The article is about the obligation to accommodate troops, but what is meant by 'hostageship' is unclear in this case. If Aírgíalla were to make war together with other federations, it would be necessary with what we today refer to as 'diplomacy'.[62] If an army, in allegiance with Aírgíalla, passed through their territory, they would travel via pre-selected roads and would camp at certain places as specified in § 28.

> 28. Cumal cacha forbaise fessar co slógib acht manis túissed eolach dia ndúnaib córib.
>
> 28. A *cumal* for every camp which spends the night with hosts, unless a knowledge able person should conduct them to their proper encampments.[63]
>
> (Transl. Edel Bhreathnach & Kevin Murray)

A representative of the visiting army would stay with the hosts over the night at every place they camped, unless a person well-known in Aírgíalla was responsible for their conduct. This person, who represented an area, would probably be valued after his rank.

The last section of the poem leans towards two agreements between Aírgíalla and Uí Néill. In this section, mythical elements are included in the text which would guarantee peace. § 40 claims that authorities – which might be perceived as deities – like the 'sea and land with the sky, sun and moon' will guarantee the peace.[64] The next article (41) mentions 'Dew and light, God's apostles from heaven, aged men, prophets, patriarchs and bright angles'.[65] Several researchers argue that these are examples of how Christian and pre-Christian traditions occur side by side.[66]

Another article (46) mentions hostages as a security for the agreement. They are called *aitiri*, 'hostage sureties'.

> 46. It sruithi a n-aitiri do-chuitchetar már […]
>
> 46. Their hostage sureties are venerable men who have sworn mightily, […].[67]
>
> (Transl. Edel Bhreathnach & Kevin Murray)

According to Charles Edwards, *aitiri* was a guarantee for major public agreements between two or more of the political and jurisdictional units called *túatha*s. The article also shows that the hostage could swear oaths; thus, they had a 'legal capacity'.

Although the proposed etymologies of the place name *Airgíalla* (or *Airgíallnae*) are uncertain, Bhreathnach and Murray believe that the word forms the basis for the federation's relationship to Uí Néill: '*airgíallnae* suggests the tentative translations "additional hostageship" or additional service.'[68] Certainly, Airgíalla was subordinated to Uí Néill, but they were – in their turn – so strong that they could not be totally subjected to other dynasties. Different types of agreements were made because of peace settlements where hostages served as a security, or regulatory factor, in the areas of confrontation, but in different ways. The hostage was therefore not only linked to warlike activities but also peace times. In this settlement, legal, religious and economic aspects presuppose each other.

Concluding remarks

I have showed that several place names from Sweden and Finland, with modifiers such as OSw. *gisl-* and Fi. *kihl-*, have some structural similarities. Although it may be uncertain in the Swedish case – since only Saxo mentions it in a dubious tale – it cannot be denied that the Finnish examples clearly show that the place name designates an organisational form during the Middle Ages even if the function of the *gisslalagh*s is unclear. The Estonian example reveals an even older organisational form that must be seen in the context of the region with altering power constellations. The example from Ireland shows that complex relations between competitive groupings underlie the formation of an agreement on hostages, which in turn could be related to the place name Airgíalla. Thus, the place names could confirm that these were once areas where social networks played a crucial role and the use of hostages was a vital part and functioned as a regulating factor between competitive groupings. These examples could therefore be related to the original ideas of Marcel Mauss about the phenomena of hostage as part of a gift economy and my earlier conclusion that the taking and giving of hostages were ritual acts.

Notes

1. An English version has been published as *The Hostages of the Northmen* (Olsson 2019).

2. Mauss 1925; Mauss (1925) 2002.

3. See Olsson 2016.

4. See Olsson 2019: Index, on these issues.

5. See Olsson 2019: 1–50 for a further description of the methods and theories.

6. *OED* 1989: 719.

7. See Olsson 2016: 366–369.

8. A more detailed version of the following analysis is found in Olsson 2019: 225–249.

9. Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum* = *Danmarkshistorien* I ([ed.] Friis-Jensen): 511–517 (book 8, ch. 1, 1–3, 13).

10. See Blomkvist 2005: 240 ff.

11. See Skovgaard-Petersen 1987: 179–181.

12. Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum* = *Danmarkshistorien* I ([ed.] Friis-Jensen): 516 (text), (book 8, ch. 3, 11).

13. Saxo Grammaticus, *The History of the Danes* (ed. Hilda Ellis Davidson): 240 (Book 8).

14. Sǫgubrot af fornkonungum ([ed.] Bjarni Guðnasson): 64 (ch. 8)).

15. See Müller 1823: 122.

16. According to *Svenskt ortnamnslexikon* (2016: 98), the place name Glimåkra can be traced to the late 14th century. The head, **Glima*-, is probably aimed at the river Glimån.

17. Olrik 1894: 253.

18. Finnur Jónsson 1920–24: 828; Friis-Jensen 1987: 23; Blomkvist 2005: 240–243.

19. Skovgaard-Petersen 1987: 262.

20. Blomkvist 2005: 242.

21. See *Saxo og Snorre* (2010).

22. Skovgaard-Petersen 1987: 262.

23. Blomkvist 2005: 249.

24. Peterson 2007: 90–92.

25. E-mail Agneta Sundström, research archivist, the Swedish Institute for Language and Folklore (*Institutet för språk och folkminnen*).

26. Olaus Magnus, *Historia* […] (transl. Granlund): 315.

27. Granlund 1976: 543.

28. *Erikskrönikan* ([ed.] Jansson): 73.

29. Gallén & Lind 1991: 314; Tarvel 1998: 193, 198, n. 1; Blomkvist 2005: 264.

30. Vilkuna 1964: 9–30.

31. Vilkuna 1960: 328.

32. Line 2009: 79.

33. Vilkuna 1960: 328.

34. de Vries 1977: 168; Tarvel 1998: 193; cf. Sutrop 2004: 52.

35. Vilkuna 1960: 328.

36. Tarvel 1998: 193.

37. Tarvel 1998: 193 f.

38. Tarvel 1998: 194.

39. Sutrop 2004: 51.

40. Line 2009: 79.

41. See Line 2009: 79.

42. Gallén 1972: 650–651.

43. Curry 2013: 24–26.

44. See Peterson 2007: 311, 317, 321, 323.

45. *Livländische Chronik / Chronicon Livoniae* ([ed.] Alb. Bauer): 280 b. (text), 281 b. (ch. 26, 2))

46. *Livländische Chronik / Chronicon Livoniae* ([ed.] Alb. Bauer): 280 f. (text), 281 f. (transl.) (ch. 26, 2)).

47. See Kala 2009: 169–190.

48. J. F. Byrne 1973: 73; Cróinín 2004: 202.

49. Jaski 2005: 253.

50. P. Byrne 2005: 489–490.

51. See Byrne 1973: 47.

52. Bhreathnach 2005: 98.

53. Bhreathnach 2005: 96.

54. Charles-Edwards 2005: 100.

55. Bhreathnach 2005: 98.

56. The Airgíalla Charter Poem: Edition (ed. Bhreathnach & Murray): 130 (text), 131 (transl.).

57. Cf. Charles-Edwards 2005: 101, 117.

58. The Airgíalla Charter Poem: Edition (ed. Bhreathnach & Murray): 132 (text), 133 (transl.).

59. Charles-Edwards 2005: 101.

60. The Airgíalla Charter Poem: Edition (ed. Bhreathnach & Murray): 132 (text), 131 (transl.).

61. The Airgíalla Charter Poem: Edition (ed. Bhreathnach & Murray): 132 (text), 132 (transl.).

62. Charles-Edwards 2005: 100.

63. The Airgíalla Charter Poem: Edition (ed. Bhreathnach & Murray): 134 (text), 135 (transl.).

64. The Airgíalla Charter Poem: Edition (ed. Bhreathnach & Murray): 136 (text), 137 (transl.).

65. The Airgíalla Charter Poem: Edition (ed. Bhreathnach & Murray): 138 (text), 139 (transl.).

66. See Charles-Edwards 2005: 122; Bhreathnach & Murray 2005: 155, n. 41.

67. The Airgíalla Charter Poem: Edition (ed. Bhreathnach & Murray): 138 (text), 139 (transl.).

68. Bhreathnach & Murray 2005: 140, n. 1b.

Abbrevations

Da. Danish

Est. Estonian

Fi. Finnish

Fr. French

Lat. Latin

OGt. Old Gutnish

OI. Old Icelandic

OIr. Old Irish

ON. Old Norse

OSw. Old Swedish

Sw. Swedish

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2. Old Icelandic and Sami Ancestor Mountains: A Comparison

Eldar Heide

Introduction

From thirteenth-century Iceland, we have texts that tell us about a belief in local mountains where people could go after death. In mainland Scandinavia, the eighteenth-century sources for Sami religion tell us about a similar tradition. In this chapter, I will compare these traditions and argue that they overlapped both in content and geographically, and that they constituted a partly shared tradition. I will compare the textual information about the two traditions, and I will compare the relevant places in the context of the surrounding landscapes. In Sami tradition, the places are in a few cases lakes and rivers rather than mountains.

The sources

Neither of the two source types that I will use is unproblematic. As written accounts dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Icelandic texts post-date the conversion by two or more centuries. Therefore, we cannot necessarily rely on the information they give about pre-Christian beliefs. For the present study, however, this does not matter so much, because it is relevant to compare the two traditions even if we cannot be sure that all the information is truly pre-Christian. Another problem is that the information that the Old Norse sources give about ancestor mountains is very scant. This is one reason why it is interesting to compare it with the neighbouring Sami tradition. We cannot transfer information from one tradition to another, but

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it is worth checking if they could throw light on each other. As opposed to the Old Norse sources, the eighteenth-century sources for Sami religion concern contemporary beliefs. But they are untrustworthy nevertheless, because they are written by outsiders – Norwegian and Swedish missionaries who interviewed Sami people about their religion only to find the most effective way to strangle it and convert the Sami.[1] As will become clear in the discussion, this problem is inescapable, but we still seem to know enough to allow for an interesting comparison.

There are three Old Icelandic texts that tell of mountains that people would 'die into' during the age of settlement: *Eyrbyggja saga*, *Landnámabók* and *Njáls saga*.[2] According to *Eyrbyggja saga*, the chieftain and farmer Þórolfr Mostrarskegg in the ninth century moved from the Norwegian island of Moster south of present-day Bergen[3] to the Þórsnes headland on the south shore of Breiðafjörður in western Iceland.

> On that headland, there is a mountain in which Þórolfr placed so much faith that nobody was allowed to look at it unwashed and nothing could be killed on the mountain, neither livestock nor people, unless it perished by itself. That mountain he called Helgafell ['sacred mountain'] and believed that he would go there when he died, as would all his relatives on the headland.[4]

One autumn day many years after Þórolfr had died, a shepherd:

> saw the cliff in the north face of the mountain open, and inside the mountain he saw big fires and heard the merry noises from a banquet and loud drinking talk. When he listened [….], he could hear [Þórolfr's son] Þorsteinn Þorskabítr being greeted together with his companions and told to sit in the high seat opposite his father.[5]

The following day, Þorsteinn drowned at sea while fishing. *Landnámabók*, which is an overview of the settlement of Iceland, says this about the same mountain:

> Þórolfr 'had so much faith in this mountain […] that he called it Helgafell, and nobody was allowed to look at it unwashed, and this place was so inviolable *(svá mikil friðhelgi)* that nothing could be killed on the mountain, neither livestock nor people, unless it perished by itself. Þórolfr and his relatives believed that they would die into the mountain.'[6]

Njáls saga tells of how the sorcerer Svanr, who lives at Strandir in north-western Iceland, drowns at sea while fishing, and fishermen in the area 'thought they saw Svanr walk into the mountain of Kaldbakshorn, where he was well greeted'.[7]

Landnámabók gives three accounts that are very brief but seem to reflect the same notions. A certain Kráku-Hreiðarr settled at Steinsstaðir in Skagafjörður, northern Iceland, and 'chose to die into mount Mælifell'.[8] On the Snæfellsnes peninsula, western Iceland, 'Sel-Þórir and his pagan relatives died into mount Þórisbjǫrg'.[9] In Hvammsfjörður, western Iceland, the settler Auðr Djúpúðga, who was a Christian, 'held her prayers at Krosshólar heights.' When she died, 'her relatives had great faith in the heights. A sacrificial construction was erected there, and sacrifices performed. They believed that they would die into these heights'.[10]

Three more examples are sometimes mentioned, but these are not unequivocal. In *Njáls saga*, Flosi Þórðarson in a dream sees Mount Lómagnúpur in south-eastern Iceland open and a man with an iron staff and a goat-skin jacket comes out. The man calls on many of Flosi's men and thus predicts that and in what order they are to die in the upcoming conflict. He speaks to Flosi and says his name is *Jarngrímr*, 'iron mask'. Later in *Njáls saga*, when Earl Sigurðr has died in a terrible battle in Ireland, one of his men sees him coming home to his farm in Orkney, and rides towards him. They meet and 'ride under a high hill' (*undir leiti nǫkkurt*) and 'are never seen again'. In *Gísla saga Súrssonar*, Gísli in a dream enters a house where he recognises 'many' of his 'friends and relatives' sitting around fires drinking. (It is not clear whether they are still alive or not.) The fires are seven in number, and this number indicates how many more years he is to live, a woman tells him. This good woman (and an evil one) returns repeatedly in his ominous dreams, and on one occasion she takes him to her hall and says this is where he goes when he dies.[11]

The Old Icelandic notions of ancestor mountains in all probability came from Norway; in the case of Helgafell, this is clear. In Norwegian tradition, these notions have been lost more or less completely. Nordland, however, has pointed out one exception, which is connected to the Ryssaberget precipice at Voss in western Norway. It 'was thought to be an unearthly place. In the local

tradition, it is believed to be a place where lights are seen foreboding deaths in the districts: "It is a nasty, haunted place. Fires have been seen burning inside the mountain […]. Now somebody is dying again, last night a light was showing in Ryssaberje."'[12]

We now move on to Sami tradition. It is only from the South Sami area that we have information about a similar kind of death realm. This, and the beings inhabiting it, is called *saajve* in South Sami, plural *saajvh*.[13] This chapter is not the place to present all the material we have about this and I will therefore limit the scope to the passages that seem most relevant to a comparison with the Old Norse tradition.[14] The best introduction to *saajve* is offered by Johan Randulf, who was a clergyman in the Namdalen district of north Trøndelag from 1718. He is considered one of the most valuable sources, because he presents much independent information. In 1723, he wrote:

> In every parish and bailiwick here in Norway, in the interior as well as along the coast, there are some mountains that are bigger, and for some reason more noted than the other, small mountains that surround them, such as *Lyder Horn*, *Hornelen*, *Romsdals-Horn* in Bergen Diocese, *Naupen*, *Schiolden*, *Lechemøen*, *Harchilden* [manuscript variants: *Harchilden*, *Harichilden*, *Hanchilden*], *Heilshornet*, *Torghatten*, *Alstahaugs Tinder*, *Biarchon*, *Leiron* etc. here in Trondheim Diocese. A Sami will hold all such mountains holy and call them *Saivo* / *saajve*, for example *Leiron Saivo*, *Biarchon Saivo*, *Harchild Saivo*, etc. The reason for this supposed holiness of the mountains is this: that Satan has deluded them into believing that in every such mountain lives a holy angel or sub-god who has the power to preserve them and help them in whatever they undertake. From such mountain angels a Sami then chooses, according to how much of a *nåejtie* (Sami ritual specialist) he is, one or two, sometimes maybe even three or four, as his angel or guardian angels, which he will summon by customary yoiking when he is to undertake something, especially when he wants to beat his drum or in other ways make an enquiry to Satan about what he wants to know. This angel will immediately appear visibly at his place and talk to him in human guise, wearing red, blue, yellow, white or green clothes. Because every such mountain's angel or *saajve*, which is what they also call the one who lives inside the mountain, has his specific colour of clothes, by which he

> distinguishes himself from any other *saajve* from another mountain, whose clothes are in turn of a different colour.[15]

The *saajve* will help the Sami 'to a wealthy marriage, to a successful hunt, to be powerful in the Sami witchcrafts, etc.' The *saajve* can also appear in the shape of a beautiful forest goddess ('Skov-Gudinde') and help gather and milk the reindeer, or she may sleep with Sami men.[16]

According to Randulf, the Sami believe that:

> as soon as they are dead, their souls move into the *saajve* or holy mountain, whose master or possessor (whom they also call *saajve*) was their guardian angel when they were alive, and they are there made into gods who have the power to, for a while, keep death away from their friends and relatives, who sacrifice to them reindeer, or horses with which they can drive around and amuse themselves, from one *saajve* to another, but mostly in their own *saajve* and the joy that is found there; all of this together is called the realm of the dead ('de Dødis Riige').[17]

Skanke lists between 30 and 40 *saajve* locations, mostly mountains, in the northern parts of Trøndelag in Norway and Jämtland in Sweden.[18]

Most of the information that we have about Sami religion in general comes from Thomas von Westen, who was leader of the Danish-Norwegian mission among the Sami from 1716 until his death in 1727. He may have been the non-Sami who obtained the deepest knowledge of the Sami religion at the time, but during his lifetime he was able to publish only fragments of the large material that he collected. Hans Skanke inherited von Westen's material, and most of what we know about it comes from his presentations.[19] He writes:

> It has been an old superstition among the Sami that they believe that in sacred mountains in the highlands, which they call *saajve*, and in haunts belonging to specters underground, which they call *jaemiehaajmoe*, there are people like themselves, with the same professions, the same practices, the same skills, the same kinds of animals as they, just with the difference that the people in(side) the mountains and underground are said to have all such things far more perfect and in a far richer and happier degree and condition

> than the Sami. […] This means that the Sami therefore consider *saajveålmah*, the people who live in(side) the mountains, as rich and wonderful people, and in all magical arts excellent and perfect […].
>
> In any of these *saajvh* they say there are […] *ålmah*, i.e. men, as well as *saajveniejth*, i.e. women and children. In quite a few there are married *ålmah* with their *niejth*, others are unmarried […]. In addition to these *saajve* people, the Sami explain that there are said to be livestock and animals far more beautiful than those the Sami have. In particular, any Sami is said to have, in those *saajvh* that belong to him, three kinds of creatures for his *nåejtie* service, which always, when he summons them, lend him a hand, namely a bird, which they call *saajvevuerniesledtie* ('*saajve* oath bird'), a fish or a snake, which they call *saajveguelie* ('*saajve* fish'), and a reindeer bull, which they call *saajvesarva* ('*saajve* [rutting] reindeer bull'). These in combination, the Sami call *nåejtiesvoejkene* ('*nåejtie* spirits'). […][20]
>
> In *saajve* […] they also believe that there is a church and the most blissful life that anyone can lead. Therefore, it is their hope […] that when they have spent this life in the misery that is the Sami's lot, they will be moved to *saajve*, whose inhabitants they consider Sami, who in their lifetime sedulously have sacrificed, drummed and yoiked on *saajve*, and therefore in their second life enjoy such great prosperity and blissfulness. […] This is why *saajvetjaetsie*, the water that flows from a *saajve*, is thought to be so holy […].[21]

Skanke later repeats that *saajve* is a place to where the Sami 'hope to come after death', but this time he says that a condition for this is having led a moral life.[22]

Further north, there are also Sami traditions about sacred mountains, often called *Bassevárre* 'sacred mountain' (SamL., or *-várri*, SamN.), which are inhabited by helping spirits or god-like beings who receive sacrifices and resemble the *saajve* beings, or the beliefs were directed at stones, boulders or cliffs near such mountains or rivers or lakes inhabited by such beings.[23] Such formations could belong to a clan,[24] and children could be sent to the supernatural beings inhabiting them to go to school.[25] However, we have far less information about any traditions about such beings than about the *saajve*, and there is no indication of a belief that people could go to such places after death.

The word *saajve* / *sájvva* / *sáiva* etc. is north of the South and Ume Sami areas known mostly in connection with water. One widespread meaning is 'freshwater',[26] another 'small spring-fed lake with large, hard-to-catch fish owned by the hidden people, and a shaft down to a similar lake below, and taboos connected to it'. Especially noise, vulgar speech and uncleanliness should be avoided near *sájvva* / *sáiva* lakes, or else, you would get no fish.[27]

It is believed that the word *saajve* is borrowed from Proto-Scandinavian **saiwaz* or **saiwiz*, which is the same word as *sea*, and that the meaning 'sacred mountain' in some way developed from the meaning 'sacred lake', although it is unclear how this happened.[28]

Research History

Here, I will give an overview of the research that has discussed the *saajve* complex and especially the *saajve* and Helgafell complexes together.[29]

Already Fritzner in 1877 suggested that the Sami idea that people could go to local sacred mountains after death was borrowed from the Scandinavians, and most scholars have shared this opinion.[30] Wiklund and Bäckman agree that most or parts of the complex surrounding the *saajve* mountain of the dead was borrowed, but believe that some parts of it are indigenous.[31] Arbman points out that, although *saajve* and other loanwords in Sami come from Scandinavian, they may have been given new content and fitted into a Sami, north Eurasian cultural background.[32] In early research, most scholars also believed that the *saajve* was a(n ordinary) realm of the dead.[33] Especially in recent research, however, many scholars reject this view,[34] because the sources primarily point out Jamiehaajmoe (SamS.) as the Sami realm of the dead.[35] Instead, some say that the *saajve* world essentially was the same as the world of *hálddit* (SamN.), *gufihtarat* (SamN.), *uldat* (SamN.), *gadniha* (SamL.), fairies / elves / hidden people[36] / *vittra* (Swedish) / *huldrefolk* (Norwegian), etc.[37] Some say that it is both, or something in-between. Bäckman argues that it was neither, and calls the *saajve* beings 'helping and protecting spirits'.[38] Rydving seems to follow Bäckman, refers to the *saajve*

beings as 'collective invisible beings' and distinguishes them from the ancestors.[39] Christiansen, on the other hand, sees traits from both ancestors and 'fairies' in the *saajve* complex and uses this in the evolutionistic debate about the origin of the 'fairy faith': 'conceptions of life after death played an important part in its formation', he argues.[40] Wiklund and Bergsland have identified most of the *saajve* mountains / locations mentioned in the early sources.[41] Dunfjeld-Aagård points out, however, that they have only paid attention to the *saajve* locations mentioned by von Westen / Skanke, who covered the interior along the Norwegian-Swedish border in Trøndelag, Nordland and Jämtland, not the coastal areas in Norwegian Trøndelag mentioned by Randulf.[42] Qvigstad, however, does include the coastal examples.[43]

Discussion

I believe that we need a broader and more detailed comparison of the Old Norse Helgafell complex and the Sami *saajve* complex than what we have seen so far. Von Unwerth's discussion from 1911 was good for its time, but is now outdated, among other things because he combines material from all over the Sami area into one standard Sami Religion.[44] After von Unwerth, there has been no systematic comparison. I believe a renewed, in-depth comparison will reveal that some of the disagreements that we have seen in the research history are not real. Others seem to derive from demanding from the mythic world view a consistency that we should not expect (see below). I also believe that we should put more emphasis on what Randulf says about *saajve* – both regarding its nature and his examples of *saajve* mountains on the coast. The partial neglect of this information seems to derive to some degree from the modern conception of the Sami as a people of inland mountain areas. In the eighteenth century, however, the Sami on the coast of Trøndelag were not yet assimilated. And, as Dunfjeld-Aagård points out, three of Randulf's *saajve* mountains were located in his own parish, Nærøy, on the coast,[45] about which he – obviously – had good information. He specifically says that there are *saajve* mountains 'In every parish and bailiwick […], in the interior as well as along the coast'.[46]

List of Traits

I will now list characteristics of the *saajve* complex (because this is the aspect we are best informed about),[47] and then compare it with Norse tradition. Because the idea of going to sacred mountains after death is mentioned only in connection with South Sami *saajve*, I will restrict myself to mainly South Sami sources that mention the word *saajve*, and not include information about the *Bassevárre*s further north (as, for example Bäckman does[48]), although many aspects of that tradtion are very similar.

1. The *saajve* locations listed in the sources are landscape formations that attract attention, mostly mountains, sometimes lakes, rivers or rapids.[49] As Randulf points out, the mountains in question are prominent and many are typical landmarks.[50] The sources do not highlight specific parts of these mountains, but judging from later popular traditions, the points of contact with *saajve* beings were in some cases precipices, because a precipice in which the hidden people live can be called *saajvebaakte*, '*saajve* precipice'.[51] Many of the *saajve* mountains listed in the sources have a characteristic precipice.[52]

2. The *saajvh* had a special connection with water. The water that flowed from *saajve* mountains was regarded as very valuable and was drunk at certain rituals.[53] In the South Sami area, a *saajve* was in most cases a mountain, but also there, *saajve* lakes were part of the tradition. We just saw that some of the *saajve* localities mentioned in the sources are lakes, rivers or rapids. A lake with fish that are hard to catch because they are owned by supernatural beings was in Frostviken, Jämtland, called a *saajvejaevrie*, '*saajve* lake', as late as in the early twentieth century.[54] In Härjedalen, even further south, a small sacrifice would be given to a *saajvejaevrie* before fishing.[55] The South Sami woman Kerstin Jakobsdotter, in the early eighteenth century, provides information that seems to come even closer to the northern traditions. She was asked to explain the Sami words in a letter from von Westen, and she explained *saajve* in this way: 'Big mountains or fells where the smoke stands or the worst ghosts live. It is also said that there are small lakes there that go, if I may say so, or uncleanliness, which, if one touches, close up and nothing is seen. The hens or

roosters crow there, and far north, it is said. Such *saajvh* they consider their supporters.'[56] The small lakes closing in connection with uncleanliness fits neatly in with the traditions about *sájvva* / *sáiva* lakes and their hard-to-catch fish further north.[57] It should be stressed, however, that 'small lakes' (*tjärnar*) in this text emerges only through emendation. But from Jämtland we also have early twentieth-century South Sami information that *saajve* lakes have a double bottom. This *could* derive from literature, but the account contains quite a bit of independent information and even names such a lake.[58] In an early twentieth-century South Sami legend from Hattfjelldal, Norway, the *saajve* world is reached by jumping into a spring (*gaaltije*).[59] In light of these examples, what 'closes' in Kerstin Jakobsdotter's account could be the shaft between the upper and lower lake. See also the connection between *saajve* and fish in point 7 of this list.

3. Only people with a personal relationship to a certain *saajve* could go to it after death.[60]

4. A *saajve* and its inhabitants could be inherited and sold, like trade goods, even moved if the owner moved, and status in society depended upon how many *saajvh* one owned and on their respective values, which differed; inherited *saajvh* were the most valuable ones.[61]

5. The *nåejtie*s had a special connection with *saajvh*.[62] Bäckman, whose work on *saajve* is the most comprehensive hitherto, understands the sources in the way that ordinary people could not go to a *saajve* after death, only *nåejtie*s.[63]

6. The paradise-like *saajvh*[64] are mentioned as one place you could go to after death, but not the main realm of the dead – which was Jaemiehaajmoe, literally 'the world of death'. The sources also mention other names for it, such as Mubpienaajmoe, 'the otherworld', or perhaps for other realms of the dead.[65]

7. The Sami had a devoted and intimate relationship with the *saajve* beings. The *saajve* beings, who were better off than humans, offered important help with reindeer herding, hunting, fishing, divination and other aspects of life, even accepting human children into their schools – if they were given the sacrifices they wanted and treated the way they wanted – and they would do serious damage if this was not done.[66] The *saajve* beings could

appear in dreams and sometimes show themselves in this world; they would especially visit the Sami on Christmas night. The Sami could visit the *saajvh* and go to parties there, and they could have sexual relations with *saajve* beings. The *nåejtie*s had special animal helpers in *saajve*.[67] If a human child got sick, s/he would be given a new name, which was called a *saajvenïmme* '*saajve* name', because the sickness was believed to be caused by a deceased person in a *saajve* wanting to be called up (to the world of the living), and the *saajvenïmme* would be the name of that person, who was then in a way reborn.[68] This ritual was called a *saajvelaavkoe* '*saajve* baptism', and after it, the deceased person's *nïmmeguelie* 'name fish' would follow the person who was given the name.[69] All this implies that most of the information we have about the *saajvh* and their world (in the earliest sources as well as in later traditions) is hard to separate from the traditions of the hidden people and their world in South Sami culture (where the word *gitne*, *giknjesje*, *gitnesje*, cognate with *ganij* above, is one term for it[70]) and the cultures surrounding it. It is not without reason that many scholars understand the *saajve* and the hidden people as the same.[71]

8. It seems that certain taboos were to be observed near a *saajve*. We have no absolutely clear evidence of this in the South Sami area, but we have many indications. As we have seen, Kerstin Jakobsdotter probably mentions an uncleanliness taboo in connection with *saajve* lakes. From the Lule and North Sami areas, we have much information about such taboos: Noise, vulgar speech and uncleanliness must be avoided near *sájvva* / *sáiva* lakes, or else, you would get no fish. In some areas, the taboos are more developed: women should stay away from the *sájvva* / *sáiva* lakes, the name of God should not be mentioned near them, the fish from such a lake should be gutted on its shores or taken into the hut through the sacred back door, etc.[72] In the northern Sami areas, such taboos were common also in connection with *Bassevárre* mountains. Among them was a requirement that women must not look at such mountains.[73] From Lycksele, just north of the South Sami area, we have information from the 1670s about a taboo regarding noise connected to a mountain where a *sájvvuo* being could be encountered.[74] Lindahl & Öhrling's information about

such taboos in connection with 'Saiwa' mountains might also refer to a southern area, although it is impossible to determine how far south that area would be.[75]

9. The *saajvh* had a very prominent position in South Sami religion. Von Westen says the *saajve* beings are the Sami's 'most important god(s) and their greatest hope and on them they have expended all their sweat and means'. Skanke says that *saajve* 'seems to be the most important element in the old religion of the Lapps, the element to which everything else refers'.[76]

Comparison

1. The five known formations that people could 'die into' in the Old Icelandic landscape are all mountains or heights, like most of the Sami ones. Also as in Sami tradition, most of these Icelandic mountains or heights are prominent.[77] Kaldbakshorn and Mælifell (and Lómagnúpur) are typical landmarks.[78] Keeping in mind *saajve* precipices, it is when the precipice in the north face of Helgafell opens that the shepherd is able to look into the mountain. Kaldbakshorn has a 400 m high, kilometre-long precipice facing the ocean, and in the middle of it, there is a vertical cleft called *Svansgjá* 'Svanr's cleft' through which, according to local tradition, Svanr entered the mountain.[79] (Lómagnúpur is also characterised by an immense, vertical rock face.) Regarding a connection to water, see the next point.

2. None of the known Icelandic formations that people 'die into' are lakes, rivers or rapids. In Iceland as well as in mainland Scandinavia, where the Helgafell complex must have come from, there are rich traditions about small lakes that are double-bottomed and/or have a passage through the bottom. The essence of these traditions is probably ancient because they are so widespread and can hardly be derived from Christianity, and because one such lake is mentioned in an Old English text.[80] But, as far as I know, we have no information that such lakes were thought to be (passages to) a realm of the dead (although such ideas may have existed in the past and failed to be recorded). Yet, the Old Icelandic belief in 'dying into' mountains could still have a connection with water. Both Svanr and Þorsteinn Þorskabítr drown before they are seen entering their local mountains, so,

in a way, they enter the mountains through water. In Icelandic folklore, *álfar* / *huldufólk* are said to live mostly in cliffs and boulders, but in many stories, jumping into ponds, rivers or the sea is the way to get to their homes, although this leads to a normal landscape on the other side, not a water-world.[81] The same is the case in the South Sami legend about a journey to the *saajve* people (see above); the spring is just a passage. This is ambiguous in a way reminiscent of the *saajve* complex with its combination of mountains and lakes. To a modern reader, it looks illogical and inconsistent. But when the cosmology of Northern traditional mythologies and folktales is examined more closely, it turns out that the unusual landscape formations that are associated with supernatural beings – special lakes, springs, boulders, cliffs, prominent mountains, waterfalls, crevices, caves, etc. – should only in some cases be seen as *dwellings* for otherworld beings in this world's landscape and more commonly as interchangeable *passageways* to an otherworldly landscape.[82] For example, in a Skolt Sami legend, a reindeer bull from the otherworld goes back to the otherworld through a waterfall.[83] It would be odd if the bull lived in the waterfall itself. In a North Sami legend, the land of the hidden people (*mearrahálddit*) appears to be underneath the sea, but is a dry land that was reached by sailing horizontally through fog.[84] Apparently, the hidden people neither live in the sea nor beyond fog horizontally speaking; they just live 'beyond the passageways'. In Old Norse mythology, Óðinn has to bore through a mountain to get into the giantess Gunnlǫð's abode, but when he wants to go home, he can fly out, unhindered by the mountain, as if she lives above the ground in daylight.[85] If we look closer at the South Sami sources, the *saajve* beings are not confined to a dwelling inside one mountain or precipice. We see in the eighteenth-century texts that they go to church and visit *saajve* beings in other places. In legends and terminology recorded later, we see that they have reindeer herds and clearly live in a whole landscape in the *saajve* world.[86] Accordingly, we should probably understand the *saajve* mountains, precipices, lakes and springs primarily as points of contact between this world and the *saajve* world, as interfaces. With this in mind, the difference between prominent mountain and spring or lake (or the like) is not so large.

3. The Old Icelandic ancestor mountains seem to have had the same private character as the *saajvh*. In three of the five clear Old Icelandic cases, it is said that it was a certain settler and his relatives who would die into the mountain.[87]

4. We have no indication that the Old Icelandic ancestor mountains could be owned like the *saajvh*, which could be traded and amassed in a rather capitalistic way. Still, it seems that the Icelandic mountains that people 'died into' belonged to the clan, especially the head of the clan, which implies that they were inheritable. If the owner of a *saajve* moved, its inhabitants could be persuaded to move with him to settle in the mountain(s) that the owner pointed out.[88] Þórolfr Mostrarskegg and his Helgafell could be an analogue to this. He moved, pointed out a new ancestor mountain, and it may be that his ancestors were thought to have moved with him from Norway and into the new mountain. At least, the noisy banquet in Helgafell may appear to have more participants than just the settler generation of Þórolfr's 'relatives on the [Þórsnes] headland',[89] which is quite small.

5. Þórolfr Mostrarskegg was a religious leader and had a close relation to Helgafell in the sense that he chose it and decided who was to go there after death. I assume that the same was the case in the other Old Icelandic cases. However, we have no indication that Þórolfr as a religious leader had such a close relationship to the mountain that he had zoomorphic helping spirits inside it (although ritual specialists in Old Icelandic tradition did have zoomorphic helping spirits[90]). In the Old Icelandic texts, it is clear that also ordinary people, not only ritual specialists, could go to an ancestor mountain after death. This seems to be the case also in Sami tradition, contrary to what has been claimed.[91] As far as I can tell, the sources do not mention such a restriction. Our two best sources say that the South Sami, in general, hoped to come to a *saajve* after death.[92] And, as noted by Rydving,[93] not all *saajvh* had a *saajve* fish, bird or reindeer bull; these *nåejtie* helpers were only found in special *nåejtie saajvh*.[94] This implies that many *saajvh* did not have a special connection with *nåejtie*s.

6. Both the *saajvh* and the Helgafell type were merry, desirable places. But were the *saajvh* really realms of the dead? The sources for South Sami tradition primarily point out Jaemiehaajmoe as

the realm of the dead, at the same time as the relationship between Jaemiehaajmoe and the *saajvh* is unclear.[95] Therefore, leading scholars (see above) argue that the *saajvh* were not realms of the dead. However, when anybody could come to a *saajve* after death, this implies that the *saajvh* were realms of the dead. The information we have of *saajveniimme*s points in the same direction: it is a dead person (*jaemieh*) in a *saajve* who wants to be called up to the world of the living.[96] Moreover, there may well be several, alternative places to go after death even within the same belief system. This is the case in Old Norse tradition, where the grey, dull Hel is the main realm of the dead, and there also is a paradise for deceased warriors, Valhǫll, possibly also Folkvangr (see below) – in addition to the even more exclusive ancestor mountains, at the same time as the deceased in some sense was believed to lead a continued existence in the grave.[97] In South Sami tradition, the sources mention even more realms of the dead, although it is not clear that they are not simply different names for the same place.[98] The realms of the dead in South Sami and Old Norse tradition correspond quite closely to one another, not only in their diversity, but also in many of the details. In both traditions, the main realms of the dead are joyless places with a female ruler – Jaemiehaahka or Hel[99] – and there are happier alternatives (*saajvh*, Valhǫll, Helgafell etc.) as well as more local and exclusive alternatives (*saajvh*, Helgafell etc.). We even get a glimpse (but no information), in both traditions, of a (presumably happy) realm of the dead ruled by one of the main female deities – Freyja's Folkvangr in Old Norse tradition, and Saaraahka's Saaraahkaaajmoe in Sami.[100] Kerstin Jakobsdotter's information about crowing roosters associated with *saajvh* may recall the roosters crowing in Valhǫll and Hel according to *Vǫluspá* 42.[101]

Rosén's argument for rejecting the *saajvh* as realms of the dead is the fact that the *saajve* beings overlap so extensively with the *huldrefolket* / hidden people.[102] However, this seems to demand more tidiness from the mythology than we should expect. I am also unsure of whether the sources allow us to distinguish between *saajve* beings and ancestors, as Rydving does.[103] For sure, only a minority of ancestors were believed to live in a *saajve*, but there is strong evidence that the *saajvh* were understood as places

to go to after death, places where deceased persons lived. At the same time, the sources make no distinction between deceased persons and other inhabitants of the *saavjh*. In this situation, it seems difficult not to understand the *saajve* beings as (one group of) ancestors.

7. The relationship between the Norse and the inhabitants of their ancestor mountains seems not to have been equally devoted and intimate as that between the Sami and the *saajve*. Þórolfr Mostrarskegg's great-grandson and successor as chieftain and *goði* or 'cultic leader' at Þórsnes was Snorri Þorgrímsson, and later in *Eyrbyggja saga*, it is said that Snorri 'climbs up on Helgafell to devise successful plans' (as Torfi Tulinius puts it).[104] This is conspicuous, and it could be an example that the ancestors inside an ancestor mountain in Iceland were believed to help the living. But no other Old Norse sources tell of anything like that – although there are many accounts of ancestors or newly deceased persons who approach the living in order to help them, similar to what the *saajve* beings do. In many cases, this is done through dreams, and often the beings who do this are female *fylgjur*, guardian spirits of the clan. These beings sometimes overlap with deceased persons and the concept seems to derive from ancestors. One example of this is Gísli's already mentioned 'dream woman' in *Gísla saga*.[105] We have no example where a deceased from inside an ancestor mountain turns up in a living person's dreams, however (unless the 'dream woman' in *Gisla saga* should be understood in this way). The fact that the anthropomorphic *fulgjur* are women, whereas the sources only mention men who go to ancestor mountains, could count against a possible link between *fylgjur* and ancestor mountains. Yet, in some cases, the *fylgja* woman's role is filled by a man,[106] and Krosshólar Heights were chosen by a female founder of the clan.

Even so, there is little reason to believe that the few words handed down to us about Old Icelandic ancestor mountains present the whole picture. Apparently, regarding pre-Christian religious phenomena, the medieval scribes took more interest in non-local traditions; most of what information we have concerns deities that were common to large areas. (More about this below.) Indications that ancestors in Old Icelandic mountains were

believed to help the living in ways similar to what the *saajve* beings did, can be found in popular traditions from post-medieval times. Throughout mainland Scandinavia, from where the culture of Iceland during the Age of Settlement was mainly brought, there are widespread traditions that the founder of the farm (which Þórolfr Mostrarskegg was), sometimes called *rudkallen*, 'the land clearer', or *tomten*, 'the house foundation man', and sometimes bearing a proper name, lives on the farm or in a nearby (grave) mound, boulder, grove or other, occasionally in a local mountain. He is believed to protect the farm and help the people who live there with their work, as long as they bring him sacrifices at certain times and observe taboos about noise, uncleanliness etc. near his dwelling.[107] If we include the whole of the tradition about *huldrefolk* ('hidden people'), *haugefolk* ('mound people', Norway), *vättarna* ('the sprites', Sweden), *álfar*, *huldufólk* ('elves', 'hidden people', Iceland), etc., from which the *rudkall* and the *tomte* can only partially be distinguished – we find virtually all of the characteristics of the *saajve* complex even in its earliest known form, including the participation in parties held by hidden people, visits from them at Christmas and sexual relations with them.[108]

This is relevant because most of the complex surrounding the *huldrefolk* etc. is probably ancient – because it is hard to derive from Christianity or other post-Christian developments (the Church would have opposed the introduction of such beliefs rather than facilitated it), and because essential glimpses of it are recorded in medieval literature. In *Þorvalds þáttr víðfǫrla* from around 1200 and *Kristni saga* from the middle of the thirteenth century, the Icelandic farmer Koðrán sacrifices to an *ármaðr*, 'steward', or *spámaðr*, 'soothsayer', who lives in a boulder near the farm, taking care of Koðrán's livestock and protecting him and giving him advice about the future. In the early thirteenth-century *Kormáks saga*, *alfar* who live in a mound cure people when people give them sacrifices.[109] In Sweden, the (condemnation of the) worship of the *tomte* is attested from the middle of the fourteenth century onwards.[110] Generally in Old Norse literature, the *alfar* are connected to fertility and good harvests.[111] *Óláfs þáttr Geirstaðaalfs* tells of the ninth-century Norwegian king Óláfr Guðrøðsson who was associated with bringing such abundance and prosperity that

he was posthumously called *Geirstaðaalfr*, 'the *alfr* of Geirstad' (the farm where he lived), and was given sacrifices during crop failures.[112] It seems a reasonable assumption that the inhabitants of the Old Icelandic ancestor mountains (and, by implication, the Old Norwegian ones) largely overlapped with the hidden people. The fact that the *saajve* beings, even in the earliest sources, are difficult to distinguish from the Sami hidden people lends additional support to this assumption. In my judgement, this assumption is probable, albeit obviously uncertain.

Some important elements from the *saajve* complex are not found in the hidden people complex. Going to the hidden people after death is (to my knowledge) not an option, human children are not sent to their schools and there is no equivalent of the helping spirits that the *nåejtie* has in his *saajve*(s). Also, it is only in the *saajve* complex that there is a link between a reincarnated child, the child's name and an ancestor mountain (or other realm of the dead). It could be a coincidence that such a notion is not recorded in the Old Norse material, however. Reincarnation in connection with naming is well known from Old Norse culture,[113] and in some places, this has survived until modern times.[114] Moreover, many scholars believe that the word *soul*, Gothic *saiwala*, is derived in Proto-Germanic times from the word **saiwaz* or **saiwiz*, which is the source for Sami *saajve / sájvva / sáiva*.[115] The ultimate background for this may be, firstly, the idea that water separates the otherworld from this world,[116] and secondly, beliefs in reincarnation, where the souls are recycled from the otherworld beyond the water.

8. It is clearer that taboos were connected to Helgafell than to the South Sami *saajvh*. But Kerstin Jakobsdotter seems to mention an uncleanliness taboo, as we have seen. The taboo about not looking at the mountain is known in connection with *bassevárre* mountains further north – although in that case it only applies to women. The taboo against killing on Helgafell, 'neither livestock nor people, unless it perished by itself', is probably better understood if we compare it with Sami and Scandinavian practices. According to *Landnámabók*, the ban against killing on the mountain reflects a demand for peace in the sacred place. This seems also to be the case when the Sami forbade hunting within

a fence enclosing a large area around a sacrificial site in the Lule Sami area.[117] However, in Iceland there was no wild game except birds and the small arctic foxes, which would be very few indeed on a mountain that measures 200 x 150 m (and was not a nesting cliff). And why add: 'unless it perished by itself'? Why is this information important to include? The words about not killing constitute nearly 10 % of the description of the mountain in *Eyrbyggja saga*! Lid explains this by linking it to a custom known from Early Modern Norway: Horses were often put to death by pushing them off a cliff, in some places backwards. They died from the impact and were then buried. This was done partly because of the Christian ban on eating horse meat, partly probably as a remnant of pre-Christian sacrificial practices. The original point, Lid says, is to send the sacrificial animal to the otherworld without using tools of any kind to kill it; this was said to be part of the tradition at Voss. As Lid points out, such ideas seem to be anchored in late thirteenth-century Iceland through a description of how the sacred stallion Freyfaxi ('Freyr's stallion') is killed in *Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða*, allegedly in the tenth century: With a sack over his head and rocks tied to his neck, he is forced off a certain cliff and drops into a pond where he drowns. What Lid says about the ritual killing of horses makes good sense in Helgafell's case,[118] because the mountain has a broad, high precipice on the north side – the one that opened when Þorsteinn Þorskabítr entered. The same way of sacrificing animals is well accounted for among the Sami, both in the north and in the south. Also, it was not unusual among the Sami to bury sacrificial animals alive or tether them, leaving them to die on the sacrificial site.[119] These animals would also come to the otherworld without being actively killed by humans.

I previously mentioned the precipice Ryssaberget at Voss, where lights used to be seen foreboding deaths. Interestingly, *Ryssaberget* means 'the horse cliff', and along with other cliffs with similar names, it is believed to reflect the habit of putting horses to death by pushing them off cliffs, which is well documented at Voss.[120]

If this is a correct understanding of 'unless it perished by itself', it could imply that humans ('neither livestock nor people') were also sacrificed in this way on the Helgafell precipice. In *Kristni*

saga, the Christian Icelanders Gizurr hvíti and Hjalti Skeggjason say (at an assembly just before the conversion) that the pagans in the country sacrifice humans by pushing them off cliffs. In addition, there are three mentions in Old Norse literature of old people or criminals being killed in this way, although one of them (*Gautreks saga*) clearly is legendary.[121] There are also several accounts of other forms of human sacrifice in Old Norse culture. It has been disputed to what degree these stories are true. But in a recent review including both the textual and archaeological material (much of it new), af Edholm concludes that human sacrifice probably was a reality in Old Norse pre-Christian culture.[122] We also have several accounts that the Sami, in the south as well as in the north, sacrificed humans in this way.[123] Some see this as anti-pagan or anti-Sami propaganda, which it may very well be.[124] But I can see no particular reason why it would be more unlikely among the Sami than among the Norse.

9. From the earliest written sources for both cultures, we get the impression that ancestor mountains were far less central in Old Norse religion than in South Sami religion. This may be correct. But it is also possible that we get a biased image because those who wrote the Old Norse sources had a different focus from those who wrote the sources for Sami religion. As we have seen, the *saajve* complex is hard to distinguish from the hidden people and their realm in other cultures, including later Sami cultures. The hidden people belong to the parts of the metaphysical world views that, after the introduction of Christianity and especially after the Enlightenment, have come to be regarded as popular traditions and superstition rather than religion.[125] Dictionaries of religion usually do not have entries about 'hidden people', 'fairies,' 'brownies,' 'dwarves' or 'trolls'.[126] When, some years ago, I wanted to find examples – from around the world – of giants and monsters living in or belonging to mountains and caves,[127] I did not find anything in the religious studies section of my university library. I had to turn to the folkloristics section. However, such beings are fully covered by any accepted definition of religion, e.g. Melford Spiro's classical one: 'an institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings'.[128] Still, the mentioned types of beings are not included

in the common understanding of 'religion' (although in religious studies during recent decades there has been a reaction against the understanding that only institutionalized religion is religion[129]).

This is probably why modern presentations of Sami religion do not give the *saajve* complex the position that we should expect, given von Westen and Skanke's statements that it was the most important part of the religion.[130] For example, Mebius touches only briefly upon *saajve* in his book about Sami religion (which in many ways is brilliant).[131] Rydving is an exception, as he writes that the *saajve* beings, and ancestors, were invoked 'far more frequently' than the divinities.[132]

Bäckman addresses this problem in her 1975 thesis on sacred mountains and *saajve*: 'It seems to me a great injustice against a people to degrade essential elements of their religion to "folklore", or worse, to "witchcraft".' As a way of redressing this, she sees seventeenth and eighteenth-century recordings about *saajve* as religion, and nineteenth- and twentieth-century recordings as folklore, because the latter are 'strikingly similar' to the traditions about the hidden people (*vittersägner*) recorded among the Swedes in the same areas.[133] However, as we have seen, it is difficult to separate the hidden people traditions from the *saajve* complex even in the sources from the seventeenth and eighteenth century, when Sami religion was still fully alive. The fact is that the probably most important part of South Sami religion is something that is usually not considered as religion but as folklore. This is not because there was something wrong with South Sami religion, but because the standard understanding of religion has a weakness. Luckily for modern scholarship, the missionaries who studied Sami religion in Early Modern times ignored the distinction between 'religion' and 'superstition' / 'folklore,' maybe because their purpose was to destroy the religion and they therefore had to learn to understand it as it actually was.

Our sources for Old Norse religion, however, were recorded for different purposes. The Eddic and skaldic poetry, which contains some mythological information, seems to have been recorded mostly because the poems were considered to be of historical or literary value in themselves. When Snorri Sturluson wrote his Edda two centuries after the conversion, his motivation was

to preserve the indigenous poetical tradition, which was packed with allusions to the mythology and thus required mythological knowledge in order to be understood. As the skalds did not allude much to the 'folkloric', local, everyday parts of the religion, Snorri did not include those aspects.[134] Regarding this part of the religion (including the ancestor mountains), all the information we have in medieval sources is the bits and pieces that happened to be recorded (mentioned above) because they had a function in narratives that were recorded for other reasons.

Due to this bias in the sources, it could well be that beliefs in ancestor mountains, probably overlapping with beliefs in *rudkallen* and the like as well as the hidden people, held a prominent position in Old Norse religion. Still, there cannot be much doubt that it was less important than the *saajve* beliefs were in South Sami religion. This is evident from the fact that deities in a Greco-Roman sense were not so important in Sami religion,[135] whereas they clearly had a prominent position in Old Norse religion – not only judging from the surviving written evidence, but also from place names.[136] In addition, the *nåejtie*s clearly had a more important position in Sami religion and society than corresponding ritual specialists had in Old Norse religion (*seiðmenn*, *skrattar*, etc., partly *goðar*).[137] Thus, the ancestor mountains' 'share' must have been smaller than the *saajve*'s, probably much smaller.

Conclusion

It seems that the happy *saajvh* really was a realm of the dead, one of several in South Sami religion. There is strong evidence that the *saajvh* were understood as places to go after death and places where deceased persons stayed. At the same time, the sources make no distinction between deceased persons and other inhabitants of the *saavjh*. Thus, it seems difficult not to understand the *saajve* beings as (one group of) ancestors, and to maintain a distinction between *saajve* beings and ancestors.

The diversity of places to go after death is not an argument against *saajvh* being realms of the dead, but indeed constitutes a similarity with Old Norse religion. Other similarities are the fact that most of the *saajvh* are mountains, usually prominent ones, the fact that the Icelandic mountains and the *saajvh* have a

private character, and the fact that taboos against uncleanliness attached to both groups. It is probable that both also had a taboo against using tools to kill sacrificial animals (possibly also humans), which instead were to die by themselves when they were pushed off cliffs, buried alive or bound tethered and left at the sacrificial site.

There are also a number of significant differences. Some of the *saajvh* listed in the sources are lakes, rivers or rapids, but in the Old Norse sources, no lakes, rivers or rapids are portrayed as places where people could go after death. This difference diminishes if we conceive of the lakes and the mountains as interfaces between this world and the otherworld. The *saajvh* were inherited, but were also traded and amassed in an almost capitalistic way. We have no indication that Old Norse ancestor mountains were understood in this way. But it is possible that the ancestors inside of Helgafell were thought to have moved there with the head of the clan, like the *saajve* beings could follow their owner. The taboo against women looking in the direction of or approaching sacred places, probably also *saajvh*, that we find in Sami tradition seems to have no parallel in Norse tradition. We have no indication that Norse ritual specialists had a similar kind of personal relationship with ancestor mountains as the Sami *nåejtie*s had, with important helping spirits inside the mountains. It seems that *saajvh* also played an important role in the lives of ordinary people among the Sami. Whether or not this was also the case among the Norse is hard to determine. If we take the sources at face value, this was definitely not the case. But there is reason to believe that this part of the religion is significantly underrepresented in the sources. In South Sami religion, the *saajvh* overlap greatly with the hidden people in other Nordic cultures, including later Sami cultures. At the same time, the complex surrounding the hidden people can only partly be distinguished from the Norwegian and Swedish beliefs associated with the founder of the farm, the *rudkall*, etc. If we assume that the Old Norse beliefs in ancestor mountains overlapped with these complexes, similar to the situation surrounding the *saajvh*, ancestor mountains would have had a prominent position in Old Norse religion – although clearly not as prominent as in South Sami religion.

It seems that the similarities between the *saajve* complex and the Old Norse ancestor mountains have been exaggerated. So has the degree to which the *saajve* complex has been borrowed from the Scandinavians. Today, it may seem obvious that the existence of similarities between a Sami and a Scandinavian tradition does not in and of itself demonstrate that the Sami tradition is borrowed. The influence could have gone in both directions, the traditions could have developed in interaction and some of the similarities could be independent. It seems clear that the Sami borrowed the word *saajve* (*sájvva*, *sáiva*). But, as Wiklund, Bäckman and Arbman have pointed out, this does not imply that they borrowed the whole complex. The Sami would not need to borrow the idea that there are beings in some other world close to us, who can help us if we treat them well and can do us damage if we do not. The same applies to the notion that deceased humans can join beings inhabiting mountains or water, or can pass through precipices, gorges or bodies of water in order to enter the world of the departed. Such ideas are found in countless cultures around the world, so why should the Sami need to borrow them?[138]

The Sami can hardly have borrowed from the Scandinavians those traits that are only found in the Sami part of the complex. The *nåejtie*'s reliance on anthropomorphic helping spirits in *saajvh* is one example of this, another is the capitalist-like ownership of *saajvh*. One of Petterson's points is also important to keep in mind: Even if a word is borrowed, this does not necessarily mean 'that the *original* content, the original ideas which the loan word in question expresses, have also been adopted.'[139] In addition, a word for a phenomenon can be borrowed even if both the phenomenon and another word for it already existed in the receiving language. For example, people in Scandinavia used to have a meal at lunchtime (in my childhood called *formiddagsmat* in Norway) even before the word *lunch* was borrowed from English in the second half of the twentieth century. Obviously, the Sami had, even before the adoption of the word *saajve*, notions of a hidden people and of an afterlife, as well as of otherworld beings living in prominent landscape features, like mountains or small spring-lakes, or of using such landscape features as points of contact with the otherworld.

The questions of which features within the complex surrounding the Norse ancestor mountains and the Sami *saajve* have come from where can never be answered. What we can establish is that, to a large degree, the two traditions overlap. Therefore, it seems fruitful to regard them as a largely shared tradition, developed in interaction. Some of the traits that we know only from Sami tradition may have developed after the Norse migration to Iceland – or disappeared at a later point in Norse tradition. And some of them may have existed in Norse tradition, but failed to be recorded. As we have seen, the Old Norse sources only give us glimpses of something that clearly constituted a much greater complex.

The Old Icelandic ideas of ancestor mountains must have come from Norway, so there is good reason to assume that, in the Viking Age, many Norwegian mountains were understood as ancestor mountains. But no name of such a mountain in Norway has made it into a manuscript that has come down to us. We may guess that Mount Siggjo, which resembles Helgafell and is the most prominent mountain in Þórolfr Mostrarskegg's native district, was his model for Helgafell and thus itself an ancestor mountain.[140] And, if it is correct that the *saajve* complex and the Norse ancestor mountain complex are largely a shared tradition, then probably (some of) the *saajve* mountains mentioned by Randulf in areas of Scandinavian settlement were venerated as ancestor mountains by the Norse, too, in the Middle Ages. This, however, can never be more than an educated guess. One could object to Randulf's list that some of the mountains, such as Lyderhorn near Bergen and Hornelen on the coast of Northwestern Norway, are outside of even areas where Sami could have lived in the early eighteenth century, when they were more widespread than later on.[141] But the Sami built boats and sailed the coast just like the Norwegians did,[142] so it should be no surprise that these landmarks were well known also to them.

Notes

1. See Rydving 1995.

2. The cases were, to my knowledge, first listed by Maurer 1894: 267 f.

3. It is universially believed that he came from this place. But he could also have come from present-day Mosterøy north of Stavanger, which likewise bore the name *Mostr* in Old Norse.

4. *Eyrbyggja saga* ([eds.] Matthías Þórdarson & Einar Ól. Sveinsson): 9 f. Translations of source texts are my own.

5. *Eyrbyggja saga* ([eds.] Matthías Þórdarson & Einar Ól. Sveinsson): 19.

6. *Landnámabók* ([ed.] Jakob Benediktsson): 124–125. Sturlubók and Hauksbók.

7. *Brennu-Njáls saga* ([ed.] Einar Ól. Sveinsson): 46.

8. *Landnámabók* ([ed.] Jakob Benediktsson): 233.

9. *Landnámabók* ([ed.] Jakob Benediktsson): 98.

10. *Landnámabók* ([ed.] Jakob Benediktsson): 139 f.

11. *Brennu-Njáls saga* ([ed.] Einar Ól. Sveinsson): 346–348, 459; *Gísla saga Súrssonar* ([ed.] Björn K. Þórólfsson): 70, 94.

12. Nordland 1969: 72.

13. *Saajve* is the modern South Sami spelling; in the sources, we usually find the form *saivo*. I generally use modern Sami spellings in accordance with Rydving 1995: 65–73; Bergsland and Magga 1993; Korhonen 2007; and Kåven *et al*. 1995.

14. For an overview of the *saajve* sources, see Wiklund 1916; Bäckman 1975: 56 ff.; Rydving 1993: 44 f.; Rydving 1995: 67.

15. Randulf [1723] 1903: 43 f.

16. Randulf [1723] 1903: 44, 46.

17. Randulf [1723] 1903: 49.

18. Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 222–224; Wiklund 1918; Bergsland 1985.

19. Von Westen's material is better known from Jessen-S[chardebøll] 1767, but Skanke's version of it is earlier and better, although it was not published in its entirety until 1945.

20. Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 190 f.

21. Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 193 f.

22. Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 196.

23. Rheen [1671] 1897: 37–43, 40 f.; Anonymus [1750s?] 1945; Kildal [1730 and later] 1945: 108, 116, 123, 138 f.; Turi 1910: 175 f., 211–213; Ränk 1955: 43–45, 77; Wiklund 1916; Bäckman 1975: 56 ff.

24. Rheen [1671] 1897: 40.

25. Olsen [after 1715] 1910: 26.

26. Nielsen 1932–38, 3: 369.

27. Tornæus [1672] 1900: 56; Johansson 1941: 47; Bäckman 1975: 13–15, 20, 56 f.; Wiklund 1916: 60 f., 63–65; Itkonen 1946: 67 f.; Manker 1957: 111; Wiklund 1916: 63–66.

28. Weisweiler 1940; Wiklund 1916: 68; Thors 1957: 452–457; Bäckman 1975: 13–17; Wallenstein 2017; etc.

29. For possible Western European, Mediterranean and Middle Eastern analogues to the Old Icelandic ancestor mountains, see Cöllen 2014.

30. Fritzner 1877: 214 ff.; Krohn 1907; Olrik 1905; von Unwerth 1911: 5 ff., 10 ff., 30; Holmberg 1915: 22; Wiklund 1916; Rosén 1919: 16; Olrik 1926: 133 f.; Lid 1942: 144; Ström 1958: 437; Arbman 1960: 127; Hultkrantz 1962: 924; Nordland 1969: 73; Pettersson 1987: 73.

31. Wiklund 1916: 45 f., 71–73; Bäckman 1975: 7 f.

32. Arbman 1960: 69 f.; similar Pettersson 1987: 71–73.

33. Fellman [1830s] 1906, 2: 65; Friis 1871: 113, 125; Holmberg (1915) 1987: 25 f.; Wiklund 1916: 45 ff.; Olrik 1926: 134; and others.

34. Rosén 1919: 25; Arbman 1960: 127; Bäckman 1975: 7, 84, 91, 103, 106–109, 126, 137; Pettersson 1987: 73; Mebius 2003: 81–86; Tolley 2009: 407–409; probably Rydving 2013.

35. Arbman 1960: 124 ff.; Bäckman 1975: 7, 84, 91, 103, 106–109, 126, 137; Pettersson 1987: 73 f.

36. Henceforth, I use 'the hidden people' as my analytic term.

37. Læstadius [1840–45] 1997: 55 f.; Fritzner 1877: 214 ff.; Rosén 1919: 25; Arbman 1960: 122 f.; and others.

38. Helland 1906: 216; Kolsrud 1958: 59; Bäckman 1975: 100 ff., for example p. 114.

39. Rydving 2013: 405 f.

40. Christiansen 1946: 93.

41. Wiklund 1918; Bergsland 1985; see also Fjellheim 1995: 73–76.

42. Dunfjeld-Aagård 2005: 30; Randulf [1723] 1903: 43 f.; Qvigstad (1920a: 354) also pays attention only to the interior.

43. Qvigstad 1920a: 355.

44. See especially von Unwerth 1911: 16 f., 31 f.; and Rydving 2004.

45. Dunfjeld-Aagård 2005: 30.

46. Randulf [1723] 1903: 43 f.

47. Compare the list in Rydving 2010b: 120–121.

48. Bäckman 1975: 18, 62.

49. Lakes, rivers, possibly a rapid: 'Jörman-Saiwo', 'Brantzen-Jokken-Saiwo', 'Germanjana-Saiwo', 'Krosejaure-Saiwo', 'Bergzhjaze-Saiwo' (Wiklund 1918: 158, 161; Wiklund 1916: 69).

50. Randulf [1723] 1903: 43 f. E.g. 'Aimetal-Saiwo' = Aajmehtaelie / Heimdalhaugen in Grong, Trøndelag; 'Hermans-Oilk-Saiwo' = Hermanssnasa in Verdalen, Trøndelag; and 'Mutzviell-Saiwo' = Modtvielie / Munsfjället in Krokom, Jämtland (Wiklund 1918: 158; Bergsland 1985: 63–66).

51. Frostviken, Jämtland (Wiklund 1916: 56).

52. E.g. 'Dærkan-Saiwo' = Jillie-Dearka / Dergaklumpen, 'Mælkan-Saiwo' = Mealhkoe, 'Buarkan-Saiwo' = Buarkantjahke / Borgahällan, 'Ourewarden-Saiwo' = Ovrevaartoe / Orklumpen, 'Norisviell-Saiwo' = Noeresfiellie / Nursfjellet, etc. (Wiklund 1918; Bergsland 1985).

53. Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 193 f.; Skanke [1728–31] 1945a: 254; Sidenius [1726] 1910: 58.

54. Wiklund 1916: 55–57.

55. Demant Hatt 1928: 52.

56. 'Store Fiäll eller Berg, der röken står ellr de wärsta spöken som der boo, derest ock skola wara kiärnor som går, Salva venia, ellr orenlighet, hwilka om man widrörer, så gå dhe igien och synas intet. Hönsen eller Tuppar gahla ther ock, skall wara långt Norr, sådane Saivo skall dhe holla för sina underhollare.' (Burman [late 1720s?] 1910: 9). In this translation, *kiärnor* is (following Håkan Rydving's emendation) read

as modern standard Swedish *tjärnar*, because *kiärnor* 'churns' does not seem to make sense. The initial *ki-* and *tj-* have the same pronunciation, and in the eighteenth century, the distribution of the unstressed endings *-ar*, *-er* and *-or* was not yet fixed in standard Swedish.

57. From the Ume Sami area, just north of the South Sami area, we encounter the notion that 'saiva' resides in many small lakes (Rijsjaevrie, Faarrohke / Farroken and Baeltehkjaevrie / Baltiken are the examples given) and rule over the fish, some times 'she' chases them away, making them impossible to catch, at other times 'she' makes them reappear (Wiklund 1916: 53–56, 65, 71).

58. 'Ved Tossåsen er en saivosö, den er meget lunefuld. Det kan være smugt vejr, naar de gaar ud for at fiske, men det bliver altid storm og uvejr, naar de begyner at fiske. Saivosøer har dobbel bund. Saivo er noget ondt' (Demant Hatt 1928: 49).

59. Qvigstad 1924: 286–289.

60. Randulf [1723] 1903: 49; Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 193 f.

61. Randulf [1723] 1903: 43 f.; Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 190 f., 222–224; Hammond 1787: 455–469; Wiklund 1918; Bergsland 1985; Rydving 2010b.

62. Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 190–194; Randulf [1723] 1903: 43–44.

63. Bäckman 1975: 103, 109, 126.

64. Randulf [1723] 1903: 49; Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 193; Wiklund 1916: 70; Arbman 1960: 124 f.; Bäckman 1978: 44.

65. von Westen [1723] 1910; Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 190 f., 194–196; Bäckman 1975: 84; Pettersson 1957; Pettersson 1987: 75, 78.

66. von Westen [1723] 1910; Randulf [1723] 1903: 43–46; Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 190–196; Rydving 2010b.

67. von Westen [1723] 1910; Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 190–192, 222; Sidenius [1726] 1910: 56–58; Qvigstad 1924: 286–289; cf. Olsen [etter 1715] 1910: 26 ff.

68. Ränk 1955: 16; Rydving 2013: 393.

69. Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 197–199; Anonymus [1720s] 1767: 417; Sidenius [1726] 1910: 58. Forbus [before 1730] 1910: 35; Kildal [1730s?] 1807: 458; Rydving 2013. About the same habit further

north, see Kildal [1730 and later] 1945: 134, 140 f.; Anonymus [1750s?] 1945: 174.

70. Wiklund 1916: 56; Randulf [1723] 1903: 64.

71. See endnote 34 and the data provided by Wiklund 1916: 50 f.

72. Wiklund 1916: 55, 63–65; Bäckman 1975: 56 f.

73. Rheen [1671] 1897: 37–43; Olsen [after 1715] 1910: 26 ff.; Leem 1767: 443 f.

74. Wiklund 1916: 55.

75. Lindahl & Öhrling 1780: 390. Wiklund points out that, although most of Lindahl & Öhrling's information is either of a northern provenience or presents southern information from the von Westen circle, their article about 'Saiwa' is independent and not northern (Wiklund 1916: 67). Part of the article reads: 'In the past, they venerated quite a few mountains as sacred. These, women were not allowed to approach, except very young, under the age of twelve.' (Lindahl & Öhrling 1780: 390, translated from Latin.)

76. von Westen [1723] 1910: 2; Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 193 f.

77. Krosshólar is not, and Þórisbjǫrg has not been identified.

78. Helgafell is not that prominent, but it could be, as Endresen (1937: 36) points out, that Þórolfr chose Helgafell because his model was the landmark mountain Siggjo near his probable homestead in Norway. Helgafell's shape and location in the landscape resembles, on a more modest scale, that of Siggjo, whose Old Norse form was *Sigg*, probably derived from 'to see' (Stemshaug and Sandnes 1997: 391), meaning 'the one you see (from far away)'.

79. Þorvaldur Thoroddsen 1914: 54, https://ornefnasja.lmi.is/.

80. Jón Árnason [1862–64] 1958–61, 1: 461, 660; 3: 208; 4: 42 f.; Asbjørnsen 1870: 91 f.; Sahlgren 1913; Finnur Jónsson 1913; Indrebø 1924: 98; Langenfelt 1920.

81. Jón Árnason [1862–64] 1958–61, 1: 3 f., 101 ff.; 3: 162 ff., 176.

82. Heide 2014a.

83. Saba 2019: 188, 191.

84. Christiansen 1920: 19.

85. Skáldskaparmál 6, *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* ([ed.] Finnur Jónsson): 84 f.; Hávamál 106, *Eddukvæði I. Goðakvæði* ([eds.] Jónas Kristjánsson & Vésteinn Ólasson): 343.

86. Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 193 f.; *saajvebovtsh* in Bergsland and Magga 1993: 247 / Hasselbrink 1981: 1101; Jernsletten 2009: 103–112.

87. *Eyrbyggja saga* ([eds.] Matthías Þórdarson & Einar Ól. Sveinsson): 19; *Landnámabók* ([ed.] Jakob Benediktsson): 98, 139 f.

88. Hammond 1787: 455–469; Bergsland 1985: 71–73.

89. *Eyrbyggja saga* ([eds.] Matthías Þórdarson & Einar Ól. Sveinsson): 9.

90. Strömbäck 1935: 160–190; Heide 2006: 137–141, 143–154.

91. Bäckman 1975: 103, 109, 126.

92. Randulf [1723] 1903: 49; Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 193 f., 196.

93. Rydving 2010b: 121; Bergsland 1985: 73.

94. Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 193

95. Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 193 f., 196 f., 214; Skanke [1728–31] 1945c: 235.

96. Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 166, 197–199.

97. Simek 2006: 178 f., 481–483; Steinsland 1991: 431; Cöllen 2014: 76 f.

98. Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 194; Skanke [1728–31] 1945c: 235.

99. Anonymus [1720s] 1767: 418; Sidenius [1726] 1910: 59; Simek 2006: 178 f.

100. Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 194; Simek 2006: 113; Ränk 1955: 35, 44, 77; Pettersson 1987: 75. In Kola Sami tradition, there was even a place that resembled the warrior paradise of Valhǫll (Bäckman 1975: 84).

101. *Eddukvæði I. Goðakvæði* ([eds.] Jónas Kristjánsson & Vésteinn Ólasson): 302.

102. Rosén 1919: 25.

103. Rydving 2013.

104. Torfi H. Tulinius 2006: 6; *Eyrbyggja saga* ([eds.] Matthías Þórdarson & Einar Ól. Sveinsson): 72.

105. Mundal 1974: 101–106.

106. Mundal 1974: 105 f.

107. Birkeli 1938: 187, 189–192, also 100, 103, 117–124, 171, 181, 186–191, 203, 205.

108. Birkeli 1938: 109–203; Jón Árnason [1862–64] 1958–61, 1: 3–124, 138, 466; 3: 162–186, etc.

109. Þorvalds þáttr víðfǫrla 1 ([eds.] Jónas Kristjánsson & Sigurgeir Steingrímsson & Ólafur Halldórsson & Peter Foote): 61–68; Kristni saga ([eds.] Jónas Kristjánsson & Sigurgeir Steingrímsson & Ólafur Halldórsson & Peter Foote): 7 f.; Kormáks saga ([ed.] Einar Ól. Sveinsson): 288.

110. Nordberg 2013: 244.

111. Nordberg 2013: 248.

112. *Flateyjarbók* ([ed.] Sigurður Nordal): 74 ff; Sundqvist 2017.

113. de Vries 1956, 1: 180–184; the prose after Helgakviða Hundingsbana 2, *Eddukvæði II. Hetjukvæði* ([eds.] Jónas Kristjánsson & Vésteinn Ólasson): 283.

114. Mundal 1992.

115. Weisweiler 1940; Thors 1957: 452–457. Some reject this, e.g. Bjorvand & Lindeman 2007: 954.

116. Heide 2011.

117. Högström [1747] 1980: 192 f.

118. Lid 1924: 181–184, 186–192, esp. 190. Cf. the killing of the horse Freyfaxi in Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða ([ed.] Jón Jóhannessen): 123–124.

119. Qvigstad 1920a: 354 f.; Arbman 1960: 132; Manker 1957: 92, 259, 263, 275; Demant Hatt 1928: 48; Leem 1767: 444; Qvigstad 1920b: 28. In light of this, it may be a foreshadowing in *Hrafnkels saga* that the chain of events, which lead to the killing of Freyfaxi, namely the illicit riding of him, happened because while the many other available horses were suddenly wary, Freyfaxi was 'as calm as if he had been buried' (*grafinn niðr*) (Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða ([ed.] Jón Jóhannessen): 103).

120. Nordland 1969: 72; Lid 1924: 186–192.

121. *Kristni saga* ([eds.] Jónas Kristjánsson & Sigurgeir Steingrímsson & Ólafur Halldórsson & Peter Foote): 34; Lid 1924: 192; Nordberg 2003: 22–30.

122. af Edholm 2016; af Edholm 2020.

123. Lid 1924: 193 f.

124. Arbman 1947; Hermanstrand 2009: 182 f.; Kroik 2020.

125. See e.g. Anttonen 1992; Saler (1993) 2000: 33–50; Rydving 2004; Nordberg 2018.

126. There are no entries on these words in neither *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Religion* (1996), *A New Handbook of Living Religions* (1997), *The Brill Dictionary of Religion* (2006), or *Encyclopedia of Global Religion* (2012). The 15-volume *Encyclopedia of Religion* (2nd ed., 2005) has entries on 'dvergar' and 'álfar' in Old Norse mythology, but not on 'dwarves' or 'elves' in later traditions. The dictionary does have an article on 'Fairies', which also mentions 'trolls' and 'brownies'. *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (2005) does have an article on 'Faerie Faith in Scotland' and an article about 'Elves and land spirits in Pagan Norse Religion', as might be expected from its focus on nature.

127. Heide 2014b: 175.

128. Spiro 1966: 96.

129. Cf. the references in endnote 125.

130. For example Reuterskiöld 1912; Karsten 1955; Hultkrantz 1962; Pentikäinen 1997; DuBois 1999; Mebius 2003; Tolley 2009; Eidlitz Kuoljok 2009; von Westen [1723] 1910: 2; Skanke [1728–31] 1945b: 193 f.

131. Mebius 2003: 81–84, 86 f., 91 f.

132. Rydving 2013: 406.

133. Bäckman 1975: 9.

134. *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* ([ed.] Finnur Jónsson); *Eddukvæði I. Goðakvæði* ([eds.] Jónas Kristjánsson & Vésteinn Ólasson); *Eddukvæði II. Hetjukvæði* ([eds.] Jónas Kristjánsson & Vésteinn Ólasson).

135. Rydving 2013; Mebius 2003: 44–62.

136. Olsen 1915.

137. Dillmann 2006.

138. Petterson points out that 'the idea of mountains of the dead is found not only in Scandinavia but also in the eastern parts of the North European area', but he still concludes that the 'ideas about the saijvo mountains are of Nordic origin' (Pettersson 1987: 73, 70–71, 74).

139. Pettersson 1987: 69 f.

140. Cf. endnote 78.

141. Olsen 2010.

142. Larsen 1934; *Samiske båter og båtbygging* 2010; Rydving 2010a.

Abbreviations

SamL. Lule Sami

SamN. North Sami

SamS. South Sami

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3. Comparative and Contextual Approaches to the Study of Finno-Karelian and Ob-Ugrian *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* Incantations and Songs

Vesa Matteo Piludu

Sources and Scholarship about the Finno-Karelian Bear Ceremonialism

This chapter deals with comparative and contextual analyses of Finno-Karelian and Ob-Ugrian *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantations and songs, which told the mythic origin of the bear. In Finland and Karelia, the knowledge of *The Birth of the Bear* (*ohton synty*, *kontion synty* or *karhun synty*) incantation gave the utterer the power to control the actions of the bear in dangerous situations, asking the bear to avoid agressive behavior. These incantations were performed (a) before leaving for the carefully ritualized bear hunt (or during the bear hunt); and (b) to protect the cattle from bears during the grazing season, because the pastures were situated in narrow meadows in the forest. I focus on the Finno-Karelian *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantations, which has been compared by some of the most influential Finnish scholars (Kuusi, Haavio, and Sarmela) with the Ob-Ugrian *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* songs. These comparisions stressed the analogies between different Finno-Ugric traditions in support of theories about the archaic origins of the Finnish bear ceremonial itself. In this chapter, I will criticize the methods and results of these classic researches. My approach suggests that the comparision between the Finno-Karelian and Ob-Ugrian traditions is

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indeed useful, but only if the researcher pays necessary attention to the existence of meaningful contextual, ritual and communicative differences between the two traditions. My contextual comparision of the material gave some new results: the lore of cattle herders, the tradition of the *tietäjä*s (sages and trance healers) as well as syncretic beliefs with vernacular interpretations of saints deeply influenced the Finno-Karelian *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantations. I the past, these influences were negated or considered degenerations of the original and archaic versions. I suggest that the historical stratification of these incantations is complex and, for this reason, it is both fascinating and challenging for contemporary scholars.

The Ob-Ugrian and the Finno-Karelian *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* songs and incantations also reveal different forms of human-animal communication. In the Ob-Ugrian songs the bear – i.e. a human interpreting the bear – told its myth in first person and from the bear's perspective to humans. In the Finno-Karelian incantations the utterer was human and the listeners were the bear and the forest spirits, and the main perspective therefore the human one. As we will see in the following sections, this difference is of fundamental importance. The chapter also deals also with ontological problems, as the personhood of the bear and forest spirits, and the Finno-Karelian and Ob-Ugrian ways to communicate with these 'forest persons'.

In the first part of the article, I will introduce the sources of Finno-Karelian bear ceremonialism and provide a critical analysis of the traditional Finnish theories and studies on the topic, taking into consideration the importance of *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantations in the important scientific debate on bear ceremonialism.[1]

I will start with a brief description of the Finno-Karelian bear ceremonial. It was performed in the winter, during the hibernation time, and it included several rituals: (1) preparative and protecting rituals and incantations, performed in the village before leaving for the hunt; (2) singing *The Birth of the Bear* incantation on the border of the forest; (3) songs to persuade the forest spirits to guide the hunters towards the prey or the den; (4) the ritual killing of the bear, including the awakening of the bruin from the den; (5) songs to persuade the forest spirits to guide the hunters

towards the prey or the den; (6) the bear feast in the village, the ritual consumption of all the meat, fat and organs of the bear; and (7) the procession with the bear's skull and bones to a sacred pine in the forest, the attachment of the bear's skull on a branch and the performance of songs for the bear's skull and its soul, in order to achieve the regeneration of the animal in its mythical homeland (the forest or the sky).[2] In Finland and Karelia, the bear hunt and ceremonial was performed when a bear had attacked the cattle; the hunting and cattle breeding lore were closely interwined.

Karelians and Eastern Finns considered the forest to be a sacred, otherworldly and sociomorphic environment,[3] where the bear and the spirits were the non-human or more-than-human persons; the powerful forest spirits (*metsän haltiat*) protected bears and game animals and provided them to the hunters who respectfully performed the rituals, ensuring the regeneration of the animal. The forest was considered a sentient and perceptive environment;[4] the spirits and the bear could see, listen to and understand human speech and the hunter's actions. Both the bruin and the forest spirits observed the hunt; if the hunter did not perform rituals, they took revenge attacking people or cattle. The ethnologist Laura Stark stresses that guardian spirits were sentient beings with emotions, agency, a moral code, and expectations.[5] The same statement could be considered valid for the bear. The bear had a shifting double identity: it was strictly bound to the families of the forest and sky haltias, but at the same time it had physical and behavioral humanlike characteristics suggesting that it could be a human – a *tietäjä*, a sorcerer (*noita*), a bewitched human, or a human choosing to live in the wilderness – who had been transformed into a bruin.[6] This situation made the bear extremely anomalous and difficult to categorize. The anomality[7] and personhood of the bear requited a ritualization of the hunt and of all the relations with bears. If the hunter correctly performed all the rituals and songs, the woodland denizens were 'pleased'; the forest haltias provided more bears or game animals, and the bear would return in a future feast.[8]

These ontological premises about the personhood of the bear and the forest are very important for the analysis of *The Birth of the Bear* incantations; the bear and the forest spirits were

considered persons able to understand *The Birth of the Bear* incantations and they were supposed to react in a precise way to the exhortations or requests of the human utterers.

In the nineteenth century, Finnish folklore collectors transcribed a large amount of *Bear Songs* (*karhuvirret*, songs for the bear hunt and ceremonials) in Finland and Karelia. At that time, the bear ceremonial was a vanishing tradition, and the majority of the songs were collected in isolated villages in eastern and northern regions. The fieldwork continued at the beginning of the twentieth century, but the collectors searched for old hunters as informants, people who were able to remember the rituals of the nineteenth century, recall the songs of their fathers and grandfathers, and describe the bear ceremonials done in the past. The material of the twentieth century is therefore strictly connected with the tradition of the previous century.

The main corpus of sources I analyzed for my PhD dissertation were 288 *Bear Songs* published in six different volumes of the collection *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* (Ancient Poems of the Finnish People, henceforth SKVR), which are divided by old Finnish and Karelian regions and folklore genres:

1. North Ostrobothnia (including the eastern region Kainuu): 118 songs
2. Viena, Archangel or White Sea Karelia: 79 songs
3. Savo or Savonia: 44 songs
4. Border and Ladoga Karelia and Finnish North Karelia: 40 songs
5. Area of the Forest Finns in Central Scandinavia: 5 songs
6. Häme or Tavastia (including Central Finland): 2 songs
7. Total: 288 songs

All the songs of these and other SKVR volumes are digitalized and readable on a public website.[9] Analyzing the data geographically, I noticed that in the nineteenth century the *Bear Songs* were mostly collected from small villages in Eastern Finland and Karelia.

The sources about Finnish bear ceremonialism predating the nineteenth century (the golden age of folkore collection in Finland and Karelia) are scarce and quite fragmentary, with the exception

of a rich and long *Bear Song* with texts describing the phases of the ceremonial: *The Text of Viitasaari*.[10] The first written document on the topic is a very brief description of the drinking from the bear skull, the last rite that closed the whole ceremonial. The account was included in a sermon given by the bishop of Finland Isaak Rothovius for the inauguration of the *Regia Academia Åboensis*, the first university in Finland, on July 15, 1640. The Bishop hoped that the Academia could be an instrument to erase these 'rude' and 'pagan' rituals from the country. The oldest sources are from Central Finland and Southern Finland (Åbo) but the Bishop refers to bear ceremonials performed in the whole country.

The most evident division in the geographic distribution of the *Bear Songs* is that in the nineteenth century, almost no *Bear Songs* were collected in Western and Southern Finland or from Ingria, the Karelian Isthmus and Olonets Karelia. Bear ceremonialism seems to have disappeared more rapidly in the western and southern regions with a more advanced agricultural system, cattle breeding, infrastructures and churches. Kalevalaic singing, too, disappeared more rapidly in the southern and western areas, due to the multifaceted processes of modernization.

In the nineteenth century, the heartland of the *Bear Songs* was quite a large area around the actual border between Russia and Finland, extending westwards to Savo and Central Finland and northwards until Suomussalmi, Kuusamo and southern Lapland. These areas were more isolated from cities and covered by huge forests; there, hunting traditions survived for a long time.

The *Bear Songs* from Viena Karelia are generally longer and rich of details, because some of the best singers and hunters knew them. However, meaningful and long *Bear Songs* were collected in all the six areas.

The old region of North Ostrobothnia included the actual eastern region of Kainuu and the eastern parish of Suomussalmi, in which a good number of *Bear Songs* were collected. In the Ostrobotnian material, too, there is a preminence of songs from the eastern and northern parts of the region.

In the nineteenth century in Western and Southern Finland, there were indeed bears, woods and forests; short or long incantations to protect the cattle from bears have been collected in almost

all the Finnish and Karelian regions. Longer and detailed incantations where collected in Savo and Karelia. In other words, in the nineteenth century information about rituals to protect the cattle – which were less elaborated than the bear ceremonials but extremely meaningful for the communities – was collected everywhere, also in the southern and the western rural areas. These rituals often included the performance of *The Birth of the Bear* incantation.

For a long time, Finnish scholars stressed the archaic features of Finnish bear ceremonialism by using comparison as a tool to demonstrate its antiquity. This comparative method has a venerable tradition, which predates the so-called phenomenological school of comparative religion. The clergyman, lexicographer and writer Christfried Ganander wrote several entries on folk beliefs about the bear in his dictionary of Finnish mythology *Mythologia Fennica*, published in Swedish in 1789. The most detailed entry is *Kouwwon päälliset eller Häät*,[11] which contains a short description of a Finnish bear ceremonial and a Sámi one, referring briefly to Schefferus. The comparison was very simple, comprising almost a juxtaposition of the two ceremonies, as if they were the same tradition. The fact that the Sámi—considered a more 'primitive' people—performed bear ceremonialism reinforced the antiquity and importance of the Finnish ceremonial.

In the late nineteenth century and in the twentieth century, many Finnish scholars followed the path of the historical-comparative mythological method of the influential linguist Matthias Alexander Castrén. They emphasized linguistic or ethnographic similarities between the mythologies or the rituals of different Finno-Ugrian peoples in order to demonstrate the antiquity of certain Finnish beliefs and rituals.[12] Another typical method of demonstrating the archaic features of Finnish myths or rituals was comparison with Ancient Greek and Roman myths and archaeological findings in Finland or in other Finno-Ugric areas.

Not everybody was fully convinced by these methods. In 1915, the folklorist Kaarle Krohn criticized the theory about the Sámi origins of the Finnish bear ceremonial, stating that there were similarities only in some ritual phases, but the Sámi and Finnish *Bear Songs* were different. According to him, the ritual similarities could be the result of a common Finno-Ugrian heritage, but as a whole the Finnish *Bear Songs* and ceremonialism developed in an

original and independent way.[13] Some renowned Finnish scholars focused on contextual analysis of the Finnish, Sámi, Khanty and Mansi bear ceremonials, avoiding general comparative theories.[14]

In 1963, the folklorist Matti Kuusi was the first scholar to elaborate a totemic theory for the ancient Finnish bear ceremonialism. Kuusi supposed that the archaeological discovery of fifteen prehistoric axes shaped with the head of a bear or elk[15] was proof that the ancient inhabitants of Finland were divided into two clans, one worshipping the bear, the other worshipping the elk. Furthermore, Kuusi hypothesized that the Ob-Ugrians were also divided into two totemic clans.[16] He remarked that the Lutheran Sámi told that the female ancestor of the Orthodox Skolt Sámi was a girl who had spent the whole winter in a bear den.[17] According to Kuusi, these Sámi totemic myths explained why the Finnish people presented the bear ceremonial as a wedding of the bear.[18]

Kuusi also noted that both the Finns and the Ob-Ugrians had a myth concerning the celestial origin of the bear. He compared the Finnish *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantations, involving the ritual killing of the bear and its ascension into the sky after its death, with the resurrection of ritually killed and resurrected 'sons of gods' of ancient cultures: Osiris, Dionysus, and Jesus. He saw similarities between the consumption of the bear meat in the bear ceremonials, the Christian Holy Communion and the ritual eating of the god present in the rituals of the indigenous peoples of Central America.[19]

In 1967, the folklorist and scholar of Finnish folk beliefs and mythology Martti Haavio also emphasized the similarities between the Finnish and Ob-Ugrian myths about the celestial origin of the bear, but he also stressed that in the Finnish version the bear was born in the constellation of Otava (the Big Dipper, the Plought, or *Ursa Major*). He compared the Finnish descent of the bear from Otava (the Big Dipper) with a multitude of astral myths from Siberia, Philippines, Borneo and North America; narratives about a woman who married a star but finally came back to earth, descending with a rope.[20]

Haavio stressed that the Finnish *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantations should be connected with the Ancient Greek and Roman myths of Kallisto or Callisto, the Arcadian princess

and nymph who was transformed into the constellation of the Great Bear (*Ursa Major*, or the Big Dipper; Otava in Finnish). In some versions, Kallisto's son Arkas became another constellation, Arctophylax (Bear Watcher), which seems to follow behind the Great Bear.[21] Haavio concluded that the Finnish *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantations, the Ancient Greek myth of Arkas and the Ob-Ugrian myth of Mir-Susne-Xum were all fragments of the same original myth about the son of a god who was killed and resurrected, and who became an ancestor and a constellation in the sky.[22] However, the myth of Kallisto was connected with an Athenian female initiation rite performed in the Brauron temple; the Ancient Greek ritual and mythological context was completely different from the Northern ones.[23] The Finnish words Otava and Otavainen (Big Dipper, the Plought, *Ursa Major*) and its root *ota* have Uralic or Finno-Ugrian roots, but the meaning of the world seems to be connected to a salmon fishing net, not to the bear itself, as in the case of the Greek myth.[24] However, Otava was often mentioned as one of the birthplaces of the bear.

The theories by Kuusi and Haavio have many points in common. Both supposed that a single prehistoric bear 'cult' worked as a 'model' for the various Finno-Ugrian bear ceremonials and that the bear cult was a kind of prehistoric religion, based on worship of the bear, considered as a god or son of a god, who suffered death and rebirth. Both authors analyzed the bear ceremonialism at the very beginning of their influential books on Finnish 'unwritten literature' and Finnish mythology. The readers understand at the very beginning that the authors consider the 'bear cult' as the most ancient stratum of Finnish folk religion and oral literature. However, in contrast to Haavio's book, which includes bibliographic references, the one by Kuusi does not include any precise archival or bibliographic references.

Recently, Håkan Rydving heavily criticized the scientific postulate that states that 'all the different types of bear ceremonials found in Northern Eurasia should be regarded as concrete forms, or representatives of the "same" single ritual: "the" bear ceremonial'.[25] Haavio and Kuusi went even further in postulating that the whole ceremonial was a result of the 'same' generic totemic myth or resurrection drama present in many religious cultures. Haavio and Kuusi collected all kind of parallels from

different cultures and they did not pay sufficient attention to the considerable temporal or geographic differences of the sources they used.

As a result, the hypothetical and prototypical bear ceremonials described by Kuusi and Haavio do not correspond precisely to any of the Finnish, Sámi or Ob-Ugrian ceremonials. They are bizarre hybrids of different traditions and a confused amalgam of Classic and Finno-Ugric mythologies.

Emphatizing the archaic origins of the bear ceremonialism, Kuusi and Haavio negated the impact of cattle herding, agricultuture and syncretic Christian popular beliefs on the Finno-Karelian bear ceremonialism, and they almost did not cover the incantations to protect cattle from bears in their most important books.

Even so, the impact of their theories was huge, and they partially influenced the anthropologist Matti Sarmela, who has built a historical reconstruction of the chronological development of the Finnish bear ceremonialism in three eras. According to him, the first era comprised the prehistoric Finnish culture, marked by shamanism and a hunter-gatherer economy. Sarmela argues that the Finnish ritual of the bear skull should be connected with the natural environment of the bear; the skull and all of the other bones should be returned to the forest to ensure the rebirth or regeneration of the animal in the original birthland.[26] According to Sarmela, the myth of *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* (which emphazises the regeneration or resurrection of the animal) is connected to this era.

However, the theoretic background of Sarmela's historical theory is different. Kuusi and Haavio stressed the importance of cultural and linguistic contacts between the Finno-Ugric peoples, and proposed bold diffutionist theories. According to Sarmela, the similarities between the bear ceremonials of the Northern peoples are not explained by the geographical diffusion of the rituals, but they were caused by the fact that all of these peoples lived in a similar ecological environment and they were concerned about the possibility that game animals could go extinct by overhunting them. Sarmela argued that the Ob-Ugrians lived for centuries in the same ecosystem as the prehistoric Finnish people, and for this reason, they better preserved the ritual hunt of the bear and the bear mythology.[27]

Sarmela stated that the Finnish bear ceremonial's second era evolved in a different direction: the old rites did not work anymore because the ecological environment changed when the Finnish people adopted agriculture.[28] During the Iron Age, with the development of slash-and-burn agriculture, the bear became the 'enemy' of the people, because it killed the cattle in the forest pastures or destroyed the farmland produced by means of the slash-and-burn technique.[29]

Sarmela stressed that the most important religious specialist of the Finnish archaic agrarian cultures was no longer the shaman, but the *tietäjä*, a sage who did not travel to other worlds or dimensions in search of lost souls (like the shaman), but expelled 'the sorcerer's arrows or darts' (*noidan nuolet*) or sickness from the body of an ill person. The environment of the age of the *tietäjä* was divided into two worlds, the cultivated landscape and uncultivated nature, which represented a kind of anti-world.[30] Sarmela stated that the most important goal of the *tietäjä* was to protect the cattle and the crops of the fields from bears.[31] According to him, *The Birth of the Bear* from the evil and dreadful Crone or Mistress of Pohjola, is connected to this era, marked by the the degeneration of the sacredness of the bear.[32]

It is indeed true that there are negative and dreadful details in some *The Birth of the Bear* incantations of the cattle herders. However, *The Birth of the Bear from the Crone of Pohjola* was also present in some songs of the hunters; the bear was not fully idealized in the *Bear Songs*, but it often had ambiguous features. In the songs of the hunters, Pohjola (the Northland) was not only the birthland of illnesses, but a name for the mythic, otherworldly and dangerous forest (Pohjola, Tapiola, Metsola) where the bear was born. In general, the Crone or Mistress of Pohjola was not only a negative being, a 'whore', and the mother of the illnesses, as Sarmela stated. She was also considered a dreadful guardian haltia and a mother of bears, wolves and wild animals. In a song by Ivana Malinen she is involved in the regeneration of bears. Her name is often connected to Hongas or Hongotar (the Pine Lady), a forest haltia and mother of the bears. The Crone of Pohjola was not the personification of evil, but a very ambiguous and powerful being; cattle herders tried to communicate with her in order to convince her to stop bear attacks.[33]

In the theory of Sarmela, the third era was the 'age of the countryman,' which developed during the Middle Ages. This period was marked by the religious dominance of the Christian faith. The Catholic and Orthodox cults of the saints influenced the rituals of the *tietäjä*s; in their incantations, the saints took the place of the earlier haltias protecting the bear.[34] *The Birth of the Bear* from wool thrown by a saint in water (river or sea) represented the main myth of this era; according to Sarmela the bear was not sacred any more, but it became a puppet fully dominated by the saints.

Although Sarmela's reconstruction contains many useful observations and interpretations, the differences between the three eras are made too sharp. Sarmela does not negate the influence of agriculture or Christian beliefs on the Finnish bear lore. However, he has the tendency to idealize the hunter-gather traditions (as a model of ecological sustainability) and to consider the influence of agriculture, Christianity and cattle herding on the bear lore as a negative degeneration of the original bear ceremonial.

The folklorist Lotte Tarkka has noted that for many decades the Finnish scholars focused on the 'ultimate origins of the song,'[35] and that for them the 'true' and 'authentic' text of a song was supposed to be the most ancient or archaic part of it. Another problem of Sarmela's interpretation is that he considers each era as completely separated from the other, denying the possibility of communication and syncretism between the traditions of hunters and cattle herders. The folklorist and scholar of religion Lauri Honko also followed a traditional Finnish comparative-historical approach in his analysis of Finno-Ugrian bear ceremonials.[36]

Kuusi, Haavio, Honko, and Sarmela influenced the scholar of religions Juha Pentikäinen who wrote a comparative book on the 'cultural history' of the bear, covering prehistory, classical mythology, Scandinavian sagas and legends, and the bear ceremonials of the Ob-Ugrians, Sámi, Finns, and Karelians. Like Haavio, Pentikäinen is interested in the astral mythologies of the bear, but he adds to his analysis a comparison of the images of the bear and the elk in the celestial parts of the painted surfaces of Sámi shamanic drums.[37] Pentikäinen accentuates the relevance of cultural contacts among these traditions, but he treats them in separate chapters containing an abundance of original sources, and the book also gives the possibility to understand the differences between the traditions.[38]

In the last decades, different contextual approaches flourished. The folklorist Lotte Tarkka wrote innovative articles and book chapters about the bear ceremonials, the meaning of the forest, and the incantations to protect the cattle from bears in the tradition of the parish of Vuokkiniemi in Viena or White Sea Karelia.[39] The ethnologist Laura Stark wrote on the syncretic tradition of incantations and rituals to protect the cattle from bears in Orthodox Karelia.[40] The folklorist Anna-Leena Siikala briefly covered the Finnish bear ceremonial in her last monograph on Finnic mythology.[41]

The Birth of the Bear Incantations in the Finno-Karelian Traditions

What kind of incantations were *The Birth of the Bear?* In order to understand the meaning of these incantations, it is necessary to analyze the ritual context in which they were performed. *The Birth of the Bear* was an incantation sung by hunters in the Finno-Karelian bear ritual hunt and ceremonialism. The herders also sung or uttered *The Birth of the Bear* incantations in the rituals to protect the cattle from bruins during the grazing season, and the *tietäjä*s[42] uttered them to heal the wounds of cows, horses or persons injured by a bear. In the nineteenth century, many Finnish folklorists collected hundreds of *The Birth of the Bear* incantations in almost all the Finnish and Karelian regions.[43] Other *Birth* incantations (as the *The Birth of Fire*, used to cure burnings) were fundamental parts of the repertoires of *tietäjä*s.

The narrative part of *The Birth of the Bear* was followed by orders to the bruin or exhortations to the haltias who generated the bear. After hearing about its mythical origins, the bear was expected to change its aggressive behavior, following the commands or requests of the singer. By singing the *Birth of the Bear*, the hunter gained control over the animal or its haltias; acting in relation to the origin or progenitor of the bruin, he controlled other members of its species. *The Birth of the Bear* incantations varied significantly from singer to singer, and they often were historically stratified, containing references to pre-Christian and syncretic Christian beings who controlled the bear. Considering the importance of *The Birth of the Bear* incantations in the folk rituals and

beliefs, it is surprising that Finnish scholars have studied them in quite a superficial way.

The folklorist Kaarle Krohn briefly covered *The Birth of the Bear* incantations in his monograph about all *The Birth* incantations of the Finno-Karelian tradition.[44] The only Finnish scholar to write an entire monograph on the Finno-Karelian *The Birth of the Bear* incantations was Juho Karhu, who divided them in three basic categories: *The Birth on the Earth*, *The Birth in the Sky*, and *The Birth from Wool*.[45] This classification is a rough simplification of the complexity of *The Birth of the Bear* incantations. The category *The Birth on the Earth* is particularly poor, because in these versions the bear was not really born on the Earth in the modern geographic sense of the word, but in a mythical and otherworldly forest called Metsola, Tapiola or Pohjola.

In my PhD dissertation, I presented a more precise classification:[46]

1. *The Birth* in the otherworldly forest and Pohjola (Mythical Northland)
2. *The Birth* in the otherworldly forest and/or Pohjola with details about the haltias who generated the bear
3. *The Birth* with the crone of Pohjola as the mother of the bear
4. *The Birth* in the sky
5. *The Birth* from wool thrown by a haltia, a saint, or the Virgin Mary
6. *The Birth* that joined two or more versions together or presented additional versions with or without narrative links between each other.[47]

Comparing the Finno-Karelian and Ob-Ugrian *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky*: The Analogies and Differences

As we have seen in the previous sections, Kuusi, Haavio and Sarmela focused their attention especially on *The Birth in the Sky* type, considered to be the most ancient version related to the archaic hunting culture.[48] However, they did not consider a fundamental problem: *The Birth in the Sky* types were quite common in the incantations of cattle herders, and rare in the songs of the hunters.[49] The general explanation was that the archaic *The*

Birth of the Bear type 'shifted' from the hunters' tradition to the cattle herders' one. My opinion is that as the hunters and the cattle herders were members of the same villages and the hunters were often involved in cattle and horse herding, the tendence to fuse the two traditions has been both diachronic and syncronic. At first, let us analyze a typical cattle herder's *The Birth in the Sky* type. In 1894, the singer Ukko Timonen from Kiteenlahti (Kitee, Finnish North Karelia) sang:

> There was *ohto* given birth to,
> the honey-paw turned around;
> high up in the sky,
> on the shoulders of Otavavainen (Big Dipper).
> How was it brought down?
> With a thread it was brought down,
> with a silver thong,
> in a golden cradle,
> then it left roaming the woodlands,
> striding the Northland.[50]

Ukko Timonen did not mention who the parents of the bruin were, but it seems that they were celestial pre-Christian (Ukko) or Christian beings and deities (God, Jesus, a Saint). In this incantation, the sacred status of the bear was still very high, as the bruin was connected with some of the most powerful Sky deities and his cradle is golden.

The sky was an Afterworld for human souls and it was also the place where newborn humans came from; the status of the birth of the bear was here similar to the human one. This detail demonstrates that the cattle herders did not fully demonize the bear, and they did not consider it as the absolute 'enemy' of the people and their cattle, as Sarmela states. The bears were feared but they were still considered sacred (*pyhä*), innocent or 'clean' or 'pure' (*puhdas*) beings by cattle herders, too. Thus, a bear who attacked cattle or a person must have been 'roused' (i.e. 'conjured,' being a bewitched bear). The real responsible party, and the hidden wrong-doer, was another human being: an envious person, a *tietäjä* or sorcerer (*noita*) concealed somewhere, probably in the nearest household or village. Lotte Tarkka stresses that conflicts between people and the bear reflected an internal struggle present in human society; the contradiction between the bear's innocence

and havoc was resolved by framing it in terms of 'aggression within the human sphere.'[51] A bewitched bear could be calmed by the uttering of the incantation *The Birth of the Bear*.

The respectful tone present in Timonen's incantation was useful to convince the bear to avoid to attack the cattle; the respect would calm the enraged bear. The bear was considered a person with emotions, and the humans tried to influence its emotive state.

The utterer reminded the bear that it had a noble, 'hight' origin, and in the second part of the incantation,[52] Timonen stressed that it should behave properly, avoiding to attack the cattle. The noble origin seems to be connected to a proper moral code. The myth of *The Birth of the Bear* seems to be fully integrated in the rhethoric of the incantation, considering its objective.

An older variant of *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantation was published in 1789 by Ganander in his *Mythologia Fennica*.[53] In this variant, the bear was born 'beside the moon, by the sun.'[54]

Haavio and Sarmela stated that the Finnish *The Birth in the Sky* type was the most ancient version of the *The Birth of the Bear* incantations and a part of a larger international mythic complex, while the versions that shared more similarities with the Finnish ones were Ob-Ugrian.[55] However, they did not give precise accounts of the Ob-Ugrian sources or songs they refered to. In the anthology of Finno-Ugric folk poetry by Honko, Timonen and Branch there are some examples of typical Ob-Ugrian *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* songs. A Khanty song from Shumilovo begins with the bear's descent from the sky, told in first person by a human interpreting the role of the bear:

> When I was let down from my father God
> the seven-throated, on an iron chain's end
> to the small wooded island with the thick
> birch grove out in the long and narrow lake[56]

In a Mansi version of *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* song, the father of the bear was the sky-god Kores. The bear prayed to him to be lowered to the land of the people below. Kores forged a cradle made of silver and gold coins, fixed on an iron chain.[57] In the Finno-Karelian versions, too, the cradle was made of gold.

The Ob-Ugrian songs continued with descriptions of some faults committed by the bear. Its father gave it instructions about

how it should behave on earth; the bear should not touch the sacrificial huts of guardian spirits, eat human corpses buried in the ice and snow, steal the meat of animals in the hunters' traps, stocks and warehouses, or harm humans unless they had uttered lies in their oaths. However, the bear did not follow its father's instructions.[58] The songs gave a mythic justification for the ritual hunt; if the bear broke some prohibitions, the humans could hunt and kill it.[59] According to Honko, the meaning of the myth was the cyclic return of the bear from and to the sky: 'the bear's real homeland is the sky, from which it descends from time to time but where it must always return.'[60] In the Khanty song from Shumilovo, the bear came back to the sky in the same way it descended to the earth: with an iron chain.

> I raised myself to heaven again, up to my father God,
> the seven-throated, upon an iron chain's end that clinked like silver.[61]

These songs were sung during the Ob-Ugrian bear ceremonial, so the return of the bear to the sky and its father seems to be connected to the regeneration of the killed animal, a typical goal of the ceremonials themselves.

Considering the analogies with the Ob-Ugrian songs, Sarmela stated that *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantation was the most ancient of the Finno-Karelian versions; thus, it was the mythic justification of the whole plot of the ritual actions of Finno-Karelian bear ceremonialism.[62] In some Finno-Karelian *Bear Songs*, at the end of the ceremonial the hunters put the bear's skull on the branch of a pine in the forest, singing: 'I set [it] up to watch the moon, / to learn the stars of Otava (the Big Dipper) / to observe the sun.'[63] The invitation to watch the moon, the sun and Otava (the Big Dipper) was also present in childbirth incantations, thus it is deeply connected with a rich imaginary of birth and travel in general.[64]

The impression is that the soul of the bear went back to its land of birth as a prelude to its new birth or regeneration in the sky. Ensuring the regeneration of the killed bear, the hunters avoided the revenge of other bears and the forest haltias.

Sarmela stressed that the hunters gave back the bear skull to the pine on which, according to some *The Birth of the Bear*

incantations, the bruin descended from the sky.[65] The pine is also connected to the mythical forest and Hongotar (the Pine-Lady), a 'mother of the bear (*karhun emuu*)' and a forest haltia protecting and generating bears.[66]

With this ritual action, the bear returned to its homeland in the heavens and in the forest, ready for its regeneration.[67] Having analyzed different variations of the *Bear Songs*, I reach the conclusion that this interpretation of the bear skull ritual and its songs is substantially correct.[68]

Contextual Differences between the Finno-Karelian and the Ob-Ugrian Versions

Even if several mythic themes are common (the birth in the sky, the cradle and the silver thread and iron chains, the possibility of the bear's return to the sky), the Ob-Ugrian songs and the Finno-Karelian *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantations had many differences. Kuusi, Haavio and Sarmela emphasized only the similarities, though. Thus, while the comparisons these scholars made are useful, the differences should be analyzed in greater detail.

The Ob-Ugrian songs had a key differing characteristic: the bear sung in the first person. Someone interpreted the bruin's role in the bear ceremony. The singer described the events from the point of view and the perspective of the bear itself. The bruin sang and the human beings listened to its myth, and the bruin explained to the people why they had the right to kill it.

The singer of the Finno-Karelian *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantations was usually a cattle herder, more rarely a hunter, who sang the incantation in order to stop a bear attack. The whole story is told from the perspective of the humans, for their self-defence or to protect their cattle.

The singers believed that the listener was the bear itself, which was supposed to react to the following exhortation and commands. Other listeners were its supernatural protectors (haltias), which were invited to control the actions of the bear. The bear and the spirits were considered persons with perceptive, appetitive and cognitive dispositions.[69]

The bear and the spirits had attributes of personhood in the sense that they understood the human language and they reacted to the lines of the incantations. They were indeed the object of the communication, but they were also agents, because they were supposed to change their behaviour.

The Ob-Ugrian songs about the birth of the bear were not incantations like the Finnish ones. Instead they contained many details about the life of the bear in the sky, the adventurous descent from the sky and the problematic life of the bear on earth; they were an integral part of the bear ceremonialism, while the Finno-Karelian *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantations protected cattle and humans from bears during the grazing season and the bear hunt. The Ob-Ugrian songs had a clear narrative and epic structure, and the singers wanted to entertain the listeners by telling detailed myths about the legendary past of the bear from the point of view of the bruin itself. *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* songs also had another meaningful ritual function: to explain why the bear could be killed and why it should return to the sidereal fatherland. The bear admitted it had committed faults; it had broken the moral rules shared with humans – so it had been killed in the mythical past as well as in the present hunt. The story worked as a narrative that was accepted and told by the bear itself.

In the Ob-Ugrian tradition, the personhood of the bear is very active. The bruin is not only able to understand the human language, but it is able to speak and sing, presenting his myth from his perspective. The anthropologist Viveiros de Castro stresses that in Amazonian ontologies animals and spirits are subjects with a point of view, a perspective.[70] In the Ob-Ugrian case, the bear presented its own mythical origins from its own narrative perspective, and with abundance of *pathos* in telling the details of the adventures of its mythic life.

However, the role of the bear was interpreted by a human being, who demonstrated a high level of mimetic empathy for the bear. The anthropologist Rane Willerslev defined mimetic empathy as the capacity of hunters to be able to put themselves in the place of the animal and reproduce the animal's perspective and imagination.[71]

The hunters who performed the bear ceremonials and the role of the bear in them would have benefitted by being familiar

with the perspectives of the bear and the forest spirits; only by knowing their attitudes could the hunters build a reciprocal social relationship that ended in a successful set of rituals.

The Finno-Karelians uttered or sang *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantations before sending the cattle to pasture or before and during the bear hunt. The Finno-Karelian bear mythology was connected to the protection of the cattle or of the group of hunters. The goal was to gain complete control over the powerful bruin, not to tell all the details of its mythical adventures.

Despite all these differences, the Ob-Ugrian and Finno-Karelian versions had a fundamental element in common: the bear was connected with the powers of the divinities of the sky.

The Ob-Ugrians explicitly called the bruin the son of the higher sky god.[72] However, the bear's status is not exactly divine in the Ob-Ugrian versions either, as Sarmela stated: the bear could be punished by its divine father and killed by humans. The bruin was not immortal, as the real gods were, nor untouchable.

Last but not least, the Ob-Ugrians did not mention Otava (the Big Dipper), an important detail in the Finno-Karelian incantations. Otava (the Big Dipper) was situated at the very edge of the universe, where the highest pre-Christian and Christian divinities and saints dwelled. In Finno-Karelian incantations to heal burnings, the healer asked the bee to find the honey to heal them. The healer commanded the bee with these words: '[fly] over the shoulders of Otava (the Big Dipper), / fly into the cellar of the Creator, / into the chamber of the Omnipotent.'[73]

This detail is of great importance, because the cattle herders requested the celestial beings who created and protected the bear to control it. After the narrative part of *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantation, Ukko Timonen uttered a command to the bear:

> Don't bring down the dung-thigh (the cows),
> don't fell the milk-bearer (the cows).
> There will be more work for the mother,
> a great effort for the parent,
> if the little boy does wrong.[74]

Timonen called the bear with a name that recalls the purity and innocence of childhood: a 'little boy' (*poikonen*), who should not create problems for his mother.[75] By contrast, the cows were

called 'dung-thighs,' creatures better left untouched because of the impurity and force contained in their excrement.

In this incantation, the bear is not addressed as the 'enemy of the village', as the behavior of an absolute evil being could not be easily modified. Instead, the bear is considered to be a young person, a 'little boy', not very conscious of his actions, and he could be convinced to avoid 'doing wrong' by the cattle herders. The bear should maintain humanlike features in order to communicate with humans; the behavior and the status of a 'boy', afraid of his parents, could be easely changed using the proper words. This incantation is not only coercitive, the utterer also explains why the bear-boy should avoid doing wrong. The moral code of a young person (a boy) included the respect for elders (the parents) and – probably – for the 'older' utterer of the incantations. The humans and bears shared a common moral code, based on age hierarchies.

The 'mother' or 'parent' was the guardian spirit (*haltia*) responsible for the behavior of her 'boy,' the bear. As parents of the bear, they generally protected the bears from hunters, but they could also protect the cattle and humans from bears.

The 'parent' motif was common in healing incantations, where the word 'mother' (*emo*) tended to be a synonym for 'guardian spirit' (*haltia*). If iron did not heal the wound it provoked, the *tietäjä* intimidated it, saying that it should do that before his mother or his parent was called and became upset at having to do 'more work.'[76]

But who, in this particular case, were the parents of the bear? Often, they were forest haltias. However, if the bear was born in the sky, it would be logical to suppose that his father was Ukko, the god of thunder and the sky, or the Christian God. Juho Turunen from Kitee (Finnish North Karelia) uttered a *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantation, followed by a prayer to the forest mistress and another to Ukkonen (Diminutive of Ukko; it also means 'Thunder').

> Ukkonen, superior Lord,
> God on the top of the cloud,
> take care in the pine wood
> as you took care inside the room.[77]

Turunen asked Ukkonen to look after the cows in the forest during the spring, as he had previously guarded them when they were in the cowshed during the winter. In a *Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantation from Kerimäki (South Savo) there was a similar request to Ukko.[78] In other incantations, a similar prayer could be addressed to Jesus.[79] In the syncretic vernacular folk beliefs, if the bear was born in the sky, the Christian beings 'dwelling' in Heaven were its guardians. Sometimes the cattle herder prayed to Jesus or Mary to put a golden spear into the jaw of the bear if it dared to attack the cattle.[80] Such acts of force, typical of vernacular Christian legends, are in contrast with the non-violent behavior of Jesus or Mary of the Gospels. In the *Birth in the Sky* type of incantations, the Christian beings were often syncretized with the pre-Christian sky-god Ukko. In other incantations to protect the cattle or hunters from the bear, almost the same prayer was addressed to the old god of thunder.[81] Antti Multanen from Kitee (Finnish North Karelia) uttered a *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantation followed by a prayer to Ukko: the god should put a collar around the muzzle of the bruin to control it.[82]

The Christian saints did not erase the memory of the pre-Christian beings, as Sarmela stresses in his historical reconstruction. The tendency was more the opposite: the Christian beings were 'adapted' to the context of the incantations. They were supposed to act as the pre-Christian beings did.

The Birth of the Bear in the Sky Incantations of the Hunters

The Birth of the Bear in the Sky incantations were quite rare in the corpus of the *Bear Songs* performed during the Finno-Karelian bear ceremonials. However, these rare variations share similarities with the versions of the cattle herders, especially in the lines of the commands. In 1884, the hunter Jussi Pakkanen from Piippola (North Ostrobothnia) sang that the bear was born:

in a woolly basket,
in an iron basket.
[…]
On the nail[83] of a small cloud.

How was it lowered to the ground?
With a nameless string,
totally unknown.[84]

In the first six weeks of its life, a newborn baby slept in a basket (*vakka*) made of intertwined thin, wooden strips.[85] The bear's basket was mythical, made of strange and uncommon materials (wool and iron). This time the bear is lowered with a string instead of a chain, and the string is 'nameless', an adjective linked with supernatural, 'unchristian' or 'pre-Christian' objects and places.

The Birth of the Bear in the Sky incantation by Jussi Pakkanen ended with a typical command to make the bear unable to bite:

I placed a hoop made of willow.
If the willow breaks,
I will build one with iron;
If the iron tears,
I mold one of copper.
If the copper cracks,
the Creator's lock will bar,
the Lord's block will govern
your jaws from opening wide,
your teeth from parting.[86]

If the bear was born in the sky, it could be controlled by the help of a powerful supernatural or celestial being: God, a saint, or the thunder-god Ukko. The hunter's motif was present in *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantations of the cattle herders.

The structure of the motif of this incantation is almost identical to the one of the cattle-herders; after the description of the bear's birth in the sky, the celestial protector or 'father' is called to stop a potential bear attack. The main differences are that in Pakkanen's version the protector is Christian (the Creator, not Ukkonen) and that the incantation was uttered for self-defense. The incantation does not invite the bear to modify its aggressive behavior, but it urges the Creator to defend the hunter.

The similarities between the cattle holder's and hunter's versions are indicators of communication between the two traditions; the hunters were men involved in many rural activities in the spring and in the summer, and they were often skilled *tietäjä*s, experts

of the incantations which include many requests and prayers to guardian spirits and syncretic saints.

In the most common of *The Birth of the Bear* incantations of the hunters, the bruin was born in a mythical forest, Tapiola or Metsola, the realm of the forest spirits or Pohjola (the Northland), the dangerous otherworldly forestland governed by the ambiguous Crone or Mistress of Pohjola. However, these variants had a similar logic; after the description of the birth in the forest, a haltia, the Mistress of Pohjola, or a saint associated with them (St. George, St. Anne, the Virgin Mary) was requested to stop a bear attack against the hunters.[87]

The bear could have multiple mythical origins in the Ob-Ugrian tradition as well. Schmidt noted that the bruin could be an offspring of the father of the sky, the forest spirits or the mother of the 'lower regions' or underground.[88]

Conclusions

In this chapter, I criticize some of the classic methods, theories and research results of the Finnish traditional scholarship on the bear ceremonialism and *The Birth of the Bear* incantations. However, I propose a more contextual way to compare *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* type of incantations that takes into consideration (a) the historical, geographic, and ritual contexts, and (b) not only the similarities, but also the differences between the Ob-Ugric and Finno-Karelian cultures. The contextual method also includes comparisons 'inside' the Finno-Karelian culture, the comparison between different types of Finno-Karelian *The Birth of the Bear* incantations, and the analysis of intertextual connections between different genres, as the incantations of cattle-herders, hunters and *tietäjäs*.

The contextual comparison is not only finalized to find out the 'most ancient', 'authentic' or 'original' of *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantations; it also gives the possibility to analyse the influence of historical changes, historical stratification, and syncretism present in the same songs.

The contextual comparison between the Ob-Ugrian songs and Finno-Karelian incantations of *The Birth of the Bear in the*

Sky type gave surprising results, and it furnished rich, complex and challenging information.

In the Ob-Ugrian version, the ritual context is the bear ceremonial, and *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* song gives a mythic justification of the killing of the bear, telling what moral faults the bear has committed. The bear, interpted by a human, is the 'performer' of the song and the humans – the villagers presents in the ceremonial – the listeners. The origin of the bear is told from the bruin's perspective and with abudance of entertaining and emotional details to reach a feeling of mimethic empathy with the bruin itself.

The Finno-Karelian *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantations had two ritual contexts: the hunter's and the cattle herder's rituals. In both cases, the human ritual actor is the narrator, and the addressees are the bruin and its guardian spirits. *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantations follow the human perspective and the human need to protect themselves and the cattle.

However, in the songs for the bear skull rituals, the references to the bruin's birth in the sky were connected to the idea of its regeneration in its mythical birthland, a concept that was much emphasized in the Ob-Ugrian tradition.

The contextual analysis of Finno-Karelian *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incantations shows that they were not only 'purely' archaic myths but incantations full of fascinating and meaningful historical layers; alongside the older strata represented by motives about the bear's regeneration in its celestial birthland, we found several motives related to the *tietäjä's* tradition and many calls and requests to Christian and Pre-Christian spirits.

The agriculture, the cattle herding and the Christian faith probably reduced the areas where the bear ceremonialism was performed, but they did not completely or abruptely erase or degenerate the sacred status of the bear and its haltias, nor their complex attributes of personhood.

The folklorist Anna-Leena Siikala has pointed out that in the Finnic Kalavalaic songs and incantations, the fusion of different historical elements often acquired a relevant contextual and ritual meaning.[89] New historical layers rarely wiped away the old layers

of meaning. I agree with her theory which stresses that changes in tradition were not mechanical events, but complex processes in which renewing and conserving tendencies could act at the same time, influencing each other.[90]

In the Finno-Karelian folk tradition, ritual actors had the tendency to 'accumulate' supernatural helpers, mobilizing quite a variegate group of beings, which belonged to a historically stratified tradition. The hunters and cattle herders asked for the help of all the powerful haltias, divinities and saints that could help them in preventing a bear attack.

Notes

1. On other international studies and sources on bear ceremonials, and the classic study of Irwing Hallowell about bear ceremonialism, see Piludu 2019: 13–15, 39–41, 49–54 and Rydving 2010.

2. For a more detailed description of the phases, see Piludu 2019: 16–18.

3. Tarkka 2013: 330; Tarkka 1998: 96.

4. On sentient ecology, see Anderson 2000: 116, 130; Århem 2016: 5.

5. Stark 2002: 23.

6. Piludu 2019: 66–68.

7. On anomality, see also Douglas 2002 (1966): 48.

8. Piludu 2019: 19–20.

9. https://skvr.fi/.

10. SKVR IX4/1096; date unknown, edited after 1750. The SKVR's sources (Ancient Poems of The Finnish People) are indicated with the number of the volume, followed by the number of the song.

11. Ganander (1789) 2003: 60–61.

12. Ahola and Lukin 2016: 55.

13. Krohn (1915) 2008: 163–164.

14. Krohn (1915) 2008: 146–164; Holmberg (Harva) 1915: 43–52; Karjalainen 1914; Karjalainen 1918: 512–545; Kannisto 1906a;

Kannisto 1906b; Kannisto 1907; Kannisto 1933; Kannisto 1938a; Kannisto 1938b; Kannisto 1939a; Kannisto 1939b.

15. See Carpelan 1974.

16. Kuusi 1963: 43.

17. Kuusi 1963: 42.

18. Kuusi 1963: 50.

19. Kuusi 1963: 42.

20. Haavio 1967: 28.

21. Haavio 1967: 29–30. On the bear in Greek mythology, see Athanassakis 2005.

22. Haavio 1967: 28.

23. Gentili & Perusino 2002; Sourvinou-Inwood 1988.

24. Turunen 1981: 235.

25. Rydving 2010: 34.

26. Sarmela 1991: 221–222.

27. Sarmela 1991: 222.

28. Sarmela 1991: 224.

29. Sarmela 1991: 230.

30. Sarmela 1991: 229.

31. Sarmela 1991: 230; Sarmela 2006: 17; on a different interpretation of the *tietäjä*'s roles, see Siikala 2002.

32. Sarmela 1991: 230–231.

33. On the Crone or Mistress of Pohjola see: Piludu 2019: 129–136, 295–296.

34. Sarmela 1991: 236.

35. Tarkka 2013: 80.

36. Honko 1993.

37. Pentikäinen 2007: 130–148.

38. Pentikäinen 2007: 130–148.

39. Tarkka 1994; Tarkka 1998; Tarkka 2005: 256–299; Tarkka 2013: 327–381, Tarkka 2014.

40. Stark-Arola 2002: 111–133.

41. Siikala 2012: 380–389.

42. The *tietäjä* (the one-who-knows, sage) was a Finnish folk healer and an expert of a multitude of incantations and rituals, able to enter in a state of trance. See Siikala 2002.

43. Almost all the collected *The Birth of the Bear* incantations has been published in the volumes SKVR (*Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot*), which are now entirely digitalized (see: https://skvr.fi/).

44. Krohn 1917: 207–214.

45. Karhu 1947.

46. Piludu 2019: 112.

47. In my dissertation, I analyzed in detail the all these variations (Piludu 2019: 111–153), focusing on the birth of the bears in the otherworldy forest, which was the most common in the hunting traditions (Piludu 2019: 114–129). In the second part of this article, I focus on *The Birth of the Bear in the Sky* incanations, which have a great importance in the Finnish scholarly debate on bear ceremonialism.

48. Kuusi 1963; Haavio 1967.

49. SKVR VI2/5405: 1–7, VI2/5408: 1–5, VII5/3869: 1–8, VII5/3930: 1–7, XII2/6858:1–7.

50. *Tuolla ohto synnytelty, / mesikämmen kiännätelty: / ylähällä taivosessa, / Otavaisen olkapäillä. / Missä se alas laskettiin?/ Hihnassa alas laskettiin, / hihnassa hopiisessa, / kultaisessa kätkyyssä,/ sitte läks saloja samuumaan, / pohjanmoata polokemaan* (SKVR VII5/3932: 3–12. 1894; English translation by Vesa Matteo Piludu).

51. Tarkka 2013: 332; Piludu 2019: 68–70.

52. See the next section.

53. Ganander 1789: 63–64.

54. *Kuun luona, työnä päivän* (SKVR VI2/5408: 3).

55. Haavio 1967: 28; Sarmela 1991: 213.

56. Cited in *The Great Bear* 1993: 152. Poem 27, 1–8; English translation by Branch. Anonymous singer from Shumilovo, Kondiskoe raion, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District, Russia. 1888. Collector: Patkanov; originally published in Patkanov 1900: 192–203; cited in Pentikäinen 2007: 37.

57. Cited in *The Great Bear* 1993: 157–159; Poem 29. Singer: Jakov Tasmanov. Chalpaul, Sartyn'ia Region, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District, Russia. 1906. Collector: Kannisto, A. Originally published in Kannisto, Liimola & Virtanen 1958: 9: 14–20.

58. Honko 1993: 125; Kannisto 1939a: 8.

59. Sarmela 1991: 213; Kannisto 1939a: 8.

60. Honko 1993: 125.

61. Cited in *The Great Bear* 1993: 152. Poem 27, 1–8; English translation by Branch. Anonymous singer from Shumilovo, Kondiskoe raion, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District, Russia. 1888. Collector: Patkanov; originally published in Patkanov 1900: 192–203.

62. Sarmela 1991: 213.

63. *Panin kuuta kahtomahan, / otavia oppimahan, / päiveä tähystämähän* (SKVR VII5/3396: 12–14. Ilomantsi. Ahlqvist B, n. 50 b. 1846).

64. Piludu 2019: 289.

65. Sarmela 1991: 220.

66. On Hogotar, see Piludu 2019: 120–122, 130, 195, 276–277.

67. Sarmela 1982: 64.

68. Piludu 2019: 265–304.

69. On personhood of animals and spirits, see Viveiros de Castro 2009; Brightman, Grotti and Ulturgasheva 2014: 2.

70. Viveiros de Castro 1998; Århem 2016: 7.

71. Willerslev 2007: 106.

72. Sarmela 1991: 213.

73. *Otavaisen olkapäite; / lennä Luojan kellarihin, / kamarihin kaikkivallan* (SKVR XII1/4586: 40–42).

74. *Elä sorra sontareittä, / koa maion kantajoa, / enemp' on emoilla työtä, / suur(i) vaiva vanhemmalla, / jos poikonen pahan tekööo* (SKVR VII5/3932: 13–17).

75. It should be noticed that the social status of the bear often changes in Finno-Karelian *Bear Songs* and incantations; it could be addressed as a young boy, the offspring or cattle of guadian spirits, an old man, a bride, a groom, or a guest of honour. These changes are never casual. See Piludu 2019.

76. SKVR I4/153a: 8–17.

77. *Ukkonen, ylinen Herra, / pilven päällinen Jumala, / hoia niin hongikossa, / kuin sä hoi'it huonehessa* (SKVR VII5/3931: 21–24. Kitee. Havukainen n. 40, 1896).

78. SKVR VI2/5405: 20–24.

79. SKVR VII5/3850: 10–11.

80. SKVR VII5/3850: *152–155*.

81. *SKVR I4/1442: 23–29, I4/1439: 78–81*, XII2/6488: 5–6.

82. *SKVR VII5*/3930. Kitee. Pennanen n. 66, 1896. Haarajärvi.

83. The edge of a cloud or a mythological sky pillar; see Siikala 2012: 168.

84. *Villasessa vakkasessa, / rautasessa vakkasessa. […] Päällä pienen pilven naulan. / millä se maahan laskettiin? / nuoralla nimettömällä, / aivan tutkimattomalla* (SKVR XII2/6464: 44–43 and 46–47. Keränen, E. 295. 1884? Piippola. Jussi Paakkinen).

85. Paulaharju 1995 (1925): 55–56.

86. *Minä vantehen pajusta pannen. / Jos paju pettänevi, / minäpä rauvasta rakennan; / jospa rauta ratkennevi, / minäpä vaskesta valatan; jos vaski katkennovi, / lukitkoompa luojan lukko, / Herran haitta hallitkoon, / leukasi leveämästä, / hampaasi hajoamasta*. (SKVR XII2/6464: 30–39).

87. Piludu 2019: 114–136.

88. Schmidt 1989: 192.

89. Siikala 1994: 37.

90. Siikala 1994: 38.

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PART II: INDIGENOUS SAMI RELIGION RESEARCH HISTORY AND SOURCE CRITICISM

4. Indigenous Religions in the Sixth Missionary District: The Case of the Hillsá Drum

Dikka Storm & Trude Fonneland

Introduction

Sámi drums are central in understanding the indigenous religions in earlier Sámi societies.[1] The recently reported find of the *goavddis* (drum) from Hillsá opens for a view into a complex religious world in a period of religious change and transformation. We believe the *goavddis* is an important object that can help shed light on Sámi cultures in the past and present, as well as contribute to new perspectives.

Written sources from clergymen and missionaries during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are commonly referred to as the most relevant source material when studying Sámi drums. This material derives from a period that witnessed a process of religious change, and the various sources are highly dependent on each other.[2] The drum from Hillsá is a silent object and impossible to interpret without support from the written source material. One of our intentions is to look at the drum from an ecological perspective, as an expression of the cohesion of the Sámi landscape, habitat and development. The drum itself rests in a static state. From a living religious symbol, it is in this paper turned into an object of examination, and through a process of classification and (re)arrangement we seek to explore how the *goavddis* opens for insights into a complex religious world at a time of religious confrontations. We argue that the *goavvdis* speaks clearly of the tenacious structures of Sámi religion, but at the same time also of adaptation and development.[3]

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The Hillsá *goavddis* – A Fragile Cultural Expression

Sámi drums are well known from written sources beginning around the end of the twelfth century. The first manuscript to include a description of the use of a drum is the medieval manuscript Historia Norvegiæ.[4] The Sámi drums are often divided into two types based on construction. Bowl drums are referred to by the north Sámi word *goavddis* and frame drums are in the south Sámi language called *gievrie*. Most frame drums are from the south Sámi areas, while the bowl drums in general come from central and northern Sámi regions.

The drum from Hillsá is a bowl drum (*goavddis*) and it is one of the northernmost drums ever discovered (Fig. 4.1).[5] The bowl drums often have a characteristic frame, and the Hillsá drum is decorated with carvings. It has two coarse handles and six paral-

Figure 4.1. The Hillsá drum (TSL 4013). Photo: Adnan Icagic, The Arctic University Museum of Norway. License: CC BY-NC-ND.

lel and double triangles with a crossbar in the middle. From the crossbars, there were probably originally hung garments, trinkets and metal objects of various kinds. According to Lars Olsen from Njaarke (Vesterfjella), who is one of few Sámi who has described the use of a drum in a written record, at the initiation of the drum sexually mature women were obliged to attach a trinket to it.[6] We cannot know if the ritual Olsen is referring to has been common all over Sápmi, but several of the drums that are known are equipped with garments, trinkets and metal objects.[7]

The drums have also been categorized based on the figures painted on the drum skin.[8] Since the membrane of the Hillsá drum is long lost, we will not be able to identify any of the religious symbols on the skin. Several researchers nevertheless emphasize that there is a great diversity in the visual art on the membrane as well as in the mode of construction, and that it is not possible to make an unambiguous and indisputable categorisation of the drums.[9]

According to the written sources, the drum was a means for communication with supernatural powers. Furthermore, it is said that the drum was used as an instrument of divination. This way, the *noaidi* (a Sámi religious specialist) could both foretell the future and communicate with devine powers. However, it is likely that using the drum for divination was not a right reserved for the *noaidi*, it could be done by a number of people.[10]

In most research literature, these are religious practices that are known in relation to the use of the drum. Still, we agree with Marisol de la Cadena who points out that, '[c]reating a similarity both enables understanding and loses sight of the difference […]'.[11] We can describe practices in forms that make them easily apprehensible by creating equivalences. But, to create equivalences, de la Cadena argues, is to wipe out differences.[12] This one can say is precisely what has happened and still happens in many exhibitions on Sámi religion. Drums are among the most treasured items in museum contexts, and were and are sought after as means for visualising indigenous religions. The ways in which objects are selected and put together have political effects, and the staging of the *goavddis* can serve to enhance the image of the Sámi as 'the other' in a cultural and religious context. This is a context that we,

through the Hillsá *goavddis*, hope to challenge by targeting time and place specific conditions.

Sámi cultural expressions like the drum from Hillsá contain important, repressed and often painful stories and experiences. As Jonas M. Nordin and Carl-Gösta Ojala point out, the systematic destruction and looting of Sámi objects, especially religious objects, during the early modern period must be recognized as a serious assault on the Sámi people and Sámi indigenous religions.[13]

Drum repatriation is an important act of decolonization that opens for a reconnection with traditions and practices that were forcibly suppressed. In this processes drums become means for changing power relationships, for creating identity and memory. As Marit Myrvoll, former museum leader at Várdobáiki Sámi Guovddáš (Sámi Centre) at Skánik (Evenskjer), where the drum will be displayed, argues, the drums are also agents in contemporary struggles for Sámi identity and history. Each time an object, a building construction or other items of material culture are identified and made visible, there will be less to explain for the individual Sámi about why one should be allowed to call a particular area Sámi.[14]

Searching for Lost Paths

On the 10th of May 2016, Dikka Storm, Trude Fonneland, and Marit Myrvoll set out for Hillsá to retrieve the drum (Fig. 4.2). In Hillsá we met the finder at his childhood home. The artefact was brought out from the root cellar where it had hung for several years. The finder gave us a detailed account of when the drum was discovered. He explained that he and his brother were going cloudberry picking on an August day in the early 1990s. They took their regular route up from the sea, but the brother was short of breath and quickly became tired in the hilly and steep landscape. The finder began to look for a place to sit down for a rest, enyoing the views and taking shelter from the rain. He discovered a spot beside the track, and described it to us as a 'rock with an overhang'. While his brother smoked a cigarette and contemplated the view, the finder restlessly turned around and started to inspect the formations behind them. He explained that there was a small area which was completely dry as the rock protected it from

Figure 4.2. Regional map with a red circle marking the location where the drum was found. Map: Dikka Storm and Trude Fonneland, The Arctic University Museum of Norway. Screen dump from Norgeskart.no, accessed 6 Dec 2021. License: CC BY-NC-ND.

the rain, and he could see red sand in a cleft in the rock. This was when he saw what at first sight appeared to be a round, mossy stone, but on closer inspection turned out to be a wooden object. The finder removed a thick layer of moss, and the wooden texture became more visible. His first thought was that it must have been something left behind from the days when his family cut the grass on these slopes for hay, but he was unsure about what use it could have had.

Back at the museum, we handed the drum over to the lab for conservation. According to the curator of the Arctic University Museum of Norway, the *goavddis* is 32 cm long, 26.5 cm wide and 9 cm deep. Further, dendrochronology specialist Andreas Kirchhefer asserts that the drum is fashioned from a pine burr (*Pinus sylvestris* L.).[15] The famous drum that belonged to the Sámi Poala-Ánde (Anders Poulsen), who was sentenced to death, but killed while in custody in Finnmark in 1692, is also made of pine.[16] Poala-Ánde himself is believed to have said that 'den lidet

at kunde tiene. Om den ey aff fyrretræ bleff udarbeidet' ('It cannot serve anyone, unless it is made of pinewood').[17]

A survey of the area where the drum was discovered was carried out on September 7, 2016, in the hope of locating the exact find spot. The finder took part in the expedition as a guide. He had given us a description of how he remembered the place, but had not had any luck trying to find it again earlier. Our strategy therefore was to inspect the hillside looking for rocks or cliffs where the finder and his brother might have been sitting 17 years earlier. Rocky outcrops could be seen in several locations on the hillside. We inspected each spot along with the finder, however they were all quickly rejected, except one.

The place that corresponded with the finder's descriptions lies in a larger, rocky area just above the old farm track. We saw a small level area below an overhang, large enough to provide shelter for two people. In the rockface behind it was a small crevice, around 20 cm high, that narrowed inwards. It was clear that an object had been lying in this crevice at some point before. An oval patch with no moss was discovered, its length and breadth corresponding to the measurements of the drum (cf. Fig. 4.1).

Dating

A small wood sample of the pine burr has been radiocarbon dated to 110 + 30 BP (Beta-454998). The radiocarbon calibration curve intersects 110 + 30 BP in two broad intervals, of which the latter is a long, practically flat section (cf. Fig. 4.3). This results in a given probability, where an age range between 1800/1810 and 1920/1940 is the most likely. However, this is unlikely given the historical context. The construction of Sámi drums is not mentioned in the sources during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in either written sources or oral traditions. For example, the well-known linguist and folklorist Just Qvigstad (1854–1957) has not described or referred to the construction of Sámi drums in his works. We also know that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries most of the drums were either forcibly rounded up by missionaries, or they were hidden in the mountains and later found and presented to collectors or museums. Many drums were sent to curiosa cabinets in Central Europe

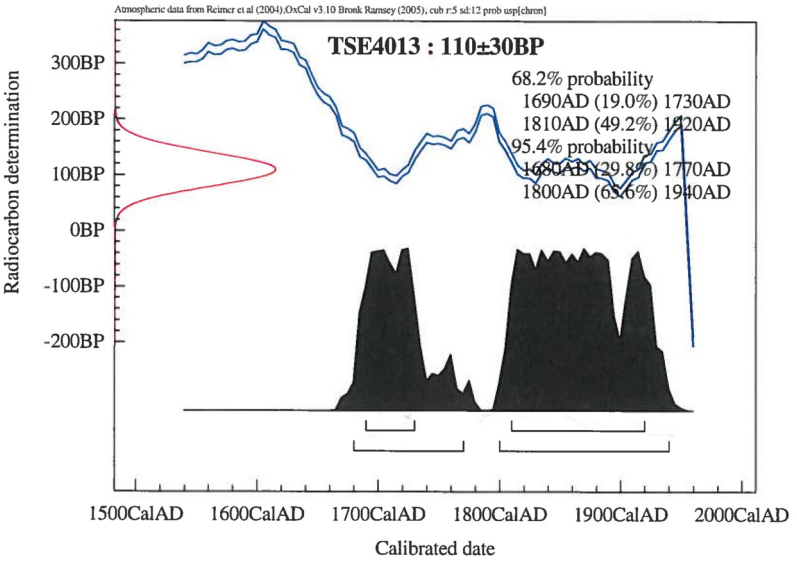

Figure 4.3. Calibration curve for the dating of TSE-4013 to 110+/-30BP (Beta-454998). Based on atmosphere data from Reimer et al. (2004). In *OxCal Program v3.10* (Bronk Ramsey 2005). License: CC BY-NC-ND.

and to the Missionary Collegium[18] in Copenhagen, where more than seventy drums were lost in a fire in 1728. In the 1850s, the introduction of Læstadianism and heavy norwegianization and assimilation politics had a strong impact on cultural life, identity and religion in Sámi areas. During the last radio carbon dating period from 1810 and until the 1940s, the knowledge about the construction and use of the *goavddis* had decreased among the majority of the Sámi population. In *Muitalus sámiid birra* (1910) Johan Turi describes the drum through the word *meavrresgárri*. The descriptions are referring to a past and to practices that used to be connected to the religious specialists, the *noaiddit*, 'Ja dainna lágiin sii daid noaidegoansttaid dahket'[19] ('And then they were performing their noaidi arts').[20] Emilie Demant Hatt, who stayed with Turi and his family for a longer period in 1907–08, writes, 'Blandt Torne- og Karesuandolapper er erindringen om trommen kun vag og uklar' ('Among the Torne- and Karesunando Sámi the memory of the drum is only vague and unclear'),[21] but she also adds that the remembrance of the drum is stronger in southern parts of Sápmi.[22]

As follows, a date between 1680/1690 and 1730/1770 as suggested by the calibration curve needs to be critically evaluated. The construction of and the use of the *goavddis* is still known at the beginning of the eighteenth century as well as from the seventeenth century and further back in time. In the period between 1680/1690 and 1730/1770, the Pietistic Mission gradually exerted great influence on the local Sámi community in the surrounding area of Hillsá. The drum still provided influence and was considered a key instrument both by the missionaries who sought to destroy what they perceived as a diabolic symbol and by the ones who used the drum as an instrument for divination or during trance journeys.

The radiocarbon date suggests that the drum was made after the worst witch-hunts in northern Norway were over. During the seventeenth century, about 125 people were sentenced to death and to burn at the stake in the three northernmost counties of Norway. As Rune Blix Hagen argues, compared to the low population, the witch-hunts in northern Norway are some of Europe's most extensive witch processes.[23] One reason is probably that according to the demonologists, the north represented the centre of evil.[24] Even though the witchcraft trials were not directed primarily against the Sámi population, King Christian IV wrote in a letter in 1609 to the provincial governors Hans Kønningham and Hans Lilienskiold that those who practiced Sámi witchcraft should be killed without mercy.[25] The fact that drums were made after these persecutions bears witness to the durable structure of religion. The missionary Thomas von Westen in 1726 managed to convince the king to abolish the death penalty for witchcraft. He argued that if the Sámi were punished, one could not obtain their confidence, and it would not be possible to alter their religious beliefs and practices.[26]

The period of religious encounter and confrontation is, as Håkan Rydving argues in relation to one Lule Sámi tradition, referred to precisely as 'the time when one had to hide the drums'.[27] This is probably also the case for the Hillsá *goavddis*. The drum from Hillsá is one of the few to escape missionary hands, and it was probably hidden away during a time of religious confrontation.

The Religious Conditions in the Areas Surrounding Hillsá at the Time of the Drum

Several researchers underline that the drums have to be regionalised and typologised and that one cannot compare all the drums with one another, without really considering where they came from, but comparisons must be restricted to within regions.[28] In the region where the Hillsá drum is found, there are oral traditions handed over to Tromsø Museum during the 1950s, which tell of a drum and its use at Rensok (Renså) in the neighbouring fjord Roabavuotna (Grovfjord) in the same time period as the Hillsá *goavddis*. The sources state that Bealjehis Jovdna (deaf Jovdna, John Øreløs), lived in his *darfegoahti* ('turf hut') at Darfegoahtelatnja (Storlemmen) – above the farm at Rensok. He owned a drum made of brass, in the shape of a bird with garments. The oral tradition tells us that the resident farmers had complained to the local bailiff about deaf Jovdna beating his drum too loudly. When the bailiff went to seize the drum, he was first allowed to try it and his body immediately felt light and happy. Jovdna explained to the bailiff that the drum would reward him if he allowed the deaf man to keep it. The reward was a great whale that would be stranded on the shore, and sure enough, when the bailiff arrived at the waterfront, the whale came swimming straight towards him. Bealjehis Jovdna's drum is also described in detail by Qvigstad and Sandberg in 1888:

> The drum was made of brass and moulded in the shape of a bird with a brass plate on which the bird was standing. From the bird's right wing, seven pairs of rings were hanging: one pair of brass; one pair of copper; one pair of pewter; one pair of silver; one pair of zinc; one pair of gold; and one pair of steel. In this way, there were seven colours on the right wing of the bird, and on the left wing all kinds of coloured threads hung, red, green, black, blue, yellow, white, and grey. These threads formed many tassels on the left wing. He [Bealjehis Jovdna] also had a horn which was curved both against and from the sun and, and with that he beat the drum's wings (left and right). From the bird a sound of several tones arose. This was one of the reasons why some of the persons who lived at the farms along the coast were angry with the deaf man, because he was so powerful.[29]

The drum at Rensok has never been found. It was, according to oral traditions in the area, lost in a fire where Jovdna's *goahti* burned to the ground, but the remains of the turf hut can still be made out as a mound in the terrain. How is this story relevant for the drum at Hillsá? The oral traditions tell us that the use of drums was known in the area in this time period. The story about Jovdna's drum might also reveal, as Håkan Rydving emphasises, that 'an awareness of the regional differences is not however sufficient, as there also were distinct types within the different regions, in addition to great individual variation'.[30]

We have no sources that can directly illustrate how the process of transition to Christianity progressed in the area. However, as Lars Ivar Hansen underlines in *Astafjord bygdebok: historie* 1, what happened in relation to the chieftains at Bjarkøy / Runáššì (Trondenes) has probably played a central role for the religious practices in surrounding areas like Hillsá.[31] Runáššì served, in the late medieval period, as the main church centre of Northern Norway.

What do we know of the conditions in Hillsá and Rivtták at the time? Archaeologist Marianne Skandfer, who took part in the search for the drum find spot, was able to identify three groups of house remains, one on the hillside and two just above the location of the find, and she suggests that they could all be part of the same cultural environment. On a plateau, slightly higher up in the terrain is the remains of a rounded structure and all along the southern foot of the mountain, the foundations for buildings can be seen (see Fig. 4.4). In this period, the sources are complex and do not give an overview of the population as a whole, but rather an insight into parts of the settled population. Demographic sources from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries tell us that Norwegians, Sámi and Kven people lived in Hillsá. The Fjellfinne and Lappeskatt from 1714 to 1753 furthermore shows that in the period, there were 76 reindeer owners in Ásttavierda (Astafjord) County, and seven in Rivtták (Gratangen).[32] On the peninsula Skávhlenjárga, between the fjords of Rivtták (Gratangen) and Roabavuotna (Grovfjord), a Sámi settlement is known from the late medieval period.[33]

Close to the site where the drum was found, we saw the remains of a house. According to the finder and other local informants, a Sámi man named Åne lived here until the middle of the nineteenth

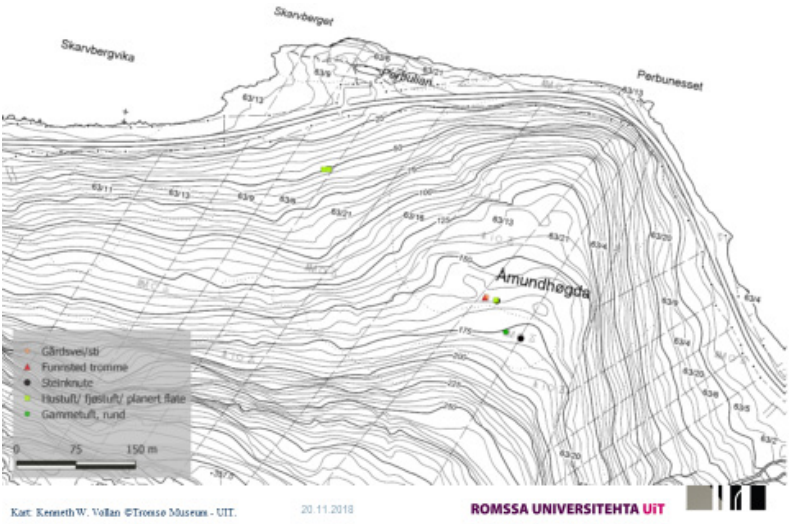

Figure 4.4. Archaeological site map of the Amundhøgda area (Kenneth W. Vollan, The Arctic University Museum of Norway). License: CC BY-NC-ND.

century. What his connection to and knowledge of the drum might have been we do not know, but it is likely that the drum belonged to one of the Sámi families that had a connection to or lived in this area from the period of time when the drum was made. Per Högström in his *Beskrifning öfwer de til Sweriges Krona lydande Lappmarker* (Descriptions of the Lappmarks of the Swedish Crown) [1747]) points out that in the 1740s the drum had been silenced, but not gone completely out of use. He writes: 'Those who use it do such in silence, that scarcely even their own people get to know about it, as they know it is a matter of life and death, and that they could easily be reported by others who do not use them'.[34] Even though the death penalty was revised in Norway from 1726, the situation Högström is referring to was probably also a reality at the Norwegian side of Sápmi. Considering the time, the Hillsá drum most probably was constructed during the period 1680–1770, and hidden in a crevice at a distance from the dwellings as it was likely used in secret or in strict confidence within a small group.

The site where the drum was found has a good view over the fjord, and one is able to see all the way to Ivvárstádik (Ibestad)

and the church from this point. One might imagine that whoever used the drum did so in a context where he or she had a direct view of a parallel and intertwined religious world.

The Sixth Missionary District

The church at Ivvárstádik was built as early as the thirteenth century, and a new church was raised on its foundations in 1881. As Hansen points out,

> like the church of Trondenes (Runáššì sic), the church that stood at Ibestad (Ivvárstádik sic) until the 1880s, was a medieval stone church. The Trondenes (Runáššì sic) and Ibestad (Ivvárstádik sic) churches were the two northernmost stone churches in the country, and the only ones north of Steigen.[35]

In 1756, the bishop Fredrik Nannestad gave the Ivvárstádik church the following characteristics 'the northernmost stone church in the inhabited world (is) a very strong and solid building'.[36] Hansen further notes that it is reasonable to assume that also the Ivvárstádik church, situated in a mixed ethnic and boundary area, was dedicated to significant missionary activity directed towards the Sámi, while at the same time highlighting the presence of the Lutheran Church of Denmark-Norway.[37]

Even though the post-reformation authorities regarded the Sámi more or less as heathens, the Sámi in the Hillsá area had for a long time had contact with the Catholic Church. Already in 1313 the Norwegian king, Håkon Magnusson, issued a royal decree where it was stated that Sámi should be granted a reduction in penalty fines for 20 years if they converted to Christianity.[38] While some Sámi people (primarily coastal Sámi) seem to have been under regular Christian influence and missionary activity already from the High Middle Ages, there are indications that their contact with the Catholic Church occurred only at a minimum level: baptizing their children and attending mass once a year.[39] Recent research, based inter alia on court cases from the late 17th and reports from the early eighteenth century, has shown that many Sámi were probably able to combine church attendance with continued indigenous practices, and thereby alternated between, and combined, religions.[40] As Håkan Rydving argues,

> The main problem for the Church authorities turned out to be that of making the Saamis abandon their indigenous religious customs, not making them believe in, or at least learn to repeat Christian dogmas by rote, or getting them to perform certain rites in the churches. From the end of the 17th century, an intense period of propaganda and coercion began to make the Saamis abandon these non-Christian elements in their religion. Special attention was accordingly paid to the drums.
>
> The role of the drums as symbols of Saami resistance is well attested in the sources from the 17th and 18th centuries. For the Saamis, the drums represented their threatened culture, the resistance against the Christian claim to exclusiveness, and a striving to preserve traditional values […]. For the Church authorities, on the other hand, the drums symbolized the explicit nucleus of the elusive Saami 'paganism' – i.e. 'the evil' that had to be annihilated.[41]

The character of religious interaction in the local community changed along with the reformation with its new demands for more uniform national standards. The introduction of Pietism had consequences for the social, religious and political conditions in the area of study. During the eighteenth century, Ivvárstádik (Ibestad) became a centre for Thomas von Westen's missionary collegium.

Clergyman and writer Hans Hammond states that Thomas von Westen made three journeys in Northern Norway between 1716 and 1723.[42] It is also said that when von Westen passed Nærøy vicarage on his way south, he had in his possession 100 drums given to him by converted *noaidi*s.[43] Initially, von Westen was supposed to concentrate on evangelism among the Sámi population in Finnmark, but as he travelled south, he realized he would have to expand his mission. On his second journey in November 1718, von Westen arrived at Ivvárstádik. Within each missionary district, von Westen stationed a missionary, a schoolmaster, and sometimes one or two adjuncts. During his stay in Lodek (Lødingen), von Westen employed Kjeld Stub (ca. 1680–1724), as a missionary in the sixth mission district from 21 Nov. 1718 to 1720, and Peder Berthelsen as a schoolmaster and interpreter with a wage of 13 rdr.[44] The Sixth Mission District of Sážžá (Senja) and Viester-Alás (Vesterålen) stretched from Gielas (Kjølen), the mountain range in the east, to the North Sea in the west. The district was vast and encompassed high mountains, valleys, fjords, and big islands.

While Stub served as a missionary, he worked close to von Westen and accompanied him on his first (1716) and second journey (1718). Von Westen characterized him as eager to work with a capacity for building good relationships towards both old and young people, as well as to the clergy. Von Westen also emphasize that Stub contributed to a growing knowledge among the Sámi. The missionary Erasmus Wallund (1684–1746) from Denmark succeeded Stub. Both Stub and Wallund valued education as a task within their positions and privately hired a schoolmaster, paid by their own wages. Through the missionaries' establishment of educational arenas in the various missionary districts, the Sámi were enrolled in a school system more than thirty years before the rest of the population in Northern Norway.[45] Hammond notes that during Wallund's stay more than fifty of the Sámi at Ivvárstádik could read, and some had bought books.[46] Thomas von Westen described Wallund's work with the following characteristics, 'he has […], cut a hole on the walls of idolatry, and found everything full of false gods, the hammer of Thor, altars, and sacrifices'.[47]

On his third journey (1722–23), von Westen travelled through the same areas and ascertained that despite the missionaries' and schoolmasters' work, there was little progress and understanding of Christianity in the area. Hammond, who chronicled von Westen's travels, points out that 'some profess that they have served and honoured God as well by the drum as the Norwegians do by their Psalms'.[48]

In the neighbouring fjord Roabavuotna (Grovfjord) people are described as especially reluctant. Hammond notes that 'the abominable heathens are plentiful'.[49] Through organized and systematic use of threats, violence, punishment and destruction of holy sites, the State mission sought to bring an end to the Sámi perception of life. In this situation, where Sámi religion was so intertwined with all practices in life, it was no wonder that many felt their very existence was under threat. In 1722, it was said that some Sámi in Skievvá (Skjomen) planned an attack on Thomas von Westen.[50]

Lennart Sidenius (1702–63) from Jemtland, Sweden, succeeded Wallund. According to what is noted in Hammond about the idolatry in the area, Sidenius had a large task ahead of him.

The missionaries were part of a religious network and the correspondences between them are a concretization of this network. The missionaries also sent reports to von Westen about the local communities. The correspondence shows demand for information about the population, economy, the religious situation, and the missionaries' activities. Von Westen forwarded the reports directly to the Mission Collegium in Copenhagen. At Ivvárstádik, Sidenius corresponded with missionaries such as Jens Kildal, Thomas von Westen and, on the Swedish side, the rural dean Johan Tornberg in Čohkkeras (Jukkasjärvi). In a letter to Tornberg dated 1726, Sidenius enclosed a record of Sámi idols that he had become aware of, and which were worshipped among the Sámi in the areas he served as a missionary:

> Rariet […] Radien […] Maderakkæ […] Sarakka […] Rana Neida […] Beive […] Torden […] Biegs Olmai […] Gissen Olmai […] [three] Ailikes Olmai […] Leib Olmai […] Kiase Olmai […] Maderakka […] [with her three daugthers] Sarakka […] Uxakka […] Juxakka […] Saivo-Olmai […] Saivo Neide […] Saivo-kiatse […] Saivo-serva […] Saivo-lodde, Saivogvelle […] Nemo-gvelle […] Jabmiakka […] [and] Ruta.[51]

The male and female deities and their helpers are located in different spheres: high up in the starry sky, further down in the air, on earth, a bit down into the ground, and deep down into the earth.[52] The way the Sámi deities are positioned probably firmly connects them to the missionaries' Christian worldview, more than a Sámi cosmology. Sidenius and his colleagues represented the State and King and belonged to the colonial system and their interpretations and descriptions of Sámi religion must be seen as texts of cultural appropriation.

Scholars hold different opinions about whom Sidenius builds on and from which Sámi community the information about the listed deities originates. Rydving states that Sidenius probably paraphrases Kildal, who had studied the 'idolatry' in Viester-Álás (Vesterålen) and Ofuohtta (Ofoten) on his travels to Viester-Álás (Vesterålen) in 1725 and 1726.[53] What we do know is that the missionaries influenced each other and their correspondences coloured the way they saw and interpreted the Sámi worldview in the local communities in which they served. This is also the case

in Ivvárstádik (Ibestad) where von Westen, Stub, Wallund, Sidenius and the one who used the drum from Hillsá were part of the same local and religious context and religious frames, but with different approaches, needs, experiences, and strategies.

The names of the deities that Sidenius included in his letter to Tornberg in 1726 thus do not represent an exact mirror of the religion practiced and the deities worshipped by Sámi people in the surrounding area of Ivvárstádik (Ibestad), but they say something about the frames that coloured the missionaries' interpretations of Sámi deities and Sámi worldviews. They might also say something about in what way the missionaries would have interpreted the membrane of the drum if they had gotten hold of it – how the *goavddis* from Hillsá would have been translated into the learned spheres of an eighteenth-century elite.

The location of the drum hiding place also tells us something about the power structures in the local community. The one who used the drum for divination or in other religious practices did so with an imminent threat of being sentenced and punished for idolatry. He or she thus had to hide the drum in a location where it was available, but at the same time concealed and out of sight for the Christian authorities and elite.

Dual Religious Identities

The reformatory processes, and the missionaries' and schoolmasters' entry into local communities, contributed to new religious thoughts and ideas leaving their mark on the landscape as well as the people. At the same time, many people had learnt to live in and between religious spheres, and developed strategies to uphold elements of their Sámi religious practices.[54]

Sidenius in his letter to Tornberg gives a description of how the Sámi both adapt to new customs while still clinging to the local religion. He writes,

> Dät är befundit hos os, at de som hafwa både kunnat läsa i bok og anstält sig utwartes helligt hawa warit de allerstörsta Noider og Afgudspræster: […]. Lapparne hafwa p[l]aisir deruthaf at de kunde hålda samtahl med sine geniis og Laribus, som komma til dem antingen i dröm hällär wakande, hvarigienom de får kundskap og oplysning om åthskilligt: De meena, om de forlåtha

> afgudatiänstan, at de aldrig skola få widare lycha til Reen, skytterij, fiskerij.[55]
>
> It has been confirmed to us that those who have both been able to read a book and externally have behaved sacred, have been the greatest *noaidi*s and idolaters. […] The Sámi are pleased to be able to converse with their spirits and house gods, who come to them in dreams or awake state, and through this they gain knowledge and enlightenment about many things. They believe that if they give up the idol worship, they will never achieve further happiness, either in terms of reindeer, hunting or fishing.
>
> (Our translation)

Sidenius's letter gives a picture of a complex religious situation in which the tenacious structures of Sámi religion are revealed. That practitioners of Sámi religion were able to alternate between different religious worldviews is also expressed on several drum membranes where elements of Christian practice are depicted as well as Sámi religious symbols (Fig. 4.5).

Figure 4.5. The Hillsá drum (TSL 4013). Photo: Adnan Icagic, The Arctic University Museum of Norway. License: CC BY-NC-ND.

This point is among other things highlighted in relation to the drum that belonged to the *noaidi* Poala-Ánde (Anders Poulsen), who in court explained the various symbols himself.[56] Poala-Ánde is believed to have said that one of the figures on the fourth row on the drum skin shows people on their way to church, as well as the church itself. The membrane of the Hillsá drum is long lost, and we will never know what imagery it contained or how it was organized, but one might wonder whether Christian symbols are expressed also in the wooden structure of the drum.

A figure, which can resemble a cross, has been carved on the inside and on the outside of the drum's frame. These symbols might speak of a meeting of religions and point to an exchange of ideas and concepts. One explanation of Christian symbols appearing on the drums is that when using the drum for divination, one needed symbols on the drumhead representing the encounter with the other religion's participants and religious system. Another interpretation is that Sámi religion was an inclusive religion, which could easily incorporate Christian and other religious ideas in its own conception of the world.[57] Both of these explanations are reasonable, and one does not exclude the other.

What is important to emphasize is the way that these symbols have been interpreted and communicated. While the Christian clergymen to a large degree described the symbols from a narrow perspective, the one who used the drum might have had no problems in perceiving the Sámi and Christian worldviews, cosmology and deities as something entwined and complementing.[58]

Another approach is that the crosses might relate to a Sámi iconography, speaking to a Sámi cosmology and worldview. The deity whose name is spelled *Radien* in Sidenius's list from 1726 is sometimes symbolized by a cross.[59] It is still impossible to state anything regarding the crosses on the Hillsá drum with certainty. We here only point to possible interpretations relating to a cohesion of the local Sámi landscape, habitat and development.

Conclusion

Considering the period in which the drum had been fashioned and the long history of Christian presence in the area, a potential hypothesis is that the one who once used the drum, acting on behalf

of a community or a family, continued and/or developed religious strategies for exercising new capacities for handling his or her everyday life, for memory, concealment, performance, translation, and transformation in negotiating indigenous religious survival under difficult colonial conditions.[60]

What we can state with certainty, is that the drum from Hillsá unfolds an exciting field of research. It opens for insights into, and offers images of, a complex religious world at a time when religions met and were reshaped. It speaks clearly of the tenacious structures of Sámi religion, but at the same time also of adaptation and development.

The *goavddis* from Hillsá also has a value beyond its role as a spotlight for possible aspects of Sámi religious practices, and can serve as a site where a complex web of demands and articulations is expressed, negotiated and contested. From such a perspective, the *goavddis* from Hillsá is still powerful and might act in ways that can neither be foreseen nor controlled. Attributed to an agent, it has social consequences – such as creating, maintaining and changing power relationships, identities, categories, and memories.

Notes

1. Kildal [1730 and later] 1945: 166 f.; Kjellström & Rydving 1988: 4; Hansen & Olsen 2014: 222–225.

2. See Rydving 1993; Rydving 1995.

3. We would like to thank archeologist Marianne Skandfer for taking part in in the search for the drum find spot, and for carfully reading our manuscript and providing constructive comments. We would also like to thank archeologist Kenneth Webb Berg Vollan for the production of the archaeological site map of the Amundhøgda area. Acknowledgment also goes to Stephen Wickler who took on the English editing task, and to the editors for their valuable comments. The research group Creating the New North (CNN) at the Arctic University of Norway generously helped us finance the radiocarbon dating.

4. Hansen & Olsen 2014: 222, 345.

5. See Manker 1938: 104–108; Christoffersson 2010.

6. Olsen 1885, according to Bjørklund 1997: 3. See also Pareli 2010: 39 f.

7. The museum's archaeologists examined the site where the drum was found with a metal detector in the spring of 2017, but no remains of possible metal objects were found.

8. See Manker 1938; Manker 1950; and Kjellström & Rydving 1988.

9. See Kjellström & Rydving 1988; Hansen & Olsen 2014.

10. See Kjellström & Rydving 1988: 6; Christoffersson 2010: 32.

11. de la Cadena 2015: 26.

12. de la Cadena 2015.

13. Nordin & Ojala 2015: 114.

14. The point was made by Myrvoll at a seminar at the then Tromsø University Museum (now The Arctic University Museum of Norway), February 2017.

15. Kirchhefer 2016.

16. See Manker 1938: 813–819.

17. Lilienskiold [1698] 1942: 164.

18. The Mission College, Misjonskollegiet at http://www.arkivportalen.no/side/aktor/detaljer?aktorId=no-a1450-01000002749574 (accessed 22 Oct. 2018).

19. Turi [1910] 2010: 139.

20. Turi [1910] 2012: 151.

21. Demant Hatt 1928: 53.

22. See also Kroik 2007: 80

23. Hagen 2012: 2; see also Willumsen 2012: 12–18.

24. See Hagen 2015.

25. Hagen 2015: 78 f.

26. Hansen & Olsen 2014: 332.

27. Rydving 1991: 28.

28. Rydving 1991: 43; Olsen & Hansen 2014.

29. Qvigstad & Sandberg 1888, referred to in Hansen 2003: 366; translated by authors.

30. Rydving 1991: 43.

31. Hansen 2000: 135.

32. Qvigstad & Wiklund 1909: 306–315.

33. See Andersen 1999; Hansen 2000. Today this area is included in the Roabat / Grovfjord reindeer herding district.

34. 'De som sådant bruka, göra det i sådan tysthet, at nåpligen deras eget folk få veta derutaf, emedan de veta det kommer på lifvet an, och at de af andra, som sådana ej bruka, lätteligen kunde blifva angifne' (Högström [1747] 1980: 203).

35. Hansen 2000: 135; our translation.

36. 'den norderste stenkirke som finnes i den ganske bebodde verden, (er) en meget sterk og fast bygning' (Nannestad cited in Hansen 2000: 135).

37. Hansen 2000: 145.

38. Hansen & Olsen 2004: 318.

39. See Rasmussen 2016.

40. Rasmussen 2016.

41. Rydving 1991: 29.

42. Hammond 1787: 259 f., 334 f., 418 f.

43. Kalstad 1997.

44. Storm 2011: 74; see also Storm 2014, and Storm 2016.

45. See Hansen 2003: 372.

46. Storm 2016: 190.

47. Hammond 1787: 832.

48. 'nogle paastode, at de ved Ruunebommen, ligesaa vel havde tient og æret Gud, som de Norske med deres Psalmebøger' (Hammond 1787: 419 f.).

49. Hammond 1787: 420.

50. Kalstad 1997: 25.

51. Sidenius [1726] 1910: 56–59.

52. Sidenius [1726] 1910: 56–59.

53. Storm 2016: 190.

54. Friis (1613) 1881: 399–403.

55. Sidenius [1726] 1910: 53 f.

56. See Lilienskiold [1698] 1942; cf. Willumsen's chapter in this volume.

57. Hansen 2000: 309–312.

58. See Rasmussen 2016.

59. '1. Radienatzje betegnet under et simple Kors' (Skanke [1728–31] 1945: 245); Sidenius explains 'Radien' in Swedish: '*Radien* er nogot ringare än *Rariet*, som skal nedsända andan til Menniskians undfångelse i Moders livet, og överleverar dän *Maderakkæ* i händer, som åther igiän straxt åt dåtteren *Sarakka* antvarder samma anda, som låther växa kiöt på Andan, intils dät blifwer til et fullkomligt foster. Radien optager de döda til sig, när de effter döden en tid lång hafwa warit i dödningernes land' (Sidenius [1726] 1910: 56).

60. See also Chidester 2018.

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5. The Witchcraft Trial against Anders Poulsen, Vadsø 1692: Critical Perspectives

Liv Helene Willumsen

Introduction

In this chapter, I will analyse a historical source that has attracted considerable attention during the last two decades, namely the court records of the trial of Anders Poulsen, 1692.[1] The trial took place in the town of Vadsø in Finnmark, which is the northernmost district of Northern Norway. The reasons for this attention are multiple, and a few will be mentioned. First, the trial against Anders Poulsen was very dramatic and had a disastrous ending, as he was accused in a severe witchcraft trial and murdered by axe the day after the trial. Second, this trial dealt with the traditional art of shamanism, as he was an old shaman who had practiced the art of rune drumming during a long life. Third, the trial of Anders Poulsen shows the meeting between a Sámi person, representing an ethnic minority group in Finnmark, and the judicial authorities at the end of the seventeenth century. Fourth, this trial put a full stop to the Finnmark witchcraft trials, which had haunted the district for a century. Fifth, from the Sami Museum in Karasjok, a work related to repatriation of ceremonial objects of indigenous cultural heritage is recently undertaken, with particular focus on Anders Poulsen's shaman's drum (North Sámi *goavddis*; in the original source material 'Runnebomen', English 'rune drum'). RiddoDuottarMuseat – Sámiid Vuorká Dávvirat (The Sámi Museum in Karasjok, Norway) has had the drum on a long-term loan from The National Museum of Denmark (Copenhagen) since the end of the 1970s. In spring 2021, the Sámi Museum sent a formal repatriation request to Denmark, and got a positive answer from Denmark in January 2022.[2]

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Anders Poulsen was brought before the court because he had played the drum, regarded as an 'evil and devilish art of witchcraft'.[3] He gave a long confession, describing the symbols of the drum. The detailed court records have survived. How can we understand Anders Poulsen's confession? I would like to approach the historical source from a critical perspective and ask: Can these court records be taken at face value, and be read and interpreted as Anders Poulsen's straightforward description of the drum and transmission of Sámi culture? Or do we have to take into account the key point of source criticism: that the context here is a criminal trial wherein the accused person is threatened by a sentence of execution, and that this frame will colour his confession?

My outset is previous readings of the Anders Poulsen trial by historians. The first reading is by Einar Niemi, who maintains that the court records from the trial of Anders Poulsen are 'the most comprehensive first-hand contemporary source available on traditional Sámi religious practices, and on the use of the magic drum in particular'; it is 'one of the most important existing sources of our knowledge on Sámi shamanism'.[4] This interpretation is based on the understanding that the confession of Anders Poulsen is reliable, and that its content accurately represents the field of traditional Sámi religious practice, particularly the use of the drum.

Another reading is given by Rune Blix Hagen. In a number of articles, Hagen refers to Niemi's statement without rejecting the notion that Anders Poulsen's confession provides knowledge about genuine Sámi shamanism and traditional Sámi religious practice. He states: 'As a study of Sámi shamanism, we can read the records from the Poulsen trial as a kind of gateway to seventeenth-century ideas of magic', and further that Poulsen's drum is 'one of a very small number of drums for which we have the owner's own explanation of the drum's symbols and figures'.[5] The reliability of Anders Poulsen's confession is not doubted, but is regarded as a glimpse into seventeenth-century people's mentalities and imagination.[6] In addition, the fact that the court records provide Poulsen's own explanation is presumed to strengthen the authenticity of the description of the drum, not taking into consideration that we are talking here about a confession given in response to interrogation in a severe criminal trial.

The Finnmark witchcraft trials were severe compared to other areas.[7] The strongest persecution of witches in Europe took place in Germany, Switzerland, and Scotland. The intensity of witch-hunting in Finnmark was 60 times the European average.[8] At the very end of the seventeenth century, the severe witchcraft trials in Finnmark had come to an end. During the Finnmark witchcraft trials, which occurred from 1600 to 1692, 135 persons were accused of witchcraft. Of these, 82% were women and 18% were men. Most convicted individuals were sentenced to death by fire at the stake. Other sentences were banishment, whipping at the whipping post, and fines.[9] When Anders Poulsen was brought before the court in 1692, 90 persons had already been executed for witchcraft by fire at the stake in the district of Finnmark, and Poulsen was the next, and the last one during the Finnmark persecution. Of the 91 persons who lost their lives, 77 were women and 14 were men.[10] The execution rate per accused was 67% in Finnmark. The intensity of the witchcraft trials, measured in number of accused per population, was high in this region, which counted just 3 000 inhabitants.[11]

The population of Finnmark was of mixed ethnicity in the seventeenth century. Two ethnic groups lived side by side, Norwegians and Sámi, each with a culture and language of their own. Around one-fifth of the district's inhabitants were Sámi.[12] Norwegian settlements were found along the coast, their populations living of fishing and smallholdings. The Norwegian population of Finnmark consisted of long-established locals and migrants who had come to the north in the previous century and settled in a district well known for its rich fishing grounds. Sámi settlements were found both inland and along the inner parts of the fjords. The inland Sámi settlements were inhabited by reindeer keepers, who migrated to the coast in the summer. Around four-fifths of those accused of practicing witchcraft were Norwegian, the remainder being Sámi.[13]

The Finnmark witchcraft trials were an offshoot of the European witch-hunts, ca. 1450–1750.[14] The witch-hunt in Finnmark was brutal, with torture being used during interrogation. The content of the accused persons' confessions was partly influenced by Central European demonological ideas and partly by traditional sorcery.

Two concepts of witchcraft came to the fore during the Finnmark witch-hunt. On the one hand, there was the European doctrine of demonology, spread throughout Europe via a number of demonological works from the late 1400s until the late 1600s. The most famous of these works is *Malleus Maleficarum* [The Witches' Hammer], from 1496. According to the demonological ideas, when a person entered into a devil's pact, the power to perform witchcraft was transferred from the Devil to the human being. Another important demonological notion was the witches' gatherings, where many witches were supposed to meet in a field or on top of a mountain, with the Devil in their midst.[15] Related to ideas on witches' gatherings were ideas on shape-shifting (metamorphosis) and night flights, as the witches had to be able to fly swiftly through the air to come to the meeting place. There is a clear multiplying element present in the motif of a witches' meeting, as the interrogated person was always asked, after having confessed to participating in a witches' meeting, who else she saw there. The demonological concept of witchcraft was related to a type of witchcraft trials called panics: successive trials during a concentrated period of time.

Then there was traditional witchcraft—*maleficium*. The content of *maleficium* trials was spells cast on humans or animals, resulting in sickness or death. This concept of witchcraft was based on the perception that witchcraft was practiced due to inherent magical power. It was practiced on an individual basis; hence one person at a time was brought before the court and accused of having performed *maleficium*.[16]

Most women accused of and sentenced for witchcraft in Finnmark were Norwegian. They were mainly accused in panics related to demonological ideas and connected with collective witchcraft. In Europe, on average around 80% of the accused and sentenced in witchcraft trials were women, and Finnmark is in line with this rate.[17] The majority of the women accused came from the local fishing communities in East Finnmark.

In the group of men accused of witchcraft in Finnmark, comprising 24 persons, 16 were Sámi, out of whom 13 were executed. The rest were Norwegian men. Most men accused of witchcraft in Finnmark were accused in individual trials. Among the Sámi men accused of witchcraft, two were shamans who used the drum.[18] In

Europe, Sámi men were known to be well versed in sorcery from history books on the Nordic countries.[19] Sámi sorcerers were particularly well known for selling wind to boats, for casting Sámi spells—called *gand*—and for playing the drum. Sámi sorcery was in focus during the beginning and the end of the trial period. Another idea related to Finnmark was that of the superstitious north: that the Devil lived up north and that the entrance to hell was there too. In the European mentality, Finnmark was a place where witchcraft was likely to thrive.

Anders Poulsen

Who was Anders Poulsen? He was a Sámi man who was, according to himself, 100 years old.[20] He came from Torne Lappmark, the area in Sweden bordering Finnmark, where several ethnic groups lived together and several languages were used. Poulsen himself did not speak Norwegian, and Sámi Constable Poul Iversen was used as a translator during the trial. Anders Poulsen owned a drum and had learned how to play it when he was young. First, Poulsen said that his mother had taught him, later that another man had taught him, and finally again that it had been his mother who had taught him. His mother had learned to play the drum from a man in Torne Lappmark. Poulsen was a married man with many children. He owned two reindeer bulls, four reindeer cows, and two reindeer calves.[21] He was a regular tax payer, a point that he himself emphasised.

The pre-trial of Anders Poulsen started two months before the formal trial. His drum was confiscated on 7 December 1691. He was questioned about his use of the drum on 8 December 1691, in the presence of Deputy Bailiff Olle Andersen, Deputy Appeal Court Judge Niels Knag, who was the bailiff and magistrate of Finnmark, and Sámi Constable Poul Iversen.[22] The deposition from the interrogation of 8 December was read out loud at the trial on 9 February 1692. Present were Niels Knag, Olle Andersen, Poul Iversen, and a jury of Norwegians in addition to a jury of Sámis. The court was presided over by the Chancellor Secretary and Regional Governor of Vardøhus District, Hans H. Lilienskiold.[23] The trial continued on 10 February. No sentence was passed, because the case, 'which is indeed a most unusual one, requiring due consideration from superior authorities, be

deferred until such time as a reply from superior authorities in Copenhagen be forthcoming about the matter'.[24] Anders Poulsen was to be kept in legal custody in Vadsø until the answer from the legal authorities in Copenhagen would arrive. Next, he was unexpectedly killed on 11 February by a mentally unstable person. The trial of his killer, Villem Gundersen, started on 22 February and continued on 24 February.[25]

Four Aspects of the Trial

In the following, I would like to discuss four aspects of the trial of Anders Poulsen. First, the historical context, including the state's demand for power and control and the necessity of interpreting the trial within a legal frame. Second, the voices of central actors during the trial: the voice of the accused person, the voice of the law, and the voice of the scribe. This effort to listen out for voices heard in the courtroom is based on Gérard Genette's methodological work *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (1972), and also on his later authorship.[26] The third aspect I would like to discuss is the interpretation of the drum's symbols as they come to the fore in Anders Poulsen's confession. The fourth aspect is the court records' information about Sámi shamanism.

Context

The state's demand for power and control in the secular field is clearly seen in the royal decrees sent from Copenhagen and in the authorities' demand for taxes. The Danish-Norwegian king himself, Christian IV, had travelled north to the Kola peninsula in 1599.[27] He felt threatened by alleged Sámi sorcery on this voyage.[28] Christian IV paid special attention to the northern area and the persons there who were skilled in sorcery. This is indicated by a letter to the district governors of Vardøhus and Nordland in 1609, which required the district governor to be aware of Sámi sorcerers, who were regarded as inclined to practice sorcery by nature. Those who were found guilty of using sorcery were to be sentenced to death without mercy.[29]

There were tensions between the Sámis and the authorities with regard to taxes. For the inland Sámis, the fur trade was very prosperous in the sixteenth century, and they had connections

with networks of merchants in Sweden and Russia. Travelling merchants came from the area around the White Sea, and Russian-Orthodox monasteries were active as well. Due to the lack of fixed borders, Sámis in these inland areas had to pay taxes in three different countries: Norway, Sweden, and Russia.[30] In the seventeenth century, negotiations related to taxation, jurisdiction, and trade were conducted on the part of each of these countries. The Swedish and Danish-Norwegian kings took initiatives to explore the possibilities for taxation in Finnmark and to define borders with their neighbouring states. This was the task of King Christian IV in 1599.

The state possessed religious power. In the post-Reformation period, it was important to get the people to adhere to the right faith. The alleged witches were regarded as enemies of God. The first point in witchcraft sentences always stated the renouncing of the baptism pact as well as the new pact with the Evil One. Church sermons portrayed an image of the Devil as a mighty figure who obtained control over numerous souls on earth. In the early 1700s, the Missionary Collegium in Copenhagen sent missionaries to work among the Sámis in Norway. Thomas von Westen was appointed to lead the mission work among the Sámi population in Finnmark and was installed in his position in 1716.[31] However, the very first teacher and catechist in Finnmark was Isaac Olsen, who came to the region just after 1700.[32]

It is vital to bear in mind that the court records stem from a legal trial. Witchcraft was a serious crime, just like murder and violence. Because it was impossible to provide valid evidence in witchcraft trials, it was considered a *crimen exceptum*. Circumstantial evidence had to be used to influence the question of guilt. Witchcraft was defined in the letters of the law and the sentence of execution had to be passed by a legal court. The church had no such authority in the north of Europe.

Poulsen's Voice: The Description of the Drum's Symbols

Genette refers to texts for which an analysis of their discourse may be productive as 'judicial narratives'. Within narratological methodology, a set of court records is regarded in its entirety as a narrative penned by a scribe. In addition, narrative structures are

seen as constitutive at other levels, for instance in the confession of the accused person. Genette's narratology works with the category 'voice'. A variety of discursive 'voices' may be listened out for; so also in the confession of Anders Poulsen. In this chapter, the main emphasis will be placed on Poulsen's voice and what it communicates.

The voice of Anders Poulsen, as it is rendered in the court records, is the most important thread in the analysis that follows: questions and answers that can be listened out for in the records. Poulsen explained he used the hammer and a hollow ring or a small object[33] to obtain 'answers' from the drum. When he used the hammer, the ring danced, and it mattered which way it danced around the drumskin. If the ring danced anti-clockwise, the person he was playing for would have bad luck. He said that when he lifted the drum high into the air, he would get an answer, 'just as two persons do when they speak to each other'.[34] In the courtroom, he demonstrated how he used the drum: he lifted it up and read the Lord's Prayer in Finnish (cf. Fig. 5.1).[35]

Poulsen's voice was detailed when he described the symbols of the drum. In the first row, there are three symbols: the figure of a human called *Ilmaris*, who represents tempest and bad weather; the figure of a human called *Diermis*, who represents thunder; and the 'figure of a wild reindeer whom he calls *Gvodde*; it is a wild reindeer which, when God is prayed to, gives good fortune in the hunt of wild reindeer'.[36] He repeated, when he was interpreting the symbols, 'When God is prayed to […]'.[37] In the original record, 'God' is consistently written without a capital initial letter. Presumably, the lowercased 'g' implies the scribe's rejection of the idea that this was the Christian 'God'. Based on parts of Poulsen's confession, it seems that the One Christian God is referred to several times. However, the language of the drum as a religious language seems to have been flexible: new contexts and approaches enabled new interpretations of the drum's fixed structures and figures.[38] One of the religious insights Anders Poulsen pointed out in his confession was that God is almighty. God is in a position to delegate his power to his helpers, represented on the drum, but the helpers can act only at God's command. The drum can be used for better or for worse, but the name of God is mentioned only in connection with the good effects of the drum: when God is prayed

Figure 5.1. Copy of Anders Poulsen's *goavddis* (drum). Exhibited in the Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo. The original drum is exhibited in the Sámiid Vuorká-Dávvirat/Sámi Museum in Karasjok. Photo 'Sandivas', Wikimedia Commons. License: CC BY-SA 3.0.

to, *Diermis* is helpful in that when floods and a lot of rain occur, he will call back the weather. This '*Diermis has no power unless God gives it to him*'. Poulsen now also confessed that '*Diermis can cause evil and bad weather that damages ships and boats, but Diermis can also make good weather again and prevent mishaps when God lets him*'.[39] [My italics.]

Likewise with the figure of *Ilmaris*: when God is prayed to, *Ilmaris* is able to call back or drive away bad weather that has been conjured. However, he is also able to make bad weather, 'but he says it is *sinful* to ask for that'.[40] The use of the word 'sinful', which is a word frequently used in Christian discourse, suggests that there is a border between good and bad use of the drum, even if it can be used for both purposes. Similarly, the figure of the wild reindeer may bring good or bad luck. It 'gives good fortune in the hunt for wild reindeer and when the rune drum is played. If the ring will not dance for this reindeer, the one who asks for good hunting will not get any reindeer, no matter how hard he

tries'. Poulsen's explanations are ambiguous. On the one hand, he underlines the blessings given by God through the figures of the drum, the positive effects of practicing drumming; on the other hand, he reveals that the drum might be used for evil purposes.[41]

In the second row, there are five figures. First a round circle pierced by a line called *Peive*: the sun. Then a figure called the child *Jumal*: God's child or God's son the Christ. Next, there is the figure of a human called *Juma-Etziem*: God the father. Then the figure of a church, called *Dom Kirch*.[42] Finally, there is the figure of a human called *Engil*,[43] who represents the Holy Spirit.

Anders Poulsen interprets four of these symbols as Christian symbols, even more so than those on the first row, although the legal officials seem to doubt this interpretation. The first symbol, *Peive*—the sun—is a bit different from the others in this row, as it is related to the blessings of good weather: 'When God is prayed to, it will yield sunny and beautiful weather and fair air, particularly when the reindeer are calving and when grain and grass are supposed to grow, and generally good weather when this is asked for'.[44]

The next four symbols in this row are religious symbols with Christian connotations, explained within the framework of Christian discourse: God's son Christ absolves from all sin, God the father 'castigates for all sins and other than that helps and provides, commands and punishes when asked to',[45] and *Engil* will absolve all sin. In the same row, there is a symbol of a cathedral, which provides absolution, peace of mind, and a Christian death, 'and whether you die or are alive, that same church will help'.[46] The language Anders Poulsen used to interpret the figures referred to the Christian trinity and mirrored central notions of the Christian church: God is a strong, blessing, and punishing father, Christ grants absolution from all sins, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, 'you become a new and clean man'.[47] The interpretation of the Holy Spirit is very much like the interpretation of the figure of Christ, so it might be that Anders Poulsen was uncertain of the difference. When describing the cathedral as granting absolution, peace of mind, and a Christian death, several fields of Christian religious life are touched upon.

However, the discourse is ambiguous. The legal officials were apparently interested in knowing what kind of God Poulsen

worshipped. The court records note his answer, 'The God that is worshipped, *as has often been reiterated*, are those figures that he has painted, the deities, about whom he says his mother taught him'.[48] [My italics.] Poulsen seems to have been of the opinion that he had often repeated what kind of God he had been worshipping, understood as the Christian God. But at the same time, he referred to what his mother had taught him, a mother who was said not to share the Christian faith. The contradiction in Anders Poulsen's confession is a reason to become suspicious of his interpretation, even if he himself denied worshipping pagan gods. The ambiguity and blurred lines between different language levels become even more striking when Anders Poulsen interprets the figures' staffs, called *Juncher sabbe* or *Herr Sabbe*, painted on the drum. These were 'Juncher's staff' or 'the staff of great lords, for he says that just as the masters on earth hold staffs, so do these persons'.[49] Juncher—meaning a young nobleman—was a term used for the district governor at Vardøhus castle and a title Anders Poulsen certainly related to the highest authority under the king. In Anders Poulsen's interpretation, these figures were actual human lords or government officials.

In the third row, there are five figures: a human figure called St Anne, a figure of Mary, the mother of Christ, and three figures called *Julle*[50]*Peive* or *Julle Herr*. They 'are Christmas days or Christmas masters who rule over Christmas'.[51] On this row, for the first time, women appear. Poulsen said that the first of the two figures, St Anne, was 'Mary's sister who assists Mary when she gives succour, but in other respects she can do nothing unless Mary wishes her to'.[52] In Christian lore, St Anne was Mary's mother. The second female figure is given various names by Anders Poulsen: Mary, *Jumal Enne*, *Jumal Ache*: 'This is Mary, the mother of Christ, God's wife, and when prayed to she will in particular help women in confinement, and she is conducive to absolution from sin and she is worshipped at God's side'.[53] Here we have two female symbols, the first one given a saint's name and the second being God's wife. This is certainly not in accordance with standard Protestant religious doctrine. However, underlining the function of the female symbols as helpers seems appropriate for the task of a *noaidi*, a person who was often contacted in problematic situations. The fact that women were seen as suitable

helpers for those who were in need, and especially in connection to confinement, might be seen as an echo of his clients' questions.

About the figures representing the three Christmas days, Anders Poulsen explained:

> They are Christmas days, Christmas masters who rule over Christmas. *Oucht Jule Peiv* is the master of the first Christmas day, *Gought Jule Peive* is the master of the second Christmas day, *Gvolme Jul Peive* is the master of the third Christmas day. If anybody defiles these days, God will punish them, but if somebody honours them and then prays to God for something, then these days are exhibited to God and it will be submitted that so and so has honoured the days and that God will help for that very reason.[54]

This explanation might or might not have been in accordance with the teachings of the church. God is described as blessing those who keep his commandments and punishing those who do not. However, the Yule symbols might well be a mixture of several aspects.[55] Yule has been celebrated since pre-Christian times when the year turns, a time for sacrifice.

In the fourth row, five figures are painted: a round circle representing the moon, the figures of two men going to church, the figure of the church Anders Poulsen belongs to, and a figure of a man coming to church from the opposite direction. About the symbol of the moon, *Manna*, Anders Poulsen explained: 'When God is worshipped, it shines brightly and the nocturnal weather will be fine, even if there is a heavy cover of clouds'.[56] The other figures in the row represent the church[57] and persons going to church and giving to the church. The logic about giving to the church is interesting: 'Yet, he adds, nobody gives unless they receive help'. The kind of trouble he mentioned that help was asked for was related to reindeer and illness. Again, the interpretation was influenced by the preaching of the church: that people should attend services and give money to the church.

In the fifth and last row, there are seven figures and symbols who are all related to the Devil: first, a woman who is supposed to be the wife of the bound devil; second, a devil who kills people and who represents disease; third, a figure of the devil 'who is on the loose now and rules in Hell and floats about in the world'.[58]

The fourth symbol is *Hilvet Tol*, the flames of hell: the fire that consumes people's souls in hell. The fifth symbol is *Hilved Tarve Giedme*, hell's tar cauldron, in which people's souls in hell are boiled. The sixth symbol is *Hilvet Haufd*, hell's grave, into which all people who believe in the Devil are thrown, and God is the one to throw them. Images of the flames of hell, the tar cauldron, and hell's grave are drawn in the court records.[59] The seventh figure, called *Hvenaales Gvolisis*, is 'a bound devil in chains, the one who was bound up when God created the world'.[60]

The interpretation of these different devils is coloured by the Bible and the notions about hell and punishment found in there, although here we hear that people's *souls* are consumed by the flames of hell and boiled in the tar cauldron of hell, not their bodies, and the image thus deviates from common visual representations of the boiling water of hell. There are several devils: one who is disease, one who is loose, for whom Anders Poulsen has no name, and one tied. The explanation of how one of the devils escaped is very earth-focused: 'This devil escaped when God tied up the other devil, described below, and God was wearing iron shoes when he found this one and trampled on him so he disappeared in a great bog'.[61] During the explanation of the devils, Anders Poulsen touched upon God's creation of the world and the gruesome punishment in hell for those who believed in the wrong Master. There are no comments from the legal officials during this part of Anders Poulsen's interpretation of the drum's symbols, even if the explanations about the devils must have been regarded as extremely important.

Anders Poulsen was questioned about the maker of his drum. He confessed first that a man in Torne Lappmark had made the drum. Finally, he confessed to have made the drum himself. In addition, there was an interest in the use of the drum regarding the lifting of curses, removing of *gand*, and punishing of a thief. Poulsen emphasised that he only wanted to do good using the drum.

Anders Poulsen's final words in court consist of a statement of his innocence: he had not forsworn God in heaven or his Christian faith, and when worshipping the depicted gods, he believed they were all God in heaven. And 'since the authorities objected to his

using the rune drum, he would relinquish it now, and believe in God in Heaven just like other people'.[62] He expressed a contradiction between using the drum and Christendom.

The Voice of the Law and the Scribe

Taking a narratological approach to the analysis of court records, the voices of the law and the scribe are important to listen out for in addition to the voice of the accused person. The voice of the law displays the official legal attitude to and understanding of witchcraft. The voice of the scribe might reveal his attitude to what is told: whether he is establishing a distance from the recorded text—indicating that he does not believe in what is uttered—or presents his own opinion.

The voices of the law and the scribe are heard particularly at the end of the trial, as the court found it necessary to send the case to Copenhagen for a final decision and keep Anders Poulsen in legal custody. The sentence in this trial was never known. However, the attitude of the judiciary was clear: 'The Sámi […] was a witchcraft practitioner and idol worshipper who had forfeited his body to be burned at the stake.'[63]

The voice of the scribe is mostly withdrawn. We meet a professional scribe in the records, who provides detailed and accurate records. It was important to document the interrogation—what was confessed to and the arguments coming to the fore—in case the trial was passed on to a higher instance court. However, there are some signs about the attitude of the scribe, Deputy Appeal Court Judge Niels Knag. Once, he presents his opinion by recording himself as an 'I', making it clear that he thinks Anders Poulsen should be severely punished for his serious crime. His second mark is the lowercased initial g in 'god'. These textual incidences show that the scribe, whatever his ambition was in terms of neutrality and however he was educated, always had the possibility to influence the records he was taking down. However, my opinion is that when recording courtroom discourse, the seventeenth-century scribe did his uttermost to get down on paper the words that were uttered during the trial. The task of recording was challenging.

Shamanism?

Genette's category 'voice' is used in my analysis as a methodological tool to clarify individual actors' contributions to courtroom discourse. Anders Poulsen's voice is valuable for a discussion of the drum's symbols as well as of the effect of drumming.

Poulsen's interpretation of the drum's symbols is characterised by a certain ambiguity. Some symbols are interpreted within a Christian frame, like the female symbols of St Anne and Mary, the trinity, God's son the Christ, God the father, and the Holy Spirit. Then, some symbols denote several devils, flames of hell, hell's cauldron, and hell's grave—the darker sides of Christian teachings. Some symbols are related to the Sámi way of life, like the symbols related to nature: the wild reindeer, the sun, and the moon.

Poulsen's confession reveals good and evil effects of the drum. The good effects are related to nature, while the bad effects are related to the devils. Anders Poulsen is reluctant to explain about the devils, but says that if the ring lands in this row: 'God is angry with whoever he is playing for, and that person will have to pray a great deal to God before the ring will go back again, so that God shows him that he is a sinful person'.[64]

Employing a narratological approach in the analysis of court records is fruitful primarily because this method aims at revealing several textual levels present in court records and, in addition, manages to distinguish between the various 'voices' heard in the courtroom. It enables the analysis to come close to the 'voices' of those participating in the trial and to get a grasp of the legal elements and the evaluation of the judiciary. In the trial of Anders Poulsen, it is his voice that gives us insight into the very complex discourse situation that unfolded itself in the courtroom. By scrutinising his voice, we see the contrasting accents that are displayed, demonstrating a situation that is under pressure. Thus, narratology, through its claim to go beyond the textual surface and apply modes of reading other than what we see at first glance, is well suited for examining the content of Anders Poulsen's trial and his confession.

What does the document reveal about shamanism? On the one hand, we see an experienced shaman demonstrating his art

and giving a confession containing elements of the knowledge of a *noaidi*. Also, the document points to what secular authorities asked a shaman about. On the other hand, the reliability of Anders Poulsen's description of the symbols of the drum should be questioned, as the confession was given in a trial with a potentially deadly ending. He explained the symbols using various connotations.[65] In my opinion, Poulsen's confession is reliable when it comes to nature-religious symbols, but not when it comes to the totality of explanations. His confession is not consistent: he deviates from what he first confesses to several times, and doubt can be raised about whether he presents his genuine knowledge before the court. Other descriptions of the symbols of the drum from the time are more reliable because they are given within other contextual frames, where the fear of a death penalty is not present. A drawing of one of these drums, made by Thomas von Westen, depicts for instance three female goddesses of the Sámi religion, not mentioned at all by Anders Poulsen (Fig. 5.2).[66] In my view,

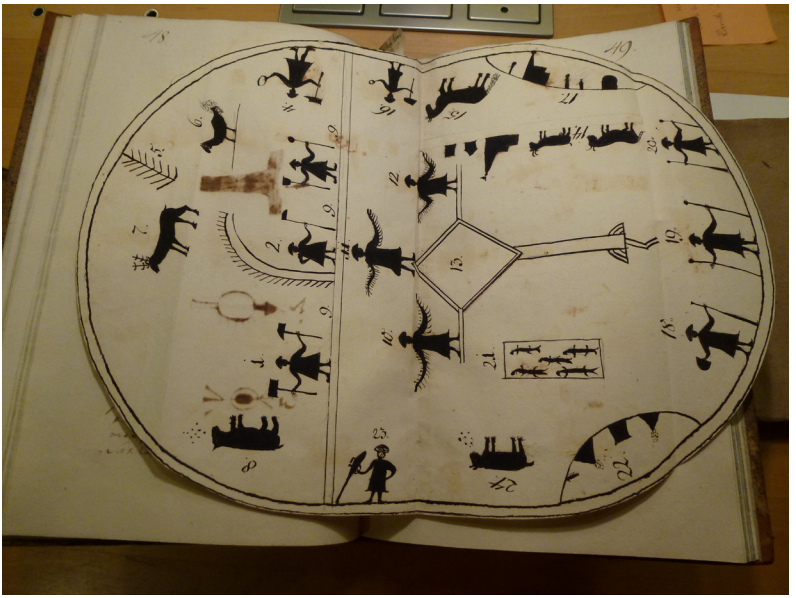

Figure 5.2. Depiction of the symbols of a Sámi drum. Thomas von Westen, Relation anlangende Finlappernes Afguderier, The Royal Library, Copenhagen, Thott, 1569, 4°. Photo: Liv Helene Willumsen. License: CC BY-NC-ND.

Anders Poulsen possessed authentic knowledge about the drum. However, only a part of this came to the fore in his confession, due to his fear that the judiciary would demonise the traditional symbols.

Notes

1. Regional State Archives of Tromsø (SATØ), The Archives of Finnmark District Magistrate [SF, Sorenskriveren i Finnmark] no. 25, Records of Court Proceedings 1692–1695, fos. 1r–8v; Willumsen 2017: 241–249.

2. Conversation between Jelena Porsanger and Liv Helene Willumsen, 6 September 2021; Porsanger 2020; www.snl.no/Anders Poulsen. Read 5 January 2022.

3. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 1r.

4. Niemi 2009.

5. Hagen 2002: 326 f.; Hagen 2005b:16; Hagen 2014: 155.

6. Willumsen 2013b: 336–353; Willumsen 2013b: 298–319.

7. Goodare 2014: 58.

8. Goodare 2014: 59.

9. Willumsen 2013a: 242–262.

10. Willumsen 2014: 31.

11. Willumsen 2008: 54–56.

12. In 1597, there were 561 Norwegian families and 154 Sámi families in Finnmark. With a family size of five, as mentioned in note 2 above, the number of Norwegians would, in the seventeenth century, be 2,805 and the number of Sámis 770. With a hypothetical family size of four, which is also used for estimations of Finnmark populations at this time, the number of Norwegians would be nearly 2,100 and the number of Sámis would be 660 (Aubert 1978: 14).

13. Willumsen 2008: 107.

14. Goodare 2016: 24.

15. Willumsen 2010: 14.

16. Willumsen 2010: 13.

17. Willumsen 2008: 93, 96.

18. Quiwe Baarsen, 1627, and Anders Poulsen, 1692.

19. Magnus 1982.

20. Orig. 'et smal hundrede aarβ alder som er fem gange 20 aar'. Ref. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 1v.

21. An inventory of his belongings was drawn up by the deputy bailiff, the Sámi constable, and two jurors, and read before the court. Ref. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 8v.

22. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 1r.

23. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 1r.

24. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 8r.

25. SATØ, SF 25, fos. 10r–15v.

26. Genette (1972) 1980; Genette (1983) 1988; Genette (1991) 1993.

27. Grubbe 2005: 1–16.

28. Niemi 1988: 34; Grubbe 2004: 10; Hagen 2005a: 246–263.

29. Niemi 1983: 219; Willumsen 1994: 57.

30. Hansen & Olsen 2004: 239, 263.

31. Skjelmo & Willumsen 2017.

32. Isaac Olsen quickly learned the Sámi language and started traveling among the Sámi population, particularly in Eastern Finnmark. Isaac Olsen left a handwritten copybook, which is a valuable source when it comes to Sámi religious practice; cf. Skjelmo & Willumsen 2018; Willumsen 2016.

33. Orig. 'dechel' which means 'devil'.

34. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 6r.

35. Orig. 'karelsk'.

36. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 2v.

37. SATØ, SF 25, fos. 2r–2v.

38. Pollan 1997: 24.

39. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 2v.

40. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 2v.

41. Another interpretation might be that he developed his own, quite sophisticated theodicy, where *Diermis* guarantees good as well as evil.

42. In Norwegian *domkirke*, in Swedish *domkyrka*, in German *Domkirche*.

43. This word means 'angel' in Norwegian.

44. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 2v.

45. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 3r.

46. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 3r.

47. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 3r.

48. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 3r.

49. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 3r.

50. *Jul* is the Norwegian word for Christmas.

51. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 3v.

52. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 3v.

53. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 3v.

54. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 3v.

55. In the Scottish witchcraft trials in Aberdeenshire 1597, Andrew Man mentioned the word 'Christsonday', which somewhat resembles Anders Poulsen's rhetoric.

56. SATØ, SF 25, fos. 3v–4r.

57. Orig. *Kirche*.

58. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 4r.

59. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 4v.

60. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 4v.

61. SATØ, SF 25, fos. 4r–4v.

62. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 6r.

63. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 14r.

64. SATØ, SF 25, fo. 5r.

65. Rydving 2004: 99–107.

66. Rydving 1995; Jørkov 2000: 9–17; Willumsen 2013a: 318 f.; Skjelmo & Willumsen 2017: 204–214.

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SATØ = Regional State Archives of Tromsø, The Archives of Finnmark District Magistrate [SF, Sorenskriveren i Finnmark] no. 25, Records of Court Proceedings 1692–1695, fos. 1r– 8v.

Primary printed source

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6. Jacob Fellman's Introduction to Saami Indigenous Religion: A Source Critical Dilemma

Konsta Kaikkonen

Introducing the Problem

In this chapter, it is my intention to take a source-critical look at what the vicar Jacob Fellman (1795–1875) wrote about Saami indigenous religion[1] in his posthumously published works. According to observations made in a previous text, I had come to the hypothesis that Fellman's text is, such as many others in the genre, a compilation of previously published texts.[2] Here I have taken the task of exploring this hypothesis further. In order to achieve this goal, I will especially take a closer look at a passage about the ritual specialists of the Saami, most often called *noaidi*s in North Saami.

In the first part of the chapter, I will look at the context and history surrounding Fellman's manuscripts before they were published in 1906. After exploring the context of the passage about ritual specialists, I turn to look at its content, comparing it to several other texts, especially descriptions of Saami indigenous religion written by Lars Levi Laestadius, Knud Leem, and Erik Jessen-Schardebøll. The results of a simplified content analysis are then related to archival work done in the Fellman family collections in Helsinki. I will conclude with some findings and by introducing further questions about Fellman's texts that remain unsolved.

Jacob Fellman was a clergyman in northernmost Finland at the beginning of the nineteenth century, at a time when Finland had become a grand duchy of Tsarist Russia. His written works, published in four volumes in 1906 under the title *Anteckningar*

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under min vistelse i Lappmarken ('Notes on My Sojourn in Lapland'), have been important sources for everyone interested in the history of northernmost Finland and Sápmi.[3] This is also true for the Study of Religions: Church historians and historians of Saami indigenous religion have often used Fellman's writings as sources, although his collections of yoiks have often overshadowed his more general descriptions of Saami indigenous religion.

Even though there are some important remarks about Saami indigenous religion in all the four volumes, for example in the travel descriptions found in the first and third volumes, as well as in the correspondences found in the fourth, the most important volume concerning Saami religion is the second one. It opens with a section titled *Ur Lappisk Mytologi och Lappländsk Sägen* ('From Lappish mythology and Lapland legends'). This section is preceded by a short preface written by the editor Isak Fellman (1841–1919), who was Jacob's son and responsible for publishing his late father's works in 1906 after Isak had retired from his position as a lawyer.

In this preface of the second volume, Isak Fellman describes the editing process and the history concerning the two different manuscripts that comprise the first part of the volume (pp. 13–190). The first of these manuscripts was (1) a 'general introduction' to Saami religion, which is referred to as the General Part (Swe. *allmänna delen*) by the editor (pp. 13–74, hereafter referred to as GP) and the second (2) an 'alphabetically organized part', which is referred to as the Lexical Part (Swe. *lexikaliska delen*) by the editor (pp. 74–190, hereafter referred to as LP). After these parts, the volume continues with J. Fellman's collections of yoiks and stories (*Lappska sånger och sagor*, pp. 191–340), followed by previously published and unpublished translations, newspaper pieces, and other texts he authored that fall out of the present scope.

As I noted in the previously mentioned article, a part of Fellman's text appears suspiciously similar to a text by Lars Levi Laestadius (1800–61), written almost simultaneously in the mid-nineteenth century.[4] If this is the case and Fellman's text turns out to be a loan or a compilation, as my hypothesis suspects, it would mean that Fellman's information mostly originated from previous texts written in other Saami areas than where Fellman himself was stationed. This would pose a serious problem for using the text

directly as a source to Saami indigenous religion in the North and Inari Saami areas.

As modern Saami studies emphasise the variety of cultural patterns within Sápmi instead of seeing Saami culture as a monolith with no regional or historical variation, these source-critical examinations are of great importance.[5] Therefore, identifying Fellman's manuscript as a compilation of texts originating in different areas and time periods would make it deeply problematic if taken as a source to Saami indigenous religion 'collected' in Northern Finland in the nineteenth century, as the title of Fellman's posthumously published works would suggest at first glance.

I will begin my inquiry by introducing the history of the two manuscripts which Fellman's published text was based on, after which I will turn the spotlight on the general part, and more specifically on the subchapter called *Troll- eller Nåidekonster* (pp. 26–40). Freely translated as 'Witch- or *Nåide*craft', this part mainly deals with Saami ritual specialists, called *noaidi* (sg.) in North Saami. In this text, I will use the North Saami word *noaidevuohta* as an analytical term to refer to the *noaidi*'s trade first documented in the missionary era of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[6] In order to enlighten some aspects of the complicated history of Fellman's manuscript, I compare the part about *noaidevuohta* with some other texts that deal with the same topic.

One of the hypotheses and starting points for the analysis is that the history of Fellman's manuscript – as well as its content – is even more closely intertwined with Lars Levi Laestadius's *Fragmenter i Lappska mythologien* ('Fragments of Lappish Mythology', hereafter referred to as *Fragments*) than previous scholarship has realised.[7] This premise originates from the previously noted similarities between these texts.[8] Laestadius's text was written between 1838 and 1845 and remained unpublished – and for the most part unknown – before the re-emergence and publication of its different parts between 1959 and 2003.[9]

The History of Fellman's Manuscript(s)

Jacob Fellman was a vicar of the Ohcejohka and Aanaar districts in the northernmost parts of the grand duchy of Finland from 1819 until 1832. He moved to Lappajärvi located in Ostrobothnia

in 1832 as he accepted a position there after a long period of seeking a more southern post. He probably began to write the manuscripts about Saami mythology around that time, even though he had apparently mentioned writing about Saami mythology to the Finnish politician and historian A. I. Arwidsson (1791–1858) already in January 1828. Arwidsson writes in a response letter to Fellman dated 14 February: 'I wait eagerly to receive, as promised, excerpt from your notes on Lappish [Saami] mythology'.[10] This is the first mention of a mythological work authored by Fellman I have been able to find.

By the end of the 1830s, Fellman had compiled a lexically organised manuscript with information about Saami mythology and tried to publish it. He was probably inspired by Christfrid Ganander's (1741–1790) *Mythologica Fennica* which had been published in 1789. The manuscript was first sent for evaluation to the Finnish Literature Society (Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, hereafter referred to as SKS) on 3 October 1838.[11] Fellman also mentioned in a letter draft – intended to be sent to the Norwegian clergyman and linguist Nils Vibe Stockfleth (1787–1866) in 1838 – that he would try to publish Saami 'national songs, as well as mythological notes'.[12] These 'mythological notes' were presumably the lexical part (LP) in almost the same form as the one printed in 1906, excluding the parts that Isak Fellman took from that part and added to the general part (GP) as he explains in the introduction.[13]

In their board meeting held 6 February, SKS decided to set a committee to evaluate whether Fellman's (LP) manuscript should be published or not.[14] On 1 May, the board read through the committee report, written by the recently promoted professor of Philosophy Germund Aminoff (1796–1876). The committee deemed that 'the Lappish Mythological Lexicon contains a not unimportant contribution to knowledge about the doctrine of the deities of the Lapps',[15] but criticised Fellman for a lack of differentiation between Saami and Finnish traditions as well as between historical and present traditions.[16] According to the committee, the manuscript included important information that could be used elsewhere, but they added that it was not printable in its present form.[17] SKS thus decided to propose to use the manuscript

elsewhere, but Fellman declined the offer.[18] The Finnish national-poet-to-be J.L. Runeberg (1804–1877) sent the manuscript back to its author on behalf of SKS in March 1841.[19]

Despite this rejection, it seems that Fellman did not give up, but made some changes to the LP manuscript and again tried to get it published. In 1842, Fellman wrote in a letter draft, probably intended to be sent to Runeberg, that he would continue working with the Saami mythology when he had time.[20] The historian Gabriel Rein (1800–67) was interested in publishing the manuscript in 1848, but wrote that the handwriting was at times unreadable and that he therefore could not follow the Saami words properly. Rein suggested that Fellman should make some changes and improve the handwriting.[21] According to Isak Fellman, the LP manuscript was probably not changed by his father after this letter.[22] After this mention by Rein, the history of the manuscripts is unclear before the LP and the GP manuscripts were edited by Isak Fellman and finally published by SKS in 1906. I found no mention of the GP manuscript before this, other than that its alleged author J. Fellman presumably only started working on it later in his life.

The Laestadius Connection

What then was the connection between Jacob Fellman and Lars Levi Laestadius? Unbeknownst to Fellman, Laestadius had also begun to write a mythological work about the Saami almost simultaneously in the late 1830s. Laestadius's manuscript on Saami mythology was to be delivered to the French zoologist Joseph Paul Gaimard (1793–1858) in order to be included in the publications of the royal *La Recherche* Expedition, of which Gaimard was the leader and Laestadius a local guide.[23] Fellman and Laestadius first became aware of each other's work in 1839 through C.A. Gottlund (1796–1875) – Laestadius's study comrade from Uppsala and Fellman's schoolmate from Turku.[24] This happened when Laestadius learned in a letter from Gottlund, dated August 1839, that Fellman was working on a similar project as his.[25] Laestadius then asked Fellman to borrow his manuscript in a letter dated 15 December 1839.[26]

Fellman had not received his manuscript back from SKS yet, so he created a short version of the LP manuscript (hereafter referred to as the '1840 manuscript'),[27] which he sent to Laestadius via an Estonian student from Tartu named Friedrich Heller. Heller's itinerary included visits to both Fellman's pastorate in Lappajärvi and Laestadius's in Gárasavvon.[28] It seems that in his response letter, sent along with the 1840 manuscript, Fellman also proposed working on a mythological overview together with Laestadius.[29] In a letter sent to Fellman 31 July 1840, Laestadius wrote that he had gotten possession of the 1840 manuscript only one day before and that he was going to send it back with Heller along with a few comments.[30] He sent these comments and a note dated 1 August 1840. The note stated, for example, that the works would not be on a collision course with each other and included a criticism of Fellman for not using the Danish historian and topographer Erik Johan Jessen-Schardebøll's (1705–1783) and the Norwegian missionary Knud Leem's (1697–1774) works as sources.[31] Laestadius also mentioned that he had not had the time to make a transcript of the 1840 manuscript.[32]

A few years later – in 1845 according to Isak Fellman – Laestadius got hold of parts of Jacob Fellman's manuscript again and this time made more extensive comments on it. Isak Fellman wrote about it thus:

> In the year 1845, it seems that Laestadius – probably while his wish that the author's [J. Fellman's] work would be soon published, expressed in a previous letter, was not completed – had again requested to receive a part of the manuscript. There was also, among other documents, included a transcript of the Literature society's [i.e. SKS's] above mentioned protocol excerpt, sent to him in the winter 1845, now in the condition, in which it was submitted.[33]

If I interpret Isak Fellman's slightly obscure passage correctly, a transcript of the LP manuscript – which had been under evaluation by SKS in 1840 and sent back to Jacob Fellman in 1841 – was sent to Laestadius in the winter of 1845, along with some other documents. These 'other documents'[34] included at least an article about graves in Vähänkyrö,[35] which Laestadius points to in his *Fragments*,[36] and a collection of songs and stories, yet another manuscript published in the second volume of *Anteckningar*.[37]

These were apparently the 'many Lappish and Finnish sorcerers' songs'[38] Laestadius mentions in his book.

According to Isak Fellman, this transcript sent to Laestadius was the version of LP that included most of Laestadius's marginal notes that were published in 1906 as footnotes alongside Fellman's text. Jacob Fellman received the transcript back from Laestadius in December 1845 with the aforementioned margin comments.[39] Meanwhile, Laestadius's more extensive comments to Fellman – which he dated 1 May 1845 and included as the last part of his manuscript to his *Fragments* – were sent to France in June to be published.[40] Laestadius wrote in the end of his *Fragments*' fourth part that 'The author has gotten so far in November 1844, and were it not so that vicar Fellman's manuscript was to be expected, I would have finished my work here and sent it off [to publication].'[41] The comments Laestadius made on Fellman's text in his *Fragments* were not the same ones that were included in the margins of J. Fellman's *Anteckningar*.[42] These more extensive comments made by Laestadius were not published before 1997, and as such they probably remained unknown to Fellman himself. I, at least, have not found a mention of them by either Jacob or Isak Fellman.

The Norwegian Detour

It seems that, so far, the fate of Fellman's manuscript and the connection between Laestadius and Fellman is somewhat traceable, but there is a new twist in the plot: a reference to J. Fellman's *Anteckningar* suddenly appeared in the folklorist and linguist J.A. Friis's (1821–1896) well known work *Lappisk mythologi* from 1871.[43] Friis's book included a description of Kola Saami beliefs and practices related to a mythological being called *Kovre* or *Kevre*, a description originally found in Fellman's LP.[44] Friis's book also included some of Laestadius's more extensive comments to Fellman from the fifth part of *Fragments*, i.e. the comments which were not included in LP upon its publications. There is no question of the origin of these passages, as one of the books Friis had used as background material was the following: 'Lars Levi Læstadius. Defect manuscript, including some "Fragments in the Lappish Mythology", written down in 1840 and left to the author for use by Pastor Stockfleth in his time'.[45]

In Stockfleth's autobiography there is no reference to visiting Gárasavvon or meeting Laestadius in 1840,[46] but he mentions staying as Laestadius's guest in 1844 on the first days of December:

> the clergyman had prepared fragments in the Finnish-Lappish mythology; of the first part, doctrine of the gods with therein belonging mythological articles, then printed among the Society's [probably referring to the French expedition] writings, the clergyman gave me the manuscript.[47]

Furthermore, Laestadius mentioned in a letter dated 7 February 1845 that he had given a copy of the first part of his book to Stockfleth to be published in Norwegian.[48] However, as the editor of the first part of Laestadius's *Fragments*, *Gudalära* ('The doctrine of the gods'), Per Posti has noticed,[49] Friis's book contains references to not only the first, but also the second, third, and fourth parts of *Fragments*. They were not completed by Laestadius before November 1844. As mentioned, though, the part that originated from Fellman's LP and found its way to Friis's book was not finished by Laestadius before May 1845.[50]

The passage could not have been copied from Laestadius in 1840 as Friis states, nor could they have originated upon Stockfleth's 1844 visit, but were of a later date. For one reason or the other, the chronological paradox had escaped the attention of both Isak Fellman and Just Qvigstad (1853–1957), who was a student of Friis and the person who informed Isak Fellman of the manuscript held in Oslo.[51]

The National Library in Oslo actually houses a part of the manuscript. It was donated there as a part of Friis's personal belongings. This fragmented transcript contains 26 pages of the last part of Laestadius's comments to Fellman (§30 to §40), written on old letters received by Laestadius.[52] I could not find any further references to this document or Stockfleth's copy of Laestadius's book before it was mentioned by Isak Fellman in 1906. This presents us with two further problems: (1) how did the parts that were not included in the first part of *Fragments* end up in Friis's book, and (2) how did the notes made by Laestadius upon Fellman's manuscript – which he did not have before the winter of 1845 – end up in Friis's book?

It is easy to follow Posti's deduction that Laestadius most probably gave the first part of the transcript of his *Fragments* to

Table 6.1. The history of Fellman's manuscript. Abbreviations: EJ = Jessen-Schardebøll; JF = Jacob Fellman; KL = Leem; LLL = Lars Levi Laestadius; LP = the Lexical Part of Fellman's text; SKS = Finnish Literature Society.

1828	1838–39	Feb 1839	May 1839	August 1839	Dec. 1839
JF mentions to Arwidsson that he is working on a manuscript about Saami mythology.	JF sends the LP manuscript to SKS.	SKS sets a committee to evaluate the LP manuscript.	SKS decides not to publish the manuscript.	Gottlund informs LLL about JF's manuscript.	LLL asks JF for the manuscript.
30 July 1840	**1 August 1840**	**March 1841**	**1842**	**Nov. 1844**	**Dec. 1844**
LLL receives the 1840 manuscript and a suggestion of cooperation via Heller. He refuses cooperation in a letter sent on the 31st.	LLL sends the 1840 manuscript back to JF, along with short comments and a suggestion to use EJ and KL.	Runeberg sends the LP manuscript back to JF on behalf of SKS.	JF mentions to Runeberg that he will continue to work with Saami mythology.	LLL finishes the fourth part of his Fragments.	Stockfleth visits LLL and gets hold of a manuscript of Gudalära for translation to Norwegian.
Winter 1845	**Feb 1845**	**April 1845**	**May 1845**	**Dec. 1845**	**1846**
LLL borrows the LP manuscript from JF (who suggests cooperation again).	LLL mentions in a letter to Vahl that he has given Stockfleth the manuscript for Gudalära.	LLL refuses cooperation in a letter to JF and says his attention is taken by religious matters.	LLL finishes the comments on JF which becomes the fifth part of Fragments. He sends them to France in June.	LLL returns the LP manuscript he borrowed, along with the margin comments printed in 1906.	G. Rein is interested in publishing JF's manuscript but complains about the handwriting.
1860	**1871**	**1906**	**1933**	**1946**	**2001**
Stockfleth mentions about visiting LLL in his autobiography.	J. A. Friis publishes *Lappisk Mythologi*	Isak Fellman publishes his father's works in four volumes.	Gudalära is found in France	The rest of Fragments, along with comments to Fellman, found in the US.	The last part of Gudalära is found in France.

Stockfleth in 1844 and sent the rest for publication in Norwegian at some point after the summer of 1845 (and before Laestadius's death in 1861).[53] This probably happened after Laestadius realised that his work was never going to be published by the French – a realisation which becomes clear from the letters quoted by Posti.[54] This transcript of *Fragments* was the one that ended up in Friis's possession via Stockfleth, the very last pages finally ending up in the National Library of Norway in Oslo.

It is however clear that only a fragment of the manuscript in Friis's possession remains extant there: the top margins of the documents include page numbers ending in 697, which indicates that the transcript given to Stockfleth included nearly 700 pages.[55] As a point of comparison, the manuscript sent by Laestadius to Gaimard in 1845, which does not include the first part of *Fragments*, comprises 355 handwritten pages.[56] Given the fact that the transcript in Oslo is written on old letters, Laestadius could only fit circa half the amount of text on each page compared to blank paper. Therefore, the extant part in Oslo comprises of 26 pages, whereas the same text takes about half the amount in Laestadius's original manuscript.[57] It therefore seems plausible that the c. 700 pages given to Stockfleth included the same text (2nd, 3rd, and 4th parts as well as comments to Fellman) as the 355 pages handed to Gaimard in 1845. The number of pages thus also supports Posti's deduction that the first part and the rest of the transcripts were handed to Stockfleth separately (cf. Table 6.1).

Rethinking the Problem: From Context to Content

What became of Fellman's General Part? Its known history is summarised in a much more compact manner because there is so little to be learnt. It seems that it was not written before 1845, most probably closer to the 1850s (or later). It can be said with confidence that it was never sent out to Laestadius or the SKS: of Rein we cannot be sure, but it does not seem probable. According to Isak Fellman, GP was written in a different handwriting than the lexically organised part, and the numbering in the manuscript was different. In the introduction, he suggests that it was probably intended to be published separately.[58] Isak Fellman notes that

headings and a title were added to GP in his editing process, and some parts were moved from the lexically organised part to the general introduction:

> However, the editor has now combined both of these complementary manuscripts into one composition. Therefore, the general part, which apparently had not been completely finished, has still underwent a partly not unimportant transformation with respect to the disposition of the material, which is additionally divided under different headlines, although they are not present in the author's manuscript.[59]

This is about all I have been able to find out by digging into archives, letters, documents, and biographies. I have not been able to locate any of the three original manuscripts written by Fellman. This supports the suggestion made by the Finnish church historian and clergyman Tuomo Itkonen (1894–1984) that according to his brother, the historian T.I. Itkonen (1891–1968), Isak Fellman had burned the manuscripts and most of his father's letters after finishing his editorial task.[60] This lack of information pushes the inquiry into a new direction: if the history of the manuscripts is not traceable any further, its contents might reveal something interesting about the manuscript's fate.

I have briefly written about Fellman's text in an article about translations, where I compared a passage from his text to Laestadius's, Erik Jessen-Schardebøll's, and Hans Skanke's texts. It led me to conclude that it seems plausible that Fellman somehow had access to Laestadius's manuscripts, because of the similarity of the translation of the chosen passage from Danish to Swedish, and because Laestadius had criticised Fellman for not having used Jessen-Schardebøll's text in their correspondence.[61] This is the source of the mentioned passage, so I became interested in how it ended up in Fellman's book.

In the following subsection, it is my intention to compare Fellman's and Laestadius's texts on a wider scope, extending the comparison to cover the whole of Fellman's subchapter about *noaidevuohta*. I chose this topic because it is the one that I am most familiar with, and additionally, one of the most covered themes in written descriptions of Saami indigenous religion. Fellman's text is used as a basis for the inquiry, and by comparing

it to other texts I will try to find out which parts of it seem original to Fellman and which have in turn been paraphrased from others. The approach will be similar to how the historian of religions Håkan Rydving has made source-critical remarks about Norwegian and Swedish manuscripts from the eighteenth century.[62] After pointing to which parts are based on Fellman's own remarks, I will try to contextualise his text by looking at how it relates to contemporary theories and paradigmatic developments.

Simplified Content Analysis

To help me with this survey, I have first decided to employ a simplified quantitative form of content analysis as a method[63] to help me evaluate which parts of Fellman's text are common with Laestadius's, and which parts correspond with other texts. I will use the syntactical method of content analysis[64] by counting the amount of words that originate from previous texts. To illustrate this, I have copied Fellman's text from a digitised version of his book[65] to a text file and colour coded the parts that I have found out to originate from other texts (Fig. 6.1–6.4). Instead of a full synopsis, I will introduce samples from different texts to the reader for evaluation as a supplement (Tables 6.2–6.9).

The content analysis reveals that more than half of Fellman's text contains the same information as Laestadius's: an approximate analysis of the word count shows that out of the 4 147 words in Fellman's text about *noaidevuohta*, as many as c. 2 500 contained the same information as some parts of Laestadius's *Fragments* (Fig. 6.1). The parts that are similar to Fellman's text are mostly from the second and third parts of *Fragments*, but also include passages from the first.[66]

A closer look at these parts of Laestadius's text reveals that none of the passages that are common to Fellman and Laestadius were original to Laestadius, except for two: a mention of an insect 'Furia Infernalis' in very similar terms,[67] and a translation of a Saami word in Leem's text into Swedish.[68] A further analysis of Laestadius's sources of information sheds light on the origins of these passages: they include for example translations of the Danish texts by Jessen-Schardebøll and Knud Leem, the same texts which Laestadius criticised Fellman for not using. However, the passages

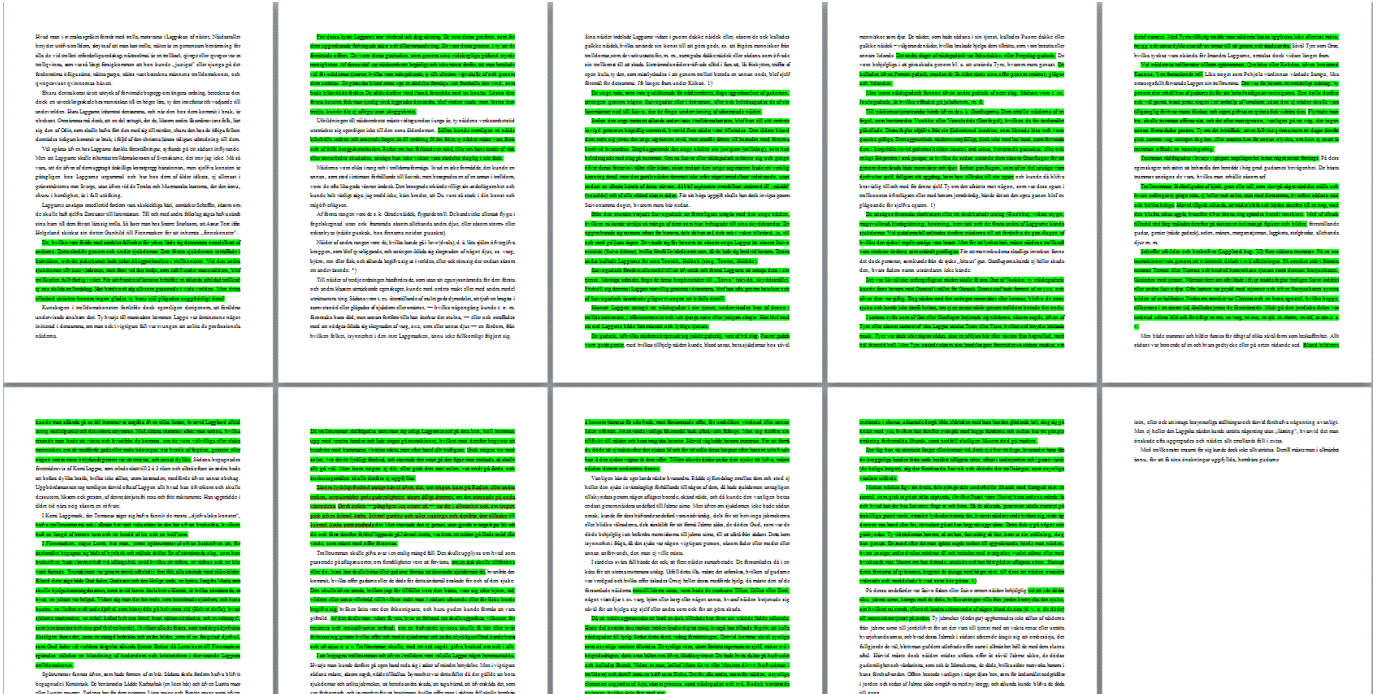

Figure 6.1. The parts that are similar in Fellman's and Laestadius's texts highlighted in green.

originating from Jessen-Schardebøll and Leem constitute an even larger part of Fellman's text, 2 808 words altogether (Fig. 6.2).

In fact, these were not the only sources of information that were used by Fellman. A closer look reveals that the text about *noaidevuohta* in addition includes parts from Johannes Schefferus's,[69] Lindahl & Öhrling's,[70] and Johannes Tornaeus's[71] texts (Fig. 6.3), and that only about 1 100 words were original to Fellman or from a source not listed here. This comparison also reveals that the sources used in the text about *noaidevuohta* extend beyond the similarities between Fellman and Laestadius (Fig. 6.4): there are parts of these texts that Laestadius did not use in his *Fragments*, but Fellman did. This would speak for the conclusion that these texts were independent. However, there are certain qualities in the texts pointing to another direction. These common characteristics are revealed by a more thorough comparison of the wordings and translations in these texts.

A comparison of the Texts and a Catalogue of Books in the Fellman Collection

A comparison of Fellman's and Laestadius's translations of Jessen-Schardebøll's and Leem's texts (Tables 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4) from Danish into Swedish reveal a striking similarity. For example, certain words used neither by Jessen-Schardebøll nor Leem appear in both Fellman's and Laestadius's translations. Some of the abbreviations of longer texts by Fellman and Laestadius ended up being almost too similar to be made by different persons. A good example of this is a translation of Leem's text about the use of a Saami drum (SaaN. *goavddis*) in Table 6.4. The South Saami deity *Raerie* (spelled *Radien* by both Fellman and Laestadius) was not mentioned in the original, but both Fellman and Laestadius included this deity in their translations.[72]

However, as mentioned, Fellman's text includes parts that are not found in Laestadius's *Fragments*. One of these is a passage about learning 'sorcery', taken from Schefferus almost directly, where Schefferus refers to Olaus Magnus and Peder Claussøn Friis (Table 6.5). Furthermore, some parts from Jessen-Schardebøll used by Fellman were significantly abbreviated in Laestadius's text, which would indicate that these translations were made by different persons (Table 6.6).

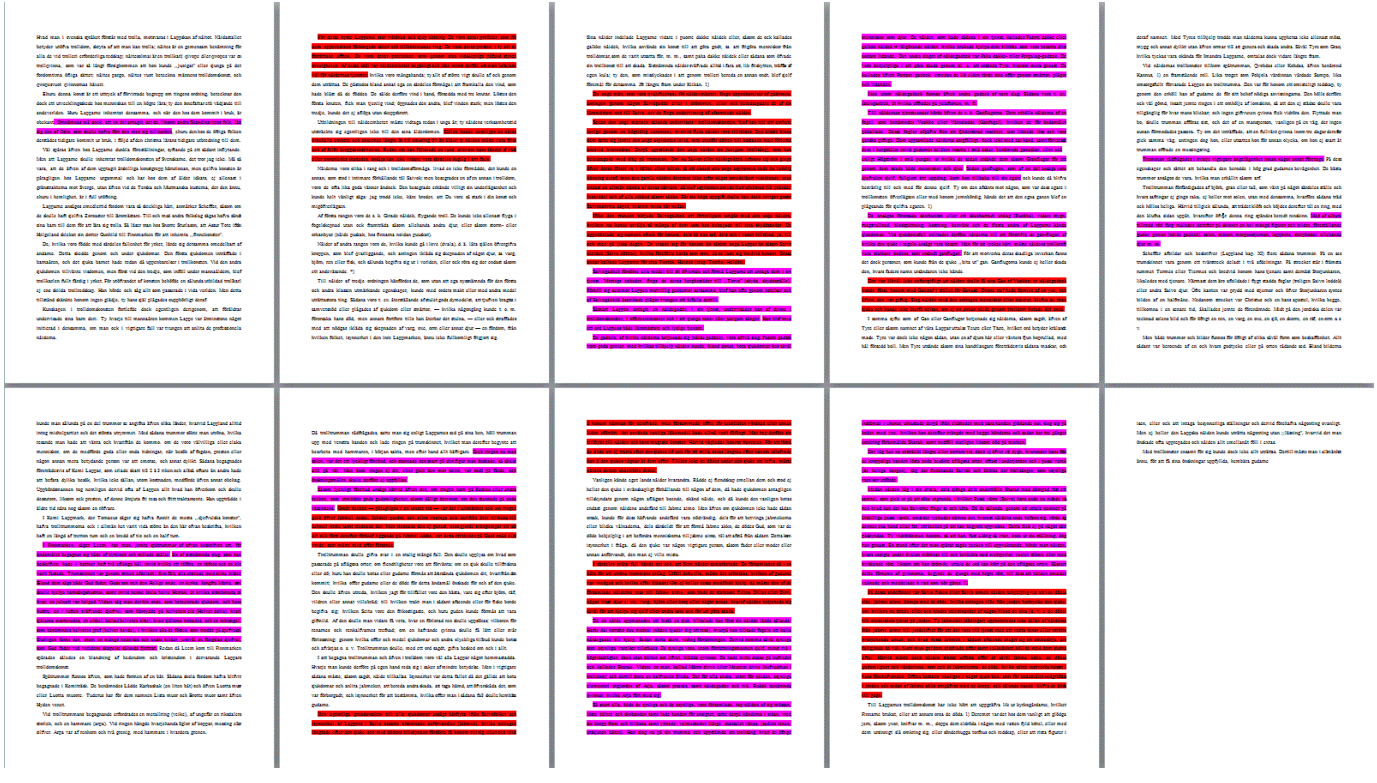

Figure 6.2. The parts that are similar in Fellman's and Leem's texts (purple), and in Fellman's and Jessen-Schardebøll's texts (red).

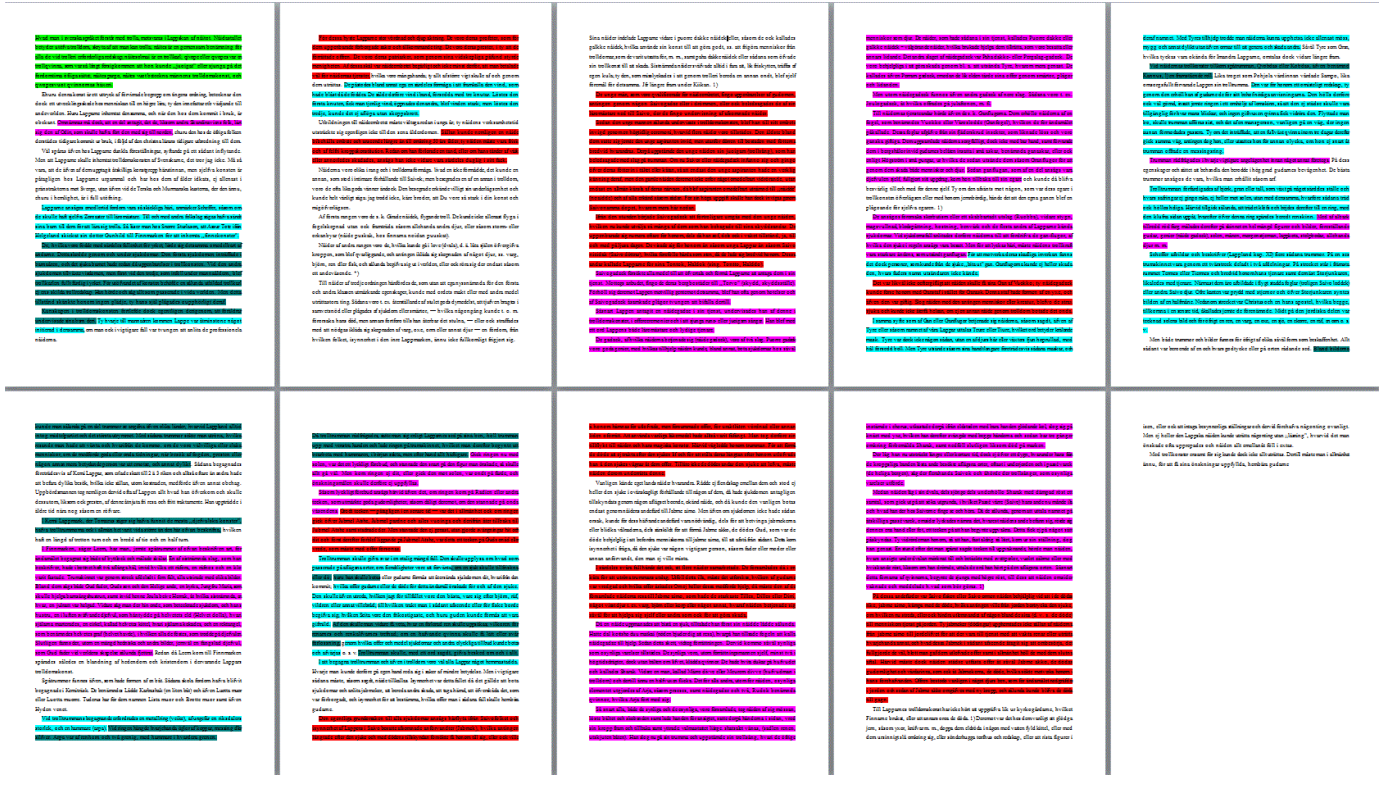

Figure 6.3. The parts that are similar between Fellman's text and those of Lindahl & Öhrling (light green), Tornaeus (blue), Schefferus (turquoise), Leem (purple), and Jessen-Schardeböll (red).

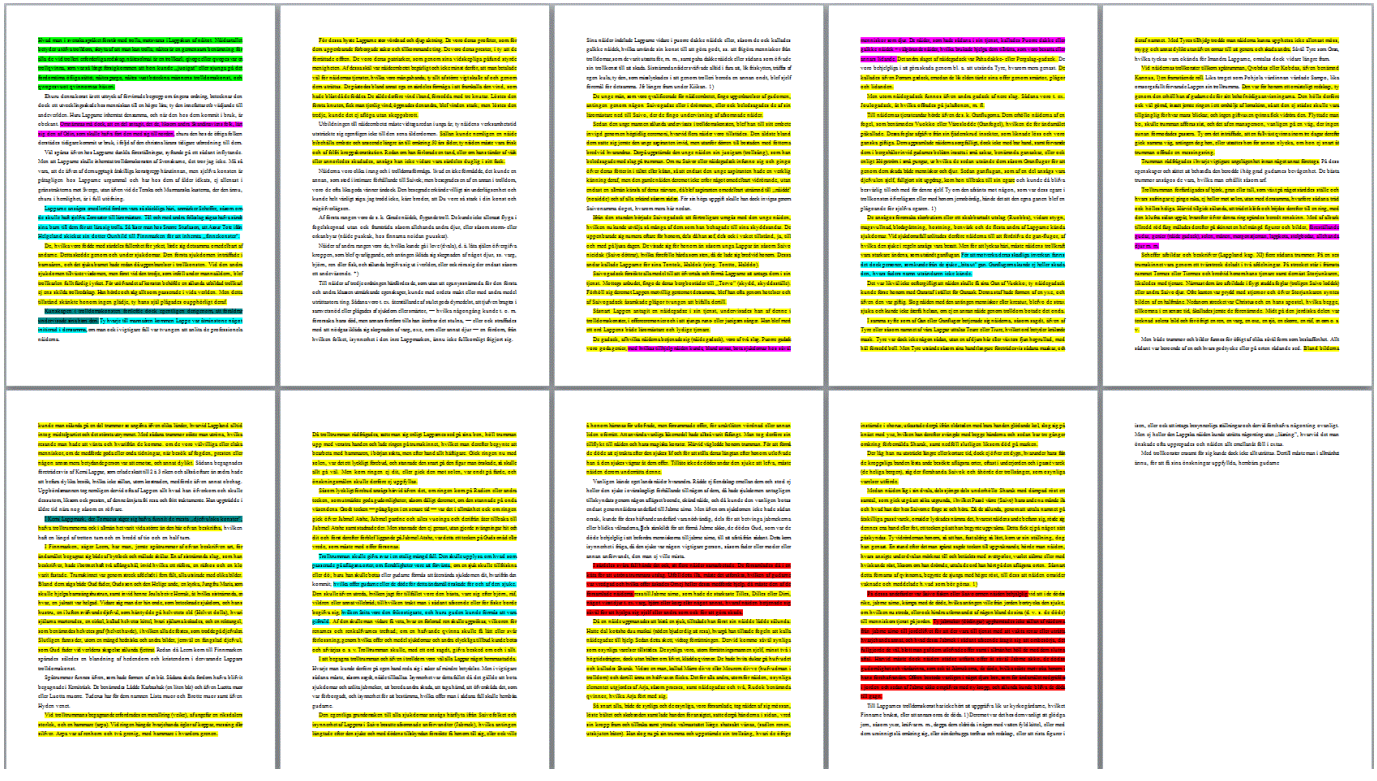

Figure 6.4. The parts that are similar between Fellman's and Laestadius's texts (yellow), as well as Fellman's text and those of Lindahl & Öhrling (light green), Tornaeus (blue), Schefferus (turquoise), Leem (purple), and Jessen-Schardebøll (red).

A passage about the different figures painted on the *goavddis* indicates an even more complicated history (Table 6.7): a description of the Lule Saami drum originally written down by Samuel Rheen was first quoted by Schefferus and then paraphrased by Leem who added some of his own remarks to Schefferus's text. Laestadius then referred to Schefferus's text, while Fellman added a part inspired by Leem's text to his description of the drum.[73] While this passage refers to something that can be considered 'common knowledge' about the Saami drum, and could have been written independently, it serves as a good reminder of the complexities of the origin of information about Saami indigenous religion, and *noaidevuohta* in particular. It also verifies on its part that we cannot simply deem the GP manuscript a copy of Laestadius's *Fragments*, even though the similarities of certain passages are significant.

Some more light on the matter could be shed by an investigation of the books Fellman had in his possession. Sophie Capdeville has catalogued the Fellman family's Lapponica collection, which was inherited by the Finno-Ugric society from Isak Fellman and his son Arno in the first part of the twentieth century. The collection is stored in the Finnish National library.[74] From Capdeville's catalogue one can see that the collection includes at least the following works: Leem's *Beskrivelse* from 1767 (includes Jessen's description) and a German translation from 1771 (does not include Jessen's description); Lindahl & Öhrling's *Lexicon Lapponicum* from 1780; Schefferus's *Lapponia* from 1673 as well as a German translation from 1675; Tornaeus's *Beskrifning* from 1772 (with handwritten comments).[75]

The question then becomes: which of these books did Jacob have, and which were obtained by his son? It seems that the only one of these books that we can certainly say Jacob Fellman possessed was the German translation of Knud Leem's *Beskrivelse*: it has Jacob Fellman's signature on it. The other books only contain Isak's signature, and this – together with the documents of their history of ownership (documented by Capdeville) – speaks for the interpretation that the rest of these books were added to the family collection by Isak Fellman.[76] It is, however, most probable that Fellman had access to *Lapponia* at one point or another because

he explicitly refers to it.[77] Additionally, it was a standard work already since its publication in 1673.

With a superficial comparison, I could not identify the handwriting on the notes found next to Tornaeus's book in the Lapponica collection to belong to either Isak or Jacob Fellman, so a graphological explanation about the book's history of ownership could not be given without more thorough studies, either.

One can, however, find evidence of which books Jacob had access to at the time of writing the GP manuscript when comparing Fellman's, Laestadius's, and Tornaeus's texts (Table 6.8), if one keeps in mind that the parts originating from Tornaeus were paraphrased by Schefferus as well. The clumsy translation of one passage from Latin into Swedish by Fellman (italicised in Table 6.8) reveals that he only had access to either Schefferus's or Laestadius's text, and not Tornaeus's. Laestadius, however, probably had access to Tornaeus's Swedish text published in 1772 because of the remarkable similarity in the wordings. A further comparison of Fellman's and Laestadius's texts with the parts which originate from the Swedish text written by Tornaeus – and that were translated into Latin by Schefferus – indicates that Fellman's translation is either a direct translation back from *Lapponia*'s Latin into Swedish or a heavily edited version of Laestadius's text (Table 6.9).

Contextualising Jacob Fellman's Input

What about the circa 1100 words that were *not* based on previous information? It seems that most of it is a general discussion about *noidevuohta* and can partly be linked to wider developments of the time. An interesting passage is found right at the beginning, after an introduction of the words related to *noaidevuohta* (which originates from Lindahl & Öhrling) on page 26:

> Although this craft is an expression of confused concepts of the order of things, it denotes a developmental stage for humans in pursuit of higher learning; for it includes an appeal to the spirit world. How the Lapps have obtained this, and when it has come to their use, is unknown. It must though be mentioned, that some of it has been appropriated, because they, like other peoples in Scandinavia, learnt it from Odin, who would have brought it with him to the Nordic countries, although it had previously come to be used

> by other peoples, as a result of the earlier spread of Christianity among them. Even among the Lapps such obscured notions can be traced that aim towards such an influence. But that the Lapps would have obtained the craft of sorcery from the Swedes, I do not believe. It can be that they have included several artifices from there, but the craft itself is evidently ancient among the Lapps and has been carried among them through the ages, not only in the borderlands towards Sweden, but also on the coasts of Ter and Murmansk [located on the Kola peninsula], where they, although in secrecy, are in full exercise.[78]

One could analyse the premises of this paragraph in many ways, but the most important feature is the clear comparative attitude, and the way in which ideas related to the theories of diffusion and cultural evolution are present. Even though certain early evolutionistic tendencies can be found in Fellman's and his contemporaries' thinking,[79] the theory of cultural evolution was not applied to the studies of Saami culture before closer to Fellman's death in 1875, and more extensively later. Referring to the 'craft of sorcery' still practiced among the Eastern Saami groups as an argument for it being 'ancient among the Lapps' and the influence of Christianity upon their understanding of the 'spirit world' are very close to the basic premises of the theories that were formalised by Kaarle Krohn and the 'Finnish school' at the turn of the century.[80] Similarly, the idea of Scandinavian loans in Saami religion – which Fellman rejects – was not introduced on a wider scale before Fellman's death.[81]

Another interesting notion related to the comparison between Saami and Norse indigenous religions is the understanding of the Norse deity Odin as a historical sorcerer. Even though the idea of the historical sorcerer Odin teaching 'witchcraft' to the Saami was nothing new, as it was already expressed in the eighteenth century,[82] it also resonates with the historical interpretation of mythology by for example E. Lönnrot in the mid-nineteenth century.[83] Lönnrot's and *Kalevala*'s influence might have also been behind the following comparison by Fellman: 'Just as faithfully as the Pohjola hostess protected Sampo, so did the Lapp keep his magic drum.'[84] Comparisons between the mythological device Sampo in Finnish folk tales and the Saami *goavddis* were not

commonplace before J.A. Friis made this connection very close to Jacob Fellman's death in the late 1860s.[85]

Could it be that these parts of the text, which seem more analytical and creative than the passages based on previous texts, simultaneously suggesting an inception no earlier than the 1870s, could have been authored by Isak Fellman? This would explain the diffusionistic and evolutionistic conclusions and references to the claimed Swedish origin of *noaidevuohta* which were the most prevalent theories in 1906. As mentioned, he writes that the GP manuscript had 'apparently […] not been completely finished' when he got hold of it. Could Isak have then added these more theoretical parts to his father's text to make it more flowing, 'modern', and credible? At least he admits to adding the headlines and to other considerable editorial tasks.

In general, the rest of the contents not paraphrased from other texts are less interesting for the current research question. Some parts were moved from the LP manuscript during the editing process, as Isak states in the introduction. One of these is a part about different qualities and skills of different *noaidi*s, originally in the LP manuscript under the word '*Nåide*', referred to and commented by Laestadius in the fifth part of his Fragments.[86] This is one of the few parts about *noaidevuohta* that seem to be based on Fellman's own experiences as a vicar in Sápmi.

Conclusions and Further Questions

It is difficult to make any definite conclusions based on the information I have presented. Rather, one is left with even more questions than at the beginning. Based on the evidence presented in this chapter it cannot be said for certain when the General Part of the second volume of Jacob Fellman's *Anteckningar* was written, but there are indications that it was done at a relatively late point. Furthermore, it cannot be said for certain that Jacob Fellman had a transcript of Laestadius's *Fragments* in his use, but there are indications that he might have had at least parts of it at his disposal.

Perhaps Laestadius finally agreed to work together with Jacob Fellman when he lost interest in working with mythological materials, as he famously wrote in 1845?[87] In this case, Laestadius

could have sent a transcript of his work not only to Stockfleth but also to Jacob Fellman, and Fellman could have used it as a reference when writing his General Part. Perhaps this was in the form of translations or notes Laestadius had made based on Jessen-Schardebøll's and Leem's texts, sent over to help Fellman to improve his text. The latter explanation seems appealing, since the translations are so similar, but partly divergent in their contents (see Tables 6.6–6.8). In addition, the parts that originate from Schefferus and/or Tornaeus are different in both authors' texts, which would indicate that Laestadius worked with Tornaeus's Swedish text and Fellman with Schefferus's Latin translation. The investigation of the Fellman book collection would support this conclusion, as it indicates that Jacob Fellman did not have access to any of these texts other than Leem's German translation, which does not include the appendix written by Jessen-Schardebøll.

Many interesting and difficult questions remain, though. Why did Laestadius reassure Fellman that their works would not be on a collision course twice, both in 1840 and in 1845?[88] What happened to the correspondence between Fellman and Laestadius? What happened to the three manuscripts written by Fellman? Did Isak Fellman burn them, and if so, why? Why is there a reference to the Kalevala, a comparison to Norse culture, and to evolution and diffusion theories, which were mostly products of a later time (around 1900)? Could it be that Isak not only edited, but also *wrote* parts of the introduction? These are questions that could be interesting to look at in the future. Some of them could be answered with the help of thorough archival work and by compiling a longer synopsis of Jacob Fellman's 'general introduction'. I hope to have paved the way for further studies on Fellman's work with this chapter.

So far, my opinion based on a careful study of Fellman's work is that Isak Fellman compiled the general part from a variety of sources. Some of these parts were moved to the GP from the LP manuscript, with some of them plausibly based on notes or translations of Leem and Jessen-Schardebøll made by Laestadius and some of them probably based on notes or translations made on Schefferus's *Lapponia* by Jacob Fellman, while some were plausibly authored by Isak Fellman in order to make the text more coherent and 'modern'.

How did the act of compilation then take place? Isak Fellman wrote that his father, 'who lived in a distant corner of the country, without the necessary access to literary aids, never even wanted to delve into any deeper critical studies'[89] of Saami mythology. It therefore seems that he did not recognise the different mythological notes in his father's collection as being similar to previously published (or, indeed, unpublished) texts. Isak then plausibly compiled a series of notes, accompanied by his own passages, to make a coherent whole without even realising that he was making a compilation. Therefore, the question of the identity of the *compiler* would be solved by pointing to the editor Isak, whereas the *collection* of texts would have been done by his father Jacob, and plausibly Laestadius. However, this remains a hypothesis before further evidence on the topic is hopefully presented in the future.

Consequences of Identifying the Text as a Compilation

Whatever the history of the GP manuscript might be, there is one definite conclusion with direct consequences for the study of Saami indigenous religion to be made here. Fellman's General Part belongs – such as many others in this genre – to the bulk of texts which have been proven to be compilations of previous texts, containing very little information originating in the North and Inari Saami areas where Fellman was a vicar. This tells of a general standard relating to copyright and originality in the mid-19th century that was different from our current standards. Whereas Laestadius and Schefferus often stated their sources of information, this was more of an exception to the rule than common practice before the late 19th century.[90]

As I mentioned in the introduction, modern Saami studies emphasise the importance of variation within Saami cultures: instead of one monoculture, there are and have been numerous different Saami groups. There is great variation, both linguistically and ecologically (livelihood, natural surroundings), in the Sápmi area stretching from central Scandinavia to the Kola Peninsula. As such, the source material originating in the early eighteenth century in the South Saami area in northern Trøndelag (in this case the text by Jessen-Schardebøll) can hardly tell much about the indigenous traditions in Ohcejohka in the nineteenth century. To give an example of the said variation, South Saami and North

Saami speakers in the seventeenth century would have had severe communication problems in their indigenous languages, and South Saami reindeer herders or sea fishermen in the seventeenth century had a different relation to their surroundings than those in nineteenth-century Ohcejohka mixed economy (fishing, cattle breeding, reindeer herding) over a 1 000-kilometre beeline to the northeast. Even the deities and their areas of influence were different in the South Saami and North Saami areas.

In addition to the geographical distances, the texts that were compiled to form Fellman's GP were written during several centuries. An example is the part about the wind knot,[91] which was to my knowledge first mentioned by Bartholomeus Anglicus in the thirteenth century[92] and ended up in Fellman's book via at least Schefferus, who paraphrased P.C. Friis (from the late sixteenth century), who in turn probably paraphrased Olaus Magnus (from the middle of the sixteenth century).[93] In addition to that, Fellman's text includes passages originating from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, but without knowledge of the origins of these different sources the reader might take Fellman to describe Ohcejohka and Aanaar in the nineteenth century. The authority based on personal experience of living in Sápmi – which the title of the book (actually added by Isak Fellman) claims – is a false one.

In Saami studies, it is crucial to keep historical and geographical factors in mind. Otherwise one risks seeing Saami culture as one unchanged monolith from prehistoric times to ours. This point of view easily leads to a problematic and uninformed 'othering' attitude towards the Saami, something scholars of Saami culture have been trying to battle since at least the 1970s, if not earlier.[94] Therefore, great caution should be taken when using not only the part about *noaidevuohta*, but also the rest of Fellman's text about Saami indigenous religion as source materials.

Notes

1. Saami indigenous religion is used here as a technical term to refer to a part of traditional Saami culture considered by scholars to belong to the sphere of 'religion', but which is in reality inseparable from the rest of Saami life. I use the relational category to denote a

type of religion contingent on time and space, in contrast to universal religions such as Christianity. For a more detailed discussion on uses of the term 'indigenous religion', see for example Tafjord 2017. For a discussion on the term 'Saami indigenous religion', see Kaikkonen 2020a.

2. Kaikkonen 2019: 545–548.

3. Sápmi (North Saami): the areas traditionally inhabited by the Saami. In this chapter, I will use the place names in the local Saami languages when available.

4. Kaikkonen 2019: 545–548.

5. Seurujärvi-Kari 2005: 356; Rydving 2010: 65 f.; see also Porsanger 2007.

6. On using the indigenous North Saami term *noaidevuohta* as an analytical category, see Kaikkonen 2019: 558–563; Kaikkonen 2020b: 27–30.

7. Already when editing his father's work, Isak Fellman (1906: 1) noted the intertwined history of these manuscripts, even though Laestadius's text was unknown to him as it was not found until several years later. Brita Pollan ((1993) 1998: 37) wrote in 1993 that 'Fellman's books […] were partly based on his own experiences, partly on […] Laestadius's records' ('Fellmans bøker […] var dels bygget på hans egne opplevelser, dels på […] Læstadius' opptegnelser'), but she does not give any references or background information to back her claim or discuss it any further. In a telephone discussion 29 Jan. 2019 Pollan did not remember how she came to this conclusion but suspected that she must have noticed a similarity when reading Fellman's and Laestadius's texts. Based on the fact that J.A. Friis had a copy of Laestadius's manuscript, she had concluded that Laestadius's texts were in circulation at the time.

8. Kaikkonen 2018: 83.

9. Pentikäinen 2005: 125–128; Pentikäinen & Pulkkinen 2011: 7–15. The only complete version of Laestadius's *Fragments* so far was published as a Finnish translation in 2011.

10. 'Jag väntar otåligt att erhålla, efter löfte, del af dina anteckningar i Lappska mythologien.' Arwidsson to Fellman 14 Febr. 1828. KA, Fellman family collection, folder 3. All translations into English in the chapter are mine.

11. Minutes from the meeting of the board of SKS, 6 Febr. 1839 §5. B 1611, SKS KIA.

12. J. Fellman [1830s–1860s?] 1906b: 448.

13. I. Fellman 1906: 8 f.

14. Minutes from the meeting of the board of SKS, 6 Febr. 1839 §5. B 1611, SKS KIA.

15. 'Lappska Mythologiska Lexicon väl innehåller icke obetydliga bidrag till kännedom om Lapparnes gudalära' Minutes from the meeting of the board of SKS, 1 May 1839 §4. B 1611, SKS KIA. Reprinted in I. Fellman 1906: 2.

16. A similar critical note was also made by Laestadius ([1840–45] 1997: 215). This also applies to one of Fellman's greatest inspirations, Christfrid Ganander's *Mythologia Fennica*, which was the first book to systematically compare Finnish and Saami traditions (see, for example, Kaikkonen 2020b: 259–268).

17. Minutes from the meeting of the board of SKS, 1 May 1839 §4. B 1611, SKS KIA.

18. I. Fellman 1906: 2.

19. Runeberg to Fellman 27 March 1841. KA, Fellman family collection, folder 3. Reprinted in J. Fellman [1830s–1860s?] 1906b: 488 f.

20. KA, Fellman family collection, folder 15. In the letter draft dated 25 Sept. 1842 Fellman refers to a letter he received 27 March 1841 from the person he is writing to; this was the date of Runeberg's rejection letter.

21. Rein to Fellman 16 Oct. 1848. KA, Fellman family collection, folder 3. Reprinted in J. Fellman [1830s–1860s?] 1906b: 476 f., where incorrectly dated 16 Oct. 1846.

22. I. Fellman 1906: 8.

23. Pentikäinen & Pulkkinen 2011: 8–10.

24. Itkonen 1977; Pulkkinen 2003: 60.

25. Gottlund to Laestadius August 1839. KA, Fellman family collection, folder 15.

26. I. Fellman 1906: 2 f.

27. I. Fellman (1906: 4) wrote in 1906 that he held possession of parts of the '1840 manuscript' along with some notes made to it by Laestadius. Per Posti (2003: 23) has another view of the situation: he claims that Fellman wanted the manuscript back quickly in order to send it to SKS. This does not seem to be a correct interpretation of the chronology: cf. endnote 28.

28. Heller to Fellman 19 Oct. 1840. KA, Fellman family collection, folder 3. Reprinted in J. Fellman [1830s–1870s?] 1906b: 454–456. It seems that Fellman had sent the manuscript to Laestadius with Heller, who was then supposed to send it back on his return trip. This would explain the hurry Laestadius had in making his comments to the 1840 manuscript.

29. I. Fellman 1906: 4.

30. Heller's letter to Fellman, however, shows that he did not make it to Lappajärvi a second time but left the manuscript and Laestadius's letter to the postal office in Vaasa (Heller to Fellman 19 Oct. 1840, KA, Fellman family collection, folder 3. Reprinted in J. Fellman [1830s–1870s?] 1906b: 454–456).

31. Jessen-Schardebøll's work was published as an appendix to Leem's book in 1767.

32. I. Fellman 1906: 5 f.

33. 'År 1845 synes Laestadius – troligen emedan hans i ett tidigare bref uttalade förhoppning, att förf: s arbete snart blefve publiceradt, ej gått i fullbordan – åter hafva anhållit att få del af manuskriptet. Detta blef ock, jemte en del andra handlingar, bland dem en afskrift af Litteratursällskapets förenämnda prot.utdrag, under vintern 1845 till honom öfversändt, nu i det skick, hvari det till Litteratursällskapet öfverlemnats' (I. Fellman 1906: 6).

34. These 'other documents' have been pointed to by at least Pentikäinen & Pulkkinen (2011: 376) and Posti (2003: 38).

35. J. Fellman [1830s–1860s?] 1906b: 318–324.

36. Laestadius [1840–45] 1997: 220.

37. This part called 'Lappska Sånger och Sagor' (Lappish songs and sagas) was published in the same volume as GP and LP, pp. 191–340 of J. Fellman [1830s–1870s?] 1906a.

38. 'många Lappska og Finska Trollsånger' (Laestadius [1840–45] 1997: 224). Laestadius ([1840–45] 1997: 225–228) only transcribed and commented one of these songs, a song about how the Saami land was found (also in J. Fellman [1830s–1870s?] 1906a: 239–243) but mentions at the end of his work that there were more of these stories in the manuscript sent to him (Laestadius [1840–45] 1997: 229). The songs sent to Laestadius probably included the 'national songs' mentioned in Fellman's letter draft to Stockfleth (J. Fellman [1830s–1860s?] 1906b: 448). This collection of songs was also mentioned by, for example, Elias Lönnrot in a letter to Abraham Kellgren (Lönnrot to Kellgren 26 Sept. 1845). Ritva Kylli (2005: 447) has written that Fellman tried to get these songs published via Lönnrot, but apparently in vain.

39. I. Fellman 1906: 6.

40. Laestadius [1840–45] 1997: 200; Posti 2003: 32.

41. 'Så långt har Författaren hunnit i November 1844, och derest icke Kyrkoherden Fellmans manuscript varit att förvänta, skulle Jag hafva afslutat arbetet här och afskickat det samma' (Laestadius [1840–45] 1997: 199).

42. This was noted already by Grundström (1959) in the first publication of *Fragments*, where he, however, decided not to publish Laestadius's 'additions' to Fellman because of the comments published as footnotes in J. Fellman [1830s–1870s?] 1906a.

43. Friis 1871: 143–145.

44. J. Fellman [1830s–1870s?] 1906a: 113.

45. 'Lars Levi Læstadius. Defekt Manuskript, indeholdende nogle "Fragmenter i lapska Mythologien", nedskrevet 1840 og i sin Tid af Pastor Stockfleth overladt Forfatteren til Afbenyttelse' (Friis 1871: xi). On the communication of mythographers and linguists (among these Laestadius, Fellman and Stockfleth) between the borders of Sweden-Norway and Russian Finland, see Kaikkonen 2018.

46. At least there is no mention of a visit after the summer, when Laestadius received the 1840 manuscript from Fellman.

47. 'For den franske videnskabelige Expedition havde Præsten udarbeidet Fragmenter i den finske-lappiske Mythologi; af første Del, Gudelæren med dertil hørende mythologiske Gjenstande, da trykt blandt Selskabets Skrifter, overlod Præsten mig Manuscriptet' (Stockfleth 1860: 163).

48. Laestadius to Vahl, 7 Dec. 1845, also referred to in Posti 2003: 36.

49. Posti 2003: 37.

50. A closer look at the defect 26 pages in Oslo reveals that the notes were not made before 1843. Because the pages are written on old letters, one can look for dates on these letters. Already the first page includes a date: 12 Sept. 1843. Therefore, the notes must have been made on the LP manuscript delivered to Laestadius in the winter of 1845 and not on the 1840 manuscript.

51. I. Fellman 1906: 10 f.

52. Håndskriftsamlingen, NB: Optegnelser af Lars Levi Læstadius om Lappernes Mythologi. Fragmentert.

53. Posti 2003: 37.

54. Posti 2003: 33–36.

55. In a correspondence with the National library in Oslo (25 Jan. 2019), the librarian Nina Korbu wrote that she was quite sure that the numberings were made before the document arrived in the library, but that there were no records of it.

56. Laestadius 1844: *Fragmenter* [2nd part]

57. Laestadius 1845: *Fragmenter* [Comments to Fellman]

58. I. Fellman 1906: 8 f.

59. 'Utgifvaren har nu emedlertid till en uppsats sammanfört dessa begge, hvarandra kompletterande manuskript. Dervid har dock den allmänna delen, som synbarligen ej blifvit slutligen utarbetad, undergått en delvis icke obetydlig omgestaltning i afseende å dispositionen af materialet, som derjemte fördelats under skilda rubriker, ehuru sådana ej förekomma i författarens manuskript' (I. Fellman 1906: 8 f.).

60. Itkonen 1977: 277.

61. Kaikkonen 2019: 545–548.

62. Rydving 1995.

63. Nelson & Woods 2011: 109–121.

64. Nelson & Woods 2011: 113.

65. http://kirjasto.rovaniemi.fi/digi/lappmarken2.htm (accessed 31 Jan. 2019).

66. Interestingly, these were all from the end of the first part, which was not found before 2001.

67. Laestadius [1840] 2003: 147 f.; I. Fellman 1906: 32, footnote.

68. Leem did not translate the phrase 'Vuolet Zaabme', but both Laestadius ([1840–45] 1997: 147) and J. Fellman ([1830s–1870s?] 1906a: 39) relate it to whispering.

69. Schefferus 1673.

70. Lindahl & Öhrling 1780.

71. Tornaeus [1672] 1772.

72. J. Fellman [1830s–1870s?] 1906a: 36; Laestadius [1840–45] 1997: 101; Leem 1767: 466.

73. Rheen [1671] 1983: 31; Schefferus 1673: 124; Leem 1767: 465; J. Fellman [1830s–1870s?] 1906a: 34; Laestadius [1840–45] 1997: 96.

74. Capdeville 2001: i–iv.

75. Capdeville 2001: 57–59, 95, 110.

76. Kansalliskirjasto, H Lapponica; Capdeville 2001: 57–59, 95, 110.

77. J. Fellman [1830s–1870s?] 1906a: 34.

78. 'Ehuru denna konst är ett uttryck af förvirrade begrepp om tingens ordning, betecknar den dock ett utvecklingsskede hos menniskan till en högre lära; ty den innefattar ett vädjande till andeverlden. Huru Lapparne inhemtat densamma, och när den hos dem kommit i bruk, är obekant. Omnämnas må dock, att en del antagit, det de, liksom andra Skandinaviens folk, lärt sig den af Odin, som skulle hafva fört den med sig till norden ehuru den hos de öfriga folken derstädes tidigare kommit ur bruk, i följd af den christna lärans tidigare utbredning till dem. Väl spåras äfven hos Lapparne dunkla föreställningar, syftande på ett sådant inflytande. Men att Lapparne skulle inhemtat trolldomskonsten af Svenskarne, det tror jag icke. Må så vara, att de äfven af dem upptagit åtskilliga konstgrepp härutinnan, men sjelfva konsten är påtagligen hos Lapparne urgammal och har hos dem af ålder idkats, ej allenast i gränstrakterna mot Sverge, utan äfven vid de Terska och Murmanska kusterna, der den ännu, ehuru i hemlighet, är i full utöfning' (J. Fellman [1830s–1870s?] 1906a: 26).

79. Kylli 2005: 442–444.

80. Kylli 2005: 442–444; Anttonen 1987: 39, 42–46; Pentikäinen (1989) 1999: 8–11.

81. Rydving 2010: 15 f.

82. Willumsen & Skjelmo 2017: 67–72; Leem 1767: 450.

83. Pentikäinen (1989) 1999: 8–11.

84. 'Lika troget som Pohjola värdinnan vårdade Sampo, lika omsorgsfullt förvarade Lappen sin trolltrumma' (J. Fellman [1830s–1870s?] 1906a: 33).

85. Friis 1871: 47–52; Europaeus 1869: 2 f.

86. Laestadius [1840–45] 1997: 210.

87. I. Fellman 1906: 7.

88. I. Fellman 1906: 6.

89. I. Fellman 1906: 10.

90. On paraphrasing, compiling, and copying texts about Saami indigenous religion before 1871, see Kaikkonen 2020b.

91. J. Fellman [1830s–1870s?] 1906a: 27.

92. Page 1963: 225.

93. [Friis] [1599] 1632; Olaus Magnus 1555.

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Supplement (tables 6.2–6.9)

Table 6.2. Translations of Jessen-Schardebøll's text by Fellman and Laestadius (my italics).

Fellman 1906a: 29.	Laestadius 1997: 157.	Jessen 1767: 54.
De unge män, som voro qvalificerade för nåideembetet, *fingo uppenbarelser af gudomen*, antingen genom någon *Saivogadze* eller i drömmen,	De unga män, som voro Candidater till sådane (Nåide) Embeten *fingo formliga Uppenbarelser af Gudarna*, än under form af *Saivo-Gadse*, än i sömnen o.s.v.	De unge Karle, der i deres første Manddoms Aar lode kiende noget Spor hos sig af Tilbønelighed og Beqvemhed til dette saa meget vigtigt Embede, bleve dertil af Tonto, d.e. den onde Aand, umiddelbar kaldede, dog paa forskiellige Maader: thi for nogle aabenbarede han sig synligen i en Saiwo-Gadzes Person; for andre har han ladet sig til syne, naar de efter en sterk Ruus ere faldne i en dyb Søvn; men atter for andre, naar han haver truffet dem allene paa Marken: ved hvilke Leiligheder han haver holdt Underhandlinger med dem og antaget dem i sin Tieneste.
eller ock beledsagades de af sin läromästare *ned till Saivo, der de fingo undervisning af afsomnade nåider*.	Saiwo-Gadse plägade sjelf undervisa sådane Candidater, och stundom nedföra dem *till Saiwo, för att der få undervisning af de afsomnade Nåider*.	Saa snart det var kommet saavidt, har Saiwo-Gadze selv taget dem i Skole og underviist dem ved idelige Samtaler, Underretning, Raadførelse og Øvelse i hans Videnskaber; snart allene paa Marken; snart og ved Omgang med og Anførsel af Noaaiderne i Saiwo, til hvilke han haver nedført ham.

Table 6.3. Translations of Jessen-Schardebøll's text by Fellman and Laestadius (my italics).

Fellman 1906a: 29.	Laestadius 2003: 147.	Jessen 1767: 56.
Det var likväl icke oeftergifligt att nåiden skulle få sina Gan af Vuokko; ty nåidegadzek kunde förse honom med Ganstaf i stället för Ganask. Denna staf hade *formen af en yxe*, och äfven den var giftig. Slog nåiden med den antingen *menniskor eller kreatur*, blefvo de strax sjuka och kunde icke återfå helsan, om ej en *annan nåide genom trolldom botade det onda*.	Det var icke alltid nödvändigt, att Nåiden fick sin Gan utaf Vuoko, ty Nåide Gadse kunde i stället skaffa honom en Ganstaf, *i form af en yxa*, som var ganska giftig; och hvan Nåiden slog dermed, antingen *kreatur eller menniskor*, blef straxt sjukt och kunde icke komma till hälsan, för än en *annan Nåide* gjort igen, eller *botat skadan med motande Trollen*.	Det var endeligen ikke aldeles fornöden, at Noaaiden fik sin Gan af Wuoko; thi Noaaide-Gadzen kunde i Steden herfor skaffe gam en Gan-Stav, dannet som en Øxe, og sterkt forgiftet, og hvad Noaaiden eller en anden slog dermed, være sig Mennesker eller Dyr, blev strax sygt, og kunde ikke komme sig igien, før end Noaaiden var stillet tilfreds, og formaaet til, selv at helbrede Skaden.

Table 6.4. Translations of Leem's text by Fellman and Laestadius (my italics).

Fellman 1906a: 36.	Laestadius 1997: 101.	Leem 1767: 466.
Gick ringen nu med solen, var det ett lyckligt förebud, och stannade den snart på den figur man önskade, så skulle allt gå väl. Men kom ringen ej dit, eller gick den mot solen, var ondt på färde, och önskningsmålen skulle derföre ej uppfyllas.	gick ringen mot Solen var det elakt märke; gick ringen med Solen, var det ett godt märke.	Fulgte Ringen ved Trold-Mesterens Slag paa Ruune-Bommen Solens Gang, agtede han samme at være et Tegn til sit Forehavendes lykkelige Udfald; men gik den imod Solens Gang, tvivlede han om, at hans Forsæt skulde lykkes.
Såsom lyckligt förebud ansågs härvid äfven det, *om ringen kom på Radien eller andra tecken, som utmärkte goda gudomligheter*; såsom dåligt deremot, om den stannade på onda väsendens.	*Kom Ringen på Radien, Junker eller andra Gudomligheter* så var äfven det ett godt tekn; men om ringen föll på de onda varelsernas hieroglyfer; så var det ett ondt tekn.	Eftersom da Ringen ved saadan Banken gik af sig selv, enten til lykkeligere eller ulykkelige Characterer, giorde de sig Gisning, om deres Forehavende skulde vel lykkes eller ey.

Table 6.5. One of the passages in *Lapponia* only found in Fellman's text, but not in Laestadius's.

Fellman 1906a: 26.	Schefferus (Swedish transl.) 1956: 151 f.
Lapparne ansågos emedlertid fordom vara så skickliga häri, anmärker Scheffer, såsom om de skulle haft sjelfva Zoroaster till läromästare.	Dessa sen yttersta Nordens invånare, nämligen Finlands och Lapplands bebyggare, voro under hedendomens tid så bevandrade, som om de haft själve den persiske Zoroaster til lärömästare i denna fördömda lära. (cit. Olaus Magnus)
Till och med andra folkslag sägas hafva sändt sina barn till dem för att lära sig trolla. Så läser man hos Snorre Sturlason, att Åssur Tote ifrån Helgeland skickat sin dotter Gunhild till Finnmarken för att inhemta 'finnekonster'.	Peder Claussøn uppgiver: 'De sætte deris Børn til Lære hos Lapperne', nämligen för att undervisas i denna konst. Så berättar Sturlauson, att jungfrun Gunhild skickades av sin fader Assur Hvite, som bodde i Hålogaland, till konung Motle i Finnmarken, dvs. det finnlapska Norge, 'at læra Finnekonst'.

Table 6.6. One of the passages from Jessen-Schardebøll's text not found in Laestadius's.

Fellman 1906a: 37.	Laestadius 1997: 158.	Jessen 1767: 59.
I särdeles svåra fall hände det ock, att flere nåider samarbetade. De församlades då i en kåta för att utröna trummans utslag. Utföll detta illa, måste det utforskas, hvilken af gudarne var vredgad och hvilka offer äskades Om ej heller dessa medförde hjelp, då måste den af de församlade nåiderna		Var Sagen av Betydenhed, forsamlede sig nogle Noaaider i den fornemmeste Juoigs Kuatte eller Telt, hvor de paa Knæ myrede og juoigede, for at raadføre sig med Rune-Bommen, for at see hvilken Gud der vilde forsones, og hvilket Offer samme forlangede. Vilde Offeret heller ikke hielpe;
resa till Jabme aimo, som hade de starkaste Tilles, Dilles eller Dirri, något visst djur t. ex. varg, björn eller korp eller något annat, hvaraf nåiden betjenade sig såväl för att hjelpa sig sjelf eller andra som ock för att göra skada.	När en *Jaabma aimo* resa företogs, kom det an på hvilken hade den starkaste Dielle eller Dirri.	da maatte en Saiwo- og Jabme-aimo Reyse foretages, hvor det kom an paa, hvilken Noaaid der havde de sterkeste Noaaiden-Dielles eller Dirri.

Table 6.7. Fellman's, Laestadius's, Schefferus's, and Leem's texts in comparison (my italics).

Fellman 1906a: 34.	Laestadius 1997: 96.	Schefferus 1673: 124.	Leem 1767: 465.
Med af albark tillredd röd färg målades derefter på skinnet en hel mängd figurer och bilder,	Med decoct af alder-bark, målades nu på det utspända trumskinnet allehanda figurer	Trumban oefuer drage the med skin, hvvaruppao the maohla med ahlbark, aothskillige figurer	Tegnet med Elle-Bark adskillige Characterer,
föreställande *gudar*, genier (*nåide gadzek*), *solen*, månen, *morgonstjernan*, *lappkota*, *stolpbodar*, *allehanda djur* m. m.			af hvilke een betyder *Gud, een Radien*, der haver været Lappernes Jupiter, eller høyeste Gud, een Engel, een Diævel, *een Noaaide-Gadze, een Solen, een Morgen-Stiernen, een Aften-Stiernen*, een Kirke, een Norske-Folkes-Boepæl, een et helligt Bierg, eller saa kaldet Passe-Vare, hvor Lapperne pleyede ofre, *een Lappernes Boelig, een deres Stolpe-Bod* med Støtter under, hvorudi de have Kiød og andet deslige forvaret, een det Gierde, hvorinden for de om Sommeren drive sine Rensdyr, naar de vil malke dem, *een Fugl, een Fisk, een Biørn, een Ulv, een Ræv etc.* een det, en andet det.

Table 6.8. A comparison of the texts by Fellman, Laestadius and Tornaeus (my italics).

Fellman 1906a: 34.	**Laestadius 1997: 97.**	**Tornaeus 1772: 17.**
Bland bilderna kunde man sålunda på en del trummor se angifna äfven olika länder, hvarvid Lappland alltid intog midtelpartiet och det största utrymmet.	[...] midt på är Lappmarken, som största regio är, och har uti instrumentet största spatium.	[...] midt på är Lappmark, som största Regio är, och har uti Instrumentet största spatium.
Med sådana trummor sökte man utröna, hvilka resande man hade att vänta och hvarifrån de kommo. *Om de voro välvilliga eller elaka menniskor, om de medförde goda eller onda tidningar*, när besök af fogden, presten eller någon annan mera betydande person var att emotse, och annat dylikt.	[D]erpå se de och spå, hvad der händer, huru snart Presten och Fogden eller någon annan vyrdig till dem skickad vorder. *Et hi vocant se beneficos, utpote qui mala non tentant, aut sinistri quid ominantur*.	därpå se de och spå hvad där händer, huru snart Prästen och Fogden eller någon annan wyrdig [footnote: 'eller myndig'] till dem skickad warder. Et hi vocant se beneficos, utpote qui mala non tentant, aut sinistri quid ominantur. [footnote: *'D. ä. Desse kalla sig wälgjörande, efter de icke försöka något ondt, eller spå något olyckligit.*']

Table 6.9. Fellman's, Laestadius's, Schefferus's, and Tornaeus's texts in comparison.

Fellman 1906a: 27.	Laestadius 1997: 156 f.	Schefferus 1673: 122.	Tornaeus 1772: 20 f.
De, hvilka voro födde med särdeles fallenhet för yrket, lärde sig detsamma omedelbart af andarne. Detta skedde genom och under sjukdomar. Den första sjukdomen inträffade i barnaåren, och det sjuka barnet hade redan då uppenbarelser i trollkonsten. Vid den andra sjukdomen tillväxte visdomen, men först vid den tredje, som inföll under mannaåldern, blef trollkarlen fullt färdig i yrket.	Men somliga blifva sådane af Naturen, somliga ex informatione et usu (genom lära och praktik). De som af Naturen blifva sjuke in pueritia, tå lärer han något i sin svaghet begynna att phantisera; blifver han andra gången hårdare sjuk, då får han se och lära mer; men blifver han tredje resan betagen, det är svårast och går på lifvet: då får han se alla djefvulska syner, och blifver i Trollkonst perfect lärd.	Sunt nonnulli, qai artem magicam ab ipsa quasi habeant natura, id quod est horrendum. Quandoquidem, quos diabolus idoneos sibi futuros intellexit ministros, eos in ipsa infantia corripit morbo, quo simul eis multas repræsentat imagines & visiones, è quibus pro ratione annorum ætatis discunt, quod ad artem illam pertinet. Quod qui secunda vice corripiantur morbo longe adhuc plures eis offeruntur visiones, è quibus quoque capiunt plus artis, quamprima vice. Sin vero corripiantur vice tertia, quod sit difficultate tanta, ut in periculum simul incidant ommittenda vita, tum eis manifestantur visions at que apparitiones diabolica omnes, è quibus capiunt, quantum pertinent ad perfectionem artis magica.	Men somlige blifwa sådane af naturen, somlige ex informatione, et usu [footnote: efter underwisning och sedwana]. De som af naturen blifwa sjuke in pueritia, tå lärer han något i sin swaghet begynna at phantisera; blifwer han andra gången hårdare sjuk, då får han se och lära mer; men blifwer han tredje resan betagen, det är swårast og går på lifwet: då får han se alla djefwulska syner och blifwer i trollkonst perfect lärd.

Contd.

Table 6.9. Continued.

Fellman 1906a: 27.	Laestadius 1997: 156 f.	Schefferus 1673: 122.	Tornaeus 1772: 20 f.
För utöfvandet af konsten behöfde en sålunda utbildad trollkarl ej ens skilda trollredskap. Han hörde och såg allt som passerade i vida verlden. Men detta tillstånd skänkte honom ingen glädje, ty hans själ plågades oupphörligt deraf.	Det hafva de sjelfve, sådane incantatores för mig bekänt, de som hafva lefvererat sina trummor ifrån sig, och lofvat öfvergifva sådan ochristelig konst. Men derhos säga de, att de, som af Naturen och genom sjukdom sådan konst hafva fått, att de likväl utan Trumma se frånvarande ting, ehvad de vilja eller icke.	Suntque hitam eruditi, ut & sine tympano possint prospicere res longe dissitas, sicque occupati à Diabolo, ut cernant eas, sive velint, sive nolint. Sicante tempus aliquod Lappo quidam, qui adhuc superstes est, tympanum mihi offerebat suum, de quo sæpe ante fueram conquestus, fatebaturque mæstus, licet id à se submoveat, nec sibi fabricet aliud, nihilominus se visurum diffita omnia deinceps, sicut ante viderit; Dabatque me ipsum exemplum, memerabatq verissime specialissimeq, quicquid accider-at mihi in itinere in Lapponiam. Querebatur quoque simul, nescire se quid facere cum oculis suis debeat, quiaisthæc sibi omnia invitissimo offerantur.	Det hafva de sjelfwe, sådane incantatores, för mig bekändt, de som hafwa lefwererat sina trummor ifrån sig, och låfwat öfwergifwa sådan ochristelig konst. Men därhös säga de, at de som af naturen och sjukdom sådan konst hafwa fått, att de likwäl utan trumma, se frånwarande ting ehwad de wilja eller icke.

PART III: THEORIES, COMPARISONS, AND THE ROLES OF SCHOLARSHIP

7. Methods and Theories as Tools in the Study of Northern Religions: Native North American Bear Rituals and Sweat Bath Traditions as Examples

Riku Hämäläinen

Introduction

Not infrequently, a scholar is dealing with cultures and religious traditions that are not part of his or her own cultural context or tradition. It is also possible that the researcher deals with features of traditions that were practiced decades, or even centuries, ago. It may even be possible that the traditions under study no longer exist or else their functions and meanings have changed remarkably. Source material might also be limited. Under these circimstances, the importance of valid research methods is emphasised. To better understand and interpret the cultural and religious phenomena under study, theories usually offer useful tools. However, it is the researcher's responsibility to reflect on the methodological and theoretical choices of his or her own work and be aware of the emphasis on subjective interpretation.

Valid methods and theories help us to understand not only foreign traditions but more familiar traditions as well. To shed light on the usefulness of methods and theories in the study of northern religions, I will offer examples from bear rituals and sweat bath traditions. My examples come from Native North America, but in conclusion I will also offer a couple of cases from Finnish traditions to demonstrate how the theories that have proved useful in

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Native North American studies can be applied to the traditions of other societies as well.

Bear Rituals

In his classic study, A. Irving Hallowell collected data on bear rituals from Eurasia and North America. He also offers a generalising overview of them and identifies common and essential elements of bear rituals within several northern societies.[1] According to him, these elements include 1) the favourite time for hunting, in spring, while the bear was still in its den; 2) referring to the bear by metaphorical expressions; 3) calling the bear out of its den; 4) killing the bear with archaic weapons; 5) making speeches to the bear's spirit after its death and paying attention to the carcass, which became the focus of elaborate ceremonial attention; 6) organising a communal, often so-called eat-all feast of bear meat; and 7) respectful handling and disposition of the bear's bones and especially the skull.

The purpose of this ritualism was to please the guardian spirit of the bears and make the rebirth of the killed bear possible, so the people could hunt bears also in the future. However, as I have emphasised before,[2] not all bear rituals have followed Hallowell's scenario, and my intention below is to compare the bear rituals and their meanings in two different surroundings in Native North America and discuss the fundamental differences between them.[3]

North American Subarctic

In the nineteenth century, the bear rituals of the Eastern Cree, a Subarctic people in North America, followed Hallowell's scenario. The scenario is also representative of bear ceremonialism in the North American Subarctic in general.[4] The hunting of the bear in its wintertime den usually occurred in early spring. The Cree never said the word bear (in his native language) when preparing for the hunt; instead, it was referred to using metaphorical expressions, such as 'Black Food', or kinsman, like 'Grandfather/mother'.[5] When the hunter reached the den, he called the bear until it came out. When the bear appeared, the hunter killed it. It was proper to kill the bear only with a traditional weapon, such as a spear.[6]

The hunter turned the body on its back and put some tobacco on its chest. He sat down and spoke solemnly to the bear. He explained that he killed the bear only because he was poor and hungry, and he needed the skin for his coat and the meat so his family could eat. When the hunter reached the camp, he asked somebody to bring the bear to the camp and butcher it. Certain parts of the bear's flesh were at once burned as an offering, so that *Meme:kwe:ši:w*, the guardian spirit of bears, would provide more bears in the future.

Just after sunset, people gathered at the feast lodge. The feast-keeper sang and made offerings to *Meme:kwe:ši:w* by dropping pieces of meat into the fire. He asked for more bears to be hunted. He drank some of the bear's tallow and smeared a bit on his forehead. He passed the container of tallow clockwise around the lodge, and the others did the same. David Rockwell notes that the Cree have considered the nutritious tallow the most important part of the bear.[7] The first part of the bear to be eaten was the head. The oldest men ate first, the youngest last. When the head was eaten, the front legs were then consumed. After the men had eaten these sacred parts, the rest of the meat was passed around in a clockwise direction and everyone could eat. At this point, the mood lightened, and people talked and laughed. Men smoked, the feast-keeper sang and drummed, and later others drummed and sang as well. In the early morning hours, after most of the meat had been eaten, people danced.

The bear rites of the Cree also involved ritual handling of the bones and especially the skull. The bones could not be thrown away, and dogs were not allowed to take them. It was forbidden to break the skull, even when killing the bear. After the feast, a tree was cut down and stripped of most of its bark and branches, with only a small tuft left at the very top. The tree was painted and stuck in the ground at the edge of the camp. The bear skull was painted, tobacco put in the jaw, and ribbons of hide or cloth tied to it. Then, the skull was lashed to the pole about three metres above the ground, and the other bones were bundled and hung below the skull. The Cree did this for every bear they killed so the bear would return to life and come back to be hunted again.[8]

North American Plains

Veneration of bears and bear rites have existed among several Plains nations, particularly in the northern Great Plains. Alice Fletcher noticed that, in the 19th century, each animal cult was composed of individuals who had obtained supernatural power from the same animal species through a vision, and each of these cults possessed certain rituals and ceremonial regalia symbolic of the animal from which the power was obtained.[9] The members of the cult were united by the medicine[10] derived from the same animal, and a peculiar relation was formed between the members of the cult.

Though the Native American Nations of the Great Plains hunted the bear and certain nations had bear dances, existing information concerning bear rites on the Great Plains does not tell us much about bear hunting rites and bear feasts.[11] The main importance was not in the hunting rites and rebirth of the bear, as among the Cree. During his fieldwork among the Assiniboine, a northern Great Plains nation, in the summer of 1953, John Ewers collected information about their bear cult. His informant, Henry Black Tail, recalled three major functions of the Assiniboine bear cult: 1) ceremonies in honour of the bear, 2) aggressive participation in war expeditions, and 3) doctoring the sick.[12]

Since the bear cult is similar enough throughout the Great Plains area, we can suggest that these functions comprise the bear cult of the Plains peoples in general. In consequence, the bear rites focused especially on warfare and healing.[13] Warfare has traditionally been an essential part of the Plains culture, and members of the bear cult were known as terrifying fighters. They had obtained their powers from the bear, and the bear served as their guardian spirit in battle, which was paraded, for example, on the surfaces of shields.[14] When bear cult members went into battle against an enemy, they wore their distinctive outfit, painted their faces in a peculiar way, and usually carried bear knives. When the bear men charged the enemy, they acted like bears and made noises like the bear.[15] When carrying his ceremonial regalia, the bear cult member might be sure his bear power was with him and would help him in battle. With his outfit and behaviour, he made clear to his enemies who they were fighting, and thus he also might gain a psychological edge over his enemies.[16]

The Plains peoples had high regard for the bear also as a curing agent. Among the Lakota, the bear was regarded as the only animal that in a dream could offer herbs for healing purposes. Two Shields, the informant of Frances Densmore, stated that the Lakota considered the bear the head of all animals regarding herbs, and therefore, if a man dreamed of the bear, he would become an expert in the use of herbs for curing illness. Bear medicine was the most sought after because bear medicine men could treat all ordinary diseases, and only they could treat wounded warriors.[17] The healing power of bear medicine men was closely linked to warfare, and bear medicine has been practiced specially to heal wounds. Thus, according to Thomas Lewis, the bear medicine men of the Lakota have almost disappeared since the battles and the need to cure war wounds came to an end on the reservations.[18]

Bear Rituals and Ecology of Religion

Even though the indigenous peoples of both the Great Plains and Subarctic areas have been traditionally hunter-gatherers and hunting formed the basis of their livelihood and existence, the meanings ascribed to the bear and bear ceremonialism varied from one region to another. This raises an important question: Why did the meanings ascribed to the bear and the bear rites of the Plains peoples diverge from the bear rites and their purposes in the Subarctic areas?

Among the Subarctic people, the major function of bear rites has been to ensure game in the future. Returning the bones, and particularly the skull where the spirit of the animal lived, back to the woods hanging from a special tree, allowed the spirit to return to the supernatural guardian of the species and made the rebirth of the animal possible. Ivar Paulson has examined the rites concerning the bear skull and its return to the woods. He notices that the area where these rites have existed in North America includes the areas extending from the Plateau to the north in the West, and from the eastern Woodlands and the Great Lakes to the north in the East. He does not mention the Plains peoples, and the area he describes encompasses the Plains area in the North.[19] Hallowell, in turn, mentions that although the Plains nations have had high regard for the bear, we do not find evidence that any

rites were performed in connection with the killing of the animal, except by the Plains Cree, Plains Ojibwa and Assiniboine.[20]

In the north, the game has sometimes been scarce, and the Subarctic people could not be dependent on only one source of food. Toby Morantz states that starvation and diseases were common enough to explain why the Eastern Cree could not afford to depend on just a single resource.[21] Their subsistence level of survival depended on the amount of game available, and thus the people made use of all available food sources. The only big food animal besides the caribou and moose was the bear. Alanson Skinner noticed that the bear was an important dietary source among the Eastern Cree, and, according to Frank Speck, the Naskapi, another Subarctic nation, has considered the bear next in rank as a food source.[22]

Hallowell states that the study of man's relationship to the faunal world can be approached from two standpoints. 'First is the utilitarian, that is, the exploitation of animals for their flesh, skins, or other substances', as he put it. Second, he says, we can study this relationship as the people themselves view it. This is what he calls the psychological aspect, and it may include all the folk beliefs and customs connected with animals.[23] Actually, the latter is the religious aspect. But, do these two standpoints exclude each other?

Since religion is not separated from culture, but a part of it, religion also shares some of the effects that the environment has on culture. Using his method of cultural ecology, Julian Steward has demonstrated that there is an ecological integration between nature and culture in which culture not only inhibits but also promotes cultural development.[24] Åke Hultkrantz has developed this method to include the relationship between religion and the natural environment, especially among northern hunting people.[25] The ecology of religion is 'the study of the environmental integration of a religion and its implications', as Hultkrantz puts it.[26] The model shows that there is an explicit environmental influence on any religion that stands in close relation to a cultural dependence on nature.

In the northernmost regions, agriculture was not as effective as in more southern regions, and the gathering of food plants

has been limited. In consequence of this, the principal way to obtain food has been hunting and fishing. The amount of game has varied periodically; it has been scarce especially in winter, and in springtime starvation has been particularly common. According to Morantz, no discussion of the environmental factors impinging on the lifestyles of Subarctic hunters would be complete without an examination of starvation, which has been a natural part of life.[27] In the early twentieth century, Skinner claimed that there were still 'individuals at nearly every post who have tasted human flesh under these conditions'.[28]

In Hultkrantz's religio-ecological model, the animal ceremonies belong to the primary level of integration, as he calls it, which includes environmental adaptation of basic cultural features, like subsistence and technology and the religious features associated with them.[29] In the north, the bear has sometimes been a very important source of food, especially in the late spring when game is scarce, and this is when bears were primarily hunted. As a large animal, the bear could offer an opportunity for the whole community to feast.

Hallowell has stated that even among those nations that observed no special rites when the bear was killed and eaten, the animal may, nevertheless, have been greatly respected or even revered. Here, Hallowell mentioned especially the Plains nations.[30] It seems that the bear was not so frequently eaten in the Great Plains area, and thus the bear hunting rites and the disposal of bones and the skull were not required among the Plains peoples. Though, game might also have been scarce in the Great Plains area in late spring, the huge herds of buffalo and other numerous game animals as well as wild and cultivated plants offered more plentiful sources of food than in the Subarctic regions.

Since the bear has not had the same significance as a game animal among the Plains nations, the bear rites do not belong in the religio-ecological model to the primary level of integration, as among the Subarctic people, but instead to the secondary level of integration, i.e. to the indirect adaptation of religious beliefs and rituals, which 'are organized into a framework that takes its forms from the social structure, which is, in its turn, a model suggested by the economic and technological adaptation to environment'.[31]

Besides, on the Great Plains the concept of a supernatural master, or guardian spirit, of the animal species was ousted by the idea of individual guardian spirits.[32] Among the Plains peoples, the bear was the symbol of power and wisdom, and the medicine obtained from it helped braves to succeed in warfare and enabled medicine men to ensure the welfare of the community.

Sweat Bath Traditions

The sweat bath is another widespread northern tradition found both in Eurasia and North America. There are two main areas where particular sweat bath tradition can be found in the world, one around the Baltic Sea region and among some Finno-Ugric peoples, and another in North America, particularly north of Mexico.[33] The Finnish sauna and the Native American sweat bath resemble each other so much that they are usually compared, and previously in some contexts they have been even considered to have common roots.[34] Of these two traditions, the Native American sweat bath is clearly supposed to promote spiritual purification, but similar meanings can be found within the Finnish sauna tradition as well.[35]

Native North American Sweat Bath

The sweat bath is an ancient tradition known to most indigenous peoples of North America, with it being an especially strong tradition among some groups.[36] At first glance, the sweat bath refers to physical activity, but the ultimate meaning of the Native American sweat bath goes beyond that. Even though bathers wash themselves after the bath, the main significance of it has not been physical cleansing but ritual purification.[37]

Here, I will focus on the Lakota sweat bath tradition because more information is available on it. Moreover, it represents and illustrates quite well the ultimate meanings of the Native American sweat baths. Accounts of the Lakota sweat bath exist already in the early ethnographic literature, and sources from the nineteenth century reveal that the sweat bath has been used particularly within rituals and ceremonies. However, the first comprehensive account was not published until 1953, when Joseph Epes Brown's

book *The Sacred Pipe* came out. The book is based on interviews with Nicholas Black Elk, who introduces the seven rites of the Lakotas. One of these sacred rites is the sweat bath. Black Elk was a medicine man, and he offered the first detailed description of the Lakota sweat bath and its symbolism from the Native American viewpoint.[38]

The English term 'sweat bath' emphasises this phenomenon as a physical action, but as a matter of fact the term is misleading regarding its fundamentals. The Lakota word for sweat bath, *inípi*, shows what it is about. The core of this term is *ní*. Lakota informant George Sword said that *ní* is what a person breathes into his body, and *ní* travels throughout the body and keeps it alive. If *ní* leaves the body, a person dies. When the Lakotas speak about *inípi*, they mean the act of doing *iní* (i.e. 'taking a sweat bath'). Sometimes a person's *ní* is weak, and then hurtful things can get into the body. When this happens, the Lakotas should *inípi* (i.e. '*to take a sweat bath')*. George Sword emphasised that the 'Lakota does not *inípi* to make the water on the body. He does it to wash the inside of the body.'[39]

The sweat lodge is described as a womb and the sweat bath as rebirth. For example, Arvol Looking Horse, the keeper of the Lakotas' sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe, has stated that the 'sweat lodge is very sacred. It is the mother's womb. They always say when come out of the sweat lodge, it's like being born again or coming out of the mother's womb.'[40] The complete darkness inside the lodge represents how it is being inside the mother's womb (or mother earth) before birth. The symbolism of the sweat lodge is also related to life. As Black Elk states, the frame of the lodge is made of willow saplings, which represent rebirth.[41]

In Native North America, an important element in the preparation for rituals and contact with the spirit world has been ritual purification, which was usually performed through the sweat bath. For example, a Cree hunter went into a sweat lodge before a bear hunt, and the dancers of the Lakota sun dance purified themselves by taking a sweat bath before the ceremony. Consequently, the sweat bath has generally preceded other rituals. Before the ritual, participants went into the sweat lodge and, not infrequently, also after the rite as well to purify themselves.

Sweat Bath as a Transition Rite

In her classic study, Mary Douglas[42] discusses how the human body functions as a symbol of society and its categorical borders, and sweating, as it penetrates the border and leaves the body, breaks these borders. However, since the major purposes of the sweat bath rite were traditionally to prepare oneself for other rites and to return to everyday life after them, I see it as a symbolic transition between this world and the spirit world. Because of the sweat bath, a person was able to come closer to the powers of the spirit world, not only during the sweat bath but during other rites as well. Consequently, the sweat bath is a tool for a certain symbolic and ritual transition across borders, and this can be understood better through the idea of transition rites.

Arnold van Gennep was the first scholar to note the significance and structure of rituals that mark the passage of a person through the life cycle, from one stage to another. According to him, transition rites can be divided into three periods, the *preliminal*, *liminal* and *postliminal* periods.[43] Later, Victor Turner advanced the theory of transition rites and continued exploring transition rites and especially the meanings of the *liminal* period to the community. Turner's theory offers two propositions. First, transition rites are a process of moving from the familiar, or structural, to the anti-structural and back. Second, the period of being away from structure, the liminal period, or liminality as Turner called it, is characterised by the existence of a so-called *communitas*, a kind of feeling of relationship among the participants, or oneness. Turner extended the liminal period beyond its original sense of a marginal ritual phase, where liminality 'has taken on new meaning as an autonomous and sometimes enduring category of people who are "betwixt and between"'.[44]

The sweat bath rite can be analysed using the structure of transition rites, the main purpose being not for social transition in the strict sense of van Gennep, but a more symbolic transition in Turner's sense. All three periods of the transition rites defined by van Gennep can be observed in the sweat bath rite, although no shift of social status is in question. In addition to purification, the purpose of the sweat bath is also the transition from profane everyday life to sacred space. In the sweat lodge ritual, we can perceive these transitions and the liminal period on two levels: first,

the sweat bath as an independent rite, and second, the sweat bath as part of a wider ritual complex.[45]

When surveying the sweat bath as an independent rite, the first transition, or border crossing, can be perceived when the participants enter the lodge and the door is closed, i.e. when the participants are shut inside the dark lodge. The sweat lodge is constructed so that it is totally dark inside and no light can enter in. The second border crossing can be observed when the door is opened and the participants leave the lodge, out of *liminality* and sacred space back into everyday life, or profane space. Native American explanations for the sweat lodge are usually related to the concept of rebirth. The darkness inside the lodge symbolises one's state in the mother's womb before birth and coming out of it is like being born again; when inside the sweat lodge, the participant usually thinks about his or her life and the direction in which he or she wants to go. Lakota testimonies on the meanings of the sweat bath corroborate this point quite well.[46]

The three-stage structure of the transition rites can be observed in the Native American sweat bath ritual. Inside the sweat lodge, humans are separated from profane life and moved into the darkness of a symbolic womb, which is the *liminal* dimension. There they can be closer to the spirit world, having a connection with it. After the bath, when back outside the lodge, the participants are incorporated once again back into their more common, profane existence.

When surveying the sweat bath as part of a wider ritual complex, the sweat lodge ritual functions as a channel for transition. In this case, the liminal period is the period between the two baths. During the first sweat bath sacralisation occurs, where the participants separate themselves from profane life to enter a space of liminality during the ritual, for which they have been purified. After the ritual period, the sweat bath is taken once more for desacralisation, or the separation of the participants from sacred space and their incorporation back into one's profane everyday life.

I have viewed the sweat bath through the structure of transition rites in order to try to understand its role in ritual purification in preparation for contact with the spirit world. In this connection, Native Americans have been closer to the sacred world, which is made possible by the symbolic transition from profane space into sacred space, and back.[47]

Conclusion

Understanding Similarities and Dissimilarities

Many classic theories are based on compared material. Even though there might be problems within generalising theories, they indeed can offer a worthwhile starting point for further considering similarities and structures as well as finding the deeper meanings of the phenomenon under study. Above, I have discussed the Native North American sweat bath tradition and found the theory of transition rites useful when trying to understand the structure of ritual purification. When conducting research on the Finnish sauna tradition, I noticed that the same sort of symbolic transition can be found in the Finnish sauna.[48]

According to Finnish traditions, the sauna was perceived as *pyhä*, 'sacred', and it has been part of traditional calendar rites, crisis rites as well as transition rites. For example, the sauna has a special place within Christmas traditions. People went to the sauna before the sun had set on Christmas Eve, and then they were clean and ready for Christmas. Traditionally, the sauna has also been used for healing, with people both bathing in the sauna and using it as a place to heal. The sauna has been a space for transition rites as well, whether for birth, marriage or passing away. Until the 1930s, most Finnish people were born in sauna. Sometimes an individual also died in the sauna, or at least the corpse was washed in the sauna. Formerly, it was also the custom for both the bride and the groom to go to sauna in their own homes before getting married. These few examples demonstrate that the Finnish sauna could function as a sacred space where people detached themselves from everyday life and daily routines. I have discussed this in more detail elsewhere,[49] but it still needs further study.

When comparing rituals, the main aim has usually been finding similarities, and, not infrequently, differences are explained as deviances, or they have been even disregarded. However, the differences especially are interesting and important when studying the diversity of cultures and religious traditions. I found this particularly interesting when researching North American bear rituals. I noticed that the meaning of the bear and bear rites are exceedingly different in two geographical areas, even though the indigenous peoples of both areas have traditionally been hunter-gatherers, and hunting formed the basis of their livelihood.

I noticed that there is an ecological point of integration between the Native cultures and their ecological surroundings within bear rituals. Above, I describe how I have utilised Hultkrantz's religio-ecological model when discussing the bear rituals and their differences within two different Native North American cultures. This model can be applied when studying bear rites of other cultures and traditions, and not only between different cultures, but within one culture as well. For example, concerning the bear rituals within Finnish folk religion, this manner of approach might be useful when discussing the differences between old hunting-based traditions and those of the later agricultural society. Within the hunting society, the bear was an honourable animal having its roots in the sky, and bear rituals followed Hallowell's scenario. It was important to ensure that the bear could return to its heavenly home to be hunted again.[50] Within the later agricultural society, in turn, the bear was honoured but at the same time it was viewed as a harmful animal from the woods that killed cattle and ate crops. It was important to practice various protective rites against bears, like *karhun pyllytys*, or mooning a bear, i.e. an older woman pulled up her skirt and pointed her naked buttocks in every direction to ensure that the bear would not come any closer.[51] We can consider that the change of stance was based on the livelihood, and thus the religio-ecological model can offer interesting viewpoints in this case, too.

Notes

1. Hallowell 1926.

2. Hämäläinen 2002; Hämäläinen 2009.

3. As Rydving (2010: 34) has pointed out, generalising theories, including Hallowell's theory, have disregarded these dissimilarities. Cf. also Berres *et al.* 2004.

4. Skinner 1911: 68–73, 162–164; Speck 1935: 94–110; Rogers 1973: 39–44; Kohn 1986: 141–151. I wish to thank one the anonymous reviewers for valuable comments on the problems of former scholars writing by generalizing about First Nations and Native Americans. For example, 'Eastern Cree' includes several groups of Néhinaw people, but usually the scholars do not specify which indigenous groups

they were really talking about. Unfortunately, in this context, I cannot guess which groups they were particularly meaning.

5. Skinner 1911: 71 f.; Hallowell 1926: 44 f.

6. Skinner 1911: 26, 72 f.

7. Rockwell 1991: 38.

8. Skinner 1911: 68, 72.

9. Fletcher 1884: 276–282.

10. The term 'medicine' refers to the supernatural power of persons, objects and activities. This power, which is usually revealed in a vision, may be used for, e.g. healing, divination or protection in warfare; cf. Hämäläinen 2011: 67 f.

11. Catlin 1841, 1: 245; Mandelbaum 1996: 210; Lowie 1983: 264–268.

12. Ewers 1988: 134.

13. Neihardt 1972: 89 f.; Brasser 1979: 37; Bowers 1991: 108; McClintock 1992: 358 f.; Mandelbaum 1996: 210.

14. Hämäläinen 2011: 81–103.

15. Denig 1930: 537 f.; Ewers 1988: 135.

16. McClintock 1992: 353.

17. Densmore 1918: 195; Walker 1980: 105.

18. Lewis 1992: 183.

19. Paulson 1965: 162–166.

20. Hallowell 1926: 73. The Cree and Ojibwa moved into the Great Plains area relatively late and preserved many features of the Subarctic culture.

21. Morantz 1983: 37.

22. Skinner 1911: 26; Speck 1935: 79.

23. Hallowell 1926: 3.

24. Steward 1963.

25. Hultkrantz 1954; Hultkrantz 1965; Hultkrantz 1979; Hultkrantz 1982; Hultkrantz 1985.

26. Hultkrantz 1979: 221.

27. Morantz 1983: 35–37.

28. Skinner 1911: 25.

29. Hultkrantz 1982: 176 f.; Hultkrantz 1979: 227 f.

30. Hallowell 1926: 151.

31. Hultkrantz 1979: 228.

32. Hultkrantz 1982: 166–168.

33. Hultkrantz 2000: 138.

34. Lopatin 1960.

35. Hultkrantz 2000: 138; Hämäläinen 2012.

36. Driver and Massey 1957: 315.

37. Bucko 1999; Hultkrantz 2000; Hämäläinen 2016. I wish to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for reminding that sweat bath is but one way of purification, connecting with a broader notion of purification by smudge/smoke that is more widely practiced.

38. Brown 1953: 31–43.

39. Walker 1980: 100; Hämäläinen 2016: 209.

40. Looking Horse 1987: 72.

41. Brown 1953: 31 f.

42. Douglas 1966.

43. van Gennep 1909.

44. Turner 1969: 94–130; Stephenson 2005: 7801.

45. Hämäläinen 2016: 211–214.

46. Bucko 1999: 76, 85, 148, 156, 185, 197, 203, 206; Medicine 1987: 167.

47. For a more detailed discussion, see Hämäläinen 2016.

48. I wish to thank one the anonymous reviewers for pointing out that the Ojibwe word for 'Finn' is *madoodoowinini*, which means 'person who takes a sweat bath'. The Finnish fondness for sauna became something that Native American communities noticed already in the 17th century when several Finns moved to the Swedish colony along the lower reaches of the Delaware River, and later in the

context of Finnish settlement on reservation lands in late 19th century. Ojibwe people saw the Finnish sauna as equivalent to Ojibwe sweat bath and used the Ojibwe word for it. For the descendants of the Ojibwe (Anishinaabe) and the Finns in the 21st century, see Kettu *et al*. 2016.

49. Hämäläinen 2012.

50. Siikala 2014: 380–389.

51. Pulkkinen 2014: 207 f.; Pulkkinen & Lindfors 2016: 114.

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8. 'Spirits' and 'Gods' as Comparative Concepts in Soviet Studies of the Nganasan World View

Olle Sundström

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the technical terminology used by Soviet ethnographers for beings presupposed in the Nganasan-Samoyedic world view. The beings in focus are those that the Nganasan called *ŋuəˀ* (sing. *ŋuə*), which have often been labelled *masters/mistresses*, *spirits*, *gods/goddesses*, or *deities*, both in the Soviet scholarly tradition and in comparative religion in general. I am interested in what motivated Soviet ethnographers in their choice of technical terminology in relation to the *ŋuəˀ*, and how this terminology became meaningful in the context of Soviet research and Marxist-Leninist theory.

One important reason why the Soviet ethnographers are of special interest to the debate on the classification and labelling of beings assumed in world views that are foreign to the scholar is that these scholars understood the Nganasan world view to be on the threshold of becoming a 'religion'.[1] From the perspective of Soviet ethnographers, the material on the Nganasan world view was particularly suitable for trying out new concepts and theorising on the origin and development of religion, and consequently on the origin and development of so-called spirits and gods. This was because the Nganasan culture and way of living were considered to be the most 'primitive' within the borders of the Soviet Union. Up until the Second World War, the Samoyedic-speaking Nganasan had kept their traditional culture, both material and

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spiritual, with only a few superficial influences from modernity and Russian culture, including Christianity. Being a 'small numbered people' (approx. 1,000 individuals) who traditionally subsisted on hunting, fishing and reindeer husbandry on the far northern tundra of the Taymyr Peninsula, data on their culture were often used for historical reconstructions of the archaic wild reindeer hunting culture of Eurasia, as well as of ancient human culture in general. From a Marxist-evolutionist perspective, this also meant that remnants of an assumed primitive communist society could be found in their culture, even as it appeared in the twentieth century. Because some ethnographers maintained that humankind's earliest cultures had lacked religion, the study of the Nganasan became particularly interesting with regard to the supposed original materialistic world view of humankind, as well as the transition from so-called primitive materialism to religion.

The question of the appropriateness of comparative terms such as *spirits* and *gods* is fundamental to the study of religions for the simple reason that belief in such beings is a recurring criterion in definitions of the concept of religion. Thus, I will begin with some general theoretical considerations regarding comparative categories such as 'spirits' and 'gods' (or 'deities').[2]

Theoretical Considerations

Definitions of religion that focus on a belief in certain types of beings or agents – whether they are labelled *spiritual*, *supernatural*, *superhuman*, *meta-empirical*, *counter-intuitive* or something else – are sometimes called *Tylorian*, because they are congenial with the minimum definition of religion proposed by Edward B. Tylor in his classic work *Primitive Culture* (1871): 'belief in spiritual beings'.[3] In Soviet research, the common minimum definition of religion was 'belief in the supernatural',[4] but since this category was constituted by subclasses of so-called supernatural beings (Ru. *sverkhestestvennye sushchestva*), such as spirits and gods, I regard it as being just another label for what Tylor meant by his category of 'spiritual beings'.[5] As will be evident below, Tylor's theories had a significant impact on Soviet ethnography due to his influence on the ideas of the founding fathers of early Soviet ethnography, Lev Ya. Shternberg and Vladimir G. Bogoraz.

Thus, in debating the concept of religion (in its Tylorian sense), we cannot circumvent the category of 'spiritual beings' and its cognates. If belief in such beings is regarded as the essence of religion, it would appear that spiritual beings are the basic empirical elements in the academic study of religion, when this study takes its point of departure in a Tylorian definition of religion. However, neither 'religion' nor 'spiritual/supernatural beings', including their subcategories ('spirits', 'deities', etc.), are empirical facts *per se*. A Nganasan's notion of a *ŋuə* or a Christian's notion of *God* is an empirical fact to the extent that we can attain knowledge of this notion (normally through verbal accounts, but also through other media such as images or rituals). In contrast, 'spiritual/supernatural beings' and their subcategories are technical terms, chosen and used by scholars (and others) to sort out and classify certain features of human ideologies that, for some reason, they find interesting and worth highlighting. The use of, for example, 'god' as a technical term has, in fact, a long history. As Jonathan Z. Smith noted, already in ancient Greece, Herodotus (fifth century BC) used *theoi*, 'gods', as a cross-cultural category in his ethnographic comparisons of the cultures of foreign peoples.[6]

Technical terms are comparative categories[7] in the sense that they assemble several different instances from various local contexts. When we call, for example, a Nganasan *ŋuə* a 'spirit', we assume or conclude that *ŋuə* has something in common – if only a family resemblance – with other entities that we would classify as 'spirits', for example, an Arabic *jinn*, a Greek *daimon*, a Finnish *haltija* or a Japanese *kami*. If we call a *ŋuə* a 'god' or a 'deity', we compare and classify it with other entities that we would call 'gods' or 'deities', for example, the Arabic *Allah*, Greek *Aphrodite*, Finnish *Ukko* and – again, as it happens – the Japanese *kami*. However, we do not propose the exact identity among the different members of the category, but we find them meaningfully comparable and the category useful.[8] One way of conveying this argument is to say that *ŋuə* in itself is neither spirit nor god, but may belong to the categories of spirits or gods. This also applies to the Christian *God*. This proposition might seem mere quibbling and indeed, in colloquial language, the distinction between 'to be' this or that and 'to belong to the category of' this or that

is rarely of interest. However, I believe that this distinction contains an important point and that we can learn something from analysing ethnographic descriptions (our own and others') with this in mind.

Much of what I have claimed thus far about comparative categories was expressed, albeit in slightly different terms, by Jeffrey R. Carter in an article on comparison as a method in the study of religions, published in 1998.[9] According to Carter, it is not only that the different members of a category are not equivalent to each other; the different members are also not equivalent to the category itself. 'Bird' is not the same a robin, and robin is not the same as 'bird'. For this conclusion, Carter relies on Bertrand Russell's Theory of Logical Types, the most central principle of which is that a category (or class) exists on a different level of logical abstraction than the members of the same category. Russell called categories 'higher logical types' and their respective members 'lower logical types'. From this logical deduction by Russell, Carter draws two important general rules for how to handle categories and their members in comparative work: first, that different 'logical types […] must not be confused or equated'; second, that 'it is a mistake to predict or conclude things about one logical type by simply examining its paired higher or lower logical type'.[10] This would mean that if we classified a *ŋuə* as a 'spirit' or a 'god', we would not be able to reliably conclude anything about spirits or gods in general by merely learning about the *ŋuə*; and we would not be allowed to predict anything about the *ŋuə* simply by knowing the definition of the concepts of 'spirits' or 'gods'. If the classification of the *ŋuə* in question as either a 'spirit' or a 'god' were adequate, we should, of course, be able to conclude that this *ŋuə* corresponded to the stated definition of either 'spirits' or 'gods'. But we would not be allowed to predict or conclude anything *more*, beyond this definition of the category.

Carter uses the familiar metaphor of the relationship between map and territory to illustrate his point on logical types. A map is not the same as the territory it is depicting, but a selection of certain highlighted points of reference singled out for a certain purpose. It is an abstraction of reality. Maps of the same territory differ depending on what they are used for. If I were to draw a

map of the area around my summer house in Northern Sweden in order to show my daughters how to find the best marshes for picking cloudberries, or the best rapids for catching trout, this map would most certainly be different from the one used by a mining company prospecting for minerals in the same area. What a cow elk would select on her map of this landscape to guide her calves to the finest grazing land and waterholes, while at the same time keeping them safe from human beings and other predators, we can barely imagine. It is the same landscape – the same reality – that is supposed to be depicted on these maps, but they contain different facts deemed to be important and relevant for navigating through it for a certain purpose.

Carter points out that the 'territory supplies no rules for drawing a map of itself'.[11] Which landmarks end up on the map depends on the cartographer's level of knowledge and on their purpose for the map. This is true, but I would like to add that earlier cartographers have supplied us with, if not rules, then at least a set of guidelines and a model for how to map certain territories. (Arguably, both myself and the mining company's cartographer more or less belong to the same tradition of map making and our different maps would therefore presumably be more similar to each other than to the presumed map of the cow elk.) Nowadays, few areas are completely *terra incognita* and scholars rarely start mapping an area without first consulting earlier maps of their chosen territory of investigation. Previous maps are models for new maps. Because of this, to some extent we become dependent on and influenced by the knowledge, interests, aims and choices of earlier cartographers – or ethnographers, from Herodotus onwards. This is one of the reasons why it is important to critically reflect upon our inherited maps and models (in the shape of concepts and categories) in order to ascertain whether we are merely confirming what we believe we already know, or if we are actually learning something new.

Commenting on Carter's (as well as J.Z. Smith's) map-and-territory-metaphor, Oliver Freiberger concludes that it would be absurd to criticise a map for not being identical to the territory. A map may be criticised for being a poor selection of relevant landmarks, and therefore inappropriate for its purpose, but not for the

fact that it abstracts and generalises.[12] In the same way, generalising comparisons, or the use of comparative technical terms must be evaluated in relation to their purpose – as well as, of course, their accuracy in relation to the facts in the 'territory'.

Using a metaphor – as together with Carter and Freiberger I just did – is a way of comparing two different objects or situations, pointing to some decisive and relevant similarities between otherwise unrelated objects or situations. The purpose of a metaphor is normally to rhetorically or pedagogically elucidate, or even explain, the meaning of an object or a situation.

Using a metaphor is doing an analogy. I have used maps and mapping here analogously with categories and category formation, arguing that, in some respects, they work in the same way. I doubt that this analogy is strong. Analogical reasoning is a common method in scientific and philosophical work. In his article on analogy and analogical reasoning in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Paul Bartha points out that philosophers and logicians have identified some common-sense guidelines for strong or good scientific analogies. Among these are that 'analogies involving causal relations are more plausible than those not involving causal relations'. Already Aristotle contended that strong analogies were derived from common causes or general laws. However, as Bartha shows, in science, many analogies are merely hypothetical and the general laws that cause the similarities among the compared objects are not always proven. This may make the analogy weak but not necessarily untrue since further studies may prove the underlying causal relations.[13]

Comparative categories such as 'spirits' and 'gods' are analogies, and they should be considered weak and as mere hypotheses until proven otherwise. I will get back to this point later on, when discussing the Soviet ethnographers' use of technical terms in relation to beings in the Nganasan world view. However, before I turn to these ethnographers, there is one more aspect of the terminology commonly used for such beings that ought to be discussed: the critique that many of these terms have their origin in Judeo-Christian theological vocabulary and/or European vernaculars.

Regarding the use of the term *god* in the study of religions, Ilkka Pyysiäinen and Kimmo Ketola have argued that it is not

appropriate as a technical or scientific term, among other things, because 'naming various kinds of mythological beings as "gods"' may lead to 'the attributes of the Christian God' being 'silently smuggled into other traditions'.[14] This would mean that the Christian *God*[15] is the main prototype for the category of 'gods' and that, to an unjustified degree, this prototype shapes our understanding of all other members of the category. I realise the problem – if you use a map of your own native territory to find your own way in a foreign country, you are bound to get lost. And indeed, there are examples in the history of scholarship of the suspected overinterpretation of foreign conceptions in light of Christian notions of *God*. In his book *The Invention of God in Indigenous Societies*, James L. Cox shows how theologically informed scholars such as Andrew Lang, Wilhelm Schmidt and Mircea Eliade based their theories of a universal 'primitive monotheism' upon such synonymisations, relying on assumptions related to so-called natural theology. Furthermore, Cox provides plenty of examples of how this idea of 'primitive monotheism' developed in indigenous societies, among indigenous academics and social and political activists, who recreated pre-contact indigenous beliefs in the image of the Christian *God*.[16] Thus, the 'smuggling' of *God* into other traditions had real consequences – in such cases, the map caused changes in the territory. Even though Cox admits that it is not possible to ascertain the precise notions of pre-modern peoples, regarding his four case studies (New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Australia and Alaska), he concludes that an indigenous idea of a 'Supreme Being' or 'Creator'

> cannot be construed as commensurate with Western philosophical or Christian ideas of God unless theological presuppositions, idealized notions of pre-modern societies or intentional strategies aimed at promoting indigenous cultural values are inserted into the equation.[17]

Despite these examples, I believe that Pyysiäinen's and Ketola's proposition needs to be slightly nuanced – for three main reasons: First, the Christian concept of 'God/god' is quite ambiguous. Hebrew *'ēl* and Greek *theos* already have multiple, possibly non-congruent, meanings in the Bible[18] and an additional

multitude of meanings in later Christian traditions, including Western philosophy, up to the present day. Thus, the attributes of the Christian *God* that would actually be smuggled in are a bit unclear.

Second, one of the usages of the term *god* in the Hebrew Bible is found in the so-called First Commandment, regarding the 'other gods' (Hebr. *'ĕlōhīm 'ăḥērīm*), those that you shall not have. In earlier (pre-Enlightenment) Christian missionary accounts[19] of non-Christian world views, the term *gods* reflected the idea of *false gods*, *idols* or *demons*, that is, of the opposite or opponent of *God* in the Christian world views in question (and, as will be shown below, Soviet ethnographic material on the Nganasan provides example of this use of the term). As I have argued elsewhere,[20] there is much to suggest that the category of 'gods' in the plural form and as a technical term in the academic study of religions was to some extent shaped by Christian ideas of *other gods* rather than by Christian ideas of *God*. This concerns the term used in what William E. Paden calls the 'rationalistic' Western tradition, in which gods have been interpreted as human projections or phantasies, in contrast with the 'universalistic' interpretation represented by, for example, natural theology and scholars such as Lang, Schmidt and Eliade.[21] It would still be a category and a term imbued with a Judeo-Christian, or at least 'Western', way of thinking, albeit not quite with the kind of attributes I assume Pyysiäinen and Ketola had in mind.

My third objection to Pyysiäinen's and Ketola's proposition is that the more the concept 'gods' has been used as a technical term for designating and categorising various beings in world views throughout the world and in different epochs of time, the more the concept itself has become imbued with the attributes of all kinds of gods, not only of the Christian *God* or of Christian notions of *other gods*.[22]

From these theoretical considerations, I conclude that categories such as 'spirits', 'gods' and 'deities' are quite ambiguous because of the terms used for the categories and because of the variety of usages of the categories. However, this does not necessarily mean that these categories are invalid or redundant. Rather, I believe that they are given different meanings in different contexts.

Thus, they must be evaluated according to the purpose they are supposed to serve in a particular context, and also in relation to the theories that motivate them. The categories in question are analogies, weak or strong. As previously mentioned, what I am interested in here is how the technical terminology used by Soviet ethnographers for *ŋuə* was theoretically motivated and how this terminology became meaningful in the context of Soviet research and Marxist-Leninist theory.

Soviet Ethnography on Nganasan *Ŋuəˀ*

Andrey A. Popov (1902–60)

The first Soviet ethnographer to publish accounts of the Nganasan world view and the notion of *ŋuə* was Andrey A. Popov. He conducted his fieldwork on the Taymyr Peninsula primarily in the 1930s and 1940s.[23]

In his descriptions of *ŋuəˀ*, Popov started by mentioning that the Nganasan themselves, when speaking Russian, referred to them as *d'yavoly*, 'devils, demons', irrespective of whether the *ŋuə* in question was regarded benevolent or malevolent. This was, he concluded, due to the influence of earlier Christian missionaries who interpreted the Nganasan world view according to Christian classifications and condemned it as idolatry; and it was from these missionaries that the Nganasan had first learned Russian.[24]

Popov himself claimed that 'Nganasan deities [*bozhestva*] and spirit masters [*dukhi-khozyaeva*], of whom the entire people's […] most important necessities of life depend, are known under the general designation *ŋuə'*. These 'spirits' (Ru. *dukhi*), he continued, were never embodied materially.[25] From this short presentation of the *ŋuəˀ*, two things are evident about Popov's way of classifying Nganasan beings. First, that he imposed his own classification on the Nganasan world view – where the Nganasan used one category, Popov used several ('deities', 'spirit masters' and 'spirits') –; second, that the fundamental category for Popov was 'spirit'.

Popov relied on an animist theory in the tradition of Tylor, although in a slightly modified version conveyed to him by his teachers in ethnography in Leningrad (mainly Bogoraz, but to a certain extent also Shternberg). He would subsequently develop

the theory of animism and speculate on the evolutionary stages preceding 'animism'. The first stage he called 'assimilatism'. This meant that 'original' or 'primitive' human beings (Ru. *pervobytniy chelovek*) started to attribute human characteristics, such as feelings and the capacity to think, to animals. Assimilatism evolved into 'animatism', which meant that human qualities were also attributed to things, such as moving water and weather phenomena, considered inanimate by 'us'.[26] Popov divided animism proper into two consecutive stages. In the early stage, immaterial images of objects that arose in the human psyche were attributed life, they were 'animated'. In later animism, these mental images were assigned autonomy and started being conceived of as independent and immaterial 'souls' and 'spirits'.[27]

Popov was not a pronounced Marxist, although he picked up one important idea from the Marxist version of the evolutionism of his age, namely, that primeval human society did not have an 'idealist' but a 'materialist' world view. Thus, the assimilatist and animatist stages, as well as the early animist stage, were materialistic world views because thus far, there were no conceptions of autonomous and immaterial 'spirits', only of living material objects. Using evolutionist theory, he claimed that the ideas about some of these 'spirits' or 'spirit masters' (of animal species or geographical areas) developed into 'deities' when they were attributed more far-reaching power. Those that Popov classified as 'deities' were celestial bodies like the sun, the moon, the earth and, above all, the sky itself. The firmament (termed *ŋuə* in Nganasan) was the 'highest deity' (Ru. *vysshee bozhestvo*), also mentioned as such in the only pre-Soviet description of some length of the Nganasan world view, written by P.I. Tret'yakov in 1869.[28] According to Popov, this being was called *N'ilytyə-ŋuə*, literally translated as 'Living sky'. This was a male deity, a creator of the universe, who had withdrawn to the highest seventh heaven. To Popov, the conception of *N'ilytyə-ŋuə* was closely related to the Christian idea of *God*.[29] Nowhere did he indicate that he believed that the Nganasan idea was a result of influences from Christian beliefs. Rather, his point was that the origin and development of the idea of the physical sky, *ŋuə*, as the highest divinity among the Nganasan, was parallel to the origin and development of the Christian idea of *God*.

Boris O. Dolgikh (1904–71)

Contemporary to the Leningrad-based Popov, Moscow ethnographer Boris O. Dolgikh conducted his first field work among the Nganasan in 1926–27 in connection with the first Soviet census in the Polar region. He would subsequently conduct more extensive field trips on the Taymyr Peninsula, and in his publications he primarily relied on the fieldnotes he made during visits between 1948 and 1961.[30]

Dolgikh's depiction of the Nganasan world view was quite different from Popov's, a fact which is quite remarkable considering that the two ethnographers collected data during the same period among a group of people comprising up to one thousand individuals. We also know that, in certain cases, the two ethnographers interviewed the very same individuals, even though Dolgikh appears to have interviewed more women than Popov. This could explain the discrepancies between his descriptions and Popov's descriptions of the Nganasan world view. I believe that another important factor regarding the disparity between their accounts is that they had slightly different theoretical starting points. Consequently, they may have interpreted their data differently and probably also chose varying pieces of information from their material in order to ensure that their accounts fit their respective theoretical views.

In translating the Nganasan category of *ŋuə*, Dolgikh used Russian terms such as *bog*, 'god', *boginya*, 'goddess' or *bozhestvo*, 'deity'.[31] Not once did he use the term *dukh*, 'spirit' for *ŋuə*. He never explicitly commented on this although it is reasonable to assume that he avoided the term *spirit* – which was very common in both Soviet and non-Soviet ethnographic research at the time – because he wanted to avoid an animist interpretation. At the time of his writing (1950s–1960s), the animist theory was condemned by Soviet scholarship as a 'bourgeois' theory.[32]

Instead, Dolgikh relied on another theory that was at times popular in Soviet ethnography: the theory of a matriarchate in the earliest societies of humankind. This idea was derived from Friedrich Engels's depiction of primeval society as being fully egalitarian, with complete equality between men and women. Unequal gender relations and patriarchy first appeared with the introduction of private property.[33] Dolgikh assumed that this matriarchal social

structure must have been reflected in Nganasan religion, in the 'mythology' and in what he called the Nganasan 'pantheon'.

In contrast to Popov, Dolgikh found 'female deities', 'goddesses', to be the most high-ranking and ancient in the Nganasan world view. At the absolute top of their pantheon, he contended, were seven *n'emyˀ*, 'mothers'. These were *Məu-n'emy* ('Earth mother'), *Syrəðə-n'emy* ('Permafrost mother'), *Byˀ-n'emy* ('Water mother'), *Tuy-n'emy* ('Fire mother'), *Kou-n'emy* ('Sun mother'), *Kičəðəə-n'emy* ('Moon mother') and *D'aly-n'emy* ('Day mother'). They were the 'primordial mothers', synonymous with the natural phenomena they personified, while also anthropomorphic 'goddesses' autonomous from the actual earth, permafrost, water etc. Dolgikh concluded that the original conception was that of, for example, Earth mother as the actual earth, and that her anthropomorphisation took place at a later evolutionary stage. Earth mother was, he contended, the most important deity of all the categories. She gave birth to and nourished all living creatures. All of the primordial mothers belonged to the category *ŋuəˀ* and, apart from them, there was only one male being at the top of the pantheon, *D'oyba-ŋuə*, the 'Orphan *ŋuə*', and one additional female being, *Bakhiˀ-n'emy*, 'Mother of wild reindeer'.[34]

Dolgikh denied that *N'ilytyə-ŋuə* (or *Ŋuə* in heaven) was anything like a 'creator god' or 'high-god', as Tret'yakov and Popov had reported. Instead, *N'ilytyə-ŋuə* was an alternative appellation for *D'oyba-ŋuə*, who had all the characteristics of a 'culture hero' but had assumed the position of a deity for the Nganasan. In the myths he is an orphan who had been raised by one of the main mother goddesses (these vary from one narrative to the next). He is the husband of either Day mother or Moon mother, together with whom he provides the life-threads that keep all individual humans alive. All phenomena of vital importance to Nganasan culture and survival – such as dwellings, fire and domesticated reindeer – are his inventions, and in the narratives, he constantly struggles for the well-being of humans (i.e. of the Nganasan).[35]

D'oyba-ŋuə has recurrent sexual intercourse with several of the mother goddesses, something which, for example, results in fine weather. Together with Earth mother he creates the souls

for humans to be born. The Nganasan also told Dolgikh that *D'oyba-ŋuə* was their special 'god', who protected and bestowed them with life's necessities. According to Dolgikh, this deity is the 'male principle, without whom life on earth would not be recreated'.[36]

The designation *N'ilytyə-ŋuə* ('Living god' in Dolgikh's translation) is close to the appellation *Nilu-ŋuə* ('Life's god'), a name that could be used for both *D'oyba-ŋuə* and for other beings, notably *Bakhiˀ-ŋuə*, 'God of wild reindeer'.[37] This being could also be known as either *Bakhiˀ-n'emy*, 'Mother of wild reindeer', or *Bakhiˀ-d'esy*, 'Father of wild reindeer', depending on whether it was female or male. She (or he) could manifest as an actual deer, with some extraordinary features, in a herd of wild reindeer. Since the Nganasan were traditionally entirely dependent on wild reindeer for their survival and well-being, Dolgikh found it logical that they called their 'god of wild reindeer' *Nilu-ŋuə*. Furthermore, they told narratives of how they (the Nganasan people) had originated from Earth mother – narratives in which she was depicted as a wild reindeer doe.

Using a traditional evolutionist approach, Dolgikh delineated three stages of the development of Nganasan conceptions. In the first stage, the people identified with the wild reindeer; they were the 'wild reindeer people' originating from the earth. In the second stage, they recognised wild reindeer as the source of life and, consequently, the mother of wild reindeer, *Bakhiˀ-n'emy*, was the mother of their lives. She was occasionally visible in the herd as a reindeer with special features. This was still during the era of the matriarchate. Only in the third stage of development did patriarchal social structures emerge, which gave precedence to the father of wild reindeer, *Bakhiˀ-d'esy*, which came to be synonymous with *Nilu-ŋuə*. Since *D'oyba-ŋuə* was portrayed anthropomorphically with reindeer antlers, Dolgikh speculated that this conception had its origin in the conception of *Bakhiˀ-n'emy* as the sustainer of life, at a time when the ancestors of the Nganasan still identified with wild reindeer. When patriarchal social structures appeared, she was split into two beings: *D'oyba-ŋuə*, as the 'god of the Nganasan' and *Bakhiˀ-d'esy*. Both of them could be given the epithet *Nilu-ŋuə*, 'Life's god'.[38]

Yuriy B. Simchenko (1935–95)[39]

Yuriy B. Simchenko belonged to the next generation of Soviet ethnographers studying the Nganasan, after Popov and Dolgikh. He conducted his fieldwork on the Taymyr in the 1960s and 1970s.[40] In his works on the Nganasan world view, Simchenko relied on the analysis of his main tutor, Dolgikh, that it was possible to find traces of primeval human society in their myths, and that their ideology was shaped by the supposed original matriarchate. He also picked up the idea – shared by both Popov and Dolgikh[41] – that original human society had an essentially materialistic world view. As Simchenko put it, the original human world view was 'naively rationalistic' or 'mechanistic'.[42]

As for the concept of *ŋuə*, Simchenko noted that it originally meant 'heaven, sky', but when it was used for certain beings it should be translated as 'inhabitant of heaven, celestial being', even if it was considered that the being in question resided underground or on earth. He preferred not to translate *ŋuə* into 'god' and he denied that the Nganasan had any 'main god'. Neither of the numerous *ŋuəˀ* were believed to be almighty. In terms of their importance and assumed influence on people's lives, they were all equal.[43] In his last (posthumously published) work, Simchenko classified what he called the 'sacred beings in the Nganasan pantheon' into three main categories: (1) *N'emy-ŋuəˀ* or 'the Great Mothers'; (2) *ŋuəˀ*, who were the offspring of the Great Mothers; and (3) the offspring of *ŋuəˀ*, the 'third generation of supernatural beings', comprising visible *kojkəˀ* ('idols' or 'fetishes') and *d'yamədəˀ* ('helping spirits of shamans').[44] Simchenko did not specify which mothers were the great and most original mothers. In the creation stories for which he accounted, 'in the beginning' there were three mothers – *Məu-n'emy*, *Syrədə-n'emy* and *Kou-n'emy* – who emanated from an original unity. The sun (*Kou*) gave warmth to the earth (*Məu*), freeing her from the grip of the subterranean ice (*Syrədə*), and aroused the earth's potential for giving birth to living beings.[45] However, Simchenko also contended that what he called the 'demiurges', placed at the top the hierarchy, were Earth mother, Sun mother and Fire mother (*Tuy-n'emy*). These were all designated the kinship term *imidima*, 'grandmother' (ego's mother's mother), as opposed to second-rank mothers, who

were termed *kotu-oma*, 'aunt' ('ego's father's or mother's older sister; ego's father's or mother's older brother's wife').[46]

That these mothers had been granted the epithet *ŋuə* signalled that they were 'supernatural beings', Simchenko suggested.[47] However, his Nganasan interlocutors contended that it was a modern misconception to add *ŋuə* to terrestrial and subterranean beings, and that the term was originally reserved for celestial beings.[48]

Simchenko saw, in effect, two different, but interrelated, world views among the Nganasan – one held by 'ordinary people' and the other by 'shamans' (sing. *ŋəˀ*, plur. *ŋəðə*) and those who believed in the cosmology proposed by the *ŋəðə*. The first he called 'canonical' or 'traditional' – because it was the most ancient – and the other 'shamanic'. The canonical world view was characterised by realistic and materialistic conceptions of visible and concrete beings. Furthermore, the most prominent beings in this world view and its mythology were feminine, such as the three original mothers described in stories of the creation: *Məu-n'emy*, *Syrəðə-n'emy* and *Kou-n'emy*. They were synonymous with the actual and visible earth, the subterranean ice (permafrost) and the sun. The 'shamanic' world view, on the other hand, was characterised by irrational and religio-magical conceptions and its mythology contained 'supernatural beings', the most important of which were male.[49]

Galina N. Gracheva (1934–93)

Working in the late Soviet period, Galina N. Gracheva came to synthesise much of the earlier findings and theories on the Nganasan world view. Before starting her career as an ethnographer in the mid-1960s at the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Kunstkamera, in Leningrad, she had taken courses on the history of the Soviet Communist Party and was employed at the institute for the study of the party's history. Between 1969 and 1992, she conducted field research among the Nganasan on numerous occasions.[50]

Gracheva's main contribution to the Soviet study of the Nganasan world view was that she contributed more profound analyses based on Marxist-Leninist philosophy. She did not

contradict the earlier Nganasanologists but rather attempted to reconcile what seemed to be contradictions among them. For example, regarding the question of a hierarchy among various beings in the Nganasan world view, Gracheva denied neither the presence of a male sky god in heaven, *N'ilytyə-ŋuə*, as Popov had reported, the intertwining of this 'highest god' with *D'oyba-ŋuə* as Dolgikh had suggested, nor the prominent position of the nature mothers, first and foremost *Məu-n'emy*, in line with Dolgikh and Simchenko. Instead, in her reconstruction of the Nganasan world view at the turn of the twentieth century,[51] she found three different tendencies towards the 'hierarchisation' of beings among different members of the community. The first tendency was to designate one of the original nature mothers – the Earth, Sun or Moon mother, in Gracheva's account – the position as the most high-ranking being. Which mother was considered to be the female primogenitor of all living creatures (including the other nature mothers and their offspring) varied among Nganasan families. A second tendency was to place *N'ilytyə-ŋuə*, identified with *D'oyba-ŋuə*, at the top of a pantheon of otherwise subordinate beings. She also noted that *N'ilytyə-ŋuə* (or variants of this appellation with the meaning 'Living', 'Life' or 'Life's *ŋuə'*) could be used for other beings that were perceived as sustainers of life, for example, the Mother of wild reindeer. Gracheva found the third tendency in 'shamanism', in which a male father in the highest level of heaven was depicted as the most central being. This being was named according to the number of heavenly layers that was recognised (normally seventh or ninth *ŋuə*), or just *Bənduptəə-ŋuə*, 'Highest *ŋuə'*.[52]

These three tendencies were simultaneously present, but to Gracheva they also reflected different stages in the evolution of the Nganasan conceptions of reality and, by extension, those of humanity. Just like her predecessors, she aimed to explain the evolution of an original materialistic world view into a religious world view, and from an ideology coloured by the assumed matriarchal social structures to an ideology formed by later patriarchy. She also maintained Simchenko's distinction between the conceptions held by ordinary people and those held by the supposedly younger shamanism.

Gracheva further elaborated Popov's explanation of the origin of animism, and of the belief in souls, spirits and deities. With reference to Lenin's so-called copy theory – according to which conceptions or mental images are reflections of external objects and reality – she understood what has been described as 'soul beliefs' among the Nganasan as quite materialistic conceptions. These ideas were not conceptions of the 'supernatural', but rather of the 'natural', she contended.[53] In fact, Gracheva claimed that the Nganasan world view lacked a sharp distinction between the natural and the supernatural: 'the natural is ascribed what, from our perspective, are supernatural properties, and the supernatural manifests itself in entirely "material" objects.' However, a tendency towards the development of such a distinction could be traced.[54] Her point was that the origin of belief in the supernatural is to be found in the 'material practice', as Marx and Engels had put it. It is not ideas that cause material practice, but the other way around. Gracheva also appears to have been inspired by Marx's alienation theory when she explained Nganasan 'soul beliefs' from the notion that every individual (human or other) leaves some of their life or life force (*n'ilu* in Nganasan) – some of their 'being' or 'essence' (Ger. *Wesen*) as Marx would have put it – in their offspring, in the landscape in which they travel, in objects they manufacture or use and so on. In the evolutionary process, this life force subsequently became objectified as separate 'souls' and later as autonomous 'spirits'.[55]

Regarding the concept of *ŋuə*, Gracheva noted that it had both a 'profane' and a 'sacred' level that corresponded to different stages in the development of Nganasan ideas. She regarded the translations 'god', 'goddess' or 'devil' for *ŋuə*, either as a single word or in compound form, which was common among the Nganasan when speaking Russian, as conditional. Thus, in her 1983 monograph, she preferred to use the 'literal' translation 'heaven' (Ru. *nebo*), even when it denoted terrestrial or subterranean beings such as *Məu-ŋuə*, 'Earth heaven' or *Syrəðə-ŋuə*, 'Permafrost heaven', while acknowledging that this way of translating was also conditional.[56]

In order to explain her idea of the evolution of Nganasan ideas, from material and profane into spiritual and sacred, she used

the example of the Deer mother (a version of Dolgikh's example of the development of *Bakhiʔ-n'emy* mentioned above).[57] To the Nganasan, the concept of Deer mother (according to Gracheva) could basically mean five different things. First, it could mean a material and fully visible doe, that is, an ordinary mother of calves. Second, it denoted a material and visible doe, who gave birth to the very first calf, and who is thus the ancestress of all deer. She is still alive and sometimes visible in the herd, and she can be identified by some characteristic traits (for example, by deformities on her body). The third meaning is that of a material doe, but invisible and considered the ruler or mistress (Ru. *khozyayka*) of all deer. All living deer are her offspring. Fourth, the appellation could denote a semi-anthropomorphic mistress of all deer (half-human, half-reindeer). And finally, Deer mother could mean a fully anthropomorphic and invisible mistress of all deer.

According to Gracheva, this list reflected the stages of evolution from a 'profane' deer mother into a 'sacred' one. The first stage was completely profane. Already by the second stage, a process of 'sacralisation' had occurred. By the third stage, the Deer mother began transforming into a 'goddess' and the Nganasan supposedly gave her the epithet *ŋuə*. By the fourth and fifth stages of development, the term *ŋuə* was being used and it had then evolved from a concept denoting something concrete (heaven, sky, weather, air) into a term, as she put it, 'identical with the words "god" or "spirit"' through a process of 'deification' (Ru. *obozhestvleniye*).[58]

Gracheva claimed that all these different meanings were present at the time she conducted her fieldwork among the Nganasan. However, she commented that the third notion of the Deer mother was the most common one and that there were only rudimentary tendencies towards the fourth and fifth notions. This comment is revealing for two reasons. First, because it indicates the stage of development at which Gracheva considered the Nganasan world view should be understood (the third stage). Second, she does not appear to have had any clear empirical evidence regarding the last two stages. Instead, they were predicted, under the condition that the evolution of the Nganasan world view had been allowed to continue without the influence of modernity in the twentieth century.

Concluding Remarks

The translation of *ŋuə* into 'god' (alternatively 'devil, demon') was already at hand when Soviet ethnographers met the Nganasan. The Nganasan themselves used it when speaking Russian. This translation was a legacy of Christian missionaries and earlier ethnographers, who had coupled *ŋuə* with the concept of 'god'. In this sense, Soviet ethnographers were dependent on previous cartographers and maps, and it was difficult for them to entirely disregard this translation and classification. However, they managed to make this translation meaningful in the context of a Marxist-Leninist interpretation of the evolution of human thought and religion.

Soviet ethnographers apparently found the Nganasan category *ŋuə* to be complex and not easily translatable into Russian. Nonetheless, with evolutionism as a fundamental theoretical tool, they thought it would be possible to come to terms with the complexities of *ŋuə* in relation to the technical terminology they had inherited, re-evaluated from a Marxist perspective. Evolutionism also allowed them to not only speculate about the past or original conceptions of the Nganasan, but also about primeval human beings in general, in the material that they gathered in the twentieth century. They could also hypothesise about what would become of these conceptions. Originally, the *ŋuəˀ* were not gods, but quite material entities that had been rationally conceptualised as such by the ancestors of the Nganasan. It was only as a consequence of the changes in the 'material practice' and in the social structure – practices and structures that Nganasan ideas and world view reflected – that *ŋuəˀ* became abstracted and 'spiritualised' into spirits, goddesses of nature, and eventually gods on par with deities in other world views.

Soviet ethnographers were schooled in Marxist evolutionism. This was more pronounced during the second half of the Soviet period and this is why Popov, compared to the other Soviet Nganasanologists, relied on a more general, non-Marxist evolutionist theory. Marxist-Leninist theory was virtually the only theoretical model that was accepted or credible in Soviet ethnographic research. From the perspective of Soviet ideology, it was important and meaningful to show how human conceptions had

originally been materialistic and realistic, how they reflected a primitive egalitarian society with females in dominant positions, both among humans and in mythology, and how these conceptions had finally developed into conceptions that were 'identical with the words "god" or "spirit"', to quote Gracheva. This became a way of revealing the worldly origin of religion. In doing so, Soviet ethnographers also implied that it was quite possible for humans to have a non-religious, materialistic and egalitarian world view.

However, the question remains whether this analogy between *ŋuəˀ* and *spirits* and *gods* is reliable and meaningful outside the Marxist evolutionist context in which the Soviet ethnographers worked. I would say that the analogy is still rather weak, primarily because it was taken for granted. It was an inherited analogy, and no real attempts were made by Soviet ethnographers to establish criteria for comparisons among *ŋuəˀ* and other so-called spirits and gods. When Popov described *ŋuəˀ*, he used his own technical terminology – the higher logical types 'spirit masters', 'spirits' and 'gods' – rather than the lower logical types present among the Nganasan. Thus, his systematisation relied more on evolutionist theories than on his own empirical material. The same applies to the systematisations made by Dolgikh, Simchenko and Gracheva. The acquaintance of the scholars with evolutionism and Marxism preceded their acquaintance with the Nganasan world view and it is obvious that the evolutionist and Marxist theories made them select and understand their empirical data the way they did. Thus, it is difficult to see how the reconstructions of the Nganasan world view they proposed could be substantiated without the help of Marxist evolutionist theory.

However, for the sake of argument, let us assume that they were correct in their conclusions about the evolution of the notions of *ŋuəˀ*. Would we then be able to draw any general conclusions about the evolution of so-called spirits and gods from this? If we were to follow Russell's and Carter's rules we would not, at least not before we had traced the same common causes of notions of spirits or gods elsewhere – of *jinn*s, *daimon*s, *haltija*s, *kami*s, *Allah*, *Aphrodite*, *Ukko*, etc. From a strictly scientific perspective, I would say that the Soviet ethnographers' analogies between *ŋuəˀ*

and *spirits* and *gods* remain weak analogies and hypotheses, not substantiated results. This does not mean that their analogies and explanations are entirely implausible. I admit that, by virtue of their sheer logic, to some extent they are rhetorically persuasive and pedagogical. However, these analogies were first and foremost made meaningful in the Soviet context. Thus, if Soviet studies on the Nganasan world view are to be used as sources for future studies of religion (Nganasan religion or religion in general), the meanings and meaningfulness assigned to the technical terminology of Soviet ethnographers must be taken into account. We should not perpetuate their terminology without critical reflection, just as earlier Christian theological terminology should not be perpetuated uncritically.

Notes

1. See Sundström 2008: 217–220.

2. Since the present volume (and the seminar preceding it) is on comparison and source criticism, it could be added that my discussion here partly serves as a source critical evaluation of the ideological and theoretical biases of the ethnographies concerned. This is an important task because the lion's share of the data we have on the Nganasan world view, up until the end of the twentieth century, stems from Soviet ethnographers. However, in this chapter I confine myself to discussing the comparative categories used in the Soviet texts.

3. Tylor (1871) 1958: 8–11. Tylor further defined 'spiritual beings' as beings that 'are held to affect or control the events of the material world, and man's life here and hereafter; and it being considered that they hold intercourse with men, and receive pleasure or displeasure from human actions'. Such beliefs inevitably result in reverence, propitiation and worship of the beings in question. Tylor called this doctrine 'animism' and contended that it was found among 'savages' and 'civilized men' alike.

4. See e.g. Kryvelev 1956: 183; and the entry *bog* ('god') in *Bol'shaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya* 1950 and 1970.

5. Regarding this common scientific definition of religion in Soviet research, the ethnographer of religion, Yuriy Semenov (1980: 56),

felt a need to specify that: 'The essence of religion is not belief in the supernatural in general, but in [belief in] supernatural power. Furthermore, not in supernatural power in general, but in such [a power] that controls every concrete human being in daily life, [and] that decides whether after death, they are rewarded with salvation in heaven or condemned to torment in hell. Where there is no belief in such a power, there is no religion. In particular, deism, in which god emerges as a supernatural power who has created the world, but who does not interfere in human affairs, is not religion.' Semenov's clarification is in accord with Tylor's concept of spiritual beings (cf. note 3). In Semenov's way of phrasing, it is more obvious that it was mainly Judeo-Christian beliefs that served as a prototype for his definition.

6. Smith (1971) 1993: 244–249. It is interesting to note that Smith states that what is described and compared in Herodotus' history book are the different peoples' 'religions'. However, Herodotus never used, and probably never implied, any concept of religion in the modern sense. He wrote about 'gods', 'sacrifices', 'customs', 'oracles', 'burial practices', etc. as separate features for comparison among different peoples. It is rather Smith, together with many of us present-day readers, who imply 'religion' to be a unifying concept for such features (cf. Nongbri 2013 for a discussion on the lack of correspondences to the modern concept of religion in Antiquity). As Schilbrack (2010; 2017), to my mind, has convincingly argued, this does, however, not disqualify the applicability of 'our' modern concept of religion to foreign or historical cultures, in which it was unheard-of.

7. Kenneth L. Pike (1967: 37 f.), who coined the dichotomy of emic/etic for linguistics, with etic terms corresponding to what are usually called technical or scientific terms, emphasised that an etic approach was tantamount to a comparative approach in anthropology (and related disciplines).

8. Even in so-called universalistic interpretations in which conceptions of 'gods' (or 'spirits') of all times and places are understood as human responses to either the same transcendent reality or the same material (worldly) reality, the *differences* among the various conceptions of 'gods' (or 'spirits') are normally acknowledged (together with the similarities).

9. Carter 1998: 136 f.

10. Carter 1998: 139–145.

11. Carter 1998: 141.

12. Freiberger 2016: 60.

13. Bartha 2019.

14. Pyysiäinen & Ketola 1999: 209. This quote is very similar to the contention of the Ugandan anthropologist Okot p'Bitek who, in 1971, wrote that the 'African deities' described in scholarly books on indigenous African religions 'clothed with the attributes of the Christian God, are, in the main, creations of the students of African religions'. p'Bitek criticised, among others, the theologian and scholar of African religions, John S. Mbiti, for having 'smuggled enough Greek metaphysical material to hellenise three hundred African deities' (p'Bitek quoted in Cox 2014: 1 and Westerlund 1985: 62, respectively). In a later article, Pyysiäinen proposed the concept of 'counter-intuitive agents', instead of 'gods', and found that by this reconceptualisation 'we arrive at a precise, theoretically motivated, and empirically testable concept' (Pyysiäinen 2003: 163). However, as far as I can judge, his suggestion entails merely a change of term rather than a redefinition of the concept or category labelled by this term. From the above quote, it appears that p'Bitek also believed that a change of term from *gods* to *deities* avoided the problems he had identified.

15. I take this to include, beside the Germanic *god* (and cognates), all translations of the Hebrew *'ēl* / *'élōah* / *'ĕlōhīm* and Greek *theos* from the original Christian canon to other languages, such as the Latin *deus* (etymologically related to the Greek term), the Church Slavonic *bog'*, and so on.

16. Cox 2014.

17. Cox 2014: 143.

18. See e.g. Schüssler Fiorenza & Kaufman 1998: 137 f.; Gericke (2017: 1–3) provides an elucidating sample of different usages of *'ēl* / *'élōah* / *'ĕlōhīm* in the Hebrew Bible and comments that this shows that these words could 'be used to denote an almost inordinate variety of phenomena'.

19. As well as in certain present-day missionary understandings, for that matter, see e.g. Vallikivi 2011 for examples of Pentecostal Christian missions among a group of Samoyedic speakers.

20. Sundström 2012.

21. Paden (1988) 1994: 122.

22. For a more extensive discussion of Pyysiänen's and Ketola's argument, as well as of Carter's theories and the problem of category formation regarding 'spirits' and 'gods' in the academic study of religions, see Sundström 2008: 29–73.

23. Apart from the Nganasan, Popov specialised in the ethnography of the Dolgan, a hunting and reindeer-breeding people on the Taymyr Peninsula. The Dolgan language is closely related to Sakha, which was Popov's mother tongue together with Russian. He also studied so-called shamanism among the Sakha. For biographical information on Popov, see Sundström 2008: 116–121.

24. Popov (1945) 1984: 43. Even though the Nganasan avoided contact with Christian missionaries, there had been a mission on the Taymyr Peninsula ever since the end of the seventeenth century. There were no schools for the Nganasan until the 1930s. On the Christian mission among the Nganasan, see Gracheva 1979.

25. Popov (1945) 1984: 65.

26. Exactly whom Popov included in this 'us' is a bit unclear, but I take it that he meant the prototypical mind of rationalistic moderns, or just his fellow Soviet scholars. But this might be the same thing.

27. Popov presented his theory on the evolution of animism, using data from his studies of the Dolgan as empirical examples. The article was published in 1958, but the publication was preceded by a heated peer-review debate involving several renowned Soviet scholars, including ethnographers, archaeologists, a historian of religions, a psychologist and a philosopher. Many of his reviewers criticised Popov for putting forth un-Marxist ideas. For a detailed presentation and discussion of Popov's article and the peer-reviewers' criticism, see Sundström 2008: 121–144.

28. Tret'yakov 1869: 414.

29. Popov 1936: 48 ff.; Popov (1945) 1984: 47 ff.; for a summary in Swedish of Popov's presentation of *ŋuə*, see Sundström 2008: 223 ff.

30. Dolgikh 1976: 20. For biographical notes on Dolgikh, see Sundström 2008: 205–210.

31. Dolgikh 1968; Dolgikh 1976.

32. Kryvelev 1956.

33. Engels presented his theory in the book *Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigenthums und des Staats* in 1884. For further information on the role of the theory of matriarchy or mother-right in Soviet scholarship, see Sundström 2007: 39 f.

34. Dolgikh 1968: 214 ff.

35. Dolgikh 1968: 214, 224 f.; Dolgikh 1976: 21.

36. Dolgikh 1968: 216, 224 f.

37. The Nganasan language has different words for wild and domesticated reindeer, *bakhi* and *taa*, respectively. According to Dolgikh's information, the Nganasan also conceived of *Taa-n'emy*, 'Mother of domesticated reindeer'.

38. Dolgikh 1968: 224 ff.

39. The reason why I present Simchenko's research here before Gracheva's – despite the fact that he was a year younger than her – is that he conducted his fieldwork among the Nganasan earlier than she did, and his first publications on Nganasan ethnography appeared before hers. Thus, his research influenced Gracheva's more than Gracheva's research influenced his.

40. See further, Sundström 2008: 210–212.

41. Dolgikh 1976: 24 f.

42. Simchenko 1996a: 14; Simchenko 1976: 289.

43. Simchenko 1963: 169

44. Simchenko 1996b: 28.

45. Simchenko 1976: 268; Kortt & Simčenko 1990: 31; Simchenko 1996a: 13; Simchenko 1996b: 5 f., 12 f.

46. Simchenko 1976: 264 ff.; Kortt & Simčenko 1985: 120, 136.

47. Simchenko 1996a: 14.

48. Kortt & Simčenko 1990: 33, 100 f.

49. Simchenko 1976: 289; Kortt & Simčenko 1990: 31 f.; Simchenko 1996a: 13–15, 182.

50. See further, Sundström 2008: 212–215.

51. This was the common period referred to by Soviet ethnographers studying the peoples of the Soviet North in the 1970s and 1980s, because they often chose to rely on the information of informants born at the turn of that century, i.e. persons who had been brought up before the Russian Revolution and the subsequent modernisation of the indigenous northern societies.

52. Gracheva 1983: 31, 48.

53. Gracheva 1983: 52–75; see also Gracheva 1975 and Gracheva 1976.

54. Gracheva 1983: 15.

55. Gracheva 1983: 52–75.

56. Gracheva 1983: 23, 27.

57. Regrettably, Gracheva does not mention any Nganasan name or term for this being. She only discussed the Russian *Olen'-mat'*, literally translated as 'Deer mother'. For this reason, it is unclear whether the concept referred to the mother of wild or domesticated reindeer, or perhaps the mother of deer in general. The lack of a Nganasan term for this being also gives the impression that she is a theoretical construct of Gracheva's, rather than an empirically documented notion collected from the Nganasan.

58. Gracheva 1983: 49–50.

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9. The Role of Academia in Finding, Claiming, and Authorizing Sakha Religions

Liudmila Nikanorova

Introduction

Scholarly writings are often perceived as legitimate and authoritative sources of knowledge by fellow academics, various political and social institutions, and the general public. When disputes and differences in opinion occur, scholarly voices are the ones that are typically called upon in an effort to make a more substantial argument. In this chapter, I address the role and power of scholars and scholarly endeavours, in regard to the processes of finding, claiming and authorizing Sakha practices as religious.

Throughout the last four hundred years, Sakha people and their practices have become the objects of translations into the Russian language and Russian worldviews on the one hand. On the other hand, Russians and their practices became the objects of translations into the Sakha language and Sakha worldviews.[1] Although translations of practices went both ways, the power dynamics were far from equal. Russians and other Europeans had the resources to make written records of their translations using their own vocabularies. These written documents were consistently treated as legitimate sources of Sakha people's past and their traditional worldviews, which quickly placed Europeans into the position of definers of Sakha practices. Bjørn Ola Tafjord argues that 'to define is to exercise power'.[2] This chapter demonstrates how this power has been exercised in regard to Sakha practices.

Inspired by the scholars in the field of critical study of religion who challenge the assumption of religion as something universal

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and timeless, I explore the role of scholars in recording and authorizing Sakha religions.[3] I make use of Markus Dressler and Arvind-Pal Mandair's theoretical model of religion-making,[4] which focuses on the way religion is being made through different dimensions and different actors.[5] I focus in particular on its dimension of *religion-making from (a pretended) outside*, which I apply heuristically in my study. This dimension encourages to explore the impact of scholars and scholarly works in the processes of religion-making, and how they reify and normalize certain ideas as characteristic or even essential, to the notion of religion.

Finding Religion and Shamans among Sakha

European travellers to Siberia, the marker of the colonized territories by Russia, were the first to leave ethnographic accounts of Sakha people from the seventeenth century. Among them were Danish diplomat Eberhart Isbrand Ides (1657–1709), Swedish officer Philipp Johan von Strahlenberg (1676–1747), and German-born Russian historian Gerhard Müller (1705–1783). Their records were typically written in European languages and featured Christian perspectives in the descriptions of Sakha practices, which made them the first translators of Sakha worldviews towards the domain of religion.[6] The value of these writings was accentuated by one of the most respected ethnographers of Sakha origin Gavriil Ksenofontov (1888–1938). He argues that the writings of Ides, Stranhlenberg and Müller were more objective than the writings of later scholars, who, according to Ksenofontov,[7] were corrupted by Russian and Tsarists attitudes.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, missionaries, political exiles, and ethnographers with predominantly Christian backgrounds continued to translate and categorize Sakha practices.[8] As a result, a new category appears in descriptions of Sakha practices – 'shamanism'. The term 'shaman' is not domestic to Sakha language. The Sakha practitioner *oyuun* along with the Manchu *sama*, the Buryat *böö* and the Khanty *ńajt* was compared to the Evenki *šaman*. Based on these comparisons, Evenki šaman transformed into a collective term 'shaman'.[9] But what was the premise of such a comparison?

According to the historian of religions Håkan Rydving, different practitioners around the world were labelled as shamans because of their 'analogous functions' (Fr. *de fonctions analogues*).[10] However, not all peoples whose practitioners had analogous functions to the Evenki *šaman* were compared to each other. No Russian or other Slavic practitioners were compared to *šaman*. Settler practitioners with similar features and functions were named as *tselitel'* (Ru. 'healer'), *znakhar'* (Ru. 'know-er'), *vedun* (Ru. 'lead-er'), but never shaman. The term shaman was reserved to the non-settler societies of Siberia, historically categorized as *inorodtsy* (Ru. 'of other kind'), to mark their assumed ethnic and civilizational difference. Such comparisons were never impartial and neutral, and further fed colonial imaginaries that continuously attempted to primitivize colonized communities.

Sakha practitioners were not only labelled as shamans but also classified into holy and evil types. Ivan Khudyakov (1842–1876) was a Russian folklorist and revolutionary who was sentenced to exile in Verkhoyansk.[11] There he learnt Sakha, compiled a Sakha–Russian dictionary, and translated the Old Testament from Russian to Sakha.[12] In his monograph *A Brief Description of Verkhoyansk District* (Ru. *Kratkoe opisanie verkhoyanskogo okruga*), Khudyakov writes:[13]

> Shamans are the translators of gods on earth. They are the interpreters of god's will, givers of health and diseases, abundance and hunger, good and evil. Therefore, they are divided into good and evil, who shaman for the devil.
>
> Very occasionally there might be a sorcerer-shaman (*aptaakh-oyuun*) and a sorceress-shaman (*aptaakh-udagan*). Even the regular shamans are dangerous people: there are some who do not have shadows, while others have two: one of their own, and the other of their devil.[14]

This short, yet illustrative, excerpt demonstrates the way Sakha practitioners were described and how observers found not only religion among Sakha, but also shamans and a devil. Such religionization, shamanization and demonization of Sakha practices and practitioners, who were considered 'primitive', was common in nineteenth-century language. Wacław Sieroszewski (1858–1945),

a Polish revolutionary who spent 12 years in Siberian exile (also in Verkhoyansk like Khudyakov) published the first comprehensive ethnographic account of Sakha practices, livelihood and worldview: *Yakuts: Experience of Ethnographic Research* (Ru. *Yakuty: opyt etnograficheskogo issledovaniya*). Like Khudyakov, Sieroszewski suggested his own typology of Sakha shamans:

a) *The last* [Sa. *kenniki oyuun*]; they are not really shamans but various hysterical, crazy, whacky and strange people, who have abilities to interpret and see prophetic dreams, tell fortunes, treat simple diseases, chase away dirty devils; they lack *emehet* and are not able to shaman with drums, spells and sacrifices.
b) *Medium shamans* [Sa. *orto oyuun*], – are the ordinary sorcerers, who possess magical powers of different levels, corresponding to their talents and their *emehet*.
c) *Great shamans, whose patronizing spirit is Uluu-toyon himself* [Sa. *ulakhan oyuun, emehetteeh uluutuiar Uluu toionton ongorulaah*], – are powerful sorcerers; their call is addressed to the lord of darkness himself; I was told that there can be only four great shamans at the same time in the Yakut land.[15]

Sakha *oyuun*s were seen by Sieroszewski either as mentally unstable people or as followers of the devil. According to Sundström 'depicting foreign people's spiritual and political leaders as frauds, maniacs or devil-worshippers could be the only reason needed to motivate colonisation and the subjugation of the land and the peoples.'[16] Sieroszewski was one of many who mirrored these attitudes in his writings, where he dehumanized Sakha *oyuun*s. Another political exile, Vasily Troshchansky (1843–1898), is largely known for his work *The Evolution of Black Faith (Shamanism) among the Yakuts* (Ru. *Evolutsia chernoi very (shamanstva) u yakutov*) (1902), where he labelled Sakha practices as 'black/dark faith'.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, ethnographers with Sakha origin began writing about Sakha practices. The Sakha scholars' contribution does not only consist of writing ethnographies using their linguistic expertise on Sakha language, it also includes a unique access to daily Sakha life and worldviews. However, this is not to imply that Sakha scholars did not

lean on earlier scholarships and categories. Due to their academic training and the environment they worked in, which were both heavily informed by Christian, Russian and Western perspectives. Sakha scholars also wrote about Sakha religion and Sakha shamans using established terminologies. For instance, Sakha ethnographer Gavriil Ksenofontov drew analogies between Christianity and shamanism to demonstrate that Siberian shamanism represented an organized religion just like Christianity.[17] This can be seen as an attempt to analyse Sakha practices as equally complex and legitimate as the Russian practices.[18]

The above-discussed ethnographic accounts from the nineteenth and early twentieth century are broadly employed to conceptualize Sakha practices by scholars and the Sakha public today. Terminologies used by these authors or their colonial attitudes do not necessarily form an issue considering the academic traditions at that time. However, the way they are currently considered and interpreted as authoritative unbiased descriptors of Sakha traditional authentic practices makes it difficult to acknowledge the contemporary Sakha practices that do not fit into these accounts. Moreover, assuming that Sakha religions existed statically for several centuries not only freezes Sakha in the past, it also disregards the processes of translations of Sakha practices towards religion. These translations were made by a few European individuals with predominantly Christian backgrounds, who were convinced that religion was a universal phenomenon found in all cultures during all time periods. Furthermore, the category of shamanism exotified Sakha practices and placed Sakha people outside of modernity. These processes of religion-making and shamanism-making that were uncritically exercised by ethnographers justified anti-religious and modernizing Soviet missions in Sakha context, which led to dramatic consequences for Sakha practitioners.

Soviet Policies on Religion and Eradications of Shamans

Contrary to popular belief, religion or adherence to a religious community was not initially criminalized as such in the Soviet Union. The Constitution of the Soviet Union from 1924 contained article 4 that guaranteed 'religious freedom' (Ru. *svoboda religioznykh ispovedanii*), as well as 'freedom of anti-religious

propaganda' (Ru. *svoboda anti-religioznoi propagandy*). Anatoly Lunacharsky from People's Commissar for Education[19] (Ru. *Narodnyi komissariat prosveshcheniya*) made some statements in which he claimed that religious freedom could be suspended 'when it is abused for the direct class struggle against the proletarian dictatorship'.[20] Then in 1929 new laws on 'Religious Associations' and amendments to the constitution which prohibited all forms of public, social, communal, educational, publishing or missionary activities were adopted.[21] As a result, hundreds of priests were executed, thousands of churches were destroyed, and publication of most religious material was prohibited. These persecutions affected not only Russian Orthodox Christians but also Muslims, Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists and practitioners, who were categorized and described in religious terms such as shamans. Shamans were labelled as 'class enemies' and selected for complete eradication.[22] Sakha practitioners named *oyuun*, based on its translation into 'shaman', were imprisoned and executed as a result of anti-religious policies in the Soviet Union.[23]

Not only religious but also the ethnic identity of a person was compromised in favour of promoting an idea of a Soviet citizen. In 1928, Stalin began 'The Great Transformation', a process which in the words of Susan Crate aimed 'to wipe out all backwardness and reminders of the past, and to manipulate ethnic differences into a streamlined Soviet identity'.[24] The policies of internationalism (Ru. *mezhdunarodnost'*) and nativization (Ru. *korenizatsia*) were promoted to create local intelligentsias that could bring socialism and modernity to their compatriots.[25] According to Peers & Kolodeznikova,[26] this type of social and cultural engineering during the Soviet Union, has influenced the way ethnicity and religion are currently framed throughout the former Soviet Union when the idea of a Soviet citizen faded and the focus was redirected to different expressions of ethnic and religious identities. In the Sakha context, this period is often described as the Sakha national revitalization.[27]

Claiming Sakha religions

In 1990, Sakha declared their sovereignty within the Russian Federation, which resulted in the establishment of the Sakha Parliament, the adoption of the Sakha Constitution (1993), and the

recognition of Sakha as the official language within the Republic. In 1990, freedom of conscience was officially re-introduced in Russia, which had a major impact on the way Sakha practices were conceptualised.[28]

The 1990s were a rather chaotic period when various Sakha activists attempted to run several organizations that claimed to revive Sakha language, Sakha culture, Sakha philosophy and Sakha spirituality.[29] In 1996, the first president of the Sakha Republic, Mikhail Nikolayev, founded the Akademiia dukhovnosti (Ru.) (Academy of Spirituality) in which various actors, including the Russian Orthodox bishop of Sakha, were assigned to reawaken and develop spirituality in the multi-ethnic population of the Republic.[30] However, by the end of the 1990s Sakha authorities turned from encouragement to distancing themselves from Sakha activists as some of them developed radical religious and national attitudes.[31] Some activists, Lazar' Afanase'v-Teris and Vladimir Konkakov, continued their work and became the initiators of the three religious organizations that claim to represent Sakha religion today: Aar Ayuu Itegele (Kondakov), Ayuu Itegele (Afanase'v-Teris), and Tengrism (Afanase'v-Teris).

One group of scholars and activists established the 'Social Centre of Yakutia' (Ru. *obshchestvennyi tsentr yakutii*) in 1989, members of which founded a group Sakha Tyla (Sa.) ('Sakha language') in collaboration with Sakha linguists.[32] In 1990, Sakha Tyla led by Sakha linguist Lazar' Afanasi'ev-Teris opened a school called Kut-Syur, which positioned itself as a philosophical-theological school with the main purpose of revitalising the moral values of Sakha. The teaching of this school was named Aiyy Eyerege (Sa.) ('Teaching of Aiyy'), and this was claimed to be rooted in Tengrism.[33] At about the same time in 1990, Sakha historian Vladimir Kondakov founded the Association of Sakha Medicine, arguing that Sakha medicine is a part of the spiritual culture (Ru. *dukhovnaia kul'tura*) of Sakha.[34]

Aar Ayuu Itegele

Vladimir Kondakov is a well-known figure in Sakha society beyond his role as the founder of the Association of Sakha Medicine. He led the ceremonial part of the Sakha annual event Tuymaada Yhyakh from 1991 to 1997, and actively participated in the

conceptualization of *yhyakh*. *Yhyakh*, recognized as the Sakha national day in 1991, is one of the most significant and largest annual Sakha celebrations. Scholars have been historically describing *yhyakh* as a 'shamanic ceremony', 'religious ritual', and recently as an 'indigenous festival'. These descriptions of *yhyakh*s, however, are nearly absent among the contemporary visitors, who attend *yhyakh*s predominantly to see sports competitions, concerts, and to enjoy the day in the company of friends and family.[35] Tuymaada Yhyakh is the first public *yhyakh* that took place in Yakutsk in 1991, the capital of the Sakha Republic. It was named after Tuymaada valley where Yakutsk city is situated. Rapidly, the Tuymaada Yhyakh grew into a massive event celebrated by thousands of people.

Vladimir Kondakov introduces himself in his books as a professor, doctor of medical sciences, researcher of shamanism (Ru. *issledovatel' shamanizma*) and *aiyy oyuun*.[36] American anthropologist Marjorie Balzer met Vladimir Kondakov in 1991 and writes about him as *aiyy oyuun*, which she translates into a 'Sakha shaman'.[37] By the time of his death in 2009, Kondakov had written a six-volume book *Aar Ayuu Itegele* (2003–06) along with many other publications on Sakha medicine and Sakha worldviews. With these books as basis members of the Association of Sakha Medicine applied in 2011 to the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation with the request to register 'Aar Ayuu Itegele' as a religious organization.[38] This was the first time an organized group claimed to represent Sakha religion. The application was written by Sakha scholars in philosophy (Viktor Mikhailov) and philology (Nikolai Petrov and Konstantin Utkin), and sent in by the initiator of the organization, Avgustina Yakovleva.[39] In this application, Aar Ayuu Itegele argues that it represents the 'ancient religion of Sakha people' (Ru. *drevniaia religiia naroda Sakha*):

> According to the scholarly literature, historical roots of religion Aar Ayuu Itegele is in pan-Turkic religion – Tengrism [Ru. *tengrianstvo*]. Aar Ayuu represents the ancient religion of Sakha people […]
>
> […] Aar Ayuu can be categorized as paganism [Ru. *yazychestvo*] considering its polytheistic system, attention to the world of spirits [Ru. *dukhov*], sacrifices for appeasement of spirits, and attribution

> to all things with qualities of living entities. Due to the exceptional role of a shaman [Ru. *shaman*], religion Aar Ayuu can be called shamanism.[40]

The organization acknowledges a variety of categories that could be applied to Aar Ayuu Itegele such as paganism (Ru. *yazychestvo*) and shamanism. This can be seen as an example of how Aar Ayuu Itegele chooses to effectively manage earlier established categories applied to the notion of Sakha religion. However, they do not claim shamanism or paganism, instead they choose to name their practice Aar Ayuu Itegele.

The registration process consisted of several questions that were set by an expert committee. One of them was 'Can Aar Ayuu Itegele be considered as a religion?' To answer this question both the applicants and the committee referred to definitions offered by classic theorists of religion such as William James, Sigmund Freud, James George Frazer, Max Sheler and Émile Durkheim, as well as Russian scholars of religion such as Olga Lobazova, Gennadiy Torgashev, Georgy Plekhanov and Dmitry Ugrinovich.[41] Another question was: 'Is it possible to teach religion and train its followers without formalized and published sources of teaching?' To make an argument, the applicants argued referring to Émile Durkheim that illiterate religions just like the literate religions have similar social roles, and therefore both can be seen as religions.[42] In 2018, I met one of the initiators of Aar Ayuu Itegele, Tamara Timofeevna, who shared with me that the organization later decided to write 'a Bible and Quran like book' in order to fit better the criteria of the Ministry of Justice.

One member of the appointed expert committee, Popkova wrote a special opinion (Ru. *osoboe mnemie*) regarding the application of Aar Ayuu Itegele.[43] Special opinions from the experts, usually of scholarly backgrounds, were extensively used during the registration processes by the Ministry of Justice. The major critique on Aar Ayuu Itegele was, according to Popkova, its claim to represent the ancient Sakha religion. Referring to the submitted application text and Vladimir Kondakov's books, Popkova commented on the extensive use of terms as karma, aura, trans, ecstasy, cosmic powers, pantheon of gods and astral spirits.[44] These terms according to Popkova suggested that Aar Ayuu Itegele is

not an ancient religion of Sakha, but a recent reconstruction and an example of the New Age movement. Following this Popkova recommended a further examination of the organization. Despite her critique, Aar Ayuu Itegele was registered as a religious organization in 2011 and became the first officially registered religious organization that claimed to represent Sakha religion.

Ayuu Itegele

Another key figure to this discussion is Lazar' Afanas'ev-Teris, a philologist by education and one of the founders of the Kut-Syur school, who applied to the Ministry of Justice in 2015 to register his organization Ayuu Itegele as religious:

> Religion Ayuu is a modern Tengrism [Ru. *tengrianstvo*]. Many scholars considered the religion of Sakha surprisingly organized and systematized. The religion of Sakha is based on the belief in Ayuu. His full name is Urung Ayuu, which in translation means the White Creator [Ru. *belyi tvorets*] […]
>
> […] Children of Ayuu together with the White Creator form nine heavens. In other religions, there are also similar notions, such as Jacob's ladder from the Old Testament. […]
>
> The main source of Ayuu religion is *olonkho*, the greatest creation of Sakha people.[45]

The comparison of nine heavens in Ayuu Itegele to Jacob's ladder is one of the examples of Afanas'ev-Teris comparing Ayuu Itegele to Christianity. Like the initiators of Aar Ayuu Itegele, Teris also stresses the important role of Sakha oral culture, specifically the Sakha epic style *olonkho*, which was recognized by UNESCO and added to their list for Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2005.

Sakha historian Valeriy Vasil'ev, who was a member of the expert committee appointed by the Ministry of Justice, wrote a special opinion on Ayuu Itegele. He made the following comments:

- calendar celebrations and rituals of Ayuu Itegele seem to be rooted in Christian celebrations and are following the solar calendar. Whereas Sakha have been historically following the lunar calendar;

- according to Gerhard Müller, Sakha were divided into various 'sects' and their religious system has not been as systematized as Ayuu Itegele claims;
- there are no sources about nine *chakras* among Sakha. This element has been borrowed from the Sanskrit terminology.[46]

Vasil'ev concluded that Ayuu Itegele is a new movement of Tengrism with cultural elements from the East and from the West.[47] Müller's account from the early eighteenth century was used to contest the applicant's claim made in the twentyfirst century about the Sakha religious system. The solar calendar celebrations that Ayuu Itegele articulated as Sakha were dismissed solely based on the scholarly sources claiming that Sakha followed the lunar calendar. At last, the final comment criticizing the existence of the nine chakras among Sakha was again based on the lack of the written scholarly sources. All these examples demonstrate the power of vocabularies employed by the early ethnographic records of Sakha practices. Despite these critical remarks, Ayuu Itegele was registered in 2015 and became the second organization that claimed to represent Sakha religion.

Tengrism

In 2016, Lazar' Afanas'ev-Teris again applied to the Ministry of Justice to request the registration of his other organization Tangara (Tengri) Itegele as religious.[48] He applied together with Lena Fedorova, official representative of Tangara Itegele. Like in Ayuu Itegele, Afanas'ev argues that Tengrism (Ru. *tengrisnastvo*) is the traditional monotheistic religion of Sakha people with Tengri as the one and only God-Creator.[49] To which the expert committee responded:

> The practice of this religious community is nothing but an artificial reconstruction based on the fragments of Sakha traditional beliefs and compilation of elements of the religions of Turkic peoples, Buddhism and Christianity.[50]

In addition, Tangara Itegele was criticized for a lack of religious activities such as services, rituals and ceremonies. The committee also commented on the double religious affiliation of Afanas'ev-Teris

(with both Ayuu Itegele and Tangara Itegele), which they found as contradicting to the established traditions and practice of confessional affiliation.[51] As a result, the application of Tangara Itegele was declined.

In 2017, Lena Fedorova applied again to the Ministry of Justice. This time, Tangara Itegele collaborated with one of the most prominent Sakha ethnographers, Professor Anatoly Gogolev. Gogolev supported the application and presented his special opinion stating that 'the organization Tangara Itegele is authentic to the teaching of Tangara (Tengri), as is presented in a number of research materials.'[52] Despite Gogolev's opinion, the expert committee concluded:

> At the moment, the scientific theory about Tengrism as a common religion of Euroasian peoples, on which Tangara Itegele is based on, cannot be either approved or disapproved because of the lack of research and scientific sources.
>
> Ceremonies and rituals of this organization are not independent and overlap with the religious practice of Aar Ayuu Itegele and Ayuu Itegele, which both claim to represent the traditional religion of Sakha people.
>
> The expert committee concludes that Tangara Itegele does not fit the criteria of a religious organization.[53]

Committee member, Nikolaev, wrote also a special opinion regarding the submitted application:

1. Application is written by non-competent 'office theorists', who do not even differentiate the concepts of 'religious community' [Ru. *religioznoe ob'edinenie*] and 'religious organization' [Ru. *religioznaia organizatsia*].
2. Application is based on research of various scholars, which contradicts to the basic condition of any religion, which is belief in the Absolute [Ru. *absolut*].
3. There is no proof in the application that Tangara Itegele is the successor of the ancient belief of Sakha in Tangara (Tengri).
4. It is clear that Tangara Itegele used Christian and Islamic religious organizations as templates for their own practices.[54]

Firstly, the organization was challenged for their lack of scholarly sources about Tangara Itegele. Secondly, notwithstanding this

argument it was then criticized for using academic research as a resource instead of forming their teaching based solely on belief in 'an absolute, as in any other religion'. Moreover, all the of the three organizations had to meet the standards of religious organizations, which were clearly informed by the world religions paradigm, but at the same time they were accused of using world religions as templates. Despite these contradicting arguments, Nikolaev then concludes that Tangara Itegele can be recognized as a religious organization as it does fit the nature of a religious organization: it performs religious activities and it is practised in the territory of the Sakha Republic.[55]

The extensive ways in which academic research was employed in the registration processes is also apparent in an attempt of Nikolaev to delegitimize some scholars who he reduced to non-competent 'office theorists'. Who is then regarded as a competent scholar? In this struggle of competing authenticities among Sakha scholars, Sakha activists and Sakha state institutions, it seems that pre-Soviet research conducted by non-Sakha ethnographers treated as the most legitimate. In April 2019, on its third attempt, Tangara Itegele was finally registered as a religious organization by the Ministry of Justice and Lena Fedorova became the official leader of Tangara Itegele. Lazar' Afanas'ev-Teris passed away in late 2017 without ever witnessing this recognition.

Concluding Remarks

My research findings revealed a multi-layered role of scholars and academic research both in the processes of finding, claiming and authorizing Sakha religions. The leaders of the three main religious organizations that claim to represent Sakha religion have scholarly backgrounds, Vladimir Kondakov in history and Lazar' Afanas'ev-Teris in philology. All three organizations, which intended to claim Sakha religion and establish themselves as a religious organization, as well as the Ministry of Justice referred to classics in study of religion, such as Sigmund Freud and Émile Durkheim, to make their arguments. The registration processes of Aar Ayuu Itegele, Ayuu Itegele, and Tengrism demonstrate the normalized features of what a religious organization is expected to be in order to be registered by the state institutions. These ideas, informed by the world religions paradigm, include the

existence of a sacred book such as the Bible or the Quran, regular religious services and teachings. Christianity, Islam and Buddhism were viewed as the ultimate examples of what a religion should be like. The applicants representing Aar Ayuu Itegele, Ayuu Itegele, and Tengrism had to meet these expectations. At the same time, in some occasions they were accused for following these standards too closely and for lacking traditional to Sakha aspects of religion. The Ministry of Justice used the assistance of contemporary scholars by forming special committees, members of which wrote special opinions.

One of the central issues raised in these special opinions was what was authentic Sakha religion and what was artificial reconstruction. In these debates, research of pre-Soviet ethnographers was regarded as the most authoritative source of authentic Sakha practices and seem to have been nearly immune to criticism. However, as I have discussed in the first part of this chapter, the processes of religion-making and shamanism-making conducted by pre-Soviet ethnographers need to be acknowledged and their definitions contextualised. Scholarly categorizations, translations and comparisons have had practical implications for Sakha people, from being targeted by missionaries to being subjected to Soviet eradications. As this case has shown, Sakha people attempt to control translations of their practices, whereas legislations and scholars continue to push their working vocabularies informed by colonial narratives of shamanism, authenticity, and world religions paradigm.

Notes

1. For more on translation as a theoretical concept, see Clifford 2013; de la Cadena 2015; and Tafjord 2017.

2. Tafjord 2006: 374.

3. See Asad 1993; *Secularism and Religion-Making* 2011; Gill 2018; Masuzawa 2011; and Nongbri 2013.

4. Mandair & Dressler 2011.

5. Departing from social constructivist and post-colonial approaches, and inspired by the studies of Edward Said (1978), Jonathan Z. Smith (1988), Talal Asad (1993; 2003), and Tomoko Masuzawa (2011),

Dressler and Mandair suggest three different levels of religion-making: (1) *religion-making from above*, that is as a strategy from a position of power, where religion becomes an instrument of governmentality, a means to legitimize certain politics and positions of power; (2) *religion-making from below*, that is, as a politics where particular social groups in a subordinate position draw on a religionist discourse to re-establish their identities as legitimate social formations distinguishable from other social formations through tropes of religious difference and/ or claims for certain rights; and (3) *religion-making from (a pretended) outside*, that is, scholarly discourses on religion that provide legitimacy to the first two processes of religion-making by systematizing and thus normalizing the religious/secular binary and its derivates (Mandair & Dressler 2011: 21).

6. More on translations and domains, see Tafjord 2016.

7. Ksenofontov 1937: 23.

8. E.g. Khudyakov 1890; Sieroszewski 1896; Troshchanky 1902; and Jochelson 1906.

9. Znamenski 2003: 1; Rydving 2011: 2; Sundström 2012: 356.

10. Rydving 2011: 8.

11. A town in the Verkhoyansky District of the Sakha Republic.

12. Khudyakov [1860s] 1969: 14.

13. Khudyakov [1860s] 1969: 303–306.

14. *Шаманы – переводчики богов на земле. Они толкователи божеской воли, податели здоровья и болезни, изобилия и голода, добра и зла. Потому они и делятся на добрых (святых) шаманов и злых (едунов, сиэмэх ойуун), которые шаманят только на дьявола. Очень редко бывают еще колдуны-шаманы (аптах-ойун) и колдуньи шаманки (аптах-удаҕан). Однако и простые шаманы – страшные люди: из них есть такие, у которых тени не видно (күлүгэ көстүбэт баҕадьы), и другие, у которых две тени: одна их собственная, а другая их дьявола* (Khudyakov [1860s] 1969: 306).

15. *а) Последние, кенники оюн; это собственно не шаманы, а разные истеричные, полоумные, юродивые и тому подобные странные люди, обладающие способностью толковать и видеть вещие сны, ворожить, лечить более легкие болезни, прогонять мелких, пакостливых чертей; он лишены амагять и не могут справлять*

больших шаманств с барабанным боем, заклинаниями и принесением жерств. б) Средние шаманы, орто оюн, – это обыкновенные чародеи, обладающие волшебной силой в разной степни, сообразно своему таланту и силе своих амагять. Наконец: с) Великие шаманы, покровительствующий дух которых ниспослан самим Улу-тоёном, улахан оюн, амагятях улутоёр Улу-тоёнтон онгорулах, – это могучие чародеи; их зову благосклонно внимает сам властелин тьмы; таких шаманов, мне говорили может быть одновременно только четыре во всей якутской земле (Sieroszewski 1896: 606).

16. Sundström 2012: 356.

17. Ksenofontov 1929.

18. See Ksenofontov 1929.

19. Which in 1946 transformed into the Ministry of Education.

20. Lunacharsky 1929, cited in Pospielovsky 1987: 52.

21. Pospielovsky 1987: 41.

22. Znamensky 2003: 23.

23. Vasil'eva 2000.

24. Crate 2006.

25. Sundström 2015: 81.

26. Peers & Kolodeznikova 2015.

27. E.g. Balzer 2008; Crate 2006; Peers & Kolodeznikova 2015; Sundström 2015.

28. The USSR law 'On the freedom of conscience and the religious organizations' has been introduced the 1st of October 1990 and has been followed the 25th October of the same year by the Russian Federation's law 'On the freedom of the confessions'.

29. For more details on the religious revitalization in the 1990s in the Sakha Republic, see Vasili'ev 2000; Filatov 2000; and Sundström 2012.

30. Filatov 2000; Sundström 2012.

31. Filatov 2000; Sundström 2012. Representatives of the Sakha organizations Kut-Syur and Sakha Keskile.

32. Vasil'ev 2000: 257.

33. Vasil'ev 2000: 257.

34. Vasil'ev 2000: 257.

35. Nikanorova 2019.

36. Kondakov 2003–06.

37. Balzer 2016: 21. Balzer (2016: 21) writes that she periodically visited the Association of Sakha Medicine and Vladimir Kondakov in a period of 1991–2007.

38. *Ministerstvo Yustitsii* 2011.

39. *Ministerstvo Yustitsii* 2011: 3.

40. *Ministerstvo Yustitsii* 2011: 5.

41. *Ministerstvo Yustitsii* 2011: 5 f.

42. *Ministerstvo Yustitsii* 2011: 12.

43. Popkova 2012.

44. Popkova 2012: 2.

45. *Ministerstvo Yustitsii* 2015: 6 f.

46. Vasil'ev 2015: 1.

47. Vasil'ev 2015: 2.

48. Ministerstvo Yustitsii Rossiiskoi Federatsii. 2016. 'Ekspertnoe zakluchenie v otnoshenii Mestnoi religioznoi organizatsii goroda Yakutska Tangara iteğele (Religiia Tengri)'. No. 14/02-30/5765 from June 15.

49. *Ministerstvo Yustitsii* 2016: 3.

50. *Ministerstvo Yustitsii* 2016: 4.

51. *Ministerstvo Yustitsii* 2016: 4.

52. Gogolev 2017. Ru.: *Сведения об основах вероисповедания Местной религиозной организации «Тангара Итэгэлэ (Вера в Тангара (Тенгри)» аутентичны вероучению Тангара (Тенгри), представленному в ряде других исследовательских источников.*

53. *Ministerstvo Yustitsii* 2017: 5.

54. Nikolaev 2017: 1 f.

55. Nikolaev 2017: 1 f.

Abbreviations

Fr. French

Ru. Russian

Sa. Sakha

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The indigenous religious traditions of the peoples of the Arctic and Sub-Arctic areas were and are highly varied. Despite their diversity, these traditions have often been presented as similar. In recent research, however, variations and local characteristics have gained increasing attention. The explicit emphasis in this volume is on differences and nuances. Accordingly, critical analyses of earlier research, different forms of source criticism, and comparative methods that look for more than just similarities are applied here as essential analytical tools.

Some of the chapters focus on aspects of the traditional cultures of these northern peoples, others offer critical readings of research about them. The themes of the chapters that deal with traditional practices and narratives vary from hostage traditions to ancestor mountains, from bear rituals and sweat baths to the ritual drum. The research historical chapters discuss source critical and terminological problems, or consider the contributions of scholars to the emergence of what eventually become identified as religions.

The volume has been edited by Håkan Rydving, professor of the History of Religions at the University of Bergen, and Konsta Kaikkonen, senior lecturer in the Study of Religions at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences.

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