Sámi past in the NW forest Lapland in Finland – tradition and change from the Stone Age up to historical times

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Abstract

In this article, the prehistoric hunter-fisher culture is considered as a significant factor in the regional and local development of the forest Lapp culture throughout centuries and millennia.

Forest Lapps are present in the oral tradition as well as in the scarce written documents that concern the northernmost area of the historical great parish of Tornio, surrounded by the Sámi villages in Tornio Lapland and Kemi Lapland since the mid-16th century. In the area of the present Kolari municipality, the main difference between the early farmers and the Lapps has been the specific relation between people and reindeer among the latter group. This is observable since the late Iron Age, and it holds for both wild and tamed reindeer.

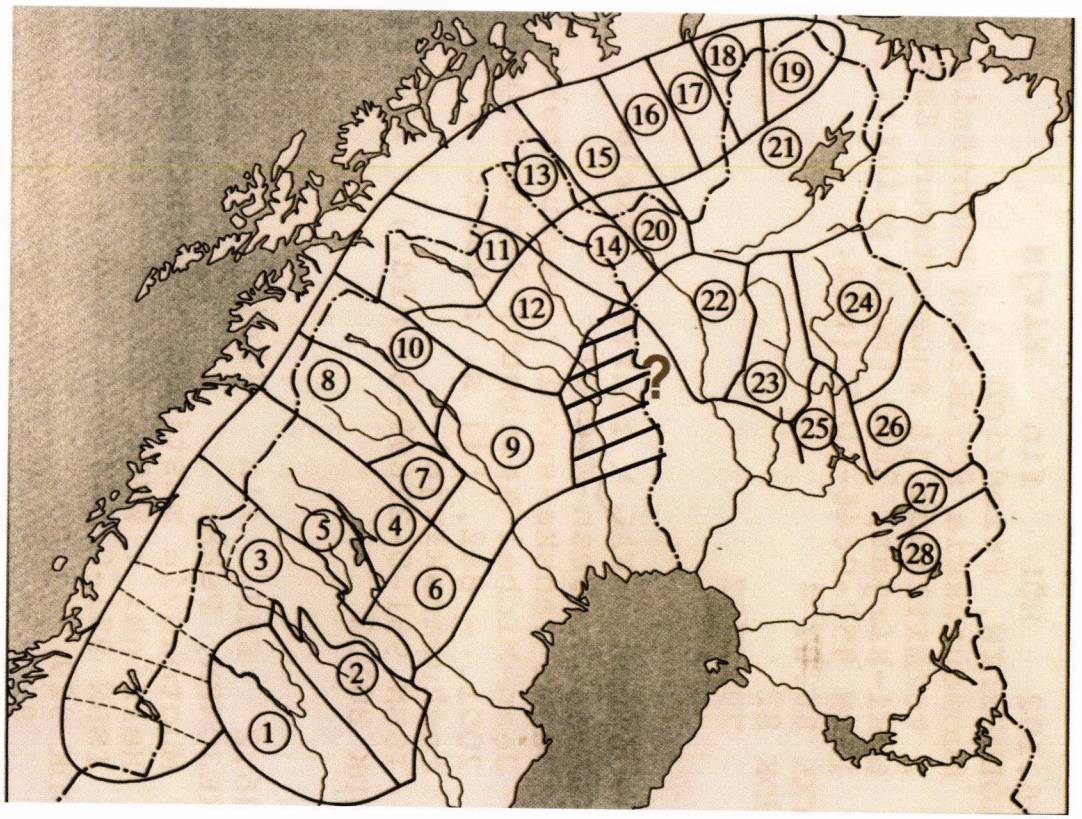
However, contacts with the farmer-fisher-hunters have had a strong impact on the indigenous Lapp culture because of partly contradicting interests in the exploitation of the wilderness. Here I give a chronological framework of the prehistory and history of the forest Lapps of the eastern valley of the Muonionjoki river, pointing to reasons for their absence in the written local past.

Keywords:
prehistory, early history, modern history, forest Lapps, Sámi, oral tradition, cultural assimilation.

The research area

The following discussion concerns the current municipality of Kolari in the eastern valley of the Muonionjoki and Tornionjoki rivers and the regions nearby (Fig. 1). It lies to the south of the officially declared Sámi area of present-day Finland, i.e., the southern border of Enontekiö municipality.

Historical documentation concerning the indigenous Sámi people is very scarce in this area. The research of historical sources has not deserved as much attention as it is the case both to the west, in Sweden, and in the more eastern areas in Kemi Lapland (Manker 1968; cf. Tegengren 1952). Also the history of the northernmost Finnish Lapland has recently been the subject of several studies (e.g. Aikio 1985; 1992; Korpijaakko 1989; Lehtola 1996; Enbuske 2006; 2008 and many others). The lack of written documents is no doubt one reason why the Sámi past of the area in question does not seem to interest local or regional historians in the eastern valley of the Tornionjoki and Muonionjoki rivers.



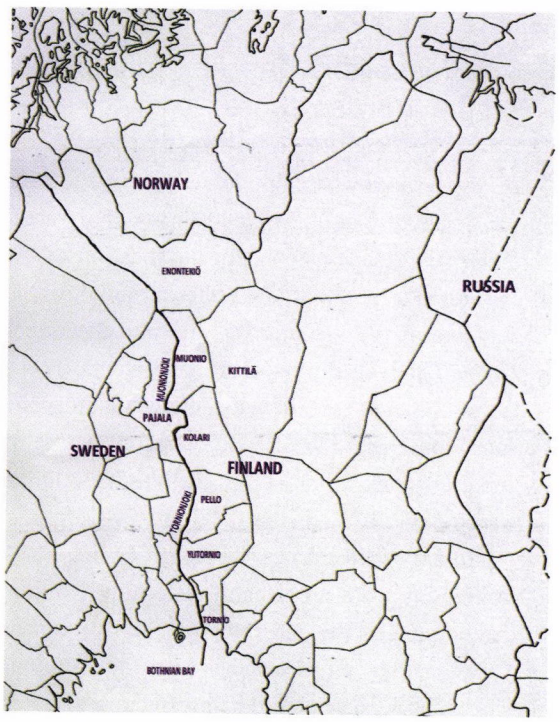


Fig. 1.

The study area is on the eastern side of the rivers Tornionjoki and Muonionjoki in the area of the question mark on the map. Tornio town is at the mouth of the river. On the Swedish side, the striped area is today reckoned as Sámi (Werbart 2002 and cited sources) by many archaeologists. The numbers 1–28 are administrative borders of the Sámi villages (siidas) since the mid-16th century in the area that was historically inhabited by the Sámi (Aikio 1985: 72).

My focus is on the less known past of the **western forest Lapps**. The prehistory and early history of this indigenous people can be reached on the basis of documented oral tradition in this area. The connection between the concepts Lapp and Sámi is discussed from some viewpoints, but the article does not aim at the definition of these concepts on a general level.

There has not been much discussion of what were the actual reasons for the penetration of the administrative border of the post-medieval great parish of Tornio up to the north. In 1553, Sámi villages were established in the present Sámi area and the Sámi families were made taxpayers there (see Fig. 1b) (cf. Vahtola 1980; 1982; 1991: 258–259; Julku 1991). In 1584, the administrative border of Tornio was defined by an authorized decision to run in Sonkamuotka between present-day Muonio and Enontekiö.

The hypothesis and main questions

My main hypothesis is that the persistent basis of livelihood has been reflected in local tradition since the Stone Age. In order to provide a sufficient amount of general background information, I start this discussion from the hunting-fishing culture – the fundament of subsistence through the past 10 000 years.

I ask whether medieval and post-medieval cultural phenomena have their roots in local or regional prehistory and how such continuities can be recognized. Naturally, the critical attitude must be kept in mind and one should not, for example, assess the potential cultural sequences self-evidently as genetic.

In short:

- What was the relationship of the Lapps in my research area to their neighboring groups?
- What kinds of characteristic features were there in the Lapp culture of this region in the distant past and until the beginning of the 20th century?
- What happened to Lapp groups in the course of time? Why and how did they disappear and where did they go?

The starting point is the municipality survey that I conducted in 1997–2000 with a multi-period approach. I also used place-names and oral tradition as criteria in looking for archaeological sites. Naturally the archaeological material that had been collected earlier was taken into account. On this basis I made a few test excavations and took some radiocarbon samples (see below).

I expect to see various relationships between the local prehistoric culture and the chronologically later Sámi culture as known by the name *Lapp* in the traditional sources. For understanding the origins of this forest Lapp culture in particular, I reflect upon some ethno-historical sources on hunting-fishing cultures north of the Arctic Circle and their relevance to the circumstances in the focus area.

The Mesolithic: the first inhabitants on the Ancylus shore

It has been my attempt to recognize the oldest traces of cultural activity in my study area. The main questions concern the location of the earliest occupational sites, the chronology, the features of the material culture, and the directions of arrival of pioneering inhabitants. These questions are essential for understanding the later, somewhat more readily apparent phase of the prehistoric inhabitation, the North Bothnian Stone Age.

In the earliest times, the environmental preconditions were presumably determined by the retreating glacier, and later by the differences between the circumstances on the Ancylus shoreline versus inland. These factors affected

the choice of possible and suitable areas for the hunting of reindeer, ringed seal, and elk as well as for fishing (Ukkonen 2001). How rapidly did the landscape change after deglaciation and when did the first pioneering groups actually occupy the ice-free zone?

The area of the present Kolari municipality belongs to the region that was deglaciated as the last area of the present Finnish territory, by 7900 cal BC (Johansson & Kujansuu 2005: 151–157; Reimer et al. 2004: 1053–1054). Thus the problem of the first occupation must be considered at the regional and local level, but not as completely separate from the Mesolithic prehistory of Finland and Lapland in general.

Today Kolari can be reckoned to represent a transitional area between the forest zone and mountainous lands. The landscape is strongly characterized by large peat lands, i.e., remains of the ancient Ancylus shore (Saarnisto 2005: 170–171). The landscape analysis shows where the first settlements or camp sites should be searched for. The densest occurrences of sites of Stone Age character are found 1) in the inland water systems of the first supra-aquatic mainland, 2) near the steep and solid shores and 3) on some ancient islands of the great Ancylus Lake (Oksala 2006).

So far the results of my fieldwork are controversial. The sites that I expected to date to the Stone Age are much younger (e.g. Oksala 2000a; 2002; 2004).

However, it is important to take into consideration all potential evidence of Stone Age settlement. A bias is caused by the researchers themselves due to the rough appearance of the local material culture. As a consequence, some of the implements are not "objectively" recognized as culturally produced at all. For example, certain artifacts that are collected during field surveys have been left out of the official lists of finds (Oksala 2008).

In my opinion, some stone implements may have been high-quality tools in the past, although they now have a worn-out appearance. For example, the impact of immense mire environments should be recognized as a factor that causes erosion of artifacts. Changes in climatic acidity, aridity, temperature, light circumstances, and chemical and physical attributes are important formation processes that strongly affect how the cultural activity of several millennia ago is seen by today's researchers. Traces of fire should be taken into account, too.

In Kolari the earliest typologically identifiable tools can be connected to Suomusjärvi types. Interestingly enough, they are found on elevations that lie below the coastline of the Ancylus maximum. This does not exclude the possibility that the first groups really arrived from the south. They may have settled on the shore and occupied higher areas later.

On the other hand, at least some of the single hearths that have been found on the Ancylus shores might represent population that may have come from the north, NW, or NE, following the drainage outlets. On these sites, only domestic raw materials have been identified so far. The same can be said for all the rest of the Stone Age sites in Kolari. In other words, these groups do not represent any faraway contacts or immigration from distant regions. Instead they seem to have been familiar with the local circumstances and prerequisites for hunting, fishing, and gathering there (Oksala 2006: 102).

The North Bothnian Stone Age culture

The so-called North Bothnian Stone Age culture is connected especially with the Litorina shore line relatively far to the south of Kolari, e.g. in Pello where the sites date to the Neolithic.

Greenstone is the raw material most commonly used for identification of the North Bothnian Stone Age culture in general. It was technically suitable for making tools, and the specific greenish color may have given it some more abstract functions or values, too. High-quality sources were available, for example, in the present municipalities of Tervola, Rovaniemi, and Kittilä.

On the basis of the greenstone artifact finds from the slopes of the river Tornionjoki in Pello and Ylitornio, the following conclusions can be drawn (Oksala 1995):

Greenstone was used already in the Mesolithic Stone Age and the necessary technology was known in this area. However, this raw material became more abundant in the Neolithic.

The number of the so-called picks of Rovaniemi type is notable. Concluding from the environmental context, this tool was used for the hunting of ringed seal.

In Kolari, the North Bothnian tools are rougher and made of local materials in a slightly different way than the classical, more trimmed types, for example, in Pello or Ylitornio to the south. Very good examples of this difference were found recently (Fig 2). The elevation of their find context is exactly on the Anculys maximum shoreline. Both picks have a rough surface. The smoothened edge of the bigger tool is the consequence of use and wearing.

It is interesting to compare the find places of the local Rovaniemi picks and a few tools that have apparent connections to the region of the eponymous site of Suomusjärvi, which is locat-

Fig. 2.
Two picks (respective lengths 27.5 cm and 32.5 cm) of the North Bothnian Stone Age tradition were found on a Mesolithic shore elevation by the Mannajärvi lake in Kolari. Photo of the finds in situ: Hilkka Oksala 2006.

ed on the present southern coast of Finland. On the basis of the shore levels, for example, in the valleys of the rivers Tornionjoki and Muonionjoki, it seems possible that local greenstone was used for the production of tools of North Bothnian type earlier than the beginning of connections with the Suomusjärvi culture.

Some typical greenstone implements have also been found along the main shores of the Muonionjoki river in Kolari. This gives the impression that the tools were imported when people were moving along the large water systems.

In the north, for example in Muonio, the typical/classical, more refined North Bothnian tools are somewhat more common than in Kolari, in spite of the long distance to the Litorina sea shore. It is obvious that in the inland regions, the Rovaniemi pick was used for other purposes than on the seal coast.

The multidisciplinary sources

The variation in prehistoric material is large in Kolari (e.g. Oksala 2004). There are concentrations of burnt or heated hearth or cooking stones, single hearth structures, dwelling depressions, and hunting pits. The material of stone artifacts is usually rough and of local origin, and the applied technology is simple. It is relatively typical that burnt bone is scarce in the archaeological material, and so is quartz. Prehistoric pottery is missing almost completely.

At first sight, the cultural remnants of prehistoric types do not express any linkages to ethnic groups that could be identified in historical documents. This is why it is crucial to take into consideration the whole relatively rich heritage dealing with the Lapps in the former great parish of Tornio (Vahtola 1991). This includes:

- oral narratives
- place-names and family names
- mythic, religious natural landscape in relation to the cultural remnants

In Kolari the earliest dated written document is from 1553 and concerns fishing rights at certain lakes for some farmers from Pello.

Sites and their age

In the municipality of Kolari, there are 140 listed sites that have an obvious or possible connection with the prehistory or history of the Lapps (Oksala 2000 b; 2004):

- 37 sites have both evidence of Lapp tradition from historical times and Stone Age finds;
- approximately 50 sites (fences for gathering or milking the reindeer (Fig. 3), hunting pit systems, "Lapp fields" (ancient market places?), bottoms and hearths of huts, conservation pits, graveyards, sacred trees), including placenames of Sámi origin, have been used by Lapps in historical times;
- 53 places are connected with the Lapps by oral tradition only (sheds standing on poles, court stones, sacred waters (*saivo*), hoards, pines on which Lapp names and years have been carved, etc.)

After the field survey, I conducted test excavations at eight sites that were assumed to date to the Stone Age. The sites were chosen on the basis of survey observations: stone tools and scatter, hearth structures, and dwelling depressions. In one of the cases, at Pello Kentänniemi by the lake Rattosjärvi, there was clear oral pre-information that the site had been used for fishing by the Lapps (Oksala 2000b: 7).

Samples were taken. From each site one radiocarbon sample was chosen for analysis. Surprisingly enough, the results disperse between the Early Roman Iron Age and the Middle Ages. Neither Mesolithic nor Neolithic dates were obtained.

Tradition connected with Lapps as the indigenous population

I aim at the scientific justification of using **local knowledge** as evidence for the prehistory of the area in focus. Despite its qualitative character, I think that fishing and hunting tradition provides essential parallels that shed light on prehistoric phenomena in a similar environment.

I am aware of the fact that this approach can be accused of being a "lappologist" perspective. It can be judged as an instrumental view offered by an outsider who may cause a danger of re-awakening some old disagreements between local communities (cf. Hansen & Olsen 2006; Kitti 2006; Halinen 2005: 96–102).

According to my experience, some laymen who acted as informants consider the first indigenous inhabitants of their home area as "others" in relation to "*met/meän*" 'us'. Even professional historians have treated the whole period prior to the 16th-century farmer colonization as relatively uninteresting local history. In short, there seems to be certain avoidance of the indigenous past and its significance is denied. In the concluding chapter of this article, I return to the reasons for this attitude.

Theoretical concepts

Parallels between prehistory and early historical times must be drawn with the aid of theoretical concepts.

Change is a temporal phenomenon. It is expressed through environmental, social, and cultural factors, such as diffusions of material culture and ideologies, migrations of groups of people, and innovations and inventions within local societies. Friction and violence may occur in connection with processes of change (cf. O'Neil 2006).

Continuity can be assessed by asking in what ways the same cultural feature can be recognized on different time levels. Certain phenomena remain unchanged. Are such stable aspects determined by the environment and at what rate do human choices affect them?

External continuity is dictated by nature. Change and continuity do not necessarily exclude each other. For example, a newcomer group may bring different technologies in order to apply them to local raw materials of the new dwelling area. But at the same time, their customs partly continue as before. Accordingly, partial change and partial continuity may intermingle at the ideological level (cf. Winkler 2006). People may change but the circumstances remain the same. Here we may speak about applying learnt skills in various new circumstances or environments that have their permanent, natural features.

Tradition can be seen as a subcategory of continuity. Tradition is cultural inheritance through learning within a restricted area. The limitations set by the local environmental circumstances are known on the basis of experience. Tradition ensures enculturation within a community. It creates the background for deep mental identity and supports permanence of values, "a collective memory". This frequently leads to resistance towards new cultural elements and change (cf. O'Neil 2006).

Integration may be understood as acceptance of new cultural traits, i.e., innovations. There may be initial resistance because the existing equilibrium is to be preserved in the society. However, the integration of novelties may also happen without any challenging. Integration takes place in contacts between different societies and promotes the cultural conformity of the partners (modified from Kuran & Sandholm 2006; O´Neil 2006).

Fig. 3. Archaic reindeer fences do not originally belong to the farming culture. Photo of remains in Simpsukursu, northern Kolari: Hilkka Oksala 2004.

Acculturation "happens to an entire culture when alien traits diffuse in a large scale and substantially replace traditional cultural patterns" (this and the following quotations from O´Neil 2006: 2). It is a combination of approximately simultaneous changes in several aspects of the traditional culture of an indigenous population or a minority, e.g. language, clothing, etc. Acculturation is due to heavy pressure from the side of a dominant society that may enforce it by education, for example. It may lead to the total loss of traditions, but not necessarily.

Sometimes the result may be milder: "the modification of the culture of a group or individual as a result of contact with a different culture". The culture under pressure would react by adding some new traits in their cultural record or by combining previous aspects in new ways. Such a process resembles integration (see above). It is "the exchange of cultural features". There may be destruction, survival, domination, resistance, modification, assimilation, integration, or adaptation. This is likely to be the case if the contacts between different groups are long-term and take place through firsthand communication. "Either of both groups of original patterns may be changed a bit, but the groups remain distinct overall." In this case, changes can be both voluntary and forced. Accordingly, continuums can be due to deliberately maintaining original features or they can be the result of less goal-oriented processes.

Assimilation is the final stage in the process of change in cultural communication. Acculturation proceeds into the damage of the recipient culture. Often the losing partner is an indigenous population or minority. We say that the ancient culture is "replaced" by a dominant culture. Assimilation may be the consequence of the active merging of one community into another, and it can lead to mental crisis among the assimilating group. Usually the superior and dictating counterpart has no roots in the area in question or is younger than the way of life under pressure there. Seen from the outside, the weakening society makes voluntary choices that simply benefit change. But means for assimilation may include mental or physical violence from the side of the stronger player. Historical examples include Americanization, Hellenization in the ancient Mediterranean area, and the Finnicization, i.e., the dominance of Finnish culture and administration, in the North among the indigenous Sámi (cf. e.g. Asp 1966).

Discontinuity may concern one or several features in a culture or environment at one time. In the archaeological material, we see this as the lack of certain artifact types in a given chronological period in relation to earlier material cultures of the area. An observation that points to discontinuity always calls for explanation. Suggested hypotheses may be change, integration, acculturation, or assimilation.

Chronology of the early indigenous population in Kolari

In the following, I give a hypothetical overview of the chronology of the local Lapp culture in my research area. The selected literature is based on archives, notes of travelers in historical times, and oral tradition. As far as place-names are considered, I rely on Itkonen (1984 I: 16–26, 158–173) and Vahtola (1980).

Stone Age and Early Metal Age

The first users of stone tools and makers of the earliest hunting pits arrived soon after the deglaciation, i.e., approximately 10 000 years ago. They were apparently hunters of wild reindeer. The hunting of ringed seal and fishing became important in the Ancylus phase. Since then, the local economy developed towards the taming of reindeer as well. The significance of big and small forest game increased, as well as that of fishing in lakes and rivers.

This millennia-long development can be seen as the background of linguistic Sámification. I support the assumption that both the early taming of reindeer and the linguistic formation date back to the time when the first metals appeared in the North around 1900 BC (Carpelan 2004; Oksala 2006: 100). The close relationship between humans and reindeer became an essential difference between the local forest Sámi culture and more southern cultures.

The Viking Age (ca. 800 – 1050 AD)

The *Kven- / Kainu* –people inhabited the northern shores of the Gulf of Bothnia probably before the 9th century AD In the lower valley of the river Tornionjoki, they were the first farmers. The first contacts between the Kvens and the Lapps may date to the Viking Age or somewhat earlier (Vahtola 1980; 1991: 212–217; Julku 1986: 129–133). We can ask if indigenous groups experienced the need to defend or hide themselves due to the potential threat that a form of contact between the groups could be violent.

The Middle Ages (from the 13th century AD onwards

In the 13th century, the so called *Pirkka*-men (Sw. *birkarlar*) began to visit the North annually. They had a background as farmers themselves. At first they were supported by the Swedish Crown in their role as tax collectors and merchants in northern areas (Vahtola 1982; 1991: 218–224).

Furs were common tax parcels to be collected from farmers in the North. In the valley of the river Tornionjoki, it followed that privately owned hunting and fishing areas spread further and further away from agricultural villages. This caused pressure on the local people to increase the area of exploitation, and it was reasonable to transport goods from northern Norway as well.

A growing number of reindeer was needed for moving the cargo. At the same time, innovations connected with the farming culture spread north of the Arctic Circle. According to some historians, this meant the birth of the concession herding of reindeer among the forest Lapps west of the river Ounasjoki (Kortesalmi 1977; 2003; 2008: 63–136; cf. Wallerström 2000). They became servants and drivers for their authorities. The system included intensive herding of reindeer for meat production and milking of small reindeer herds.

By the 1430s, the southern border of Lapland was located north of Pello (Julku 1975). Beyond this border, the rights to the use of lands and waters were still recognized as belonging to the Lapps (Vahtola 1982: 126–127). The influence of the Catholic church spread to the northern forests by 1480 at the latest. That was when the Särkilahti Chapel was built in Övertorneå/Ylitornio (e.g. Vahtola 1991: 322–329).

In a few cases, we find evidence of Iron Age/Medieval settlement in the same environments where Stone Age land use could be expected. I was convinced of this when in two cases the radiocarbon analysis gave late dates instead of Neolithic ones as I had assumed (see above). The site Pitkäjärvenmaa in Kolari dates to the 11th–12th centuries, and the site Jokijärvi in Muonio was in use from the 13th to 15th centuries.

Both of these sites show indications of winter residence. There are remains of strong walls of oval or round-cornered rectangular huts, and the hearths in the centre have heavily burnt stones. Such constructions could well be from the Stone Age, but they are also typical conic or rectangular forms of (Lapp) huts. These northern sites can be compared with parallel cases with respective dating in the lower valley of the river Tornionjoki. On the basis of excavations, we know, for example, that iron was used in the more southern area (Kostet 1978; Koivunen 1991: 135–149; Mäkivuoti 1988), while this raw material was nearly lacking in the area of the Muonionjoki water system.

Life in the North as described by Olaus Magnus

The description of *Scricfinia* by Olaus Magnus in 1518–1519 is likely to concern forest areas just by the Arctic Circle (printed in Finnish 1973). Olaus Magnus describes skiing, the hand-bow as the main hunting weapon carried by men and women equally, hunters of wild reindeer, exchange of fish and furs between local people and the *Pirkka*-men at permanent market places, as well as the power of the latter in relation to indigenous communities.

Olaus Magnus sees the life of the people in the great forests as peaceful and innocent. He praises the great abundance of game and fowl, and handicrafts of fur, hides, and feather products are described. He also states that fishing was even more important than hunting. The best source of nutrition was the pike, and the amount of salmon was great, too. Fish was caught by

nets, torches, hooks, and wooden traps, as well as in water pits. The catch was conserved in many ways, and fish was considered as a currency unit.

Traveling by boats, on skis, and with the help of reindeer is described, too. Olaus Magnus stresses the role of Tornio as the central market place and as the export harbor to Europe (Germany).

Reindeer were very important in the North. The tamed reindeer were closely herded for fear of wolves, while some reindeer were wild. We read that people owned herds of 10 to as many as 500 animals. The reindeer were milked as well as butchered for meat, bone, skin, etc. The use of reindeer as track animals was common, and especially traders, i.e., the *Kainu*-men and *Pirkka*-men transported their cargoes in sledges (*pulks*).

Administrative and economic changes in the 16th century

During Gustav Vasa's reign, the rights for the use of certain wilderness areas and lakes in Kolari were guaranteed in writing to some farmers from Pello (Lundholm 1991: 282–283). It seems that this old tradition of wilderness use by the farmers at least partly prevented the formation of strong indigenous winter village communities Instead, Lapp/Sámi villages were established as tax units in the neighboring area of Lapp/Sámi villages. The *Pirkka* taxation was forbidden and the King's officials took tax collecting into their own hands. From this time on, we can observe a trend towards a certain reservation policy in the Lapp/Sámi villages. The character of taxation in Kolari and Muonio is an interesting matter for future study.

In 1584, a border was officially drawn between the Lapp/Sámi villages and the Lutheran parish of Tornio. It ran in Sonkamuotka, i.e., the present border between the municipalities of Muonio and Enontekiö (Vahtola 1991: 221, 257–258). This must have meant that the indigenous non-farmer population was put into a kind of outlaw situation in their homeland, surrounded by the new borders of the Tornio parish.

For example the first farmer in Kolari used the newly legitimized opportunity already during the same decade. According to local knowledge, he came from Savo, i.e., a district where slash-and-burn cultivation was practiced and charcoal was burned for iron production. He occupied the Ylläs island of the river Muonionjoki by violence. The indigenous people who were driven away are called Lapps in oral heritage (Vahtola 1991: 227; 1982; Paulaharju 1962: 12). Today the island is known as Kolarinsaari.

The notes of writers between the 16th and 19th centuries already describe the Lapps as inventors of the reindeer economy (Tornaeus 1900; Portin 1968; Olaus Magnus 1973). The slash-and-burn agriculture caused erosion of the old forest pastures of the reindeer, and game also became scarcer. This must have meant that the indigenous Lapps as forest hunter-fisher-herders had to move either deeper into the forests or to the northern mountains according to the government policies. A further threat was iron manufacture, which was started in Köngänen on the western side of the confluence of the rivers Tornionjoki and Muonionjoki (Pajala) in the mid-17th century (cf. Vahtola 1982: 182).

Linguistic, religious, and economic integration and acculturation in the 17th – 20th centuries

Sámi dialect(s)

What kind of connections are there between the Lapps of early historical times and Sámi identity? According to my knowledge, there is no

documentation of the language spoken by the Lapps precisely in the Kolari area in the 16th century or earlier. But place-names do carry traces of words of ancient Sámi dialects. The vocabulary in question is connected with an archaic wilderness culture, i.e., the natural environment and exploitation by hunting, for example. Such names are abundant all over the present Lapland (see Oksala 2006; cf. Vahtola 1980). In addition, we can presume that certain family names have a Sámi background in Kolari.

We know that there have been three old Sámi dialect groups in the surroundings of my research area: 1) Tornio Sámi (Fig 1: 11 and 12) in the northwest, 2) Kemi/Kittilä Sámi (today distinct) (Fig. 1: 22) in the east, and 3) North Sámi in Enontekiö (Fig. 1: 14 and 20) (cf. Itkonen 1984 I: 161; Virrankoski 1973: 733–734; Laakso 2006). It is obvious that the indigenous tongue in Kolari resembled one of these. From the documented local history of colonization and settlement, we know that Finnish did not become the main language before the 17th century. Accordingly, place names of Finnish origin cannot be very old in these regions.

Old religions and Christianity

The Catholic Church never obtained a strong position in my research area. But in 1606, the municipalities of Kolari and Muonio were connected to the fresh Lutheran parish of Ylitornio. During the 17th century, goal-oriented Christian education was introduced among the local people in the sparsely settled parishes. It aimed at the extraction of old religions and the dominance of the Finnish language. The position of the Church became stronger after the Köngänen ironworks was established in Pajala in the mid-17th century and consequently the community got a chapel and a priest (Slunga 1993: 300–304).

In such an atmosphere the Sámi language soon fell out of use. There is evidence from the 18th century that the Sámi dialect of Tornio was already heavily mixed with Finnish (see Portin 1968: 130; Slunga 1993: 300–301). But at the same time, the merchants of Tornio still depended on reindeer and their herders. "Tracks" (*raitio*) were necessary for the traffic between the Gulf of Bothnia and northern Norway (cf. Mäntylä 1993: 203).

Cultural change: an example from Kurtakko village

In the 1920s, a full portrait of a Lapp/Sámi community was written down by Samuli Paulaharju (1962: 10) in the village of Kurtakko in Kolari. This picture was completed in 1997 by Mr Jonne Vanha who lived on the oldest farm of the village (Oksala 2004: 35). The explanation for the name of the lake and the village is given as follows: the Lapps were settled by the lake with their animals. They milked the reindeer at the mire of Teuravuoma. The milk was dried in the crops of capercaillies (*Tetrao urogallus*) and it was kept in a shed on an island. This dry milk was called *kurtta*; thus *Kurtakko* 'place where *kurtta* is' derives from a Sámi dialect.

At first the Kurtakkojärvi lake was used for fishing by farmer-fishers from Pello side by side with the Lapps. But in the 1680s, the first farmer settled on the site that had previously been occupied by the Lapps. The latter had to move away (Teerijoki 1993: 18; Jaako 1996; Portin 1968).

According to Mr Vanha, the Lapps had been living in this place year round. In his childhood, some floors of the huts of the Lapps were still left and artifacts were found in the fields. I observed one hut floor myself in the vicinity of this farm in 2006.

From acculturation towards assimilation

The Lapp society in Kurtakko can be perfectly connected with the western kind of forest Sámi tradition that has been documented, for example, in Pajala, too (Manker 1968). The milking of reindeer was a step towards the final assimilation of the reindeer economy into a farming society. The assimilation policy was encouraged by the authorities. The settlement bill from 1695 declared that all the Lapps had to be taken by force from the Ylitornio parish and they were made to move to official Lapland in the northern mountain area (e.g. Enontekiö). We can note that such policy had actually been practiced already in the 1670s by Governor Johan Graan, who had a Sámi background himself. Soon all Lapps of the southern parishes were obliged to leave for areas that were administratively reserved for Sámi/Lapp villages. The southern areas were joined to the county of Västerbotten.

The goal of the policy was to reserve the forest area for further farming settlement. The merchants of the town of Tornio supported the Crown in practice: they began to keep their track reindeer in pastures (Fi. *raitio*) of the Lapp villages in the northern mountain areas instead of keeping the animals in the adjacent forests as before. In the mountains, the herders got properly paid for their work, but among the forest Sámi this caused loss of traditional income. It led to complaints by the forest Sámi (Virrankoski 1973: 78; Itkonen 1984 I: 115; 1984 II: 115–116).

In 1736–1737 the French expedition led by Sir Maupertuis visited Lapland in order to make geophysical measurements. A member of the team writes that he had often met Lapps in the lower valley of the river Tornionjoki up to Pello in the north (Outhier 1975). These communities lived in huts, bred a few reindeer, and used the animals for driving and milking. The Lapps knew the landscape in detail and they were excellent guides.

There is a written source indicating that some forest Lapps still kept reindeer around the ironworks of Köngänen (Kengis *bruk*) in 1740. It is not clear where the Lapps lived, but it is likely that the note also concerns certain places in Kolari.

The same source describes that at the same time, the local forest Lapps were strongly turning to farming and cattle breeding at their inherited farms (Manker 1968: 11; Fellman 1910a: 178 < Carl Sadelin). Half a decade earlier the Lapps had milked reindeer in Kurtakko. This is an example of acculturation with the cattle farming economy. We can rely on the notes of the organist of the Ylitornio parish church, who described the transition of the Lapp lifestyle into a farming culture during approximately 50 years, since the 1780s and also earlier. He had gathered much personal knowledge about this and he knew the local tradition. Portin reports that there were marriages between Lapps and farmers (Portin 1968: 103–104, 122–125, 217–218, 278–279; Wahlberg 1968). The cultural transition was continuation of an old custom. Farmers especially from Pello had traditionally visited the area for activities such as fishing. Then a few members of farming societies came to the area of the forest Sámi to stay and to practice the cultivation of hay, turnip (*Brassica rapa*), and barley there. It led first to acculturation, then to the assimilation of Lapp families into the Finnish type of farming culture. The development was supported by the Crown.

In Kolari such a development is apparent since the mid-18th century, when farmers occupied the forest lakes permanently (Jaako 1996: 14). It is understandable that in the course of economical acculturation and assimilation of Lapp and farmer communities, the original local indigenous language and identity were gradually

lost. This may be the explanation for the scarcity of historical sources that would reveal more about local Sámi. As a matter of fact, it seems that the state officials had deliberately hindered documentation of their life since the reign of Gustav Vasa.

Cultural interaction and final assimilation of the Lapps

The process was mutual cultural exchange, too, and it led to creolization (Ruotsala 2002: 81). In order to survive, farmers had to become reindeer keepers, although they did not have large herds of animals. Documents provide information about "Lapps" who took care of the animals in forests but these herders were partly of Finnish origin (Kortesalmi 2003: 567–568). The situation refers to mixed identities, be they ethnic or connected with a profession. This view helps to understand Itkonen's note (1984 I: 95) that indigenous Lapps had completely disappeared from Kolari already in the 18th century.

In any case, this western type of forest Lapp culture was not extinct yet. In 1799, Edward Clarke travelled up the rivers Tornionjoki and Muonionjoki. He noted that north of the village of Kaartinen in the NW of Pello, it was more and more common to see Lapp huts (published: Clarke 1997).

From the beginning of the 19th century there are also notes concerning Sámi families who moved in the opposite direction: from the mountains to the forests of southern parishes in order to earn their living by taking care of the reindeer of farmers there. In some cases, the documents mention these people as returning to the lands of their ancestors (Paulaharju 1962: 60–76; cf. Rasmussen 2008: 21–25). This can be seen as the last wave of concession herders on the Finnish side of the border river of Tornionjoki. It had a positive impact on the professional development of the contemporary reindeer economy.

However, by the early 20th century, even these families had been assimilated with the local rural culture. The *paliskunta* act (act for associations of reindeer owners) from 1898 became especially important. A completely new era began in the Finnish reindeer economy which since then has been strictly organized (e.g. Kortesalmi 1977; 2003; 2008: 135; Ruotsala 2002).

Conclusions

Continuity

The sources support my hypothesis that in many cases the coincidences between Lapp traditions on one hand and archaeological finds or sites on the other hand are not accidental. The reason is that the basis of the economy remained similar through millennia. Livelihood depended on hunting, fishing, and keeping reindeer on a small scale in forest areas and on mires. This wilderness landscape offered the sources for subsistence until the strong cultural change that the hunter-fisher Lapps faced from the 13th century onwards.

The change was due to pressure from the outside: taxation and the growing market with *Pirkka*–men for furs and fish. Contacts with the wilderness economy of farmers led to changes in the reindeer economy. An important part of this was concession herding (Sw. *concession*, Fi. *raitioporonhoito*), i.e., the practice according to which the Lapps took care of the reindeer of the dwellers of farming villages who needed the animals mainly for transportation of loads in the winter time.

In the following, the cultural features with roots in the indigenous Lapp culture are summarized. We have to keep in mind that the characteristics are chosen by a scholar standing outside

the society, not by members of the societies in focus.

- From the Stone Age onwards: fishing, hunting, and the capture of wild reindeer. The dates and use of hunting pits have been discussed in detail by Halinen (1995) and Korteniemi (1990; 1992).
- From the Metal Age (since ca. 2000 BC) onwards: taming of reindeer at first, for example, for decoy animals for hunting or for transportation;
- From the Middle Ages: intensified use of reindeer for transportation;
- From the Early Historical Period: intensive herding of reindeer as cattle, milking and butchering of tamed reindeer;
- Up to the Second World War: keeping some reindeer as track animals by almost every household and transporting loads in *pulks* (Fi. *pulkka*) or sleighs (Fi. *ahkio*). Along with the spread of agriculture, horses and better roads, *pulks* were usually replaced by reindeer sledges (Fi. *reki*), which were simpler to build.
- Use of reindeer furs as raw materials for clothing;
- The Sámi costume or parts of it as the dress in reindeer work – in later times even independently of the ethnic background of the user. After the Second World War, the use of the costume has been more and more devoted to the Sámi speakers in their present administrative home area, although in the historical view, it does belong to the original tradition in, for example, the Kolari area as well.
- The late beliefs concerning for example, sacred trees and *Saivo* waters as expressions of ancient religion;
- The Sámi language/dialect — distinct in the 18th century, but observed today in place-names and in the reindeer-related vocabulary used by the local reindeer professionals;
- Cone huts (Sámi *goahti*, Fi. *kota*) for dwelling, in some cases up to the 20th century;
- Certain family names.

Reasons for assimilation

The main reasons for the final assimilation of the Lapp culture with the dominating farming culture can be viewed from the angle of social psychology:

- In the late Iron Age, first contacts between the Lapps and Kven/*Kainu* farmers may have been based partly on violence from the side of the latter group.
- In the Middle Ages, the *Pirkka* taxation and trade caused heavy exploitation of fish and game in wilderness areas.
- From the 16th century onwards, the policy of the Swedish Crown supported the Finnish hunter-fisher-farmers in their taking over the ownership of lands and lakes from the Lapps. The boundary between Lapland and farmed areas *de facto* moved north from Pello as far as Enontekiö in the relatively short time of only 150 years. Negotiations about the use of lands and waters were no longer held with the Lapps.
- Since the 17th century, the government policy directed persecution against the Lapps in order to prepare for the expansion of farming in forest areas. Slash-and-burn cultivation, as well as charcoal burning for the needs of iron manufacture, spoiled previous natural reindeer

pastures and disturbed game hunting. The indigenous population was forced to draw back either to Sámi/Lapp villages in the north or towards forests in other directions.

- The few local Sámi people apparently suffered from poverty. In Kolari, we notice a striking lack of prehistoric metal finds and iron artifacts in the archaeological record.
- Schooling was organized by the Lutheran church soon after Reformation. Finnish became the language of common education, even, for example, in the parish of Ylitornio just south of the Sámi/Lapp territories. This policy brought along the loss of original religion and language. In short, it caused the breaking of the mental basis of the indigenous culture.

The past history of local societies has been deliberately hidden both by the local people themselves and by authorities. In the background there is an attitude that judges the indigenous culture and way of life to be trifling. For a long time, the indigenous identity has not been treated as worth defending. It has not been valuable as something in contrast to the dominating economic and social culture. The last concession herders of reindeer in the beginning of the 20th century were treated as "others", and soon even they assimilated into the majority.

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