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Currents of Saami pasts

Recent advances in Saami archaeology

Marte Spangen, Anna-Kaisa Salmi, Tiina Äikäs & Markus Fjellström (editors)

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Introduction: Currents of Saami pasts

Marte Spangen[1], Anna-Kaisa Salmi[2], Tiina Äikäs[3], and Markus Fjellström[4]

…you return to a world of many determinations, where the attempts to explain and understand are open and never ending – because the historical reality to be explained has no known or determined end. (Hall 2007: 278)

Saami archaeology and the study of Saami pasts

A scientific field is a constant process, and, as all processes, it is defined by dialectics, since standpoints are only defined in opposition to something else. Saami archaeology is no exception, and this field emerged precisely because of oppositions, when political conflicts enforced the realization of a lack of consideration of the Saami presence in the prevailing understanding of the past in northern Fennoscandia. Furthermore, the opposition to Saami archaeology and the identification of cultural heritage as specifically Saami has no doubt continued to shape the research within this field. Yet the field is neither ultimately defined by this genesis nor maintained without constant discussion and internal and external repositioning.

In our opinion, a certain measure of tension between different voices is a prerequisite to continue to shape any research field. This is inherent in studies of Saami archaeology, for several reasons. First, archaeology itself may be said to have a dual identity. It has the hallmarks of a defined scientific discipline in terms of a specific core object of study, specialized methodologies, and specific terminologies. At the same time, archaeology is incredibly diverse and may perhaps even be defined as transdisciplinary (see Hall 2007: 275–276), since we include practices and thoughts from so many other presumed delimited disciplines. Saami archaeology is perhaps a particularly transdisciplinary field, as it has always made use of a broad basis of sources. This includes all the sources used in archaeology in general, but perhaps particularly ethnography, though whether this has always advanced studies of Saami pasts, or sometimes limited them, is debatable (Wobst 1978; Schanche 1993; Olsen 2004: 28–29).

Secondly, Saami archaeology has its *raison d'être* in invoking previously unheard voices outside the research community, including new voices from the past but also of today (Äikäs and Salmi 2019). This has been an obvious goal for the research since its inception, at least in Norway partly parallel to and inspired by emerging feminist approaches in the 1970s and 1980s, as evident in the title of the seminal article by Audhild Schanche and Bjørnar Olsen. *Var de alle nordmenn?* ("Were they all Norwegians?"), playing on the title of an equally seminal feminist archaeology workshop *Were they all men?* (No.: *Var de alle menn?*) (Schanche and Olsen 1985; Olsen 1997: 70–71, 243; Battle-Baptiste 2017: 35). Approaches in Saami archaeology also concur in part with the more recently articulated

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'community', 'public', and 'indigenous' archaeologies. These similarly aim to provide a voice for previously unheard stakeholders (Merriman 2004; Atalay 2006, 2012; Phillips and Allen 2010), whom are sometimes labelled 'subaltern' voices (Spivak 1988). Despite some critique of the ideological basis for and results of these frameworks, especially in terms of who is actually given a voice (González-Ruibal 2009, 2019; Spivak 2012: 5–6), such multivocality is generally pursued in indigenous contexts, which obviously includes collaboration with the indigenous communities. Saami archaeology has always emphasized ethnographic and traditional knowledge, and there has also been a consciousness about how local communities need to be active and conductive parts of research and preservation projects (Schanche 1993; Fossum and Norberg 2012; Barlindhaug 2013).

However, and thirdly, the focus on material objects in archaeology ensures a constant dialogue, where we can be, and often are, met with solidified counter-arguments to our preconception in every study, or what has been labelled the 'evidential constraint' (Wylie 1992). The lingering quality and materiality of these physical first-hand sources to long-term developments and events in Saami contexts outlive and resist both the longevity of human recollection and our penchant for categorization, arguably providing things with a voice of their own (see Olsen 2010). Thus, in the transdisciplinary field of the study of Saami pasts, archaeology is an indispensable producer of evidence for variations that are likely to stretch far beyond the stereotypes imposed by "the tyranny of the ethnographic record" (Wobst 1978; Olsen 2004: 28–29).

Finally, and fourthly, the fact that Saami archaeology inherently involves research efforts in four different countries, with four different majority languages and research traditions, results in a certain friction, in the best possible sense, that necessarily translates into a constant questioning of how to 'do this right'. Focus, theory, and methodology depend on the cultural historical context of the subject in different countries and the frameworks that articulate conceivable research questions and restraints in terms of, for instance, ethical considerations. This includes the extent to which it is ensured that Saami voices are heard in archaeological research projects. Ideally, more research should be published in the various Saami languages, too, though at least summaries in Saami languages have become more common (e.g., Spangen 2016; Fjellström 2020). As in this publication, however, translation is often limited due to financial considerations. This is a challenge because any text should be translated preferably into at least the five Saami languages commonly used today (North, South, Lule, Inari, and Skolt Saami), and preferably all the Saami languages to encourage the revitalization of those that are extinct or nearly extinct (Pite, Ume, Kildin, Akkala, and Ter Saami). The language issue underscores how Saami archaeology is also defined by the cultural diversity between and within Saami communities. One aspect of this is the efforts made today to increase knowledge about the less studied 'minorities in the minority'. Due to the sheer number of people living in North and Lule Saami-speaking areas today, the culture, history, and language of these groups are generally better known than those of other Saami groups. Our use of the spelling 'Saami' in this publication, in contrast to the North Saami spelling 'Sámi' used for the conference title, reflects a recognition that our research needs to be inclusive in this sense.

Despite these inherent multivocal qualities, Saami archaeology, like all scientific fields, is likely to congeal over time, as accepted and not so accepted research questions and approaches are sorted out. Hence, we also need to make a conscious effort to maintain the multitude of voices, both in terms of exploring new material, methods, and theories with an open mind, and in terms of literally recruiting new voices. In addition, in order for the said "frictions" to have any beneficial consequences, we have to continue to meet, discuss, and reposition within the existing international research community involved in this field.

Advances in Sámi Archaeology

This volume presents results from one such effort by a number of people who helped organize and participated in the conference *Advances in Sámi Archaeology* at Siida Sámi Museum in Inari, Finland, 4–6 June 2018. About 50 participants were present, listening to a total of 25 papers (samiarc.wordpress.com/program), which were also followed by a number of people through online streaming. This was an encouraging level of interest and number of researchers working on topics relevant for the understanding of Saami pasts and the meaning of this research for Saami communities today. It was equally refreshing to note the broad scope of research that is currently identified by investigators as Saami archaeology. The presentations covered a chronological span from the Iron Age to the present, including current use of Saami cultural heritage, and most of the geographical areas defined as *Sápmi* (in North Saami; Skolt Saami: *Sää'mjânnam;* Aanaar (Inari) Saami: *Säämi*; Julev (Lule) Saami: *Sábme;* South Saami: *Saepmie*), from the Skolt Saami in the northeast to the South Saami in the southwest (Figure 0.1). The discussed contexts covered burials, settlements, offering sites, mobility, hunting contexts, World War II remains, and the early modern city of Stockholm. The studies implemented and discussed theoretical issues and methodological approaches such as repatriation, colonialism, globalization, political and legal uses of Saami archaeology, and cross-disciplinary use of historical, ethnographic, and lexical sources, soil sampling, osteology, isotopes, and DNA analyses in combination with archaeological excavation, survey, and interpretation.

This confirms a continuous trend of researchers in the field conducting studies of important issues concerning Saami societies with innovative methods and theoretical frameworks, with a consciousness of how these issues are interrelated with developments in society far beyond core Saami areas. The broad scope should ensure renewal of the field itself but also underlines why Saami archaeology cannot be seen as a niche subject for the interested few but an integrated part of archaeology in general and particularly in the Nordic countries and northern Russia (see Hansen and Olsen 2014: 6–8).

The present collection of articles is not comprehensive of the presentations at the conference, mainly because some of these were already published or in the process of being published elsewhere (Äikäs and Spangen 2016; Jerand et al. 2016; Nordin 2017; Lidén et al. 2018; Piha 2018; Dury et al. 2018; Spangen and Fjellström 2018; Kirkinen et al. 2019; Harlin 2019; Fjellström et al. in prep.). The contributions in this book still cover the main trends in Saami archaeology. Some of the articles in this volume concern basic research that is needed to map the physical evidence of cultural variation among Saami groups, while others activate already recorded material in new ways. Yet others are concerned with how this is interpreted and understood by a wider public. All this is a necessary part of the further development of Saami archaeology to better our understanding of Saami pasts and its consequences in the present.

At the same time, the present articles mainly focus on persistent topics that have been and continue to be central to the understanding of Saami societies of the past. Despite their prevalence, these need to be constantly reconsidered according to new evidence, methodologies, and theories. This includes three particularly monumental issues; how, where, and when reindeer husbandry, pastoralism, and herding emerged; how the Saami have interrelated with non-Saami groups and to what effect; and how archaeology affects and is affected by the recent political history of the Saami. These debates have defined Saami archaeology, and they are still pivotal to understand past and present Saami societies.

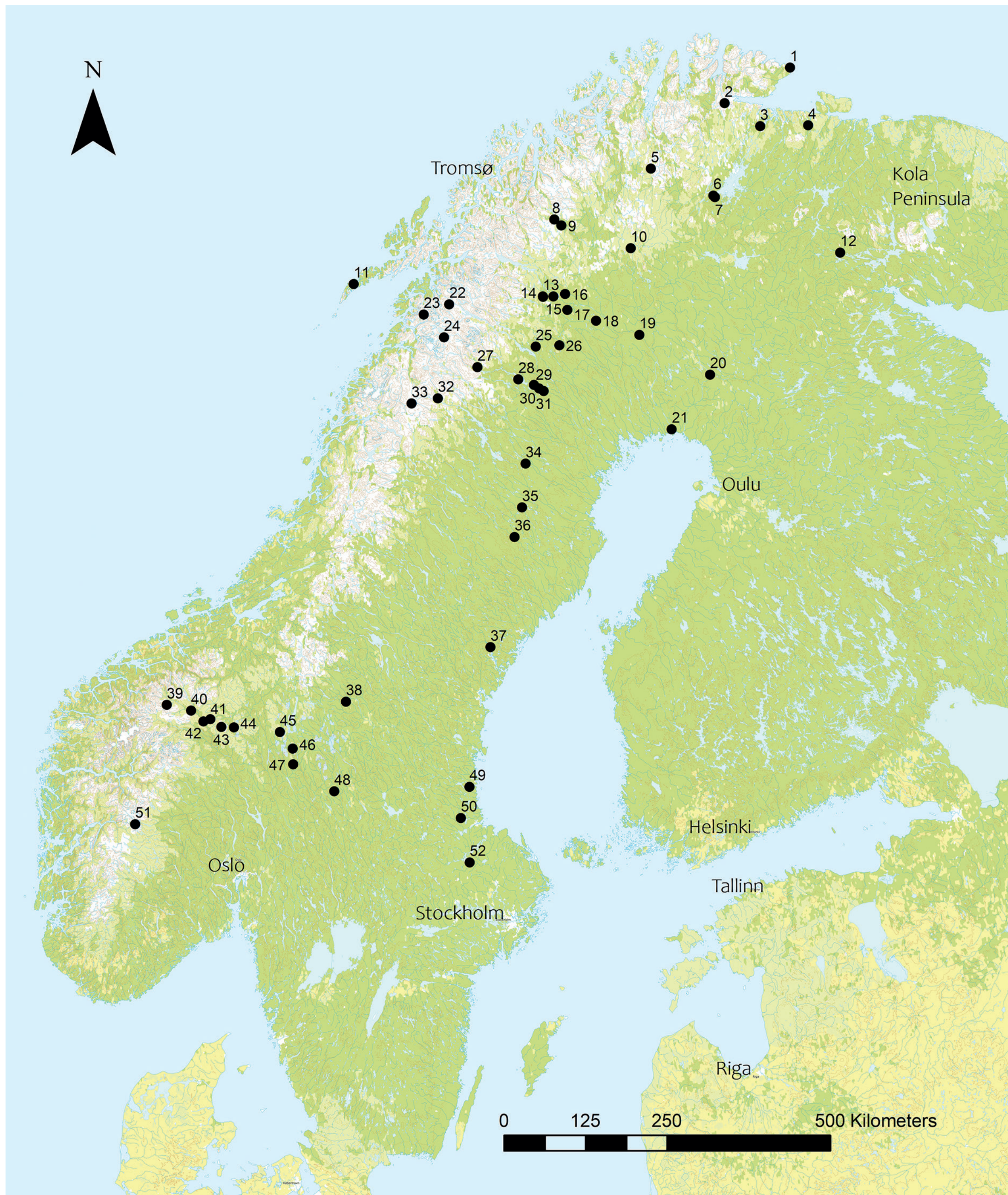

Figure 0.1: Map with place names mentioned in the book. 1. Vardø (Vardøhus), 2. Gollevárri, 3. Neiden /Njávdem, 4. Petsamo/Peäccam, 5. Beajalgŋai, 6. Inari/Aanaar, 7. Nukkumajokki, 8. Könkämä, 9. Rounala, 10. Enontekiö/Márkan, 11. Flakstad, 12. Liva, 13. Girjas, 14. Kiruna/ Giron, 15. Jukkasjärvi/ Čohkkiras, 16. Pahtavaara, 17. Svappavaara, 18. Masugnbyn, 19. Kengis/ Geavŋŋis, 20.Rovaniemi/Roavenjárga, 21. Tornio/Duortnus, 22. Suollagavallda, 23.Mørsvikbotn/ Muorgos, 24. Lake Virihaure, 25. Unna Saiva, 26. Malmberget, 27. Kvikkjokk/Huhttán, 28. Lake Gállokjaure, 29. Tjäruborgares land, 30. Jokkmokk/ Jåhkåmåhkke, 31. Skällarim, 32. Silbojokk/ Silbajåhkå, 33. Nasafjäll/Násavárre, 34. Arvidsjaur/Árviesjávrrie, 35. Gransjö, 36. Lycksele/Lïkssjuo, 37. Björned, 38. Härjedalen, 39. Reinheimen, 40. Lesja, 41. Einsethøe, 42. Dovre, 43. Rondane, 44. Gravskaret, 45. Vesle Sølenskaret, 46. Storhøa,47. Eltdalen, 48. Soejvengeelle's grave, 49. Järvsjön, 50. Medskog, 51. Sumtangen, 52. Tärnsjö (ill. M. Spangen).

Emergence of reindeer herding and pastoralism

A recurring topic in the present articles, and in Saami archaeology in general, is the question of when, where, and how the Saami became reindeer herders or pastoralists (e.g., Hultblad 1968; Arell 1977; Aronsson 1991; Mulk 1994; Storli 1996; Wallerström 2000; Hedman 2003; Bergman et al. 2008; Andersen 2011; Sommerseth 2011; Bergman et al. 2013; Bjørklund 2013; Hedman et al. 2015; Røed et al. 2018).

Besides discussions about terminology and the different ways of domesticating and keeping reindeer, of which reindeer herding is probably the best overall concept, this is a discussion about what historical and archaeological evidence can reveal about the topic. It is central to the understanding of Saami cultural history because of the stereotypical, though not entirely accurate, association of Saami groups and individuals with reindeer and reindeer nomadism. However, the genesis of Saami reindeer herding is also of crucial importance to understand the composition of Saami societies, their habitation and mobility patterns, land use, territorial divisions, economic and cultural life-worlds, and relation to neighbouring groups. Despite having been discussed for decades, it is clearly a valid and, in many ways, unresolved research question.

We have a relatively good understanding of the general course of events: the gradual emergence of domesticated reindeer, perhaps for draught purposes, before the 15th century, and the intensification of reindeer herding associated with a range of societal changes after that (e.g., Bjørnstad et al. 2012; Bergman et al. 2013; Røed et al. 2018). Yet, many questions, such as the local variations of the process, the role of wild reindeer hunting in economy and worldview, and the details of the early reindeer herding practices, still remain open. It is interesting to see that researchers within Saami archaeology today approach this topic from a wide range of methodological frameworks and types of archaeological material. In this volume, Anna-Kaisa Salmi, Sirpa Niinimäki, and Hanna-Leena Puolakka report on an innovative comparative study of stress markers on reindeer skeletons, which enables mapping of the use of reindeer as draught animals and a new way of determining if reindeer in different contexts are wild or tame. Milton Nuñez and his co-authors report on the 2008–2011 Academy of Finland project, *Human-Animal Relations among Finland's Sámi 1000−1800 AD*. They produced a series of results, among them that the isotopic composition in reindeer bones at offering sites in Finland indicate a distinct change, most likely from wild to domesticated reindeer, around AD 1600. Jostein Bergstøl refers to recent aDNA studies of reindeer to discuss the development of reindeer herding in southern and northern Norway, respectively, while both he and Hilde Amundsen and Kristin Os discuss the connection between coral hunting facilities and later installations used in reindeer herding.

The wide range of possible archaeological approaches is all the more interesting and promising due to the lack of conclusive written sources for this topic. There is a long tradition in Saami archaeology of taking into account all the available sources that can inform the matter. However, there is debate as to whether continued discussions about the meaning and source value of, for instance, the famous 9th-century Ohthere's account or the 16th- and 17th-century Vardøhus fort records will help establish the phases of reindeer domestication in Saami contexts. Perhaps we need to concentrate even more on the potential of the archaeological material to determine these phases in various regions. There are still vast amounts of osteological and (landscape) archaeological evidence that could be investigated to provide additional, and possibly contradictory, answers about domestication processes in different parts of Sápmi than can the few and inconclusive historical sources available. Ongoing projects are currently studying osteological remains with these aspects in mind, such as the ERC and Academy of Finland funded *Domestication in Action – Tracing Archaeological Markers of Human-Animal Interaction* (e.g., Salmi et al. this volume) and the building of a database of isotope values from reindeer and other animals in northern Fennoscandia (Fjellström 2020). DNA research on reindeer populations has

also yielded important results (Røed et al. 2018). There is reason to think that these and other efforts in the years to come will extend our knowledge about this topic even further. Furthermore, these and other studies have challenged previous notions of the Iron Age and medieval Saami as mainly fisher-hunter-gatherers and/or reindeer herders. Not only are details of the multiple combinations of livelihoods in different areas being revealed, but new aspects are coming into focus. For instance, increasing evidence suggest that sheep husbandry was also part of the Saami economy in more areas and at an earlier stage than previously assumed (Hedman and Olsen 2009; Äikäs 2015; Hedman et al. 2015; Salmi et al. 2015; Spangen 2016; Salmi et al. 2018; Spangen and Fjellström 2018; Nuñez et al. this volume). This opens up another set of questions about Saami economy, landscape use, trade, and relationship to neighbouring (more definitely agricultural) groups.

The internal variation and contacts between Saami communities also continue to be explored. In this volume, Oddmund Andersen presents results from the study of an offering site and an adjacent scree grave in Mørsvikbotn, Nordland, northern Norway, an area where three different Saami groups were present and interacted, all of whom may have used the offering site. Gunilla Larsson, on the other hand, discusses the less studied Forest Saami, who were part of the local communities in middle Sweden until quite recently, and who had their own distinct economic adaptations and cultural expressions that can also be traced archaeologically. Both studies clearly illustrate the continued need for both more fieldwork and continuous attention to geographical and chronological variation to advance our understanding of the complexities of past Saami societies.

Saami archaeology about the non-Saami

As mentioned, another key aspect of Saami society studied by archaeologists is the contact between Saami and other groups. Such contacts were arguably instrumental in the genesis of Saami identity (Odner 1983; Hansen and Olsen 2014: 22–26). Notably, this contact also affected the neighbouring groups, for instance, in terms of how what has been labelled as a Germanic, or Norse, ethnicity was developed and articulated among groups in multicultural areas. A series of studies have highlighted the complexities of this relation and the limited usefulness of a dichotomist understanding, pointing to the hybrid cultural expressions in border zones and meeting places between the Saami and non-Saami (e.g., Olsen 2000a; Spangen 2005, 2009, 2010; Bruun 2007; Bergstøl 2008; Nurmi 2009; Olsen et al. 2011; Lehtola 2012; Gjerde 2016; Hakamäki 2016; Henriksen 2016; Salmi et al. 2018; Kylli et al. 2019).

The topic is present in this volume, too; a typical Saami drum hammer found in Rendalen, southern Norway, has previously been discussed in terms of 'cultural mixture' due to its mix of decorative patterns that may be related to both Norse and Saami culture (Pareli 1991; Zachrisson 1997). In her present article, however, Hege S. Gjerde rather explores the meaning of *voids*, both in the décor of this object and in-between our definitions of archaeological material and groups in the past. While not settling on a final answer to what the meaning of the hammer and décor may be, Gjerde follows an interesting path of deconstruction that can be helpful in further developing our understanding of real and imagined categories in the past.

This development over the last few decades has moved Saami archaeology beyond some examples of a somewhat unfortunate 'strategic essentialism' (Spivak 1988; Danius et al. 1993; Olsen 2001a, 2001b). This initial need to claim a coherent 'Saaminess' in the archaeological material was mainly brought on by the continuous external pressure to prove the presence of Saami groups in certain areas in the past or the ethnic affinity of specific heritage sites or archaeological material. The urgency of such proof has depended on the context in question, both regarding the audience of any statements

about Saami pasts and what parts of the Saami past and territory we are discussing. In core Saami reindeer herding areas like inner Finnmark, interpretations of medieval heritage sites as Saami are less controversial (if not always uncontroversial) than in border areas like southern Norway and Sweden or in Saami landscapes of the Coastal or Forest Saami (Zachrisson 1997; Larsson 2001; Bergstøl and Reitan 2008; Dunfjeld-Aagård 2009; Baglo 2019; Larsson this volume).

Thus, it is interesting that several of the authors in this book enable alternative and more diverse interpretations of more or less contested heritage sites, some of which are situated in border zones. Aronsson presents evidence for minimal landscape use around the much-debated Stállo house foundations. He combines elements of previously conflicting theories by suggesting they were used by the Saami for trade meetings with Norwegian chieftains. Bergstøl compares the similar coral hunting installation for wild reindeer in the north and south of Norway and asks whether this technique should be seen as a result of hybrid practices performed by both the Saami and Norse/Norwegian population, in collaboration or inspired by each other. Similarly, Amundsen and Os emphasize the possible Saami connection to the large hunting enclosures found in Hedmark in southeastern Norway and their similarity to later known fences for separating reindeer herds, while acknowledging the challenges of defining the use of such installations in this border zone. Importantly, in whatever way these sites are interpreted in terms of the ethnic affiliation of the users, they are of interest to the study of Saami pasts as part of Saami landscapes, affecting Saami people and their landscape use.

There is obviously room for these debates in current Saami archaeology, but it may be more challenging to communicate the complexities of this research to the general public, not least in contexts where the portrayal of Saami pasts can have repercussions for law and policy-making.

Saami archaeology, politics, and colonialism

Saami archaeology is undoubtedly an arena for political statements. As such, the initiation of Saami archaeology was in itself part of the political debate of the 1970s and 1980s, particularly triggered by the famous protests against the building of the Alta river hydroelectric dam in Finnmark, Norway. Awareness of Saami presence and Saami issues and the relation between documenting the Saami past and their rights in today's modern society was at the core of the early archaeological efforts, and still is today. Insistence from some fellow archaeologists to keep the research 'objective' and unrelated to politics represents an oxymoron that actively disregards the inherent political aspect of documenting Saami pasts.

Thus, the understanding of the study of Saami pasts as an inherently political issue has made it a contested topic, but most archaeologists working with Saami pasts today are highly aware of the political aspects of any such study, as well as the necessity of performing studies in cooperation and agreement with local indigenous groups. In a recent article, based on a series of interviews, archaeologist Eeva-Kristiina Harlin (2019) states that Finnish archaeologists fear political involvement when writing about Saami archaeology. We would somewhat disagree; younger generations of Finnish archaeologists especially are aware of the political aspects of their field. For example, the University of Oulu have taught regular courses in archaeological ethics since 2007, including questions about the political use of archaeology. One reason for her conclusion seems to be that Harlin links the critical attitude among some archaeologists to discussions about ethnicity in prehistoric societies to her claims that archaeologists do not want to make statements that could be used politically. However, theoretical boundaries concerning the time-depth of current ethnic groups should not to be confused with negligence of the cultural affiliation many indigenous groups feel to the past.[1] "For the indigenous

1. "Cultural affiliation" means a common group identity that can justifiably be traced from the current group to an identified historical or prehistoric group (http://www.nps.gov/history/nagpra/TRAINING/Cultural_Affiliation.pdf). "Descendant community" refers to a broader definition; it means a non-uniform, self-identifying group, whose members, no matter what their backgrounds, identify with a certain place or past through common traditions, proximity, or collective memories (Nicholas and Hollowell 2007: 1).

peoples roots can be 'timeless'", as Harlin states, referring to Jelena Porsanger's keynote paper at the *Advances in Sámi Archaeology conference* (Porsanger 2018; Harlin 2019: 263). For some archaeologists, the questions of scientifically proven age of Saami ethnicity and questions of repatriation might be tied together, but this is not generally the case. It would have been interesting to see the age-structure of the researchers interviewed by Harlin and whether there are differences of opinions between generations.

The political aspect of Saami archaeology becomes conspicuously evident in court cases, such as those described by Malin Brännström in her article in this volume. The article also grapples with the challenges of presenting the complex past discussed above to audiences with diverse backgrounds and objectives for seeking out this information. Brännström compares how archaeological and historical material has been presented, understood, and used in two court cases concerning Saami land rights in Sweden. She stresses the importance of making the complexity and meaning of archaeological finds understandable to the courts to ensure well-informed rulings. Brännström's article was written before the final court ruling, which eventually went in favour of Saami claims and against the Swedish state. The government has since declared that the relevant Reindeer Herding Act, which regulates much of the land use and ownership in Saami areas, is to be re-evaluated (Heikki 2020).

Unfortunately, such court cases have also engendered hostilities between Saami and non-Saami locals. Following the most recent Girjas case, we have seen harassment of Saami through online fora, direct threats, and killing of reindeer (Moreno 2020). In such situations, it may seem useless and counter-productive to admit to any uncertainty about the ethnic affiliation of certain cultural expressions. However, if we wish to maintain the legitimacy of archaeology, we obviously have to communicate even complicated issues. The challenge is perhaps rather to do this in a way that defeats and bypasses prevailing stereotypes and (internalized) hegemonic structures.

Such stereotypes and hegemonic structures are part of the effects of colonialism on Saami culture and on our understanding and presentation of Saami pasts, which has been another central topic in Saami archaeology (e.g., Olsen 2000b; Hansen and Olsen 2014; Hood 2015; Spangen et al. 2015; Spangen 2015). Over the last decade, the early modern state colonization of Saami areas has increasingly been debated within the broader context of colonialism at that time (Nordin 2012; Immonen 2013; Hood 2015; Nordin and Ojala 2015; Ojala and Nordin 2015; Äikäs and Salmi 2019). In this volume, Carl-Gösta Ojala discusses these issues concerning Swedish colonialism in Sápmi as it occurred through mine developing and missionary activity, and what legacies remain today. Thomas Wallerström also discusses how early modern state influence shaped the Saami settlement patterns we can trace today, which is thus not to be confused with an age-old 'authentic' Saami social organization.

Consequently, the articles in this volume illustrate the breadth and complexities of Saami archaeology as well as Saami pasts, and the width of theoretical and methodological approaches required to develop further knowledge. Research efforts over several decades have made Saami archaeology a broadly accepted and hopefully inspirational transdisciplinary field in the Nordic countries. One aim should be to maintain and reinforce a position for Saami cultural history as an obvious integrated part of our common pasts in northern Fennoscandia and northern Europe (Olsen 2004; Hansen and Olsen 2014). While the central topics, as presented here, remain quite traditional, new approaches promise exciting developments within the field in years to come. This includes a potential for broadening our research questions into new aspects of Saami societies, economy, and culture by taking into account new evidence and reconsidering old, as well as developing the already well-established interdisciplinarity further, for instance, in terms of combining archaeology with linguistic and onomastic evidence (e.g., Piha 2018).

Are we there yet?

While the presentations at the 2018 *Advances in Sámi Archaeology* conference showed vibrant activity within the research field, there are still challenges that will need to be met to maintain this situation. A limited number of researchers are working on topics within the vast area of Sápmi. Consequently, some areas are fairly well explored, some site or object types widely debated, and some issues continuously discussed, while others have received little or no systematic attention. Some of the most striking lacunae may be the limited amount of comparative work across the national borders, with some notable (multidisciplinary) exceptions (e.g., Ljungdahl and Norberg 2013; Myrvoll et al. 2015, Nielssen 2017), and the lack of knowledge about essential issues, such as long-term Saami population and habitation history, which is obviously of great importance to an understanding of the general societal organization in various regions. Geographically, the Saami archaeology of the Kola peninsula is perhaps least explored so far, though there has been some research activity, with recent interesting results including the finding of similar row-organized hearths in Liva, Murmansk, as in other areas of Sápmi (Murashkin and Kolpakov 2019). However, there is still need for more extensive investigations in the Russian parts of Sápmi, and indeed studies of medieval archaeology here at all (Murashkin and Kolpakov 2019: 75). We regret that no Russian authors were able to contribute to this publication to that end. Continued contact and research collaborations across national borders, such as in the 2018 conference, may help to address some of these current biases.

In line with the initial statement about what creates and develops a scientific field, efforts should also be made to maintain many different voices involved in the discussions about Saami pasts, including continuous communication with different stakeholders among Saami groups and recruiting new professional voices. Currently, it is only at UiT – the Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø that Saami archaeology is taught systematically as an integrated part of the courses in archaeology. Only a small number of students at this intuition choose to specialize in this topic, despite the continuous need for professional archaeologists with knowledge of Saami cultural history within research, dissemination, and in heritage management institutions. Even if Saami archaeology today has a number of active researchers and stewards that identify as Saami, there is also a continuous need to recruit students with Saami backgrounds.

It is difficult to measure the exact number of researchers engaged in the field of Saami archaeology today, as many only have this as one (minor) part of their research agenda. However, there seems to be a fairly widespread interest, not least judging from participation at the 2018 conference. The researchers conducting Saami archaeology are affiliated with a range of institutions and include independent researchers without institutional backing. In his blog, archaeologist Petri Halinen (2019) asks if Saami archaeology could be strengthened by giving one institution the responsibility for coordinating such research, and if so, if that should be a national institution, like the Finnish Heritage Agency (FHA) in the case of Finland, or a Saami institution, like Sámi Museum Siida (which hosted the conference in Inari). Halinen suggests that FHA and Siida could plan and coordinate Saami archaeology together. In our opinion, the current system and funding of the FHA does not readily support this solution, but coordinating researchers with an interest in the field who are currently working somewhat isolated from each other in different organizations could be beneficial.

Another, but related, problem is that many researchers work in temporary positions or only perform research in Saami archaeology within time-limited projects. Making more money available for research projects of this kind is of course important and what has been funded so far has produced many important results (e.g., Myrvoll et al. 2015; Bergman 2018), but to ensure continuity it would be beneficial to establish more permanent positions with this main focus. One seat was initially dedicated to the field at UiT (then University of Tromsø) in the 1990s, currently held by Professor Bjørnar Olsen. Unfortunately, there is no reason to think that any of the other Nordic universities will pri-

oritize establishing a position specifically for Saami archaeology any time soon. Therefore, we would like to suggest a Nordic professorship, possibly to be held for a set but extensive time period. This could be jointly funded by the states with a Saami population and circulate between these countries to ensure a continuous revitalization of the research agenda and, presumably, a regrowth of students, young researchers, and projects dealing with related topics in each country.

To sum up, Saami archaeology has made great strides in recent years, but the discipline is not yet where it needs to be: not with the infrastructure of the field nor with any of the debates touched on in this book, and not with the social and political role of Saami archaeology nor with the way we communicate our research within and outside the research community. However, it is encouraging to see the commitment of so many researchers who continue to explore these issues with the resources and approaches available. Hopefully, this volume will challenge and inspire, and thus contribute to continued 'friction', debate, and further advances in Saami archaeology.

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