

# **VABAHUSÕ MÕISTÕQ HUMMOGU-EURUUPA KIRÄNDÜISIN**

**VABADUSE KONTSEPT  
IDA-EUROOPA KIRJANDUSTES**



**VABAHUSÕ MÕISTÕQ  
HUMMOGU-EURUUPA  
KIRÄNDÜISIN**

**VABADUSE KONTSEPT  
IDA-EUROOPA KIRJANDUSTES**

**THE CONCEPT OF FREEDOM  
IN THE LITERATURES OF EASTERN EUROPE**

Toimõndanuq  
Szilárd Tibor Tóth, Roza Kirillova ja Jüvä Sullõv



Võro 2017

## **Võro Instituudi toimõndusõq 32**

Publications of Võro Institute 32

Toimõndaja / Editor: Jüvä Sullõv

Kaasõpilt / Cover design: Elena Tóth

Võro kiil: Urmas Kalla

Nõvvoandja / Advisor: Piret Norvik

Toimõndusnõvvokogo / Advisory board:

Renāte Blumberga (Lāti Aoluu Instituut, Lāti Ülikuul),  
Martin Ehala (Tarto Ülikuul), Riho Grünthal (Helsingi  
Ülikuul), Hasso Krull (Eesti Humanitaarinstituut, Tal-  
liina Ülikuul), Karl Pajusalu (Tarto Ülikuul), Péter Po-  
mozi (Eötvös Lorándi Ülikuul), Tiit Rosenberg (Tarto  
Ülikuul), Janne Saarikivi (Helsingi Ülikuul), Anneli  
Saro (Tarto Ülikuul), Helena Sulkala (Oulu Ülikuul),  
Taive Särg (Eesti Kirändüsmuusõum), Heiki Valk  
(Tarto Ülikuul), Eberhard Winkler (Göttingeni  
Ülikuul)

Võro Instituudi toimõnduisi indeksiirvāq:

Publications of Võro Institute is indexed in:

MLA Directory of Periodicals

Linguistic Bibliography Online

Eesti Rahvusraamatukogu digitaalne arhiiv (DIGAR)

Toimõndusõ aadrõs / Editorial address:

Võro Instituut, Tarto huulits 48, 65609 Võro, Estonia

tel +372 78 28750, faks: +372 78 28757

kodoleht: wi.ee/toimonduso

e-post: juvasul@ut.ee, wi@wi.werro.ee

Trükjā: Udmurdi Ülikooli kirjastüs

ISBN (trükün) 978-9949-9995-1-4

ISBN (pdf) 978-9949-9995-2-1

ISSN 1406-2534

## ALOSTUSÕS

Võro Instituudi toimõnduisi sari ilmus 1997. aastagast pääle. Aastagast 2007 om välläannõq saanuq alalidsõ toimõndaja ni toimõndamisõ mano om haarõt riikevaihõlinõ nõvvokogo. Sarja om naat inne välläandmist retseniirmä ja taa pandas kirjä riikevaihõliidsihe raamadunimistüihe.

**Välläandmissagõhus.** Edespitengi om plaanit vällä andaq egä aastaga üts toimõnduisi põhinummõr, miä tulõ vällä rehekuun. Ku kirotuisi kogonõs inämb, võidas mano tetäq eräle numbriid.

**Oodami välläandmisõs kirotuisi,** mil om kõrralik ja kimmäs nii opusõ ku uurmisõ puul. Tuujaos, et umma kirätüüd saataq, piä-i olõma üles astnuq Võro Instituudi konvõrendsel. Oodõduq ommaq kõik keele ja kultuuri uurmisõga kõüdedüq tüüq ni uurmisallo vaihõlidsõq ja võrdõlõjaq teemaq.

**Põhinumbridõ põhijaon** andas vällä õdagumeresoomõ ni tõisi Õu-ruupa väikeisi kiili ja kultuurõ uurjidõ – keele-, kirändüs- ja rahvaluulõtiidläisi, muistitsidõ välläkaibjidõ, rahva-, aoluu- ni ütiskunnatiidläisi – kirotuisi.

**Esseistiga jaon** annami vällä populaartiiduslikke kirotuisi, arvostuisi ja ülekaehuisi. Erälde numbriin ilmusõq teemakogomiguq, suurõmbaq umaette uurmistüüq jms.

**Toimõnduisi kiil.** Võro Instituudi toimõndusõq om algusõst pääle olnuq mitmõkeeline välläannõq. Lisas võro ja eesti keelele oodami kirotuisi kõigin õdagumeresoomõ keelin, erändkõrran ka muin keelin. Egä toimõnduisi põhinummõr om vähämbält kolmkeeline – kirotusõ originaalkiil üten võro- ja ingliskeelidse kokkovõttõga.

**Artikliq retsenseeritäsõq.** Egä kirotusõ kotsilõ and uma vafadu nimiga arvamisõ kats, suurõmbidõ lahkomekide kõrral kolm arvamisandjat. Toimõndaja saat arvamisõq artikli kirotajalõ edesi.

**Kirotuisi saatmisõ tähtaig** om egä aastaga 15. radokuu päiv. Kirotusõq ilmutõdasõq välläandõ sama aastaga numbrin, miä tulõ vällä rehekuun.

**Nõudmisõq artikli moodulõ** lövvüseq Võro Instituudi toimõnduisi kodolehe pääl ([wi.ee/toimonduso](http://wi.ee/toimonduso)).

Toimõndaja

## ALUSTUSEKS

Võru Instituudi toimetiste sari ilmub 1997. aastast alates. Aastast 2007 on väljaanne saanud alalise vastutava toimetaja, toimetamisse on kaasatud rahvusvaheline kolleegium ja sari on muudetud eelretsenseeritavaks. Väljaanne registreeritakse rahvusvahelistes bibliograafilistes andmebaasides.

**Perioodilisus.** Edaspidigi on kavas avaldada üks toimetiste põhinumber aastas, ilmunisega oktoobris, ning vastavalt kogunevale materjalile erinumbreid.

**Ootame avaldamiseks artikleid**, mis on teoreetiliselt ja empiiriliselt hästi põhjendatud. Toimetised on avatud kõigile kaastöödele keele ja kultuuri uurimisega seotud aladelt ega ole piiratud Võru Instituudi konverentsidel esinejatega. Teretulnud on interdistsiplinaarne ja võrdlev vaatenurk.

**Põhinumbrite põhirubriigis** avaldatakse läänemeresoome ning teiste Euroopa väikeste keelte ja kultuuride uurijate – keele- ja kirjandusteadlaste, folkloristide, arheoloogide, etnoloogide ja ajaloolaste ning sotsiaalteadlaste – artikleid.

**Esseistika rubriigis** avaldame populaarteaduslikke artikleid, arvustusi ja ülevaateid. Erinumbritena ilmuvad teemakogumikud, monograafiad, konkreetsed uurimused jms.

**Toimetiste keel.** Võru Instituudi toimetised on algusest peale olnud mitmekeelne väljaanne. Lisaks võru ja eesti keelele ootame artikleid kõikides läänemeresoome keeltes, erandjuhtudel ka muudes keeltes. Iga toimetiste põhinumber on vähemalt kolmkeelne – artikli originaalkeelele lisatakse alati võru- ja ingliskeelne kokkuvõte.

**Artiklid retsenseeritakse.** Iga artiklit hindab anonüümselt kaks, eri-arvamuste korral kolm retsenti. Toimetaja saadab retsensioonid edasi artikli autorile.

**Artiklite saatmise tähtaeg** on iga aasta 15. veebruar. Artiklid avaldatakse väljaande sama aasta numbris, mis ilmub oktoobris.

**Kaastöö vormistusjuhendi ja nõuded** leiab Võru Instituudi toimetiste kodulehelt ([wi.ee/toimonduso](http://wi.ee/toimonduso)).

Toimetaja

## ALKUSANAT

Vörun instituutin toimituksia -julkaisusarja on ilmestynyt vuodesta 1997 alkaen. Vuodesta 2007 julkaisulla on ollut vakituinen päätoimittaja ja toimitustyössä on ollut mukana kansainvälinen työryhmä. Sarjaa on alettu esitarkastaa. Julkaisut rekisteröidään kansainvälisiin bibliografisiin tietokantoihin.

Vörun instituutin toimituksia on **aikakausijulkaisu**. Sarjan päänumero ilmestyy joka vuosi lokakuussa. Lisäksi julkaistaan erikoisnumeroita kulloinkin saatavilla olevasta materiaalista.

**Julkaisemme artikkeleita**, jotka ovat teoreettisesti ja empiirisesti hyvin perusteltuja. Otamme vastaan artikkeleita kielen ja kulttuurin tutkimukseen liittyviltä aloilta, eikä kirjoittajan tarvitse olla osallistunut Vörun instituutin konferensseihin. Toivomme artikkeleilta tieteidenvälistä ja vertailevaa näkökulmaa.

**Päänumeroiden perussisältö** muodostuu itämerensuomalaisten ja muiden Euroopan pienten kielten ja kulttuurien tutkijoiden – kieli- ja kirjallisuustieteilijöiden, folkloristien, arkeologien, kansatieteilijöiden, historioitsijoiden ja yhteiskuntatieteilijöiden – artikkeleista.

**Esseistiikan osiossa** julkaistaan populaaritieteellisiä artikkeleita, arvosteluja ja katsauksia. Erikoisnumeroina ilmestyvät teemakokoelmat, monografiat, tutkimukset yms.

**Julkaisujen kieli.** Vörun instituutin toimituksia on alusta asti ollut monikielinen sarja. Vöron- ja vironkielisten artikkelien lisäksi otamme vastaan artikkeleita kaikilla itämerensuomalaisilla kielillä, poikkeustapauksissa myös muilla kielillä. Jokainen päänumero on vähintään kolmikielinen – alkuperäiskielisen artikkelin lopussa on aina vöron- ja englanninkielinen tiivistelmä.

**Artikkelit tarkastetaan.** Jokaisen artikkelin arvioi anonymisti kaksi, erimielisyyksien sattuessa kolme tarkastajaa. Sen jälkeen arvostelu lähetetään artikkelin kirjoittajalle.

**Määräaika.** Artikkeleita otetaan vastaan joka vuosi 15. helmikuuta saakka. Artikkelit julkaistaan saman vuoden julkaisussa.

**Artikkelin muotoiluohjeet** löytyvät Vörun instituutin toimituksia -julkaisun kotisivulta ([wi.ee/toimonduso](http://wi.ee/toimonduso)).

Toimittaja

## PREFACE

Publications of Võro Institute have been published since 1997. Since 2007 the procedure of publication has been changed. There is a standing editor in charge, an international advisory board is involved and the series will be peer-reviewed. The publication will be registered in international indexing/abstracting services/databases.

**Periodicity.** Henseforward we aim to publish a main issue a year, in October, and according to material and will special editions will be published.

Theoretically and empirically well-grounded **papers are expected.** Publications are not limited to the presentations of the annual conferences of Võro Institute. We look forward to all contributions from the different fields of the study of language and culture. The interdisciplinary and comparative angle is welcome.

**In the main section** the contributions of researchers of Finnic and other European small languages and cultures – linguists, scholars of literature, folklorists, archaeologists, ethnologists, historians, and social scientists – are published.

**In the section of essays** the papers of popular interest, reviews and summaries are published. Thematic numbers, monographies, and ad hoc studies are published as special editions.

**Language.** Publications of Võro Institute have been since the very beginning a multilingual publication. In addition to the Võro and Estonian languages articles in all Finnic languages, and as an exception in other languages, are welcome. Each main edition is at least trilingual – the summary in Võro and in English will be always added to the original.

**The papers are peer-reviewed.** Each article is anonymously reviewed by two, in case of disagreement by three reviewers. The editor forwards the reviews to the author.

**The deadline for papers** is every year February 15. The papers are published in the issue of the year, in October.

**Submission guidelines** are available on the homepage of the Publications of Võro Institute ([wi.ee/toimonduso](http://wi.ee/toimonduso)).

Editor







# THE COLOURS OF THE POLAR LIGHTS (SYMBOLS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF SAMI IDENTITY)

ILDIKÓ TAMÁS

## From Lapp groups to the Sami nation

Even to the present day, the idea is commonly held (even in the Scandinavian countries) that the Sami are a remarkably unified group, that their existence is close to nature and based on reindeer herding, and that they sing their “ancient” joiks<sup>1</sup> (Mahtisen 2004). This homogenizing thinking is not at all surprising, as outsiders reduce even groups without sovereign nations or autonomy to less nuanced categories. The Sami live on Northern Europe’s periphery in an area about 1500-2000 km long and 200-400 km wide (Bereczki 2000: 37). The borders of four countries cross over *Sápmi* (“Sami-land”), the crescent-shaped area where the Sami live. In Scandinavia, those who identify as Sami are numbered around 70-100 thousand. They form the largest minority in Norway, where more than half of the Samis live (Aikio 2003: 35). The smaller portion of the Sami population lives in three other countries, the majority of which are in Sweden and Finland, and there are now fewer than 2000 Samis in Russia (Stepien 2009: 75). Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the division of the Sami groups was

---

<sup>1</sup> The joik is a singing tradition that touches the whole life of the Sami. It exhibits the marks of sacred and the profane symbols, and it is performed by many more people than those who would usually be connected with folk songs and ritual singing. The joiks have many functions: for example, as entertainment, as a communication tool, and as an expression of identity. The joik is also a system for the classification and identification of the Sami’s surroundings, a kind of summary of their experiences and knowledge about the world, in which their views about life are reflected and expressed (Tamás 2007: 75-79).

determined by ecological factors and the *siidas*<sup>2</sup> along the migration routes of the reindeer. These territorial units stretched from the edge of the sea into the interior in stripes running beside each other, where they formed what can be viewed as linguistically, economically, and culturally unified regions. The Sami themselves considered the boundaries between the *siidas* to be the borders of separation between them, the primary evidence for which is the formation of different dialects. The migrations of the people, tied to predetermined routes and often requiring a forced tempo, meant that the members of each group only maintained contact with directly neighbouring groups, so more distant Sami only knew of each other's lives by information passed on between several groups, which means that before the Second World War news did not penetrate to the entire region populated by the Sami (Lehtola 2010: 58). The most common exonyms of the Sami are "Finn" and "Lapp" (which are known from the earliest contact with them).<sup>3</sup> The latter was in almost exclusive use as an exonym for the Sami from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The word *Lapp*, which has a pejorative connotation in the North, has been successfully removed from official use thanks to the efforts of these people, and the endonym *Sami* has taken its place.<sup>4</sup> These designations originated primarily from travellers

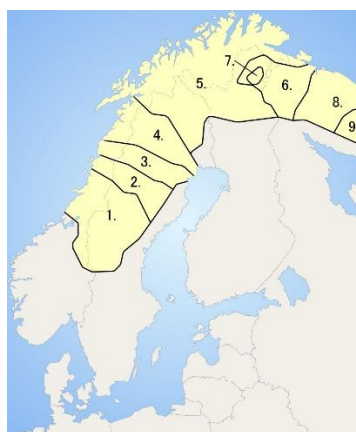
---

<sup>2</sup> The *siidas* are territories adjusted to the numbers (50-500 people), needs and natural boundaries of Sami groups, whose central location was the winter quarters. The entire *siida* community came together in the winter quarters, while family groups lived separately during the milder seasons, when they hunted, fished, and/or wandered together with the reindeer (Näkkäläjärvi 2003: 114-121).

<sup>3</sup> *Finn* and *Lapp* as exonyms can be found in several early sources (Tamás 2007: 31) and geographical names (such as the Finnish Lappi and Norwegian Finnmark) evidence them even today. The word *Lapp* is decidedly rude, even insulting, in Scandinavian countries to this day, and it is not a "politically correct" expression in more distant countries, either. This has caused a change in exonyms and the use of the endonym *Sami* in other languages, including Hungarian in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

<sup>4</sup> Until the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the overwhelming majority of the Sami people were reindeer herders, while the inhabitants of the fjords and the river and lake countries were fishers. These are the occupations based on which even the earliest sources (Tamás 2001: 30-32) separate

and missionaries. Later, when linguistic and folkloric studies of the Sami began, newer and newer opportunities for drawing divisions appeared, which the Samis themselves also found important, while others valued them for their scientific merit. The different Sami occupations (lifestyles) are also considered distinguishing features among the Samis, as are language and folk dress. The varieties in folk dress, which reflect the geographic and cultural divisions among the people, make this picture literally multicoloured, and they play a key role in the internal and external representation of the Sami. The ten very different dialects are historically the result of the low population spread out over tremendous territory, and many of them are endangered today.<sup>5</sup> (Figure 1.)<sup>6</sup>



**Figure 1.** The Sami languages: Southern, Ume, Pite, Lule, Northern, Inari, Skolt, Akkala, Kildin, and Ter Sami.

---

the types of Sami groups: they describe the ocean Lapps as fishing communities, the mountain or forest Lapps as reindeer herders. These two key economic paths were complemented by hunting, gathering, and agriculture and crafting to a lesser extent.

<sup>5</sup> Source: <http://hu.languagesindanger.eu/nyelvek-listaja/> (last accessed: 10.09.2015)

<sup>6</sup> The map's source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern\\_Sami](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Sami) (last accessed: 10.09.2015)

The multicolouredness of the languages is intensified by the fact that the Sami live in the territory of four countries, which causes many problems as well. Despite this, many of them are not bilingual. Though they consider themselves Sami, the banning of their language for several generations has caused many of them to speak only the official language of their country. Bilingualism, and in some cases (particularly near the borders of three different countries) proficiency in three languages can be connected with the “unevenness” caused by the fact that the Sami language is only in spoken use, while the written literacy of the Sami is tied to Norwegian, Finnish, Swedish, or Russian.<sup>7</sup> Thanks to Sami *giellabeassi* (language nest) programs in kindergarten and native-language education, reading and writing is becoming increasingly universal among young people, while it is less widespread among the older generations. Samis who learn their native language as adults often do not know the language of their own territory, and instead know only or prefer to use the primary, northern Sami dialect. The cause for this is that – though more dialects have orthography – the dominance of Northern Sami is becoming more pronounced (Tamás 2001: 619-628). Considering that (on the basis of the Swadesh list<sup>8</sup>) the differences between even the neigh-

---

<sup>7</sup> These are supported by my plotting-boards made during my visits to Norwegian and Finnish Sami settlements (in 1999 and 2014). In Kau-tokeino, for example, an elderly woman called Máret, who speaks three other languages fluently besides Sami, asked me to write to her in Norwegian or English if I write to her, the latter of which her daughter can translate for her, as her ability to read is limited to Norwegian. Although there has been a unified, official written language for the Northerners since 1978, neither the 75-year-old lady, nor her daughters could read nor write in their native language, so they could only communicate in writing in Norwegian and English, which they learned in schools.

<sup>8</sup> The American linguist Morris Swadesh’s compilation of a basic concepts is the standard method employed in historical and comparative linguistic studies. The following statistical data about the Sami language are derived from Gábor Tillinger’s dissertation: the overlap between the neighboring Northern Sami and Inari Sami languages is 90.2%, which is smaller, than between Norwegian and Danish (96.7%) and close to that between Spanish and Portuguese (85.9%). The percentage is the

bouring Sami dialects are greater than, for example, those between Norwegian and Danish, and the “overlap” between more distant dialects is about the same as between the Romance languages (Tillinger 2013), it was necessary to designate **one** language for the purpose of nation-building. Therefore, Northern Sami assumed the role of the national language, while the other languages took on a minority status (minorities within the minority). Naturally, folkloric elements also have their own unique regions with characteristic features, on which different ethnic connections had significant influence.<sup>9</sup> Starting in the second half of the 20th century, the lifestyle of the Sami people largely transformed, so that today important differences are evident. A substantial portion of the Sami became city-dwellers, and many who would rather have pursued reindeer keeping were forced to find urban occupations. Due to reduction caused by the “communication of cultural differences” (Eriksen 2008: 41). The differences between the Sami and the majority populations (superficially) began to lessen, and there began a spread and dissolution of the characteristic aspects representative of Sami-ness. In opposition to this, reindeer keeping remains a central element in the internal and external expression of “Sami identity,” and Swedish and Norwegian law guarantees the Sami monopoly in this area. In Finland, however, only 20% of the Sami population is employed in reindeer keeping, and the percentage is even lower in Russia (Lehtola

---

same (85.9%) in the case of the neighboring Inari and Skolt. The overlap between Lule and Skolt, which do not border each other, is 71.2%, which matches the “distance” between the French and Portuguese languages, and it is somewhat less than the shared vocabulary of the Estonian and Finn languages (72.3%) (Tillinger 2013: 64-65, 81-90).

<sup>9</sup> A good example of this is the development of the joik tradition, which have significant differences between regions. While the primary, Northern Sami region’s joiks, musically and lyrically, are markedly different from the surrounding Swedish, Norwegian, and Finnish folk music, the musical world of the more southern regions has been strongly influenced by the Swedish folk song treasury, and the Karelian epic tradition had a strong influence on the characteristically long texts of the eastern regions (Tamás 2001, Tamás 2007).

2010: 10). Despite this dynamic transformation, the “exoticization” of the Sami in (not only) external discourses remains significant, mirroring discourses connected to native populations worldwide. Depicting an archaic people caught in an unchanged state separated from modern progress (with their tents, reindeer, and shaman drums), these images dominate discourse, connected to this day with ideas of being left behind, inferior, and similar negative stereotypes. This means that differences between the Sami groups are reduced to seeming insignificance beside the much more noticeable differences that separate them from the Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, and Russian populations. This is to say that for external viewers, without an immediate or deep knowledge of the subject, the picture formed appears uniform. The patchwork-like reality of the Sami is geographically, linguistically, culturally, and economically heterogeneous. This variety is complicated by the fact that the criteria of laws determining who can officially be considered Sami vary from country to country.<sup>10</sup> It can be said overall that due to their minority status, the Sami are in the crossfire of both internal and external determination of their ethnic identity. Nevertheless, the awareness of Pan-Sami identity is today shared among the Sami people, tying together even the most distant regions. This required the combined cooperation of the Sami intelligentsia, which has grown in strength from the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The important questions of the movements aimed at beginning this revitalization ask how the Sami can determine themselves and their tighter and more distant communities in the modern world, as well as what national qualities they find important. In order to communicate with widespread and many people, they had to find those central symbols, drawn from a variety of sources but still crafted into a unified whole, that project the image the Sami prefer (and, at times, that outsiders expect). The political and cultural interests

---

<sup>10</sup> The Norwegian poet Aagot Vinterbo-Hohr (1936–) makes reference to this in the following lines: “grandfathers / were born in eighteen ninety-five / grandmother in eighteen ninety / parents in nineteen forty // native language / banned across four generations // according to the law: / he is not Sami” (based on the Hungarian translation by Johanna Domokos) (Domokos 2003: 19).



of the Sami required that such national symbols be constructed, all while recording and supporting their heterogeneity (Hobsbawn 1990, 1997, Hobsbawn – Rangers 1983). The shaping of these symbols naturally included an emphasis on the linguistic and cultural signifiers of certain regions, which had to be accepted by the entire Sami community. One such element is the word *sámi* (Sami), describing nationality, being applied to the entire Sami population in everyday and official use, as well as the name for the entire region occupied by them, *Sápmi* (“Sami-land”), which are words from the Northern dialect. Nation-building usually comes with selecting the groups (and places) to emphasize as having the desired essential qualities of a nation, and the existence of such groups (in the case of the Sami, the northern reindeer-keeping communities) determines what symbols are possible or desirable to emphasize. Their minority existence in four countries thus is connected, on the one hand, to a new kind of center-periphery relationship (in “Sami-land”), and on the other hand with a new, “global” solidarity that connects all people with indigenous status. For this reason, we must take into account at least three relationship systems when we analyse these symbols: nation state – minority, Pan-Saminess - Sami groups, and aboriginal groups – Sami. To understand Sami self-determination, a brief historical overview is necessary.

### **In the shadow of hostile flags**

Although they never established an independent state in the course of their history, the Sami populated a tremendous territory until the start of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Their territory extended well to the south of its boundaries today. Because of their cyclical migration and the border crossings these required, they frequently had to pay taxes to multiple states. From the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Swedish rule intervened increasingly in the lives of the Sami, and the Swedes often took their lands without compensation. At the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the exact determination of the border between Norway and Russia had a more negative effect than any previous event on the nomadic Sami, as they had until then wintered the

herds in the interior and then herded them to the fjord regions in the summer, but this change put an end to their free movement in the area. Although churches had already been built in Lappland in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the most effective period of missionary work was the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Puritan Lutheran movement led by Lars Levi Laestadius (1800-1861) spread from 1840 and achieved significant successes. Shamanism and joiking, seen by outsiders as demonic, were punished by religious and secular authorities alike. Certain articles of women's clothing were also banned, primarily the *ladjogahpir*, a sickle-shaped head covering with internal reinforcement (Figure 2.)<sup>11</sup> (Solbakk – Solbakk 2005: 111).



**Figure 2.** *Ladjogahpir*<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> The image's source: [https:// www.flickr.com/photos/28772513@N07/5264099407](https://www.flickr.com/photos/28772513@N07/5264099407)

<sup>12</sup> The image's source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/28772513@N07/5264099407>)

These, together with confiscated shaman drums, were publically burned by the ministers.<sup>13</sup> Though the Sami took up arms against the political and the religious restrictions, the use of intimidation, and the impossibility of economic survival, the Sami rebels were few in number and isolated from one another, so the revolution was defeated. The leaders were executed or thrown in prison, which created even deeper fear amongst them, and the Sami became even more withdrawn. The events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought no easing of tensions until the last third of the century; in fact, the circumstances continued to worsen in many respect. The territory of the Sami continued to contract, while the Norwegian and the Swedish governments employed never-before-seen tactics to try to assimilate the Sami. People struggling to maintain their Sami identity no longer had to deal only with the loss of societal prestige and discrimination. They could not use their native language publically, and everything connected with Sami identity was stigmatized. In Sweden, institutes established for the study of racial biology were used to demonstrate their inferiority. The most famous (most publicized) operated in Uppsala until the 1970's. This was all connected to concrete measures such as sterilization. Thanks to the circumstances briefly described above, the basic expressions of Sami identity (language, clothing, tents) disappeared (at least in public spheres) because they had become synonymous with inferiority. In areas of mixed populations where the Sami were in the minority, their native language, joiking, and Sami dress could be found exclusively inside Sami homes, carefully hidden away from the eyes of outsiders. Harald Eidheim (Eidheim 1969), writing in his studies about Samis living in seaside settlements and Norwegian fishing communities, describes the struggle against notions of Sami stupidity, dirtiness, fecklessness, ridiculousness and other stereotypes about the Sami cultural markers completely outlawed in external spheres. Although they did not break away completely from every element of the Sami lifestyle, the Sami themselves became increasingly used

---

<sup>13</sup> This is the subject of the film titled *Iðitsilba* (Burning Sun), directed by Elle Márjá Eira, presented at the 2015 Sami film festival (<http://www.isfi.no/eng/resources/pdf/7SamiStories.pdf>).

to the fact they could only practice the things condemned and looked down on by the Norwegians or the Swedes (eg. joiking), behind closed doors, often hidden even from their own children. To speak Sami in front of Norwegians or Swedes was considered a provocation, and to appear in traditional dress was social suicide. As a result of the powerful dichotomization (Eidheim 1971), and in order “to save themselves from being labelled, they introduced themselves as Norwegians, and overemphasized everything that they considered part of Norwegian culture” (Eriksen 2006: 360). This all led to a deep crisis for the Sami identity, as well as to the conscious switching back and forth between the externally displayed and internally lived identities. However, the coin has another side, regarding which Thomas Hylland Eriksen’s uses the term *paradoxon* (Eriksen 2006: 360). Under the influence of the Norwegian school system and to help force assimilation, the ability to read and write became universal in the Sami circles. This became a requirement of their ability to uphold their interests. Therefore, the Norwegian methods of assimilation, banning the use of the Sami language and requiring them to become part of the Norwegian social system as Norwegians, gave the Sami capacities that later made it possible for them to effectively represent their own political goals. They learned the contemporary tools of nationalism and survival, and learning the Norwegian discourses of power was the price of their survival. The Swedish and Finnish oppression was different from this in that instead of the assimilation of the Sami (their “Swedification” or “Finnification”), here the political intention was to exclude them. The “Lapp skall vara lapp” (‘the Lapp should remain a Lapp’) motto, together with its use of the pejorative exonym, suggested that the Sami are unsuitable for becoming equal members of society (Grundsten 2010: 21).

Despite all difficulties, and partially thanks to new trends in international indigenous policy, the Sami have reached significant achievements. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sami parliaments were founded one after the other in the Scandinavian states: on November 9, 1973 in Finland; on October 9, 1989 in Norway; and on January 1, 1993 in Sweden. The Sami Council (*Sámiráđđi*) formed in 1956. It is a Pan-Sami movement based in

Norway, which supports and represents Samis living anywhere in the world. The familiarity gained in the necessary political-cultural discourses would not have been enough in itself. For their cultural rebirth and the revitalization of their ethnic identity, the Sami needed important symbols that could become the central focus in their survival strategy due to their central role in traditional Sami culture.

### **The Northern, Pan-Sami, and pan-indigenous discourses**

Many important Sami political and cultural institutions are located in the northern Norwegian region of Finnmark, which plays a central role in all respects. Nevertheless, the early all-Sami political efforts started in the more southern regions, where the threat of assimilation appeared earlier and with greater force. In the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, between 1904 and 1911, the institutions formed in the southern-Sami territories were the forerunners of later movements, which addressed larger groups. Their efforts were primarily social and cultural in nature. The era's most outstanding figure was Elsa Laula Renberg (1877-1931), a Sami living in Sweden. Her intense political role from the start of the century formed the basis of the international Sami council held on February 6, 1917, in Trondheim. Following this, there were three more ground-breaking meetings through 1937. The Sami guiding principles established in the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century later took on a central importance in the international political struggle for indigenous peoples' rights (Hilder 2015: 23-25).

The second wave of the minority unity movement also started in the southern regions, when, during the Second World War, the different Sami groups were moved as part of the evacuations to the western Finnish region of Ostrobothnia. As a result, the widely spread Sami groups who barely knew of each other's existence found themselves confined together in a small space, which created conditions favourable to cooperation (Lehtola 2010: 54-55, 58). Neither the Second World War nor the surviving theory of Social Darwinism could stop the emerging Sami

movement. In 1947, the Sami reindeer herders started an organization to protect their own interests. Nine years later, the Northern Sami Council was founded with the goal of bringing together the Sami living in different countries and regions. This is when the idea of a unified Sami nation was irrevocably formed: a nation which, though it does not have its own political borders, can pass laws over territories in which the Sami have lived for centuries. Since this subject was raised internationally, the Sami have played an important part in international talks regarding the rights of indigenous people. In this time, there was a gradual cooling in the efforts at assimilation directed against the Sami. The most important change came in 1979, as a result of the protests against the redirection of the northern Alta River and the construction of a hydroelectric power plant. The protest was unsuccessful in the sense that it was unable to prevent the construction of the power plant, but it had a positive outcome as well: attention was turned more than ever to the rights of the Sami, the problems of the northern regions, and the protection of the environment. Thanks in large part to the positions they won in Norway, the Sami play an important part in the most significant international forums (WCIP, IWGIA) on the topics of the issues of indigenous people, the compensation of affected groups, and programs for rehabilitation.<sup>14</sup> So far, the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, ILO 169, covering the territorial rights of indigenous people, has only been ratified in Norway, and not in the other countries. Despite the limited self-governance enjoyed by the Sami, the separation from external perceptions (and certain stereotypes along with them) and global discourses did not come to pass. The term indigenous continued to be strongly connected to the image of a pre-modern, “pagan” person living in harmony with nature (Gaski 2003, Graff 2007, Pentikäinen 1996, Sveen – Rydving 2003). The Sami themselves consider their common denominators with other indigenous people important. They place great value on their

---

<sup>14</sup> The president of the Norwegian Sami Parliament, Ole Henrik Magga, was the first president of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issue, formed under the aegis of the UN in 2002 (Stepien 2009: 87).

commonality with other similarly oppressed people they have established links with through international politics and cultural connections. As was expressed several times by the founder of the Sami revitalization movement, Nils-Aslak Valkeapää (as well as many other Northern politicians and writers): the voice of the Sami is barely audible by itself, but they form a strong and powerful community to whom the world pays attention when they are united with other indigenous groups.<sup>15</sup> This belief is often visually expressed in the decorations of cultural events and in the creations Arvid Sveen, Hans Ragnar Mahtisen, and many other Sami artists. Christianity and imperialism often appear as conquering powers in these; thanks in large part to this, images connected to the pre-Christian world view and shamanism play a determining role in Sami discourses.<sup>16</sup> (Figure 3-5.)

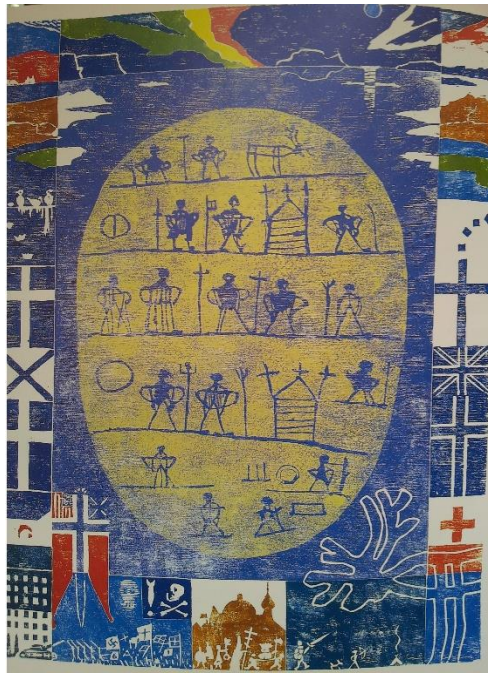
---

<sup>15</sup> The biopic about him, (“The wind is blowing through my heart”) can be watched on YouTube. The importance of pan-indigenous cooperation is expressed several times in it:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ax8eWwrneVE>  
(last accessed: 09.10.2015).

<sup>16</sup> One of the causes for the “store window-style” interpretation of shamanistic motifs is the “necessity to display” (Bíró 1996: 247), in other words, to show those things that the colonizers were exterminating earlier with fire and steel. These symbols associated with Sami-ness carry within themselves the image of an unconquerable people capable of survival. There is a clear representation of this at the end of a music video by the Sami singer Sofia Jannok, who is from Sweden. It shows a piece of graffiti written in the Sami language: “*LEAT DAS AIN*” (“we are still here”). The video’s source:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hr13WV7UkgA> (last accessed: 09.10.2015)



**Figure 3.** Poster of a historic theme by Hans Ragnar Mahtisen.



**Figure 4.** Hans Ragnar Mahtisen: Newborn Nation...





**Figure 5.** Arvid Sven's work<sup>17</sup> about the solidarity of indigenous people and the Sami national endeavour.

<sup>17</sup> The image's source:

<http://kreativtforum.no/artikler/kudos/2014/02/asdfg>

The image of the natural people connects “mystically” with a “natural world view,” which draws not only from historical discourses, but is also reinforced by contemporary expressions condemning the results of modernization and the pollution of the environment, as well as contemporary pagan knowledge-registers (Hilder 2015: 109–148). The construction of Pan-Sami identity is therefore (also) strongly linked with natural, shamanistic, and mythic imagery, which can be observed to be a common denominator with other indigenous groups, for instance, with the construction of the similarly very heterogeneous North American Indian tribes’ Pan-Indian identity (Kristóf 2007: 153–172).

The above-mentioned processes and events—the more intense assimilation of the south, the limited minority rights of the eastern Sami (on the Kola Peninsula)—led to the political and cultural strengthening of the Sami in northern Norway, where the new middle-of-periphery pattern of Sami society was unconsciously formed.<sup>18</sup> The indigenous minority’s tremendous geographical distance from the more densely-populated, strategically important Scandinavian regions also helped enable the northern Sami regions’ independence. The exotic idea of the “Far North” eventually brought with it a rise in tourism. To go to Lapland meant to make an imaginary journey into the past and also an experience—though full of difficulties and challenges—of idyllic, untouched nature, made more beautiful by the reindeer and the people in colourful clothes herding them.<sup>19</sup> As a result of all of this, the North, seen from the perspective of the nation-states as peripheral, became the center of the Sami revitalization. Thereby, the most important symbols also started out in this central region.

---

<sup>18</sup> Of the Scandinavian countries, Norway has the most complete representation of Sami rights. In Sweden, the protection and support of Sami occupations is emphasized. In these two countries, reindeer keeping is the exclusive right of the Sami. In Finland and Russia (despite the fact that the first Sami parliament was formed in Finland), the opportunities available to the Sami are significantly more limited.

<sup>19</sup> Fishing, which received emphasis early on, was less suitable for being the basis of opposition, so its role in identity representation was forced into the background.

The first flag (Figure 6.), which was used from the start of the 1970's until 1986, actually contained the colours and patterns of the folk dress of the reindeer-keeping, Northern Sami dialect-speaking groups. The widest blue stripe used the basic colour of their folk dress, and the narrow yellow stripe and the somewhat wider red stripe contained the colours of the costume's breast- and shoulder parts, as well as that of the decoration along the edges (Bjørklund 2000: 279). The characteristic green colour from the folk dress of the more southern regions, primarily in Sweden, only appeared in the flag accepted in 1986, as a fourth stripe.



**Figure 6.** The first flag.

Beyond these central symbols, the Pan-Sami ideal also appears in emblematic organizations and groups, such as the composition of the Sami football team and the Sami choir. The football team (Figure 7.)<sup>20</sup> is made up of Sami from three countries, while the choir's membership (Figure 8.)<sup>21</sup> covers all four countries—in fact, its activities cannot be linked to a base in a single region, as it “wanders” among the centers of several languages (they call themselves *musijkka nomádat*, or musical nomads, on their homepage).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Source: <http://tavriya.com.ua/?id=4921>

<sup>21</sup> The picture's source: : <http://www.samijienat.com/govat.html>

<sup>22</sup> The website's address: <http://www.samijienat.com/musihkka-nomaacutedat.html>



**Figure 7.** The Sami football team in 2008.



**Figure 8.** The *Sámi Jienat* ('Sami voices') choir's members.

## Elements of folk dress and folklore in the Sami flag

The flag that today symbolizes the Sami nation (Figure 9) was first used in 1979 in the course of the protests against the building of the hydroelectric plant on the Alta River in northern Norway. It was made official in 1986, on the anniversary of the first all-Sami council (February 6, 1917), at the 13<sup>th</sup> Sami Conference in Åre (Näkkäläjärvi 2003: 21). The flag, composed of different vertical stripes connected by a ring, carries many meanings. The four stripes represent the Sami groups living in the four countries, while the ring that combines them represents the need to balance out their dividedness.



**Figure 9.** The current Sami flag.

The four colours show the colours of the traditional dress (and, at the same time, those of the Aurora Borealis). The ring of the flag is a symbol of many meanings: beyond unity, it represents the Sun and the Moon, the opening to allow smoke to escape at the top of traditional tents, the shaman drum, and migration based on cycles, which is the traditional lifestyle of the Samis (Näkkäläjärvi 2003: 21).<sup>23</sup> Related to this, the blue and the crimson semicircles refer not only to heavenly bodies, but to the “dual-dwellings” of the Sami who have separate winter and summer quarters. Visual and verbal symbolism, therefore, connects very

---

<sup>23</sup> The following section of a Valkeapää poem illustrates the above symbols in condensed terms: “Great ring / on a wandering path / the moon in the opening for smoke / Northern lights / the stars of the sky”.

strongly with the ideology associated with the flag. Another point supporting this is that the flag designed by Sami artist Astrid Båhl and the national anthem's text were accepted simultaneously and made official. A genuinely dense literary and poetic language-web exists around the flag. According to the prose folklore texts about the origin of the Sami and the Aurora Borealis, as well as in motifs appearing over and over in epic joiks, the Sami are the sons of the Sun who live their lives matching their own wanderings to the cyclic movement of the Sun (Gaski 2003). The text of the *Sámi soga lávlla*, the "Sami national anthem," written by Isak Saba, draws partially from this tradition, when it describes the Sami as the "shining descendants of Sun-children".<sup>24</sup> The flag's symbols, therefore, are in close connection with Sami literary tradition and object culture: primarily with the colours of the folk dress and the form and motifs of the shaman drum. The flag's colours display primarily the colours of summer dress (the winter dress is a pelt with the fur turned out, whose colours of blue, yellow, red, and green only appear in its ribbon decorations). The *gákti*, which is to say the summer dress—for men and women alike—is made chiefly of blue baize, its borders and its neck decorated by colourful—red, yellow, and green—stripes and geometric shapes.<sup>25</sup> (Figure 10-11.)

---

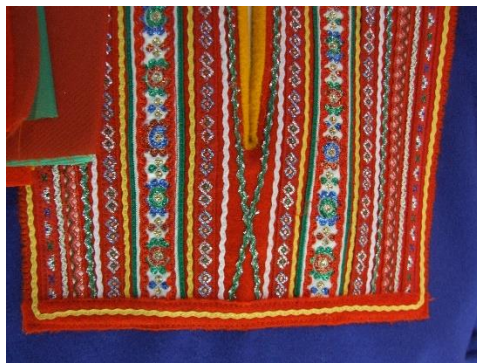
<sup>24</sup> For example, in the joik texts gathered and completed by Anders Fjellner. Finn's work was inspired by the rich Finnish folklore collections and publications, thus was born the "Sami epic fragments" titled *Páiven párneh* ("The Sun's son") and the *Pišša Paššan párdne* ("Pišša and Paššan's son"), a work of notable creativity reflecting the conventions of contemporary folklore text-publication. The selection is through the translation of the Hungarian Anna Bede (Keresztes 1983).

<sup>25</sup> The flag of the Seto in Northern Europe can be mentioned for its parallel use of folk dress. Although the Seto flag, like other flags of Northern minorities (Vepsians, Votes, Izhorians, Karelians, Ludians), uses the template of the Scandinavian flags, the cross-shape of the Seto flag is decorated with their characteristic embroidery. The picture's source: <http://www.nyest.hu/renhirek/hanyan-beszeli-a-szettut-a-voruities-a-mulgit> (last accessed: 09.10.2015).





**Figure 10.** Sami Women, Kautokeino, 1999.



**Figure 11.** Sami ornamental motifs.

I have already mentioned the objects connected to the ring motif, and it is important to also mention that on shaman drums, which have long been known only as museum pieces, the Sun always appears as a central symbol. Comparing the northern countries' and the other minorities' flags, they differ only in their colours, while all are divided by a cross. At first glance, the Sami flag departs from this Scandinavian tradition. However, if we consider the flag's proportions, and we look at the two narrow stripes, it becomes clear that there is a commonality with the Scandinavian flags. The stripes, overlapped by the ring, can be considered the opposite of the cross motif:



The Sami opinions that do not agree with the central symbolic language also reflect this. In the Sami journal *Ságat*, an article appeared with a fairly provocative title: “The Sami Flag is Ugly and Full of Occult Symbols.”<sup>26</sup> The writer, a Sami minister, condemns the flag's ring, representing the Sun, Moon, and the shaman drum together. He would rather see the cross on the flag, as the Sami have not been pagans for a long time. The shamanistic symbols and their interpretations, wrapped in the mist of Sami myth and esotericism, are genuinely not always popular among the Christian Sami, particularly the Laestadians. They bemoan the lack of Christian symbols in the process of building Sami identity, though their opinion does not even begin to reflect the thoughts of the majority, due to the contradictory role Christianity played in the history of the Sami. This does not mean that the Laestadians

---

<sup>26</sup> The report's original location: <http://www.sagat.no/hovednyheter/2013/02/16/29982/>. The report was mentioned by several Norwegian news outlets, for example: <http://www.vl.no/troogkirke/pastor-h%C3%B8sterstorm-etter-kritikk-av-sameflagget-1.59464> and <http://thornews.com/2013/02/16/pastor-thesami-flag-is-ugly-and-full-of-occult-symbols/> (last accessed: 09.10.2015)



and other, strongly Christian groups would reject the Sami symbols completely from the sphere of religious life. Sami folk dress is used as Sunday dress and for celebrations in the churches, and the pictures and altars in the Sami churches reflect this, displaying Christians wearing folk dress, including the “Lapp Mary” (Figure 12-13).



**Figure 12.** Sami triptych in the Jukkasjärvi Church. The work of Bror Hjort (1894–1968).



**Figure 13.** Sami children at their Confirmation.

## **The symbolic discourse of rehabilitation (?)**

Beyond uniting the Sami, the old-new symbols also have a positive influence on the outside world. Sami songs or modes of dress are no longer considered worthless and laughable in these new discourses, but they are rather considered important forms of knowledge that can be used for protecting the environment. In this new and clearer light, the Sami are talented musician and their material world inspires visual artists and designers. Although many continue to be antagonistic or apathetic towards questions associated with indigenous people, it seems that an increasing number of people want to take part in Sami culture. This new trend has created some fairly ambivalent situations: on the one hand, Sami and “outsiders” have strongly contoured ideas about what is authentically Sami, while on the other hand, we can find the many-sided truth behind the unified mask of these ideals “on both sides”. Next, I will describe three occasions in three countries which revolved around Sami dress in different ways.<sup>27</sup>

On February 6, 2009, all of Norway looked north. They did this not only because the Sami celebrate Sami National Day on that day, but because the royal couple, Haakon and Mette-Marit visited Kautokeino and Karasjok.<sup>28</sup> The pair wore Sami folk dress on the occasion, which they had received for their wedding in 2001 (Figure 14.)<sup>29</sup>.

---

<sup>27</sup> Dress as a national symbol is prominent in Norway and Sweden. The royal family’s members in both countries appear in the colors of their countries’ flags on national holidays.

<sup>28</sup> Kautokeino and Karasjok are emblematic Sami settlements. The former is the site of the most important cultural events, while the latter is the center of the Sami judicial system and is also where the Norwegian Sami parliament is based.

<sup>29</sup> The picture’s source: <http://www.finnmarkslopet.no/rhist/article.jsp?id=4091> (last accessed: 09.10.2015)



**Figure 14.**

Over the course of their two days spent in the North, they tried traditional Sami foods, as well as traditional Sami activities from lassoing to riding in a reindeer-drawn sleigh, almost even sleeping in tents. Mette-Marit declined this last activity on account of the -30 to -35°C cold.<sup>30</sup> The media wrote positive accounts of the royal couple's participation in the series of Sami celebrations, although some Sami groups aired criticism. For example, they wrote that Haakon put the "four winds cap" on wrong and that both wore overalls beneath the winter clothes they received as gifts from the Sami.<sup>31</sup> The rejection of sleeping in tents and wearing overalls both recalled one of the "homogenizing" themes in Sami folklore, which is that only Samis can stand the cold. The gestures of building bridges and friendship could not cover the smaller mistakes, such as the incorrect wearing of the cap. Despite this, no one questioned the positive intentions of the royal couple.

Other, more dramatic events reveal that the Sami react very sensitively if someone uses their symbols in a way that reveals they do not know the symbols' code. In Finland, the case of the beauty queen served as an important lesson. The winner of the Finnish Miss Universe 2007 contest represented the country in Sami dress (however, the dress was not made by Sami, but was

---

<sup>30</sup> Source: <http://www.seher.no/royal/sover-ute-i-35-minusgrader-36740> (Last accessed: 09.10.2015.)

<sup>31</sup> Source: <http://norwegianne.net/2009/02/09/haakon-and-mette-marit-in-finnmark/> (last accessed: 09.10.2015)

mass-produced in Hong Kong). As a result, there were protests in the northern Finnish city of Rovaniemi. Several hundred young people marched through the streets with Sami and (directly bypassing the Finnish language) English signs to send a message to the world beyond the Finns. The mottos of the protests were: “Respect my culture!”, “I like real things!”, “Not for sale!”, “This is our dress, this is our identity!” and “Burn fake!” (Hilder 2015: 159). Lars Miguel Utsi expressed in a release that they were protesting because the industry associated with tourism is flooding Lapland with “fake folk dress” and “fake Samis”.<sup>32</sup> According to him, this is an unacceptable, new sort of discrimination that treats the Sami like they were worthless. Tourists encounter “fake Samis” and the pale imitations of their material culture in the North, and they think that this must be what genuine indigenous people are like as they experience the glittering empire of Santa Claus. Among the signs from the protests, one had the slogan *Dá lea miss Sápmi!* (‘Here is Miss Sápmi!’), which a young woman clad in *genuine* folk dress held while standing beside a table, on which imitation Sami clothing “made in Hong Kong” like that worn by the Finnish beauty queen were spread, thus demonstrating the powerful contrast between the two. As was revealed by the releases, these show a problem with deeper roots than any isolated incident. Klemetti Näkkäläjärvi, President of the Finnish Saami Parliament from 2008 to 2015, also expressed how much harm the Finnish tourism industry does to them, as cheap imitation Sami objects mass-produced in China, among them folk dress, flood businesses not run by Sami in Lapland.<sup>33</sup> The gifting of clothing (which is always home- and handmade) and folk dress is important in Sami circles to this day. It has ritual meaning, as it represents acceptance as well as becoming a member of society. In contrast to this, those who order and market the Finnish goods go behind neglecting the meanings behind them but also pay no attention to accuracy or quality. Although handmade Sami

---

<sup>32</sup> Lapland is the English equivalent of the Finnish Lappi, which is the official designation of Finland’s most northerly region.

<sup>33</sup> Oral remarks. Klemetti Näkkäläjärvi spoke on this topic at a round table arranged by the Loránd Eötvös University, Faculty of Humanities, during his November 2014 visit to Hungary.

goods that are certified authentic (*duodji*) also exist on the market, these have difficulty competing with the mass-produced, cheap goods. Naturally, to a certain extent, tourism contributes to the survival of the indigenous people, and the Sami form their “own” tourism industry, which is impossible to confuse with Chinese imitations and copies.<sup>34</sup>

A Sami boy dressed in folk dress appeared in the first round of the 2014 “Talang Sverige” talent competition. His appearance was emphasized both in the interviews conducted with him and in his conversation with the judges when he came on stage. Jon Henrik Fjällgren explained that he loves Sami folk dress and his clothing was made by his mother. He himself is of South American “Indian” descent, and he was adopted by a Sami family as a baby. The film showed before his stage performance also revealed that many looked down on him and made fun of him for his skin colour in his childhood, and also for the fact that he was part of a reindeer keeping Sami family preserving traditions. Despite these, he bravely introduced the Sami culture’s treasures to the broader Swedish audience, so he prepared a joik for the talent show. During Jon Henrik’s performance, many people broke into tears, and after the song the members of the jury as well as the audience gave a standing ovation, so overcome they could barely speak.<sup>35</sup> A few weeks and rounds later, Jon Henrik left as the nationwide program’s winner. In 2015 he joiked before the Swedish royal family under Swedish flags, accompanied by a

---

<sup>34</sup> Sami fashion designers increasingly try to adjust the patterns, colors, and motifs to the “templates” desired by young people. Modern Sami clothes designed uniquely are popular in Sami and non-Sami circles alike. They always emphasize, though, that the historical symbolism of the clothing must be accurately preserved in the world of the modern fashion. In August 2015 Sigga-Marja Magga held a presentation about the work of Sami handmade products and the work of fashion designers in Oulu. She stressed that the *duodji* still carries very important meanings today: it is connected to a system of norms, and it is also the symbol of the Sami fight for human rights (Magga 2015: 448–449).

<sup>35</sup> The contest’s broadcast can be viewed on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woEcdqqbEVg>

Royal Swedish Army Orchestra during the Nationaldagen festivities.<sup>36</sup> It has become a tradition on the Swedish National Day for a Sami singer to take the stage as a special performance, and many Sami singers in addition to Jon Henrik have become famous among the Swedish audience (Figure 15<sup>37</sup>-16.<sup>38</sup>).



**Figure 15.** One of the jury members, Tobias Karlsson, while listening to Jon Henrik joiking.



**Figure 16.** The winner with his parents.

---

<sup>36</sup> Other Samis have been guests of honor at these events in recent years: Sophia Jannok in 2013 and Ingá-Máret Gaup-Juuso in 2014, accompanied by Loreen.

<sup>37</sup> Source: <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2327&artikel=5793990> (last accessed: 09.10.2015).

<sup>38</sup> Source: <http://www.op.se/noje/musik/dagen-efter-succesegern-jon-henrik-fjallgren-slapper-skiva> (last accessed: 09.10.2015).

These three cases demonstrate that ethnic tensions are present even today in the North. Sami rights received legal protection primarily in Norway and Sweden. Despite this, the two (Norwegian and Swedish) examples illustrate well that the two countries are following different paths in the rehabilitation of the Sami. This could all have historical causes, as Norway wanted to erase the cultural markers of Sami-ness: to assimilate by force and change (“Norwegianize”) the Sami (Bjørklund 2000, Minde 2005), while Sweden primarily aimed to exclude them: they denied rights to them and took steps (such as sterilization) to lower the Sami population, which signified that Sami are an inferior “race” that will never be equal to the Swedes (Grundsten 2010)). This is why in Norway today the political efforts towards rehabilitation aim for the acceptance of distinctive Sami elements and cultural equality, which the Norwegian royal couple appearing in an official capacity wearing Sami dress illustrates well. In Sweden, the steps towards achieving social equality are more readily observable. The primary symbols of Sami-ness (such as their dress and the joik) have gone from being looked down on to being accepted, even celebrated by the Swedes in the discourse for equality (and compensation). It is another question whether, despite the positive changes observable in political spheres, the political background is not as significant as that in Norway. For a more nuanced understanding of the situation in Norway, it is necessary to know that, although the Finns and the Sami consider the northern region historically the home of the Sami, we hardly find any settlements in Lapland where the Sami comprise a significant majority. The mixing of Sami and Finns was much more prevalent there; as a result, many Finns have started to keep reindeer. They learned reindeer keeping from the Sami, they adopted the related tool usage and terminology (like other elements of regional folklore) while changing them to suit their own preferences. The majority of Sami in Finland today feel that political processes increasingly exclude them from reindeer keeping, which is a vital, iconic branch of their self-identification, so many must choose other occupations out of necessity (Näkkäljärvi 2014: 109–125). After long discussions, the acceptance of Convention C 169 of the ILO was included in the daily agenda of the Finnish Parliament.

The Sami watched the events with great anticipation, but only the Swedish minority parted voted with them, and the Parliament rejected the proposal. As a result, the Sami have not received the right to control their land and natural resources, which among other things would have helped strengthen the economic position of reindeer keeping. As a result of the actions of the tourism industry, in the eyes of the Sami, more and more cultural elements pass into outsider's hands. It is understandable that in this context culture plays an ever more valuable role. The Sami nation can be accessed through culture. Because Sami do not have their own state, their culture is the one thing that is exclusively the common property of the Sami in the sense of national property. The use of their symbols in situations independent of them, even if it is done with good intentions, causes panic or disapproval in Sami circles.<sup>39</sup> As we see, relationships are multifaceted, and they are coloured by current ideologies and events. The lack of a common rhetoric connected to dress does not appear only in Finn-Sami relations, as we see a good example in the criticism about the Norwegian royal couple's not completely proper dress. In Sweden, one of Sofia Jannok's videos from 2015 shows how to put on the folk dress, while she strongly criticizes Swedish democracy in the lyrics.<sup>40</sup>

### **In Summary**

The performances of Sami politicians, singers, visual artists are impossible to imagine without Sami dress or other visual symbols of Sami identity, which all come with the processes of revitalization and rehabilitation. Ethnic symbols can be easily picked and

---

<sup>39</sup> In such situations, the Sami do not react by jealously shutting others out, but rather by emphasizing national values, striving for certain standards of quality within their borders, and seeking international protection and regulation (in the same way as "Hungaricum" and its foreign equivalents).

<sup>40</sup> Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGc7c8U2aps> (last accessed: 2015.09.10.).



built in by the nation-construction, as I explained with the construction of the Sami flag. Ethnic symbols become institutionalized in this process.

The “North’s” earlier interpretations—as a wild and uninhabited “no man’s land” waiting to be conquered by civilization—are today unacceptable (Broderstad 2011: 893, Hilder 2015: 120–129). The ever-present Sami symbols remind us: the North was never only a bleak wilderness. This arctic landscape is the home of the Sami, where every hill, valley, river, and stone has a story connected to it. It is a place of memory, the stage of Sami history. A visible result of the victories of the ethnic revitalization process is the appearance of, in addition to public writing and place names in the Sami language, the frequent presence of Sami flags and people wearing traditional dress.

Although territorial autonomy is impossible for the Sami, the colours blue, red, yellow, and green mark the symbolic (re)occupation of land by the Sami as well as the need for the validation of their rights. This presence, reinforced by visual symbols, appears every time Sami matters are represented, whether in political or in cultural arenas. From the colours in the creations of Sami visual artists to political placards, from the logos of official institutions to the appearance of musicians on stage, the indigenous “world of four colours” appears in all.

In addition to complete folk dress, we can often find everyday (not ethnic) clothing decorated with jewellery, Sami writing, or shaman drum motifs. These elements link the ethnic identity and the national endeavours. In poetic expression, we find everywhere the “pictures / the imagery of pictures / symbolic / images of drum pictures / fancy / picturesque world”<sup>41</sup> (Nils-Alsak Valkeapää). The widespread appearance of the figures that decorate the drums’ membranes are not only a reference to the

---

<sup>41</sup> Translated from the Hungarian translation by Johanna Domokos (Valkeapää 2001: 27).

Sami world picture before the arrival of Christianity.<sup>42</sup> (Figure 17<sup>43</sup>, 18<sup>44</sup>, Figure 19.<sup>45</sup>)



**Figure 17.** Sofia Jannok wearing her risku (the traditional female brooch for a scarf), which also serves as her protective symbol.

---

<sup>42</sup> In the same way we see in the use of the rock art of Alta, the use of this treasured motif also expresses the desire for the legitimization of “ancientness,” thus the right of the Sami to their own territory is also reinforced.

<sup>43</sup> Source: [https://www.google.hu/search?q=sofia+jannok&biw=1920&bih=969&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0CAYQ\\_AUoAWoVChMI-weXX28KKyQIVyfyCh2U8Ac k#imgsrc=ze1xn0s36XUfMM%3A](https://www.google.hu/search?q=sofia+jannok&biw=1920&bih=969&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0CAYQ_AUoAWoVChMI-weXX28KKyQIVyfyCh2U8Ac k#imgsrc=ze1xn0s36XUfMM%3A)

<sup>44</sup> Source: [http://www.zazzle.co.uk/sami\\_tshirt-235891891863758143](http://www.zazzle.co.uk/sami_tshirt-235891891863758143) (last accessed: 09.10.2015).

<sup>45</sup> Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/31384528627200289/> (last accessed: 09.10.2015).



**Figure 18.** A T-shirt with Sami colours and a reindeer.



**Figure 19.** A tattoo of a reindeer motif used on shaman drums.

The efforts at homogenization, whether arriving from the outside through the use of force or created by necessity and practicality by the inner dynamic, determined the use of Sami visual representation for a long time. Their entrance into an even wider context and connection to the Northern way of life as well as to

the “global picture” of indigenous life all contributed to a unifying effect. The “*real, accurate*” Sami wears folk dress, breeds reindeer, and probably relates to the supernatural in their own archaic way. Museum displays from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were based on this concept as well (Mahtisen 2010: 53–72), to which the perspective of modern Scandinavian museology—which also documents contemporary cultures in detail—stands in sharp contrast. It is natural, and also unavoidably archaizing, that the most characteristic symbols in the self-definition of the Samis are also the most historical. The branches of the tourism industry and often the legal decisions also reinforce this (ex. in Norway and Sweden, the Sami have exclusive rights to keep reindeer, which is of special importance to Sami identity). These symbols have to prove to be effective not only inwards, but outwards, which also demonstrates the “majority culture’s desire for exoticism” (Nagy 2014: 241<sup>46</sup>) (Figure 20, 21<sup>47</sup>, 22<sup>48</sup>).



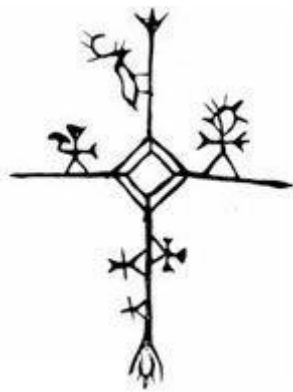
**Figure 20.** The rock art of Alta (northern Norway)

---

<sup>46</sup> This quote was taken from Zoltán Nagy’s study on small Siberian groups, and it also applies perfectly to the Samis’ situation.

<sup>47</sup> Source: <http://old.no/samidrum/> (last accessed: 09.10.2015).

<sup>48</sup> Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/310889180496404076/>



**Figure 21.** Shaman drum motifs.



**Figure 22.** Sami jewelry. (Juhl's Silvergallery, Kautokeino).

This occasionally causes internal tension, which has been expressed in literature several times: “I do not live like that / I do not have such a house / I do not hunt. / Am I Sami? // Nevertheless / my will is Sami / my thoughts are Sami / my soul is Sami / my tongue is Sami” (Ravna Eira).<sup>49</sup> An average, modern town in the

---

<sup>49</sup> Based on the Hungarian translation by Johanna Domokos (Domokos 2003: 23).

North does not attract visitors. Those who travel to Lapland want to see the arctic region's old face, and this naturally overlaps with the Sami desire to preserve their traditions, which are the most fundamental pillars of nation-building. These pillars also support those points that place the Sami outside the boundaries of modern society. The shift away from showing the relics of the past only began in the early 2010's: museum exhibitions, films, music videos, etc. try to show the Sami as equal members of modern society. This goes beyond showing people traveling beside the reindeer herds on snowmobiles instead of on skis and depicting the most modern technology in Northern homes. The symbols themselves that represent the Sami are taking on new meanings. For example, listening to joiks has become "trendy." One can win national talent competitions by joiking. The works of Sami artists and designers can be found in Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, and more distant homes (for example, a sofa patterned around a Sami drinking cup or "four winds cap"-inspired decorative bottles and glasses) (Figure 23<sup>50</sup>, 24, 25.).



**Figure 23.** Ikea chair designed by Maria Vinka, a Sami.

---

<sup>50</sup> Source: <http://www.ikea.com/hu/hu/catalog/products/50039552/> (last accessed: 09.10.2015)



**Figure 24.** A medallion inspired by a Sami motif. (Juhl's Silvergalleri, Kautokeino, 2014.)

The use of the Sami image-world in wider circles thus connects to another “pan-indigenous discourse,” the ownership rights of traditions and the protection of their materials, which actually revolves around the question of brand protection.<sup>51</sup> Obviously postcolonial reactions are also observable in Sami circles in connection to this: they consider the study and analysis of their own culture, language, and history to be their own right and responsibility, and they view the “naturalization” of certain Sami symbols by other Scandinavian groups with decided disapproval (such as in the mentioned case of Miss Universe in Finland). On the question raised about access and rights to scientific research,<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> The literature about the protection of the cultural goods of indigenous people is ever-growing (ex. see Brown 2003, Collins 1993, Graves 1994, Hirvonen 2008, Mills 1996, Solbakk 2007).

<sup>52</sup> Discussion of the problematic nature of the relationship of “indigenous” and “outsider” researchers to each other and their researched topic appears virtually everywhere. In the case of the Siberian small minority groups, “sharp questions appear about who the culture belongs to, who can benefit from it, who can thematize the discourse, and whose is the deciding opinion. From this approach, it appears obvious that those who

Elina Helander, an employee of the Arctic Centre in Rovaniemi, wrote the following: “What has Sámi research meant for the Sámi? First, in the earlier research tradition the Sámi were an object of study for outsiders, non-Sámi researches [...] historians, pastors, linguists and many others described the Sámi culture from their point of view. [...] The existence of the Nordic Council and the Sámi Council made it possible to open a Sámi research institute in the early 1970s: the Nordic Sámi Institute [...] Through this institute, the Sámi have been able to influence the image of the Sámi and the way their history and culture is depicted and their language and society studied.” (Helander 2003: 41). In the continuation of the article, Helander stresses that the Sami can only be studied with their consent and supervision, and only such topics should be touched on which can be useful for the Sami politically, economically, or culturally. Because the frequently anti-colonialist “minority nationalism-discourse” is organized primarily around the notion of cultural nationalism, they see the inaccurate and unlicensed use of images as a continuation of earlier negative discrimination. The latent symbols of the second third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had become of primary importance by the turn of the millennium, and by the 2010’s their popularity had spread beyond the borders of the Sami communities. While the Norwegians, Swedes, and Finns were integrating Sami symbols into their own usage, the Sami worked all the more to stress their closely-guarded cultural uniqueness. The fear of assimilation remains alive today, so the hyphen between the categories of **integration-appropriation** and **rehabilitation-(cultural) imperialism** becomes washed away, and symbols become more fragile and vulnerable in the seesaw of analysis. In this context, the old slogan “*Samiland for Sami*” today can be expressed as “*Sami culture for Sami*”. The feeling of danger to societal identity from the globalization of culture leads to increasing counter-reactions. In Eriksen’s words: “At the start of the new millennium—regardless of perspective—we must all face the serious challenges of both homogenization and isolation” (Eriksen 2006: 385).

---

know the culture the best are the ones who belong to it, so their opinion must be treated as incontrovertible” (Kristóf 2007: 160).



## Bibliography

- Aikio, Ante 2003:** The geographical and sociolinguistic situation. In: Pennanen, Jukka – Näkkäläjärvi, Klemetti (eds.): *Siidastallan. From Lapp Communities to Modern Sámi Life*. Inari: Sámi Siida Museum. 33–39.
- Bereczki András 2000:** A lappok története. In: Nanovszky, György (szerk.): *A finnugorok világa*. Budapest – Moszkva, Teleki László Alapítvány. 34–41.
- Bíró A. Zoltán 1996:** A megmutatkozás kényszere és módszertana. Az etnicitás vizsgálatának szempontjai és esélyei egy közép-kelet-európai mikrorégióban. In: Gagy József (szerk.): *Egy-más mellett élés. A magyar-román, magyar-cigány kapcsolatokról*. Csíkszereda: Pro-Print Könyvkiadó. 247–283.
- Bjørklund, Ivar 2000:** *Sápmi – nášuvdna rieggáda*. Tromsø: Tromsø Museum, Tromsø University.
- Broderstad, Else Grete 2011:** The promises and challenges of indigenous self-determination. *International Journal*, 66, 4. 893–907.
- Brown, Michael F. 2003:** *Who Owns Native Culture?* Cambridge: Mass., Harvard University Press.
- Collins, John 1993:** The Problem of Oral Copyright: The case of Ghana. In: Frith, Simon (ed.): *Music and Copyright*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Domokos, Johanna 2003:** A számi írók története. *Finnugor Világ*, 1–2. 15–21.
- Eidheim, Harald 1969:** When Ethnic Identity is a Social Stigma. In: Barth, Fredrik (ed.): *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*. Bergen: Universitetsforlaget. 39–57.
- Eidheim, Harald 1971:** *Aspects of the Lappish Minority Situation*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland 2006:** *Kis helyek – nagy témák. Bevezetés a szociálintropológiába*. Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó.
- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland 2008:** *Etnicitás és nacionalizmus. Antropológiai megközelítések*. Budapest – Pécs: Gondolat Kiadó, PTE Kommunikáció- és Médiatudományi Tanszék.

- Gaski, Harald 2003:** *Biejjen Baernie – Sámi Son of the Sun*. Karasjok: Davvi Girji.
- Graff, Ola 2007:** The relation between Sami Yoik Songs and Nature. *ESEM*, 12. 227–231.
- Graves, Tom 1994:** *Intellectual Propriety Rights for Indigenous Peoples: A Sourcebook*. Oklahoma City: Society for Applied Anthropology.
- Grundsten, Anna 2010:** *The Return of the Sami. The Search for Identity and the World System Theory*. Lund: Lunds Universitet, Department of Social Anthropology.
- Helander, Elina 2003:** The meaning of Sámi research for the Sámi. In: Pennanen, Jukka – Näkkäläjärvi, Klemetti (eds.): *Siidastallan. From Lapp Communities to Modern Sámi Life*. Inari: Sámi Siida Museum. 41.
- Hilder, Thomas R. 2015:** *Sámi Musical Performance and the Politics of Indigeneity in Northern Europe*. Lanham – Boulder – New York – London: Rowman – Littlefield.
- Hirvonen, Vuokko 2008:** *Voices from Sápmi: Sámi Women's Path to Authorship*. Kautokeino: DAT.
- Hobsbawn, Eric 1990:** *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hobsbawn, Eric 1997:** *A nacionalizmus kétszáz éve*. Budapest: Maecenas Kiadó.
- Hobsbawn, Eric – Rangers, Terence (ed.) 1983:** *Invented traditions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Keresztes, László 1983:** *Aranylile mondja tavasszal. Lapp költészet*. Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó.
- Kristóf Ildikó 2007:** Kié a “hagyomány”, és miből áll? Az Indigenous Studies célkitűzései a jelenkori amerikai indián felsőoktatásban. In: Wilhelm Gábor (szerk.): *Hagyomány és eredetiség. Tanulmányok*. Budapest: Néprajzi Múzeum (Tabula Könyvek 8). 153–172.
- Lehtola, Veli-Pekka 2010:** *The Sámi People. Traditions in Transition*. Inari: Kustannus-Puntsi Publisher.
- Mahtisen, Stein R. 2004:** Hegemonic Representations of Sámi Culture. From Narratives of Noble Savages to Discourses on Ecological Sámi. In: Siikala, Anna-Leena – Klein, Barbo – Mahtisen,

Stein R.: *Creating Diversities. Folklore, Religion and the Politics of Heritage*. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society.

**Mahtisen, Stein R. 2010:** Indigenous Spirituality in the Touristic Borderzone: Virtual Performances of Sámi Shamanism in Sápmi Park. *Temenos*, 46, 1. 53–72.

**Magga, Sigga-Marja 2015:** The Process of creating Sámi handicraft Duodji – From national symbol to norm and resistance. In: Mantila, Harri – Sivonen, Jari – Brunni, Sisko – Leinonen, Kaisa – Palviainen, Santeri (ed.): *Congressus Duodecimus Internationalis Fenno-Ugristarum. Book of Abstracts*. Oulu: University of Oulu. 448–449.

**Mills, Sherylle 1996:** Indigenous Music and the Law: An Analysis of National and International Legislation. *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 28. 57–86.

**Minde, Henry 2005:** Assimilation of the Sami. Implementation and Consequences. *Gáldu čála – Journal of Indigenous Peoples Rights*, 3. 33.

**Nagy Zoltán 2014:** Sámántánc a konferencián: A néprajztudomány teologizálódása Oroszországban. *Ethnographia*, 125, 2. 234–249.

**Näkkäläjärvi, Klemetti 2003:** The Sámi flag. In: Pennanen, Jukka – Näkkäläjärvi, Klemetti (eds.): *Siidastallan. From Lapp Communities to Modern Sámi Life*. Inari: Sámi Siida Museum. 21.

**Näkkäläjärvi, Klemetti 2014:** Kirste Paltto A lappok című könyve után. A számik Finnországban az 1970-es évektől napjainkig. In: Valkeapää, Nils-Aslak – Paltto, Kirste – Näkkäläjärvi, Klemetti – Kádár Zoltán: *Lappok*. Budapest: Nap Kiadó. 109–125.

**Pentikäinen, Juha 1996:** *Shamanism and Northern Ecology*. Berlin – New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

**Solbakk, Aage – Solbakk, Odd Ivar 2005:** *Kultur máhttu. Árbevierut ja kulurerohusat*. Karasjok: ČállidLágádus.

**Solbakk, John 2007:** *Traditional Knowledge and Copyright*. Karasjok: Sámikopiiija.

**Stepien, Adam 2009:** Egység és szakadás között. Pánszámi együttműködés az északi országokban és Oroszországban. *Pro Minoritate*, 3. 74–95.

**Sveen, Arvid – Rydving, Håkan 2003:** *Mytisk Landskap: Ved Dansende Skog og Susende Fjell*. Stamsund: Orkana.

**Tamás Ildikó 2001:** A számi irodalmi nyelvek kialakulásáról és fejlődéséről. In: Maticsák Sándor – Keresztes László – Lahdelma, Tuomo (ed.): *Folia Uralica Debreceninesia 8. Ünnepi könyv Keresztes László tiszteletére*. Debrecen – Jyväskylä: Debreceni Egyetem Finnugor Nyelvtudományi Tanszék. 619–628.

**Tamás Ildikó 2007:** *Tűzön át, jégen át. A sarkvidéki nomád lapok énekhagyománya*. Budapest, Napkút Kiadó.

**Tamás Ildikó 2013:** “Few words are sung in it” – Questions of Methodology in Studying Sami Yoik Texts. In: Andersson, Kajsa (szerk.): *L’Image du Sápmi 3*. Örebro: Humanistic Studies at Örebro University. 236–260.

**Tillinger Gábor 2013:** *Samiska ord för ord. Att mäta lexikalt avstånd mellan språk*. Uppsala. (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Uralica Upsaliensia 39).

**Valkeapää, Nils-Aslak 2001:** *Nap, édesapám*. Fordította Domokos Johanna. Marosvásárhely: Mentor Kiadó.