

Chapter 5

The Meaning of Words and the Power of Silence



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Abstract This chapter calls for a dialogue on Saami history with a higher degree of cooperation between archaeologists and historians than what has been the case up to now, which is necessary if we are trying to understand the gaps in time. Today there is a gap between Saami history produced according to written sources and Saami history based on archaeological material. This only increases the already asymmetric relations for the Saami and keeps teachers, politicians and other people in the majority societies in the dark when it comes to the long lines of Saami history on the Scandinavian Peninsula, what I call a power of silence. This silence makes or contributes to keeping old myths about Saami history from the end of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries alive in the majority society today. The aim of this chapter is to look across national borders to provide a brief summary of history based on what we (think we) know and have discussed as important for the understanding of the South Saami's prehistory from 4000 BC to 1000 AD. Another aim is to reflect on different strategies and interactions between Saami societies and agricultural communities.

Iktedimmie Daate tjaalege akten digkiedæmman haasta saemien histovrijen bijre aktine sagke stuerbe laavenjostojne arkeologi jñh histovrikeri gaskem goh lea daan raajan orreme, naakede mij lea daerpies jis edtjebe pryövedh joekehtsem guarkedh nuekie varke. Daan biejjien akte joekehtse gaskem dam saemien histovrijem man vâarome lea doh tjaaleldh gaaltijh jñh saemien histovrijem man vâarome lea dihte arkeologeles materijaale. Daate ajve lissehte doh ij loktes tsiehkies saemide, jñh lohkehtæjjah, politihkerh jñh jeatjah almetjh dejnie jeanatjommes siebriedahkine jemhkielisnie hööltie gosse lea dan guhkies saemien histovrijen bijre skandinavijen njaarkesne, naakede maam manne gohtjem akte stræjmie sjeavohthvoeteste. Daan sjeavohthvoeten gaavhtan dle bâeries mytah saemien histovrijen bijre luhkieåkseden jñh tjuateden jaepietjuetien minngiemossen ræjeste åadtjoeh jærhkedh jieldh jienebelåhkoen siebriedahkesne daan biejjien. Ulmie daejnie tjaaleginie lea laanter-

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aastaj dâaresth vuartasjidh, juktie ânehks iktedimmiem vedtedh histovrijistie dan bijre mijjeh (vïenhtebe) jaehkebe jih libie digkiedamme goh vihkeles jis edtja âarjelsaemien âvtehistovrijem guarkedh 4000 Kr. â. raejeste 1000 Kr. M. raajan. Akte jeatjah ulmie lea ussjedatdedh ovnessie strategiji jih ektiedahkoj bijjeli saemien siebriedahken jih laanteburriesiebriedahken gaskem.

5.1 Introduction and Background

Written records alone do not provide a wide historical perspective nor do they deepen our understanding of how the indigenous, circumpolar cultures have evolved. This too is true for the history of the Saami society. There are few written sources and, until recently, they were mainly produced by non-Saami authors. For this reason, Saami history is only partially found in traditional archives. Their history is instead, to some degree, preserved in other sources, such as archaeological and paleobotanic records, oral traditions, in understanding the landscape and by studying the actions of other relevant figures in Saami areas. By placing the different sources into a context, including the actions, reactions and interactions of neighbouring communities, interesting possibilities for discussing and understanding historical relations and how they evolve over time appear.

As Damm and Forsberg (2014, p. 838) have pointed out, the prehistory, and I would also add, the history of Fennoscandia is unique in many respects. In this geographical area, a hunting, fishing and gathering economy and culture survived into the twentieth century, side by side with the northernmost farming economies for nearly 6000 years. For us today, this offers interesting possibilities for studying social relations and interactions, social change and strategies over time. The way of life and the economy largely form people's identities. Changes in the way of life for a group, or for that matter perhaps only for a part of the group, will affect their identity, customs and use within one or several generations. This way of life occurs as a consequence of reorganizations that are implemented when the group adapts to a new way of life. The exchange of material, or cultural loans, does not have the same degree of influence on a group's identity, at least as long as the exchange does not affect the way of life and social relations within the group. In 1997, Inger Zachrisson presented results from the interdisciplinary 'South Saami Project' in her book 'Encounters in Border Country' (*Möten i gränsland*). This work was of great importance for the coming generation of archaeologists and others interested in South Saami history. Since then, several Ph.D. dissertations focusing on the southern areas with Saami settlements have been written in Norway, for example, Bergstøl (2008) and Gerde (2016), and also one Ph.D. dissertation focusing on the hunting and gathering societies in southern Norway from the Neolithic to the pre-Roman Iron Age (Amundsen 2011). They have all critically challenged much of the earlier archaeological research and written history and have contributed to a new discussion on Saami history and prehistory in the southern part of Scandinavia. In 2004, Lars Ivar Hansen and Bjørnar Olsen published their book entitled *Samernas*

historie fram til 1750 ('The history of the Saami up to 1750'). This is one of the few books collaboratively written by a historian and an archaeologist about Saami history and prehistory. It is an important work because the interdisciplinary use of material concerning Saami history creates a bridge for understanding the development of Saami history and prehistory. Another interesting example of contributions that have been made comes from Carl-Gösta Ojala and his studies of Saami prehistory from a research historical perspective and a contemporary political perspective (2009).

One of the aims of this paper is to encourage a dialogue on Saami history with cooperation between archaeologists and historians, and to encourage the discussion of each other's results on a broader scale. Another aim is to encourage work across national borders so we can gain a better understanding of Saami history and prehistory. A third aim is to enhance reflection on common strategies and interactions between Saami societies and agricultural communities.

5.2 The Mindset

Interpretations are not possible before they have already started, and to some degree, some generalization is necessary to be able to understand societies. Researchers are schooled in critical thinking but also into a system with theoretical boundaries. These are often invisible and difficult to even identify as being present in any given situation. There seems to be some form of an unprecedented agreement about the definition of useful source material and what perspectives, issues or angles are relevant, recognized or even permitted. Some of these unspoken boundaries are constituted by research results that are so well established that few reflect over them. This is the way it is, this is the way we do it, this is the point where we have to start asking 'new' questions and this is our source material. However, it is easier to think without reflecting, following an established structure based on the educational system. If we are to produce new research interest, this contradiction must be resolved. The most common strategies are to find new source material, ask new questions for a particular source material and/or dig deeper than anyone else has done before and analyse small details. Another alternative is to try to identify the established boundaries, identify weak points in these boundaries and try to shake, move or break through them and make ourselves and others aware of them by problematizing them. Since the end of the 1990s, post-colonial theories and indigenous methodology have been used by some researchers as tools to see through existing frameworks when it comes to understanding conditions in minority communities and the already written history about them (Porsanger 2004, pp. 106–107). While I am probably influenced by these theories, I am not that deeply familiar with them.

5.3 Early Drafts in Saami History

Three main questions have been focused on by archaeologists working with Saami prehistory: When did the Saami come to Scandinavia? How far back in history and prehistory can the Saami as an ethnic group be traced? And when did the Saami start herding reindeer? The second and third questions are considered closely related to each other. Today, many archaeologists share the opinion that Saami identity is the result of a process that took place in Fennoscandia during the second or first millennia BC (Forsberg 1996 p. 166; Hansen and Olsen 2006). In other words, the Saami people and the Saami identity are results of events that took place within this geographic area over an extended period of time.

Archaeology's strength is said to be its ability to study history in a specific geographic area over long periods of time (Hodder 1998 p. 130). Research in a particular area that spans over multiple eras enables a study of social change reflected in material culture. One major difference on the Scandinavian Peninsula that I believe we can see and follow is between the hunter-gatherer and the agrarian communities. The life they lived, with different economies and social strategies, has left different traces in material culture. In the beginning, following the post-glacial era when this area became ice-free, there was only one type of economy throughout the Scandinavian Peninsula for over 6000 years, an economy based on hunting and gathering, with a nomadic lifestyle, allowing movement between different areas and habitats. Around 4000 BC this relationship changed; agriculture and a farming economy started in southern Scandinavian and farming spread relatively quickly up to Uppland in the north, westwards to the coastal areas outside of the Oslofjord and a bit further along the coast (see Fig. 5.1). Agrarian groups in the southern part of the Baltic Sea and in Denmark had already existed for around 1000 years before agriculture appeared in what is known as modern-day southern Sweden and Norway (Persson 1999, p. 165, Welinder et al. 2004, p. 13, 56, Josefsson et al. 2014, p. 821). A number of questions have arisen concerning why the agrarian settlement and expansion paused in northern Denmark and Germany for more than 1000 years before continuing its expansion over to southern Sweden; how could the agrarian settlement expand with such speed until it reached northern Uppland; and finally, why did the agrarian settlement cease to expand there? These questions are still under discussion. One suggestion is that it was a matter of choice and identity as agriculture spread to neighbouring areas at this time (Hallgren 2008, p. 274). Another is that the climate was optimal for starting farming on the southern part of the Scandinavian Peninsula at the time. According to this conclusion, the first farmers were immigrants, since they seem to have had knowledge of a complete farming technology and this can also explain their quick expansion into the area. Some of the researchers who see it as a result of immigration argue that both the immigrating farmers and the indigenous population were involved in the creation of the agrarian societies in southern Scandinavia (Sørensen 2014, pp. 263–265). However, the hunting-gathering communities were still in the majority over the peninsula. The fact that they did not turn to agriculture and funnel beaker pottery at this time could also be interpreted or understood as a conscious

choice not to do so (Hallgren 2008, p. 274). This view makes it possible to see the area between these two economies as a border between two different ethnic groups. Hallgren (2008 p. 253, 277) also shows that the northern border for agriculture at this time was not necessarily formed or determined by ecological obstacles, since in northeastern Poland there seems to have been a similar border, where agriculture was not adopted or established at this point either. This area in Poland is situated 600 km southeast of the Mälär Valley, in a warmer climate (see Fig. 5.1).

With the exception of growing crops and livestock farming, the farming economy and the farmers lived according to a more hierarchical ideology compared to the hunter-gatherers. The farmers were also more specialized in their production and consumption. One visible trace, indicating that the diet changed in the early Neolithic period, is shown in results of the ^{13}C value from skeletons and ceramic food crusts in the comparison of older and younger material. The ^{13}C value is much higher in human remains and ceramic food crusts from hunter-gatherer settlements during the late Mesolithic than for the early farming settlements from the Neolithic period in the same area. High ^{13}C values seem to come from consuming large quantities of a marine-based diet. Living on a terrestrial-based diet is expressed in a lower value. These values indicate that a change in diet took place during the early Neolithic period when farming also commenced (Persson 1999, pp. 69–70; Sørensen 2014, p. 23).

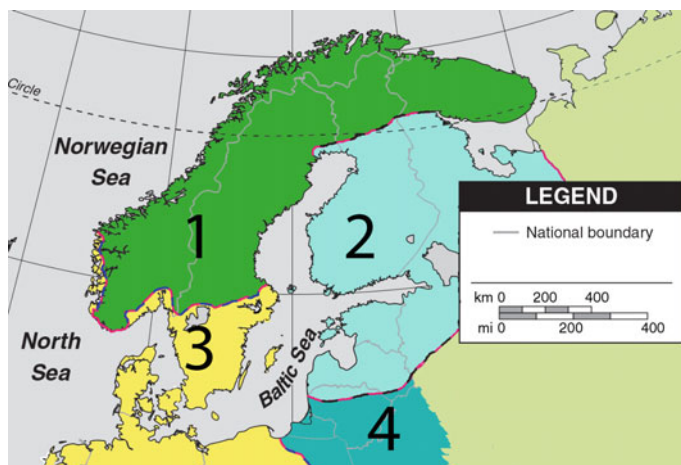


Fig. 5.1 Map of northwest Europe with various techno-complexes and economies visible around 4000 BC. 1. Hunter-gatherer area where the colour red is of importance and visible in rock art, tools made of red slate, red ochre in graves and on settlements. 2. Hunter-gatherers with so-called comb ceramics, stone tools produced by the bifacial flaking technique and ember jewellery. 3. Early farming settlements. 4. Other hunter-gatherer groups with ceramic production. The map is based on a number of maps presented in Hallgren (2008, p. 251, 257 and 261)

5.4 Neolithic Hunters

The archaeological material from the hunting and gathering communities during the Neolithic period, 4000–2000 BC, that lived north of the farmers shows local and regional differences between geographic areas. This is both from a material culture and economic perspective, where it can be generalized that from around 4000 BC, coastal communities focused on marine resources, such as fish and seal, and communities located inland focused on the hunting of both big (elk and reindeer) and small (beaver) game. Freshwater fishing was probably of great importance as well. For the inland groups in northern Finland and Norway, reindeer constituted the main prey, while for groups further south, elk constituted their most common big game (Lundberg 1997; Rähälä 1999, p. 205; Pesonen 2002, p. 27). Some of the northeastern societies in the inner part of the Bothnian Bay and along the Kalix and Torne river valleys seem at this time to be a part of an eastern group of hunter-gatherers. They differed from other societies because of the use of comb-ware ceramics, amber and flint objects of eastern origin and a tradition of semi-subterranean houses in smaller or larger villages (see Fig. 5.1 and area No. 2). A significant part of the material culture and the raw material at these sites in the inner part of the Bothnian Bay and along the Kalix and Torne river valleys is otherwise found at this time at settlements further to the east, in the Karelia and Baltic Areas. However, the most western sites that we know of so far with comb-ware ceramics are very rich in their material culture when it comes to these typical eastern objects. The technique for producing stone tools is also different at these sites, indicating that something more than just the exchange of goods was taking place. This material culture formed a distinct border to the west starting around 4500 BC around the Kalix river valley (Baudou 1992, p. 71; Halén 1994; Norberg 2008). The comb-ware ceramic groups had another distinct border from the Alandic archipelago (Sw. Åländska skärgården) to the agrarian groups on the mainland on the Swedish side—Mälardalen (Hallgren 2008, p. 265).

The borders between different hunter-gatherer societies appear to be just as visible in archaeological records as the borders revealing the spread of the first agrarian groups at the same time in southern Sweden and Norway. The southern border for this material culture, the Pit-comb-ware culture/Comb ceramic culture, spans to northeastern Poland. By this time, the hunter-gatherer societies in central and northern Scandinavia were surrounded by farmers in the south and Pit-comb-ware hunter-gatherers to the east of the Bothnian Bay and for a time also in the northeast around 4000 BC (see Fig. 5.1).

Depending on how many researchers interpret the meaning of material culture and economies, these differences can also be interpreted as different ethnic groups coexisting in prehistoric times (Hallgren 2008). When the differences in material culture suddenly become more prominent after the establishment of agriculture in one area, this is an indication that these different ethnic identities probably already existed earlier. They were perhaps not seen as relevant to point out or emphasize until the social relationships were changed to a considerable degree, which was what

might have happened when the farming economy was adopted in the neighbouring areas.

On the Swedish side of the border, in what later became South Saami and forest Saami areas, the beaver and elk largely dominate as prey in the archaeological material from the Neolithic period. The elk is considered to have had a special position and probably also spiritual meaning, and the animal figures are common in the known rock art and on tools, especially tools made of red slate, from this era. The elk, based on this evidence, is interpreted as an animal of great symbolic value (Lundberg 1997 p. 2; Lindgren 2002). Reindeer, bears, snakes, salmon, humans and dogs are also depicted in the rock art but to a lesser degree compared to the elk. The colour red has also been of importance. The painted rock art found in this area is also always red. Red ochre is found on settlements and sometimes in the few known graves. The colour red seems to have been of importance in a symbolic sense (Lundberg 1997, pp. 2, 167–168). Tools made from red slate have been of particular interest to these people, slate is found in many colours, such as grey, black and green, whereas red slate is far scarcer than the other colours. In spite of this, tools of red slate have been used to a much larger degree although being of no better quality than slate of other colours. Red slate is found naturally in some areas upstream of the river Ångermanälven, for example, around the small rivers Sjutälven and Saxån. Red slate is also found on the coast in one area in Nordingrån and in Skellefteå (Lundberg 1997, pp. 162–163).

The spread of this material in the form of tools made from it covers most non-pottery and non-farming areas in the central and northern parts of Sweden and Norway during the Neolithic period. Bones found in the settlements show that reindeer, beaver, elk, bear, forest birds and different species of fish have been hunted and caught. The most common identified animal in the bone material is, however, the beaver, and the second most common bones are from elk found in and around the winter dwellings (Lundberg 1997, p. 146).

During the third and fourth millennium BC, agriculture continued to spread. From what has been documented through pollen databases, the dispersal appears to be irregular, starting in different places along the coast. Some researchers say that the palynology records do not yet provide knowledge about early adaption of cereal cultivation or how it was spread through northern Fennoscandia, only that it started in coastal areas (Josefsson et al. 2014, p. 8). The northern area for agriculture during the Neolithic period reaches up to Lofoten in Norway and on the east coast up to the areas north of Skellefteå, for example, Bjurselet in Sweden. Here, a short period of agrarian settlement appeared around 2500 BC (Knutsson 1988; Baudou 1992, pp. 71–73). The cultivation appears to be of small-scale and livestock farming may have been more important than the cultivation of crops. Farming along the coast seems to have been spread in two ways, by groups from southern Scandinavia and by inclusion in existing hunter-gatherer communities in the area (Norberg 2008, p. 177; Damm and Forsberg 2014, p. 850). In the northernmost areas in which these early agrarian groups were established, there seems to have been a conflict with the hunter-gatherers (Knutsson 1988, p. 196, 199). The spread of farming also stopped here, farming does not reach the inner parts of the Gulf of Bothnia until during the late Iron

Age or in the early medieval era. In many of the northern areas, the establishment of agriculture also seems to have been short projects to begin with; they were abandoned soon after they started and did not return again until the Bronze or Iron Ages.

After a decline in the agrarian settlement at the end of the Neolithic period all over Scandinavia, when the hunter-gatherers seem to have taken back some lost terrain in southern Scandinavia, the farming economies return with strength during the Bronze Age, 1800 BC–500 BC. The early Bronze Age is associated with religious and social change and also the beginning of what Goldhahn (2017, pp. 10–11) has called the second ‘rock art boom’. According to Goldhahn (2017) and other researchers, the new set of figurative rock art articulated a new order of social and cultural hierarchies and a shift in the cult among the farmers, from an earlier cult associated with ancestors, to a cult honouring daily life and the yearly rebirth of the sun. Much of the rock art features maritime and martial themes: key symbols are boats, weapons, sun symbols, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figures and ‘*it has been argued that many rock art images were made before, during, or after maritime and martial affairs*’ (Goldhahn 2017, pp. 11–12).

During the Bronze Age, a well-developed network of trading in tin and copper was established over large areas. Tin and copper make up the elements of the alloy bronze, which is seen as an important contributor to the observed social change and lends its name to the era. This alloy seems to have been of great interest since the various regions usually only were rich in one of these two metals. People interested in producing bronze had to travel long distances to obtain the raw material even if there were cultural differences to deal with (Kristiansen and Larsson 2005, p. 5; Goldhahn 2017, p. 12).

One aspect separating the Bronze Age from earlier farming economy periods is probably the degree of organization of the society into different units. Compared to the neighbouring hunter-gatherers in Scandinavia, Bronze Age communities probably had more specialists for different tasks, and leaders for different events. Among hunter-gatherer societies, the common knowledge, or know-how, for all production was usually more widely spread among the members. Leaders here are also known to have been of a more temporary nature and were chosen according to their knowledge and authority in the field, from spiritual knowledge to practical knowledge.

The Bronze Age community is assumed to have been organized into chiefdoms in a hierarchy with formal leaders, priests, officers, warriors, peasants, slaves and so on. The ability to control and coordinate groups and maintain power may have increased significantly during this time. The basis for this is that control over people had been facilitated. There are no longer any alternatives to an agricultural way of living for a majority of the people in most areas. This development ties people to an area and to permanent settlements, making it easier for those who can exercise power to control them. The settlements needed, in turn, protection from rival elites so the farmers fed and were being led by chiefs and warriors. During this period, farmers might have become more ideologically and subconsciously bound to agriculture and livestock farming since it was widely practised for generations, and they can, therefore, have seen this farming as the best or only way of living. This suggests that alternatives, such as hunting and fishing, may have lost status and value, perhaps seen as something

not for them, or something that belonged only to the elite (the hunting) and fishing was seen as something exercised only by poor people without land or alternatives. The alternatives to farming were also most visible for people living in the border areas, which probably undermined the ability to see through the existing regime and ideology for a majority of the people. For a deeper presentation of ideology and how it works in more or less complex societies, see for example Bourdieu (1999, p. 109) or Giddens (1988, p. 187).

Communications and contact probably also improved during the Bronze Age and accelerated through the use of horses and through increased shipping, beneficial to the Bronze Age elite and their control over people, production and resources. Improved communications might also have helped to speed up the 'growth of the economy' and increased the ability to build up bigger army units than earlier. The Indo-European languages have been assumed to have spread over northern Europe by around 2800 BC, or even earlier with the first farmers (Burenhult 1999, p. 145). The spread of the Indo-European languages might have made communications between different groups easier and beneficial for trade transactions. Perhaps some of the trade was more standardized and faster. Trade might also have lost a part of its former meaning in the creation of alliances in some areas, which is assumed to have been a major part of the reason for the exchange of goods before. A number of researchers consider the development of the chiefdom and agrarian societies on the European continent during the Bronze Age, to be one of the greatest social changes documented in relation to prehistoric time. It manifests itself materially in the archaeological record through standardized bronze ornamental objects showing gender, status and ethnicity (Goldhahn 2013, pp. 250–251). In the symbolic language and import of goods, large groups turn to a similar understanding of the world and a material culture that exists in the Mediterranean area simultaneously. It is also to a high degree believed that the Bronze Age elite in Scandinavia was involved and also dependent on trade and on other forms of exchanges with the Mediterranean areas in order to maintain power and prestige at home (Kristiansen and Larsson, 2005, p. 17). When the exchange of bronze finally ceases and is replaced by locally produced iron, the construction of mega structures like large burial monuments also ends temporarily. The long-term exchange of other goods also seems to decrease for a while or no longer leaves the same impression in the archaeological material.

In Sweden, Norway and Finland, the agrarian Bronze Age settlement with this cultural concept has been traced to the coast in the northern areas. There are only a few known two- and three-axle long houses in northern Norway and Sweden, but they are found up to Troms and Umeå in Västerbotten (Arntzen 2015; Lindqvist and Granholm 2016). The southern Scandinavian building tradition indicates a high degree of identification with the southern areas among these groups. Concentrations of Bronze Age graves, cairns, are found regularly along the coast and up to Jävre parish in Västerbotten. In Finland, this type of settlement seems to reach up to the Pyhäjoki River according to the finds of burial cairns from the period (Okkonen 2003 p. 241; Holmblad 2010, pp. 152–153). In Norway, they reach at least up to Harstad in Troms (Andreassen 2002, p. 96).

The tradition of Bronze Age cairns has been connected with a southern Scandinavian influence along the northern coast. However, questions have been raised as to whether they are of southern Scandinavian origin or not, since it is not possible to say that the cairns tradition is older in the south compared to the tradition in the north (see for example Damm and Forsberg 2014, p. 846; Ramqvist 2017, pp. 107–108). There is, however, a clear connection with farming societies and these graves at some of the sites. In Finnmark and in the inner part of the Gulf of Bothnia, between the Piteälven and Pyhäjoki Rivers, these types of graves and farming settlements do not seem to have existed during the Bronze Age (Norberg 2008, p. 139, 165, 174). In the interior on the Scandinavian Peninsula, these settlements and burial cairns are unusual or seem to be non-existent north of Örebro County, in the interior of Gävleborg and Dalarna Counties in Sweden and in larger parts of the interior of Norway, such as Hedmark and the interior of Trøndelag. The border zone for the settlements seems generally to be about the same in many areas with respect to how the farming settlements had expanded during the middle and late Neolithic era.

5.5 The Need for a Saami Identity

The Bronze Age also marks what is considered, from the general perspective of archaeologists and linguists, the beginning of what is to become Saami culture and language. The Proto-Saami and Proto-Indo-European languages may, at least initially, have been connected to the two economies and ways of living in Scandinavia as well as to the many alliances that existed and that had developed over time. The development of a Saami identity was probably also connected to the social strategies concerning how the interaction with the farmers was organized.

According to Barth's (1969, p. 19) theory and research, these cultural differences will to a large degree be communicated along the borders between different ethnic groups. However, if the group occupied distinct niches with low competition for resources over time, which probably was very much the case here in Scandinavia, Barth (1969, p. 19) suggests that the articulation would mainly be through trade and in the ceremonial-ritual sector. Some of this may have occurred unconsciously from whatever type of relations there were with the farmers. This might be due to their being neighbours during times of peace and conflict and during periods of trust and mistrust. A more formalized ideology that promoted a certain way of living as hunter-gatherers may have been rooted in this interaction since lifestyle is a very important cohesive element for building identity, according to many researchers (see, for example, Giddens 1988, p. 179, 187; Bourdieu 1991, p. 20). To survive as a culture, must there not be benefits, practical and perhaps theoretical that promote and encourage a certain way of living? Perhaps external forces and interests also helped to maintain this way of living?

As seen further south, all hunter-gatherer societies north of the Alps up to the Scandinavian Peninsula, were, by the Bronze Age, long gone from the landscape. In Scandinavia, they remained up to historic times and to some degree even into the

present time. In the end, hunter-gatherers ended up as a part of the Saami society where reindeer herding, small-scale farming, handicrafts, fishing or a combination of these ways of living are somewhat more familiar to the surrounding societies today (Marek 1992, p. 42).

How were the relationships between different ethnic groups in Fennoscandia during prehistoric times? The answer to this question probably differs according to time and place. Some researchers, for example, as Sognnes (2005, p. 11), argue that during the Bronze Age, the Trøndelag region might have been a border area between hunter-gatherers and Bronze Age farmers. Sognnes suggests that an intense competition for the land and the social interaction in the Trøndelag region may have resulted in the creation of two different groups and that a Saami identity developed earlier in this area compared to the areas to the north and east of Trøndelag (Sognnes 2005, p. 105).

Traces of what can be interpreted as conflicts during the Bronze Age in the Trøndelag region have been found in the form of the rock carvings at Bardal in Nord-Trøndelag with hunter-gatherer motifs having been carved over by farming or agricultural carvings typical of the Bronze Age (Fig. 5.2). This can be interpreted as a symbolic action suggesting that the area became inhabited by a new group. Another example from what clearly appears to be the outcome of conflict is a site in Sund from the early Bronze Age. In 1967 and 1968, a large number of human and animal skeletal remains were discovered in the gravel immediately below the humus and topsoil in Sund on the inlet to Borgenfjorden. This appears to have been some sort of mass grave, and possibly some sort of sacrifice to the gods for victory over the defeated. The skeletal remains were grouped in a number of piles, where the human bones had been placed in no particular anatomic order (Farbregd et al. 1974). The number of individuals may have been higher since the find was made close to an actively worked gravel pit. Analyses showed that between 22 and 30 individuals, men, women and children had been killed and placed together. Half of the remains belonged to children. The distribution of age among the dead is similar to what one could expect in a small community of two or three families (Fyllingen 2003, p. 27, 29). Traces of violence on the preserved skeletons indicated that they had been cut and stabbed to death (Sognnes 2005, p. 101) and the massacre probably took part somewhere between 1250 and 930 BC according to ¹⁴C-dating of the skeletons (Fyllingen 2003, p. 38 Table 4).

Further analysis of the remains of the victims from the Sund massacre identify them as belonging to a Bronze Age farming community, and they showed no signs of having consumed any larger quantities of food from the sea, although they lived next to it. They suffered from vitamin D deficiency and their bones bore traces of repeated periods of starvation (Fyllingen 2003, p. 33). Half of them also had evidence of old healed defensive injuries on their arms, suggesting that these people had experienced severe violence long before the massacre took place.

The overall impression resulting from the analysis was a society in distress. State of health was not good. In addition, at Sund (and Kråkerøy) there was evidence of violent trauma—both before death and healed (antemortem) and at the time of death (perimortem). (Fyllingen 2003, p. 31)



Fig. 5.2 Part of the rock carving field at Bardal in Nord-Trøndelag with a hunter-gatherer motif (large wild animals, yellow) which has been carved over by typical farming carvings (boats, foot-prints, domesticated animals, etc., red). Photo by Erik Norberg

Signs of rickets, a result of vitamin D deficiency, lack of fish oil, animal fat and ultraviolet light, have been discovered from Nordland in the north to Østfold in the southeast. Fyllingen (2003, p. 33), therefore, interpreted this as a result of nutritional deficiency caused by restricted access to various types of food. Despite the nearby marine resources, it is possible that some groups, for cultural or other reasons, did not consume seafood or that seafood was a very small part of their diet. The skeletons from Sund and the older graves at Tonnes-Holan, not far from Sund, show a similar lack of vitamin D and also repeated periods of starvation (Fyllingen 2003, p. 33).

There are few clues that can help us to ascertain who is responsible for the Sund massacre. Perhaps there might have been a conflict between two farming communities. The type of cut marks on the victims was caused by swords, axes or lances, indicating face-to-face combat (Fyllingen 2003, p. 36). There are also no signs of bow and arrows being used. The use of swords, however, indicates that another farming community might have been involved in the attack, as swords are seldom found in hunter-gatherer contexts at any time in history or prehistory.

The example above illustrates the occurrence of conflicts and social stress in these agrarian societies. Conflicts like these have a structuring effect on society, defining a us-and-them mentality, and creating a moral code that keeps the community united (Fyllingen 2003, p. 38). The finds from Sund and other areas indicate, however, that there may have been room for other groups, geographically close but outside of the conflict because they were active in other niches. In this particular case, it

was at least theoretically possible to be in this position by being oriented towards marine resources in the area, thus avoiding the competition with the farmers for other resources and/or interests.

The hunter-gatherer communities' reply to the Bronze Age farmer's orientation to the south is interpreted as a number of reorganizations. The settlements during the Bronze Age become more mobile and nomadic compared to Neolithic period, both in the interior and along the shore (Forsberg 1985; Norberg 2008). An increase in the influence from the east on hunter-gatherer societies also seems to have been significant. Metal, in the form of bronze, imported through their eastern contacts, is of great interest and importance to these communities. Skills and knowledge about metal casting were present and are visible through a number of finds of casting moulds from archaeological sites from this time. From the material exchange, it seems like the hunter-gatherers maintained contact with the farming communities, with settlements sometimes located close to each other in coastal areas. Hunter-gatherer and farming settlements have, however, not been found close to each other in the interior of Scandinavia after 60° north, where it seems that the hunter-gatherer communities have had some advantages over the farming communities, or the interest in farming has been low. One such advantage could have been the fact that crop farming and cattle rearing become more complicated the further north one goes due to the colder climate. The farmers' crops and cattle came from much warmer climate zones originally (see Broadbent 2010, p. 22). The cattle and the grain needed time to adapt to the climate in the north, buildings had to be constructed for the cattle and fields had to be prepared. This may have been the reason behind the low degree of interest in expanding farming to the north and into the interior areas. How attractive farming was at the time as a way of living here, considering practical and ideological reasons, is crucial for understanding how the region developed. However, products coming from the farmers and through their network of contacts might have been of interest, while it is perhaps also possible that the farmers had a greater or similar interest in products supplied by the hunter-gatherers.

When the Bronze Age culture took hold, the farmers' way of living may have been well known to the hunting communities as small-scale farming had been present since the Neolithic period. Profound disapproval may have developed over the extended amount of time the groups coexisted, for example, disliking the subordinating hierarchical structure that existed in these peasant communities. Their own way of living, their alliances with other hunter-gatherers in the east, their social strategies, belief system and philosophy might have been strong and attractive enough for them to keep, value, respect and protect. Together with the topography, landscape, climate and vegetation, they may have considered their way of life not just good, but favourable. This lifestyle may have been the most adaptable to the climate and landscape and also a well-integrated and coordinated way for the residents to understand their world. Material culture from the time shows a large geographical spread of asbestos-ware ceramics, bronze axes, casting moulds and bifacial arrowheads with a straight base in the areas that later in history are partly or totally inhabited by the Saami. The most widespread traditions from among these objects are probably the bifacial arrows with their straight base and the flaking technique behind it (see Fig. 5.3).

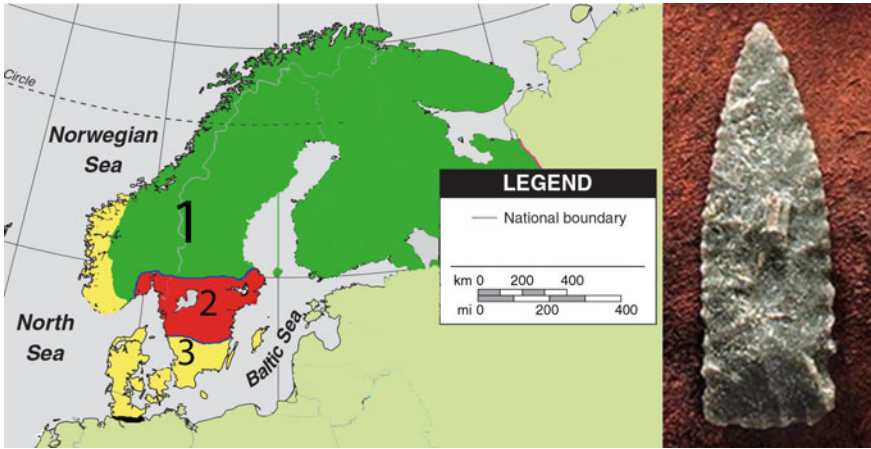


Fig. 5.3 Geographical distribution of three different late Neolithic and early Bronze Age pressure-flaked arrowhead traditions (from Apel 2012, p. 157 Fig. 13.1.). 1. Northern tradition with bifacial arrowheads made of local material mainly quartz and quartzite. 2. Central Scandinavian bifacial arrowheads produced from imported flint flakes from southern Scandinavia. 3. Southern tradition, bifacial arrowheads made of local high-quality flint. To the right, arrowhead of the northern tradition type (nr 1.)

5.6 Early Written Sources, Linguistics Research and Archaeology

In his book ‘Germania’, Tacitus, a Roman senator and historian, describes the Scandinavian people in writing for the first time in 98 AD (Hansen and Olsen 2006, p. 47). Tacitus describes different groups of peoples dwelling north of the Roman lines, mainly Germanic tribes that formed farming communities, as well as descriptions of hunter-gatherers whom he calls the ‘Fenni’, that dwell in the vicinity of several of the Germanic tribes. One of these tribes, the Suiones, according to researchers, who lived in and around the lakes of Mälaren and Hjälmaren in Sweden are described by Tacitus as being devoted to agriculture, having slaves and an appreciation for wealth and material belongings. In contrast, Tacitus describes the Fenni as people living in poverty north of the Suiones, with a lifestyle, economy and ideology that differs greatly from their neighbours. According to Tacitus, the Fenni lived by hunting game and foraging herbs, they did not cultivate the earth or build houses, and were not worried about their own or others’ property and were happy with their life. Many researchers today believe that the Fenni are the Saami. Later, several Mediterranean writers during the first millennia AD regularly return to this description and the details on differences in the way the Fenni and the farmers lived on the Scandinavian Peninsula (Zachrisson 1997, pp. 159–160 and 169–170; Hansen and Olsen 2006, pp. 47–48).

Linguistic evolution and development are difficult to trace and describe retroactively when there are no written sources. In northern Europe, the first texts appear around 200 AD. As early Germanic texts from this era are very similar from a linguistic perspective, in the geographic area from northern Germany all the way up to Scandinavia, the language is considered to be new to the area at the time (Burenhult 1999, p. 145). By comparing related words from different geographical areas, researchers can form an understanding of the development and growth of language in that area. However, the notable spread and changes in languages are often related to well-known research in archaeology that shows important events in human history. If this is not fully stated, archaeologists can then support themselves using linguistic data to confirm their findings. Some linguists have come to the conclusion that the Uralic language family has had a much stronger influence in Scandinavia compared to what earlier research has suggested (Burenhult 1999 p. 145). The linguistics researcher, Knut Bergsland, found that around 400 AD, a large number of words of Germanic origin entered the South Saami language as borrowed words, with Saami words also appearing in the Germanic-Norse language at the same time. According to Bergsland, this language exchange is the result of a high degree of trading interaction between the Saami and Norse societies (Bergsland 1995, p. 9).

The common Saami language unit is believed to divide sometime after the 800s. Borrowed terms from Old Nordic are common in all modern-day Saami languages from the South Saami area up to the territory of the Kola Peninsula (Hansen and Olsen 2006, p. 145). According to linguistic research, one of the southern dialects of the South Saami language, a dialect spoken south of Røros and Idre down to at least Gävle in Sweden, and in the area of Jotunheimen in Norway, has been lost (Strade 1997, p. 177).

During the final decades BC and first decades AD, there are several archaeological indications of interaction between the same groups. One example is a grave field in Storsjö parish in Härjedalen, called Krankmårtenhögen, that was in use from 200 BC to 200 AD and which has signs of burial traditions from both Saami and Germanic traditions (Ambrosiani et al. 1984). Another, later, but similar example from a burial context is found on Långön in the northwest area of Ångermanland, a grave field from the Viking and early Medieval Age (Hvarfner 1957; Zachrisson 1997). Traces from what is believed to be settlements where trade took place are present at several sites, consisting of different types of weights used to determine the value of products in a certain amount of silver (Hedman 2003, pp. 161–163). These types of weights are found both along the coast and in the interior and suggest what could have been an accepted trading system when one exchanged goods in these areas, see Fig. 5.4.

The archaeological material shows that during the centuries at the beginning of our era, various economic and social strategies are evident between a settled agricultural population along the coast in Trøndelag and Nordland. On the Swedish side, this corresponds to a similar permanent farming culture around Storsjöbygden in Jämtland, established around 300 AD, and along the coast up to northern Ångermanland. Scattered throughout these settlements, and in the outlying areas, there was a coastal-bound hunter-gatherer population that may have practised reindeer herding to some degree, simultaneously with hunting and fishing. Supporting this, traces of



Fig. 5.4 Distribution of finds of similar types of spherical weights assumed to have been used for trade and transactions during the late Iron Age (from Hedman 2003, p. 164)

early small-scale forest reindeer husbandry is documented in pollen data from the inland region of Norrbotten (Aronsson 1991, p. 114).

Both in the interior and coastal areas of Norrbotten, archaeological findings show early, small-scale iron and steel production with distinct parallels to an eastern form of iron production that had existed in Finland and Karelia and that had been established during the centuries BC (Bennerhag 2009, 2012). During the Migration Period, 400–550 AD, iron production in Trøndelag, Jämtland and Dalarna increases (Magnusson 1988, p. 129–131; 1989, p. 2). This was probably part of a comprehensive trading system and geographically the production was carried out in the middle of the South Saami area. The small-scale iron production that existed in Norrbotten's Saami hunter-gatherer communities ceased around 400 AD (Bennerhag 2012). This may have been due to the more large-scale production of iron and the subsequent trade and exchange of iron from this area. The first introduction of iron production to Jämtland may have been made by the Saami through their eastern contacts with the Ananyino culture (Ramqvist 2001, p. 3; 2012, p. 45). The production of iron in Trøndelag also rose dramatically at this time and was probably also a part of the trade. The increased production of iron around 400 AD also occurred when the use of asbestos-ware ceramics and the production of stone tools ceased (Bennerhag 2012, pp. 60–61). This does not mean that there was a sudden disappearance of the users

of stone tools and asbestos-ware pottery, since the settlements were still there, rather this was likely due to a change in the use of raw materials for tool production. Most probably, the reason for this disappearance is the fact that stone tools and ceramic containers were replaced by tools and containers made of iron. From this, one can draw the conclusion that the Saami had a role in metal processing at the time. As mentioned above, the Saami may have even introduced the knowledge of and started the first iron production in Jämtland, perhaps even further south into neighbouring areas. In Finland, the oldest known iron production in the country is found in the northern parts of the country and has connections with the Ananyino culture further east in Russia (Forsberg 1996, p. 174). An attempt to more fully understand the Saami role in iron production, and their transporting and trading in iron, would be interesting since Magnusson's (1986, 1988) research clearly shows that the extent of production for a period of time was greater than the need for the local societies around Storsjön in Jämtland.

From the eighth century, the settlement patterns in parts of the inland seem to be more adapted to reindeer needs, and settlements were located on dry pine moors, near small lakes and peat bogs. This type of Saami settlement location is well known from historic reindeer herding. It seems probable that this type of new site was also associated with domestic reindeer herding (Hedman 2003; 2005, pp. 27–28). Pollen analyses also show increased grazing in the mountain area during the 700s, in the South Saami area of Jämtland–Härjedalen, believed to be related to reindeer herding (Aronsson 2005, p. 119, Ljungdahl 2007, p. 35). In the Pite Saami area, a similar change is seen. Hedman (2003; 2005, pp. 15–16) interprets the change for the Lule and Pite Saami areas as indicating that part of the society shifts from being hunter-gatherer based to focus on reindeer herding, hunting, fishing and trade.

The Saga literature, for example, the Egil Skallagrímsson story, contains quite detailed stories about how he traded with the Saami and in what geographic areas this trade took part. The story also mentions that he had competitors and that he was in conflict with other tradesmen coming from the east to engage in trade with the Saami (Zachrisson 1997, pp. 169–170).

From the ninth century, there is a new type of Saami settlement documented in the border areas between the birch forest and the areas above the tree limit zone, at the altitude between 600–700 m above sea level. The structures have often been organized in rows. When excavated, the floor area seems to have been organized similarly to later known Saami houses (South Saami *gâetieh*), although the floor area has been partially dug down into the ground so the construction was semi-subterranean. Their location in the terrain and associated facilities in the form of storage pits and bone deposits are similar to the later, historically known Saami settlement in the mountain region. This leads most researchers today to put them together with early Saami reindeer herding in the mountains (Storli 1991; Hedman 2003; Bergman et al. 2008). From the end of the ninth century, there is also a written source 'Ottar's Story' which refers to Saami and reindeer herding in the area of Helgeland, although Ottar claimed that he was the owner of the reindeer that the Saami were tending (Hansen and Olsen 2006, pp. 63–67).

5.7 The Medieval Era

Following the Christianization of the agrarian societies, Saami societies in the south seem to have been able, to a large degree, to maintain their traditional way of living. Examples of this have been found at the South Saami grave field in Vivallen, Tännäs parish, from the 1100s, where the dead were shrouded in birch bark or hides in a custom similar to both earlier and later Saami graves. They were also buried with their personal items and even with grave gifts. One man buried at Vivallen seems to have been dressed in female-coded clothing and female-coded jewellery which can be interpreted as perhaps being a sign that he had the role of shaman (South Saami—*nâetie*). This is not the only example where objects receive another gender in a Saami context (Zachrisson 1997, p. 80; Mulk 1994, p. 225). Since the *nâetie* were said to be able to travel, go beyond boundaries and visit other worlds, this transgender ability and symbolization were important. Later sources also mention that the reindeer that drew the sled of a *nâetie* also should be of neither male nor female gender (in south Saami this reindeer is called *staajne*). The *staajne* took the *nâetie* to their destinations in the fastest way of all the reindeers and the *staajne* also drew the sled carrying the drum—*gievrie* (Drake 1918, p. 27). From these contexts, it seems that a lot of the material around a *nâetie* was loaded with transgender signals, fully visible to those in the surroundings that understood them.

The Saami groups were probably well aware of the Christian religion and some also considered themselves as Christian at this point, as we can see from the preserved letters from the Saami woman Margareta at the end of the fourteenth—and early fifteenth centuries (Eriksson 1992, p. 278). Two medieval law texts, however, the Eidsivathinglagen and Borgarthingslag, also point to an increasing distance to the Saami culture, forbidding people to seek advice or fortune telling from the Saami (Zachrisson 1997, p. 165). During the Iron Age, however, the social and religious differences between the Saami and the Norse and Swedish chiefdom societies, and the laws against asking Saami for help during the Medieval era did not put a stop to the trading, but may have affected other interaction negatively and caused stigmatization and exclusion.

From the Medieval era there is, unlike earlier eras, well-known written Scandinavian material about the Saami (Bergman and Edlund 2016). A number of non-Saami authors describe the geographic area with Saami settlements, writing about how they live, the skills they possess, their religion, with whom and what they trade and how the Saami are required to pay taxes for living on their own land to various kings and lords.

It is during this period that the word ‘Same’ for Saami people also appears for the first time in written records (Zachrisson 1997, p. 157, 159, 167; Hansen and Olsen 2006, p. 48). During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, several letters mention where the border to ‘Finnmark’ is referring to the land inhabited exclusively by the Saami to the north. This border went approximately through today’s northwest Ångermanland, Strömsund, Lierne, Grong and Namsos (Zachrisson 1997, p. 170; Skevik 2005, p. 277; Hansen and Olsen 2006, pp. 48–49). Far more south of this

border, Saami people and communities were living close to the farming settlements in both Norway and Sweden. During this time, the name ‘finnakonugr’ Møttull in Trøndelag is mentioned, meaning a Saami king (Zachrisson 1997, p. 170). This might indicate a more hierarchical organization among some of the Saami groups or perhaps it refers to a more well-known spokesman for this group, and therefore is referred to as king by the Norse.

One known possible battle between the Saami and Norse is mentioned in the texts. According to Snorri Sturlason’s story, *Heimskringla*, Saint Olav’s third battle was an attack against the Saami living in Herdalir—Härjedalen (Zachrisson 1997, pp. 168–169). However, there are other stories that mention the use of force against the Saami (Zachrisson 1997, p. 167). In Saami oral tradition, there are also several stories about hostile attacks on the Saami, where mainly the so-called ‘*rabpmere*’—small bands of robbers—are the perpetrators (Marek 1992, pp. 203–206).

The colonization of northern Norway and the inner parts of the Gulf of Bothnia occurs from the thirteenth to the fourteenth centuries. Religious and central powers in Sweden and Norway attempt to increase their control over the northern and interior areas at this time. Fortifications and churches are built and farmers move into the area. Ownership of land is obtained by it being sold, bought, given and taken away. From this time, there are written sources that describe a special group of traders, ‘Birkarlar’, who are often referred to as those who traded with the Saami. Although the Birkarlar appear to have been in the area before mention in written sources, they were not the only ones trading with the Saami. Already from the period 800–1300, many objects came into the Saami areas from surrounding societies, for example, bronze pendants, bracelets, brooches, coins and different objects made of tin, silver and copper. These objects are found at Saami settlements, in graves, but most commonly on the sacrificial sites (Serning 1956; Zachrisson 1984; Mulk 1994; Fossum 2006). This trading system was probably created during the Iron Age or late Iron Age, 700–1050 AD. The written sources indicate that the trade goes even further back, as Bergman and Edlund (2016, p. 22) have pointed out, and the archaeological material also gives similar indications of this trade being carried out for a very long time (Hedman 2003, see Fig. 5.3). The oldest known source in which the term Birkarlar is mentioned is in the so-called Tälje Charter (Tälje stadga) from 1328. There the trade with the Saami is regulated and protected for these tradesmen in an area from the Gulf of Bothnia to the east and out to the Atlantic to the west. From the letters that exist, they appear to have had a strong trading position until the mid-1550s when the Swedish King Gustav Vasa rescinded their privileges. The ancient Saami contacts and exchange of goods to the east with Novgorod, Karelian and other groups in the eastern areas seem to have diminished from around the thirteenth century and onwards (Mulk 1994, p. 227).

5.8 Discussion and Conclusion

The fact that this geographic area has a long history of hunter-gatherers and that large areas were unsuitable for agriculture has been the strong foundation for an ideology that remains in close contact with the hunter-gatherer lifestyle. The inherent animistic belief system, with stories closely connected to the surrounding landscape, was a way of understanding the world that strengthened the society and the lifestyle. The topography and the climate have been beneficial for small, flexible, nomadic hunter-gatherers, which is important and worth emphasizing. It is also significant that the landscape would have been disadvantageous to those who would want to exercise control over people and large areas, in comparison to the accessibility of landscape in most parts of central Europe. This background, combined with successful social strategies from the Saami ancestors, could be part of the general understanding of how multiple economies and cultures came to coexist until the modern era.

Social strategies change and evolve over time, however, and paleoecological data increasingly indicate that cultivated cereals appear in the Saami inland areas during the late Iron Age and early Medieval era, thus suggesting that some small-scale farming took place (Josefsson et al. 2014). This has also been documented in slightly earlier Saami contexts in Østerdalen, southern Norway (Bergstøl 2009, pp. 183–184). It is well known that surrounding communities attempted to exert influence over the Saami community, primarily through trade, taxation and later through Christian mission and legislation. The Saami, as a society, managed to adapt to this and had successful strategies for dealing with these external influences. Later, in historic time, one can also see that Saami reindeer herders often owned goats and cows. Many South Saami had a mixed economy, combining small-scale reindeer herding, small-scale farming, hunting and gathering. This was not due to the climate being more suitable for farming and livestock than earlier in history. Growing potatoes also became important for many Saami at the same time as it became popular among the Swedish and Norse population. According to the Bible, the farmer is said to be closer to God than the shepherd, and far closer to God than ‘the wild man’—the nomadic hunter-gatherer. These ideas are visible in texts created by priests when they defend or try to defend Saami land losses to farming and the subsequent loss of Saami identity. For example, Priest Petrus Læstadius (1833), at the time active in Lycksele parish, writes that the best thing that could happen to the Saami would be to become farmers, as they would then come closer to God, and would subsequently become Swedes after only one generation. In order to be considered as human beings close to the Christian God, and to protect the land as the righteous owners, one can perhaps also understand some of the earliest farming among the Saami from this perspective. The medieval and also later laws saw land as someone’s property based on permanent settlement and agrarian economy. Most of the Saami at the time probably had a different view on land rights and probably connected their rights to the land used by their forefathers.

Contemporary research strongly indicates that there has been and still is a link between economy, identity, social organization and languages in Scandinavia. The

Bronze Age chiefdoms identified themselves ideologically and linguistically with the communities further south on the continent. Researchers believe they have found signs of this in the remaining material from these societies. The hunter-gatherer communities' underlying strategy, I propose, was based on defensive considerations, at least this seems to be the case from a long-term perspective. Both groups most likely cultivated tension fields based on a number of repertoires, for example, different belief systems, different languages and the creation and maintenance of different gender roles within the cultures. Some differences may have impeded competition and perhaps even fuelled aggression between groups and their different economies. The use of different ecological areas and production that was suitable for mutual exchange of attractive products between both parties may, on the other hand, also have increased tolerance for one other. The elite in the surrounding agrarian societies probably had a need for the hunter-gatherers' production of furs, tools, baskets, rope, dried fish, spiritual knowledge and other things, as seen later on in history, and the other way around, salt, fabrics and farming products, such as meat, flour and grain, may have been of interest to the Saami.

During historic times, it is well known that in some areas the agrarian society had great use of Saami handicraft, such as rope making, ski making, furs (tanning and maintenance), and they used Saami as advisers, for spiritual knowledge, animal castration and butchering horses (Svanberg 1999). The Saami also hunted predators, such as bears and wolves that attacked domestic cattle. This was knowledge and expertise that was in demand into the nineteenth century and likely ceased with the industrialization of hide manufacturers, slaughterhouses, the reduction of predators and the development of other specialist industries and new professions.

More things could of course be mentioned. What has been presented above establishes that throughout all prehistory and into historic time, a continuous hunter-gatherer society existed on the Scandinavian Peninsula with a slow degree of change but highly adaptable and able to survive. When we finally encounter them in the written sources, these people are the Saami, and therefore there were also Saami present before they appeared in written text. How far back this name has existed is difficult to say, but as there are only Saami people in Fennoscandia and on the Kola Peninsula, the identity has started there and from the interaction with other cultures. According to Barth, ethnic awareness becomes strongest in the border zone between different cultures (Barth 1969). From what I have seen in the archaeological record in Fennoscandia, I, too, believe this is the case.

As mentioned in the introduction, this paper has aimed to create possibilities for understanding and enabling a fusion of historical and archaeological science. This has been done through examples, mainly an archaeological perspective, where some fragments are used to create an understanding for Southern Sámi cultural change over a long period of time and in the light of surrounding contexts, other communities or societies of hunter-gatherers and farming cultures.

Due to the fact that we archaeologists rarely feel the demand to answer questions when asked about how the Saami culture has changed as it moved into historic time, a strange gap has emerged between Saami history based on written sources and Saami history based on archaeological material. This gap creates or is often just

filled with silence. The silence of the subject is thus not neutral and non-political in a relation that already from the outset was asymmetric concerning who has produced the history for this geographic area. This silence is instead an advantage for the one who can exploit it against the other. This silence is of no profit to the Saami people today. The power of silence, from this perspective, is beneficial only to the one who has had the pen and the written word the longest. Do not forget that.

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