East and West in Sápmi

– Borders and identities in Sámi historical archaeology

Carl-Gösta Ojala

This paper discusses archaeology with and without borders in Sápmi, and the importance of the state borders in historical archaeology in Sápmi. How have the changing borders affected the field of archaeology and the understanding of the past in the Sámi areas?

In the paper, I focus on the border between "East" and "West" in Sápmi, and discuss aspects of the interconnections of archaeology and politics in historical archaeology in Sápmi. There is a need to consider the historical and archaeological developments in the Russian part of Sápmi, which have often been neglected in Scandinavian historical-archaeological discussions on Sámi history and heritage. There is also a need to promote more co-operation between archaeologists in the Nordic countries and Russia across the present-day state boundaries.

The study of borders in Sápmi can contribute to a deeper understanding of historical processes as well as contemporary heritage processes in Sápmi. There is great potential in future cross-boundary archaeology in Sápmi, as well as in historical-archaeological explorations of colonial processes and border construction in the North.

Introduction

The border between "East" and "West" has been one of the most influential borders in Sápmi, cutting through the political and archaeological landscapes in the North, dividing visions of past as well as present times. As a conceptual border, it has followed largely the fluctuating borderlands between the Nordic countries and Russia, and it has exerted great influence on archaeological interpretations of Sámi pasts as well as heritage processes and heritage management.

As a point of departure, I argue that in order to understand the ways in which northern histories have been narrated, and territories, cultures and identities have been conceptualized, it is important to explore the history of borders and their meaning and significance in Northern Fennoscandia. There are of course many different kinds of borders – administrative-

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territorial, social, cultural and linguistic – with interrelated histories and legacies, which have been of importance for archaeological views of the past in the North. In this paper, I will focus on the border between East and West in Sápmi, underlining the importance of studying the construction, meaning and impact of borders in Northern Fennoscandia. I also wish to point out the need for archaeologists to work across the present-day state boundaries in Sápmi. Furthermore, I wish to emphasize the interrelations of historical archaeology and political and social processes in Sápmi. There is a need to consider and discuss the historical and archaeological developments in the Russian part of Sápmi, which have often been neglected in Scandinavian historical-archaeological discussions on Sámi history and heritage.

Borders and identity formation

Sápmi covers a vast area, which extends across the state boundaries between Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. There is considerable cultural, social and economic diversity within Sápmi, which is also evident in the linguistic situation. Usually, scholars distinguish ten contemporary Sámi languages, many of which are seriously endangered. The Sámi languages are often divided into a western and an eastern branch. The western Sámi languages include North Sámi (the Sámi language with most speakers), Lule Sámi, Pite Sámi, Ume Sámi and South Sámi. The eastern Sámi languages include Inari Sámi, Skolt Sámi, Kildin Sámi, Akkala Sámi (often considered extinct) and Ter Sámi. Kemi Sámi, which became extinct in the 19th century, is usually considered to belong to the eastern Sámi language group. The Kola Sámi groups consists of Skolt Sámi (in the border area between Norway, Finland and Russia), Kildin Sámi (the largest Kola Sámi group) and Akkala Sámi and Ter Sámi (which are two very small minority groups).

Scholars in different fields of the human and social sciences have discussed border constructions and the social, cultural and economic impact of various kinds of borders in Northern Fennoscandia and Sápmi (e.g. Aarseth 1989; Gustafsson 1995; Paasi 1996; Jackson & Nielsen 2005; Lähteenmäki 2007; Elenius 2014, 2015). The history of establishing the state boundaries in Northern Fennoscandia has been complex, multidimensional and has included a range of different actors (Wiklund & Qvigstad 1909; Enewald 1920; Gustafsson 1995; Hansen 2005). However, there is not space here to go into any depth in this history.

The border politics in Northern Fennoscandia have had profound consequences for Sámi communities. The Skolt Sámi, with traditional settlement areas in the borderlands between Norway, Finland and

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Russia, have been especially severely affected by the wars and the changing borders in Sápmi. After World War II, many Skolt Sámi families were relocated from the Soviet area to the Finnish side of the border (Lehtola 2015; cf. Serck-Hanssen 2017 on the borderland Skolt Sámi religious heritage).

In the early 20th century, due to border closures for reindeer husbandry, North Sámi reindeer-herding families in northernmost Sweden were forced to relocate further south in Sweden, for instance, to Lule, Pite and South Sámi regions. The relocations have created long-lasting traumas and conflicts within Sámi communities in Sweden. The forced relocation of North Sámi families, and its consequences, have been much discussed in recent years (Marainen 1996; Labba 2020). Conflicts over contemporary cross-boundary reindeer husbandry across the Swedish-Norwegian boundary have played out in politics and court cases. A political process to reach an agreement between the Norwegian and Swedish states on the cross-boundary mobility of reindeer herding has been ongoing for a long time, which is still seeking a permanent solution.

Due to the political situation, there has been little contacts between archaeologists in the Nordic countries and Russia during large parts of the 20th century. However, there were contacts between Finnish and Russian archaeologists in the early 20th century and in the early Soviet period before the Stalinist policies and repression made contacts very difficult (Tallgren 1936; Salminen 2003, 2014). Official contacts and research collaboration between Finnish and Russian archaeologists were restarted during the post-war period and developed further after the fall of the Soviet Union (Kirpichnikov et al. 2016).

Some Swedish archaeologists were also active in the Kola Sámi regions. In 1908 and 1910, the Swedish archaeologist Gustaf Hallström travelled in the Sámi areas on the Kola Peninsula, documenting ethnographical and archaeological sites (Hallström 1912, 1922; cf. Tretjakova 2006). During his journeys, Hallström excavated, or plundered, several cemeteries, including cemeteries still in use, to procure Sámi human remains for the collections of the Anatomical Institute at Uppsala University. Today, the human remains gathered by Hallström are stored at Museum Gustavianum at Uppsala University.

The legacy of the Iron Curtain and the break in contacts within science during the 20th century is still felt in archaeology. The knowledge about archaeological research in Russia among archaeologists in, for instance, Sweden remains low, and there are still few spaces of interaction between Scandinavian and Russian archaeologists, despite attempts by several scholars from the Nordic countries and Russia to change this situation. Archaeological and historical research

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traditions, which have developed in different scientific and political environments, also affect current research. In addition, language difficulties and barriers have played an important role in restricting interaction and exchange of knowledge, in particular between the Scandinavian languages, Finnish, and Russian.

In archaeology, discussions on borders have concerned, for instance, relations between North and South in Swedish archaeology (see e.g. Broadbent 2001; Loeffler 2005; Ojala 2009; Hagström Yamamoto 2010), a question which is closely connected with the issue of relations between what is viewed as "Swedish" and "Sámi" history, identity and heritage. Eastern contacts have also been in focus in some discussions in Swedish archaeology, for instance concerning the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (Ojala 2016; Ojala & Ojala 2020) and the Late Iron Age and early medieval period (e.g. Roslund 2001; Fransson et al. 2007; Androshchuk 2013; Callmer et al. 2017; cf. analysis of Russian and Soviet discussions on Scandinavian connections in the Viking Age in Klejn 2009). There have also been discussions on prehistoric East–West contacts in Northern Fennoscandia (see e.g. Baudou 1989, 1995; Ojala 2009; Ojala & Ojala 2020). However, these discussions on prehistoric East–West contacts in the North fall outside the scope of this paper.

Some scholars have examined and challenged the divide between East and West in the ethnography of northernmost Europe. The ethnologist Kerstin Eidlitz Kuoljok has explored mythologies and worldviews in the northern areas in Northern Fennoscandia and northern Russia and Siberia. Eidlitz Kuoljok has been one of the scholars who have worked most systematically on combining research perspectives from Nordic and Russian ethnography and history (e.g. Eidlitz Kuoljok 1999, 2009, 2015; see also discussions in Myklebost 2010). In Sámi research, relations between linguistics and archaeology have been discussed by several scholars, focusing on the emergence and development of the Sámi languages and their spread across present-day Sápmi, which combine archaeological sources and linguistic data from different parts of the Nordic countries and Russia (on the issue of connecting archaeology and linguistics in the Sámi context across present-day borders, see Aikio 2006; Luobbal Sámmol Sámmol Ánte (Ante Aikio) 2012; Saarikivi & Lavento 2012; Piha 2020).

In the post-Soviet period, the Barents Region has emerged as an important geographical concept in societal discourse and human and social sciences, incorporating Northern Fennoscandia, the Kola Peninsula and some other regions of northernmost Russia (Elenius 2015). As a macro-region, it encompasses Sápmi, but is considerably larger. In contrast to Sápmi, it is

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an example of a macro-region building across the state boundaries and the former Iron Curtain based on administrative regions in the different countries. The Barents Region, or the Barents Euro-Arctic Region as it was named, was established by political initiatives in 1993 after the fall of the Soviet Union. The Barents Region as a concept is used both in political, social and economic processes, for facilitating regional development, cooperation and mobility between regions in the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and northwestern Russia, and in science, as a way of increasing transnational exchange of knowledge and experience, and cross-boundary collaboration between researchers in the Nordic countries and Russia (see the Encyclopedia of the Barents Region as a prime example of transnational collaboration, Olsson 2016a, 2016b; see also Elenius 2015).

Sámi archaeological heritage across borders

The early modern colonial expansion in Sápmi, which took place in competition between Denmark-Norway, Sweden-Finland and Russia, has been an important theme in some historical-archaeological research in recent years, including works focused on Swedish early modern colonialism in Sápmi (e.g. Ojala & Nordin 2015, 2019; Ojala 2019; Nordin 2020). More generally, increased attention has been paid to issues of Swedish and Scandinavian colonialism in recent research (Naum & Nordin 2013; Höglund & Andersson Burnett 2019). Russian colonialism in the northern, Arctic regions has also been a contested topic, connected with varying views on the history of Russian colonialism and imperialism (see e.g. Forsyth 1992; Slezkine 1994; Etkind 2011; Josephson 2014).

The history of the colonization and incorporation of Sápmi in the different states, and the construction of state boundaries, followed the competition over northern resources, such as fur products, and trade routes in the Sámi areas. The establishment of state boundaries was a long and complex process, which is exemplified, for instance, by the combined spheres of interest and overlapping taxation areas in Northern Fennoscandia, with Sámi groups in parts of Finnmark being taxed by the Danish-Norwegian, Swedish and Russian states, before the establishment of the state borders (Hansen 2011, 2018).

Sweden's relations with the Russian state, during periods of war between Sweden and Russia and during more peaceful periods, have been of fundamental importance throughout the history of the Swedish state, not least in the early modern period (Tarkiainen 2017). Still, the eastern dimension in the early modern colonial history in Northern Fennoscandia has not been much studied in historical-archaeological research.

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Although the cross-boundary dimensions in Sámi archaeology have been emphasized in some earlier overviews of Sámi history and archaeology, including the eastern dimension (e.g. Lehtola 2004; Ojala 2009; Hansen & Olsen 2014; Kent 2014), most of the scholarly interest in Scandinavia has focused on the western parts of Sápmi, from the 17th century (e.g. Johannes Schefferus' Lapponia, although it includes some material from the Kemi Sámi region; see Schefferus 1956 [1673]) onwards. Much of earlier research on Sámi pasts have been confined within the state boundaries of the respective countries, which forms a scientific legacy that present-day researchers carry still today. However, many scholars strive to work beyond these limitations.

The colonial dimension is shared by all Sámi groups, although the historical and present-day political and social contexts vary. The Kola Sámi are part of different legal and administrative traditions than in the Nordic countries. In Russia, the Sámi population is a small minority group, which officially belongs to the group of Indigenous peoples of northern Russia and Siberia, often named "the small-numbered peoples of the north", with special federal and regional legislation and policies (Slezkine 1994; Donahoe et al. 2008; Sokolovskij 2008).

On the Kola Peninsula, the Sámi groups have been severely affected by the policies of the Soviet Union during the 20th century. The experiences of the Kola Sámi involve, for example, collectivization and Soviet modernization, Stalinist repression and terror, loss of land due to exploitation of natural resources and establishment of restricted military areas and forced displacement during the Soviet period, and difficult social and economic situations in the post-Soviet period (Sergejeva 2000; Rantala 2006; Vladimirova 2006; Kotljarchuk 2012; Konstantinov 2015; Allemann 2020).

The societal, political and ideological contexts of Soviet archaeology also differed radically from the Nordic ones (e.g. Formozov 2004; Platonova 2010; Klejn 2012, 2014a, 2014b). Still, several aspects of interest concerning Sámi history have been similar among Russian/Soviet and Nordic researchers. Russian archaeologists have been involved in discussions concerning the "origins" of the Sámi people on the Kola Peninsula and the extent of the earlier Sámi settlement areas (e.g. Gurina 1997; Manjukhin 2002; Kotjkurkina 2004; Murashkin 2005; cf. debates on Sámi origins through the history of archaeology in the Nordic countries in Ojala 2009, pp. 115–141). Debates on the borders of Sámi settlement areas in historical and prehistoric times have concerned, for instance, archaeological remains such as graves and stone constructions along the Karelian coast and on islands of the White Sea. It has been debated whether these remains should be considered Sámi or not, a debate

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in several ways similar to the ones concerning archaeological remains in the South Sámi regions in central Sweden and Norway (Manjukhin & Lobanova 2002; Manjukhin 2003; Sjakhnovitj 2007; Kosmenko 2009; concerning discussions on ethnic interpretations in the Viking Age and the early medieval period and interrelations between Sámi groups and Scandinavian groups in the South Sámi region, see Zachrisson et al. 1997; Ojala 2009, pp. 141–164; Gjerde 2016; Gjerde & Bergstøl 2021).

To give some examples of archaeological sites which challenge and complicate the borders between East and West, I will mention a few topics of research that have dealt with East–West contacts in early historical times.

One example of a category of ancient remains which has been discussed, in collaboration between Nordic and Russian archaeologists, are Sámi hearth sites, which have a very long period of use during the Iron Age, the medieval period and the early modern period (Hedman 2003; Halinen & Olsen 2019). In recent years, Russian archaeologists have excavated one site in the Murmansk Oblast, Liva-1, a hearth-row site, with rectangular hearths, dated to about the 11th–14th centuries, which belongs to a group of hearth sites common in western Sámi areas in the Late Iron Age and early medieval period (Murashkin & Kolpakov 2019). At the site, a very rich find material of iron and bronze objects were discovered, objects which point to connections with centers of ancient Rus', Scandinavia and the Baltic countries. Murashkin and Kolpakov underline that the Middle Ages is the most poorly studied period in eastern Fennoscandia and that there is a great need for more archaeological research on the historical periods on the Kola Peninsula. The discovery of the Liva-1 site thus opens up many interesting perspectives. This example also underlines the potential of cross-boundary collaboration between archaeologists from the different countries in Sápmi.

Another example that could be mentioned concerns the theory about the use of central-places, so-called "winter villages", based on Väinö Tanner's research in the Skolt Sámi regions, but which was transformed into an influential general theory about pre-colonial Sámi social organization and settlement structure in Sápmi (Tanner 1929). These ideas have been criticized by several scholars recently, pointing to for instance the influence of Russian administrative and legal systems on the Skolt Sámi social organization, and the diversity of social organization and settlement patterns in different parts of Sápmi (Eidlitz Kuoljok 2011; Wallerström 2017). This example shows the complexities of combing historical and archaeological sources and interpretations from the different countries, and stresses the need for more interdisciplinary communi-

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cation and cooperation across the borders in Sápmi.

A final example is the archaeology of multi-room houses in the coastal regions of Finnmark, northernmost Norway, which have been dated to the period from the 13th century until the mid-17th century. Archaeologists have discussed multiethnic contacts and East–West interaction in the Middle Ages, in the multicultural environment of the Finnmark coastal region with Norwegian, Sámi and Russian/Karelian influences (Olsen et al. 2011; Henriksen 2016).

In earlier research, discussions on East–West contact and exchange networks have also concerned finds of objects of eastern types in scree graves in northern Norway (Schanche 2000) and in offering sites in northern Sweden (Serning 1956; Zachrisson 1984; Makarov 1991) during the Iron Age and the early medieval period. Discussions on the emergence and development of Sámi reindeer husbandry have also taken place in a cross-boundary context, in which East–West interaction continues to play an important role, for instance in recent DNA studies (Røed et al. 2018).

Confronting colonialism

"… that the Saami constitute one people, and that national borders shall not infringe on our national unity;

… that the Saami people has inhabited its traditional homeland – Sápmi – since time immemorial and long before national borders were drawn;

… that through the immemorial use of our traditional territories, we have developed a rich, living and constantly evolving culture, distinct to the Saami people;

… that it is this culture that defines the Saami as a people and gives us our collective identity, and that the states have an obligation to respect the Saami people's right to a distinct culture, language and identity and shall take effective measures to prevent any forms of assimilation and reverse the effects of past injustices;

… that as a people, the Saami have the right to self-determination, including the right to determine our economical and social development, through which our culture continues to be living and constantly enriched;

… that through the right to self-determination, the Saami people have the right to freely dispose over our natural resources and under no circumstances shall we be deprived of our means of subsistence;

… that the Saami people, as a part of the right to self-determination, have the right to maintain and strengthen our distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions…"

(Quote from the Declaration of the 19th Sámi Conference, representing the Sámi Council's member organizations in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, in Rovaniemi 2008, see Sámi Conference 2008).

Since the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, cross-boundary Sámi cooperation has increased,

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involving also Kola Sámi groups and organizations. One important international forum has been the Sámi Council, Sámiráđđi, with representatives from Sámi member organizations in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia.

Colonial legacies affect Sámi groups in all countries. On local, regional, national and international levels, Sámi ethnopolitical and cultural revitalization movements include struggles for decolonization, self-determination and the recognition of Sámi Indigenous land and cultural rights. The state boundaries have affected not only interpretations of the past, but also Sámi heritage processes and heritage management. The structure of heritage management systems and heritage legislation, as well as the level of Sámi power and influence in heritage management, vary between the different states in Sápmi.

Kola Sámi political struggles for political representation and Indigenous rights have taken place under often very difficult social and political circumstances, shared by other groups in the Indigenous movement in Russia (Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012; Konstantinov 2015; Berg-Nordlie 2017; Vladimirova 2017). Despite being the largest Kola Sámi language, Kildin Sámi has few active speakers. However, language revitalization and education form an important part of the Kola Sámi ethnopolitical and cultural revitalization movements (Scheller 2011).

In examining the complexities of Sámi pasts, and the interrelations of colonialism, border construction and archaeological interpretations, it is important to avoid over-simplified classifications of identities and cultures in Sápmi. Today, the Kola Peninsula, as well as the western parts of Sápmi, are multiethnic regions, with many different nationalities. Discussions on indigeneity on the Kola Peninsula have also included, for instance, the Komi minority group on the Kola Peninsula, relations between Kola Sámi and Komi groups, classifications by researchers and the construction of social, cultural and ethnic borders between the groups (Fryer 2011; Mankova 2018). The history, identity, and culture of the Pomor groups along the coasts of the White Sea have also been a topic of cultural revitalization, and political debates, in the post-Soviet period (Goldin 2016; Shabaev et al. 2016).

Historical archaeologists working in Indigenous colonial contexts, such as in the different regions of Sápmi, face many challenges, which need to be addressed (cf. Ojala 2019, p. 182): How can archaeology engage with colonial histories, which are often still painful and traumatic, in fruitful and ethically sustainable ways? How can archaeologists relate to Indigenous communities who have been and are still being affected by these histories? What new perspectives can historical archaeology bring forth, and how can

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archaeologists contribute to current discussions on colonialism? These issues are also relevant in relation to the study and understanding of contested colonial history and heritage in Sápmi, and the construction of borders in archaeological as well as political space.

Inspiration might be found in discussions on Indigenous archaeology, as a field of decolonizing archaeology, encompassing a much wider social, cultural and political field than what has traditionally been the case within archaeology. As such, Indigenous archaeology seeks the empowerment of Indigenous groups and the promotion of Indigenous voices and experiences in archaeology and heritage management. One of the foremost representatives of the Indigenous archaeology movement, the Native American archaeologist Sonya Atalay, argues that a decolonizing archaeology "must include topics such as the social construction of cultural heritage, concerns over revitalization of tradition and Indigenous knowledge, issues of ownership and authority, cultural and intellectual property, and the history and role of museums, collections and collecting" (Atalay 2006, p. 302).

Conclusion

This paper has discussed some aspects of the border between East and West in Sápmi. One of the aims has been to stress the importance of incorporating the eastern Sámi regions – and eastern Sámi voices and experiences – in discussions on Sámi histories and Sámi contemporary heritage processes and struggles for self-determination and Indigenous rights. Another aim has been to discuss some of the challenges and possibilities of exploring Sápmi as a complex region with and without borders.

The examples mentioned in this paper illustrate the interrelations of archaeology, borders, identity formation and power. What are the borders of archaeology itself? What is included, what is excluded? Who has the power to define? Who controls the borders between "Us" and "Them" in archaeology in Sápmi?

There is a need for more co-operation between archaeologists in the Nordic countries and Russia across the present-day state boundaries. In light of the current, problematic political relations between the Nordic countries and Russia, this co-operation seems even more important. At the same time, the study of borders in Sápmi can contribute to a deeper understanding of historical processes as well as contemporary heritage processes in Sápmi. There is great potential in the future of cross-boundary archaeology in Sápmi, as well as in a historical archaeology exploring the complexities of colonial processes and relationships between different groups by examining encounters and border constructions in the North.

To sum up, I argue that we need to examine and better understand

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the borders and divides in Sápmi, their histories and importance for archaeological interpretations and heritage processes, while at the same time striving to question and open-up borders between "Us" and "Them" in the North and reduce the negative impact of the state boundaries, working for more contact, exchange, mobility, and co-operation across these boundaries.

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Carl-Gösta Ojala, Ph.D., researcher in archaeology, Uppsala University.
Email: carl-gosta.ojala@arkeologi.uu.se

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