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Linnaeus as Ethnographer of Sami Culture

Linnaeus' most important contribution to ethnography is undoubtedly the information he gathered about the Sami during his trip to Lapland in 1732. He was then just 25 years old. Linnaeus of course was not an ethnographer in the sense the term is understood nowadays. Ethnography as a discipline was first developed into systematic form in the nineteenth century.¹ But Linnaeus can certainly be called an ethnographer according to the description given by Clifford Geertz in his book *Works and Lives. The Anthropologist as Author* (1988). According to Geertz ethnographers themselves think that:

What a proper ethnographer ought properly to be doing is going out to places, coming back with information about how people live there, and making that information available to the professional community in practical form.²

Geertz argues in his book that ethnography is not only this, but also a kind of writing, a way of “putting things to paper”, knowing

¹ The traditional anthropological fieldwork: living for a long time with a small group of people, sharing their lives in order to be able to study intensively as much aspects of their life and social organization as possible, developed first in the early twentieth century.

² Geertz, *Works and Lives. The Anthropologist as Author*, 1988, p. 1.

“ways in which knowledge claims are advanced” so that they persuade and are believed. The ability of anthropologists to get others to take what they say seriously has, according to Geertz less to do with the force of theoretical arguments than with their capacity to convince that what they say is the result of their actually having penetrated another form of life, of having, one way or another, truly “been there”.³

Linnaeus as an ethnographer *avant la lettre* was not part of this ethnographical tradition. He had to find out for himself how to go about “getting there”, how once “out there” to get the information he was interested in, and how “back here” in his own scholarly milieu to persuade that milieu of the usefulness of his journey and his findings. How Linnaeus did this and what picture he presented his scholarly milieu of the life of the Sami is the subject of this article.

Linnaeus, as we all know, studied medicine and botany. First a student at the university of Lund, he moved to the University of Uppsala in 1728, where Olof Rudbeck jr. and Lars Roberg were professors of medicine. In the spring of 1730 Linnaeus, still a student, started lecturing in botany, taking over Rudbeck’s tuition. He also moved in with the Rudbecks. In 1695 Rudbeck had travelled into Lule and Torne Lappmark to make a study of plants and birds. Back in Uppsala he planned to publish a series of 12 volumes about Lapland and its inhabitants. He had just published the first volume in 1701, when the big fire of 1702 destroyed much of Uppsala. In the fire, the manuscripts of the remaining volumes were lost. Only a book with sketches and part of his handwritten diary survived the fire. During the years in Rudbeck’s house, Linnaeus had ample opportunity to discuss Lapland with his benefactor. It was during this stay that Linnaeus made up his mind to travel to the North. On the 15th of December 1731, Linnaeus applied to

³ Geertz, *Works and Lives. The Anthropologist as Author*, 1988, pp. 4-5.

the board and members of Vetenskaps Societeten in Uppsala, Uppsala's Royal Scientific Society, for a scholarship of 600 *daler* in copper coin (a value of ca. 2500 *Euros* in our days), to make a trip to Lapland for scientific research.

In his application, Linnaeus points out that although Lapland is part of Sweden it differs from Sweden in several aspects of flora and fauna. According to Linnaeus, there is great need for a catalogue of plants, a *Flora Lapponica*. He also points out the economic profits of the silver, copper and iron ores that are found and exploited in the area, and the possibility of finding more. In the end he mentions the human inhabitants, especially the Lapps as they were called then. He mentions as his fields of interest:

- The influence of the climatic conditions in general on living creatures;
- the possibility of enhanced knowledge about endemic illnesses and;
- the home medicine used by the Sami and what food they eat in times of scarcity.

Every anthropologist who has ever applied for money will be amazed about his vagueness about where and how he wants to travel, the length of the route, where he will stay, and the duration of his stay. Having heard nothing from the Society by April 1732, he wrote again. He now writes that he thinks he can do with 400 *daler* in copper coin, based on the estimated length (240 old Swedish miles) and the duration (20 weeks) of the journey⁴. It will be a

⁴ Linnaeus makes here a calculation error. The sum of the distances he mentions is 340 miles and not 240. An old Swedish mile was 10.7 km. Linnaeus reckons with 8 *styfver* for a mile and 2 *silfverdaler* for a week which together with 14 *silfverdaler* for special clothes, amounts to 119 *silfverdaler* or 357 *koppardaler*. In addition came such things as costs for guides etc. See Linnaeus, *Iter Lapponicum*, 2003, II, pp. 327-330.

tour around the Bothnian gulf with trips up into Ume, Lule, Torne and Kemi Lappmark, lasting for four months from mid May to mid September. On the 14th of April he was allowed 400 *daler* in copper coin, the sum he had asked for, which was about all the money the Society could dispose of.

Had Linnaeus any knowledge beforehand about the culture of the Sami? How did he prepare himself?

After having written his application in December 1731, Linnaeus spent Christmas with his parents. In February, he travelled to Lund to learn more about mineralogy. However, he stayed in Lund for only a week. He does not seem to have visited professor Henrik Benzelius, who in 1711/1712 had traveled in Torne and Lule Lappmarks to study astrology.

From Lund, Linnaeus returned to his parents. He was back in Uppsala around the first of April, where he discovered that he still had had no reply from the Society. From the moment he was sure of the tour, there was less than a month left for further preparations.

Among the handwritten papers concerning the journey left upon his death, there are two lists of questions, the first containing 76 questions, and the other 15 questions. Only the first is of interest here. These questions were no doubt partly the result of rumours and fantastic stories told about the Sami in Swedish society, but also of real scientific interest. According to Ingegerd and Sigurd Fries, who wrote a commentary to the text of a new Swedish edition of the diary published in 2003, the first list was apparently the result of what the members of the Society including Rudbeck, and Linnaeus himself, thought worthwhile looking into. This means that the list was made up not more than a month before Linnaeus started upon his journey. It functioned as a kind of memory list

during the tour. Some of the questions are mentioned straightforward in the diary and answered there.

The questions are not systematized according to theme. 28 of the questions concern the Sami. First of all there are enquiries referring to material culture such as housing, clothing and handicraft products. Second, Linnaeus is interested in the Sami way of existence, especially in hunting and in what professions one finds among the Sami. There are no questions about reindeer herding, but Linnaeus is interested in the anatomy of the animal. Third, six questions deal with food and illnesses. Linnaeus also wants to know if it is true that among Sami the men cook the meals and not the women. Fourth, Linnaeus is interested in the daily activities and the dividing of household tasks in general, and furthermore in the Sami calendar, their seasonal activities, and in their “free-time” activities or games. Fifth, he wants to know about marriage, birth, baptism and burial; in modern anthropological terminology, the rites of passage. Sixth, he is interested in the physical appearance of the Sami, height, colour of hair and eyes, build and most peculiar, if their feet are placed in a different way when they are running. Finally there are some questions about the Sami belief system. One can only say that this is a huge task for one whose main interest was not focused on the Sami culture, who would travel amongst the Sami for only a few months, and who never before had occupied himself with the Sami.

It is useful to know what was there for Linnaeus to study and if he studied it before starting his tour. The most important work was the book *Lapponia* published by the Uppsala professor Johannes Schefferus in 1673. Linnaeus read this book, at least that part of it that deals with flora, fauna and minerals. In his diary, Linnaeus refers only once to Schefferus’ book⁵. He also mentions Schefferus

⁵ The remark in the diary concerns the reindeer as a rummaging animal. Lin-

by name in *Flora Laponica*, which appeared in 1737, and in some handwritten rough drafts that never were finished for publication. In *Laponia*, Schefferus takes up many of the points about the Sami way of life we find in Linnaeus' question list. But in his diary Linnaeus does not mention Schefferus as an ethnographer of Sami life, whereas he often mentions authors who wrote about his other fields of interest.

It is well known that Schefferus and the Rudbeck family (especially Rudbeck senior.) were not the closest of friends. Schefferus himself had never visited Lapland. After having been there, Linnaeus does not hesitate to point this out as something that should make one suspicious concerning the information found in Schefferus' book⁶. However, Schefferus' account of the Sami way of life is based on the accounts of clergymen who worked in the north and had much contact with Sami. Schefferus' book is a remarkably objective account of the Sami. At the time, it was certainly good reading for one who wanted to study the Sami way of life.

Linnaeus was not the first person who traveled among the Sami and published about it. Before Rudbeck there were Pierre Martin de la Martinière and Jean Francois Regnard. They traveled in 1670 and 1681 respectively and published about their travels in 1671 and 1731. Linnaeus does not seem to have known these books.

Linnaeus' teacher and friend, Olof Rudbeck jr., traveled in 1695 with two companions to Torne and Lule Lappmark. Their aim was to study the natural history of the area. The first volume of Rudbeck's work describes only the first part of the journey. It does not contain any information about Lapland. However, it seems that Rudbeck lent or gave Linnaeus his handwritten diary, since part of it was found among the papers Linnaeus left upon his death. From

naeus, *Iter Laponicum*, 2003, I, p. 105.

⁶ Wiklund, 'Linné och Lapparna', 1925, p. 91.

this diary we know that Rudbeck at least had read La Martinière's book. He might have told the young Linnaeus that this book did not contain much which could be of interest to him.

This, however, is not the case with the book Aubry de la Motraye published in 1723 in English and 1727 in French. Since Motraye was a good friend of the librarian of the university library in Uppsala, it is hardly conceivable that the library did not then contain a copy of it. Motraye was a French refugee who had traveled widely. He had stayed in Sweden for three years when, in the spring and summer of 1718, he traveled high up into the mountains of Torne Lappmark. He penetrated deeper into the country of the Sami than either Regnard or Rudbeck had done. Moreover he traveled alone, with guides and interpreters who spoke a bit of Latin and Swedish. He traveled in the Lappmarks by boat, by foot and by reindeer sledge before it became too late for that in the summer. He stayed with several Sami families. He describes their camps, what he discussed with the Sami he stayed with, and the food they offered him. The account of his journey is detailed and looks trustworthy not in the least because Motraye as author who experienced it all, is highly present in the text.

Linnaeus certainly did not read the book, probably because his knowledge of English and French was scanty⁷. Nowhere in his diary does he mention Motraye's name. This is remarkable since during his journey Linnaeus met several persons who knew Motraye. These were Daniel Solander and his son Karl Solander, Hans Walltier and Henrik Forbus, all members of the clergy, and Per Fjellström, a well-known schoolteacher. Motraye met them on returning from his tour in Torne Lappmark. Linnaeus does not men-

⁷ Linnaeus was not interested in languages as such and never learned English, French, German, Sami or even Dutch. See Linnaeus, *Egenhändiga anteckningar*, 1823, p. 36 and Wiklund, 'Linné och Lapparne', 1925, p. 90.

tion any of these persons by name in his diary. However, he made a list of people from the higher social circles he had met during his tour, and told how they had received him.

If traveling through Lapland alone, and in the way both Motraye and Linnaeus did that, going up in the mountains during summertime, depending on Sami hospitality and Sami guides, was so unusual as Linnaeus will have it, it is hardly conceivable that no one mentioned this predecessor to Linnaeus.

We must conclude that Linnaeus' discussions with Rudbeck and Rudbeck's rather limited diary were his main sources of information before he started on his journey.

Where did Linnaeus find his Sami informants and how many were they?

Information about Linnaeus' record-keeping about his fieldwork, about his feelings when staying with the Sami and about how many Sami he had as his informants can be found in his diary as well as in his official travel report to the Society. Linnaeus also gave an account of his travels to professor Roberg. Roberg wrote it down almost word for word. Some information is to be found, too, in the list of people he met, in letters he wrote during his trip and in some of his publications and manuscripts. The diary alone does not give the full details concerning these matters.

When Linnaeus left Uppsala on horseback, he had with him a leather bag with very little luggage. He had two maps, one about Lule Lappmark and one about Torne Lappmark, a diary in folio pages and a book with pages for drying plants. In his pocket he had a so-called *planbok*, furthermore a traveling pass for the first part of the trip, and a letter of recommendation from the Society. The recommendation letter stated that Linnaeus wanted to study stones and minerals, animals, birds, fishes, insects and most of all trees,

plants, grasses and mosses. In explaining the aim of his travels, Linnaeus could, thus, refer to this letter. However, the letter does not mention anything about a study of the Sami way of life.

The *planbok* was a little book in which he could take down notes during the day. It measured 8 by 13 centimeters and was therefore easy to carry in a pocket. It consisted partly of ordinary paper pages and partly of pages that were treated in a special way. Notes written on them with pencil, could be wiped out afterwards, and the pages used again. It is clear that we here have what anthropologists call a field diary. When I was a student I was told that anthropologists in the field should keep three kinds of diaries, a field diary – Linnaeus’ *planbok* – a private diary where one should note down the events of the day, personal points of view, feelings and personal thoughts etc., and a diary in which one in a more systematical way worked out the findings noted down in the field diary. Because of want of time in the field, I think most anthropologists only use a field diary and a private diary. In a way, this is what Linnaeus did too, only he had to wipe out the notes from the field diary after he had copied them into his travel diary. In this way, it became a mixture of a private diary and an account of his scientific findings. Linnaeus did not write in his diary every day, certainly not when he traveled through the Lappmarks. In moments when he had more time, he wrote down his observations from several days, either from his field diary or from memory. Sometimes he later added information to pages he had written earlier. He is very careless in noting down dates. Many of them have been inserted later on.

Linnaeus started his journey alone. However, Linnaeus often writes “we” in his diary when he, presumably, must have been alone—with his horse. On the other hand, he sometimes writes “I” in cases where he scarcely can have wandered alone. This does not make it very easy to find out how many Sami he had as guides or interpreters. He did not take the trouble to note such things down

in his diary. Both in Umeå and in Luleå, he obtained a special letter of recommendation to all the local policemen and the *skickare* (local people who helped the officers of the crown with the gathering of taxes and arranged transportation for travelers). These persons were called on “either to be his guide themselves to the places he needed to visit or to procure for this other skilled Lapps who can speak the Swedish language”.⁸

May 26, 1732, O.S. (June 6, N.S.)⁹ Linnaeus left Umeå and traveled in the direction of Lycksele. Part of the way to Lycksele he had to travel by boat on the river. He was rowed to Lycksele in very light, small sewn boats. In Lycksele he stayed with pastor, Ola Graan. Here he also met the schoolteacher, Per Fjellström. It was a short but very rewarding stay. He got a long list with Sami names for plants, mammals, birds and fishes. He also described and made detailed drawings of the small sewn boat and of the harness used on reindeer when drawing a sledge. It is clear that either Graan or Fjellström, who both spoke Sami and had lived among the Sami for a considerable time, showed and explained the harness to him and helped him with the list with Sami names.

From Lycksele, Linnaeus wished to travel to Sorsele, a distance of about 140 km. However, in order to come to Sorsele, he had partly to go by foot while crossing the watershed between the Ume river basin and the Vindel river basin. Linnaeus set out by boat and probably got as far as 90 km on his way. After two days and nights he and his guide had to leave the boat and to go by foot in search of the next guide.

⁸ “at de antingen sielfwe äro dess wägwisare, dit han har nödigt at resa, eller ock förskaffa der til andre beskiedelige Lappar, som kunna tala det Swänske språket;” Linné, *Iter Lapponicum*, 1913, p. 227.

⁹ Sweden changed from the Julian calendar (referred to as O.S., old style) to the Gregorian calendar in 1753.

Because of the melting snow in the mountains, the area proved to be a nightmare of marshes. Moreover the weather was rainy and it was rather windy. They went all night until six in the morning of the third day, without finding any Sami. Linnaeus was by that time so tired that he stayed with a fire they made on a somewhat dryer place. His guide left him there and went to find the next man. In his diary, Linnaeus wrote that he now was “*itinere satiatus*”¹⁰, heartily sick of the trip. He then compared his surroundings with the river Styx, the underground river in Greek mythology. After eight hours, his guide came back with a Sami woman. She told Linnaeus in a kind of biblical Swedish that it was impossible to continue. Linnaeus then gave up the thought of traveling to Sorsele and returned to Lycksele. From there he traveled back to Umeå and proceeded along the main road to Luleå.

The whole trip from Lycksele to the marshes and back again lasted five days and nights. This was all the time Linnaeus spent with the Sami who lived above Lycksele. They were all Forest Sami who, during this time of the year, made a living from fishing. But how many Sami did he meet?

From a careful comparison of his diary, the report to the Society and the Roberg account, we can conclude that, on this five-day tour, Linnaeus probably had five Sami guides and two Finnish colonists as guides. One of the Sami guides did not speak Swedish. Linnaeus stayed twice with Finnish colonists and certainly twice, maybe three times with a Forest Sami family. All these people made a living by fishing for pike and perch. At least one of the Sami families had small children and there was a woman sewing clothes. Linnaeus did not sleep in Sami huts or tents. He slept under the boat turned upside down or before a fire with the boat as a windscreen behind his back. He also slept in the open air, on a

¹⁰ Linnaeus, *Iter Laponicum*, 2003, I, p. 52.

bedding made of mosses by his Sami guide.¹¹ He saw a lot of deserted Sami huts and deserted tent places since the Sami were fishing elsewhere. He also saw a hut and the storage constructions of the aforementioned Sami woman. We must conclude that he did not meet with many Sami and Sami families. In his report to the Society and in the account he gave Roberg, he clearly exaggerates the distance covered during this trip, which according to the Roberg account should have been 270 or even 540 km.¹²

The same holds true for his trip into Lule Lappmark, from Luleå to Jokkmokk, Kvikkjokk and on to the Norwegian coast and back again. According to his diary he left the town of Old Luleå on June 25th O.S. [July 6, N.S.], traveling towards Jokkmokk. He apparently did not travel alone, but neither in his diary nor in his two other accounts about the journey does he mention travel companions. From his autobiographical notes, not published until 1823, it seems he traveled all the way from Luleå to Kvikkjokk in the company of Seger Swanberg, a mineralogist, and Joachim Koch, quartermaster of the regiment stationed there.¹³ They were on their way to a newly opened silver mine in the area.

Most of the way to Kvikkjokk they traveled by boat, as far as Jokkmokk in a bigger one than the small boats used in Ume Lappmark. Sometimes they had to walk from the end of one lake to the beginning of the next. Between Jokkmokk and Kvikkjokk, Linnaeus stayed a whole day in Tjåmotis with the family of the sexton of the churches of Jokkmokk and Kvikkjokk. K.B. Wiklund, professor in Sami language and culture, has managed to find out from the Swedish property register that this man was a Sami by

¹¹ Linnaeus, *Iter Lapponicum*, 2003, II, p. 366.

¹² Linnaeus, *Iter Lapponicum*, 2003, II, p. 366.

¹³ Linnaeus, *Egenhändiga anteckningar*, 1823, p. 18. In the diary he mentions them as companions on leaving Tjåmotis. Linnaeus, *Iter Lapponicum*, 2003, I, p. 94.

name of Nils Andersson.¹⁴ Thus, before Linnaeus came to Kvikkjokk, he stayed at least a whole day with a Swedish-speaking Sami family. He might have visited two or three other Sami families during this part of the trip.

His real mountain wanderings started from Kvikkjokk. He left the place in the afternoon, after having spent only one night in the house of the pastor. The pastor and his wife arranged a Sami interpreter to accompany him on his tour. In an article about reindeer parasites published in 1739, Linnaeus gives an interesting detail not mentioned in the diary or the other accounts. He writes there that he traveled from Kvikkjokk with a Sami interpreter and a reindeer that carried food and clothing needed during the trip.¹⁵ In his diary he gives a detailed description of the packing saddle and the harness used when traveling in such a way. In the Roberg account however Linnaeus relates that he traveled by sledge for about 75 km¹⁶ crossing the snow-covered watershed. This is, I think, highly improbable, and one of his many exaggerations, since Sami usually did not take their sledges all the way up to their summer camps.

The trip from Kvikkjokk to the Norwegian coast took five days and nights. On the first stage, Linnaeus had only his interpreter; later, he was accompanied by two Sami, one of them probably a guide. The diary does not make it clear if this was the same person all the way. Linnaeus mentions three Sami summer camps. Finally, he and his two Sami companions, 50 and 70 years old, came down to a village on the Norwegian coast.

The trip back to Kvikkjokk lasted, according to his diary, six days and nights. On this return trip they partly followed a different

¹⁴ Wiklund, 'Linné och Lapparne', 1925, p. 72.

¹⁵ Gullander, *Linné i Lappland*, 1969, pp. 115, 116. See also Wiklund, 'Linné och Lapparne' 1925, p. 74.

¹⁶ Linnaeus, *Iter Lapponicum*, 2003, II, p. 367.

route. The first camp they visited was probably the same as the last one before they came down to the coast village. Then, after traveling in a more northeastern direction, they reached the camp of the Sami policeman, *länsman* Kock. Linnaeus does not tell us about any wanderings during the next three days. His diary for these days gives much information about the reindeer and Sami daily activities. Wiklund assumes that Linnaeus stayed all this time with the Kock family. From there he should have walked a night and a day until he arrived in Kvikkjokk. In '*Resans gång, dag för dag*', a commentary written in 2003, Ingegerd Fries is of the opinion that Linnaeus also traveled on these three days.¹⁷

Linnaeus mentions only two Sami summer camps during his return trip. If, as he writes in his diary, he followed a somewhat longer route back to Kvikkjokk, there must at least have been one more camp. Sten Selander, who reconstructed this route in 1947, supposes that this camp was near Alkajaure where there existed a summer camp around 1700. From there Linnaeus could follow the old path, which had been used to transport ore from the Alkavare mountain to Kvikkjokk.¹⁸ The diary makes it clear that, at least part of the way back, Linnaeus had a guide with him to bring him and his interpreter from one camp to another.

According to his report to the Society, his return trip from Norway over the mountains should have lasted a month (from July 1 to August 2 O.S.). During this time he should have walked in a northern direction aiming for Torne Lappmark. He came, he says, as far as Kaitum. From here he turned back, since the Sami there were very wild and fled from their tents when they saw him coming. The distance from Norway to Kaitum was, he writes, 430 km

¹⁷ Wiklund, 'Linné och Lapparne', 1925, pp. 73-74; Linnaeus, *Iter Lapponicum*, 2003, II, p. 23.

¹⁸ Selander, 'Linné i Lule Lappmark' 1947, p. 16.

and from there to Kvikkjokk was another 430 km. This means that he should have covered a distance of 860 km. In the Roberg account he also mentions Kaitum. It is, however, a sheer impossibility that he came as far north as Kaitum, or walked 860 km in six days, the real time used for the trip. It is nowadays taken for granted that Alkajaure and not Kaitum, was the lake he came to and from where he turned south to Kvikkjokk.

Back in Kvikkjokk, Linnaeus stayed for two days with the pastor and his wife writing in his diary. Linnaeus left Kvikkjokk by boat and was back in Luleå on July 30 O.S.

For almost a month and a half, Linnaeus was in and around the towns of Torneå and Kalix. He took a small trip into Kemi Lappmark but does not seem to have met Sami there. In his report to the Society and in the Roberg account, Linnaeus mentions that he also took a trip into Torne Lappmark. To the Society he wrote that this was in September, to Roberg he said that it was in August. He traveled by boat with the district judge from Kalix to the copper works of Kengis and Junosuando. There he decided to turn back with the same boat. This third trip is not mentioned in the diary. We can safely assume that he hardly came in contact with any Sami on this trip.

We must conclude that Linnaeus on his whole roundtrip from Kvikkjokk to and from Norway stayed, in all probability, in five different summer camps. One of these he visited twice. But he also met Sami between Jokkmokk and Kvikkjokk. This means that during his journey in Lule Lappmark, he stayed with at least six Sami families and possibly nine different groups. In two camps he stayed for a whole day and in a third maybe two or three days.

Thus, during his two trips into the Lappmarks, Linnaeus, who in one of his unpublished drafts, presumably as a means to impress

his readers, says that he met a 1000 Sami¹⁹, visited eight, possibly 12 Sami camps altogether and stayed there for a very short time. Three were Forest Sami camps, the other ones were Mountain Sami groups.²⁰ In Ume Lappmark he had five Sami guides, in Lule Lappmark maybe somewhat more (but maybe less, since he hardly mentions them). In Ume Lappmark, he had no interpreter with him. In Lule Lappmark, he had a Sami interpreter with him all the way from Kvikkjokk to Norway and back again (probably the same man during the whole trip).

In addition to his contacts with Sami, he stayed with pastors and schoolteachers, with a mineralogist and with higher civil servants, who all of them knew and had traveled extensively in the Lappmarks. With some of them he stayed for a considerable time. They number about twenty people altogether and must have been important informants. Most of them are mentioned by name in the list of persons he met.²¹ A third category of informants may have been the colonists who had settled down in the Lappmarks and who guided him through the lower woodlands to Lycksele and Jokkmokk.

The Sami he met remain anonymous. Not only he does not give their names in his diary, they also do not come forward as persons with personalities of their own, not even his interpreter. To be fair to him, it must be said that the same holds true for most of the clergy and other Swedes he met on his journey.

¹⁹ Linné, *Iter Lapponicum*, 1913, p. 249. See also Gullander, *Linné i Lappland*, 1969, p. 104.

²⁰ A Forest Sami fishing camp during summertime usually consisted of one family only. Among Mountain Sami camps were made up by one to four families.

²¹ The list is published in Linné, *Iter Lapponicum*, 1913, pp. 235-238 and, with comments, in Linnaeus, *Iter Lapponicum*, 2003, II, pp. 403-410.

Observation and participation

Considering the short time Linnaeus actually stayed with the Sami, the amount of information he gathered about their culture is remarkable. Anthropologists out in the field are today known for their research method of participant observation. Linnaeus was trained in observing things meticulously, especially plants. This technique of observation enabled him to sketch and describe almost every Sami cultural item he saw. In the Lycksele area he gives detailed information about the small and fragile Sami sewn boats. He describes the clothing of the Sami he meets, some of the traps the Sami use to catch squirrels and forest birds, the reindeer harness used in winter when traveling with sledges, huts and tents as well as storage constructions. For him the Lycksele tour was not an unavailing journey at all, since he also got the Sami names for plants and animals and gathered information about the food of the Sami and their healing methods.

According to Wiklund²² his observations are valuable nowadays because Linnaeus describes a Forest Sami culture that by the beginning of the 20th century did not exist anymore. These Forest Sami made a living from fishing mainly, especially during the summer months. They then were living in isolated families, migrating along their fishing sites.

Linnaeus' second stay with the Sami was with Mountain Sami, mainly living from reindeer breeding. His observations then related to this group. He himself does mention both groups, but he does not seem to have perceived them as groups with slightly different cultures.

In Lule Lappmark, he wrote down detailed information about tent life and everything of the material culture he saw. He also

²² Wiklund, 'Linné och Lapparna', 1925, p. 69.

wrote about the Sami way of greeting each other and about their games. Here he had ample opportunity to study the reindeer. He saw whole herds; saw how scared the animals were of the gadfly and what these insects did to their skins. He saw the milking of reindeer cows and the castration of bulls and watched one or two slaughterings. This gave him the opportunity to study the anatomy of the animal. He also noted down different Sami words to denote the reindeer according to their age. He got information about the tanning of leather, about the Sami calendar and much, much more, such as the rituals concerning an engagement.

Traveling the way he did, Linnaeus had little chance to participate in the life of the Sami. Still, I think he experienced something of a culture shock in meeting a completely strange culture. This is obvious from what he writes in his diary and the reports.

It is clear from his diary that he did not prepare his own meals. When traveling among the Sami in the Lappmarks he depended on what food his guides or his interpreter prepared and shared with him and on the hospitality of the Sami families. On his way to Lycksele he complained that he got nothing to drink but water. The food situation became a big issue when he finally got stuck in the marshes. About his meeting with the Sami woman who made them turn back, he writes:

My health and strength being by this time materially impaired by wading through such an extent of marshes, laden with my apparel and luggage, for the Laplander had enough to do to carry the boat; by walking for whole nights together; by not having for a long time tasted any boiled food; by drinking a great quantity of water, as nothing else was to be had but water and fish (often full of maggots and unsalted), I must have perished but for a piece of dried and salted reindeer meat, given me by my kind hostess the clergyman's wife. This however without bread

proved unwholesome to my stomach that could not digest it. Oh how I longed to come again to people and eat spoon food [...]. I inquired of this woman whether she could give me anything to eat. She replied no, unless you want fish. I looked at the fresh fish, but perceiving its mouth to be full of maggots, it at once abated my hunger, but did not recruit my strength.²³

Both in his report to the Society and in the Roberg account, he complains too about not having had bread to eat when traveling in Lycksele Lappmark. So when he then came back to the house of the pastor, he was very glad to be served food, he says. To Linnaeus food without bread and salt, was no food.

In the first Mountain Sami camp he came to, he was given a product made of whey cooked into a thick mass. He liked the taste of it, but had to eat it with a spoon given to him by his host. The man washed it for him by spitting on it and then drying it with his fingers. In the next camp they served char, a kind of trout. Some of the fish were boiled in water, others were roasted on a spit over the fire. Linnaeus did not like the boiled fish, which was prepared without salt, and refused to eat the roasted ones for the same reason. They then served him dried salted char that they roasted over

²³ Based on Linnaeus, *Lachesis Lapponia or a Tour in Lapland*, 1811, I, pp 146-147. Swedish original Linnaeus, *Iter Lapponicum*, 2003, I, p. 53: "Jag som redan kände mig siuk af så stor strapsering genom mörkor helt många och långa, genom mina egna sakers bärande, ty Lappen bar båten, genom natvakande, genom dett jag intet fät någon kokes mat på någon tijd, genom mycket vatn drikande; ty annat än fisk (offta full med matskar och osaltad) och vatn gafs ej till uppehälle, jag hade förgåts där icke prästmor gifvet mig ett stycke specke renköt med mig, dett doch för min mage utan bröd var myckit ond, och gik bort osmält. Jag önskade då än engång råka folk att få äta supesmat, [...] Jag frågade om hon hade någon mat för mig? 'Nije! Utan tu vill hafva fisk.' Jag såg på den färska fisken, som var full med matsk i munen, hvilken mättade mig af blotta på seendet, men styrkte ej."

the fire and he ate that. He furthermore tells that the Sami drank the water in which the fish was boiled, which, he writes, “I was unable to do”. The next day he was treated again with freshly made reindeer cheese “which, together with a great proportion of cheese that I had eaten of late, disagreed violently with me, and made me almost *tenesmus*”.²⁴ When coming down to the farm at the Norwegian coast, Linnaeus sighs: “I was then tired to death and found it very refreshing to get some cow milk and food and to sit on a chair”.²⁵

On his way back across the mountains Linnaeus changed his ideas about drinking water. He now praises nature that always gives the thirsty traveler something to drink, and moreover the healthiest water one can imagine.

In his report to the Society about his trip through the mountains, Linnaeus tells that the pastor’s wife in Kvikkjokk supplied him with food for eight days.²⁶ According to this report, his trip to Norway lasted 12 days (in reality it was only five). In Norway, he also stayed one night with the local pastor, who received him very well. In Kaitum, on his way back through the Lappmarks, he decided to turn back to Kvikkjokk “especially because the bread for 14 days had run out. The fat reindeer milk was very repugnant without bread. The whey-cheese caused such constipation that I hardly

²⁴ Linnaeus, *Lachesis Lapponia or a Tour in Lapland*, 1811, I, pp. 307 and 317. Swedish original Linnaeus, *Iter Lapponicum*, 2003, I, p. 104: “hvilket jag ej h ller kom uht med”; *idem*, p. 106: “hvilken graverade magen, som med den myckna ost och messe jag tillf rme  tit gjorde mig n stan tenesmus.” *tenesmus* = constipated.

²⁵ Linnaeus, *Iter Lapponicum*, 2003, I, p. 108. Swedish original: “Jag var d  helt trot, fick svalka mig med komiolk och vederqvicka mig med mat, samt sittaa p  stohl.”

²⁶ Linnaeus, *Iter Lapponicum*, 2003, II, p. 350.

could endure it anymore”.²⁷ As noted, Linnaeus writes in this report that the return journey to Kvikkjokk lasted a whole month:

In the end I reached Kvikkjokk after having been without bread for more than four weeks. No one can imagine how difficult it is to be without bread for such a period even though one should have other food in abundance.²⁸

In reality, the whole round trip lasted fourteen days instead of a month and a half. From the Roberg account we know that among the food given to him for the tour by the pastor’s wife was bread.²⁹ We can be sure too that Linnaeus was served bread when visiting the pastor in Norway. He also might have had the possibility to buy bread in the coast village before traveling up in the mountains again. So this whole account is highly exaggerated. But I don’t think that these exaggerations are to be put in the same category with his exaggerations on the length and duration of his wanderings. The last, no doubt, served to make it clear to the Society that his travel route had been much longer than he had anticipated when applying for money so that he had had to borrow money which he had to pay back.

The accounts tell us that it was a real shock for him to discover that the Sami used no bread and almost no salt. He became heartily sick of eating unsalted fish meal after meal or so many meals that consisted only of cheese and other milk products.

²⁷ Linnaeus, *Iter Laponicum*, 2003, II, p. 352. Swedish original: “Hälst som brödet för 14 dagar blifvet alt. Den feta renmiölken var mycket vämjachtig utom bröd. Missungen (caseus secundarius) förorsakede sådan obstruction, att jag ej längre trodde mig uthärda.”

²⁸ *Idem*. Swedish original: “Kom omsider till Qvickjock sedan jag varit utom bröd öfver 4 veckors tid; ingen menniska kan persvadera sig hvad svårighet är så länge vara utan bröd, fast ägde man till öfverflod annor löös mat.”

²⁹ Linnaeus, *Iter Laponicum*, 2003, II, p. 366.

The food of the Sami was a topic he was highly interested in. His diary is rich in details about the subject. He not only observed (and as it came to eating food he participated), he also asked a lot of questions. These questions were about the practical sides of running a household and making a living.

It is a well-known fact that informants might get tired of the anthropologist's endless and sometimes in their eyes nonsensical questions. They then can tell the unhappy researcher what comes to their mind to satisfy him and to amuse themselves. I am inclined to believe that Linnaeus, too, was made fun of, without him being aware of it. After having been in Tjåmotis on his way back to Luleå, he describes, among many other things, the way the Sami kill a reindeer. He then mentions all the useful slaughter products the animal supplies them with. In the end we read: "Everyone throws the testicles away. The *penis* serves to make a thong to draw the sledges".³⁰ Though no comment is given on this, either in the general text commentaries or in the ethnological commentary on Linnaeus' diary published in 2003, I have my suspicions that Linnaeus here was fooled. Although he told Roberg that he had travelled by sledge, no traces of it are found in the diary. The harness for drawing sledges he saw himself and described, when he was in Lycksele, had a leather thong. Motraye, who did travel by sledge and describes both sledge and harness, never mentions such a thing, talking only about "a trace"/"*un trait*". From a publication of Knud Leem from 1767 we know that this thong was made of a strap of cow skin or seal skin, well greased to make it supple.³¹

³⁰ Linnaeus, *Lachesis Lapponia or a Tour in Lapland*, 1811, II, p. 111. Swedish original Linnaeus, *Iter Lapponicum*, 2003, I, p. 156: "Ballarna kastas af alla bort. Penis brukas till ackier att draga med."

³¹ Motraye, *A. de la Motraye's Travels*, 1723, II, p. 309/Motraye, *Voyages en Europe*, 1727, II, p. 223. Leem, *Beskrivelse over Finmarkens Lapper*, 1767, p. 156.

Nevertheless, one must admire Linnaeus. To be able to collect such an amount of detailed ethnographic information as he did, is really remarkable. He observed continually and asked questions about what he observed. His information therefore concerns mostly material culture. Linnaeus was clearly not interested in Sami racial background. What remarks he makes about their physique, is related to their living in a harsh climate or to the fact that they are such strong walkers (one of the questions on the list). Concerning the rites of passage, also one of the topics he was interested in, he tells us about the engagement rituals only. We do not find any information about the social structure of the Sami society or about questions like leadership, the making up of herding groups, ownership of reindeer, questions of inheritance or the Sami kinship system. Neither does Linnaeus touch upon political issues such as land use and land rights. Though he seems to support the ideas behind the *Lappmarksplakat* of 1673 in that he states that the Sami like colonists to settle down amongst them, which is said to be profitable for both groups, it is also clear to him that the colonists in Lycksele Lappmark were invading and taking over Sami fishing waters. Somewhat surprisingly, he does not take up the question of religion. Such subjects required building up confidence and talking, more than observing, and this might have been difficult under the circumstances of his journey. Neither does he seem to have taken up these subjects with the priests or the civil servants he stayed with. On the whole though Linnaeus found answers to most of the questions on his list.

The scientific results of the journey

When Linnaeus returned to Uppsala, he had with him some ethnographic objects bought or received as gifts during his tour. Linnaeus mentions a Sami snuffbox, a model of a Sami sewn boat, two

pairs of Sami shoes, a woman's cap, and a Sami girdle with all the apparel the Sami usually have hanging on it. Furthermore Karl Solander had promised to send him a Sami drum. Linnaeus does not mention any fur clothing like the Sami *peske*, boots or mittens. However, it is known that in the years before he came to Holland he had both a Sami *peske* and boots in his possession.³² He surely brought them with him to Falun, where he spent the winter of 1734/35 and met his future bride. Linnaeus tells us that he once "called on Sara Lisa in Lapp costume".³³

Linnaeus must have been aware of the fact that the costume would attract publicity and make him the centre of attention, certainly abroad. When travelling to Holland in the spring of 1735 he had the costume and a Sami drum with him. He showed both costume and drum in Hamburg, where he gave a kind of imitation of a Sami shamanic séance.³⁴

In the Netherlands one cannot have been totally ignorant concerning Sami clothing. The young Swedish student Nicolaus Örn had some thirty years earlier made use of its publicity value when he presented himself to the higher circles in several European countries as prince of Lapland. He left his costume rather worn out in Leiden where, in 1710, it was in the possession of the anatomical laboratory.³⁵

In the Netherlands Linnaeus wore his costume when he defended his doctoral thesis in Harderwijk in June, 1735. Later, he

³² Sydow, 'Linné och Lappland', 1972-74, p. 22. When in Kvikkjokk Linnaeus was given a rimed chronicle about the Sami way of life written by the secretary of the regiment in Luleå. See Wiklund, 'Linné och Lapparne', 1925, p. 66 and Wiklund, 'En rimkrönika om Lapparna', 1909.

³³ Uggla, *Linnaeus*, 1957, p. 8.

³⁴ Reuterskiöld & Wiklund, 'Linnés Lappska trolltrumma 2', 1912, p. 167.

³⁵ Berg, 'Lappland och Europa', 1954, p. 235.

wore it on several occasions in Amsterdam and Leiden. He even seems to have tried to *yoīk* when he told his audience about the Sami way of life and demonstrated the use of the drum.³⁶ In 1737, Linnaeus was painted in this costume by Martin Hoffman. Hoffman made three copies of this painting for Linnaeus' Dutch friends. The one to Johan Frederik Gronovius, who did much to help Linnaeus in getting his manuscripts printed, differs from the other two. Here Linnaeus is standing beside a low cupboard, on which one can see a pile of his published works. In his hand he not only has the little flower named after him, but also a slip of paper saying *Linæa Gronov*.³⁷

So Linnaeus made ample use of his ethnographica, as tokens of his really having been “out there”. The drum – which still exists – and clothing have later been studied by researchers interested in these topics.

But what did Linnaeus do with the information about the Sami written down in his diary?³⁸ First of all, he made a system of paragraphs concerning different subjects treated in his diary. He inserted the paragraph numbers in the text, so that it would be easier to find the information. This shows that he intended to publish his results. When he presented his travel report to the Society, he also presented a list of 206 “observations”. He hoped that the Society would choose some of them as subjects for its Acta. When the Society showed no interest, Linnaeus wrote a small essay about three of them. One tells about how to make a temporary bed of mosses, a Sami method he thought could be used by the Swedish army. But

³⁶ Nordström, ‘Linné och Gronovius’, 1954-55, p. 14.

³⁷ Tullberg, *Linnéporträtt*, 1907, p. 20; Wachenfelt, ‘Ett återfunnet Lapplandsporträtt’, 1947, pp. 21-22, 25-30.

³⁸ The diary itself was not published before 1811 and then in an English translation.

the Society was not even interested in this.³⁹

During the next two years Linnaeus worked on several manuscripts. He took them with him when he came to the Netherlands. The most important book resulting from his Lapland journey was *Flora Lapponica*, published in Amsterdam in 1737. This book does not only deal with the flora: Linnaeus also tells the readers in what way the Sami use some plants and trees as food and medicine, for dyeing, for the barking (tanning with bark) of hides, as material for handicraft products etc. When relating this, he often makes a digression to tell about such things as the Sami tent and how the Sami live in it, or the Sami cradle. In 1739, he published an article about gadfly infestations of reindeer in the Acta of the Society.⁴⁰

Linnaeus planned to write a book about the Sami and seems to have made several attempts at a beginning. Some short drafts have been preserved. But such a book was never finished.

In addition to some information given in his publications, Linnaeus told much about the Sami in his lectures. It is first of all from these lectures that his contemporaries learned that he admired the Sami for their healthy, happy and guileless life. Already in *Flora Lapponica* he expresses some of these ideas. There he writes after having described the Sami hut or tent:

An odd type of house, almost more miserable than that of Diogenes himself! Oh happy Lapp, who in the farthest corner of the earth, almost hidden from the world lives a good life, fully content and completely innocent. You fear neither famine nor the rages of war, [...]. You sleep under your reindeer skins, free

³⁹ Fries, *Bref och Skrifvelser af och till Carl von Linné*, 1907, I, 1, pp. 330-341. Linnaeus wrote them in 1732.

⁴⁰ The title of this article is: 'Om renarnas brömskulor i Lapland' in *Kungl. Vetenskapsakademiens Handlingar* I, 1739. It appeared in Latin as 'Oestrus rangiferinus descriptus a Carolo Linnaeo' in *Vetenskaps Societetens Acta* in 1741.

of troubles, quarrels and twists, free too of envy, of which you know nothing. [...]. Your beverage is crystal-clear water [...]. Your food is in springtime fresh fish, in summer soured reindeer milk, in autumn ptarmigan and other wild fowls, in winter fresh reindeer meat without salt or bread [...]. You eat in peace after rising or before going to bed and you have no knowledge about our poisons hidden in sugar and honey.⁴¹

Elsewhere in the book Linnaeus sighs: “How happy is the life of the Lapps, hidden for the world in their blessed wilderness”.⁴²

In the years after 1742 Linnaeus held regular courses on the principles of diet.⁴³ In the eighteenth century this was a comprehensive field, dealing not only with food and health but also with other items of daily life connected with health and well being, such as dress and physical movement. Part of these lectures has been preserved through his students. Linnaeus himself has left two manuscripts with material used in his courses, *Dieta naturalis*, written before 1742, and a more comprehensive manuscript mostly written in Latin, called *Lachesis Naturalis, quae tradit Dietam naturalem*,

⁴¹ Linnaeus, *Flora Lapponica*, 1905, p. 229. Swedish original: “Ett underligt hem, nästan mera torftigt än själfva DIOGENIS! O lycklige Lapp, som i världens yttersta hörn sålunda i det fördolda lefver väl, nöjd och oskuldsfull! Du fruktat hvarken hungersnöd eller krigets stormar, [...]. Du sofver här under din renhud, fri från alla bekymmer, strider och trätor, utan aning om hvad afund är.[...]. [D]in dryck är kristallklart vatten, [...]. Din mat är om våren färsk fisk, om sommaren syrad renmjölk, om hösten ripor och andra vilda hönsfåglar, om vintern färskt renkött utan salt och bröd [...] och du spiser i trygghet, då du stiger upp ur eller lägger dig ned i din bädd, och känner ej våra gifter, som döljas af socker och honung.”

⁴² *Idem*, p. 255. Swedish original: “Lycklig lefver nämligen Lappen, dold för världen i sin lyckliga ödemark.”

⁴³ Linnaeus, *Linnés Dietetik*, 1907, p. IV.

used in later years.⁴⁴ In these lectures, which were highly popular, Linnaeus uses the technique of setting up contrasts as educational means. But he certainly believed in his message when he told his students that the simplicity of nature is to be preferred above the riches of civilization.⁴⁵ In his lectures he tells the students that mountainous areas are healthier than the lower lying valleys and woodlands. He told his students: “I felt never better than in the mountains, where I had to drink the purest water”.⁴⁶ According to Linnaeus the Sami are bodily and mentally extremely healthy people because of the pure air and their way of living, the food they eat, their clothes and their bedding. The Sami are loose-limbed and light-footed because they use shoes without heels and because they do not sit on chairs, but on the ground, legs crossed. But we, and especially students who have to read a lot, Linnaeus says, sit on high chairs with low tables, a position that does not suit the intestines. He tells them: “Therefore, sit as the Lapps do, so you do not sit too high.”⁴⁷ The Sami too, wear clothes that are not tight. This is healthier than the clothing fashion of Europe with its tight-fitting dresses. But most of all it is the Sami diet that makes them healthy. Eating much meat and little green-stuff together with much physical exercise makes one healthy and agile. When Sami boil their meat and fish they drink the cooking water, and this is why almost no one knows what it is to be ill.⁴⁸ The Sami too is content with only a little food each time he eats, and because of that, he does

⁴⁴ Hagberg, *Carl Linnaeus*, 1939, p. 203. Linnaeus, *Dieta naturalis*, 1958, pp. 5-10.

⁴⁵ Hagberg, *Carl Linnaeus*, 1939, p. 211.

⁴⁶ Sydow, ‘Linné och Lappland’, 1972-74, p. 47.

⁴⁷ Linnaeus, *Dieta naturalis*, 1958, p. 62. Swedish original: “ därföre sitt som Lappen, så sitter du ej förhögt.” See also Sydow, ‘Linné och Lappland’, 1972-74, p. 51.

⁴⁸ Sydow, ‘Linné och Lappland’, 1972-74, p. 52.

not become fat. They also leave their food to cool before eating it, which again is better for one's health. It is better too not to eat different foods in one meal. And one has to admire the Sami who eat fish in spring, milk products in the summer, birds in autumn and meat in winter. But you, Linnaeus tells his students, "you lose your appetite if you have to eat the same food every day".⁴⁹ And,

The Lapp does not eat bread, but still he is healthy. I saw men in their sixties run in the mountains like youngsters, they could even lay their feet in their neck, something that I think is the result of a defectu panis, [not having bread to eat].⁵⁰

Again and again Linnaeus emphasizes in his lectures that the Sami lives in accordance with nature. He contrasts him with the European, the civilized man, by making the last one ridiculous. He uses his own students to show them the degenerated European customs. By doing so he seems to forget that once he was such a student himself, who, as his diary shows, was shocked by not getting bread to eat, by having to eat the same food all the time, by not having a chair to sit on, and, at least during the first part of the journey, by having only water to drink. Maybe the culture shock from his youth was never forgotten. But by depicting these experiences, his having been "out there" the way he did for his students "back here", making them experience the same, though in their minds only, he turned his experiences into something that did not shed any possible negative light on himself as a young field worker. Moreover, this technique enabled him at the same time to convince

⁴⁹ Linnaeus, *Dieta naturalis*, 1958, p. 82. Swedish original: "Men du mister appetiten om du ej får byta om dageligen."

⁵⁰ Linnaeus, *Dieta naturalis*, 1958, p. 80. Swedish original: "Lappen äter intet bröd, lefwer dock så frisk, att han är ett exempel. Jag såg gubbar om 60 åhr i fiellen springa som barn, ja lägga foten på nacken, det jag wist deducerar a defectu panis." See also: Sydow, 'Linné och Lappland', 1972-74, p. 54.

his students in a creative way that the Sami were indeed a sensible, healthy and happy people.

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