

Rangifer Domus

The domestication of animals, and of landscapes, traditionally has been defined as a sudden technical achievement which allowed humans to rise above, exploit, dominate, and profit from their surroundings. Described dramatically as a revolution, or more recently as neolithization, these stark metaphors have often overwritten local accounts of how people nurture relationships with certain places or certain species, let alone thrive in them. Arctic landscapes are frequently described as needing more domination than most, making them ideal examples with which to compare these two positions. This panel will present recent research from environmental archaeology, genetics, anthropology, and the history of science to work towards a new model of human-animal relationships with a special focus on reindeer (*Rangifer*) both wild and tame. The presenters, each from their own discipline, will re-examine the line between wild and tame forms to explore how they anticipate each other. The papers will reflect new work on 'nurturing' using categories from the theory of personhood, the structure of the biosphere, niche construction, and the domus. There will be an emphasis on *Rangifer* relationships internationally and not limited to the Nordic countries.

Chair:

David Anderson, University of Tromsø

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Past Hunting Embedded Reindeer Management in North Norway

There is archaeological evidence of episodic adjustments in both reindeer knowledge, landscape use and technological knowledge in North Norway. Reindeer hunting went through several cycles of intensification that varied geographically. Large pit-fall systems for hunting wild reindeer in the interior may have been established around 2500 BC; these systems are concentrated at the border between modern fall and winter pastures. During the Iron Age another type of wild reindeer hunting appears in the mountain plateaus and on snow patches. A third adjustment is the domestication of wild reindeer, a change that involved hunting-embedded reindeer management.

The domestication of wild reindeer cannot be understood as a linear development. Instead, we must be sensitive to chronological and geographical variations in the organisation of herding and how these organisational differences might manifest themselves in archaeological remains in the landscape. These regional and temporal adjustments must therefore be discussed in light of a

holistic anthropological-humanistic approach that links landscape to the dynamics of social and cultural knowledge and considers how people nurtured their relationships with certain places. Pastoral skills differed from those known today, but still entailed a human – animal relation containing reindeer knowledge of a kind still in use today.

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Place names and the history of reindeer herding

For the reindeer herding culture a strong and deep contact with the environment is characteristic. The reindeer herders who have been living, working and moving with their herds have particular names for the environment, natural phenomena and landscape.

The language has its own central meaning, which transmits knowledge and cultural meanings. Place names, for example tell about the culture, history and they carry the memory of the place; they anchor people with a specific place. They can also tell about more individual and intimate history. According to Keith Basso who has studied the culture and language of apaches, that always when the community members are talking about their landscape, they classify and value it or they transfer the narratives of it. The local people have and still tell narratives which are connected to the environment. It is not just a question of narratives which have a personal nature and are connected with the family, but often they are linked with larger social, historical and political processes just as Julie Cruikshank has pointed out when she has studied the native folklore in Youkon. In my paper I focus on the places names and which they can tell about the history of traditional sources of livelihood. My examples are from northern parts of Kittilä.

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Different types of reindeer husbandry provide various types of traces in the countryside. Stone fences as a source of understanding reindeer herding culture

In the lulesámi area it has been documented several stone fences in the high mountains. Several of these fences are made of reindeer herders to prevent reindeer from moving out of their pastures. The fences documented are been build or placed in the landscape in different ways. Most fences are short and blocks of small landscape areas, but in one case is documented a fence that blocks the entire peninsula. Questions to be discussed are whether the different fence types are expressions of different types of reindeer herding. The interpretation is that the smaller fences are associated with the

older intensive reindeer herding while the long fence documented is related to a younger and more extensive reindeer herding.

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Contributions on Human-Animal Relationship from Environmental History – Short Historiography and Ways Forward

The paper discusses the ways environmental historians, mostly Finnish, have dealt with and studied animals and human-animal relationship as a historical phenomenon. What kind of approaches and methodological choices have historians applied? Concerning the human-animal encounter in the academia, which participant in the encounter gets most interest, most agency? It is argued that animals are studied mostly as an object of human gaze and of human practices, and human's role in the "social" sphere of the animal has been of lesser interest. Also the way, in which research has been interested in extinctions and threatened species has a limiting effect on *animal agency*. The second part of the paper offers preliminary thoughts about how, from a theoretical point of view, the agency of the animals could be lifted. Recent studies on animal agency and on *environment of the animal*, as well as concepts of semiotic and ontological niches by Morten Tønnessen are presented, and further discussed, whether the concepts are applicable on reindeer-man relationship.

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The construction of a pastoral image: Rangifer and Sami resource management

The scholarly – and popular - understanding of Sami reindeer herding presents an image of a rather static "traditional" one-dimensional kind of adaption through the centuries, characterized by common access to pasture and private access to animals – coined "Sami pastoralism" (Ingold, Paine). Such an understanding has been the prevailing picture of how Sami reindeer herding has been constituted through the centuries, the only debate being *when* domestication took place in pastoral terms (Storli, Vorren, Hansen/Olsen).

This idea of an old "pastoral tradition" can, however, be traced back to 1850-1950 and reflects research and discourses in that particular period, rather than the actual history of the relations between reindeer and man in Fenno-Scandia. Important vehicles were the advancement of media, film and photography, education, science and foreign politics. This period constituted both the public and

the scientific image of what Sami reindeerherding was all about, namely a continuously "traditional" nomadic society which for hundreds of years ago had turned the wild reindeer into domesticated animals and lived as pastoralist ("Masters of the tundra") ever since. This one-dimensional image was projected both back in time (Storli, Helskog) and also into descriptions of current Sami herding adaptations.

The fact, however is that we know rather little about internal dynamics and transitional processes within the Sami society through time. To what extent and for what purposes did people relate to the reindeer and how should concepts like "domestication" and "pastoralism" be understood?

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The Landscape Ethnoecology of Eastern Siberia Reindeer Herders

This paper focuses on the way Eastern Siberia reindeer herders employ 'interstitial' ecological categories. Our preliminary results have identified the possible existence of anthropogenetic meadows that to 1000 years BP, at least 700 years predating the arrival of Russians to the region. The pollen diagrams from the region typically create an ambiguous response. In particular, all three sites surveyed demonstrated a 'paradoxical' rise in meadow species that each prefer wet and dry environments, while set within a context where shrubs are in retreat. A shift in emphasis from the pastoral relation to a description of the domestic environment helps to resolve these ambiguities. A meadow might be 'opened' first by some physical action and then might attract wild reindeer or moose. Hunters might mimic this process and deliberately widen or create new meadows in order to attract animals. Rather than describing an evolutionary schema of the taming of one animal, attention on emplaced relationships show how the same intuition harbours relationships between wild or tame reindeer, or multiple domestic species. An understanding of complex landscape categories such as the ecotope, 'paradoxical' plant communities, or an the interstitial term point to places that are good for holding reindeer - and perhaps other species.

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"Our Reindeer Are Going Wild." Narratives about Changing Reindeer and Community Sociality in the Kola Peninsula, Northwest Russia

One of the indicators of the postsocialist transformation of the reindeer herding community of Lovozero (Murmansk Region) is a radical decrease in the size of the reindeer herd and loosened control of herders over the reindeer. As an important component of this complex process herders point out that the reindeer are going wild – a regressive irreversible change in reindeer herd behaviour in relation to humans. In this paper I will explore different narratives about "reindeer going wild" (*odichanie olenei*) and analyze them in light of their context. My hypothesis is that these narratives come in close relation and can be even interchangeable in certain conditions with narratives of social degradation of the community under the pressures of political liberalization, economic change and moral decay caused by the Russian policy of transition to capitalism.

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God on Trail: The Enigma of Distance and Proximity in Chukchi Sacrifice

As in the case of the biblical story of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac, there is an inherent tension in the sacrificial situation between sacrifice as a form of exchange or barter - in Robertson Smith's formula, *do ut des*, 'I give in order that you may give' - that is, within an economic circuit, and also as something that is not exhausted by a process of economic exchange. This paper seeks to resolve this paradox by looking into ritual blood sacrifices among the Siberian Chukchi. It will be shown that according to the official rhetoric of the Chukchi, no ontological distance exists between the living and the dead, between humanity and the divine - that is, a situation of uneconomic, mimetic and excessive identification with one's ancestor. However, this situation of sameness or coincidence is ultimately unsustainable and indeed self-destructive as it brings madness and death, rather than fullness of life. Distance to the divine, therefore, has to be constantly created and ritual blood sacrifice is above all such display of distance. Sacrifice is no less than the condition of possibility for the human-divine sociality to occur - a curious condition which founds sociality by undoing its primordial origin in sameness or proximity. The sacrificial logic of substitution - which effectively displaces the real act of sacrificing oneself - allows for this strikingly necessary distance. This, however, is not to be understood as if humanity and divinity are at either side of a continuum. Distance is no necessarily equivalent to separation. Rather, distance enables the manifestation of the divine. Indeed, distance is in a very literal sense the divine. But it is also the condition which makes human proximity with the divine possible. The distance of sacrifice is, so to speak, the spacing in which proximity with the divine occurs.

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