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- ¹ Sami drums were probably popular objects of export in the 17th and 18th centuries. Missionaries and explorers brought dozens of drums from various parts of Lappmark to be sold and shipped to the private collections of Noblemen and other interested people all over Continental Europe. Some of these drums later on found their way to museums, while many became lost or are still somewhere, to be traced by future investigations of local museums and private collections. [...]

The drum (Manker, 1938) clearly illustrates the cyclic *Weltanschauung* of the Sami

THE EIGHT DIRECTIONS OF THE UNIVERSE AS WELL AS THE EIGHT SEASONS BECOME MANIFEST IN THE CENTER OF THE DRUM. THE FIGURES OF GODS, HUMAN BEINGS, ANIMALS, CHURCHES, GRAVES ET CETERA ARE STRUCTURED SYMMETRICALLY TOWARDS THE CENTER OF THE DRUM. THIS KIND OF DRUM WAS READ AND INTERPRETED FROM DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS AT DIFFERENT SEASONS.

The cosmological structure of the drum and the Sami cyclic world view

- 2 This drum is very sun-centred. The *beaivi* is a part of the pillar of the universe around which everything takes place in the heaven of the deities as well as among people below. The line under the pillar indicates the fine borderline between the spheres of the living and the dead members of a family clan, i.e. the thin boundary between life and death, this world and *Jábmíidáibmu*, the Land of the Dead where everything is upside-down compared to this world. An ordinary man could wander there in his dreams or supernatural experiences with the *stállo*, the *qufihtar* and the other beings of that sphere (Nielsen, 1934: 379; Turi, 1910: 200-206; Pentikäinen, 1984). The surface of the drum may be divided into three realms of the universe rather than into two, according to research done thus far.
- 3 What becomes manifest on the surface of the drum is a Sami *Weltanschauung* of a tripartite universe. It consists of the upper realm of the heavenly deities, the middle or human realm, and the lower realm, *Jábmíidáibmu*, or the upside-down world. They are, however, connected with a pillar having a *peive* or the sun as its centre. The sun is located in the centre of the whole drum surrounded by gods, people, animals, and other symbols in a symmetric configuration towards the centre. The location of the figures as

well as the whole structure of the drum with its oval form seem to indicate a cyclic view of life.

- 4 The Sami way of life, economy and culture is highly dependent on the sun. Seasonal variation is felt very strongly in the Arctic and Subarctic conditions of the Far North. In winter, there is a long *kaamos* period with no sunrise and in summer a couple of months with no sunset. Most of the Sami have until recently been nomadic or seminomadic people moving annually from place to place in accordance with the migratory drive of the animals (moose, elk, deer, reindeer, salmon, trout) they have been hunting, fishing, or breeding. After settling down, the Sami have often occupied summer and winter villages or even summer, autumn, winter and spring cabins for the different branches of their combined economy system. The Sami have, for this reason, been called “the people of eight seasons” (Manker, 1963). [...]

The face of a drum from Lule Lappmark, Sweden.

THE DRUM IS SUN-CENTERED, BUT THE FEMALE ÁHKKÁ GODS ACCOMPANY THE MOON AND OTHER ASTRAL figures IN UPPER REALM. THE LOWER SECTION CONSISTS OF ANTHROPOMORPHIC AND THERIOMORPHIC figures. AS A WHOLE, THE SAMI SHAMAN DRUM CAN BE COMPARED TO A COMPUTER: EACH figure HAS ITS OWN SYMBOLIC MEANING. THE DUTY OF THE SHAMAN WAS TO MASTER THE CODE AND INTERPRET IT IN EACH PERFORMANCE ACCORDING TO THE NEEDS OF THE AUDIENCE.

- 5 Shamanism is one of the main manifestations of Sami Pre-Christian religion, and many of its functions have remained a part of the Sami world view until recently in spite of the fact that almost all the Sami are at least formally baptized Christians nowadays. The natural centre of the drum is the sun. This does not, however, mean that the Sami had worshipped the sun god, as has been supposed by some scholars until now. The more probable interpretation is that the drum has been read and interpreted in a perennially varied way, due to the season, person and problem in question. The oval form of the drum and the location of the figures towards the heliocentric sun indicate the same.

The director of the shamanistic session, the noaidi or the shaman was an expert in shamanic folklore. He had to know the myths about the origins of the universe and about the culture. Mythic time is cyclic. The early golden times are brought to the present every time a social, cultural or private crisis takes place.

The drum as cognitive map of the shamanistic seance

- 6 The drum is a key to the cosmology of the Samis. The shaman had an intimate relationship with his own drum which was often made by him. The figures of the drum were a kind of cognitive map for the trip of the shaman's ego-soul between the three levels of the universe. At the same time it was the collective side of the drum, open to the public to be observed collectively and interpreted publicly by the shaman to the audience who shared the same cosmologic beliefs. The cyclic world-outlook of shamanism became manifest in the oval shape and the heliocentric figures of the drum. It was probably used, read and interpreted from different directions in a way that shifted annually in accordance with the seasonal variation.

The vision of Samuel Rheen, minister of Jokkmokk parish 1666-1671, of the shamanistic session.

THE PICTURE HAS TWO PHASES: ON THE LEFT THE SHAMAN IS PREPARING HIMSELF FOR THE TRANCE BY BEATING THE DRUM WITH HIS HAMMER, ON THE RIGHT HE IS LYING IN A TRANCE WHILE HIS SOUL, AIDED BY THE ALTER EGO, IS ON HIS TRIP. THE CHRISTIAN POINT OF VIEW OF THE ARTIST IS REFLECTED BY THE DEVIL FIGURES REPRESENTING THE SHAMANIC HELPING SPIRITS. THE DRUM IS SUN-CENTERED.

- 7 Paolo Mantegazza gave a description of the use of the drum on the basis of the Naerö manuscript of 1723. Because it very probably stems, both in terms of space and time from approximately the same cultural area as the *runebom* of the Pigorini museum, it is quoted below in extenso:

To ask advice before undertaking of some importance (a journey, a hunting or fishing trip) or in a case of illness, the Lapp [Sami] consulted the *runebom*. It seems that every family had one, just as every Protestant family has a Bible. Only in the case of more serious matters the noaidi was asked to act as an intermediary; normally the *runebom* was consulted by the head of the family. After numerous preparations and gesticulations the *vuorbe* (the ring) was placed on the drum, which was then beaten with the wand until the bouncing ring was finally stopped on some figure and refused to move away from it. The place where the ring had

stopped revealed the will of the gods. If a journey was planned, the stopping of the ring on the sign of the morning or the evening indicated the time in which one had to set out. The ring which stopped in that part of the drum where a lek with fish was designed promised success for a fishing trip. If the ring stopped on the edge of that part, the god of the fishes would be propitious if he received an offering; but if it refused to enter into that part of the drum, no success could be expected. The *runebom* had a place of its own in the special sacred part of the hut. At the risk of death or some other great disaster no woman was allowed to touch it or even walk on the road along which the drum had been carried.

(Mantegazza, 1881: 285ff). [...]

The esoteric meanings of the back side of the drum

- 8 Mantegazza's information coincides with the other sources from the same era and from the same cultural area. The shamanic session varied according to time of year and reason: for example, when and why it was arranged, for whom, and for what particular purpose. The drum must be regarded only as a part of the whole that includes the other ritual repertoire and all the other attributes of the shaman in his culture. The drum clearly depicted both the collective side, drawn or painted on the skin surface and read and interpreted publicly for the audience, as well as the more private backside.
- 9 Research has hitherto only been interested in the front of the drum which is space for collective symbolism. Almost completely forgotten was the inventory on the back side. Also in the case of the *runebom* in Rome, there is a complicated symbolism in the underside, which does not only indicate the artistic value of the drum maker but may contain clues for dating and locating the drum. The figures cut with a knife on the nether side are symmetric and may refer to reindeer marks or to more esoteric information transmitted through clan or family from generation to generation or through a sacred tradition passed from shaman to shaman in succession. In order to be sure about the meaning of the symbols on the lower side, all the known drums should be revisited and restudied. This type of holistic analysis will surely lead to a new interpretation of the semiotics of the uses, meanings, and functions of the Sami shamanic drums.
- 10 The huge body of information on Arctic shamanism seems to agree in regarding shamanism as a clan or family institution (*Shamanism*, 1978 and *Shamanism*, 1984). The shaman often acted on behalf of his kin against competing groups, peoples, clans and families. Shamanism was still a family institution when Thomas von Westen in the 1710's and 1720's was collecting tens of drums from the Norwegian Swami – one of which may be our *runebom* in Rome. A Russian ethnographer S. I. Vajnshtein reports that the Tuva in Central Siberia, 30.000 in all, still had in the 1930's as many as 700 shamans (1984: 353).
- 11 Although the use of the shaman drum later on was usually confined to one leading regional shaman, it was not unusual for the head of a Sami household, *siida*, to use the drum in simple exercises of divination. Holding the drum in his left hand and the drumstick in his right, he would place a small object, called an *arpa* (or triangular piece of reindeer bone decorated with metal rings and ornaments) on the face of the drum and follow its movement on the face of the drum. He might predict a number of things on the basis of this act. He might decide, for example, in what direction his *siida* should continue on a migratory journey, where he might find a lost reindeer or a grazing spot

for his herd, what courses of action he should take to protect the clan from beasts of prey. Other questions for which he wanted answers might be: where the best hunting sports were; when it would be best to depart on a journey he was about to undertake; what sacrifices he had to offer to the gods or guardian spirits to protect the victim of a serious accident, and so forth. The drum was also used to determine the will of the gods for punishment of reindeer theft, murder and other crimes (Collinder, 1949: 148).

- 12 There were also special norms connected with the drum itself. Here, it is important to note that among the Sami, the use of the shaman drum was taboo for the women. Documentary sources of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries concur that women were not even allowed to touch it (Itkonen, 1948: 2, 33). The drum was stored in the rear part of the so-called *boasso*, the holy corner where no woman could set foot. Rheen tells, for instance, that when on migratory journeys, the Sami first took the shaman drum to a new location. This practise was based on the belief that if a woman even came into contact with a drum harm would come to her. According to Rheen, women were not allowed to follow the path by which a male member of the family had taken the drum to its new place of storage for three days. On seasonal journeys, the drum might also be placed in the last sledge of a moving caravan. Sometimes it was taken to its destination along a completely different path (Manker, 1938: 23-73). This kind of information coincides with the general view of Sami shamanism as a male institution. [...]

The "inner heart" of the Siberian drum

IT IS BEHIND THE "PUBLIC" FRONT OF THE DRUM, INCLUDING SOME NOISY-MAKING EQUIPMENTS AND SYMBOLS RELATED TO THE HIDDEN MESSAGES, SHARED BY THE SHAMANS AND DRUM-MAKERS OF THE CLAN ONLY. THE PICTURE BY TIMO LEHTINEN SHOWS THE DRUM OF A NGANASAN SHAMAN FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF KUNSTKAMERA, THE MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY OF PETER THE GREAT, ST. PETERBURG.

Map showing the distribution of the Sami people¹

The problem of the heavenly hunter and game

- 13 There is a problematic setting in the celestial sphere of the *runebom* in Rome. Above the traditional pictures indicating the heavenly deities of the Sami (*Waralden Olmay*, *Bieggaoimmái*, *Tiermes* or *Horagállis*, and *Leaibeolmmái*) there is the figure of a hunter with a four-edged hat on his head and a bow and an arrow in his hand aimed at a bear that is shown under a large reindeer with great horns. It was on the basis of this so-called Kautokeino hat, that Manker located the drum's origin in the Norwegian Finnmark (Manker, 1950: 390ff.; Wiklund, 1930: 96). This hypothesis, however, contradicts the theory of some ethnologists, according to which this kind of Kautokeino hat is very recent among the Sami in Finnmark. It became a fashion among the Sami only from the 19th century on at the earliest (Itkonen, 1948: 1, 363ff.). For this reason, some scholars suggest that the whole drum is not at all authentic or that the peculiar celestial sphere had been made at a later date when the drum had been repainted for some reason. Other scholars consider it authentic and – on the basis of comparative analysis – locate it either in Pite or Lule Lappmark, on the Norwegian side.
- 14 My own study sides with the latter opinion. There is no sign of any repainting on the surface of the drum. The whole skin was painted at the same time. In accordance with the historical documents, we come to the following conclusion: the drum was found during the mission of the 1710's or 1720's by von Westen or his colleagues but was probably painted as early as the second half of the 17th century in Pite or Lule Lappmark by the Sami who moved over the Swedish-Norwegian border.
- 15 The *runebom* in Rome seems to reflect a world view of hunters. There is one bow and arrow in the human sphere and one hunter in the sky. But what special purpose has the

hunter in the celestial sphere, above the heavenly deities? His picture has been painted very naturally. Compared to the bear, his size seems to be quite natural. The figure of the reindeer, on the contrary, is magnificent and gigantic, compared to both the hunter and to the bear. This may also be the clue to the solution of the problem of the hunting drama in heaven. This drama may not concern an ordinary hunting episode here but an astral hunting drama above, in the sky. The hunter may be a shaman. If this type of a four-edged Kautokeino hat became a fashion as late as the 19th century, it may well have been a part of the repertoire of the shaman, his former ceremonial hat. This may also be the reason why the church authorities particularly attacked this kind of hat rather than other articles of the richly decorated Sami costumes. The four edges of the hat may indicate the power of the shaman as the mediator between this world and the other. In this role he had the capacity to rule over the four corners of the universe: east, north, west, and south, as well as over the seasons.

Parallels in Finnish folklore and pictographs

- 16 A comparison can be made here between Sami shamanism and Finnish folklore, on the one hand, and with Siberian shamanism, on the other. As has been said above, in Sami shamanism the shaman drum clearly reflects the view of the universe consisting of three levels or zones. On the basis of the Finnish creation rune, the cosmos is similarly divided into the upper, middle and nether spheres (Pentikäinen, 1986). The centre of this world view is the sun, in Sami *beaivi*, or the Tree of Life. The Evenks and some other Northeastern Siberian people describe the roots of this life as being the cosmic rivers of the shamans themselves. There is a Land of the Dead at the mouth of each river where the shaman journeys during his trip to meet his helping spirits among the dead. The hole, often drawn concretely on the surface of the Sami drum, is the manifestation of the outstanding capacity of the shaman to wander from zone to zone and to interact with the deities and the spirits of each zone where necessary. He was considered the real mediator of the universe. The shaman's dress refers to the same fact. V. Basilov tells about the Evenks of the Baikal Lake who had two kinds of dress, that of a bird for the upper and that of the ox for the nether world. The Selkup used the dress of the wild deer when journeying up, and that of the big bear when going down to the nether world. Sometimes the same shaman had two drums, one for his journey up and another one for his journey to the Land of the Dead. It is interesting that in the ritual such shamanistic attributes as a snare or stack referred to the heavenly trip, fish figures down to the Land of the Dead (Basilov, 1986).
- 17 In Finnish poetry, the rune on the Skiing down the Hiisi Elk seems to be a description of the heavenly journey of a shaman, Lemminkäinen. The elk has been born in the astral hemisphere. The skiing takes place in the same cosmic zone, when going up Tapomäki, climbing Kirjovuori, *i.e.* the level of the heaven of the Milky Way. Päivölä, the Land of *päivä*, *aurinko*, Sun, where the banquet of the gods takes place is not in Hell but in Heaven. Later folklore has moved this meeting place from the heavenly sphere to the black river of Tuonela, the land of Dead. It was there that the dead Lemminkäinen was finally found by his mother. In spite of his effort to go up, Lemminkäinen's destiny is to die to go to the land of the dead, called Manala or Tuonela in Finnish folklore. He joins the group of cultural heroes who shared the rare experience of having visited the land of the dead, forbidden to ordinary people, but being the destination of most

shamanistic trips (Pentikäinen, 1988). According to *Mythologia Fennica* by Christfried Ganander, in 1785, the expressions “*Tuonella käydä, Tuonelassa vaeltaa*”, ‘to visit Tuoni, to wander in Tuonela’ mean falling into ecstasy or a trance (Ganander, 1960: 94). The hostess of Tuonela is described as a feminine figure, the virgin of Tuoni, the girl of pains who welcomes newcomers at the river of death. Väinämöinen makes his trip in the shape of a snake to get through the iron net to hinder his departure.

This drum is the biggest of all the drums preserved, its size being 85 x 53 x 11,5 cm

THE SURFACE IS MADE OF REINDEER SKIN, FIXED TO THE BOTTOM WITH WOODEN NAILS. THE TRIPARTITE STRUCTURE OF THE COSMOS IS CLEARLY MANIFEST. IT IS IMPORTANT TO OBSERVE THAT THERE ARE HOLES BETWEEN THE THREE LEVELS INDICATING THE ROLE OF THE SHAMAN AS MEDIATOR BETWEEN MAN AND HIS UNIVERSE. THE HOLES DRAWN ON THE DRUM SYMBOLICALLY CORRESPOND TO THE CAPACITY OF THE SHAMAN TO BE A SUPERNATURAL MEDIATOR.

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NOTES

1. Considering the large area they inhabit, the Sami are very few in number. One can say that the Sami speaking population today is very roughly, 35,000, of which 10,000 live in Sweden, 21,000 in Norway, 2,500 in Finland and 1,500 in the U.S.S.R. Estimates of numbers vary greatly because in different countries there are different definitions of what a Sami person is. The Sami people speak a language belonging to the Finno-Ugric linguistic family.

RÉSUMÉS

Sur les tambours des chamanes Sâmes sont dessinées leurs représentations mythiques du monde. Ces cosmologies sont figurées autour d'un soleil central et sont structurées selon un modèle sacré tripartite. Ce sont de véritables *cognitive maps* utilisées lors des séances de transe chamanistique. La face interne de ces tambours est elle aussi porteuse de significations ésotériques et rituelles (le chasseur astral). L'article présente une riche iconographie et se clôt par une analyse comparative du « message » peint sur les tambours avec certains aspects du folklore finlandais, sa mythologie et sa littérature orale ancienne en particulier.

The drums of the Sâmes shamans depict their mythical representation of the world. These cosmologies are featured around a central sun, based on a sacred, tripartite model. These veritable cognitive maps are used during shamanistic trances. Inside, these drums also bear esoteric and ritual significations (the astral hunter). This article presents this rich iconography

and ends on a comparative analysis of the “message” painted on these drums with Finnish folklore, its mythology and, especially, its ancient oral literature.

INDEX

Index géographique : Europe du Nord

Keywords : Shamans, Sâmes, Drums, Outside and Inside, Cognitive Maps, Rites, Myth, Esoteric Meaning, Iconography, Folklore, Anthropology

Mots-clés : chamanes, Sâmes, tambours, face externe et interne, cartes cognitives, rite, mythe, sens ésotérique, iconographie, folklore

Thèmes : anthropologie (Europe)

nomsmotscles Samis