

Lars Ivar Hansen and Bjørnar Olsen, *Samenes historie fram til 1750*. Cappelen Akademisk Forlag. Oslo 2004, 427 pp, with indexes of terminology, names and places.

The Sámi have for a long time been the subject of many expeditions, studies and books. In spite of the fact that numerous studies and books have been focused on the Sámi, their own voice or standpoint has not been included in most of these works. This book, *Samenes historie fram til 1750* (The History of the Sámi until 1750) does not, however, belong to this category. The authors, Lars Ivan Hansen, Professor of History at the University of Tromsø and Bjørnar Olsen, Professor of Archaeology at the same university, have long focused on Northern Scandinavia and especially the Sámi. This book is the first part of a project to publish the history of the Sámi.

The history of the Sámi until 1750 is divided into five main chapters. Two first chapters, 'Introduction' and 'Variable perspectives on the origins of Sámi' open many perspectives and possibilities for interpretations. The authors begin by arguing and justifying their point of view and the need for new approaches and diverse perspectives on Sámi history. They want to revise and overturn old stereotypes and to present the recent results of multidisciplinary research concerning the Sámi who have been regarded as a people without history. As the authors note, they are writing about very complex history. The history of the Sámi has to be read in many other documents and the researcher's task is to make this history visible. Especially the archaeological and historical institutions in the northern parts of Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia play an important role in this connection. Whether or not they fulfilled it is another question.

The second chapter is a summary of various theories and perspectives regarding the origin of the Sámi. After presenting cultural stereotypes and immigration theories which have been used previously, the authors introduce the modern concepts of ethnicity and culture. Relying mainly on Fredrik Barth's ideas about ethnicity, they understand ethnicity and especially Sámi

ethnicity as a form of cultural identity, which is actualizing in contacts between different groups. Hansen and Olsen also evaluate the results of modern gene technology used in physical anthropology and their conclusion is to focus more on cultural identity than on a primordialistic view, where ethnicity is connected with origin and is thus a permanent quality as if it could be inherited, i.e. as physiological features.

Another cultural stereotype which is connected to the Sámi is to present them as a culturally, socially and historically homogenous group. Actually, this can be connected with many ethnic studies, e.g. in ethnographies history and time have often been neglected. According to archaeological conventions, culture has been used to define a specific territory and phase, e.g. the Ananyino culture. The wider concept of culture used in this book is to be red in the text. In many scenes, the authors emphasize that the picture of Sámi archaeology, history and culture is very diverse. The differences between different Sámi groups, languages, sources of livelihood, places of settlement and time have to be taken into account. The authors have also taken examples from different places in the Swedish, Finnish, and Russian regions. In spite of the fact that the focus is on the history of Sápmi in Norway, this book gives a good picture of the different and not simultaneous processes in Sápmi.

The third chapter studies economic specialization and ethnic consolidation, which took place during the Iron Age and Early Middle Ages. The archaeological material exhibits major variation and according to it 'a repertoire of pan-Sámi symbols' existed at least at the end of the Viking Age. Language has played an important role in both combining and confronting. During the Viking age, Sámi communities had direct contacts with representatives from distant communities which had different economies and wanted to obtain the products of the Sámi. The need to define territorial rights to hunting and fishing grounds can also be seen a base for the process that made the *siida* a territorial entity of the Sámi. In addition to the substantial and economic changes in Sámi communities, also

other changes took place. Certain homogeneity of religion and rituals can also be dated during this period.

The fourth chapter concentrates on processes in the period 1200–1500, e.g. colonization, encountering cultures and changes in the communities. A great deal of changes took place at different levels. In addition to colonization and integration to the ‘global’ economic and administrative systems, an important factor is the conversion to Christianity. These factors occurred at different times and there were also different regional variations. The Sámi are not seen as a passive partner; instead they used their own strategies to adapt to new circumstances and survive.

The last chapter, national integration, rights and judicial system and missions ca. 1550–1750 focuses on a very exciting period in the north. Colonization, economic integration and missionary activities continued and gained strength. Christianity gradually replaced the Sámi folk religion and its worldview. More and powerful institutions were built in Sápmi and the Sámi came under the direct control of the states. During this time, also the first phases of the territorial division of Sápmi took place (the treaty of Strömstad and its supplementary protocol, *Lappe-kodicillen*). Because the mid-1700s can be regarded as a turning point in Sámi history also Hansen and Olsen finish their book in the year 1750.

All in all, with the help of multidisciplinary studies, the authors present new approaches and new dimensions for Sámi history. The multidisciplinary aspect is particularly prominent especially in the questions of language, genetics, legal history and comparative religion. There is still one dimension, however, which is lacking, namely gender. The authors have referred – and often critically – also to studies which have

emphasized the gender aspect, but gender is still missing in this book. Maybe it is still difficult to discuss the gender aspect because of the material, but I hope that this question will more visible in the next book. There is one detail, which raised attention. In this book Eastern Sámi is used as a synonym for Skolt Sámi. In spite of the fact that Skolt Sámi is *nuortalaš*, eastern in northern Sámi, it would be clearer to leave the concept of Eastern Sámi to be used for all the groups – Skolt Sámi, Inari Sámi, Kildin Sámi, Ter Sámi and Akkala Sámi – who belong to the Eastern Sámi. Some chapters are so full of detailed information that a reader who does not know archaeological material and the geography of northern Norway can easily get lost. In spite of all the details, the main point of this book, the historical processes in Sápmi, are presented in a way that provides the reader with a many-faceted picture of them.

In the introduction, Hansen and Olsen wished that this book would show the history of the Sámi as a part of Nordic history. I think that they have managed well in this goal. This book is an important work for all who study Sámi or Nordic issues either as archaeologists, historians, or ethnologists. I hope that this book would inspire archaeologists and historians in Finland to write and publish – at least in Finnish – about the history of Lapland. The history of Lapland or Sápmi is even today almost as invisible as it was during the 1980s when I studied archaeology.

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