

### 3. THE SACRED IN THE LANDSCAPE

*Lake Inarijärvi, June 2007*

*While I was surveying offering places in the area of Lake Inarijärvi, my attention was drawn to the intricate tapestry of sacred places in the landscape. The most famous example of a sacred place in Lapland is probably the island of Ukonsaari (47) in Lake Inarijärvi. Existing impressions of the silver find by Arthur Evans, advertising aimed at travellers, and visiting the place together with numerous tourists affect our experience. What we know in advance guides us when we observe the environment. My Estonian colleague recognized the shape of Ukonsaari from afar, as it was so familiar from many images.*

*I visited Ukonsaari as a tourist among other tourists, although I was furnished with different background information. On the other hand, my encounter with the feminine sacred place of Lake Inarijärvi, Akku (28) in Kalkuvaara, took place without a specific atmosphere created for tourists or background information based on excavations. On top of the hill of Kalkuvaara, there were no visible traces of enculturation of the landscape. It is said that there used to be a stone at the site at one time, but nowadays the location of offering activities can no longer be pinpointed. The magnificent view, however, made an impression, as I stood in the pine forest and looked down on Lake Inarijärvi.*

*The sacred places of Lake Inarijärvi are a part of the landscape of memory. Oral and written tradition has recounted collective memories associated with them, and at the same time, these sites can be the objects of powerful personal memories. On the burial islands located near Ukonsaari, memory is symbolized by crosses. The sacred geography of Lake Inarijärvi is also characterized by a long chronological continuity. People moved from the offering places of the old religion to the church near Lake Pielpajärvi. However, the old sacred places did not immediately fall out of use, but could be used simultaneously and receive new meanings. Samuli Paulaharju writes about the meanings assigned to the sacred places of two religions:*

*“Pielpajärven vanha pyhä temppeli [...] oli erinomaisena apuna maallisessakin vaelluksessa. Se oli koko seutukunnan paljon mainottu palvoskirkko, ainakin yhtä hyvä kuin monet metsä- ja tunturijumalat, joita myös palvottiin. Jo vanhalle kirkolle lappalaiset kantoivat uhrejaan. [...] Eikä ollut kaukana kuulu Ukkokaan, vanhan järvikansan merkillinen seitasaari, joka varsin monelle kalanpyytäjälle oli antanut apuansa maallisessa toimeen tulossa.”<sup>236</sup>*

<sup>236</sup> Paulaharju 1965 [1927], 240. “The sacred old temple of Pielpajärvi [...] was of great help even in the journey on earth. It was the famous church of worship of the whole region, at least as good as many forest and fell gods who were also worshipped. The Lapps carried their offerings already to the old church. [...] And not far away was the well-known Ukko, the strange sieidi island of the old lake people, which had helped many a fisherman earn his daily living.”

### 3.1. The landscape as experienced and lived-in

*Maisema on kulttuuri- ja luonnonhistoriallisesti monikerroksinen tarina, jota voi lukea monin tavoin. Miten sitä lukee riippuu monesta tekijästä, kokemuksesta, tiedosta, aistillisesta valppaudesta. Ja tietenkin koko luonnonkokemisen kulttuurisesta taustasta. Ympäristön henkinen merkitys on sen tarinassa.*<sup>237</sup>

*Jussi Kivi 2004: Kaunotaiteellinen eräretkeilyopas, p. 25*

In my work, I approach Sámi sacred places through the concept of landscape. A landscape is something different from the environment. A landscape is that which is experienced and lived in. It is laden with meanings. How a particular landscape is experienced depends, on one hand, on factors related to the individual, and on the other hand, the cultural background created by the community. The mental models of an individual are important in experiencing the landscape. They can be created by memories of real events as well as secondary, unexpected observations or conveyed impressions.<sup>238</sup> The experience of landscape can also be approached through the concept of place.<sup>239</sup> The true aspect of a place is in the images related to it. The contents and meanings of images vary among the people who experience them. People interpret the symbols embedded in a place on the basis of their own cultural background, emotions, experiences, and knowledge.<sup>240</sup> Meanings are attributed to a landscape according to how and why we are familiar with it.<sup>241</sup> For example, the same forest can for one person be an everyday workplace, while for another it can evoke a romantic memory such as getting engaged.

We experience the landscape through the interaction of all our senses. We see, hear, smell, taste, feel; all our senses combine to convey an impression of the outside world. However, our senses are not innocent, but guided by our earlier experiences and knowledge. We do not simply hear, see, or smell, but assign *significance* to that which we hear, see, and smell. When the modern terms of *place* and *landscape* are used, what they refer to is precisely this subjective impression based on sensory perceptions.<sup>242</sup> The way in which the landscape is experienced is affected not only by that which is seen and sensed, but also that which is experienced emotionally or imagined through knowledge or memory.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> "The landscape is a multilayered story in cultural and natural history that can be read in many ways. How it is read depends on many factors, experience, knowledge, sensory alertness. And, of course, the whole cultural background related to experiencing nature. The spiritual meaning of the environment is in its story."

<sup>238</sup> See e.g. Darvill 1999, 106–107.

<sup>239</sup> The concepts of landscape and place are closely connected. Places receive their meanings in their context in the landscape. Space is often seen as a vacuum where human activity takes place. Space is the same everywhere and at all times. Places, on the other hand, are culturally meaningful locales that make up part of the human experience as instruments of human activity. Different meanings are attributed to them at different times, and they are shaped by personal and social activity. Changes in places do not happen so much in the material environment as in experience, significance, thought, and action. Places, people, and meanings thus interact with each other. (Lock 2003, 173, 175; Kymäläinen 2006, 203–207.)

<sup>240</sup> Raivo 2002, 157; Kymäläinen 2006, 203–207.

<sup>241</sup> See e.g. Relph 1986, 56–58, 123.

<sup>242</sup> Hernando Gonzalo 1999, 258; Karjalainen 2006, 86–87.

<sup>243</sup> Fairclough 2006, 179.

The experience of the landscape combines the landscape itself and images related to it. Landscape and mindscape merge into each other. Just like a work of art is ultimately created out of the viewer's interpretation, a landscape is also created out of an individual's experience. The images raised by landscapes are personal, and the same natural place can arouse different kinds of emotions in different people. However, mindscape is not only an individual phenomenon, but also a cultural one.<sup>244</sup> Our cultural background affects the images we possess and therefore our experiences. Landscape and culture have a dialectical relationship; people's impressions shape their ways of seeing the environment, and the environment, for its part, shapes the predominant cultural impressions of the landscape.<sup>245</sup> The cultural component of the mindscape gives a social aspect to the experience of landscape; humans do not experience the landscape only as individuals, but also as members of a community. To summarize, it could be stated that the landscape is created out of experience – either imagined or real, individual or communal.

### 3.1.1. The taskscape

Experiencing the landscape is not a static phenomenon; instead, meanings and feelings change not only among individuals but also through activity that takes place in the landscape. The meanings attributed to a landscape change together with its changing function. The park that was a peaceful picnic site yesterday may today host a lively rock concert. According to Tim Ingold, we dwell in the landscape. Places are not encountered objectively – or as objects – but they are lived in and through.<sup>246</sup> The idea of the landscape as a lived-in space is already present in Martin Heidegger's writing. The landscape is created out of the meeting of humans with the world, and in this meeting, activity defines the landscape.<sup>247</sup> In the context of archaeology, Christopher Tilley has emphasized the connection between landscape and experience. He sees the landscape as a space for activity to which meaning is provided by events, actions, and the person experiencing them.<sup>248</sup>

The Sámi experience of the landscape, in particular, has been approached through activity.<sup>249</sup> Ingold has used the term *taskscape* to describe the landscape as the theatre of human life and activity.<sup>250</sup> The landscape is created out of people's everyday activities in the world. An activity or task that a person carries out in the environment is an essential part of living in the landscape. Every activity is related to other tasks carried out by other people or other types of actors, and together they all form the taskscape. An actor may equally well be a human, an animal, a tree, or even a stone that interacts with activities carried out by others. Thus, the taskscape is a socially constructed sphere formed of the activities of humans and other beings.<sup>251</sup> In addition

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<sup>244</sup> Karjalainen 1997, 16; Keskitalo-Foley 2006, 131.

<sup>245</sup> Knapp & Ashmore 1999, 4.

<sup>246</sup> Ingold 2005, 172–188; cf. Karjalainen 1998, 4.

<sup>247</sup> Heidegger 2000 [1927]; Heidegger 1994 [1951].

<sup>248</sup> Tilley 1994.

<sup>249</sup> Magga 2007a.

<sup>250</sup> Ingold 1993, 158.

<sup>251</sup> Ingold 1993, 158; Ingold 1997, 29–30; Mazzullo & Ingold 2008, 35. In the 1990s, Ingold emphasized humans as actors, but in the 2000s, he has added also other actors to the taskscape.

to humans, also other beings can function as actors, and thus the landscape is not a passive *tabula rasa* before human influence.<sup>252</sup>

The landscape is thus experienced through motion, activity, and participation. Different activities produce different ways of experiencing and structuring the world. Audhild Schanche has noted that the Northern Sámi word *meahcci*, forest, is associated with the relationship between humans and nature. The meaning of the word *meahcci* changes according to the natural resources that are to be exploited. *Meahcci* can be *guollemeahcci* 'fish forest', *muorrimeahcci* 'wood forest', or *luomemeahcci* 'cloudberry forest' depending on what activities are carried out in it.<sup>253</sup> Inga-Maria Mulk also emphasizes experiencing the landscape through activity. According to her, means of subsistence and changes of season were central factors in the Sámi experience of the landscape. The landscape is very different from the viewpoints of Sea Sámi, reindeer herders, or hunters, for example.<sup>254</sup> The landscape is organized from the viewpoint of the group's annual activities and the periodic movements of game animals.<sup>255</sup> Activity in the landscape can vary in nature, essential characteristics, location, temporal details, or distribution.<sup>256</sup> The cloudberry forest of late summer may in the winter assume the role of hunting forest.

### 3.1.2. The landscape of story and memory

Memories, stories, and myths related to the landscape have also been considered as typical of the Sámi conception of the landscape.<sup>257</sup> The landscape is encultured not only through activity, but also through collective memories, stories, yoiks, local tradition related to how places have been used, and place names. Inga-Maria Mulk speaks of a "cognitive landscape". By this term, she means a layered landscape consisting of many parts, both material and immaterial, that assumes meaning through activity.<sup>258</sup>

Landscape studies have long focused on monuments. However, the ways in which non-farming peoples modify the landscape is often much less conspicuous than monuments. As a result, they have been thought to live in unmodified nature without leaving physical traces on the landscape, in contrast to farmers and monument-builders. The enculturation of the landscape can, however, also take place in ways that leave fewer or smaller traces.<sup>259</sup>

The Sámi are an example of a group that has not created long-term monumental modifications in the landscape. This, however, does not rule out the construction of a landscape with cultural meanings. For many hunter-gatherers, the landscape consists of places associated with mythical and historical events.<sup>260</sup> Monument-building has allowed people to change the physical features of the landscape. However, even less

<sup>252</sup> Wallis 2009.

<sup>253</sup> Schanche 2002, 163; cf. Mazzullo & Ingold 2008, 31.

<sup>254</sup> Mulk 1997, 12–13.

<sup>255</sup> Lemaire 1997, 12.

<sup>256</sup> Llobera 1996, 614.

<sup>257</sup> Magga 2007a, 15; also Huuskonen 1995; Näkkäläjärvi 2007, 36–37.

<sup>258</sup> Mulk 1997, 12–13.

<sup>259</sup> Jordan 2003, 275; cf. Insoll 2007.

<sup>260</sup> Boaz & Uleberg 2000, 101–104.

conspicuous structures can modify the meaning of the landscape without influencing the topography in a radical way.<sup>261</sup> Mobile groups often create meaningful landscapes by associating thoughts and emotions with the landscape as they find it – paths, views, campsites, and other special places.<sup>262</sup>

Audhild Schanche notes that the traditional Sámi worldview is based on horizontal relationships that incorporated symmetry, balance, reciprocity, and equality, in contrast to vertical relationships incorporating asymmetry, hierarchy, unequal power relationships, dominance, and overlordship.<sup>263</sup> According to Schanche, historical sources and oral tradition provide evidence that the border between nature and non-nature was more flexible and situational in earlier times. Nature and its resources were not set above or below humans; nature was separate from humans, but on the same level. The worldview is reflected in stories and legends, as well as in pre-Christian religious practices. On the levels of practice and myth, the relationship between humans and nature was based on symmetry and reciprocity.<sup>264</sup>

The balanced and equal relationship with the landscape and nature, as presented by Schanche, is based on the long-standing idea of the harmonic relationship of aboriginal peoples with nature. As stated earlier, the modification of the landscape by aboriginal peoples seldom left behind monumental structures. However, the enculturation of the landscape provides a framework for studying the ways in which even the most “nature-friendly” peoples might cause significant physical changes in the landscape.<sup>265</sup> For example, the hunter-gatherers of the Nunak people in the Amazon have unwittingly changed the ecology through their annual cycle and its related gathering. Fruit is gathered from groves in a natural state and consumed locally, and the seeds are deposited in the near vicinity. Later the seeds grow and produce resources to which humans return.<sup>266</sup> Modification also extends to sacred landscapes: members of the Tallensi people in Northern Ghana have affected the vegetation of their sacred places, which have been considered natural.<sup>267</sup> As for the Hantisi of Western Siberia, they enculturate the landscape by visiting sacred natural places that are changed physically and symbolically through the production, use, and leaving in place of cultural artefacts.<sup>268</sup>

Place names, stories, and mythologies are not only a way to enculturate the landscape, but also a part of the landscape of memory. Memories of past places could live on in stories or place names.<sup>269</sup> Memories can also be related to places that were earlier in use and in which traces of use are visible and recognizable. Ilkka Luoto notes that all memories are place-related.<sup>270</sup> Even though there are also abstract memories, independent of time and place, most of our memories return to

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<sup>261</sup> Bradley 1993, 23–24.

<sup>262</sup> Ingold 1986, 153; Knapp & Ashmore 1999, 10.

<sup>263</sup> Schanche 2004, 1–2.

<sup>264</sup> Schanche 2004, 4.

<sup>265</sup> Jordan 2003, 18.

<sup>266</sup> Politis 1996, 504–505.

<sup>267</sup> Insoll 2007.

<sup>268</sup> Jordan 2003, 18.

<sup>269</sup> Bradley 2000, 157.

<sup>270</sup> Luoto 2008, 109.

a certain place. We may remember the asphalt schoolyard on our first day of school or the railway station in which we last saw an old friend. Thus, the landscape is filled with images of remembering. The landscape has also been laden with memories for people of the past. People understood that they were living among the memories of the past, and so those places had meaning for them. They could be reused and imbued with new meanings and values. Elements of landscape were influenced by the relationship between past and present.<sup>271</sup> On the other hand, remembering is not always tied to physical objects. In Sámi culture, it is believed that people are remembered as long as yoiks are sung about them, and also dwelling sites can be remembered for a long time after they have been abandoned. Susanne Küchner differentiates between the landscape of memory and landscape as memory. The former confirms and records personal and social memories in the form of place names, for example. The latter, on the other hand, is a part of the process of remembering, the past manifesting itself in the present and modifying the present.<sup>272</sup> Sámi sacred places can be approached from both viewpoints. Firstly, they record memories of the ethnic religion of past generations in their place names, and secondly, they are still a part of the process of remembering, in which old places have assumed new meanings and have thus influenced later activities in the landscape.

There is no universal way to define the places that have during particular periods been important for remembrance. The collective memory of a community or the individual memories of its members can cover, for example, mythical and cosmological concepts, memories of burial grounds, meeting places, valleys, or mountains that are associated with a specific chronological or historical context.<sup>273</sup>

Tim Ingold describes the connection between acting in the landscape and experiencing the landscape through memory in a poetic way: "to perceive the landscape is therefore to carry out an act of remembrance, and remembering is not so much a matter of calling up an internal image, stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past."<sup>274</sup> Memories related to the landscape guide our actions and experiences; even if an old sieidi is already destroyed, we can still sense the sacredness of the place and act according to the respect it demands.

On the other hand, the view that emphasizes remembering and the significance of memories is tied to a Western linear concept of time. However, we do not have straightforward information on how time and space were understood in Sámi communities before Christian and Scandinavian influences.<sup>275</sup> There is no universal, abstract time in the world. We have an intuitive understanding of time, but what is it really? It goes without saying that not all cultures share the Western linear concept of time, which is formed of the past, present, and future. The dreamtime of Australian aborigines combines past, present, and future into a continuum.<sup>276</sup> Time can also be experienced as cyclical, and the same things are repeated again and again. On the

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<sup>271</sup> Bradley 2002; also Bender 1993b; Gosden & Lock 1998, 2–6.

<sup>272</sup> Küchner 1993, 86.

<sup>273</sup> Knapp & Ashmore 1999, 13–14; Taçon 1999.

<sup>274</sup> Ingold 1993, 152–153.

<sup>275</sup> Rydving 1993, 96.

<sup>276</sup> Clarke 2003, 16.

other hand, the past can be seen as being in front, visible and known, or past times can be considered as experienced here and now, as a series of concentric circles.<sup>277</sup> As for archaeological time, it is formed of two parts: the time constructed in chronology and the time actually experienced by people in the past. Therefore, in the experience of past people, the oldest elements in the landscape were not necessarily attributed with meanings related to the past.

To summarize, it could be said that the landscape is not a universal phenomenon. Encounters with the landscape, and the landscape itself, have varied in time and place. There are individual variations that are related to the experiences of a single person and that can therefore change as the person gathers more experience. What can we then hope to reach of all these levels of meaning of the landscape? Even though an individual's experiences of the landscape are probably out of the reach of an archaeologist, human activity leaves traces on the distribution of archaeological remains. By studying these spatial distributions and relationships, we can understand human activity in the landscape and thus also the meanings attributed to the landscape. By bringing forward various ways of acting at a sacred places and various meanings attributed to places we can approach the differences between individual experiences.

In the following, I aim to sketch the meanings that Sámi ritual landscapes have been associated with over the times. The landscape is seen as a palimpsest in which earlier and later activities are combined in a continuum. Memory manifests itself in the continuity of the landscape through reuse, reinterpretation, restoration, or reconstruction.<sup>278</sup> The sacred characteristics associated with the ritual landscape are a part of the changing meanings related to experience.

### 3.2. Viewpoints into sacredness

There are two words denoting sacredness in the Sámi language. The word *áilegas* is younger and has Germanic roots, whereas *bassi* is a Finno-Ugric word with the same etymological roots as the Finnish word *pyhä* [sacred].<sup>279</sup> According to Veikko Anttonen, *bassi* refers to a topographically anomalous feature and the boundary of a land area.<sup>280</sup> The semantic meaning of the word sacred, in both Indo-European and Finno-Ugric languages, refers to 'segregated', 'demarcated', or 'separated from the rest'.<sup>281</sup> A sacred place is thus separated from mundane, profane space.<sup>282</sup>

The concept of the sacred has often been approached through negation. The sacred has been seen as something other than the profane. Mircea Eliade describes a sacred place as characteristically something other than a profane place.<sup>283</sup> The most important element of sacredness is thus that which it is *not*. The sacred and the profane are strictly dualistically separated, and sacred space is likewise strictly separated from

<sup>277</sup> Cf. Bradley 1991, 209.

<sup>278</sup> Knapp & Ashmore 1999, 14.

<sup>279</sup> Pulkkinen 2005, 9, 32.

<sup>280</sup> Anttonen 1994, 27; Anttonen 2004, 503.

<sup>281</sup> Anttonen 1994, 29; Anttonen 1996, 96.

<sup>282</sup> Anttonen 1994, 27.

<sup>283</sup> Eliade 2003 [1957], 33.

the surrounding profane space.<sup>284</sup> Ilkka Pyysiäinen describes sacredness as a kind of demarcation. Sacredness manifests itself when a certain important boundary is crossed. The boundary can be equally well geographical, corporeal, social, or metaphysical.<sup>285</sup> However, boundaries are formed in people's minds. They are cultural constructions that can be conceived only through the values of the culture in question. There are no boundaries in nature; all boundaries are manmade and cultural.<sup>286</sup>

The segregation of the sacred and the profane also segregates ritual activity from profane activity.<sup>287</sup> In archaeology, too, the sacred and the profane have long been viewed as separate areas of life.<sup>288</sup> In more recent times, this dichotomous approach has, however, been questioned.<sup>289</sup> According to Joanna Brück, the division of behaviour into ritual and rational is based on a post-Enlightenment Western way of thinking and should not be reflected onto the past. Ethnographical examples show that in many communities, the ritual and the profane are not separated from each other.<sup>290</sup> The boundaries between the sacred and the profane, as well as the ritual and the commonplace, are, like other boundaries, culturally determined and created by humans.

Timothy Insoll emphasizes that religion cannot be seen as separate from other areas of life; instead, it provides a kind of lens through which, for example, means of subsistence, social organization, technology, and even death can be viewed and perceived as parts of the totality of life.<sup>291</sup> However, this does not mean that all of life is ritualized or that people constantly behave in a particularly spiritual manner.<sup>292</sup> Instead, beliefs and worldviews give meaning to the surrounding world and human activity in it. The symbolic and functional aspects of this activity do not have to be mutually exclusive. Richard Bradley describes Spanish grain storehouses that had simultaneously both a symbolic and a practical role. The cross on the storehouse roof combines religion with the practice of a means of subsistence.<sup>293</sup> In a similar vein, the Sámi gathered in their winter villages not only to take part in the church services, but also to trade and strengthen their social relationships.

Ethnographic material also offers examples of peoples among whom the sacred is not strictly demarcated. For example, the sacred places of the Hanti had no clear boundaries, even though the edge of a swamp, the shore of a lake, or the bank of a river could give some indications of a boundary. The sacred site was more a place than a delineated area.<sup>294</sup> Even though there are spaces demarcated as sacred, they do not strictly limit sacral activity. For example, a church can be used for profane purposes separate from church services, and on the other hand, people's spiritual

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<sup>284</sup> Jackson & Henrie 1983, 94.

<sup>285</sup> Pyysiäinen 2002, 144.

<sup>286</sup> Ingold 1993, 156.

<sup>287</sup> Durkheim 1976 [1912], 308; Brück 1999, 317. On the other hand, everyday tasks have also been described as rituals.

<sup>288</sup> Brück 1999.

<sup>289</sup> E.g. Brück 1999; Jordan 2003; Insoll 2004.

<sup>290</sup> Brück 1999.

<sup>291</sup> Insoll 2004, esp. Fig. 2.

<sup>292</sup> Cf. Brück 1999, 325.

<sup>293</sup> Bradley 2005, 3–10.

<sup>294</sup> Jordan 2003, 146, 222.



activities, such as praying, are not confined to within the walls of the church. Material things have boundaries, but human thought and action are not tied to a certain place. Ritual activities can take place anywhere, but they concentrate in certain locations, certain sacral nodes.

Neil Price notes that this kind of holistic view does not really deal with religion in the sense in which religion is generally considered nowadays. Human belief was not formalized and regulated. Rather, it was a belief system, a part of life connected to the other parts. A holistic belief system was related to a worldview in which the boundaries between this world and the next and between human and animal were not strict. For people it was not a question of belief but knowledge of how things worked.<sup>295</sup>

In the case of rituals, drawing a line between the sacred and the profane is further complicated by the broad definition of the concept of ritual. The term *ritual* has become too general and wide-ranging.<sup>296</sup> It has also been used for profane activities that are recurrent and regular, such as one's evening chores.<sup>297</sup> Therefore not all ritual activity is religious and conversely, not all religious activity is ritual in nature. That said, the term *ritual* may be limited only to activity in which humans are in touch with the supernatural.<sup>298</sup> The central element in the sacral definition of ritual is that a ritual opens up everyday life to contact with the supernatural.<sup>299</sup> Personally, I agree with Insoll in that a ritual is part of a larger context that covers religion and worldview.<sup>300</sup> A ritual may be related to profane activities, but it still carries symbolic meaning that ties it to beliefs and the supernatural. Thus, a ritual is a *form of recurrent activity that brings the supernatural close to the everyday*. In a ritual, an individual's spiritual state or the meaning of the event to the community are more important than regulation coming from the outside. In this sense, my view conforms to the holistic worldview. Therefore, I use the term *ritual* in this sense, excluding purely profane rituals.

In the following, I discuss how the sacred stands out in the Sámi landscape. The terms *áilegas* and *bassi*, related to place names, describe how the sacred is demarcated in landscape elements, but just how precisely the sacred was separated from the profane and how sacredness was experienced as a part of the taskscape demands closer study.

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<sup>295</sup> Price 2008, 145–146.

<sup>296</sup> Bradley 2005, 32.

<sup>297</sup> Humphrey & Laidlaw 1994, 65–67; Rappaport 1999, 24.

<sup>298</sup> Zuesse 1987, 405. On the definition of a ritual as secular or profane, see also Bell 1992; Kyriakidis 2007.

<sup>299</sup> Alexander 1997, 139.

<sup>300</sup> Insoll 2004, 12.

### 3.3. GIS as a way of describing of the landscape

*'That's another thing we've learned from your Nation,' said Mein Herr, 'map-making. But we've carried it much further than you. What do you consider the largest map that would be really useful?'*

*'About six inches to the mile.'*

*'Only six inches!' exclaimed Mein Herr. 'We very soon got to six yards to the mile. Then we tried a hundred yards to the mile. And then came the grandest idea of all! We actually made a map of the country, on the scale of a mile to the mile!'*

*'Have you used it much?' I enquired.*

*'It has never been spread out, yet,' said Mein Herr: 'the farmers objected: they said it would cover the whole country, and shut out the sunlight! So we now use the country itself, as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well.'*

*Lewis Carroll 1965 [1893]: Sylvie and Bruno Concluded, pp. 608–609*

In the following chapter, I examine the sacred landscape of the Sámi and especially the offering places by approaching them through spatial data and GIS (*Geographic Information Systems*) analyses. There are many factors influencing how people choose the theatres of their actions. The places may have been chosen because they are located close to practical or symbolic resources or existing places. The selection may also have been influenced by less systematic reasons, such as experiences, values, and beliefs associated with the place.<sup>301</sup> GIS provides an opportunity to combine various types of material to examine the reasons behind human actions.<sup>302</sup>

The results of the analyses carried out naturally depend on the material available for use. Due to the better availability of environmental data, GIS often contains information on the soil, topography, and waterways, whereas cultural information is more difficult to include in GIS. There has thus been cause for concern that the larger amount of environmental data may lead to environmental determinism.<sup>303</sup>

However, Marcos Llobera, among others, denies any direct connection between environment and determinism. According to him, archaeological research that exploits environmental factors is not necessarily doomed to environmental determinism. Determinism comes from the interpretations and ways of dealing with the information, not from the information itself.<sup>304</sup> I agree with Llobera's view on this issue. The presentation of cultural information in GIS could be seen as one of the challenges of spatial analysis.

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<sup>301</sup> Wheatley & Gillings 2002, 202.

<sup>302</sup> Kvamme 1992, 77.

<sup>303</sup> Gaffney & van Leusen 1995; Lock & Harris 2000, xvii. The environmental and technical determinism related to GIS in Finland has been discussed by e.g. Kirkinen 1996.

<sup>304</sup> Llobera 1996, 612.

There have indeed been attempts to also use GIS for studying cultural and social phenomena.<sup>305</sup> However, this also has its risks. According to Gary Lock, existing software programmes aim to model social and cultural information onto a landscape, even though this information actually resides within people. A certain place as such has no meaning; instead, it acquires meaning in the minds of the person or group who visits, acts in, speaks about, or thinks about the place. The same place can have different meanings for different individuals and at different times. In addition to a person's own background and emotions, many other factors influence how a place is experienced. Historical depth and a connection to past people and events is crucial for constructing meanings.<sup>306</sup>

Among other things, viewshed has been analysed when the objective has been to study the social and cognitive aspects of a landscape instead of the physical and economical aspects.<sup>307</sup> Viewshed analyses that calculate the visibility between two points have often been seen as the gateway to studying the experience of a landscape. The viewshed area is thought to explain how ancient peoples experienced a landscape. Viewing and observing are, however, very different from experiencing.<sup>308</sup> GIS studies can approach the human experience more closely than just at the level of vision by also including in the analyses other senses, as well as the stratification of the landscape and the resulting memories and history. Additionally, historical sources and ethnographical analogies can offer clues to the cognitive landscape.<sup>309</sup> The best result is achieved by combining different sources and analyses.

Understanding the landscape through spatial analysis is based on the fact that human activity in the landscape is distributed unequally. Both present and past landscapes are organized through the unequal distribution of resources, both social and natural resources. Spatial analyses can help to sketch the spatial structures caused by the unequal distribution of resources.<sup>310</sup> However, it should be kept in mind that analyses never reflect the real world as it was in the past. They may find regularities and deviations that we can use to approach the past mindscape, but GIS can never drill down into the thoughts and ideas of a person in the past. Instead, GIS provides the prerequisites for studying theoretical models and hypotheses by quantitative means. It can take the landscape archaeologist from a world of personal experience into a testable and verifiable environment. The aim is not to get inside the heads of past people – this is impossible due to differences between how individuals experience the world – but to find a tool that enables organizing the elements of the landscape in order to understand them better.

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<sup>305</sup> Boaz & Uleberg 2000. The study is restricted to the change in the landscape and the analysis of the possibly related experiences. See also e.g. Vaneekhout 2009.

<sup>306</sup> Lock 2000, 62; Lock 2003, 176.

<sup>307</sup> Christopherson & Guertin 1996; Wansleebe & Verhart 1997, 59–60; van Leusen 2002, 1.6.; Soetens 2006, 395.

<sup>308</sup> Lock 2003, 180; cf. Rodaway 1994, 10.

<sup>309</sup> Van Leusen 2002, 5.12.

<sup>310</sup> Van Leusen 1999, 215; van Leusen 2002, 1.3.

### **3.4. Summary**

My work combines the theory of landscape archaeology with GIS-aided analyses, such as viewshed analyses and various proximity analyses. GIS can provide landscape archaeological studies with the analytical precision that has been demanded of this field. On the other hand, the viewpoints of landscape archaeology and phenomenology, with a focus on human experience and its corporeality, bring the location information analyses closer to the realm of subjective human experience. A combination of these viewpoints provides a fruitful starting point for the study of Sámi sacred places. Through the concept of landscape, new viewpoints are also provided into how the sacred has been experienced in the landscape as separate from or intertwined with the profane, or both.