

6. SACRED PLACES TODAY

Kirkkopahta (74) in Muonio, August 2009

As we arrived at the Kirkkopahta sieidi for fieldwork, we were met by a surprise – two elk skulls stared at us with empty eyes from the top of the stone. One still had some hair left, and flies were buzzing around them. Someone had clearly brought offerings to the sieidi not too long ago. As the excavations progressed, it turned out that these were the only bone finds we were going to get. This did not mean, however, that people had not been interested in the site. Instead of old bones, we found other signs of human activity. Someone had placed chunks of quartzite on top of the stone. There was a group of sprigs tied together with string on the ground next to the stone. The strangest find we encountered was a film can pushed deep under the stone. Inside the film can was a small plastic bag and inside the bag, a tinfoil-wrapped piece of sheet-like material that was, at the time, interpreted as building material. However, later studies of photographs gave reason to consider the find as hashish. Objects left at Kirkkopahta are signs of people's visits to the place and perhaps also of the different meanings given to the sieidi. We also had visitors during the fieldwork. An occasional tourist bus would pass us by on its way to Lake Pakasaivo, which was provided with better signposts and opportunities to enjoy coffee. Tourists also stopped at Kirkkopahta. Even on a rainy day, there were six visitors. As well as Finnish, we heard people speaking in Swedish and French. In addition to tourists, a local woman showed the sieidi to her friends. One rainy week in August 2009, Kirkkopahta was an object of interest not only to researchers, but also to tourists and locals, and slightly earlier to those who had brought the offerings.

6.1. Signs of the modern use of sacred places

*Suuret pyhät tunturit kyllä pysyvät pystyssä niin kauan kuin maailma on raiteillaan, eivätkä vankat kalliojumalatkkaan horjahtelee, eivät kalamiesten siunatut paadetkaan katoa. Kirkonkävijä kansa ei niitä enää kumarra, mutta tietää kyllä, mikä virka niillä on ollut ja mihin ne ovat kyenneet.*⁶²⁴

Samuli Paulaharju 1965 [1927]: Taka-Lappia, p. 264

Even though the church had been present in the lives of the Sámi since the Middle Ages and, in the period of orthodoxy, attempted to root out all signs of ethnic religion, the old traditions were resilient. One indication of this is the afore-mentioned offerings given to churches. Offerings were also brought to sieidis for a long time in addition to churches. A story written down in 1910 tells the following of offerings on the island of Ukonsaari (47): "An old Lapp man said that several decades ago, Saara-Vuolli (Vuolli-Saijets) had offered eggs there [on Ukonsaari] to Ukko."⁶²⁵ Written sources too mention that offerings were given, even as late as the turn of the 20th century.⁶²⁶

Archaeological excavations have also revealed signs of 20th-century activity at sieidis. Signs of modern human activity were documented in connection with archaeological excavations at the sieidis that were studied during the summers of 2008 to 2010. After documentation, the artefacts were left in place. The find material up to the middle of the 17th century consisted only of bones. Usage in the 19th century is evidenced by four coins dated to the late 19th century from Näkkälä (9) and Sieiddakeädgi (113), as well as fragments of green 19th-century bottle glass from Sieiddakeädgi.⁶²⁷ We also found two personal objects that could not be dated, namely a bone ring from Taatsi (65) and an antler button from Näkkälä (Figure 14). In addition to bone finds, the largest find group consisted of modern artefacts from the 20th and 21st centuries. These included coins, personal objects, burned tealight candles, and bunches of sprigs.

Coins are the largest group of modern finds. Coins were found at all studied sieidis with the exception of Äkässaivo (80) as follows (19th-century coins are not included here): 119 coins (1960–2005) at Taatsi, 329 coins (1921–2007) at Näkkälä, 190 coins (1960–2005) at Sieiddakeädgi, 5 coins (2000–2001) at Koskikaltiojoen suu (29), 24 coins (1963–2006) at Porviniemi (75), 20 coins (1963–2002) at Kirkkopahta, and 100 coins (1930–2006) at Dierpmesvárri (3) (Table 12). The coins were mainly from the Nordic countries, but individual coins from Estonia, Germany, and Switzerland were also observed. In the case of euro coins, the country of origin of the coin bringer could not be ascertained, because foreign euros also circulate in Finland. Norwegian

⁶²⁴ "The great sacred fells will surely stand as long as the world goes on, the sturdy bedrock gods will not falter, and even the blessed stones of the fishermen will not disappear. Churchgoing folk will no longer bow to them, but will surely know what they were used for and what they were capable of."

⁶²⁵ Itkonen 1910. Original Finnish text: "Muuan vanha lappalainen kertoi, että vielä muutamia vuosikymmeniä sitten oli eräs Saara-Vuolli (Vuolli-Saijets) siellä [Ukonsaarella] Ukolle munia uhrannut."

⁶²⁶ Paulaharju 1932; Kjellström 1987, 24–33.

⁶²⁷ The dating of the bottle glass (Koivunen 2008, personal communication); cf. Aalto 1995, 99, 132.

coins were more common at Sieiddakeädgi and Dierpmesvárri than at other sites due to the location of these sieidis close to the Norwegian border. The small number of foreign coins at Kirkkopahta, for example, was surprising, because foreign tourists visited the sieidi often even during the excavations.

Table 12. Modern coins found at the studied sieidis.

	Unidentified	Euro	Sweden	Norway	Finland	Switzerland	Germany	Estonia	Total
Taatsi									
Number of coins	16	52	4	10	36	1	0	0	119
Years		1999– 2005	2000– 2004	1960– 2005	1963– 2000	1981			
Näkkälä									
Number of coins	10	151	11	10	146	0	1	0	329
Years		1999– 2007	1939– 2003	1944– 2002	1921– 2000		1969		
Sieiddakeädgi									
Number of coins		32	3	41	109	0	0	2	187
Years		1999– 2005	1980– 1992	1960– 2002	1963– 2002			1992– 1996	
Koskikaltiojoensuu									
Number of coins	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Years		2000– 2001							
Porviniemi									
Number of coins	2	13	0	0	11	0	0	0	24
Years		1999– 2006			1963– 1997				
Kirkkopahta									
Number of coins	0	5	1	0	14	0	0	0	20
Years		1999– 2002	1973		1963– 1995				
Dierpmesvárri									
Number of coins	1	11	6	25	57	0	0	0	100
Years		1999– 2003	1930– 1977	1958– 2006	1960– 1998				
Total	29	269	25	86	373	1	1	2	793

For the euro coins, we can also calculate the value of the coins left at the sieidis without any significant effect by inflation. Small 5 and 10 cent coins were the most common find group (Figure 77). The number of coins of bigger denominations is fairly even. Of course, people could have left several coins at the same time, so the diagramme does not reveal the amount of money left per visit. Regarding coin offerings, however, it has been said that the act of making an offering was the important thing, not the monetary value of the offering.⁶²⁸

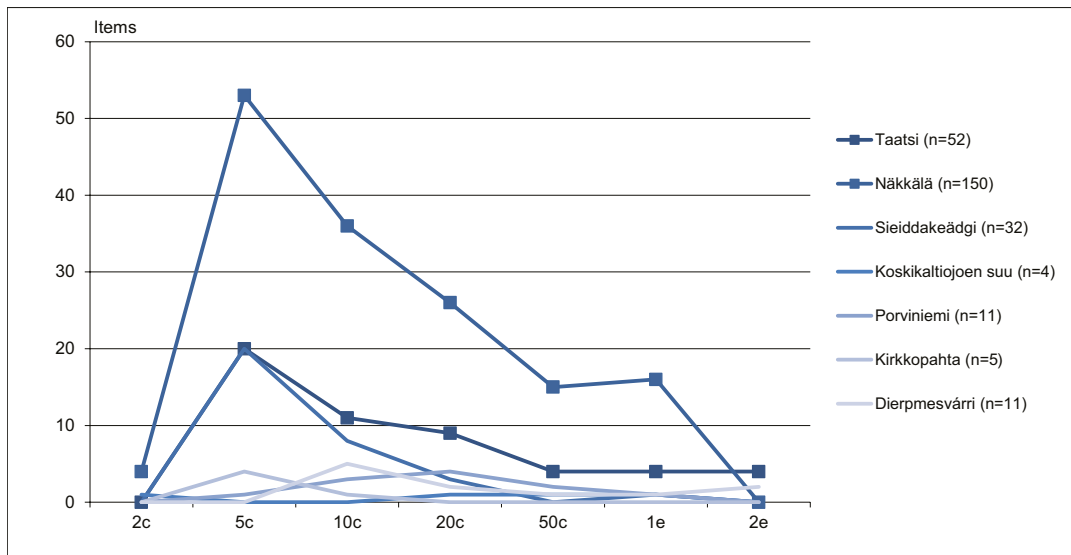


Figure 77. The number of euro coins of various denominations offered at various sieidis. The denomination could not be identified on all coins.

Coins were often placed into holes in the sieidis where they were not visible. In some cases, it seemed important that the coin leaver had to go to some trouble to place the coin in the desired place. The coins have been placed on top of tall stones or into deep crevices. At Taatsi, the largest concentration of coins was found on the top plateau of the sieidi, which the excavator dared to climb to only when secured by a harness. At Sieiddakeädgi, with the exception of three coins found in front of the sieidi, all other coins were found in a cave-like niche in the south-eastern part of the stone. People had crawled inside the niche and then placed coins into small holes carved by water (Figure 34). This could not be done without getting one's clothes dirty. A total of 42 coins were found in holes in the niche ceiling, 62 coins on the niche floor, and 82 coins on the plateau inside the niche. At some sieidis, the coins had been pushed so tightly into crevices in the rock that they could not be removed (Figure 78). Some coins formed decorative patterns on the surface of the stone (Figure 79). It appears that there are two traditions in the leaving of coins: on the one hand, it is important to hide the coins or to ensure that other people cannot take them, and on the other, coins are used as decorative elements. However, coins were found on the ground around the sieidis at all sites. At Näkkälä, as many as 241 coins out of 330 were found in excavations at the foot of the sieidi and in its surroundings. Some of them may have fallen down from the top of the stone, but some may have been deliberately left on the ground.

⁶²⁸ SKS KRA. Kohonen, Marjatta 1-107.1959.



Figure 78. A coin in a crack of the Porviniemi sieidi stone.

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Figure 79. Coins placed on the side of the Näkkälä sieidi.

The greatest number of coins was mainly found at sieidis that are associated with a strong tradition of offerings and that also yielded the most comprehensive bone material. Exceptions are the sieidi at Koskikaltiojoen suu, at which a large amount of bone material but few coins were found, and the sieidi of Dierpmesvárri, at which bone finds were surprisingly meagre in the light of the tradition associated with the sieidi, but coin finds were generous. The Dierpmesvárri sieidi, which is located about 12 kilometres from the nearest road, shows that coins have also been brought to sieidis located far away from settlements and roads. Thus, it seems that the leaving of coins is associated more with a strong continuity of Sámi tradition than with tourism.

Coins have been offered already in earlier times. In Norrland, coins from offering places are dated from the late 10th century to the 13th century. All coins have a hole, so it has been thought that their primary function was as pendants and not as means of payment.⁶²⁹ Thus, as offerings, they would represent personal objects. However, written sources also tell of monetary offerings. Paulaharju believes that money was usually offered for some reason other than success in hunting wild reindeer. He tells that money had been offered, among others, at Outakoski (113) and Seitigädgi (112).⁶³⁰ The Dierpmesvárri sieidi is said to give what is asked of it when one places a coin in a hole in the stone. The size of the sum did not matter. There are also other examples of the taking of coins to sieidis by the Sámi.⁶³¹ In the early 20th century, Ilmari Itkonen wrote down this story of offering coins: "He told me that, some years back, a certain forester offered a markka on Ukonsaari (in jest, of course), even though someone had warned him that no good would come of it. 'But then the forester took ill,' continued the storyteller in earnest. Let this be a warning to tourists!" According to Itkonen, even in his time, people sometimes threw a small coin in the water at Ukonselkä for good

⁶²⁹ Zachrisson 1984, 122; Wallerström 2000, 18; Hedman 2003, 164–165.

⁶³⁰ Paulaharju 1932, 17.

⁶³¹ SKS KRA. Kohonen, Marjatta 1–107.1959, 108–190.1960.

winds.⁶³² The moral of this story is that offerings should be taken seriously and not be thought of as a touristic act.

However, the leaving of coins at sieidis may in some cases have become a part of the touristic performance.⁶³³ Coins may be left at sieidis in the same way as at many other sites around the world. The touristic custom of throwing coins into fountains, for example, is widespread. Sometimes the custom is associated with various beliefs, such as that of returning to the same place, like at the *Fontana di Trevi* in Rome. Sometimes a coin is used to leave a trace of oneself, in the manner of carving a name into a temple pillar. Of course, some of the coins may have had other meanings.

Some coins may be related to offering associated with fishing. According to Vuokko Hirvonen, fishing tourists have offered coins and lures to the sieidi at the Utsjoki health centre (Seitigädgi 112).⁶³⁴ Also a fly found at Porviniemi in Muonio has probably been left there by a fisherman. Even in older tradition, coins are mentioned as fishermen's offerings. Uno Holmberg recounts how fishermen made offerings to the *tšasolmai*, the water man, by placing a glass of liquor, a piece of bread, or a few coins on the shore.⁶³⁵

More recent fishing tradition seems to be associated with offerings of alcohol. On the Internet forum of Erä, a Finnish hunting magazine, a forum member pursues good fishing fortune as follows: "Tomorrow, I will make a sieidi and find the cognac bottles hidden by my wife. Not to drink, but to douse the sieidi."⁶³⁶ The interesting thing about this citation is that the person is *making his own sieidi*. At the Taatsi sieidi, we found a small bottle of *Underberg* liquor that had been left on top of the sieidi unopened and may also be associated with the same tradition. On the other hand, alcohol and fishing are connected also in Sámi tradition.⁶³⁷ According to Peter Sköld, liquids were the second most important offerings after animals. However, he considers the offering of spirits to be a fairly late phenomenon, not starting until the 17th century.⁶³⁸ Offerings of alcohol may have been associated with various situations. Frans Äimä tells that the Skolt Sámi made an offering or took a drink every time they passed a sacred place.⁶³⁹ Drinking together might thus be a part of the offering ritual. Offerings of alcohol are one example of a custom that has its roots in Sámi tradition but lives on among tourists.

As for other stimulants brought to sieidis, it is worth mentioning tobacco, which was found at Porviniemi. In addition, snuff was found at Äkässaivo. Like alcohol, tobacco had also been an offering in the ethnic religion.⁶⁴⁰ The Sámi are said to have

⁶³² Itkonen 1910. Original Finnish text: "Niinikään jutteli hän jonkun 'hosmestarin' tässä takavuosina uhranneen Ukonsaareen (tietysti piloillaan) markan, vaikka joku oli varoittanut, ettei siitä hyvää seuraa. 'Mutta hosmestari tulikin sitte kivuloiseksi', jatkoi kertoja tosissaan. Olkoon tämä turisteille varoituksena!"

⁶³³ Myrvoll 2008, 45.

⁶³⁴ Hirvonen 2007, 85.

⁶³⁵ Holmberg 1915, 88–89.

⁶³⁶ <http://www.eralhti.fi/keskustelu/t4986>. Original Finnish text: "Huomenna teen seidan ja etsin vaimon piilottamat konjakkipullot. Ei juontitarkoitukseen, vaan seidan valeluun."

⁶³⁷ Sammallahti 1975, 114–115.

⁶³⁸ Sköld, 1999; cf. Itkonen 1948 I, 296.

⁶³⁹ Äimä 1903, 116.

⁶⁴⁰ Paulaharju 1932, 14.

used tobacco avidly as early as in the 17th century.⁶⁴¹ Indeed, the hashish found at Kirkkopahta can be considered to continue the same tradition of stimulant offerings. On the other hand, the hashish may have been just hidden away with no intent of offering, as indicated by the careful packing of the drug and its placement in a hole in the stone.

In addition to coins, personal objects have also been left at several sieidis. These include the ring found at Taatsi with the carving 1953, a silver earring from Näkkälä, as well as a yoyo and an eyeglass lens from Sieiddakeädgi. Some kind of personal significance may also be attached to the group of sprigs tied together that was found at Kirkkopahta. In addition to excavation finds, in connection with a survey in the summer of 2007, a sort of membership card of a pub was found at the foot of a sieidi stone at Lake Äkäsjärvi (79) in Muonio. These kinds of objects seem to imply a deeper contact with the sieidi than bringing a coin. Whereas coins are intended as instruments of exchange, the idea behind other small objects found at sieidis seems to be giving something of one's own. However, such small objects did not always entail actually renouncing something of one's own. At a slightly different offering place, a sacred spring at Sigulda in Latvia, visitors could buy rings and other "personal" items from a stall and then throw them into the spring.⁶⁴² Even though such organized trade is not known at sieidis, the true personal value of small objects is difficult to estimate. Some objects may also have been lost by visitors to the sieidi without having been intentionally offered. However, the fact that personal items are found at nearly all studied sites and their context in connection with other offerings seems to indicate intentionality.



Figure 80. Tealight candles placed on a flat spot on the Taatsi sieidi.

Individual sites may also have offering traditions that are specific only to them. At Taatsi, such a tradition consisted of leaving tealight candles at the sieidi. In addition to Taatsi, only one tealight has been found at Porviniemi and one at Kirkkopahta. At Taatsi, there were 29 tealights altogether. Like coins, they were found both around the sieidi and on plateaus on the rock, which could hold groups of several tealights (Figure 80). The tealights appear to have been burned on the spot, which is also indicated by matchboxes found on site. However, no candles other than tealights were found.

⁶⁴¹ Itkonen 1948 I, 295.

⁶⁴² Laime 2009, personal communication.

There was also another curious find group at Taatsi: quartzite chunks. Like tealights, quartzite chunks were placed on flat spots on the stone. Similarly placed quartzite was also found at Kirkkopahta. Quartzite is in neither case found in the environment, and it is clearly brought there by humans. At Taatsi, the quartzite had been placed in a spot that cannot be reached directly from the ground, so placing it there had to involve some effort. In his survey of Sodankylä, Mika Sarkkinen has observed a similar phenomenon at the Keivitsa (95) sieidi. In this case, there was a boulder near the sieidi with large, split chunks of quartz placed on top of it.⁶⁴³ Also at Kussuolinkivaara in Sodankylä, a quartzite chunk was observed at the foot of a wooden sieidi in connection with an inspection visit. No distinction appears to have been made between quartz and quartzite.

6.2. Neo-paganism as a part of the activity at the sieidis

The large quantity and variety of finds dating to the 20th and 21st centuries show that sieidis have been important to people even in the recent past and continue to be important today. People have visited them and attributed meanings to them. But who visits sieidis and for what purposes? Above I mentioned that sieidis are tourist attractions where visitors leave objects. There can be many reasons for tourism, for example, fishing or seeing nature.

However, especially the finds from Taatsi (65) and Kirkkopahta (74) containing quartzite, tealight candles, and a tied bunch of sprigs, seem to indicate that sieidis hold some ritual meaning even today. Mika Sarkkinen considers that the quartz found at Keivitsa (95) may be related to a neo-shamanistic belief in energy-giving rock crystals and quartzes that can be reloaded in a secluded place at a high elevation.⁶⁴⁴ Neo-shamanism is a form of neo-paganism. Neo-paganism consists of religious activity that emphasizes the sacredness of nature and the connection between humans and nature. It combines the traditions and rituals of old European natural religions with the customs of today's primitive people. Neo-paganism has its roots in druid societies founded in Britain in the 18th century.⁶⁴⁵ Some neo-pagans consider their movement to be the direct descendant of pre-Christian traditions. According to them, information has been transmitted as oral tradition up to today. On the other hand, the neo-pagan movement also acknowledges change: paganism as it is practised today is considered to be associated with deliberate reconstructions and actual inventions by one person or a small group, and no full-scale pagan belief system is thought to have survived the Christianization of Europe unscathed. In neo-shamanist groups, too, some people consider that they are conserving the original shamanism, whereas others add new, invented rituals and beliefs, like crystal healing.⁶⁴⁶

Neo-paganism thus consists of different groups, some of which are small and local. However, these different groups have some common features, namely a mystical attitude towards nature, magic, goddess consciousness, and an emphasis on individual experience in religious practice. A mystical connection to nature is considered to lie behind that which is called sacred in different religions and

⁶⁴³ Sarkkinen 1993.

⁶⁴⁴ Sarkkinen 1993; cf. Harner 2004, 150.

⁶⁴⁵ Aarnio 2001, 197; Sjöblom 2006, 203, 208.

⁶⁴⁶ Townsend 2004, 53.

cultures.⁶⁴⁷ In Finland, Lehto ry and Pakanaverkko ry act as forums that aggregate the various neo-pagan movements.

Neo-paganism is also associated with offering activities. In Britain, neo-pagans have left offerings at megaliths, for example. The offerings consist of flowers, tobacco, food, drink, and more durable items such as crystals, coins, feathers, special stones, and personal ritual items. Even pine cones are known to have been offered in Britain.⁶⁴⁸ Likewise, in Finland, pine cones have been placed at the foot of the Lake Äkäsjärvi (79) sieidi and pushed into cracks of the wooden sieidi at Kussuolinkivaara (96) (Figure 81). However, some of the pine cones may be placed by squirrels. Other finds corresponding to neo-pagan offerings are a feather placed into a hole in the bedrock at Äkässaivo (80) and the aforementioned tied bunch of sprigs from Kirkkopahta. Particularly the quartz and quartzite pieces found at several sieidis may be related to a modern offering tradition. In the neo-pagan tradition, quartzes are considered especially important in the Wiccan and neo-witchcraft movements.⁶⁴⁹ They may be considered as symbols of the goddess or objects related to the neo-shamanist initiation.⁶⁵⁰ On the other hand, quartz may also be related to Sámi tradition. Quartz has been found at offering places, and some offering places are formed of quartz.⁶⁵¹ In addition, finds from sieidis include coins, tobacco, and drink bottles, which may be related to neo-paganism but are also a part of Sámi tradition. Within the sphere of neo-paganism, offerings are given for various reasons. Some of the offerers hope that the spirits will benefit from them, others want someone else to take into use a ritual item that the offerer no longer needs, or believe that giving offerings also encourage others to do likewise.⁶⁵² The connection of the aforementioned offerings found at sieidis to the neo-pagan offering tradition is indicated by the fact that the finds correspond to neo-pagan offerings documented elsewhere. Neo-pagans are also known to visit the places in question.⁶⁵³



Figure 81. Pine cones placed in front of the Äkäsjärvi sieidi.

⁶⁴⁷ Harvey 1997; Sjöblom 2006, 208–209, 211.

⁶⁴⁸ Wallis 2003, 171; Blain & Wallis 2007, 10, 56; cf. Harner 2004, 146.

⁶⁴⁹ Informant, female, 28 years old, 2009, personal communication.

⁶⁵⁰ Harner 2004, 146–151.

⁶⁵¹ Manker 1957, 211, 224; Vorren & Eriksen 1993, 181; Wennstedt Edvinger & Broadbent 2006, 29.

⁶⁵² Wallis 2003, 170; Blain & Wallis 2007, 10.

⁶⁵³ Informant, female, 28 years old, 2009, personal communication.

In Finland, neo-paganism has mainly been associated with cup-marked stones in the south of the country.⁶⁵⁴ Sieidi stones are respected by neo-pagans but rarely function as stages for rituals due to their distant location from large population centres. However, they are sometimes visited, and offerings are left during these visits. The offerings mainly consist of food, which is left near the sieidi to be consumed by animals. In this way, the offerings return to the circle of nature.⁶⁵⁵

The selection of Taatsi, Kirkkopahta, and possibly also Äkässaivo as modern ritual sites may be due to factors that these three places have in common. All are known sites that can be easily accessed. Taatsi and Kirkkopahta are accessible by car, and there is a signposted hiking route to Äkässaivo. At Taatsi, the quartzite and tealight candles seem to form a ritual context. The lack of types of candles other than tealights seems to indicate either that all tealights were brought at the same time or that people have known what kind of candle to bring.

6.3. Tourism focusing on sacred sites

Sometimes there are attempts to enliven the traditions of the ethnic religion in the context of tourism. The tealight candles at the Taatsi (65) sieidi may thus also be related to a local shamanistic entrepreneur who takes visitors to the sieidi.⁶⁵⁶ The heritage industry is a phenomenon associated with the historical interpretation of a certain place, landscape, or region and its utilization for tourism.⁶⁵⁷ In the tourism industry, Sáminess is marketed as a part of the mythology of the north, and sieidis have thus also become tourist attractions. Tourists can participate in "Lappish baptisms" performed as shamanistic rituals and make offerings to both new and old sieidis.

At the sites inspected in connection with fieldwork, observations were also made on the utilization of sacred places for tourism. The best-known Sámi sacred site among tourists is probably the island of Ukonsaari (47) in Lake Inarijärvi. It can be accessed by a boat that leaves from the vicinity of the Siida Sámi Museum. On the island itself, there is a guide board with information on the site and step constructions to enable easier walking and to prevent erosion. The site can be experienced in an easy and controlled manner.

Sometimes a sacred place may also be introduced to tourists as part of a bigger whole. For example, the site of Uhriaihki (21) at Markkina in Enontekiö is located near an old church place and burial sites. This site is not necessarily visited specifically in order to see the offering pine, but it is one part of a bigger picture. Guide boards provide information on the multi-layered history of the place.

Metsähallitus, the Finnish state enterprise for forest administration, has actively posted guide boards at sites located on state-owned lands. Parking spaces, duckboard-covered paths to sieidis, and guide boards have been constructed near

⁶⁵⁴ Website of Lehto ry; Informant, female, 28 years old, 2009, personal communication.

⁶⁵⁵ Informant, female, 28 years old, 2009, personal communication.

⁶⁵⁶ See e.g. <http://www.shamaaninmaa.fi/>. On the other hand, shamanistic activities related to tourism do not necessarily leave any material traces. Veikko Siitonen says that he tidies everything away after the event (Siitonen 2011, personal communication).

⁶⁵⁷ Raivo 1996, 204.

many sieidis. The signposted places are often well-known sites, such as Taatsi in Kittilä, or located near hiking routes, such as Uhriharju and Pyhänkasteenlampi (82) in Pelkosenniemi. In some cases, the precise location of the sieidi is no longer known, but the guide boards nevertheless mention the sacredness of the landscape. For example, at Jyppyrä (6) in Enontekiö, the sieidi stone is gone, but it is still mentioned as a part of the meaning of the landscape. Some of the sites are referred to in connection with other sites. At Kirkkopahta (74), the guide boards and the lean-to serving coffee are located at the nearby Lake Pakasaivo, and many tourists drive right by the Kirkkopahta sieidi to visit only the *sáiva* lake.

Local tourism entrepreneurs may also utilize sieidis in their business. A Lappish shaman working at Taatsi, Veikko Siitonen, says that the people participating in the events that he organizes are attracted by “closeness to nature [and] original belief”. There are from 40 to 60 participants each year, they are aged from 10 to 70, and come from around the world.⁶⁵⁸ At Kalliorova (72) in Muonio, the precise location of the sieidi is no longer known. However, during a field visit to the site, a local tourism entrepreneur told me of choosing a presentable stone that tourists are taken to see (Figure 82). At the stone, a “shaman” emerges to meet the tourists and perform a “Lappish baptism”.



Figure 82. A stone used as a sieidi for touristic purposes.

During the archaeological research, signs of more recent visits were noticed at some sieidis, even though there were no guide boards for tourists. Such sites are the well-known sieidis at Näkkälä (9) and Dierpmesvárri (3) in Enontekiö and Sieiddakeädgi (113) in Utsjoki. However, in the case of items such as coins left at the sieidis, we cannot be certain whether they indicate tourism or local habits.

Sacred places may also be utilized by tourism for reasons other than ethnic religion. On the headland of Keimiöniemi (73) in Lake Jerisjärvi in Muonio, guide boards usher tourists to a fishing homestead located on the headland. However, no mention is made of the sieidi known to be located on the headland, although the fishing homesteads

⁶⁵⁸ Siitonen 2011, personal communication.

lie only a few metres from the assumed, though uncertain, location of the sieidi. At Koskikaltiojoen suu (29) in Inari, the sieidi is advertised by a guide board erected by local people. However, the strips of paper indicating a path from the parking lot to the sieidi stone have been detached. During the five days of excavations at the sieidi, there were no tourists at all. Some cars drove up to the embankment, but it remained unclear whether they were looking for the sieidi or a geocache located nearby.⁶⁵⁹ There were no reports of visits to the site during the duration of the excavations; perhaps the excavation team scared visitors away. At other times, the geocache seems to have attracted tourists, travellers, and perhaps even locals. During the summer of 2009, a visit to the geocache at Koskikaltiojoen suu was reported by eight Finns, one Austrian, one German, and one Czech, in addition to four excavation team members.⁶⁶⁰ However, the reports do not indicate whether these people also visited the sieidi. In addition, several other people had also visited the site but left no messages.

In other cases too, sacred places may be a part of a broader cultural context or landscape experienced as beautiful, in which case these places may be visited without being conscious of their meanings related to sacredness. There are sacred places also in areas that are visited by many tourists, such as near hiking routes. However, these places are not always known to hikers. For example, at Pöyrisjärvi, Pyhäkero (76), and Levi (58), tourism is not necessarily related to the sacred places there.

That said, there are sacred places related to tourism in the whole research area. Most of them are generally known and mentioned in written sources, but guide boards have also been erected at some places regarding which the interpretation as a sacred place is less certain, such as Suttésája (114) and the Lake Äkäsjärvi (79) sieidi. In addition to sieidi stones, also a lost sieidi or a sacred fell visible at a distance may be mentioned on the guide boards. Reasonable accessibility seems to be the major uniting feature for sacred places utilized by tourism.

Signposts and guide boards emphasize the nature of a sacred place as a tourist attraction. On the one hand, they indicate the value of the place, and on the other, they potentially subject it to vandalism. This raises the ethical question of whether it is acceptable to guide tourists to Sámi sacred places. The problems caused by tourism to sacred places that are still in use has been discussed in other countries.⁶⁶¹ In Sweden, the location of northern offering places is protected information that is not available in the public register over ancient sites.⁶⁶² In Finland, the register over ancient sites has been available on the Internet since September 2008. When the sites in the register were put online, there was no discussion on keeping location information for individual sites secret, except for underwater sites. The publication of sites attempted to follow the principle that public data should be publicly available.⁶⁶³ Neither are there any unifying ethical guidelines for all archaeologists regarding guide

⁶⁵⁹ A geocache is a box that hobbyists find and hide with the help of GPS locators and hints or coordinates published on the Internet. When they find the cache, they can report their visit on the community website.

⁶⁶⁰ <http://www.geocaching.com/>.

⁶⁶¹ Price 2003; Reeves 2003.

⁶⁶² <http://www.fmis.raa.se/cocoon/fornsok/search.html>.

⁶⁶³ Haimila 2010, personal communication.

boards. Metsähallitus has no uniform policy on whether sieidi locations are marked. The guide boards have been set up at different times, and decisions on placing them have always been made in the nature reserve in question. The current opinion is that only those sieidis, which are commonly known and not in private use by a certain lineage or family, are marked.⁶⁶⁴ Of the Finnish sites, an especially large degree of publicity has been bestowed upon Ukonsaari in Inari, where the number of visiting tourists is higher than anywhere else. Attempts have also been made to get Ukonsaari added to the UNESCO list of world heritage sites. At the same time, some locals are opposed to tourists visiting the site and would like to forbid them from coming ashore on the island.

Tourists are not only taken to old sacred places, but also to sites that have been created especially for them. Kalliorova in Muonio is an example of a place where the touristic experience does not depend on seeing a genuine sieidi stone. Meanings are born out of actions and stories, not necessarily out of the history of the place. Such a landscape created for tourists has been described as inauthentic, associated with commercialization, entertainment, and conventionality.⁶⁶⁵ On the other hand, the concept of inauthenticity has also been criticized.⁶⁶⁶ The seeing of a "real" site is not necessarily meaningful for tourists. Richard Prentice has noted that there are many forms of authenticity that overlap with each other. An authentic experience can be generated, for example, by an original artefact or location; a natural environment; a place where something significant has happened or is believed to have happened; a connection with one's own national heritage or that of others; learned authenticity, which is based on guidance by experts, or constructed authenticity in a place that imitates history.⁶⁶⁷ All of these can also be associated with Sámi sacred places. Authenticity can be experienced, for example, through the location of a sieidi stone, an impressive natural environment, ritual activity or a connection with one's ancestors related to the place, or through a story created by guide boards and tourism entrepreneurs. For people participating in shamanic activities, authenticity was created by a closeness to nature and a connection with a belief experienced as indigenous.⁶⁶⁸ Authenticity is therefore not built into an artefact but is created through the relationships between people, places, and objects. Authenticity is culturally constructed and varies in each experience according to person and situation.⁶⁶⁹

Therefore, the seemingly inauthentic may also acquire meanings of authenticity. Even though authenticity may be a presupposition for the tourists who visit these places, inauthenticity is not experienced as a disappointment. An emotional experience is possible without authenticity. For example, meanings of sacredness associated with a place change the way in which the place is experienced. Even though the assumed birthplace of Jesus cannot be observed in Bethlehem, the meaning of the place has been transmitted to the Church of the Nativity. It has acquired the meaning of the birthplace and is thus not seen as an inauthentic fake.⁶⁷⁰ Likewise, in Rovaniemi in

⁶⁶⁴ Rautiainen 2010, personal communication.

⁶⁶⁵ Relph 1986; Keskitalo-Foley 2006, 132.

⁶⁶⁶ Holtorf 2005b; Edensor 2006, 3; Lovata 2007.

⁶⁶⁷ Prentice 2001, 15–22.

⁶⁶⁸ Siitonen 2011, personal communication.

⁶⁶⁹ Jones 2010, 181–182.

⁶⁷⁰ Meskell 2004, 192, 216; Melotti 2007, 118–130.

Finland, the productization and signposting aimed at tourists have moved the authentic experience of the Arctic Circle away from its geographical location. At Kalliorova, the meaning of the sieidi for tourists may have been transmitted to the stone to which they are brought. The recreation of an original place is thus not necessary for reasons of authenticity. Instead, authenticity is constructed by recreating the atmosphere of the original place and conveying the emotions and experiences related to it. Authenticity can be achieved through the reconstruction of either an artefact or an experience.⁶⁷¹ Thus, Lappish baptisms may also have meaning for tourists, even though they have no direct connection with any traditions of the ethnic religion. In this case, Lappish baptisms and shamanistic rituals at sieidis should not necessarily be seen as the disneyfication⁶⁷² of ethnic religion and the past, but instead as the reconstruction of history and the attributing of meanings through action.



↑
Figure 83.
A sieidi in the name of a holiday centre in Muonio.

←←
Figure 84.
A sieidi as a climbing wall.

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Figure 85.
A sieidi in a jewellery store in Hetta.

⁶⁷¹ Melotti 2007, 125; Melotti 2008, 19, 20–21.

⁶⁷² Relph 1986, 101.

In addition to being sacred sites to be visited, sieidis may also interest visitors when taken out of context. Examples of the productization of sieidis vary from hotel and bar names and jewellery shops to climbing walls (Figures 83, 84 and 85). The productization of sieidis can be seen as moving the original place away from the context of sacredness. The sacred experience is replaced by a commercial and entertaining experience. However, Lynn Meskell has suggested that productization does not always disconnect its object from the context of the sacred. Productization may decrease spirituality, but also democratize it and make its objects easier to reach. The object may also acquire new meanings that may or may not be related to the old spiritual meanings.⁶⁷³

6.4. Sacred places in local stories

Above, I described visitors to Sámi sacred places in the light of observations made during fieldwork. However, sacred places are not always visited from afar. They are also meaningful to local people, both Sámi and others. Sacred places are used to build one's identity and to gain a cultural connection with one's ancestors. The tradition associated with ethnic religion is still alive. According to Inga-Maria Mulk, many Sámi experience a strong social and historical connection to the sacred places of their ancestors.⁶⁷⁴

Some of the artefacts found at sieidis have probably been left by locals. As I mentioned above, items such as coins, alcohol, and quartz are associated with many traditions. Customs related to offering may have remained strong even long after the turn of the 20th century. Even nowadays there is talk of people who have brought offerings to sieidis. People still visit the Porviniemi (75) sieidi in Muonio in connection with fishing.⁶⁷⁵ Likewise, Veikko Sarre told us that, as late as in the 1950s, whenever his mother Saara Inka Sarre went fishing, she took a part of the catch to the sieidi at Lake Nitsijärvi in Inari (Koskikaltiojoen suu, 29). Thanks to this, Sarre says, his mother had "good fishing luck".⁶⁷⁶

Sieidis are also still considered as possessing power. Veikko Sarre also told us that when he visited the sieidi at Lake Nitsijärvi with his relatives, one of them took a piece of stone from the sieidi and put it in the pocket of his trousers. However, his trousers would no longer stay on. When they left the sieidi, the trousers kept sliding down until the man had to turn around and bring the stone back to the sieidi. Also three people who had touched the stone all hurt their hands.⁶⁷⁷

Sieidis may also belong a landscape of story, in which the story related to the sieidi does not necessarily have to have any connection with offering. In November 2008, Unto Autto, then 71 years old, reminisced about a story related to the sieidi at Saivovaaranpalo (63) in Muonio. The story was about a rich old woman in Raattama, who had locked her riches and jewellery in the attic of the granary and stated that she would not die so quickly that she would not have time to hide the key from

⁶⁷³ Meskell 2004, 177–219; cf. Byrne 2009, 75.

⁶⁷⁴ Mulk 2003, 130.

⁶⁷⁵ Autto 2008, interview.

⁶⁷⁶ Sarre 2009, personal communication.

⁶⁷⁷ Sarre 2009, personal communication.

others. However, she met her end when taking a break from her journey and sitting on the sieidi at Saivovaaranpalo, where a bear came and attacked her. She only had time to throw the keys into the forest but not to hide them before the bear killed her. The keys were later found in the forest.⁶⁷⁸

Sieidis thus form in many ways a living tradition also among locals. The material found in archaeological studies that was brought to sieidis in the recent past is one indicator of this still-living tradition. However, the beliefs and values associated with sieidis nowadays require a dedicated, extensive study of oral tradition. Within the framework of this study, we must be satisfied with modern excavation finds and stories inspired by archaeological research as reflections of modern meanings.

6.5. Summary

Stories told by locals in connection with or after archaeological research show that sieidis are still attributed with meanings and used up to recent times. Furthermore, finds dating to the last few decades indicate the recent use of sieidis. Finds from the late 20th and early 21st century consist mainly of coins and some personal items. Some of the modern offerings, such as coins and alcohol, continue old traditions, but some of the artefacts left also reflect new practices. These new practices may be associated with many kinds of activity. The bunches of sprigs, tobacco, pine cones, and quartzite encountered in connection with the excavation have been associated with neo-pagan activity, which is indicated by similar offerings in Britain, for example, and oral information acquired in an interview. On the other hand, especially neo-shamanistic activities can be intermixed with tourism, as indicated by the tealight candles found at Taatsi. Travel to sieidis can take many forms and break the norms of authenticity that dominate the discussion on cultural heritage. Altogether, even today, sieidis are still surrounded by the activities of many groups and by changing meanings.

⁶⁷⁸ Autto 2008, interview.