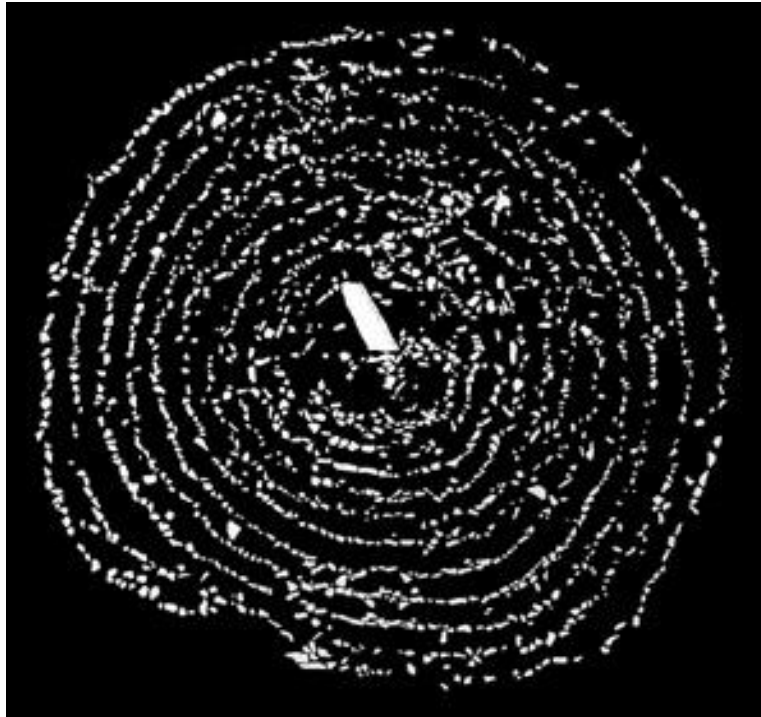




SÁMEDIGGI SAMETINGET

VÁRJJAT SIIDA

WORLD HERITAGE LIST: A TENTATIVE LIST SUBMISSION



October 2023

Written by Audhild Schanche for the Sámi Parliament in Norway

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1 NAME OF PROPERTY: VÁRJJAT SIIDA

Várjjat is the Sámi name for Varanger, the north-easternmost fjord in Norway and its surrounding landscapes. Várjjat Siida is the old territorial unit of the Varanger Sámi. The term *siida* is further explained below.

2 STATE, PROVINCE OR REGION

Norway, County of Finnmark.



Figure 1. Municipalities in Finnmark county. Map from Store norske leksikon.

3 LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE, OR UTM COORDINATES

(centrepoinets)

SITES	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	UTM Northing	UTM Easting
Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes	70°7'47"N	29°2'34"E	7781642	577480
Ruovdenjunlovta/Gropbakkengen	70°9'33"N	28°34'49"E	7778503	559761
Rissebávte/Gressbakken	70°4'29"N	28° 49'6"E	7775249	569150
Gollevárre	70°7'8"N	28° 15'24"E	7779615	547698
Noiddiidčearru/Kjøpmannskjølen	70°24'23"N	30°0'1"E	7813975	612251



Figure 2. Varanger Peninsula with the 5 interrelated sites. The green line marks the border of the Varanger Peninsula National Park.

4 SHORT PRESENTATION OF THE COMPONENT SITES

The serial nomination includes five components within the Varanger Peninsula, the land bridge connecting the peninsula to the mainland and 12 km along the southern coast of the Varanger fjord. The five sites testify in an outstanding way to how settlement, livelihood and religion are interconnected through time and space, and also to how climate and geological changes have affected the environment. The latter is especially evident at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes, which also in other respects may be seen as the core site linking the five together.

Anthropological literature often uses the term “hunter- gatherers” for non-agricultural peoples. This term does not fit well with Arctic circumstances where edible plants are few and fishing has

been crucial. And although gathering of vitamin-rich berries likely always have been part of the autumn activities, the main food sources were wild mammals, fish, and birds. Thus, in this overview the term hunting and fishing culture, or hunters and fishers, will be used.

The sites that are identified as having potential Outstanding Universal Value are:

Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes (Sámi/Norwegian name translated to English: Fish oil stone/Morten's headland): A unique coastal settlement which has been occupied for 12 000 years. It includes activity areas from the first post-glacial habitation, vestiges of 265 dwellings dated between 7000 BC and 1900 AD, as well as an adjoining burial ground with more than 400 graves used from 800 BC to AD 1700 AD. The site also includes a number of sacrificial and sacred places of various ages. One of them, Ceavccageadge, has given the place its Sámi name. Located in Unjárga/Nesseby municipality.

Ruovdenjunlovta/Gropbakkengen (Iron point cove/Pit hill field) in **Stuorravuonna/Karlebotn** (Big fjord/Tradesman's bay): A settlement site containing the vestiges of as many as 115 pit houses that date from 4000 to 3000 BC. Located in Unjárga/Nesseby municipality.

Rissebávte/Gressbakken (Grass slope): A settlement site with the vestiges of 15 massive semi-subterranean houses dated to the period 2200 to 1850 BC. The wall areas of the houses contain huge midden deposits. Located in Unjárga/Nesseby municipality.

Gollevárre (Golden Mountain): A hunting site containing possibly the largest pitfall system ever recorded in the Arctic. It contains a total of 1979 single pits for trapping wild reindeer, with an adjoining settlement and processing site dated to AD 1200 to 1650. Located in Deatnu/Tana municipality.

Noiddiidčearru/Kjøpmannskjølén (Shamans' rock field/Merchant's ridge): An impressive wild reindeer hunting site containing large funnel-shaped trapping systems organized around two large stone-built corrals with several kilometre-long drivelines. The site also contains hundreds of hunting blinds, meat caches, hearths, and other structures. The site was likely used within the period AD 1100 to 1600. Located in Båtsfjord municipality.

5 CONTEXT, TERMS AND BACKGROUND

5.1 Towards a Sámi history and archaeology

The Sámi is an indigenous people inhabiting the region of *Sápmi*, the Sámi name for their territory. Today it encompasses large northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and most of the Kola Peninsula in Russia. The Sámi language, which is divided into 10 sub-languages, belongs to the Finno-Ugric language family.

The name of the northernmost county in Norway, Finnmark, derives from the Old Norse form *Finnmørk* (*finn* was the old Norse term for Sámi). In Norse times the name referred to the land of the Sámi and extended far beyond today's Finnmark County.

Research on the Sámi past has for long been heavily affected by the prejudices and asymmetries characterizing the relation between the Sámi and the Norwegian majority population. From the second half of the nineteenth century, in the era of Social Darwinism, nationalism and nation-building, the historical disciplines favoured a particular national narrative. Norway's history was the history of Norwegians, and Norway the homeland for them and their forefathers.

The presence of the Sámi did not fit well with the nationalist conception of a cultural and ethnic homogenous country. Thus, they were early to be seen as a “foreign” people that had migrated to Norway from the east. As for other indigenous and marginalized peoples, moreover, they were seen as static and outdated, as a people of the past but nevertheless without a history. Accordingly, their appropriate place for scholarly inspection was ethnography rather than history and archaeology (Hansen and Olsen 2014:16-21).

Important archaeological exceptions to this attitude of distancing were Ole Solberg (1909), Gutorm Gjessing (1935, 1942) and, not the least, Povl Simonsen (1961, 1963, and 1975). As early as in 1959, he formulated a question that can be seen as a forerunner to later theories of Sámi ethnicity as the result of social and cultural processes:

“On this basis, one concludes that the crucial question: “When did the Sámi arrive” may simply be wrongly posed. Instead, we should be asking “At what point in time did a concept arise that we can permit ourselves to call Sámi?” (Simonsen 1959:17 (Translated from Danish original text)).

In the wake of the Sámi struggle for political and cultural rights during the 1970s and 1980s, the ethnographic hegemony was contested, and in the 1980s Sámi history and archaeology emerged as visible academic fields. Since then, a number of works on Sámi history and prehistory has been published. A comprehensive contribution in English is the book *Hunters in Transition. An outline of Early Sámi History* (Hansen and Olsen 2014). It discusses important issues such as the formation of Sámi ethnicity, interaction with chieftain and state societies, and the transition from hunting to reindeer herding. The importance of the cultural heritage of Várjjat Siida is manifested throughout the book.

5.2 Siida

The main component of the historically known Sámi social organisation was the *siida*. The term denotes both a social and a territorial unit; that is, a local community formed by a group of households as well as the territory which they inhabit and collectively use. The sharing of hunting products and the existence of collective institutions above the household level are also regarded as constitutive features (for a detailed discussion of the term, see Hansen and Olsen 2014:168 -174).

The *siida* territorial organization goes back to the time when fishing and hunting were the main subsistence activities (Vorren and Manker 1981). It is best known from Skolt Sami areas on the southern side of the Varanger fjord, where it was maintained into the beginning of 20th century (Tanner 1929).

Economic activities, including hunting, fishing, whaling and berry picking, were organised at the *siida* level. Such marine and terrestrial resources have formed a core basis of Sámi livelihood and

culture. Besides archaeological finds, including rich faunal assemblages from midden deposits, this is well documented in written sources (H. Olsen 1967; Odner 1992; Hodgetts 2010).

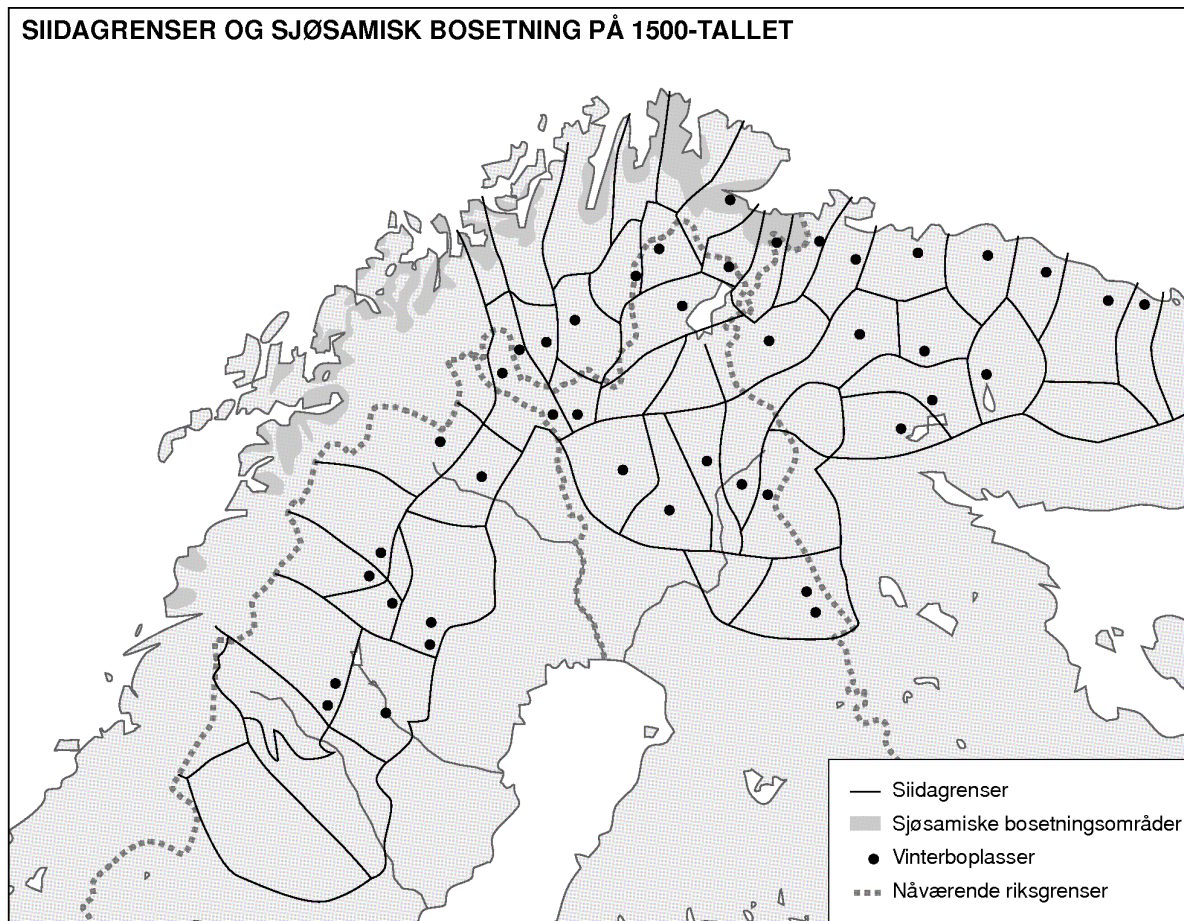


Figure 3. Reconstruction of siida territories and coastal Sámi habitation in the 16. century. From *Norsk historisk leksikon*, 2. opplag, 3. utgave (2004).

The availability of food resources depended on the seasonal migration patterns of reindeer, marine mammals, fish, and seabirds, as well as the ripening of berries. To access the available terrestrial and marine resources in different locations, as well as firewood during the winter, the Sámi sustained a semi-nomadic way of life, moving between two to three seasonal sites. In general, several families lived together at winter sites near the base of the fjord. During spring and summer, they split up in family units and moved to the outer coast. However, the household autonomy was strong, and families could choose to do otherwise (Kolsrud 1961; Odner 1992).

Today, the reindeer herding *siida*, defined as group of reindeer owners that practice reindeer husbandry jointly in a defined area, and also the reindeer herd, is an adaptation of the ancient siida principles to modern large-scale nomadic reindeer herding.

5.3 Language and identity

We do not know what language(s) the first inhabitants in Varanger or elsewhere in Sápmi spoke, or what they called themselves. The Paleo-European languages were spoken before the arrival of the European language families of today: Indo European, Uralic and Altaic. The Sámi

languages form a branch of the Uralic language family. A substrate of loan words from unidentified non-Indo-European and non-Uralic languages are found in various Finno-Ugric languages, most notably Sámi (Aikio 2012; Sammallahti 2001).

The origin of the Sámi has since long been debated: they have been declared as the remnants of a European Stone Age population and as late intruders from the east. Both views were in 1983 challenged by Knut Odner. With reference to Barth (1969), he explained Sámi ethnogenesis as a social phenomenon and way of organizing transactions between groups, taking place when interactions between hunting societies and farming communities increased. According to Odner, this process, resulting in the adoption of a Finnic language that later developed into Proto-Sámi, took place in southern Finland) in the Roman Iron Age (AD 1-400).

This has later been debated (for a presentation of this debate, see Svestad and Olsen 2023). Today, most authors see Sámi culture and ethnicity as the result of cultural and economic differentiation processes among hunter-gatherer groups in Fennoscandia during the last millennium BC, where the forefathers of the Sámi upheld a hunter-gatherer economy while others turned to agriculture (see Hansen and Olsen 2014, 9-31, 39-44). This interactive model assumes that ethnic identities are relational, and do not evolve in a vacuum. Others point out that there also were internal reasons for the maintenance of Sámi identity through times. According to Vladimir Šumkin (2008), the extreme natural conditions compelled the Sámi to choose a distinctive pattern of development which permitted them to preserve their ethnic consciousness and certain elements of their traditional culture.

Finnish researchers within the fields of historical and comparative linguistics have recently revived the former migrationist hypothesis (e.g. Heikkilä 2014; cf. Svestad and Olsen 2023, 1-6). Svestad and Olsen points out that a notable feature of these studies is that their reasoning leans on outdated knowledge on archaeological research on the Sámi past, that of Northern Norway in particular. With reference to research on scree graves, bear graves, sacrificial sites and settlement sites, Svestad and Olsen maintain that the ethnographically known Sámi culture originated in the last millennium BC. In their view, the archaeological record provides strong evidence for considerable continuity – in settlement, organization of domestic space, burial patterns, and ritual practices. The long time span of the scree burials, dating from 900 BC to AD 1600/1700, are of particular relevance in this respect.

6 VÁRJAT SIIDA

6.1 Introduction

Várjjat Siida, sometimes called Várnjárgga siida, is the old territory of the Varanger Sámi. It covers most of the Varanger peninsula, the land bridge between Unjárga-Nesseby and Deatnu-Tana and about 40 km along the southern side of Varanger fjord and the adjoining inland. Vorren (1980) depicts the Varanger Sámi Siida as excluding most of Berlevåg municipality, as does the reindeer herding siida of today. However, according to local tradition in Unjárga/Nesseby, the Varanger Sámi held their reindeer in areas in Berlevåg as late as the early 1900s.

Cultural heritage in Varanger – Várjat in Sámi - is extraordinarily rich and deep. The area was settled about 12 000 years ago, and archaeological evidence shows continual habitation since

that time, as evidenced by site 1) Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes. The climatic conditions as well as favourable soil acidity have ensured exceptional preservation of organic materials, including human remains and artefacts that would have disappeared long ago at sites in warmer climates.

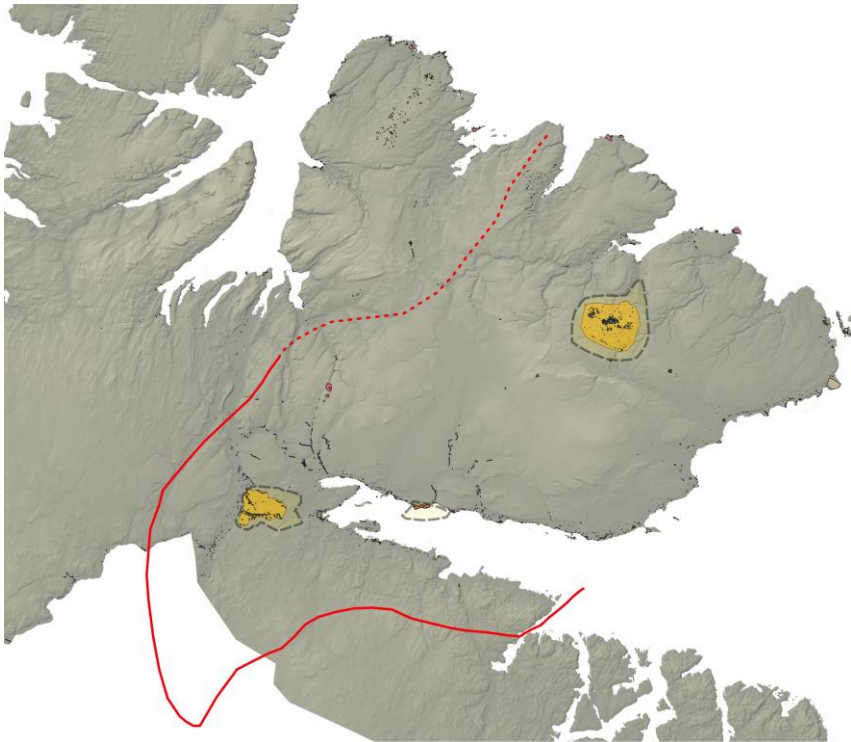


Figure 4. Red line: Outline of the Varanger Sámi Siida. The dotted line marks where the border is somewhat uncertain. The three larger sites are marked in yellow. Map: Jan Ingolf Kleppe.

The Varanger area has become a major reference point in archaeological research in northernmost Europe. Archaeological finds, from settlement and burial sites alike, show that fishing, sealing, birding, and wild reindeer hunting were core activities through all periods up to AD 1600-1700 (Solberg 1909, Simonsen 1961, Olsen 1967, Renouf 1981, K. Schanche 1988, 1994, 2005; Odner 1992; Hodgetts 2010; Brown et al. 2022).

6.2 Landscape and resources

The Varanger Peninsula is the largest peninsula in Norway, and is situated far north of the Arctic, at approximately 70°N. It is delimited by the Varanger fjord to the south, the Tana fjord and river to the west and the Barents Sea to the north and east. It is situated far north of the Arctic Circle. The 10°C isotherm in July, commonly used to define the Arctic region, runs south of the peninsula.

30 000 years ago, Finnmark was covered by a heavy ice sheet. This sheet was part of the large glacier that covered the entire Scandinavian Peninsula and northern Germany and the Baltics. Despite its Arctic location, the coastal areas of Varanger experienced the end of the last Ice Age long before most other parts of Scandinavia, perhaps earlier than 15 000 years ago. In other parts of Norway, the ice cap started to melt about a 1000 years later. Around 11 000 years ago also the inner parts of the fjords in Finnmark were bare. Between 9 000 and 7 000 BC the glacier had disappeared also in the interior parts of Finnmark.

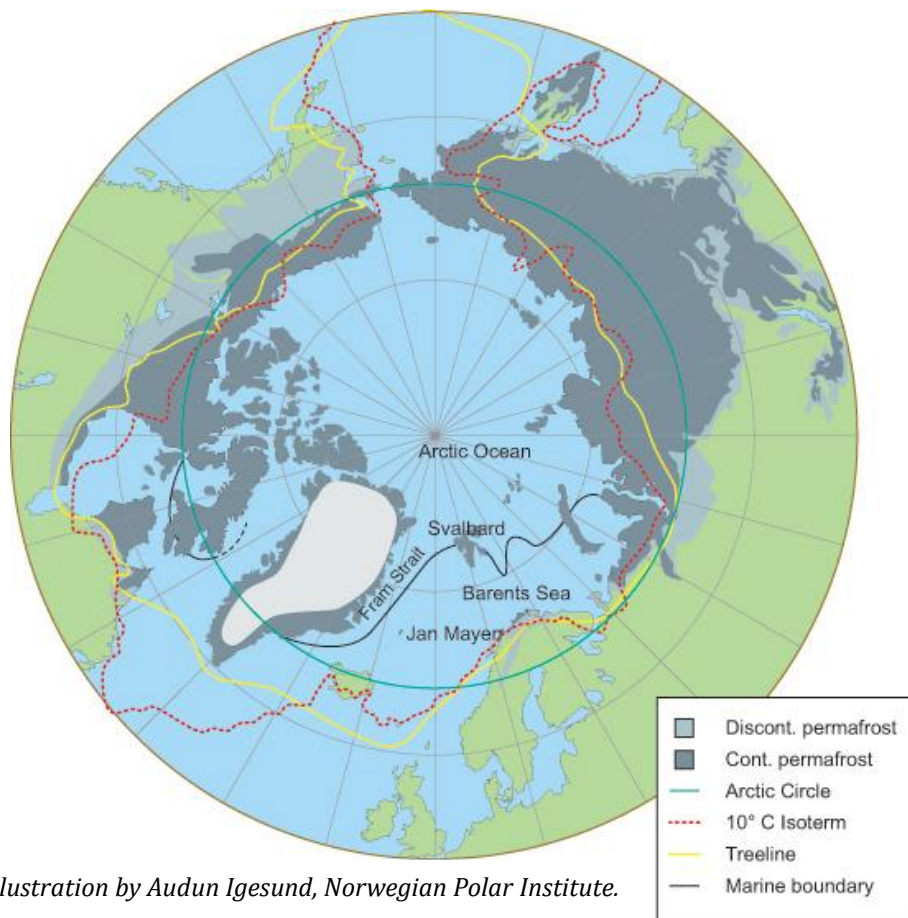


Figure 5. Illustration by Audun Igesund, Norwegian Polar Institute.

The Varanger peninsula mostly consists of upland plateaus, and large parts of the higher ones are dominated by block fields from earlier ice-ages and ice-free periods. These plateaus constitute an unusually ancient landscape in Northern Europe and were mostly shaped before the last Ice Age, which peaked about 21,000 years ago and ended about 11,500 years ago.

During the last and earlier ice ages, the ice lay stationary over much of the peninsula. Except for melt water channels, some of them older than the last Ice Age, it therefore had little effect on the landscape (Fjellanger et al. 2006). Movements in the ice cap left about three thousand rim or circular moraines, which are known from just a few other places in the world, and then in only small numbers (Ebert and Kleman 2004).

In the period between early melting and complete disappearance of the glacier the landscape was open, and the vegetation was characterized by small bushes, shrubs, and grass. Eventually small forests of birch started to form.

Between 7 000 and 3 800 BC there was a period of warmer climate. The main part of the interior of Finnmark and the inner parts of the fjords were covered by pine forests. Pine and birch grew side by side in the outer coastal areas. The warm period ceased around 4000 BC, and the climate was gradually cooling thereafter. As a consequence, a deforestation took place in the outer coastal areas. Since around 1800 BC the vegetation has been approximately like it is today (Sjøgren and Damm 2019).

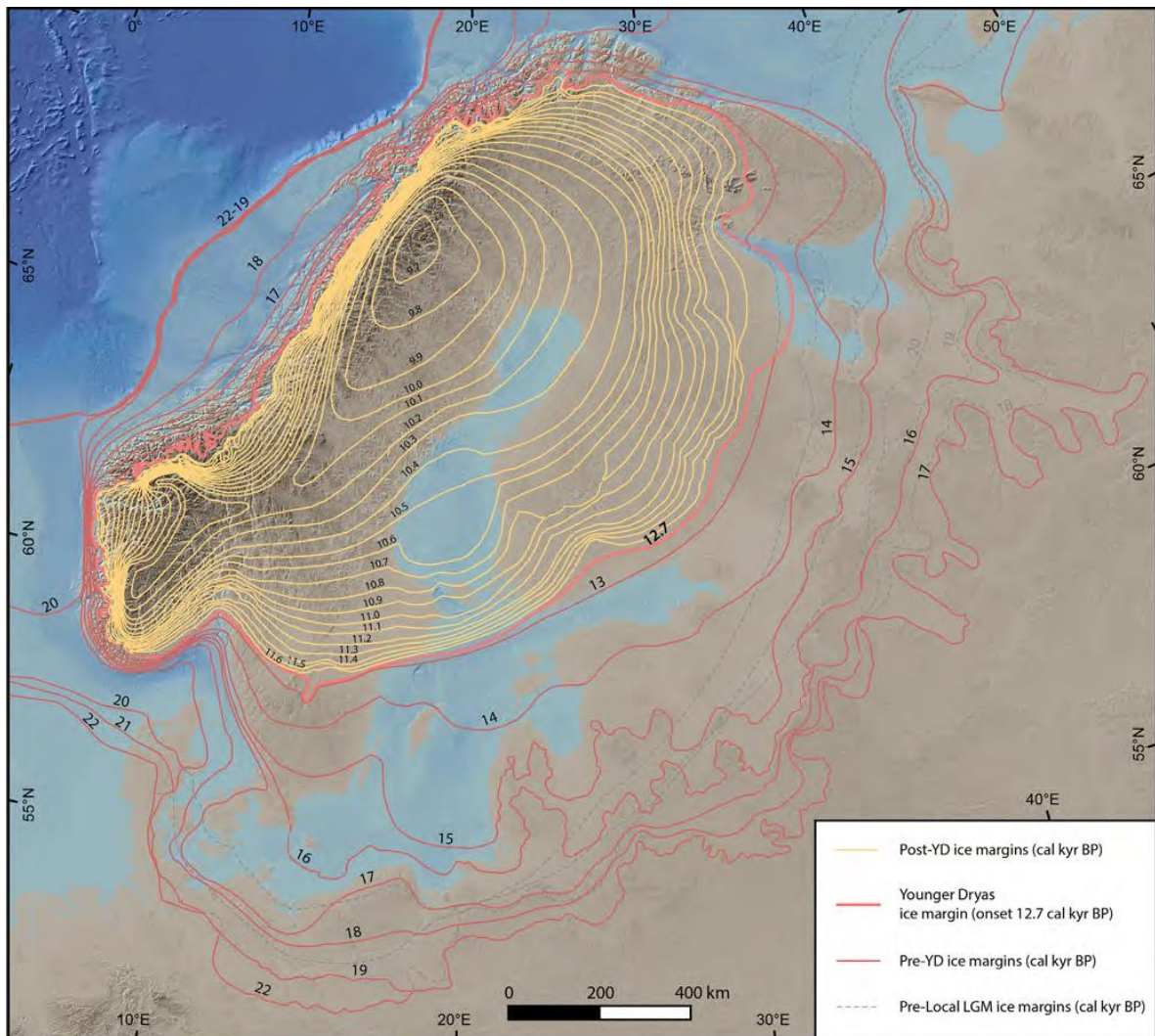


Figure 6. The Fennoscandian ice sheet retreated early from the Varanger Area, and 12 000 years ago the entire Varanger Peninsula was deglaciated. From Stroeven et al. 2015.

Close to the shore, the terrain is characterised by sediments and cliffs. The most conspicuous coastal sedimentary forms of the Varanger Peninsula are the raised beach ridges produced by the post-glacial rebound. The beach ridges often run in parallel lines, but can also crosscut, due to landscape forms, gradients, local climate and wave force variations.

The fossil beaches along the Varanger Fjord have frequently been studied by geologists. An early article by Aubrey Strahan, later to become Director of the Geological Survey of Great Britain states that though readily recognized all round Northern Norway, they are particularly well developed in Varanger:

“The long slopes leading up to the interior can be seen from the sea to be diversified by a succession of terraces, too numerous to count, and lying one above the other up to a height of nearly 300 feet above the present shore.” (Strahan 1897, see also Sanjaume and Tolgensbakk 2009).



Figure 7. Beach ridges in Varanger. Photo: Tormod Amundsen, Biotope arkitekter.

The climatic conditions in our era, with relatively low temperatures and a limited amount of precipitation, has resulted in the area's sparse accumulation of plant debris and limited amount of mountain birch woodlands. However, contrary to what one may think in view of latitude and climate, Varanger is an area of great natural abundance. It is a contact zone for diverse natural habitats and species that elsewhere are found at a great distance from each other, thus making a variety of resources available within a limited area.

The wide Varanger fjord provides ideal conditions for productivity of fish and sea mammals. It is a "false fjord", as it was not carved out by glaciers but shaped by a geological fault, and therefore lacks the underwater entrance threshold characterizing proper fjords.

In the Varanger fjord, the warm waters from the Gulf Stream mix with the colder and less saline waters from the Arctic Ocean, causing vertical circulations that favours the production of plankton. It is also the only Norwegian fjord opening to the east, to the rich fish spawning grounds of the Barents Sea. It is visited by migratory fish species and constitutes a spawning ground for others.

Important fish species are cod, saithe and haddock, and also halibut and flounder. Important too are Atlantic salmon and anadromous trout and char, which enters the rivers in Varanger every spring/summer. Sea mammals include common and grey seals, harbour seals, white-beaked dolphin, orcas and minke, fin and humpback whales. Harbor and grey seals are stationary, while ringed seal, harp seal, hooded seal and bearded seal visit the fjord during winter and spring.

As for terrestrial resources, the Varanger Peninsula provides an ideal grazing land for reindeer. It is a meeting place for plant species from the High Arctic and Eastern Siberia as well as species that are more southerly. In addition to the rich pastures of lichen, grasses and herbs, the snow patches, naked rock, block fields and windy shores offer the reindeer refuge from heat and troublesome insects.

Due to the climate, the vegetation in the higher areas peak in late summer, so the reindeer have access to fresh plants for a prolonged season. Furthermore, before national borders divided the land, there were no barriers to the land of today's Russia and Finland. This made rich winter grazing lands to the south and east accessible for the reindeer.



Figure 8. Reindeer grazing close to Noiddiidčearru. Photo: The Sámi Parliament in Norway.

Regarding other terrestrial animals, Varanger has healthy populations of red foxes, Arctic hares, Eurasian ermines, and otters. The population of elks have been rising the later decades. Brown bears now live in the interior and southern areas near the Russian borders (the Pasvik Valley), and stray animals can sometimes be seen on the northern side of the fjord. Arctic foxes were abundant until the beginning of the 20th century but now only a few couples are breeding. Extinct are also beavers and wolves.

The Varanger region is one of the Arctic areas richest in birdlife. It lies directly in the path of migrating birds, and the advantageous biotopes, combined with the rich resources of the adjacent ocean, attract a myriad of bird species in great numbers. The distances between the continents are short here at the top of the planet, so it is visited by eastern, High Arctic and occasionally North American species.



Figure 9. View from the burial ground at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes towards a kittiwake birdcliff inside the protected area. Photo: Varanger Sámi Museum.

6.3 The Varanger Sámi

The Varanger peninsula, called Varnjárga in Sámi, includes Unjárga/Nesseby, Vadsø, Vardø, Båtsfjord, Berlevåg and parts of and Deatnu/Tana municipalities.

Until reindeer pastoralism and small-scale husbandry was taken up in this area around AD 1600-1700, Sámi livelihood was based on hunting and fishing. Even in the following centuries this livelihood was important, especially among those many Sámi who did not become reindeer pastoralist. The traditional settlement pattern was characterized by an annual cycle of transhumance. The main habitation site was the winter site, situated at the inner end of the fjord and sometimes a bit away from the coast.

In the fall the wild reindeer herds migrated from the outer coast to the western part of the siida. This was the time for the communal reindeer hunt, by bow and arrow and trapping systems in the interior part of the peninsula and in pitfall systems along the river valleys. The trapping system visible in the archaeological record reveals that a previously unmatched mass hunting of wild reindeer developed especially from the 13th century onwards (Hansen and Olsen 2014:175).

Trapping and hunting small game and ptarmigans were important activities in the fall and winter. In the Viking and Medieval Ages, furs from species such as arctic and red foxes, Eurasian stouts (ermine), beaver and reindeer were important products in the exchange with Russian (Novgorodian) and Karelian traders further southeast, and furs were also the main tax item alongside dried fish.



Figure 10. Illustration of a Varanger Sámi on skis. From Martinière 1671.

During spring and summer, the Sámi moved to sites at the seaward end of the fjord and the outer coast for fishing, sea mammal and seabird hunting, and gathering of eggs and down. Another activity during late summer and early fall was berry picking, especially of cloudbberries. The harbour seal was the most hunted marine mammal. While whales were not actively hunted, the Sami would occasionally kill whales that would stray into shallow water and get trapped at low tide. Historical sources as well as local traditions tell that powerful shamans (*noaidi*) in Varanger could joik (traditional Sámi singing style) whales to the shore.

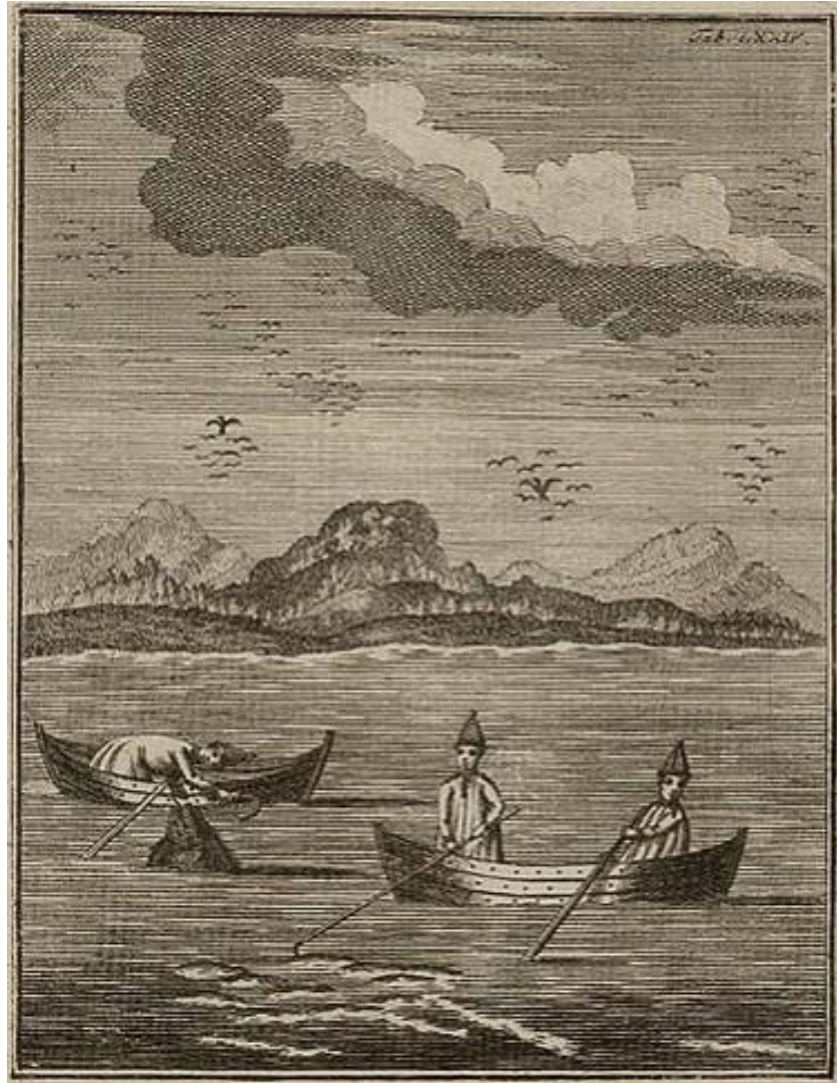


Figure 11. Coastal Sámi fishing of halibut and saithe, the latter with gaff hooks. Engraving by Oddvart Helmsøldt de Lode (1726 – 1757). From Leem 1767.

From the Middle Ages onward, Sámi economy and social and religious values came into extreme pressure from outside societies. At the outer coast of Finnmark, a Norwegian colonization took place, starting in the 13th century. The colonisation was motivated by the increased significance of commercial fishing, especially after the Hanseatic League was established in Bergen. With the colonization came the establishment of Norwegian governmental strongholds, including fortresses, and the building of churches.

In the early 14th century, the first fortification and a church in Finnmark was established in Vardø, at the easternmost tip of the Varanger peninsula. During the 15th and 16th centuries, a number of Norwegian fishing settlements were established along the outer coast. Russian interests, initially organised through the extensive trade network of the feudal city state of Novgorod, at the same made their economic and political interests manifest, and from the 16th century the Swedish kingdom actively started to compete over resources here (Niemi 1980; Hansen and Olsen 2014).

The economic pressure on the local economy culminated in the late 16th century, when the Varanger Sámi were taxed by three states simultaneously (Denmark-Norway, Sweden, and Russia). The huge trapping systems and the mass trapping of reindeer they testify to, were a direct outcome of this pressure and had severe consequences. The wild reindeer population was seriously diminished. In the wake, pastoralism developed as the new reindeer economy, causing an economic differentiation of the Varanger Sámi.

Moreover, while direct colonization in terms of establishment of settlements was restricted to the outer coast of Finnmark for a long period, this changed from the late 16th century onwards. Due to numerous factors, such as low prices for cod and a hampering trade monopoly upheld by Bergen merchants, the fishing villages of the outer coast declined. Some people left and went south again, but others moved in along the fjords, where the conditions for farming were better. There, they took over the old spring and summer sites of the Sámi.

When reindeer pastoralism emerged as specialized economy in Varanger in the 16th and 17th century, a new pastoral siida organization was also formed as an adaptation to the needs and particularities of large-scale reindeer herding. Access to pastures now became critical and territorial confinements and siida borders were adjusted into more flexible arrangements. This also applied to the size and composition of the siida units. Despite differences, the social-, economic- and family relations between reindeer herders and those with a coastal Sámi adaption facilitated cooperation and reciprocity. Intermarriage was common, and persons could move back and forth between the occupations.

Verdde is a Sámi word that denotes bonds of reciprocity and friendship between reindeer owners and coastal Sámi. In Varanger it was practiced in many ways. The reindeer herding families commonly kept a few sheep, which when they moved to the winter pastures were taken care of by their *verddes* among the more sedentary coastal Sámi. Likewise, the reindeer herders could care for reindeers owned by the coastal Sámi who despite not specializing in reindeer herding, often kept a small number of reindeer. In the censuses of 1865 and 1875 from Varanger, it appears that 23 coastal Sámi families had reindeer. In total, they had about 500-600 reindeer with between two and 70 reindeer per family (Nilsen 2009).

While reindeer herding became the main livelihood for some Varanger Sámi, the majority upheld an economy combining fishing, small game, and marine mammal hunting with small-scale livestock farming. Archaeological excavations have shown that some Varanger Sámi kept a few sheep or goats as early as the 15th century, while still moving seasonally between their settlement sites (Odner 1992). An annual cycle of transhumance, later in time also with a few cows, was upheld until around 1940, but then confined to the inner part of the fjord, in what today is Unjárga/Nesseby municipality. The old summer sites further out had then been taken over by Norwegians and Kvens.

‘Kven’ is the traditional name given to people of Finnish descent in northern Norway. The present-day Kven population descends from several waves of immigration from northern Finland and Finnish-speaking northern Sweden in the 17- and 1800s. The main wave of

immigration was to the Varanger area around the second half of the 19th century. Vadsø has since become known as the capital of the Kven people. The motive was the rich fishing available in the Varanger fjord. Immigration increased during the 1860s on account of a famine in Finland. Kvens were granted minority status in Norway in 1996, and in 2005 the Kven language was recognized as a minority language in Norway.

Norwegianization was an official policy carried out by the Norwegian government directed at the Sámi and later the Kven peoples of northern Norway (Niemi and Eriksen 1981; Minde 2005). Sámi people were regarded as primitive and uncivilized, and the Kvens as a threat to the national security. The goal was to assimilate non-Norwegian-speaking populations into an ethnically and culturally uniform Norwegian population. The assimilation process began in the 1700s, and over the course of the 1800s it became increasingly influenced by Social Darwinism and nationalism.

After the Second World War, the racial based arguments for assimilation disappeared from official documents. Norway's welfare system was cemented, and the continued assimilation policy was framed as part of a socially based welfare development of Sámi areas. The Norwegianization policy had far-reaching consequences, especially for the Coastal Sami. In many areas, language, identity, and knowledge of the past was diminished or even erased.

The Sámi Assembly of 1917 was the first Sámi National Assembly. It was held in Trondheim in February 1917, with participants from both Norway and Sweden. The Sámi National Day is celebrated on 6 February to commemorate the beginning of this assembly. A Varanger Sámi from Unjárga/Nesseby, Johan Roska, travelled the long way and participated.

It was not until much later that the national authorities took serious notice of the Sámi struggle for rights as an indigenous population. The protest against the hydroelectric development of the Alta and Kautokeino river in the 1970s and 1980s (the Alta conflict), turned the spotlight on the oppression of the Sámi and of Sámi culture. Even though the struggle against the damming was lost in 1980, the Alta conflict led the Norwegian authorities to commission a public report on the Sami's cultural and political rights (Falch and Selle 2018), leading amongst other to the establishment of the Sámi parliament.

In 1989, the first Sámi parliament in Norway was elected. In 1994, a regulation of the Cultural Heritage Act assigned the Sami parliament legal responsibility for cultural heritage monuments and sites in Sámi areas, in line with the responsibility of the regional county municipalities. It is no coincidence that the Sámi Parliament located the first office for the protection of cultural heritage monuments and sites to Unjárga/Nesseby municipality. The remarkable density of sites and the value the local population tied to this heritage was part of the reason.

Whereas the outer district of Varanger have been colonized by Norwegians and Kvens, the Unjárga/Nesseby municipality is still predominantly a Sámi community. Unlike in most other coastal areas, the Varanger Sámi have maintained their language and identity, and traditional occupations and legal arrangements have likewise been upheld. For example, the notion that families and local groups had specific rights to respective hunting and gathering in certain areas prevailed up to the 1960s, and to some extent still exists.

One possible reason for this strong maintenance of lifestyle and language can be the close relationships between reindeer herders and other inhabitants throughout the year, socially and geographically. Perhaps even being close to Vadsø (Čáhcesuolo in Sámi), the centre for

Norwegian political and administrative authorities in Finnmark, contributed to and upheld the cultural identification.

Sometimes, people with strong will and capability can make a difference. One such person was Isak Saba from Unjárga/Nesseby. In 1906, he became the first Sámi to be elected to the Norwegian parliament. He was the representative of Finnmark for the Norwegian Labour Party from 1907 to 1912. He argued (in vain) against the efforts to eradicate Sámi language and culture. Saba collected traditions and folk tales in Varanger, carried out archaeological investigations, and wrote the text to *Sámi soga lávlla*, which the Sámi Conference made the Sami national anthem in 1986 (Zachariassen 2012).

All in all, the people of Unjárga/Nesseby have upheld a deep attachment to their past, including knowledge of and care for the archaeological record of that past. The material and immaterial heritage are important elements in most people's understanding of who they are and what they come from. The extraordinary wealth of cultural monuments and sites, and the professional interest by archaeologists and other scholars for this heritage, may have played into this.

This heritage is an important indigenous heritage to which the native Sámi population is closely connected, both directly and as the likely descendants of the earliest hunters and fishers. Moreover, as archaeological studies have revealed, Varanger holds a unique position in the cultural history of the Sámi. Socio-cultural processes and developments that took place here appear to have been decisive for the formation of a number of Sámi cultural features that later were more widely adopted and thus became defining for Sámi culture and ethnicity at large. This includes religious and ritual manifestations such as burial customs and technology, including the use of large corrals for wild reindeer hunting. This method later became indispensable also to Sámi reindeer herders and may even have played a role in the transition from hunting to herding.



Figure 12. Separating the Varanger herd. Photo: Varanger Sámi Museum.

After wild reindeer roamed the area for thousands of years, the Varanger herd of domesticated reindeer has continued to graze here since the 16-17th century. Furthermore, the Sámi coastal fishery has been upheld, and together with small-scale farming, mostly sheep, is an important element in the local economy. Small game hunting, fishing in rivers and lakes as well as gathering berries and firewood have never ceased to be valuable for the household economy and are highly treasured activities for the local population.

7 THE PREHISTORY AND EARLY HISTORY OF VÁRJJAT SIIDA

7.1 Introduction

As pointed out by Brown et al. (2020), the remarkable concentration of archaeological sites in Varanger has attracted research for a long time. The fjord represents a “Maritime Core Area,” where social complexity arose in hunter–gatherer–fisher communities (Brown et al. 2020:4). Favourable natural conditions and limited modern disturbances have resulted in the preservation of an unusually high number of prehistoric and early historic sites. The slow degradation rate and thin layer of soil have ensured that even the minor alterations of the ground surface that took place during prehistoric periods, in order to construct fireplaces, erect tents, build sod houses or make graves, are still visible today. The dry and cool Arctic climate also provides favourable conditions for preservation of organic materials, and the oldest middens recorded in the area are dated to around 7500 BC.

Another notable attribute characterizing the Varanger archaeological record is that the amendments made to the landscape, including the assignment of cultural and ritual values, made active use of features shaped by nature, thereby merging the cultural and the natural. The interplay between nature and culture is directly observable in how the stepwise descending array of post-glacial beach terraces afforded attractive spaces for successive settlements, in the use of ring moraines for meat caches and screes and caves for burials and in the sacred sites shaped by nature.

Surface vestiges of prehistoric dwellings are more frequent and evident in northern Norway than in any other part of the Nordic countries. Especially rich in such traces is the very northern- and easternmost coastal stretch of Finnmark County. Thousands are found along old beach terraces in the form of round, oval, and rectangular depressions in the ground. In Varanger, where the number of house grounds and density of settlement sites is especially high, we can follow the development of dwelling forms from preboreal time to the present day, and Ceavccageađge/Mortensnes makes this decamillennial long sequence strikingly present at one and the same locality.

Varanger is a main reference area in archaeological research on the prehistory of northern Scandinavia. The sites Ruovdenjunlovta/Gropbakkengen, Rissebávte/Gressbakken and Ceavccageađge/Mortensnes, Gollevárre and Noiddiidčearru/Kjøpmannskjølen, are all “classical” sites of northern archaeology and indispensable cases in the research and research history of northern Fennoscandia.

Surveys, mappings and excavations at these sites have been carried out and published since the 1850s (e.g., Nordvi 1853, 1855, Nummedal 1936, 1937; Gjessing 1937; Vorren 1948, 1968,

1998; Vorren and Manker 1953; Simonsen 1961; Odner and Johansen 1968; Munch and Munch 1965, 1966 [1989], Kleppe 1974; K. Schanche 1988, 1994; Hodgetts 2010; Brown et al. 2022). Varanger is also the main reference area for research on Sámi pre-Christian burials in stone chambers in screes, under cliffs and on stony beach ridges (Nordvi 1853, 1855; Kleppe 1974; A. Schanche 1994, 2000; Myrvoll 2005; Ciućka 2019).

The archaeological chronology of the area traditionally occupied by the Sámi can be defined as follows:

Early Stone Age	10000 BC to 4500 BC
Late Stone Age	4500 BC to 1800 BC
Early Metal Age	1800 BC to BC/AD
Iron Age	BC/AD to AD 1050
Medieval Age	AD 1050 to AD 1550
Post-Medieval/Historical time	After AD 1550

One should note that there are some variations as to how different authors define and date the periods. The chronology displayed in the table is an adaption of the chronology presently used for northern Norway. With regard to the Varanger Fjord area, ceramics, normally seen as diagnostic of the Younger/Late (Neolithic) Stone Age, is already present at 5300 BC, though only at sites on the south side of the inner fjord and in the south-eastern interior area (the Pasvik Valley) (Skandfer 2005).

7.2 Habitation

The melting of the ice after the last Ice Age removed an enormous weight from it. This caused a process of isostatic rebound that endured throughout the postglacial period and gave shape to the present terraced coastal landscape, characterized by fossil beaches at different elevations. Ever since the first hunters and fishers arrived on this coast more than 12 000 years ago, the beach terraces along the coast have attracted human settlement, also providing an approximate means for chronological assignments. Moving down the terraced slopes takes the form of a travel in time that allows for observing changes in dwelling form and settlement outline and size. Soon people also began hunting and gathering in the interior, thus starting to use the entire territory of what later became the Várjjat Siida. This barren land has preserved the traces of these pioneers as well as those of later hunters and herders more persistently and faithfully than elsewhere, leaving us with an exceptional Arctic record of a still present past.

The shores of the Varanger fjord are exceptionally rich in remains of prehistoric dwellings. The dwellings are as a rule located in groups, often in rows, close to the shoreline zone of the time. Between Varangerbotn and the town of Vadsø alone, a stretch of about 50 km, 130 sites with clusters of pit houses and a total number of 626 houses from two periods, the Late Stone Age and Early Metal Age, have been recorded. The total number of mapped house pits and subterranean houses from the Late Stone Age and Early Metal Age in Unjárga/Nesseby municipality is 1091.

The size and form of the dwellings vary through time. The oldest ones, from the Mesolithic/Early Stone Age, consist of small circular vestiges of sod houses and tent rings. Later, the houses became rectangular, increasingly larger, and more dug-down. This development culminates at the transition between the Late Stone Age and the Early Metal Age, and in the first part of the

latter, whereupon the dwellings, as a general rule, becomes smaller, circular, and less dug-down in the Iron Age and medieval period.

The changes of house form, as well as changes in numerous other features related to the organisation of domestic space, are often interpreted in terms of factors such as settlement pattern (degrees of mobility) and social organization (family structure, degrees of social complexity) (cf. Renouf 1981; K. Schanche 1988; Olsen 1994).

Early Stone Age

There has been a long discussion on where the first people in Finnmark came from: from the East or along the Norwegian coast from the Southwest. The answer is probably that they came in several waves from different directions. However, recent research suggests that the first to arrive in Varanger came from the East, along the coast of the Kola Peninsula. Lithic material exhibit traits typical of Early Mesolithic pressure-blade technology of the east European Plain, and have been found at several sites in Varanger, one close to Ceavccagead̥ge/Mortensnes. The oldest are dated to 9659–8826 BC (Manninen, Damlien, Kleppe et al. 2021).

The Early Stone Age settlements are situated in areas with good access to the ocean, preferably on isthmuses. Most of the sites only contain lithic debris without any visible dwelling structures. However, Mesolithic dwellings are also recorded, the most numerous at Ceavccagead̥ge/Mortensnes, where they have been dated between 8230 and 7186 BC. These are discernible as shallow circular depressions of moderate size, usually around three to four metres in diameter, and are interpreted as the foundations for tents or circular turf huts.

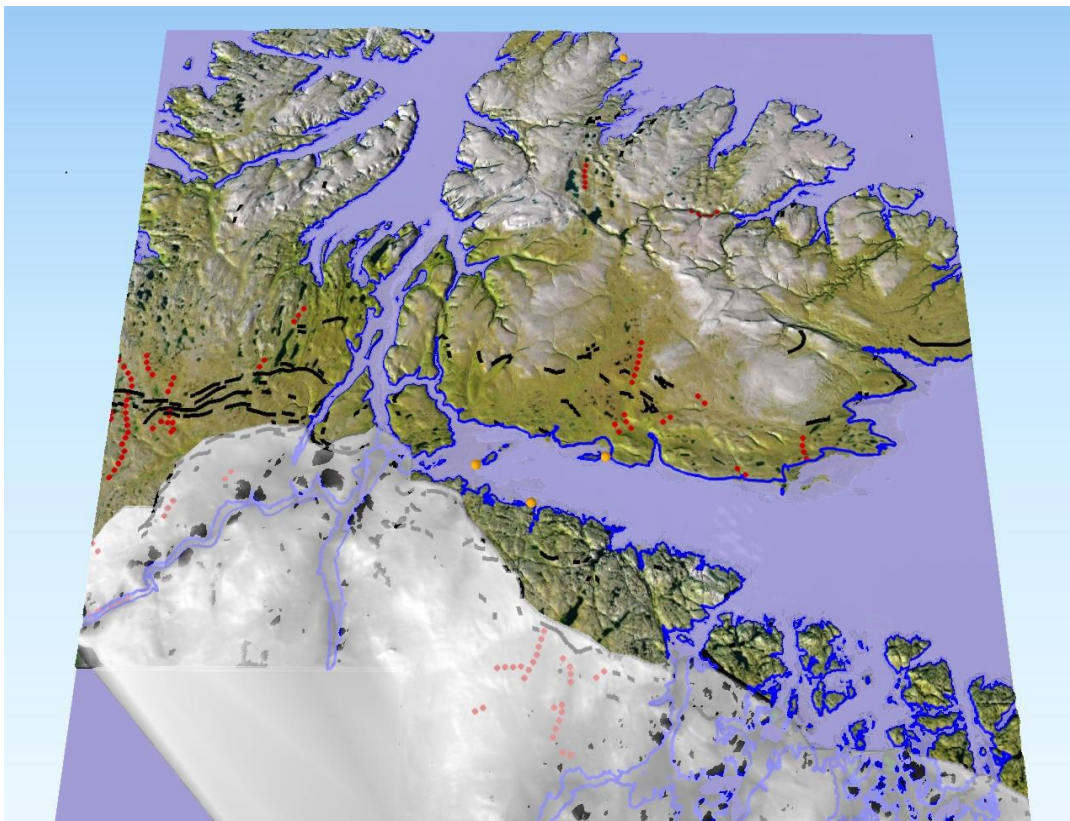


Figure 13. The yellow dots mark the earliest sites in Varanger, inhabited about 12 000 years ago. Note that the peninsula then was an island and that the ice edge was close. Map: Jan Ingolf Kleppe.

Towards the end of the Early Stone Age the dwellings increase in number, and somewhat in size and visibility, but are still quite small, with diameter up to 4 meters. The more solid ones are interpreted as the result of a more confined mobility with groups returning to the same places seasonally. The architecture is compared to the traditional circular Sámi sod house (*goahhti*, see below), containing a superstructure of wood, bark, and turf and with a hearth centrally placed at the floor. Towards the Late Stone Age, the pattern of settlement seems to have consisted of moving between two or more seasonal settlements, in addition to the use of smaller auxiliary hunting- and fishing camps.

The earliest pottery in Norway is found in the Varanger area and belongs to the Comb Ceramic tradition, which prevailed over large portions of Finland, Karelia, Russia, and the Baltic region from 5300 to 2500 BC. In Norway it is present only at sites on the south side of the inner Varanger fjord (immediately next to the sites Ruovdenjunlovta and Rissebávte) and in the interior area of south-eastern Varanger and only during the period from 5300 to 4500 BC (Skandfer 2005).

Late Stone Age

In an early part of the Late Stone Age (4500-3000 BC), a larger and more solidly built house type appeared. Named the Karlebotn type (after their Ruovdenjunlovta/Gropbakkengen namesake), these dwellings normally have a rectangular outline, a sunken floor (12 – 20 square metres) and a centrally placed hearth. They are well visible as rectangular or oval depressions on the raised beach terraces.



*Figure 14. Late Stone Age pit house sites along the western part of the Varanger fjord.
Map: Jan Ingolf Kleppe.*

At the same time, an important change in the stone tool technology also took place. Besides chipping and flaking fine grained stones, grinding slate for tools was taken up. Red, green, and grey slate eventually become the most frequently used raw material for stone tools like daggers, knives, spearheads, and arrowheads. Simultaneously, the usage of fine-grained stone like chert and fine-grained quartzite diminished.

After the 4th millennium BC, a transition to larger and deeper pit-houses with two fireplaces took place. This development culminated around 2000 BC with the appearance of the very distinct

semi-subterranean houses of the Gressbakken type, named after the type site of Rissebávte/Gressbakken (Simonsen 1961). These houses contain a deep dug-down and rectangular floor area measuring as much as 60 square meters furnished with two large and centrally aligned fireplaces; around this are massive walls with the traces of three and sometimes four entrances (K. Schanche 1994).



*Figure 15. Gressbakken house sites along the western part of the Varanger fjord.
Map: Jan Ingolf Kleppe.*

The Gressbakken houses are found primarily in the Eastern parts of coastal Finnmark and on the Kola Peninsula. Along the coast of the Varanger fjord, the southern side of the fjord included, 494 such houses have been mapped. The houses are organised in rows with up to 30 houses at one site, but usually far less.

The rich faunal material from sites such as Rissebávte/Gressbakken contains species associated with all seasons and suggests a close to sedentary lifestyle as also indicated by the very houses themselves. The material in the midden deposits also contains traces of burials, a rich bone technology, and though sparse, the first ceramics since the Comb Ceramic tradition, and the oldest metal implement known from northern Norway, in the form a copper dagger. In the same house as the dagger, a human figurine of bone was found (K. Schanche 1989, 1994), later to be taken up as the logo of the Varanger Sámi museum.

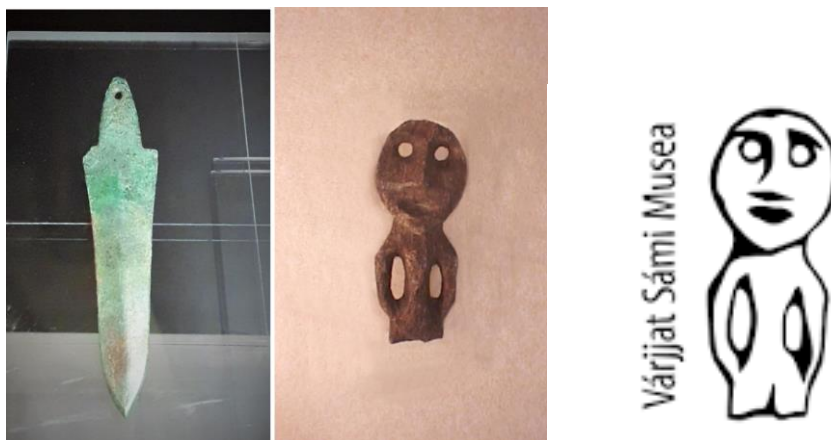


Figure 16. Copper dagger and human figurine found in a Gressbakken type house in Storravuodna/Karlebotn. Photos: Varanger Sámi Museum.

Early Metal Age

The Early Metal Age is characterised by more intensive networks between hunter-gatherers in North Fennoscandian societies and with metal producing societies in Karelia, and later also in Central- and East Russia. This increased contact with distant and distinctly different societies are seen as vital for the emergence of a collective identity among the hunting societies of northern Fennoscandia, and as a root to the formation of Sámi ethnicity (Olsen 1994; Hansen and Olsen 2014).

In the last millennium BC, the pit-houses disappeared, and was followed by an extensive settlement mobility, characterized by smaller circular houses and tent rings displaying some of the spatial features typical of the organization of Sámi domestic space (Olsen 1994; Myrvoll 2011; Hansen and Olsen 2022, cf. Ränk 1949).

Regarding dwellings and settlement patterns, the situation in the first part of Early Metal Age period is, however, less conclusive, especially in the Varanger area. Here the Gressbakken type houses were replaced by another large subterranean dwelling, the Mortensnes type, dated to the second millennium BC. These houses are also very dug down, organized in rows, and with a square or rectangular outline, though missing the entrance features of the former dwellings. The sites are fewer, but the houses at each site often more numerous than during the Gressbakken phase. Unfortunately, they are vastly understudied, and their chronology was for a long time confused (Johansen and Odner 1968).



Figure 17. Shard of Kjelmøy ceramic from Dálmmat/Kjelmøy. Photo: Olga Kvalheim, The Arctic University Museum of Norway.

Pottery was re-introduced to hunting-fishing groups in northern Fennoscandia around 2000 BC, in the form of asbestos-tempered ceramics (R. Jørgensen and Olsen 1988; E. K. Jørgensen et al. 2022). Several types and chronological phases have been identified, with the youngest being the Kjelmøy ceramics, dated to 900 - 0 BC.

Dálmmat/Kjelmøy is an island on the south side of the Varanger fjord containing two famous archaeological sites excavated by Ole Solberg in the early 20th century (Solberg 1909, 1911, 1920; Olsen 1984, 1994). The excavations yielded a very rich and well-preserved assemblage of bone implements, clear traces of iron use and a rich ceramic material. Ceramics of the Kjelmøy type has a very distinct design and ornamental style and became the predominant ceramic tradition in northern Fennoscandia in the final part of the Early Metal Age. Its wide distribution has been associated with the formation of a common identity among the northern hunting

societies, possibly acting as an ethnically distinctive element of their material culture (Jørgensen and Olsen 1988, Hansen and Olsen 2022).

Iron Age and onwards

In the Iron Age, Sámi societies continue the mobile lifeform, using the circular tents and turf huts as the most common dwelling forms. The floors are not dug down, making them less visible in the terrain than the earlier pit-houses and semi-subterranean houses. Due to this, they have only become archaeologically noticed in the last three decades. They have been identified and investigated at a number of places along the coast of Finnmark and northern Troms (Hesjedal et al. 1996; Myrvoll 2011, Hansen and Olsen 2022).

Together with the slab-lined pits, a technology for extraction of blubber oil, and narrow oblong remains of Sámi boat houses or landings, the huts document summer habitation along the outer coast during the Iron Age. They have been connected to new exchange contacts with the Norse chieftains of Northern Norway, as described also in historical sources (Henriksen 1995; Hansen and Olsen 2022).

Excavations of the floor plan of these houses have revealed a similar pattern for how the floors are organized in Sámi turf huts and tents. This type of dwelling, archaeologically named the Slettnes type, appears in the last millennium BC and continues through the Iron Age and medieval period (Hansen and Olsen 2014:60, 87). Actually, it represents the origin of the traditional Sámi dwelling used into recent times, the *goahti*.

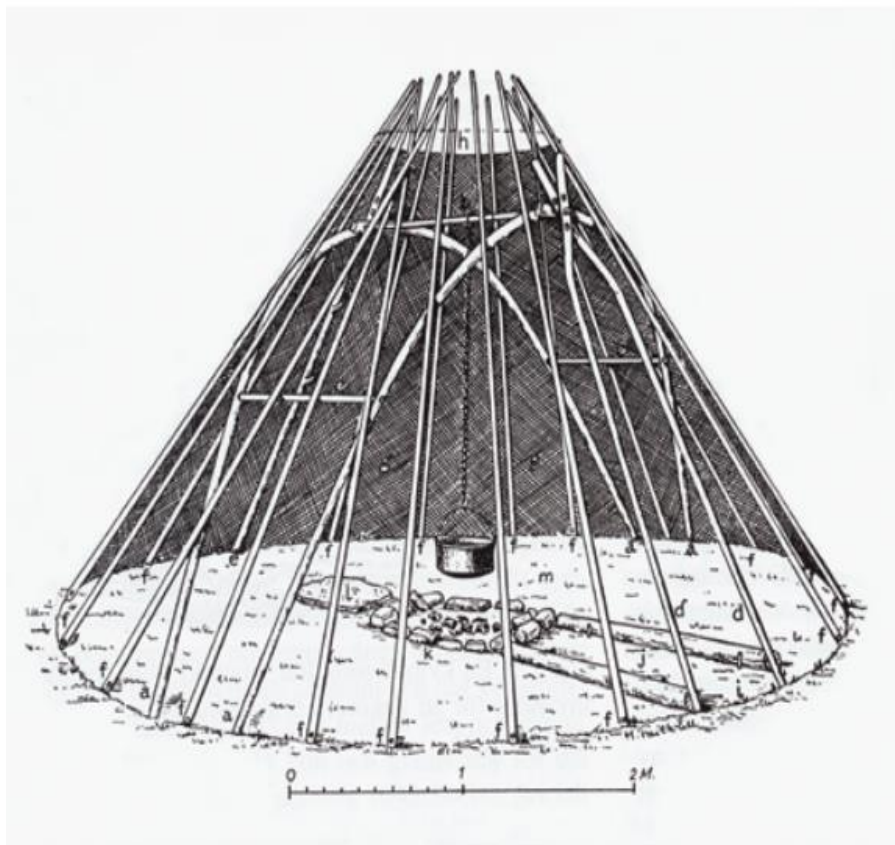


Figure 18. Drawing of a bealljegoahti. From Manker 1944.

The *goahtti* or *bealljegoahtti* (dwelling with an arch-beamed frame) consists of an inner framework of two sets of curved wooden rafters, called *bealljek*. Straight beams are pegged to the *bealljek* and poles of roundwood are laid against this frame. The structure was covered with skins and later textiles, or with overlapping sheets of birch bark, kept in place by layers of turf stacked against the sloping wall. As archaeological remains, the turf huts of this type will appear as circular rims with an interior depression. They are found all over Sápmi. It was the most common type of dwelling until the 1800s and was still in use up to the 1940s (Sjølie 2016).

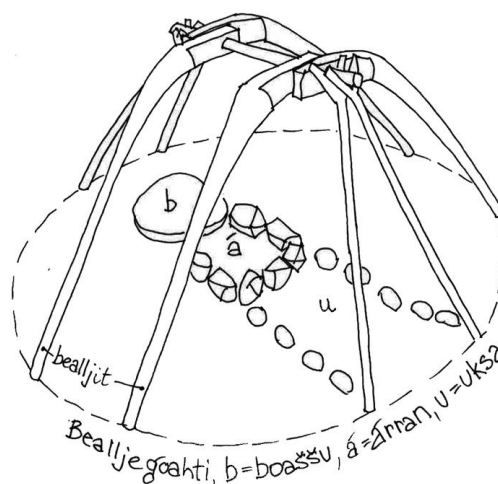


Figure 19. *Bealljegoahtti* framework and floor design. From Sjølie 2016.

A *lavvu* is a temporary dwelling in the form of a conical tent and is still in use among some reindeer herders. The light and easy to assemble dwelling enabled the herders to follow the reindeer during migration bringing the poles and covers with them. Remnants of a *lavvu* place can be difficult to detect but can be seen as a fireplace with the common Sámi floor design, or as circle of stones that held the cover in place, similar to the tent structures from the Early Stone Age. In Varanger, traces of *lavvus* are found in the interior of the peninsula and are related to both reindeer hunting and herding.

In the indigenous Sámi religion, the spatial division of the floor plan is closely associated with Sámi cosmology. In the centre is the *árran*, the fireplace, from where the smoke goes up through the smoke hole, reflecting the centre of the greater world. Right opposite the front door, behind the fireplace, is the sacred *boaššu* area where food was prepared and where the drum was kept.

The floor area was divided with stones or logs running from the door towards the fireplace, and also from the fireplace to the sacred back door behind the *boaššu*, where the weapons were placed, hunted animals brought in and dead family members carried out. On each side of this mid-axis were the space for the household members and visitors, *luoddjo* where everybody had her or his place. The dwelling and fireplace were connected with female goddesses residing under the floor: *Sáráhkka* under the fireplace, *Juksáhkka* under the door, and *Uksáhkka* under *boaššu* (Ränk 1949; Rydving 1995; Kaikkonen 2020).

Among the coastal Sámi larger, rectangular turf houses also came into use from the 17th century onwards. They were constructed with four straight posts at the corners and are often divided into two compartments, separated by an entrance area. Aptly referred to as the “common turf house/goatthi” and sometimes “joint goahtti” they accommodated both humans and livestock (mainly sheep). They were a common feature of coastal Sámi settlement during the historical period of mixed economy and were in use into the early 20th century.

At sites along the Varanger fjord, such as Ceavvcageadge/Mortensnes, vestiges of round and rectangular dwellings often form the surface of older cultural layers, dating back through the medieval and Iron Ages. Apart from continuity in use, this confined accumulation indicate how feelings of belonging may have structured settlement patterns and conceptions of home.



Figure 20. Coastal Sámi common/joint turf house in Varanger 1897. Photo: Ellisif Wessel.

7.3 Subsistence

Throughout history, the subsistence strategies of the people of Várjjat Siida have been flexible and varied, with a high degree of responsiveness to changes of landscape, climate, and resources as well as technology and social circumstances. This, together with a profound attachment to the land and to the forefathers, has created an adaptive elasticity and resilience while at the same time maintaining the social and cultural glue.

Fishing, sea mammal and small game hunting

Apart from slab-lined pits for the extraction of blubber oil from the Iron Age, and associated vestiges of boat landings, economic activities tied to fishing, sea mammal catching, and small game hunting have left few observable prehistoric vestiges.

A few structures of larger boathouses dating to the late Iron Age and of presumed Norse origin (one at Ceavvcageadge/Mortensnes) are interpreted as remnants of exchange with and taxation by the Norse chiefdoms on the western coast of Northern Norway.



Figure 21. Fishing hook of reindeer antler from Dálmomat/Kjelmøy. Photo: Ulla Schildt, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo.

The lack of archaeological structures documenting fishing and marine and small game hunting is compensated for by the rich archaeological finds of osteological material and tools of stone, bone, and antlers from habitation and burial sites in Varanger. The tools include fishing sinkers, hooks and harpoons as well as spearheads, arrowheads, and knives. The osteological material reveals a variety of fish, birds, and mammals (Solberg 1909, Simonsen 1961, Olsen 1967, Renouf 1981, Hogetts 2010)



Figure 22. Slab-lined pit in Berlevåg. Photo: Bjørnar Olsen.



Figure 23. Right: Fishing sinkers from Varanger. Left: Parts of a luster fork made of reindeer antler found in a scree burial in Vadsø. Photos: Ulla Schildt, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo.

Hunting wild reindeer

Varanger has been a focal point for discussions concerning the role and significance of wild reindeer hunting and transition to reindeer husbandry and herding (Vorren 1944, 1998; Olsen 1987; Odner 1992, 2001; Hambleton and Rowley-Conwy 1997; Risbøl 2009; Hansen and Olsen 2022; Bjørklund 2019).

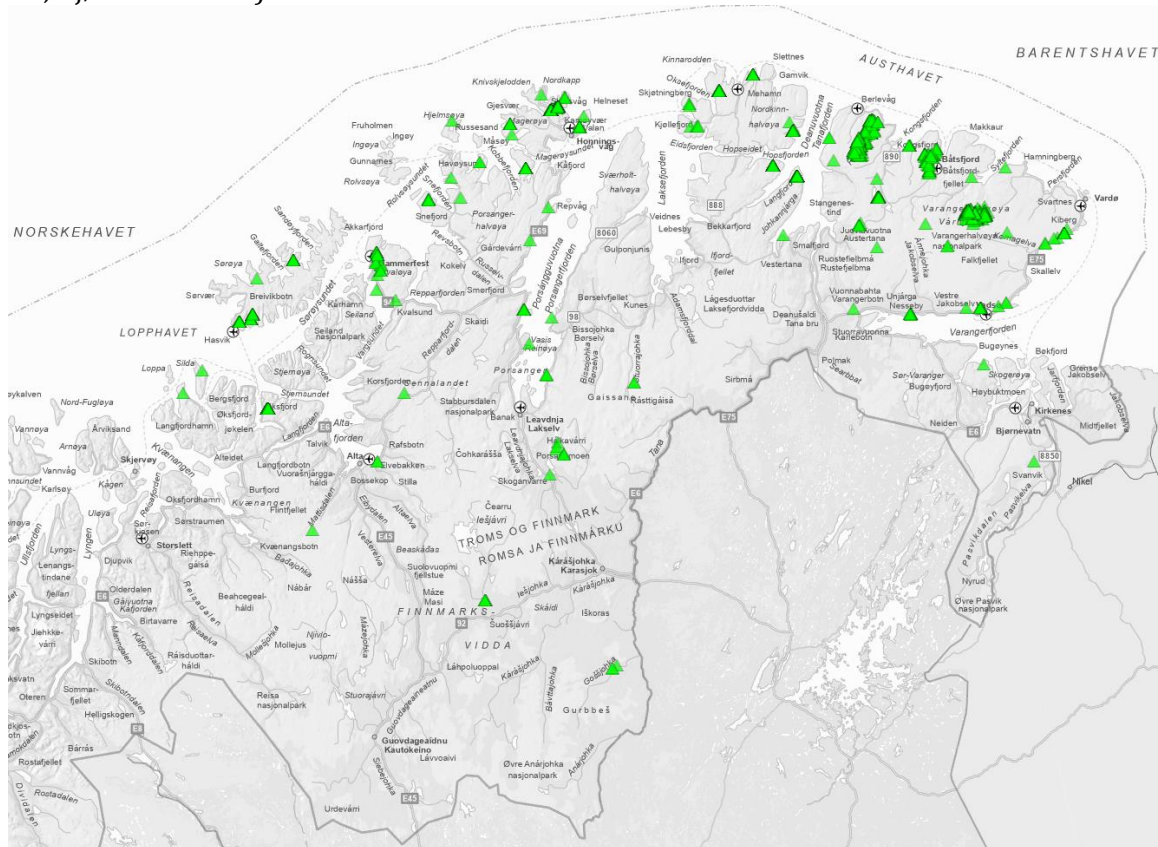


Figure 24. Distribution of documented hunting blinds in Finnmark. Map: Jan Ingolf Kleppe.

A common and widely distributed hunting structure, found in numerous numbers along the coast as well as in the interior of Varanger and elsewhere, are hunting blinds for hunting with bow and arrows. So far, 2063 hunting blinds have been documented in Finnmark. Large areas are still not surveyed. Hunting blinds have been built as long as the wild reindeer were hunted.

A hunting blind system at Rákkočearru in Berlevåg was surveyed in 2011. It consisted of 16 hunting blinds laid out in a V-shape. Lithic material was found in two of the hunting blinds. The presence of a single-edged point suggests a possible Early Mesolithic date for the use of the system. Reindeer bones dating to 11600-10760 ca BC have been found at the nearby site of Løkvika, (Kleppe 2012, 2014; Manninen et al 2021).

Hunting or trapping pits are found in large numbers across Fennoscandia. In Finnmark, close to 24 860 pits have so far been identified, making them the most common category of cultural heritage in the county (Myrvoll, Thuestad and Holm-Olsen 2011)¹. Hunting pits may have been used and reused for long periods and are thus difficult to pin down chronologically. It is also

¹ The number given in this publication has since increased.

difficult to obtain adequate organic material for radiocarbon dates from them, and the few that have been dated cover a long time span back to the Stone Age (Furseth 1995, 1996). The organic residues used for dating are most often from seeds that were found under the dugout masses, and theoretically, this material may be much older than the pits.

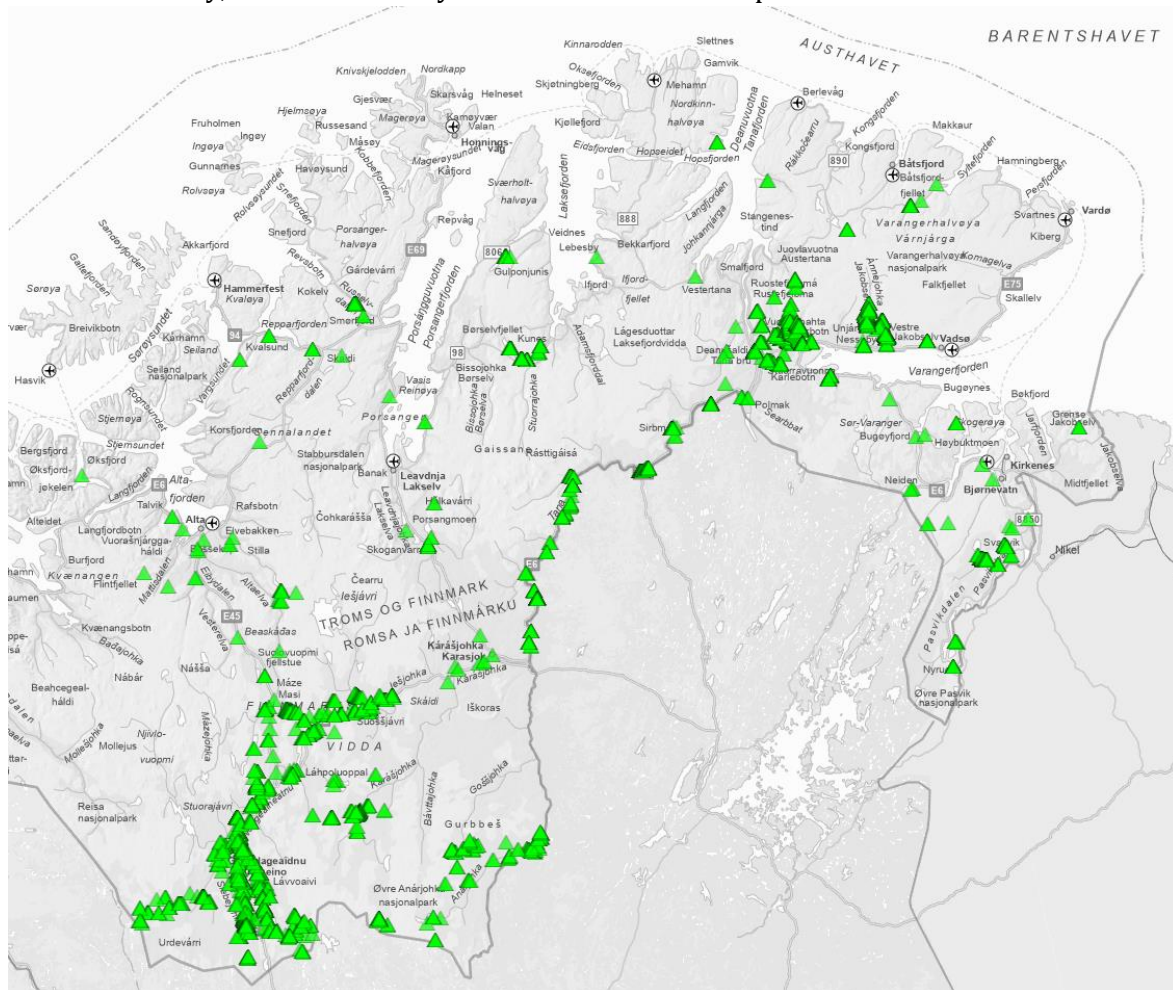


Figure 25. Distribution of documented hunting pits in Finnmark. Map: Jan Ingolf Kleppe.

The pits appear as circular or oval depressions in the ground, often surrounded by a low wall of soil. Their size normally ranges between two and five meters in diameter, with a depth of up to one and a half meters. They are commonly laid out in rows, sometimes with branches. These pit systems can be very large, consisting of several hundred individual pits. Pitfalls were dug out at places where the reindeer had their migration routes between summer and winter pastures, often traversing land bridges between lakes and bogs, or where the reindeer passed other bottlenecks in their way. In Sámi, the pitfall systems are called *suohpaš*.

In Eastern Finnmark, hunting wild reindeer came to play an important role for the coastal Sámi. This was particularly the case in Varanger (Hansen and Olsen 2022:170-177). The largest known concentration of hunting pits, numbering more than 3000, and also the largest known single system (Gollevárre), is situated on the isthmus between the Tana River and the Varanger fjord, within the old Várjjat Siida. The systems essentially form three strategic main lines that effectively block the reindeer migration to and from the Varanger Peninsula (Hansen and Olsen

2022:173). Even today, this area is a “bottleneck” when moving the reindeer herds between summer and winter pasture lands.

In the interior of the Varanger peninsula, wild reindeer were also hunted using fences built of stone forming converging lines in order to guide the reindeer to a slaughtering site, sometimes in the form of a corral. Wooden corrals and drive lines are known from many areas and are also depicted in the rock carvings in Alta (Helskog 2011).

According to Vorren, the Nenets people in Siberia built drive lines with heaps of turf in summertime. In wintertime, wooden poles and even swan wings were transported on sledges and put in the snow (Vorren 1958:6). In Northern Finland, Sámi fences built of wood for catching wild reindeer are recorded as late as the 1800s (Tegengren 1952:90-103; Fellman 1906:58-59).

In Varanger, the drive lines, extending for several kilometres, are surrounded by a large number of hunting blinds. In some places, the converging lines end in stone built trapping corrals. In Sámi, such places are called *vuopmanat*. The most magnificent and extensive of these trapping systems is located at the low mountain Noiddiidčearru/Kjøpmannskjølen in Båtsfjord municipality.

The large number of hunting structures in Varanger have been interpreted as a result of trade and taxation (Vorren 1998, Hansen and Olsen 2014). In the Medieval Period the Sámi were involved in trade networks with the (Danish-)Norwegian authorities and the Novgorod Republic, and they paid taxes to both administrations (Hansen 1996). As mentioned above, this pressure on Sámi economy continued and increased towards the 16th and early 17th century, when the Varanger area was taxed simultaneously by Denmark-Norway, Sweden, and Russia (Hansen and Olsen 2022:227).

Extensive trade, that also included English, Dutch, and German merchants, further increased the demand for furs. Tax accounts from the 17th century state that the Sámi in Varanger presented the county governor not only with furs but also living reindeer as tax for their use of the hunting sites. Furs, processed meat (smoked or salted), clothing of hides, tools, combs and spoons, and glue made of bones, were important trade items (Hansen 1984; Vorren 1998; Bjørklund 2019).

The decline of wild reindeer hunting in Varanger started sometime after AD 1600. According to records from the 17th and 18th centuries, the hunting sites were desolate by AD 1690 (Niemi 1983:182–183). It is hardly a coincidence that this date matches the first written sources that talk about domesticated reindeer being moved from the inland to the coast (Niemi 1983:186), as also suggested by the overlap with the youngest radiocarbon date from Gollevárre (Bjørklund 2019:90).

Reindeer husbandry/reindeer pastoralism

Until the 1600s, hunting, trapping, catching, and fishing formed the main livelihood activities within Várjjat Siida. The unique archaeological record of Varanger includes the terminal phase of the wild reindeer hunt when the differentiation between Sami reindeer herding and coastal Sami adaption started.

Despite being owned and herded by the Sámi, the reindeer are not considered fully domesticated, as they generally roam free on pasture grounds. Wild and tame reindeer have

similar behaviour. The migrating routes and seasonal pastures are the same. The traditional knowledge of reindeer herding and hunting combines in the intimate knowledge of the characteristics of the reindeer and reindeer herd.

Migratory reindeer herding is relatively new in Varanger, where it is identified from around 1600 AD. The last wild reindeers were hunted in the late 1800s. Taming of reindeer for draught and as decoy animals is much older and was an important part of the hunting economy.

As mentioned earlier, the Coastal Sámi in Varanger kept a number of tame reindeers. According to Bjørklund (2019), the debate on wild vs. tame reindeer has not always made a distinction between “husbandry” and “pastoralism”. The Sámi name for wild reindeer is *goddi*. The domesticated reindeer are called *boazu*. The two nouns are proto-Sámi words, thus reflecting the coexistence of domesticated wild reindeer back to 1000 – 1500 BC (Aikio 2006). Sledge runners dating to 1500 BC and resembling those in later Sámi sledges have been found in northwest Russia (Murashkin et al. 2016). In Norway, distinctive Sámi sledges (*geris*) have been found in Sámi graves dated to the Iron Age (A. Schanche 2000).

The development of reindeer pastoralism has been described as a profound change from an adaption depending on multiple resources, including wild reindeer (Bjørklund 2013, Hedman and Olsen 2009). This adaptation had come to an end around 1650. The extinction of the wild reindeer has been explained as the result of taxation, intensive hunting, and the introduction of firearms (Vorren 1973). Alternatively, it has been argued that the development of local hierarchies led to the ownership of reindeer and corrals and thus favoured a pastoral economy (Hansen and Olsen 2004:212-214).

Recent DNA-analyses of reindeer bones from Finnmark (including bones from Gollevárre) has revealed that there is no genetic relation between the old stock of wild reindeer, the *goddi*, and the current herds of domesticated reindeer, the *boazu*, and that the mitochondrial genome in Finnmark reindeer underwent a massive genetic replacement since the medieval period (Røed et al. 2018:283; Bjørnstad et al. 2012). This has led to the conclusion that the present reindeer population must have arrived from outside. According to Bergstøl (2020:36), the Sámi did not build up herds from their own, domesticated animals, nor did they use native, wild reindeer.

However, there is no historical or folkloristic evidence of such an import to Finnmark during the period in question. Bjørklund (2019:94) finds it is fair to assume that such an event, which had profound consequences, would have been memorized in one way or the other.

Two alternative theories have been proposed (Røed et al. 2018; Bjørklund 2019; Hansen and Olsen 2022:198-200). The first is that of a more gradual introduction of non-local reindeer through trade and barter in the Middle Ages. Bjørklund’s second theory is that the ‘non-native genetic signatures’ reflect an old, but small population of domesticated animals, kept for transport and other domestic purposes. This theory implies that the domestic stock must have been kept for a very long time under strict control to maintain their genetic integrity, not being able to mix with the maternal part of the wild reindeer population (the DNA markers that are used are only transmitted through maternal lineages).

Historical sources confirm that breeding constricted to male wild with tame female reindeer. Bjørklund concludes his article as follows: “Whatever explanation turns out to be correct, both theories bear witness to an indigenous creativity and competence which made the transition to pastoralism such a success.” (Bjørklund 2019:94).

7.4 Religion

The Sámi indigenous religion was a worldview and an indigenous ontology with no absolute borders between the spiritual and the physical or between humans and other living beings. As for many other indigenous peoples, the spiritual realm and the physical realm were seen as interconnected, and the relations with nature and other beings as reciprocal, sanctioned through ceremony and ritual (Hart 2010). Through offerings and other rituals, humans ensured a good relationship with gods and forces in nature. Hunting, fishing and trapping were in themselves ritual acts, characterized by mutual exchange and communication with other beings.



Figure 26. Copy of a drum owned by the noaidi Anders Paulsen. Confiscated in Vadsø in 1691. The original is at the Sámi Museum in Kárášjohka/Karasjok in Finnmark. Photo: Norsk folkemuseum.

The Sámi universe, as presented on some shaman (*noaidi*) drums, was divided into three horizontal spheres: the world of divinity, the terrestrial or earthly world of the living and the underground world of the dead. The landscape was made alive by a vast number of forces and powers, as well as the spirits of ancestors. The surroundings constituted a sacred space where relations to gods, powers, and ancestors were maintained through collective as well as individual religious rituals and practices (Svestad 2011:42; Rydving 1995: 96-103).

The *noaidi*'s ability to go into trance made him or her a general intermediary between human beings, who lived in the middle world, and the supernatural beings of the upper and nether worlds. A shamanistic form of worship in which drumming and traditional chanting, joiking, was important. The *noaidi*'s most vital task was to maintain a link with the world inhabited by departed Sámi.

According to Hultkrantz (1987), the perception of nature in the Sámi religion had its roots in the hunting lifestyle, and this persisted after the introduction of other ways of livelihood. The bear was regarded as the most sacred animal. Many rites were connected with the bear hunt, among them rules of how to treat the bones, including the practice of bear burial (Fjellström 1981[1755]; Myrstad 1996). The skeletons of other animals were sometimes treated with the same reverence.

Humans and animals alike were seen as having two souls or spirits, a free soul, and a corporeal soul respectively (Pettersson 1957:41; Storå 1971:186-87). In dreams or in trancelike states, the human free soul could leave the body and assume a concrete form. After death, the free soul released itself from the body and went to the underworld of the dead, *Jábmeáibmu* (Friis 1871:126; Bäckman 1975:85). The corporeal soul remained attached to the physical remains, the bones in particular. The souls of the dead could be harmful or helpful. Through sacrifices and rituals, the living sought assistance from their dead relatives (A. Schanche 2002c).

Burials

In Varanger, as elsewhere in Norway, only a few graves dating to the Stone Age have been identified. The dead were buried close to the dwellings, and sometimes inside the houses or in the middens outside the doors (Simonsen 1961, Renouf 1981). Three cairns have been excavated at the Ruovdenjunlovta/Gropbakkengen site, but likely predate the settlement site (Olsen 1994). Another burial, located at the late Stone Age settlement sites Nyelv in Nesseby, was excavated by Anders Nummedal in the 1930s (Simonsen 1959). A human skull from this grave has been dated to 3700-2900 BC.

Features shared by all of the Stone Age cairns are modest size and a flat profile, often just a single layer of stones. The cairns are round or oval, and with a central burial pit, 10–50 cm deep. Grave goods are rare, and include arrowheads, axes, amber jewellery, a whetstone and some lithics. Human remains from this period have only been encountered in the early discoveries from the Varanger region (Simonsen 1974, Renouf 1981; Henriksen 2001; Ramstad 2003).

A large burial ground at the Bolshoy Oleniy Island located in Kola Bay dates back to the second half of 2nd millennium BC (Murashkin et al. 2016). While some burial gifts have clear similarities with burial finds from the late part of the Early Metal Age in Varanger, the burial custom is quite different. At Bolshoy Oleniy Island, the dead are buried in sand and often in wooden, boat-shaped, lidded caskets.

On the basis of physical anthropology and DNA analyses, a biological affinity with ancient Altai Neolithic and modern, Ugric-speaking Siberian groups like the Nenets people has been assumed (Murashkin et al. 2016: 196-197). The caskets show clear similarities with the Sámi sledge, *geres*, used also as burial caskets at least since the Iron Age. The latter phase of the burial ground overlaps with the earliest Sámi scree graves (see below), and a sort of affinity may be assumed (cf. Svestad and Olsen 2023).

Around 900 BC, a new burial practice emerged in Varanger, the so-called scree graves. The dead were no longer buried in and around dwellings, but in landscapes dominated by stones and cliffs, often in themselves uninhabitable. The dead were laid in airy and dry chambers in screes and stony raised beaches where soil and gravel had been washed out. The chambers can be man-built and covered with stone slabs, or they are arranged in small caves, adjacent to low cliff walls and under rock overhangs and boulders.



Figure 27. Scree grave in Láspurgohppe/Laksebubukt, Vadsø municipality. Photo: Audhild Schanche.



Figure 28. Scree grave in Kramvik, Vardø municipality, dated to AD 110-375. Photo: Audhild Schanche.

The airy chambers can be seen as related to the concept of a body soul in the old Sámi religion. The openings and gaps between and under the stones permitted the souls to move between the world of the living and the world of the dead and enabled the living to have a continued communication with their dead relatives (A. Schanche 2000, Svestad 2011).

Besides the absence of soil, consistent features of the scree graves are shrouds or covers of birch bark and grave gifts such as bones of mammals, birds, and fish, as well as tools and ornaments. During the Early Metal Age and Iron Age, the birch bark could be sewn to form dresses and shoes. In the Middle Ages the shrouding became simpler, and birch bark sometimes was employed mainly as a cover (A. Schanche 2000).



Figure 29. Distribution of scree burial sites along the western part of the Varanger fjord. The intensity of colour indicates numbers. Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes stands out.

Map: Thor-Andreas Basso.

In Varanger, and particularly in Unjárga/Nesseby and Vadsø municipalities, there is a remarkably large number of scree burial grounds. In Nesseby, close to 1000 burials have been identified, and in Vadsø close to 700. 34 % of all documented localities in Finnmark are from these two municipalities (Myrvoll 2005:7).

With the exception of two scree grave finds from northernmost Nordland County, Skjellesvik and Kvitsteinselva (Svestad 2018, see also Svestad and Olsen 2023, 7-10), all scree graves dated earlier than AD 800 are (so far) from Varanger.

The Varanger burial finds from the Early Metal Age consist of various animal bones and teeth shells, potsherds of asbestos tempered Kjelmøy ceramic, artefacts of bone and stone and sometimes also iron implements. Finds from between AD 300 and 800 are few and point to exchange contacts with Norse peoples. Between AD 800 and 1200, contacts with other Finno-Ugric speaking peoples and, eventually, with the early Russian city-state Novgorod, are evident from many burials finds of metal ornaments of bronze and silver.

In the period AD 1000 – 1300, the scree grave burial custom became common in large parts of the Sámi settlement area in Norway and the interior of Northern Sweden. This has been linked to a pressure on traditional Sami values, due to the increased demand for products the Sámi could deliver (primarily furs) and the social and religious changes among neighboring peoples turning to Christianity. The Sami communities' response was an intensification and

homogenization of ritual practices related to death cults, bear cults and sacrificial cults (A. Schanche 2000, Hansen and Olsen 2022). It is hardly a coincidence that scree graves, bear graves, sacrificial sites and sacred sites appear in the same types of landscapes. In what Ernst Manker (1957) refers to as the "stone cult", important religious practices are united.

In Varanger, the scree grave custom lasted until around AD 1650. In inland areas of Sápmi further south it was upheld to around 1750 (A. Schanche 2000). Other practices of Sámi pre-Christian religion, such as offerings at sanctuaries, in some cases perhaps also burials, existed side by side with Christian religion into the 20th century (Fossum 2006: 108; Mulk 2009: 130; Zachrisson 2009, Svestad 2011: 39-40).

So far, no scree burials have been identified in Northern Finland, where cremation burials seem to have been the common practice in between AD 800–1600 (Puolakka and Kuusela 2022). In Russia, a few scree graves have been identified on the Kola Peninsula (Nationen, undated) and on Anzersky Island in the White Sea (Puolakka and Kuusela 2022, cf. Martynov 2010).

Sacred and sacrificial sites

The sacred Sámi geography consist of natural features such as mountains, cliffs, special stones, lakes, and islands that were regarded as holy. They were associated with a spiritual presence and where you could get in touch with the power that resided there. To some degree they are still treated with special respect and care.



Figure 30. A small mountain with a sacrificial cave. Like some other Sámi sacred mountains and cliffs, the Norwegians called it "Finnkirka" (Sámi church). In Kramvik, Vardø municipality.

The sacred sites often form distinctive landscape elements: holy mountains, caves and anthropomorphic or zoomorphic cliff profiles and rocks and also lakes and woods. In some cases, the site may also have its own place for sacrifices where the offerings were laid. This may be a special stone (*sieidi*), a crack between boulders or a cavity. Antlers, bones, blood, fat, and metal objects are among the many known offering gifts (Quigstad 1926; Vorren and Eriksen 1993; Myrvoll 2008).

Bones of mammals, birds and fish occur on both habitation, sacrificial and burial sites, and demonstrate that hunting and fishing were important for the people living here, both in terms of subsistence and spirituality. Reindeer antlers and bones of halibut were central as gifts to the spirits of the sacred sites in the Iron and Medieval ages. A few of the sacrificial sites in Varanger have been dated to between AD 1000 and 1700 (Vorren and Eriksen 1993).



Figure 31. Murgiidgahperaš/Klubben, a sacred mountain close to the border between Unjárga/Nesseby and Vadsø municipalities. Photo: Audhild Schanche.

In addition to the sacred places shaped by nature, we have human-built sacrificial sites; round stone circles or stone walls, sometimes with a small middle mound where perhaps a *sieidi* of stone or wood was placed. Like so many other types of cultural sites, the sacrificial stone rings are particularly numerous in Varanger (Vorren and Eriksen 1993:201). Quite often, they are found in the vicinity of or at burial places. Their chronology still remains somewhat unclear but recent radiocarbon dates show that many of them were constructed in the 13th and 14th century (Spangen 2016:170-171). Though the sacred purpose of these sites has been contested (Spangen 2016), the arguments are not very convincing, especially in the context of the Varanger sites.

It was not until the late 17th century, when the kingdoms of Norway and Sweden–Finland started to expand and colonize Sápmi, that Christianity truly made its presence known. The Protestant church was hostile to Sámi shamanism, which it considered to be Pagan idolatry. In parallel with the royal powers wishing to assert their political dominance over Sámi territory and economic resources, the church authorities were burning their Sámi drums, destroying their sacred sites, banning the joik singing, forbidding their personal names and forcing them to subject to the doctrine of the church (Rydving 1995, Hansen and Olsen 2022: 293-311).

8 PRESENTATION OF THE COMPONENT SITES

8.1 Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes

Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes is situated on a wide headland on the northern side of the Varanger fjord. It was protected as a cultural heritage site in 1988. The site is delimited by the sea to the south and by two sacred mountains to the north. Its position close to rich fishing grounds and a bird cliff, midway between the outer and interior parts of the fjord, meant easy access to different marine and land-based resources, enabling a seasonal as well as a more sedentary settlement pattern.

The Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes site is a central reference area for research on Sámi prehistory and early history as well as on Sámi religion. According to Brown et al. (2020: 1.3), the site has yielded the most comprehensive multiproxy record in the Arctic and is probably the largest archaeological site complex in the Arctic. It can be added that it also has provided us with a rich immaterial heritage in the form of myths, tales, joiks (traditional Sámi songs) and place names.

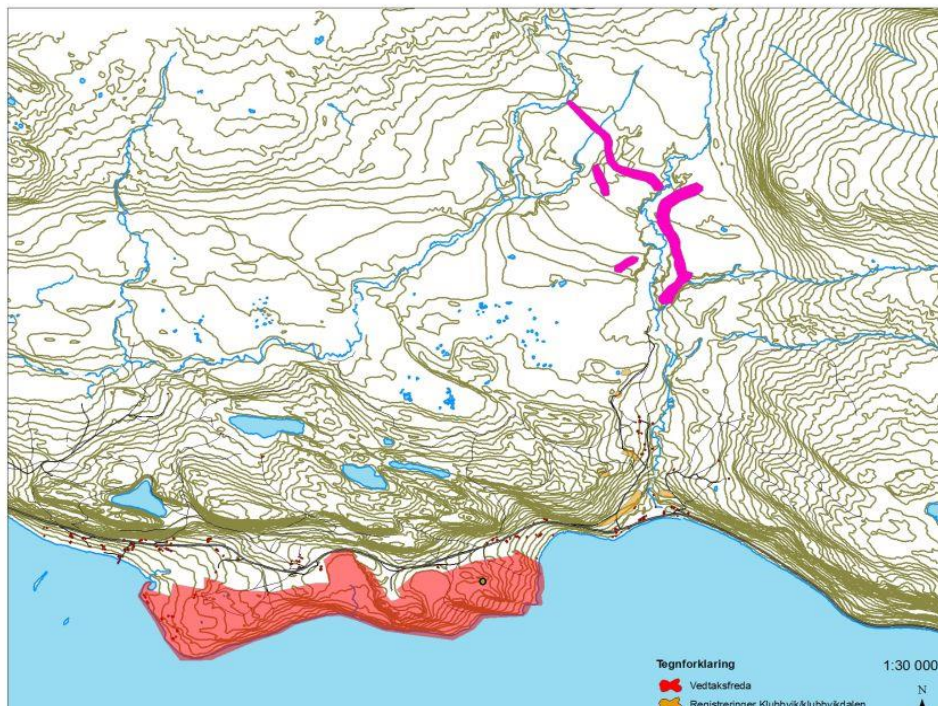


Figure 32. The protected area at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes in red. Rows of nearby hunting pits in pink. Map: Jan Ingolf Kleppe.

Among the multitude of settlement and burial sites in Varanger, Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes stands out. The area has been inhabited for almost 12000 years. The persistency of human habitation has left a unique and tangible record of as many as 270 dwellings (tent rings, turf huts, subterranean houses), exposing the immense duration of human presence at this place from the Mesolithic to modern times. With more than 400 identified scree graves, Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes is also the largest known burial ground of such graves, and the only one known to have been used from the Early Metal Age to the end of Medieval times. This is an extraordinary time span for a single burial site.

Dwellings

The oldest locality in the area lies on a beach ridge about 80 m above today's sea level. It was discovered by surface lithic debris. According to the geological age of the beach ridge and a ¹⁴C-dating from a similar site at the outer coast of the Varanger Peninsula, it dates to around 9500 BC.

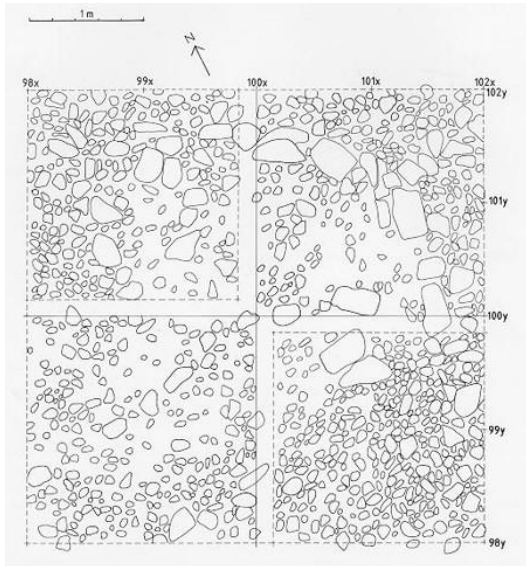


Figure 33. Dwelling dated to about 7500 BC.
Photo and drawing: Kjersti Schanche.

Inside the protected area at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes, the oldest locality lies between 64 and 57 metres above sea level in a fossil landscape that once was characterized by promontories and points surrounded by water. The site has been identified by lithic debris (flakes and stone tools) laying on the windblown surface (K. Schanche 1988).

Further down, 41 dwellings from the Early Stone Age have been identified, of which three have been excavated. The earliest of these consists of 16 vestiges of turf huts and tent rings dated to around 7500 BC, which lie along the brim of an earlier promontory, 44 metres above the sea level of today. They have a diameter from 3 to 4,5 m. The floors are only slighter lower than the surrounding terrain, probably from clearing the floor of stones. One has been excavated. Besides flakes and cores, two double edged points were found (K. Schanche 1988:72). Close to the dwellings are several concentrations of stones that may be marking burials or fireplaces.

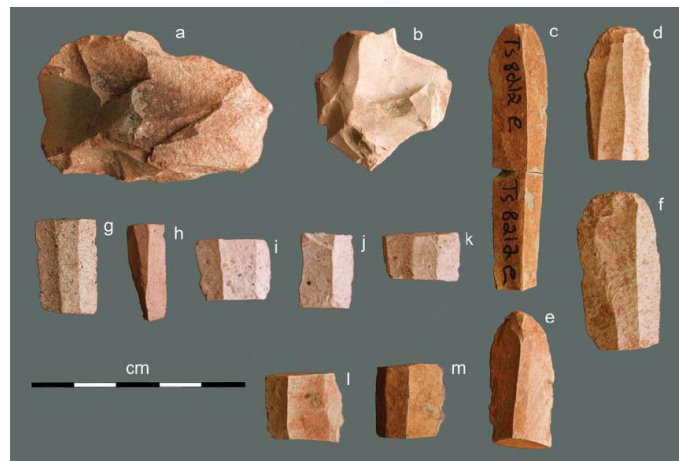


Figure 34. Cores and blade fragments from house dated to 6500 BC. Photo: Jarmo Kankaanpää, cf. Kankaanpää 2012.

A little lower, between 40 and 37 m above sea level, two other houses from the Early Stone Age have been excavated. One is a little deeper than the other and has hints of walls. It has been dated to around 6500 BC. Among the finds were flakes, blades, and cores, including a blade core and a microlith core (K. Schanche 1988:77).

The earliest middens documented in northern Norway are found at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes (Brown et al. 2020:4). Part of a midden from the end of the Early Stone Age has been excavated (K. Schanche 1988: 78). It lies about 27 m above sea level, on top of a Tapes beach shoreline. Apart from numerous seashells, it yielded a lot of bones from seals, whale, beaver, wolf and a number of seabirds (plus a few ptarmigan bones) and fish species.

The fish are dominated by Atlantic cod and some pollock. The birds are dominated by black-legged kittiwake, guillemots, and great auk (K. Schanche 1988: 81). Three transverse arrowheads, a lot of flakes, a hoe of reindeer antler and a bone needle, were also found. Charcoal from the midden have been dated to 4403 – 4896 BC.

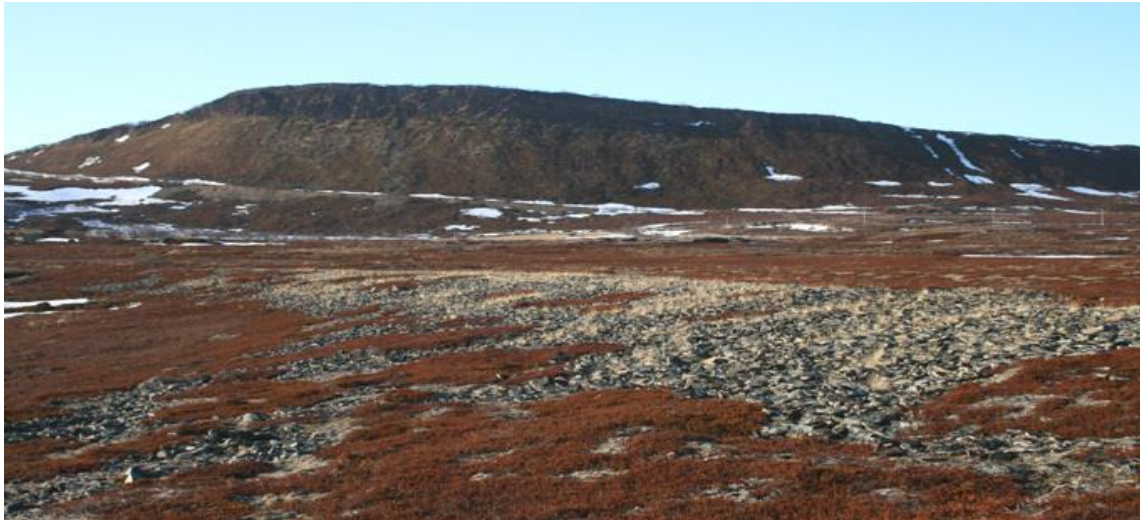


Figure 35. The Tapes beach line with dwellings and middens at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes. Photo: The Sámi Parliament in Norway.



Figure 36. Hoe of reindeer antler from a midden at the Tapes beach line. Photo: Kjersti Schanche.

The organic assemblage implies fishing by boat and demonstrates a specialised marine adaptation based on a broad range of species during spring and summer, with striking absence of terrestrial species like reindeer (K. Schanche 1988: 158, Bjerck 2007: 14). The lack of reindeer has been ascribed to hunting while in the inland but could also reflect that marine resources dominated.

62 dwellings from the early part of the Late Stone Age have been identified at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes. These are mostly Karlebotn-type houses with a round/oval, square or rectangular surface appearance. In a group of 47, lying 47 m above sea level, two have been excavated. They lie along a westward facing point that once featured a shallow bay to the north. One of the dwellings is circular while the other is rectangular, and they are both deeper and larger than the dwellings from the Early Stone Age. Bifacially retouched points and arrowheads, single-edged knives and an axe of grinded slate confirms the date to around 4000 BC. Slate tools were probably mainly used in connection with hunting of marine mammals.



Figure 37. Two of the Karlebotn-type houses at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes. Photo: Varanger Sámi Museum.

Curiously, there are only seven houses of the Gressbakken type at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes, none of them excavated. This may be related to the fact that the dwelling immediately succeeding this type, the Mortensnes-type house is, as indicated by their naming, very numerous here. A total of 107 such house remains are recorded, divided among two close-by settlements in a previous bay area at the western side. Since very few are investigated, their chronology remains uncertain, though based on finds, radiocarbon dating and shoreline chronology they are likely from the second millennium BC.

One cannot exclude, however, that Mortensnes-type pit houses partly overlap with the Gressbakken phase, causing their unequal frequency (see Johansen and Odner 1968, fig. 4 and 5). Notwithstanding this, the number and organization of houses indicate that this was the main dwelling site for at least parts of the year, and which people returned to over a considerable period of time. The houses are large, rectangular, or quadratic, and with deeply dug-down floors between 30 and 40 m². Contrary to the Gressbakken type houses, visible entrances are not a common feature.

Two houses of this type, at 14 and 13 m above sea level, have been (partly) excavated (Johansen and Odner 1968a, 1968 b). One has a rectangular floor of 33 m² and an asymmetrically placed fireplace. Among the finds were ceramic sherds of the Kjelmøy type, and cores, scrapers, and flakes of quartz. The faunal assemblage was dominated by seal, whale and reindeer, with a few bird and fish bones.

The reindeer bones suggest more use of the site hinterland. Combining the zooarchaeological data, Brown et al. (2020) concludes that the economic character of Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes changed over time, from one dominated by the use of the sea and coast in the Early Stone Age to a more mixed economy using larger parts of the landscape in the Lounger Stone Age and later. The other contained finds from different periods (EMP to Medieval), and radiocarbon dates from

the two houses are equally diverging. Much seem to suggest that these houses have been subject to later reuse, including for ritual purposes (see Odner 2001). Younger deposits of e.g. ceramic vessels are also known from Rissebávte/Gressbakken houses (K. Schanche 1996).



*Figure 38. One of the many houses of the Mortensnes-type at Ceavccagead̥ge/Mortensnes.
Photo: Jan Ingolf Kleppe.*

A radiocarbon date from a test pit, also yielding a slate dagger, provided a date to the mid-second millennium BC, and it should also be noted that test excavations in 1960 yielded bone artefacts “displaying great likeness with tools from the Gressbakken phase” (Johansen and Odner 1968: 61).

Closer to the sea lies a total of 48 houses from the Iron Age and onwards. They vary in size and form, from small circular to larger rectangular. Some have been dug down in the ground, but not to the same extent as in the earlier periods. A test pit of 2m² outside a house revealed accumulated cultural layers documented to have a thickness of up to two meters.

The layer contained many mammal bones, mostly reindeer and sheep/goat. Among the identified birds, kittiwakes and ptarmigans were the most numerous, and the fish bones were mainly of cod and haddock. The first 10 cm of the layer contained sherds of glass and pottery and fragments of chalk pipes. Chalk pipes disappeared in the next layer, which may indicate that it goes back to the medieval period. Close to the sterile ground was found asbestos tempered ceramics of the Kjelmøy type, dating to the last part of the Early Metal Age.

The most recent house remains at Ceavccagead̥ge/Mortensnes date from the late Medieval Age to the 1800s. These are vestiges of turf houses in traditional Sámi style, with both circular and rectangular floor plans. The rectangular house grounds, which are the most recent, are the remains of the “common or joint turf houses” that sheltered both humans and animals.



Figure 39. Lithograph of a common/joint turf house at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes. Sacred mountain in the background. After Friis 1871.

The trading post at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes, of which the stone-built foundations still can be seen, was founded in 1748. Its purpose was trading with the Varanger Sámi, and also with Russian merchants. Contacts to the east flourished again from the 1700s and were very important until the Russian revolution in 1917, through the so-called Pomor trade. The Pomors, who were Russian traders and sailors living by the White Sea, brought with them grain and other products that were exchanged for fish.



Figure 40. One of the house foundations after the trading post at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes. Photo: Varanger Sámi Museum.

A joik about the girls from Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes tells that they were so excited when they saw Russian trade ships entering the Varanger fjord that they could barely stand still on their two legs. They began hopping on one foot along the seaside rocks.

Religion

As researchers on religion have shown, the old Sámi religion was predominantly a hunting and fishing religion and was maintained long after other types of adaptation had been introduced (Rydving 1995).

Ceavccageađge, which means the Fish Oil Stone and is the Sámi place name of the area, is a raised sacrificial stone surrounded by 13 concentric stone rings. The sacrificial stone is mentioned in a written source from 1690 (Knag 1694). A written source from 1767 describes that an old Sámi woman in secrecy offered milk to the stone every morning and evening (Leem 1975 [1767], cf. Sveen 2003:75). The stone was also described by the priest and linguist Johan Fritzner, later to become honorary doctor at the University of Copenhagen (Fritzner 1846). According to local knowledge, as well as a written source, cod-liver oil – hence the name of the stone – was still being offered as sacrifice to the stone in the mid-19th century (Nordvi 1858).

The merchant and archaeologist Andreas Georg Nordvi carried out an excavation inside the stone circles surrounding the raised stone. He recorded deposits of sacrificed reindeer antlers and fish, bird and animal bones as well as a metal ring and a net sinker. An interesting detail is that certain animal bones were placed together. Fish bones and beaver teeth laid to the west, and reindeer antlers and bird bones to the east (Nordvi 1858). It is not unlikely that a forgotten cosmological order lies behind this distribution.



Figure 41. Ceavccageađge, the sacred Fish Oil Stone with stone rings. Photo: Varanger Sámi Museum.

From the Sámi in Inari in Finland we also have an old legend about the Fish Oil Stone. It tells about Beaive-Voulab, a mythical male figure known across large parts of Sápmi. Beaive-Voulab was extremely strong. Once while fishing in the Varanger fjord, he was challenged by the Norwegians to show his strength. He took a large stone, lifted it up in the air and drove it into the ground. "This stone, Ceavccageađge is its name, can be seen at a place near the shore on the northern side of the Varangerfjord," the story concludes (Hirsti et al. 2009).



Figure 42. Drawing by Nordvi 1858.

Other elements tied to religious practices at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes are two sacrificial stone rings and a sacred stone in the shape of a bear. An old legend related to the Bear Stone says that people at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes once adopted and tamed a bear cub. The bear cub was nursed by a dog, played with the children, and was eventually completely domesticated. An evil *noaidi* (the Sámi shaman) living on the south side of the fjord disapproved of the bear living with people. At this time, living was tough with famine and starvation, and the sacrificial site was often in use. Once when the people were gathered around the sacrificial ring and the bear was there with them, a raven came flying across the fjord. It settled down among the people, close by the bear. As soon as the raven sat down it turned into the evil *noaidi*. He talked to the bear and said that because it had become fond of people it would turn into stone. The Bear Stone stands there today, looking out across the Varanger fjord (Hirsti et al. 2009).



Figure 43. The sacred Bear Stone. Photo: Audhild Schanche.



Figure 44. One of the two sacrificial stone rings at Ceavccageadge/ Mortensnes. The Bear Stone in the background. Photo: Audhild Schanche.

One of the things that makes Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes outstanding is the exceptionally large burial ground, containing more than 400 identified graves. The burials and sacrificial stone rings are situated at the east side of the headland, which contains no settlement and are dominated by cliffs, stone boulders, screes and rock fields. While the key features of the burial custom remained remarkably stable, the objects accompanying the dead changed according to social and technological trends and external contacts.

The first investigation of such burials in Varanger was undertaken by Andreas Georg Nordvi (1821-1892), the merchant at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes. Nordvi was the first educated archaeologist in Norway. He studied under the guidance of Professor Japetus Steenstrup in Copenhagen, but in 1840, after his father died, he had to interrupt his studies to take over the family business. Nordvi conducted extensive excavations and studies of Sami burial customs and culture in Varanger (Nordvi 1853, 1855). He was one of the first in Norway to engage systematically with field archaeology, and his field notes are still of great value. In 1855 he received the Royal Danish Society of Sciences and Letters' silver medal for his investigations of Sámi burials. Quite a few items from his collections of grave finds were transferred to the ethnographic museum in Christiania/Oslo.

Sadly, Nordvi's interest in Sámi archaeology was not shared by other scholars, and due to the impact of physical anthropological race research and the escalating demand for human remains, he ended up as a trader in Sámi skulls and skeletons. In this era of race research, human skulls from Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes became important specimens in physical anthropological studies of the presumed characteristics of the “Lappish race” (A. Schanche 2002a, 2002b). Numerous graves were exhumed, and skulls and bones were shipped to the universities of Oslo and Copenhagen and from there to other European and American scientific institutions.



Figure 45. Opened grave with chamber built of slabs of slate at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes. Photo: Audhild Schanche.

As the result of Nordvi's investigations and subsequent "skull hunters", graves at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes were opened and emptied. However, many of the graves, especially in the eastern part of the burial field, are intact, and many are probably not yet identified.



Figure 46. Intact grave at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes. Photo: Audhild Schanche.

In the late 1960s, Else Johansen Kleppe reinvestigated many of the opened graves (Kleppe 1974). As expected, no human skulls were found. The burial practice involved shrouds of birch bark and gifts in the form of seashells and animal bones as well as tools and ornaments. The number of finds from scree graves in Varanger kept at museums in Oslo and Tromsø are 205. 137 of these are from Unjárga/Nesseby municipality, of which 68 from Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes.



Figure 47. Part of a stitch marked birch bark shroud with several layers. Photo: Ulla Schildt, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo.

Animal bones of fish, birds and mammals have been found in graves from all periods. However, bird- and fishbones occur especially frequently during the Early Metal Age. All bird species are sea birds and freshwater birds. Most mammal bones are of reindeer, most often in the form of split tubular bones. For beavers, otters, foxes, bears and walruses, only teeth and skulls are found. Here and elsewhere, animal bones, eventually also domesticated animals, appear more sporadically in scree graves from later periods.

Reindeer skulls and bones have been found in graves with no traces of human burials, reflecting the horizontal symmetry between animals and humans in the Sámi religion. In one burial at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes, cleaved bones and skulls of a reindeer and a calf were found with an almost complete pot of asbestos tempered ceramics, seashells and fragments of wood and birch bark (A. Schanche 100:297). This resembles the way bones of the sacred bears were venerated and buried (see Fjällström 1775; Myrstad 1996). A bear burial at the locality Hannooaivi near Storravuonna/Karlebotn has been dated to AD 970-1040 (Myrstad 1996:30).

Except for bones, seashells and birch bark, the most common finds from the graves at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes are Kjelmøy ceramics, bone and antler tools and utensils (like arrows, harpoons, fishhooks, spoons and combs), stone artefacts, metal ornaments and sometimes iron implements.

A burial find from a chamber made by stone slabs against a rock wall was opened in 1852 by Nordvi and magistrate in East Finnmark, Even Saxlund (Solberg 1907). It contained a piece of one and fragments of another ski of pine, birch logs, a T-shaped bone artefact, a pierced wooden object, ornate horn spoons, three arrowheads of bone, two otter skulls, a predator tooth, fish and bird bones, parts of a stitched birch bark shroud and a skeleton of a woman. The ski is dated to 390-125 BC (Vorren 1995:14-17).



Figure 48. Part of a ski from a grave at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes. Photo: Varanger Sámi Museum.

Participation by Sámi women in the hunt is supported by the writings of the Roman historian Tacitus in the year 98 AD. He describes the Fenni as follows:

"In wonderful savageness live the nation of the Fenni, and in beastly poverty, destitute of arms, of horses, and of homes; their food, the common herbs; their apparel, skins; their bed, the earth; their only hope in their arrows, which for want of iron they point with bones. Their common support they have from the chase, women as well as men; for with these the former wander up and down, and crave a portion of the prey."

From most of the Iron Age there are only a few imported metal objects, mostly ornaments, found in the graves, and predominantly of western/Scandinavian origin. In the period AD 900 – 1300, at the time when the scree grave custom spread over a large geographical area, there is a significant change in the types and numbers of metal objects that followed the dead to the graves.

The most characteristic type of artefacts is imported costume ornaments (bronze and silver) of Permic, Finnish, Baltic and Russian origin, and it is primarily in female burials that these objects appear. The sacred character of metal was a commonly held belief among the pre-Christian Sámi, ensuring protection of the dead entering his or her next life (Storå 1971:183; Bäckman and Kjellström 1979:181).



Figure 49. Permic bear figurine and strap fitting of bronze from a grave at Ceavccageađge/Mortensnes. Date AD 800 - 900. Photos: Olav Heggø, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo.

After 1300 AD, there is a sudden break of this eastern import. A few graves have been radiocarbon dated, three of them to the Medieval period. To be noted is that birch bark shrouds become simpler, and animal bones fewer.

The burial place at Ceavccageađge/Mortensnes was in use for more than 2500 years, between around 900 BC and 1600 AD. This represents a notable religious continuity and provides a unique link of tradition between the recent and the distant past. Continuity can also be assumed from the resemblance of a Permian bronze plate dated to AD 800-900 with the belt rings for needle cases and other sewing utensils that up to recently were worn by Sámi women.



Figure 50. Right: Bronze plate from a grave at Ceavccageađge/Mortensnes, dated to AD 800-900. Photo: Ove Holst, Museum of Cultural History, Oslo. Left: Sami woman from Olderdalen, Troms, 1947. Photo: Anna Grostøl, Norsk Folkemuseum.

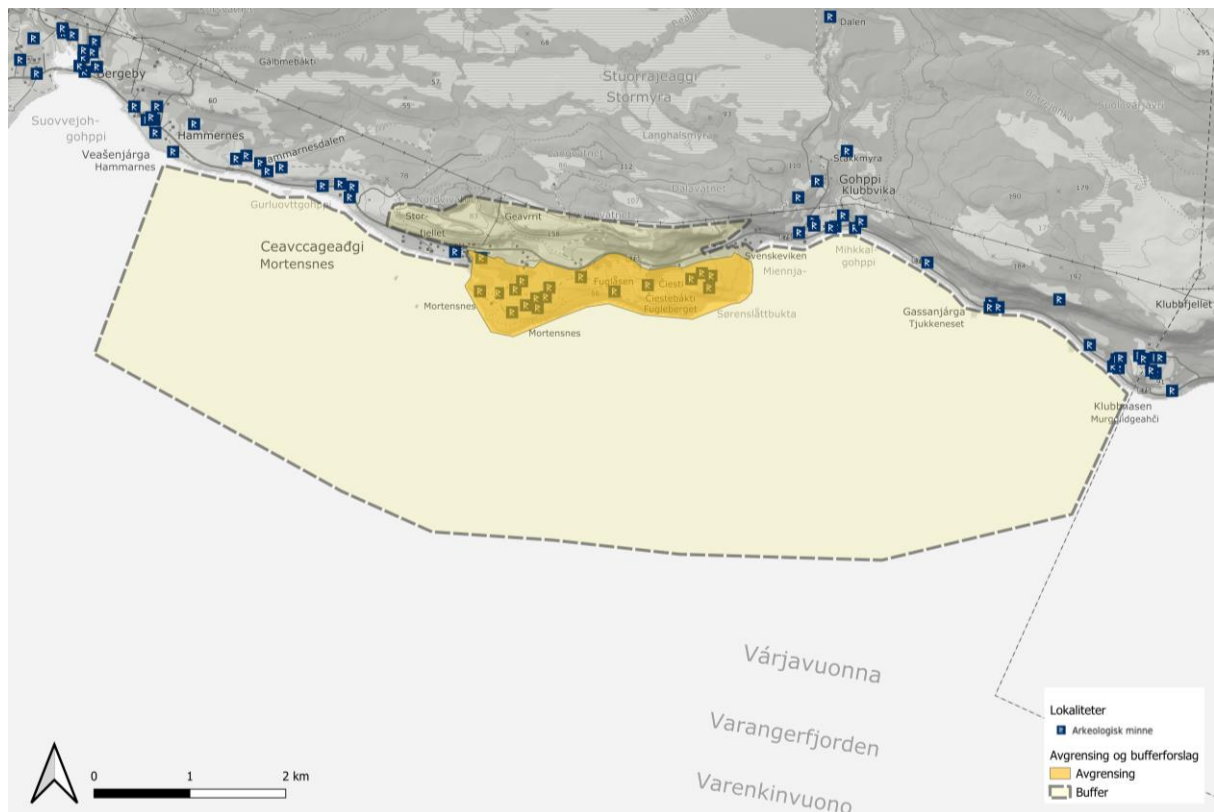


Figure 51. Suggested borders for WH site and buffer zone at Ceavccageadgi/Mortensnes, cf. figure 30. Map: Jan Ingolf Kleppe.

8.2 Ruovdenjunlovta/Gropbakkengen in Storravuonna/Karlebotn

The Ruovdenjunlovta/Gropbakkengen site has a central place in archaeological research of northern Scandinavia. It is recognized as a “classic” Late Stone Age site and has given name to the Karlebotn type houses. The site was first documented in 1935 by Anders Nummedal, and it was here that archaeologists first understood that house depressions along the Arctic coast, earlier thought to be the remnants of more recent Sámi turf houses, had such an early age. In the following two years, Nummedal excavated six houses and three low cairns (Nummedal 1936, 1937), and in 1938, Gutorm Gjessing made the first mapping of the site (Gjessing 1942). 11 further houses were excavated in 1952 and 1953 by Povl Simonsen (Simonsen 1961). All surface remains were restored after the excavations.



Figure 52. The Ruovdenjunlovta/Gropbakkengen site seen from the East. Photo: Jan Ingolf Kleppe.



Figure 53. Part of the Ruovdenjunlovta/Gropbakkengen site seen from the North-East. Photo: Audhild Schanche.

The site was used between 3700 and 3000 BC. It is situated on a narrow beach terrace 22-25 metres above today's sea level, confined geologically by a steep upward slope behind and an equally steep slope down to the sea in front. Along this terrace, in two and three parallel rows, lie the depressions of as many as 115 pit-houses. The large concentrations of houses and their spatial organization indicate that several houses were inhabited simultaneously (Helskog 1984; Olsen 1994). This is further suggested by the fact that the houses are never superimposed on older structures (Skandfer 2012).

The "Karlebotn houses" initiated a tradition of building semi-subterranean houses, which continued unbroken for a long time, particularly in Varanger. The houses have a rounded to rectangular floor plan with a centrally placed fireplaces lined with stones.

The development towards more solid and larger houses indicates a more fixed settlement pattern, where people spent longer time at each site and moved between fewer. It has been estimated that they were occupied during winter and spring.

The osteological material from Ruovdenjunlovta/Gropbakkengen is, however, limited compared with the following period. Among the fish bones, cod and halibut are the most numerous. A few bones of birds have been identified. Except for swan and raven they are all from migrating seabirds. The lithic material, on the other hand, is very rich. At this time, the technique of grinding slate had come into use, and Ruovdenjunlovta/Gropbakkengen has a stone tool inventory completely dominated by ground slate. Among them are 184 arrowheads, 99 spears, 65 daggers and knives and 113 fragments of such tools (Simonsen 1961:190). From one single house, we have 17 knives, 27 spearheads and 57 arrowheads of slate, including fragments. The tools are remarkably specialised in terms of maritime hunting and processing.

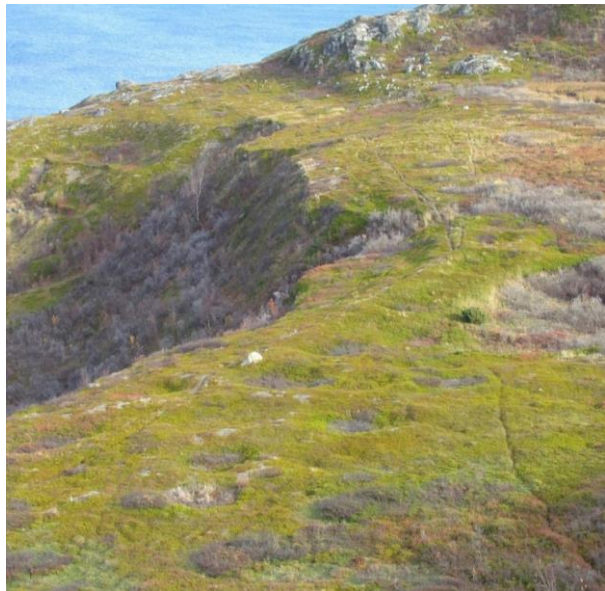


Figure 54. House depressions at Ruovdenjunlovta/Gropbakkengen site seen from the terrace above. Photo: Audhild Schanche.

While Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes displays 12 000 years of more or less continuous habitation, Ruovdenjunlovta/Gropbakkengen represents an example of the fragile balance between natural affordances and human choice. In its period of use, the sea-level provided an ideal bay to live in, with good fishing grounds and a nearby 'coastscape' dotted with skerries and small islands where seals thrived. However, its location in the innermost part of the Varanger Fjord also made it vulnerable. When the sea level dropped below a certain level, fishing and seal hunting became increasingly difficult here. At the turn of the third millennium BC, Ruovdenjunlovta/Gropbakkengen became abandoned and never used for settlement again.



Figure 55. Arrow- and spearhead of slate from Ruovdenjunlovta/Gropbakkengen. Photo: Mari Karlstad, the Arctic University Museum of Norway.

The enigmatic character of the site is also associated with the presence of three burial cairns. One of them was oval in shape (44.0 x 2.4 m, height 30 cm) and contained traces of a skeleton and a bifacial retouched point (Simonsen 1961:182). Radiocarbon dating of bone material has yielded results to the early fifth millennium BC, making them the earliest known burials in the Varanger region. They even predate the houses, suggesting that the site may have held a ritual or religious significance prior to its domestic use (Olsen 1994).

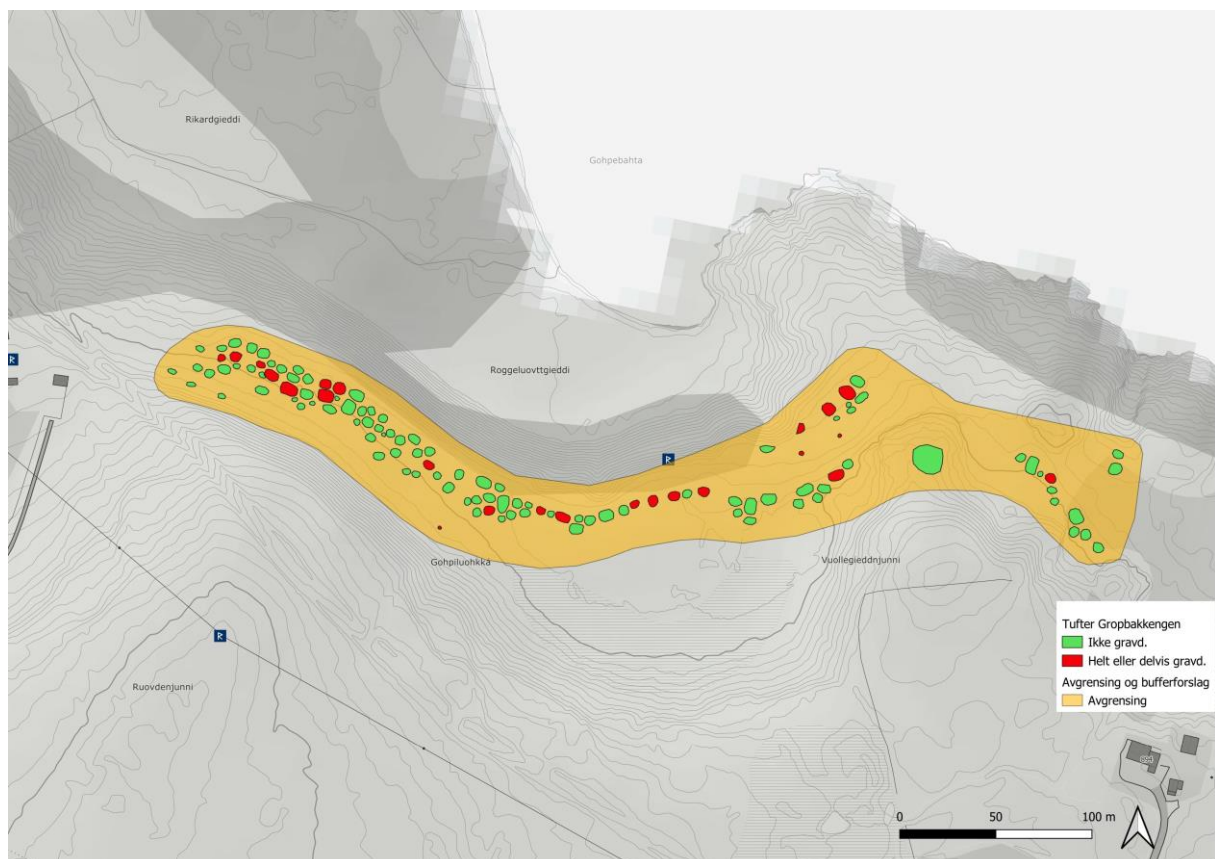


Figure 56. The house pits at the Ruovdenjunlovta/Gropbakkengen site. Excavated and partly excavated houses are marked in red, non-excavated houses in green. Map: Jan Ingolf Kleppe.

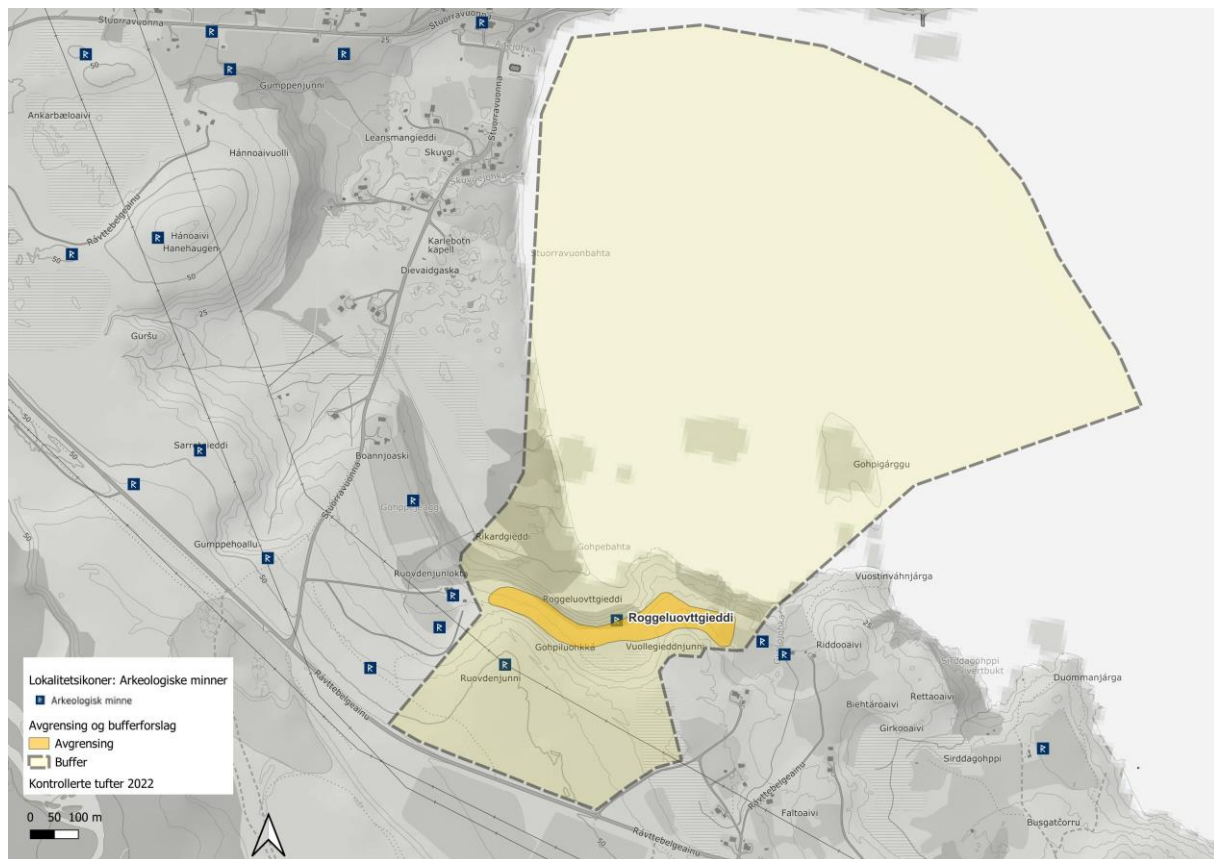


Figure 57. Suggested WH site with buffer zone at Ruovdenjunlovta/Gropbakkengen. Map: Jan Ingolf Kleppe.

8.3 Rissebávte/Gressbakken

The conspicuous and impressive Gressbakken type houses have gotten the name from the Rissebávte/Gressbakken site, where they first were excavated. Similar houses on Giehkirnjárga/Fiskerhalvøya on the Russian side of the border had earlier been described by the Finnish geographer Väinö Tanner. He was made aware of the site of a Sámi who called the pits *jennam'vuólas'kuatt*, a Skolt Sami word for underground dwellings (Tanner 1928:13; K. Schanche 1994:4).

The Rissebávte/Gressbakken houses have not one, but two hearths. The hearths are placed along the longitudinal axis of a rectangular semi-subterranean main chamber. The houses have three (sometimes four) entrance passages that may widen to form separate annexes at the longitudinal ends. The main floor area is substantially larger than the Karlebotn house type, normally 30-40 m² and in exceptional cases even larger.

The outline of the houses themselves, and their overall patterning, appear very regular and symmetrical. Together with midden deposits, bone assemblages, and artefact form and decoration, these elements suggest increased social and ritual complexity and sedentism, and that the family groups sharing the houses included more than the nuclear family (Myrvoll 1992; K. Schanche 1994).

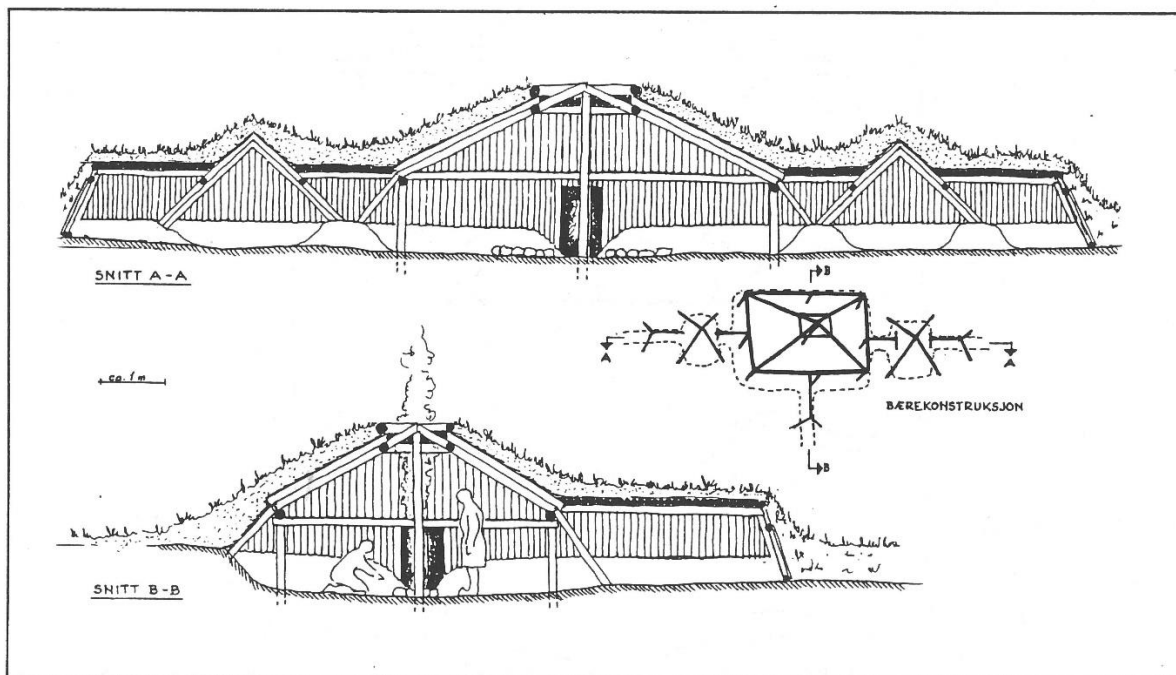


Figure 58. Proposal for reconstruction of a Gressbakken-type house. Drawing by Ingolf Schanche. From K. Schanche 1994.

Between 1954 and 1957 Povl Simonsen excavated five houses at the locality "Gressbakken nedre vest" (lower west), where 14 houses lie close together in two rows. (Simonsen 1961). At the nearby locality "Gressbakken nedre øst" (lower east) he excavated one house. This site is damaged and therefore not included here.

The excavations show that the use of slate decreases compared to the previous period, however, as many as 44 spearheads and 29 arrowheads were unearthed. Most hard stone tools are of quartz and fine-grained quartzite.

The Gressbakken houses are usually dated between 2150 and 1850 BC (K. Schanche, 1994). A recent excavation of a dwelling interpreted as a Gressbakken house at the Kharklova site on the Barents Sea coast indicates that this house tradition may have emerged somewhat earlier (Kolpakov, Murashkin et al 2021).



Figure 59. Photo of House 3 at Gressbakken under excavation (Simonsen (1961). From Jørgensen and Riede 2019.



Figure 60. The same house as in figure 59 in 2023. Photo: Jan Ingolf Kleppe.



Figure 61. House with three entrances at Rissebávte/Gressbakken. Photo: Thor-Andreas Basso.

During an excavation of a Gressbakken house at a locality in Storravuonna/Karlebotn, a remarkably early copper dagger (see Figure 16) of eastern origin was found in a midden (K. Schanche 1989). The house has been dated to 2200–1530 BC. New evaluations of the stratigraphic context of the dagger show that the midden is somewhat older than the house (Skandfer 2012). This corresponds to datings of a few copper items of eastern origin in Finland (Hood and Helama 2010). The dagger is the earliest metal find in Norway. It indicates an emerging contact between the people in Varanger and metal producing peoples to the South-East.

What distinguishes the Gressbakken houses are, beside their size and form, the amazing number of artefacts made of bone and antler and the large quantity of faunal remains, preserved in the massive middens associated with the front entrance and the walls next to it. Some human bones, including skulls, were also found in the middens, suggesting that they also had ritual significance. Among the 857 artefacts of bone and antler are 68 fishhooks, 64 harpoons, 135 needles, 23 daggers, 31 combs, 60 chisels, 24 beads and 10 spears and arrowheads (Simonsen 1961:376). While other Gressbakken type houses later have been excavated, none of them have resulted in a material as rich and varied as at Rissebávte/Gressbakken.



Figure 62. Artefacts made of bone and reindeer antler from Rissebávte/Gressbakken. After Jørgensen and Riede 2019.

The ornamentation on bone artefacts is intricate and very distinct for the Gressbakken phase. A curious feature, especially observed on objects associated with females, is how symmetric patterns includes anomalies or deviant insertions that “disturb” the overall impression of order. Myrvoll (1992) suggests that this may have acted as tacit discourse opposing the dominant (male) order, as expressed in e.g. house form and settlement outline.

The faunal material is from the large middens around the walls, especially along the front. A plausible interpretation of the stratigraphy of bones, shells and other waste materials is that the waste has been deposited outside the doors to eventually form part of the house construction (K. Schanche 1994:89). The faunal material is extremely rich. Among the many thousand identified bones, reindeer and a number of different bird, fish, seal and whale species dominate. Other identified animals are dog, wolf, beaver, fox, otter, wolverine, weasel, marten, bear, and hare. The fish material is especially abundant, and with cod as the most important species (Olsen

1967). Though initially interpreted as representing a winter-spring settlement, later analyses have emphasized the seasonal variability in the material and thus the possibility for whole year occupation (Helskog 1984; Engelstad 1985; K. Schanche 1994; Hodgetts 2010).

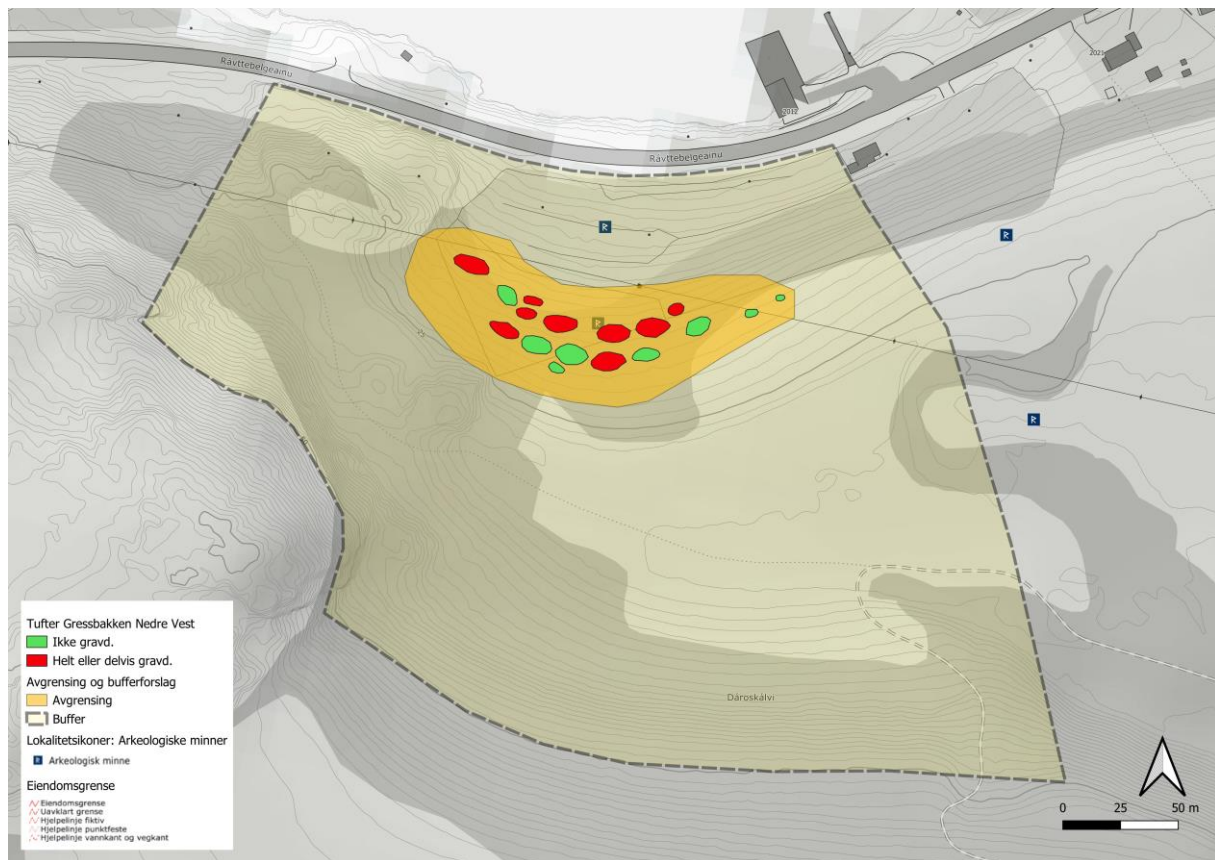


Figure 63. Suggested WH site with buffer zone at Rissebávte/Gressbakken. Map: Jan Ingolf Kleppe.

8.4 Gollevárre

As mentioned, the largest known concentration of pitfalls, numbering more than 3000 organised in 14 systems, is situated on the isthmus between the Tana River and the Varanger fjord. The largest one, the Gollevárre pitfall system, consists of as much as 1979 single pits, and is surrounded by numerous meat caches and hunting blinds. It runs on both sides of a little valley, Javvadalen, and continues along a large bog area, Ruossajeaggi/Korsmyrene, from there it runs eastward to the Mihkojávre and ends north of Heandratvárre.

Trapping wild reindeer in Varanger lasted until the 17th century, but it is not known how old the earliest parts of the Gollevárre pitfall system are. Only one pit has been excavated (Schanche and Schanche 2014). This revealed that the construction of the pit had disturbed a settlement layer from the Early Metal Age, containing asbestous pottery, stone flakes and charcoal, dated to 360-90 BC. Thus, the pit must have been constructed later than the Early Metal Age, and, at the earliest, in the Iron Age.

The Gollevárre site stands out not only due to the astounding size of the system and the number of pits. The site also includes a number of meat caches and hunting blinds, and an associated

hunt dwelling site with remains of 16 turf dwellings. The houses are quite large and may have housed up to ten people. Here, for hundreds of years, the Varanger Sámi returned during autumn to await the reindeer migrating back from the summer pastures at the peninsula.

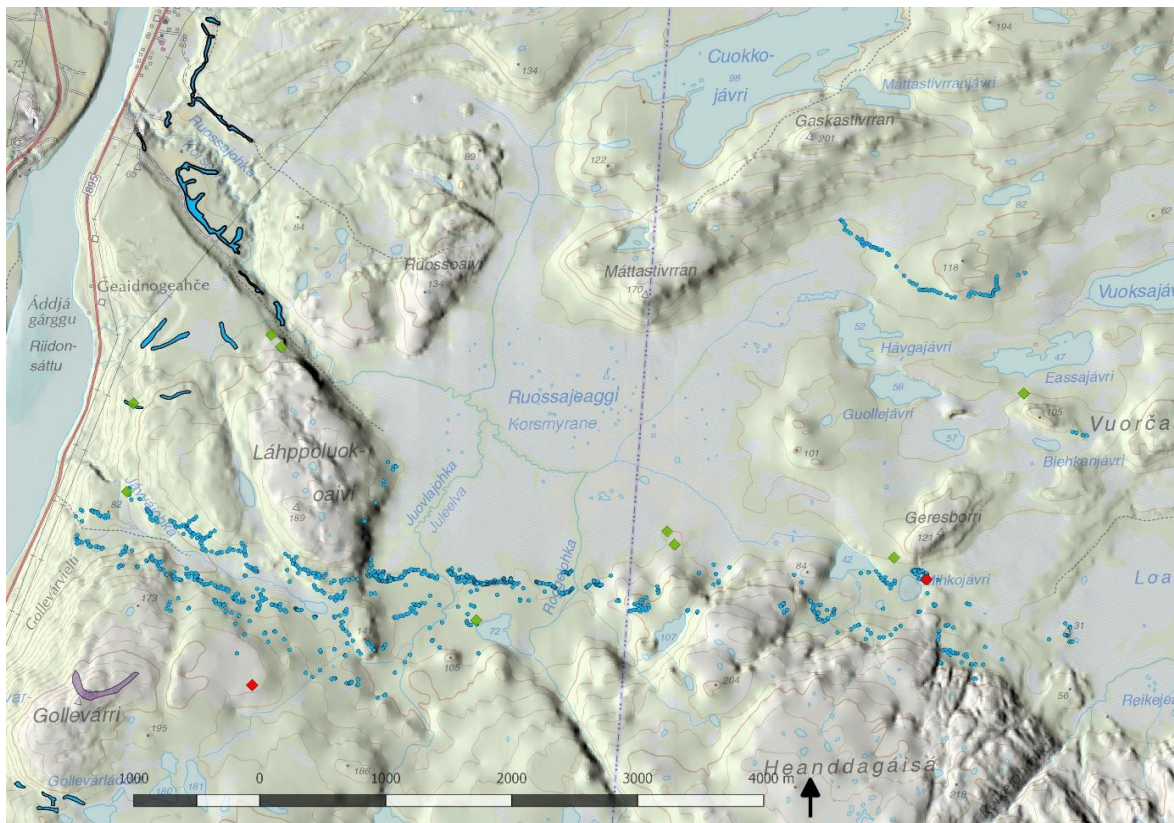


Figure 64. The Gollevárre site with rows of hunting pits. Map: Jan Ingolf Kleppe.

Excavations of parts of five houses and a large refuse heap have revealed huge quantities of reindeer bones and, in particular, skulls and antlers (Munch and Munch 1989). Other finds consisted of iron knives, spears, arrowheads, and scrapers, and also bone tools. The large numbers of half-processed antler spoons, especially, suggest that it was also a site for spoon production. In addition, the variation in finds indicate that the whole *siida*, including women and children, were present at the dwelling site. The faunal material, as well as the artefacts, testifies to both large scale hunting and the production of bone artefacts for a market (Vorren 1998:127). The disproportionality between reindeer bones, on the one hand, and skulls and antlers/horns, on the other, suggests that carcasses were moved away for consumption elsewhere. Interestingly, excavations at the contemporary coastal site of Geachevainjárga shows an opposite distribution, indicating that the large-scale reindeer hunt strongly impacted local dietary patterns (Odner 1992, Hambleton and Rowley-Conwy 1997; Hansen and Olsen 2022:172-176).

Ten radiocarbon dates from the site fall between AD1200 and 1650 and indicate a habitation period of at least 400 years (Munch and Munch 1998:148; Bjørklund 2019: 90). The youngest dated samples from this hunting site coincides with the time when the first written sources talk about reindeer herding. A document from 1625 is a complaint from Norwegians claiming that “Sami from the mountains” move their herds across their hay fields (Niemi 1983:186).

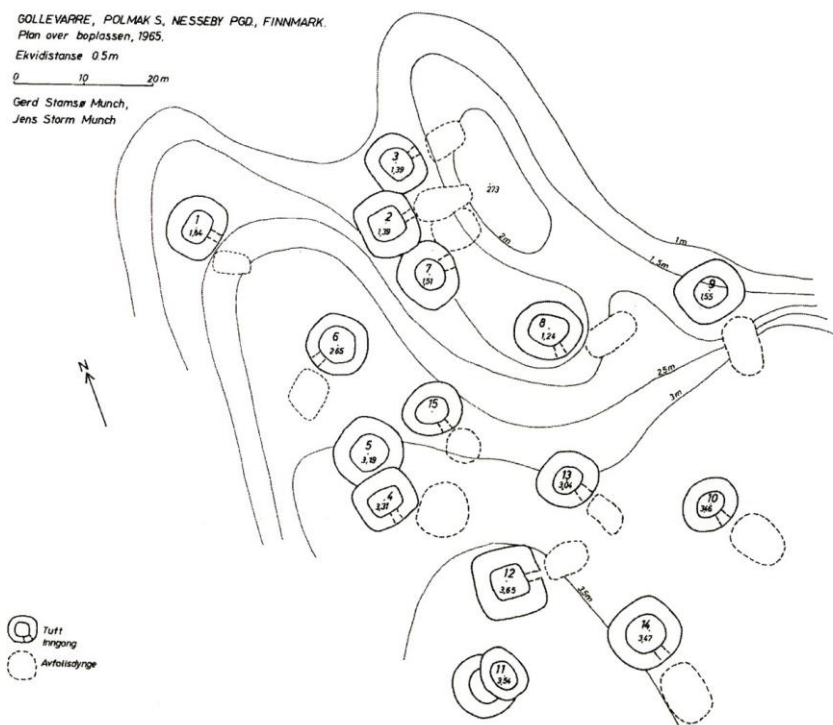


Figure 65. Map of the Gollevårre turf house site. From Munch and Munch 1989.



Figure 66. Measuring one of the hunting pits at Gollevårre. Photo: Kenneth Webb Volla.

Wild reindeer trapping ceased in the 17th century AD, and by 1690, none of the systems were in use according to written sources. Trapping of wild reindeer is however documented into the 19th century, and one cannot exclude that parts of the larger systems continued to be temporarily used for some time.

Nevertheless, knowledge about reindeer and the rich Sámi reindeer vocabulary were sustained and developed within the pastoral families, while the coastal Sámi upheld fishing, sea mammal and small-game hunting, including the traditional knowledge and vocabulary connected to these activities.



Figure 67. Hunting blind at Gollevárre. Photo: Jan Ingolf Kleppe.

Both groups maintained the important heritage of Sámi place names and intimate knowledge of the area. There were extensive contacts between the two groups based on reciprocity and exchange, and individuals moved between the groups, for instance through marriage.



Figure 68. The dwelling site at Gollevárre. Photo: Thor-Andreas Basso.

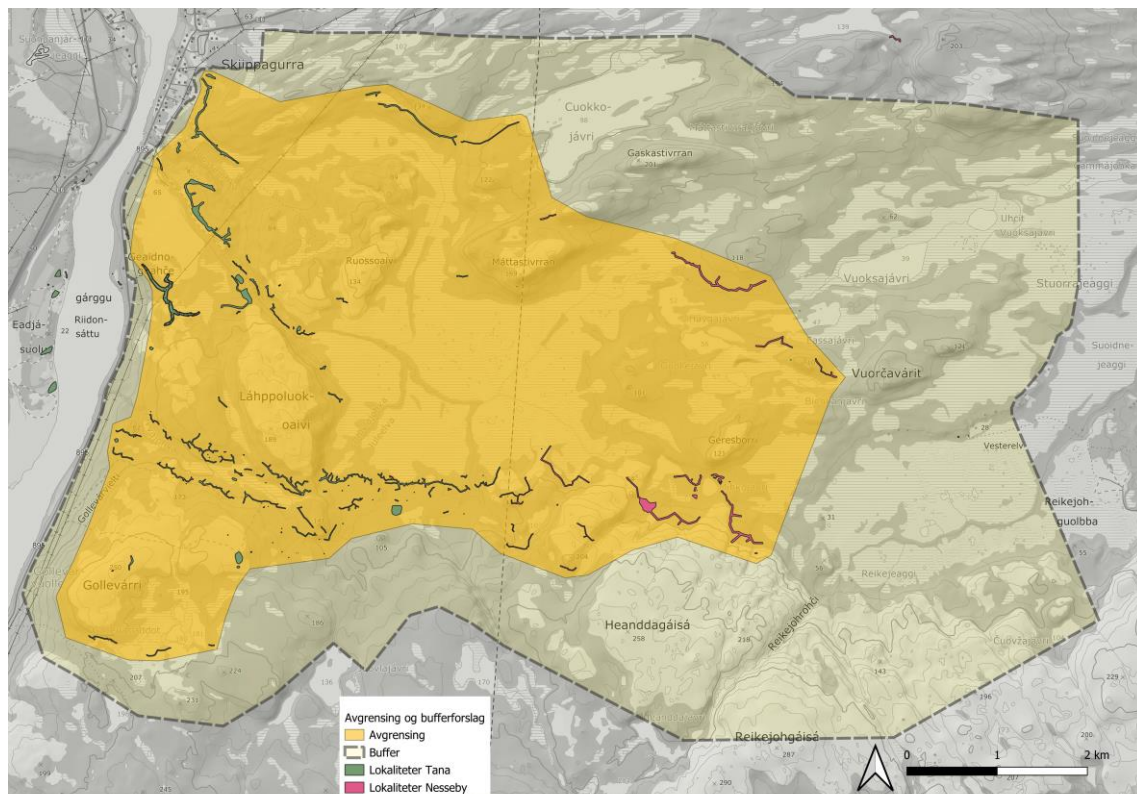


Figure 69. Suggested WH site with buffer zone at Gollevárre. Map: Jan Ingolf Kleppe.

8.5 Noiddiidčearru/Kjøpmannskjølen

Grazing reindeer always seek fresh pastures. Thus, in the late the summer they seek higher elevations where herbs and grasses sprout later. In the interior of the Varanger peninsula there are several large funnel shaped trapping systems, containing long converging stone fences or drive lanes terminating in corrals. The fences extended for several kilometres, and were built in order to guide the reindeer to the corrals where they were killed or, possibly, also selected for domestic use. In Sámi, such places are called *vuopmanat*. The same term is used among reindeer herders for their wooden fences and corrals used for driving the reindeer together for earmarking or slaughtering. The trapping systems can be seen as a forerunner of the smaller, wooden fences and corrals used within reindeer husbandry. They are indicative of how the technology and knowhow developed during the latest phase of reindeer hunting was crucial for the emergence of the new pastoral reindeer economy (Olsen 1987).

The most magnificent and extensive funnel shaped trapping system is located at the low mountain Noiddiidčearru/Kjøpmannskjølen. Noiddiidčearru means the Shaman's Mountain. Located within the borders of the Varanger Peninsula National Park, it is a low, barren mountain ridge, surrounded by melt water channels.

The site was first recorded and mapped by the ethnographer Ørnulv Vorren (1944, see also Vorren 1958), however, first being showed the site by an elder from the local reindeer owners. The unique knowledge that reindeer herders possess about land, land use, and reindeer behaviour has been instrumental also in later surveys and mapping, as well as for interpreting the site.

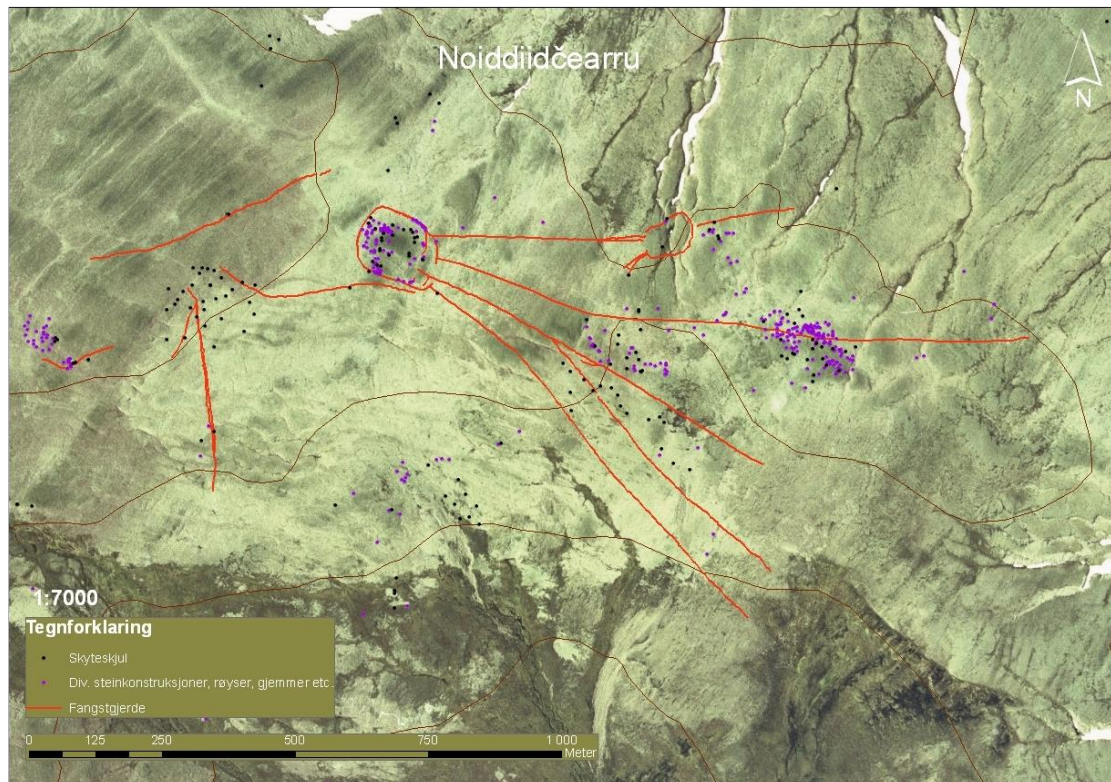


Figure 70. Corrals, drive lines, hunting blinds and other stone structures at Noiddiidčearru/Kjøpmannskjølen. Map: Thor-Andreas Basso.

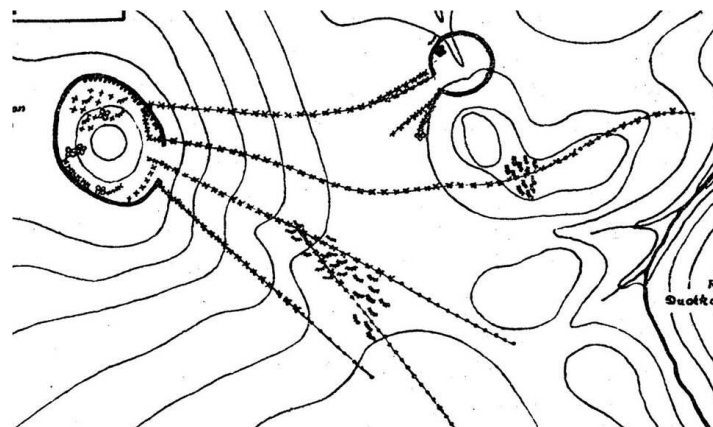
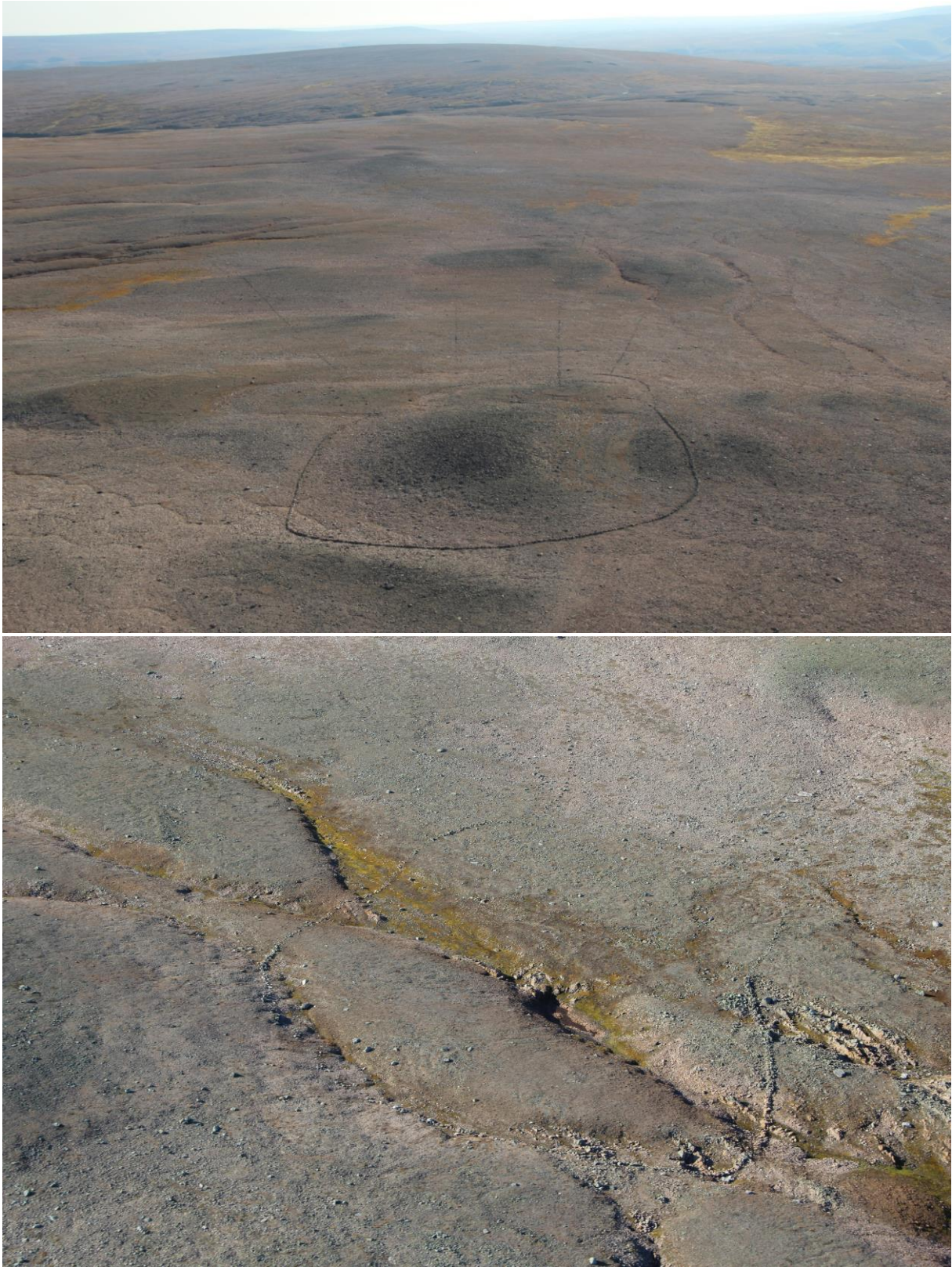


Figure 71. Map of Noiddiidčearru/Kjøpmannskjølen. From Vorren 1944.

Since 1944, Vorren's map and text have been referred to in most archaeological texts concerning wild reindeer trapping in Scandinavia. However, it was not until 2011 that the site was visited by archaeologists. Between 2011 and 2013, the Sami Parliament carried out a digital mapping project of the area. This fieldwork resulted in documentation of around a thousand (!) new monuments. Several new drive lines/guiding fences were registered, the longest up to 2 km long, see figure 68. In the vicinity of the lines, are numerous hunting blinds (677), meat caches (184) and stone cairns (781). The many ring moraines provide heaps of big stones that are difficult to enter and were actively used for meat caches. They are often marked with a stone on the top that clearly is secondary, making them easier to recognise when coming back to the area.



*Figure 72. Aerial photos of the two corrals at Noiddiidčearru/Kjøpmannskjølen. Note the drive lines.
Photo: The Sámi Parliament in Norway.*

Seventeen stone rings with a diameter between 3 and 5 meters, interpreted as possible sacrificial sites, have also been recorded. In one of them, reindeer bones had been hidden in a stone chamber along the inner wall. A piece of the bone has been radiocarbon dated to between AD 1600 and 1700.

The system includes two stone-built corrals, one with a diameter of up to 150 metres, and several kilometre-long stone drive lines leading to the openings of the corrals. Interestingly, the World Heritage property *Rock art of Alta* in the western part of Finnmark depicts reindeer corrals during its first phase (7200-6200 BP). They are seemingly made of wooden poles.

The biggest corral at Noiddiidčearru/Kjøpmannskjølen encircle a low ring moraine on top of a hill, making it impossible for the reindeer to see the enclosure upon entering it. One of the stone fences connects it with the smaller corrals. The fences consist of rows of raised stones or stone heaps, a few meters apart, which get closer towards the opening of the enclosures. A number of other drive lanes do not end in enclosures, but in concentrations of stone-built hunting blinds, also called bow hides.



Figure 73. Drive lines (left), inside the large corral (top right) and hunting blind at Noiddiidčearru/Kjøpmannskjølen. Photos: The Sámi Parliament in Norway.

The Varanger peninsula is probably the only place in the world where trapping fences or drive lanes for reindeer (or caribou) are seen in combination with solid stone-built circular enclosures. The largest systems, of which Noiddiidčearru/Kjøpmannskjølen stands out, may have been able to trap 200-300 animals at any one time. In comparison, the drive lines documenting wild reindeer trapping in southern Norway ends in narrow stone-built holding pens that could hold only a few animals (Hole 2013). These are often surrounded by butchering sites with middens of bone and antlers (Bergstøl 2020:41). At Noiddiidčearru/Kjøpmannskjølen, the meat was temporarily stored in the many meat caches before it was brought to the settlement sites or trading posts. The hunt took place in late summer and early fall, when the herds stayed at higher elevations and when the calf skins were good for making clothing.



Figure 74. Meat cache on top of a ring moraine. Photo: The Sámi Parliament in Norway.

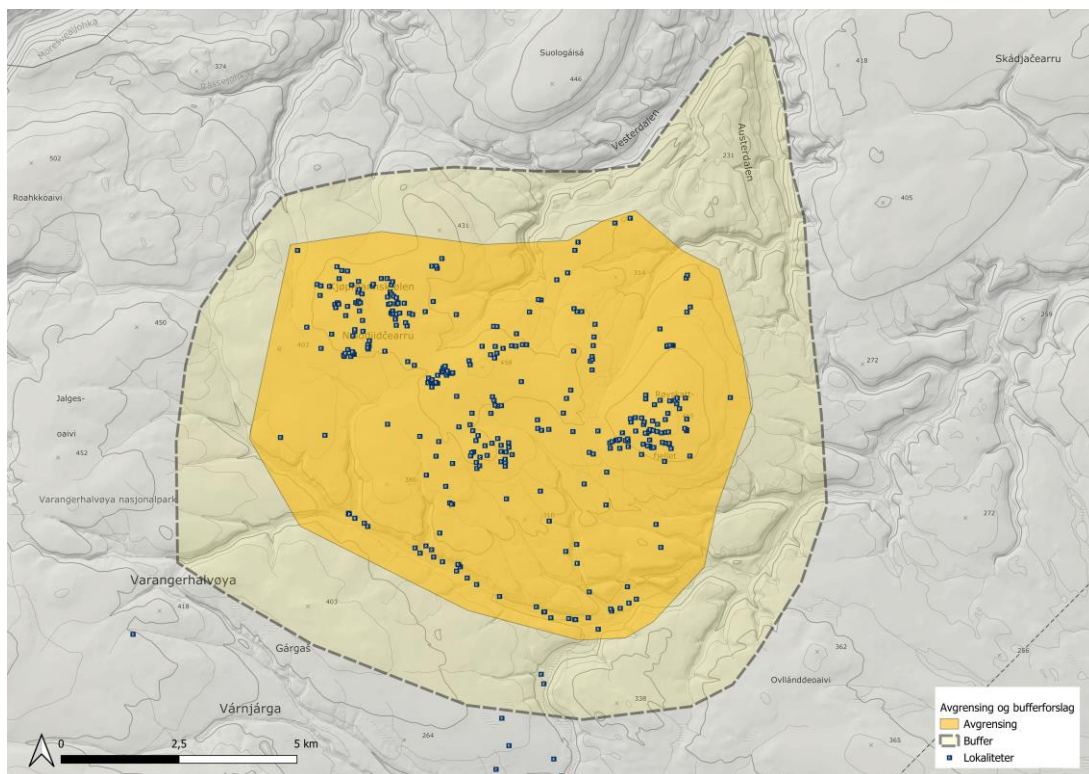
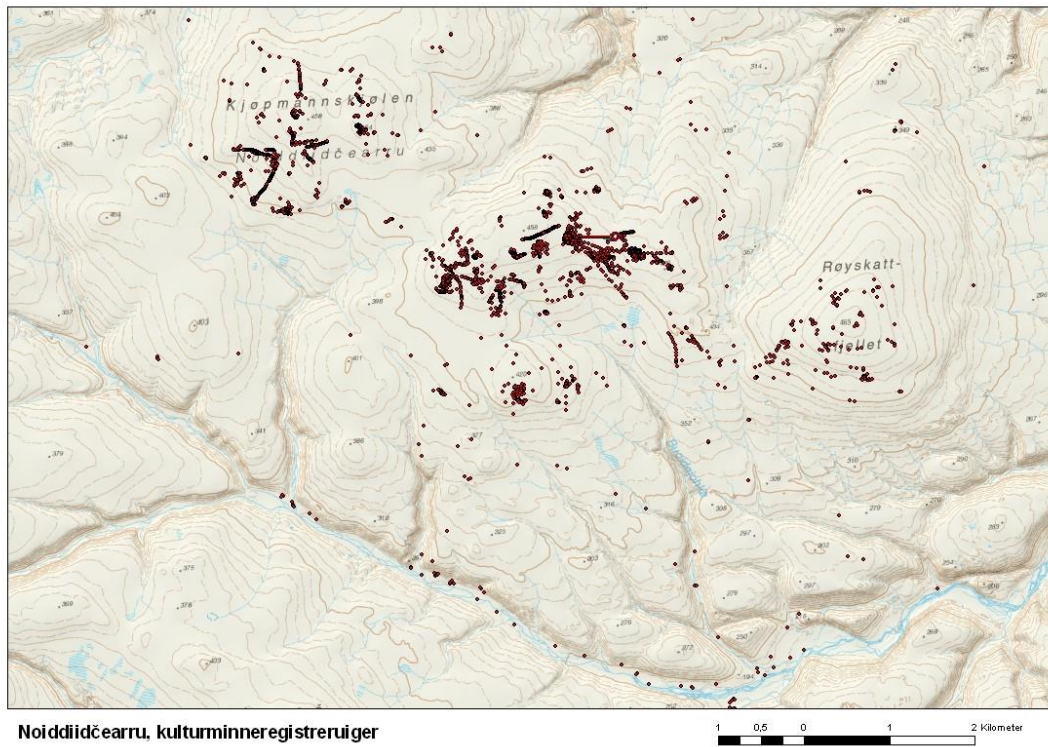
The earliest mention of converging drive lines and corrals for hunting large numbers of wild reindeer in Varanger is by the County Governor of Finnmark Hans Hansen Lillienkiold, who lived in Vadsø from 1687 to 1701 (Lillienkiold 1698:174). Other sources reveal that the fences for trapping wild reindeer were still in use in the 17th century. There is no certain evidence for when they were built and most intensively used. However, based on a contextual date it is assumed that the corrals and drive lines came into use between AD 1200 and 1400.

The valley Davák/Sandfjorddalen runs to the southwest of Noiddiidčearru/ Kjøpmannskjølen. It has rich reindeer pastures, and 63 hearths have been documented along the bottom of the valley. Charcoal from some of them have been radiocarbon dated, showing a time span from AD 1000/1100 to 1900 and thus covering the late phases of wild reindeer hunting as well as the subsequent period of reindeer husbandry (Schanche and Schanche 2014). However, the find of a Mesolithic arrowhead in close proximity to one of the hunting blinds indicates that the reindeer hunt with bow and arrow at Noiddiidčearru may have very old roots. At another location in the interior part of the peninsula, Álljaviedji/Øvre Flintelv, a recent find of a habitation site dated to around 5800 BC, also confirms early seasonal settlement here (Schanche and Schanche 2014).

While reflecting deep roots, the Noiddiidčearru/Kjøpmannskjølen site also holds a double significance by representing both the very culmination - and end - of an age-old tradition of large-scale trapping of wild reindeer, and at the same time displays the emergence of the very technology that became crucial to the pastoral reindeer economy that followed. It is therefore a heritage site of immense importance both to reindeer herders and to other Sámi groups.



Figure 75, see also figure 19. Lavvu fireplace with rows of stones marking the entrance. Photo: The Sámi Parliament in Norway.



9 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE SELECTION OF COMPONENTS

Varanger is an area where the density of cultural sites from the Mesolithic time onwards is unusually high. The Ceavccageađe/Mortensnes, Ruovdenjunluovta/Gropbakkengen, Rissebávte/Gressbakken, Gollevárre and Noiddiidčearru/Kjøpmannskjølen sites are exemplary among them and cornerstones in the archaeological record of the north. Thus, they are selected as the foremost examples in an area with many other magnificent sites including:

- a remarkable density of habitation sites from all prehistoric and historic periods and which are epitomized by the Ceavccageađe/Mortensnes site, and with Ruovdenjunluovta/Gropbakkengen and Rissebávte/Gressbakken as the most spectacular and rich single period examples;
- the highest frequency of scree graves sites, but nowhere in such an outstanding abundance as at Ceavccageađe/Mortensnes, in such close vicinity to a habitation site, or with such duration as witnessed by its 2500 years of use;
- the largest number of pitfalls and pitfall systems, but nowhere as large as at Gollevárre or as closely connected to a unique dwelling and processing site used during the hunt;
- a remarkable amount of stone-built funnel-shaped trapping systems with drive lines and corrals, and associated stone-built shooting blinds and meat caches, but not as extensive and impressive as documented at Noiddiidčearru;
- an abundance of sacred and sacrificial sites, but nowhere with the variety and archaeological, historical and oral context offered at Ceavccageađe/Mortensnes.

10 JUSTIFICATION OF OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

The Outstanding Universal Value of the five component sites presented above, with Ceavccageađe/Mortensnes as the contextual hub, lies in their exceptionally rich testimony to the most long-lived hunting, fishing and gathering culture of the European mainland. Thus, the sites together provide heuristic concreteness to a tradition which elsewhere on the continent disappeared more or less completely during the first half of the Holocene.

This tangible heritage is related to habitation, subsistence, and religion, and to the interconnectedness between these categories and the landscape they are part of. Furthermore, the sites are a testimony to an extraordinary adaptive robustness, and an unusual persistency in dwelling, subsistence strategies, and religious practices.

The focus of this nomination is broad. The exceptionally rich heritage left and cared for by the Varanger Sámi and their ancestors bridges landscape, culture, economy, settlement and religion, where each category always plays into another. This overarching integration and coherence are basic characteristics of Várjjat Siida. It also pays due respect to the integral lives of its former inhabitants.

It includes the following values:

- an outstanding abundance, density and variation of sites and monuments;
- excellent preservation conditions;
- an extraordinary duration, continuity and sustainability of a hunting and fishing culture through changing climatic and geological conditions;
- a remarkable flexibility and resilience in response to natural, social and economic challenges;
- a fundamental interrelationship between habitation, subsistence and religion;
- a unique Arctic landscape which conspicuously displays both past human presences and environmental changes;
- a directly observable convergence between landscape development and cultural chronology.

The heritage of Várjjat Siida shed crucial light on

- the pioneer peopling of northernmost Europe after the Ice Age;
- long-term architectural trajectories and settlement development among northern hunter-fishers and reindeer pastoralists;
- the components and dynamics of the prehistoric record of northern Fennoscandia;
- long-term variations in resource strategies as testified by an exemplary rich faunal material;
- Sámi religious practices, including the relationship with the dead and the interaction between humans and animals;
- the emergence and maintenance of Sámi cultural identity;
- the technology, labour and social conditions of the wild reindeer hunt;
- the emergence of reindeer pastoralism.

Sámi archaeology as a distinctive field of research has its root in Varanger. The current archaeological knowledge of the Sámi past, and of northern prehistory more generally, is to a considerable extent based on the Varanger record and the five sites included in this nomination in particular. This record and the research carried out has great importance for the Sámi society. They serve to place Sámi history in a long-term perspective, within its own framework of development, and has constituted a timely reminder that the prehistory and history of Norway is more than Norwegian.

At the same time, it is also a fact that the knowledge of Sámi prehistory and history in Norwegian society in general is meagre. The reasons for this “blindness” and neglect are, as mentioned above, connected to a number of factors such as nationalism and social-Darwinism, and, thus, to

the very political economy of research. To assign the selected sites of the remarkable rich Várjjat Siida a place on the World Heritage List will help counteract this for the benefits of all.

11 CRITERIA MET

The five component sites constituting the Tentative List proposal *Várjjat Siida* are considered to justify criterion (iii) *to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living or which has disappeared*.

The criterion is fulfilled by the five sites and their outstanding assemblies of interrelated monuments being:

- a unique testimony to the prehistory and early history of Sápmi;
- indispensable cases in the research and research history of northern Fennoscandia;
- a remarkable testimony to an exceptionally old and long-lived hunting and fishing culture in Arctic Europe;
- an exceptional testimony to resilience and adaptive continuity in an Arctic border zone, exemplified by flexible resource strategies, elastic alterations of dwellings, settlement patterns and hunting and fishing technology, as well as by skilful attitudes to changes in the natural and social environments;
- a unique testimony to continuity of religious and ritual practices linked to death and regeneration, and to how indigenous Sámi cosmology and religion is interwoven with Arctic nature;
- an exceptional testimony to the intimate relationship that developed between human and reindeer in both the hunting siida and, later, the pastoral siida.

Combined, the outstanding and unique qualities of the archaeological heritage of Várjjat Siida, as manifested clearly in the five sites, validate it as a unique testimony to a deep and resilient cultural tradition, upheld by the forerunners and foremothers and -fathers of the Sámi and with strong links to Sámi traditions and the Sámi people today.

12 STATEMENTS OF AUTHENTICITY AND/OR INTEGRITY

As documented in the introductory chapter, the chosen sites are representative of the immensely rich heritage of habitation, burial, sacrificial and hunting sites in Varanger. Seen together, they include all the elements needed to express their potential Outstanding Universal Value. They furthermore express chronological and typological variation as well as richness in monument types and thus constitute a remarkable archive for and testimony to the cultural activities of which they once formed part. Moreover, they constitute integral elements of a landscape where nature and culture coexist in a direct, visible and largely undisturbed manner, and where also the tangible connection between natural features, habitation, cosmology, and religion is made present.

The reindeer herding, fishing, small game hunting and gathering carried out by the Varanger Sámi of today uphold a strong link to the past. The past is also transmitted and constantly made present in the Sámi language, place names, traditions and landscape myths.

The Arctic climate and the limited degree of modern impacts have preserved organic material to an unusual extent and left stone structures and vestiges of houses close to intact.

A midden in connection to a Gressbakken-type house dated to 2000 BC in Unjárga/Nesseby was one of three case studies of deposit monitoring within the «InSituFarms» research project in Norway. The aim was to document state of preservation through archaeological deposit description and evaluation of preservation conditions through soil samples and installed probes measuring soil temperatures, humidity and redox values in the midden.

“Case Banġgohppi” revealed excellent preservation conditions for inorganic material (here including bone, horn and antler) and stable low humidity and low temperatures. Interestingly, even with longer cold periods of very low air temperatures, no lower than minus 5 degrees Celsius were measured in the upper deposits. Redox potential was measured to between 300 and 800mV, indicating a constant presence of oxygen in the deposits. While the conditions for preserving bone and antler presently are very good, climate change in the form of increased precipitation (rain) may worsen the situation (Martens et al. 2017).



Figure 78. The visitor centre at Ceavccageađe/Mortensnes. Photo: Nasjonale turistveger.

Some parts, with fragile surface and sparse vegetation, like Noiddiidčearru and the burial field at Ceavccageađe/Mortensnes, are vulnerable to disturbances. At Ceavccageađe, a visitor centre, pathways and other facilities have been provided to regulate the traffic. As the scree area with graves is difficult to walk in, the path has proven to be effective to prevent damages. Noiddiidčearru is implicitly protected by its remoteness and by being situated within a national park with strict regulations.

To visit Gollevárre also takes some efforts, although less than for Noiddiidčearru. However, the turf and vegetation cover are much more robust here. The same can be said for the Ruovdenjunluovta and Rissebávte sites. However, at these sites some form of regulation facilities may be needed.

The Ceavccageadgi/Mortensnes component is the only one that is accessible to the public. A visitor centre, paths and other facilities are provided. The component is under the management of the Várjjat Sámi Musea (Varanger Sámi Museum). A management plan secures that maintenance and protection priorities are yearly agreed upon by the Sámi Parliament and the

Varanger Sámi Museum. The museum also acts as an information point for the Varanger Peninsula National Park. Given the remoteness of the Noiddiidčearru and Gollevárre components, it is probable that the vast majority of visitors will learn about these parts of the property from interpretative materials in the museum. The role and location of this museum, also as a local educational and social arena, provides an opportunity to integrate the presentation and interpretation of Várjjat Siida in all visitor materials and exhibitions.



Figure 79. Entrance area at Varanger Sámi Museum. Photo: Bjarne Riesto.

The Ceavccageađe, Ruovdenjunluovta, Rissebávte, Noiddiidčearru and Gollevárre sites are cornerstones in the archaeological record of the north. The habitation sites are intact in ways rarely seen in other equally accessible areas. Modern infrastructure impacts are limited or non-existing, and excavated houses have been reconstructed to appear as they were before investigation. The excavations have resulted in a rich archaeological material and thus an important platform for interpretation and dissemination.

The graves that have been opened and emptied have not been closed, so many chambers are visible. This, however, is also a painful heritage in the sense that these opened graves at Ceavccageađe/Mortensnes bear witness to a dark chapter of the recent history of the Sámi as well as of other indigenous peoples. From the mid-19th century onwards these and other graves were opened to meet the demands for “primitive” human remains at European and American scientific institutions preoccupied with racial and social Darwinist studies.

The exact borders around the five component sites, including also buffer zones, will be defined as part of a nomination process and are only suggested in this document. It is however clear that to include all the pit-houses at Ceavccageađe/Mortensnes, the World Heritage area will be larger than the area that was protected in 1988. The aim of drawing borders will not be to go large, but to ensure the identity of the places and the unique combination of cultural and natural characteristics that make the sites distinctive.

Relevant for the assessment of integrity and authenticity is that it is the Sámi people, across national borders as well as locally, that has taken the initiative for the nomination of Várjjat Siida, an exceptionally valuable manifestation of Sámi cultural heritage, to the World Heritage List. The initiative is supported by the county of Finnmark, all the municipalities involved and the Sámi Parliamentarian Council, the joint body of the Sámi parliaments in Norway, Finland and Sweden. The reindeer herders' organisations in the area have also responded positively. The proposal was originally developed by the Unjárga/Nesseby municipality, a small coastal Sámi community, and the Sámi Parliament in Norway, and was further refined in 2010 by an expert group appointed by the Sámi Parliament.

A number of instruments under Norwegian law provide a legal basis for the protection of the proposed areas. Among them are the Cultural Heritage Act, the Nature Diversity Act and the Planning and Building Act. The Directorate for Cultural Heritage is the primary authority regarding cultural heritage and is responsible for implementing the national cultural heritage policy. The legal management entities for cultural heritage consist of the Sámi Parliament and the Finnmark County Council, and for the Varanger National Park the County Governor office. The Varanger Sami Museum plays an important role in the management of Ceavccageađe/Mortensnes. If a nomination to the World Heritage list is pursued, a coordination instrument between these entities will have to be formed.

13 COMPARISON WITH OTHER SIMILAR PROPERTIES

13.1 Introduction

Most World Heritage properties that include indigenous lands are primarily inscribed because of their natural qualities. During the last two decades, due to efforts by indigenous organisations, there has been a growing realization that many areas designated as “natural” are home to indigenous peoples and are also fundamentally cultural. After the inclusion of “cultural landscapes” as a new category of World Heritage properties in 1992, some properties on indigenous land have been renominated.

Two cultural landscapes, *Aasivissuit – Nipisat. Inuit Hunting Ground between Ice and Sea* in Greenland (2018) and *Budj Bim Cultural Landscape* in Australia (2019) have been included on the World Heritage List exclusively for their outstanding indigenous cultural heritage values. They both cover large areas, and the traditional land use was central for the justification of outstanding universal value.

Traditional Sámi land use is a central value of the *Laponian Area* World Heritage property in northern Sweden. The Outstanding Universal Value of the Várjjat Siida combined sites has a different rationale and justification. Here, the Outstanding Universal Value of indigenous Sámi cultural and archaeological heritage is in the forefront, though always consistently entangled with the landscape and the wider environment. This tangible heritage gives insight into how livelihoods, dwellings, technology, economy and religion have persisted and changed through 12 millennia, and also provide a crucial corpus of attachment and pride for the Varanger Sámi of today.

In this way, a potential inclusion of Várjjat Siida on the World Heritage List counteracts ideas from the days when indigenous peoples, hunter - fisher -gatherers in particular, were seen as being without history and to represent static and uniform cultures. It further represent a departure from the conception of their cultural heritages as vague and unnoticeable parts of nature or the ‘wilderness’ rather than to also include manifest expressions of remarkable cultural achievements (A. Schanche 2012).

This tangibility is not in any contradiction with the fact that the Sámi, as indigenous peoples in general, have a strong relationship and affect with their land. Sámi landscape practices, as well as the names and terms connected to them, are relational and contextual, in a way that repeal a dichotomy of culture and nature (A. Schanche 2002d; Joks et al. 2020). The many memories held on to by this land strengthen this attachment further and, thus, represent an invaluable resource for continued Sámi presence and well-being.

13.2 Sites on the World Heritage List

Várjjat Siida shares important elements with *Aasivissuit – Nipisat. Inuit Hunting Ground between Ice and Sea* in Greenland, and some also with the *Laponian Area* Laponia in Sweden. Some similarities can also be found between Várjjat Siida and the *Cultural and Historic Ensemble of the Solovetsky Islands*, Russian Federation.

Aasivissuit – Nipisat. Inuit Hunting Ground between Ice and Sea. Greenland (Denmark)

The vast areas of Aasivissuit – Nipisat contain a wide range of constructions connected to Inuit inland and coastal hunting and was the summer territory of reindeer hunters and trout fishermen from about 2150 BC until around AD 1950. It was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2018. The nominated property covers 417,800 ha and is situated just north of the Arctic Circle. The ca. 235 km long and up to 20 km wide area extends from the sea in the west to the ice sheet in the west.

The property was nominated under criteria (iii) and (v). Criterion (iii) was justified by the State Party on the basis of the presence of archaeological evidence of all periods of Greenland's human history, and the demonstration of seasonal movements and subsistence patterns. Criterion (v) was justified on the basis of the ability of the nominated property to demonstrate the resilience of the human cultures and their long history of traditional seasonal migrations. In line with recommendations from ICOMOS, the property was inscribed under criterion (v). ICOMOS considered that criterion (iii) had not been demonstrated, and that the arguments presented by the State Party for the justification of criterion (iii) were more strongly relevant to the requirements for criterion (v).

There are many similarities between Aasivissuit – Nipisat and Várjjat Siida. Both properties document indigenous Arctic and subarctic hunting and fishing. Hunting hides, meat caches and stone-built caribou drive lines are similar to the hunting structures found in Várjjat Siida. In Aasivissuit – Nipisat, as well as in Várjjat Siida, hunting caribou/reindeer and marine mammals were core subsistence activities, supplied with seabirds and anadrome fish in spring and summer. A major difference is that in Várjjat Siida, the importance of year-round marine fishing was just as important as hunting.

Other similarities of lifestyle include seasonal movements, although over shorter distances and with noticeable chronological variations in Varanger. Tools of stone, bone and antlers also have many parallels, in function as well in in types. It is interesting that a shift from knapping hard stones to grinding slate occurred in both settings, although in Greenland 5000 – 6000 years later than in Sápmi. Large middens with well-preserved faunal material occur in both properties. Again, what sets them apart is the age of the middens, and also in what they reveal about species variation and the importance of saltwater fishing in Varanger.

Since Várjjat Siida is seeking to be inscribed under criterion (iii), and not as a vast cultural landscape, the comparison with Aasivissuit – Nipisat will concentrate on the archaeological remains. The archaeological record of Aasivissuit – Nipisat includes settlements of different periods. Within the area is the Paleo-Inuit site of Nipisat and hundreds of visible ruins from the Thule culture (c. AD 1250-1700) and the historical period (AD 1700-1900). Excavations of the coastal Nipisat site (dated to 2200 – 700 BC) document the presence of the paleo-Inuit Saqqaq cultural tradition. The key species in the food economy were caribou and seal. The entire area is now covered with dense vegetation so nothing can be seen on the surface.

The Paleo-Inuit Greenlandic Dorset cultural tradition, characterized by distinctive stone tool types, was a result of a new Paleo-Inuit migrations from Eastern Canada around 800 BC. There are five known Dorset sites in Aasivissuit – Nipisat, suggesting a settlement pattern oriented primarily at the coastal areas, but with some forays into the interiors.

Except for two stone set hearths and two tent features, both discovered in association with cultural layers and not visible prior to excavation, no distinguishable structures of the Saqqaq

tradition at the Nipisat site or at the five identified sites belonging to the Greenlandic Dorset tradition have been identified. They are hidden in the ground or deeply buried below cultural layers and ruins from more recent (Thule) episodes of settlement.

In Várjjat Siida, the situation is quite different. The area was inhabited close to 10 000 years earlier than Aasivissuit – Nipisat. The time depth, number, variation, density and visibility of surface prehistoric structures is strikingly dissimilar. The unified chronology of dwellings and raised beach formations in Varanger have preserved a large number of house structures from all prehistoric periods since the Early Stone Age, as intact structures.

Today's Inuit people are descendants of the specialised whaling and maritime hunting Thule culture, that came to Greenland from Alaska and Canada around 1100 AD. They arrived in the Aasivissuit – Nipisat area by the mid-13th century. The use of knapped stone for knife and weapon blades ceased, and most lithic tool production was based on the use of polished slate. This resembles the introduction of slate technology in Varanger around 4500 BC.

Many Thule winter and summer sites are found in the area. Some dwellings have left clear structures on the surface, often with large middens outside the entrance. Others have been obliterated by natural degradation or historical settlements at the same localities. Their houses included semi-permanent round and clover-leaf shaped winter dwellings, igloos built on the ice and summertime tents and tent houses.

The winter houses were built of stone, peat, driftwood and whale ribs, and had sunken entrances. The tent houses are a kind of permanent structure with walls of stone and turf and with a layout similar to that of the winter dwellings, including a semi-subterranean main room with an entrance passage and a superstructure of willow withies covered with skins or, in later years, canvas. One of the coastal sites in Aasivissuit – Nipisat has five cloverleaf shaped winter houses, and another has eight remains of these buildings. The summer camp site at Aasivissuit is a 100 x 55 m oval grassy mound on the shore of a lake, with 22 tent houses and eight tent rings.

The semi-subterranean clover-leaf shaped winter dwellings and summer tent houses have some similarities with the Stone Age houses in Várjjat Siida, the Gressbakken-type houses with their entrances and large middens in particular. However, these are much older, and larger, and have more than one entrance. Dwelling structures like the Karlebotn and Mortensnes types of pit-houses with no detectable entrances have no parallels in Greenland.

In late 17th century, travelling kayak hunters developed the large communal house, where many families lived in one long building. The communal houses were normally 8-10 m long and 4-5 m wide and accommodated four to six families. Some of the largest communal houses in Greenland are known from Aasivissuit–Nipisat.

After the mid-1800s, multi-family dwellings became less common. The size of the multi-family houses is comparable to the Gressbakken type houses, also believed to house more than one family, but the floor plan organisation and historic context, and not at least age, is very different. The size and building materials of the communal houses are also comparable to the rectangular Sámi turf houses of the 18th and early 20th centuries. However, they were built to house people and livestock, and usually only one extended family.

The colony of Nepisene, established in 1724, was the second settlement to be established by the Danish-Norwegian administration in Greenland. The motive was Christian mission and to monopolise both whaling and trade with the Greenlanders. It was burned down twice by Dutch

whalers, and later the remaining house structures were to a large extent overbuilt by Inuit communal houses.

Despite containing quite different vestiges, the history behind Nepisene is comparable to the Norwegian trading post at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes, founded in 1748. Both were aimed at trading with the local people, although at Ceavccageadge fishing, not whaling, was the economic motive. At Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes, the stone-built house foundations are still intact and are not disturbed by later activities.

Due to Andreas Georg Nordvi, the last tradesman at Ceavccageadge/Mortensnes and Norway's first educated archaeologist, the trading post has multiple meanings. Besides trade and colonization, it is a testimony to early Sámi archaeology, and also to the demand for Sámi skulls in the era of race research. As such, it plays into the history of archaeological and anthropological research in Sápmi.

Along an ancient trail from the winter settlements in the west to the summer camps in the east are many Thule summer camps dwelling ruins, way marker cairns, meat caches and stone set graves. The current appearance of these sites, and most of the visible ruins, originates from their use in the 19th and 20th centuries, but nearby heathen graves provide evidence of occupation also during the Thule period.

Graves are also found in the vicinity of most winter settlements. In Varanger, graves from the Stone Age are also found near settlements. Many graves in Aasivissuit–Nipisat are built as a heap of stones piled on top of a chamber. This has some similarities to the construction of the scree graves in Varanger, as does the fact that many graves have been opened and robbed. The difference lies in time span, number of graves and in the richness and variation in the grave goods of Varanger.

In the hinterland of Aasivissuit is an extensive caribou hunting system with hunting blinds and drive lines. The main features are two large drive systems, intended to direct the caribou close to a stone wall, where hunters would lie in wait to kill the animals. The caribou drive is, with some interruptions, a 3.9 km long line of small cairns or single stones. The stone wall is a 70 m long, partially collapsed wall of stones. As for some drive line systems in Canada, this is highly comparable to the hunting structures at Noiddiidčearru. What makes Noiddiidčearru outstanding, is the circular corral, not documented elsewhere, the number and total length of the drivelines and the number and density of hunting blinds, meat caches and cairns.

A major difference between Aasivissuit–Nipisat and Laponia on one side and Várjjat Siida on the other lies in scope, content and character. The two first are extensive natural and cultural landscapes, one tied to Arctic hunting and the other to reindeer herding. Várjjat Siida is about five exceptionally rich archaeological sites, selected as the foremost examples in an Arctic area with an unusually rich archaeological heritage.

Laponian Area, Sweden

The Laponian Area in Northern Sweden covers 940,900 ha. It was inscribed in 1996 under cultural criteria (iii) and (v) and natural criteria (vii), (viii), (ix). Originally, Laponia was nominated as a natural heritage site, and ICOMOS recommended that the cultural value as a reindeer herders' landscape be added.

Criterion (iii) is justified with the area bearing an exceptional testimony to the tradition of reindeer herding and is one of the last and unquestionably the largest and best-preserved

example of an area of transhumance. In support of Criterion (v) is that the area is an outstanding example of traditional land-use, a cultural landscape reflecting the ancestral way of life of the Sámi people based around the seasonal herding of reindeer. Although shortly mentioned in the decision, the prehistoric remains are not actively included in the rationale for inscription.

The oldest habitation site in the area dates back to about 5000 BC. A number of dwelling vestiges are dated to the Younger Stone Age, Early Metal Age and Iron Age. They are situated along major rivers in the forest area and by the large lakes in the mountains. Some are described as pit houses, although quite shallow and with poorer visibility than in Varanger.

Hearths and house-foundations of the reindeer herders of more recent times can be found many places. Abandoned reindeer Sámi settlements are characterized by lush vegetation, remains from lavvus and turf huts, overgrown hearths and cellar pits. Hearths are often found along watercourses. In the mountains they indicate temporary summer settlements.

A *Stalotomt* is the vestige of a large turf hut (goatthi) (up to five meters in diameter) with an oval or round lowered floor level, often with a hearth in its centre. A mound runs along the indentation. The *Stalo* dwellings are usually found in groups of two to five. They are often alongside the natural migration routes of reindeer, and only in high-altitude valleys. They are dated from the time between AD 800 and 1500. Around 50 such dwellings have been registered within Laponia. Vestiges of *Stalo* dwellings are not found in Varanger but are common in mountainous areas further south in Northern Norway.

Within the Laponian Area there are about 20 pitfall systems, with a few having up to around 100 pitfalls. One system has been dated to between 100 BC and AD 700 AD (Mulk 1994). No habitation sites with faunal remains directly connected with the hunt, as in Aasivissuit and Gollevárre, have been recorded. Neither have any drive line systems. The archaeological remains are important documents to the history of the area, but they are not in themselves claimed to have Outstanding Universal Value. And this is precisely what sets the Várjjat Siida sites apart. Although the archaeological remains in Laponia to some extents are comparable to the Várjjat Siida sites, the latter excels through the time span, magnitude, variation and context of the sites.

In the management plan for Laponia, it is claimed that many of the physical expressions of the cultural heritage are extremely frail and vulnerable, and therefore disappearing. This is especially true for the remains of huts and reindeer pastures due to fertilization from the reindeer herds resulting in lush vegetation. Due to construction details and a climate preventing overgrowth, the sites in Varanger are more robust and lasting.

Laponia is solely an inland area. Adjoining it to the west is the Tysfjord/Hellemofjord landscape in Norway, presently on the Tentative List of Norway. The World Heritage Committee has welcomed a consideration of a transboundary site. However, the local resistance has been strong and so far, no decision has been made.

The cultural value of Laponia is first and foremost connected to it being an undisturbed landscape connected to reindeer herding. In Várjjat Siida the prehistoric and early historic sites are at the core. The Varanger Peninsula is part of the true Arctic and is predominantly a coastal area where the use of marine resources such as fish, sea birds and sea mammals merges with reindeer hunting and subsequently herding in a process that has lasted for 12 000 years.

Cultural and Historic Ensemble of the Solovetsky Islands, Russian Federation

The Solovetsky complex is a monastic settlement, established in the 15th century, on an archipelago situated in the western part of the White Sea. Between 1926 and 1939 the monastery on the main island was turned into a special Soviet prison and labour camp. On the islands, traces of human presence go back to the 5th millennium BC, 5000 years later than the earliest habitation in Varanger. The main prehistoric settlement period was in the 3rd millennium BC.

On the Zayatsky Islands there are many stone labyrinths and stone cairns, presumably created by proto Sámi people. The labyrinths may be compared to the concentric stone rings around the Fish Oil Stone (Ceavccageadgi), and the cairns resemble some of the graves, although at Ceavccageadgi these are made of slate. The structures at the Zayatsky Islands have yielded few finds and their function is unclear. This is in contrast to the unusually rich and varied archaeological record of religious activity at Ceavccageadgi, and its remarkable time span of a specific burial custom.

13.3 Sites on the World Heritage tentative list

Ivvavik / Vuntut / Herschel Island (Qikiqtaruk), Canada

The Ivvavik and Vuntut National Parks and Herschel Island (Qikiqtaruk) Territorial Park comprise 15 500 km² of wilderness on the Yukon coastal plain, Richardson Mountains, a portion of the Old Crow Flats wetlands and an arctic island in the Beaufort Sea. Together, these parks comprise a land rich in wildlife, in variety of landscape and in vegetation. This area was not glaciated, and forms part of the Beringia corridor as evidenced in its assemblage of archaeological and palaeontological deposits. The area supports close to 10 percent of the world's caribou population. The Inuvialuit and Vuntut Gwitchin have hunted, fished and traded in the region for thousands of years. The human history is expressed through archaeological evidence and oral history. The forefathers of the Inuvialuit and Vuntut Gwitchin hunted, fished and traded in the region for thousands of years.

These Canadian areas, including also Quttinirpaaq, are very different from the Varanger area in terms of landscape, chronology, technology, and types of monuments. The archaeological sites go back to 4500 BC and show few visible structures, as also manifested through the selected criteria (iv), (v), (vii), (viii) and (x).

Quttinirpaaq, Canada

Quttinirpaaq covers the northern portion of Ellesmere Island. The park consists of sedimentary mountains, ice caps, glaciers, ice shelves and fiords. As for the previous site, Quttinirpaaq (37 775 km²) have natural processes as important criteria. However, in addition to criteria (vii), (viii) and (x), criteria (iii) is added.

The major valleys of the park are central to one of the routes by which early Aboriginal peoples moved from the Canadian Arctic to Greenland. All pre-contact cultural groups known to have occupied High Arctic Canada, including Independence I (4500-3000 years ago) and Independence II (ca. 3000-2500 years ago), Late Dorset (ca. 1300-800 years ago) and Thule (ca. 900-300 years ago), are represented by archaeological sites in the park.

The sites are documented by surface finds and tent rings. The tent rings resemble tent rings in Varanger, and the lithic material have similarities with Late Stone Age finds from Varanger.

Otherwise, the archaeological record is very different and markedly less varied in monument types, density and age.

13.4 Other sites in the Arctic region

Caribou/reindeer drive systems made of stone and/or wood are found in Canada, Alaska and Greenland. They can be in the form of a V-shaped funnel with two lines of cairns or stones, ending with opposing shooting blinds or in a U-shaped corral, sometimes made of wooden poles. Circular enclosures made of solid stone walls are only found in Varanger, and the visibility of the drive lines are exceptional in Varanger.

Other structures for hunting wild reindeer in Varanger can be compared with structures along the 35 km long Lake Tasersiaq in Greenland. Along the lake are many shooting blinds, drives, and caches, but no pitfall trap systems or corrals. The earliest structures are dated to around 2000 BC, and the majority of the sites can be related to their use by the Inuit from the 14th century up to 1950. In Varanger, structures for hunting reindeer predate this by thousands of years and incorporate a greater range of structures, as well as a technology that points to the transition to reindeer herding.

Along the coast of the Kola peninsula in Russia habitation sites from varied periods have been found, but none with the size and unbroken continuity found at Ceavccageađgi, and without nearby burial grounds. No hunting systems have been recorded.

Among the reasons behind the unusual rich prehistory of the Varanger area is that the coast here has been ice free during winter since the end of the Ice Age. Also, there is no ice cap on the Varanger Peninsula, and the highest mountain here is only 633 m above sea level. Várjjat Siida was inhabited very early. Also, compared with other Arctic areas, the contact with neighbouring cultures is very old. This reveals a strong and consistent cultural resilience.

13.5 Other sites in Norway

Elsewhere in northern and southern Norway, there are many areas with shooting blinds and pitfalls, and also some drive lines. However, wild reindeer were being hunted in Varanger when the interior areas of southern Norway were still covered by ice. Varanger also stands out by the way the connection between hunting and herding reindeer is manifested in the landscape. The unbroken relationship between man and reindeer and the maintenance of intimate knowledge of animals and the landscape are revealed in practices, language and traditions. Another feature not found elsewhere is how the religious meaning of the hunt is revealed by burials, sacrificial sites and Sámi place names.

In the wild reindeer areas of southern Norway, the drive lines of the funnel shaped reindeer trapping system that led up to a holding pen can be difficult to detect (Solli 2018). The pole holes, sometimes with traces of rotten wood and sometimes marked with supporting stones, often lie quite far apart, and the system is revealed clearly only when mapped. This is quite different from the highly visible stone fences and corrals on the Varanger peninsula.

The largest corral at Noiddiidčearru/Kjøpmannskjølen may have been able to trap 200-300 animals at any one time. In comparison, the drive lines documenting wild reindeer trapping in southern Norway ends in narrow stone-built holding pens that could hold only few animals

(Hole 2013). These are often surrounded by butchering sites with middens of bone and antlers (Bergstøl 2020:41), but no dwelling sites like at Gollevárre.

At Noiddiidčearru/Kjøpmannskjølen, the meat was temporarily stored in the many meat caches before it was brought to the settlement sites or trading post. Since the meat caches often are found in connection with ring moraines, they form focal points in the landscape. The number and density of meat caches at Noiddiidčearru/Kjøpmannskjølen as well as hunting pits at Gollevárre is unparalleled.

The selected five sites are highly comparable to other habitation, burial, sacrificial and hunting sites in Varanger. This is an area where the density of cultural sites from the Mesolithic and onwards is extraordinarily high. The five sites are selected as the foremost examples in an area with many other magnificent sites including:

- sites from all the time periods that at Ceavccageadgi are present in an unbroken line and with Ruovdenjunlovta as a spectacular single-period example;
- burial sites with many graves, but nowhere in such an extraordinary abundance as at Ceavccageadgi or in such close vicinity to the habitation during the 2500 years the burial place was in use;
- large pitfall systems, but nowhere as large as at Gollevárre or connected to a house site used during the hunt;
- drive lines and corrals surrounded by hunting blinds and meat caches, but not as extensive and impressive as documented at Noiddiidčearru;
- sacred and sacrificial sites, but nowhere with the variety and context offered at Ceavccageadgi.

13.6 Conclusion

The Outstanding Universal Value of Várjjat Siida is closely tied to the archaeological and culture historical heritage and their testimony to an immensely persistent indigenous Arctic hunting and fishing culture and belief system. As noted throughout this report, the entanglement between these five component sites and the landscape is intimate and conditional. The deep relationship between nature and culture is highlighted by the merging of cultural monuments, natural forms and landscape development in time and space.

Elements of the Várjjat Siida component sites may be compared with many sites. However, seen as a whole and in relation to latitude, diversity, time depth and continuity, they are unparalleled. The burial place alone, with its numerous graves and the time span it covers, makes Várjjat Siida stand out in a way that is exceptional and unique. The same can be said for the continuous record of settlement, for the breathtakingly impressive trapping systems as well as for how the trajectories of architecture and settlement is traceable through time.

Várjjat Siida is also exceptional in a circumpolar Arctic context in relation to the timespan of a single settlement site and burial place (Ceavccageadgi/Mortensnes), and to the scale and form of settlement and hunting structures. Moreover, the sites bear witness to the enduring importance of reindeer and coastal fishing along a coast that is ice free all year round at a

latitude where coastal waters elsewhere are covered by ice. The time depth, number, variation and density of tangible structures makes Várjjat Siida stand out and give it a distinct profile. As such, it in some ways fills a gap not covered by Aasivissuit–Nipisat and Laponia. It also implies a break with the “ethnographic” understanding of indigenous cultures and the Sámi past.



Group of Varanger Sámi 1884. The importance of reindeer is revealed by the clothes and shoes while the boats show the importance of fishing. Ceavccageadgi is seen in the background. Photo: K. Knutsen collection, University of Bergen.

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