

## The Earliest Contacts between Scandinavians and South Saami<sup>1</sup>

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### 1. The first inhabitants of Scandinavia

Over the centuries the opinion about the ethnic identity of Scandinavia's first population has moved back and forth. Up until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Saami were generally regarded as the original inhabitants of all Scandinavia. Such an opinion is expressed clearly by Johan Ihre in his preface to the Saami dictionary of E. Lindahl & J. Öhring, *Lexicon Lapponicum*, from 1780. According to Ihre, the greatest linguist of Sweden at that time, this idea was first presented by G. W. von Leibniz. Ihre's version of the theory is, however, mixed with a mythical perspective; the Germanic language was introduced into Scandinavia by "Odin and his company". In other words, the main god of the Scandinavians has become a historical person.

At the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the general opinion changed in a radical way. The Saami were now seen as immigrants, often late immigrants, particularly in the southern parts of their area of distribution. According to the Norwegian historian Yngvar Nielsen (1891: 26) the Saami had spread from the north at a very late point of time and had not reached the area of Røros, in the southernmost Saami area of today, until late in the 17<sup>th</sup> or even early in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. His view is clearly connected with the Norwegian nationalism that was growing strong at this time, but his expressions occasionally have a distinct racist character, e.g., when talking about the need "to stop the Lappish invasion" or when describing what happens when the Saami "get into closer contact with culture". Certainly there was a similar nationalism in Sweden, as all over Europe at that time. In the writings of Karl Bernhard Wiklund, the first Swedish scholar in Finno-Ugric and Saami research, this nationalism was intertwined with a strong darwinistic perspective (Larsson 1996: 49 f.). According to him also it was a question of "a real Lappish im-

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migration towards the south” (Wiklund 1910: 4) and the Saami had not reached their southernmost areas ”until in our days” (Wiklund 1925: 114).

Even today one can meet representatives of Scandinavian studies who talk about the Saami as an alien people in Sweden, and dislike the term ”aboriginal people” to describe the Saami, since it is impossible to know whether they were in fact the first inhabitants. That argument would, however, pertain to the Swedish-speaking population as well, since no language was spoken on the Scandinavian peninsula during the Ice Age. The ethnic identity of the first populations in Scandinavia will remain unknown, as regards both south and north Scandinavia. Palaeolithic finds cannot be connected with any present-day group of languages, but only bear witness to the presence of human beings. Even if this is so, we can, of course, study the contacts between speakers of Saami and speakers of Scandinavian languages.

According to the traditional view, the Saami arrived rather late in such central Swedish areas as Jämtland and Härjedalen (the later area is situated on the same latitude as Røros in Norway). This opinion also prevailed in archaeological research, but was challenged when Inger Zachrisson (late overview given in MÍG 33 ff.) investigated anew some graves in Vivalen in Härjedalen. Although the graves were dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, she found them predominantly Saami (Zachrisson 1997: 80, 124, *passim*). Thereby she pushed the borderline of Saami presence farther to the south and further back in time. Her investigation was met with harsh criticism as well as with enthusiastic support. The whole question could seem unimportant, but apart from its interest to scholars in history and prehistory, it also has a political dimension. It is an essential question to the south Saami to know whether their presence in the southernmost areas has a history of some 1000 years instead of a couple of hundred years as Yngvar Nielsen maintained. The Saami are just one of a number of harassed peoples in Europe thought of as an alien group in a country. Therefore, an investigation based on indisputable facts is needed.

## **2. Are there indisputable facts in linguistics?**

In the following I will try to show that the results of research into language can constitute such indisputable facts that are needed to corroborate a theory. Even if human language is, in one way, ephemeral, it can nevertheless provide arguments that can hardly be ignored.

Many linguistic arguments are, however, too vague to be suitable. That does not mean that they are incorrect, but just that they are too imprecise to form a sharp argument. When, e.g., Ole Henrik Magga (2012: 114) shows

that the snow terminology of South Saami is very different from that of North Saami, this is, of course, a solid argument for his conclusion that "South Saami has been a language of its own for a long time [et selvstendig språk i lang tid]". However convincing that result is, the problem is what the phrase "a long time" means. How many years constitute a long time: 250 years? 500 years? 1000 years? Or even more? Even detailed knowledge of the material does not result in any exact dating.

There are examples where the material provides evidence that is undeniable in some way. One such case is, I believe, the expression *gosen milkie grasi*, that can be found in a Saami wordlist from the 1770s. The wordlist contains words taken down by a pupil of Carl von Linné, Per Holmberger. Holmberger studied for Linné for ten years and kept up his botanical interest throughout his life. He translates the plant name into its Latin name, *Ballota nigra*, a name given by Linné some 20 years earlier when establishing this species. The Latin name has not been changed since, it is still called *Ballota nigra*. In English, this plant is called black horehound. This means that Holmberger must have taken down the Saami word *gosen milkie grasi* somewhere where this plant can be found. There can be no misunderstanding, since the same name is used today and since Holmberger knew his botany. Consequently, the northern border of the distribution area of *Ballota nigra* is identical with the northern border of the area where Holmberger could make his interview with Saami speakers. The northern borderline of the plant runs some 200 kilometers north of Stockholm, at the city of Gävle. So in the 1770s, Saami must have been spoken in that part of the country, far away from the present distribution area of Saami. The conclusion is inevitable, because, as Holmberger himself put it, you don't have words for things you don't know (cf. Larsson 2005).

In the case of black horehound it is the semantic side of the word that settles the question. In the following I will discuss a case where formal aspects play a similar role. Before doing so, we must have a look at the Finno-Ugric historical phonology.

### **3. Finno-Ugric historical phonology**

According to Voltaire, etymology is an art where consonants play a very small role and the vowels none at all. That is not the case with the historical phonology of Finno-Ugric languages. We have a very clear picture of the development of the sound-system from Proto-Finno-Ugric into the languages of today. That certainly does not mean that there are no unsolved problems

left, but the present theories are based on the work of several generations of researchers. The proto-language had, e.g., three sibilant phonemes, as can be seen already from a comparison of representative examples in Saami, Finnish and Hungarian.

Saami	Finnish	Hungarian	Reconstructed	Meaning
<i>salla</i>	<i>syli</i>	<i>öl</i>	* <i>süli</i>	‘lap, arms’
<i>čuohti</i>	<i>sata</i>	<i>száz</i>	* <i>śata</i>	‘100’
<i>luossa</i>	<i>lohi</i>	–	< Balt., cf. Lith. <i>lašiša</i> etc.	‘salmon’
–	<i>hiiri</i>	<i>egér</i>	* <i>šijere</i>	‘mouse’

These examples show that there are three types of correspondences:

Saa. *s* = Fi. *s* = Hung.  $\emptyset$

Saa. *č* = Fi. *s* = Hung. *sz*

Saa. *s* = Fi. *h* = Hung.  $\emptyset$

A lower number of reconstructed sibilants cannot provide any explanation with a regular development of the sounds. The fact that the word represented by Saami *luossa* is a Baltic loanword helps us identify one of the sounds in the proto-language as \**š*. When material from more languages is added, the conclusions will be even safer, be it material from Finno-Ugric languages or from languages that Finno-Ugric has borrowed words from. To mention one such case, the reconstructed palatal sibilant is supported by the Permian languages, where the opposition of non-palatal vs. palatal consonant is preserved, and by loanwords from Indo-Iranian languages, e.g. the word for ‘100’, where the palatal *ś* is preserved also, cf., e.g., Sanskrit *śata-* ‘100’.

It should also be noted that among the examples above there is no word where an initial \**š* is represented in all three languages. The language historian cannot expect the words to be preserved just because they present interesting facts about the proto-language. A living language is not a systematically built up museum, so we have to work with the material that has accidentally remained. Some sounds are extremely stable over time, e.g., \**m* and \**r*, and are maintained in several languages, but in general, the reconstructed, original sound can be found as such in just a few languages. An initial \**k*, e.g., is maintained in the western, Finno-Permian languages, but in Ugric languages it changes under certain conditions. Furthermore, the different sounds had a different frequency in the proto-language, and that certainly affects their chances to remain in the languages of today. When working with questions of this kind, the data presented in Statistik der uralischen Lautensprechungen (SUL) are very useful. Of course, sounds that were frequent in

the reconstructed proto-language provide us with a richer picture of the system. In UEW one can even find examples of reconstructed minimal pairs, e.g., *\*sala* ‘verstecken, verhehlen, stehlen; Dieb’ ≠ *\*śala* ‘Ulme’. That is in good accordance with the fact that non-palatal *\*s* can be found in 38 reconstructions and palatal *\*ś* in 48 cases (SUL 116 ff.).

Among the reconstructed phonemes we also find a non-palatal *\*δ* and a palatal *\*δ’*. There are several examples that support the non-palatal *\*δ* after the first syllable, and it shows a different development than, e.g., the occlusive *\*t*:

Saami	Finnish	Hungarian	Reconstructed	Meaning
<i>giehta</i>	<i>käte-</i>	<i>kéz</i>	<i>*käti</i>	‘hand’
<i>buođđu</i>	<i>pato</i>	<i>fal</i>	<i>*paða</i>	‘dam; enclosure for netting salmon’ (KN)

There is, however, no certain example of a reconstructed word that would have had a *\*δ* in the initial position. The only one of this kind could be *\*δāpδē* ‘spleen’, an etymology that is accepted by Sammallahti (1998: 198 f.) and Lehtiranta (1989: 219), but is regarded as highly uncertain by Korhonen (1981: 129; cf. UEW s.v. *läppä*<sup>2</sup>). On the other hand, there are three reconstructed words with an initial palatal *\*δ’* (SUL 98), which results in a rather puzzling picture of the frequency of these sounds in Proto-Finno-Ugric (here compared with the number of *\*t* in both positions; all numbers according to SUL):

Phoneme	Initial	Non-initial
<i>*t</i>	43	16
<i>*δ</i>	0	13
<i>*δ’</i>	3	10

The palatal *\*δ’* differs from all other reconstructed sounds in one notable respect; namely, that it has not been maintained in any language of today, so some element of uncertainty is connected with it. László Honti (latest 2012) has for this, and some other reasons as well, suggested that the quality of this sound was another, namely *ʃ*, with a non-palatal correspondence *ʃ*. The advantage of this explanation is that such a sound can be found in Khanty dialects (Honti 2012: 47) and can be explained as deriving directly from the same sound in the proto-language. Of course, it is also possible to argue in favour of the traditionally reconstructed *\*δ’*, since there is a good deal of logic in it. Already the correspondence between Saami *ođđa* ‘new’ / Finnish *ute-lias* ‘curious’ / Hungarian *új* ‘new’ indicate that we are dealing with a dental, palatal sound.

This classical problem certainly cannot be solved in this article, and it is not needed for the following discussion. There is a unanimous opinion among researchers in Saami language history that this mysterious sound – whatever its quality was in Proto-Finno-Ugric – developed into a voiceless, dental fricative,  $*\theta$ , in Proto-Saami (Korhonen 1981: 129; Sammallahti 1998: 199).

Proto-Saami	SaaS	SaaN	Finnish	Other FU lang.	Hung.	UEW
$*t$	<i>dälle</i>	<i>dolla</i>	<i>tuli</i>	Md. <i>tol</i>	–	$*tuli$ ‘fire’
$*t$	<i>dieves</i>	<i>dievas</i>	<i>täysi</i>	Ma. <i>tić</i>	<i>tele</i>	$*täw-$ ‘full’
$*t$	<i>dihkie</i>	<i>dihkki</i>	<i>täi</i>	Udm. <i>tej</i>	<i>tetű</i>	$*täji$ ‘louse’
$*\theta$	<i>hibmie</i>	<i>dapmi</i>	<i>tymä</i>	Udm. <i>lem</i>	–	$*\deltaümä$ , $\delta'imä$ ‘glue’
$*\theta$	<i>hiñse</i>	<i>dañas</i>	–	??Ko. ” <i>lañes</i> ”	–	Not in UEW: $*\delta'iñis$ , $\delta'iñis$ ‘twigs’
$*\theta$	<i>fuome</i>	<i>duopma</i>	<i>tuomi</i>	Udm. <i>löm-pu</i>	–	$*\deltaömi$ ‘bird cherry’

As can be seen from the above examples, the dental fricative  $*\theta$  in an initial position has another representation in South Saami than it has in northern Saami languages. The material is not extensive – language is no systematical museum – but it is regular.

In his book on the vocabulary of common Saami, Lehtiranta (1989) presents altogether five words with an initial  $*\theta$  ( $<*δ$ ), and he is the one presenting the parallel South Saami *hiñse* / Komi *lañes* (referring to KESK). This parallel seems to be extremely uncertain; it is not noted in UEW, and the semantics of the Proto-Permian *\*lañes* does not fit together with the Saami word (cf. KESK). Even if the Komi parallel has to be rejected, the correspondence within Saami – SaaS. *hiñse* / SaaN. *dañas* – is regular (cf. Bergsland 1946: 22).

Bergsland (1946: 22) suggests another example as well. SaaS. *hâvva* ”the protuberant upper part of the marrowbone of the backside of the forefoot of the reindeer” (translation from Rydving 2012:164 based on SLW s.v. *hâv-vaa*) / SaaN. *duv'va* ‘protruding upper end of the *dab'bâ* at the back of fore-legs of reindeer (or other animal)’ (form and translation from KN s.v.). This word could be a Scandinavian loanword, cf. OSw. *thuva*, ON. *þúva* ‘tussock, grassy hillock’. Bergsland himself regards the correspondence as uncertain and the semantic part seems to cause great problems. Furthermore, the development in South Saami seems to presuppose a dissimilation ( $*\theta uv-$   $>$   $*huv-$   $>$  *hâv-*) to explain the initial *h-* (cf. below). So even if the contrast between SaaS. *h-* / SaaN. *d-* is what we expect from a Proto-Saami  $*\theta-$ , this etymology seems uncertain (marked with ? in the table below).

Lehtiranta (1989: 30 f.) also presents a word found in Lagercrantz' dictionary (LW s.v. *håppe*, here somewhat simplified transcription) which denotes another bone: SaaS. *haabbe* 'der obere Vorderbein im Vorderbein des Rentieres' / SaaN. *dab'bâ* 'the marrow-bone above the *čib'be*'. The Ume Saami form is *håbba* (Schlachter 1958 s.v.), whereas the languages further to the north and east have forms with an initial occlusive. The word is formally regular and the semantics is unproblematic. The forms can be derived from a Proto-Saami *\*θāmpə*, as Lehtiranta suggests.

Another word to be dealt with here was noted already by Qvigstad (1893: 140). It is the verb 'to felt' as in, e.g., SaaL. *tuohppit* 'verfilzen, walken', *tuohpanit* 'sich verfilzen, gewalkt werden' (HG s.v.), also in Lindahl – Öhrling: *tuopet* 'valka kläde eller walmar'. Qvigstad (ibid.) connected it with a word in Scandinavian languages, Sw. *tova*, No. *tov* etc.; in Icelandic it has an initial fricative, *þæva* 'valka' (cf. SAOB T2184 for more forms). The initial *t-* in Lule Saami does not allow any conclusion as to the age of this loanword, but the word is found also in four out of the five eastern varieties of Ume Saami with forms like, e.g., Msk. *fühpət*, Mlm. *füöhپət* 'to felt' (Calleberg). This word is not found in Schlachter's dictionary (1958), and since that dictionary has been regarded as synonymous with the notion of Ume Saami (Larsson 2012: 76), the Ume Saami forms have not been noted in research. The correspondence SaaU. *fuo-* / SaaL. *tuo-* makes it obvious that this is an old loanword from a Scandinavian word with an initial *\*θ*, written *þ* and known as "thorn" in Scandinavian studies. Lule Saami *tuohppit* could represent a Scandinavian *t-*, whereas Ume Saami *f-* can not.

There was a dental fricative in Proto-Scandinavian that remained in Old Swedish and Old Norse and is still to be found in Modern Icelandic. It was a phoneme separate from /t/ and reflects the same Proto-Germanic sound (Widmark 2001: 78; e.g. Krahe 1966: 76, 91). So, in this respect the same phonemes existed in Proto-Saami and in Proto-Scandinavian, and Scandinavian loanwords in Saami can show the same development as inherited words, if they are old enough.

The phonetic representation of this old dental fricative *þ* in loanwords allows us to group loanwords into different historical strata. In the oldest ones a continuative in South and/or Ume Saami reflects a Scandinavian *þ* (= PS *\*θ*). In the following stratum a Scandinavian occlusive is rendered as the letter <d>, and in the youngest loanwords the letter <ɬ> is used in South and North Saami to show the postaspiration of the Scandinavian occlusive (Haselbrink 1944: 122, 77; Bergsland 1946: 23 f.), e.g.:

I: SaaU. Msk. *fühpət* / SaaL. *tuohppit* 'to felt', cf. OSw. *thova*;

- II: SaaS. *dovres* ‘dear’ cf. Sw. *dyr*; *dovne* ‘pillow’, cf. Sw. *dyna*; *dæjsta* ‘tuesday’, cf. Sw. *tisdag*; *dåase* ‘box’, cf. Sw. *dosa*;  
 SaaN. *diibmu* ‘clock; hour’, cf. Sw. *timma*; *dinga* ‘thing’, cf. Sw. *ting*;  
 III: SaaS. *taake* ‘roof’, cf. Sw. *tak*; *teegele* ‘brick’, cf. Sw. *tegel*; *tiije* ‘time’, cf. Sw. *tid*.  
 SaaN. *teasta* ‘test’, cf. Sw. *test*; *tomáhtta* ‘tomato’, cf. Sw. *tomat*.

The initial occlusive in the Norwegian and Swedish word *tak* ‘roof’ was a dental fricative in older stages of the language. Consequently, SaaS. *taake* must have been borrowed after the change  $*p (= *θ) > t$  had taken place in Scandinavian (Rydving 2012: 164).

#### 4. The thunder god

In the literature about the Saami it is often said that their name for the thunder god was *Horagalles*. That statement is, however, a consequence of the fact that the sources to Saami prechristian religion mostly describe circumstances in the southern parts of Sápmi, but the information has been often generalised to cover all Saami (Rydving 2010: 95). Håkan Rydving is the researcher who has succeeded in establishing a strict relation between the sources and the area they described. His picture is much more precise and varied, than the one presented in old overviews.

Following Hasselbrink (SLW: 21 f.), Rydving (e.g. 2012: 165) divides the South Saami language area not into two parts, as is often done (e.g., Korhonen 1981: 15 f.), but into three parts: southern South Saami, central South Saami, and northern South Saami. This division can be supported by strict linguistic criteria, e.g., the form of the infinitive ending and that of the accusative singular:

Form	Northern SaaS	Central SaaS	Southern SaaS
Infinitive	<i>-dh</i>	<i>-dh</i>	<i>-jh</i>
Acc. sg.	<i>-b</i>	<i>-m</i>	<i>-m</i>

The word *Horagalles* is a compound, where the latter part corresponds to SaaS. *gaellies* meaning ‘old man’. The first part of the word can be found in a few other compounds: *hovresåektie* and *hovrenåarja* ‘thunder’, *hovrenåarjan steavhke* ‘rainbow’, and *hovreskodtje* ‘thunder’,<sup>2</sup> as well as a simplex *Hovre* ‘the god of thunder’. Rydving (2012: 165) underlines that these words

<sup>2</sup> The word *hovren-gierkie* ‘mountain crystal’ (Bergsland – Mattsson Magga) also seems to belong to this group, but I have no data on the dialectgeographic distribution of this word.

have an explicitly southern distribution in the Saami language area: apart from *hovreskodtje* ‘thunder’ that is found also in central South Saami all of them are restricted to southern South Saami, i.e. southern Jämtland and Härjedalen in Sweden and Røros in Norway. The usual words for ‘thunder’ further to the north are, e.g., *raejrie* and *aatja* (Rydving 2012: 165). The word *hovre(n)-*, is borrowed from the Scandinavian name for the thunder god, Thor, runic Sw. *þor*, *þur*, ON. *Þórr* (SAOB T2021; Qvigstad 1893: 195; SLW s.v. *Huvre*; Sköld 1985: 65 f.; Rydving 2012). So, the continuative *h-* in southern South Saami derives from a Scandinavian *þ*.

In the – admittedly few – examples above an older Saami \**θ* has developed into *f-* before a labial vowel. Bergsland (1946:22) reckons with a development \**huo-* > *fu-* in South Saami, which can be observed both in inherited words and loanwords. Such a change is known also from some Finnish loanwords in Saami languages further to the north, e.g. SaaN. *fuomašit* ‘notice’ < fi. *huomata* (Korhonen 1981: 134), but in contrast to South and Ume Saami the change there seems to be spontaneous. In general, northern forms in *huo-* correspond to southern forms in *fu-*, e.g.: Lule Saami *huovva* ‘Schar, Haufen, Rudel’ ~ Ume Saami M. *fuovva*, ST. *fiowə* (Moosberg ST), Msk. *fuovvə* (Calleberg) ~ SaaS. *fuove* (SLW s.v.); SaaU. Mlm. *fuöhppē* ‘rush (noun)’ ~ SaaN. *hoahppu* ‘id.’; SaaN. *fuotni* ~ SaaU. Msk. *fuotnū* ‘bad’ < Fi. *huono* ‘id.’; but SaaL. *fuonōs* and *huonōs* ~ SaaU. SoF. *fuonūs* ‘the evil one, the devil’. So, the regular development of South and Ume Saami is represented in SaaS. *fuome* ‘bird cherry’, SaaU. (Msk.) *füehpət* ‘to felt’, whereas the initial *h-* is irregular in SaaS. *hävva* ‘the protuberant upper part [...]’ and *Hovre-*, *hovren-äärja* ‘thunder’ and so forth. SaaS. *hävva* could – if it belongs here – be explained as the result of a dissimilation, whereas the *hovre(n)-* forms need another explanation.

There is obviously no reason to search for any quality differences in the loan-giving Scandinavian languages; both the name of the thunder god and the verb ‘to felt’ started with the same *thō-* in Old Swedish (Lennart Elmevik, personal communication, 20. 11. 2013). The explanation for the irregularity should be found in Saami.

In Finno-Ugric studies, not least in Finland, it is not uncommon to explain irregularities in phonological development by pointing to the risk that a regular development would cause homonymy. Even though such a possibility must be reckoned with, this explanation seems to exaggerate the disturbances homonyms would bring into the system. Language can bear homonymy, since words are always used in a context. The Swedish word *vad* has five dif-

ferent meanings: 1. ‘what’, 2. ‘calf (of the leg)’, 3. ‘ford’, 4. ‘bet, wager’, and 5. ‘seine’. This homonymy never causes any problems in communication.

However, when ON. *Þórr* is rendered as SaaS. *hovre(n)*- instead of an expected *\*fuorra*, there is an obvious risk of a disturbing homonymy. There is another Scandinavian loanword that is wide-spread in Saami languages; namely, OSw. *hōra*, isl. *hóra* etc. < germanskt *\*hōrōn* (Hellqvist 1948 s.v. *hor*) meaning ‘whore’ (the English word also belongs here, of course). This word can be found in Saami from North Saami, Nesseby *fuörra* ‘Hure’, Suijavaara, Könkämä *huorra* (LW s.v.; the transcription here somewhat simplified) as well as in the Saami languages further to the south: SaaL. *huorrā* ‘liederliches Weibsbild, »Hure«’ (HG s.v.), SaaU. *fuarra* ‘Hure’. Lagercrantz connects this word with SaaS. *fuärrä* ‘ein Fluch: Teufel’, that he has taken down in Snåsa and Vefsen. Hasselbrink (SLW s.v.) gives the form *fuärraa* with the same meaning also from Meraker, Offerdal, Anarisfjällen, Undersåker and Røros. The semantic change ‘whore’ > ‘devil’ does not require any detailed comments, it is enough to compare with the corresponding word in Hungarian: Hung. *kurva* ‘whore’; *kurva hideg van!* ‘it’s bloody cold’ (MÉSz. s.v.; my translation into English).

The wide distribution of this loanword in Saami indicates an early borrowing. As could be expected, this old loanword has participated in the change *huo-* > *fuo-* in South and Ume Saami. There are, however, a couple of instances in these languages with an initial *h-*: SaaS. Vfs. *howrà* ‘whore’ (LW s.v. transcription somewhat simplified) and SaaU. ST *hourā-ol<sup>o</sup>mài* ‘whorish man’ (Moosberg ST s.v.). Here it must be observed that these words are obviously local and late. Their form seems to be almost identical with the Swedish word, where a slightly diphthongised pronunciation of closed long vowels is typical. Furthermore, in South Saami the change in meaning – SaaS. *fuärraa* ‘devil’ – in the old borrowing opened up for a new borrowing with the meaning ‘whore’. In Ume Saami, where *fuarra* has retained its original meaning, this later borrowing is only known in a compound with another meaning. Lagercrantz word from Vefsen, *howrà*, could be regarded as a quotation loan.

Against this background it seems very probable that the irregular representation of Scandinavian *p-* in SaaS. *Hovre(n)*- can be explained by a wish to avoid homonymy. It would be highly inappropriate to give the name *\*Fuärragaellies*, ‘the old whore-man’, to a god who was worshipped and feared (Rydving 2010: 94).

The distribution of the words support this reasoning: the loanword for ‘whore’ can be found over a wide Saami area, from Nesseby down to Røros.

The word *Hovre* and its compounds – all connected to the thunder god – are restricted to southern South Saami, even if one case out of five is registered also in central South Saami. The late loanword SaaS. *howrà* ‘whore’ is taken down in Vefsen alone and its pronunciation is almost identical with that in Swedish.

### 5. Summing up

To sum up, there were in Proto-Saami two phonemes \*/t/ and \*/θ/, which derived from separate phonemes in Proto-Finno-Ugric. Neither Finnish, nor northern Saami languages show any difference as to how these sounds are rendered. In South and Ume Saami, however, these phonemes have different representations: the old occlusive remains an occlusive, whereas PS \*θ is represented by a continuative. Even if the examples are few, we can distinguish between two different representations of PS \*θ depending on phonetic context: in front of a non-labial vowel *h-* but in front of a labial vowel *f-*. This development seems to be regular to ”southern Saami in a broad sense of the word”, i.e. South Saami and Ume Saami.

In the first phase then, PS \*θ- developed into *h-* in southern Saami, which, of course, affected both inherited words, like \*θimä ‘glue’ and \*θōmi ‘bird-cherry’, and loanwords, like θōva ‘to felt’. Ume Saami developed in the same way as South Saami, as can be seen in the word for ‘glue’ attested in seven out of the nine varieties in my investigation into Ume Saami variation (Larsson 2012): in each variety where this word is found, we find an initial *h-*, eg. ST *hīppmie*, Msk. *hippmē*, i.e. the same development as in SaaS. *hibmie*. At some time in this early phase the Scandinavian word for ‘whore’ – OSw. *hōra* etc – has been borrowed.

After this, the change \*huo- > fuo- took place, which is regular in the southernmost languages: SaaS. *fuome*, SaaU. *füöhpæt* and SaaU. *fuarra*. It might seem strange from a cultural point of view that the textile term ‘to felt’ was taken over earlier than the name of the thunder god, since the textile term OSw. *thova* is not attested until 1450 (SO s.v.), whereas the name of the thunder god is known in runic Swedish. The felted cloth, however, is known from prehistoric finds and the Swedish word for this kind of cloth appears for the first time in a written text in 1292 (Nationalencyklopedin s.v.).

After the development \*huo- > fuo- had taken place, the name of the thundergod, ON. *þōr* etc., was borrowed into (southern) South Saami, where it got the form *hovre*. According to Sköld (1985: 65), ”[t]he most probable” explanation is that the South Saami substituted Scandinavian *þ* with *h*, when taking over the word. So instead of the unfortunate homonymy, it could be

the development of the South Saami sound system that provides an explanation to the correspondence Scand. *þ-* ~ SaaS. *h-* in *Hovre*. The explanations do not necessarily exclude one another. However that question is resolved, there remains the vowel problem: here, the long Scandinavian *ō* is rendered by *-ov-*, not by the diphthong *-uo-*. Does that indicate that the diphthongisation had also taken place when the name of the thunder god was borrowed?

Southern Saami	Northern Saami	Proto-Saami / < Scand.	Older FU form	Meaning
SaaS. <i>hibmie</i>	N. <i>dapmi</i>	* <i>θümā</i> , * <i>θimā</i>	* <i>δümā</i> , <i>δimā</i>	‘glue’
SaaS. <i>hijse</i>	N. <i>dajas</i>	* <i>θijis</i>	??* <i>δijis</i> , <i>δijis</i>	‘twigs’
SaaS. <i>haabbe</i>	N. <i>dab’bâ</i>	* <i>θāmpə</i>		‘protuberant part of a bone’
SaaS. <i>hāvva</i>	N. <i>duvva</i>	??skand. <i>θúva</i>		‘a bone’
SaaS. <i>fuome</i>	N. <i>duopma</i>	* <i>θōmi</i>	* <i>δōmi</i>	‘bird-cherry’
SaaU. <i>füöhpət</i>	L. <i>tuohppit</i>	Scand. <i>θova</i>	–	‘to fet’
SaaS. <i>hovre(n)-</i>	–	Scand. <i>θórr</i>	–	‘the god of thunder’

The important thing in this etymology is, however, not the vocalism, but the fact that the initial continuative in SaaS. *hovre(n)-* must reflect a continuative (cf. Rydving 2012: 164). A Scandinavian occlusive would have been rendered by a Saami occlusive, as in SaaS. *taake* ‘roof’ < Scand., cf. Sw. *tak* ‘roof; ceiling’ < *þak*. In present-day Swedish and Norwegian, the thunder god is called Tor, the old fricative *þ* has developed into an occlusive, *Tor*. This means that the form *hovre(n)-* must have been taken over before this sound change took place in Scandinavian languages. The undisputed, common opinion among scholars in Scandinavistics is that this development took place “at the latest around 1400” (Wessén 1968: 82). This gives us a terminus ante quem for the borrowing, but there is also a terminus post quem. In the west Germanic languages the name of the thunder god has a nasal – Eng. *Thunder*, Ger. *Donner* – which has disappeared in Old Scandinavian (Sköld 1985: 65 f.; Rydving 2012: 163). No nasal is reflected in SaaS. *Hovre-* and therefore Sköld (1985: 66) concludes that the word “was apparently borrowed during the Viking age or during the Early Middle Ages”.

## 6. The contacts between southern Saami and Scandinavians

Yngvar Nielsen (1891) and Wiklund (1925) assumed that the southern Saami arrived in their present areas in the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century viz. after the

beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> The results of Sköld (1985) and Rydving (2012), however, indicate that the southern Saami have been there before the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It must once again be underlined that the forms in *Hovre*- are almost exclusively restricted to southern South Saami. It is not attested in more northerly Saami languages.

Would then the difference between a couple of centuries in the dating of the South Saami – Scandinavian contacts be of such a great importance? Yes, it certainly would, depending on the kind of criteria that it is based on. The important difference between the datings of Nielsen and Wiklund and the dating based on SaaS. *hovre*- is that the latter one is supported by an undisputed sound-criterium. Nielsen's and Wiklund's, on the other hand, is an estimation based on an idea about Saami immigration. To put it frankly: it is pure guesswork.

If one were to follow Nielsen's dating, one would have to assume that there elapsed some 200 or 300 years before Proto-Saami \* $\theta$  had changed into  $t$  in the Saami language in Härjedalen. That would be an impossibility. By the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Saami was growing into a written language. The amount of texts varied from region to region and the written language can be more or less obscure, but the general picture is getting clearer and clearer and the dating of the texts is certain. An earlier dating of the Saami presence in the southernmost areas is further supported by many circumstances, such as the general differences in snow terminology pointed out by Magga (2012). So, if there was a desperate need – for some incomprehensible reason – to declare that the contacts between the South Saami and the Scandinavians had started after 1500, it would be necessary to explain how an occlusive in Scandinavian could be rendered by a South Saami fricative. Such efforts would probably be as convincing as an explanation that the South Saami word *Hovre* was taken over from Icelandic, where the fricative has remained.

Furthermore, Wessén's dating "at the latest 1400" is a *terminus ante quem* and according to Sköld there was a period of almost 700 years, during which the word could be taken over and result in a form with an initial  $h$ -. So, the difference between the datings of Nielsen and Wiklund and that of

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<sup>3</sup> A frequently used argument against an early presence of the Saami in their present-day areas has been the lack of old Saami place-names (to this discussion see, e.g., Zachrisson 1997: 18). Proponents of the theory of an old Saami presence have then, more or less successfully, tried to find Saami place-names that reflect very old stages in the development of Scandinavian languages. When it comes to place-names, however, it must never be forgotten that mapping has always been in the hands of the majority population.

Sköld and Rydving is not one of 200 or 300 years. It is the difference between guesswork and a solid linguistic criterium that yields a reliable terminus ante quem.

One could consider the question, whether it is reasonable that the name of the thunder god was taken over in, say, the 14<sup>th</sup> century. That would seem rather late for the name of a pagan Scandinavian god. Therefore, it is easier to join Sköld in his opinion in his article, that the word was taken over "during the Viking Age or during the Early Middle Age" (Sköld 1985:66). Considering this possibility and the absolute time-limit "before 1400" and also considering the very southern distribution of the forms in *hovre(n)-*, linguistics support Zachrisson's dating of the Saami grave at Vivalen in Härjedalen. And we are dealing with a linguistic argument that is very hard to come around.

#### Abbreviations

Eng	English	OSw	Old Swedish
Fi	Finnish	PS	Proto-Saami
Ger	German	Saa	Saami
Hung	Hungarian	SaaL	Lule Saami
Ko	Komi	SaaN	North Saami
Ma	Mari	SaaU	Ume Saami
Md	Mordvin	SoF	Ume Saami forest variety
Mlm	Ume Saami variety of Malmesjaure	ST	Ume Saami variety of Southern Tärna
Msk	Ume Saami variety of Maskaure	Udm	Udmurt
ON	Old Norse	Vfs	South Saami variety of Vefsen

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