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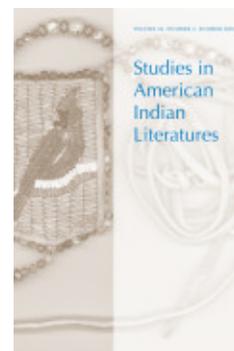
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## **Publishing Sámi Literature—from Christian Translations to Sámi Publishing Houses**

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# Publishing Sámi Literature—from Christian Translations to Sámi Publishing Houses

KIRSTI PALTTO

Edited and translated by Rauna Kuokkanen

Publishing in the Sámi languages has always been difficult. The Sámi are currently spread across four countries, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. There are nine different Sámi languages, some of them with only a few speakers. The Sámi publishing industry is entirely dependent on government funding as we do not have our own funds nor is there a system of independent foundations as is the case, for example, in North America. Although the Sámi language has been a language of instruction at some schools in the Sámi area for a couple of decades, the number of Sámi readers remains very small. Due to the various Nordic assimilation policies that were particularly harsh in the early twentieth century, many Sámi have lost their mother tongue, and many of those who retained the language did not learn to read Sámi at school. One would expect national governments to amend the situation by arranging Sámi literacy courses for adults during their workdays. These courses would also offer much-needed spaces for learning to read Sámi literature. However, this has not proved to be the case.

For every Sámi word I have published, I have been forced to beg for money from the representatives of the government. Today, with the establishment of the Sámi parliaments, much of the funding for the Sámi people is now funneled through these bodies.<sup>1</sup> However, especially in Finland, the annual allocation of funds is way below what is required to adequately run Sámi affairs and advance “Sámi cultural autonomy.” Despite the Sámi Cultural Autonomy Act, the

amount allocated annually to various projects and initiatives related to Sámi culture, including Sámi literature, is a fraction of the total amount of the received applications.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the situation of the Sámi language and culture continues to worsen. Establishing strong foundations with adequate resources is next to impossible because of a consistent lack of funds. Moreover, the Sámi area is sparsely populated, and the distances between communities are long. Communicating with one another is not as easy as it is in urban areas. The distance from urban centers also means that everything is more expensive in the North, which also increases the need for additional funds. Demands for adequate, systematic funding are easily justifiable if one recalls how the nation-states have been exploiting natural resources on Sámi territory for decades, if not centuries. This exploitation has also reduced our cultural, linguistic, and spiritual strength and capacity to the situation in which we find ourselves today.

#### THE FOUNDATION OF SÁMI LITERATURE

*Yoiking*, storytelling, and oral tradition in general form the roots of written Sámi literature. Yoiking, a Sámi way of expressing oneself and communicating by means of chanting and singing, has traditionally been important among the Sámi. Yoiking contains Sámi views of themselves: who they are, where they are from, and why Sámiland belongs to the Sámi. Christian missionaries were against yoiking especially when it was associated with Sámi spirituality and *noaidit* or shamans who were the healers and spiritual leaders of the Sámi. When missionaries attacked the Sámi worldview and social order and sought to outlaw them, the Sámi invented ways to maintain their spirituality. For instance, they created yoiks that mocked and criticized *noaidit* while continuing the practice in secret. The representatives of the church accepted these kind of yoiks but did not understand their double meaning (see Gaski). Yoiking remained hidden after being banned by the church as sinning and the language of the devil. The yoik tradition prevailed particularly where the presence of church representatives was lower, such as in the forest. Men yoiked, for example, while working with the reindeer up

in the mountains (Skaltje). Yoiking continues to be a way of communication even though it may not always contain many words. In addition to words, communication takes place with voice and body language. The use of voice is a very important way in which one can describe and present almost anything.

Like yoiking, Sámi oral tradition is linked with the Sámi perception of the world as being replete with various spirits and guardian figures. Stories and reminiscing have been ways of presenting Sámi history, but they have also had the function of building the future. As with many other Indigenous peoples, the Sámi have also had specifically chosen storytellers (or “historians”) whose role was to know and remember the stories of their and previous generations. In this way, knowledge was transmitted not only about traditions and bygone life but also about the land and interaction with the land, including an understanding of human responsibilities and rights. Sámi oral tradition also contained knowledge that remained invisible or incomprehensible to outsiders. An example of this is a yoik titled “The Unknown Inhabitants of the Sámi” recorded by Jacob Fellman in 1906.

#### FROM ORAL TRADITION TO WRITTEN LANGUAGE

The Sámi language as a written language is young compared to the so-called world languages. The Sámi are a small northern people who have not had equal opportunities to promote a global awareness of their lives, cultures, and languages. As we have never had our own state but have been spread across four countries—Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia—we have been forced to live at the mercy of these states. This has meant various stages and forms of oppression, neglect, ridicule, and theft, depending on each state’s national and economic intentions. But even in small nations there are always people and groups of people who continue to resist the outside pressures and subjugation. The Sámi have oral histories telling about events where they have used the same methods as their oppressors to resist and fight back. The most well-known story is about a young Sámi man called Lávrrakas who leads the murderers of his family

astray while crossing a mountain top. There are numerous versions of this story from different regions, and the Oscar-nominated feature film *Ofelaš* (Pathfinder [1987]) was based on this story.

The church recognized the importance of the Sámi language and its centrality in conveying deeper meanings to the people. That recognition resulted in a decision to use the Sámi language as a means of converting the Sámi to Christianity. Bringing Christianity to Sámiland was linked to the usurpation of the Sámi territory and its natural resources. The governor of Österbotten, Johan Graan, is quoted of saying about Gabriel Tuderus, a Christian minister serving a southern Sámi area (Kemi) in the mid-seventeenth century: “If we want to have God’s permission for our acts and for mining the Sámi gold and other precious metals, we have to give the Sámi the gift of the word of God which is even more valuable than gold. It is the King’s wish and this work is carried out with great force by Tuderus” (Itkonen 219). The church and the states understood that the word of God was most effective in the Sámi mother tongue. This resulted, in the seventeenth century, in the first translations of basic religious material in the Sámi language, such as a book of psalms as well as an ABC book. It took another hundred years for the New Testament to be translated. The number of religious translations increased at the end of the nineteenth century, when texts such as the Bible were translated. Many of these texts were translated by Lars J. Haetta, a Sámi man who was convicted and imprisoned in Oslo for the 1852 Guovdageaidnu uprising.<sup>3</sup> He and another Sámi convict, Anders Baer, also wrote stories and psalms, but they were not published in the Sámi language until in 1956.

Some of the representatives of the church recorded Sámi oral tradition and yoiks starting in the seventeenth century. Perhaps the most well-known church representative is Olaus Sirma, a Sámi man who was studying to become a minister in Uppsala and recorded Sámi yoiks. Two of these yoiks, “Moarsi fávrrot” and “Guldnašaš,” were translated into Latin and published in Johan Sheffer’s *Laponia*, the first ever monograph on the Sámi people, in 1673. One of the two translated yoiks, “Guldnašaš,” later inspired writers such as J. G. Herder. In the eighteenth century, another Sámi minister, Anders Fjellner, recorded Sámi oral tradition with the intention

to create a Sámi national epic similar to Finnish *Kalevala*. The epic was never completed, but many of the yoiks and stories collected by Fjellner remain.

#### EARLY SÁMI AUTHORS

At the turn of the nineteenth century the Sámi language was still strong and rich compared to its present-day status. However, various practices and policies of assimilation meant that the use of Sámi was restricted and often banned. One of the policies was to prevent Sámi teachers from returning home to work at local schools. This restriction resulted in a resistance among some Sámi teachers, and in the Leavdnja (Lakselv) region, a handful of Sámi teachers established a Sámi newspaper *Ságai Muitaleaggji* (The Messenger [1904–1911]) that immediately became a platform for an intense debate about the preferred language of instruction at Sámi schools and whether the Sámi language should be taught in school. In the early 1900s there were also a couple of other Sámi newspapers, but they were even shorter lived than *Ságai Muitaleaggji*. Anders Larsen was the editor of *Ságai Muitaleaggji*, and he also wrote stories and poems for the newspaper. In 1914 he published a book, *Beaivvi álgu* (Dawn), which is a story about the Norwegian assimilation policies and their consequences on a young Sámi man. At the end of the book, however, the protagonist gains a new faith in his Sámi roots and language, which represents a new dawn for the Sámi people. This spirit of the “new dawn” is also apparent in a poem written by Larsen’s contemporary Isak Saba that later became the Sámi national anthem.

The beginning of published Sámi literature is often considered to be Sámithe’s 1910 book *Muitalus sámiiid birra* (A Story about the Sámi). The book was a collaboration between Johan Turi, a Sámi reindeer herder, and Emilie Demant Hatt, a Danish ethnographer who helped Turi to write and publish the book in Sámi and Danish. The book is a collection of brief accounts about the Sámi origins, traditions, worldview and belief system, and traditional practices of healing, and it also documents the changes the Sámi were experiencing as the result of the encroachment of the nation-states.

## RACE RESEARCH AND PUBLISHING SÁMI LITERATURE

The publishing of Sámi literature in Finland has somewhat peculiar roots. In 1932 an organization called Lapin Sivistysseura (the Civilizing Association of Lapland) was established in the Department of Anatomy at the University of Helsinki. According to one of the faculty members, Finnish race research scholar Väinö Lassila, Finland did not adequately look after the civilizing of the Sámi. Together with others, Lassila established the association to create better possibilities for the development of the Sámi “from their own premises.” At that period, this implied that the Sámi were allowed to learn to read and write but otherwise needed to remain “a pure race.” Lassila himself was critical of race research and craniology, also common among the Sámi in the early twentieth century (Isaksson).

In 1932 Lapin Sivistysseura established a magazine in the Sámi language, *Sápmelaš* (The Sámi). In the beginning, the magazine was a mere four-page publication, but it was distributed to all Sámi households in Finland for free. The magazine used a different orthography than the one used on the Norwegian side of Sámiland in religious books and other publications, but many Sámi were able to learn the new orthography. In the 1940s the magazine moved to the Sámi region Anár, and it joined the forces with a Sámi association, Sámi Litto, that was established during the evacuation of the Sámi at the end of the Second World War. This is also when the magazine gained its first Sámi editors, such as Hans-Aslak Guttorm, Pekka Lukkari, and many others, who were often both teachers and writers and saw the importance of maintaining the Sámi language.

In the 1960s another Sámi magazine, *Deanubákti* (Dea the Cliff), was published by a local Sámi organization for a short period. *Deanubákti* consisted mostly of pieces by young Sámi attending the teacher-training college and aspiring writers for whom the magazine offered a platform for publishing their stories and poems.

Lapin Sivistysseura was also involved in publishing Sámi literature. As early as in 1940, the organization published Hans-Aslak Guttorm’s poetry collection *Gohccan Spálli* (Awakened Gust of Wind). My first book, *Soagŋu* (Marriage Proposal), was published

by Lapin Sivistysseura in 1971 (they published two other titles by me in the 1980s). The association also published the late Nils-Aslak Valkeapää's first poetry collection, *Lávlljo vizar biellocizáš* (Sing Warbler, Bluethroat), in 1975. Previously, the association had already published *Sámigiell Abis* (Sámi ABC Book, 1935) and *Nuottasálbmagirji* (Book of Psalms, 1941), which were delivered to Sámi schools after the Second World War. However, the ABC book was used only by some Sámi teachers who cared enough about education in the Sámi language and were not fearful of criticism by colleagues or parents. Teaching in the Sámi language was not on the agenda, and the authorities in general did not appreciate the teaching of the language in schools. In my school in Vuovdaguoika (a small community in Utsjoki, the northernmost municipality in Finland), the local and long-time Sámi teacher Hans-Aslak Guttorm occasionally taught Sámi in secret.

Lapin Sivistysseura also published a handful of other religious booklets and a monograph on the difficult situation of the Skolt Sámi, who, after the Second World War, were relocated from the Soviet Union to Finland and who had to live in dire socioeconomic circumstances (poverty, poor housing, and unemployment). The association also sought to improve the living conditions of the Skolt Sámi living conditions through fundraising campaigns. One of the individuals involved in fundraising was Robert Crottet, a man of French, Russian, and Swiss background who collected Skolt Sámi oral tradition and later published a book that has been translated into Finnish, *Kuun metsä* (Moon Forest [1954]). Finnish scholar Karl Nickul was also actively involved in these activities and edited a book of photographs *Suenjel* (1933) about the Skolt Sámi lives and land. All in all, in its seventy-five-year existence, the association has done important work to support Sámi language and culture (such as arranging cultural events and handicraft exhibitions and publishing books and other materials in Sámi), even though it was established upon anthropological premises and even though it sometimes issued statements involving the Sámi without consulting the Sámi (a practice that was almost standard at the time).

The first Sámi books were published outside Sámiiland, and they

did not always reach their Sámi readership. Another reason for this inadequate distribution was the lack of a single orthography. The Sámi in Norway and Sweden had adopted so-called Bergsland-Ruong orthography in 1950–51, whereas the Sámi in Finland used the so-called Lapin Sivistysseura orthography. These were quite different from one another and were a barrier to Sámi publishing. For example, the *Čállagat* (Writings) series, fifteen booklets published in mid-1970s by the Sámi Committee for Sámi Literature in Kárásjohka (in Sámiiland), was written according to Bergsland-Ruong orthography, which prevented the books from being used in Finnish schools although they would have filled a serious need for material in Sámi. The Sámi, however, wanted to communicate in writing with one another across the nation-state borders and to facilitate the production of textbooks. After years of negotiations, a common orthography was accepted in 1979.

#### THE SÁMI WRITERS' ASSOCIATION

The Sámi Writers' Association was established in 1979, and it was meant to become a professional organization for all Sámi writers in the Nordic countries. The mandate of the organization is to promote and support Sámi writers and Sámi literature by establishing scholarships, seeking support for funding for publishing, offering professional mentoring, and organizing seminars and writing workshops. It was also important to have a forum to communicate with other Sámi writers. I chaired the organization for five years from 1980–85. During this period the organization established its roots in Sámi society. We organized writing courses for both writers and young people and worked on encouraging people to write in the Sámi language. Many individuals took up this challenge and have since published novels, children's books, and other literature. In its early years the organization also published a magazine, *Dollagáddi* (Bonfire), which also served as a platform for emerging writers but did not survive for long due to funding difficulties and a lack of human resources. We also published an anthology of Sámi literature, *Savvon* (Stream Pool), in 1983. In 1989 the Sámi Writers' Asso-

ciation held a campaign titled “Strengthen the Sámi Language,” the objective of which was to raise awareness of the Sámi language and the importance of Sámi literature. Among other things, the campaign organized a writing competition for youth, and two years later the association published the results as an anthology. The campaign also published *Čálli giehta ollá guhkás* (A Writing Hand Reaches Far [1989]), a book by Harald Gaski and Nils Øivind Helander on Sámi literature.

The position of the organization as a representative of the Sámi writers has been often dependent on the capacity and work of each chair. The biggest disagreements have been about whether the organization should nominate Sámi literature not written in the Sámi language to the Nordic Literary Prize. Sámi writers who either cannot or have chosen not to write in Sámi remain a minority within the organization, as most Sámi literature continues to be written in the Sámi languages.<sup>4</sup> Sometimes such writers have felt excluded from the organization and its goals, but the organization has argued that Sámi literature published in Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, or even German is eligible for support and candidacy through mainstream structures that are not available for literature written in Sámi. Some Sámi writers have indeed won literary prizes for their books published in Nordic languages. Aagot Vinterbo-Horn won the Tarjei Vesaas literary prize in 1987 in Norway, and my novel translated into Finnish, *Vojjaa minun poroni* (Graze in Peace My Reindeer), was nominated for the Finlandia literary prize in 1987. Neither of these nominations came through the thinly stretched nomination board of the Sámi Writers’ Association.

#### THE EMERGENCE OF SÁMI PUBLISHING HOUSES

Around the same time as they adopted a common orthography, the Sámi were also starting their own publishing activities with the establishment of a small Sámi publishing house Jorgaleaddji (Translator) in the small Sámi town of Fanasgieddi, Norway. Jorgaleaddji published several Sámi authors, such as Hans-Aslak Guttorm, Eino Guttorm, Inger Halvari, Marry A. Somy, and me. Jorgaleaddji also

published textbooks and other educational material. From the publisher's inception, its funding was dependent on a single source—the Norwegian government, a fragile foundation upon which to build a publishing house. Jorgaleaddji also published Sámi authors in Finland, and for a short period, the publishing house collaborated with another small Sámi business, Girjegiisá (A Book Chest), which was both a local bookshop in Ohcejohka/Utsjoki, Finland, and a book publisher. The intention was to strengthen Sámi publishing with cross-border collaboration, but it did not work out as intended as the Finnish government did not allocate the funding necessary for running the enterprise. Jorgaleaddji went bankrupt in the mid-1980s—even the Norwegian government funding to publish *Donald Duck* in the Sámi language (which appeared for a couple of years) did not manage to rescue the first Sámi publishing house. It is unclear what exactly caused the bankruptcy, but some books were produced so cheaply that they did not last long in use.

After a short period of silence, another Sámi publishing house was established, this time in the Sámi town of Kárásjohka, Norway. Davvi Media (Northern Media) was established by some of the same people who founded Jorgaleaddji, but again it did not survive too long. However, in a way it had a successor, as Davvi Girji (Northern Book) was established in 1990. Davvi Girji is a locally and Sámi-owned publishing house that has published Sámi literature, textbooks, dictionaries, scholarly publications, and literature translated from other languages into Sámi. It continues publishing to this day.

In Sweden a local Sámi organization, Vuovjjus, had published a newsletter of the same name in the 1970s. In the 1980s Vuovjjus published a couple of books, and gradually it gave birth to a Sámi publishing house, Dat. Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, a writer himself, became the director of Dat. Like Davvi Girji, Dat publishes Sámi books independent of national borders, but since the unexpected death of Valkeapää in 2001, Dat has been going through a quieter period.

The Sámi Council has been working to publish books in the Sámi language and has published, for example, Eino Lukkari's 1979 novel *Bas Galle* (Little Carl).<sup>5</sup> Since 1994 the Sámi Council has granted an annual literature prize that has encouraged Sámi authors to write.

For several years it also had a Sámi literature purchasing policy through which the Sámi Council annually purchased 450 copies of each title of Sámi literature published in that year to distribute them to Sámi institutions such as schools, daycares, elders' homes, and hospitals. In 2000, however, this practice was terminated because the Nordic Council of Ministers discontinued its funding of the project. The book purchasing policy was in many ways critical to Sámi publishers and writers because it guaranteed sales. Putting an end to this practice also limited readers' access to Sámi literature. In a longer term, it resulted in financial difficulties in publishing Sámi literature and decreased the number of books published annually (which were already low). The Sámi Council and the Sámi Writers' Association have been working to reestablish the policy, but thus far they have had no luck in persuading the Nordic Council of Ministers to resume its support of the project. The general annual meeting of the Sámi Writers' Association in 2007 issued a statement to the Sámi Parliamentary Council and requested that the council increase its efforts to support Sámi literature and place the reinstatement of the literature purchasing policy on its agenda.<sup>6</sup> Largely, Sámi political bodies have been paying lip service toward the importance of the Sámi language and its maintenance through Sámi literature, but they have done relatively little to increase funding for publishing Sámi literature and supporting Sámi writers who cannot make a living from writing but depend on short-term scholarships and other jobs. The statement notes:

In 2006, the Sámi Writers' Association has requested the establishment of a book purchasing policy of Sámi literature to the Norwegian Sámi Parliament which forwarded the request to the Sámi Parliamentary Council. The Sámi Writers' Association has not heard anything back from the Parliamentary Council. This is why the Association's annual general meeting of 2007 is forced to remind the Parliamentary Council about the request. We the Sámi have the right to advance our language and it is our wish that our elected body, the Parliamentary Council, prioritizes the work that is required to maintain

and develop a living Sámi language. The Association's annual general meeting considers the book purchasing policy a central mechanism in supporting the Sámi language. Further, the Association's annual general meeting reminds the role of Sámi literature in promoting and advancing the Sámi language. Books, audiotapes and other material also showcase our society and Sámi life. A book suits people of all ages.

#### ESTABLISHING A PRIVATE PUBLISHING ORGANIZATION

When I started writing in the mid-1960s, the faith in the survival of the Sámi language was minimal. Many people did not consider it possible to actually write books in Sámi. Not many Sámi were able to read or write in Sámi, although the older generation managed to read the old orthography that was used in Norway in order to have access to religious texts. For example, my father's generation used to read sermons in Sámi. Sámi literacy was killed by the governments' assimilation policies. After the Second World War, all children were required to attend school. If they did not live in the town or village where the school was located, as was the case with many Sámi children, they were required to stay at the school's residence. The schools were mixed (i.e., Sámi and non-Sámi), which meant that non-Sámi children and teachers generally looked down upon Sámi culture and language, thus stigmatizing Sámi identity for many children. Sámi children also had to learn the language of the majority (many did not speak it until they started to attend school). Some children were able to go home for the weekends, but many went home only for longer holidays. Before the war, Sámi children only attended school for a couple of months a year, which meant that their connection to home as well as to Sámi culture and language was not disrupted. After the war, however, Finland passed a law requiring a mandatory seven-year school attendance.

Our generation, the baby boomers, was exposed to the harsh pressures of Finnish cultural policies that did not have much room for the Sámi language. I did not, however, want to believe in these policies but started writing stories to the *Sápmelaš* magazine and

soon wrote *Soagŋu*. In its introduction, I wrote that “I see myself as somebody who carefully goes out on the autumn ice where nobody has yet traveled. Or if they have, they have crossed it in a way that their tracks are invisible and I have to find myself a strongest way” (Paltto 5). I wrote about the beauty and complexity of the Sámi language and how easy it is to describe anything with it. *Soagŋu* is a collection of accounts and stories based on those I had heard in my youth at the River Deatnu, from ice break-ups to figures of Sámi oral tradition, from traditional marriage proposal practices to accounts of magic.

In 1989 another Sámi writer, Inger-Haldis Halvari, and I established a Sámi publishing association, Gielas (Keel). Soon after, Eino Kuokkanen, who has translated three of my novels into Finnish, joined us to do the layouts. When the publisher Jorgaleaddji went bankrupt, we realized that the only way to get books published was to do it ourselves. Halvari, however, resigned from the association soon after its establishment and did not publish any of her books through Gielas. She was replaced by Ingrid Tapio, also a Sámi writer. We applied for funding from the Norwegian and Finnish governments and were able to publish six titles altogether, five of my books and one translation, a novel by Kyrgyz writer Chinghiz Aitmatov.

Initially, publishing our own books was exciting: we could choose the style, layout, and cover ourselves. Soon, however, applying for funding for every single title separately became rather burdensome—something of which I was in charge of doing. It was a lot of work first to write the book and then to seek funding for publishing it. Further, the printer we used was Finnish and had no staff with any knowledge of Sámi. This resulted in several typos and mistakes, especially in the first title Gielas published, *Guovtteoaivat nisu* (Two-Headed Woman [1989]). In addition, the printing was always delayed, and the books did not come out when planned. After eight years, with only two other people working with me, I no longer felt able to continue with Gielas. The last title Gielas published was in 1997, my collection of poetry *Beštoriin* (With a Wagtail). After we decided to discontinue the publishing business, I was relieved although I knew that getting my work published would again be

more difficult. Following Gielas, I did not get anything published until 2001, when Davvi Girji published the collection of short stories *Suoláduvvan* (Stolen), nominated for the Nordic Literary Prize and awarded the Sámi Council Literary Prize in 2002.

Since the publishing of *Suoláduvvan*, I had to wait for six years until my subsequent manuscripts received the required funding for publishing. The final installment of my trilogy was finally published in 2007, as was a collection of short stories for youth *Ája* (A Spring). It seems that fiction is largely forgotten and ignored in Sámiland, as it is in other parts of the world. The states do not seem to care to fund a Sámi literature whose sales are minimal.

#### THE CHALLENGES OF PUBLISHING SÁMI LITERATURE

The publishing of Sámi books by the Sámi themselves has been unorganized and usually dependent on a handful of active individuals. There have been short-lived literary magazines and small publishing houses that have not been able to survive because they lacked the necessary financial or human resources. The dream has always been to have a secure foundation to publish literature first and foremost in the Sámi language and later expand to the rest of the world. Currently, however, there is no sign this dream will come true in the foreseeable future. There was some hope after the Alta River case in the early 1980s, when Norwegian authorities were more responsive to Sámi demands than before and, among other things, started a process of mapping the needs of Sámi society.<sup>7</sup> The Norwegian government was also more willing to fund Sámi initiatives than before. Since then, Norway has been at the vanguard of funding Sámi literature—one can argue that it is the Norwegian government that has maintained and upheld the fragile foundation of Sámi literature and helped it to continue to exist.

Although publishing Sámi literature has not been easy, one can say that, starting in the 1960s, there has been established a strong foundation for it. Currently we have several Sámi publishing houses (all of them very small except Davvi Girji and Dat), all on the Norwegian side of Sámiland since the Norwegian government has been

most supportive of funding it. Despite the chronic lack of funding and despite the several years' wait that Sámi authors have to endure to see their work published, it is inspiring to see that the Sámi continue writing in their own language. The older generation has started to learn to write their mother tongue so that they can record their lives for future generations—they see it as a crucial tool for transmitting Sámi knowledge and values to younger people. Young writers continue to emerge, some of whom start with yoik lyrics and later move to the written form. The board of the Sámi Writers' Association currently includes two young male writers—also a new development. The younger generation is actively writing and insists on writing in the Sámi language. I saw this clearly in Kárášjohka at the end of 2006, when I held a writing course at the local high school. Students who have taken classes in writing Sámi since primary school have quite a different foundation than we who, when we started writing, did not even know how to transcribe the Sámi language on paper or how the letters should look.

It is my hope that Sámi literature will become better known throughout the rest of the world. There is a need for more translations into majority languages and for stronger information and marketing campaigns. Sámi texts have their own specific rhythm. We also live in a very multicultural environment with various views and thoughts. The Sámi are, if you will, on the top of the world where they look at life and the world, learn from it, and live closely with the land. This is what the rest of the world needs to hear and listen to.

#### NOTES

1. The Sámi parliaments are elected bodies (by registered Sámi individuals) who represent the Sámi interests especially at the national level.

2. The Sámi Cultural Autonomy Act was passed in 1995 in Finland and it stipulates the Sámi have the right to maintain and advance their language and culture. That same year, the Finnish Constitution was amended to recognize the Sámi as an Indigenous people.

3. Guovdageaidnu is a reindeer-herding Sámi community and the birthplace of a Christian revivalist movement, “Cuorvvut” (Shouters), in the

eighteenth century. The movement, characterized by powerful sermons and ecstatic stages, got its name from travelling lay Sámi preachers who preached doomsday and penance and were particularly against alcohol. The reasons leading to the uprising are too complex to elaborate here in detail, but in short, the uprising, linked to the revivalist movement, wanted to purge their community from sin and bad influence. In the uprising, the local non-Sámi shopkeeper and police superintendent were killed, and the minister almost was beaten to death by local Sámi. The two leaders of the uprising were executed in 1854. Lars J. Haetta was one of the participants in the uprising and was sentenced to prison.

4. The North Sámi is, by far, the biggest language group, and most Sámi literature has been published in the North Sámi. It is also the operating language of the Sámi Writers' Association. In this article, "the Sámi language" refers to the North Sámi unless indicated otherwise.

5. Previously, the council was the Nordic Sámi Council, until 1989, when the Russian Sámi joined the nongovernmental organization (NGO). The Sámi Council, established in 1956, is an NGO representing Sámi organizations.

6. The Sámi Parliamentary Council is a collaboration body for the three Sámi parliaments in Norway, Sweden, and Finland.

7. The Alta River conflict is considered a watershed in Sámi-Nordic relations. It involved a plan by the Norwegian government to build a hydroelectric dam in northern Norway (see, e.g., Brantenberg; Paine; Parmann; Sanders). In its original form, the dam would have submerged the Sámi village of Máze (Masi) and a considerable portion of important reindeer grazing and calving areas in the heart of the reindeer-herding region. The government plans were met with unexpected resistance by the Sámi as well as by environmentalists and fishers who wanted to protect the salmon that inhabit the river.

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