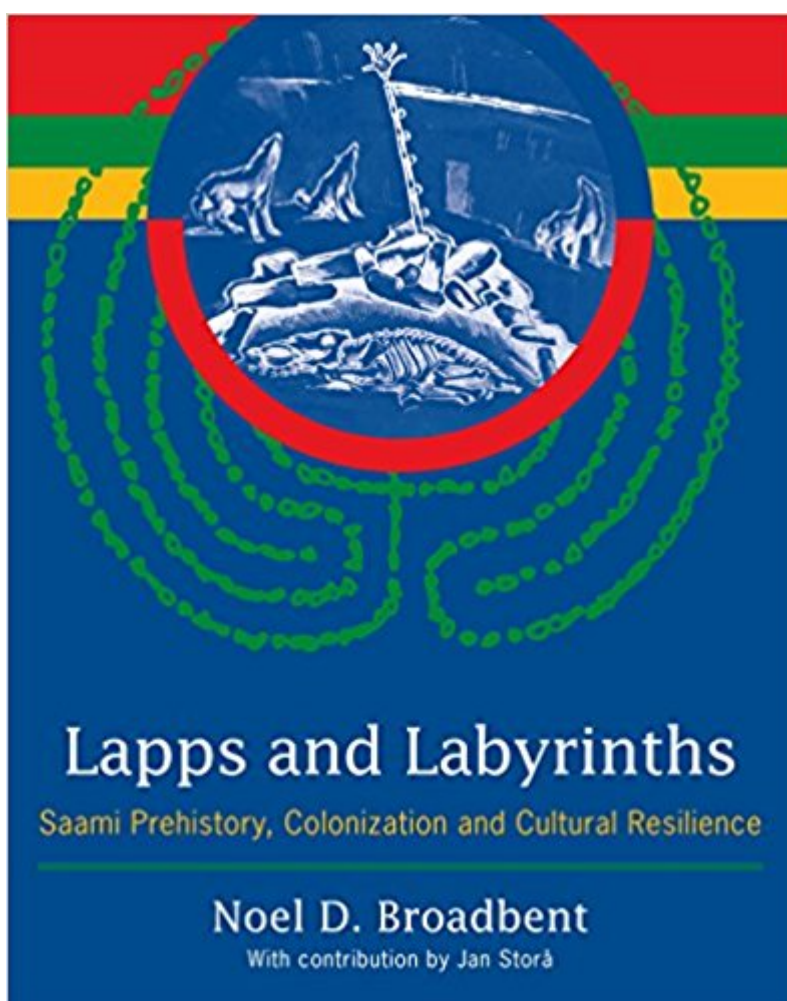




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# Lapps And Labyrinths: Saami Prehistory, Colonization, And Cultural Resilience



## Synopsis

Professor Noel D. Broadbent is one of Sweden's foremost experts on north Swedish archaeology and literally wrote the book on the prehistory of the Skellefteförfä region on the North Bothnian coast. This knowledge is now brought to bear on the issue of Saami origins. The focus is on the successful adaptive strategies of Saami societies over thousands of years - a testimony to Saami resiliency, of relevance to the survival of indigenous societies worldwide today.

## Book Information

File Size: 25999 KB

Print Length: 304 pages

Publisher: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press (October 30, 2013)

Publication Date: October 30, 2013

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00F8EYXCE

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #480,525 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #50

in Amazon Books > History > Europe > Scandinavia > Sweden #90 in Amazon Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Ancient Civilizations > Prehistory #116 in Amazon Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Europe > Scandinavia

## Customer Reviews

Highly detailed history of the Saami. I'm fascinated by the ancient history of the European continent and the peoples who emerged, but not all get equal study in the literature. I would consider this a good step forwards in exploring the north of the continent and one of the earliest peoples there who have changed relatively little since the earliest times.

Content is great but the format of the physical book is hard to read. The lines of type are very close and span the page, which is very wide. The shininess of the paper emits sort of a glare. Husband agreed me - difficult to read. but wonderful information.

Very well researched and informative. Broadbent is passionate about the Saami folk. He brings in past theories and research, along with newer findings.

book arrived in excellent condition as advertised

Lapps and Labyrinths: Saami Prehistory, Colonization and Cultural Resilience by Noel D Broadbent published by the Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press is an archeology book about the SAAMI IN SWEDEN. I capped those words because most people think the Saami stayed in Northern Finland. New evidence proves they lived in Sweden's northern Baltic coast and had cultural exchange with Scandinavians. For this reason this book is a must for those involved with Heathenry and Asatru. The Late Medieval Period shows the demographic mixing and accommodations made by both ethnic groups. Other places in Sweden have Saami names and both cultures have borrowed words from each other. Possible future archeology will show that, until the nation state and Industrialization, the Saami and Germanic peoples of the North Nordic region were not separated, but instead harmonious neighbors. Politically this could help the oppressed Saami today, the only indigenous people of Europe, who are often seen as the Other. They are gaining more rights to land for their traditional ways of life because of the proof being revealed about their tribal lands. The book is academic which may turn off many readers. However, it can be scanned and skimmed for relevant information. The relationship between Saami shamanism and "bear cult" (found throughout all of the Arctic) and Christianity is intriguing. The labyrinths for example were built on coasts by Christians where the Saami had their own rites. The Saami have been in Sweden below the 60th parallel for at least 2,000 years. This early Saami were not reindeer hunters as much as fishers. Genetic research now shows that today's Saami and the first people to arrive in Scandinavia (who would become the Germanic peoples) more than 10,000 years ago are linked. The racism against Saami culture as being "primitive" and nothing as great as the Norse is now being dismantled with new discoveries. Schools and museums will have to show the great contributions from the Saami peoples. This book focuses mainly on the Bothnian coast in Sweden. There are many illustrations from digs. Cairns and remains of households are well documented. Climate changes and the animal patterns that went with them are well documented, along with the tools used such as nets and snares. How the Saami lived with the land so beavers, seals and moose were not hunted to extinction is very inspiring. The later introduction of metals as offerings next to

reindeer, along with the peaceful coexistence mentioned by Snorre and in other sagas of Finn-Kings and Norse Chiefs show how the two cultures adopted each other's religious rites. Links between shamans and iron working smiths are explored. The Deities of the Saami and their offerings are well described. The "nine traits" of Saami religion are discussed, which are of great interest to this animist. Bear rituals are described in great detail. Delved into is the ceremonial use of the Cretan labyrinth by Christian fishermen, along with other Christianization that came with colonization. For anyone interested in indigenous culture, animist culture or prehistoric Norse culture, this book is the only one of its kind. Saami shamanism did have an effect on the Norse. The giantess Skadi, Njord's wife, with her skis linked her in my mind to a Saami woman and physical evidence supports that. For those believe that the Norse were xenophobic and interested in "pure blood" this book will probably be very upsetting. (YAY!) I have read several books by Saami on modern political issues and myth, but nothing like this. I personally highlighted a few favorite passages, some of which I will share:

"Saami were experts in northern travel technologies, including skis, sleds and sewn and riveted boats of the types that brought the Vikings down Russian rivers to Constantinople."

"The shamanic beliefs of the circumpolar world became deeply entrenched in the Nordic psyche, finding form in the religion of the Vikings."

"Saami bear rituals connected the human and animal worlds through this cult. They have been dated to as early as 200 CE and as recently as the 19th century, but these bear rites may be thousands of years older in the Nordic region."

"Saami sacred sites were often landforms such as mountains, lakes, islands, caves, cliffs, rapids, waterfalls. These were places where power was concentrated. These powers consisted of the spirits of ancestors and different categories of helping and protective beings that maintained different classes of animals."

"An offering is a symbolic gesture, and as most of the animals had been consumed prior to being offered, they are not, strictly speaking, sacrifices."

"There was no priesthood and every family used sacred drums for their spiritual needs."

"The early Norse were not concerned with bloodlines or pure Norse tradition, as well as showing that drums, not found in Heathenry, probably were used. For those of us influenced by Northern Tradition Shamanism, which many Heathens tend to rail against as it is "not in the Lore" (although Raven Kaldera's website and books make it very clear repeatedly he is not a

Reconstructionist, but someone inspired by the Lore and then guided by the Gods and ancestors), this book connects early Germanic people with shamanism via their Saami neighbors.

From the publisher: "Lapps and Labyrinths is a detailed analysis of Saami prehistory from 5000 BC to AD 1500 along 500 km of the Bothnian coast in Northern Sweden. The Saami were highly specialized seal hunters who also practiced animal husbandry, farming and metallurgy in ways analogous to the Norse. In the early fourteenth century they were Christianized and driven inland where many later became nomadic reindeer herders. Their land-uses, place-names, technologies and spiritual ideas have strongly impacted north Swedish society and left an indelible, and yet little appreciated, imprint on Nordic culture." From William Fitzhugh, Director, Arctic Studies Center, Smithsonian Institution: "Broadbent's Lapps and Labyrinths has a broad application and demonstrates the value of anthropological studies for balancing the dominance of history in native studies. This work is in the best tradition of Scandinavian archaeology and breaks new ground for science and society."

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