Connecting and Correcting

A Case Study of Sami Healers in Porsanger

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van
de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof.mr. P.F. van der Heijden,
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op woensdag 20 juni 2007
klokke 16.15 uur

door
Barbara Helen Miller
geboren te Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, USA
in 1949
Promotiecommissie:

Promotor:
Prof. Dr. J.G. Oosten

Referent:
Mw. Dr. N.J.M. Zorgdrager

Overige leden:
Prof. Dr. P.J. Pels
Prof. Dr. P.J.M. Nas
Mw. Dr. S.W.J. Luning
Connecting and Correcting
A Case Study of Sami Healers in Porsanger
CONTENTS

Acknowledgements IX
Map of North Scandinavia X
Map of Porsanger Municipality XI

Introduction 1

The Project 1
Meeting the Sami 1
Central questions 3

Introducing the Coastal Sami 4
Social Developments among the Coastal Sami 4
The impact of World War II as related by my informants 8
The situation after World War II 12
Construction of this book 15

1 Studies on Sami Shamanism 17

Lapponia 18
Helpers and songs 19
The drum and drum performance 21

Fragmenter i Lapska Mythologien 26
The gods 27
Prophecy 28

Recent studies in traditional Sami shamanism 29
The Sami noaidi 30
Noaidi and shamanistic activities moving into modern times 34
Gand 34
Categories of sorcerer and shaman 37
Trance – ecstasy 43

2 Laestadianism on the Coast of Finnmark 49

The conversion of the Sami in Finnmark 49
Influences from Sweden 52
Laestadianism 53
The founder and early years of the movement 53
The spread of the movement and early opposition 59
Core issues and debates 62
Laestadianism among the Coastal Sami in Porsanger 66
Core issues and debates 68
Laestadian meetings 73
Conclusions and Remarks 76

3 Encounter Experiences 79
The presence of exceptional beings 79
*Gufibtarat* (subterraneous beings) 80
Other underground people connected to a location 84
*Fárru* (travelling group) 86
*Rávvgat* (water trolls) 87
*Eahpáražžat* (dead-child beings) 88
*Gomit* (ghosts) 95
*Gáccit* (groups of helpers) 97
*Vuoiyga* (spirit) 99
*Fárrosaš, Mañyasaš* and *Ovdasaš* 100
Animal helping-spirits 105
*Bijat* (spell) 106
Conclusion 109
Encounters 109

4 Discourse on the Noaidi and the Healer 111
Use of the term *noaidi* and shaman 111
*Noaidi* and shaman in local newspapers of today 111
Current local views on the activities associated with the *noaidi* 114
Johan Kaaven (1837-1918) 120
Johan Kaaven as depicted in literature 120
Facts about Kaaven’s life 127
Johan Kaaven as healer 128
Lars Pedersen, also known as Gamvik (1873-1942) 136
Facts about Gamvik’s life 136
Gamvik as healer 137
Healers in the period 1935-1970 140
Healers 140
Present day healers 142
Britt Kramvig’s Ingmar 142
Mikkel Gaup 144
Hjalmar 147
Discussion 150
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank those many people who contributed to this research project. My first expression of gratitude is to my former mentor Dr. J. H. Kamstra for encouraging me to undertake research. I am grateful to Dr. Jens-Ivar Nergård for allowing me to join him on a fieldtrip that led to contact with my main informants and to Dr. Jojada Verrips for guiding my initial steps. I thank the Sami healers who generously granted interviews: Mikkel Gaup and Hjalmar Persen. I am greatly indebted to Nanna Persen and Sigvald Persen. Their support and cooperation has been instrumental and basically decisive for this project. They provided me with many interviews, and additionally, gave access to their patients. I want in particular to thank Sigvald for his active involvement. I thank the residents of Porsanger Municipality who shared with me their experiences and insights: Johannes A. Guttorm, Rávdná Guttorm, Karen Rávdná Eira Guttorm, Per Johannessen Guttorm, Nils Persen Guttorm, Anna Guttorm, Ruth E. Forsberg, Solveig Tangeraas, Nan Persen, Åge Persen, Ole Eliassen, Sigrid Alette Eliassen, and Nils Anders Guttorm. Members of the Research Group Circumpolar Cultures and the Research Group Pentecostalism of the Hollenweger Institute commented on earlier versions of this dissertation and I greatly appreciate their help. I am grateful to Pastor Stef de Wit for the sharing of his knowledge; to Willy van Tellingen for many services rendered; to my aunt, Ruth Freeman, for reviewing and editing; and to my mother, Helen Miller, for her availability and support of my work. I am deeply grateful to you all.