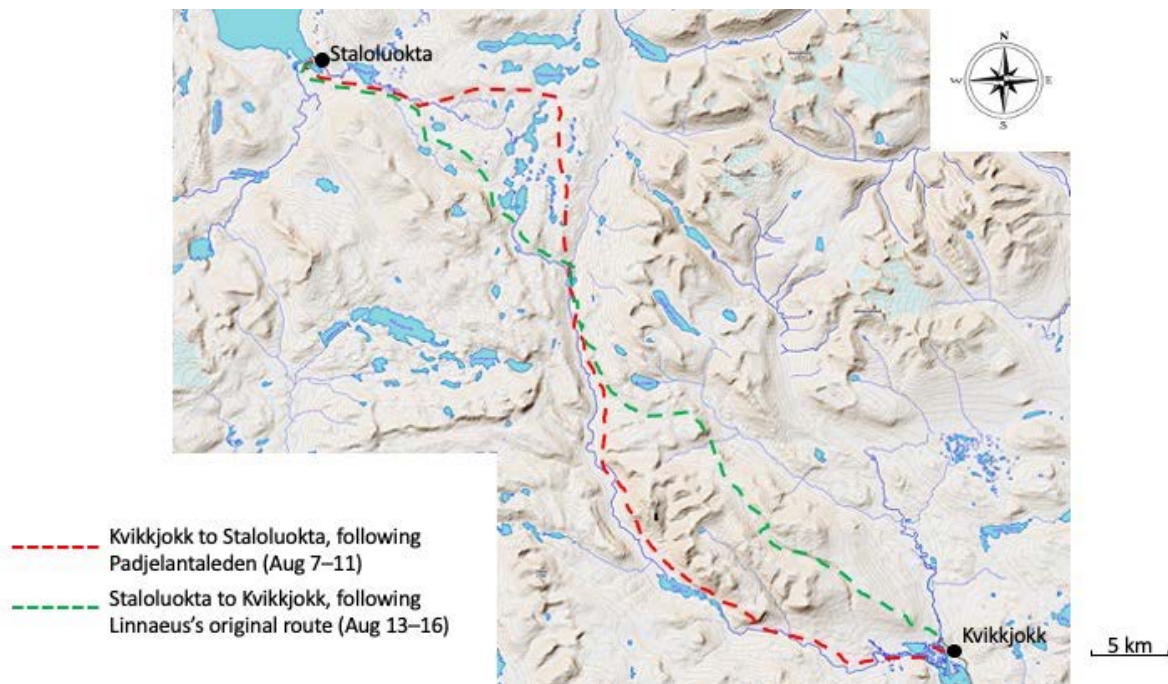


London, 6 September 2020

Dear Jim,

We're just back from another trip to Lapland where we've been re-tracking Linnaeus's Laplandic Journey from 1732. As you know, we've been working with your ideas about Knowledge in Transit to articulate our project of using Linnaeus's travel account and understand how knowledge is created through intersections between people on the move (see <https://linnaeus-in-lapland.net/>). This year's trip was another iteration, which took us up into the Laplandic fells of Padjelanta National Park, part of today's UNESCO World Heritage Area "Laponia".

Here's a little sketch of the route we took:



You'll note that we went from Kvikkjokk, a small community where several hiking trails meet, to Staloluokta at lake Virijaure – a Sámi summer village used by reindeer herders and for fishing – and then back to Kvikkjokk again, but following a different route. The way up took us along the Padjelanta hiking trail, nicely marked out, and with cabins along it, should one not want to camp in a tent (for example in gale-force winds!). The way back was our attempt to follow Linnaeus's original route, known today as Prästleden (priest's path), and an important trade route at his time, especially for the transport, by reindeer, of silver-ore mined in the late 1600s.

Our experiences on these two routes were strikingly different, in a way that highlights the importance of communication for the creation of knowledge. We thought we'd share some of these with you, not least because it would be great if you could join us on our next journey!

On our way up we chose to follow what today is the official trail, to give us a chance to get used to the terrain (and ease the weight of food in our packs, though the wild mushrooms and berries didn't aid that). We also wanted to make sure to reach our destination in time. Five days of steady walking along a safe route, allowing time for pause and reflection, we thought should be enough to make sure we arrived in time for a pre-arranged meeting on August 12 with Katarina Parfa Koskinen – a reindeer herder who also runs a kiosk in Staloluokta and is a PhD researcher in Education at Umeå University, investigating cross-boundary teaching of Sámi language.

The first bit of travelling was done by boat. Björn, the ferryman, took us to the start of the Padjelanta trail, telling stories on the way. He showed us the island on which Linnaeus had been hosted, incidentally by Björn's ancestors of 10 generations ago. He also gave us a first idea of the route Linnaeus had taken across mount Vållevárre, which now overlooked us. Curiously, he was keen to learn, in return, whether there were any traces left by Isaac Newton in Cambridge, whose genius he greatly admired.

The story-telling begun here continued throughout our route to Staloluokta, at times with fellow hikers who passed us, or ones we met fishing their way up the mountain valleys, and especially with the hosts who looked after the cabins. This latter group was of an interesting makeup. The first three cabins were run by the Swedish Tourist Association, and hosts were recruited from all over Sweden, some making it their annual get-away from city-life. None of them knew Katarina, but all had heard about Linnaeus and some were aware of Prästleden.

This changed markedly when we entered Lapponia, where cabins are run by the Sámi Association involved in the management of Lapponia. Elisabeth at Darreluopal cabin asked us to send her regards to Katarina and that she was missed. We wondered if the reindeer wandering around were Elisabeth's or belonged to someone further up the valley. Andrew at Duottar cabin, interestingly, referred to Prästleden as Linnéstigen, or Linnaeus's path, and had heard it was beautiful. The hosts of the cabin at Staloluokta had actually walked the trail to Kvikkjokk and knew its shortcuts. Bringing these stories together, it was Katarina who finally could provide us with detailed information on the route, with assistance from her aunt. Her family has been living in the area during the summer season since the 1920s, when the Swedish authorities forcibly relocated them to Padjelanta from further north, a result of nation-states flexing their muscles by enforcing physical borders. We talked a whole day with her about the politics of knowledge, identity and borders, and the role Linnaeus's account of Lapland might play today. She also knew Björn.

Equipped with a good sense of the route for the Prästleden, we set off on our way back to Kvikkjokk along the path Linnaeus had allegedly taken. This led through two stone-strewn valleys flanked by steep, dark mountains reaching up to some 1800 m. The landscape was much bleaker and more oppressive than the lush, tree and flower-filled valley we passed through on our way up, which several people referred to as "jungle". Flowers were a rarity now, what trees there were crept along the ground with their miniature leaves. The path was hardly discernible, only partly marked out by pairs of standing stones or cairns (see photos), some of them apparently very old, as Elisabeth confirmed.

Linnaeus himself had relied on two guides, and a servant, when making his way along here, and without the knowledge we had gathered and the occasional way-markers we would have struggled to find our way as well. We passed only two pairs of walkers on this stretch over three days, and only spoke to one briefly who indicated that the path was harsh, and the stony ground made it difficult to camp. The main joy on this part of our journey was the sighting of a Ptarmigan in the middle of the stone-fields of Vållevágge. On noticing us it made no effort to flee, but shuffled around on its feathered feet, seemingly unperturbed. Was it the very same ptarmigan of which Linnaeus wrote that he "could have killed a hundred times over without difficulty", but then didn't out of concern for its chicks?

Surprisingly, and this is what we wanted to share with you, we learned much more about Linnaeus's journey on our way up to Staloluokta along Padjelantaleden, than we learned by following in his "footsteps" on Prästleden. Knowledge, as you have shown, only comes into being through communication. Despite not being the exact path Linnaeus had followed, we felt our experience on

Padjelantaleden reflected much more his own, as what we learned about the landscape and its layered depth of natural, cultural and political history came mostly through conversations with our modern-day “guides”, including information-boards set up by the management of the national parks. Curiously, the name Staloluokta refers to *stallo*, mythical troll-like creatures in Sámi folklore identified with remains of ancient dwellings one finds all over Padjelanta (we had camped on one of these, just 2 km West of Duottar cabin, as we discovered on the following morning). Naming a dwelling after these mythical figures implies there is no place without traces left by previous inhabitants for others to read. It makes more glaring Linnaeus’s construction of Lapland as a “terra nullius”, a fiction that his own travel diary negates. We need to explore these juxtapositions further with those who know better on our next trip.

They brought to mind a further question – which (hi-)stories are we getting involved in, if we take knowledge to essentially result from communication? The history of nations as Sweden who sent explorers like Linnaeus to subject remote landscapes to their colonizing gaze? The history of the people who guided and hosted him through Padjelanta and beyond, and shared with him what they knew about nature and its uses? The history of the current inhabitants of Padjelanta? But where and when do they see their history beginning? In the 17th century, when the first Swedish settlers arrived in the region? In the eighteenth century, when the reindeer economy was flourishing in Padjelanta and the Sámi were key traders between Sweden and Norway (under Danish rule)? Or in the 1920s, when Sámi families currently herding reindeer in Padjelanta were forcibly moved there? And who is included in this history? Hosts watching over a cabin for only a few weeks during the year, or students on a summer job in the tourism industry? Hikers who visit the area for recreation like the two molecular biologists at the University of Malmö, both from Italy (but one born in Russia)? Researchers like ourselves, or the unfortunate team of scientists caught in a stonefall along Prästleden? Or are we left with the story of those “stallos” whose dwellings remain and who, perhaps 50, 300 or even 3000 years ago, put up large stones to guide people like us, generation after next, through the landscape?

These are, of course, rhetorical questions, the answers to which we leave open in our project since any final answer would end conversations and preclude the kind of history of knowledge your work has inspired. We hope that they suffice to entice you to join us in person on one of our future wanderings.

With our best wishes for journeys and arrivals lying ahead of you,

Staffan & Elena

PS: Linnaeus’s travel account is available in an English translation by Peter Graves from University of Edinburgh Press (currently out of print). Otherwise, James Edward Smith’s 1811 translation is available on-line. You will know Lisbet Koerner’s book *Linnaeus: Nature and Nation* (Harvard Univ. Pr., 1999), which describes Linnaeus’s colonial vision of Lapland. There is a recent historical study of the little-known forced relocations of Sámi by the Swedish state: *Herrarna satte oss hit* [The Masters Placed Us Here], by Elin Anna Labba, Norstedts, 2020. On the *stallo*, see Lars Ivar Hansen and Bjørnar Olsen, *Hunters in Transition: An Outline of Early Sámi History*, Brill, 2014, pp. 82-93.



Waymarkers along Prästleden, Padelanta (Sapmi/Sweden).
In the lower picture, a pair of waymarkers is just about visible on the horizon.