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3 Signs of Travel and Memory*

The Case of the Wooden Slabs in Jukkasjärvi (1681–1736)

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In Jukkasjärvi, a small town located in the county of Kiruna, situated nearly 200 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle, there is an old church, built in 1608, in which one finds a wooden plaque, more precisely the back of a reindeer sleigh, with a curious inscription:



Figure 3.1 Wooden slab by Regnard, Jukkasjärvi church.

Photo: Sylvie Requemora-Gros

It reads:

Gallia nos genuit, vidit nos Africa, Gangem
Hausimus, Europam que oculis lustravimus omnem:
Casibus et variis acti terra que mari que,
Stetimus hic tandem nobis ubi deficit orbis
De Fercourt. De Corberon. Regnard
18 Augusto 1681

* The text is translated from French by Olivia Trolley and edited by Christina Kullberg. All translations of quotes from French are Trolley's and Kullberg's. The Latin was first translated by Requemora-Gros to French. The English versions were then carefully corrected and adjusted by one of the anonymous reviewers. Special thanks to the anonymous readers for their helpful suggestions and to the editors of this volume for help with Swedish language sources.

The short verse in Latin translates as follows:

France has given birth to us. We have seen Africa and the River Ganges, travelled the entirety of Europe. We have had many different adventures, by land and by sea, and we have stopped here, in this place, where the earth came to an end.¹

The wooden plaque with its engravings in Latin, which recall the inscription on Virgil's tomb ("Mantua me genuit [...]"), is still visible today in the church at Jukkasjärvi.² It was the French playwright Jean-François Regnard (1655–1709), widely known in France as Molière's successor, who had it engraved when he travelled to the North in the 1680s. He wrote about his journey to the region in his fictional work but also, most notably, in a travelogue, *Voyage en Laponie*, which was published posthumously in 1731. Here we learn more about the context of the engraving:

It took us nearly four hours to get to the summit, walking along paths that had not before been known to any mortal, and when we arrived we saw the whole stretch of Lapland and the Nordic Sea, right up to the northern cap, where it turns west. That, my friend, is called tackling the pole's axis, and getting to the very edge of the world. It was there that we placed the following inscription in its true home, which, I believe, will never be read by anyone but bears.³

The book then continues with the quote from the wooden plaque, quoted above. The passage describes how Regnard and his fellow travellers first made the inscription on a stone in the northern landscape. I will come back both to the company of travellers and the stone inscription later in this chapter. Here, I want to underscore that in the published text, commenting on the inscription, Regnard notes the precise duration of the inaugural ascension (four hours) and the timelessness of its final reception (never to be read by anyone but bears), located in a time that is synonymously suspended, inexistent, and *ad æternam*. The temporal progression thus leads to a kind of denial of time, which strongly suggests an immemorial desire for spiritual, literary, and geographical immortality. Regnard's wooden slab thus allows to reflect on travel and temporality in relation to materiality and to establish links between early modern French travels to the far North.

In fact, Regnard's engravings can also be read in connection with other inscriptions in the same church. One of the other plaques in Jukkasjärvi is difficult to decipher but is recognisable as being that of Aubry de La Motraye (1674–1743), a French Huguenot who travelled through Europe and parts of Asia and Africa at the turn of the eighteenth century. In 1715 he came to Sweden with the Swedish King Charles XII's secretary, and he explored Lapland in 1718. The other inscription refers to Pierre Louis

Moreau de Maupertuis's travels (1698–1759). Maupertuis was a mathematician who went to Lapland on an expedition sponsored by the French Academy of Sciences to prove that the earth is flattened by its two poles. The inscription commemorating his travels features a signed overleaf by Johannes Wegelius, a lecturer at the school of Torneå, on the front and on the back by Gabriel Gyllengrip, the governor of the region, both of whom welcomed Maupertuis in 1736.

Plaques like these reflect the interrelationship between engraving, art, crafts, and meaning, but in the early modern period, they first and foremost represented a celebration of time and space, a work of classical rhetoric positioned as a timeless memorial. In a way, the wooden slabs in Jukkasjärvi need to be understood in a larger context of imperial expansions and the practice of marking a space as a form of remembrance and of possession. They could even be considered as an example of a Nordic *padrão*, a kind of “stone pillar mounted with a cross or a Portuguese crest of arms, bearing an inscription”.⁴ Portuguese travellers who became wealthy by discovering “new” lands in the fifteenth century often used these pillars in order to commemorate the places that they had visited but also to claim possession of these territories. The first to put this into practice was Diogo Cão under the orders of Jean II in 1482 at the opening of the Zaire River. Bartolomeu Dias and Vasco de Gama also used these kinds of markers. Interestingly, in light of this imperial travel practice, the French travellers to northern Sweden used wood rather than stone, and even, in the case of Regnard, a reindeer sleigh.⁵ Moreover, French travellers to the North had other ambitions than Portuguese explorers in Africa and the New World. As historical remainders, the plaques celebrating and commemorating Regnard, La Motraye, and Maupertuis were not signposts for political and commercial spaces of conquest. Instead, they represent an exercise in poetic style and reveal the desire to leave a temporal, historical, and artistic marker that needs to be understood in the context of French early modern writing practices. Leaving traces on a plaque can be translated into an aspiration to situate oneself and one's travels in an atemporal perspective; it communicates a quest for glory and immortality. Inscriptions left by travellers reignite the past culture of antiquity, reflect the modern concept of a present worthy of respect, and look towards a future worthy of being remembered and marked, in both the history of science and of literature.

This chapter argues that the series of inscriptions in Jukkasjärvi make it possible to trace a lineage of French voyagers to the North. The objective is to investigate this lineage in order to reflect on temporal dimensions in travel by looking at the relationships between travelogues and other forms of writing that travellers left behind, in this case engravings. The chapter also examines the specific form of such travel inscriptions. What kind of poetics do these inscriptions on wood convey? The plaques can be seen as historical markers, which are simultaneously worldly and

topographical, but they also embody an original kind of visual and textual medium. Being both a material and a scriptural remnant of travellers, they seem to operate on different temporal levels: As memorials of the travellers, they are linked to the place visited, at the same time as they draw on antique traditions, through the prism of French classicism, which suggest another temporality that seems to be articulated in a tension with the time of a French imaginary of the North.

Aspiring Socialite Travelling North: Regnard

Regnard set off towards Flanders on April 26, 1681, and travelled via Holland and Denmark to reach Sweden. Encouraged by the king of Sweden, Charles XI, he embarked at Stockholm on July 23 and journeyed to Lapland with his companions, Nicolas-Augustin Corberon and Claude Auxcousteaux de Fercourt, returning to France on December 4, 1681.⁶ He travelled through Lapland for six weeks, covering around one thousand kilometers of ground in just one month. At the end of the seventeenth century, Sápmi was not a geographical unity. It was a land at a crossroads between nations, defined simply as a region inhabited by those known as “Lapps”, the Sami. The Sami were disseminated across the region since the ninth century by a systematic treatise of Finnish hunters and became connected to the Swedish crown in the sixteenth century under King Gustav Vasa (1496–1560). The treaty of Teusina (1595) and Knäred (1613) drew political divisions between Lapland and Sweden, Russia, and Denmark.⁷ It was in this geopolitical context that Regnard travelled to the far North.

For a French seventeenth-century traveller, arriving above the Polar Circle was conceived as a considerable achievement. The destination in itself was uncommon at the time. French travellers would preferably voyage south, to Italy and Greece, or towards the Middle East to look for education or alliances, adventure, or exotic encounters. In other words, Regnard had his reasons for giving his northern voyage a slightly exaggerated and poetic tone: He had to justify this unusual destination. Typically, he calls Torneå “the last town of the world on the northern edge” as if one would fall into the abyss if one was to go further.⁸ One could, of course, question how dramatic their voyage to the far North really was, considering that they travelled during the summer. Nevertheless, in the imaginary of southern Europeans, the landscapes above the Polar Circle represented the door towards a radical elsewhere – an arctic barbaric space. On an imaginative level, Regnard presents the area as not only geographically remote but also temporally distanced; it is “savage” and “archaic”, meaning that going to these faraway lands would imply a journey across space and equally across time.

Several possible explanations have been given as to why Regnard’s travel account to Lapland remained unpublished during his lifetime. One

explanation might be that a substantial amount of the information contained was taken from the *Laponia id est regionis Laponum* by Johannes Schefferus, a German philologist who became the professor of eloquence and politics at Uppsala University in 1647. His study of Lapland was published in Latin in 1673 and translated into French by Père A. Lubin, under the title *Histoire de la Laponie*, in 1678.⁹ Considering the popularity of this translation, it is possible that Regnard might have chosen not to publish his own account: The translation would have revealed to what extent Regnard's text was fraught with "plagiarisms".¹⁰ Moreover, with the success of *Histoire de la Laponie* the market for Nordic exoticism would have been saturated. Unlike Regnard, however, Schefferus never went to Lapland. Schefferus's text is a compilation of notes taken by priests and parishioners on the request of the philologist. But rather than "facts" on the region, it was a certain imaginary of the North, inspired by *Histoire de la Laponie*, that marked Regnard's travelogue. This imaginary did not come from the Latin edition of Schefferus's history but from the French translation. Included in the French 1678 edition, one finds illustrations by the engraver René Michault that were highly influential and allowed the exotic image of Lapland to be disseminated at the time – an imaginary vision that clearly influenced all French travellers to Scandinavia, including Regnard.¹¹

Another explanation as to why Regnard did not publish his travels is political. The moment when Sweden abandoned its alliance with France, the French king aligned with Denmark. In the light of these changes in alliances, it has been speculated that Regnard could have been sent on a secret mission to reassure the Danish chancellor.¹² Would Regnard then have been travelling to the North as a diplomat? It is possible, but there is no evidence of this and Regnard makes no mention of any such thing. At the core of his voyage seems to have been an interest in all things worldly and courtly and a desire for a grand tour of the North.¹³ Contrary to what he writes in the novel *La Provençale* (1731), which is one of his fictional accounts of his many journeys, the departure towards Scandinavia was not brought about by a failed love story. He did not express any hope that "the cold of the North would somewhat calm the fervour" of his unquenched love and he did not embark on the journey "with as much sadness as with curiosity" as it is claimed in the novel.¹⁴ Rather, it was a quest for knowledge of the world (*curiosité*) and a desire to develop his sociable side that motivated him. Following the model of well-to-do youth who completed their training by doing a cultural tour across the humanist heights of antiquity, Regnard set off with his two companions, de Fercourt and Corberon. *Vidit nos Africa*, as they claimed in the Jukkasjärvi inscription, which can literally be translated as "Africa has seen us" (a common way of saying "I was touring Africa" in Latin). It thus seems like they wanted to present themselves as cosmopolitans.

The names of those who had travelled alongside Regnard do not, generally, appear in any of his published travel accounts or in other published writings: in *La Provençale*, Fercourt is totally absent, as is the case with the travelogue of his trips to Flanders, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, and Germany. The names do not even appear in his account of the journey to Lapland, with the exception of the mention on the plaque inscribed in Latin. Here, finally, his companions appear, and even if they were completely excluded from Regnard's other texts, the inscription suggests that the company as a whole was significant for the journey.

Together the three men formed a group of young aspiring socialites, who had not yet reached the peak of their careers but who, nevertheless, chose to embark on a journey towards an obscure destination, at least from the point of view of a Frenchman. Corberon had been an active lawyer in the Grand Chamber of the Paris parliament from 1669 and was deputy public prosecutor of the General Counsel when they set off towards Sweden. Surprisingly then, he had put his political ambitions on hold and left to discover the world, venturing to Asia all the way to the Ganges River. On the plaque in Jukkasjärvi Ganges and Asia are mentioned, making a direct reference to Corberon's travels and not those of Regnard. Upon his return from Scandinavia in 1683, Corberon married Mademoiselle Magdeleine Du Four. She was the daughter of a former consul and member of the Parisian bourgeoisie, and her dowry, combined with the financial support of François-Michel Le Tellier de Louvois, Louis XIV's Secretary of State and War, allowed Corberon to obtain the title of Counsellor and General Prosecutor at the parliament of Metz in 1684.

De Fercourt was a noble gentleman from Picardy, who did not have as brilliant a career as did Corberon but was made counsellor in the office of Beauvais and ultimately became major of the town.¹⁵ Before going to Scandinavia, de Fercourt had travelled with Regnard in the Mediterranean region, where they visited Italy and North Africa. Several texts published at the time state that Regnard was always by de Fercourt's side although their travels would later lead to controversies between the two friends. This is notably the case concerning the account of when they were captured by pirates and held in Algeria. A nobleman and of higher value to his kidnappers than Regnard, de Fercourt escaped along with a valet, of whom we know nothing, aside from the fact that de Fercourt gave him a considerable sum during the negotiation for his ransom.

The two travel companions were no doubt important to Regnard, who did not enjoy the same social status as they did. Yet, in his publications, Regnard would not only silence his fellow travellers; he would, at least according to de Fercourt, also fabricate. When de Fercourt became conscious of the publication of Regnard's Scandinavian journey in 1731, three years before de Fercourt's death, he was eager to rectify the mistaken facts: "Nothing could be more false", he said about the account.¹⁶ He also published his own version of the captivity in Algeria before he

passed away. He was just as irritated by the tales he found in Regnard's *La Provençale* and quite possibly also by the fact that Regnard in his play *La Coquette* let a ridiculous character have de Fercourt's title of counsellor to the presidial counsel of Beauvais.¹⁷ Considering his old age, he could only point out what he deemed to be blatantly false about Regnard's versions of their journeys. In an unedited letter addressed to Jean-Pierre Nicéron, de Fercourt wrote of his bitterness and powerlessness:

All our travels have been published under the name of M. Regnard, but the details of the fragments that we found after his death are so poorly recounted: There are so many things that have been omitted, and others that are so badly placed that I really wish I could do something about it; but where, when, and how?¹⁸

In a way, the plaque in Jukkasjärvi at least acknowledges the presence of Corberon and de Fercourt even if they are far from giving us an idea of their version of the voyage. The companions are also crucial for understanding Regnard's travel writing and the inscription. They testify that despite the strange destination, he hoped that the journey would contribute to better position him in the Parisian social circles. Regnard's voyage to Lapland took place before he became a famous dramaturge and Molière's "sole beneficiary".¹⁹ Tellingly, once he had become famous for his theatre – some time after his return from Scandinavia – Regnard revealed this *mondain* dimension of himself. But this side of him was clearly already there in his travels to the North as can be seen in his writing strategies.

In the preface to the posthumous travelogue, Regnard addressed a reader that he wanted to please, namely the French ambassador in Stockholm. In so doing, he presented the account of his journey to Lapland like a long letter, punctuated with information but also filled with entertaining stories. This placed his account in the line of French galant travel narratives of the period. He used stylistic features that were common in galant writing, such as prosimetrum, which combines prose and verse. Moreover, the very structure and form of his travel writing tend towards galant literature. He inserted a poem on the beauty of the solitary Nordic landscapes by taking up the antique topic of the sublime *locus terribilis*, whilst all along playing with a number of possible intertexts, like "La Solitude" or "Le Contemplateur" of Saint-Amant, thus foreshadowing the beauty of the North that would later be enhanced by Madame De Staël (1766–1817). Finally, his writing often tended towards a dramatisation of the Other. For example, he depicted the movement of the Sami in terms of a mute theatre. In so doing, he added a theatrical aspect to his Cartesian conceptualisation of the Sami as a "little machine".²⁰

The galant style and form is also reflected in the ways in which he travelled. Regnard's entire itinerary was determined by his worldly intention

to connect with the courts of northern Europe in order to make himself known. He first visited the court of Denmark, then that of Sweden, and as previously mentioned it was in order to please the King of Sweden, who had suggested the voyage in the first place, that he undertook the journey to Lapland. The other trips to Flanders and Holland were equally courtly adventures, tracing royal genealogies more so than tracing descriptions of the particularities of these countries, as if the inscription of a particular place and time interested him more than contemporary geography. This worldly intention to leave a mark in this “barbarian and uncivilised” North, a North that he then transformed through a gaze that was at once antiquarian (turning it into a *locus amoenus*) and modern (a pre-romantic conception of the beauty of the savage place), thus allowed Regnard to place himself in a sociable and civilised present, beyond the memorial aspect of the plaques.

In other words, while the plaque is commonly a commemorative practice that inscribes the voyager into the visited place, Regnard’s inscription is at the same time directed towards the future and towards other spaces: This traveller was interested in leaving a trace of himself not only in a church in Jukkasjärvi or at the “edge of the world” where it never would be “read by anyone but bears”, but in the aristocratic circles in Paris. But the plaque remains temporally stable; it is there reminding future visitors to the church that he and his friends were there. In contrast, his published texts evoking his travels played with more disruptive temporalities as they resurface in different contexts, in different forms of writing, and were ultimately published posthumously.

Regnard’s wooden plaque would indeed leave a mark in accounts by European travellers to come. In this way, it seems, the sociable and galant exercise in style infiltrated the more scientific travels to the North in the eighteenth century, too. Above and beyond its commemorative dimension, the engraving thus exists in an interesting temporality; the inscription itself becomes part of another genealogy, that of a line of explorers in Lapland.

The Huguenot Following Regnard: La Motraye

When La Motraye arrived in Jukkasjärvi during the winter of 1718, he found Regnard’s text engraved on the back of a reindeer sleigh and placed by the altar in the church. Guided by a local who had been Regnard’s guide 37 years earlier, La Motraye visited the rock upon which the original engraving was to be found. In his travelogue, he describes his own journey to the rock and quotes the original inscription:

After a stretch of three thousand miles across glacial plains, our precursor showed me the *non plus ultra* of three French travellers. [The guide] told me that, around thirty-seven years earlier he had provided these three men with boats on the same unfrozen lake. This *non plus*

ultra is the extremity of a chain of bare mountains [...] which almost make up an island, that he named Pescomarca [...], and from which these men had wanted to see the tip, like someone from that side of the world would do [...] In so far as his memory served him, the old man pointed out the place where he had seen them inscribe something, but what, he said, he did not know. I scraped the moss off the rock and discovered these all-too-legible words:

Gallia nos genuit; vidit nos Africa; Gangem
Hausimus, Europamque oculis lustravimus omnem:
Casibus et variis acti terraque marique,
Stetimus hic tandem, nobis ubi defuit orbis
De Fercourt, De Corberon, Regnard
Anno 1681, die 22 Augusti²¹

The toponymy “Pescomarca” has been identified as a neck of land in the southeastern part of Lake Torneträsk called Pieksejarka in Sami.²² The stone version of Regnard’s wooden plaque that La Motraye here claims to have seen, remains lost despite the attempts made in the beginning of 1900 by Karl Bernard Wiklund, professor at Uppsala University, to encourage tourists and archaeologists to find it.²³ Nonetheless, it is clear that La Motraye constructs the landscape that lies before him through the perspective of Regnard and his companions, even if Regnard’s *Voyage en Laponie* had not yet been published at the time of La Motraye’s voyage. Instead of the temporal precisions related to travel that we saw in Regnard’s inscription, La Motraye operates in the time-space of memory: The recollection of his own journey to the site of the stone and the memories of the local guide, who had helped Regnard and his companions 37 years earlier and now accompanied La Motraye to the same spot.

Clearly, there was a tradition among travellers from the South after Regnard to leave a mark in the church of Jukkasjärvi. Guiseppi Acerbi, an Italian naturalist who voyaged to Lapland in 1798 and 1799, wrote in his travel journal and later in his travelogue, that he had read in the Turku gazettes that the plaques were counted in a list that had been left in the church of Jukkasjärvi.²⁴ “In the church of Jukasjervi”, he writes in his travelogue, “there is a book, in which, in imitation of Regnard [...], [travellers] have had the ambition to write their names, and to shew their talents as men of wit”.²⁵ Amongst them, Acerbi notes, there was one in Latin that referred to La Motraye’s visit in June 1718. There are no mentions of the Turku gazettes in the French or English translations of his travelogue; instead he lists and then cites the inscriptions on the inside of the church in Jukkasjärvi. In this context, he evokes La Motraye’s own inscription on a curious semi-circle-shaped plaque, which is still found in the church but is today very difficult to read. Nonetheless, the first verse on this curious plaque very clearly suggests that Acerbi in his travelogue quotes this particular inscription.



Figure 3.2 Wooden slab attributed by the author to La Motraye, Jukkasjärvi church.

Photo: Sylvie Requemora-Gros

Gaul gave life to me, and England gave me a safe haven; the two Germanies, Great Greece and Greece, Naxos, Barcelona, Hercules' columns, the two Asias, Italy, Africa, and Malta, which lies opposite the latter two, the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, the Caspian Sea, but also the Baltic shores saw me, even the north pole itself saw me, and Lapland made me see the midnight sun and offered me the meat and milk of reindeer to eat and drink, like Tartaria once offered me the meat and milk of horses.

This was written in Jukkasjärvi by Aubri de La Motraye,
subject of Great Britain,
on his return from Lake Torneträsk
on June 13, 1718²⁶

La Motraye was a more experienced traveller and outpaced Regnard in the number of countries he had visited. He was also a Huguenot and a “subject of Great Britain” who, after he had travelled to Rome, Lisbon, London, and the Ottoman Empire, departed towards Sweden in 1715 together with Otto Wilhelm Klinckowström, secretary of the Swedish king Charles XII. In 1718 he explored Lapland and discovered the traces of Regnard. Being a Huguenot travelling in a Lutheran country, La Motraye is quick to nuance Regnard’s representations of the North, as if he could detect that Regnard

was more interested in pleasing a social elite than in giving a precise and accurate description of the region. Nonetheless, La Motraye, too, continued the practice of inscribing classical sociable poetics in the far North.

In his travel account, La Motraye explicitly writes that this exercise in style, the art of engraving on a plank of wood, like an “ancient votiva Tabula”, takes shape in the wake of Regnard’s inscription:

After dinner [the local guide] showed me the church and the four verses written by the travellers that I mentioned previously, who had engraved them onto a plank of wood that they had suspended against the wall next to the altar, much like an ancient votiva Tabula. I made him understand how much freedom these men had given to their muse at the expense of truth, in calling Peskomarca the edge of the world, and he asked me if I did not also want to leave something in memory of my travels. I told him that I would think about it that evening: in fact, it was not long after I had got back to my lodgings after having dined with him that I picked up my pen and wrote the following words, in which I recount my travels.²⁷

Describing the wooden plaque as a *Votiva Tabula*, a gallery of celebrities or a place of worship turned into a place of sociability, it becomes part of a new epigrammatic and poetic collection and of a coded genre: The opening line of all of La Motraye’s and Regnard’s poems starts in the same way, by putting France first. Regnard begins “Gallia nos genuit”, and “Gallia mihi lucem dedit” is La Motraye’s first line. In taking up a process of imitation, La Motraye thus in a way constructs his wood engraving as a particular style. Speaking of Regnard and his companions and following the proverb “long ways, long lies”, he points out “how much freedom these men had given to their muse at the expense of truth”, a typical topos of travel narratives. But La Motraye himself improved his own engraving when he quoted it later in his travelogue. In the published version, La Motraye transforms the short piece of prose to eleven more elaborate verses, and, thus, he posits himself as a traveller-liar in the wake of Regnard.

Acerbi signalled that there are different versions of La Motraye’s text – the inscription in itself and the poem later included in his travel journal – thus emphasising how writing and, perhaps, the very experience of travelling changes with time:

Mr. Motraye seems to have been a traveller of consequence. It appears from his biographer that he lived in particular habits of friendship with Charles the XIIth, king of Sweden. When he printed his Travels in England, he does not seem to have been quite pleased with his inscription at Jukasjervi, which is neither verse nor prose (as he would make us believe that he wrote it extempore) and he has altered it [...].²⁸

Acerbi seems to have mixed up the moments of inscription in his account as he dates the wooden plaque to June 13, 1718, and the published verse to June 23, 1718. The word choice “extempore” is a temporal marker, and La Motraye himself plays with temporality by evoking the *votiva tabula*. More importantly, the transformation of the text from the engraving to the published book breaks with the principle of imitation. La Motraye does not copy but reinvents Regnard’s style and form. He seems to explore the possibility of contributing to a dimension of the travel genre that is in the process of taking shape; inscribing one’s presence in the North in the form of a poem engraved on local material turns into a practice and a genre that occurs as an appendix to the travelogue. Acerbi does not say exactly where in the church the plaque was placed. Nonetheless, his remarks suggest that La Motraye is proud to have his inscription “in the church near the others”, meaning Regnard, Fercourt, and Corberon.²⁹

According to Acerbi, the “guest book” from the church in Jukkasjärvi, which he, following the French translation, describes as a “merging of all of these accounts [*témoignages*] in the form of a literary swordfight”,³⁰ was written “in imitation of Regnard [...] to shew their talents as men of wit”.³¹ However, it appears to have disappeared. Literary scholar Marthe Emmanuel claims that this “literary swordfight” unfolded in the lost “guest book” and was thus not engraved but written “on paper that has not stood the test of time, like Regnard’s wood”.³² However, the existence of the disc-shaped wood, quoted above, proves the very opposite: La Motraye quite literally followed Regnard’s practice. He not only left words on paper but also on wood. Moreover, his semi-circled plaque is placed beside two other large pieces of wood containing engravings that do not figure in Acerbi’s list. These plaques celebrate the travels of Maupertuis, the next voyager to participate in the “literary swordfight” in the church in Jukkasjärvi.

The Scientist and the Inscriptions: Maupertuis

Maupertuis was a pioneer of Newton’s theories in France, who travelled on a scientific mission to Lapland supported by the French Academy of Sciences in 1735. The aim was to determine the measures of a meridian arc of one degree, evaluate the curve of the terrestrial sphere, refine the calculations of the lunar parallax, and improve measurements for maritime navigation. He travelled with the Swedish astronomer Anders Celsius, four other scholars, a secretary, and an illustrator. The aim of the travel was thus clearly scientific, but the expedition was surrounded with more social encounters. Gabriel Gyllengrip, governor of West Bothnia, welcomed Maupertuis and his team when they arrived and organised a celebration in their honour. When the expedition reached its end, Johannes Wegelius, a teacher at Torneå, organised a farewell evening ahead of their departure. Both these occasions were commemorated in writing.

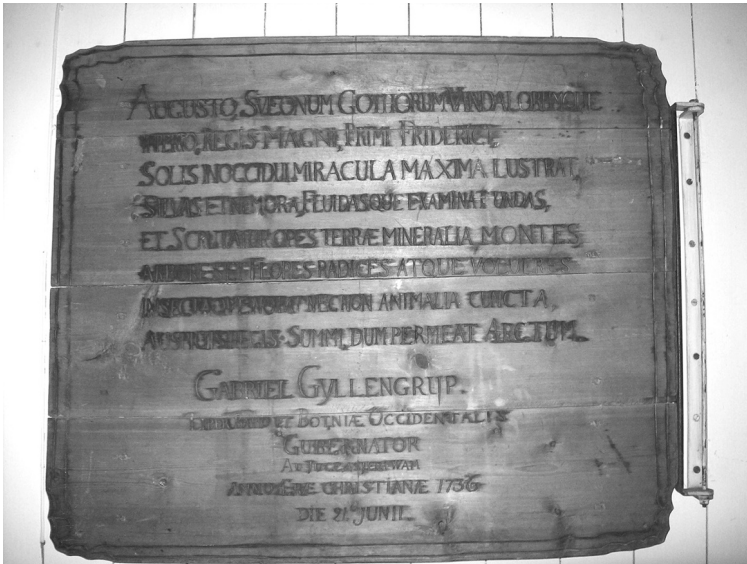


Figure 3.3 Wooden slab signed Gyllengrip, Jukkasjärvi church.
 Photo: Sylvie Requemora-Gros

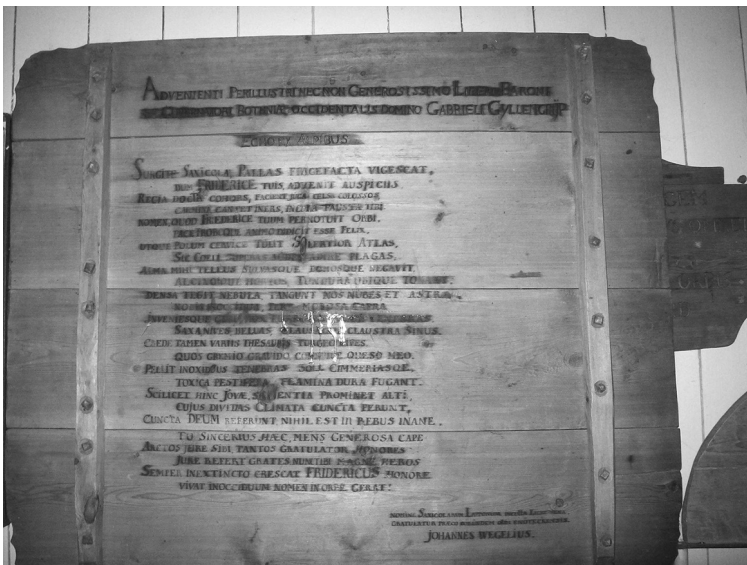


Figure 3.4 Wooden slab signed Johannes Wegelius, Jukkasjärvi church.
 Photo: Sylvie Requemora-Gros

The two sides are signed respectively Gyllengrip and Wegelius and were engraved during Maupertuis' travels to the region. Here we have two locals who left their poetic marks alongside the foreign travellers to celebrate the French scientist's journey, and thus contributed to the poetics of inscriptions in Jukkasjärvi. The translation of the epigram signed by Gyllengrip reads as follows:

Under the majestic reign
of the great Frederick the First
King of the Swedish, Germanic, and Vandal peoples,
Gabriel Gyllengrip, free baron and Governor of West Bothnia
Views the great wonder that is the midnight sun,
Examines the forests, groves, and the running rivers,
Explores the richness of the earth, the minerals, mountains,
Trees, flowers, roots, and birds
He observes the insects as well as all living creatures,
Whilst, under the auspices of the great King, he explores the Pole.
Near Jukkasjärvi,
on the 21st of June, in the year 1736, of the Christian era.³³

It paints a self-portrait of the governor as a new kind of Linnæus, a knowledgeable botanist, geologist, taxonomist, and accomplished explorer. Indirectly then, the verse celebrates and remembers two scientific explorations to the North – that of Linnæus in 1732 and that of Maupertuis and Celsius in 1736 – and suggests that the governor himself will, in the wake of these explorations, look at the northern provinces like these men of science, exploring it in the interest of the King.

Wegelius appears to improvise to the best of his ability apparently without using a dictionary, but relying on his classicist education and his knowledge of Antiquity. However, even if the meter is often irregular, the poetic composition is interesting, as it is based on a double encomiastic prosopopoeia, referring first to Lapland itself and then to its inhabitants:

To the highly illustrious nobleman Gabriel Gyllengrip,
Free Baron and governor of West Bothnia upon his arrival

Echo of the Mountains
Rise up, inhabitants of the mountains,
may frozen Pallas come to live again,
whilst under your auspices, Frederick,
arrives the learned royal contingent;
may the haughty summits erect statues,
may the unrefined inhabitants sing songs that bring luck to you.
Since your name, Frederick, is known all over the world,

it has learned to find joy in peace and in an honorable soul,
and just as the ingenious artist Atlas has taken the world upon his
shoulders,
he dares visit the high areas of the heaven.
The nurturing earth has refused me forests, houses, and the gardens
of Alcinous,
thunders are everywhere, the mist casts a thick cloak over us,
and clouds and stars are but a hand's reach away,
the never setting star Capra brings us our share of afflictions,
and you will see ice, and then <storms> and shadows, rocks, snow,
beasts,
and how the access to the bay is being closed.
But believe me, I am rich with many treasures,
and behold them, here in my full bosom.
The never-setting sun chases the Cimmerian darkness away,
the strong winds sweep away with the fowl smells.
And it is in this that the intentions of the heavenly God comes through,
and all types of climate bring about his richness.
Everything is a reflection of God, there is nothing vain in anything.
Accept this, generous spirit, in a more candid way.
The North rightly rejoices at such honours,
and now rightly thanks you, great Hero;
may Frederick forever enjoy a never ending glory,
may he live and may his name never be forgotten on earth.
In the name of the Sami mountain inhabitants, unversed in
literature,
I, their herald and formerly resident of Enontekiö, express my joy
and gratitude,
Johannes Wegelius.³⁴

The eulogy to Fredric the First, King of Sweden and Prince of Finland from 1720 to 1751, starts off with a common prosopopeia, juxtaposing the motif of the cold country with the revival brought about by the head of the scientific team in charge of Maupertuis's mission. Like a kind of polar bucolic, it insists on the passage of time via the seasons and on the role of the North Pole as the central point for Atlas bearing the world on his shoulders. The theme of the cold (mist, heavy coat, Auriga constellation, ice, snow, darkness) does not hinder the richness of the various treasures celebrated by Wegelius, who in the end of the poem states himself as the hero of the Samis, who speaks in their name.

In his *Mémoires* (1718), Pierre-Daniel Huet, who never personally visited these regions let alone encountered any of its inhabitants, claims that "the people who, born under a cold climate, and who do not experience the well-meaning influence of the sun as much as we do, are slower in

the operations of the spirit, and less capable of distinguishing truth from falsity. It is in this way that the Lapps, who are confined to Sweden, the Icelandic folk, and those from Greenland are depicted in the accounts of trustworthy writers”.³⁵ This picture of a Lapland that is untamed, left behind, and bound in an archaic temporality, “unversed in literature” (written on the plaque as “incultæ litteraturæ”), was recurrent in travel narratives of the region. In his “Relation d’un voyage fait dans la Laponie septentrionale, pour trouver un ancien monument” (Account of a journey into northern Lapland in search of an Old Monument), Maupertuis repeatedly alludes to the supposed stupidity of the Sami. Repeating the racist theories of his time, he claims that the “Lapps” were hardly human, but “a species of men who live as beasts in the forest”.³⁶ Explicitly, he justifies this conclusion with references to an antique perception of the North: “What attention can we give to these people who antiquity pronounced to be illiterate and who more often than not do not know their mother?” he asks rhetorically.³⁷ For Maupertuis, the region and its people clearly belong to an illiterate space, where fine arts and sociability usually had no place.

Maupertuis never left any inscription of his own in the church. However, there is another, local inscription that surfaces in Maupertuis’ travel writing, namely the famous stone of Käymäjärvi, also known as the “stone of Pajala” or the “stone of Vinsavaara”.³⁸ This curious stone is not linked to the plaques in the church, but, as we shall see, Maupertuis indirectly associates it with the practice of engraving inaugurated by Regnard. He tells about how he set out to look for the stone, or rather a monument of the past – “an old monument” – which the Samis “looked upon as the wonder of their country, and within which they believe lies the science of everything that they do not know”.³⁹

When Maupertuis finally found the monument, he was embarrassed that he could not interpret its signs, and he did not know whether to attribute them to the work of humans or “a trick of nature”:

The stone upon which these lines are engraved is made up of various layers; the characters are written on a sort of pebble, whilst the rest, and above all between the two lines, seems to be written in a stone that is slightly wetter and more porous.

In any case, M. Celsius and I copied, individually and with great care, all that we could decipher, as you see it here.

Whether or not it is nothing more than a trick of nature, the reputation that this stone has in this country necessitated that we give the description.

This stone certainly does not have the beauty possessed by the monuments of Greece and Rome: but if it does indeed contain an inscription, this inscription seemingly has the advantage of being

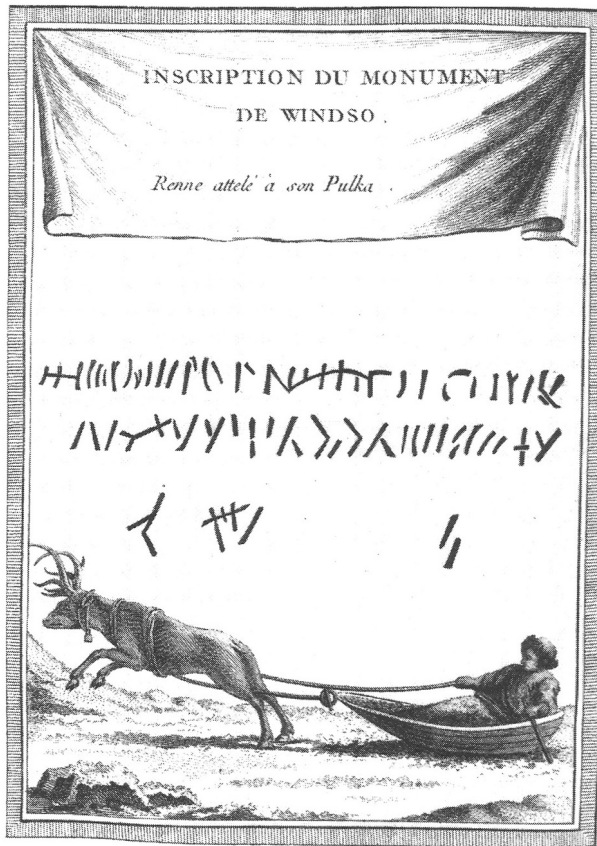


Figure 3.5 The Käymäjärvi inscription, Antoine François Prévost d'Exiles, *Histoire générale des voyages, ou nouvelle collection de toutes les relations de voyages par mer et par terre* (1777), vol. 15. gallica.bnrf.fr/Bibliothèque Nationale de France, public domain.

the oldest in the universe. One would never have believed that [the Lapps] might ever have had a memorable event that they would have wished to pass on to posterity; nor that if they had wanted to do so would they have known how. One would never have thought that this country, given its current position, would ever have had any more civilised inhabitants. The dreadful climate and sterile earth are destined to be nothing more than a retreat for miserable people who do not know any other climate.

It thus seems that our inscription must have been engraved at a time when this country enjoyed a different climate; and before one of those big revolutions, that we are certain must have happened upon the earth. The position that its axis has today in relation to the

ecliptic plane means that Lapland only very rarely receives any sunlight; it is thus condemned to a long winter, fatal to man and to all of nature's productions; its ground is sterile and deserted.⁴⁰

Maupertuis emphasises the age of the monument and compares it to the vestiges of the Greco-Roman times at the cradle of humanity. In fact, he goes further and gives it the higher value of an even older object ("the oldest in the universe"), making it out to be the original stone (*la pierre originale*), the most memorable source of civilisation, the mother of human genealogy. Yet, such conclusion seems to be at odds with the primitive appearance of the people of Lapland. The complexity of the signs could not possibly, for Maupertuis, be the work of such a baffled people from a cold country with a horrible and sterile climate, so it must have been that the climate was different at the time the inscription was made.

This leads to a radical geographical interpretation of the deep time of the North: If the stone was indeed the sign of culture, not of nature, then there must have been an age when the cold did not ravage the region. Maupertuis imagines a tropical polar country and concludes: "The polar circles were maybe what the tropics are now".⁴¹ Logically, then, for Maupertuis to be able to contemplate the possibility of a previous warming of the earth, he does not imagine a kind of anachronistic climate change but rather imagines a change in the earth's axis to explain the desolation of the northern space. But conscious of the fact that he was on this point risking to venture into the realm of historical fiction, he referred to the sacred authority of the biblical story which recounts the deluge: "The sacred story teaches us that water once covered the highest mountains. It would be difficult to conceive of such a flood, with the displacement of the earth's gravity, and its climates".⁴² Maupertuis' speculations that the stone might have been caused by a "trick of nature" are confirmed by researchers today.⁴³ He was also right in signalling the cultural significance of the stone for the Sami.⁴⁴ But faced with the perplexity raised by this vestige of the past of the Käymäjärvi stone, subject to a mysterious temporality, located in a vertiginous temporal *mise en abyme*, Maupertuis also imagined that it could be another *votiva tabula*, preceding that of Regnard and La Motraye, made by travellers who would have anticipated and fulfilled his own desire to inscribe himself in this tabular genealogy: "If we want to have recourse to these changes, we might find the origins of Windso's inscription [on the Vinsavaraa stone] in some event that was as unique as our journey".⁴⁵ In a strange temporal palimpsest, Maupertuis compares his own description of the stone to that which he would like to have engraved, following the lead of Regnard and La Motraye.

He did, in fact, have the intention to add to the collection at Jukkasjärvi by making an inscription in Torneå, but the project failed due to the lack of craftsmen at hand capable of carrying out the task. The reason why

we know about it is that the project is mentioned in a letter from Pierre Michel Hennin to Maupertuis dated August 1, 1756:

An inscription containing the story of the project that we undertook in this country will perhaps one day be as obscure as the inscription [on the Vinsavaraa stone]: and if all science and knowledge had been lost, who would then be able to discover, or imagine, that such a monument could be the work of the French; and that what they would see engraved would, in fact, be the distance of the degrees of the earth, and the determination of its shape?⁴⁶

Concluding Remarks

More work remains to be done on this topic; in a sense this chapter is directed towards the future. We would have to go back to the archive and return to the church in Jukkasjärvi in order to find the “guest book” referred to by Acerbi. We would also have to search again the surroundings for the rock engraved by Regnard and seen by La Motraye, near Pieskenjarka. These are travel writing artefacts, not intended for publication, in which the text becomes a memorial and an atemporal image, a circumstantial game of sociable rhetoric in “an enchanted country whose philosophers are fairies”, to borrow the words of Voltaire, written in a letter to Maupertuis.⁴⁷ Situated in a landscape of the far North, these plaques signal, above and beyond the published writings, an *album amicorum*, an arctic equivalent of the famous *Guirlande de Julie* written in 1641 by several poets who frequented the salons of the Hôtel de Rambouillet to honor Julie d’Angennes on her birthday. This circumstance places the inscriptions in a context of French ancient regime sociability. Moreover, the inscriptions constitute borders, marking the far North at the same time as they signal the end of the travellers’ itineraries and their return to the social world. In that sense, they represent at once geographical, anthropological, and, above all, temporal borders. The plaques allow us to reflect on the past, linking the faraway space to deep time, on the genealogy of origins, where antique references are surpassed by the constitution of a Nordic base that could be the foundation for a historical reconstruction. This requires a present experience able to be passed on to future readers of all times.

Notes

- 1 The author’s own translation of the Latin to French can be found in Jean-François Regnard, “Voyage en Laponie”, *Les Œuvres de Mr. Regnard, nouvelle édition revue, corrigée & augmentée*, vol. 1 (Paris: Pierre-Jacques Ribou, 1731), p. 209: “La France nous a donné la naissance. Nous avons vu l’Afrique et le Gange, parcouru toute l’Europe. Nous avons eu différentes

- aventures, tant par mer que par terre; et nous nous sommes arrêtez en cet endroit, où le monde nous a manqué”. His travels have been re-edited as Jean-François Regnard, *Voyages: Romans et récits*, ed. Sylvie Requemora-Gros (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2020).
- 2 “Mantua me genuit, Calabri rapuere, tenet nunc / Parthenope; cecini pascua, rura, duces”. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer who noticed this reference.
 - 3 Regnard, *Voyage en Laponie*, p. 209: “Nous fumes bien quatre heures à monter au sommet par des chemins qui n’avoient encore été connus d’aucun mortel, & quand nous y fumes arrivez, nous aperçumes toute l’étendue de la Laponie & la Mer Septentrionale, jusqu’au Cap du Nord, du côté qu’il tourne à l’Oüest. Cela s’apelle, Monsieur, se froter à l’essieu du Pôle, & être au bout du monde. Ce fut-là que nous plantâmes l’Inscription précédente qui étoit sa veritable place, mais qui ne sera, comme je croi, jamais lûë que des Ours”.
 - 4 Paul Teyssier, “Les cent glorieuses”, *Lisbonne hors les murs. 1415–1580: L’invention du monde par les navigateurs portugais*, ed. Michel Chandeigne (Paris: Édition Autrement, 1992), p. 19: “pilier de pierre surmonté d’une croix ou du blason portugais et comportant une inscription”.
 - 5 This has been read in terms of a colonial appropriation of local material; see Jonas M. Nordin and Carl-Gösta Ojala, “Collecting, Connecting, Constructing: Early Modern Commodification and Globalization of Sámi Material Culture”, *Journal of Material Culture* 23, no. 1 (2017), pp. 61–62, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359183517741663> (accessed Jan. 20, 2020).
 - 6 Alexandre Calame, *Regnard: Sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1960), p. 41: “The text concerning the journey to Poland is dated 1683. It is sufficiently evident not only in the letter to Marcadé (‘I leave immediately for France’), but also in the accounts of Regnard’s presence in Paris on March 17, 1682 that it makes sense to rectify 1683 to 1681”. (“Le texte du Voyage de Pologne porte la date de 1683. Il est suffisamment évident tant par la lettre à Marcadé (‘Je pars incessamment pour France’) que par la présence attestée de Regnard à Paris le 17 mars 1682 qu’il convient de rectifier 1683 en 1681”.)
 - 7 See John Trygve Solbakk, *The Sámi People: A Handbook*, ed. John Trygve Solbakk (Vasa: Davvi Girji OS, 2006), Chapter 1.4 “Colonisation and Division of Sápmi”, pp. 35–57.
 - 8 Regnard, *Voyage en Laponie*, p. 97: “dernière ville du monde du côté du Nord”.
 - 9 Johannes Schefferus, *Lapponia, id est regionis Lapponum et gentis nova et verissima descriptio. In qua multa De origine superstitione, sacris magicis, victu, cultu, negotiis Lapponum, item Animalium, metallorumque indole, quæ in terris eorum proventium, hactenus incognita. Produuntur, et eiconibus adjectis cum cura illustrantur, Francofurti, ex officina Christiani Wolffii* (Frankfurt, 1673).
 - 10 See Théophile Cart, “Le Voyage en Laponie de Regnard”, *Revue des cours et conférences*, no. 24 (May 1900), pp. 321–27.
 - 11 For an analysis of the construction of the North as Other in the early modern era, see Magdalena Naum, “Between Utopia and Dystopia: Colonial Ambivalence and Early Modern Perception of Sápmi”, *Itinerario* 40, no. 3 (2016). She briefly discusses Regnard and La Motraye on pages 494–95.
 - 12 See Calame, *Regnard: Sa vie et son œuvre*, p. 35.
 - 13 For a discussion of the Grand Tour in a French perspective, see Gilles Bertrand, “Le voyage et les usages de l’espace méditerranéen à l’époque

- du Grand Tour”, *Revue de l’Institut des langues et cultures d’Europe, Amérique, Afrique, Asie et Australie* 28 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.4000/ilcea.4087> (accessed May 13, 2020).
- 14 Jean-François Regnard, “La Provençale”, in *Les Œuvres de Mr. Regnard, nouvelle édition revue, corrigée & augmentée*, vol. 2 (Paris: Pierre-Jacques Ribou, 1731), p. 103: “les froids du nord pourraient un peu ralentir ses ardeurs”; p. 101: “autant par chagrin que par curiosité”.
 - 15 Claude Auxcouteaux de Fercourt, *La relation de l’esclavage des sieurs de Fercourt et Regnard*, ed. M. Targe (Toulouse: Privat, 1905), p. 13.
 - 16 The letter from Fercourt to l’abbé Nicéron is quoted in Fercourt, *La relation de l’esclavage*, p. x: “How can we possible have any faith in Memoirs in which there is nothing either truthful or serious?” (“quelle foi peut-on avoir à des Mémoires, dans lesquels il ne doit y avoir rien que de vrai et de sérieux?”).
 - 17 Jean-François Regnard, “La coquette, ou l’Académie des Dames, comédie italienne en 3 actes, mêlée de scènes françaises, en prose (January 17, 1691)”, *Le théâtre italien: Les comédies italiennes de J.F. Regnard recueillies par Évariste Gherardi*, ed. Roger Guichemerre, vol. 2 (Paris: Société des Textes Français Modernes, 1996).
 - 18 Fercourt, *La relation de l’esclavage*, p. 15: “Tous nos voyages ont été imprimés sous le nom de M. Regnard, mais mal sur des fragments qu’on a trouvés après sa mort; il y a tant de choses qui ont été omises et d’autres si mal placées qu’on souhaiterait bien que je voulusse y travailler; mais où, quand et comment?”
 - 19 See Jean-François Regnard, *Théâtre français*, vol. 3: *Le Légataire universel, La critique du Légataire, Sapor, Les souhaits, Les vendanges ou le Bailli d’Asnières*, ed. Sabine Chaouche, Noémie Courtès, and Sylvie Requemora-Gros (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2018).
 - 20 Regnard, *Voyage en Laponie*, p. 129. See my analysis of Regnard’s description of the Sami, “Comment peut-on être lapon? Singularités Nordiques: J.-F. Regnard en Europe du Nord, entre anomalie et ironie”, *La France et l’Europe du Nord au XVII^e siècle: de l’Irlande à la Russie*, ed. Richard Maber (Tübingen: Narr, 2017).
 - 21 Aubry de La Motraye, *Voyages du Sr de la Motraye en Europe, en Asie et Afrique, ou l’on trouve une grande variété de recherches géographiques, historiques et politiques sur l’Italie, la Grèce, la Tartarie, Crimée et Nogaye la Circassie, la Suède et la Laponie, etc., avec des remarques instructives sur les mœurs, coutumes et opinions [...] des peuples et des pays où l’auteur a voyagé [...]*, vol. 2 (Hague: T. Jonson & J. Van Duren, 1727), p. 360: “Après une course de trois Milles sur la plaine glaciale, notre précurseur me montra le *non plus ultra* de trois voyageurs François, à qui il me dit qu’il avoit fourni près de trente-sept ans auparavant des bateaux sur le même Lac dégelé. Ce *non plus ultra* est l’extrémité d’une chaine de montagnes toutes nues [...], composant une espece de presqu’Isle, qu’il nommoit *Pescomarca* [...], de laquelle ces Messieurs ont voulu faire regarder le bout, comme celui du monde de ce côté-là [...]. Le vieillard m’indiquant autant que sa mémoire le lui fournissoit l’endroit où il les avoit vû graver quelque chose qu’il ne connoissoit, disoit-il, pas, j’arrachai la mousse du rocher, & y découvris ces vers bien lisibles, *Gallia nos genuit; vidit nos Africa / Gangem Hausimus, Europamque oculis lustravimus omnem: / Casibus et variis acti terraque marique, / Stetimus hic tandem, nobis ubi de fuit orbis* / de Fercourt, de Corberon, Regnard Ad Pescomarcam 18 Aug. 1681”.

- 22 Marthe Emmanuel, *La France et l'exploration polaire* (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1959), p. 163. Emmanuel does not name the professor at Uppsala University who identified “Pescomarca”, but the identification was published by Karl-Bernard Wiklund in “En liten uppgift att lösa vid Torne träsk”, *Svenska turistföreningens årsskrift*, 1904, p. 362.
- 23 It was Wiklund who launched the appeal in the Swedish Tourist Association bulletin: “En liten uppgift att lösa vid Torne träsk”, pp. 361–62. The call is launched again in 1931 by Hilding Kjellman, “Regnards resa i Lappland”, *Svenska turistföreningens årsskrift*, 1931, p. 258. Lucien Maury who was employed as a professor of French at Uppsala 1900–06 writes that he had read in a Swedish guide book about the stone inscription, Lucien Maury, “À la recherche de Regnard en Laponie”, *Les nouvelles littéraires, artistiques et scientifiques*, April 19, 1930, p. 10.
- 24 Giuseppe Acerbi, *Viaggio in Lapponia 1799*, ed. Luigi De Anna and Lauri Lindgren (Turku: Turun Yliopisto, 1996), pp. 26, 122. For an analysis of La Motraye’s voyage see Alessandra Grillo, “La Laponie d’Aubry de la Motraye (1718): L’interaction entre texte et image”, *Astrolabe* 18 (2008), www.crlv.org/astrolabe/novembre%20C3%A9cembre-2008/la-laponie-daubry-de-la-mottraye-1718 (accessed Dec. 10, 2019).
- 25 Giuseppe Acerbi, *Travels through Sweden, Finland and Lapland to the North Cape in the years 1798 and 1799*, vol. I (London: Joseph Mawman, 1802), p. 348. The French translation is made by Joseph Lavallée, *Voyage au Cap Nord par la Suède, la Finlande et la Laponie* (Paris: Levrault et Schoell, 1804), p. 138.
- 26 Acerbi, *Travels through Sweden, Finland and Lapland*, p. 350: “Gallia mihi lucem dedit, et liberum Anglia portum; utraque me Germania, Græcia Magna Minorque, mons Jovis, ac Barcellona, Herculisque columnæ, ambæ Asiæ, Italia, Africa, hisque opposita Melite, Euxina et Mæotica, Caspia, Baltica nec non littora viderunt, vidit Polus Arcticus ipse, et mihi inocciduum ostendit Lapponia solem; proque cibo et potu carnem et lac ran-giferinum præbuit, ut Tartaria olim præbebat equinum / Hæc scribebat ad Jukasjerviam rediens ex Torniavensi lacu Aubris de la Motraye, Magnæ Britanniæ subditus, 13 Junii, 1718”. The two Germanies refer to the military division of Germania inferior and Germania superior; Magna Græcia refers to the Greek colonies in southern Italy and Sicily; the two Asias refer to Minor Asia and the rest of Asia.
- 27 La Motraye, *Voyages*, p. 376: “Après dîner il me montra l’Eglise, & les quatre Vers des Voyageurs que j’ai déjà rapportez, qui les avoient gravez sur une Planche de bois qu’ils y avoient pendue contre le mur à côté de l’Autel, comme une *votiva Tabula* des Anciens. Je lui fis entendre combien de liberté ces Messieurs avoient donné à leur Muse aux dépens de la vérité, en appellant *Peskomarca* la fin du monde; & il me demanda si je ne voulois pas aussi laisser quelque chose en mémoire de mes voyages. Je lui répondis que j’y penserois le soir: en effet je ne fus pas plutôt de retour à mon logis, après avoir soupé avec lui, que je pris la plume & fis les Vers suivans, dans lesquels j’indiquai mes voyages”.
- 28 Acerbi, *Travels through Sweden, Finland and Lapland*, p. 350.
- 29 La Motraye, *Voyages*, p. 377: “dans l’Eglise auprès des autres”.
- 30 Acerbi, *Voyage au Cap Nord par la Suède, la Finlande et la Laponie*, p. 140: “comme la réunion de tous ces témoignages en genre d’escrime littéraire”.
- 31 Acerbi, *Travels through Sweden, Finland and Lapland*, p. 348.
- 32 Emmanuel, *La France et l’exploration polaire*, p. 162: “inscrits évidemment sur des papiers et n’ont pas résisté au temps comme le bois de Regnard”.

- 33 Gabriel Gyllengrip, transcribed from the plaque by Sylvie Requemora-Gros: “Augusto Sveonum Gothorum Vandalorumque / Imperio, Regis Magni, Primi Friderici, / Solis inoccidui miracula maxima lustrat, / Silvas et nemora, Fluidasque examinat undas, / et Scrutatur opes terræ mineralia montes, / arbores et Flores radices atque volucres / insectaque notat nec non animalia cuncta, / auspiciis regis Summi, dum permeat Arctum. / Gabriel Gyllengryp. / Liber Baro et Botniæ Occidentalis / Gubernator / Ad Juccasjeriwam / anno Æræ christianæ 1736 / die 21 Junii”.
- 34 Johannes Wegelius, transcribed from the plaque by Sylvie Requemora-Gros: “Advenienti Perillustri nec non Generosissimo Libero Baroni / et Gubernatori Bothniæ occidentalis domino Gabrieli Gyllengrijp / Echo ex Alpibus / Surgite Saxicola, Pallas frigefacta vigescat, / Dum FRIDERICE tuis, advenit auspiciis / Regia docta cohors, facient juga celsa colossos, / carmina cantet iners, incola fausta tibi. / nomen quod FRIEDERICE tuum pernotuit orbi, / pace [P]roboque animo didicit esse Felix, / utque Polum cervice tulit Solertior Atlas, / Sic Cœli superas audet adire plagas; / Alma mihi tellus sylvasque domosque negavit, / alcinoique hortos, Tundura ubique tonant, / densa tegit nebula, tangunt nos nubes et astra / Nobis inoccidua, fert morosa Capra / inveniesque gelu, mox <turbines atque> tenebras / Saxa nives, belluas, clausaque claustra Sinus. / Crede tamen variis thesauris turgeo dives. / Quos gremio gravido, conspice quæso meo. / Pellit inoxiduus tenebras Soll Cimmeriasq<u>e, / Toxicia pestifera flamina dura fugant. / Scilicet hinc Jovæ, sententia prominet alti, / Cujus divitias climata cuncta ferunt. / Cuncta DEUM referunt, nihil est in rebus inane. / Tu Sincerius hæc, mens generosa cape / Arctos jure sibi, tantos gratulator honores / Jure refert grates nunc tibi, magne heros / Semper inextincto crescat FRIDERICUS honore / vivat inocciduum nomen in orbe gerat! / nomine Saxicolarum Lapponum incultæ litteraturæ, / Gratulatur præco eorundem olim Enotecrensis. / JOHANNES WEGELIUS”.
- 35 Pierre-Daniel Huet, *Mémoires* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1993), p. 40: “peuples qui, nés sous un climat froid et ne se ressentant pas aussi bien que nous de la bienfaisante influence du soleil, sont plus lents dans les opérations de l’esprit et moins propres à distinguer la vérité de l’erreur. Tels sont, au rapport d’écrivains dignes de foi, les Lapons, qui confinent à la Suède, les Islandais et les Groënlandais”.
- 36 Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis, “Relation d’un voyage fait dans la Laponie septentrionale”, *Maupertuis en Laponie: A la recherche de la figure de la Terre*, ed. Osmo Pekonen and Anouchka Vasak (Paris: Hermann, 2014), p. 192: “[...] espèce d’hommes qui vivent en bêtes dans les forêts”.
- 37 Maupertuis, “Relation d’un voyage fait dans la Laponie septentrionale”, p. 192: “quelle attention peut-on faire à ce que débitent sur des antiquités des gens qui ne savent pas leur page, et qui le plus souvent ne connaissent pas leur mère?”
- 38 Vesa-Pekka Herva, Janne Ikäheimo, Matti Enbuske, and Jari Okkonen, “Alternative Pasts and Colonial Engagements in the North: The Materiality and Meanings of the Pajala ‘Runestone’ (Vinsavaara Stone), Northern Sweden”, *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 28, no. 4 (November 2018), pp. 613–28. “The Swedish Heritage Board (Riksantikvarieämbetet) has defined the Vinsivaara stone as a natural rock with folklore associated with it” (p. 615).
- 39 Maupertuis, “Relation d’un voyage fait dans la Laponie septentrionale”, p. 183.
- 40 Maupertuis, “Relation d’un voyage fait dans la Laponie septentrionale”, pp. 192–93: “La pierre sur laquelle ces lignes sont gravées est composée

de différentes couches; les caractères sont écrits sur une espèce de caillou, pendant que le reste, et surtout entre les deux lignes, paraît être d'une pierre plus molle, et feuilletée. Quoi qu'il en soit, nous copiâmes, M. Celsius et moi, séparément et avec soin, tout ce que nous pûmes discerner, tel qu'on le voit ici. Quand ce ne serait qu'un jeu de la nature, la réputation qu'a cette pierre dans ce pays méritait que nous en donnassions la description. Cette pierre n'a pas assurément la beauté des monuments de la Grèce et de Rome: mais si ce qu'elle contient est une inscription, cette inscription a vraisemblablement l'avantage d'être la plus ancienne de l'Univers. On ne croira guère qu'ils aient jamais eu aucun événement mémorable à transmettre à la postérité; ni, quand ils l'auraient eu, qu'ils en eussent connu les moyens. On ne saurait non plus supposer que ce pays, dans la position où il est, ait eu autrefois d'autres habitants plus civilisés. L'horreur du climat, et a stérilité de la terre, l'ont destiné à ne pouvoir être la retraite que de quelques misérables, qui n'en connaissent aucun autre. Il semble donc que notre inscription aurait dû être gravée dans des temps où ce pays se serait trouvé situé sous un autre climat; et avant quelqu'une de ces grandes révolutions, qu'on ne saurait douter qui ne soient arrivées à la Terre. La position qu'a aujourd'hui son axe par rapport au plan de l'écliptique, fait que la Laponie ne reçoit que très obliquement les rayons du soleil; elle est condamnée par là à un hiver long, et funeste aux hommes, et à toutes les productions de la nature; sa terre est stérile et déserte".

- 41 Maupertuis, "Relation d'un voyage fait dans la Laponie septentrionale", p. 194: "les cercles polaires ont pu être ce que sont aujourd'hui les tropiques".
- 42 Maupertuis, "Relation d'un voyage fait dans la Laponie septentrionale", p. 195: "L'histoire sacrée nous apprend que les eaux ont autrefois couvert les plus hautes montagnes. Il serait bien difficile de concevoir une telle inondation, sans le déplacement du centre de gravité de la Terre, et de ses climats".
- 43 Herva et al., "Alternative Pasts and Colonial Engagements in the North", p. 616.
- 44 Herva et al., "Alternative Pasts and Colonial Engagements in the North", p. 618.
- 45 Maupertuis, "Relation d'un voyage fait dans la Laponie septentrionale", p. 195: "Si l'on veut point avoir recours à ces changements, on pourrait trouver l'origine de l'inscription de Windso dans quelque événement aussi singulier que notre voyage".
- 46 Maupertuis, "Relation d'un voyage fait dans la Laponie septentrionale", p. 195: "Une inscription qui contiendra l'histoire de l'opération que nous étions allés faire dans ces pays, sera peut-être un jour quelque chose d'aussi obscur que l'est celle-ci: et si toutes les sciences étaient perdues, qui pourrait alors découvrir, qui pourrait imaginer, qu'un tel monument fût l'ouvrage des Français; et que ce qu'on y verrait gravé fût la mesure des degrés de la Terre, et la détermination de sa figure?"
- 47 Letter from Voltaire to Maupertuis, May 22, 1738, Voltaire, *Troisième Suite des mélanges de poésie, de littérature, d'histoire et de philosophie* (Paris: Prault, 1761), p. 133: "pays enchanté dont les philosophes sont les fées".

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