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Hunting

Here we outline which species were hunted in the boreal forest and how they were hunted or trapped, and which animals were hunted in the mountains. The conditions for hunting were better in the boreal forest than in the mountains due to differences in topography, habitats, and species composition. From the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century, hunting led to extinction of wild reindeer and depopulation of fur animals; while small-game hunting for subsistence continued to be important. In the forest region, strong property rights to game developed through the *skatteland*, and hunting was a private enterprise. We suggest that the institution of *skatteland* was a response to changes in Sami economy, and the transition from collective to private hunting was a contributing factor. Hunting in the mountain region developed in the opposite direction and was open access after the wild reindeer was extinct. Hunting became important for social justice, and poor Sami had access to hunting grounds.

Hunting in Research About Sami

While previous research has addressed multiple aspects of early modern Sami fishing and reindeer husbandry, the focus on hunting has been relatively constricted.¹ This is due in part to the relative scarcity of hunting evidence in historical sources. In much research, early modern hunting has been described rather unsystematically, lacking in chronology and context. As described in Chapter 2, Sami historiography was characterized by ethnographic perspectives until the 1970s.² According to Hansen and Olsen, “the Sami past did not belong to the academic responsibilities of the historical disciplines.”³ Over the past four decades, the understanding of Sami hunting has increased by highlighting the role of hunting in Sami society and its impact on Sami’s relations with neighboring people. However, most researchers have concentrated on time periods before 1600, which is about the time hunting ceased to be the backbone of Sami economy.⁴ One of the most intense debates among these scholars has revolved around the question of when, why, and how Sami society transitioned from hunting to herding, but the changes in herding were the overriding factor.⁵ The focus on herding has somewhat overshadowed how hunting continued to be an integral part of a more complex household economy for many Sami long after the introduction of large-scale reindeer husbandry.⁶ Therefore, for the early modern period, the ethnographic descriptions of hunting dominate the literature.⁷

Although hunting lost economic importance in international trading around 1600, it played a vital role in many Sami households in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁸ This circumstance stands out

¹ Josefsson et al. (2010), Bjørklund (2013), and Norstedt et al. (2014).

² Tanner (1929), Tegengren (1952), Manker (1960), Phebe Fjellström (1962), Hvarfner (1965), and Henriksson (1978).

³ Hansen and Olsen (2014, p. 2).

⁴ Lundmark (1982, p. 170) and Hansen and Olsen (2014, p. 230).

⁵ Sommerseth (2011) and Bergman et al. (2013).

⁶ Bjørklund (2013) and E.-L. Päiviö (2017).

⁷ Hvarfner (1965), Phebe Fjellström (1986), and Kjellström (2000).

⁸ Bjørklund (2013) and E.-L. Päiviö (2017).

in many contemporary sources, where the topic of hunting frequently appears. What is lacking, and what we will contribute to, is an analysis of early modern Sami hunting from a household perspective that advances beyond descriptions of particular practices toward a more systematic understanding of early modern hunting in interior northern Fennoscandia. This will allow us to integrate hunting with the developments in fishing and reindeer husbandry to better understand changes in the economy and rights to land.

Hunting is the practice of pursuing, capturing, or killing wildlife and can be divided into subsistence, commercial, and recreational hunting.⁹ Scholars studying pre-historic and medieval Sami hunting in a wider geographical area have mainly been concerned with four themes. The first theme deals with how wild reindeer became the most important animal to hunt, why mobile settlements were required, and how large pitfall trapping systems were established.¹⁰ The second theme deals with fur trade and how Sami's high-quality furs were the most important factor in the establishment of the northern trade networks in the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages.¹¹ The third theme deals with collective hunting, where researchers have focused on pitfall hunting until circa 1600.¹² Their empirical findings were underpinned by Ingold's theoretical work.¹³ The fourth theme deals with hunting rituals and ceremonies, and scholars have shown that there was a strong link between religion and hunting in societies that depended on hunting.¹⁴ Beyond these themes, there are other aspects of pre-early modern hunting. One example is that small-game hunting must have been common, but lack of sources has made it difficult to analyze.

Around the beginning of the seventeenth century, Sami society went through several major changes: the number of wild reindeer was decreasing, and the use of pitfall hunting declined rapidly.¹⁵ In many

⁹ Peterson (2019).

¹⁰ Mulk (1994), Vorren (1998), and Sommerseth (2009).

¹¹ Odner (1983), L. Hansen (1990), and Hansen and Olsen (2014, pp. 127–131).

¹² Tegengren (1952), Vorren (1978), Mulk (1994), and Sommerseth (2011).

¹³ Ingold (1980).

¹⁴ Korhonen (2007), Rydving (2011), Hansen and Olsen (2014).

¹⁵ Lundmark (1982), and Mulk (1994).

households, reindeer herding replaced fur hunting and gradually became the backbone of the economy. Scholars who focused on the early modern era thus had less interest in analyzing hunting as a collective enterprise. We conclude that when hunting no longer played an important part in the definition of Sami ethnicity, it became less interesting for scholars. Instead, study of Sami ethnicity, and thus research about Sami history, has focused mostly on reindeer herding and the Sami's relation to the state.¹⁶ Much of our little knowledge about early modern Sami hunting still comes from ethnographic literature.

The ethnographic analyses have nevertheless contributed greatly to our understanding of Sami hunting, especially when it comes to small game. They contain detailed descriptions of how hunting was performed, which hunting methods were used, the seasonality of hunting, and types of hunting gear. However, they often portray Sami pre-twentieth-century practices as rather static, practically unchanged over time.¹⁷

The transition from a hunter-gatherer economy to a pastoral economy has continued to draw the attention of archaeologists and historians, but the primary focus has been on reindeer husbandry, not on hunting. An example would be two papers published in 2013 that came to very different conclusions about the introduction of reindeer pastoralism. Bergman et al. used archeological traces of so-called *stállo* foundations (arrangements of Sami community structures) as proxy for reindeer nomadism and argue that the shift started as early as 800 A.D.¹⁸ In contrast, Bjørklund argues that after 1750 users started to have reindeer herds large enough to make a living, and that there was “no paradigmatic abrupt change through domestication from a ‘hunting society’ to a ‘pastoral society.’”¹⁹ Bjørklund believes that hunting was part of people's adaption to the environment up to the nineteenth century. The point we make here is that hunting is elusive in the empirical parts of these papers.

¹⁶ Hultblad (1968), Arell (1977), Lundmark (1982), Kvist (1989a), Lundmark (2006), and Sommerseth (2011).

¹⁷ Tanner (1929), Tegengren (1952), Manker (1960), Henriksson (1978), Phebe Fjellström (1986), and Kjellström (2000).

¹⁸ Bergman et al. (2013).

¹⁹ Bjørklund (2013, p. 186).

Päiviö takes an approach similar to Bjørklund's when she discusses hunting as part of the household economy.²⁰ To understand that economy, she argues, one has to include hunting in addition to reindeer herding, fishing, gathering, handcraft, trade, and transport. She uses early modern accounts as sources and applies a broad description of hunting, also used in this chapter, to include grabbing, trapping, pursuing, and tracking.

Research that has analyzed people's adaptations to early modern environmental settings in interior northern Sweden mentions hunting in general terms but gives few details about methods and prey. Josefsson et al., for example, estimated the number of people that a particular territory could support and provided only a short list of animals that were hunted for fur.²¹ Norstedt et al. quantified the resources controlled by households in the Ume lappmark district.²² According to their results, fishing was the only resource that showed any correlation to taxation, underscoring the importance of fishing in the boreal forest. However, in their study, hunting comprised only an estimation of the number of wild reindeer in the region. At that time, wild reindeer were in decline, but more important, the study downplayed the significance of other hunted animals, including small game, which are mentioned in the sources.²³

Methods and Sources

In Chapters 2 and 3 we described methods and sources, but a few things that are specific to hunting will be touched upon here. In many of the early modern accounts, unlike reindeer pastoralism, hunting was described with few words and almost in passing. Bear hunting was more meticulously described, probably because it was connected to ceremonies that the authors found fascinating. Given the irregular and seasonal

²⁰ E.-L. Päiviö (2017).

²¹ Josefsson et al. (2010, p. 147).

²² Norstedt et al. (2014).

²³ Norstedt (2011).

nature of hunting, authors who paid only short visits to local households seldom had the opportunity to take part in hunts, particularly for large game. It is therefore doubtful whether they actually witnessed the procedures they described, and it is more likely that their reports were based on hearsay and retelling of hunting stories. For the narrator, it was probably both easy and tempting to choose a spectacular story instead of a more typical one. Hence, it is possible that the accounts give us a slightly embellished picture of hunting.

It is plausible that the visitors actually might have witnessed some of the small-game hunting, which was done more frequently and in the vicinity of the household areas. For example, Linnaeus described that he had seen traps for capercaillies everywhere when he traveled in Ume lappmark in 1732.²⁴ Other trapping devices that must have been easily recognizable for visitors were bird houses used for gathering eggs, as well as snaring devices for various land fowl, which are commonly mentioned in the accounts.

The anecdotal hunting descriptions make it difficult to systematically assess if a certain hunting practice was common, or to what degree a prey contributed to a household's economy. To try to compensate for the risk of exaggerating sketchy evidence, we have compared accounts describing Sami hunting from several parts of northern Sweden, and combined the information with evidence in court rulings.

A special challenge in regard to hunting regulations is that animals wander in the landscape and can move between areas with detailed regulations and areas with few or no regulations. Rules for early modern hunting ranged from extreme control to total lack of control, or open access. A user's right to prey could be linked either to his or her control over the area where the animal was killed, or to the effort he or she put into the hunt. The issue of who possesses the game has been widely discussed by users, courts, and legal scholars.²⁵

In seventeenth-century southern Sweden, most hunting was limited to nobility and resembled legislation in continental Europe, but in northern Sweden, including the Swedish lappmark, which encompassed

²⁴ Linnaeus (2003, p. 62).

²⁵ Rose (1985, p. 76).

two-thirds of the country, hunting was available to common people.²⁶ Availability did not mean the absence of institutions, only that rules were created in a local context with a bottom-up perspective, i.e., users developed their own institutions for regulating, monitoring, and implementing resource use.²⁷ The first royal ordinance that regulated hunting in the Swedish lappmark was introduced in 1749 and was aimed at limiting settlers' hunting rights to one-half of a Swedish mile, or 5,344 m, from their homesteads. The ordinance reinforced that hunting rights across the lappmark belonged to the Sami. The second ordinance, initiated in 1766, also targeted settlers and made it clear that it was strictly forbidden to hunt domestic reindeer.²⁸ The ordinance stipulated punishment for illegal hunting of domestic reindeer and looked for ways to prevent it by introducing rules for selling and buying reindeer furs. The ordinance required hunters to keep the ears on the reindeer pelt so the owner could be identified. Both the buyer and seller were responsible and could be fined if the ears were missing.

Hunting in Interior Fennoscandia

The most noticeable physical divide, when it came to early modern hunting practices in Lule lappmark, was the ecological difference between the eastern boreal forest and the western Scandinavian Mountains. For early modern hunters, as for hunters today, ecology set the premise for hunting, foremost by determining which prey could be hunted, and where. In our analyses of different aspects of early modern hunting in Lule lappmark, we used the division between boreal forest and mountains as a starting point. In this section, we present each landscape type and describe how the settings interconnected with early modern hunting.

²⁶ Korpjakkko-Labba (1994) and Nyrén (2012).

²⁷ Ostrom (2005). See also Chapter 2.

²⁸ Stiernman (1747–1775).

Hunting in the Mountains

Hunters in northern Fennoscandia have depended on reindeer for food, clothing, and shelter since the end of the last Ice Age. There are traces of trapping systems in the mountains in Lule lappmark, which tell us that wild reindeer were hunted there. According to Hollsten, who resided in Jokkmokk parish in the eighteenth century, there were mountain reindeer, forest reindeer, and wild reindeer.²⁹ He argued that the tame reindeer were mountain reindeer, which spent spring, summer, and autumn in the mountains and winters in the forest, and forest reindeer (*skogs-renar*), which stayed year-round in the forest. Wild reindeer resided in the lowlands east of the lappmark, toward the Gulf of Bothnia. No wild reindeer appeared to be in southern Lule lappmark in the 1770s. However, in the northern part of the Swedish lappmark, including Kaitum in northern Lule lappmark, wild reindeer were present into the nineteenth century.³⁰

In 1672, Tornaeus described hunting of wild reindeer in the mountains of neighboring Torne lappmark during winter.³¹ In his description, hunters departed in pairs on hunting expeditions that could last for eight to ten weeks. They stalked herds of wild reindeer before crawling behind a rock or snowpack, close enough to shoot a designated animal using rifles. Further evidence of wild reindeer in the mountains comes from a 1731 court case in Torne lappmark in which a user complained about repeated trespassing on his tax land *uppåt på fjället* (in the mountains) by a user from another village.³²

On the organization of hunting, Tornaeus wrote that either *antingen går hela byn gemenligen* (the whole village [went] together) or only a couple of villagers, and after the hunt, the prey was divided among the villagers.³³ However, those who did not pay tax did not get a share, so it appears that reindeer hunting in the mountains took place on lands held in common by the tax-paying members of the Sami village. In the court

²⁹ Hollsten (1774, p. 128).

³⁰ Læstadius (1832, pp. 344–345) and Ekman (1910, pp. 7–12).

³¹ Tornaeus (1900, pp. 55ff).

³² Arell (1977, p. 154).

³³ Tornaeus (1900, pp. 55ff).

case described by Arell, the defendant had shot four reindeer of which two had been accrued to the proprietor of the tax land.³⁴ This suggests that hunting of wild reindeer in the Torne lappmark mountains could be organized on private lands with the consent of the landholder. We did not find any evidence in the early modern accounts or in the court rulings of reindeer being hunted in the mountains of Lule lappmark.

Other animal species also were hunted in the mountains, namely arctic fox (*Vulpes lagopus*), wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), and ptarmigan (*Lagopus sp.*). The arctic fox is native to the alpine tundra and well adapted to life in a cold climate thanks to a dense, insulating, and multilayered pelage that changes color seasonally between light grey in summer and white in winter, or stays dark blue, brown, or grey year-round. When Rheen listed Sami trade articles in 1671, he included pelts from black and red foxes (both *Vulpes vulpes*) as well as skins from blue and white foxes (both *Vulpes lagopus*).³⁵ According to Rheen, who mostly described Lule lappmark, arctic foxes were found only in the mountains.³⁶ He moreover described that fox hunting was more difficult in years when there was an influx of Norway lemmings (*Lemmus lemmus*). In such years, the foxes feasted on lemmings and did not as willingly seek out carrions that hunters deployed, which suggests that traps were a common method for catching foxes. The method seems rational, as furs certainly must have been priced higher if they were unmarked by bullets, and as foxes, according to Linnaeus, were not hunted for human consumption.³⁷ We have found only one court ruling from Lule lappmark that concerns hunting in the mountains.³⁸ The particular case involved two brothers in Sirkas who disputed who had the right to the furs from two foxes and one wolverine. The defendant argued that he alone had caught the animals, while the plaintiff claimed they had hunted *i samma wånher* (in the same traps). Since they had shared the traps, the plaintiff claimed that they both should have a right to the prey. The court proceeding ended by their agreeing to sell the coats and split the reward between them.

³⁴ Arell (1977, p. 154).

³⁵ Rheen (1897, p. 58).

³⁶ Rheen (1897, p. 54).

³⁷ Linnaeus (2003, p. 58).

³⁸ HRA (1704, p. 804).

Another prey animal was the gamebird ptarmigan. The rock ptarmigan (*Lagopus muta*) was native to the mountains but not the forests. The willow ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus*) resided in both lower mountain terrain and boreal forest. For early modern hunters, their feathers and meat were attractive returns. Linnaeus described how all households engaged in reindeer herding in Lule lappmark moved to the boreal forest in winter, and that only some of the poorest inhabitants stayed in the mountains to snare ptarmigans.³⁹ He described that hunters could snare up to 40 or 50 birds during one night. Högström likewise wrote that poor Sami in Lule lappmark sometimes stayed in the mountains during winter, surviving on abundant catches of ptarmigan.⁴⁰ Even so, he described that hunters had to combine the ptarmigan diet with other meat since bird meat allegedly was not nutritious enough to survive on. Niurenius (around 1640), Rheen, and Tornaeus also described snaring of ptarmigans in winter.⁴¹ Both Linnaeus and Högström described that users who owned large reindeer herds were not especially engaged in hunting and not particularly accomplished hunters, and specified that few of the households they visited in the mountains owned rifles or steel bows (cross bows).⁴² According to them, reindeer herders' hunting efforts were directed toward either squirrels with wooden bows in the forest in winter, or ptarmigans with snares. Holm described that in the mountains of Ume lappmark there were few bird species to eat other than ptarmigans.⁴³ (Fig. 6.1).

Hunting in the Boreal Forest

Many more species of prey animals were native to the boreal forest than to the alpine tundra, and early modern sources mentioned several in accounts and court cases regarding forest hunting. Furthermore, forest inhabitants were generally portrayed as proficient hunters, skilled in both

³⁹ Linnaeus (2003, pp. 106–107).

⁴⁰ Högström (1747, p. 97).

⁴¹ Niurenius (1905, p. 19), Rheen (1897, p. 53), and Tornaeus (1900, p. 60).

⁴² Linnaeus (2003, pp. 101–138) and Högström (1747, p. 86).

⁴³ Norstedt (2011, pp. 105–108).



Fig. 6.1 Willow ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus*) with egg, depicted in 1695 (Source *Iter lapponicum*, Luefsta MS 92, Uppsala University Library, Sweden. Public domain. <https://www.alvin-portal.org/alvin/imageViewer.jsf?dsId=ATTACHMENT-0137&pid=alvin-record:162152>)

making traps and shooting. Högström described hunting as fundamental for all households in the forest of Lule lappmark.⁴⁴ Linnaeus similarly described the inhabitants as skilled marksmen.⁴⁵ Several animal species were mentioned in lists of traded goods in the lappmark: otter (*Lutra lutra*), wolverine, lynx (*Lynx lynx*), marten (*Martes martes*), fox (red and black), beaver (*Castor fiber*), grey skin (or red squirrel [*Sciurus vulgaris*]), wolf (*Canis lupus*), and bear (*Ursus arctos arctos*).⁴⁶

The sources told us that wild reindeer were present in the boreal forest of Lule lappmark in the seventeenth century. Wild reindeer there were hunted with snares, spears, rifles, or bows and arrows.⁴⁷ The use of bows, snares, and spears was also corroborated by two court rulings from Lule lappmark.⁴⁸ In 1672, Graan described how seventeenth-century hunters in Ume lappmark got plenty of food from wild game, such as wild reindeer, which, according to him, were hunted in the forest, rarely in the mountains.⁴⁹ The hunt for wild reindeer was described as year-round, especially around St. Matthews Day in September, which was the rutting season, in early spring when the snow cover was deep, and in summer. In fall, hunters stalked herds of wild reindeer in the forest and used a tame *vaja* (female reindeer) to attract bulls and kill them with rifles or bows. The winter hunt was performed on skis; while the hunters stayed on top of the snow, the reindeer sank into the snow, which made it relatively easy to catch up and kill it. Hunters had the most luck in snow-rich winters as a thick snow cover favored hunting of most forest animals.⁵⁰ Lundius mentioned how a hunter in one single day had felled 16 wild reindeer. Inhabitants in Ume lappmark were also said to have stalked wild reindeer in the forest in summer, equipped with rifles or bows.⁵¹ However, Holm described how hunting wild reindeer in the summer was

⁴⁴ Högström (1747, p. 85).

⁴⁵ Linnaeus (2003, p. 138).

⁴⁶ Rheen (1897, p. 58) and Tornaeus (1900, p. 63).

⁴⁷ Rheen (1897, p. 23).

⁴⁸ HRA (1699, pp. 76–85); RA SH (1741, p. 784).

⁴⁹ Graan (1899, p. 42).

⁵⁰ Lundius (1905, p. 26).

⁵¹ Niurenien (1905, p. 17).

not customary, since meat and skins were destroyed by insects.⁵² Further, Holm's account describes how some *skatteländ* had many wild reindeer and some had few.⁵³

Aside from hunting with rifles or bows, seventeenth-century sources from Ume lappmark described how inhabitants there used trapping pits to catch wild reindeer.⁵⁴ The pits were set up in narrow gorges, delimited by steep cliffs or other impassable terrain, where the wild reindeer usually passed in winter. In the midst of the gorge, several deep pits were dug and covered with fine twigs and mosses. On top, loose snow was shuffled to hide irregularities. The hunters either waited for the reindeer's voluntary passage, or actively startled them so they moved toward the pits.

After Linnaeus had traveled in Ume lappmark in 1732, he stated that “*willrenar finnas sällan i Lapmarken, förnämligast finnas någre på Almänningen emällan Granöen och Lyksele*” [wild reindeer are seldom found in the lappmark, mostly they reside on a common land between Granön and Lyksele], located at the eastern border.⁵⁵ He also wrote that reindeer herders sometimes lost tame reindeer to wild herds but that they usually got them back the following year. The tame reindeer would then be herded back to the flock by its owner or, if it did not comply, it would be shot. If reindeer traps were used, they could have easily become a hazard for tame reindeer and cause problems for reindeer herders.⁵⁶ The last evidence we found about wild reindeer hunting in Lule lappmark came from a court case in 1741.⁵⁷ The court decided that a settler who had deployed a wild reindeer trap in the eastern part of Sjöksjokk had to reimburse the owners whose reindeer got caught in his trap.

The distribution of moose or elk (*Alces alces*) is hard to interpret. According to Lundius, there were normally no moose in Lule lappmark, but Ume lappmark had both moose and wild reindeer in abundance.⁵⁸ However, in Holm's detailed descriptions of game in each *skatteländ*,

⁵² Norstedt (2011, p. 84).

⁵³ Norstedt (2011, pp. 65–73).

⁵⁴ Lundius (1905, p. 22) and Niurenus (1905, p. 17).

⁵⁵ Linnaeus (2003, p. 44).

⁵⁶ Arell (1977, pp. 99–101).

⁵⁷ RA SH (1741, p. 784).

⁵⁸ Lundius (1905, pp. 12, 40).

moose are not mentioned in Ume lappmark.⁵⁹ Holm's task was to assess the value of resources of each *skatteland*. Since he did not mention moose, he could not have seen it as a reliable asset for landholders. The moose must have been absent or at least very rare. In Torne lappmark, Tornaues (1900:55) described that moose had existed in past times.⁶⁰

The wolverine is native to both the arctic tundra and the boreal forest. In a text about wolverines in Lule lappmark, Hollsten stated that the animal resided in forests near a mountain with rugged terrain to which they could flee when they were hunted.⁶¹ Wolverines have dark-colored, dense, water-repellant greasy fur. Their coats showed up in early modern trade lists from Lule lappmark, which suggests they were hunted there.⁶² According to Holm in 1671, wolverines were common in Ume lappmark, but hard to catch, and were hunted to prevent them from breaking into storage places, such as buildings and mountain crevasses.⁶³ Hollsten described them as a great nuisance because they ate food people had stocked to use during their return to the mountains in spring.⁶⁴ Hunting methods included trapping with steel-jawed leghold restraint traps that were heftier than ordinary traps and hunting on skis with a spear for the final killing. Lundius corroborated trapping wolverines in his account from 1674 of practices in the boreal forest in Ume lappmark.⁶⁵

Sami considered bears to be the most prominent creatures in the forest due to their superior strength compared to other animals.⁶⁶ This probably contributed to numerous rituals that surrounded bear hunts, and the subsequent preparation and disposal of meat and bones, described by several authors.⁶⁷ Linnaeus described bear hunting in Lule lappmark as stalking by a single man with a dog who eventually crawled close

⁵⁹ Norstedt (2011, p. 39).

⁶⁰ Tornaues (1900, p. 55).

⁶¹ Hollsten (1773, p. 232).

⁶² Lundmark (1982, pp. 198–203).

⁶³ Norstedt (2011, p. 72).

⁶⁴ Hollsten (1773, p. 235).

⁶⁵ Lundius (1905, p. 28).

⁶⁶ Rheen (1897, p. 43).

⁶⁷ Högström (1747, p. 209), Rheen (1897, pp. 43ff.), and Niurenus (1905, p. 18).

enough to shoot the bear.⁶⁸ The hunts took place in fall when bears were busy eating berries. Rheen described a more collectively organized hunt in Lule lappmark, where a person who had found the hibernating bear's den gathered family and friends to help wake and kill it.⁶⁹ Killings were performed with either spears or rifles. The bear hide was reserved for the person who had located the den, and the meat was divided among all participants in the hunt. Niurenienius specified the time period for bear hunting in Ume lappmark as March and April, when the bear was still in its den but right before it normally awoke.⁷⁰

The priest Pehr Fjellström wrote about the rituals surrounding bear hunting and described a common law among inhabitants wherein the proprietor of a *skatteland* where a bear had been killed got a share of the meat, regardless of whether or not he or she had participated in the hunt.⁷¹ If the proprietor had participated, he or she got to choose the first share, then received the share due to each participant.

Several court rulings from Lule lappmark dealt with bear hunting and gave a different picture. In one case from 1709, two bear hunters from Jokkmokk were the plaintiffs.⁷² They claimed to have woken a hibernating bear and thereafter encircled it on their own *skatteland*. However, before they could kill the bear, it had run off to a neighboring *skatteland* where it eventually had been killed by the defendants. In court, the plaintiffs demanded a share of the bear's fur from the defendants, but since the court was not convinced that it was the same bear, the verdict went in favor of the defendants, and the plaintiffs were left empty-handed.

A parallel case was brought to the court just a few days later. In that case, two men in Sjukksjokk had encircled a bear on another user's *skatteland* and then shot it.⁷³ Thanks to the effort of the men at the beginning of the hunt, the court decided they had rights to one-third of the value of the bear's coat. Even if it was not made explicit in the verdict, it seems reasonable that the remaining two-thirds accrued to the landholder.

⁶⁸ Linnaeus (2003, p. 148).

⁶⁹ Rheen (1897, pp. 43ff).

⁷⁰ Niurenienius (1905, p. 18).

⁷¹ Pehr Fjellström (1981 [1755], p. 9).

⁷² HRA (1709, p. 343).

⁷³ HRA (1709, p. 357).

In 1742 and 1744, two more court cases dealt with bear hunting. The first involved a dispute between a user in Jokkmokk and a user in Sjukksjokk.⁷⁴ The second case involved a user from Jokkmokk and a user from Sirkas.⁷⁵ In both cases, the verdicts had been postponed: in the first case, the court needed to find out who owned the land where the bear had been killed; in the latter case, the defendant never appeared in court. Neither of these cases seems to have been reopened, probably because the parties reached settlements outside court.

The court rulings show that the meat and coat from a killed bear belonged to the holder of the *skatteländ* where it had been shot.⁷⁶ Yet, it was possible to get a share if a person had participated in the bear hunt before the bear fell, even though it was not on his or her land. In court rulings that explicitly mentioned the number of hunters, they always hunted in pairs. This also goes for a case from 1707 where a father and son from Sjukksjokk stood accused of reindeer theft.⁷⁷ In defense, they argued they could not have stolen any reindeer since they were out hunting bear at the time.

Between 1572 and 1615, 77 beaver pelts from Lule lappmark were sold or paid in tax to the Swedish crown.⁷⁸ According to an account from the seventeenth century, there were beavers in Ume but not in Lule lappmark.⁷⁹ In the mid-eighteenth century, Hollsten described how he had taken care of an orphaned beaver kit and, according to him, that beavers had been so rare by then in Lule lappmark that many older inhabitants had never seen a beaver while growing up.⁸⁰ Beavers were favored prey for their valuable castoreum, which probably was the main reason beavers became extinct throughout Sweden. Carl Fjellström wrote that castoreum was so expensive in the pharmacies in Sweden that Sami should have sold it to Swedish merchants instead of taking it to markets

⁷⁴ RA SH (1742, p. 254).

⁷⁵ RA SH (1744, p. 289).

⁷⁶ Korpijaakko-Labba (1994, pp. 260–261) and Korhonen (2007).

⁷⁷ HRA (1707, pp. 145–149).

⁷⁸ Lundmark (1982, pp. 191–203).

⁷⁹ Lundius (1905, p. 12).

⁸⁰ Hollsten (1768, p. 286).

in Norway.⁸¹ Because the beaver skins were already being sold to Swedish merchants, they should have been able to offer as much for the castoreum as the Norwegians did.

The source materials reveal little to no information about hunting of many species of small game. Squirrel hunting was especially important for many households in the lappmark, and we know that Sami in Lule lappmark paid taxes in squirrel pelts, which represented the bulk of traded furs.⁸² Linnaeus described squirrel traps made of logs that had been split in two.⁸³ He previously had described, in an account from the mountains, how efficiently Sami handled wooden bows when they hunted squirrels in the forest. In Holm's account, squirrels and other small game are listed for almost all *skatteland* in Ume Lappmark.⁸⁴ For some land in the boreal forest, squirrels are listed as rather abundant.⁸⁵ In the court rulings from Lule lappmark, we found two cases concerning squirrels.⁸⁶ Both were from Sjöksjökk and pointed out that squirrels belonged to the holder of the land. Coats from martens are mentioned in early modern trade lists, and Niurenius described that martens could be killed with arrows while they were up in trees, but that the most common hunting method was to use fire to smoke them out of their hiding places in mountain caves and crevasses.⁸⁷ They were then caught in nets that were tied in front of the entrance.

Forest inhabitants also engaged in hunting fowl for meat, feathers, and eggs. The feathers were used in the household and for trade, while the meat and eggs mostly were consumed within the household. Other materials from the birds also were used, such as skins for water-tight containers.

Rheen listed land fowl that resided in the boreal forest in Lule lappmark, such as western capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*), black grouse (*Lyrurus tetrix*), and hazel grouse (*Tetrastes bonasia*). Both Torneaeus and

⁸¹ C. Fjellström (1760, p. 21).

⁸² Lundmark (1982) and Phebe Fjellström (1986, p. 182).

⁸³ Linnaeus (2003, p. 61).

⁸⁴ Norstedt (2011, p. 39).

⁸⁵ Norstedt (2011, pp. 89–114).

⁸⁶ HRA (1711, pp. 759–760) and RA SH (1757, pp. 496–497).

⁸⁷ Niurenius (1905, p. 19).

Rheen listed several species of water fowl that were present in northern Fennoscandia during summer, such as whooper swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) and various species of geese and mallards, such as common golden eyes (*Bucephala clangula*), Swartor (probably velvet scoter [*Melanitta fusca*]), black-throated divers (*Gavia arctica*), red-throated divers (*Gavia stellata*), and goosanders (*Mergus merganser*).⁸⁸ Several methods were used in bird hunting. Linnaeus wrote that he had seen traps for capercaillie along paths all over Ume lappmark and that these traps were deployed in fall.⁸⁹ At least in Ume lappmark, traps were also used to catch water fowl, such as geese and swans.⁹⁰ Moreover, both Ehrenmalm and Lundius described that inhabitants hunted forest fowl with rifles.⁹¹ Ehrenmalm specified that Sami in the boreal forest shot plenty of birds in spring. Linnaeus described how he nearly had been hit by a misdirected bullet fired by a bird hunter when he was out picking wild strawberries in the mountains in northern Norway, just across the border from Lule lappmark.⁹² Sources also mentioned that water fowl were caught in nets but did not specify if hunters were trying to catch birds or if it happened as a bycatch in fishing nets.⁹³

We have not found any particular bird species mentioned in court rulings from Lule lappmark. However, bird hunting in general can be affirmed, for example, in a case where plaintiffs and defendants used bird traps.⁹⁴ Bird hunting was also stated in several disputes over rights to use specific tax lands, where the court saw long-term use of bird traps as a valid argument for the bird hunter to obtain continuous user rights.⁹⁵ All cases regarding bird trapping in Lule lappmark that we found had unfolded in the boreal forest. We learned that users in the mountains snared ptarmigans, and probably trapped other birds, although it is not noticeable in the court records. The lack of court cases regarding bird hunting in the mountains is probably because there were fewer bird

⁸⁸ Tornaeus (1900, p. 60) and Rheen (1897, p. 53).

⁸⁹ Linnaeus (2003, p. 62).

⁹⁰ Lundius (1905, p. 17).

⁹¹ Ehrenmalm (1743, p. 128) and Lundius (1905, p. 18).

⁹² Linnaeus (2003, p. 118).

⁹³ Tornaeus (1900, p. 60).

⁹⁴ RA SH (1777, pp. 45–46).

⁹⁵ RA SH (1772, p. 485).

species there than in the boreal forest in the winter, thus less hunting. Also, and maybe more important, because the institution of *skatteländ* was more widespread, providing the opportunity for more disputes over rights.⁹⁶ Court records from Lule lappmark by and large described trapping of birds, whereas only one court ruling mentioned *fågelskjutande* (bird shooting).⁹⁷

Aside from bird hunting for meat and feathers, Sami also gathered birds' eggs. There were specially built nesting places for gathering eggs.⁹⁸ These bird houses were made of hollow trunks with a manmade hole in the middle and ends plugged with moss. The bird houses were attached to trees, and as soon as the birds laid their eggs in them, they were emptied. Hunters also collected swan eggs on mires and tufts after the birds had been snared.

The only evidence we found that revealed anything about the extent of hunting in Lule lappmark came from a court case in 1737. The defendant, a man from Sjokksjokk, was charged for unlawfully using a tax land. The right to the land had originally belonged to the father of the current user, and he had given the defendant provisional rights to hunt there, but only until his son, the plaintiff, had come of age to use it. The court decided that the defendant no longer could use the land, and thus approved the plaintiff's demand. As a consequence, the defendant wanted to be compensated for traps he had deployed on the land. This was approved by the court, and he was compensated for a total of two hundred traps, divided equally between *flakar* (log traps) and *giller* (cage traps). The traps were described as well functioning, and therefore worth a total of 12 *daler* copper coins.⁹⁹ It was obviously problematic to remove the traps, and subsequently reasonable for the plaintiff to reimburse the defendant for their worth. Although this evidence concerns one specific case, it suggests that one land parcel could contain hundreds of traps. Besides the 200 traps, the defendant might have had other, less complicated traps made of wires and ropes that easily could have been removed and might have hunted small game with bow and rifle.

⁹⁶ Hultblad (1968).

⁹⁷ HRA (1709, p. 352).

⁹⁸ Tornaeus (1900, p. 60) and Lundius (1905, p. 16).

⁹⁹ RA SH (1737, p. 682).

Small-game hunting seems to have been a particularly important income source for the poor. This was highlighted in a court ruling from 1701 where the plaintiff, a man from Jokkmokk, accused two maids, who were also sisters, of having destroyed a couple of *fågelflakar* (log traps for birds) and the floor of an *akkja* (sledge) that belonged to him. According to the sisters, it was instead the plaintiff who had acted unlawfully, both by destroying several of their bird traps, and by striking them with rods and twigs. All in all, the court argued that the offense was minor but that the plaintiff nevertheless had a greater liability. The court's main argument was that the plaintiff had acted unjustly toward two simple-minded women, and that he should have been able to handle the situation differently. Moreover, the court stated that since the two sisters lived in great poverty, the plaintiff should compensate them with six *daler* copper coins, or a *vajren* (female reindeer). They also had the right to continue using bird traps on his land. The court emphasized that the plaintiff should *icke förtaga dem deras närings och lifsuppehälle* (not take away their livelihood and life support) and that the sisters, for their part, had to show respect and good manners toward the plaintiff.¹⁰⁰ From Pite lappmark, Öhrling wrote that those who were very poor sought their livelihoods solely from hunting and fishing.¹⁰¹

Ecological Differences

With regard to ecological settings, the most important natural conditions that impacted decisions regarding hunting in Lule lappmark between 1660 and 1780 were the differences between mountains and boreal forest. While the forest had many species of mammals and birds, the mountains did not. The same observation was made by Holm in his account of Ume lappmark in the 1670s.¹⁰² The compositions of species of prey animals in the two regions were stable during the study period,

¹⁰⁰ HRA (1701, pp. 406–408).

¹⁰¹ Öhrling (1970 [1773], p. 11).

¹⁰² Norstedt (2011, pp. 105–107).

but some important changes occurred that impacted hunting strategies and outcome.

The sixteenth century saw an increased demand for expensive furs and a trade that flourished until it peaked in the 1570s. Fur trade declined rapidly in Lule lappmark in the beginning of the seventeenth century.¹⁰³ Lundmark suggested that it was caused by an overharvest of fur animals, but another possible explanation was that new trade patterns had emerged that increased the fur import to Europe, first from Russia and later from North America.¹⁰⁴ However, it is likely that the slow, long-term decrease occurred for three reasons: (1) Furs continued to be sought-after goods in local trade even after they lost importance in international trade. Hunters could easily see how incomes from fur trade would improve the household economy, especially in the boreal forest where fur animals were abundant at the time. (2) The human population increase in the eighteenth century led to increased hunting pressure. (3) Some wild animals were a nuisance to people—stealing their stocked food or attacking their domestic reindeer—and were therefore killed.

The developments surrounding wild reindeer are more lucid than for other wild game. It is difficult to pursue reindeer herding in areas with wild reindeer. Vorren established a temporal correlation between the decline of wild reindeer and the emergence of reindeer pastoralism in the Finnmark region of northern Norway during the first half of the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁵ Lundmark argued that a similar development occurred in Lule lappmark and that the extinction of wild reindeer was intentional.¹⁰⁶ It began in the mountains and ended in the easternmost boreal forest of Sjøkksjøkk, where wild reindeer were rare by the mid-eighteenth century. We know relatively little about how wild reindeer were distributed in the mountains in early modern Lule lappmark. In fact, wild reindeer were mentioned in only one source from 1608,¹⁰⁷ and their presence was indirectly confirmed by the remains of pitfall

¹⁰³ Lundmark (1982, p. 120).

¹⁰⁴ Lundmark (1982) and Brook (2008).

¹⁰⁵ Vorren (1978, 1980).

¹⁰⁶ Lundmark (1982, pp. 162–163).

¹⁰⁷ Lundmark (1982, pp. 163).

systems.¹⁰⁸ When inhabitants with access to mountain grazing developed reindeer pastoralism, wild reindeer would have had no place in the mountains, explaining their rapidly decreasing numbers. According to Holm, there were no wild reindeer in the mountains of Ume lappmark in 1671, although they were abundant in some of the *skatteland* in the boreal forest.¹⁰⁹ Pitfalls thus became useless and hazardous for domestic reindeer, and from the mid-seventeenth century, at the latest, wild reindeer must have been extinct or at least very rare in the mountains.

Some court rulings from the first decades of the eighteenth century contain information about wild reindeer being present in the forest in Lule lappmark. The last one was dated in 1741 and mentioned a trap for hunting wild reindeer. According to Hollsten, wild reindeer were rare in Lule lappmark but remained in the forests between Lule Lappmark and the farming districts in the east.¹¹⁰ The disappearance of forest reindeer coincided with the introduction of large-scale reindeer pastoralism around 1750.¹¹¹

Small-game hunting for international trade lost importance in the seventeenth century. However, small-game hunting for subsistence was still important. It reinforced the boreal forest as the primary arena for hunting. The boreal forest offered an abundance of animals, while the mountains offered relatively few. Hence, households in the forest had more opportunities to hunt.

Importance of Prey Animals

The source materials give insights into the major reasons why households in Lule lappmark hunted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. First, people needed fat and protein from wild animals for consumption. Second, households needed products for trade and paying

¹⁰⁸ Mulk (2005, p. 48).

¹⁰⁹ Norstedt (2011, p. 38).

¹¹⁰ Hollsten (1774).

¹¹¹ Hultblad (1968).

taxes—for example, skins from a wide range of animals, such as squirrels, foxes, bears, and martens, and feathers from wild fowl. Third, people wanted to prevent predators, particularly wolverines, bears, and wolves, from damaging their stored food and tame reindeer.¹¹² Besides these three practical and functional motives for hunting, there was surely a fourth, intangible motive: the feelings of excitement, joy, and reward that continue to entice modern-day hunters.

Property Rights

Two central questions are: Who had the right to hunt? and Where could they hunt? The answers for forest hunting were connected to proprietorship of *skatteland*, meaning that rules for access were well defined among users. In the mountains, on the other hand, distribution of tax lands was less clear, and users often had open access to hunting.

In the forest, users were more dependent economically on hunting, and having as much control as possible over the resources was key. There was a strict division into *skatteland* on which individual households had private rights to grazing land, fishing waters, and hunting grounds. The boundaries between them were usually well known, and if not, the local court helped to set the borders. As soon as a wild animal dwelled on a *skatteland*, it was seen as private goods, and the property of the proprietor of that land. Ownership of the animal shifted when it strayed to another person's *skatteland*. In Lule lappmark, all but one of the hunting disputes taken to court took place in the boreal forest. Hultblad showed that most of the forest in Lule lappmark was divided into *skatteland*. Arell conveyed that most court cases regarding hunting in Torne lappmark dealt with uncertainties over boundaries in relation to the natural resources that were disputed.¹¹³

The formation of hunting rights in the forest followed many of Ostrom's design principles for sustainable use of CPRs.¹¹⁴ Well-defined

¹¹² Högström (1747, p. 85) and Linnaeus (2003, p. 138).

¹¹³ Arell (1977).

¹¹⁴ Ostrom (1990, p. 90).

user groups and resource areas made it possible to control the amounts of resources that were withdrawn from each land, which in turn reduced the risk of overuse. If the use of a resource was contested, or if trespassing occurred, the local court functioned as a collective-choice arena that mediated between users, clarified boundaries between lands, and penalized someone who violated the rules. Clear boundaries between users' lands made it easier to monitor regulations, even though very large *skatteländ* still might have been difficult to control fully.

Small-game hunting favored lands that were used individually for two reasons. First, hunting small game often entailed traps, which in turn became investments in the land; for example, fixed log traps took time to construct and were difficult to move. A household could have had several hundred such trapping devices on its land. Second, small-game hunting required users to have great knowledge about the whereabouts and behavior of prey animals in order to deploy the right trap in the right place. The traps also had to be monitored regularly, which required hunters to deploy them near their living grounds. Many aspects of hunting were thus facilitated if users had detailed knowledge about and easy access to land. If a *skatteländ* was used by more than one household, each household had its own traps, and the prey animals accrued to the household that had deployed them. Trapping is for the most part an extensive hunting method and many traps are required for it to be rewarding. The probability of catching a prey animal increases if the hunter has large numbers of traps deployed in as many strategic places as possible. Therefore, the division of *skatteländ* into smaller units, which became common in the eighteenth century, was disadvantageous for the hunting economy. It decreased each households' catch area and eventually made trapping economically inviable. The smaller land units affected the household fishing economy in the same way.¹¹⁵

Large prey animals in the boreal forest also accrued to the proprietor of the *skatteländ* where it was felled, but this rule could be set aside by mutual agreements between involved parties. If someone had been instrumental in the pursuit of a bear prior to the killing, it was possible for him or her to get a share even without belonging to the household

¹¹⁵ Chapter 5.

of the landholder. Opposite to the rest of Sweden, where pest animals could be killed and claimed by anyone, in the lappmark they belonged to the landholder.¹¹⁶

There were no such strict regulations regarding access to hunting or to whom a felled wild animal belonged in the Lule lappmark mountains. However, where wild reindeer were present in Torne lappmark during the seventeenth century, the hunt was regulated by the villages. Since there were fewer species of wild animals in the mountains than in the forest, hunting played a less important role in the household economy. Early modern sources were vague when it came to the organization of hunting in the mountains, but there was no clear evidence of it being tied to *skatteland* in Lule lappmark, and it seemed as if users were allowed to hunt freely.

Hunting was often described as a collective enterprise organized and regulated by the Sami village and where the wild animals were a CPR.¹¹⁷ However, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sources told us that hunting in the forest was organized individually or at the household level, and that wild animals belonged to the holder of a *skatteland* where they appeared. Hunting in the mountains, after the disappearance of wild reindeer, was also organized individually, and wild animals were most likely seen as CPRs.

As discussed in Chapter 2, earlier research assumed that *skatteland* represented an older organization, predating their first appearance in the sources from the seventeenth century.¹¹⁸ Other scholars did not perceive tax lands as originally Sami, but rather as the result of the Swedish government's desire to organize taxation by connecting all inhabitants to specific lands.¹¹⁹ The origin of *skatteland* is complex; however, the organization of land into well-defined user parcels makes sense when we consider the organization of fishing and hunting in the boreal forest from the mid-seventeenth century to the second half of the eighteenth century. Norstedt argues that *skatteland* were created "to achieve a satisfactory

¹¹⁶ Korpjakko-Labba (1994, p. 263).

¹¹⁷ Ingold (1980), Mulk (1994), and Bergman and Ramqvist (2018).

¹¹⁸ Holmbäck (1922).

¹¹⁹ Hansen and Olsen (2014).

division of predictable and dense resources” and points to fishing as the determinant factor.¹²⁰ Well-defined tax lands made it possible for landholders who relied on fishing and hunting to gain control over resources that were fundamental for their survival. The idea of hunting as a collective enterprise or of wild animals as a CPR does not fit with the way land was actually organized in the early modern period. Hence, it is likely that the organization into *skatteland* was a response to changes in the Sami economy, and that changes in the organization of hunting, from collective to private, was one of the contributing factors in that development.

Participation in Hunting

Before 1600, hunting in the lappmark was described, albeit from sketchy evidence, as a task performed mostly by men. Men left home to hunt wild reindeer or bears and returned with the prey and shared it within a group of neighbors and relatives. It is probably an exceedingly one-dimensional description of medieval and pre-historic hunting,¹²¹ but due to the sources, and the dominating portrayals of hunting therein, little else is known about who actually hunted historically. The shift from portraying hunters as main characters to not describing them at all coincided with the expiration of wild reindeer hunting and the increased importance of reindeer pastoralism, which led to the portrayal of Sami after the sixteenth century as foremost reindeer herders.

The fundamental change in hunting in the early modern period, from producing a surplus of furs for trade to a subsistence mode, might have changed who participated. In the early modern accounts, young boys, for example, were said to have practiced squirrel hunting with bows from an early age. And it is fair to conclude that the authors' own views of gender division of labor, from childhood to adulthood, relatively uncritically transferred into their descriptions of Sami customs. Men moved around, chasing and hunting large animals, and women were mostly invisible

¹²⁰ Norstedt (2018, p. 65).

¹²¹ Mulik (1994).

or stayed at home. An example would be accounts that present a vivid picture of men being part of ritual bear hunting,¹²² although Kuhmunen has shown that women participated in the rituals when the bear was brought home.¹²³ The use of weapons—rifles, bows, and spears—were associated with men.

Accounts and court rulings gave plenty of evidence of small-game hunting that took place close to the living grounds, and it seems reasonable that both men and women participated. Common tasks were to build, place, and monitor the traps to catch small game. Since one household could have had several hundreds of traps, it would have been a time-consuming endeavor and thus a shared responsibility for several household members. For most species of small game, there was also a seasonal variation in the number of prey animals, and during the high season all the available work force in the household must have been needed, regardless of gender or age. Catching water fowl must have required the same workforce whenever households had to optimize harvests of meat, eggs, and feathers during the few summer months before the birds migrated. Moreover, many of the work tasks related to fishing and reindeer husbandry were performed by both men and women.¹²⁴ This was true also for many of the household chores, such as food preparation and cooking. There was thus a tradition of sharing labor. Small-game hunting became the major hunting activity and was more predictable than large-game hunting. Hence it contributed to subsistence. Hunting was not gender neutral, but women's and children's roles in early modern small-game hunting have largely been invisible.

Social Justice

Small-game hunting for subsistence played an important part in upholding social justice among inhabitants in Lule lappmark. Poor people could, for example, stay in the mountains in winter to hunt

¹²² Tornaecus (1900, p. 59–60) and Niurenienus (1905, p. 14).

¹²³ Kuhmunen (2015).

¹²⁴ Chapters 5 and 7.

ptarmigans, where users had open access to hunting. Despite this, there was probably little risk of overharvest since there were few hunters on relatively vast lands. Hunting by poor people was not limited to the mountains; they also could hunt small game on tax lands in the boreal forest. If landholders claimed that people's hunting was an intrusion, the court could decide that they had rights to continue hunting because they were underprivileged.¹²⁵

Small-game hunting likely increased in importance in the early modern period, even though the scarcity of information from previous centuries makes it impossible to prove. Small-game hunting was possibly motivated by a growing population that made people search for alternative incomes, especially inhabitants who in the beginning of this period did not participate in reindeer pastoralism. The larger picture implies that the gap between wealthy and poor inhabitants in Lule lappmark increased during the early modern period due to population growth and expansion of reindeer pastoralism, which yielded great surpluses for pastoralist households.¹²⁶ Hunting was one way to alleviate poverty for those who remained on the wrong side of the gap, and to prompt social equity, the poor's right to hunt was often confirmed by the local community via the local court.

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¹²⁵ HRA (1701, pp. 406–408).

¹²⁶ Kvist (1989a).

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