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## A Shaman Drum Hammer from the Medieval City of Turku, Finland

Rainio, Riitta

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*Music &  
Ritual*

Bridging Material & Living Cultures

Raquel Jiménez, Rupert Till and Mark Howell, eds.





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## A Shaman Drum Hammer from the Medieval City of Turku, Finland

By Riitta Rainio

*In this paper, I analyze and interpret the T-shaped antler artefact that was excavated from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century layers of the city of Turku, Finland. On the basis of the basic form, size, use-wear and raw material, the artefact is a drum hammer of Saami origin. Although the ornaments are uncharacteristic of traditional Saami drum hammers, similar type of motifs can be found in another medieval drum hammer from Norway. In the medieval city of Turku, the drum hammer seems to have been in a use that was different from the original shamanistic one. On the basis of the archaeological context, the drum hammer was hidden in the floor construction of a dwelling house, most probably as a gift to the house spirit or some other kind of transcendent being. As similar deposits of sound-related artefacts and instruments can be found in the later Finnish folklore, it is possible to carry on the reasoning further. The hidden drum hammer can be interpreted as a special sound deposit, by which the drumming sound was transported to the other transcendent reality, where it protected the household in an inaudible way.*

In 1998, archaeologists unearthed a T-shaped antler artefact (TMM 21816: LU 61) in the centre of Turku, the former capital of Finland (Fig. 1). On the basis of its shape, the artefact was recognized as a drum hammer, a typical instrument of Saami shamans in the past centuries (Seppänen 1999: 60; Ahola *et al.* 2004: 244–245). Using drums and T-shaped drum hammers, Saami shamans fell into a trance, left their bodies and transcended to the spirit world (Itkonen 1948b: 331–348). These noisy shamanistic seances were described by the missionaries, who in the 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries converted the Saamis to Christianity. During this conversion, most drums and their hammers were destroyed or confiscated and scattered in antiquarian collections around Europe (Manker 1938). Only a few drum hammers were preserved—and later found—in the graves, hoards and sacrificial places of the Saamis (Sirelius 1924; Serning 1956: 94–95; Kopisto 1971; Carpelan 1987; Berglund 2005).

The T-shaped artefact from Turku, however, could not easily be connected with the Saamis nor the shamans. The artefact was found at the heart of urban, Christian

Finland, within 150 meters of a national Cathedral. Associated finds at the site of Åbo Akademi included ceramics, leather shoes, iron nails, bone beads, spindle whorls, ice skates, wooden pots and remains of domestic animals (Find database: M 147), that is typical material from the Finnish Middle Ages. The drum hammer, as well as the bulk of the associated material, could be dated to the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries (Seppänen 2012: 362, 413–417). The city of Turku had been founded a hundred years earlier at the instigation of the Swedish Crown, Roman Catholic Church and German merchants (Kallioinen 2000: 40–44; Hiekkanen 2003: 45–48).

In the 14th and 15th centuries, the Finns and the Saamis, two Finno-Ugric languages speaking peoples, were living in two completely different worlds (Fig. 2). While the Finns in the South were Christian farmers and subjects of the Swedish Crown, the Saamis in the North were heathen hunter-fisher-gatherers practicing their ancestral religion and means of livelihood. The third Finno-Ugric languages speaking people, the Karelians, traded with the Saamis and taxed them for the Novgorodian Republic (Vahtola 2003: 30, 42–43). The border between Sweden and Novgorod was volatile and open to dispute. Both domains, backed by the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches, tried to gain a foothold in northern Fennoscandia (Luukko 1954: 47–83; Vahtola 2003: 34, 40–43).

In this paper, I aim to analyze and interpret the T-shaped artefact of Turku from the perspectives of music archaeology (or auditory archaeology) and organology, that is the study of musical instruments. There are many questions arising and waiting to be answered. Is the artefact really a drum hammer as proposed by the excavators? Does it fit in typologically and stylistically with the known Saami drum hammers? What was the artefact doing in Turku? Was it used by the Saamis or the Finns, the heathen or the Christians, shamans, city dwellers or visitors of Turku? For shamanism, divination, music making or fun? Or was it confiscated by the church, hidden in the ground on purpose or thrown away into a rubbish heap? As the artefact may represent the oldest Saami drum hammer excavated from the area of Finland, and the only shaman drum hammer ever excavated from an urban, Christian environment, it can shed new light on the history of drumming and shamanism and the relationship between the Saamis and the Finns, heathenism and early Christianity. The artefact can also open up new perspectives on the musical life of the medieval city of Turku, traditionally regarded as the stronghold of Gregorian chant and church music (cf. Dahlström 1995: 23–47). On the other hand, other instrument finds from

medieval Turku seem to refer to European-style secular music (Dahlström 1995: 58–63; Ermala 2004).

## Methods

In autumn 2011, I visited the Museum Centre of Turku and documented the T-shaped artefact by drawing, photographing, measuring and scanning its details under the microscope (Nikon L100). Other artefacts from the same find context (TMM 21816: KP14913, LU 54; M 147, 149B), as well as the find database and the excavation report from the site of Åbo Akademi (Pukkila *et al.* 2000), were studied at the same time under the guidance of conservator Maarit Hirvilammi. At the next stage, I handed the detailed photographs and results of measurement over to osteologists at the Finnish Museum of Natural History, Ritva Talman and Kristiina Mannermaa, who identified the material on the basis of morphology. Unfortunately, the original artefact was not at hand for the identification. To carry out a comparison between the T-shaped artefact and other known Saami drum hammers, I documented all available drum hammers at the National Board of Antiquities and the National Museum of Finland. These 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century hammers were eight in number (KM 20837: 27, 21986: 34, 29659; SU 1346, 3577: 26, 27, 5031: 1, 2).

The rest of the known drum hammers, both from Finland (SU 5606: 575; PPM 7133: 7) and from other Nordic countries, were studied through photographs and literature (Manker 1938: 300–346; Serning 1956: 94–95; Zachrisson 1991; Ranta 1998; Berglund 2005). The interpretation of the artefact was greatly helped by archaeologist Sonja Hukantaival's (2006; 2007a; 2007b; 2011) articles on special building deposits, and archaeologist Liisa Seppänen's dissertation (2012), which afforded the first thorough description and interpretation of the stratigraphical layers, contexts and structures at the site of Åbo Akademi. Finally, information on wooden idols of the Saamis was received from archaeologist and Saami researcher Tiina Äikäs.

## Comparing the Turku Artefact with Saami Drum Hammers

In regard to size, the T-shaped artefact of Turku seems to be in line with the known Saami drum hammers. The height of the artefact is 12.4 cm, the height of the shaft 8.7 cm and the spread of the arms 10.7 cm. For known Saami drum hammers, these



Fig. 1 T-shaped artefact of Turku (TMM 21816: LU 61). Photos by author



Fig. 2 Finland in the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Drawing by author.

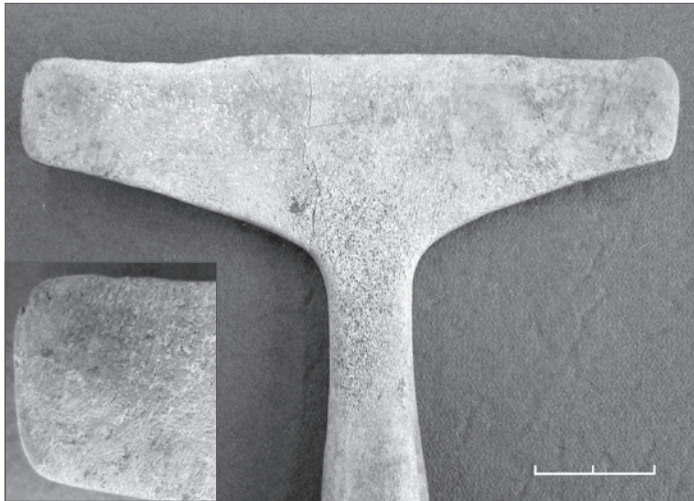


Fig. 3 Use-wear marks on the T-shaped artefact of Turku (TMM 21816: LU 61). Photos by author.

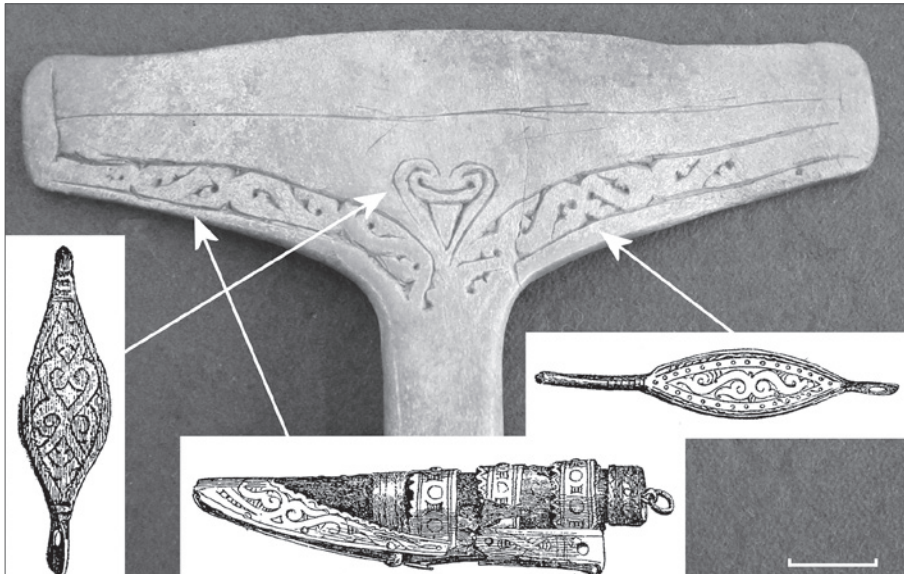


Fig. 4 Ribbon and foliage ornaments on the T-shaped artefact of Turku (TMM 21816: LU 61) and the Karelian metal artefacts. Photo by author, drawings after Schvindt (1893: k. 9, 279, 285a).

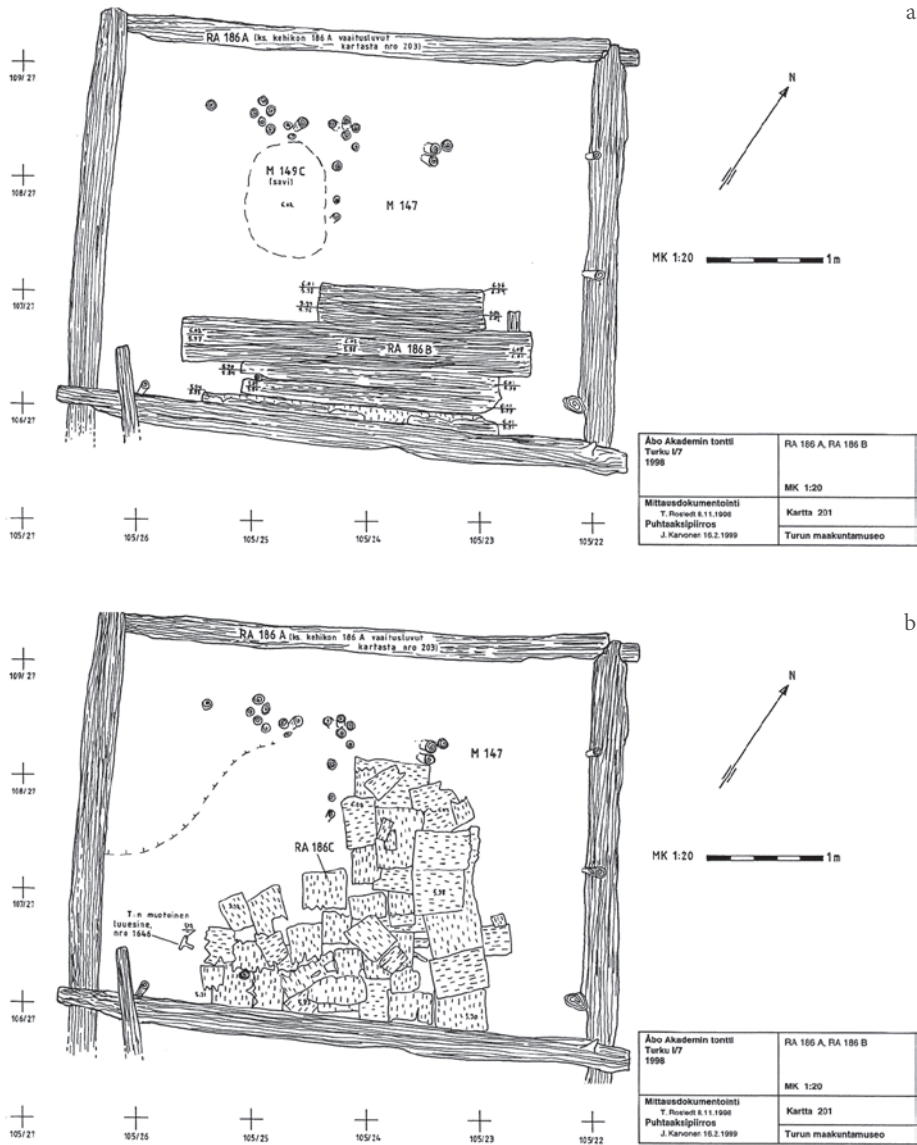


Fig. 5 North-western room of the dwelling house (RA 186). a) the upper layer showing the wooden floorboards, b) the lower layer showing the birch bark insulation and the position of the T-shaped artefact. After Pukkila et al. (2000: K. 201, 202).



*Fig. 6 Wooden staff (TMM 21816: KP14913) from the south-eastern room of the dwelling-house (RA 186). Photos by Martti Puhakka/Museum Centre of Turku.*

measurements vary between 8–24 cm, 6–15 cm and 5–15 cm. An anomaly in relation to most drum hammers: however, appears in the arms, which are flat and only 0.2–0.4 cm in thickness. Although 0.5–0.7 cm thick arms can be found in some drum hammers (Manker 1938: Abb. 491–492, 537, 554, 556), in the majority of instances the arms are round, plump and about 1–2 cm in thickness. As to form, they resemble the shafts of the artefacts, that is the parts used as handgrips. In the Turku artefact, the shaft is round, 1.1–1.8 cm thick and perfectly fit to be used as a handgrip. The use of the shaft as a moving pointer (cf. Manker 1938: 349–352, Abb. 572–577) seems thus improbable.<sup>1</sup>

In regard to use-wear, the T-shaped artefact of Turku is also in line with other known Saami drum hammers. In all well-preserved examples, the most well-worn areas occur on the arms, especially at the ends of the arms (cf. Manker 1938: 317–336).

1 The use of the artefact as a scraper or tool for leatherwork (cf. Seppänen 1999: 60) seems also improbable: the long outer edge of the arms – the hypothetical blade – is uneven and less worn than other parts of the arms. In addition, traditional Finnish and Saami scrapers were quite different in form, structure and material (Itkonen 1948a: 310–319; Sirelius 1989: 38–42, T. IV).

In these cases these areas consist of polish and abrasions; on the undecorated side of the Turku artefact they consist of splits and dark, dirty-looking stains (Fig. 3). According to ethnologist Ernst Manker (1938: 428, Abb. 615–617), the Saamis used to hold and shake the drum hammer in an oblique position, so that the slightly bulging or downward bending ends of the arms hit the membrane. Sometimes only one end in a more perpendicular position was used to hit the membrane. These hits against the membrane, which was greasy and sooty due to the tuning by fire (Manker 1938: 203–205, 425–427), would explain the use-wear pattern and marks found on the artefacts. The hits with only one end, however, could not be realized with the flat arms of the Turku artefact. The use as a handgrip – leather-coated or bare – would explain the polish found on the shaft of the Turku artefact.

The disposition of the engraved ornaments along the arms is the same in all studied artefacts. The motifs, however, differ clearly. While in the traditional 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century drum hammers the ornaments are rectilinear and simple, in the Turku artefact they consist of ribbon and foliage ornaments with so-called palmettes and acanthuses (Fig. 4). These ribbon and foliage ornaments, unknown by the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century Saamis (cf. Itkonen 1948a: 521–528), suggest an earlier, medieval dating. More or less similar ornaments can be found in medieval and Iron Age artefacts around Fennoscandia (Holmqvist 1934; Itkonen 1948a: 516–518; Ahola *et al.* 2004: 162, 164), the most notable of them being the 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century T-shaped drum hammer from Nordset, Norway (Manker 1950: 442–444, Abb. 155–156; Zachrisson 1991: 86–88).<sup>2</sup> However, exactly similar ornaments with palmettes and acanthuses can be found in the 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century metal artefacts from Karelia and north-western Russia (Fig. 4) (Schvindt 1893: K. 8–10, 250–257, 279, 285, 285a; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1985: 380–384). This points to the conclusion that the artefact of Turku originates, in date as well as stylistically, in the Middle Ages and in the regions that had close contacts with the Karelians and the Russians, for example in the Saami areas, which were taxed by the Karelians for Novgorod. As a proof of these contacts, Karelian metal artefacts can be found in the 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century sacrificial places of the Saamis (Serning 1956: 95–96, 165–166, T. 1, 3).

An important factor in solving the origin of the T-shaped artefact, is its material. While the shaft seems to follow the natural form of a narrow, slim antler beam, the spongy bone on the arms indicates that these parts were made from a flat, shovel-like fork, which was originally about 1 cm in thickness.

<sup>2</sup> The drum hammer from Nordset bears Ringerike-style and plaited band ornaments.

The shovel-like fork was then ground to make it even flatter. According to osteologists Talman and Mannermaa, the best answer to this description would be reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*) antler, more specifically the anterior branch, which is flat and curves over the forehead and muzzle of the animal. Although the alternative of elk (*Alces alces*) antler cannot be entirely excluded, making such a slender artefact from massive elk antler would have been very arduous. This result, again, points to the conclusion that the T-shaped artefact is of Saami origin. Reindeer were mostly found in northern Fennoscandia, and used by the Saamis for several purposes. Antlers were used for example to make drum hammers, spoons, knife sheaths and grips (Itkonen 1948a: 501–504; 1948b: 337). At least in some instances, the anterior branch was used for drum hammers (Manker 1938: 312, 324, 330, 344–346, Abb. 492, 537, 561–562). In southern Fennoscandia, as well as in the Turku area, reindeer were almost extinct by the Middle Ages, and seldom used for artefact production (Tourunen 2008: 114–115, 129, 131).

### Focusing in on the Find Context

On the basis of the analysis above, it seems reasonable to argue that the T-shaped artefact really is a Saami drum hammer; archaic in relation to ornaments, but typical in relation to basic form, size, material and traces of use. It also seems reasonable to assume that in Turku the artefact was in secondary use. This secondary phase in the artefact's life can be studied more closely by focusing in on the find context, both at a macro and micro level. At the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, the site of Åbo Akademi formed part of the Quarter of Mätäjärvi ("Rotten Lake"), a recently founded quarter on the fringes of the city (Seppänen 2012: 944–946). The population of this quarter consisted of merchants, shoemakers, furriers, tanners, weavers and other artisans (Tourunen 2008: 125, 130–132; Seppänen 2012: 835–837), quite well-to-do, though probably not as rich as the burgher leaders and clergymen at the city centre (Kallioinen 2000: 148–149; Seppänen 2003: 94–95). This distinction is exemplified by the predominance of wooden log houses at the Quarter of Mätäjärvi and the relatively larger number of stone and brick houses at the medieval centre (Seppänen 2003: 99–100; 2012: 648, 660–670). Judging from ceramic finds, the population at the centre could be German in origin (Pihlman 2010: 86–88). The immediate surroundings of the drum hammer find consisted of wooden structures, all of which can be

dated dendrochronologically to the turn the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. These structures include a dwelling house with two rooms (RA 186), a courtyard with wooden pavement, an outbuilding and a workshop with water barrels, a water-drainage system and traces of tanning and skin processing (Pukkila *et al.* 2000: 62–67, K. 316: 1, L. 6: 213–239, Seppänen 2012: 307–310, 333–337, 342–356, 359–365, 374–383, 401–420, 836, 902, K. 283).

The drum hammer was found inside the dwelling house (RA 186), which had been built at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and abandoned circa 1429, at the time of a major fire in the city (Seppänen 2012: 406–417). According to the excavation report and maps (Pukkila *et al.* 2000: 62, K. 201, 202, 203: 1), the drum hammer lay in the north-western room of the house, under the wooden floorboards, among the birch bark insulation of the floor (Fig. 5). The aim of these birch bark sheets, 50 x 70 cm in size, was to insulate the floor from humidity. Since the remains of a dismantled fireplace were found under the birch bark sheets, it seems clear that the floor with its insulation did not represent the first building present, but a later alteration. This alteration work, giving a dating to the drum hammer find, could have taken place sometime in the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Seppänen 2012: 417).

Curiously enough, another extraordinary artefact was found in the same dwelling house (RA 186), in a nearly identical context. A wooden anthropo-zoomorphic staff (TMM 21816: KP14913) lay in the south-eastern room of the house, under the wooden floorboards, close to the birch bark insulation of the floor or neighbouring fireplace (Karvonen 1999: 53–54, K. 6–7; Pukkila *et al.* 2000: 63, K. 203: 2, 209, 212, L. 6: 239, M. 149; Seppänen 2012: 414–417). Since the remains of an older floor were found under the staff, it seems again clear that the find context of the staff did not represent the first stage of construction of the building, but a later alteration, probably from the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Seppänen 2012: 417). The staff is unique in the archaeological record of Finland and full of intriguing details (Fig. 6), such as carved ornaments on the face, polished and darkened lips and cheekbones, parallel cuts, a groove, a North European-style sign of the owner (cf. Itkonen 1948b: K. 409–410; Kolchin 1989: Pl. 24–25; Sirelius 1989: K. 689) and a strong odour of juniper (*Juniperus*) wafting around.

The artefact resembles wooden portable idols that were placed in the depository shelters of the Saamis and worshipped by kissing the face (Ravila 1934: 83–85; Itkonen 1948b: 314–315). It also resembles wooden domestic idols that were placed

in the 10<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> century dwelling-houses of Novgorod, and were decorated with multi-coloured bands in a groove (Kolchin 1989: 191–196, Pl. 200–208; Pokrovskaya 2007).<sup>3</sup> Although comparable in size and form, these wooden idols were not made of juniper, nor was juniper used in medieval ecclesiastical sculpture (Vuola 2000). However, in the Finnish and Saami folk tradition, juniper flakes and smoke were used in prophylactic magic and healing (Rantasalo 1937: 117–118, 141–142, 171, 179, 186–187; Itkonen 1948b: 449, 453, 467–468).

The two-fold occurrence emphasizes the find context of these artefacts and raises a question about its meaning. It seems improbable that the drum hammer and the staff would have fallen accidentally through the cracks of the floorboards, because they were too large for that and too remarkable to be left under the floor. The artefacts were hardly stored there for later use, because it was rather difficult to bring them out again. To do so one would have to raise the 35 x 9 cm broad floorboards and muddle the carefully arranged, overlapping birch bark sheets (cf. Seppänen 2012: 407). Besides, other parts of a drum, indispensable for making a usable set, were not found in this context; not even metal rings and fittings that were typical of the Saami drums and would have been preserved by the ground (cf. Manker 1938: 267–283, 355–364). Nor were the artefacts discarded in a normal way by throwing them into a rubbish heap. On the contrary, everything in the find contexts points to the conclusion that the artefacts were deliberately deposited in their place. According to archaeologists Hukantaival (2006: 91–92; 2007a: 67) and Seppänen (2012: 414–417), they can be interpreted as special building deposits, artefacts deliberately deposited in the structures of a building as gifts or offerings to transcendent, other-worldly powers and beings (Osborne 2004; Hukantaival 2007b; Herva/Ylimaunu 2009).

### Interpreting the Find as a Sound Deposit

Hukantaival (2006: 91–92; 2007a: 67) discusses the drum hammer find in her master's thesis and articles on the building deposits of pre-modern Finland. These deposits seem to have been fairly common in the medieval and later city of Turku, despite the presence of the Cathedral, bishop's throne and Dominican convent. Other archaeological examples include animal bones and horns in a pit under a 15<sup>th</sup> century floor, a goat skull next to a 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century boundary mark, an edge tool inside a 14<sup>th</sup> century fireplace,

3 The artefact also bears a resemblance to the wooden zoo/anthropomorphic staffs of Siberia, which served as shamans' mounts during the seance (Harva 1933: 325–326, 356–357, K. 64, 100; Hoppál 2003: 137–139).

and a knife and two whetstones under a 17<sup>th</sup> century floor (Hukantaival 2006: 84–87, 90–91, 93–94, 107; 2007a: 66–67, 72, T. 1; 2011: 49). Similar building deposits are also mentioned in Finnish ethnographical sources, where the examples include animal bones, iron tools, cattle and horse bells, thunderbolts, guns, bullets, gunpowder, Bibles, and hymnbooks or their pages, which may be placed under a floor, threshold or footing, or on a wall, corner or ceiling (SKMT, Vol 4: 222–223, 225, 329–336; Rantasalo 1937: 163, 169–170, 194–195, 199–203). The buildings in these examples are mainly 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century cowsheds and stables. According to informants, the deposited artefacts, as well as pieces of them, were powerful tools that shed their power on the building and its guardian spirit, when they were deposited in critical, liminal spaces such as entrances, outer boundaries or fireplaces, where the spirits stayed or resided (Waronen 1898: 190; Hukantaival 2007b: 26–29). Iron tools and bells strengthened the building with the power of iron, thunderbolts, firearms and bullets with power of fire, and Bibles and hymn books with the power of Christianity. The animal bones, representing the power of these animals, transformed into the guardian spirits that protected the household by driving away ill-willing outside powers (Hukantaival 2006: 37–39, 109–110). Beliefs like this relate to a wide European tradition and follow the logic of so-called sympathetic magic (Frazer 1992: 11–48; Hukantaival 2006: 37–50; 2007b).

According to the 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century ethnographical sources, similar powerful tools were also carried in several calendar and initiation rituals aimed at protecting the cattle, cowshed, stockyard, pastureland and farm. In this related context, interestingly the sound-related tools or instruments were used for sound production. Bells were rung, guns fired and hymns and prayers sung in a resounding voice (SKMT IV: I: 63, 244, 316, 316b, d, 340b1, d, k1, IV: V: 86–128; IV: VI: 135, IV: XI: 76, 163; Rantasalo 1937: 192–193; 1945: 35–36, 84–103, 116–128; 1947: 21–63). This metallic, loud and verbal noise gave an acoustic form to the powers of iron, fire and Christianity and protected the homestead acoustically (Rainio 2005; 2010: 168–175). Together with odorous substances, it made the communication with spirits multi-sensual. When the sound-related tools and instruments were later buried or left in the pastureland, mixed with nutriment and given to cattle, or deposited in the cowshed or stable (SKMT IV: V: 96, 110–116, 124–127, 133d7, 149–227, 172b–p, IV: VI: 230, 967–971, 983–985, 1178–1180, IV: VII: 171), this left a reference to the sound being still there. The deposited instruments and their pieces transported the powerful noise

to another, transcendent reality, where it continued to protect the homestead in an inaudible, but effective way. This transformation of sound into transcendent form is exemplified by cases where food containing bell scraps was given to cattle while saying: “Listen to this sound!” (SKMT IV: V: 155–156, 158), “Remember to follow this sound!” (SKMT IV: V: 128m, 172n1). According to the informants, this way the cattle “drank the bell sound into their blood” (SKMT IV: V: 192e13).

Although not exactly the same as these aforementioned tools, the drum hammer and the wooden staff can be interpreted by following the same logic and principles of sympathetic magic. The drum hammer can be interpreted as a powerful tool that can be a *pars pro toto* representing the whole drum, its drumming sound, a drumming shaman and shamanistic seance. The staff also referred to some kind of communication with the spirit world. Together these artefacts conjured up a guardian spirit that protected the dwelling house (RA 186) by extraordinary means, including a prophylactic drumming noise and through the special properties of the staff. The sound was audible and active in another, transcendent reality, unceasingly and without any effort. Therefore this deposit, as well as the deposited bells, guns, hymnbooks and their pieces in other contexts, can be regarded as special sound deposits,<sup>4</sup> sounds deposited in critical, liminal spaces, in order to be audible in the other reality and to protect there the households from transcendent and other outside attacks. Furthermore, it seems that the traditional soundscape in Finland, both in the countryside and the city, comprised not only physical, audible sounds, but also imaginary sounds that were audible in an imagined reality.

### Setting the Sound Deposit in the City Soundscape

The interpretation above requires that the new owner of the drum hammer, the owner of the dwelling house (RA 186), knew something about Saami shamans and drums and believed in their magic power. This may appear far-fetched at first, but proves to be conceivable in the light of written sources. According to medieval written sources, the city-dwellers of Turku did have connections with the Saamis and Saami areas in the North. In 1345–1346, the bishop of Turku travelled to the Gulf of Bothnia to carry out missionary work among the Karelians and the Saamis on the Novgorodian side of the border (Luukko 1954: 259–261). Merchants of Turku travelled yearly to the Gulf of Bothnia to

4 “Sound deposits” of pots and skulls, which were built into churches or threshing barns to improve their acoustics, have been discussed by e.g. Merrifield (1987: 121–128).

carry on trade with the Finnish settlers, who had moved to the region in the 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries and had begun to tax the Saamis (*ibid.*: 65–70; Kallioinen 2000: 181–184). For many years, the Finns from the inland had been carrying out hunting and plundering expeditions among the Saamis (Vahtola 2003: 30–31, 51, 63). The products sought after on these expeditions were furs, hides and fish and apparently also the services and skills of the shamans. In 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century Scandinavian sagas, the Saamis are always depicted as skilful witches, as masters in foretelling the future, changing their form, raising storms and causing injury or even death (Nenonen 1994: 125–140; Thorsson 2001: 204–205, 307–308). In 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century legal documents, the Finns are reputed to have the habit of travelling north and asking Saami witches for help in the most difficult and dubious cases (Itkonen 1948b: 344–348; Nenonen 1994: 125–150). In Finland, these unChristian activities did not lead to legal actions until the 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, but in Norway, as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the oldest Christian laws already prohibit Norsemen from going to the Saamis to have their fortunes told (Zachrisson 1991: 88).

It is possible that through one of these exchanges the drum hammer ended up in Turku. It is also possible that it was brought by an occasional Saami visitor or newcomer, who left no traces on the documents. On the basis of the widespread reputation of the Saami shamans, the owner of the dwelling house (RA 186) would have had in his/her possession an especially powerful tool, which could protect the property better than ordinary animal bones and iron tools. A property owner or an artisan at the Quarter of Mätäjärvi could feel a need for extra protection to meet the numerous dangers of the urban environment, such as fires, epidemics, famines, pirates, rival colleagues and crowds of envious neighbours (cf. Kallioinen 2000: 99–101). The urban soundscape too, could appear somewhat oppressive. Most of the merchants spoke German, soldiers and government officials Swedish, and the clergy and Dominicans Latin (Ahola *et al.* 2004: 243). A new type of music, Gregorian chant resounded at the cathedral and the convent, and very loud church bells rang throughout the city (cf. Dahlström 1995: 23–26, 31–45; Hannula & Lehto-Vahtera 2010: 112–123). Via this “sacred noise” the authoritative power of the Church and Crown reached into every nook and cranny (cf. Schafer 1977: 49–52, 76, 273). The drum hammer find can finally be seen in this context. Although protective magic was not forbidden in the medieval city (Nenonen 1994: 193), it was hardly possible to drum or bring a Saami shaman to drum at a building site, under the eyes of the

bishop and Christian neighbours. That must have been too unChristian, disturbing and noisy. Instead, it was possible and equally effective to hide the drum hammer in the building and let the sound protect the property in another reality, beyond the reach of bishop and neighbours. This “secret noise” can be seen to express some kind of underground resistance, suspicious and expressing a somewhat defiant attitude towards the urban, Christian environment.

### Conclusions

In this paper, I have analyzed the physical properties and the find context of this T-shaped artefact of Turku, and drawn conclusions on the basis of these analyses. The size of the artefact, the use-wear on the arms and reindeer antler as probable material seem to affirm that the artefact is a drum hammer of Saami origin. Although ribbon and foliage ornaments on the arms are uncharacteristic of traditional Saami drum hammers, more or less similar ornaments can be found in the oldest known drum hammer from Norway. Like the artefact of Turku, this hammer dates back to the Middle Ages. In the medieval city of Turku, the drum hammer seems to have been in a use that was different from the original shamanistic one. On the basis of the archaeological context, the drum hammer was hidden in the floor construction of a dwelling house, most probably as a gift to the house spirit or some other kind of transcendent being. As similar deposits of sound-related artefacts and instruments can be found in the later Finnish folklore, it is possible to carry on the reasoning a bit further. The hidden drum hammer can be interpreted as a special sound deposit, through which the drumming sound was transported to another reality, where it protected the household from transcendent and other outside attacks. This inaudible, “secret noise”, more commonly found in traditional rural environments, lent itself especially well to the hierarchical and congested city soundscape.

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