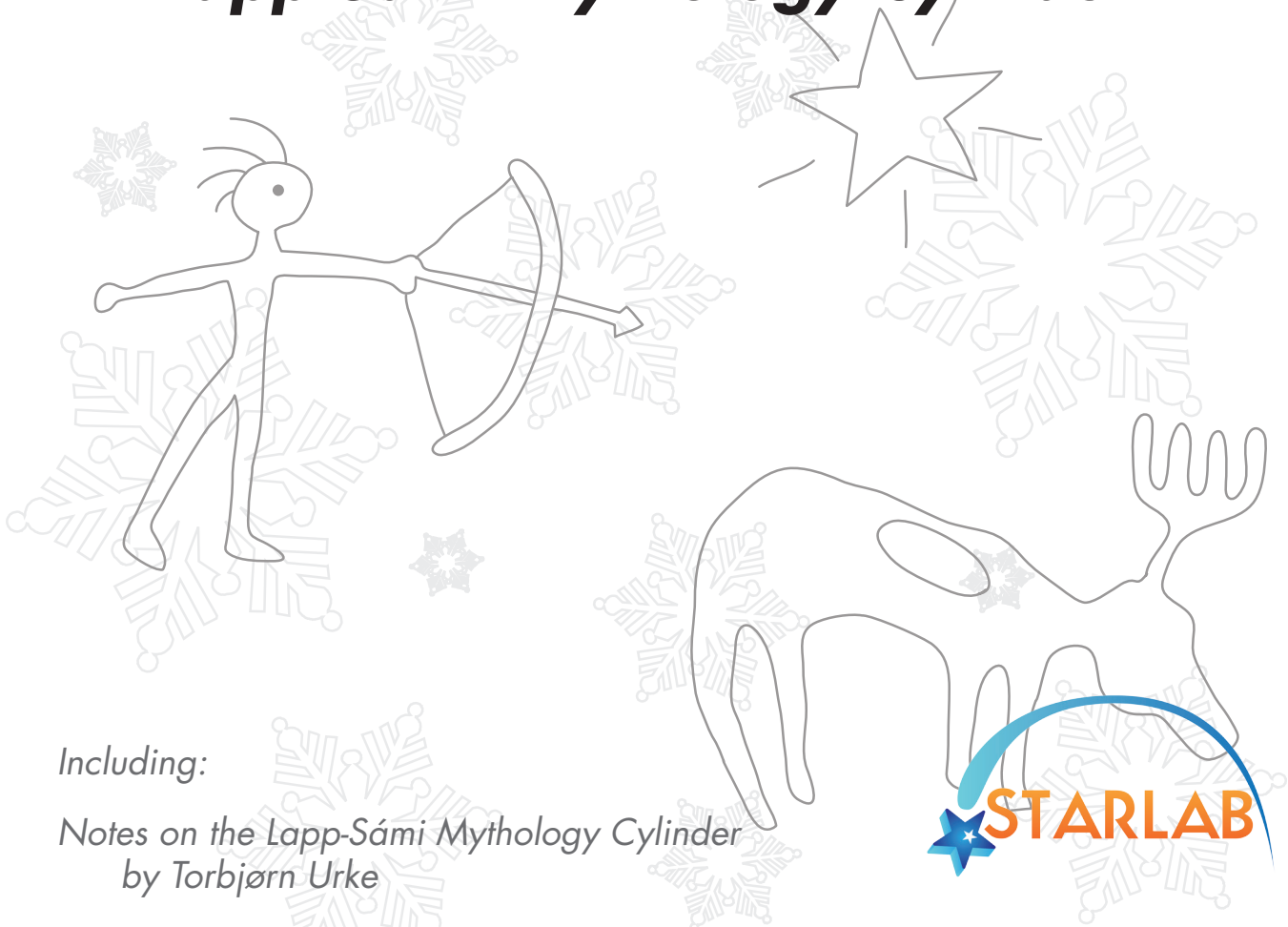




**A Collection of Curricula
for the STARLAB®
Lapp-Sámi Mythology Cylinder**



Including:

Notes on the Lapp-Sámi Mythology Cylinder
by Torbjørn Urke



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Notes on the Lapp/Sámi Mythology Cylinder

by **Torbjørn Urke**

Background

Like the Ancient Greeks, Ancient Chinese and the Native Americans, the Lapp/Sámi Arctic peoples from Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Kola Peninsula of Russia had constellations that represented their own unique culture. Although better known to the outside world as Lapps, they prefer the name Sámi meaning “same land.” Like the different Native American tribes, there are several Sámi tribes — Forest Sámi, River Sámi, Coastal Sámi and Mountain Sámi. Also like the Native Americans many of the constellations held different meanings for different tribes, others were common to all. The Lapp/Sámi Mythology Cylinder focuses on subjects that all of the Sámi people had in common — the importance of hunting and the significance of the Milky Way where the weather can be forecasted.

The Lapp/Sámi Mythology Cylinder features ten figures that illustrate this celestial moose hunting scene and other important themes.

Ten Figures from Lapp/Sámi Mythology

The Moose (Sarva)

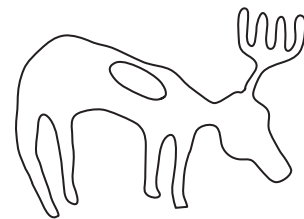
This constellation dominates the sky and consists of Auriga, Perseus and Cassiopeia (which makes up the splendid horns).

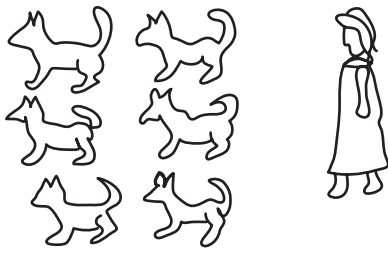
Castor and Pollux (Cuoighahaegjek)

The Skiing Moose Hunters. These sky hunters are moving and shooting in the direction of the Moose.

The Three Stars of Orion's Belt (Galla-bardnek)

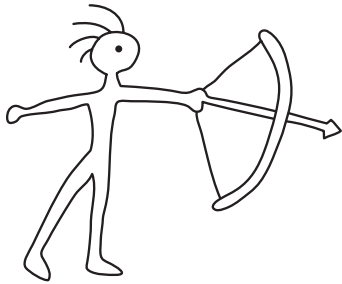
These three stars form three hunting dogs that help the Skiing Moose Hunters to capture the Moose.





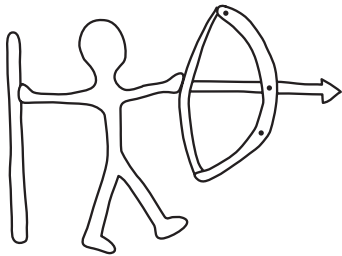
The Pleiades (Suttjenes-råuko)

This constellation has several interpretations among the Sámi peoples. Some believe the Pleiades is a hole in the sky from which cold weather comes. Others believe that the Pleiades stars are six young women waiting for husbands. Orion, after a quarrel with his wife, offers to marry one of them but they all reject him. He is so incensed that he grabs his bow and shoots at them. They turn and flee. The third interpretation, and the one that is depicted on the cylinder, is part of the sky as a moose hunting scene — the stars represent an old wife with a pack of dogs running after the Moose.



Ursa Major (Fauna davgge)

The hunter's bow.



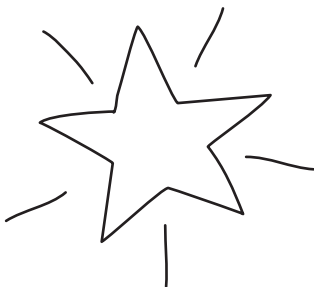
Arcturus (Favnta)

The main star in a second hunter figure.



The North Star (Boahje-navlle or Stella polaris)

The North Star anchors the Boahje-navlle or Sky-stake. The Sámi culture believed that the world was an island with the Sky-stake or Sky-pole holding the world in position.



The Morning and Evening Star (Guovso naste) or Venus

This star had a special importance to the Lapps/Sámi. 'Guovso' is the name for twilight at dawn and dusk while 'naste' means star. Venus was seen in the morning until Christmas and then in the evening after Christmas. During the polar nights from November to January, Venus was circumpolar and could be seen both day and night. Under special conditions, Venus was so bright that it cast shadows. It illuminated the road when the shaman/troll-man (Noaiden) traveled to Jabiaibmo. It is painted on the Sámi shaman drum and among other Northeurasian people is known as "the shaman star."

It was also believed that Venus could bring rain as well as good health and fertility. The Sámi decorate their belts with star figures of brass or silver (not unlike the Arapahoe people who had a special ceremonial belt used in religious rites which was decorated with stars that were supposed to bring a good life).

The Milky Way (Ládderaiddaras)

Bird tracks. In Sámi tradition, birds were watched over by a female deity, Barbmo-akka. She made sure that the birds migrated from the southern areas to the north. Next in line was the Crane (Guerga) that was considered the king of the birds. He was in charge of telling Barbmo-akka how many birds were born and how many died while they were in the north. This migratory path of the birds could be seen in the winter at the celestial arch, the Milky Way.

The Milky Way was also seen as a weather forecast chart. The glove (vott) tells when winter is coming, the crescent moon represents the dangerous “yule-moon” at Christmas time, and the cross or “X” in the sky from which they could predict the weather in the late winter.

