

The *Petsamo* Board Game (1931) and Everyday Game Culture in Finland in the Interwar Period

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ABSTRACT

The paper studies the *Petsamo* board game, published independently in Finland in 1931. This racing-genre game consisted of a game board map situated in the Petsamo area in northern Lapland. Originally, Petsamo was mainly populated by Sámi people and only officially became a part of Finland after the 1920 Treaty of Tartu between Finland and Soviet Russia. After the Treaty, Petsamo became an arena for several activities that can nowadays also be examined as borderland and cultural colonialism, such as establishing new settlements, mineral prospecting, tourism, the production of Petsamo-related artworks and so forth. In this paper, we approach the *Petsamo* game within a larger cultural historical context and analyse the representations of Petsamo in the game board and the instruction booklet as well as the activities of the designers of the game and players who originally owned the copy of the game that is currently held in the collection of the Turku Museum Centre. Thus, methodologically, the paper presents a holistic microhistorical example of non-digital game history.

Keywords

board games, game history, racing games, cultural colonialism

INTRODUCTION

Near the end of the Great War, the Russian empire descended into chaos. The February Revolution of 1917 ended the rule of the czar, and the Bolsheviks claimed power after the October Revolution. The Grand Duchy of Finland declared itself independent on 6 December 1917, but in Spring 1918, civil war between the ‘reds’ and ‘whites’ broke out, which ended with the triumph of the white side. However, the border between Finland and Soviet Russia remained unclear until negotiations in the city of Tartu in Estonia in 1920.

The Treaty of Tartu between Finland and Russia came into effect at the end of 1920. Through this, Finland gained a pathway to the Arctic Ocean due the annexation of the Petsamo area, which had formerly belonged to the Russian Empire. The area was inhabited by indigenous Sámi people, the Skolts, who had previously been converted to Greek Catholicism.

Even though Finns had been interested in the Northern Arctic Ocean coastline before, the Petsamo area gained much more attention after the enactment of said Treaty (Lahti

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2021). In many of the discussions of the time, the area was identified as a colony of Finland where, for example, the educational system as well as road infrastructure had to be built. Petsamo was also seen as a natural resource with its minerals, forests, game and fish stocks. Likewise, Petsamo became a topic in various public writings and debates and was introduced and depicted in travel books, tourist brochures, as well as in numerous cultural productions and art works, as an exotic site for various activities. This discourse of cultural exotism later transformed into nostalgia after Petsamo was incorporated into the Soviet Union after the Second World War and was no longer as easily accessible to Finns (on the history of Petsamo area, see *Turjanmeren maa*, 1999).

Recently, historical research on the Petsamo area has become more critical. Many scholars have described Finnish activities in the Petsamo area as borderland colonialism, a concept that refers to the above-mentioned economic and cultural exploitation and the utilisation of stereotypes and racism that take place in the border regions between two states. In these exploitative activities, cultural productions such as artworks, literature and tourist services have played an important role, which has already been studied within history, arts and cultural studies. (See e.g. Lakomäki et al. 2022; Lahti 2021; Merivirta 2022. On Sámi game cultures, see Laiti 2021.)

However, no previous research has ever made note of a game that represented Petsamo and its neighbouring regions. This game, named simply *Petsamo-veli*, utilised stereotypical Lapland imagery and introduced the main tourist attractions and economic exploitation opportunities. Ultimately, it acted as a tool for taking the area culturally under control.



Figure 1: *Petsamo* game board. Turku Museum Centre. Photo by Jaakko Suominen.

The game was designed by Frans Nyberg and Ruth Torén and published independently in 1931 – the same year the so-called Finnish Arctic Sea highway from Ivalo to Liinahamari in Petsamo was opened. We have studied a particular copy of the game that was donated by the Mustelin family to the Turku Museum Centre in 1996. So far, we found no other copies of the game in Finnish museums or library collections. In this paper, we examine the game artifact itself as well as its designers and owners/players. The game can be studied from the postcolonial theory point of view. The concepts of borderland colonialism and cultural colonialism are especially suited to this case. However, other theoretical contexts are relevant, especially when studying the game's

role in the Finnish game production as well as in the history of everyday life and middle-class childhood in Finland in the interbellum period. Thus, our main research question concerns how the Petsamo game can be situated in the interwar game culture in Finland.

The paper's main game studies research contribution is to demonstrate how to apply the idea of local game history (Swalwell 2021) to an older non-digital game case example. In addition to this, we conduct an experiment on how to create a more holistic approach to game history when studying a single game from three different angles simultaneously.

HOLISTIC APPROACH TO LOCAL BOARD GAME HISTORY

Board games are media forms that can be studied using media studies methods (Booth 2021). From the perspective of media historical studies, one can examine board games, for example, in the framework of media production. Likewise, one could study the reception and usage of board games but there are not necessarily many suitable sources for this kind of research, especially when examining older games. There are few game reviews, photos or illustrations, or everyday written descriptions of playing situations available. The third possible approach to media historical research of board games is the analysis of boards, game instructions and other gaming elements. In this case, the analysis methods consist of close playing of games (see e.g. Arjoranta 2015) as well as analysis of representations of geographical locations, people, fauna and flora, to name a few examples (Suominen, Pasanen & Koskinen 2022).

However, games are different from other media forms due to their interactive and participatory nature. What follows, is that one also must analyse game mechanics when studying board games. From the perspective of cultural game studies, a game is a cultural product, which also provides the opportunity to examine the issues of the various contemporary phenomena around it (Friman et al. 2022, 10). Our study represents the study of local game history where the question of 'where' is essential. Melanie Swalwell (2021, 1) points out that 'location has been a massive blind spot in game history'. Swalwell (2021) defines local game history, for example, as the critical and reflective examination of local, locality and locatedness in game history and emphasises the umbrella-like variety of conceptual approaches, such as hyper-local, regional, national, transnational, global and multi- or trans-local.

By utilising the postcolonial point of view as one of its theories, this paper offers a novel contribution to the relatively new postcolonial game studies field in the context of non-digital board games. This specific approach is examined more thoroughly for example in the upcoming book *Heritage, Memory and Identity in Postcolonial Board Games* edited by Michał Mochocki (2023), which aims to challenge the 'hegemony' of digital games in the field. In addition to considering the implications of applying colonial history in board games and its impact on the games' players, the book's various examples and case studies demonstrate 'how colonialism-themed games work as representations of the past that are influenced by existing heritage narratives and discourses' (Mochocki 2023). (On postcolonial game studies, see also e.g. Mukherjee 2017; Mukherjee and Lundedal Hammar 2018.)

Similar to many other cases in historical research, our source material is many-sided. Our most essential source is the *Petsamo* board game, which consists of a cover envelope, a game board and an instruction booklet. The booklet provides the player with general rules for play as well as descriptions of different scenarios that take place

in the individual sections of the board. Further, the copy that we study also contains a pencil made inscription about the owners of the game.

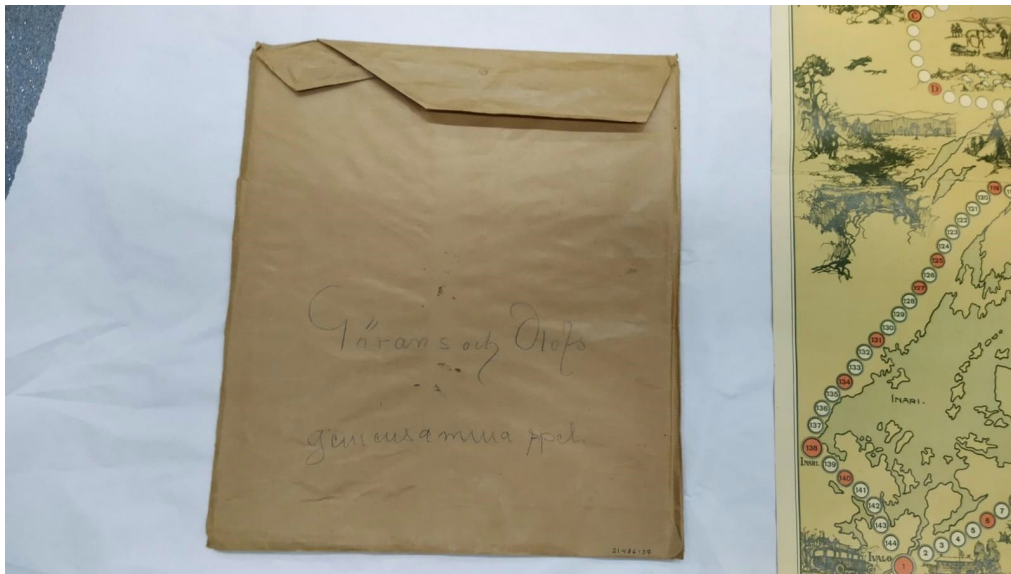


Figure 2: Detailed pencil marking. Photo by Jaakko Suominen.

As we know who the owners of this particular game were, as well as the game's designers, we have been able to trace information on them from various archives and museum collections in Turku, Helsinki and other places in Finland. Therefore, our sources consist of photographs, illustrations, old newspaper articles, diary books, correspondence and other written material.

Our research follows the conventional methods of historical study such as source criticism, contextualisation and writing-based reasoning. Here, source criticism refers to the idea that all the different sources describe particular events in their own way. Source criticism is not a separate research method but rather a part of a larger research strategy and it is a methodological concept related to many different research methods. (Tepora et al. 2022.)

Contextualisation, for its part, is also used as a concept in various disciplines. In historical study, it belongs to a research strategy where past people, events and phenomena are approached as their own viewpoints and as products of their own time. Reasoning with writing means the hermeneutic understanding that emerges when a researcher uses theories in the analysis of the sources and in the discussion between the researcher and the sources. (Tepora et al. 2022.)

GAME INDUSTRY AND GAMING IN FINLAND IN THE EARLY 1930S

Finnish industrial game production began in the 1860s at the latest. However, a particular game industry only began to emerge in the 1920s when several companies' game production reached a more substantial role within the industry. In addition to the carpentry and printing and publishing industries, a third form of game industry emerged: the national production of slot machines in the late 1920s and the early 1930s. (Suominen 2023.)

After the 1918 civil war, the rise of industrial game production was connected to several societal changes, such as population growth, urbanisation, general industrialisation and the economic boom that lasted until the great depression at the end of the 1920s. In

addition, there were common changes in trends of leisure time activities. (Suominen 2023.)

The great depression affected consumption and gaming cultures as well. Consumers started to, at least somewhat, favour cheaper paper and cardboard games, while Christmas remained the high season for purchasing and playing games. Cardboard games were usually produced and published by publishing houses that manufactured a wide variety of products in addition to magazines and books. Nevertheless, there were some independent game designers although they did not usually gain a large audience for their products. (Suominen 2023.) Our case example is, in effect, an independent publication that has not been studied before.

It seems that while wooden and plywood games were marketed to a wider age group, paper-based board games were mostly targeted to children and teenagers. However, some challenging strategic war games were exceptions to this rule.

The topics of these board games varied from sports to warfare, trade, traffic and fairy tales. Sometimes, they also focused on other topical political events in addition to wars and conflicts (see, for example, Suominen, Pasanen & Koskinen 2022). The most typical game genre of the time was the race game where players proceeded on the game board based on dice numbers. Usually, the race was linear, but it could also contain various routes. During the game, the player could also benefit or incur penalties when arriving at a special section on the board. Our case example is also a race game, which could have offered a reasonably easy starting point for designers without previous experience in designing games.

Historically, race games originate e.g. from the Italian 15th and 16th century game *The Game of the Goose*. The genre became popular in the 19th century after the development of new industrial printing methods. In many cases, race games have an educational theme and a moral message targeted mainly to children, although board games were originally gambling games, favoured by Italian noblemen (Saastamoinen 2022, 92–94, 167–168; Seville 2019).

DESIGNERS OF THE PETSAMO GAME

The Petsamo board game was designed by Frans Nyberg and Ruth Torén, individuals previously unknown in Finnish game history. In order to find more information about the duo, we turned to different archives and collections such as the picture collections at Åbo Akademi University (Turku's Swedish speaking university) and the Finnish National Library's digitised newspaper archive. In addition to this, the architecture museum and the Finnish Literature Society have both written a biography of Nyberg. Nyberg had also written a book about etching in 1933, where he shared useful insights about his travels to Northeast Finland. According to a letter written by Nyberg to the possible suppliers, he and Torén designed the game together, and Nyberg created the illustrations for the board.

Frans Nyberg (1882 Saint Petersburg – 1962 Porvoo) was a Finnish architect, graphic artist and painter. He worked in well-known Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen's firm in Hvitträsk until the beginning of 1920s when he became a full-time painter. Nyberg moved to Porvoo in 1923 and started to work as an art teacher in Strömborg's girls' school. In addition to teaching, he made graphic art, etchings, aquarelles from different parts of Finland and organised numerous exhibitions where he displayed his work. (Arkkitehtuurimuseo, online.) Nyberg was an active culture persona, and between the

years 1934 and 1952, he served as Porvoo museum's intendant and was determined to ensure the preservation of the old Porvoo (Anttonen 2006).

We could not find as much information on Ruth Torén, but we were able to locate a few pieces of information and several pictures of her. While the Åbo Akademi's picture collections had one portrait of her from 1910, the Museum bureau had three more. Based on Torén's appearance and on the people photographed with her, she was most likely born in an upper middle-class family. It is likely that her parents were mechanical engineer Anders Waldemar Torén and Inez Torén. Anders Waldemar Torén worked for Porvoo's railway in the late 1800s, so it is likely that Ruth Torén grew up in the city and perhaps later became acquainted with Frans Nyberg there. In the course of research, it has come to light that Ruth Torén is among the few early Swedish-speaking Finnish female game designers whose careers should be studied more closely (Suominen, Pasanen & Koskinen 2022; Ylänen 2017).

We know that Torén was in Lapland the same year the *Petsamo* game was published as we were able to locate a black-and-white picture taken by her titled 'English sport fisher in Virtaniemi, Inari' (all the translations made by the first author). The town and lake Inari are part of the *Petsamo* game's board, so perhaps her trip to the North had served as an inspiration for co-designing the board and its story.

When it comes to Frans Nyberg, we know slightly more about his relationship to Northern Finland. Even though we do not have information about his possible travels to the *Petsamo* area, he travelled to Kuolajärvi and Rovaniemi in 1931 and made etchings of different fells and swamp areas in the region. The journey had a profound impact on Nyberg as he writes: 'There is nothing among my previous experiences that could match the impression that the light Northern nights and the looming fells had on me' (Nyberg 1933, 24). In fact, there are several correlations between Nyberg's narration of his journey and the illustration of the *Petsamo* board game. He talks of 'Laplanders' and their reindeer, bears roaming the wilderness, eagles soaring proudly in the sky, great barkless pine trunks and small rivers running in the swamp areas between enormous fells. He speaks very highly of the pristine Northern nature and how he is glad to get away from the 'civilisation' of southern Finland. (Nyberg 1933, 23–24. On Finnish painters in *Petsamo*, see Hautala-Hirvioja 2016.)

Upon studying Nyberg's archive in the Finnish National Library, we came across a single typewritten letter by him to the possible suppliers. In this letter, he describes the game as a self-financed 'geographical dice game', which is 'abundantly illustrated with four-coloured landscape and animal pictures'. Nyberg writes that the game will be sold 'at least in the biggest paper and toy shops' in Helsinki. Since the letter is dated the 6th of December 1931 and Nyberg asks the suppliers to get back to him as soon as possible for him to be able to send the product to them on the 14th or 15th, he was likely hoping that the game would be sold during the Christmas season. He also informs the suppliers of the game's price, 20 Finnish Marks or *Markka* (Finland's Pre-Euro currency), and of the supplier's commission, which is 25%. *Petsamo* can be considered relatively expensive, as it was almost twice the price of other similar board games of the time.

We were able to find one advertisement for the game published on the 19th of December in a newspaper called *Borgåbladet*. *Borgåbladet* was a Swedish-language newspaper from the town of Porvoo, where Nyberg lived when the game was published. The advert mentions architect Nyberg by name and describes the game as a 'pleasant geographical game', which combines 'utility and fun' and 'is designed to teach the little ones at home a lot of useful knowledge about our possession up by the Arctic Ocean'. It also reveals that the game was available in Elsa Winberg's paper shop, in the Mission bookstore

and in a store called Alba Nova in Porvoo. As of yet, however, we do not have information on how the game was received by the larger public. Nonetheless, we will later look at a family who owned a copy of the game to better understand the context of where it was played.

EXAMINATION OF THE GAME BOARD AND THE RULES

Recently, postcolonial theories and conceptualisations have been further developed and used by scholars in cultural game studies. Postcolonial game studies have utilised various approaches from the examination of colonial representations and cartographies in games to games' various roles in maintaining colonial legacies. Sometimes, ethnographic methods have also been used when studying game cultures even though the focus on game play and representations have been more common (Mukherjee 2017; Mukherjee and Lundedal Hammar 2018 and the whole Postcolonial Perspectives in Game Studies theme issue of the *Open library of Humanities*, 2018). Game maps are indeed a way of controlling territories and using colonialist imagination (Jungman et al. 2022). In this case, we will analyse the *Petsamo* game board and its instructions from the perspective of Finnish cultural, settler and borderland colonialisms. In other words, we will discuss how the Petsamo area was represented as an economic resource and tourist resort as well as how the inhabitants of Petsamo were stereotyped in their representation.

Here, it is also worth noting the importance of the meaning of play. In her book, Megan A. Norcia (2019) examines how 19th century British board games shaped ideologies about nation, race and imperial duty, and essentially taught children how to be good colonial citizens. In fact, geographical games played a significant role in this: not only do maps allow scholars to track the growth of imperialism but they also promote 'sociocultural ideologies about what it means to rule and be ruled' (Norcia 2019, introduction). Therefore, geographical games, such as *Petsamo* in our case, invited children to rehearse colonial ideologies through play. As further examined below, the *Petsamo* game introduces its players to different strategies of colonial rule in the Petsamo area: competition between the neighbouring countries, resource management and the Fennicisation of the local culture.

The *Petsamo* game begins in the village of Ivalo. The rules address the player in second-person and warn them of the dangers along the way as well as informs them of the good fortune they might encounter during their journey in Petsamo. In the end, however, the 'beauty of the north' will make it all worth it. Indeed, the beauty and uniqueness of nature in Petsamo is highlighted throughout the journey. The board itself has been filled with illustrations of typical Northern fauna and flora, such as reindeer, mosquitos, bears, lemmings and old pine trees and fell areas. The Arctic Ocean also plays an important role in the game's design. The game board portrays fishing boats, sea mammals and, along the coast, different marine birds such as puffins, auks and common eiders. Petsamo area's wildlife was often exoticised and used as one of the main 'attractions' to lure tourists to the region. For instance, fishing tourism drew Finnish and international hobbyists to Petsamo's rivers and to the Arctic Ocean (see Arminen 2022).

In sum, the board displays the region in a very stereotypical manner. Since the publication of the game coincided with the completion of the road that ran from the village of Ivalo through the Petsamo area, one of its purposes could have been to advertise the region to the greater public in hopes of drawing in more visitors. In this way, the game also channelled the colonial thinking of the era and played a part in upholding its practices.

Throughout the game, the player interacts with nature and the animals along the path. As the player sets out on their journey, the numbers 12 and 15 provide them with ‘good fishing waters’ and an ‘abundance of game’. The river Paatsjoki runs by this section on the board, a waterway that has been one of the most popular places for fishing for salmon, trout and grayling (Arminen 2022). The same section of the game board also depicts a male and female wood grouse settled on the branches of a dead pine tree, assumedly representing potential small game. The same theme continues throughout the game. On number 43, the player stays in place for one round to watch the fishing as well as on number 58, where they lose one turn to stay in a hut surrounded by beautiful nature and good fishing waters. According to Elina Arminen (2022), fishing tourism played an important role in formulating the vision of Petsamo and its borders. Not only did it strengthen the region’s ties to Finland, but it was also a way to strengthen the whole nation’s sovereignty at the time when its independence and borders were seen as unstable (Arminen 2022).

The region had several other natural resources that Finland was eager to seize. One of these was the region’s ore reserves, which possible exploitation is brought up in the *Petsamo* game. Early on in the game, the player can stumble upon a ‘geologists’ tent’, where ‘men hack a mountain with their hammers’. Here, the player is invited to stay and help the geologists and stay in place for two rounds. Additionally, the rules mention black factory smoke in the Norwegian village of Kirkenes at number 42 where, at the time when the game was created, the ore mined in Bjørnevatn was concentrated. When the *Petsamo* game came out in the early 1930s, Finns had increased interests in the possibility of ore mining in the region. Perhaps the ‘geologists’ tent’ can be interpreted as such, a premonition of what was about to come, since it was not until 1938 when the Finnish ore factory in the village of Kolosjoki was founded, which came to symbolise lasting Finnish colonial presence in the region. (Stadius 2022.)

In addition to the above-mentioned fishing tourism, the game board and the rules also depict forms of industrial fishing. The board has two illustrations of vessels situated in the Arctic Sea that look like 19th century steam-powered fishing trawlers. Additionally, the instructions read that on number 80, the player boards a vessel to observe herring fishing. The rules also mention the harbour of Liinahamari, which never freezes over. This enabled year-round access for the fishing vessels to the Arctic Sea (Arminen 2022). In 1921, the Finnish state established the Petsamo Corporation whose role was to enhance the fishing industry and provisions logistics. The project did not, however, succeed, mostly due to its misuse and unpreparedness to compete with Norwegian fishing vessels. (Stadius 2022.)

In fact, competition between the bordering neighbours becomes clear in the *Petsamo* game as well. The game’s route strays briefly across the border to Norway’s side, where the player can end up in five different ‘spots’ that result in different actions following the rulebook. Four out of five of these are somehow negative or bring misfortune to the player. On number 36, which is located in Svanvik, the player is forced to restart the whole journey, while on number 37, ‘mean customs’ make the player miss two turns. Similarly, in Bjørnevandet, on number 41, the player loses two turns without an apparent reason. Number 42 in Kirknes offers the player ‘black factory smoke and noise’, and then prompts them to leave the place in haste. The fifth ‘spot’, 39, rewards the player by allowing them to pass by the area faster – which hardly suggests that there would be anything worthwhile staying for on the Western side of the border. Finally, number 81 in the Norwegian village of Vadsjö, reunites the player with the familiar ‘mean customs’. This rather obvious negative portrayal of the bordering country speaks of the way rivalry and fear defined the relationship between Finland and Norway in the Petsamo region at the time. The constant competition with the neighbouring countries

was a central feature of colonial rhetoric, the purpose of which was to demonstrate that the Finns were capable of assuming control of its new territory. (Stadius 2022.) Instead, the *Petsamo* game does not make similar direct references to Soviet Russia, apart from using euphemisms such as angry bears at the eastern border.

Additionally, large hotels and other lodgings for tourists form one of the most repetitive motifs on the game board. For example, board number 72 is located in Liinahamari and the rules describe the place as ‘new and grand’ where one can find a ‘fine hotel and food like nowhere else’. The illustration of a bus right at the beginning of the game journey also hints towards mass tourism. This, in addition to the several illustrations of Finnish flags on different buildings, marks the area as a tourist resort and also as a Finnish territory. Under Finnish rule, the Petsamo area became a national project that was strongly connected to the idea of seizing the land and Fennicising its culture. This is an integral part of settler colonialism and in the case of Petsamo as well, the land was seen as empty and pristine, which was then tamed and ‘civilised’ by the Finnish settlers. (Lahti 2022.)

The game board and instructions also have numerous depictions of the region’s native people, the Skolt Sámi. According to Arminen (2022), the Finnish ruling elite’s actions significantly limited both Orthodox monastery’s monks’ and natives’ original livelihood and trade and made them dependent on tourism. Their role was to serve and entertain tourists; they were both an attraction and workforce when local knowledge was needed. In the case of the *Petsamo* board game, the same pattern of representation continues. On one hand, the local inhabitants are portrayed as eager to help the player on their path with their local knowledge of the forest and grounds. This is the case on numbers 108 and 116, where first the player is aided by a local ‘ranger’, who knows the route well and thus gives the player an advantage, and second, when a ‘Laplander’ comes to collect the player with a boat and takes them with a tailwind behind them to the village of Inari. Then again, the board depicts the Skolts as posing by their goahti, a fabric-covered Sámi hut, or by their reindeers. This passive portrayal fits to the role the native people were often assigned to as Petsamo became a popular tourist resort. Along with its illustrations of the region’s fauna and flora, the game reduces the Skolt Sámi to one of the attractions of Petsamo.

Then, on the other hand, the game portrays the Sámi as potentially dangerous. Towards the end of the game, on numbers 95 and 96, the player might come across an ‘odd witch that roams in the fairytale-land’.

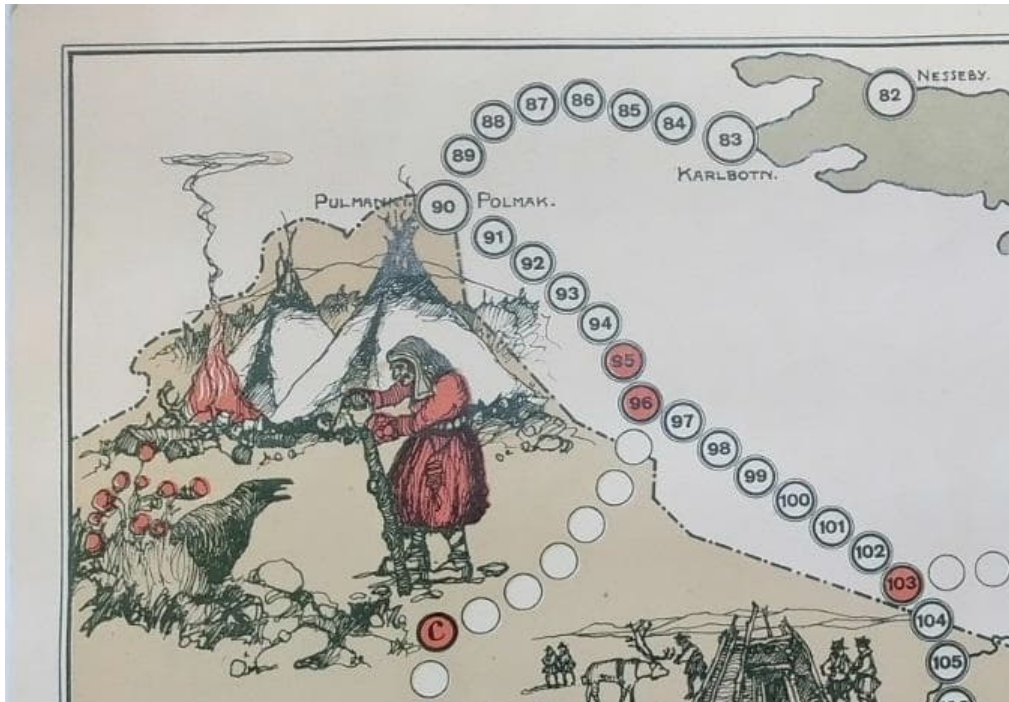


Figure 3: the game board's depiction of the 'witch'. Photo by Jaakko Suominen.

Here, the game board shows an old woman who is leaning on a walking stick and is wearing clothing that bears a resemblance to traditional Sámi clothing. The figure is standing in front of two goahtis, with a raven and a large fire to her side. The rules warn the player that the 'witch' can be in a 'mean mood'. If the player is able to evade her, they can continue their journey alone 'unafraid'. If, however, the player ends up on spot 96C, the witch can end the player's game altogether. The controversy between these two depictions, Sámi as both useful and potentially dangerous, is clear. It illustrates how colonial representation of the subject is rarely rational.

PLAYERS OF THE *PETSAMO* GAME

The copy of the game that we studied was wrapped in brown paper and bore the handwritten inscription "Göran's och Olofs gemensamma spel" (Göran's and Olof's shared game) on its back-side. Indeed, according to the Turku Museum Centre, the game had arrived in the museum's collection as part of a donation from the brothers Göran-Fredrik (1920–2007) and Olof Mustelin (1924–1999) in 1996. The donation consisted of items ranging from baptismal clothing to gas masks, statues and storage artifacts but also included card and board games, dice sets, tin soldier moulds, a periscope, a laterna magica, a bandy stick and other playthings. Upon learning about this, we decided that it would be interesting to investigate the game through its previous players as well as the game itself and its designers. To find information about the brothers, we consulted the archives of Åbo Akademi University and the Finnish National Library's digitised archives.

In order to inspect the environment in which the game was purchased, we took a closer look at the brothers' childhood. Olof and Göran-Frederik were born in Turku but by the time when the *Petsamo* game was released in 1931, the Mustelin family lived in Helsinki and the brothers were 11 and 7 years of age. Their parents were Edit (née Helsingius) and Bruno Mustelin. Bruno Mustelin was a graduate engineer and during his life he worked as an engineer in different shipyards and for the Ministry of Defence,

and also lectured on machine building and mechanical industry at Åbo Akademi. Edit Mustelin was originally from a town called Tammisaari and became a Master of Philosophy in 1916. Olof writes about his memories during the time they lived in Helsinki revealing living conditions of (upper) middle-class family and its gender roles: 'I think I remember our home and the view it had of Tempelgatan street quite well. It was an average size and quite a beautiful home, which our mother took care of (with help from the maid)'. Olof also describes his relationship to his parents: 'I grew quite attached to my parents even though father was very busy with his work. He went to work in the Ministry quite late in the morning but instead most likely also worked at home during the evenings'. Conversely, Olof reminisces that their mother took good care of them, since 'she had a lot of time'. The family moved back to Turku in 1936 and the brothers joined Turku's Swedish lyceum.

We know a few details about the brothers' relationship to games and other culture products through Olof Mustelin. In his memoirs, Olof writes that he spent a great deal of time assembling different 'collections' out of stamps, matchstick labels and tin soldiers, a hobby which, in his opinion, could be mirrored in his future career choices. The boys' mother helped Olof in assembling these in different 'archives'. The brothers also wrote for a '*Kivitok-post*', a family newspaper, which had detailed descriptions of the family's life from its different 'sectors'. Olof recalls that their mother wrote something for it, but the idea was that he and Göran-Frederik were the main authors – sometimes the boys were keen to fulfil this task and sometimes it felt exhausting. When it comes to literature, Olof writes that reading stories from classic children's books from authors such as Zacharias Topelius and Elsa Beskow out-loud increased his interest in it.

They also played 'all sorts of games' in their Helsinki home in Temppeleaukio. This can also be observed from the artifact collection donated to Turku Museum Centre. It consists of about 20 board and card games covering topics from sports, travel, education and miscellaneous themes, most of them of Finnish origin but also some German games, at least one was sent by aunt Liese from Germany as a birthday gift. Olof has also recorded the family's 'Corona world championship' games score tables in one of the notebooks from 1934 that we found in the Åbo Akademi archive. *Corona (Novuss)* is a wooden board game, introduced in Finland in the mid-1920s, which soon became commonplace in many Finnish households and in club activities (Suominen 2023). Olof also took interest in puzzles as indicated in the Finnish-Swedish scout magazine *Scoutposten*, where he had won the 'Christmas scouts' puzzle in 1939. However, it was the brothers' interest in sports that grew along the years. Not only did they play many different competitive games such as badminton and tennis ('football was most important'), Olof also made rigorous notes on different athletes' scores and games in his numerous notebooks.

The sea and sea fearing also seemed to form an important part of the brothers' childhood. Not only did their father build and design ships and lecture on them, but they also had a summer cottage in Turku's archipelago. In 1925, Bruno Mustelin had put out advertisements in two different Swedish-Finnish newspapers *Åbo Underrättelser* and *Västra Finland* to enquire about a 'summer home in the archipelago with two rooms and a kitchen'. By all accounts, the family found a suitable lodging as both brothers later wrote longingly about their summers in the archipelago and adventures made with the family's motorboat 'Molekylen'.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have examined how the *Petsamo* board game was situated in the inter-war period game cultures in Finland. As a board game, the *Petsamo* was typical and

atypical at the same time. On one hand, it represented a popular and widely circulated game genre, racing games, which had previously been often used similarly in mapping geographical areas and the representation of their characteristics due to ideological reasons (Ylänen 2017). *Petsamo* can be added in the line of the Petsamo related products that were part of cultural colonialist practices of annexation of the area, and thus, gamified colonialism, interactively depicting borderlands, settler activities, nature resource utilisation and exoticisation, can be seen as a subcategory of cultural colonialism.

On the other hand, *Petsamo* was the first and perhaps the only game that depicts the specific region in Northern Europe as far as we know. The fact that the game was an independent publication is also exceptional, because most of the board games of that era were published and marketed by large publishing houses. It is likely that the game designers, Frans Nyberg and Ruth Torén, had no previous experience in game design, even though Nyberg's visual arts background was common for game designers at that time. Games were designed mostly as side jobs within a larger visual and graphics work portfolio.

Not much information exists on the reception and usage of cardboard games in the interwar period. Similarly, in this case, we do not know how widely the *Petsamo* game was circulated and on what kind of occasions even the particular studied copy of the game was played. However, because of the archival material related to the game owners, we know that many-sided gaming and sports formed an important part of their leisure activities and everyday life.

The *Petsamo* game was situated in a certain geographical area that was annexed to Finland for about 25 years. Locality had a double meaning referring to a Finnish game depicting Finnish or Northern landscape in a specific geographic area. Here, we have seen controversies related to, for example, representations of Sámi people as well as to neighbouring countries. However, in this paper, we have also studied the designers and the owners/players of the game to provide a more holistic overview on one single copy of the game and its place in the interwar Finnish game cultures.

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