

Conservation and Change:
Response, Adaptation and
Leadership

Studies in Conservation

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ysic20>

Collaborating with a Source Community to Conserve two Sámi Coffee Bags by Combining Established Conservation Treatments and Traditional Preservation Methods

Kuukua Anna Buduson

To cite this article: Kuukua Anna Buduson (2022) Collaborating with a Source Community to Conserve two Sámi Coffee Bags by Combining Established Conservation Treatments and Traditional Preservation Methods, *Studies in Conservation*, 67:sup1, 40-48, DOI: [10.1080/00393630.2022.2051959](https://doi.org/10.1080/00393630.2022.2051959)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00393630.2022.2051959>



© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 31 Mar 2022.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 685



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Collaborating with a Source Community to Conserve two Sámi Coffee Bags by Combining Established Conservation Treatments and Traditional Preservation Methods

Kuukua Anna Buduson

Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway

ABSTRACT

This article summarizes a masters dissertation project from 2019, whose aim was to collaborate with a Sámi source community and decide on a suitable conservation treatment for two coffee bags (*gáfeseahkkat* in Sámi). Technical examination was carried out using light microscopy and Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectroscopy to investigate the powder on the surface. Discussion with members of the *duodji* (Sámi handcraft) community was then carried out with the aim of discussing the technical findings, the cultural significance of the *duodji* coffee bags, and traditional knowledge of *duodji* techniques and Sámi preservation methods. The purpose was to uncover hidden traditional knowledge and evaluate whether suitable and established conservation treatments could be combined with traditional Sámi preservation methods.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received November 2021
Accepted March 2022

KEYWORDS

Sámi culture; indigenous people; collaboration; source community; ethnographic conservation

Introduction

In museums that collect, preserve, research, and exhibit the cultural heritage of indigenous peoples, attempts to repatriate such collections to the original owners have been both successful and challenging (Bolz 1993; Johnson and Henry 2002). Success has often been linked to a collaborative approach between museum staff and ‘source communities,’ meaning individuals who identify with a group of indigenous people and who can provide additional and hidden knowledge regarding the cultural significance of the museum’s collection (Peers and Brown 2003; Nicks 2003).

Such a collaborative approach has enabled these museums to exhibit valid information that is embedded in their collections by combining material culture with a living culture (intangible heritage) –that is, the practices, representation, and expression recognized by an indigenous people as part of their cultural heritage (Lenzerini 2011). This approach has also benefited museums by allowing them to express their respect for indigenous people by sharing the power structure of preserving and exhibiting such cultural heritage, thus changing attitudes from previously depicted views of indigenous peoples as dying cultures on the brink of extinction (Bernstein 1992; Knappett 2005; Madden 2010; Smith 2012; Sully 2016).

However, sharing power has also challenged the established framework regarding how museums preserve the artifacts in their collections. Because conservation deals with preserving the physical nature of the artifact, Clavir (1996) has discussed how collaboration and inclusion of a living culture has challenges such as: relying on scientific methods and conclusions; ethics in decision-making regarding conservation treatments; the authority of conservators as specialists; and how conservators work.

Regardless of the challenges, Clavir contended (1996, 2002) that if the goal of conservation is to preserve the ‘true integrity’ of the artifact, then the entire conceptual framework needs to be defined (Wharton 2008). Hence, by combining condition with the living culture that is embedded in such artifacts, a suitable conservation treatment provides an opportunity to preserve both the physical artefact and living cultures. As a result, comparison of indigenous people’s preservation methods with established conservation methods provides an opportunity for museums to include their methods and thus preserve their living culture (Green 2006).

This article will therefore explore the benefits and challenges of collaborating with a source community in selecting a conservation treatment, by focusing on two coffee bags. GG38 (Figure 1) was produced in 1977, while GG319 (Figure 2) was produced around



CONTACT Kuukua Anna Buduson  anna.buduson@gmail.com  Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway



Figure 1. GG38 before treatment (A) and after treatment (B).



Figure 2. GG319 before treatment (A) and after treatment (B).

the 1950s. These are described as *duodji*, or handcrafted Sámi objects, and are part of the collection of the Guovdageainnu Gilišillju / Kautokeino bygdetun, RiddoDuottarMuseat, hereafter RiddoDuottarMuseat, which is a Sámi museum located in Guovdageainnu / Kautokeino, Norway. The aim of this study is to evaluate how collaboration with a *duodji* source community can aid a conservator in deciding upon a suitable conservation treatment that combines Sámi and established conservation methods.

The *duodji* coffee bags and their condition

The two *duodji* coffee bags differ in color, thickness, and appearance. GG319 is decorated with textile banners and is stiffer and thinner. GG38 is semi-stiff and lacks decoration. The brown leather used for GG319 is also lighter compared with that used for GG38, which is dark brown. The difference is most likely due to the animal species and tanning technique applied to process the skin, as well as the health of the animal from which the hide was taken. GG38 is filled with blister sedge (*Carex vesicaria*), which is a traditional Sámi method used to preserve leather in its three-dimensional form (Hætta et al. 2007).

The top of GG319 is longer and wider compared with GG38; moreover, the wrinkles in the bottom of GG319 are more defined than those at the bottom of GG38. Both bags consist of five parts: a top part, a decorative part, a middle part, a bottom part, and a ribbon. The parts in GG38 are sewn by hand, while the parts in GG319 were put together using a sewing machine. The museum director wanted the *duodji* coffee bags to be treated by combining Sámi and established preservation methods. Investigation of the traditional materials used in the coffee bags was also of interest.

Cultural significance of *duodji* objects

In simple terms, *duodji* can be defined as traditional Sámi handcraft techniques that are used to produce objects and artwork (Gabrielsen 2001). The objects are created by a *duojár* (plural *duoját*), meaning a *duodji* artisan who has developed handcraft skills through kinship knowledge – the transmission of knowledge between generations (Guttorm 2009). The raw materials used to produce *duodji* objects have traditionally been sourced from local areas where the Sámi live (Guttorm 2009). Due to kinship knowledge, the production, design, and shape of *duodji* objects might vary locally or even between families; this allows the details to vary in the objects while maintaining most details in accord with *duodji* traditions.

A *duojár* produces either hard or soft *duodji*. Hard *duodji* are created using hard materials, such as wood, stone, bone, or metal, and are traditionally produced by a man. Soft *duodji*, on the other hand, consist

of soft materials, such as textiles, fur, and leather, and are traditionally produced by a woman. Terms such as *atnu-*, *cikna-*, and *dáiddaduodji* are used to distinguish whether a *duodji* object is for everyday use (*atnu*), decoration (*cikna*), or artwork (*dáidda*) (Guttorm 2009). This article will focus on soft *atnuduodji* made of leather.

Leather manufacturing processes among the Sámi people include using vegetable tanning, mineral tanning, fat tanning, smoking, or combinations of these with other methods (Rahme 1985; Klokernes 2007). These methods have usually been used on hides from reindeer, deer, moose, sheep, or goat (Rahme 1985). Other hides have also been used, such as wolf, lynx, dog, hare, and mink, often to make accessories for clothing as well as smaller objects, such as coffee bags (Klokernes 2007). The tanning process yields different leather characteristics, such as color and softness.

Kinship knowledge covering the process of creating *duodji* materials, as well as the finished product of a *duodji* object, exists among many Sámi people, even if they are not *duoját*. A strong connection between *duodji* and the Sámi people therefore exists because many Sámi share a personal connection with objects that represent their identity as indigenous people (Guttorm 2014). *Duodji* objects can, therefore, be understood as an identity carrier for the Sámi people. The constant change and diffusion in the term also allows one to understand *duodji* as being dynamic and constantly changing with time (Kramvig and Flemmen 2016). Different perceptions of such objects, depending on who is consulted within the Sámi community, might therefore occur.

Suitable conservation treatments for leather artifacts

Conservation treatments are decided based on investigations of an artifact with the goals of ensuring that the artifact's value is not diminished and that its physical and cultural significance is maintained (Caple 2000; Muñoz Viñas 2005). The purpose is to extend the lifespan of the artifact without altering or changing either its original or current state, so that future generations can access the artifact in its 'true integrity', which conservators have to investigate to define its value. The term can be understood as the physical traits of the artifact, such as the structure, design, and production technique, as well as wear, usage, and later repairs (Clavir 1996; Muñoz Viñas 2005). When these elements are identified, it is possible to decide on a treatment that respects the originality of the artifact, thereby preserving its true integrity.

Due to the importance of such preservation, treatment decisions for leather artifacts normally consist of doing as little as possible. The first step consists of

cleaning the leather by vacuuming the surface to remove loose deposits. Most conservators of leather have stopped using solvents because of past mistakes that have worsened or damaged the condition of leather artifacts (Doyal and Kite 2006). Leathers that are stiff and fragile are often reshaped by humidifying the leather and gradually manipulating it back to its original shape. Internal support is then added to preserve the three-dimensional form and to eliminate sagging and stress on the leather (Angus, Kite, and Sturge 2006). These procedures are often described as appropriate conservation treatments because they preserve value, while maintaining true integrity if that is defined narrowly as physical appearance.

To finish the treatment, patching, sewing, or adhesives and infills can be applied to reduce any visible damage that disturbs the leather's appearance (Doyal and Kite 2006). However, unless there is a specific need to preserve the aesthetic appearance of the leather artifact, such treatments are seldom performed because they might alter the artifact's true integrity.

Leather from indigenous artifacts, however, is usually treated differently than that from historical and archaeological artifacts. Because of the hidden knowledge represented in such artifacts, their true integrity can often be interpreted differently by museum conservators and indigenous people. However, this knowledge must be recognized and understood in the process of deciding on a suitable conservation treatment (Doyal and Kite 2006). Investigation and collaboration with source communities are therefore key elements that can guide a conservator in including indigenous preservation methods.

Methods

The investigation of the leather coffee bags was conducted using a two-step process. The first step consisted of technical examination to identify the material and techniques used to produce the coffee bags. The second step consisted of consulting with *duoját* through a conversation. The aim was to collect additional information and hidden knowledge about the cultural significance, *duodji* technique, production, and preservation of the coffee bags. The results were then used to select a suitable conservation treatment.

Investigating textiles and sewing thread using microscopy

Because reference images for different hides were not available, the conservator did not investigate the grain on the surface of the leather using microscopy to determine which type of hide was used in the production of the coffee bags. However, the textile

decoration on GG319, as well as the sewing threads on GG38, might resemble traditional materials and were studied further using microscopy.

The textiles in GG319 were investigated using a Leica MZ6 stereomicroscope. The aim was to study the weaving pattern and examine whether the textiles were homemade or commodity products. The sewing threads used to produce GG38 were of interest because they were of an unrecognizable material. The thread fibers were examined as wet mounts and compared to both animal and synthetic reference fibers.

Investigating the leather surface using FTIR

White powder resembling deposited salt on the surfaces of both coffee bags was of interest because it could give an indication of what tanning process had been used. Four samples were collected from the front and back of the leather for both coffee bags. These were analyzed using a Perkin-Elmer Spectrum One FTIR spectrometer. The peaks were labeled and compared with the in-house spectral library.

Consulting a source community

A focus group interview was chosen as the appropriate conversation method. Because the coffee bags were soft *duodji*, they were most likely produced by women. Three female *duoját* from Guovdageainnu (Kautokeino) volunteered to participate in the focus group, which was led by the conservator and observed by the museum director from RiddoDuottarMuseat. The conversation was held in the exhibition room at RiddoDuottarMuseat. A range of topics was discussed in the focus group including: the results of the technical study; hidden knowledge surrounding the cultural significance of the coffee bags; kinship knowledge underlying *duodji* techniques; and traditional Sámi preservation methods. This additional information made it possible to evaluate and select a suitable conservation treatment, and determine whether traditional Sámi conservation methods could be combined with established conservation treatments.

Results

Microscopy

Wear on the textile used to decorate GG319 made it challenging to determine whether the weaving patterns were homemade or commodity products. The microscopic examination could not determine whether the fibers used in the sewing threads in GG38 were organic or synthetic (Figure 3). Due to limited time for the project and lack of reference materials for fibers, it was not possible to go further.

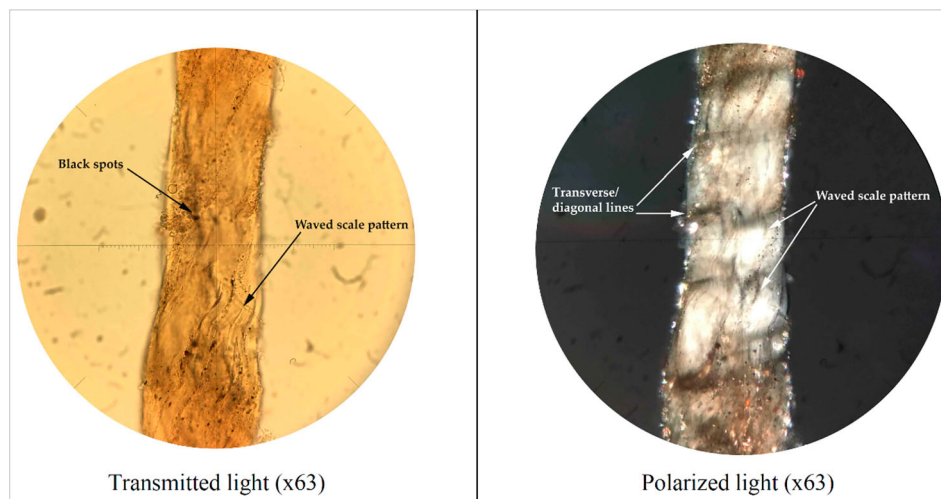


Figure 3. Sewing thread from GC38 in transmitted light with uncrossed (left) and crossed polarisers (right).

FTIR

Figure 4a shows that the GG38 sample had a 97% match with a reference sample labeled red iron oxide in boiled linseed oil, even though there were no red areas on the bag. Figure 4b shows a sample from GG319, which had an 82% match with a reference sample labeled docosanol, a saturated fatty alcohol used traditionally as an emollient or thickener in cosmetics.

However, peaks between $3,000\text{--}2,500\text{ cm}^{-1}$ were present in all samples, indicating that the samples might contain triglycerides, a lipid compound found in different oils, waxes and fats (Mills and White 2011). FTIR does not identify specific oils (Stuart 2007). Therefore, further investigations using gas chromatography would need to be conducted to evaluate whether the precipitation was due to the Sámi tanning technique or to added materials.

Focus group interview

The *duoját* were presented with the results of the technical examination and images of the coffee bags. Regarding the unclear FTIR results, they explained that a traditional cleaning method using *ostu* could create such a product. *Ostu* is the Sámi word for willow bark (*Salix L.*), which is prepared by boiling the bark in water and then cooling it completely before using the bark as a sponge to clean the surface. If the leather objects were dry, a mixture of bark water with either fat or oil would also be used to prevent them from becoming hard. Soap and other detergents are also common to use and might therefore explain the docosanol match. It was concluded that it was impossible to determine the content of the powder on the surface.

Regarding the unsuccessful fiber identification of the sewing threads in GG38, one *duojár* explained

that the reason the fibers could not be identified was that the sewing threads were likely made of animal sinew, commonly used when sewing soft *duodji* objects. Therefore, an analytical method used to identify the presence of animal protein should have been applied.

Furthermore, when the cultural significance of *duodji* objects was discussed, the local environment was found to be crucial, because all three *duoját* had direct access to raw material through their activities, such as reindeer herding, farming, and fishing. A loyalty bond called *verdet* was also mentioned regarding how raw material was collected. The term *verdet* refers to an established trading relationship between two Sámi's engaged in different activities who would only trade their raw materials between each other, which established and strengthened the bond of loyalty. The materials used in the coffee bags might therefore either come from the local area or through *verdet* loyalty bonds, because they date back to the 1950s when *verdet* connections was still common among the Sámi people.

When the cultural significance of the actual *duodji* coffee bags was discussed, the *duoját* explained that historically, coffee bags were used to store coffee, tea, dry food, or even money; they were also an accessory to be worn with traditional Sámi clothing, called *gákti*. The shape of the bag would also vary depending on the local area. One *duojár* explained that currently, the design of such bags was understood as the prototype for modern coffee bags and other accessory purses worn with *gákti*. However, the *duoját* could confirm that the coffee bags originated from Kautokeino based on their design and shape.

Regarding kinship knowledge in creating *duodji* objects in general, the technique was taught orally at home, and it can be understood as 'silent' knowledge, because it resides in hand skills. However, one participant stressed that, since oral traditions are often key to

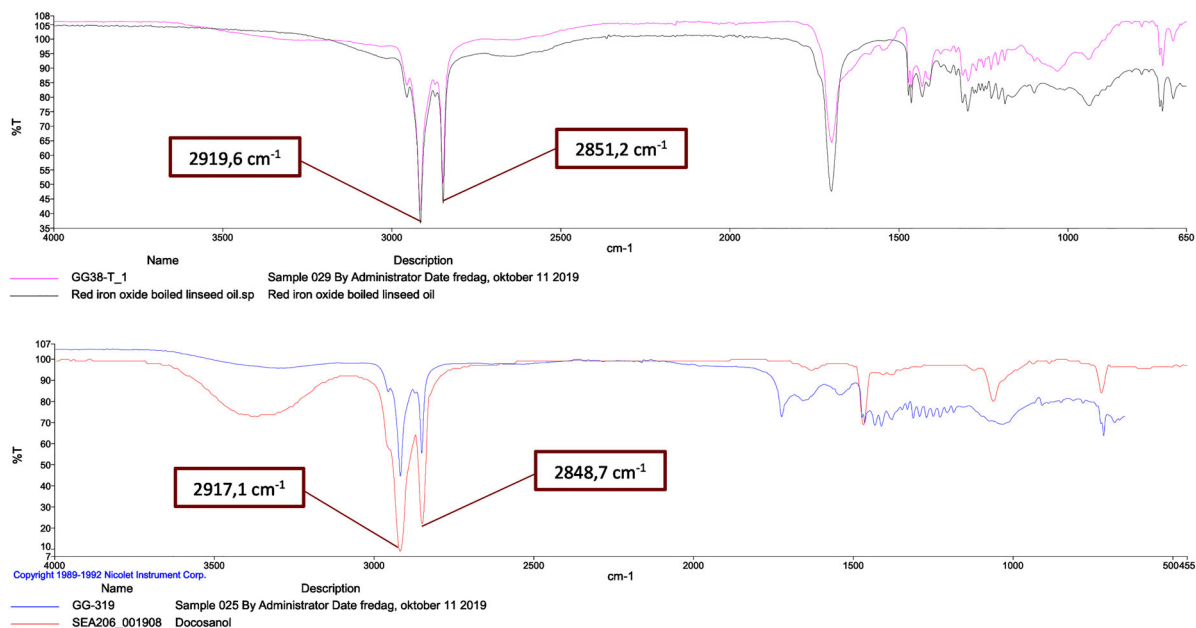


Figure 4. FTIR results for G38 (pink line) and reference spectrum (black line); and GG319 (blue line) and reference spectrum (red line).

kinship knowledge, the principle of using *duodji* terminology and explaining the production using Sámi words was crucial. The Sámi terminology for the different parts of the coffee bags is summarized in Figure 5.

Regarding traditional Sámi preservation methods and established conservation treatments, the focus group interview revealed that the *duoját* had a similar understanding of the conservation process to conservators. For example, if leather materials were stiff and hard, the *duoját* would perform the same treatment as conservators, which was to reshape the leather by humidifying it and carefully stretching it back into its original form. Regarding stabilization and repair, the *duoját* agreed with the conservation practice of preserving the coffee bags by expanding their lifespan but doing as little as possible to their current appearance, thereby preserving their true integrity.

Similarly, the *duoját* agreed with typical conservation practice on the importance of preserving the

three-dimensional form. However, they recommended using blister sedge as the internal support, because it is used by the Sámi people to prevent moisture remaining in leather objects, which can result in mold growth. Moreover, because blister sedge combined with leather has a distinct scent that is recognized amongst the Sámi people, it carries an intangible heritage that complements the conceptual framework of the leather objects that they use.

Treatment of the coffee bags

Surface cleaning was conducted by removing loose surface deposits using a vacuum cleaner, followed by a scalpel to carefully scrape off unwanted deposited layers without damaging the leather. This minimizes the visible signs of dirt while preserving the true integrity of the objects, namely the visible evidence of historical usage.

The reshaping process consisted of constructing a chamber to create a humid microclimate that could

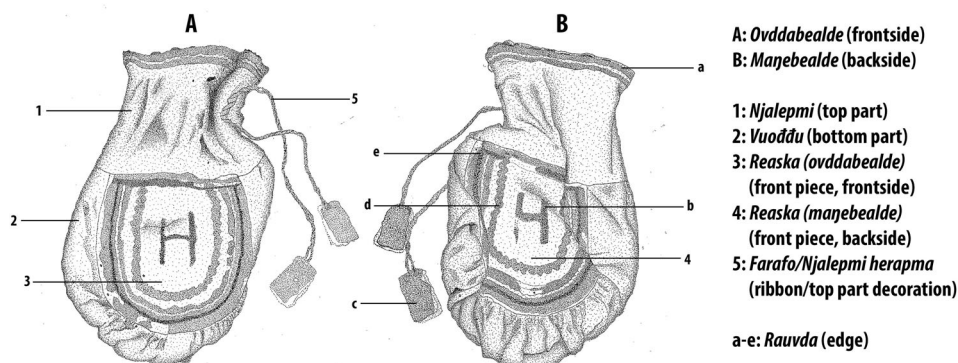


Figure 5. Sámi terminology for the different parts of GG319.

be regulated and controlled. The skeleton of the chamber consisted of poles that measured 51 × 52 × 79 cm. Polyethylene plastic was wrapped around the poles. An opening and closing mechanism was created in front of the tent. A TinyTag Ultra 2 datalogger together with a hygrometer were placed inside to record the relative humidity (RH), to ensure that the RH did not increase above 75%. After the coffee bags were moistened for three days, reshaping was completed using the fingers to carefully soften the leather. Blister sedge was used as an internal support to complete the treatment (Figures 1 and 2).

Discussion

The conversations and discussions that were conducted in the focus group interview indicated that conservators and *duoját* think alike, and that valuable traditional preservation methods used by the Sámi people might be beneficial in conservation. The benefit of analyzing them and evaluating their usage through a conversation is that it allows such methods to be evaluated on equal terms as established conservation treatments. Likewise, the approach in this project revealed that preserving the coffee bags with traditional Sámi techniques using an internal support of blister sedge provided opportunities to include intangible heritage within conservation treatment, a concept that is worth further study. Therefore, established conservation treatments could be combined with traditional Sámi treatments.

The process of selecting a conservation treatment was conducted in simple steps with minimal intervention to preserve the evidence of historical usage; it included the use of blister sedge as a traditional preservation method. However, *ostu* was not used during this treatment since past use of solvents by conservators has resulted in damage to leather. Moreover, it was not necessary to remove the stains during this round of treatment. However, further study on the effect of using *ostu* as a cleaning solvent could create an opportunity to use this method in Sámi museums in the future.

Regardless of the successful results of this study, some challenges and weaknesses in the collaborative approach should be addressed. First, the intention was to invite six to eight *duoját* to a focus group to enable participants to discuss the topics with minimal participation from the conservator, thus eliciting information from a variety of viewpoints (Hollway and Jefferson 2000; Gubrium and Holstein 2002; Morgan 2002; Warren 2002; Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). However, only a few *duoját* volunteered to collaborate in this project. Consequently, traditional knowledge was unveiled from the perspectives of only three participants, which yielded only a few interpretations. Therefore, the present study did not

result in a thorough understanding from a community perspective.

Secondly, conducting the investigation and collaboration process in two separate steps was a weakness in the methodology. The aim was for the conservator to use the established analytical methods and present the results to the *duoját*, with the intention of enabling them to add information that the analysis did not yield. However, the results showed that the focus group conversation should have been conducted simultaneously with the laboratory investigation, allowing opportunities for the conservator to select analytical methods that would have yielded much more relevant results and for the *duoját* to study the coffee bags in detail.

Thirdly, the FTIR reference samples stem from previously analyzed pigments and oils in paintings and understandably are not representative for artifacts like the coffee bags. Rather, they provide suggestions that require further investigation. This created a problem for evaluating whether the precipitation on the surface was due to the tanning process or to cleaning of the leather by the previous owners. Investigation of the fiber used for the threads also revealed that the conservator's lack of knowledge and limited time in analyzing the fibers further resulted in little benefit.

Conclusion

The results of the technical study, combined with focus group conversation with the *duoját*, showed that the collaborative approach was both successful and challenging. The success consisted of the scope of hidden knowledge that was revealed during the conversations. In addition, the *duoját* contribution enabled the conservator to decide on a suitable conservation treatment to preserve the true integrity of the coffee bags. The challenge was that only a few participants volunteered for the project, which limited the potential to discover a variety of viewpoints. Another restriction for the project was the limited reference material for fibers and FTIR spectra. Nonetheless, the findings indicate that collaboration would benefit conservators and museums in understanding the cultural significance of artifacts made by indigenous peoples and how they should be preserved.

Acknowledgements

I wish to show my appreciation to my supervisors Noëlle Lynn Wenger Streeton and Anne May Olli for encouraging me and helping me finalize the project. I also wish to extend my special thanks to Johan Aslak Hætta and Ellen Balls for providing me with the two *duodji* objects from the museum collection, and to the *duoját* who participated in the focus group interview; this project would never have happened had it not been for the museum's and *duoját* participation.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

References

- Angus, A., M. Kite, and T. Sturge. 2006. "General Principles of Care, Storage and Display." In *Conservation of Leather and Related Materials*, edited by M. Kite, and R. Thomson, 113–120. London: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Bernstein, B. 1992. "Collaborative Strategies for the Preservation of North American Indian Material Culture." *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 31 (1): 23–29.
- Bolz, P. 1993. "Repatriation of Native American Cultural Objects – Confrontation or Cooperation?" *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 118 (1): 69–77.
- Brinkmann, S., and S. Kvale. 2015. *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. 3rd edn. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Caple, C. 2000. *Conservation Skill: Judgment, Method and Decision-Making*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Clavir, M. 1996. "Reflections on Changes in Museums and the Conservation of Collections from Indigenous Peoples." *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 35(2): 99–107.
- Clavir, M. 2002. *Preserving What is Valued: Museums, Conservation and First Nations*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Doyal, S., and M. Kite. 2006. "Ethnographic Leather and Skin Production." In *Conservation of Leather and Related Materials*, edited by M. Kite, and R. Thomson, 184–191. London: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Gabrielsen, S. H. 2001. "Duodji." In *Av nød, lyst og kjærlighet: husflid i Nordland gjennom 100 ar*, edited by S. H. Gabrielsen, 276–280. Bodø: Sentraltrykkeriet.
- Green, V. 2006. "Using Case Studies to Examine the Decision-Making Process for Cleaning Ethnographic Objects." *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 45(3): 183–199.
- Gubrium, J. F., and J. A. Holstein. 2002. "From the Individual Interview to the Interview Society." In *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*, edited by J. F. Gubrium, and J. A. Holstein, 3–2. Thousand Oaks and London: Sage.
- Guttorm, G. 2009. "Duodji: som begrep og som del av livet." In *Gierdu: bevegelser i samisk kunstverden*, edited by E. S. Vikjord, and I. Snarby, 12–17. Bodø: Samorganisasjonen for kunstformidling i Nord-Norge og RiddoDuottarMuseat.
- Guttorm, G. 2014. "Duodji – kultur- og identitetsbærer og næring." In *Samtinget 25 ar S. R. Nystø*, edited by M. Guhttor, and S. Pedersen, 171–182. Alta: Bjørkmanns.
- Hætta, M., B. Aarseth, L. G. Wilks, M. J. and Gaup, and M. J. 2007. *Håndbok i Duodji: Samisk håndverk*. Nesbru: Forlaget Vett and Viten AS.
- Hollway, W., and T. Jefferson. 2000. *Doing Qualitative Research Differently: Free Association, Narrative and the Interview Method*. London: Sage.
- Johnson, J. S., and J. P. Henry. 2002. "Pesticides and Repatriation at the National Museum of the American Indian." In *ICCM-CC 13th Triennial Meeting Rio de Janeiro Preprints*, edited by R. Vontobel, 673–678. London: James and James.
- Klokkernes, T. 2007. *Skin Processing Technology in Eurasian Reindeer Cultures: A Comparative Study in Material Science of Sami and Evenk Methods: Perspectives on Deterioration and Preservation of Museum Artefacts*. Doctoral thesis, Royal Academy of Fine Arts, The School of Conservation, Copenhagen, Denmark and The Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway.
- Knappett, C. 2005. *Thinking Through Material Culture: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press.
- Kramvig, B., and A. B. Flemmen. 2016. "What Alters When the Traditional Sámi Costume Travels?: A Study of Affective Investments in the Sápmi." In *Sensitive Objects: Affect and Material Culture*, edited by J. Frykman, and M. P. Frykman, 179–198. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.
- Lenzerini, F. 2011. "Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Living Culture of Peoples." *European Journal of International Law* 22 (1): 101–120.
- Madden, R. 2010. *Being Ethnographic: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Ethnography*. New Delhi: Sage.
- Mills, J. S., and R. White. 2011. *The Organic Chemistry of Museum Objects*. 2nd edn. London and New York: Routledge.
- Morgan, D. L. 2002. "Focus Group Interviewing." In *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*, edited by J. F. Gubrium, and J. A. Holstein, 141–159. Thousand Oaks and London: Sage.
- Muñoz Viñas, S. 2005. *Contemporary Theory of Conservation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Nicks, T. 2003. "Introduction." In *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*, edited by L. Peers, and A. K. Brown, 19–28. London: Routledge.
- Peers, L., and A. K. Brown. 2003. "Introduction." In *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*, edited by L. Peers, and A. K. Brown, 1–16. London: Routledge.
- Rahme, L. 1985. *Garvning och beredning av hudar och skinn med traditionella metoder*. Östersund: Institutet för förhistorisk teknologi.
- Smith, L. T. 2012. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd edn. London: Zed Books.
- Stuart, B. 2007. *Analytical Techniques in Materials Conservation*. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.
- Sully, D. 2016. "Setting the Scene: Introduction." In *Decolonizing Conservation: Caring for Maori Meeting Houses Outside New Zealand*, edited by D. Sully, 19–26. New York: Routledge.
- Warren, C. A. B. 2002. "Qualitative Interviewing." In *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*, edited by J. F. Gubrium, and J. A. Holstein, 83–101. Thousand Oaks and London: Sage.
- Wharton, G. 2008. "Dynamics of Participatory Conservation: The Kamehameha I Sculpture Project." *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 47 (3): 159–173.

Appendix: Interview questions

Part 1. Duojár

- Why did you choose to work with *duodji*?
- Can you give a summary of your background as a *duojár* and your work with *duodji*?

Part 2. Duodji in time and space

- What is *duodji*?
- Why is *duodji* Sámi?

Part 3. Gáfeseahkka as a *duodji* object

- What is a *gáfeseahkka*?
- How do you use a *gáfeseahkka*?

- How do you think the *gáfeseahkkat* (GG38 and GG319) were used?

Part 4. Production technique, availability of materials, and the end product

- How do you learn to make *duodji*?
- For whom do you produce *duodji*?
- What raw materials are used to make *duodji* products?
- What is the relation between the raw materials and Sámi culture?
- Can you explain Sámi traditions regarding leather processing techniques?
- Do Guovdageainnu (Kautokeino) traditions differ from other Sámi local areas?

Part 5. Preservation methods for *duodji* objects

- How are *duodji* objects, such as *gáfeseahkka*, preserved?
- Why is blister sedge used for leather objects?
- Does the preservation method reveal anything about the Sámi culture and traditions?

Part 6. Indigenous peoples' objects from a conservation perspective

The conservator will give a short presentation and explain the ethical guidelines in the field of conservation. The aim is to introduce the participants to the ethical guidelines and why collaborations between museum staffs and source communities should be performed, so that participants can understand why such conservation efforts are important

when it comes to understanding how far a conservator should go in performing a conservation treatment. Duration, approx. 3–5 min.

Discussion of the choice of conservation treatments for the *gáfeseahkkat* GG38 and GG319:

- *Gáfeseahkka* GG38 was filled with blister sedge when it entered the museum collection and is softer than GG319. In conservation such secondary elements might be perceived as a traditional Sámi preservation method and may be removed unless it damages the object. What do you think about using such Sámi methods as a conservation method in a museum preservation context?
- Analytical studies have been carried out indicating that *gáfeseahkka* GG38 and GG319 might have been treated with an oil, wax, fat, or soap. Which do you think is most likely?
- Holes are present in the *gáfeseahkkat*. Conservation treatments of such damages are sometimes carried out to stabilize the objects condition. However, when it comes to museum objects that present indigenous culture, this is carefully considered as one does not want to add new materials and methods to disturb the authenticity of the object. What do you think about this view?

Closing comment:

- What do you think about this approach and discussion together, where museum staff and members of a source community collaborate in discussing the value, historical context, and preservation method for the *gáfeseahkkat*?