

“Notes upon Russia”

Vol. II.

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Laponia

The region of Laponia was so named of the people that inhabite it. For the Germanes call all suche Laponas as are simple or vnapte to thinges. This people is of small stature, and of suche agilitie of bodie, that hauyng theyr quyuers of arrowes gerte to them, and theyr bowes in theyr handes, they can with a leape cast themselues through a circle or hope of the diameter of a cubite. They fight on foote, armed with bowes and arrowes, after the maner of the Tartars. They are exercised in hurlyng the darte, and shootyng, from theyr youth: insomuche that they gyue theyr chyldren no meate vntyll they hyt the marke they shoote at, as dyd in old tyme thynhabitauntes of the Ilandes called Baleares. They vse to make theyr apparell streight and close to theyr bodyes, that it hynder not theyr woorke. Theyr wynter vestures are made of the whole skynnes of Seales or Beares, artificially wrought, and made supple. These they tye with a knotte aboue theyr heads, leauyng onely two holes open to looke through, and haue all the residue of theyr bodyes couered, as though they were sowed in sakes, but that this beyng adopted to all partes of theyr bodyes, is so made for commoditie, and not for a punyshment, as the Romanes were

accustomed to sow paricides in sakes of leather, with a Cocke, an Ape, and a Serpent, and so to hurle them alyue altogether into the ryuer of Tiber. And heereby I thinke it came to passe, that in olde tyme it was rashly beleueed, that in these regions there were men with rough & heary bodyes lyke wylde bestes, as parte made relation through ignoraunce, parte also takyng pleasure in rehearsall of suche thinges as are straunge to the hearers. The Lapones defended by this arte and industry, goe abrode

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and withstand the sharpenesse of wynter and the North wyndes, with all the iniuryes of heauen. They haue no houses, but certayne Tabernacles lyke tentes or haies, wherewith they passe from place to place, and change their mansions. Some of them lyue after the maner of the people of Sarmatia, called in olde tyme Amaxobii, which vsed waynes in the steade of houses, They are much giuen to huntyng, and haue suche plentie of wylde bestes, that they kyll them in maner in euery place. It is not lawful for a woman to goe foorth of the tent at that doore by the which her husbände went out on huntyng the same day, nor yet to touche with her hande any parte of the beast that is taken, vntyll her husbände reache her on the spytte suche a portion of fleshe as he thynketh good. They tyll not the grounde. The region nourysheth no kynde of Serpentes: yet are there great and noysome Gnattes. They take fyshe in great plentie: by the commoditie whereof they lyue after the maner of the Ethiopians, called Ichthiophagi. For as these drye theyr fyshe with feruent heate, so doe they drye them with colde, and grynde or stampe them to pouder as small as meale or floure. They haue suche

aboundaunce of these fyshes, that they hould great plentie thereof in certeyne store houses, to carry them vnto other landes neare about them, as Northbothnia, and Whyte Russia. Theyr shyppes are not made with nayles, but are tyed togeather and made fast with cordes and wythes. With these they sayle by the swyft ryuers betweene the mountaynes of Laponia, beyng naked in sommer that they may the better swymme in the tyme of perill, and geather togeather such wares as are in daunger to be lost by shypwracke. Parte of them exercise handie craftes, as imbroderyng and weauyng of cloth, interlaced with gold and siluer. Suche as haue deuised any necessary Arte, or doe increase and amende the inuentions of other, are openly honoured, and rewarded with a vesture, in the which is imbrodered an argument or token

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of the thyng they deuised. And this remayneth to the posteritie of theyr famelie, in token of theyr desartes. They frame shyppes, buylde houses, and make dyuers sortes of housholde stufte artificially, and transporte them to other places neare about. They huye and sell both for exchange of wares, and for money. And this only by consent of both parties, without communication: yet not for lacke of wytte, or for rudenesse of maners, but bycause they haue a peculiar language ynknowen to theyr borderers. It is a valiant nation, and lyued long free, and susteyned the warres of Norway and Suetia, vntyll at the length they submitted themselues, and payde ryche furies for theyr tribute. They chose themselues a gouernour, whom they cal a kyng : But the kyng of Suetia gyueth him auctoritie and administration. Neuerthelesse, the people in theyr

suites and doubtful causes resorte to Suetia to haue theyr matters decided.

In theyr iourneys, they go not to any Inne, nor yet enter into any house, but lye all nyght vnder the firmament. They haue no horses, but in the steade of them they tame certayne wylde bestes which they call Reen, beyng of the iust bygnesse of a Mule, with rough heare lyke an Asse, clouen feete, and braunched homes lyke a Harte, but lower and with fewer antlettes. They will not abyde to be rydden. But when theyr peytrels or drawyng - collars are put on them, and they so ioyned to the Chariotte or sleade, they run in the space of .xxiiii. houres, a hundred and fiftie myles, or .xxx. Schænos, the whiche space they affyrme to chaunge the horizon thryse, that is, thryse to come to the furthest signe or marke that they see a far off. Which, doubtlesse, is a token both of the marueylous swiftnesse & great strength of these bestes, beyng able to continue runnyng for so great a space, in the meane whyle also spendyng some tyme in feedyng. I suppose that this thyng was somewhat knowen to the olde wryters, although receyued in

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maner by an obscure and doubtful fame: For they also wryte that certayne Scythians doe ryde on Hartes.

They neyther Mow the Christian religion, nor yet refuse it, or are offended therewith, as are the Iewes: but doe sometymes receyue it fauourably, to gratifie the princes to whom they obey. And that no more of them imbrase the Christian fayth, the faulte is somewhat to be imputed to the Bysshoppes and Prelates that haue eyther reiected this cure & charge of instructing the nation, or suffered the fayth of Christ to be

suffocate euen in the fyrst spryng. For vnder the pretence of religion, they would haue aduanced their owne reuenues, and ouerburdened the people by an intolerable example, none otherwyse here then in all Christendome, which thyng is doubtlesse the cause of most greuous defections. I heard John, a byshop of Gothlande, say thus: We that gouerne the church of Vpsalia, and haue vnder our diocesse a great parte of that nation, lyke as it is not conuenient to declare many thinges of our vigilance and attendaunce ouer the flocke committed to our charge, euen so absteynyng from mischeeuous couetousnesse, whereby religion is abused for luker, we doe in all places our diligent endeuour, that wee minister none occasion, whereby this nation, as offended by our sinnes, may be the lesse wyllyng to embrace the Chrystian fayth. This is the state of the religion among the Laponers: although of theyr owne institution and custome receyued of theyr predicessours, they are Idolatours, honouryng that lyuyng thyng that they meete fyrst in the mornyng, for the God of that day, and diuinyng thereby theyr good luck or euyl. They also erecte Images of stone vpon the mountaynes, whiche they esteeme as Goddes, attributyng to them diuine honour. They solemne manages, and begyn the same with fyre and flynt, as with a mysterie so aptely applyed to the Image of stone, as if it had been receyued from the myddest of Grecia. For in that they adMbite a mysterie to fyre, as they doe not this alone

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(forasmuch as the Romanes obserued the same custome), euen so are they herein partly to be commended, in that they vse the ceremonies of so noble a

people. The mysterie of the flinte is no lesse to be prayed, both forasmuch as this is domestical! philosophie, and hath also a neare affinite and signification to these solemnities. For as the flynt hath in it fyre lying hyd, whiche appeareth not but by mouyng & force: so is there a secrete lyfe in both kynds of man and woman, which by mutuall coniunction commeth fourth to a lyuyng byrth.

They are furthermore experte inchaunters. They tye three knottes on a stryng hangyng as a whyp. When they lose one of these, they rayse tollerable wynds. When they lose an other, the wynde is more vehement: but by losyng the thyrd, they rayse playne tempestes, as in olde tyme they were accustomed to rayse thunder and lyghtnyng. This arte doe they vse agaynst such as sayle by theyr coastesj and staye or moue the ryuers and seas more or lesse, as they lyst to shew fauour or displeasure. They make also of leade certayne shorte magicall dartes of the J quantitie and length of a fynger. These they throwe agaynst such, of whom they desyre to be reuenged, to places neuer so farre distant.

They are sometymes so vexed with the canker on theyr i armes or legges, that in the space of three dayes they dye through the vehemencie of the payne.

The Sunne falleth very lowe in these regions: and prolongeth one continuall nyght for the space of three monethes in wynter, duryng which tyme they haue none other lyght but lyke vnto the twilight of eueninges & morninges. This is very cleare, but continueth but fewe houres, and is lyke the bryght shynyng of the Moone. Therefore, that day that the Sunne returneth to the hemispheric, they keep holy day and make great myrth with solemne festiuitie.

And these are the maners of this nation, not so

brutyshe or

saluage, as woorthy therefore to be called Lapones for their vnaptenesse or simplicitie, as when they lyued vnder their owne Empyre, and vsed no familiaritie or entercourse with other nations, & knew not the commoditie of their owne thinges, neyther the pryce and estimation of their furies in our regions, by reason whereof they solde great plentie of them for some of our wares of small value.

The boundes or limittes of Laponia (beyng the extreeme land of Scandia knowen towarde the North pole) are extended towarde this parte of the North, to the world yet vnknowen to vs: And furthermore towarde the same parte of the vttermost sea, aceordyng to this description.

The fyrst coast	70	72.
The coast folowyng	80	7.
That that yet foloweth	90	70.

From the fyshyng places and store houses of this sea, they carry forth to Nordbothnia and whyte Russia, landes confinyng to them, great plentie of fyshe. Whereby we may coniecture that this sea is extended on euery syde towarde the North. Towarde the West, it is limited with the most inwarde gulfe at the Castle of Wardhus, at the degree

54	70	30.
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Towarde the South, it is limited by a lyne drawn from thence vnto the degree.....

90	69.
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