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# Elk hunting in Northern Sweden during the Stone Age

By *Otto Blehr*

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On the basis of ethnographic analogies, ethological data and material remains, the author evaluates the methods of hunting with bow and arrow, the use of elk pits, and communal drives ending in water or jumps, respectively, as to their potential use and their efficiency. Communal drives in the autumn were of utmost importance. Rock art depicting elk can serve as an indicator of the sites where this kind of hunting once took place.

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“... most observation on hunters have been done by persons totally inexperienced in either the ways of hunting or the behavior of the species hunted”.

(Frison 1978, p. 363)

Scattered across the taiga in northern Sweden are numerous remains of Stone Age camp sites characterised by pits surrounded by mounds of fire-cracked stones, Sw. *boplatsvallar* (Lundberg 1985, p. 293). The bones found in the ones that have been excavated are mainly from elk (*Alces alces*), and reveal that this ungulate was the most important prey species (Lundberg 1997, p. 2, 174). Until the emergence of post-processual archaeology in the 1980s it was generally assumed that the elk had been secured mainly with the help of communal drives ending in jumps or in water, where the animals would have been killed either by the impact of the fall or by hunters in boats (Hallström 1960). This assumption drew heavily upon the fact that carved and painted pictures of elk were found on rocks in the assumed catchment area of the Stone Age hunters. These pictures were interpreted as traces of hunting magic performed in order to

secure hunting luck. Thus, when Gustav Hallström carried out his research on the multitude of rock carvings of elks found at the Nämforsen rapids in River Ångermanälven, as well as on the more modest number of rock paintings known from less conspicuous localities, he viewed them all as places where communal elk drives had taken place (1945, p. 31; 1960, p. 375). He was not alone among Nordic archaeologists to see this connection between rock art depicting ungulates and communal hunting. (I use the technical term *rock art* here for brevity without intending to cast the ancient carvings and paintings as “art”.) Anton W. Brøgger for instance explained the many red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) carved on outcrops and boulders at Vingen in western Norway by stating that they had been made to bring Stone Age hunters good luck when hunting. In this connection he also referred to a local legend about deer having, until the end of the 17th century, been intercepted by farmers during their fall migration and driven to their death over the cliff edges above Vingen (1925, p. 78; cf. Bøe 1931, p. 29; Bakke 1973 pp. 156–157).

However, during the heyday of post-process-

sual archaeology the link between the rock art and hunting magic was rejected. Helena Günther has suggested that one of “the reasons for this peculiar fact is an exaggerated reaction against older archaeological research related to rock art that today is viewed as functionalist, deterministic and naïve” (2009, p. 17, my translation; cf. Goldhahn 2008, p. 17; 2013, p. 126; Gjerde 2010, p. 425). Some of the numerous elk pits found in northern Sweden have been radiocarbon-dated to the Stone Age. Therefore the use of pits is regarded by many archaeologists today as the principal hunting method for elk already at this early date. However, at the same time there is uncertainty as to the validity of the radiocarbon dates in question.

Against the backdrop of the shifting perspectives on the hunting methods, and the uncertainty as regards the dating of the elk pits, this article will discuss various ways of elk hunting that may have been practised in northern Sweden by Stone Age societies that depended on this game. This will be done with the help of ethnographic analogies, and ethological as well as archaeological data.

#### *Bow and arrow*

Arrowheads found among the lithic artefacts at camp sites show that the hunters knew the use of bow and arrow (Lundberg 1997, p. 28). From the Arctic we know that Inuit archers were able to hit a stationary target with accuracy only within a range of about 23 meters (Stefánsson 1914, p. 96; Rasmussen 1931, p. 170; cf. Jenness 1922, p. 146). There is no reason to believe that the Stone Age hunters that are our concern here had better bows or were better archers. Therefore, bow and arrow must at most occasions have been of limited use when hunting elk. For although the elk can barely identify motionless objects, they can, like other ungulates, easily discover the slightest movements at quite a distance, and will then save themselves by flight. In most cases it was therefore impossible for the hunters to get close enough to their prey that they could let fly their arrows with any hope of success. This was particularly so during the winter when the elks were wise, “usually wiser than man” (Nelson 1973, p. 100).

If we assume that the taiga in northern Sweden was populated during this part of the year,

individual hunting with bow and arrow would have been particularly dire when the snow cover was too thin to slow down the elks' movements, leaving them free to evade pursuit. The temperature was of relevance as well. At 15–20 degrees below Celsius the snow crunches loudly under foot, and the elk would take flight long before the archer could get within range. Even today an individual hunter, having the advantage of a modern rifle, has little chance without a noisy gale covering all sound (Nelson 1973, p. 101). Nelson (pp. 107–108) also relates that Kutchin Indians took advantage of the snow in hunting by circling elk trails. When no tracks were found to go out from the area circled, a communal hunt was organized, involving stationing archers at places where the elks were expected to leave when trackers made them take flight. Our Stone Age hunters may reasonably also have used the visibility of the elks' tracks in the snow to circle them.

In addition to these active hunting methods using bow and arrow, passive ones are also known from the literature. Among the pre-contact Athabaskan-speaking Indians of Alaska, for instance, big-game snaring was the most effective method for securing game during the winter (McKenna 1959, p. 48; cf. Nelson 1973, p. 109). This hunting method is also known from recent centuries in Sweden (Henriksson 1978, pp. 34–35), but again we have no way of confirming whether, and if so to what extent, it was practised during the Stone Age. The same goes for the use of spring-spear traps (*ibid.*, p. 36; Schröder 1958, p. 359; 1985, p. 381).

Neither can we confirm whether Stone Age hunters made use of the opportunity when the snow's crust had become strong enough to carry them but not the elks. Assuming however that the hunters spent early spring in the inland, they would inevitably have had encounters with elk under such snow conditions. This would probably have led the hunters to grasp how, when on skis, they could catch up with the elk and make the kill as the animals ploughed or bounced slowly through the snow. This form of hunting, sometimes aided by dogs that ran ahead and cornered the prey, has been documented among present-day Indians of North America (Nelson 1973, p. 102), and as late as from 19th century Sweden



(Schröder 1985, p. 382). The method was so successful that the Swedish authorities at the time, fearing that the elk would become extinct, prohibited such “destructive ski hunting on crusty snow” (Markgren 1974).

The method is also documented on a Stone Age rock-carving panel from New Zalavruga (fig. 1) on the White Sea. The panel shows three hunters overtaking a cow with her two calves. The track left by the hunters’ skis tells that they, after a downhill run, have caught up with their prey and started the killing. The front calf has been hit by three arrows in its back, the rear one by two, while the spearing of the cow is under way. Besides being to my knowledge one of only two Stone Age documentations of such a hunt, the carving also offers a unique insight into the limited effect that even multiple arrows could have, and this notwithstanding the short distance between the archers and their prey. Nevertheless, as to the outcome of this particular hunt there can be no doubt. The quotation above from Markgren shows that it could have a devastating effect on the elk population. As Nelson (1973, p. 102) documented among the Kutchin Indians, the same could have been the case also when the snow was without a crust, but deep enough that the elk sunk into it up to their bellies. All the hunters then had to do was to follow the track until they caught up with the animals. A Bronze Age rock-carving panel at Massleberg in Skee parish, Bohuslän depicts seven dogs chasing a red deer (Coles 1990, fig. 72). This imagery suggests that the use of dogs when hunting ungulates at other times of the year was also known during the Stone Age, but again we have no way to confirm that this was the case.

### *Elk pits*

Numerous and extensive elk-pit systems are found scattered across Norrland. Some are near Stone Age camp sites, and thus firmly regarded by some as coeval with the hunters who once occupied these camps (Forsberg 2000, p. 82; Sjöstrand 2011, p. 212). Other archaeologists are less certain, and believe that the use of pitfalls for elks as far back as the Stone Age must have been very rare. Evert Baudou is among the latter. He finds it difficult to determine the age of the pitfalls, and finds it likely that most belong within the later agricultu-

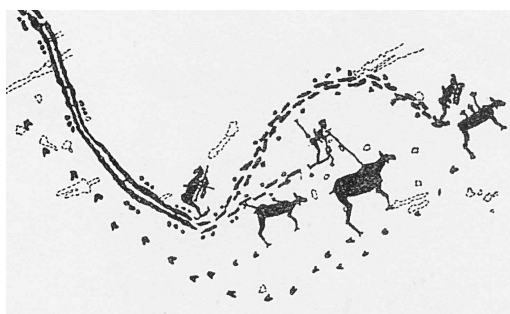


Fig. 1. A Stone Age carved panel from Karelia showing elk hunting on crusty snow. (Savvateev 1984, here after Sjöstrand 2011, p. 179)

ral economy (1977, p. 38). Per Ramqvist shares Baudou’s view, and like him believes “that Stone Age dates are rare, and that many of them are probably too old, considering that they are from the ground below the mound created when a pit was dug” (2007, p. 169, my translation). He illustrates this with two dates from the same elk pit that differ by more than three thousand years. Ascribing this to the use of questionable material for the dating, Ramqvist stresses that one has to be especially critical with many early dates that have been published (p. 168). This skepticism as to the reliability of the material used for dating elk pits is shared by others as well (Hansson & Rathje 1996, pp. 35–36; Lindqvist 2009, p. 24; Gjerde 2010, p. 367, note 431; Larsson 2012, p. 23). It is doubtful whether Stone Age hunters would have had the social organisation needed for the management of elaborate pit systems. Furthermore, we may seriously doubt that the pit systems could have been dug and maintained with the tools Stone Age hunters had at hand, that is, the shoulder blades of elks. Until numerous convincing radiocarbon dates are presented, it seems reasonable to believe that elk pits first came into use when an area had been settled by farmers.

### *Communal elk drives ending in jumps or in water*

Due to the arrow’s limited range, and the ungulates’ flight behaviour, various forms of communal hunting dominated all over the world until the gun replaced the bow and arrow (for regional surveys, see Frison 1978, pp. 251–276; Blehr 1990,

pp. 304–326). From Sweden, Wetterberg reports that “in the large falls Tännforsen . . . there still fell down as late as the reign of King Karl XI [1660–97] such a multitude of reindeer, elks and even bears that the villagers of Nordhallen were taxed for the capture of animals . . .” (quoted after Hallström 1960, p. 78). Hallström refers to Wetterberg to support his assumption that a steep fall in the creek at Glösa (Alsen parish, Jämtland) had once been used as an elk and reindeer jump. In addition to these jumps, there is also one known from historical times in Sweden (Granlund 1940, pp. 5–9), as well as one from Norway (Mølmen 1993). Also in Norway are the aforementioned red deer jumps at Vingen. Of interest too is a third ungulate that was secured by communal hunting in mountain areas in Norway, namely the reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus tarandus*). Vast numbers of cairns and stone walls that channelled the animals towards enclosures, jumps or lakes still bear testimony to the importance of these drives (Blehr 1973; Barth 1982).

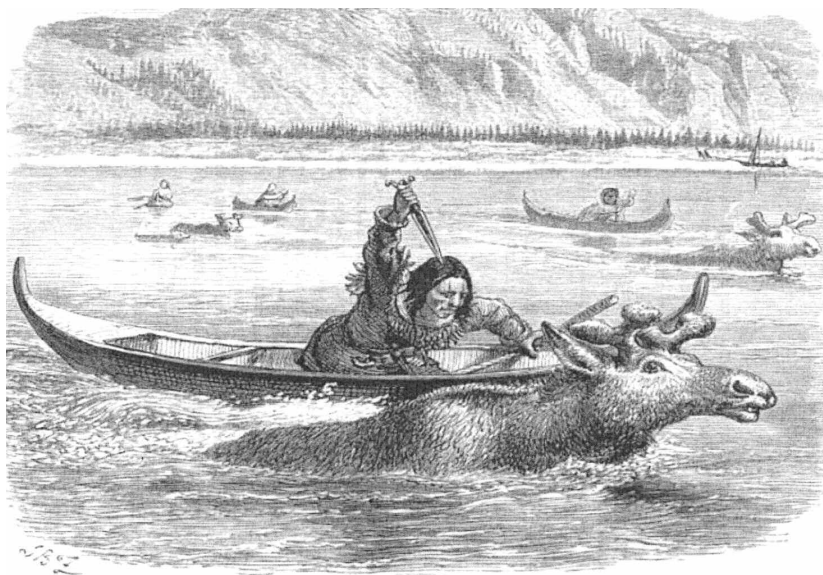
Communal hunting offered a way of overcoming the handicap hunters of ungulates had in getting close enough to the prey to use their weapons. Thus we may expect Stone Age elk hunters in northern Sweden as well to have known this hunting technique. However, contrary to the barren mountain areas in Norway, the taiga in northern Sweden does not have cairns or stone walls that could have channelled the animals. In fact, there is nothing left today that can tell us if a locality was once used for communal elk drives – unless we let the carved and painted elks we find at localities near running water, at lakesides, or on boulders, as well as at bluffs, serve as clues. A characteristic of all these localities is that, being situated close to precipices or water, they appear suitable for communal elk drives. The depicted elks could, as it were, have served the same function as the numerous stone cairns and walls did in the reindeer drives, that is, to steer the elks towards the cliff faces with the jumps, or the water where hunters would have waited for them in boats. Ungulates are known to close ranks when pursued, and since elks are no exception the hunters may have made the carvings and paintings of them in the belief that this would lure the elks to join with the, from the point of view of the hunters, strategically located imitations of

them. If this were the case, it means that the hunters practised a kind of hunting magic predicated on the actual physical proximity of the real prey to its carved or painted counterpart.

Though accepting that some of the elk depictions may have served other purposes, Hallström relied on the hunting-magic explanation. To explain why we find elk carvings only at the rapids of Nämforsen, he suggested that the carvings were meant to lure elks to their fate in the rapids (1945, p. 31). In the same manner he explained all the other carved and painted elks known at the time as having been used in hunting magic during communal drives. Among the painted sites was Brattberget that “formed an excellent goal for a *battue* [communal drive], the intention being to force the animals to tumble down into the water or, better still, onto the rocks below the precipice” (Hallström 1960, p. 21). At Hällberget he sought to make anecdotal evidence relevant to the conclusion he implicitly drew. During a hunt at this locality in 1939 a dog chased a bull elk who, to escape its pursuer, “jumped down from the precipice above the western paintings straight into the lake” (p. 24). And at Åbo lake Hallström referred to what he had been told about how a wounded animal, during a 1938 hunt, took to the water right at a boulder with a painted elk 30 meters from the shore, and was outmanoeuvred by a hunter in a boat who killed it with his knife (1943, p. 159). From the Yukon River in Alaska we know that knives were used in the same manner to kill elks in communal drives that ended in water. The natives would manoeuvre their birch-bark canoes around an animal until it was so exhausted that the hunters could approach stealthily and stab it in the heart or loins (fig. 2; Whymper 1868, p. 215).

Hallström points out (1943, p. 159) that it was easier to get the elks when they were in the water. He does not explain why this is so, but he may have had access to his Norwegian colleague Hjalmar Negaard’s report from work on Hardangervidda. There, Negaard points out, for hunters with primitive weapon technology it would have been an easy innovation to drive reindeer into lakes where they could be outmanoeuvred and killed by hunters in boats (1911, p. 63). Drives ending in lakes or rivers are facilitated by the fact that the reindeer willingly enter water. This is an evolution-

Fig. 2. Elk hunting in the Yukon River, Alaska (Whymper 1868, facing p. 215).



ary adaptation to wolf predation, as wolves will interrupt the chase if their prey takes to water. To drive the animals into water has therefore been the preferred form for communal hunting in areas where there is an abundance of lakes. On Hardangervidda in Norway, for instance, almost all the archaeologically visible reindeer drives end in water. Only on the north-western fringe of the mountain plateau, where there are no lakes, are there a few reindeer jumps, coeval with the drives ending in water (Blehr 2014).

Elk, like all ungulates of the northern hemisphere, share this adaptation to wolves (Cowan 1947, p. 160; Peterson 1955, p. 104). No wonder then that in Finland, so rich in lakes, we only find rock paintings of elks in “physical connectedness with water” (Lahela 2005, p. 40). Granted the role of the elk imagery in hunting magic, this is only to be expected. Due to the abundance of lakes, it was never necessary to develop alternative communal hunting methods in Finland. In northern Sweden, however, the topographical situation is more varied; there are fewer lakes suited for drives, but the terrain is on the other hand rich in precipices. Thus, elk jumps here stood out as the second best alternative, where localities suited for letting the drives end in water were lacking. Of the 18 localities with painted elks that were known in detail

in 1998, ten were situated near water, while eight lacked such contact (Ramqvist 2002, p. 92).

The only one besides Hallström who has to my knowledge taken hunting magic so seriously that he carried out systematic fieldwork at the sites with rock paintings of elks is Anders Fandén (1996). His hypothesis was that these localities either reflected communal hunting with the use of hunting magic, or were sacred sites. He concluded that the rock-painting sites were most probably cult sites (p. 51). His doubt about communal hunting at the sites seems mainly to be based on the height of the jumps. At some of them the drops are roughly 20 metres, and he judges that this would have damaged the meat and hides too severely. Fandén also points out that no weapons are depicted – neither pointing at nor stuck into the painted elks. If the rock-painting sites had been used for communal drives ending in elk jumps, so his argument runs, then at least some of the humans found on a few of the paintings ought to have been equipped with weapons. As this is not the case, this also leads him to doubt the validity of the suggested hunting-magical interpretation (pp. 48, 52).

Having presented his arguments against communal elk jumps and drives ending in water, Fandén all the same ends on a less decisive note: “However, it is not possible to completely reject that it

would have been possible to carry out communal hunts [at the rock-painting sites], but it would have been considerably more effective and less time-consuming to hunt elks in systems of pits or with the help of skis during the winter. Thus it is closer at hand to interpret the sites with their rock paintings as cult localities” (p. 51, my translation). He does not however spell out why the alternative hunting technique that he suggests, in his own words, “would have been considerably more effective and less time-consuming”.

Though undeniably some of the meat would have suffered from a fall from 20 metres, the fall would in fact not have damaged the hide much, if at all. During fieldwork in the Kangerlussuaq area in West Greenland I found several caribou jumps of about that height. And in Alberta, Canada, a buffalo (*Bison bison*) jump of this height is known from the locality Head-Smashed-In. That is, before the heaps of countless bones from slaughtered buffalo below the jump made the height more modest (Brink 2008, p. 18). Even higher buffalo jumps have been documented in the same area (Brink 2008, p. 71). As to the absence of weapons from the paintings, this is hardly surprising considering that no weapons were necessary at drives ending at elk jumps, the drop itself being what killed the animals.

Fandén is far from the only one who makes weakly founded claims regarding elk hunting during the Stone Age. Lena Holm states that the elk was easy to catch during the winter when they aggregated in larger groups and their activity was restricted by the snow, especially so when the snow was covered by an ice crust that hindered movement. This combination of conditions, according to her, indicates that winter was the best hunting season. She adds that animals at this time of the year “are relatively fat; weight loss does not occur until spring” (1991, p. 97). Apparently as indecisive as Fandén, a couple of paragraphs later she claims that the autumn was the preferable hunting season for elk. Nonetheless, when summing up, her conclusion is that “the elk is an optimum game animal and resource [both] during autumn and winter”.

It may have been the effectiveness of elk hunting when a strong crust has formed on the snow that lead Holm to state that winter was as worth-

while a hunting season as the autumn. However, she overlooks the fact that weather conditions can also make winter hunting problematic, as well as the even more important fact that the animals’ condition deteriorates all through the winter. Not only do they become skinny, with meat lacking in fat, the hide also accumulates holes made by the larvae of warble flies (*Hypoderma*) when they leave their host animals. Thus the elk is most certainly not “an optimum resource” during the winter.

Åsa Lundberg states (but erroneously ascribes the idea to Holm) that “both the amount of meat and the quality of the hides and antlers are better during the winter” (1997, p. 149, my translation). She furthermore regards winter as “the most important season for hunting, as most fishing and gathering is not possible” (ibid. p. 175, my translation).

### *Discussion*

At the core of my disagreement with the above-mentioned scholars are our differing assessments of the elk and the effectiveness of various hunting methods. As a consequence, we disagree about what season would have offered the best conditions for hunting. To the issue of season could be tied the question of whether the inland was inhabited all year around or not.

In his discussion of Nämforsen, Hallström noted that the elks had a crossing place above the waterfall there the carvings are situated (1943, p. 159), that is, a place where they crossed the river during their spring and autumn migrations. It has likewise been recognised that other localities with carvings or paintings are strategically situated on the animals’ migration routes (Simonsen 1979, pp. 447 f). Sverker Janson and Harald Hvarfner (1966, p. 36) interpreted the rock art sites as seasonal camp sites, used again and again over a lengthy span of time by elk hunters. I find this a reasonable interpretation, and the fact that the hide scraper is the dominant artefact found at excavated sites (Lundberg 1997, pp. 447 f) indicates that it was in the autumn they were occupied. This since it is in autumn the elk’s hide is of the quality needed for clothing and shelter.

Nevertheless, the idea that the most significant elk hunting should have taken place in the autumn is contrary to the opinion of several scho-



lars, who claim that winter was the all-important hunting season (Baudou 1976, p. 81 f; Ramqvist et al. 1985, p. 335; 1992, p. 44; Lundberg 1997, pp. 153 f, 169, 175). Their interpretations are based on the fact that the carvings and paintings show the animals without antlers, as the bull elks are during the winter. However, the elks depicted can just as well be cows (Lundberg 1997, p. 153), which after all never have any antlers. In the autumn the cows are in prime shape after the summer season. Thus, the hunting magic may have been explicitly aimed towards the cows. Though both sexes lose weight during the rut, the loss of the cows amounts to only about 4%, whereas the bulls' loss of weight is three times that (pers. comm. O. Hjeljord 2014; cf. Gubser 1965, p. 299 f).

A seal bone found at one of the camp sites (Lundberg 1997, p. 114) suggests that the people there also spent time on the Baltic coast (Blehr 1993, p. 28 f). Alternatively, the camps may have been used all through the winter (Baudou 1977, p. 98 f; Lundberg 1997, p. 169), and the seal bone might just be evidence of casual contact with coast dwellers. Either way, whether the hunters stayed in the taiga only for the communal hunt when the elks migrated towards their winter area, or stayed there all through the year, their subsistence would in both cases have depended on the communal hunts in the autumn, this since they needed the elk's coat when it was at its best, as well as its meat when it was at its fattest.

### Conclusion

We can easily identify prehistoric arrowheads as such because the functions of almost similar forms are known ethnographically. When such points are found we take archery for granted. Moreover, we may assume that the range of the arrows was more or less the same for Stone Age hunters as for more recent ones: no more than 23 metres. In the same manner, having no reason to believe that the elk's current flight behaviour differs from what it was like in the Stone Age, we can through ethological study get at the possibilities and limitations that this behaviour offered the ancient hunters, with their particular weapon technology. We may, as it were, to a certain degree share the Stone Age hunter's cognition as to the effectiveness of various hunting strategies (Blehr 1991, p. 362).

Successful stalking by an individual archer would have revolved around ways to overcome the elk's ability to sense movement or noise at a distance far beyond bowshot. If people lived in the taiga during wintertime, then one hunting strategy may have been the one referred to above from the Kutchin hunters, who took advantage of blizzards to approach their prey. But winter hunting could not offer the high-quality hides and the fat meat that would have been of paramount importance for subsistence.

The hunt on the snow crust in late winter may have been very successful, even crucial in that season, alone or together with other hunting methods. But again, for their year-round survival, people also needed hides for clothing and shelter, as well as fat meat. These resources had to be sought when available, and that was during the autumn. The radiocarbon dating of the elk pits does not positively support their use in the Stone Age, and so there is only one hunting method left. Not surprisingly this is the one that has been of essential importance for all societies known from the ethnography to depend on ungulates for their subsistence: communal drives. People would have relied on this method that let them secure the animals they needed during the relative short time in the autumn when these migrated through the area. This conclusion is supported by the existence of the carved and painted elks found at precipices and near watercourses. These, so to speak, no longer possess their old role as lures for real elks, but have instead achieved a new one by affirming that the localities where they are found were once used during communal elk drives.

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## Summary

Scattered across the taiga in northern Sweden are numerous Stone Age camp sites. They are rich in elk bones, thereby revealing that this ungulate was the most important animal of prey for the hunters who used these camps. Until the emergence of post-processual archaeology in the 1980s it was generally assumed that the elks had been secured mainly by means of communal drives ending in jumps or in water, where the animals would have been killed either by the impact of the fall or by hunters in boats. This assumption rested upon the belief that the carved and painted pictures of elks found on rocks in the assumed catchment area of the camp sites had been used in hunting magic. After the new school of thought had prevailed this model was rejected, and the numerous elk-pit systems found in the same areas became regarded by many as coeval with the Stone Age camps. Other archaeologists were less certain. They believed that the use of pitfalls for elk as far back as the Stone Age must have been very rare.

Against the backdrop of the shifting perspectives on the hunting methods, the author discusses various ways of elk hunting that may have been practised in northern Sweden by Stone Age societies dependent on this game species. In turn individual hunting with bow and arrow, the use of elk pits and the use of communal drives are examined. In each case the author focuses on the preconditions, techniques and relative outcome of the method.

The elk easily discovers the slightest movements at quite a distance beyond the range of an arrow,

and is thus able to save itself by flight. Therefore bow and arrow would on most occasions have been of limited use when hunting. Assuming that the taiga in northern Sweden was populated at all during the winter, hunters would mainly have been able to catch up with the animals using skis when the snow's crust had become strong enough to carry the hunter but not the elk. This hunt on the snow crust might have been very successful, even decisive for survival in the winter season, alone or together with other hunting methods. But hides for clothing and shelter, not just fat meat, were crucial for the hunters and their dependents all year round. These resources had to be sought when available, and that was during the autumn. Radiocarbon dating of the elk pits does not positively support their use in the Stone Age, and so there is only one hunting method left that could with any certainty have secured the hides and the meat surplus that people needed. Not surprisingly this method is the one that has been crucial to all societies known from ethnography to depend on ungulate hunting for their subsistence: communal drives.

Nothing survives today that can tell us if a locality was once used for communal elk drives – unless we let the carved and painted elks we find at localities near running water, at lakesides, or on boulders, as well as at bluffs, serve as clues. A characteristic of all these localities is that, being situated close to precipices or water, they appear suitable for communal elk drives. Some scholars suggest that the depicted elks served the same

function as the numerous stone cairns and walls did at the reindeer drives, that is, to steer the elks towards the cliff faces with the jumps, or the water where hunters would have waited for them in boats. Ungulates close ranks when pursued, and since elks are no exception the hunters may have made the carvings and paintings of them in the belief that this would lure the elks to join with the, from the point of the view of the hunters, strategically located imitations of them. I conclude that the hunters practised a kind of hunting magic predicated on the actual physical proximity of the real prey to its carved or painted counterpart.

The Stone Age hunters would thus have relied on a method that let them secure the elks they needed during the relative short time in the autumn when the animals migrated through the area and both hides and meat were of top quality. This conclusion is supported by the existence of the carved and painted elks found at precipices and at water's edges. These, so to speak, no longer play their old role as lures for real elks, but have instead achieved a new one by affirming that the localities where they are found were once used during communal elk drives.