

The Management of Knowledge  
of the Intangible Heritage  
in Connection with Traditional Craftmanship  
at the Ethnographic Museum  
of the University of Oslo

Tom G. Svensson



# The Management of Knowledge of the Intangible Heritage in Connection with Traditional Craftmanship at the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Oslo

● **Tom G. Svensson**  
Professor, University of Oslo, Norway

## ABSTRACT

Following on from a tentative presentation I made at the ICME symposium in Seoul 2004, I would like to demonstrate how cultural diversity can be expressed through traditional knowledge related to craftsmanship, as part of an important intangible heritage that is worthy of recording and preserving. My argument is based on two different case studies: *Hopi* pottery and *Sámi* basketry. I shall concentrate on the people who manage and transmit this vital form of intangible heritage. These ethnographic case studies are founded on first-hand observations in the field. I also describe a collecting policy for ethnographic museums that is based on kin-related collecting, and narratives.

## Introduction

According to the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Heritage in 2003, *traditional craftsmanship* is one of five specified domains (Article 2). Practicing a handicraft is often a way of life, not merely a means of earning a living. This type of intangible heritage consists in part of inherent knowledge connected to the craft, and partly of the life histories of individuals actively engaged in it. Focusing on intangible heritage is especially useful in gaining as complete an understanding as possible of objects as examples of traditional craftsmanship.

Objects can only speak for a culture if we also know how they were made and used and what meaning is attached to them. In my view, research-based collecting of objects must be accompanied by observations in the field, and by the collection of reminiscences. Or, as Richard Kurin so cogently put it, *intangible cultural heritage exists in communities, not museums* (Kurin, 2004). In the following paper I hope to demonstrate how cultural diversity can be expressed through traditional knowledge related to craftsmanship, a form of intangible heritage which is well worth recording and preserving.

This is a challenge for all museums which aim to record cultural history. My argument centres on *Hopi* pottery and *Sámi* basketry, with particular emphasis on the people who make them.

The forms of intangible heritage which seem to have the greatest bearing on artefacts are 'knowledge systems' and life styles which relate to specific kinds of objects. This raises two questions. 1) What sort of life style involves these objects, and 2) What 'knowledge system' is reflected in making them? (Svensson, 2004)

In anthropological studies we can see a growing interest in examining the revival and transformation of traditional handicrafts into what is often now referred to as 'ethnic art'. *Hopi* pottery from the USA and the basketry of the *Sámi* peoples of the European Arctic are cases in point. In both instances we can see that refined aesthetic forms have been developed. Equally important is the attachment to tradition and the cultural origin of these kinds of objects. By identifying certain families with leading positions in the production of specific craft items, and by following several generations of the same family and recording their life histories, we can learn about the way objects were

originally used and begin to understand stylistic changes, the way people manage relevant knowledge gives social life to the objects.

Nampeyo, among the *Hopi* of Arizona, USA, and Asa Kitok, among the *Sámi* of Gällivare, Swedish Lapland, are both women who, almost by accident, revived craft traditions which had been more or less forgotten. They both developed what were formerly ordinary crafts, skills shared by many, in new ways, inspiring members of their own families, and others, to continue them. Nampeyo, was born ca. 1860 and died in 1942, but a fourth generation of her descendants, and even a member of a fifth generation, continue to produce innovative pottery designs based on traditional *Hopi* ware. She is still remembered as a leading *Hopi* potter, and is frequently spoken of as the 'Old Lady Nampeyo'. In the case of Asa Kitok, who died in 1986, we can observe something similar. A third generation of her descendants are still making artistic versions of traditional *Sámi* basketware.

## *Hopi* Pottery

Collecting started about a hundred years ago at the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Oslo. In 1904, Ole

**Figure 1**  
NAM PEYO, portrait

**Figure 2**  
One of Nampeyo's pots showing a unique design that has never been repeated, Oslo collection UEM13602. Photo Ann Christine Eek.



Solberg, a research associate, later professor and director of the museum, brought back a representative collection featuring various aspects of the *Hopi* culture, including fifteen pots by Nampeyo.<sup>1</sup> Pottery was in no way his main interest - he was more concerned with aspects of religious practice among the *Hopi*. However, he realised that there was increasing local interest in pottery traditions, and that it was an important element in the material culture of the *Hopi*. Most certainly Solberg was not aware of the role Nampeyo was already playing, there are no records of her from his fieldwork. This means that no 'intangible heritage' information was recorded at the time. The collection is, however, rather extraordinary as it dates from 1900-10, when Nampeyo was making her finest pots.

In order to fill in some of this missing intangible heritage, I have chosen a research strategy based on systematic, kin-related collecting, in other words, pairing objects with recordings of the potters talking about their work and ideas. I have, furthermore, shown photos of our Nampeyo collection to her descendants to find out how they reacted.

In 1980, on my initiative, the museum managed to obtain one object by one of Nampeyo's three daughters, Fannie. On my field trip in 2006 I had the opportunity to see one object by her daughter Annie and two by another daughter, Nellie, all carefully kept within the family, showing they recognised the importance of Nameyo's legacy. In all, the museum is now in possession of no less than twenty-seven different objects, besides the original fifteen made by Nampeyo, from twenty-one of her descendants. From the second generation we have three items, one from each of her granddaughters by Fannie. The bulk of the recent collection comes from the third generation of her descendants in which there are eleven potters. Finally, from the fourth generation we have items from six different individuals who are descended from the families of all three of Nameyo's daughters. By focusing our collecting activity in this way, trying to cover sufficient ground both vertically and horizontally, we are beginning to build a 'biographic collection'.

It is my conviction that a 'biographic collection' of a specific type of object must come from a set of people who are related by blood, because it is through people who have learned the skill from each other, and are similarly concerned about passing that same skill on to future

generations, that it is possible to see and understand how knowledge and skills develop over time. There is a specific individual behind each object, who can pass on what they have learnt from Nampeyo's legacy. Most of the potters we met came from the third and fourth generations of her descendants, but they told us that what they know came from Nampeyo, even though they may never have met her, or only have known her when they were small children. This keeps her legacy alive. Recognising that she was the most significant *Hopi* potter of her day, Nampeyo herself was determined not to let pottery making die out. She told her daughters that they should continue *thinking as a potter, practicing as a potter*. To Priscilla, her great grandchild, now aged 82, she stressed the point; *when you grow up I wish you to teach your children what I teach you, because I don't want my knowledge and skill to be lost*. And Priscilla, today considered a real pottery matriarch, has certainly followed Nampeyo's guidance; her daughters are gifted potters.

The *Hopi* potters' 'knowledge system' refers firstly, to clay, where to find it and how to prepare it properly by wetting it. Knowing where the best clay is to be found is usually 'secret' knowledge, only shared by close kin, whereas more people are shown how to examine and judge the clay - by feeling the texture and smelling and tasting it. Clay is not just clay. Apparently the most suitable clays have a slightly sweet taste. The 'knowledge system' also relates to working the clay - moulding it, shaping it in the traditional way by coiling, polishing and sanding it using special stones, painting different designs with natural pigments and finally firing it in the traditional way. This involves heating up a pile of sheep manure mixed with broken pottery shards; this covers the items to be fired. It is a tricky process and the fire has to be watched carefully to make sure the pots come out whole. Those few potters who use kilns to fire their wares are dismissed as not truly following *Hopi tradition*. Immediately after the firing is completed, the pots are sun dried, either outside or indoors; they are then finished products, ready for sale.

It is the modelling and the designs that give identity and meaning to the pottery, or, as one informant put it, *design is a way of understanding our Hopi history and learning about our traditional values*. All the contemporary potters who saw the photos of old Nampeyo's pots in the Oslo collection were astonished by

her designs. In many cases they had never seen anything like them and they will, from now on, be a significant new source of inspiration. I see that sort of reaction as another reason why it is so important to record intangible heritage. The potters studied the pictures enthusiastically and pointed out that the sparse decoration, leaving large spaces undecorated, was typical of Nampeyo and her style. All her symbols clearly represent traditional *Hopi values*, her uniqueness lay in the way she mastered abstract forms, especially in depicting various animals characteristic of the *Sikyatki* design style (Schaaf, 1998:93). *Sikyatki* is a historical place, northeast of Polacca, which dates from the 14th century. Examples of typical designs from the Nampeyo family of potters are *eagle tail*, *fine-line migration*, and *cloud of rain* (Blair, 1999:92), basic elements that are repeated in endless different forms by present-day potters.

Returning to Nampeyo, she is particularly well-known for her revival of the ancient *Sikyatki* design style. Some of her descendants still use *Sikyatki* patterns in decorating their ware, it means they consider themselves to be true to Nampeyo's legacy, and it stresses their love of tradition. Even if individuals want to develop a personal style, the link to the Nampeyo heritage is always there, they all take great pride in being descended from the famous 'Old Lady Nampeyo'. Her name definitely defines a standard, a heritage built on quality. For it is her style of decoration, and her indisputable sense of quality, more than anything else, which to a great extent have been maintained by her descendants, increasing their self esteem and giving added satisfaction to the pride they take in their craftsmanship.

This brings us to the issue of signing objects. Most potters who today use the name 'Nampeyo', consider it as a brand name; they can use it providing they have a direct link back to Nampeyo. But it can cause problems; only those who, through matrilineal descent, belong to Nampeyo's clan, the Corn Clan, are entitled to sign their items 'Nampeyo'. In fact, Nampeyo herself never signed her pots. However, quite early on the potters resolved this dilemma themselves by using an individually designed symbol for the corn plant. This symbol can be used by all potters belonging to the Corn Clan, thus differentiating Nampeyo's descendants from other potters. In other words, there are rules of conduct about how craftspeople can sign their items - and understanding this is also part of the 'knowledge system'.

So is the use of pottery shards, picked up from the ground, which can be used to create exciting new designs. By applying ancient *Hopi* designs to recently modelled pots, modernity meets history, for quite a few potters this is a connection that is highly valued. Being a potter is not only about making a decent living, equally important is the contribution the potter makes to preserving *Hopi* culture. Nampeyo got inspiration for her designs from shards obtained from excavations at *Sikyatki* in the late 19th century, shards which she studied closely, but she never used them as a design in their own right unlike a few present day potters, for instance, Dextra and Nyla, both descended from Nampeyo's daughter, Annie, the one who was most faithful to the *Sikyatki* style. This, no doubt, is a further example of how traditional knowledge focusing on craftsmanship is managed. To practically all the potters who are descended from Nampeyo, it is the craftsmanship, working with the hands all the way through, without any mechanical help, that maintains the traditional craft and art they value so highly.

Pottery making relates to *Hopi* life in various ways. Pottery is an integral part of *Hopi* ceremonial practice, and at the same time the symbols that are applied to the pots as decoration are loaded with spiritual power. On the other hand, the Nampeyo family designs include a unique set of personal styles. So traditional knowledge about pottery making amongst the *Hopi* is a constantly transforming and developing 'knowledge system'. And it is only the people actively taking part in pottery making who are able to master such knowledge.

Let me end with some brief remarks about the life style of *Hopi* potters. To be a potter means practising pottery making in all its phases, including marketing. It combines an occupation that is a livelihood, involving careful economic planning, with an important role as bearer and transmitter of tradition. At the same time, all the potters referred to take an active part in the annual cycle of *Hopi* ceremonies, thereby emphasising their *Hopi* identity. Their membership of the tribe is spelled out in rituals, but being related to a legendary figure like Nampeyo is equally important to the potters' sense of identity. Living in a particular place, in this case at the First Mesa, in the village of Hano, or below the mesa at Polacca, originally a trading post, separates most *Hopi* potters from those specialising in other *Hopi* crafts, for instance at Second and Third Mesa. For the potters,

however, there is a close connection to the latter two mesas because today much of the marketing and selling of pottery takes place there. But even for contemporary potters, living at First Mesa, with its long tradition of developing and maintaining *Hopi* pottery, which now stretches back almost 150 years, still feels right.

Part of the potters' way of life involves keeping in contact with various galleries and museum shops which are outlets for their products. These outlets may be situated within the Hopi territory at First, Second or Third Mesa, or at places that attract tourists, like the traditional *Hopi* House at the Grand Canyon, where, during its first season in 1905, Nampeyo and her eldest daughter, Annie, were the first Indian craftswomen to demonstrate their work (Blair, 1999:87). Other notable outlets are in Flagstaff, at the Museum of Northern Arizona, and in Sedona where there are many major galleries to which several Nampeyo's present-day descendants regularly travel.

To understand see the pottery in context, one has to identify those essential aspects of the potters' life style which affect their craft. This is far more than simply describing technical processes, and it, too, is a form of intangible heritage, albeit one which is connected to tangible, material objects.

## Sámi Basketry

When my attention was first drawn to *Sámi* basketry work in 1972, Asa Kitok was almost 80 years old. She was still active but was soon to retire, so it was urgent that we learn about her work. Being completely illiterate, she never committed any of her extensive knowledge and experience to paper, it was all passed on by word of mouth. However, at the same time two of her daughters

were active and well established craftswomen in their own right. I was more interested in the everyday lives of these people and the stories they told about it, than in the specific objects they produced.

*Sámi* basketry is a craft tradition which uses birch roots named *tai've*; the *Sámi* name for the craft is *tai've duodje*<sup>2</sup>. Basketry is a craft which they first learnt from outsiders, but which dates back at least to the 17th century. It soon became a part of the *Sámi* culture, especially because the objects made in this way were so useful.

The 'knowledge system' associated with basketry work is twofold, first, it has to do with all the technical and practical aspects of basket making; and secondly, it relates to the way of life and general philosophy of the craftspeople, either the part they play in reindeer herding and other traditional *Sámi* occupations, or their lives as modern day artists and craftspeople. It is best to record their stories in the field, when one can spend a period of time living and with them and sharing their everyday experiences.

Let us then hear what Asa Kitok (1893-1986)<sup>3</sup> had to say:

*Traditionally we made craft items for household needs only in connection with herding reindeer. After around twenty years of complete inactivity concerning basketry I decided to take it up again. The driving force for me was that at least some of my daughters should learn enough to share my pride and interest in this tradition. Thus I became an active basket weaver, tai've duojar, and in my generation I am the only one. Falling back on tai've as an occupation, my life suddenly became easier and more meaningful as I felt I had a mission to fulfil in reviving and carrying on a traditional Sami craft.*



**Figure 3**  
Pot made by Nyla, a 4<sup>th</sup> generation descendant of Nampeyo showing the innovative use of old sherds in a new design thereby connecting tradition with the present, UEM 48608. Photo. AnnCristine Eek.

**Figure 4**  
Pot made by Loren H Nampeyo, a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation male descendant of Nampeyo, showing images from ceremonial life. Oslo collection UEM48598. 3Photo Ann Christine Eek.

*I also saw a challenge in trying out new shapes, but it was important for me to stay with traditional Sami artefacts. I wanted my basketwork to reflect Sami traditions, to convey something of our nomadic life style which is fast disappearing.*

*Finally, I am very pleased that I started and contributed to the revival of Sami basketry traditions, tai'Ve-toujéV. And through my daughters I am convinced this craft will live on.*

To sum up, people actively engaged in the art and craft of basket weaving can explain the extensive knowledge and ideas which lie behind their craft, and can tell us about their way of life. We therefore see the baskets in context, in their cultural setting. Among the *Sámi*, baskets were once an essential part of their limited set of utensils, extremely useful in everyday life. Today, basketry of ever increasing quality and inventiveness, demonstrates the undeniable vigour of *Sámi* art produced purely for enjoyment and appreciation

From a museum perspective, the collecting of artefacts should always be accompanied by the collecting of knowledge, and the informative part of such knowledge comes from prominent individuals. As examples, the objects collected for the Ethnographic Museum, a *kohpo kárja* by Asa Kitok (1972) and a *mini kisa* by Ellen Kitok (2003)<sup>4</sup>, are closely connected, not only because they come from the same family but because of the culture-specific knowledge attached to them. These two artefacts represent *Sámi* basketry tradition as well as modernity, they date from the era when the revived, perfected craft was at its height and they are at the cutting edge of the art of basketry. Knowledge comes together with the object.

Another issue is the distinction between art and craft. Asa Kitok was exceptionally skilled at making exact replicas of ancient utility items, but she also managed to try out new and original designs, although they all showed unmistakable signs of the *Sámi* tradition. She even perfected some of the old coiling techniques practised by *Sámi* women in the distant past. Her daughters, especially Ellen, also show a remarkable mastery of the entire spectrum of *Sámi* basketry craft and art. Some of what Ellen Kitok creates is certainly 'art' and she has had several exhibitions in fine art museums and galleries. Her strength lies in creating bold new designs and techniques,

and it reaffirms time and again her unique position as a *Sámi* artist, firmly grounded in *Sámi* traditions and able to exploit traditional knowledge and skills to the full.

The *Sámi* way of life has changed a lot in recent years. In the course of her long life Asa Kitok first lived as a nomad, herding reindeer; then, after her family gave up herding, she lived a settled life based on fishing and gathering; and finally she earned her living as a craftswoman. Her daughter, Ellen Kitok, lived through a similar set of changes. As a child she lived the life of the settled *Sámi*, then, following her mother's legacy she became a craftswoman, and finally she became a fully fledged basketry artist. As life styles have changed, craftspeople have ceased to make utilitarian objects for everyday use and now make beautiful works of art for collectors and museums.

Some might think this would raise issues of authenticity. However, as long as the artist is fully aware that she belongs to a distinct culture and that whatever she produces reflects her cultural background, the items she makes must be regarded as representative of present day *Sámi* culture, consequently they are also authentic. In my opinion, the dynamic process of continuity and change in *Sámi* basketry is best understood as a fusing of tangible heritage with intangible heritage, or as Julie Cruikshank wrote, *both words and things have an ongoing role in reproducing contemporary culture* (1995:28).

## Concluding Remarks

Ethnographic objects are material reflections that demonstrate cultural distinctiveness to the outside world. But seen in this way they are simply ethnic artefacts. (Wade, 1985:187). They need to be viewed in conjunction with the testimony of the craftspeople who made them; objects per se do not have a voice.

Both Nampeyo and Asa Kitok were influential pioneers when it comes to reviving craft traditions. Those revivals had a great impact on the development of design within their respective cultures and many still honour their legacies. They were, moreover, equally concerned about the quality of the raw materials they used, whether it was clay or birch roots, and about the importance of knowing the country and where such valuable raw materials could be found.



**Figure 5**  
ASA KITOK, portrait

**Figure 6**  
A rather large basket, kohpo karja, a basket for keeping coffee cups, made by Asa kitok in 1972, private collection. Photo. Elisabeth Sletten.

To record the processes of transformation accurately, we used a narrative approach or pursued a policy of biographic/kin-related collecting. In this way, tangible objects were linked to their intangible heritage, and by talking to a sufficient number of people from the communities which produced the artefacts, we learnt how knowledge was handed down through the generations. In *Hopi* pottery as well as in *Sámi* basketry, modernity meets history in the objects currently being made but the link to tradition is always present. Markers of identity, that is, objects representative of a specific culture, are recognisable from their design - modelling in the case of pottery or weaving and shaping techniques in the case of basketry. Being acknowledged as someone whose work plays a part in preserving their cultural heritage was important to both the *Hopi* and the *Sámi* craftswomen.

Finally, both Nampeyo and Asa Kitok are officially recognised as legendary persons in their own right. Nampeyo has been elected into the Arizona Womens' Hall of Fame, and Asa Kitok has recently been honoured by the setting up of an annual grant in her name for people working in *duodje* (2005).

## Appendix. Asa Kitok Narrative

In the olden times most women, like myself, were able to make all sorts of useful items, but my primary interest has always been in basketry. This kind of handicraft is based on birch roots and is typical women's work. Traditionally we made craft items for household needs only when we were out herding reindeer.

After around twenty years of not making any baskets, I decided to take it up again. I was the only one who was interested in reviving our basketry tradition, for other women in my generation it was no longer of any interest.

The driving force for me was that at least some of my daughters should learn enough to share my pride and concern for this tradition. You can say that I did what I set out to do, as two of my daughters, Margit and Ellen, gradually became leading craftswomen, developing and refining the craft of coiling roots.

I never expected to turn craftwork into a serious occupation, but after a slow start rumours began to circulate and I got more and more orders, especially from Gällivare, both from shops selling *Sámi* handicraft and private collectors. Thus I became an active basketry craftswoman, *tai've duojár*, and in my generation I am the only one. Mostly I kept to making objects we used in our traditional way of life, like cheese moulds, bottles for salt and baskets with a lid for coffee cups, round ones as well as oval ones. All the patterns and coiled techniques were the result of ancient knowledge and practice, I was only a contemporary teacher and custodian of the craft.

To begin with I was surprised to find out that this activity could bring in money -and the prices gradually went up as my name became known. When I had the chance I chose basketry, *tai'ivé*, as an occupation because it gave me a reasonable income, which meant I could live a bit more comfortably. My life suddenly became easier, even more meaningful as I felt I had a mission to fulfil to revive and carry on a traditional *Sámi* craft.

This kind of craft means hard work and very long days, one has to be dedicated. To make a living at basketry requires talent, patience and a good head for business. It starts with the hard work of collecting roots out in the woods, and they can often be a long way from home. Early summer is the best time to collect birch roots, then the roots are making sap so it is easier to scrape off the bark. In the autumn the bark stays tighter

**Figure 7**  
A small basket, mini kisa, inspired by the large oval wooden kisa for storage in the nomadic era, made by Ellen Kitok in 2003, UEM 47998. This item contains all original as well as newly created Sámi weaving techniques, therefore it can be read as a text on Sámi basketry craft and art. Photo. AnnCristine Eek



and the work of cleaning the roots becomes harder. It is, furthermore, important to know where to look for suitable roots for fine pieces. For example, if the ground is stony, one only finds crooked roots which are no use for basketry. In a wood full of birch and pine, where there are a lot of fallen trees, you can collect long, straight roots that are ideal for basketry work.

When gathering roots you need axe, together with a piece of reindeer antler or a pitchfork for potatoes. When I return home I immediately put the roots in cold water and start scraping off the bark with the back of a knife, after that I hang the roots to dry. Next day the same thing, and you have to be prepared to spend several days collecting as there will be a lot of waste when scraping the roots. After the roots are cleaned and dried I sort them according to different thickness and bind them up in rounds for further drying. Dried roots can be stored any length of time before being used. Our main tool is the awl made of bone, usually marrow bone, first cut with an axe then sharpened and finally shaped by a knife. This awl must be made of bone which has been boiled, otherwise it is too fragile. You need several awls with different points depending on the thickness of the roots.

Different kinds of utensils made from birch roots require different coiling techniques. What distinguishes the Sámi work from non-Sámi basketry is that we usually use a double supporting thread around which we coil what we call the thinner winding thread, with the aid of the awl. The reason for using double supporting thread is that the baskets last much longer, which was important when we used to move around a lot. Another distinction between the Sámi and non-Sámi basketry is the way in which the object is built up. In the simple technique used by non-Sámi one folds the strands inwards, continuing after the bottom part is made. The Sámi, on the other hand, turn

the object outwards, which means that the side you see, the side with the pattern, is seen on the outside. To have the side you see facing inwards is bad in my view.

One of my latest creations is to make the characteristic single-shafted milk-pail, *nahppé*, of roots, it is an object which was originally made of wood from the round knots of the birch tree. I had often used such a milk-pail, so the inspiration was obvious in a way, as I developed my skill pushing the boundaries for what it was possible to make with birch threads. To make a *nahppé* of roots is far more difficult than to make it of wood, and the most difficult part is to attach the handle to get the proper balance between handle and bowl, like in a wooden milk pail.

Other new items I have made are corks for salt bottles, and the large *kisa*, the oval storage box made of wood. I saw it as a challenge to try out new shapes, but it was important for me to stay with traditional Sámi artefacts. I wanted my baskets to reflect Sámi traditions, to remind us about the nomadic life style which is well on its way to disappearing. Of course, most of what I made when I became a more or less full time craftswoman, was not for practical use, they were decorative things for a new market of people who are collectors.

Let me conclude. I never thought that I should be the one reviving Sámi basketry traditions, *tai'vé-toujév*. But I am very pleased that I started and contributed to its revival. Through my daughters, what they have accomplished, and their teaching of this craft to a new generations of Sámi - as well as to interested non-Sámi - I am convinced this craft will live on. But there will always only ever be a very few who do it as it is so time-consuming. If you want to live a modern life style it is extremely hard to make a living. 🇳🇴

## NOTES

1. 1904 is the year when Indian Pottery began to be recognised as art (Blair, 1999:168)  
Nampeyo, as an early native potter was already appearing at different fairs to demonstrate her craft. The quality of the Oslo collection must be seen in this context.
2. *Duodje* is term describing aesthetic practices within the *Sámi* culture. It refers to high quality based on great skill, in all kinds of *Sámi* crafts, that which is hand made.
3. This is a short version of an extensive narrative by Asa Kitok which forms an essential part of an earlier monograph *Asa Kitok and her daughters* (Svensson, 1985). This text has subsequently turned out to be an important source of inspiration for various basketry makers descended from Asa Kitok, and others. For a more complete account of this short version see Appendix.
4. The term *mini kisa* refers to a small oval storage box with a lid. It is a most complex basketry item, made entirely of the thinnest threads ever to be found. The artefact shows all the *Sámi* basketry techniques applied to one single object and carries a wealth of symbolism. (Fig. 7)

## REFERENCES

- Blair, Mary Ellen & Laurence, 1999. *The Legacy of a Master Potter Nampeyo and Her Descendants*, Tucson: Treasure Chest Books
- Cruikshank, Julie, 1995. Imperfect Translating: Rethinking Objects of Ethnographic Collection, *Museum Anthropology*, Vol.19, p.7
- Kramer, Barbara, 1996. *Nampeyo and Her Pottery*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press
- Kurin, Richard, 2004. Museums and Intangible Heritage : Culture Dead or Alive? *ICOM News*, Vol. 57, p.4
- Schaaf, Gregory, 1998. *Hopi-Tewa Pottery 500 Artist Biographies*, Santa Fez, New Mexico: CIAC Press
- Svensson, Tom G. 1985. Asa Kitok och hennes döttrar - en studie om samisk rotslöjd. *Acta Lapponica*, No 21, Nordiska Museet Stockholm
- Svensson, Tom G. 2004. Knowledge and Context - The Social Life of Objects, *ICME papers*, Seoul
- Wade, Edwin L. 1985. The Ethnic Art Market in the American Southwest 1880-1980 in Stocking, G. (ed.) *Objects and Others Essays in Museums and Material Culture*, the University of Wisconsin Press