

## Anna and Mary, Catholic saints living into our time

The encounter with the Catholic faith during the 12th century has left traces in both religious and material culture. *Maljor* with "M" for Virgin Mary and "A" for Mary's mother Anna were used as means of payment, and also had a protective effect.

Within Catholicism, Mary stands as protector of the family and the child.

In the Sami belief there were the goddesses *Sáráhkká* and *Biejvve*.

*Sáráhkká* cherished life, she was helpful during childbirth and protected women and children but also reindeer calves. *Biejvve*, the sun, gave life to nature, animals and people with her warming rays when she returned after winter. In some areas, Maria and Anna become new names for the Sami goddesses. Silver charms with M and A became popular to wear as protection against evil. As decorations, they survive into our time, especially on belts and silver collars.

*Maljor is a type of jewelry that belongs to the female garment. It is used as lacing for the front of the garment.*