

# **NOMADIC SAAMI AND ALCOHOL: JOKKMOKK PARISH, 1760 - 1910**

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## **Abstract/Resume**

A general view has long been held that drinking among the Saami was more socially disintegrative and destructive than among other Scandinavians. However, the alcohol habits of the nomadic Saami population in Jokkmokk did not differ in any substantial way from the settled Swedish population. Towards the end of the period, due to a Christian revivalism among the Saami, they were in fact living a considerably more sober life. In spite of these facts legislators and the general public regarded the Saami as an ethnic group with a particular vulnerability towards alcohol and hence in special need of protection.

Il y a depuis longtemps une opinion générale que l'acte de boire parmi les Saami les désintègre et les détruit plus sévèrement du point de vue social que parmi les autres Scandinaves. Pourtant, les habitudes alcooliques des nomades Saami à Jokkmokk n'étaient pas réellement différentes de celles de la population suédoise établie. Vers le fin de cette période, à cause d'un revivalisme chrétien chez les Saami, ils vivaient en effet avec considérablement plus de modération. Malgré ces faits, les législateurs et le public général regardaient les Saami comme un groupe ethnique d'une vulnérabilité particulière vers l'alcool et ils avaient, donc, besoin de protection spéciale.

## Introduction

A general view has long been held that drinking among the Saami was more socially disintegrative and destructive than among other Scandinavians. This negative conception is often reiterated, whether by members of the general public commenting on contemporary events, or by scholars making statements about the past. Campbell (1948:253-254), for instance, was of the view that the Saami use of alcohol was totally disintegrative and destructive. The Saami were very unfavourably influenced by alcohol, he felt, as it did not belong in their traditional way of life. Alcohol was a foreign element, brought into Saami culture from surrounding civilizations. The Saami tried to fit it into their way of life, but the adaptations were never without conflict. Widén (1964:160), was of the opinion that the Saami had many opportunities to become addicted to alcohol; he felt they were excessively fond of alcoholic beverages, and that once they had started drinking they continued as long as the supply lasted.

The period from 1760 to 1910 was an epoch of severe internal and external stress for the Saami Nation. At the beginning of the period, nomadic reindeer pastoralism stood at its zenith, but the early decline of reindeer herding soon followed (1790-1860), succeeded by an age dominated by agriculture and forestry (1860-1910). The first hydro-electrical developments, and the beginning of modern industrial times, came after 1910 (Hultblad, 1968; Lundgren, 1984; Kvist, 1987). The situation of Jokkmokk parish is central within the Saami area of Sweden; Saami dominated the parish up to the 1860s. The composition of the inhabitants changed through the growth of the settled population, the heavy out-migration of Mountain Saami to Norway and the Forest Saami transformation to an agrarian life. In 1860 the nomadic Saami population and settlers of Saami origin amounted to about 1,200 of the parish's 1,900 inhabitants. Of the total population, only about 50% were Saami speakers in 1861, while as many settlers of Saami origin spoke Swedish.

Several new factors of change were introduced with the administrative limit of cultivation of 1867; the enclosing and delimitation of Crown lands from 1873; the large scale forestry operations from the 1870s; and a heavy influx of non-Saami workers. As a result of these changes, less than 10% of the 5,000 inhabitants of Jokkmokk parish spoke Saami in 1905 (Hultblad, 1968: 342; Wahlund, 1932; Lundgren, 1984:7-12).<sup>1</sup> The object for study can not be clearly delimited, but encompasses the persons called "Lapps" in the primary sources. This group can not be unequivocally defined, but nomadic Saami can be regarded as a core for this population probably varying somewhat from source to source. The nomadic Saami amounted to a couple of hundred persons less than the total number of Saami

speakers in the parish.

### **The Special Liquor Legislation for Lapland, 1723-1898**

Possibly the oldest description of drunken Saami is found in a relation from Torne lappmark 1615. In that year the sheriff was forced to call off tax-collection in Tingevåra Lapp village, as the taxpayers, due to drinking, "ran around like madmen without knowing what they were doing." The alcohol had been bought from traders who, in spite of a royal prohibition, arrived at the winter village a fortnight before the sheriff (Fellman, 1910-1915 I:462-472). It was also common that the sheriffs fed the Saami with large amounts of food and drink in connection with revenue collection. This was a custom probably reflecting the Saami view of the tax-collection as a traditional and reciprocal gift exchange. When the Saami from Umeå and Åsele lappmark gathered to pay taxes in 1607, the 42 taxpayers, with wives and children, received, besides bread, meat and butter, 11 barrels (1409 litres) of beer and 6 jugs (16 litres) of hard liquor.<sup>2</sup>

In the clerical relations from the mid 1600s which formed the basis for Johannes Schefferus's book *Lapponica*, alcohol appears to be well established in Saami culture. Liquor is enumerated among the common trade goods, and forms a part of the betrothal ceremonies. Drunkenness, however, is not found among the rather self-righteous listings of Saami vices by the clerics (Rheen, 1897; Graan, 1899; Tornæus, 1900). But the 17th century Swedish ministry were no advocates of restraint in food and drink, and these attitudes might have influenced clerical opinion about Saami sobriety. This can be seen in the description of the funeral feast of the Reverend Johannes Tornæus that the French traveller Jean-Francois Regnard witnessed in Torneå, 1681:

*As a dessert we were given pipes and tobacco, and all the ministers drank until they fell under the table* (Regnard, 1946:131).

The Pietist revival which occurred at the beginning of the 18th century changed this frivolous disposition. The Pietists were zealous supporters of mission among the Saami. The practical results of the Pietist offensive were small to begin with. Traders were, however, prohibited to sell liquor to Saami during the fairs, as this time of large popular congregation was very important for religious instruction. The limited prohibition had little effect, and after an initiative in Diet by the House of Clergy, a prohibition on the import of hard liquor into Lapland was introduced, together with a ban on the retail sale and serving of liquor in the province. But it did not take long before this prohibition was circumvented. New complaints only brought

about a renewal of the prohibition in 1743 (Widén, 1964:31-46; Haller, 1896:35-37; Moberg, 1968:121). The new prohibition was as hard to enforce as the old one. The merchants viewed the ban on alcohol with unfavourable eyes, as it hurt their trading interests in Lapland. They called forth mercantilistic fears that the Saami would take their trade goods to Norway. The argument was met with sympathy, and prohibition was revoked in 1752. In order to uphold church attendance, selling of alcohol was not allowed until the day after the end of the fairs. In 1756-1760, a total prohibition also affected the whole realm (Modee, 1742-1829, V:3279; Haller, 1896:38-39; Widén, 1964:161-162; Moberg, 1968:121; Bäck, 1984:34-53).

The Pietist revival was primarily an expression of spontaneous and genuine religiosity, yet the favourable official response that met the Pietist religious offensive in Lapland cannot solely be explained by religious motives. After the Great Northern War (1700-1721) with its territorial losses, government efforts were concentrated on fortifying the country's position within existing borders. In a social order where a common religion was the basis for government legitimacy, mission was an excellent and inexpensive way of strengthening territorial sovereignty in border areas. The mercantile arguments of the prohibition opponents also, paradoxically, fit into the frame of the same picture. The government's old fear of taking any actions that might induce the Saami or their trade to leave Sweden in favour of neighbouring countries was accentuated anew. The result of this collision of interests was the above mentioned compromise, so that the sale of alcohol was allowed after the end of church functions (Kvist, 1986).

When prohibition again came onto the agenda, religion had ceased to be an argument. In 1828, Carl Magnus af Robson introduced a motion in the House of Nobility for better protection of the Saami. Among the dangers he saw threatening them, alcohol was not the least. According to Robson, the Saami were weakened both morally and physically by their measureless craving for spirits, aroused and maintained by speculators without conscience. After further investigations and public debate, his motion resulted in an ordinance in 1839 reviving the prohibition decrees from 1740 and 1743. The arguments behind this legislation were an early expression of two tendencies not fully manifested until the end of the century. These were, first, a protective paternalism, worrying about a group of Native people not regarded as capable of taking care of themselves, and second, government apprehension that a weakening of the Saami could lead to an uneconomic under-utilisation of the mountain pastures (Kvist, 1986).

Many travellers in Lapland during this time were also of the opinion that the Saami in general were addicted to drinking. This view spread to the

general public through a number of writings, as can be seen from the example of Joseph Acerbi. In 1799 he made a journey up the Torne River towards Kautokeino and North Cape. He complained bitterly about his Saami porters in his account of the trip:

*This extraordinary degree of heat soon operated most powerfully upon our Laplanders, who had already swallowed three glasses of brandy each. They laid themselves down to rest at every short distance, and were calling out every moment for more brandy. We soon discovered that we had no longer to do with Finlanders, who are a sober, robust, active, and hardy race of people. We had now to deal with a set of wretches who cared only for fermented liquors, and were unwilling to work (Acerbi, 1802:47).*

### **The Repeal of Prohibition in Lapland, 1898**

In 1848 the renewed prohibition of 1839 was extended to comprise not only spirits made of grain and potatoes, but also brandy, rum and arrack. After a motion in the Diet in 1890, the prohibition was expanded into the areas of Kopparberg and Jämtland provinces that were inhabited by Saami (Kvist, 1986). Yet Lapland changed fast so that not only Saami were affected by the prohibition, but settlers and newcomers too. Many felt that special alcohol legislation for Lapland was anachronistic, and in 1891 P.A. Hellgren from Vilhelmina (Åsele lappmark) introduced a bill in the Second Chamber, repealing the prohibition on the import of alcoholic beverages for personal consumption. Hellgren meant that consideration should be given both to modern times in Lapland, with fast progress and the spread of civilization, and to the impossibility of enforcing the existing rules. The bill was rejected, however, as the Committee of Ways and Means disapproved it after hearing from *Svenska Missionssällskapet* [Swedish Missionary Society].<sup>3</sup>

The legislators held a protective attitude towards the Saami, and it is obvious that they did not trust their ability to handle alcohol (Upman, 1978: 69-70). This impression is enhanced by a bill put forward, by J.A. Lundström from Norsjo (Västerbotten), in the Second Chamber in 1894. He described the negative consequences for the Saami, which according to him were caused by them being treated with liquor during the fairs. Not only were the poor Saami induced to sell their reindeer too cheaply, but they were also supposed to slaughter many of the breeding deers in their drunken stupor. Consequently Lundstrom wanted a total prohibition on offering alcohol to reindeer-herding Saami. Without discussion the Committee of Ways and

Means supported the bill and also without discussion it was accepted by the Diet.<sup>4</sup>

During the 1890s, the illicit sale of alcohol expanded dramatically in Lapland, and the number of prosecutions increased year after year, even if the prospect of police seizures was very small. Smuggling methods were legion, while fights, prostitution and tragedies followed in the wake of bootlegging (Moberg, 1968; Sandin, 1987). These conditions caused Nils Wallmark from Luleå (Norrbotten) to put forward a bill repealing the ban on the importation of alcohol to Lapland. Wallmark admitted that the prohibition had been useful when its aim was to protect the Saami from the darker side of civilization, but he was not interested in considering the Saami any more. The prohibition was limiting the civil rights of the increasing non-Saami population and had to be removed. The nomadic Saami were in Wallmark's line of reasoning contrasted with the settled Swedish population who ought to have the right to unlimited purchase of alcohol as in the rest of Sweden. Wallmark did not believe that prohibition was lowering the consumption of alcohol, and as it was circumvented in all manners thinkable, logic demanded it to be repealed.<sup>5</sup>

The Committee of Ways and Means followed Wallmark's line completely. According to it, the prohibition was justified as long as the Saami dominated Lapland, as they were known to be very fond of drinking. But now, when the Saami proportion of the population had substantially diminished, no valid reasons existed any more for such an exceptional statute. As the Saami were a minority even in Lapland, the people of the province ought to have the same rights as in the rest of Sweden. When the bill was debated in the Second Chamber, different opinions came forth, however. The member Ström from Gällivare (Torne lappmark) moved that the bill should be rejected. The prohibition protected the population of Lapland in general, and the Saami in particular, from the miseries of drinking. Its chief advantage was the preservation, both morally and economically, of the Saami. The member G. Kronlund, a judge from Torneå (Norrbotten), supported the bill with the same arguments as the committee. In his usage, the Saami were protected, but the non-Saami were hurt by the old law. The bill was carried with a vote of 150 for, and 50 against in the Second Chamber. As it passed the Upper Chamber without discussion, the prohibition was repealed as of 1898.<sup>6</sup>

The parliamentary debates during the 1890s give a good picture of contemporary attitudes and opinions. Until 1897, the Diet held a protective attitude towards the Saami people who were seen as an ethnic group particularly vulnerable to alcohol. Indeed, in 1890 the area of prohibition was enlarged, and the next year a move to lift the ban on alcohol was

rejected. Yet, when the decision to repeal prohibition was taken in 1897, the protection of the Saami had disappeared as an argument of the parliamentary majority. When the population of Lapland had been increased with a growing number of non-Saami settlers and workers, the Diet could no longer judicially separate the province from the rest of the realm. The new inhabitants were not seen as in need of any special protection, and should not have to suffer any separate legislative limitations.

The parliamentary opinion of the Saami, as a people with a special inclination to drinking, and therefore in particular need of protection, was shared by the general public. *Svenska Nykterhetssällskapet* [Swedish Temperance Society] put forth the view in 1869, that both men and women among the Saami had an animal craving for alcohol. And *Svenska Läkaresällskapet* [the Swedish Medical Society] declared in 1880 that the extreme fondness of alcohol among the Saami caused a moral and physical degeneration, as well as ever increasing poverty (*Svenska Nykterhetssällskapet*, 1869; Westfelt, 1880:185-191).

### **Jokkmokk Parish: Traditional Drinking, 1760-1850**

In the official reports of the local clergy and their inspecting superiors of the Established Church, information about alcohol use and abuse in the parishes was given. This information was based both on what the ministers saw in person, at Lapp fairs and catechetical meetings, and what was generally known about local conditions. Yet the interpretation of these observations was largely dependent on the views held by the individual minister. The increased interest in temperance during the 19th century, therefore, focused attention on alcohol much more markedly than earlier. It can not be concluded, then, that alcohol abuse necessarily worsened during this period.

The Lapp fair in Jokkmokk in 1760 was characterised by unusual moderation. Reverend Jonas Hollsten reported that nobody was drunk, and that church officiating could take place with full attendance. Obviously it was the general prohibition realm that showed its effects. The vicar had received news about its suggested repeal, and argued for its continuance in Lapland. Without spirits, the Saami managed well, but if they tasted some, they always wanted more, and many could sell their trade goods for liquor instead of necessities. Drinking during the fairs also obstructed the religious instruction given once most people were assembled.

During the following years, few complaints about alcohol abuse in Jokkmokk were made. After 1775, an inn was founded at the church, but at the ecclesiastical inspections in 1779 and 1785 the congregation requested that it should be closed by the governor. The free trade in liquor

was supposed to have made some Saami destitute and dependent on poor relief. It seems as if the provincial government listened to their wishes, as in 1792 the inn was reported as closed.<sup>7</sup>

Reverend Samuel Öhrling was of the opinion in 1789 that drunkenness was common in the parish, particularly among Saami. It could clearly be seen during the Lapp fairs. Yet, according to his judgement, conditions in Jokkmokk were not worse than in the rest of Lapland. In 1792 he thought that, as the inn had been closed, drunkenness only occurred during the fairs and when the Saami visited the coast or Norway. Just as sailors often had a reputation as drunkards when in port, so the Saami were considered to be drunk the one or two times a year they obtained alcohol, while remaining sober the rest of the year. Indeed some Saami who occasionally drank were never seen drunk, while others never touched alcohol at all.<sup>8</sup>

Drinking and drunkenness are not mentioned in the official reports after Daniel Engelmark became vicar in 1804. As he was convicted of drunkenness in office in 1823, this silence might be interpreted as an aversion to judge others suffering from the same weakness as himself. Supplementary evidence from inspections did not come until 1817, when the situation seems to have worsened through illicit liquor import and sale. At the inspection in 1823 special attention was given this problem. On a direct question, the congregation could not reveal any knowledge about illegal inns or illicit liquor trade by any parishioners. However, peasants from Luleå were accused of bringing spirits to the parish by sleighs. The alcohol was then sold at the church.<sup>9</sup>

The temperance movement reached Jokkmokk in 1842, when Reverend Ullenius, his fellow clergymen, and some Saami and settlers took the temperance vow. According to him, the renewed prohibition of 1839 assisted in keeping the people sober and orderly. But the smuggling of liquor from Luleå did continue in many ways and during almost all seasons. Indeed, when the parish was inspected by Lars Levi Læstadius in 1848, he regarded the situation as far from positive: illegal inns existed and drinking was conspicuous.<sup>10</sup> When Gustaf Westerlund moved to Jokkmokk in 1849, the parish got a vicar who had for many years been active in the temperance movement: in 1841 he had founded a temperance society in Arvidsjaur. Alcohol therefore received great attention in his reports. He could inform his superiors that the illicit liquor trade flourished through the smuggling of alcohol from Luleå. Among the goods could be found both brandy and wine mixed to the so-called "Spanish Wine," and all kinds of rot-gut. "Hoffman's Drop's," a mixture of spirits and ether, were also popular. These contrabands were sold by the settlers to the Saami: many settlers had to get liquor to be able to buy reindeer from the Saami. In general hard liquor played a

key role in relations among the common people, and it was not uncommon to see drunken persons in church. Reverend Westerlund held a particularly bad opinion about the two village shops, which had been established since freedom of trade was introduced in 1846. Their trade was thought to flourish in combination with the illicit sale of alcohol (Westerlund, 1857:177-181).

### **Jokkmokk Parish: Christian Revivalism Among the Saami, 1850-1910**

When Lars Levi Læstadius visited Jokkmokk parish again in 1856, he could report how important changes had started to come about. A religious revival that honoured absolute temperance had begun to spread among the Saami.<sup>11</sup> It was Læstadius's own movement that had reached Jokkmokk. In Jokkmokk, the revival started in 1855. According to tradition, it was a wealthy Saami from the Kuoljok family who made the first contact with Læstadianism, during a visit to Gällivare. In the beginning of the revival, during the 1850s, several different religious directions were present. But it was the Læstadian movement that finally succeeded among the Saami; it never won any following amid the Swedish population (Westerlund, 1857:181; Nordberg, 1979:145-147; Gripested, 1985:59).

Progress was slow from the beginning. Clerical complaints concerning drunkenness and trafficking in alcohol were still brought forward. Yet already in 1859, drinking and bootlegging were reported to be confined to the six months of the year when good sleighing snow was present and facilitated transportation. These occurrences declined considerably over time, and in 1869 it only took place in the southern part of the parish, where bootleggers from the Swedish coast still came and bartered liquor for reindeer meat and other local products. The Læstadian revival seems to have spread especially among the Mountain Saami. Reverend Berlin wrote in 1868 that if any moral precedence should be given to either the Swedish or the Saami people, it should without doubt be given to the Saami, particularly the Mountain Saami, who both in temperance and other virtues had shown themselves to be above the Swedes. This was the opposite of centuries of clerical complaints, where the Mountain Saami had often been pointed out as ignorant and immoral. The provincial governor also stressed the good effects of the Læstadian revival; it was claimed to have made the Saami an honourable people in deeds and conduct.<sup>12</sup>

During the first half of the 1870s no great changes in the use of alcohol were reported. Excessive drinking among itinerant Swedish forest workers was criticised on several occasions. From about 1875 on, stern measures were taken against the illicit sale of alcohol, and the vicar maintained in 1879 that it was totally eradicated. At the end of the decade, the situation

was described as very moderate even during the fairs; drunks were rarely seen. The sober trend prevailed during the 1880s; drinking occurred chiefly among itinerant forest workers. The illicit sale of liquor was, however, not so successfully eradicated as previously presumed. During the 1890s drinking habits deteriorated sharply. Illicit sale and bootlegging increased with the opening of the interior railway; beer is for the first time mentioned as a contributor to drinking. During the last five years of the 19th century the consumption of alcoholic beverages increased steeply. The wage earning population increased and had good incomes. A storm, which felled an enormous amount of trees during a good business cycle for timber, created a large economic boom in Jokkmokk in 1897. The extent of the economic impact was such that if every male inhabitant in the parish had taken up forest work, only half of the labour demand would have been supplied. The result was a virtual migration to Jokkmokk by workers from other parts of the North (Lundgren, 1984:38-39). The period, which coincided with the repeal of the alcohol prohibition in Lapland, has been called the "liquor-time" after what occurred (Vesterlund, 1925:129-140). That this name was not given in vain, can be seen in the court minutes. While only a few persons were sentenced for drunkenness during previous years, in 1898 forty-four and in 1899 forty persons were sentenced for this offence.<sup>13</sup>

With the establishment of a legal retail sale of alcohol in Jokkmokk in 1900, the illegal sale diminished but the temperance situation did not improve. A struggle over the legal sale took place, where the sheriff and the chairman of the rural district board were in favour, while the local clergy and the police inspector tried to abolish it. The advocates of temperance won. Police inspector Berglund could prove with statistics that the sale of both spirits and beer had increased after the introduction of a legal place for retail, while the itinerant population had virtually disappeared (Berglund, 1903). The blame for drinking was put on the settled population. After the abolition of the legal retail sale in 1904, Reverend Ahlfort could report that the temperance situation had improved and several temperance associations had been founded. This can also be seen in the sentencing for drunkenness. During the years 1900-1905, an average of 13 persons per year were sentenced, during 1906-1910 the average had sunk to only 3 per year. The economic boom in the timber trade declined at the beginning of the new century, and could not create as many jobs as earlier, and the number of itinerant workers diminished. As these workers were the main consumers of alcohol, their removal improved the temperance situation.<sup>14</sup>

Reports from the local clergy and the provincial governors show that Saami alcohol consumption, at the beginning of the period 1850-1910, did not differ significantly from that of the settled population. In only a few

instances was liquor mentioned as a problem in connection with this ethnic group. At considerably more occasions, especially towards the end of the period, they were mentioned as living a much more temperate life than the local Swedish population, particularly the itinerant workers. In 1901 the Saami were, for the last time during the period, mentioned in a clerical report. They were then said to live a pronounced well-behaved and orderly life, and a large number of them were members of the Læstadian movement.<sup>15</sup>

### **Jokkmokk Parish: Court Cases, 1760-1910**

In spite of the literary statements about general drunkenness at the Lapp fairs (Læstadius, 1831:131-134; Bore, 1904), and the perpetual complaints made by the ministry, very few persons were convicted of drunkenness by the courts in Jokkmokk. During the hundred years between 1760 and 1860 only 35 people were sentenced. The convictions applied, with only one exception, to occurrences that took place during the fairs. The legislation concerning drunkenness was quite clear. It was an offence to appear intoxicated in public. Additional penalties were enacted for drunkenness under aggravated circumstances, such as in church or court. But in the light of the narrative sources it seems as if the statutes were not applied to their full extent. Of the nine persons convicted for drunkenness between 1760-1790, all were sentenced only for that offence. Among the eight sentenced between 1790 and 1800 two were also sentenced for other misdemeanours. Of the 18 sentenced between 1800-1860 all were also convicted for other offenses or for aggravated drunkenness. The assize of 1818 must have been particularly lively, as two jurors and two spectators were sentenced for drunkenness in court. As mentioned above, the vicar Daniel Engelmark was sentenced in 1823 for aggravated drunkenness while performing official duties. But all misdemeanours committed during the fair were done under the influence of alcohol. In 1827, for instance, the Saami Ivar Jonsson Abriel was sentenced for breaching the market peace and for assault causing bodily harm, but no particular penalty was however given for drunkenness, which would have been the case if he had been intoxicated.<sup>16</sup>

None were sentenced for drunkenness more than twice with previous convictions noted, as they influenced the penalties. The only Saami appearing repeatedly before the court between 1760 and 1860, was Amul Pannasson Parrak from Sirkas during the 1830s. In 1835 he was convicted for battery and breaking of the market peace. The next year he was found guilty of battery, breach of the market peace, breach of the Sunday peace, and drunkenness, and the year after for public insults and assault not

causing bodily harm. In 1838 he was fined for not appearing in court for a divorce proceeding initiated by his wife. But then his criminal career was over. In 1845 it was noted, however, that his wife had deserted him because of his violent behaviour. In spite of his dissipation, it does not seem that he became a social outcast. He could always pay the very stiff fines, for they were never converted into prison terms or corporal punishment. Between 1823 and 1838 he also appeared on the tax rolls together with two brothers.<sup>17</sup>

During the period 1860-1910 only five nomadic Saami were sentenced for crimes related to alcohol. In 1886 a Saami woman was convicted of aiding and abetting the illicit sale of alcohol. During the unsettled year of 1899 two Saami were sentenced for drunkenness, as was another in 1902. The only Saami who appeared more frequently before court during this period was Lars Andersson Huljo. In 1879 he was sentenced for a defamatory statement, in 1884 for aiding and abetting the illicit sale of alcohol, and in 1886 for a similar offence. Finally he was convicted in 1903 for drunkenness and disturbance of the peace. The penalties meted out for these misdemeanours were restricted to fines.<sup>18</sup>

The lack of congruence between the earlier narrative sources and the number of convictions for drunkenness can only be construed as an apparent contrast between the letter of the law and its implementation. The soft enforcement can be tied to the generally lenient attitude towards alcohol in contemporary society. The tolerance shown by the local authorities seems to have been much greater than by the legislators in Stockholm (Læstadius, 1831:127-131). The picture given by clerical and provincial reports after 1850, depicting the Saami as living a considerably more sober life than the settled population, is fully confirmed by the court records.

## Conclusions

A closer analysis shows that the Saami peoples relation to alcohol was not so problematic as a superficial study of government decrees can imply. During the 18th century the big problem in the eyes of government was drinking during the Lapp fairs, obstructing religious instruction when most people were gathered. Most of the Saami alcohol consumption occurred during limited periods of the year when intoxicants were available, which led travellers and other external observers to wrongful deductions about the lack of Saami sobriety. The Saami use of alcohol was at this time in fact not more problematic than that of Scandinavians in general, even if that was rather excessive in our eyes.

The background to the early alcohol regulations for Lapland shows a clear connection with the Pietist offensive and the demands of religious

instruction. Local observers emphasised this and accentuated the fact that drinking only occurred on limited occasions. In spite of evidence of heavy drinking, a closer scrutiny of the convictions for drunkenness shows no sign of social drop-out behaviour through alcohol. Previous to 1860, none are sentenced more than twice for drunkenness and only one person appears more often before the courts.

During the 19th century, a protective paternalism enters the debate: the Saami people were seen as not able to take care of themselves under the pressure of Swedish society. The general public held a negative view of Saami alcohol use, and the government initiated special legislation to protect the Saami against its supposed disastrous consequences. The Saami Nation were not only seen as a numeric minority, but also as a morally weaker ethnic group. A closer analysis of the primary sources, however, gives a completely different picture. After the Læstadian revival, the Saami appear as the more sober part of the population.

The nomadic Saami relationship with alcohol in Jokkmokk between 1760 and 1910, was in no way worse than that of the Swedish population in the parish. In fact, due to the Christian revivalism among the Saami, they were towards the end of the period living a considerably more sober life. It is likely that the conditions in the whole area affected by Læstadian revivalism, that is from the north down to and including Arjeplog parish, were the same as in Jokkmokk. In spite of these facts, which were reported to the central authorities, the legislators and the general public persisted with the old view of the Saami as particularly vulnerable to alcohol. It seems that this view was based on prejudice and ignorance. In the areas south of Arjeplog where the revival did not have any adherents, the Saami population was small, and there were no objective reasons that a worse situation there should have influenced the public opinion.

Earlier propositions by scholars suggesting that Saami had a more problematic relationship with alcohol than Scandinavians in general, seem to be based on a superficial study of general material, and on drawing inappropriate parallels with other cultural areas, North American Indians in particular. Since their ethnogenesis the Saami people have had permanent contact with surrounding cultures, and Saami culture evolved in relationship with these. The contacts with agricultural societies must, since the earliest days, have included alcohol. Neither in historic, nor in prehistoric times has a contact situation existed where alcohol was introduced as a foreign element. The significance of alcohol in Saami society must therefore be viewed from the same point as for the Scandinavians in general, and no parallels to "Native peoples" can be made.

## Notes

1. Landshövdingeberättelser 1861-1865 - 1901-1905; Uppbördsböcker 1747-1866, Hultblads excerpter LA 1460, *NMA*.
2. Landskapshandlingar, Norrland, Västerbotten 1607, *RA*.
3. Riksdagstrycket 1890, Riksdagstrycket 1891.
4. Riksdagstrycket 1894.
5. Riksdagstrycket 1897.
6. Riksdagstrycket 1897.
7. Domkapitlets i Härnösand arkiv: Manualhandlingar, F III bf 1, 7, 8, *LAH*.
8. Domkapitlets i Härnösand arkiv: Manualhandlingar, F III bf 1, 7, 8, *LAH*.
9. Domkapitlets i Härnösand arkiv: Manualhandlingar, F III bf 1, 7, 8, *LAH*.
10. Domkapitlets i Härnösand arkiv: Manualhandlingar, F III bf 1, 7, 8, *LAH*.
11. Domkapitlets i Härnösand arkiv: Manualhandlingar, F III bf 1, 7, 8, *LAH*.
12. Domkapitlets i Härnösand arkiv: Manualhandlingar, F III bf 1, 7, 8, *LAH*; Landshövdingeberättelser 1860-1865 - 1901-1905.
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