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Churches in Finnmark County and the Torne Region in the Early Modern Period

Introduction

This article focuses on the availability of church buildings for the Sámi in Finnmark County (Denmark-Norway) and the Torne region (Sweden) in the early modern period until the first half of the 1700s. Based on a survey in the current article of the known ecclesiastical buildings in the two regions in the period, the following five questions will be discussed: What kinds of buildings were used as churches? Were some of them primarily built for the non-Sámi population and others mainly for the Sámi? How often did the Sámi visit the churches? Were the availability of churches similar in Finnmark County and the Torne region? Were some Sámi linked with churches in both Norway and Sweden? After a short discussion of the religious and political background of the establishment of the churches, most of the article deals with presentations of each church related to their respective parishes in the two regions – first Finnmark, then Torne. Finally, the problems presented above will be discussed.

In the period discussed in this article, the early modern period, the majority of the Sámi population in Finnmark County was coastal Sámi. A smaller group was the reindeer-nomads who used the interior in the winter and coastal areas in the summer season as grazing land. Most of the non-Sámi population lived in fishing villages along the outer coast, but an expansion into the fjords from the non-Sámi group took place in this period. This expansion, together with economic factors, resulted in changes to the structure of the Sámi settlement. In Várjavuonna (Varangerfjord), Sámi long-distance migration to the outer fjord area was exchanged for short-distance seasonal migration within the inner parts of the fjord. In Áltavuotna (Altafjord), the Sámi settled on one side of the fjord and the Norwegians on the other side.¹

The majority of the Sámi population in the Torne region lived in Torne *lappmark*.² In summer, the Sámi in the mountain districts made seasonal mi-

1 Nielsen 1990 pp. 122-123; Niemi 1983 p. 247; Hansen and Olsen 2004 p. 255.

2 «Lappmark» was a Swedish term used for geographical and administrative areas in the north of the country specifically inhabited by the Sámi people.

grations to the coast of northern Norway, for fishing, hunting, and reindeer breeding.³ The non-Sámi population in the Torne region was mainly Finnish-speaking farmers in Torne Valley, below the boundaries of Torne lappmark. From the late 1630s, Finnish-speaking farmers settled in Torne lappmark, but the Sámi were still in the majority.⁴ The Swedish language was used by some of the inhabitants of Torneå town,⁵ which was founded in 1621.⁶ From the mid-1660s, the mining industry in the upper Torne valley brought Vallons and Germans to this area, in addition to Swedes and Finns from other parts of Sweden-Finland. However, most workers were local Finns. Sámi were hired for transporting the ore with the use of reindeer.⁷

I have here not included the district we today call the interior of Finnmark (*Indre Finnmark*). This district, the present-day municipalities of Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino), Kárášjohka (Karasjok), and the southern part of Deatnu (Tana) in Norway, was under the Swedish Church and Swedish administration of justice, even though both Sweden and Denmark-Norway collected taxes. *Indre Finnmark* is therefore treated as a part of the Swedish Torne region, together with some areas which belong to Finland today. These are Ohcejohka (Utsjoki) municipality by the Deatnu River, and the parts of the former parishes of Nedertorneå, Övertorneå, and Enontekis on the east side of the course of the Könkämä – Muonio – Torne rivers.⁸

In this article Sámi placenames are used in Torne lappmark and in the fjord areas of Finnmark. The Norwegian, Swedish or Finnish name will be given in parenthesis. Exceptions are for names of churches and parishes where I use their official, historical names, and for some places where only Finnish names are known. Norwegian place names are used for the outer coast of Finnmark with Sámi name in parenthesis where they are known. Swedish placenames are used in the parishes of Nedertorneå and Övertorneå with Finnish names in parentheses or in footnotes.

3 Korpijaakko-Labba 1994 pp. 91–95.

4 Hiltunen 2007 pp. 109, 131–133.

5 The Finnish name of the town is Tornio; since 1809, it has been on the Finnish side of the national border.

6 Teerijoki 1993 p. 118.

7 Kumma 1997 pp. 53–58, 75–89; Tawe 1958 p. 16.

8 The parish of Loppa in western Finnmark is not included in the article, because it had a rather small Sámi population. Also, it was the poorest parish in Finnmark, where most priests stayed for only a short period.

Background

The first churches in these northernmost regions of Fennoscandia or Sápmi were established around the turn of the fourteenth century, in fishing villages along the coast of Finnmark and in the market places along the coast of Gulf of Bothnia.⁹ Some Sámi came in contact with Christianity during this time. In the Post-Reformation sixteenth century, all churches in Finnmark were still located along the coast,¹⁰ while the only clerical building in Torne lappmark was one small chapel.¹¹ At least from the mid-1500s, the priests of the parish of Torne had ecclesiastical responsibility for Torne lappmark, like other parishes in the northern part of the Gulf of Bothnia were responsible for “their” Sámi regions (lappmarker) which they visited once or twice a year. This arrangement was implemented by King Gustav I Vasa (1523–1560) and continued by his son John III (1568–1592).¹² The coastal Sámi of Finnmark who were integrated into the church at this time probably participated in services in the churches along the coast.¹³

Within the space of two and a half years, the king of Denmark-Norway, Christian IV, and the Swedish duke Carl (from 1604 King Carl IX) both made visits to the northern parts of their realms. Christian went on a sea voyage to Vardø in Finnmark and the Kola Peninsula in Russia in the summer of 1599, while Carl visited Torneå and other market places in Västerbotten during the winter of 1602.¹⁴ The reason for these trips was the ongoing struggle for the sovereignty of the northern territory. By 1599, Carl had started a reorganization of northern Sweden, to gain more control over this part of the country, particularly the Sámi regions.¹⁵ Soon this new system also included the coastal Sámi areas in an effort to make a corridor to the Arctic Ocean. But the Kalmar War (1611–1613) ended the Swedish hope of gaining sovereignty over the coastal Sámi areas along “Västersjön.”¹⁶ However, large inland areas where the two kingdoms had overlapping taxation remained,

9 Hansen and Olsen 2014 p. 257.

10 Hamre 1983 p. 92.

11 Slunga 1993 p. 292.

12 Bygdén 1923 (II) pp. 242–243; Fellman 1910 p. 15.

13 Kolsrud 1947 p. 2–3.

14 Hansen and Olsen 2014 p. 257; Westin 1965 p. 29.

15 Olofsson 1965 pp. 90–122.

16 Olofsson 1965 p. 188. *Västersjön* was the Swedish term for the coastal areas of northern Norway, and thus was used as a designation of the coastal Sámi territories.

and the Swedes were still in control of the ecclesiastical administration in the interior of Finnmark. This area was subject to negotiations after the Great Northern War (1700–1721), and was devolved to Denmark-Norway by the Border Treaty of 1751.¹⁷

Ecclesiastical expansion was a part of Carl IX's reorganization, and churches were established in some Sámi winter dwelling places in the inland.¹⁸ Christian IV's interest in the northern region coincided with the witch trials, which became more intense in Finnmark during the seventeenth century than anywhere else in Norway. In 1609, the fief holders in northern Norway were instructed by the king to persecute Sámi sorcerers without mercy.¹⁹ His argument was that the Norwegian and "other pious people" did not dare to move into the fjords because of Sámi magicians. Witch trials involving Sámi were often the result of conflicts with the Danish-Norwegian authorities over rights to land and water.²⁰ But most of those prosecuted in the witch trials in Finnmark were Norwegian women.²¹

Churches in Finnmark County

The establishment of churches in Finnmark was connected to the non-Sámi expansion into the region from the high Middle Ages through the late Middle Ages.²² Norwegians, as well as other peoples from the North Sea region, moved to Finnmark to take part in the commercial fisheries. They settled in small fishing villages along the outer coast of Finnmark, close to the rich fishing banks. Sámi also took part in the fisheries, and some authors think that the churches were built for the coastal Sámi, too.²³ The coast of Finnmark was considered a "*terra missionis*." There was no ordinary parish organization here during the Middle Ages, and the churches or chapels did not have any tithing rights.²⁴ The archbishop of Nidaros received all the income, which was colle-

17 Hansen 1985 pp. vii–xliv.

18 Hansen and Olsen 2014 p. 240.

19 Lundh 1870 p. 300 (1609); Hagen 2005 p. 8.

20 Hagen 2012 pp. 8–9.

21 Hagen 2005 p. 6.

22 Hansen 2012 pp. 254–255.

23 Kolsrud 1947 pp. 2–3; Bratrein and Lind 2004 pp. 64–69; Mundal 2007 pp. 118–119.

24 Hansen 2012 p. 261.

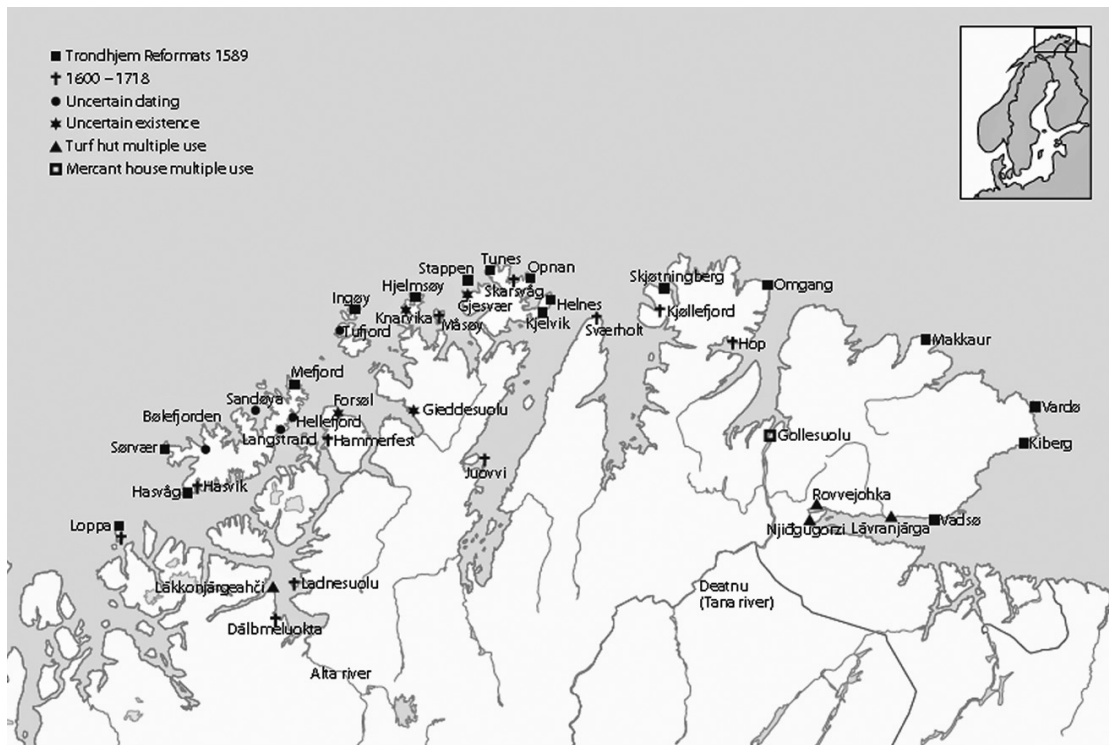


Figure 1: Map of churches in Finnmark County. (Ill. UiT 2015, Bjørn Hatteng and Siv Rasmussen)

cted by *setesveiner* (commissioners).²⁵ In 1589, there were seventeen churches and *korshus* (chapels) in Finnmark, which were served by twelve clergymen.²⁶ Most of these churches were without doubt of medieval origin, while others were probably built in the Post-Reformation period. During the seventeenth century, both names and number of parishes changed. Some of the old medieval churches were moved to more convenient places or closed during this century, while others strengthened their position as parish churches.²⁷

The Sámi districts were included in the coastal parishes, but it is uncertain when this happened. Finnmark belonged to the Diocese of Trondheim, and during the seventeenth century some of the bishops of Trondheim took initiatives to improve ecclesiastical control over the Sámi districts. A report about the situation in the north by Bishop Peder Schjelderup resulted in two decrees from King Christian IV in 1631. One was about the Finnmark clergy, who should receive tithings like other priests. The other decree involved the

25 Hansen 2012 p. 262.

26 Hamre 1983 p. 92.

27 Trædal 2008.

Sámi more directly. All priests should preach for both the Norwegian and the Sámi populations. The priests in the *best* parishes should teach a youngster, Sámi or Norwegian, to work as chaplain or catechist for the Sámi. Those who wanted to learn the Sámi language would be given priority to scholarships at the Latin school. It turned out, however, to be difficult to carry out these plans, and eventually it included only one parish in the southern Sámi region.²⁸ Other efforts were made by the later bishops Erik Bredal (1643–1672) and Peder Krog (1688–1731, but it is uncertain whether they had any direct effect on the establishment of churches in the period discussed here. Bishop Bredal worked among the Sámi in Trondenes in present-day Troms County, where he stayed from 1658 until 1660. As far as we know, he never visited Finnmark. Bishop Krog is too late in time to have had any impact on the establishment of the church buildings in discussion here. He visited Finnmark three times, in 1696, 1700, and 1708, and gave instructions about improvement of the ecclesiastical situation for the Sámi.²⁹ However, a few churches and chapels were established in the fjord areas during the seventeenth century, some places in connection with a graveyard. In addition, unconsecrated government-owned buildings were used for services. Most parish priests visited the nearby Sámi communities in the parish from one to three times a year.

The majority of the priests in Finnmark came from other parts of Denmark-Norway. Most priests were Norwegians, from the western and central parts of Norway, followed by priests from Denmark. Out of a total of 36 parish priests and chaplains who served in Finnmark in the period from 1650 to 1720, only three were born in Finnmark. The clerical language was Danish or Norwegian, even in the Sámi regions.³⁰

The *Mission Collegium* (Misjonskollegiet), which was established by King Frederik IV in 1714,³¹ organized a mission towards the Sámi population in Norway in the early years of the eighteenth century. The mission was headed by Thomas von Westen, and may be compared with Carl IX's ecclesiastical reorganization. Both involved the establishment of churches and chapels in the Sámi areas and the use of Sámi language in the preaching. This article will deal with the ecclesiastical situation in Finnmark before this mission started, although sources written by von Westen will be used to shed light on the situation in this prior period.

28 Lysaker 1987 pp. 142–143.

29 Steen 1954 p. 79.

30 Rasmussen unpublished; Dahl 2000; Erlandsen 1857; Sollied 1901.

31 Steen 1954 p. 102.

The Parish of Vardø

Vardø (Várggát) Church on the Varanger Peninsula was consecrated by archbishop Jørund in 1307 and is the first church we know of in Finnmark.³² Though it cannot be stated with certainty, clues indicate that the church was dedicated to St. Olav.³³ The medieval church was replaced by a new one in 1714. Timber for this church was bought from the Russian-Orthodox Skolt Sámi on the southern side of Várjavuonna (Varanger fjord).³⁴ Another medieval church on the Varanger Peninsula was Makkaur Church that was included in the parish of Vardø in 1685.³⁵

The churches of Kiberg and Vadsø are mentioned in the *Trondhjem Reformat of 1589*.³⁶ It is possible that churches could have been built there in the late Middle Ages, since both Kiberg (Biergi) and Vadsø (Čáhcesuolu) were established as fishing villages at that time.³⁷ But the first church we know of in Vadsø was built in 1571 on the island of Vadsøya, where the village was then located. During the seventeenth century, the population moved to the mainland, and in 1710/1711 a new church was established there.³⁸ Kiberg got a new church in 1667, which was built in Bergen and brought to Kiberg.³⁹ A parish priest and a chaplain served the churches of the parish of Vardø in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. The parish priest lived in Vardø until the late 1600s, while the chaplain lived in Vadsø. This arrangement changed

32 Storm 1888 p. 74.

33 Nissen 1960 pp. 31–32; Rasmussen in print pp. 6–7. The dedication of Vardø medieval church is uncertain and usually regarded as unknown. The only traces which can help us here are two maps from the sixteenth century. The first is a world map of 1508 drawn by a Dutchman, Johannes Ruysch, and the second is the well-known Carta Marina, the Swede Olaus Magnus's map of 1539. A church which may be Vardø Church is called St. Odulfi by Ruysch and "Ca:S. Olavi" by Magnus. Kristian Nissen discusses the possibility of a St. Olav church in Vardø, but he rejects the idea. His argument is that it is unknown in Norwegian tradition to connect St. Olav with Vardø. Nissen was not aware of the Dutch saint St. Odulphus, who sometimes seems to be mistaken for St. Olav, as Ruysch probably did. The popularity of the personal name Olav (Oluf, Ole) among the coastal Sámi in Varanger may also indicate a St. Olav-dedication.

34 Trædal 2008 p. 261.

35 Trædal 2008 p. 263.

36 Trondhjems Reformat was a commission report about the local ecclesial finances of the Trondhjems diocese which was prepared for Christian IV in 1589. See Hamre 1983 p. 92.

37 Linchusen 1975 p. 62; Niemi 1983 pp. 76–77, 99–100.

38 Danske Kancelli Supplikbog, vol. 5, October, November, December 1703; Niemi 1983 pp. 130, 324; Trædal 2008 pp. 251–253.

39 Sollied 1901 p. 37.

when the former chaplain was appointed as parish priest in 1696. From then on, the parish priest would live in Vadsø and the chaplain in Vardø.⁴⁰ Father and son, Ludvig Christensen Paus (1681–1707) and Ludvig Christian Ludvigsen Paus (1707–1740), both worked to strengthen Sámi integration within the Church. So did the provincial governor at the time, Erich Lorch.⁴¹ This was done in many ways: Lorch and Paus senior employed Isaac Olsen as a teacher for the Várjjat Sámi,⁴² Lorch planned a church in Máze,⁴³ and Paus junior and Lorch appointed ten Sámi men as *helligdagsvektere*.⁴⁴

A government-owned turf hut called *kongsgammen* (the king's hut) was situated in Lávránjárga (Finnes) in the seventeenth century. This unconsecrated building was used both by secular and ecclesiastical authorities for tithing and tax collection, court sessions, and services. It had probably already been built when a court session took place in Lávránjárga in August of 1656.⁴⁵ This turf hut, or perhaps a new one, was still in use in 1694.⁴⁶ In the latter part of the seventeenth century, Lávránjárga (Finnes) was a summer and autumn village for the Várjjat Sámi. Earlier in the century it may have been a winter village, when the Sámi used fishing sites further east during summer.⁴⁷

The inner part of the fjord, present-day Unjárga (Nesseby) municipality, had government-owned turf huts with the same functions as the hut(s) in Lávránjárga (Finnes). They were also called *kongsgammen*. Later on, one of them was called *amtmannsgammen* (the district governor's turf hut). In the Sámi language, they were called *hearragoahti* or *lavdnjegirku*. The dating of the turf huts is uncertain, but according to a court record from 1679 the turf huts were in need of repair.⁴⁸ Turf huts kept in good repair can last for at least 60 years, which means that they may have been built in the first part of the seventeenth century. The number and the location of the turf huts changed over time. Sources from the late 1600s and early 1700s talk about two turf huts, called by Thomas von Westen *winter and summer kongsgamme*.⁴⁹ One of

40 Niemi 1983 pp. 208, 316–318.

41 Steen 1954 p. 86.

42 Niemi 1983 p. 321.

43 Trædal 2008 p.214.

44 Niemi 1983 p. 381. These men had to report to the parish priest about sins committed by other Sámi.

45 Finnmark sorenskriverembete Tingbok 10, 1654–1663, p. 31b. Tromsø State Archives.

46 Knag 1938b (appr.1690) p. 53.

47 Niemi 1983 p. 167.

48 Finnmark sorenskriverembete. Tingbok 16, 1678–1679, pp 50b–51a, Tromsø State Archives.

49 von Westen 1938 b (1717) p.119–120.

them was situated on the northern shore of the fjord, perhaps in Rovvejohka (Nyborg). The other was in Njiddgugorži (Vesterelvfossen) on the southern side of the fjord. The turf hut in Njiddgugorži was probably built as a result of the establishment of a market there in 1688. *The fogd* (regional bailiff) Niels Knag refers to a new *kongsgamme* in 1694.⁵⁰ It is not known when these government-owned turf huts were used as churches for the first time. In the late 1600s and early 1700s, the parish priest visited the Sámi there three times a year.⁵¹ In addition to the Várjjat Sámi, the Deatnu Sámi participated in services in Unjárga and their children were baptized there.⁵² Christian graves have been found on two small islands, Várjavuonsuolu (Sjøholmen) and Ávehat (Løkholmen), in Unjárga (Nesseby). The graves at Várjavuonsuolu are dated to the early Post-Reformation period, while the dating of the graves at Ávehat is uncertain.⁵³ Scree graves were the most common graves among the Sámi in Várjavuonna until the 1500s–1600s. The decline in this burial custom is seen as a result of Christian influence in the region.⁵⁴ The burial custom was heavily linked to the practice of the Sámi religion and the Sámi's close connection with their dead relatives. The archaeologist Audhild Schanche suggests that priests and officials may have instructed the Sámi to bury their relatives on the islands, as a way to break this close connection.⁵⁵

Isaac Olsen was a teacher in this district from 1703 to 1716, and although he was appointed as a teacher, he worked more as a missionary. He was from Trøndelag originally, and he came to Finnmark to serve as a house-teacher in the household of the parish priest in Kjelvik, Trude Nitter. The provincial governor Lorch brought him to Unjárga (Nesseby), where he did ambulatory teaching of Christianity in the private turf huts of the Sámi. When Bishop Krog visited Finnmark in 1708, Olsen was instructed to be a teacher for the Sámi in three other districts as well; Deatnu (Tana),⁵⁶ Lágesvuotna (Laksefjord), and Porsáŋgu (Porsanger). Unlike the priests in Finnmark, he spoke Sámi language and therefore became much more familiar with Sámi culture and society than the priests usually did. According to Thomas von Westen, Ludvig Christian Ludvigsen Paus understood Sámi language pretty well. Ho-

50 Knag 1938b (appr. 1690) p. 50.

51 von Westen 1938 a (1717) p. 110.

52 Ibid. p. 110.

53 Myrvoll 2005 p. 5 (attachment 3).

54 Hansen and Olsen 2014 p. 222; Schanche 2000 p. 347.

55 Schanche 2000 pp. 341–342.

56 The territories included were both in Deatnu Valley and Deanuvuotna.

wever, his language skills were probably not that good, as information from Isaac Olsen shows that he actually did not speak the language.⁵⁷

The Parishes of Skjötningberg and Omgang

Nordkinn Peninsula is situated between the two large fjords, Deanuvuotna (Tanafjord) and Lágesvuotna (Laksefjord). The district had two churches of medieval origin, situated in the fishing villages of Omgang (Vuoggá) and Skjötningberg. Both churches had their own priest in 1589.⁵⁸ During the seventeenth century, Omgang was annexed to Skjötningberg for two periods, first from 1625 until 1633, and then again from 1685 until 1720.⁵⁹ Kjøllefjord Church was built in the late 1600s and soon took over as the main church in this parish. The parish was formally renamed in 1720, and called the parish of Kjøllefjord (Gillevuotna). On account of the depopulation of the outer coast, the churches in Skjötningberg and Omgang were closed during the eighteenth century.⁶⁰ The dedication of Omgang Church is unknown, but Skjötningberg Church was called Stephani Church, which indicates a dedication to St. Stephen in Catholic times.⁶¹ The medieval church in Skjötningberg was replaced with a new church some time before 1643.⁶²

Another church in this region was Hop Church in Skeavvonjárga (Skjånes) in Deanuvuotna. This church was probably built in the early 1600s and must have been closed some time before 1689. It is not mentioned in the *Trondhjem Reformats of 1589*, but is reported to have been in existence in 1620.⁶³ Hop Church is not included in the oldest preserved church accounts from Finnmark from 1689–1693, and was probably closed some years before. But notices in the accounts from Omgang Church from 1694 and 1697 about a borrowed postilla testify to the existence of the church.⁶⁴ A report from 1694 says that there was a church there in earlier times.⁶⁵ This church belonged to the parish of Omgang and was served by the Omgang parish

57 Qvigstad 1910 p. 58.

58 *Trondhjems Reformats* p. 431.

59 Trædal 2008 pp. 269, 271.

60 Trædal 2008 pp. 269–273.

61 Ibid p. 170.

62 Ibid. p. 272.

63 Sollied 1901 p. 33.

64 Kirkeregnskaper 1689–1693 and 1694–1699; Omgangs kirke 1694, 1697; Amtmannen i Finnmark 3006. Tromsø State Archives.

65 Knag 1694 p. 14.

priest. Hop Church may have been built as a result of the Norwegian migration into the fjord region. But it is also possible that it was established to connect more closely with the Sámi in Deanuvuotna. Although there was no church in Hop anymore in 1716, the parish priest of Kjøllefjord visited Hop every autumn, according to Thomas von Westen. The few Sámi who lived in Lákkovuotna (Langfjord) in Deanuvuotna were served by the clergyman when he was in Hop. Every midsummer the same priest went to Gollisuolu (Gullholmen), a small island in the Deatnu (Tana) River, during the seasonal salmon fisheries. The service was celebrated in a store, where beer and spirits were sold and consumed.⁶⁶ Both local Sámi from the lower Deatnu Valley and Sámi from Várjjat, Anár, Kárašjohka, Ohcejohka, and Deanu siida came to Gollisuolu to sell salmon to the merchants there.⁶⁷

The Parish of Kjelvik

Kjelvik (Goaskinvággi) Church was a medieval church situated on Magerøya (Máhkarávju) Island. It was dedicated to St. Nicolaus and in 1589 was served by a parish priest who also served two other churches on the outer coast, Opnan and Helnes. Both were closed during the seventeenth century. The parish of Kjelvik acquired three new annex churches in that century: Skarsvåg, Måsøy (Muosát), and Sværholt (Spierta).⁶⁸ Kjelvik had a central ecclesial position in this part of Finnmark, even for the Sámi. Sværholt Church was built in the early 1600s on Sværholt peninsula between the fjords of Lágesvuotna (Laksefjord) and Porsáŋguvuotna (Porsangerfjord). This church was said to have been built for the Sámi in Lágesvuotna.⁶⁹ Sources from the late-seventeenth century prove that they attended services there.⁷⁰ But according to Thomas von Westen, the Sámi of Lágesvuotna never came to Sværholt Church, which was in poor condition and almost a ruin. The Sámi sometimes came to Kjøllefjord which was easier, and the parish priest of Kjelvik, Trude Nitter (1699–1719), went once a year to Lágesvuotna where he officiated in the turf huts, i.e., in the Sámi homes.⁷¹ These observations by von We-

66 von Westen 1938 a (1717) p. 110.

67 Pedersen 1984 pp.45-47.

68 Trædal 2008 pp. 289–309.

69 Bratrein 1968 p. 35.

70 Knag 1938a (1694) p. 12; Finnmark prosti kirkeregnskaper 1689–1693 and 1694–1699; Sværholt kirke pp. 21–22; Amtmannen i Finnmark 3006. Tromsø State Archives.

71 von Westen 1938a (1717) pp. 110, 123.

sten were probably almost correct for the time he visited Finnmark. Sværholt Church was in a poor condition already in the late 1600s. Some repairs were made, but it was finally closed *ca.* 1735. When the fishing village of Sværholt lost its position as a community center, a heavy decline in the population followed. It is an exaggeration to say that the Sámi in Lágesvuotna never came to Sværholt Church. Church accounts show that the Sámi offered money to this church, in addition to paying ordinary tithes, in the early 1700s.⁷²

Kjelvik Church was the main church for the Sámi in Porsáŋgu. They paid tithes and made other offerings to this church, usually money but also candles and reindeer skins.⁷³ Like in Lágesvuotna, the parish priest Trude Nitter visited Porsáŋgu once a year, in summer when he served the four most prominent villages: Hårvik, Gieddegohppi (Leirpollen), Čuđegieddi (Kistrand), and Smiervuotna (Smørfjord).⁷⁴ According to Thomas von Westen, there was no assembly building in Porsáŋgu. Another source mentions a building called *messehus* in Norwegian (service/worship house), built by local Sámi on Juovvi (Prestøya Island)⁷⁵ in Porsáŋguvuotna.⁷⁶ The building was situated on the same island as the one where a graveyard was consecrated before 1686 by Jens Madsen, parish priest of the parish of Kjelvik (1666–1686).⁷⁷ The *messehus* probably dates to approximately the same period. There are also pre-Christian graves on this island, and historian Håvard Dahl Bratrein has interpreted the existence of both pre-Christian and Christian graves as a transition from heathen to Christian burial practice.⁷⁸ Other researchers have shown that this transitional phase, where elements from the two burial practices were mixed with each other, lasted for a very long period.⁷⁹

The Parish of Ingøy

Ingøy Church was a medieval church situated in one of the old fishing villages in Finnmark. A new church was built at the beginning of the eighteenth

72 Finnmark prosti kirkeregnskap 1712–1720, samt noen ekstrakter og skrivelser ang. disse 1692–1720; Sværholt kirkes regnskaper 1699–1714, pp. 80–88; Amtmannen i Finnmark 3007. Tromsø State Archives.

73 Finnmark prosti kirkeregnskaper, 1701–1714, Kjelvik kirkes regnskaper 1702–1714, pp. 57–70; Amtmannen i Finnmark 3007. Tromsø State Archives.

74 von Westen 1938a (1717) p. 110.

75 Also called Ytre Langøy and Nordre Langøy.

76 Bratrein 1968 p. 25; Trædal 2008 p. 287; Svestad 2007 p. 52.

77 Schanche 2000 p. 340.

78 Bratrein 1968 p. 27; Schanche 2000 p. 117.

79 Svestad 2007 pp. 41–68; Schanche 2000 pp. 136, 335–343.

century. Other churches in this region were Tunes, Hjelmsøy, Stappen, Tufjord, and Måsøy.⁸⁰ All of them were located on islands along the outer coast. Unlike the other parish priests by 1716, the priest of Ingøy (Iččat) did not visit the Sámi in their settlements. Christopher Jansen Wessel (1707–1718) from Trondheim was the parish priest at that time. He was a brother of the famous naval hero Peter Wessel Tordenskjold, and described by von Westen as an energetic man, “zealous in all matters of God.”⁸¹ The Sámi of Jáhkovuotna (Revsbotn) and Muorralvuotna (Snefjord) belonged to the parish of Ingøy, and they came to Ingøy Church once a year.⁸² Nevertheless, it is possible that a “church building” had been in existence in this fjord area at an earlier time. According to a local legend, there was a church on Gieddesuolu (Gressholmen) Island⁸³ in Jáhkovuotna (Revsbotn) attacked by Russians. Graves of similar types as on Juovvi (Prestøya) Island are registered on Gieddesuolu (Gressholmen) Island, which indicates that this island was also in use in the transitional phase between the pre-Christian and Christian burial practice.⁸⁴

The Parish of Hammerfest

The medieval church at Mefjord on the northern part of Sørøya (Sállan) Island was the main church in this parish until 1620, when this position was taken over by Hammerfest Church.⁸⁵ Mefjord Church was an annex to Hammerfest until it was closed in 1672.⁸⁶ The church even gave Mefjord its Sámi name, Girkovuotna, which means “church fjord.” In addition to this church and the churches of the parish of Sørvær on the southern parts of Sørøya, there may have been four other churches on the island in the Middle Ages. There are legends about churches in Langstrand and Hellefjord in the inshore channel and in Bøle and at Sandøya on the outer coast.⁸⁷ The Sámi in the nearby fjord-areas of Fálesnuorri (Kvalsund) belonged to the parish of Hammerfest, and the parish priest Hans Mogensen Herdal (1671–1720) used to visit the Sámi there. He even appointed a Sámi man to educate the other Sámi in the Christian faith. Nothing is known about any church or other building used

80 Trædal 2008 pp. 298–315.

81 von Westen 1938a (1717) p. 81.

82 von Westen 1938a (1717) p. 111.

83 Called Jordholmen by Bratrein and Trædal.

84 Bratrein 1968 p. 27; Schancke 2000 p. 117.

85 Trædal 2008 p. 319.

86 Trædal 2008 p. 332.

87 Bratrein 1966 unpublished report Tromsø Museum; Trædal 2008 pp. 330–335.

as a church in these places, and the services probably took place in private homes, or perhaps in a turf hut owned by a local Sámi, Tude Kvivesen. He and his turf hut are mentioned by both Thomas von Westen and Isaac Olsen. Olsen visited Fálesnuorri in 1715, where he in a turf hut belonging to Tude Kvivesen, heard about how some educated Sámi in Sweden had returned to the practice of their indigenous religion.⁸⁸ In his report of 1717 to the Mission Collegium, Thomas von Westen proposed to build a school building close to Tude Kvivesen's turf hut, which was in the middle of Kvalsund.⁸⁹ Hans Mogensen Herdal was old and sick when von Westen was in Finnmark, and he was not able to visit the Sámi in Fálesnuorri (Kvalsund) any longer.

The Parishes of Sørvær and Alten-Talvik

The oldest church in these two parishes was Sørvær Church, probably established in the fifteenth century. Sørvær (Márregohppi) was then an important fishing village, the largest on the island of Sørøya (Sállan).⁹⁰ Like many of the other fishing villages on the outer coast, Sørvær declined in importance and lost many inhabitants during the seventeenth century. This also impacted on parish life. In the latter part of this century, the priests lived in Hasvåg (Ákḡováhki) close to the inshore channel of Sørøya, while the old church in Sørvær decayed. Hasvåg Church is mentioned in *Trondhjem Reformats of 1589*, but it is possible that it was built by late medieval times since the settlement there is dated to that period.⁹¹ The old church at Hasvåg was replaced by a new church in the late-seventeenth century, but this was moved to the nearby Hasvik (Ákḡoluokta) after only a decade.⁹² The dedications of Sørvær and Hasvåg churches are not known.

The Áltavuotna (Altafjord) region was a part of the parish of Sørvær until the parish of Alten-Talvik was established in 1705, and the majority of the Sámi lived in this part of the parish of Sørvær. We do not know where the Sámi attended services before the mid-1600s. Perhaps they had to go to one of the churches at Sørøya, or the priest may have visited Áltavuotna. A government-owned turf hut (*kongsgammen*) was already built in the six-

88 Qvigstad 1910 p. 80.

89 von Westen 1938b (1717) p. 126. The Sámi name of the village of Kvalsund is Ráhk-kerávju.

90 Nielsen 1990 vol. 1, pp. 32, 34.

91 Linchusen 1975 pp. 50–51.

92 Trædal 2008 pp. 339–344.

teenth century on the river bank not far away from the outlet of Áлта River. Both coastal Sámi from the Áltavuotna region and mountain Sámi from Guovdageaidnu and Ávjovárri⁹³ came to fish salmon in the river every summer. The turf hut was built for the *fogd* who collected taxes from them,⁹⁴ but it is unknown whether it was ever used as a church. In the 1650s, the parish priest Søren Lauritsen Lindholm visited Áлта three times a year.⁹⁵ Although we do not know exactly where he went, it is likely that he visited Lákkonjárgeahči (Langnes).⁹⁶ The court was located there, and according to local tradition there once had been a church there. The historian Jens Petter Nielsen supposes that it was not a real church, but an unconsecrated turf hut where both court and services were held.⁹⁷ The dating of the building is unknown. Only one source describes services at Lákkonjárgeahči (Langnes). Mogens Zarasen, a Sámi man in Loppa (Láhppi) but originally from Áлта, was brought to court in 1672 because he had neglected Holy Communion for 12 years. Zarasen told the court that the last time he went to God's table, as he put it, was in Lákkonjárgeahči (Langnes), with the former parish priest of Sørvær, Laurits Nyborg (1660–1671).⁹⁸ The Áлта area was regarded as belonging to the parish of Sørvær from at least the beginning of the seventeenth century. There were no parishes in Finnmark in the Middle Ages, but the region was under the influence of the parish of Sørvær by the late Middle Ages, when a *setesvein* of the archbishop collected taxes there.⁹⁹ In the latter part of the seventeenth century, Lákkonjárgeahči (Langnes) was replaced as a place for ecclesiastical services first by the island of Lille Årøya, where there was a graveyard,¹⁰⁰ and some years later by the larger nearby island Ladnesuolu (Årøya), where a church was built in 1694. After a few years, the church on Ladnesuolu was moved to Dálbmeluokta (Talvik), which the clergy deemed was a more convenient place for a church.¹⁰¹

93 Sámi siidas or communities in the inner parts of present Finnmark County.

94 Nielsen 1990 p. 85.

95 Sollied 1901 p. 10.

96 Known today as Isnestoften (Norwegian).

97 Nielsen 1990 p. 153.

98 Willumsen 2010 p. 328.

99 Hansen 2012 p. 261; Nielsen 1990 p. 37.

100 Nielsen 1990 p. 152.

101 Trædal 2008 pp. 346–350.

Churches and Church Organization in the Torne Region

As written in the introduction, clerical arrangements involving the Sámi in Sweden were directed by the kings in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. More arrangements were implemented by their successors during the seventeenth century. These activities included the establishment of churches and parishes in the Sámi areas, school for Sámi youngsters, Sámi priests, and the publication of literature in the Sámi language.¹⁰²

The region which I call the Torne region was called Torne or the parish of Tornö until 1606. The parish was then divided into three parishes: Nedertorneå (Lower Torneå), Övertorneå (Upper Torneå), and Torne lappmark. The parish of Torne was of medieval origin but it is uncertain when Torne lappmark was included within this parish. The name *lappmark(er)* appeared as Swedish administrative regions in connection with King Gustav I Vasa's taxation of the Sámi in the mid-sixteenth century. From 1615 until 1673, Torne lappmark was again included within Nedertorneå Parish, as it had been before 1606. Torne lappmark was finally separated from Nedertorneå by 1673 and split into the parish of Jukkasjärvi with the annex Enontekis, and the parish of Koutokeino with the annex Utsjoki.

Nedertorneå and Övertorneå were mainly Finnish-speaking parishes, while the native tongue in Torne lappmark was Sámi. Despite the situation with the language, the mother parish of Torne had already become a part of the Archdiocese of Uppsala in the medieval period, where the majority spoke Swedish. Although the Torne region belonged to Uppsala Archdiocese, and from 1647 to the newly established Härnösand Diocese, church services were conducted in the Finnish language. In the parishes of Torne lappmark, the Sámi language was used in addition to Finnish.¹⁰³ In the late 1500s and early 1600s, the majority of the clergy came from Finland. Due to internal recruitment among sons of local priests, the number of priests born in Torne rose from the mid-1600s. In the period from 1650 until 1750, the clergy of Torne was local. Even their wives came from the parishes round the Gulf of Bothnia.¹⁰⁴ It is therefore correct to speak about a northern clerical network.

102 Steen 1954 pp. 95–98; Olofsson 1965 pp. 279–280.

103 Bygdén 1923 vol. II p. 240; Fellman 1910 pp. lxi-lxxiv.

104 Bygdén 1923 vol. II, Rasmussen unpublished.

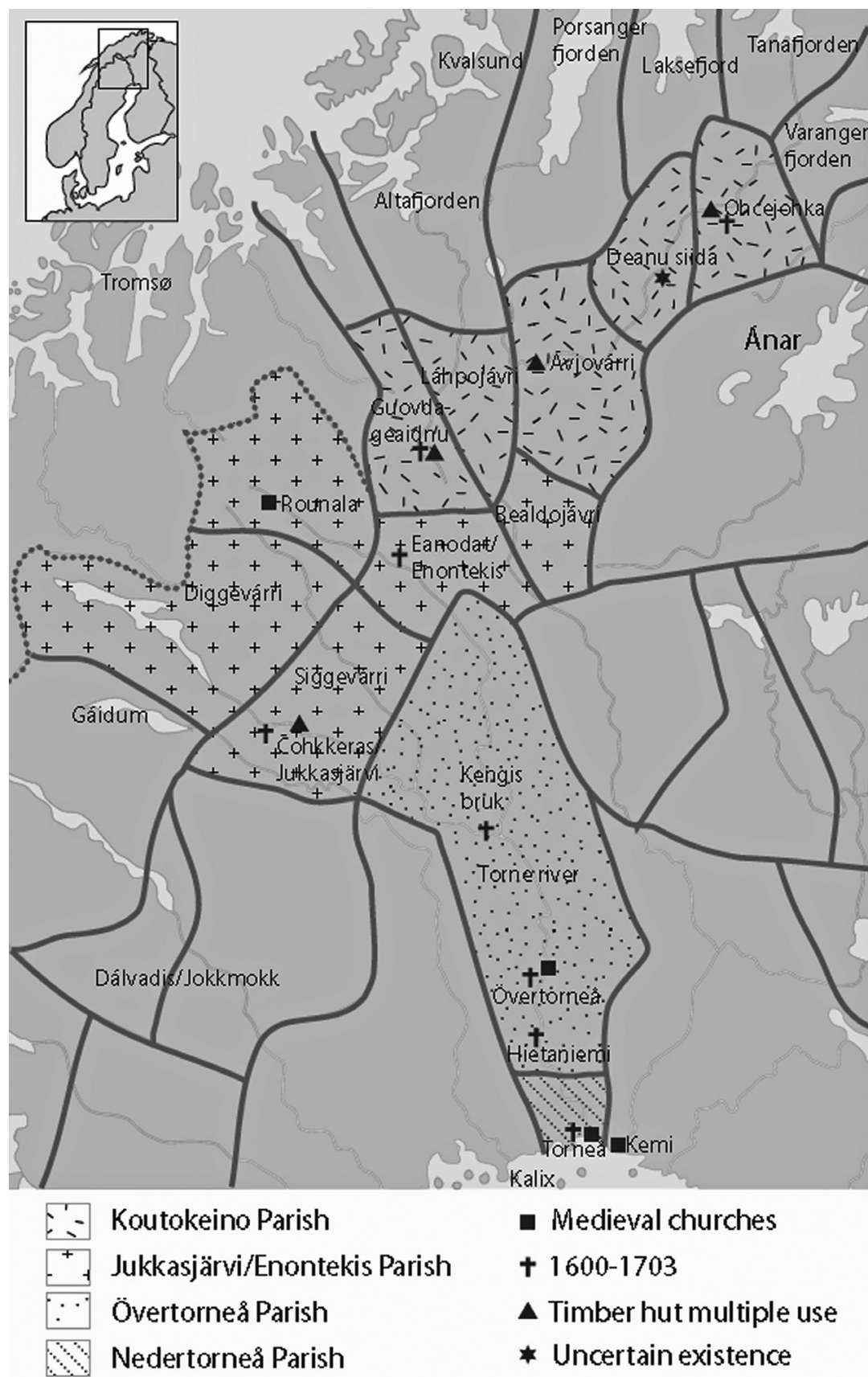


Figure 2: Map of churches in the Torne region. (Ill. UiT 2015, Bjørn Hatteng and Siv Rasmussen)

The Parish of Nedertorneå

In the medieval period, the chapel at Torne was built on the island Björkön (Pirikkiö) at the outlet of the Torne River. It was dedicated to St. John the Baptist. The first information about the parish of Torne and the chapel is from 1346, when Archbishop Hemming Nilsson of Uppsala consecrated a graveyard and baptized about 20 Sámi and Finns there.¹⁰⁵ The first churches and chapels in the Gulf of Bothnia were made of wood. They were replaced by stone churches at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The stone churches in northern Sweden have usually been connected with Archbishop Jakob Ulfsson (1469–1514), who held Västerbotten as a personal fief from the king.¹⁰⁶ According to local tradition, the wooden chapel at Björkön was burned down in an attack by enemies. The first stone church was probably built between 1496 and 1511.¹⁰⁷ This church was later called Nedertorneå Church.¹⁰⁸ Another church in the same parish was Torneå Church,¹⁰⁹ built in 1647 for the inhabitants of town of Torneå (Tornio) which was established in 1621.

The Parish of Övertorneå

The second church in the former parish of Torne was Särkilax (Särkilahti) Chapel, built on a small island in the Torne River around 70 km upstream from the outlet, in the later parish of Övertorneå (Ylitornio). The chapel was dedicated to St. Andrew. It is first mentioned in 1482 and was probably established by Archbishop Jakob Ulfsson. This chapel was washed away by a flood during the spring of 1615. Two churches were built to replace it, Övertorneå Church in Matarengi (Matarenki), which is the present center of Övertorneå municipality, and Hietaniemi Chapel in Hedenäset (Koivukylä), 20 km downstream on the Torne River.¹¹⁰

Kengis (Köngäs) iron mill in Pajala was established in the mid-1600s, and only a few years later the mill had both its own chapel and a chaplain. When the founder of the mill, the German merchant Arendt Grape, applied for a chaplain for Kengis, he referred particularly to the Sámi.¹¹¹ Many priests

105 Nordberg 1973 p. 7.

106 Wallerström 1995 p. 352.

107 Wallerström 1995 vol. II, p. 43.

108 Alatornion kirkko (Finnish).

109 Tornion kirkko (Finnish).

110 Slunga 1993 pp. 285–286.

111 Kyrkoherde Erik Nordbergs arkiv, handskrift 25. Volym 25:2:a Brukspredikanten i Kengis.



Figure 3: St. Michael, Keminmaa old church, built in early 1500s. St. John the Baptist in Torne Parish was probably a similar church. Photo: Siv Rasmussen 2010.

of the Torne region started their careers as a chaplain in Kengis, among them Anders Tornensis who later became the parish priest of the parish of Koutokeino.

The Parishes of Jukkasjärvi and Enontekis in Torne Lappmark

The parishes of Jukkasjärvi and Enontekis covered the five southernmost siidas of Torne lappmark: Rounala, Suovdditvárri (Sounttavaara), Bealdojávri (Peltojärvi), Diggevárri (Tingevaara), and Siggevárri (Siggevaara). A small chapel in Rounala siida is supposed to have been the first building built for ecclesiastical use in Torne lappmark. The origin of the chapel is obscure, but tradition says it was built by three Christian Sámi brothers from Rounala, who cut the timber on the Norwegian side and brought it with them over the mountains.¹¹² This chapel used to be connected with clerical activity among the Sámi, as directed by King Gustav I Vasa (1523–1560). But this hypothe-

112 Slunga 1993 p. 292.

sis has been re-evaluated in recent years, because radiocarbon dating of skulls from the chapel graveyard has provided an earlier dating from the Middle Ages.¹¹³ The Rounala Sámi had regular contact with the Norwegian coast and with Torne Valley, and probably encountered Christian influences from both directions. This hypothesis is supported by their use of Christian names, in addition to Old Norse names.¹¹⁴ The nearest churches in Norway were in Lenvik and Tromsø.¹¹⁵ As far as we know, no clergyman ever lived permanently in Rounala, but they visited the chapel in winter when it was possible to travel by reindeer and sledge, the most convenient means of transport in the interior of Sápmi. Two of the early priests of Enontekis, Georgius Henrici (1606–1614) and Olaus Sirma (1676–1719), are particularly associated with this tiny chapel in the mountains.¹¹⁶ Both of them liked to preach there, at this site, and both of them were buried there. Sirma tried to avoid the chapel being closed down.¹¹⁷

As a result of the separation of Torne lappmark from the parish of Torne in 1606, two new churches were built in Torne lappmark. These were Enontekis Church in Eanodat (Enontekiö) and Simojärvi Chapel in Čohkkeras (Jukkasjärvi).¹¹⁸ The church in Eanodat, or Márkkan (Markkina), as the church site was called, was situated in Suovdditvárri (Sounttavaara) siida. This church was replaced by a new one in 1661. The other church building was an annex, Simojärvi Chapel, built by the Sámi of Diggevárri (Tingevaara) and Siggevárri (Siggevaara) siidas in the southernmost part of Torne lappmark. The name Simojärvi is unknown today. The exact location of the chapel is therefore uncertain. However, according to old sources and local tradition, the first graveyard of this district was located at a place called Siikakielinen, about 10 kilometers from the present church.¹¹⁹ Some have suggested that Simojärvi Chapel was built at this location and moved to the present-day church site when it was repaired in 1655.¹²⁰ Presentations of the present church of Čohkkeras (Jukkasjärvi) usually tell us that the oldest part

113 Information from Thomas Wallerström in January 2011.

114 Rasmussen 2015 p. 9.

115 Trædal 2008 pp. 433, 412.

116 Bygdén 1923 (II) pp. 52, 58.

117 Kyrkoherde Erik Nordbergs arkiv, handskrift 25. Volym 25:2:k. Kapellanen Olof Sirma i Enontekis, p.979; Tornæus 1983 pp.34–35.

118 Bygdén 1923 (II) p. 44.

119 Johansson 1997 pp. 40–43.

120 Tawe 1958 pp. 25–27.

of the building is from 1607/1608. But recent studies by church historian Sölve Anderzén, former parish priest of Jukkasjärvi, indicate that the first chapel was built on the same site as the present church, and that very little of the material from the old chapel was used in the new building from 1726/1727.¹²¹ Siikakielinen was probably the assembly site for the people of these siidas in the latter half of the 1500s, where market, tax-collection, and services took place. The parish priests from the parish of Torne officiated in a hut at Christmastime every year, and the first graveyard of this district was located here.¹²²

Georgius Henrici (Jören Henriksson) was appointed as preacher of Torne lappmark and Kemi lappmark in 1602. He spoke both the Finnish and Sámi languages, and he visited each siida of his huge parish three times a year.¹²³ The king wanted the preachers to live next to the churches, and in summer 1606 Georgius Henrici went to Eanodat to control the ongoing construction of the church and priestage.¹²⁴ It is doubtful if Henrici lived in Eanodat throughout the year. He had a farm in Övertorneå, and probably lived there most of the year. But the fact that his son also spoke the Sámi language may indicate that the whole family stayed for longer periods in Torne lappmark. It is usually assumed that Georgius Henrici was Finnish, but his son is called *lapp* in some sources.¹²⁵ Henrik Jörenssohn was parish clerk in Övertorneå and interpreter at the court in Torne lappmark and Kemi lappmark. In addition, he assisted Johannes Tornæus with the translation of *Manuale Lapponicum*, a Book of Common Prayer in the Sámi language.¹²⁶ Georgius Henrici was fired from his position in Torne lappmark in 1614, because of some Sámi men made a complaint against him. But he was allowed to continue as preacher of Kemi lappmark another two years.¹²⁷

From 1615 until 1673, Torne lappmark was included within the parish of Nedertorneå, and the parish priests or the chaplains visited the Sámi siidas in winter, as things had been before the reorganization. When Torne lappmark was separated from Nedertorneå in 1673, Jukkasjärvi Church became

121 Anderzén 2009 p. 60.

122 Anderzén 2009 p. 37.

123 Nordberg 1973 p. 308.

124 Bygdén 1923 (II) pp. 58–59.

125 Larsen and Rauø 1999 pp. 25, 28, 31.

126 Fellman 1912 III pp. 17, 416; Larsen and Rauø 1999 pp. 25, 31, 39; Nordberg 1973 pp. 340, 353.

127 Bygdén 1923 (II) p. 59.

the main church in the parish, with Enontekis Church as an annex.¹²⁸ This separation was directed by King Carl XI. The parish priest had to live in the priestage next to Jukkasjärvi Church, while a chaplain lived in Eanodat. All parish priests of Jukkasjärvi in the period studied in this survey were either born in the parishes in the Torne region or the neighbor parishes. The only Sámi priest in Torne lappmark was the chaplain or preacher in Eanodat, Olaus Sirma.¹²⁹ He was probably originally from Kemi lappmark, but had been to school in Torneå and studied in Uppsala. A new priestage was built in Eanodat in his time. At least from the 1680s, a parish clerk lived in Čohkkeras (Jukkasjärvi).¹³⁰ The first clerk we know about was Lars Johansson, who complained in 1690 that the Sámi did not pay him for his work as a teacher for the children.¹³¹

The Parish of Koutokeino in Torne lappmark

The parish of Koutokeino with the Utsjoki annex was established in 1673,¹³² and covered the northernmost siidas of Torne lappmark: Guovdageaidnu,¹³³ Ávjovarri,¹³⁴ Ohcejohka,¹³⁵ and Deanu siida (Teno by).¹³⁶ A fifth siida was Láhppojávri, which appeared in the Swedish taxation system as an own siida until 1642, thereafter taxed together with Guovdageaidnu. Unlike the southern siidas in Torne lappmark, these siidas also paid taxes to Denmark-Norway and, until 1595, to Russia as well. In the Danish-Norwegian tax registers this area was called Sørfieldet (The South Mountain). The Sámi here were probably subjected to Christian influences from both the Swedish and Norwegian sides, in the same way as the Rounala Sámi. The use of more Norse personal names here than in Rounala may indicate a tighter and earlier contact with the Norwegian Church, but these influences may have come through the Norwegian tax collectors or by the coastal Sámi.¹³⁷ The first build-

128 Bygdén 1923 (II) p. 45

129 Bygdén 1923 (II) pp. 46–47, 52.

130 Larsen and Rauø 1999 p. 93.

131 Larsen and Rauø 1999 p. 180.

132 Bygdén 1923 (II) pp. 45, 69–70.

133 Called Koutokeino in Swedish, the present-day Norwegian name is Kautokeino. I use Koutokeino here for the parish under the Swedish Church, and Guovdageaidnu for the site and the Sámi siida.

134 Present-day Kárášjohka (Karasjok) municipality.

135 The Finnish name is Utsjoki.

136 Deanu siida = Teno by, Juxby, and Eskilsby in Swedish sources.

137 Rasmussen 2015 p. 9.

ding we know of in Guovdageaidnu siida used as a church was a small timber hut from the 1640s. According to Adolf Steen, this building was ordered to be built by Johannes Tornæus, parish priest of Nedertorneå and Torne lappmark (1640–1681), who also established a graveyard in each siida.¹³⁸ This small building was in use as a church until the first proper church, St. Carl's Church, was consecrated in 1703.¹³⁹ A prieststage was built here by parish priest Johannes Tornberg senior (1676–1682). Until the prieststage was built, the priest and his family lived in Máze, 60 kilometres to the north.¹⁴⁰ The parish of Koutokeino had six priests in total during its existence (1673–1751), all of them with connections to the clergy of Övertorneå Parish. The parish priest was also responsible for the other siidas in his parish, which he visited at least once a year.¹⁴¹ The first parish clerk we know about in Guovdageaidnu was Samuel Israelsson from Haparanda in Nedertorneå Parish, who was a nephew of the parish priest Anders Tornensis (1682–1705) and the former parish priest Johannes Tornberg.¹⁴²

The earliest building used as a church in the whole of the parish of Koutokeino may have been a little timber hut in Deanu siida. According to local tradition, it was destroyed by enemies in an attack, who killed both the priest and the whole congregation by setting fire to the church.¹⁴³ This building is said to have been situated in Dálvadas, close to the Deatnu River at the site *Boares girku*, which means *Old church* in Sámi language. The name *Dálvadas* indicates that this was a winter dwelling place. This may have been a building made for both secular and ecclesiastical use.

The next building used as a church along the Deatnu River was in Ohcejohka siida, near the outlet of the Áibmejohka (Äimäjoki) River.¹⁴⁴ This building seems to have been in use by the Swedish priests before the first church in Ohcejohka, St. Ulrica, was built in 1701. As an annex to the parish of Koutokeino, Ohcejohka was visited every winter by the priest who stayed for a couple of weeks. Some of the priests even brought their families with them. During their stay, they lived in a prieststage which was already in existence be-

138 Nordberg 1973 p. 333; Steen 1954 p. 99.

139 Bygdén 1923 vol. II p. 70.

140 Fellman 1912 pp. 407–408.

141 Bygdén 1923 vol. II pp.69–73; Rasmussen 2011 pp. 62–69.

142 Larsen and Rauø 1999 p. 161.

143 Fellman J. 1906 vol. II p. 166.

144 Kylli 2012 p. 53.



Figure 4 St. Carl, Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino old church, built 1703. Photo: Sophus Tromholt 1882/83, University of Bergen.

fore St. Ulrica Church was built.¹⁴⁵ St. Ulrica was built by the shore of Máttajávri (Mantojärvi), close to the marketplace.¹⁴⁶ From the 1680s, parish clerks lived in Ohcejohka. One of their tasks was to teach reading to both young and old. These parish clerks were Sámi men from Ohcejohka or the neighbour siidas. Ivar Larsson was the first, as far as we know. A new parish clerk, Per Olsson, arrived from Anár (Enare, Inari) around the year 1700, when Ivar Larsson still had the position. Nevertheless, Per Olsson was appointed to the position in addition to Larsson, the reason being that Olsson read and sang better Finnish than Larsson did.¹⁴⁷ Finnish was the main church language in Torne lappmark, as well as in the other parishes in the Torne region. At the same time as St. Carl's Church was built in Guovdageaidnu and St. Ulrica Church was built in Ohcejohka, an assembly building was built in Ávjovárri siida.¹⁴⁸ In fact, the original plan was to establish one church for the whole

145 Larsen and Rauø 1999 p. 106.

146 Kylli 2012 pp. 53–54.

147 Larsen and Rauø 1999 pp. 157–158.

148 Niemi 1983 p. 320; Solbakk 2000 p. 214.



Figure 5 St. Carl, Guovdageaidnu/ Kautokeino old church, built 1703. Photo: Sophus Tromholt 1882/83, University of Bergen-

parish by the Kárášjohka River in Ávjovárri siida. But the inhabitants of both Guovdageaidnu and Ohcejohka opposed this plan.¹⁴⁹ It is noteworthy that the Swedes in the Post- Reformation period named their churches in the Catholic tradition, even though the churches in Guovdageaidnu and Ohcejohka were not named after any real saints, but after the king and the queen. In Denmark-Norway, the practice giving churches saints' names was not in use after the Reformation.

Ecclesiastical Buildings Available for Sámi Use

The oldest churches in the two regions discussed in this article were built in the medieval period in the coastal districts. It is usually assumed that these churches were built primarily for a non-Sámi population,¹⁵⁰ although some

149 Larsen and Rauø 1999 pp. 118–119; Steen 1954 p. 98.

150 Steen 1954 p. 63.

authors have emphasized that they could have been built for the coastal Sámi as well.¹⁵¹ It is possible that churches may already have been in existence during the Middle Ages in areas traditionally regarded as Sámi districts. The small chapel of Rounala siida probably dates to medieval times. There are local traditions about former churches both in Deanu siida in Torne lappmark and in coastal Sámi areas in Finnmark.

Conclusion

In the Post-Reformation period, the Sámi communities in the fjords of Finnmark and Torne lappmark were included in the nearest coastal parish. The clerical situation for the Sámi in each of these two regions was quite similar in this period, although some improvement came earlier in Sweden than in Norway. The Swedish kings were much more involved in the improvement of the situation than the Danish-Norwegian authorities were in this period.

From the mid-1500s at least, the parish priest or chaplain of the parish of Torne visited the Sámi siidas once or twice a year. A similar arrangement came into being in Finnmark during the seventeenth century, where the parish priests of the coastal parishes visited the Sámi communities from one to three times a year. In addition, the Sámi participated in services in the parish churches at major festivals.

In the seventeenth century, one or more buildings were used as churches, situated in the Sámi district in all of the five large fjords in Finnmark: Várjavuonna (Varanger fjord), Deanuvuotna (Tana fjord),¹⁵² Lágesvuotna (Laksefjord), Porsánjgguvuotna (Porsanger fjord), and Áltavuotna (Alta fjord). Some of them were consecrated chapels, while others were unconsecrated turf huts designed for multiple uses. The latter buildings were built for the secular administration, even though they were used for clerical functions, too. In both categories, some buildings were primarily used by Sámi, while others were used by both Sámi and other ethnic groups. There were in total three government-owned turf huts used as churches in Várjavuonna. In Deanuvuotna, there was Hop Church, which was probably used by the Sámi in the fjord area and the lower part of the Deatnu (Tana) river. Sværholt Church was

151 Kolsrud 1947 pp. 2–3; Bratrein and Lind 2004 pp. 64–69; Mundal 2007 pp. 118–119.

152 Included territories both in Deatnu Valley and Deanuvuotna.

built for the Sámi in Lágesvuotna. At Juovvi Island in Porsáŋgguvuotna, there was a little building for ecclesiastical use in connection with the graveyard. In Áltavuotna, a government-owned turf hut at Lákkonjárgeahči (Langnes) was used as church. In the coastal Sámi districts belonging to the parishes of Hammerfest and Ingøy, the situation is more uncertain. A similar building to that one at Juovvi Island seems to have been situated on an island in Jáhkovuotna (Revsbotn). In Fálesnuorri (Kvalsund), there was no assembly building according to Thomas von Westen, but the priest and a teacher visited the private turf huts there.

When comparing with Torne lappmark, we observe that the situation was quite similar to that of the Sámi districts of Finnmark. Early in the seventeenth century, churches were built in the southern parts of Torne lappmark, in Čohkkeras (Jukkasjärvi) and Eanodat (Enontekis(Enontekiö)). In the northern parts of Torne lappmark, small timber huts were used as churches in Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino) and Ohcejohka (Utsjoki), until proper churches were built in the beginning of the eighteenth century. These timber huts probably had multiple uses like the turf huts in Finnmark. In both regions, few Sámi lived close to the church or the parish priest year round. In Finnmark, the parish priest visited the Sámi a few times a year. None of the priests lived permanently in the societies where the Sámi were in the majority. In the Torne region, the priests did not live permanently in the Sámi areas until 1673, when Torne lappmark was separated from the parish of Nedertorneå. As nomads, they only came to church occasionally during the year to celebrate the major festivals.

The most important differences between these two regions were the variations in language and the origin of the clergy. While the Finnmark clergy came from western/middle Norway and Denmark, the clergy of Torne was of Finnish origin, which turned out to be of local clergy stock from the latter part of the seventeenth century due to internal recruitment. Finnish was the main church language in the Torne region, but the Sámi language was used to some extent in Torne lappmark. In Finnmark, the language was Norwegian or Danish, even in the Sámi districts.

Many Sámi migrated between the inland and the coastal areas in Finnmark, some seasonally, others more permanently. These groups were linked to churches on both sides of the border, even though they often preferred the Swedish churches, particularly the women.¹⁵³ One reason was probably

¹⁵³ von Westen 1938a p. 111.

the situation of the language, since few Mountain Sámi understood Norwegian or Danish. Coastal Sámi women from Norway who were married in Torne lappmark had the opposite problem, since they did not understand Finnish in the beginning. But according to Tornæus, they soon learned to read and understand Finnish.¹⁵⁴ Sámi men were more frequently in contact with non-Sámi through commercial activities and tax collections than the women. Therefore, more men than women seem to have been bilingual or multilingual. Nevertheless, the women were an essential part of economic life, and there were women who worked for non-Sámi. The Swedish king had his own reindeer, which the tax collectors used for transport. Sámi women in Torne lappmark were hired by the *fogd* to take care of these reindeer; their salary was paid in fabrics.¹⁵⁵

154 Tornæus 1983 (1990) pp. 36, 39.

155 Rauø and Larsen 2002 pp. 13–15 (1559).

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