





**VÁCLAV MAREK  
AND THE SAMI**





Kristin Aasbø, Maja Atterstig,  
Bohumil Fořt, Michal Kovář,  
Robert Kvile, Přemysl Ovský,  
Håkan Rydving

# VÁCLAV MAREK AND THE SAMI

Michal Kovář (ed.)

Pavel Mervart, Červený Kostelec  
Sijti Jarngje – Samisk språk- og utviklingscenter / Sijti Jarngje –  
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Kristin Aasbø, Maja Atterstig, Bohumil Fořt,  
Michal Kovář, Robert Kvile, Přemysl Ovský,  
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# Preface

The idea to write this book emerged during the colloquium on Václav Marek (1908–1994), the Czech photographer, novelist and researcher, held in Prague in the spring of 2019. Marek’s work is known to only a few – even in the Czech Republic – and few experts have taken the opportunity to discuss its different aspects. The low level of public awareness about the work is due to the fact that most of it is written in Czech and for Czech readers, and only a part of Marek’s entire work has been published, some of it posthumously.

During the colloquium we decided to compile a brief description and evaluation of the most important elements and facets of Marek’s scientific and artistic production in English, to offer at least some basic information about his work to a wider audience. It appears that the optimal prerequisites for such an evaluation would be the following: to be a Sami, to know Czech, to be an expert in the corresponding field and to know its Czech, Nordic and global historical discursive context. Obviously, none of the contributors to this book have all the prerequisites.

The book is a “collective monograph”. In a relatively compact form its chapters cover in general all the main creative fields and genres regarding the Sami in which Marek was active. Some fields

have been omitted: this applies to his newspaper work and drawings, in addition to Marek's articles concerning biology. However, these domains could be considered somewhat marginal within the entirety of his creative activities, in part due to their small quantity, and this perhaps would have no impact on the contextual assessment of the other, core aspects.

The single authors' particular perspective, along with the specificity of Marek's output and the corresponding discipline, necessarily make the chapters diverse, and also complementary. In the first chapter, "Václav Marek, photographer of Susendalen in Norway, 1933–1948", Maja Atterstig and Kristin Aasbø consider the technical, content and artistic traits of Marek's photographs. However, with a few exceptions the documentary component here is limited to the explicitly non-Sami environment. The deeper assessment of the documentary function regarding Sami life is left to a Sami researcher. All of Marek's photographs from Norway will soon be accessible from the National Library of Norway, and their "language" is potentially universal.

Prof. Håkan Rydving is a renowned expert in the history of the Sami indigenous religion and the history of its studies. He was familiar with Václav Marek's Czech texts long before any of the other contributors to this book. In the chapter "Václav Marek's approach to indigenous Sami religion", Rydving analyses the period and material context of Marek's work, his own angle, and significant outcomes in the field.

In the chapter "Václav Marek, historiographer", Michal Kovář focuses on the motivation of Marek's texts dealing with the history of Sápmi and the Sami and his effort to harmonize the results from different historical disciplines. The Czech scientific context of the period is complemented by Přemysl Ovský in the chapter "Václav Marek, ethnographer". Ovský's characterization of Czech ethnography may serve as a basic contextual extrapolation of other Czech historical studies of the period, too.

The last chapter “Václav Marek, novelist”, by prof. Bohumil Fořt and Michal Kovář, is a narratological and thematic analysis of Marek’s Czech novel trilogy containing a historical depiction of the Norwegian Sami milieu. Some remarks on Marek’s inspiration by Sami oral traditions are also added.

Václav Marek was an ambassador *sui generis* of the Norwegian Sami in Czechoslovakia. The current ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway in Prague, H.E. Robert Kvile, dedicates his introductory words to the status of the Sami mainly in Norway. Thus the Introduction to this volume has the symbolic value of the multi-layered Norwegian-Sami-Czech relations. It also functions as a basic presentation of the people that Marek was devoted to and exposes the political and moral context of the Sami issues.

The unifying element of the chapters in this volume is Marek’s personal motivation, which is in part linked to his biographic data. This fact affected the arrangement of the chapters: the book starts with the chapter on Marek’s stay in the north, which was the essential impulse for his pivotal activity in Sami studies. The secondary parameter was the importance of Marek’s intellectual effort bound to a particular scientific or artistic domain.

Marek’s estate was handed over to different institutions. His negatives were deposited along with personal comments on the pictures (the notebooks) in the National Library of Norway, Norwegian and English manuscripts to the Sami Archive (*Sámi arkiiva*) in Kautokeino/Guovdageaidnu (Norway), whereas the photographic prints and all the other documents, including unpublished manuscripts and letters, are deposited in the Archive of the National Museum in Prague, Fund “Marek Václav”, n.f. 856. Marek’s specialized book collection is a part of the library fund of the Faculty of Arts, University of West Bohemia (Pilsen, Czechia), and of the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University (Brno, Czechia).

*The editor*





# Introduction

## Norway's indigenous people: From assimilation to recognition

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Robert Kvile

Back in 2007, the then President of the Sami Parliament in Karasjok, Mr. Egil Olli, told me about his first day in school as a seven-year-old boy in his home district of Porsanger. “I didn’t know a single word of Norwegian”, he said; “we only spoke Sami”. At the time, it was forbidden to speak any language other than Norwegian in school.

This was back in 1956.

Norway’s policy towards its indigenous people, the Sami, has changed radically since the 1950s. Nonetheless, the consequences of the policy of Norwegianization are still visible, and the process of righting the wrongs of the past is still ongoing.

The Sami population of Norway is concentrated in the north of the country, in Finnmark and Troms, but the traditional Sami region extends all the way down to the Femunden area in the southeast.

Of the four countries with a Sami population, Norway has the largest. Estimates vary substantially depending on the criteria used, but approximately 40,000 is the figure often cited. There are fewer Sami in Sweden, and considerably fewer in Finland and Russia.

As with most other Western countries, Norway has developed into a multicultural society over the last one or two generations. That said, Norway has never been homogenous. In addition to the indigenous Sami population, there are five national minorities. Only groups with a long-standing attachment to the country (more than 100 years) have been granted minority status. They are Kvens (people of Finnish descent in northern Norway), Jews, Forest Finns (people of Finnish descent in south-eastern Norway), Roma, and Romani people (in Norway often referred to as Tater).

More recent immigrant groups, for example Pakistanis, are not considered as national minorities.

## Towards a consolidated Norwegian nation – pressure to conform

There were no clearly defined national borders within the Sami areas until 1751, when the border between Denmark-Norway and Sweden (including present-day Finland) was drawn. The treaty on the border allowed for the need to regulate the Sami's grazing rights in the border areas. This was set out in an addendum to the border treaty, the so-called *Lappekodicillen*.

By contrast, when the eastern part of the border between Norway and Russia was defined in 1826 (with the then Grand Duchy of Finland), some of the Sami "*siidas*" were divided in two, with one part in Norway and the other in Russia (the Pasvik *siida*) or one in Norway and the other in Finland (the Neiden *siida*).

Around the mid-19th century, amid a growing national sentiment and drive towards independence, a policy of Norwegianization was introduced, the aim of which was the full assimilation of the Sami

people and other ethnic minorities into the Norwegian-speaking majority.

Influenced by the theories of social Darwinism, the policy was grounded in the notion that the Sami were an inferior people, and that their way of life was outdated. Driven by the schools, the church and local authorities, the process of Norwegianization fostered widespread discrimination, and had substantial negative consequences for Sami culture, language and society.

The ban on the Sami language in schools was particularly effective, but even so the Norwegianization policy eventually moved into other social spheres as well. Besides language, this policy also came to dominate agricultural policies, the armed forces, communications and the media. As an example, the Land Act of 1902 stipulated that property could only be transferred to Norwegian citizens who could speak, read and write Norwegian. This law was in effect until 1965.

It was not until the 1930s that Sami was again permitted as a second language in some school districts. In practice, however, the Sami language was banned in many Norwegian schools well into the 1950s, even during the school breaks.

In Finnmark, boarding schools were used as a tool in the Norwegianization efforts. From 1905 until 1940 a total of 50 boarding schools were built. The children lived away from their parents, all teaching was in Norwegian, and the use of Sami – and Finnish – was strictly forbidden.

Ultimately, many Sami families and societies came to reject their identity and lose their command of the Sami language and their attachment to Sami traditions. There was a widespread negative attitude towards the Sami among Norwegians, many of whom were influenced by negative stereotypes, including *inter alia*, those found in the literary works of Nobel Prize Laureate Knut Hamsun.

## After 1945 – towards recognition of minority rights in international law

After the Second World War, new attitudes towards tribal and indigenous peoples slowly emerged.

The development of international human rights instruments was important in this regard, beginning with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the statement therein that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

A few years later, in 1957, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted its Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention, aimed at recognizing and protecting the cultural, religious, civil and social rights of indigenous and tribal populations within an independent country, and providing a standard framework for addressing the economic issues faced by many of these groups.

The 1989 ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, also known as the ILO Convention 169, was an update of the 1957 convention and is the most significant legally-binding international convention concerning indigenous and tribal peoples.

This convention is considered a forerunner of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007. This Declaration is the most comprehensive international instrument on the rights of indigenous peoples. It establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world, and it elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific situation of indigenous peoples.

The two 1966 covenants, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, are also important instruments to prevent discrimination, the latter with a clear reference to minorities in Article 27: “In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic

minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.”

### Norway – a somewhat slow and hesitant follow-up

It is, however, fair to say that Norway’s policy towards the Sami developed rather slowly.

A Sami committee was established in 1956 to discuss principles and concrete measures for the Sami population. Its conclusions, published in 1959, included numerous initiatives to facilitate the preservation of Sami culture within Norwegian society. This was the first time that Sami issues were put before the Norwegian Parliament. It was also the first attempt in Norway to introduce a policy in relation to the Sami population that recognized their special situation and the responsibility of the State to safeguard their needs and rights.

In its White Paper presented to Parliament in 1963, the Government did not recommend the adoption of the proposals of the 1956 committee. The Government did not recognize the Sami as a minority and referred instead to “Sami-speaking Norwegians”. However, in 1964 the Sami Council was established as an advisory agency for state, county and municipal authorities.

## Sami organizations

The gradual, albeit slow change in attitudes in Norway towards the Sami was also influenced by the establishment of organizations representing Sami groups and Sami interests.

The oldest of the Norwegian Sami organizations still in operation today is the Sami Reindeer Herders' Association in Norway (NRL), established in 1947 with the goal of promoting the interests of the reindeer-herding Sami. A Sami Association was founded in Oslo 1948. Somewhat later, in 1968, The National Association of Norwegian Sami (NSR) came into being, followed by the competing Norwegian Sami Union (SLF) in 1979.

Nordic cooperation between the Sami developed in parallel, first with a conference in Jokkmokk, Sweden, in 1953. Three years later the Nordic Sami Council was established to ensure liaison between Sami organisations in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Today, the Sami Council represents the Sami indigenous people of Finland, Norway and Sweden in the Arctic Council; it is represented in the Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples Secretariat (IPS), and has observer status at the Barents Euro-Arctic Council Working Group of Indigenous Peoples (WGIP), as well as in the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

### The Alta Controversy: towards recognition of Sami rights

The Alta controversy was an eye-opener for many Norwegians on issues pertaining to the situation for the Sami population. The background to the controversy was comprehensive plans to develop the Alta-Kautokeino water system on the Finnmark

plateau, including a dam which would inundate the Sami community of Masi. Even after the scaling back of these plans, a major hydroelectric project remained on the drawing board, including a 100-metre high dam across the Alta river canyon; this also involved the construction of a road across reindeer grazing land and calving areas.

Reindeer owners, joined by environmentalists, took the state to court in 1979 to stop the project. They lost the case, but the issue took on symbolic significance. Demonstrations and acts of civil disobedience were organized, both at the construction site and in front of the Parliament in Oslo. A group of Sami women staged a sit-down strike at the Office of the Prime Minister.

In 1982, the Supreme Court of Norway confirmed the ruling by a lower court that the project was legal. The activists dissolved their organization, and the plant went into operation in 1987.

The controversy, however, would radically change Norway's policies towards the Sami. In 1980, the government appointed a Sami Rights Commission, tasked with looking into Sami cultural and political rights, as well as issues related to the use of land, water and resources in the county of Finnmark. The Commission was reappointed in 2001 to explore the same issues in the area spanning from the county of Troms down to Hedmark in south-eastern Norway.

The 1980 commission report was published in 1984 and paved the way for the incorporation of a new paragraph on the Sami into the Constitution of Norway (see below), and the Sami Act of 1987 on the Sami Parliament and other issues pertaining to the Sami, which ultimately led to the establishment of the Sami Parliament, officially opened by the King in October 1989.

The work of the Sami Rights Commission also eventually led to Norway's ratification of the ILO Convention 169 and hence to a final recognition by the State of the Sami as an indigenous people.

## The Sami Parliament (Sámediggi)

Sámediggi, the Sami Parliament, is located in Karasjok (Karášjohka) in Finnmark. Elections take place every four years on the same day as elections to the Parliament of Norway (the Storting). It currently has 39 members elected from 7 constituencies.

Only a small number of responsibilities were assigned and transferred to the Sámediggi when it was first established in 1989. However, more responsibilities have since been added, and it now plays an important role in issues ranging from language and culture to economy and the use of land and water resources.

An important task for the Sámediggi is its participation in the management of the land area of Finnmark, 95 % of which (or 46,000 sq. km) was transferred to the Finnmark Estate agency by the Finnmark Act, adopted by the Norwegian parliament in 2005. The Sámediggi appoints half the Finnmark Estate board members.

The basis for the Finnmark Act is that the Sami, through traditional use of the land and water areas, have acquired individual and/or collective ownership of and the right to use land and water in the Finnmark County. The act does not cover fishing rights in saltwater, nor does it cover mining and oil rights.

In 2005, the Government and the Sámediggi agreed on “Procedures for Consultations between the State Authorities and the Sámediggi”. These procedures have been developed in accordance with Article 6 of the ILO Convention 169. They apply to the Government and its ministries, directorates and other subordinate state agencies or activities and shall ensure that work on matters that may affect Sami interests is carried out in a satisfactory manner. Around 30–40 consultations take place annually.

Various professional advisory organs have been established subordinate to the Sámediggi. These are the Sami Cultural Monuments Council, the Sami Culture Council, the Sami Business Council, and the Sami Language Council. They function as professional



organs for the Sámediggi and assist in the management of allocations and subsidies.

The Sámediggi cooperates closely with its Nordic sister parliaments, the Sámediggi of Sweden, established in 1993, and the Sámediggi of Finland, established in 1996.

The Sámediggi was the scene for a highly symbolic act by the King of Norway, Harald V., when, in a speech to the Parliament in 1997, he apologized for the assimilation policy:

*“The Norwegian state is founded upon the territories of two peoples – the Norwegians and the Sami. Sami history is closely interwoven with Norwegian history. Today, we must apologize for the injustice previously inflicted upon the Sami people by the Norwegian authorities – through a hard assimilation policy. The Norwegian State, therefore, has a particular responsibility for facilitating the Sami people’s ability to build a strong and viable society. This is a historical right based on the Sami’s presence in their cultural regions, which stretches far back in time.”*

However, the Norwegianization policy has left open wounds. This motivated the Norwegian Parliament in 2018 to appoint a commission charged with examining the past assimilation policy towards the Sami and Kven populations: the commission to investigate the Norwegianization policy and injustice against the Sami and Kven/Norwegian Finnish peoples (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission).

The Commission has three tasks: first, to historically map the policy and activities carried out by the Norwegian authorities against the Sami and Kvens/Norwegian Finns, locally, regionally and nationally, from around 1800 until the present day; second, to investigate the consequences today of the Norwegianization (assimilation) policies; and finally to propose measures for continued reconciliation.

The commission shall deliver its report by 1 September 2022.

## The Sami languages

The aim of the Norwegianization policy was assimilation, including linguistic assimilation. The low number of active speakers of the Sami languages made these languages vulnerable, especially the Sami languages spoken south of the Northern Sami areas of Troms and Finnmark.

In 1967 Sami was introduced as a first language in certain elementary schools. Today the right to an education in Sami (any of the three Sami languages spoken in Norway) is confirmed in law, in both primary and secondary schools. This has helped consolidate the Sami languages, but first and foremost Northern Sami.

At the academic level, the University of Tromsø plays an important role in the promotion of North Norwegian and Sami perspectives in education and research. Its Centre for Sami Studies has a coordinating role. In 1989, a Sami College in Kautokeino (Guovdageaidnu) was established, the main objective of which was Sami language teacher training.

Recognising that the Sami languages are vulnerable and therefore in need of special attention and support, the government appointed a commission in 2014 to develop measures to this end. Their report (NOU 2016:18 *Hjertespråket* (“The language of the heart”)) was presented two years later. When discussing follow-up measures, the Norwegian parliament asked the Government to pay particular attention to the Southern Sami language and to the interrelationship between language, culture, trade and crafts.

In 2016, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/RES/71/178) proclaiming 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages, based on a recommendation by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The resolution had full support from the Norwegian government, which allocated extra funding to the Sami Parliament’s work to promote the language year.

The sad reality is, however, that the number of Sami speakers is set to decrease in the years to come. An important reason for this is that few young people speak the language in the coastal areas traditionally dominated by the Sami.

## Conclusion

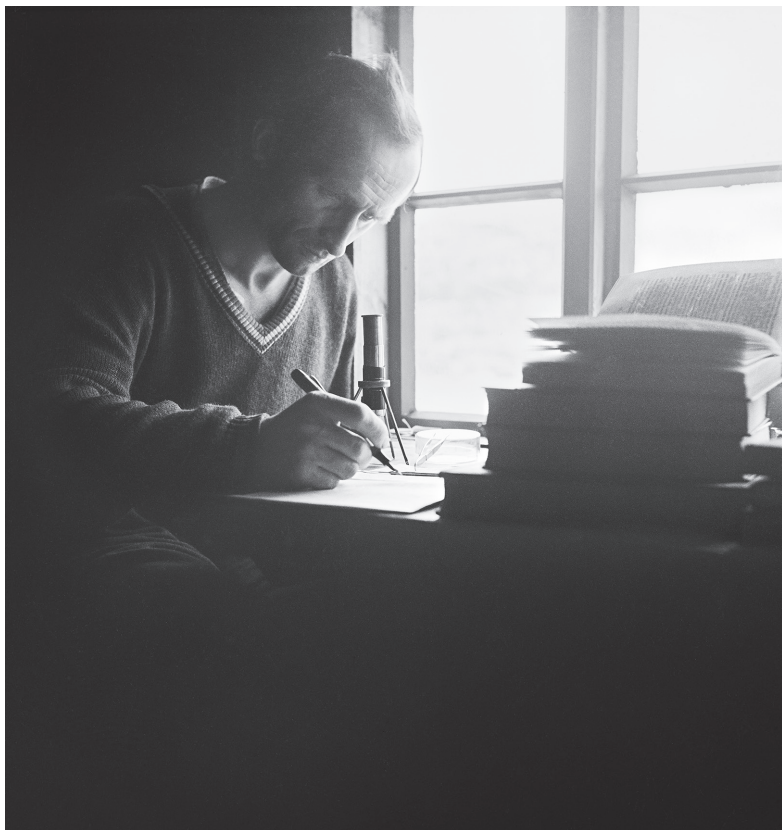
The situation for the Sami indigenous people of Norway – and for our national minorities for that matter – is the result of a gradual recognition of their rights, coupled with a simultaneous recognition of the responsibilities of the authorities towards them.

This principle was included in the Norwegian Constitution in 1988: “The authorities of the state shall create conditions enabling the Sami people to preserve and develop its language, culture and way of life” (§108). The paragraph also symbolized that the policy of assimilation had finally been abandoned.

A greater interest on the part of the majority population in Sami culture, and especially in Sami music, has played an instrumental role in fostering a recognition of the positive contribution of the Sami in Norwegian society. Films on Sami history and culture, perhaps most notably *Pathfinder* (1987) and *The Kautokeino Rebellion* (2008), have also been important in this regard. The positive role played by the public broadcaster of Norway, as well as Sami newspapers, should not be underestimated either.

While only a few decades ago many Sami felt that suppressing their identity was important for their success on the labour market, and for their success in general, today’s young Sami are proud of their Sami heritage and their mastery of the Sami language.

This gives hope that the Sami indigenous people of Norway will also constitute “a strong and viable society” in the future, as the King of Norway, Harald V, put it in his speech to the Sámediggi in 1997.



Václav Marek in his cottage, self-portrait, November 1941.

# Václav Marek, photographer of Susendalen in Norway, 1933–1948

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Maja Atterstig and Kristin Aasbø

## The gift

Late in the year 2003, the National Library of Norway received a gift of about 2300 negatives and diapositives: material relating to the north of Norway and taken by the Czech Václav Marek. It was Michal Kovář who made the decision, together with Marek's family, that these photographs would be appreciated in the country where they were taken. With the assistance of the intermediary Tor Magne Berg, a Sami friend of Marek, the material was handed over to the National Library, as this institution is responsible for the Norwegian part of the Sami Bibliography and offers very good archiving facilities for photographic material as well as digitization.

## Václav Marek and Norway – a background

In Czechoslovakia, as elsewhere in Europe, the 1920s and 1930s were a politically unstable time, with much unemployment and unrest. With only one arm, Marek found it especially difficult to

find a job, but he received a small disability pension due to the work-accident that caused his handicap. This gave him the financial opportunity to go abroad, and he started to travel all over Europe. He took a sack containing the most important things: clothes, books, notebooks, and a camera. He lived on a subsistence minimum, taking small jobs, and making observations of birds and other animals, collecting flowers, and assessing rocks. He became a self-taught natural scientist, and even had an agreement with the National Museum in Prague to collect geological and botanical examples from his stays abroad, for which he received small sums. In the summer of 1933, he arrived in Sweden and also travelled through Norway and part of Finland. When the winter arrived, he made the acquaintance of a forest manager in the valley of Susendalen, close to the Swedish border. The manager offered to let him stay in a cottage, and Marek did so until the summer of 1934, when he was forced to leave because he had no permit of residence. He went home to Czechoslovakia and later travelled to Spain, Portugal, and France. But he himself had said that he could not forget the calm of the north, and in the summer of 1935, he was back in Sweden, and he returned to Susendalen in the autumn. Marek thrived in this beautiful area, where Norway is at its narrowest. He explored the mountains around Susendalen and experienced the grandeur of this unique landscape of “Børgefjell” together with Ola and Lars Børgefjell as they herded their reindeer in the area. These trips formed the basis for Marek’s lifelong fascination with the Sami way of life. It conformed to his own ideal of a life of meaningful, strenuous freedom. He stayed on for 13 years, helping farmers, interviewing old people on the history of both Norwegians and Sami people, hunting and herding, studying, writing, photographing, and making friends. In the summer of 1948, he suddenly went home to Czechoslovakia and only returned once for a three-month visit in 1979.

## The photographic archive of Václav Marek

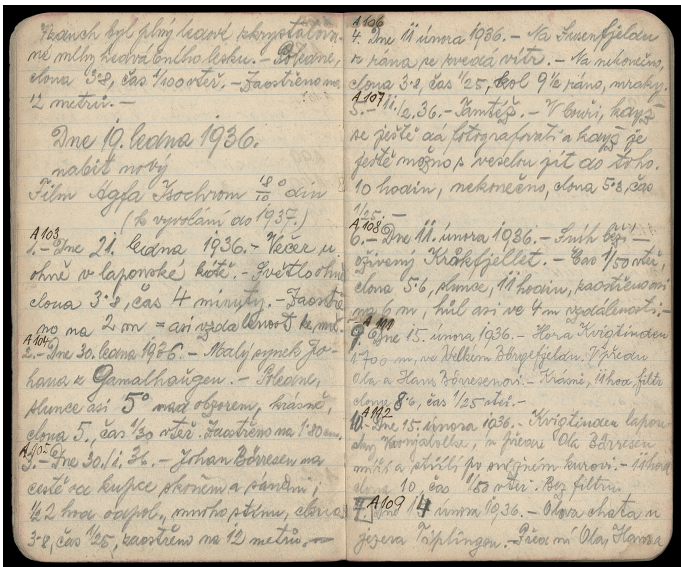
Working with photographic material, one usually places greater emphasis on the paper prints made from negatives than the negatives themselves. It is the paper print that is the finished work, it shows what the photographer wanted the image to look like, and he or she may have made choices about cropping, degree of contrast and the like. Václav Marek's archive consists almost exclusively of negatives, and there are relatively few paper prints. The ones that exist are to a large extent related to Marek's Sami material. It was these photographs that Marek himself considered valuable, as they were linked to his research on Sami history and way of life. In total, there are about 150 motifs that Marek himself used in his publications, mostly of Sami-related topics or landscapes and animals.

Marek was not a very good copyist, so the original paper prints will often appear grey and flat. In fact, it can be argued that Marek's paper positives do not invite a closer look at his photographic material, whereby there may be a risk that the quality of the negatives could go unnoticed, as negatives are difficult to study and difficult to deal with. But with the help of the digital technique, the negatives can be turned into positives with a single keystroke, and you can zoom into the images and access details that were completely invisible in the original negative format of 6x6 cm. Furthermore, it is easy to get an overview of large numbers of images. The digitization "opens" the negative-archive, and in Marek's case this became a revelation – the way of life of an entire village suddenly became visible!





Marek's negative archive and note books at the National Library of Norway.



A spread from one of Marek's notebooks showing references to the pictures he took. Václav Marek's archive, National Library of Norway.



## Marek's system

Together with the photographic material, there were seven small notebooks that provide information about motifs and shooting conditions, and together with the pictorial material itself, these notebooks constitute the primary source material for Marek's photographs of Susendalen. Marek used these books to record information about his photographic practice, and they follow a clear pattern. He starts by describing the type of film he uses, and then notes information about each exposure on the film, usually twelve images. He then describes the motif and mentions the chosen aperture and shutter speed, as well as any use of a filter. He also writes about the weather conditions and specifies what time of day the photograph was taken. Sometimes the motif description is long and complementary, other times it just consists of a name or a descriptive word. The information was entered in parallel with the act of photographing. From 1935 onwards, Marek inscribed a number at the edge of each negative after developing and afterwards entered the same number for the appropriate picture in the notebook. Marek's numbering system was mainly made up of the letters A, B, and C. He started with series A on the 20th of May 1935. After photograph No A999, in July 1946, he switched to the B-series. Here he takes 331 numbered pictures, the last one in December 1947. Finally, he makes C-series, which starts in February 1948 and ends after moving back to Prague in June 1948.

## The content in his photographs

Among the 1840 negatives from Marek's 15-year stay in Norway we find many faces of Susendalen's inhabitants. There are pictures

of groups, celebrations of a new-born or a wedding, but mostly we see scenes of everyday life and activities alongside pictures of houses and farms. And then there are the fascinating portraits of the approximately 300 persons living in Susendalen at this specific period of time together with Marek. These pictures represent meetings between the photographer and the portrayed that really touch us as viewers today, effectively bridging the time span of 70 years.

In the archive there are also pictures that Marek took for himself related to his scientific interests. He photographed the wildlife in his surroundings, and he seems particularly attached to all types of birds. We also find breath-taking landscapes from Marek's mountain kingdom, Børgefjell, an area later to become one of Norway's largest natural parks. And of course, Marek took many pictures related to the Sami, his everlasting interest. He photographed their homes, their handicrafts, *duodji*, the reindeer herding, life in the mountains, fishing etc. There are approximately 400 negatives related to Sami life or Sami activities. These are the pictures that Marek himself used regularly when he wanted to illustrate or document his writing on wildlife and the different aspects of Sami-life. Many of them can be found as negatives in the archive, but some are missing, as is the case with many photographic archives – the pictures that are most frequently used are also the ones missing, as a result of their hazardous travelling so to speak through different editing and copying agencies. In Marek's case we know that he sometimes sent the original negatives to the publisher of his articles, some of them are still in the archive, hence they were returned, but others were evidently not. The Archive of the Czech National Museum in Prague has a large archive by Václav Marek pertaining to his studies and scientific works consisting of letters, manuscripts, notes and other documents. There are also some boxes with quite a few photographic prints made by Marek himself. Some of these pictures in the Prague

archive were new to us, but with the help of Marek's notebooks we could see that these pictures were made from the missing negatives.<sup>1</sup>

## Marek and photography

In a draft CV Marek writes that he had an internship in a photo shop in Fellingfors, south of Mosjøen. Beyond this, all indications are that Marek was self-taught as a photographer, as he was in most areas. Furthermore, Marek's meticulous notes on the camera settings for each exposure illustrate the same methodological approach as in his research, and his thorough commitment had one goal in mind: to become an ever-better photographer. But Marek does not reflect on the photographic medium as such. Photography seems to be a kind of visual study for him, as natural and important as reading and writing. It seems that he used his images in the same way that he used his other notations, as documents that were valuable for his research as an anthropologist and researcher.

By this moment in history, the photographic technique was no longer so complicated. Marek apparently taught himself to handle the camera, to develop the film and to make paper prints from them. There are not many references to how exactly Marek did his developing and print-copying of photographs during his stay in Norway, and we must bear in mind that in a cottage high up in the mountains, without running water and electricity, this is no easy task. He would have had to bring water, heat it up and mix it

<sup>1</sup> In the Archive there are also about 400 photographs in colour. These pictures were taken in 1979, when Marek went back to Norway for about three months. He had tried to make the voyage earlier but had not been allowed by the Czechoslovak government. These pictures are not covered in this article.

with several chemicals to develop the film, and to repeat the process if he were to develop positive prints on paper.

Marek did not have much money, but he obviously prioritized buying film and chemicals, and he would have had to carry the heavy load on his back, twenty kilometres up to his home in the wilderness. So this was undeniably something he focused on doing, as he also focused on reading academic books and making notes on everything around him.

For photography, Marek used a Rolleiflex, a modern camera at that time, notable for its compact size, low weight and particularly sharp and bright camera lens. It was a mechanically robust camera with a quiet shutter system, and it was popular with professional photographers up until the 1960s. Since the image is composed by looking down onto the viewfinder while holding the camera firmly towards the chest, it enabled a steady method of photography. Considering Marek's handicap of having only one arm, the Rolleiflex would have been a good choice of camera, but we are nevertheless impressed by his mastery of the tool. But then again, Marek seemed to master many things with his one arm, such as hunting, fishing, painting houses and doing all sorts of manual work on the farms and in the woods. He impressed the people of Susendalen to such an extent that they still talk of him and tell stories about him more than 70 years after he left for Czechoslovakia. And 100 years after his birth, in 2008, his name was officially immortalised in the paths and resting peaks in the landscape he loved so much.

## An archive within the archive?

Let us take a closer look at some of the pictures Marek took of the habitants of Susendalen in the years before, during and after the Second World War. Some of them he probably took upon request,

and after returning to Prague he sometimes made enlargements and sent them to his friends back in Norway. This was a much appreciated gesture and was a part of a quite massive correspondence that lasted until his death.

Each of these photographs depicts an individual and seen all together they capture both a community and an era. They are specific and universal at the same time. These pictures also show Marek's ability to analyse, connect with, and capture the person in front of him. He managed to make one expressive portrait after the other using one single exposure.

Why did Marek take these pictures, and why do they look the way they do? There are several answers to those questions, the obvious one being the technical framework that has already been discussed. But we would like to highlight two phenomena that can be useful in placing Marek's photographs of the population of Susendalen in the broader context. First, we will examine his pictures in relation to a photographic practice often referred to as "village photographer", and secondly, we will see how Marek's portraits relate to the use of photographic portraits as identification.

## The village photographers

In the 1880s, around 40 years after photography first became known, a new type of semi-profession emerged that could be called the "village photographer". The existence of this type of semi-professional photographer was linked to the development of the photographic technique, as by this time cameras were both cheaper and easier to handle. The photographic materials were prefabricated and made on a backing of plastic rather than glass – all this made it easier for amateurs to learn and practise photography.

When the number of photographers – both professional and amateur – increased and spread throughout the country and outside the cities, different faces were to be seen on the negatives. It was no longer only the wealthier people living in heavily populated places who could afford to have their pictures taken. For the people in Susendalen, the closest professional photographic studio was in Mosjøen, some 120 km away, so maybe we could say that there was a need, or at least room for, a semi-professional photographer in the area.

The typical village photographer took pictures in the area where he or she lived, and consequently they had both the trust of their customers and a knowledge of the local culture, a combination that often led to more relaxed and spontaneous photographs compared to those taken by professional photographers. Everyday life and labour were recorded along with the traditions and portraits of families and friends, and the activity could give the amateur photographer an extra income. The glory days of “village photography” lasted until the 1920–30s, when more and more people bought their own camera. Although Marek started photographing in Susendalen in the mid-1930s, the content of his photographs is quite like those of the village photographers. He knew the people he portrayed, they shared the same living conditions, and this gave him access to situations that probably would not be available to a photographer just passing through Susendalen.

On the other hand, Marek came from another country, with another culture and background. At first, he did not speak much Norwegian, and he certainly was a stranger, a one-armed stranger and with a hot temperament on top of everything else. But when you take a picture of someone, you are showing a special interest in that person, and photography might have been a way for Marek to get in contact with the residents of Susendalen. Although Marek was much liked and respected, he was still an outsider, and this outsider position may be perceived in some of his portraits –

a certain hesitation, a tiny bit of distance in the eyes of the person depicted.

## Photography as means of identification

Photography is a tricky medium to study because it can be used for such diverse purposes. For instance, due to the medium's superior ability to show similarity with the depicted subject, photography was, from early on, used to identify and control people. The police took pictures of suspects and prisoners to keep them under surveillance, and during the 19th century and well into the 20th, anthropologists and scientists used photography together with measuring to categorize and rate people according to racial typologies.

During the Second World War, Norway was occupied by Nazi Germany, and to control all Norwegian residents the occupiers ordered that every person older than 15 carry a "*Grenzzonen-Bescheinigung*", an ID-card with a photographic portrait and some descriptive information. There were evidently many people in Susendalen who did not have a portrait suitable for this purpose. Marek was known in the valley for his photographic talent, and he was asked to take pictures of almost one third of the inhabitants. In his notebook Marek wrote "In August 1940, I photographed over a hundred people – portraits at 1 1/2 m, for border identification."<sup>2</sup> Marek took the task very seriously and made a great effort to achieve the best possible result. He wrote about his experiments with both the exposures and development of the films, and in the notebook, he concluded that "The result was brilliant, soft negatives, with a lot of details and fine-grained."

<sup>2</sup> "V srpnu 1940 jsem fotografoval přes sto lidí – portrétů fotografie na 1 1/2 m, do pohraničních legitimací."

When we first began to study Marek's archive, we could see that some portraits stood out from the rest because of the uniformity of the images and the soft light, without shadows; they appeared to have been taken under the same conditions and at the same time of year. Compared to many of Marek's other portraits, only one or two people were depicted in these close-ups, and most of them were looking straight into the camera with a serious but relaxed expression. It took some time before we found the lines quoted above, but when we did, it confirmed what we already thought: we had seen similar images taken for the same purpose in other archives. But Marek's portraits had a remarkably high quality or, in his own words, the result was brilliant.

The context of an image is crucial to how we as spectators interpret and understand it. Our view of Marek's portraits changed somewhat when we realized why they had been taken, but just for a while. Through it all, the look of these individuals, their appearances, their expressions, the eyes that meet ours, remain as touching and strong as at first glance.

## Marek's photographs of the Southern Sami way of life

Marek's interest in the Southern Sami and their way of life is also reflected in the negative archive, where about a quarter of the pictures are related to the Southern Sami's living conditions. These images are clearly very important to Marek, and he knows he will use them in his further studies and work. In Marek's time, photography had been established as a practical tool in scientific research. It was seen as depicting something in an accurate and objective way, and photographs served as a type of proof or illustration of what was presented as scientific findings. Marek's images of Sami



crafts and Sami settlements fit into the understanding of photography as an “objective” representation of the outside world. People at that time were not so aware that the photographer behind the picture was central to how the picture looks. A few reflective texts on the nature of photography had been published at this time, but there was no overall theoretical or critical treatment of the specific properties of the medium. However, Marek had most probably seen how the Sami and other indigenous people were often photographed in scientific contexts, and he obviously did not want to go in that direction.

When Marek photographed the peasants of Susendalen, the images were often staged, and there was eye contact between the photographed and the photographer. But when he photographed the Southern Sami, he behaved more like a participating observer; he was moving around, trying to capture situations and events from different angles, without interfering with the events happening. He could take up to 20 consecutive pictures as he followed them in their activities, while he was otherwise very careful with the use of film, with only one or two pictures per subject. Among the motifs there are many pictures of the handling of reindeer herds, with marking, milking and castration, and he photographed evocative glimpses of well-deserved breaks from work: people sitting around the campfire, having coffee, or gathered inside the tent, “*kâte*”, in the light of the fire.

## Self-portraits

Among the many portraits of the people of Susendalen, we also find 150 pictures that Marek took of himself. Some of them are typical self-portraits, taken from a short distance, straight on and with his face as the focal point. These pictures are often referred

to as “self-portraits” in his notebooks. But there are also many pictures where Marek is more like a figure, a human reference that helps us understand the impressive dimensions of the surrounding landscape. It is not important, or even evident, that the figure in the picture is him; the content of the image would not really change if he were replaced with another man hiking, skiing or hunting in the mountains. But even though they are not self-portraits in the traditional sense, they do tell us something about Marek and his way of life. By staging and capturing himself the way he does, he manifests his own role in nature. Marek lived, and loved to live, in and of nature. His self-portraits show both his care and his conquest of the wildlife surrounding him, a relationship as difficult and complex as that with another person.

In the self-portraits, Marek appears an introverted, serious and masculine man. A man who mostly turns his weaker side away from the lens, both literally and metaphorically. He is well aware of the figures he represents; he’s the hunter, the scientist, the author and the explorer. But occasionally, we get a glimpse of a playful and self-conscious artist with a need to communicate with himself through his images. On 30 June 1946, Marek took off his clothes and sat down on a large rock in the same position as *The Thinker*, the famous sculpture by Auguste Rodin. Marek captured the scene with one shot and wrote in his notebook “Naked on rock” (“*Naháč na balvanu*”). His body is turned inwards, and his feet are anchored to the rock, and he is surrounded by beautiful mountain scenery<sup>3</sup>. The picture is well composed and the reference to Rodin is obvious. The previous exposure shows Marek at a distance of a few metres. He is holding his rifle; he is out on a hunt. What happened between the two scenes? What made him go from hunting to contemplation, and to eternalize these two states?

<sup>3</sup> According to the will of Marek’s family, we refrain from showing the picture of Marek in the nude.

Rodin expressed his ideas about *The Thinker* like this, “He stops mid task to think about things, to exercise a faculty which distinguishes him from the animals.” In several of his self-portraits Marek shows a desire to appear like that – as a man with the capacity and the strength to both think and act.

## The archive and the library

We end this little excursion into the photographic world of Václav Marek with a picture that in our minds has become a sort of symbol of his personality. In the notebook, the motif is stated as “My library”. This was certainly the only library that could be found in the mountains where Marek lived, located in the cottage he built for himself far away from civilization. It is a dark picture, and it shows rows and rows of Marek’s books – an image of Marek’s persistent drive for knowledge. But then, in the left corner, under the rows of bookshelves, we find a tiny portrait of a most important person: The musician Hermína Střížková, who was the reason why Marek left his beloved but solitary life in the mountains surrounding Susendalen and returned to an urban life in Prague.



A map of Susendalen valley and the mountain area of Børgefjell, drawn by Marek. Václav Marek's archive, The National Museum's Archives, Prague.



Václav Marek hunting on Bursaksla in Børgefjell, October 1946.



Oddny Solem, ca. 1945.





Male mountain grouse in winter suit, April 1938.



The funeral of Ellen Svenskvoll, February 1948.





Václav Marek on his way up to the summit of Kvigtinden and Måsskardfjellet, February 1941.



Bjørn Børresen, August 1936.



Chick of Eurasian Woodcock, July 1933.



Tore Peter Carlsson in Ørjedalen, September 1940.





Second row, from the left: The mother Haldis, the daughter Dagrún Viola, the father Johan Mathias Børresen, an unknown helper and the son Otto Ibbe Bauman. Front row, from the left: The niece Kristine and the children Jostein, Karen and Ingeborg Aud. The fields of the farm Trallerud, August 1941.



The maid Paula Johanne Pedersen with Synnøve Eggen, ca. 1941.



Aslaug Nybrot, March 1948.



Lars Johan Larsen Svenskvoll with his nephew Konrad Svenskvoll in the background, August 1940.





Johan Mathias Børresen with his son Otto Ibbe Bauman and Andreas Atterli, Trallerud, November 1935.



The couple Egil Mikal and Ida Marie Fagerli, August 1940.



The couple Ragnhild and Ottar Ingvald Sørensen Bråten, August 1940.



The couple Karl August and Ane Marie Jansson, August 1940.





The sisters Torbjørg Eline and Karen Ivara Flugstad, August 1940.



Václav Marek's portrait of Ellen Svenskvoll and her daughter Kristine Larsdatter Svenskvoll. The picture was taken in July 1940, to be used as identification papers (*Grenzzonen-Bescheinigung*) demanded by the German occupants.

GRENZZONEN-BESCHEINIGUNG  
Grenzzone Ost  
GRENSEBØERBEVIS  
Grensesone Øst

Nr.: 127

Polizeimester/Lensmann in  
Politimesteren/Lensmannen i

Haugvold

Inhåber dieser Grenzzone-Bescheinigung  
Innehaveren av dette grenseboerbevis

Kristine Larsen

geb. am 1879-26 in Haugvold  
født den 26. 11. 79 i Haugvold

Beruf: Arb.  
Yrke: Arb.

Staatsangehörigkeit: Norsk  
Nasjonalitet: Norsk

hat seinen/ihren ständigen Wohnsitz in:  
har sin faste bopæl i:

Svenskvoll

Polizei-/Lensmanns-Bezirk:  
Politilensmanns-distrikt:

Haugvold

Diese Bescheinigung berechtigt zum Verkehr in folgenden Polizei-  
bezirken der Grenzzone Ost:  
Dette bevis gir innehaveren rett til å ferdes i følgende politi-  
distrikter i Grensesone Øst:

Haugvold

Ort:  
Sted:  
Datum:  
Datum:

Haugvold  
26. 11. 90

Siegel  
Stempel



Fotografet stemplet

Kristine Larsen  
Eigenhändige Unterschrift  
Egenhøntte underskrift

Valentin Jensen  
Pol.  
Lensmann

Unterschrift des Politimesters bzw.  
Politimesterens eller lensmannens  
underskrift

Grenzzone-Bescheinigung belonging to Kristine Larsdatter Svenskvoll, where the portrait Marek took is used.



The dog Jurva in front of the reindeer-herd belonging to Ole Børgefjell, December 1943.





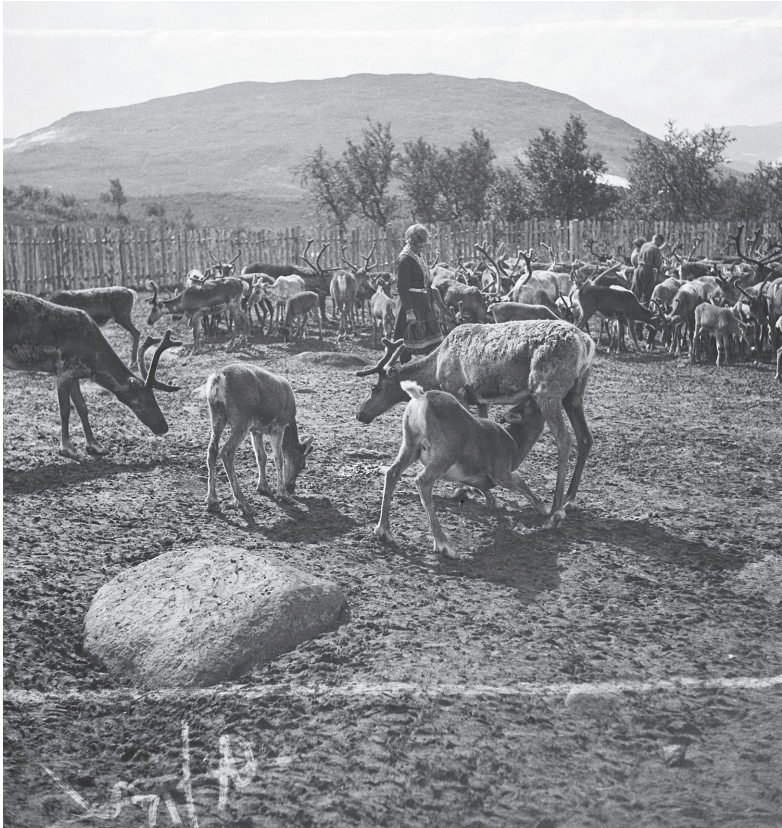
Johan Skum and Johan Klemetsson, Båvloe, July 1946.



Ole Ingemund Tomassen Børgefjell and Ola Lukkassen, Tiplingen, August 1947.



Johan Skum and Siri Baer Larsson by the reindeer-fence, Båvloe, July 1946.



Inside the reindeer-fence at Mjølkelvskaret, July 1937. Marek made the white marks in the image to indicate where he wanted to crop it.





Václav Marek, self-portrait, September 1936.



Václav Marek, self-portrait, June 1937.



Václav Marek, self-portrait with two days' catch, June 1938.





Václav Marek's library in the cottage he built at Austre Tiplingen, April 1947.



# Václav Marek's approach to the indigenous Sami religion

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Håkan Rydving

## Introduction

Václav Marek made important contributions to many fields. One of them was the study of the indigenous religious traditions of the Sami during the 17th and early 18th centuries. This was a period when the indigenous religion had already incorporated elements from Christianity. Most of the Sami were baptised and married, and were to be buried according to Christian rituals. At the same time, the indigenous religion lived on, during most of the 17th century without much opposition from the authorities. It was only from the 1680s that a few decades of intense religious confrontation and missionary activities started. The Sami who still sacrificed to the indigenous divinities, used the ritual drums, or performed other rituals that were not accepted by Church and State, were punished and forced to hand in their drums. But despite this pressure, many Sami succeeded in continuing with indigenous religious traditions in secrecy.

Most of our written sources of knowledge about the indigenous Sami religion come from this same period. In order to fight the old religion more effectively, the authorities collected information

about it. The drums that are now found in museums were collected during this period, and lists of sacrificial sites that were made during the same period help us to find many of the places where the most important communal rituals were performed.

Many different terms have been and are used for the religious traditions Marek's research dealt with. Marek himself often used terms like the "old" or "ancient" religion; today it is more common to talk about "indigenous" religion, and that is the term I will use in the following text for the pre-Christian or non-Christian religious traditions of the Sami.

## Marek's studies of Sami religion

Marek wrote innovative texts on the indigenous Sami religion at a time when few researchers devoted themselves to this religion. As a matter of fact, apart from him there were hardly any researchers who specialised in Sami religious traditions during the 1950s. Instead, researchers who in the main worked with other cultures and themes also wrote about Sami religions, but without any knowledge of the Sami language and with only superficial ideas about Sami culture in general.

Marek, however, based his texts on all of the sources available at the time,<sup>1</sup> and he related and contrasted his independent and

<sup>1</sup> From the 17th century, he not only used Schefferus's monograph *Lapponia* (1673), but also Schefferus's most important sources from the 1670s. Among the material from the 18th century, he used the published manuscripts that were available in addition to the monographs by P. Högström (1747), P. Fjellström (1755) and K. Leem (1767).

interesting analyses to both earlier research and the most recent publications.<sup>2</sup>

The first two of the four articles Marek published deal with ancient religious ideas and the question about surviving elements of what at that time was called “totemistic” ideas among the Sami,<sup>3</sup> the third article covers the role of women,<sup>4</sup> and the fourth discusses Sami ideas about life and death in relation to the South Sami so-called *saajvh* beings and the world of the departed, South Sami *jaemiehaajmoe*.<sup>5</sup>

Marek also wrote an introductory text about indigenous Sami religion. He completed it in 1968, but was never able to get it published. There he writes about hunting rituals and sacred stones,<sup>6</sup> about different divinities and nature spirits related to hunting,<sup>7</sup> about the activities of the *nåejtie* (the most important ritual specialist among the Sami<sup>8</sup>), about the ritual drum,<sup>9</sup> and about sacrifices.<sup>10</sup>

In 2009, Michal Kovář republished the four articles and for the first time published the longer introductory text in an excellently edited volume.<sup>11</sup> This means that Marek’s texts on indigenous Sami religion are now easily accessible.

<sup>2</sup> As, for example, Manker 1950; Karsten 1952; Serning 1956; Manker 1957; and Pettersson 1957.

<sup>3</sup> Marek 1955; cf. Marek (1955) 2009; Marek 1956; cf. Marek (1956) 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Marek 1959a; cf. Marek (1959a) 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Marek 1959b; cf. Marek (1959b) 2009. Sami words are spelled according to the present orthographies.

<sup>6</sup> Marek [1968] 2009: 117–129.

<sup>7</sup> Marek [1968] 2009: 129–133.

<sup>8</sup> Marek [1968] 2009: 133–167.

<sup>9</sup> Marek [1968] 2009: 167–215.

<sup>10</sup> Marek [1968] 2009: 216–236.

<sup>11</sup> Marek 2009; cf. Kovář 2009a; Kovář 2009b.

## The four articles

In this short text, I will briefly present and comment on the four articles published in the 1950s.

(1) The first of them, published in 1955, is an introductory text. Here, Marek presents the most important sources, both the texts from the 17th and 18th centuries and the oral traditions collected later; then he takes up the most important research texts. He uses examples from the whole of the Sami territory, from the South Sami to the East Sami, but he does not make a point of regionalising. Instead, he uses the material from the different areas and time periods to sketch out the history of the development of Sami religion, since his main point of departure was that of cultural evolutionism in – what one could call – a “light” Marxist-Leninist variant. His idea is that certain forces in nature were gradually deified and made into divinities. Among the themes he deals with, one could mention the stones and mountains in nature that were regarded as powerful and therefore received sacrifices, and he discusses the role of the inner part of the tent where the hunting equipment and the ritual drum were traditionally kept.<sup>12</sup>

(2) The second article deals with “surviving elements of totemistic ideas”, one of the great themes within anthropology at the time. Here, Marek focuses especially on the bear, bear rituals and bear terminology, and the article is partly based on narratives he had collected himself during the 15 years he lived among the Sami of the South Sami region of Sáavsoe (Norwegian Susendalen).<sup>13</sup> The idea with “totemism” was that larger or smaller groups of related people (clans, phratries) had special relations with certain animals. The whole theme was abandoned after the publication in 1962 of

<sup>12</sup> Marek 1955; Marek (1955) 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Marek 1956; Marek (1956) 2009.

Claude Lévi-Strauss's *Le totémisme aujourd'hui* (Totemism today),<sup>14</sup> but in the 1950s this was still a central theme.

On the basis of this article, I would like to make a general comment on Marek's writing strategies. In the same way as place, time and scholarly trends influence *our* writing habits, Marek was, of course, also dependent on his contexts. But it is interesting to see how comparatively freely he acted in relation to the demands of what was regarded as good scholarship at his time. If one compares the introductions and conclusions of the Czech texts and the Russian summaries of his articles on the one hand with the main parts of the articles on the other, one sees this clearly. In the introductions, conclusions and summaries, he presents the results in accordance with cultural evolutionism and uses the terminology that was demanded within that paradigm, but the main parts of the texts of the articles are much more focused on interpretations of items of information in the different sources and therefore more empirical. To take one example, in the summary of the article about "surviving elements of totemistic ideas", Marek states – absolutely according to the handbooks of that time – that "hunting magic" was gradually developed into worshipping of animals, and that animals and people were later in the process of development understood as related, since they were all regarded as having souls. When such a relation was fully established, one talked about an "advanced totemism".<sup>15</sup> He could have written this without having performed any analysis at all of his sources, since this was the way evolutionary development was understood. In the main part of the article, on the other hand, the evolutionistic ideas about a totemistic stage in the development of cultures are toned down. Instead, the focus is on the perception of animals in different Sami contexts, on rituals involving animals

<sup>14</sup> Lévi-Strauss 1962.

<sup>15</sup> Marek 1956: 54; Marek (1956) 2009: 66.

(and especially the bear), on divinities and other spiritual beings related to the animal world, etc.

(3) The third article is the most innovative one. As a matter of fact, it is the first scholarly text that specifically deals with the role of women in the indigenous Sami religion.<sup>16</sup> I will therefore present this article in more detail.

Long before the study of the position of women in religions began in the 1970s, Marek had published the first scholarly article on women in Sami religion, but not only that. His article is, as a matter of fact, one of the first texts devoted to the role of women in any religion. Gender and religion, and especially women and religion, is today an important aspect of any study of any religion. But even today, however, most researchers who write about women and religion are female researchers. There are men who study this theme, but far fewer. In this respect also, Václav Marek was a forerunner and set a good example.

When one starts reading this article, one is at once transplanted into a type of cultural discourse common in the late 1950s. Nothing else would have been expected. However, when Marek on the second page of the article starts discussing concrete Sami phenomena, he gives interesting examples of female beings in the folklore traditions as well as in the earlier sources, first with some North Sami examples. Beginning with the ambivalent and powerful Áhčēšeatni and Njávēšeatni (the first of them described as hasty and thoughtless, the second as slow and slack in the folklore traditions), he continues by discussing Gieddegeašgálgu, ‘the old woman from the end of the meadow’. She was regarded as a wise and kind being living at the edge of the cultivable land, where she ruled over wind and

<sup>16</sup> It would be 20 years before the next texts on the theme were published, all of them by female researchers though (Eira 1979; Bäckman 1982; Stephens 1983, etc.). Unfortunately, none of them referred to Marek’s article.



weather. If one met her and succeeded in speaking to her, one could – the stories tell us – ask her for anything, and she would give it.<sup>17</sup>

Then Marek moves on to the *háldit*, the rulers over areas in nature and over different species of animals and plants, one of them being Lottežeatni (who ruled over the birds), another Bárboáhká (who ruled over the land in the south where migratory birds stayed during the winter). In this group, he also includes the Lule Sami *gadniha*, whom the texts present as beautiful women with long hair who moved with their animals in the same way as the (nomading) Sami and who were as good at chanting as the Sami.<sup>18</sup>

Having discussed these beings in nature, Marek moves to the South Sami beings related to the tent and especially Båassjoeaahka, the being who ruled over *båassjoe*, the innermost part of the tent, where the ritual drum and the hunting equipment were kept.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, he comes to the most important female divinities of the South Sami: Maadteraahka, the first female ancestor, and her three daughters, Saaraahka, Joeksaahka and Oksaahka, all three of them related to the life of women. Saaraahka was the creator goddess and the most important divinity among the South Sami; Joeksaahka could change the female embryo to male if one wanted a son; Oksaahka guarded both the door of the tent and the sexual organs of women and also helped women during pregnancy and childbirth.<sup>20</sup>

In the main part of the text Marek discusses these female beings with the help of the different sources; he compares the different items of information and presents an interpretation of the main roles of these female characters. He presents the material as evidence

<sup>17</sup> Marek 1959a: 263–265; Marek (1959a) 2009: 69–72.

<sup>18</sup> Marek 1959a: 265–267; Marek (1959a) 2009: 72–75.

<sup>19</sup> Marek 1959a: 267–269; Marek (1959a) 2009: 75–78.

<sup>20</sup> Marek 1959a: 269–273; Marek (1959a) 2009: 78–84.

of a change from female to a male dominance, or in the terminology of the time, from matriarchy to patriarchy. However, even if we do not interpret the material in that way today, and the theoretical level therefore is problematic, the detailed analysis of the Sami material is still of utmost interest to anyone dealing with the indigenous religion of the Sami, not least because of Marek's vast knowledge of sources of various types and from different regions: Scandinavia, Finland and Russia.

Firstly, he emphasizes the existence of numerous female forest creatures (like Gieddegeašgálgu, the *hálđit*, etc.), secondly, he presents Båassjoeaahka as originally being a goddess of the forest and hunting areas around the tent but also at the same time a being related to the tent and especially its hearth. Thirdly, he argues that when – at a later period – the men started to make the food, the hearth became “taboo for women”. Båassjoeaahka therefore had to step down to the ground beneath the *boassjoe*, the innermost part of the tent.

Later, Marek argues, the only important female divinities were those who protected women during menstruation and childbirth, and helped children during the early years of life (Maadteraahka, Saaraahka, Joeksaahka, Oksaahka). But even these divinities were, according to him, also related to the areas around the tent.

He concludes that women's interests represent the inner circle of family interest in the settlement and its closest surroundings. However, the outer circle of the family's area was protected by the most important idol of the men (the *sieidi* stones that received much of the sacrifices). When the men also started to get involved in the activities in the tent, for example by being responsible for the preparation of meat and fish for the meals, the roles of the men became even more important, and the women lost parts of their earlier power.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Marek 1959a: 274; Marek (1959a) 2009: 86.

Even if this material would be looked upon differently today, Marek's interpretation cannot be rejected without serious consideration. His presentation of a possible development of the roles of the female divinities and spiritual beings of the Sami is an interesting way of ordering the information in the sources, of giving sense to disparate material full of contradictions. And in addition to that, the mere fact of having presented and analysed the scattered items of information about these female characters is a type of innovative gender analysis that to this day is all too uncommon in the study of the indigenous Sami religion.

(4) The fourth article takes up a theme that has been much discussed: opinions about life and death and their relations to two types of invisible beings, one being the departed ancestors, the other the South Sami so-called *saajvh* beings.<sup>22</sup> These beings were regarded as living in certain mountains. They were owned by humans, both men and women; one could sell and buy *saajvh* and children inherited the *saajvh* beings of their parents; status in South Sami culture was related to how many *saajvh* beings a person owned.<sup>23</sup>

Also in this article, Marek presents what we today would call a gender perspective, for example when discussing the roles of the female *saajvh*. The most interesting parts of the article are based on his own interviews with the people he got to know during his years in Säävsoe. To mention only one example, he takes up the interesting traditions about name giving and how names were

<sup>22</sup> The *saajvh* had earlier been taken up by, for example, Reuterskiöld (1912: 84–87, 91–94), and Wiklund (1916). Later the *saajvh* were discussed by Arbman (1961) and Bäckman (1975), among others. Sami ideas about life and death and about the world of the departed had earlier been dealt with by Pettersson (1957), and were later taken up by Storå (1971), Mériot (1976–78), and Bäckman (1979).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Rydving 2010: 120–124.

chosen. One of his informants, Gunhild Børgesfjell (1868–1959),<sup>24</sup> told him that when she heard that her sister-in-law had given her new-born son the name Nils, she started to cry, because she thought that the child was given the name of Gunhild's unhappy brother, who had been mentally ill, and now she thought that the child would in the same way have a life full of suffering and illness.<sup>25</sup> In such situations, however, when a child had received an improper name, it was possible to change the name for a better one, and of course Gunhild Børgesfjell knew about that tradition, already well attested in the sources from the 17th and 18th centuries.<sup>26</sup> This is just one of many examples in his texts where Marek is able to show that indigenous religious traditions lived on long after the process of religious change – a process that in some areas began as early as during the 11th and 12th centuries and that was intensified during the decades around 1700.

## Conclusion

Marek's articles often begin with some modern theme, something Marek had heard in Säävsoe or read in one of the collections of folklore material. And from there he goes to the earlier material, searching for parallels or confirmations that the same type of ideas can also be found in that material. When he does that, he uses all the available sources and all the available research texts. His knowledge of both sources and research literature is nothing less than impressive. In order to find these examples, he must have devoted a lot of time to reading and re-reading extensive material.

<sup>24</sup> Marek 1992: 238.

<sup>25</sup> Marek 1959b: 397; Marek (1959b) 2009: 108.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Rydving 1993: 115–122.

He seems to have been looking everywhere, and since he – like every serious culture researcher – was a polyglot, he was able to use material not only in the Scandinavian languages, Czech, Russian and English, but also in Finnish, German and French, not to mention his independent analyses of the original Sami material. Marek refers to Sami words, explains them and uses them as important elements in his texts. This method is a way to relate the more theoretical and general level of the analyses to the concrete ways of thinking of the Sami informants, be they his own or those who had been interviewed several centuries earlier. He takes the Sami seriously and was – I would say – able to think and analyse in a Sami way. His 15 years in Säävsoe are most probably the reason why he was able to analyse Sami ways of thinking in such a nuanced, respectful and well-informed way many decades before historical and anthropological investigations on the cultures and religions of indigenous peoples even tried to be nuanced, respectful and well informed. We should not forget that at the time when Marek wrote his texts, the peoples we today call indigenous were still called “primitive” and most researchers looked down on them. This arrogant attitude is never found in Marek’s writings, not even when he – rather unwillingly it seems to me – had to relate to the dominant theoretical ideas of his time.

However, the time-bound theoretical discourses are, as I have mentioned, in the main found at the beginning and at the end of Marek’s texts and in the Russian summaries. If we just dig through that thin layer, we find a much thicker layer of independent analyses of primary sources in dialogue with the leading authorities of his time. I do hope that he knew that he himself was one of these leading authorities on Sami culture and religion. We – who read him more than six decades after he wrote his articles – have no difficulty in seeing that he was not only one of the leading authorities, but also one of the most creative and most thought-provoking researchers. Therefore, his texts are still very rewarding to read.

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# Václav Marek, historiographer

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Michal Kovář

The Czech interest in the Sami and Sápmi can be traced back to the 17th century, when a character of a “*Lappo*” occurred in one (*Mundus artificialis, scena prima tertii actus*) of the school dramas by Johan Amos Comenius (*Schola ludus, seu Encyclopædia viva: hoc est Praxis Scenica Januæ linguarum & rerum, artificium exhibens amænum...*, 1654), performed in the Hungarian town of Sárospatak. Along with his German (*Germanus sive Teuto*) and Hungarian (*Hungarus*) counterparts, the Sami character (*Lappo*) served probably only as a demonstration of various types of clothing of the three nationalities. It has been emphasised several times with some amusement that the Sami character of the drama is wearing two different shoes – a wooden one on his right foot and a leather one on his left foot.<sup>1</sup> Comenius was perhaps acquainted with some representations of the Sami and their garments from his journey to Sweden in 1638 and wanted to show as many types of Sami shoes as possible.

The famous *Relatio tentatae missionis lappicae anno 1659 et 1660* by the Swedish Jesuit Johan Ferdinand Körningh presents another

<sup>1</sup> Cf. e.g. Veltrusky 1994.

peculiar Czech view of the Sami (and the Finns from north Bothnia) from the baroque period. However, the Sami view of the inhabitants of the then Bohemia would have been far more interesting. Regrettably, there is no record left by the Sami boy who Körningh brought back to Bohemia.

From the end of the 18th century up to the present day, many Czech travellers have left accounts of their journeys to Sápmi, mostly consisting of mere impressions – like for example the Czech writer Karel Čapek in his *Travels in the North*. In this Czech context, the work of Václav Marek is undoubtedly outstanding.

Over more than 40 years, Václav Marek wrote several texts with greater or lesser relevance to the history of the Sami people. The following list excludes the works on Sami indigenous religion:

- the manuscript *Lapper* [the Sami], 4 pp., s.a.;
- the manuscript *Kort antropologisk utsyn over den samiske populasjon i Susendalen og de historiske perspektiver*, [Brief anthropological survey of the Sami population in Susendalen and its historical perspectives], 29 pp., s.a.;
- the manuscript *Lopáři. Národopisná a sociologická studie ze severní Skandinávie* [The Sami. An ethnographical and sociological study from northern Scandinavia], about 300 pp., 1950;
- the manuscript *Z dávné minulosti Severu. Vývoj laponské kultury. Hospodářské a kulturní dějiny Laponců. I. – Lov, rybaření a sběr rostlin. II. – Chov sobů* [From the ancient past of the north. The development of the Sami culture. Economic and cultural history of the Sami people. I. – Hunting, fishing and plant gathering. II. – Reindeer husbandry], about 700 pp., 1969 (the part No. I. has a shorter variant from the year 1972 labelled as *Komsa*) [the first 130 pages were translated (by the author?) into English under the title *The Old History of the Lapps. A Noetics of the Ethnolinguistic and Mental Evolution in the Past*];

- the manuscript *Same-ättnam* [The Sami motherland], 22 pp., November 1984;
- the manuscript *Laponsko a Laponci v minulosti* [the Sami and Sápmi in the past], 5 pp., December 1984 (a shortened Czech version of the *Same-ättnam*);
- the manuscript *Noen tanker til samenes antropologi* [Some thoughts on the Sami anthropology], 28 pp., 1985;
- the manuscript *Paa ville veier i Samelands fortid* [On stray paths in the prehistory of Sápmi], 16 pp., June 1985;
- the manuscript *Laponsko v bouřích času. Historicko-etnografický přehled a současná politická situace* [Lapland in timestorms. Historical and ethnographical survey and the contemporary political situation], about 400 pp., 1989;
- the book *Samene i Susendalen* [The Sami in Susendalen], Hattfjelldal commune, Hattfjelldal, 1992.

In addition to these texts, Marek transformed parts from his long manuscripts into several articles. This chapter deals with the texts written in Czech.

### Marek's scientific background and motivation

Since Marek was forced due to the external, mainly economic, conditions to leave high school, and he had never taken up formal education, all his scholarly endeavour was a product of his self-teaching and postal consultations with experts in different fields from different countries (cf. his huge correspondence in the Archive of the Czech National Museum).

After leaving Czechoslovakia in 1931, during the Great Economic Depression, Marek made some extra money by writing articles

about his journeys. Some of the articles were published in Czech local and national newspapers. Thus, there are also a couple of articles from the Norwegian part of Sápmi. Besides these fees, Marek probably obtained some small money for the articles written for the periodical *Czechoslovak Ethnography* (*Československá etnografie*), and also for his novel on the beginnings of the colonization of Norwegian Susendalen, which was published in 1972. The last royalty Marek was given for a work dealing with Sami issues was the Hattfjelldal Community Prize, awarded to Marek for his book *Samene i Susendalen* in 1992. Marek's numerous pictures taken in Sápmi have become a part of the common heritage,<sup>2</sup> occasionally published in monographs and periodicals with the remark "an unknown author" ("*okänd fotograf*"). According to my estimation, Marek's royalties for his work dealing with the Sami did not exceed altogether an amount corresponding to a couple of average monthly salaries in Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, since Marek after his homecoming worked as a mere librarian in different institutions focused on biology and agriculture, his scientific and artistic work dedicated to the Sami culture and history could not help him in his "academic career" at all, and he had to carry it out during his free time.

Marek had several times expressed his internal motivation for his interest in Sami issues, for example in a letter to the Central Committee of Czechoslovak Communist Party<sup>3</sup> Marek wrote

<sup>2</sup> Marek's photographs have been published, for example, in Elsvatn 1988: 52, 75; Elsvatn & Smørvik 2019: numerous pages; Sæterstad 1962: 123, 135, 157, 161, 173. Also Czechoslovak TV used them in 1977 in the broadcast *Jak daleko je k přírodě*. Úvodní pořad cyklu *Člověk v přírodě* [How far is it to nature. An introduction to the series *Man in the nature*], for which Marek perhaps wrote the script as well. It was broadcast on the 2nd program of ČT on 17 April 1977, at 8 p.m.

<sup>3</sup> However, as far as I know, Marek never became a member of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. He applied for admission immediately



the following words, “My personal task of my life has been a defence of the last people of Europe, and the national destiny of the Sami people was a vivid warning to me and for my entire future.” Even if Marek at the beginning could have believed that he would perhaps enter the academy with his Sami studies, after a decade spent in post-war Czechoslovakia he had to give up, “*Yet, I was already rather disappointed from the start. I didn’t reckon on such a lack of interest in everywhere. I was not even allowed to take my articles on Sami out of my briefcase in editorial offices – perhaps because of my clothing...*” (the above cited letter). However, Marek never gave up writing, although most of his work remained unpublished (thousands of pages!).

Marek’s devotion to the Sami cause runs through his entire work. He often offered articles about current Sami events, like the Alta controversy, for publication in Czech newspapers. But his efforts to get critical articles about the creation of the lake on the Alta River published were doomed to failure, not only because of the title of the Sami activists’ circular *Charta 79*, but also because the official attitude to ecological issues in communist Czechoslovakia was in conflict with it. Marek’s articles could have been interpreted as a veiled criticism of the very same practice in Czechoslovakia, where whole villages were moved and their lands flooded without any consideration for the will of the inhabitants.

Activism, however, may also be perceived in Marek’s scientific and artistic work.

after his arrival in Prague in 1948, but was rejected. The testimonials by the local *lensmann* (the police officer) and people who Marek helped to escape from occupied Norway to Sweden were rejected too, and Marek was never acknowledged by Czechoslovak authorities as a member of the anti-Nazi resistance.

## The method, aims and style

The references to current events (as in the case of the Alta controversy) create a specific dynamic of the text's exposition in Marek's extensive historiographical work written in Czech. The historical events are not comprehended as events from the past, but always with respect to the present. However, this general statement is not that trivial, since it depends on whose present is to be perceived and from whose perspective. Marek is naturally in sympathy with the Sami people, and he makes an effort to legitimize their claims to the autonomy of Sápmi through historiography.

The elementary approach is expressed in Marek's sentence from the late 1950s regarding thoughts about the role of woman in Sami pre-Christian spirituality, "One need not be too cautious."<sup>4</sup> This basically means that we should not feel overly limited, when necessarily (due to the lack of sources, for example) speculating about an issue related to a non-privileged group. The reasons are thus both, ethical and epistemic. In a situation when we have access mainly to information given to us from the majority's angle, it is reasonable to rely more on those data and even speculations which create an image favourable to the minority. Still, there is naturally always the risk of disservice.

However, such speculations must not contradict what we already know. Marek criticized the effort, common to some western historians of the north, to adjust or ignore data that do not fit into their periodization. He criticized the deductive practice to proceed from personally motivated<sup>5</sup> conceptual constructs instead of the inductive

<sup>4</sup> Marek 2009: 67.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. e.g., "Dozens of papers and books have been written on the Sami people since long ago, until recently only by foreigners – Norwegians, Swedish, Russians, Finns, Germans, also French and others. The motivation has often been the same: to show without any disgrace the history of the tribes neighbouring the Sami (cf. K. Bergsland, B. Collinder,

movement based on particular facts. It is even obvious that he appreciated the initial archaeological descriptions and hypothesis already emerging during fieldwork more than any comparative and deductive periodization of the history of Sápmi.

The anti-comparative feature of Marek's historiography is manifested in references to Sami texts and in quotations of Marek's Sami friends, his "informants", in two considerations – as a corrective to what had been written on Sami history, and as a primary source of information. For Marek, Sami communications represent, in a division according to another axis, both the source for his historical knowledge and the actual historiography of the Sami. And again he sees a direct link between history and the present, for example, by comparing the common misinterpretation of Óhthere's words about the "unbought" (*unbebohtra*)<sup>6</sup> reindeer and records of Marek's own interviews with Norwegian and Swedish farmers and merchants about the topic of Sami pasturing somebody else's reindeer herds, all of this framed in an extensive, several pages long record of a conversation between the Sami Gunhild Børgesfjell and her sons Lars and Ole Tomasen from Susendalen about reindeer herding,

J. Gustavsen and others). The Sami people themselves have never written about Sápmi (save for minor exceptions). They've managed for ages with oral tradition mutually passed on in tales and songs." *"Od dávných dob bylo napsáno o Laponcích celé množství spisů a knih, ale až donedávna je psali jen cizinci – Norové, Švédové, Rusové, Finové i Němci, také Francouzi a jiní. Při tom šlo často i o to, aby historie sousedních kmenů vyšla na světlo dějin bez poskvrny (viz K. Bergsland, B. Collinder, J. Gustavsen aj.). Laponci sami o Laponsku v minulosti nikdy nepsali (až na malé výjimky). Spokojovali se po celé věky jen se vzájemným ústním předáním v pohádkách a písních."* (Marek 1989: 357a)

<sup>6</sup> According to Marek, the Old English word *unbebohtra* was already misinterpreted in the edition and translation by Joseph Bosworth in 1855 (see p. 12, "six hundred tame deer of his own breeding"). This misinterpretation has been reproduced in following editions and translations.

or brief remarks told to Marek by another Sami Nils Olav Kappfjell from Majavatn. According to Marek, this noetic link between ancient sources and the contemporary Sami society is secured by the archaic nature of the Sami settlement in the area Marek lived for decades.

Different values that Marek assigned to “first-hand testimony” (archaeological evidence, information given by Sami herders) and further academic debates also apply to the academic discussions with another friend of Marek, namely the Sami sociologist and writer Erik Nilsson-Mankok. In this particular case Marek again appreciated more the herders’ explanations and rejected Nilsson-Mankok’s assumptions concerning, for example, the late arrival of the Sami people in South Sápmi.

We can shed light on the foundations for Marek’s occasional criticism of Sami historians by quoting him directly, *“The attitude of the contemporary Sami intelligentsia is somehow more difficult, for it is deeply dependent on the Scandinavian educational system and its academic principles. Therefore it readily serves foreign interests.”*<sup>7</sup> *“Sami dictionaries, grammars and also the Sami history have up until now been written by non-Sami experts. For the first time now the Sami people have the opportunity to express their disagreement and to interfere with these fixed schemes in terms of the development of the Sami language and the history of their own. However, they have not so far departed from the old schemes.”*<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> “Stanovisko současné laponské inteligence je ovšem poněkud obtížnější. Je silně závislá na skandinávském školství a jejich akademických principech. Často tedy ochotně slouží cizím zájmům.” (Marek 1989: 357)

<sup>8</sup> “Laponské slovníky i mluvnice i laponskou historii až dosud psali jen odborníci cizích národností a nyní mají Laponci poprvé příležitost vyjádřit nesouhlas svého lidu a zasahovat do těchto ustálených šablon, pokud jde o vývoj laponského jazyka, ale i dějiny jejich kmene. Až dosud se však od starých šablon příliš neodlišují.” (Marek 1989: 343)

Marek's criticism of the historiography of his time, along with a mere enumeration of facts and foggy quoting of hundreds of scientific texts (Marek mentions just the name of an author, sometimes the year of a publication), makes the reading of his texts difficult to some extent. Hundreds of pages are devoted to disproving a hypothesis, and the author's standpoint comes out at the end, often through a change of style. The text is thus an alternation of a scientific and a forceful, insistent manner, which creates a special dynamic that is not easy to follow. Furthermore, the structure of the texts is quite complicated, as it is determined by different parameters: themes, the periodization of the Sami history, and the periodization of the historiography investigating the Sami history. Marek further adopts many, even competing terms without their re-definition in his own, quite complicated system. On the other hand, this feature occasionally makes it possible to set up new ideas and unbiased views.

In addition, the personal, "subjective" style, opposing the objective style of a scientific treatise, is multi-layered. Marek often uses poetic expressions, *"Since then when the first animals of the circumpolar Arctic occurred in the area of Komsa – perhaps from the hillsides of the Urals – the conditions in the north have constantly changed: the rock ptarmigan, which appeared in small flocks, has rapidly spread to the iceless land; concurrently the lemming, the reindeer, the lesser white-fronted goose, the red-throated loon, the mountain hare, and after them the wolverine, the wolf, the stoat and the arctic fox, but also many tiny and hardy birds like the snow bunting, the Lapland longspur, the Lapland lark and after them the rough-legged buzzard, the falcon, the merlin, the snowy owl, the great grey owl; however, quite soon the grouse also appeared here, the old forest rover, who from time to time sets about recklessly wandering on long journeys."*<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "Od té doby, co se v oblasti dávné Komsy objevila první zvěř cirkumpolární arktidy – snad z úbočí Uralu – podmínky na Severu se ustavičně měnily:

Irony and sarcasm are the most frequent tools for summing up Marek's criticism of the scientific or political attitude towards the Sami, for example, *"Only recently people used to say that the Sami are a primitive nation – without any culture, without any perspective. But as recently as the 1930s primitivism was measured precisely according to consumption of soap, sugar and paraffin oil. Now we have had the opportunity to inspect the statement."*<sup>10</sup>

The opposite – affirmative and empathizing – approach is employed when dealing not with historiography, but with Sami history itself. Marek obviously strived for the smallest distance between himself as an observer and the object of his interest. He writes, *"Only those who have lived here in the mountains, amongst these people, who know their language, may understand the sense of their words – and also the sense of what they didn't say."*<sup>11</sup> For example his description of the Sami family, upbringing and education of children, and gender equality in Sami families in history and present is in fact the Sami life's celebration. Marek attempted to depict a basic situations and subsequent feelings of people even in the oldest history of Mesolithic migrations in the north. With this kind of empathy he outlined the development of the Sami

*kůr horský, který se tu objevil v maličkých hejnech, se rychle rozšířil po celé leduprosté zemi, současně lumik, sob tundrový a brzy po něm též sob lesní, husa malá, potáplice malá, zajíc-bělák, a za nimi rosomák, vlk, hranostaj a liška polární, ale i spousty drobného otužilého ptactva jako sněhule, strnad laponský, skřivan laponský a s nimi káně rousná, sokol lovecký, dřemlík, sova sněžná, sova laponská, ale velmi brzy byl zde snad také tetřev, ten starý lesní tulák, který se občas pouštěl bezhlavě na dlouhé cesty." (Marek 1969, part I: 64)*

<sup>10</sup> *"Není tomu tak dávno, kdy se říkalo, že Laponci jsou primitivní národ – bez kultury, bez perspektiv. Ještě ve třicátých letech se to měřovalo naprosto přesně: podle spotřeby mýdla, cukru a petroleje. Měli jsme nyní příležitost přesvědčit se sami..." (Marek 1989: 366)*

<sup>11</sup> *"Jenom ten, kdo žil tady v horách, mezi těmi lidmi, rozumí jejich řeči a může pochopit smysl jejich slov – i toho, co neřekli." (Marek 1969, part II: 33)*



identity, which was after all the main topic of his efforts. Such an imaginative process and contemplation was, however, used just as a final completion carried out after several approaches from different angles.

In his interpretative research Marek linked results from different particular historical disciplines including archaeology, archaeobotany, somatic anthropology and etymology. For each discussed domain he used a pertinent combination of the disciplines. His wide approach would probably be a task for an entire research team. The weakest point in Marek's constructions could be seen in his etymological considerations based on his intuition rather than any rigorous methodology. When searching for Uralic cognates, Marek used Björn Collinder's *Fenno-Ugric Vocabulary* (1955). However, his speculations encompassing lexemes from the wider area (northern Eurasia, the whole circumpolar area) were grounded on Morris Swadesh's (not generally accepted without reservation) hypothesis of the Dene-Finnish language family (1965) and Wilhelm Schmidt's concept of the *Sprachenkreise*, namely *der arktische Kreis* (1926, p. 500nn). Thus Marek juxtaposed Uralic and other lexemes for 'seal', for example, the Tamil *kadal nāj* (a neologism originating in a combination of words for 'sea' and 'dog'), the Evenki *narga*, *large*, *kuma*, the Gilyak *langr*, the Yupik *kazig'jak*, *nych'sják*, the Inuit *kazigjak*, *arija* etc., regardless of any regularities. Often he supports such lexical lists with onomatopoeic explanations, "I believe that the Sami words *oro*, *or'ro*, *orres*, *ōrék*, even the older *hurre*, *hurRt'she*, *vārres* [...] originally meant a luring reindeer for reindeer hunting. The name was probably made by children. It was a calf which a hunter caught near by a wild herd and brought home for children and for breeding [...]. The children called the calf by its own voice, simply *oro* or *or'ro*, as the children imitated the calf. [...] The reindeer voice is, however, not as simple as the voice of a calf and its imitation by children. A reindeer's voice changes over time, mainly according to its sex, age and season. The fundament *oro* usually remains, but is

enriched by raspy consonants like h, ch, kch, rR and by some vowels like u, a, ö, so the hunter's onomatopoeic imitation specified to deceive wild reindeer sounded like a guttural or breast voice – aorr, kchorr, 'hurRh or alike."<sup>12, 13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> “Domnívám se, že laponská slova oro, or'ro, orres, öřék a další podobná, i straší hurre, hurRtše, vārres a mnohá podobná, i slovo Oordo, značila původně volavého soba k lovu divokých sobů. Jeho název utvořily nejspíše děti. Bylo to sobí mládě, které chytil lovec u divokého stáda a donesl je domů, pro zábavu dětem a k odchovu, aby mohlo být později zabito k potravě pro rodinu. Děti na malého soba volaly jeho vlastním hlasem a prostě tedy oro nebo or'ro, jak mládě napodobovaly děti. Při společných hrách s dětmi stávalo se mládě záhy členem rodiny a o nějakém pozdějším zabíjení na maso nemohlo být řeči. Zejména když se později zacvičený sob uplatnil velmi dobře na lovu a sobice kromě toho dávala mládě a mléko. Hlas soba není však tak prostý jako hlas mláděte a jeho nápodoba dětmi. Během času se hlas soba mění, především podle pohlaví, podle stáří a dílem i podle ročních dob. Základní oro zpravidla zůstává, bývá však časem obohacováno chrčivými souhláskami jako h, ch, kch, rR, také ovšem některými samohláskami jako u, a, ö, takže onomatopoická nápodoba z úst lovce, upřesněná k oklamání divokých sobů, zněla jako hrdelní nebo prsní zvuk aorr, kchorr, 'hurRh a podobně.” (Marek 1989: 151–152)

<sup>13</sup> However, the data Marek collected to back up some of his etymologies could be of interest to a lexicographer. In addition they illustrate his effort to discuss details with his Sami friends, “Gunhild Børgesfjell (born 1868) once told me about the former ways of reindeer herding; she mentioned a long line of different names for the domestic reindeer, and finally she also recalled a less used and almost forgotten word ö'ro, perhaps or'ro or 'orr'o with the meaning of 'domestic reindeer; reindeer male'. [...] The reindeer herder N. O. Kappfjell from Majavatn [...] pronounces simply orra, and this means 'a reindeer male' or 'any cloven-hoofed male, either wild or domestic, a reindeer or an elk'; the reindeer female in this relation was called maengole.” “Gunhild Børgesfjellová (nar. 1868) mi kdysi vyprávěla o dřívějším chovu sobů; připomněla mi také dlouhou řadu rozličných názvů domácího soba a při tom si nakonec vzpomněla i na málo užívané a skoro zapomenuté označení ö'ro, lépe snad or'ro či 'orr'o, značilo to ,uchočený sob, sobí býček či sobí bulík'. [...] Sobí nomád N. O. Kappfjell z Majavatn [...] vyslovuje prostě orra a značí to prý ,sobí

The motivation of onomatopoeia is not always that simple, in a mere imitation of a natural sound or a voice of a tool (typically the bow with wide circumpolar parallels) according to Marek. Many Sami words resulted from already structured speech, for example a *juoigus*, in which an interjection may become an autosemantic lexeme. Marek even states that, “*the original Sami tales are products of different historical epochs and different areas, and go back to the first successful attempts and achievements of the human language. Or in another words: People learned to speak by telling fairy tales.*”<sup>14</sup>

The theme of children and related phenomena (fairy tale proper) in Marek’s texts is frequent. He also uses the children as an experiment based on an onto- and phylogenetic parallelism to demonstrate the archaic character of Sami cultural phenomena (not only the language), for example in the case of Sami music, “*It should be mentioned that the first national [in terms of the political meaning of the word – MK] Sami songs have been created. Let us mention two of them, published on a single MAI 59 in Oslo [...] in 1980. Both were sung by Sverre Kjelsberg and Mattis Hætta. The melody and the lyrics were created as resistance songs to protect Sami rights in the first Sami nationwide resistance against the construction of the Alta power plant [...]. The melodies are admirable, two-year-old children stopped playing when they heard the stirring performance and started looking in astonishment with open mouths at the record player.*”<sup>15</sup>

*býk’ či ,samec spárkaté zvěře, divoké i ochočené, sob nebo los’, ale i jiné; ,samice soba’ v tomto vztahu se pak nazývala maengole.” (Marek 1989: 150)*

<sup>14</sup> “*Řekl bych, že laponské původní pohádky jsou plody různých historických epoch a různých oblastí. A datují se od prvních zdařilých pokusů a úspěchů lidské řeči. Čili jinak: Lidé se naučili mluvit vyprávěním pohádek.” (Marek 1989: 267)*

<sup>15</sup> “*Zde je možno připomenout, že v nejnovější době vznikaly skutečně první národní laponské písně. Připomeňme dvě z nich, které vyšly na malé desce MAI 59 v Oslo a byly odměněny Grand Prix 1980 v Norsku. Obě písně nazpíval Sverre Kjelsberg a Mattis Hætta. Hudba i zpěv byly vytvořeny*

Marek's linguistic positivism expressed in stressing the role of onomatopoesis<sup>16</sup> is complemented by a structuralist glottogonic

*jako bojové písně na ochranu laponských práv v prvním, celonárodním odboji Laponců proti výstavbě přehrady na řece Alta, jejíž přeje a přírodní bohatství na dolním toku byly prohlášeny za státem chráněnou rezervaci v zájmu laponského lidu. Jsou to písně Sámiid Ædnan – Laponsko – a Datsikavisa – Píseň z Datsiky. Jsou to obdivuhodné melodie, při jejichž strhujícím přednesu si i dvouleté děti přestávaly hrát a dívaly se s údivem a s otevřenými ústy na gramofon.” (Marek 1989: 262–263)*

- <sup>16</sup> However, the onomatopoesis may happen in different ways, even as a kind of a secondary assimilation or re-calibration of a word according to a natural voice, “The stages [of language development] can be observed in terminology and in fairy tales and in the memory of the people. Whereas the original semantemes – with the primary meanings, how a hunter brought a reindeer calf to a tent, women and children fostered it and the calf was later used as a luring reindeer – have survived, in numerous Sami fairy tales there is only the reminiscence for the first part of the process. [...] They describe how hunters brought orphaned reindeer calves from tundra, how a woman suckled them and talked to them in human language. When calf matured and asked for its father, and when it found out that its father was a reindeer, it ran back to tundra to join a reindeer herd. The woman and her children shouted after the calf, but it never returned. How they shouted at the calf, the author doesn't tell. However, in related materials G. M. Kert (1961) tells of a grandfather who visited his daughter married to a reindeer, and when he was approaching their tent, his reindeer grandchildren shouted: ‘Khon'ker, khon'ker, the grandpa is coming!’ Perhaps this ‘khon'ker’ is the voice of the human calves as they had been taught by their human mother. [...] This onomatopoeia is nevertheless not an exact imitation of a reindeer voice. It didn't matter during a game with their reindeer-siblings, and it was a form which they had learned from their human mother. It is not an imitation of a reindeer voice. And after all, the calf fled back to tundra after its father in Sápmi. In a Samoyedic family the development continued. The hunter took the reindeer calf with him for hunting, to hide behind it. The game has changed to an uncompromising life's practice, and the woman's and children's random terminology was refined by the hunter's experience. The hunter had to communicate precisely with his reindeer so that he would not to be

principle. The language arises in tales. We can probably even propose a further implication that in the particular Sami archaic environment, which according to Marek directly represents our common prehistory, the glottogony happens in *juoigus* – the condensed genre connecting natural and cultural voices, melody, prosody and syntax, actant and story, a single signifié and a complex signifiant.

Regarding the development and classification of languages, Marek rejects the existence of a common, discrete and uniform genetic protolanguage – a language arises from telling (or rather singing?),

spotted by the wild reindeer. [...] This is the onomatopoeia proper, only with the addition of the vector of the human purpose and use.” *“Tato stadia je možno sledovat v terminologii a v pohádkách a pamětech lidu. – Zatímco mezi Samojedy se dodnes dochovala původní semantema anebo jim velmi blízká, s prvotními významy, které popisují, jak lovec přinesl do stanu živé sobí mládě a ženy s dětmi je potom odchovaly – až posléze byl tento ochočený sob využit lovcem jako vábící sob na lovu – jsou v četných laponských pohádkách vzpomínky jenom na první část tohoto procesu. [...] Líčí, jak lovci přinesli z tundry osiřelé sobičky, jak ho žena doma odkojila a odchovala a mluvila s ním lidskou řečí. Když mládě dospělo, ptalo se po otci – a když se dovědělo, že otcem je sob, uteklo do tundry za sobím stádem. Žena i děti volaly za uprchlým bulíčkem, ale ten se už nevrátil. Jak na něj volali, autor neuvádí. Ale v příbuzných látkách vypráví G. M. Kert (1961) o dědečkovi, který přišel na návštěvu k dceři, provdané za soba, a když přicházel k jejich stanu, volala sobí vnoučata: ‚Chonker, chonker, dědoušek jde!‘ Snad tedy chonker – je asi ono ‚chorkání‘ lidských sobích telat – jak se tomu naučila, když jim matka – žena – vyprávěla lidskou řečí pohádky a když si hrály se svými bratry-soby. Tento onomatopoický výraz není ovšem přesnou nápodobou sobího hlasu. Ve hře na tom tolik nezáleželo a byl to také tvar, který se sobí mláďata naučila od své lidské matky. Není to tedy nápodoba sobího hlasu. A v Laponsku nakonec mládě uteklo za otcem do tundry. V samojedské rodině však vývoj pokračoval dále. Lovec vzal sobí mládě na lov a použil ho jako vábícího soba, aby se za ním kryl. Hra se změnila v nesmlouvavou životní praxi a nahodilé termíny žen a dětí upřesnila lovecká zkušenost. Aby lovec nebyl zpozorován divokými soby, musil se se svým zvířetem přesně dorozumět. [...] To je tedy vlastní onomatopoeia v pravém slova smyslu, jen s vektorem lidského účele a použití.” (Marek 1969, part I: 80–82)*

it is a product of, one might say, a continuous glottogony, therefore an entity with a dynamic, complicated development, subjected to specific, often sudden and situational impulses. Instead, he works with the concept of a language community, “[The Finnic languages] developed gradually from a coexistence of different European tribes, from the group of old European languages, and after that they met the Uralic tribes in the north and created a Finno-Ugric language community – not a protolanguage, the least known phenomenon.”<sup>17</sup> Marek most probably attempts to say that there has never been one uniform lingual ancestor, but rather local aggregates of languages (< Schmidt’s *Sprachenkreise*?) with their own *ad hoc* (lexical) sources (he says that lexical innovations happen, “under their local ecological, historical and social conditions”), occasionally with a transgression between neighbouring languages. “The development went in reality from multiple ‘dialects’ progressively to final languages and further to the artificial written languages – and not *vice versa*.”<sup>18</sup>

From the few mentions about the concept of language and culture it seems that Marek was convinced that the Sami culture and the Sami language are archaic not in terms of a conservation of former ready contents allowing us, for example, to study directly, “the European Stone Age”, but in terms of the ways of their production, active forms and ways of creation. There is something like a permanent inception in the Sami culture and the Sami language differing from other European languages in measure. The plant metaphor in the language classification was not so great a metaphor for Marek. The Sami language grows from different roots, the roots

<sup>17</sup> “Vývijely se pozvolna ze soužití různých evropských kmenů, ze skupiny starých evropských jazyků a po setkání s uralickými kmeny na severu utvářely finnougričskou jazykovou společnost – nikoli prajazyk, fenomén nejméně známý.” (Marek 1989: 29)

<sup>18</sup> “Vývoj šel ve skutečnosti od mnohotných nevyhraněných ‚nářečí‘ progresivně k finálním řečem a od nich k umělým spisovným jazykům – a nikoli naopak.” (Marek 1989: 30)

may (re-)grow together, and autonomous factors may be acting in the process. A language substrate is not a mere background, a residuum, an evidence of something actually lost, but a constant agent.

## Results

What is Marek's hypothesis about the history of (the) Sami? "*The oldest names for game and fish represent three great groups of ethnic names in the north. The first two groups [the oldest one consists of sea animals, the second one of small game] are most probably proto-Uralic, and we may say that the older one arose in the western parts of Finnmark – in the Sami territory, therefore it is proto-Sami in origin. The second one existed separately further to the east as the Uralic proper or proto-Samoyedic, perhaps a little later. The third types of semantemes [connected to hunting and herding of large animals] spread from the south and represent the group of the Finnic languages. They appeared in the area of contemporary Finland relatively later (perhaps about 2000 BC) as early Finnish, Tchud, Vepsian, Karelian etc. and spread to northern Finland and Sweden, and especially eastwards to the Onega River.*"<sup>19</sup> Marek thus believes that the Sami language

<sup>19</sup> "[N]ejstarší názvy lovných zvířat a ryb tvoří tři velké skupiny etnických názvů na Severu. Dvě první skupiny jsou nejspíše prauralické a je možno říci, že starší z nich se utvářela v západních oblastech Finnmarky – na laponské půdě –, a je tedy svým původem protolaponská. Druhá existovala odděleně dále k východu jako vlastní uralická či protosamojedská skupina, snad jen o málo pozdější. Třetí typy semantem se šířily z jihu a jsou představovány skupinou finských jazyků. Objevily se na území dnešního Finska poměrně pozdě (snad kolem 2000 př. n. l.) jako raná finština, čudština, jazyk vepsický, karelský aj. a šířily se odtud na sever Finska a Švédska, zejména však na východ k Oněze." (Marek 1989: 176)



is a descendant of three roots. Since his diagram is the tree diagram, but posted upside down, or better, moved to the lowest positions, the roots, he uses the traditional names of branches and the trunk (the family) in quite a different way. The proto-Sami, proto-Uralic and the proto-Finnic are different, although in their history often knitted, and equal ancestors of Sami.

The first, proto-Sami domain corresponds to the first population in the north, at the end of the Ice Age. According to Marek the western area of Finnmark was inhabited by “micromigrations” from the south with an east arc trajectory over the Russian plains (about 13,000–10,000 BC), whereas some people (the later proto-Samoyeds – Marek identifies them with the legendary Siirtja people) moved to the east and some thousands of years later re-joined the proto-Sami population in Sápmi (about 7000 BC). The third, Finnic wave consisted also partly of descendants of the original “proto-European” population of Central Europe, however partly from the Russian plains. *“The known eastern Gracettien culture, carried by a variable population of the Cro-Magnon people, spread over the Russian steppe and farther to the north to the subarctic forests already in the Palaeolithic period. These people later migrated via Sungir to Komsa, whereas some of them continued to the northeast to the Urals. The western group formed the basis of the early lapponoid or pre- or protolapponoid race, whereas the eastern one later formed the pre-Uralid language group and Uralic race, perhaps about 4000 BC. [...] The original arctic tribe of the Nordic tundra in the area from Sungir to Komsa and the Urals created in the west lapponoid population or proto-Lapps a kind of mixed Uralic race with an admixture of mongoloid features in the east. Likewise the subarctic race in the forest-tundra further to the east was in the process reshaped into the Uralids. The boreal population of the forests further from the southwest here later created a group of Baltic Finns and in the southeast Volgaic and Permian Finns. All these anthropological groups later created a common proto-Finno-Ugric language family. [...] All these anthropological elements*

*started blending together from the first millennium AD, but the Sami population in the mountains on the Swedish-Norwegian borderline remained unimpacted by these foreign elements.”<sup>20</sup>*

The three sources of (the) Sami are illustrated by different texts and cultural phenomena. In my opinion the employment of the *Kalevala* is noteworthy in Marek’s reasoning. As an analogy to the Sami history he uses three verses from “runo” 3, “*Pohjola porolla kynti / Etelä emähevolla / Takalappi tarvahalla*” (W. F. Kirby’s translation, “In the north they plough with reindeer / in the south the mare is useful / and the elk in furthest Lapland.”). The Finnish horse as a southern phenomenon represents just the newest root, the Pohjola’s reindeer stands in for the domesticated reindeer as a phenomenon coming from the eastern proto-Uralic root, and the elk has a synecdochic meaning of the original proto-Sami hunting culture, or of the original Sami attempts to domesticate the elk (Marek was convinced from Sami tales collected in Hattfjelldal area that local Sami had tried to domesticate the elk).

<sup>20</sup> “[P]řes Ruské stepi a dále k severu do subarktických lesů již v paleolitu se šířila známá kultura východního gravettieny, nesená variabilní populací cro-magnonského lidstva. A tato se později rozšířila přes Sungir do Komsy, zatímco jiná část tohoto lidu pokračovala k severovýchodu k Uralu. Západní skupina se stala základem dávné lapponoidní či pre- nebo protolapponoidní rasy, kdežto východní část vytvořila později pre-uralidní jazykovou skupinu a uralickou rasu, snad kolem roku 4 000. [...] Onen původní arktický kmen severské tundry v oblasti od Sungiru do Komsy a k Uralu vytvořil později na západě lapponoidní osídlení či Protolaponce, laponskou rasu; na východě pak jakousi smíšenou uralickou rasu s příměsí mongoloidních rysů. Podobně i subarktická rasa v lesotundrách dále k východu se v tomto procesu přetvářela v uralidy. Boreální populace z lesů dále od jihozápadu zde později utvářela skupinu baltických Finů a na jihovýchodě pak volžsko-permské Finy. Všechny tyto antropologické skupiny zde později vytvářely společnou finno-ugrickou jazykovou prarodinu [...] Všechny tyto antropologické prvky se zde později, od počátku naší doby, začaly různě mezi sebou mísit, ale laponské obyvatelstvo v horách na švédsko-norském pohraničí zůstalo téměř nedotčeno těmito cizími vlivy.” (Marek 1989: 67)

The diachronic survey of development of different cultural phenomena like architecture, household articles, skis, sledges, hunting weapons and traps, fishing, clothing, food preparation, domestication and utilization of different animal and plant species etc. is extended with the history of the clash with the ethnic majority: establishing borders, taxation and colonization, and by an analysis of the Sami ecological manners in using the natural sources in contrast with the exploitation performed since the Middle Ages by the others.

## General concluding remarks

Methods in the research of Sápmi's history and prehistory have developed rapidly since Marek's time. The rough somatic anthropology has been replaced by molecular biology, the archaeology has been refined in terms of its method and the ways of interpreting its finds. The time when Marek could address a wide audience with his explanations has passed. Still, his effort to create a critical compilation and a comprehensive delineation of the history of Sápmi and the Sami is probably still unique and remarkable in terms of scope. Perhaps also his general approach and particular outcomes and observations may serve in various regards even to this day.

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# Václav Marek, ethnographer

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Přemysl Ovský

Václav Marek is one of the most remarkable persons in the history of the Czech ethnography. Ethnography is understood to be a systematic description of one contemporary culture, often using ethnographic work in terrain called fieldwork, which means “intense, long-term anthropological research, conducted among a community of people”.<sup>1</sup> Ethnography also means an attempt at the systematic collection of facts about human languages, habits, art and achievements. Ethnography in this sense covers the collection of material from documents and interviews and adaptation of this material to specialized publications.<sup>2</sup> Václav Marek certainly meets the definition of an “ethnographer” in all the above respects. As an expert on the Sami people, culture and environment who lived among the Sami for almost 15 years from the 1930s to 1940s, he is cited and appreciated by both Czech and Scandinavian scientists (Kovář 2009, Hingarová – Hubáčková – Kovář 2009, Kovář – Gaski 2010, Kappfjell 2010, Kovář 2013). From the ethnographic point of view, Marek’s life work can be divided into two main

<sup>1</sup> Barfield 1997: 188.

<sup>2</sup> Barfield 1997: 157–159.

parts.<sup>3</sup> One of them can be termed the “protoethnographic” period. This creative period of Marek’s is represented by the articles written mostly in the 1930s and 1940s. This period contains an article about the life of Spanish fishermen<sup>4</sup> and other essayistic articles regarding the Sami environment and milieu.<sup>5</sup> The second period crucial for the analysis of Marek’s ethnographic work in this paper can be considered the “ethnographic” period. It started in the 1950s with the publication of specialized articles in the ethnographic journal *Czechoslovak ethnography* (*Československá etnografie*)<sup>6</sup> and other studies and monographs, published<sup>7</sup> and unpublished.<sup>8</sup>

### Shift of perspective on the Sami people in the discourse

With the rise of nationalism during the 19th century, there was an abrupt change in the view of the Sami. Before the expansion of the nationalist discourse, a much more positive relationship with the Sami and the dominant Enlightenment idea of the Sami as noble savages prevailed. Nationalism, on the other hand, required national hegemony, and the Sami culture started to come under threat from a policy of assimilation. The former supposed theory of indigenusness of the Sami in Fennoscandia was transformed by the nationalistic ideology, and the Sami were often seen as “lazy, amoral and drunk”<sup>9</sup> The Sami, as an ethnic minority, were

<sup>3</sup> Ovský 2020: 25.

<sup>4</sup> Marek 1936.

<sup>5</sup> Marek 1936, 1937, 1938.

<sup>6</sup> Marek 1955, 1956, 1959a, 1959b, 1961, 1964.

<sup>7</sup> Marek 1992, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Marek 1969, 1989.

<sup>9</sup> Marek 1989: 179.



not considered an indigenous population, but descendants of the Mongolians, who came to Scandinavia from the Asian steppes and were entrenched deeply under the majority population.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the Sami acquired some characteristic attributes common to all non-European ethnics, such as primitive, wild, aggressive and amoral.<sup>11</sup> The Sami came to be viewed as European savages, as the last primitive race of the north, and their only hope for survival was to be raised to a higher civilization level, meaning assimilation and integration into majority society, which in Norway, for example, led to “*fornorskningspolitikk*”,<sup>12</sup> the official governmental policy of Norwegianization.<sup>13</sup> From the time when Marek arrived in Sápmi, he tried very hard to defend the Sami against the authors who described them in a negative way. Marek criticized, for example, Finnish ethnographer and philologist Matthias Alexander Castrén (1813–1852): “*The Finnish ethnographer M. A. Castrén (1852) concludes that the Lapps in Enare are heavy-handed and slow, melancholic and foolish. They are also jealous, envious, quarrelsome and irreconcilable, cunning and tricky, and they have many other similar characteristics.*”<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Pokorná 2009: 288.

<sup>11</sup> Pokorná 2009: 288.

<sup>12</sup> The official state policy to assimilate the Sami, much more aggressive in Norway than in Sweden and Finland. In the late 1800s, both Norway and Sweden intensified the policy of assimilation against the Sami. In Norway, schools did not permit the use of the Sami language anymore, not even in the teaching of Lutheran Christianity, for which it had been permitted previously. An act in Finnmark County denied the right to buy land for farming to anyone who did not speak Norwegian.

<sup>13</sup> Pokorná 2009: 289–290.

<sup>14</sup> “*Finský etnograf M. A. Castrén (1852) soudí, že Laponci v Enare jsou těžkopádní a pomalí, trudnomyslní a hloupi. Také však jsou závistiví, nepřející, svárliví a nesmiřitelní, prohnání a lstiví a mají ještě řadu jiných podobných vlastností.*” Marek 1989: 179.

It was Václav Marek who offered a different view of the Sami culture from the 1930s. For him, the Sami were not barbarians, fools or idlers, but people with a deep knowledge of the nature whose way of life was a viable and the most profitable one in the local subarctic conditions. *“Just as in other associations, the Lapps are often labelled as primitive and inferior. If someone lived in the north for almost half of his life and could look without prejudice on these social relationships between farmers and nomads, he would not succumb so easily to this subjective evaluation, which usually arises for some reasons hidden completely somewhere else – ordinarily just in neighbourly disagreements and disputes . . . which led to violence and bloodshed in olden times.”*<sup>15</sup> Marek’s characterisation of the Sami was different from most of the other authors of that time, who could have been influenced by nationalism as well as Norwegianization of the Sami. Marek described the Sami as follows, *“Thanks to tough conditions and the complicated life around reindeer herds, far in the mountains and in storms, each of them learn to depend just on himself. They are excellent in bright perception, mobile, spirited and nimble; they can rejoice in the simple trivialities of life and are able to appreciate the beauty of their tough and poor homeland. They show a high degree of intelligence in discussions with friends as well as strangers. They are incapable of quarrel and dispute – they converse with everyone with obvious ease, they smile and have some permanent attraction to the joke – perhaps because of distrust in the meaning of words or even the one they are speaking to.”*<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Marek 2009: 9.

<sup>16</sup> *“Díky drsným podmínkám a složitému životu kolem sobích stád, daleko v horách a v bouři, naučil se každý z nich spoléhat sám na sebe. Vynikají bystrým postřehem, jsou pohybliví, čilí a pohotoví; dovedou se radovat z prostých maličkostí života a dovedou ocenit krásu svého drsného a chudého domova. V diskusích mezi přáteli i s cizími lidmi osvědčují vysokou míru inteligence. Neumí se hádat a přít – a rozprávějí s každým se zjevnou lehkostí, s úsměvem a s jakousi stálou náklonností k žertu – snad z nedůvěry*

## Czechoslovak exotic ethnography

Václav Marek considered himself a convinced communist. After the Second World War, when many Czech citizens fled their homeland in fear of the communist power, Marek returned to Czechoslovakia from Sápmi to help to build the new communist order. And he became an ideal of the “New Socialist person”<sup>17</sup> for the regime in the 1950s. A person uninfluenced by bourgeois academic education, but able to make every effort to manage any kind of work, which, of course, does not detract from Marek’s professional success. The theoretical-methodological basis of former Czechoslovak ethnography derived from Marxist-Leninist ideology, and its institutional base, including the journal *Czechoslovak ethnography*, played an essential role for the character of Marek’s ethnographical work. After the Second World War, Czech ethnography, formerly strongly nationalistically burdened, underwent a transformation influenced by the change of political government in the then Czechoslovakia. The new ethnography, defined by the Soviet school, was defined by the essential topics typical for the discipline: the history of primitive communal society, study of matriarchy and patriarchy, decomposition of the family system, history of the primitive economy, origin and primordial forms of religious ideology or ethnogenesis; these were the topics which were meant to define the new ethnography.<sup>18</sup> For all the Czech ethnographers of that time, an important point was to study the transition of society from matriarchy to patriarchy, which was a crucial moment for the development of society as well as for

*k samotnému významu slov či dokonce k tomu, s nímž hovoří...” Marek 1989: 131.*

<sup>17</sup> For more about the concept see, for example, Cheng 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Nahodil 1950: 74–76.

religious ideology.<sup>19</sup> For example, an article by the Soviet scientist Mark O. Kosven (1957) containing a description of matriarchy and patriarchy as a universal historical phase in the evolution of mankind was translated and published in Czechoslovakia. The basis for the transition from matriarchy to patriarchy was seen by Marxist discourse in the growth of producing powers followed by development of the economy. The characteristic element was a decline in the economic significance of hunting, the reorientation of men to agriculture with use of the plough and stockbreeding, and the separation of the household economy, the domain of women.<sup>20</sup>

In the journal *Czechoslovak ethnography*, the only specialized magazine covering ethnography in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s and founded according to the central Soviet periodical *Soviet ethnography*, Václav Marek was one of the most frequently published authors of exotic ethnography. As a result, Václav Marek was highly regarded as an ethnographer in the 1950s. Unfortunately, Václav Marek became a victim of his own conviction. With the shift of the political situation in the former Czechoslovakia in the 1960s, he ceased to be of interest to the communist leaders, and Marek's life work could not be dusted off until the change of political regime in the 1990s. Thanks to the international political changes in the early 1960s, the gates to the Third World for ethnographic field works of the Czech ethnographers opened up, and so Czech ethnographic interest turned to areas other than northern Europe. The early 1960s also saw the termination of the journal *Czechoslovak ethnography*, and thus the opportunity to publish works focusing on the European area ended. The new management of the discipline in the 1970s resulted in the repeated influencing of ethnology by politics and strengthening self-centred ethnography. As a result,

<sup>19</sup> Nahodil 1953: 56.

<sup>20</sup> Kosven 1957: 7–11.

the brief opportunity to publish articles specializing not only in the Czechoslovak or Slavic area, but rather European and worldwide, ended. Marek's retirement also resulted from his lack of academic education and foreign scientific renown, unlike other Czech ethnographers, who mostly emigrated after the political changes in Czechoslovakia in the 1970s. Another cause lies in a certain ossification of Marek's approach, which remained loyal to Marxist ideology, even though Czechoslovak ethnography started to be influenced by the theories of Anglo-American anthropology in the 1960s.

### Ethnographic life's work of Václav Marek

The basic ethnographic topics taken from the Soviet pattern and introduced in the former Czechoslovakia, as stated above were also reflected in Marek's ethnographic work. The following themes can be included in Marek's crucial ethnographic ones: the traditional, which means pre-Christian, Sami religion, its origin and evolution, as well as the origin and evolution of the traditional Sami livelihood, with reindeer breeding at the fore, the Sami ethnogenesis and the development of the Sami family, highlighting of the degenerative evolution of the status of Sami women in Sami society. One of the more recent topics in Marek's work was the effort to improve the position of the Sami minority in the Scandinavian national states by drawing attention to their poor status.<sup>21</sup>

One of Marek's greatest ethnographic topics was the old Sami religion, its development and the impact of the arrival of Christianity to Sápmi. Marek followed the Marxist instructions on how to

<sup>21</sup> Ovský 2020: 26.

study the origin and the first forms of religious ideology, thus he tried specifically to answer the question “when, from which roots and under which circumstances the religion originated”.<sup>22</sup> Marek included the following in the oldest elements of pre-Christian religion: *sieidi*,<sup>23</sup> ritual passing through a small back door in *goahti*,<sup>24</sup> weather sayings, cult of the sun, dangerousness of the moon, influence of the animals on the state of people’s health, bywords, cult of the birds, position of the celestial bodies, exorcism, shamanism and transformation of a person into bear’s form.<sup>25</sup> In conformity with Marxist discourse, Marek saw the origins of Sami religion in “the circumstances of the social-economic relationships of people”.<sup>26</sup> According to Marek, the basis for the religion was fear, and sacrifice was a necessary precondition for the recovery of society.<sup>27</sup> In the history of religion, Marek defined a process of transformation from a practical action to a ritual act. For instance, in the historical evolution of *sieidi*, the sacrificial place, Marek put the practical aspect in the first place; it was a raised place, from which a hunter could see the prey in the surroundings without being seen. The hunter left the remains of bones and various other detritus in such places, which attracted the prey.<sup>28</sup>

Marek also stated that there was a similar rationalized process of transformation in passing through a small back door in *goahti*. Every time the hunter went outside or returned to *goahti*, he had to wipe his clothes with a small branch to get rid of the power of the forest before entering the home or to get rid of the power of the home before going to hunt. This activity according to Marek

<sup>22</sup> Nahodil 1953: 133.

<sup>23</sup> A Sami cult item, usually a rock with unusual shape.

<sup>24</sup> A Sami hut or tent.

<sup>25</sup> Marek 1955: 357–371.

<sup>26</sup> Nahodil 1953: 133.

<sup>27</sup> Marek 2009: 238.

<sup>28</sup> Marek 1955: 357.

led to the creation of a small back door in the *goahti*, which was so small that the hunter in the old days<sup>29</sup> had to squeeze through it and wipe away all the power stuck on him this way.<sup>30</sup> Marek also wrote about *noaidi*, the Sami “shaman”, and their main attribute, the shamanic magical drum. The elite status of the *noaidit*, according to Marek, came with the increase of the social and cultural-economic differentiation and the disruption of the social structures, which necessarily led to a feeling of powerlessness and fear. For *noaidi*’s specialization, the change of sustenance, namely the transition from the deer hunting to reindeer breeding, was important.<sup>31</sup> Apart from *noaidi*, Marek also focused on his drum, its origins and application. Originally, according to Marek, the drum was only a musical instrument<sup>32</sup> or it served for signalling.<sup>33</sup> Marek’s thesis repeated once again the transformation of the original practical activity into a religion over the course of time. The bear feast “*vaerro*” underwent a similar transition as well. This custom of offering a sacrifice developed from a practice when the hunters who killed game far from home took only the best meat and left the rest.<sup>34</sup>

In the subject of history of the primitive economy, Marek analysed the traditional method of the Sami livelihood, the breeding of reindeer, which had an essential influence on the character of the

<sup>29</sup> Marek used this term for a period of time of universal social balance, where people lived in communities with reciprocal respect. Due to the absence of specialization, the absence of hierarchy is characteristic for this time. Magic was also shared with everyone, it was not a monopoly of the “shaman”. Society was not divided, men and women looked after the hunt and household equally and no taboos, religious orders and prohibitions existed.

<sup>30</sup> Marek 1955: 360.

<sup>31</sup> Marek 2009: 231.

<sup>32</sup> Marek 2009: 212.

<sup>33</sup> Marek 20019: 214.

<sup>34</sup> Marek 2009: 220.



Sami society. Marek described Sami history pointing towards the economic behaviour and sustenance in the Komsa culture, focusing on the seal and walrus hunt in winter and the reindeer hunt in summer.<sup>35</sup> According to Marek, the key factor for the Sami society was the domestication of reindeer calf, which was later used as a lure reindeer,<sup>36</sup> the fundament for the breeding of reindeer.

Marek also wrote about the origins of material culture. Marek, for instance, connected skis, an important Sami requisite for moving in snow with the breeding of reindeer.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, he examined the cargo reindeer saddle, and also milk and milking of reindeer in order to prepare sour home-made cheese and butter.<sup>38</sup> He focused on another form of livelihood, which was trapping. He described a wolverine trap, fox trap, traps for hares, martens, grouse, cranes and ptarmigans<sup>39</sup> or the so-called hellish wolverine trap.<sup>40</sup> Marek also described fishing as an important source of food. However, in Marek's opinion fishing probably originated from hunting for small animals, and for a long time it was only a secondary means of sustenance, mainly for women, children and old men.<sup>41</sup> Regarding fishing, Marek described the fishing equipment, such as harpoon, fishing boat and fishing net.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, he wrote about the marginal Sami livelihood of the old days – agriculture, especially breeding of goats and sheep, growing of oat, rye, barely, hemp and flax for knitting nets and ropes, milling of flour and production of bread.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Marek 1963: 18–19.

<sup>36</sup> Marek 1963: 36.

<sup>37</sup> Marek 1963: 177.

<sup>38</sup> Marek 1963: 210–226.

<sup>39</sup> Marek 1963: 72–74.

<sup>40</sup> Marek 1989: 87.

<sup>41</sup> Marek 1963: 114.

<sup>42</sup> Marek 1963: 77–101.

<sup>43</sup> Marek 1989: 245–254.

From the point of view of the evolutionary development of society, namely the transition to matriarchy and further to patriarchy caused by the development of the economy, Marek looked at the status of women in the Sami society too. He focused on the role and participation of women in the customs and traditions, but talked also about women in the Sami fairy tales, women's position in the society and their influence. Marek detected some historical changes in the status of women in the Sami society. Marek attributed to women the first place in many spheres, for example in the production of the oldest specific fishing equipment<sup>44</sup> and, last but not least, it was a woman who domesticated reindeer.<sup>45</sup> Marek supported the privileged status of women in the Sami society by analysing the Sami religion. He showed that in the old times, many forest beings existed as woman spirits. With the introduction of reindeer breeding, however, according to Marek the position of women in the household was weakened.<sup>46</sup> The decline of women from the strong position of forest beings to the protection of women during menstruation was, from Marek's point of view, a consequence of economic and social changes, particularly with the introduction of reindeer breeding.<sup>47</sup>

Another significant topic of Marek's work was the change of the social and cultural life of the Sami leading to the inferior position of the Sami in the national states. This is not a topic typical for the 1950s, but it is a more recent topic, developed during the 1960s with regard to ethnographical research in Africa. In the wider political context it can be seen as the ethnographic application of the Soviet doctrine regarding the promotion of ethnic-national self-awareness and the promotion of political independence from

<sup>44</sup> Marek 1969: 28.

<sup>45</sup> Marek 1969: 129

<sup>46</sup> Marek 1959: 269.

<sup>47</sup> Marek 1959: 270.

the western imperial states. Marek wrote wholly about the “denationalization of the Lapps”.<sup>48</sup> According to him, it was an unequal relationship, which he saw in the former coexistence of the thirty-thousand group of the Sami and the fifteen million Norwegians, Swedes and Finns. As the contemporary ethnic discourse understood ethnicity as non-stratified identification, the cultural and ethnic differences were horizontal,<sup>49</sup> Marek connected ethnicity with a class evaluation, where class differences are, of course, vertical. The Sami occupied the lowest rung on the social ladder because they were identified (and they identified themselves too) as the Sami.<sup>50</sup> “Lapps are really often ashamed of their speech, their folk costume, their culture and their nation – however only as a consequence of rude offences and ridicule.”<sup>51</sup> The crucial problem for the Sami nature, culture and society, according to Marek, was the introduction of industry to the traditional Sami pasture areas. He primarily criticized the building of large mines, steelworks, large paper mills and huge dams, and the best Sami land was taken without any debate with the Sami, “without compensation and apology”.<sup>52</sup> The building of a dam on the downstream part of Altaelva in northern Norway is a typical modern example.<sup>53</sup> The change in the use of reindeer had a negative

<sup>48</sup> Marek 1969: 278.

<sup>49</sup> Moreman 2016: 589.

<sup>50</sup> Ovský 2020: 27.

<sup>51</sup> “*Laponci se často skutečně stydí za svou řeč, za svůj lidový kroj, za svou kulturu i za svůj národ – teprve však v důsledku hrubých urážek a posměchu.*” Marek 1989: 168.

<sup>52</sup> Marek 1989: 163.

<sup>53</sup> One of the most significant events in the formation of the modern Sami ethnic identity was the damming of the Alta River, in the heart of the Sami homeland, the result of a decision first made by the Norwegian energy company NVE in 1968. Building should have started in the middle of 1979, but it was prevented by a crowd of Sami who blocked the road and stopped the construction machines entering. After three

influence on the character of the Sami society. Marek saw the introduction of extensive breeding of reindeer, which started before the Second World War and continued during the second half of the 1900s, as destructive for the Sami society. Marek criticized the interventions of the national states in the Sami way of reindeer breeding, especially the dissolution of a large number of small farmsteads, Sami or Swedish, for alleged incompetence in running them under the new conditions, which affected mainly the Sami.<sup>54</sup> According to Marek the original democratic and egalitarian society of reindeer nomads was increasingly disintegrating, when “due to the governmental interventions, a society of rich owners of huge herds and against them a class of the poorest proletarians was created in Scandinavia”.<sup>55</sup>

Another ethnographical topic in Marek’s work, also derived from the Soviet Marxist ethnography, was the ethnogenesis of the Sami, thus its origins and evolution, which Marek tried to explain by means of anthropological analysis. In the field of anthropology of the Sami, which he understood, according to the Soviet paradigm, in strictly biological terms. Marek pointed out the high occurrence of blood type A2 in the Sami population. Marek himself carried out a measurement of the Sami population around the Norwegian-Swedish border, which he considered a “pure-blooded Lappish settlement”.<sup>56</sup> Through this he defended the historical legitimacy of the Sami to their land and fought against the nationalistic opinions ascribing Mongolian origin to the Sami. From the measured

years it was decided by the government that the building would continue, and many Sami were sentenced, but it showed the Sami that they could join together, which led not only to the recognition of the Sami people as indigenous to the region but also to the establishment of a Sami parliament in Norway in 1987 (Kent 2018: 68).

<sup>54</sup> Marek 1989: 121.

<sup>55</sup> Marek 1989: 121.

<sup>56</sup> Marek 1989: 38.

figures and through the analysis of DNA and enzyme systems, Marek deduced that “the Lapps do not have anything in common with the Mongolians and are not similar to any other arctic nation, such as the Eskimos”.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, Marek sought other evidence for the indigenoussness of the Sami through a study of the origins of the Sami culture. Marek concluded with a very forceful description of the inception of the Komsa culture, which he understood as the original culture in the area. The Komsa culture had its origin nowhere else, and it later spread from the place of its origin in all directions. To the south-west, along the seacoast, to the south and directly to the east to the Kola Peninsula and further over the Ural Mountains, together with the Uralic tribes, and later, with the first ceramics, to the south-west, at the time when there were *not*, “any Finnish tribes”.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, Marek clearly argued against the opinion that the Komsa culture was “only an episode in the history of the north” and that the Komsa culture, “is not even a true culture and not an even episode, but only an accidental relic of wandering hunters”.<sup>59</sup>

## Conclusion

The evaluation of Marek’s ethnographic work from the present day is complicated. The theoretical and methodological principles used by Marek were reasonable during the 1950s in Czechoslovakia (in the context of the political situation, in reality the only possible ones), but in the broader context of the European Ethnology or

<sup>57</sup> “Laponci nemají tedy nic společného s Mongoly a nepodobají se také žádným jiným arktickým národům, jako Eskymákům.” Marek 1989: 40.

<sup>58</sup> Marek 1989: 42.

<sup>59</sup> Marek 1969: 8.

even Anglo-American anthropology of the time, it was a relatively obsolete approach. On the other hand, Marek presented a different view of Sami culture than was common in “western” anthropology. An example is his systematic research into the position of women in Sami society. Václav Marek looked at the Sami minority mostly from the point of view of the historical materialism of Marxist-Leninist ideology. This approach means the reduction of history to a linear development as well as a limited perspective of any social and cultural changes explained by economic factors and production relations. The basic ethnographic topics copied from the Soviet model were also reflected in Marek’s ethnographic work. Marek’s most crucial ethnographic themes include the traditional Sami religion, its origin and evolution, as well as the origin and evolution of the traditional Sami livelihood, with reindeer breeding at the fore, the Sami ethnogenesis and the development of the Sami family, highlighting the degenerative evolution of the status of Sami women in Sami society.

The later articles written during the 1960s and 1980s obviously used the paradigm of the Swedish ethnology of Sigurd Erixon, who realized that the study of the European terrain is not possible without an analysis of the diffusion of culture elements,<sup>60</sup> as it was for example, in Marek’s opinion, with the spread of the Komsa culture, the original culture from the Sami area. Another more recent topic in Marek’s work was the effort to improve the position of the Sami minority in the Scandinavian national states through a defence of the Sami distinctiveness, independence and national self-consciousness. For all his life, Marek remained in the shadow of his ethnographic contemporaries in Czechoslovakia. However, at least for his deep expert knowledge of the Sami culture and his enthusiasm for a vigorous and unflinching defence of the Sami minority, he deserves an unquestionable place not only in the

<sup>60</sup> Woitsch 2017: 225.

history of the Czech ethnography, but also in European Ethnology. Marek's legacy does not lie only in the tens of expert articles and many hundreds of photographs left by him, but also in the ethnographical sense itself, which is an active attempt at a defence and preservation of cultural heterogeneity and independence of ethnic minorities.

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# Václav Marek, novelist

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Bohumil Fořt and Michal Kovář

Marek wrote three thematically interconnected novels and several short stories. This chapter deals with his *Trilogy*.

The *Trilogy* consists of three prose works, one published, two unpublished: *Nomads of Eternal Desire* (*Kočovníci věčné touhy*; published in 1972 by Blok in Brno) with the two subtitles – *Ancient Times Jeer* and *Stories from the Sami Past* –, *Swan Song* (*Labutí píseň*; written 1982, rejected for publishing 1983) and its shortened version *Migrating Birds in a Storm* (*Tažní ptáci v bouři*; last edition 1993), and *Two Worlds* (*Dva světy*; last edition in 1992). The plots of all three novels are set in the Hattfjelldal community, specifically in Susendalen, in south Sápmi, which Marek knew very well.

Marek's fiction apparently reflects the Sami oral literature, which Marek knew in detail and drew inspiration from. He used themes in his work that he had heard from his Sami friends. He commented on his inspiration on the typewritten manuscript entitled *Ancient time's jeer* [i.e. the earlier title of *Nomads of Eternal Desire*, cf. the following footnote]: *A short summary*:<sup>1</sup> “As to the material for my

<sup>1</sup> The original text of *Nomads of Eternal Desire* was abridged by its editors and this emendation authorized by the author (cf. a letter from Blok

*book Ancient time's jeer, I have collected it among the local folks, some details are from regional magazines (Helgelands Arbeiderblad, Nordlands Folkeblad etc.) and from the municipal and parish archives in Hattfjelldal and Mosjøen. Some parallels and narrations are taken from Johan Ingebrigtsen Fagerbakken's books Storjorden Hattfjelldalens bebyggelse m. m. (Mosjøen: Johnsens Aksidenstrykkeri 1923) and Bidrag til finnernes bygdehistorie og etnografi I. hefte. Hattfjelldalens finner (Oslo: Nordnorske samlinger utgitt av Etnografisk museum II. 1934). [...] The narration of Ancient time's jeer represents a narrowed epic view of a small Lappish nation's fate and its national destiny exemplified by several families living in a little valley in northern Norway at the turn of the 18th and 19th century along with memories of the past and dark perspectives of the coming decade and future of these people. So it indirectly describes the destiny of small nations and minorities and has a somewhat general validity, even though individual conditions may differ. [...] During the drastic scenes when people cannot be stopped by anything, they live through and discuss the 'cruel natural law' in the harsh north where an old Viking legal system and royal decrees written on old parchments had supposedly been applied in the past, but where the life itself has always taken its own path.*

*It also lightly touches on the origin of the key problem of the Lappish nation – denationalization of women and the fatal disintegration of Lappish community in its deepest, biological foundation, which had troubled no one back then and had not been attributed such importance as it has nowadays. Yet even then the two main characters capitulate in the end because they have lost their direction and faith. An intelligent reader surely notices that their accidental death is in fact a suicide,*

*publishing house from 16 June 1971 and Marek's letter to Dr. Jan Žáček or "Jenda" from 3 September 1971). Originally, as a variant from the years 1949–1950, the novel had been named *People and Forests*, but later Marek rewrote it and named it *Ancient Times Jeer*, only to rename it again after a request from his publisher as *Nomads of Eternal Desire*.*

*a result of their quiet despair. [...] I have tried hard to keep to the historical facts and do not always strictly respect the dramatic perfection of the characters. [...] Finally I would like to mention that I did not write this book out of boredom but rather to contribute to an explanation of the minority problem and to help my courageous friends up in the north as much as I can and am able to.”*

In terms of a generic classification of the texts, they could, within the general genre of novel, oscillate between saga, chronicle, historical novel, realist novel, and ethnographic novel – all these genre and sub-genre specificities when blended together result in the unique meaning build of the *Trilogy*.<sup>2</sup>

Semantically speaking the novels axiomatically share various topics and motifs that co-constitute their theme, the main one being the encounter of the old and traditional and the new and imposed, with the subsidiary ones being the everyday life, work, virtues and rituals of the Sami people and of newcomers (farmers, executives, priests...), religious, social and moral structures and values of both groups, their families and particular fates and lives, their views of crime and punishment, love and the erotic, etc.

The narration, which drives the plot, comes mainly from a narrator, with characters contributing an episodic narrative on occasion. In terms of general narrative structure all these novels use a Diomedic distribution for the narration of the (Er-form) narrator and characters (Ich-form). This form of distribution traditionally divides authentication power between the objective

<sup>2</sup> Such a blend is also typical for the Nordic ruralism that had a great influence in Czechoslovakia, especially in 1930s (cf. for example the significant Czech ruralist Josef Knap (1900–1973) and his affinity to the work of Selma Lagerlöf). Most likely Marek followed the pattern of Norwegian writers such as Olav Duun, Johan Falkberget, Trygve Gulbrandsen, but also Tarjei Vesaas (works by these authors were extensively translated to Czech), in terms of particular features linked to the genre, form and ethos.

and omniscient narrator and limited-knowledge, subjective characters, common for (not only) realist novels.

Generally speaking, in addition to the plausible, consistent and comprehensible narration, it is the description that plays a crucial role in the final authentic design of the fictional world represented here. In terms of realist narratives, description, as a *poietic* tool, has two main dimensions – as a tool substantially contributing to the representation of both characters and their milieus.

The representation of fictional minds, an inevitable quality of a novel, primarily focuses on the description of the minds and inner lives of the characters and uses various (conventionally based) techniques in order to fulfil this aim. These techniques and strategies, usually in the form of the aforementioned blend, encompass a direct definition (description) of the characters' minds, and an indirect representation (dialogues, (inner) monologues, represented and narrated (free indirect discourse) and acting). However, in terms of realist novels in general and Marek's novel in particular, with their tendency towards objectivity, description of fictional minds plays a somewhat auxiliary, supportive role in the overall authentication design of the given fictional worlds.

It is the detailed description of milieus that make up an important part of the authentication of the world. So descriptions of nature (landscapes, weather, natural cycles and processes) are complemented by descriptions of the everyday life and work of Sami people and of newcomers, nomadic and farming lifestyles, the building of permanent houses and farms and of shelters (*kota*, *goahti*), food preparation and conservation in both societies, cattle keeping, reindeer herding, deer marking, slaughtering deer, hunting wolves, foxes, wolverines, hares, grouse, fish, farming, trading, moonshining, rituals of various types: religious, magic, courting, proposal, wedding, religious beliefs and visions, legends, tribal myths, tribal and family allegorical songs and also of documents, rules and laws. As the number of motifs and topics described in

the novels, as well as the extent of the descriptions, suggest, the fictional worlds based on the texts of the novels are strongly authenticated (there is a richness of inner authentication), however, the worlds presented are also strongly associated, connected through their reference to the actual world (outer authentication). These references are various and extensive; they refer to actually existing landscapes, places, events, people (or better, their fictional counterparts), are complemented by Macaronic language (Sami, Norwegian, Swedish) and by references to (actual existing historical) documents and by authentic photographs, and even notes and glossaries of terms. In these cases fictional and actual references overlap, and the documentary function of the fictional text strongly contributes to the overall authentication of the world.

Last but not least, it should be mentioned that in terms of the *Trilogy*, the role of narrative commentaries is connected with the role of descriptions. In particular, the novels are full of explanatory and interpretative commentaries which interrupt, slow and sometimes stop the flow of the action/plot and are direct interventions of the narrator taking on the explanatory (interpretative) function and making it dominant. This common rhetoric form (*exegesis*) of a narrative commentary substantially contributes to the degree of authentication of the narrative texts in question.

Let us now focus in more detail on the similarities and dissimilarities of all three novels of the *Trilogy*. *Nomads of Eternal Desire* takes place in Sápmi and starts at the beginning of the 19th century and continues to the end of the century.

The basic plot of the first novel is as follows: Sami nomads – the old Pól Sjursen, his wife Ristyn and their three sons Jouna, Sjur and Oula<sup>3</sup> – are the protagonists. This family has been grazing

<sup>3</sup> Oula is a somewhat marginal protagonist, even though Marek had obviously used a grandfather of his friend and storyteller Gunhild Børgefjell as the model for him. It is just her sons with whom the time



its reindeer herds in the Susna River valley since time immemorial. Because their great herds need vast pastures, this family is perceived by other Sami as the owners of all neighbouring fields. As the most experienced herdsman and a *noaidi*, the old Pól plays the role of a community leader. He determines when it is necessary to move to the Swedish lowlands for the winter, he is the one who must be asked before anyone can be allotted pastures for reindeer herds, or a place to build a house etc.

In the very first chapter Pól's oldest son has a long monologue about the future of the Sami, reindeer and Sápmi against the background of as-yet only anticipated changes. Then other characters are introduced and afterwards we witness a description of the Sami collective winter passage to Sweden. When they return in spring, the herdsmen find out that their camps and larders have been plundered. It is obvious that the Ruggfinn, the Forest Finn Ginger Jó, must be the culprit. Everyone soon resigns themselves to the situation, just hoping the thief would eventually go away. But when the Ginger Jó steals a coffer full of silver from Lars, the leader of the Sami from the Swedish side of the mountains, it

of reindeer nomadism in Susendalen ends. Probably it was just these three brothers who had the same fate as the sons of Pól and Ristyn – childlessness and death – that Marek had used as models for his novel. The youngest one, Ole, left the valley in middle age and became a craftsman. The real name of Gunhild's father was Ole Pälseen. Then both Oles, Gunhild's father and her son, could be models for Oula. Oula's wedding is also used as a manifestation of the decline of the Sami family, and the story is an example of Marek's inspiration by oral tradition. Oula's father-in-law buys a bottle of hard spirit from Norwegian craftsmen on his way from the wedding party. The craftsmen are returning home from the valley where they were mending a farm belonging to a Norwegian farmer Janssen. But instead of spirits, the bottle contains hydrochloric acid used by tinsmiths to clean welds and the old Omma, father of Kaisa, dies after drinking it (cf. the tale "The Hard Life" in Marek's collection of Sami oral tradition, Marek 2000: 240–241).

cannot be taken as a theft out of hunger anymore. And when he is later caught while stealing from a larder, now again on the Norwegian side, four Sami lads including the two Pól's sons set out to catch the Ginger Jó. They shoot him even though he is unarmed. Marek was told this story (cf. the story about the Finnish jump waterfall, Marek 2000: 245–246), but gave it a new meaning by incorporating it into his novel.

In general, the novel mediates primarily the history of one extended family and episodically also the history of one farming family (two brothers and one sister) – in addition, some other characters and their families are portrayed here, as is their milieu. The main thematic-plot lines can be described as follows:

- i. old and traditional vs. new and imposed (farmers)
- ii. crime and punishment.

The first theme-plot line should be seen as a broad and complex conglomerate of action and thought. The line practically follows the contrast between the Sami people and the newcomers moving to Sápmi. The differences are shown not only in their everyday lives, working habits, rituals and virtues, but also attitudes, morality, and values. Therefore, the main contrastive points or conflict knots important for the whole design of the fictional world provided can be seen as follows:

Relationships with nature. Whereas Sami people live in harmony with nature, follow its annual cycles, take from it in moderation and thankfully worship its generosity, considering it to be their mother, the newcomers to a lesser or greater degree exploit natural resources (mainly wood), with some thoughtlessly taking from it, changing and ruining the natural landscape and thus the whole environment.

Occupation. Following the migrating heritage of their predecessors, the Sami people are traditionally reindeer herders, hunters and people of “freedom and nature”. The newcomers, on

the contrary, settle down as farmers, land owners, landlords, and tenants. However, they also become a part of the newly spreading and colonizing state authority, establishing its own power. They are also notaries, stewards, clerks, policemen, etc.

Faith and religion. The traditional doctrine of pantheism followed by the Sami people sees gods as divine counterparts of people and animals, and places of worship and sacrifice spread out in nature. This is confronted by Christianity, the monotheistic religion of the incoming missionaries and colonists, who built up sterile chapels and churches, far removed from nature and people.

In addition, the newcomers express, in the view of the Sami people, incomprehensible wishes and commands through missionaries supported by the state. This contrast in faith and religious issues of both groups can also be viewed at the level of various rituals that both sides undertake, simply due to the fact that on both sides everyday rituals are intertwined with everyday beliefs and religious practice. Therefore another level of contrast can be seen in terms of courting and wedding rituals and ceremonies.

Let us now exemplify the above mentioned contrastive points through two passages taken directly from *Nomads of Eternal Desire*. The first example describes the ritualized hunting of a bear by the Sami people. The bear is personalized and the whole scene is, from the beginning, designed as a performance: the hunters do not go hunting, they throw a party instead. They call the male bear “uncle” and “old man”, and they do not hunt him with a spear but “invite him to a party”. In addition, the feast following the hunt is set as a continuation of the party with performances of particular scenes from the previous hunt. The way in which the incoming colonizers take hunting and cutting down trees as a part of their everyday rational exploitation of the world, shooting and putting them down as second-rate conquered objects, is in stark contrast with the mythical view of the original inhabitants.

The second example directly refers to the religious contrast of both sides, and is explicitly articulated by one of the most traditional Sami people, the old Pól, who serves the community as a magician. Pól addresses a Christian priest with the following words, “*We have been calmly living under the care of our gods for centuries, your god takes care only of you, not of us. He is not here, does not come to us, to the mountains, but wants us to come to him, to his churches and chapels. We have been trying to find him, but we have never found him and never will.*”<sup>4</sup> This address from the mouth of a Sami magician clearly sets out the main religious difference between the co-existing groups of people.

In this particular novel the “crime and punishment” theme-plot line is firmly bound up with the Sami people’s traditional society’s way of living. “The case of Ginger JÓ”, as we can call the line, runs like a leitmotif through the whole novel. Pól’s sons and other young men track, hunt and ultimately kill JÓ, a “Viking” intruder and thief in the society. Consequently, during the course of the novel all the murderers die of different natural (!) causes. The story follows the mythical beliefs of the community: the mother of the family, immediately after Jo’s murder, predicts the boy is a disaster, because “evil breeds evil”:

*“Oi, oi! Stupid thing’ve done my boys!  
Yoo, hoo – bad things came and they did yet miss them.  
Vuolaa, vuolaa! Man not stopped the fate.  
Not changed the pace of things.  
And not escaped hell.  
Stupid thing’ve done my boys.  
Oi, oi. Vuolaa, vuolla!  
The revenge belongs to gods.  
Evil by evil gods pay.*

<sup>4</sup> Marek 1972: 87.

*So is the life in the mountains.  
That's the slimy fate.  
Vuolaa, vuolla!  
My boys end up bad...<sup>5</sup>*

It is obvious that human fate is linked to their deeds and also to Mother Nature: the world is a system constituting a unity between people, nature, and gods. Myth and life and worlds create one complex meaningful unit.

Nevertheless, another (albeit minor) “crime and punishment” line can be found in the novel *Nomads of Eternal Desire*, this time encompassing both groups of inhabitants and interconnecting them. It is the story of a family of farmers-newcomers consisting of two brothers and a sister (Ola, Arild and Maren Nordman):<sup>6</sup> The Sami people ask the gods to get rid of the new farming family, which embodies the evil element which can threaten the original world. The request is formulated as a spell cast on the family in the form of a song performed by the magician, who asks the gods to kill the blasphemers (Christians) and to make an example of them that others would not like to follow. Ultimately, the brothers die in an avalanche, and the sister freezes in the woods when the farm burns down:

<sup>5</sup> Marek 1972: 79.

<sup>6</sup> “According to the folktales prevailing in the region, these Nordmans were three siblings. Their names were Hans and Ole, the name of their sister is unknown. I changed the older brother into the more typical Ole and named the second one Arild. But there are other versions about these people as well. The Hattfjelldal archive does not mention them though. The foundations of their farm, which had to be burned down according to the oldest locals, were still partly visible in the 1930s.” (A typewritten paper *Notes to the letter of introduction for the novel V. Marek*: Ancient Times Jeer. 29 September 1970.)

*“The corpses of the two brothers, partially eaten by wolverines and foxes and heavily decomposed, were accidentally discovered by a shepherd at the beginning of the summer. According to the chapel book record they were buried on 22 June 1822...”*<sup>7</sup>

*“Severe winds, which at the beginning flung snowflakes and floating ice into the eyes of the girl and into her dying face, kept tossing layer after layer of her white tomb at the end, covering her bitter fate.*

*In the end, they won!*

*The Great Biegga stood with them.*

*The old magician did not lie.*

*Again, they succeeded in stopping the pace of history and cheated time. For a week then they kept making sacrifices around the river and in the mountains in order to thank the god of wind and winter storms for his tremendous help.”*<sup>8</sup>

These descriptions, the first one in the form of a semi-official report and the second in the form of a semi-authentic recording, draw our attention to the formal features of the novel. As has been already stated, the novel is dominated by the authentication function, which places the text close to factual literary production. Within this strongly semi-factual environment fictional characters gain strong plausibility, and the whole blend of fictional and semi-factual bring the novel close to the genre of historical realist fiction.

The majority of that mentioned above also applies fully to the second, unpublished novel of the *Trilogy*, *Migrating Birds in a Storm* or *Swan Song* (the manuscript of *Swan Song* was submitted to the publishing house Československý spisovatel in 1982 and rejected in 1983; *Migrating Birds in a Storm* is a revised and shortened version of *Swan Song*, the last corrections in the manuscript come

<sup>7</sup> Marek 1972: 236.

<sup>8</sup> Marek 1972: 237.

from 1993; the author had removed some passages from the first version, mainly the lyrical descriptions of nature or the side plots, for example the story of a wolf hunt).

The second novel of the *Trilogy* describes the adventures of Gotar and his relatives and neighbours and takes place in the 1920s and 1930s. It is connected to the previous novel *Nomads of Eternal Desire* through certain characters. Generally speaking, the novel focuses on three main topics:

- i. The portrayal of the everyday working life of the Sami people. The everyday life of deer herders following the change of seasons and natural laws and processes – everything is subordinated to the pace of nature and described in detail in the novel.
- ii. The description of working processes, setting traps, fishing, hunting, food preparation, social and religious rituals. A thorough description of the difference between young men's and women's lives, men's and women's social roles and obligations, courting, eroticism, sexuality, and emancipation is part and parcel of this topic. In addition, the love-story between Gotar and Ossi works as an important leitmotif of the story.
- iii. The encounter of the old and new, traditional and modern, natural and supernatural, common sense and superstition. Another important leitmotif follows the growing tension between the Sami people and newcomers (Norwegian and Swedish farmers).

Generally speaking, in terms of motifs *Migrating Birds in a Storm* or *Swan Song* in many ways follows on from the previous novel, *Nomads of Eternal Desire*.<sup>9</sup> The novel portrays encounters between

<sup>9</sup> Unlike in his previous novel, although Marek does not have to depend on stories and narrations to such an extent, he draws on his own experience.



traditional Sami people and newcomers, living in and with nature versus using and exploiting it, herding reindeer versus farming and trading, sticking to traditional religious feelings and rituals versus Christianity. However, more personal tensions appear: The Sami's old rights vs. newcomers' claims of land, the Sami people are treated as second rate people in the face of the law (new fees and taxes are being introduced), and they are humiliated on the most personal level.

A telling example of this humiliation is embodied in the story of the "crime and punishment" of Gotar, the protagonist of the novel. This theme-plot line also follows one of the main theme-plot lines of the previous novel, however it also substantially differs from it. Unlike in the previous case, this time a member of the Sami community is accused by the newcomers of casting a spell on them. Nevertheless, in this case singing traditional songs (*juoigus*) is mistaken for witchcraft. Consequently Gotar is hunted down like an animal, caught, examined by a psychiatrist and finally declared sane and not guilty and released. But after a minor incident with one of the clerks, he becomes scared of further humiliation, runs away again and ultimately dies on his own of hunger and exhaustion.

In a typewritten unsupercribed paper inserted in the manuscript Marek stated, "My second book about Laplanders [...] was meant to depict the Susna Valley two or three generations later, at the time when all these details [of the original national individuality] have already disappeared. I wanted to depict the tragedy of this loss – quietly and without big words. [...] When I parted from my friend [in 1948], whose name in this book is Isar [probably Lars Børgefjell, born 1914], he was already forty. We laughed. 'Take it easy boy – and hold on!' 'Sure. No danger here,' Isar shrugged me off. 'You know, one lonely Finn [i.e. a Sami] does not do much damage in the mountains...' These are memorable and historical words actually said on behalf of the whole Lappish nation. There was never any actual reason to act according to any laws – against the Lappish minority in Lapland."

In several dialogues we also encounter a Swedish Sami student who tries to find new ways for survival of Sami. Here Marek is possibly describing his long-time friend, the sociologist Erik Nilsson-Mankok. Moreover, in the character of Gotar Marek brings to life an old legend about Djäkne.<sup>10</sup>

As previously noted, the manuscript of *Swan Song* was rejected for publication. In fact Marek's archive contains a letter by the author (dated 24 January 1983) in which he tries to convince the publisher to revise the negative decision. Fortunately, the letter Václav Marek sends to the publisher also reveals the reasons for the publisher's rejection of the manuscript thus allowing us to see the whole story. Václav Marek's practical arguments supporting the publication of the book display his conviction that the book would be, like the previous one, well received by the readers:

*"Nevertheless, after all you arguments, I am more and more convinced that the readers would appreciate my book. In addition, the first published volume was sold out within weeks.<sup>[11]</sup> So, out of all the reasons you gave me, I cannot comprehend the real ones that lead you to rejection of my work."*

Nevertheless, another part of the argumentation goes totally beyond the book and its qualities as such and uses the author's political beliefs and deeds in order to support the book's publication. Initially Marek connects his political beliefs with the book's qualities, *"Also your opinion about my book being sentimental does not correspond with reality. You must have overlooked the fact that I am a diligent proletarian, and therefore the suggested 'sentimentality' is not a quality of mine"*, he then refers purely to his political devotion, *"I am a diligent proletarian, and in 1948 I returned to Czechoslovakia"* (the above quoted letter).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. a story "Djäkne – a Sami schoolboy", Marek 2000: 234–240. Erik Nilsson-Mankok himself told this legend.

<sup>11</sup> The print run was 5000 copies.

*Two Worlds*, the last volume of the *Trilogy*, can only be assigned an approximate date of publication based on the fact that the manuscript's last corrections were made in 1992. Unlike the two previous volumes of the *Trilogy*, the plot-line of *Two Worlds* is divided into two parts with a gap of some thirty years between them: probably the 1910s and then post-war.

The title *Two Worlds* not only refers directly to Václav Marek's essential leitmotif in all three books, i.e., to the difference between the old world of the Sami people, their lives and traditions, and the world of the new colonizers and their lifestyle. However, in addition to this direct reference, two worlds also appear in *Two Worlds* in a metaphoric way: as an unequal relationship between Annok and Zuzana. The relationship is unequal from the very start due to the fact that they belong to different ethnicities, lifestyles, classes... worlds. Whereas Zuzana is the daughter of a Norwegian farmer, Annok represents the transitional generation of the Sami people, or the Sami people who are slowly but surely leaving their tough lifestyle of semi-nomadic reindeer herding and, forced by increasing poverty, keep changing their lifestyle and partly settle down on their farms. Zuzana first rejects Annok's proposal, but later, having realized that the prince she had been waiting for will not arrive, she ultimately agrees and marries him. They live a normal farming life and start a family; ultimately, Annok completely abandons the idea of reindeer herding, sells his herd to his relatives (known from previous books of the *Trilogy*), and the only connection with his original or previous lifestyle remains his ability to hunt and maintain his passion for hunting. He understands nature and talks and listens to it: he talks to "friendly" jays and he also considers birds to be messengers – for example a brambling announces someone's death.

As previously mentioned, apart from the symbolic or allegoric meaning of *Two Worlds* with regard to Annok and Zuzana's relationship, two worlds refer to the futile battle that Annok, and

in his embodiment the whole traditional nation of the Sami people and their lifestyle, fights against the outside world: both their children die – there is no traditional future, no new soldiers on their side! The world around them keeps changing. Not only in terms of natural resources being exploited and more and more land being claimed by wealthy people and used for speculation, but also, and most importantly, people like them are pushed to the edges of the newly developing society, considered dirty, to have an unpleasant odour, savage, and are treated accordingly. They are exploited and deprived of their rights. In addition, in order to describe the hopelessness of the deteriorating world, the author allows the Sami people to collaborate first with farmers (“Vikings”, Norwegians, Swedes) and, in turn, after the thirty-year break in the plot, he then allows the farmers to collaborate with the Nazis and Germans, which has a serious destructive, as well as moral impact on the lives of the whole (mixed) community.

However, in order to follow the symbolic meaning of *Two Worlds*, let us conclude this part with another reference to Annok and Zuzana’s relationship.

Some thirty years after Zuzana dies, Annok offers shelter to a single mother with a child (whose father was a German soldier), yet a mere few years later they both leave him for a better life and he remains alone once again. This highly symbolic moment links the very end of the *Trilogy* to the previous volumes. The phenomenon of a single mother plays an important symbolic role in the previous volumes: the children of single mothers are viewed as hope for the future of a traditional society by the Sami people, yet are treated as unwelcome bastards by the new society. The fact that the single mother and her child leave Annok and he remains alone symbolically shows that the children, the only hope for the continuation of the tradition, want something different from this tradition, spelling the end of the original community and their lifestyle and values.

It is a matter of fact that Václav Marek's *Trilogy* represents a rather unique work in Czech literature and culture. From a formal point of view it can be classified as a realist historical novel encompassing some qualities of other genres and sub-genres. Within this general framework, semantically speaking, slight undertones of an idealistic vision of traditional people, sentimental symbolism of change, and personal longing for the good old days can be detected. Nevertheless, regardless of the novels' generic and semantic features it is their informational/educational dimension that is especially important, as this brings them close to factual literature. This dimension, common only for some realist novels, makes the novels a highly authentic and valuable source of the epistemological function, which is complemented by narrative and poetic functions. And this fact demarcates the very core of the value of the *Trilogy*.

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<sup>1</sup> This causerie might have been written by Václav Marek's namesake (sometimes using also the pennames Václav A. Marek, Redaktor, redaktor Marek, Marek-Orděncov or Alexandr Orděncov), who was publishing concurrently in *Sadské noviny* causeries, feuilletons, essays, poems and short stories, often perhaps imitating Marek's style and using similar themes and motives.



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# Appendix I

## Václav Marek's autobiography I ("Životopis k žádosti Václava Marka" [Biography for Václav Marek's application], s.a.)

I was born on 5 March 1908 in the town of Sadská. My father was a worker in a brewery. When he was in France collecting practical experiences, he was unemployed for a while and so joined the foreign legion there. After he returned home, he arranged his own small shop selling fabrics in Sadská. He ran into debts and died in 1913 at about 36 years old.

My mother was a black smith's daughter from Sadská. After my father's death she ran the shop alone, but since the debt kept increasing, she worked and grieved to death. She died in 1924, at 42 years old. That year I attended the first year at the Economic high school in Poděbrady. Immediately after the summer holidays I started at my uncle's decision as an apprentice of butchery in the company J. Satrapa, Studená. However, I left the job after a while and became an apprentice to the miller Jaroslav Bahník in Sadská. A belt in the mill tore off my left arm about 11 February 1927. I remained in the mill and worked according to my abilities, and in addition I kept studying in Poděbrady almost until the end of the 3rd year.

When an opportunity arose in Lomnice nad Popelkou, I left school and got a job with the constructor Kovář there (1928).

The constructor was an irascible man, and his employees changed rapidly. So was I soon without a job. For some time I received unemployment benefits. I was living with my friends (B. Kopecký, bakery), and in 1929 I left to go abroad for the first time. Since my childhood I had been interested in foreign countries and nature. I studied geography and natural sciences assiduously. I was attracted by mountains, so I travelled mainly in highlands. During my travels I worked on farmsteads. There was rarely an opportunity to stay longer than a week, and if so, I was working for a low salary. I visited about twenty countries from Spain to northern Finland. During my visit to Norway I succeeded in staying longer in the valley of Susna below the Arctic Circle, and after that I stayed there another 15 years. I made my living from work on mountain farms, in forests, from taking pictures, sketching plans of arable etc. lands, during wintertime also from hunting etc. In the beginning I studied botany, zoology, and ecology further, but soon I switched to lappology, anthropology, sociology, psychology, psychiatry, physiology and pathology, but also history and philosophy. The studies filled my entire free time and claimed all my spare money. For about ten years I regularly borrowed books from the university library in Oslo by mail, carried out research in local and municipal archives, and collected many worthy sociological and ethnographic materials, anthropological measures, folklore, cultural and economic developments regarding the local population, about 70 local farms, and amongst the Sami population on the Norwegian and Swedish side. I witnessed the process of the decline of the Sami and the Sami culture there.

During Second World War I was held in the German military prison in Mosjøen for helping Czech, Polish, Norwegian and other labourers over the border to Sweden, however due to a lack of evidence I was later released. After the war I decided to build my own house in Susendalen and to settle on my own homestead. I was offered the job of local agronomist. The valley of Susna

became my first real home and I had no doubt about staying there.

However, after the February events I changed my mind and returned to my home country on 4 June 1948.

For my whole life I have sought out friends among communists and the proletarian intelligentsia. However, I was not admitted to the Party when I applied in 1948.

After I came home I worked in gamekeeper research of animal biology, later in edaphic zoology in forestry, and for the past nine years I have been working in documentation. I have been deputy director for two years. I am currently still studying ethnography, and under the given conditions publishing in *Československá etnografie*.



## Appendix II

### Václav Marek's autobiography II (Letter to dr. Drahomíra Vlašínová (Institute of Czech Literature, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences), 29 April 1982)

MAREK, Václav, born 5 March 1908 in Sadská, district Nymburk, formerly Poděbrady.

Father Antonín Marek, a worker in brewery, later in France and Marocco, later in the French Foreign Legion. After returning home a textile shopkeeper – after grandfather. Born 1877, died 13 December 1913.

Mother Marie Marková, née Němečková, daughter of a blacksmith in Sadská. Born 1881, died 1924.

In my childhood I lived in Sadská and the surrounding region near the Elbe River.

After primary school in Sadská I attended the Economic high school in Poděbrady. The first class in the years 1923–1924.

Then I became an apprentice in a mill in Sadská, but in 1926 a belt tore off my left arm.

After that I continued my studies at the Economic high school in Poděbrady, the second class and a part of the third class in 1926–1928.

From the age of 17, I had no home, and spent most of my time abroad: in Romania, Yugoslavia, Italy, France, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, Belgium, Germany and elsewhere, and finally in Sweden,

Finland and Norway. I stayed in northern Norway more than 15 years (1933–1935 and 1936–1948). I used the opportunity to learn about the life, history and ethnography of the Sami and the other peoples of the north. Thanks to the National Library in Oslo, I could read most of the literature on the Sami and the others – apart from the books I had. Today I have about 5000 books, albeit I have had to sell a part of my collection due to a lack of space.

I started my poor literary career with articles from different parts of Europe, first in *Sadské noviny*, *Trn* and *Tvorba* in perhaps 1928 and 1929.<sup>[2]</sup> I don't remember the titles. Later in *Ahoj*, *Letem světem* and *Naší přírodou* in 1936–1938.

I returned home after the war, on 5 May 1948, and since that time I have lived in Prague. I worked in the Czechoslovak Hunters Union in 1948–1950, in the Research Institute of Forestry, Zbraslav-Strnady, for about 3 years, and finally in the Czechoslovak Academy of Agricultural Sciences in Prague from about 1953 to about 1969, however in the later years the institute was transformed into the Institute of Scientific and Technical Information, Slezská Street 7.

(N.B.: It should be noted that I had various casual jobs abroad, mostly without any permission, which was in those times obligatory, in agriculture. Occasionally, I made my living by hunting and fishing in Norway. In France I once worked in a mill, in Belgium briefly in a shop. In Norway I was helping out on farms, with fieldwork, in forests, at planting and logging. I also surveyed areas of farms and sketched maps for newly cultivated fields and subsequent

- 2 The first number of *Sadské noviny* came out in 1931. Marek published three or four articles about his travels in Yugoslavia and Belgium in the newspaper between 1931 and 1933 – cf. Marek's bibliography and the footnote added to the particular heading. The editor together with Mr. Daniel Řehák (Institute of Czech Literature of CAS) could not find any Marek's text in the periodicals *Trn* and *Tvorba* in the late 1920s and the early 1930s either any work written under a penname with a conceivable attribution to Marek.

subsidy. Once I even drew a real map of a half of a municipality for a land registry.)

After I came home I gave several radio broadcasts in Prague on the Sami, however, there is only one record of the broadcasts – in *Náš rozhlas* 1948, 15, the program related to 10 November 1948, radio station Praha II. [...]

I would like to mention some of my published and unpublished works, which total about 50. [...]

Unpublished works

*Osvěta a školství v Laponsku* [Enlightenment and education in Sápmi]. 1972, about 14 pp. Lost in the editorial office *Lidová demokracie*.

*Der lappische Kalender und die Zeitrechnung in der Vergangenheit des Nordes*. In Czech 1966, 70 pp, in German 1971, 72 pp. “Lost” in Helsinki.

*Per Gynt*. 1972, 12 pp. “Lost” in *Lidová demokracie*. [...]

I am a pensioner and widower. In 1948 I married the piano and xylophone virtuoso Hermína Střížková. We have two married daughters. My wife passed away in 1978.

As for my political conviction, I am a class-conscious proletarian, which is certainly a great flaw. In 1948 I applied for admission to the Party, but I was rejected. In 1956 (according to my estimation) I was invited to join the Party. I rejected the offer.





# Authors

**Robert Kvile** is a Norwegian diplomat, currently Ambassador to the Czech Republic. He has i.a. been General Consul of Norway in Murmansk and Head of the Section for the High North, Resources and Russia in Norway's Foreign Ministry. Mr. Kvile earned the degree of Magister Artium (PhD) in Slavic Linguistics at the University of Oslo in 1987.

**Maja Atterstig** is a Swedish photographer. She studied photojournalism and creative writing, and for the last six years she has worked as photographer in all of the National Libraries of Scandinavia, Norway, Sweden and now Denmark.

**Kristin Aasbø** is a Norwegian photographer and photo historian. She worked as a photo archivist in the National Library of Norway for 25 years, but is now working at Preus museum, the National Museum of Photography in Norway.

**Håkan Rydving** is a linguist and historian of religions. Since 1995 he has been professor of the History of Religions at the University of Bergen. His main research interests lie in northern indigenous cultures, and especially in Sami linguistics and in the history of Sami religious traditions.

**Michal Kovář** is a senior researcher at the Department of Germanic Studies, Charles University (Prague). He worked at the Department of Linguistics and Baltic Studies, Masaryk University (Brno) for almost 15 years. His fields of interest are the literature of Uralic peoples, mainly baroque Hungarian, Sami and old Finland's literature.

**Přemysl Ovský** is a postgraduate student at the Department of Anthropology, University of West Bohemia, Pilsen.

**Bohumil Fořt** is a professor of literary theory at Masaryk University (Brno) and a senior researcher at the Czech Academy of Sciences. He is the author of five monographs (including *An Introduction to Fictional Worlds Theory*, 2016) and some fifty studies. His fields of interest are literary theory, narrative theory, literary realism, structuralism, and fictional worlds theory.

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