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Bertil Marklund, *Det milsvida skogsfolket. Skogssamernas samhälle i omvandling 1650–1800* (Skrifter från Centrum för samiska studier 23; Kulturens frontlinjer 58), Umeå: Umeå University 2015, ISBN 978-91-7601-235-2, 448 pp.

If we had been able to visit the northern part of Fennoscandia in 1650, we would have met Forest Sami in a vast area from the Kemi region in the east, in present-day Finland, to the forest area that surrounds the Ångermanland River and its tributaries in the south. In Sweden, their land stretched from the mountains in the west to the cultivated coastal area in the east. The Forest Sami were the only inhabitants of this boundless forest, which was seasonally also used by the peasants by the Bothnian Gulf for lake fishing and by the Mountain Sami for winter pasture. This map, however, changed in the twentieth century as a result of state politics; the Forest Sami were supposed to become assimilated peasants. Simultaneously, the culture of the nomads in the mountains was supported. The core area of the Forest Sami of today is the Malå and Arvidsjaur municipalities.

The Forest Sami culture in Arvidsjaur, Pite *lappmark* (the Sami region “around” the Pite River) in present-day Sweden stands out as a unique research object. Current knowledge about the Forest Sami culture of Arvidsjaur is primarily the result of research done by Israel Ruong (1944 and 1945), Ernst Manker (1968) and (indirectly) by Erik Bylund (1956) who investigated the settler colonization in this Sami area. Having been a field of human geographical (Ruong, Bylund), ethnographical (Manker) or archaeological scholarship (Aronsson 1991; Hedman 2003; Karlsson 2006), the Forest Sami of Arvidsjaur are now being investigated by a historian.

Bertil Marklund has formulated four main problems: a) How to describe the Forest Sami transition from an economy of hunting and fishing and the herding of a few reindeer into Forest Sami nomadism?; b) What was the significance of the economic pressure from the Mountain Sami in the west and settlers from the coast in the east?; c) What was the significance of the pressure from the Swedish state in this Forest Sami area?; d) What was the significance of the Forest Sami’s own ability to achieve a sustainable economy? Marklund has tried to understand and describe individuals faced with different potential choices, thereby illuminating a classical topic in North Scandinavian culture history: the rise of the Sami reindeer herding culture.

The area of investigation is primarily the historic Arvidsjaur *siida* and adjacent Forest Sami areas in the Ume and Lule *lappmarks* (i.e.

Sami areas); secondly the adjacent Mountain Sami and peasants of the coastal areas to the east; thirdly the region as a whole with a focus on trade, colonization, moving patterns and the state's exercise of power. Marklund compares Arvidsjaur with the neighboring Forest Sami areas to the south and to the north. He took his point of departure in a body of comparatively well preserved written records and followed individual life histories, crosschecked whenever possible.

The book is in Swedish. The title in English is 'The boundless forest's people. The Forest Sami society in transformation 1650–1800.' It is composed of five previously published articles and a synthesis—altogether 448 pages. The titles of the different articles, translated into English, are: 1. 'From poor Sami to Sami pauper. Poverty and emigration from the Sami areas of Pite and Ume from 1650–1760 in the light of the Sami Ordinance of 1748;' 2. 'The Sami taxation area Vourbejaur 1650–1800. A pilot study;' 3. 'Some theoretical aspects in the study of Forest Sami tax lands;' 4. 'Some economic and social topics related to the Forest Sami 1650–1800;' 5. 'The Forest Sami's economic space.' Articles 1–3 have separate abstracts or summaries in English. The book provides a very short summary and abstract in English and one in the Ume Sami language spoken in Arvidsjaur.

Marklund faced three challenges: 1) Establishing the significance of the (neo-)evolutionistic theory of stages, i.e. that nomadic reindeer breeding "emerged" from "semi-nomadism" with few reindeer, in its turn a "development" of catching and hunting economies; 2) Getting a grip on the "intrinsic life" of the Forest Sami societies. How did the social and economic strategies, on their own, result in Forest Sami reindeer nomadism? Why have the Arvidsjaur Sami escaped assimilation and cultural dissolution?; 3) Combining the results of challenges 1 and 2 with the partial studies, i.e. the articles.

Ever since the middle of the sixteenth century, the Arvidsjaur Sami paid tax to the Swedish king in a system based on tax rolls, introduced at the coast of the Bothnian Gulf in the fourteenth century (Wallerström 1995: 47–51; Tegengren 2015: 230–232). At the very beginning of the 1600s, the state's presence expanded. A church- and marketplace was founded in Arvidsjaur close to a chapel of unknown age. The king took initiatives in 1673 and 1695 aimed at a colonization of Lapland which resulted in 31 settlements in 1800 (in Arvidsjaur) as compared to only one in 1757. These figures are interesting when compared to the nearby Uhmeåbyn in the south, already void of Forest Sami due to colonization, partly by Sami settler families.

This book is an analysis of a Forest Sami area interacting with "the outside." The Sami were not passive "recipients" or "victims" of a de-

velopment. Some thirty tax lands, about 15 times 15 kilometers in size sustaining one or two families, was a basic unit of analysis in Marklund's study, as well as individual life stories deriving from written sources.

The thread goes from the written records elucidating the economic change from 1650–1800. With Article I, which deals with the officials' repression against poor Arvidsjaur Sami coming to the coastal settlement to look for jobs or just to beg, and the internal differences regarding the economic potency of tax lands appear. In this way, Marklund demonstrates the significance of the tax land as an analytic unit. In Article II, Marklund shows that the Mountain Sami hardly contested access to reindeer pasture. Rather, they served as models for a reindeer-based economy. In Article III, some theoretical aspects are discussed for the subsequent analysis of the sources: issues regarding different forms of subsistence among the Forest Sami, social complexity and economic structures among settlers and Mountain Sami. Consequently, in Article IV he discusses demographic development, patterns of marriage and conflicts involving resources. In Article V, the variables are put together based on Elinor Ostrom's (1990) generalizing theories about commons, a tool for identification of Sami forms of collective action.

What, then, are the answers to questions a), b) and c)? And how about d)?

Question a): In the period 1650–1800, the Forest Sami of Arvidsjaur went from a subsistence economy with hunting and fishing to an economy where tending to their reindeer flock was the most important thing. However, they did not walk in step in this process. The young Forest Sami took the lead in the development and the transition can be dated to the latter half of the eighteenth century, that is, somewhat later than that of their Mountain Sami neighbours. The nature-given opportunities of the tax lands were a supporting factor but did not determine economic change. Tax lands with forest reindeer breeding tended to have larger human populations, indicating that one driving force was a desire for subsistence. The possibilities of reindeer pasture closer to the coast became more and more important as the tax land pastures vanished.

As for question b) regarding the pressure from Mountain Sami and settlers in the Forest Sami areas, Marklund concludes that the presence of Mountain Sami was insignificant. While the colonists that settled in the tax lands could certainly be regarded a serious threat to their subsistence, they posed no such threat in the period of investigation, as they were quite few.

How about the outside pressure from the state, i.e. question c)? The role of the state could, *a priori*, be regarded as insignificant as the Sami

lived on the tax lands. However, the state had the right to impose taxes and lay down guiding principles, rules and duties. In that way, the state had an impact on the Forest Sami economic development from 1650–1800. But, unknown up to now, is that their customers in their turn had orders from manufacturers of chamois leather used to produce underwear for the Swedish Army.

How did Marklund answer question d)? Were the Sami victims of a system imposed by the authorities or were they independent actors in an era of change, able to create economically sustainable strategies of their own? The state made the Arvidsjaur Sami an organizational, geographical unit at the beginning of the 1600s. A tax reform in 1695 required a geographical definition. In 1748, the state tried to limit the presence of poor Sami begging in the coastal settlements. In 1749, the livelihood of Sami and settlers was defined by an ordinance. In 1752, the so-called *lappmark* border was set, excluding peasants from fishing in the lakes, a resource far away from their settlements. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, legal disputes over land and water were handled by the County Governor, after having been brought before the Sami dominated local district court—an administrative reform paving the way for a state dominance (ownership) over these resources.

Marklund describes how the Forest Sami living on their tax lands cooperated in developing a sustainable economy of their own. They had the instruments needed to be able to control matters about re-allocation of the tax lands, a prerequisite for the emerging nomadic livelihood. Although the individual families had different, unique modes of earning their living, they acted collectively. After 1800, when responsibility for matters relating to land use was transferred to the county administrative board, their possibilities for independent collective action faded.

At this point, the reviewer's task is nearing the end. Two topics remain to be considered: the quality of Marklund's thesis and the development of the emerging reindeer nomadism.

Stadium theories are associated with (neo-)evolutionary points of departure. They tend to depict humans as tragic victims of "development." The stages from "the simple" to "the complex" are difficult to connect with empirical data. Stadium theories also tend to view "turn overs" of indigenous peoples as being coherent in time and space, irreversible, forceful, deterministic and rapid. Stadium theories have their merits, Marklund says, but they do not *explain* what happened.

Marklund's data has been combined with Ostrom's (1990) general theory about commons, "common pool resources," and with social anthropologist Tim Ingold's (1980) version of stadium theory based on uses

of the reindeer, a scheme consisting of three stages: hunting—pastoralism—ranching, each with specific modes of production and (re)distribution of the animal. The final stage is capitalistic, a production for the market, but the hunters share the proceeds. In the pastoralist stage, the animals have individual owners. Ingold's theory is preferred to the traditional evolutionary scheme. According to Marklund,

the concept of semi-nomadism is ambiguous: a time period, a stadium, a rapid subsistence displacement from a hunting society to a nomadic one—a not really distinct perspective of research. (p. 28)

Marklund made use of his investigation of individuals. He found that it was possible to combine Ostrom's theory about commons with Ingold's theory on stages in the uses of one and the same animal, the reindeer, and was able to demonstrate how the Forest Sami society functioned in economic and social respects and how people interacted strategically.

Marklund notes that the period 1650–1700 hardly saw any change in the use of the reindeer of the kind that occurred in the 1700s, especially after 1750. He identifies some nomadic specialists in the 1720s. The tax land structure was re-allocated to fit the pastoral patterns of movement. The so-called *ungsprintar*, young people without tax lands were the “effective modernists,” and the semi-nomads, with just a few reindeer and making their living on hunting, fishing and handicraft, were the “traditionalists.” Following a crisis in the early half of the eighteenth century, some pastoralists “returned” to semi-nomadism and fishing as their dominant livelihood. Some individuals built up small herds in periods when there was a demand for reindeer hides.

It should be noted that the scale of Forest Sami nomadism was different from that of the Mountain Sami. Herd sizes were different. Marklund quotes two sources from 1770–1799 indicating that the individuals in question had 40 and 100 reindeer, respectively. These numbers are far below the subsistence level for Mountain Sami reindeer nomads, which was 200 animals (Lundmark 1982: 155). Forest Sami nomadism was one component in a combination of economies, including handicraft.

The thesis' main strength is its focus on that topic, by necessity excluding outlooks on similar research themes. The book is complex—four different threads woven together in the syntheses which are not always easy to follow. The summaries are much too short. As for style, it is sometimes a bit too colloquial. These comments, however, are merely an elderly man's somewhat unfair grumbings about a thesis with sparkling highlights: the history of a Sami culture overlooked in North Scandi-

navian scholarship, more or less hidden in the shadow of the “exotic” Mountain Sami and the history of the Lapland settler colonization. Details are given about economic change and Marklund provides answers to the question “Who did what?” in the emergence of local level Forest Sami nomadism, giving substance to speculations about evolutionary stages. By the proposed connection between army uniforms and the market for reindeer hides, he has identified a very interesting issue for future research.

This book is the fruit of decades of research on a hobby basis, speeded up after the author’s retirement. At the beginning of the book, Bertil Marklund tells his readers that he wanted to write about the Arvidsjaur Forest Sami because they had been oversimplified or overlooked in previous research. He kept his promise—it’s done!

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