

## THE RAGNAR LASSINANTTI COLLECTION AT LULEÅ UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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**ABSTRACT:** Luleå University of Technology is the only University of Technology in Sweden with such broad scope in its education and research. We conduct research within the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. We provide education in the spheres of engineering, the social sciences, the humanities, teaching, music, media education, and drama. We have about 8,500 students enrolled and a staff of 1,200. In addition to the main campus in Luleå, we have campuses in Piteå, Kiruna and Skellefteå.

Luleå University Library. The new building of the University Library at Luleå was inaugurated in August 1994. The library building has an area of 7000 m<sup>2</sup>, of which 1100 belong to the Computer Support Centre and the rest belongs to the library. The location of these two facilities in the same building is fruitful.

The Ragnar Lassinantti Collection. Luleå University of Technology acquired the Ragnar Lassinantti Book Collection in the autumn of 1990. The collection consists of about 13,000 volumes, most of which are works of fiction and works on history, social science, geography, the history of literature, art and religion. The main focus of the literature in the collection is on Nordic conditions, including the Sami (Lapps) and the Laestadian movement. The collection not only contains literature in Swedish, but also in all of the other Nordic languages, especially Finnish. The archival material that belongs to the collection includes about 600 audio tape recordings. The tapes contain Ragnar Lassinantti's radio recordings for the radio program Pohjoiskalotti, which mostly consist of interviews with people from the Arctic regions of Fenno-Scandinavia and the Kola Peninsula.

### **Introduction**

In August this year I participated in IFLA's satellite conference on the indigenous peoples of the world, entitled "Library Services to Indigenous People." The conference took place in Tromsø in Northern Norway. In the Nordic countries today there are two projects which focus on the future of the Sami Bibliography. On the one hand there is a

Swedish project and on the other hand a Nordic project based in Jokkmokk and being conducted within the framework of the Berenice Network. (Margareta Raattamaa will tell you more about the Berenice Project.) I am a member of the reference groups of both projects.

The Nordic reference group held a meeting one day before the IFLA conference. At that meeting I was appointed "ahkku," which is a Sami word meaning "grandmother." A representative of the first nation peoples in Canada, Jim Bruce, described in detail how they still choose an elder. He or she does not actually have to be the oldest person, but must be wise, possess a great deal of experience, and be someone whom people listen to. I interpreted the first nation peoples' custom of electing an "elder" to be similar to the old Sami custom of electing an "ahkku."

When Jim Bruce explained the role of the elder of the Canadian first nation peoples at the IFLA meeting, I understood that they and the Sami share a common view of the "elder" or "ahkku." This means in our context that, when the younger members of the Sami reference groups are engaged in an animated discussion and I wish to enter the discussion and express my opinion, I only have to stand up. Then everyone stops speaking to listen to what I have to say!

#### **Who am I?**

I am an information specialist at Luleå University Library. At the moment I am working at the reference service and teaching information retrieval to students at the Faculty of Engineering.

One of my special interests at the Library has always been the very far north. I attended my first Northern Libraries Colloquy in Tromsø in 1982. Luleå University Library organized the Northern Libraries Colloquy in Luleå in 1986. For those who know me from the '80s, for ten years I was working outside the Library in different projects concerning research in cold regions, women and technology, and a women's university.

Since 1995 I have been back at Luleå University Library. Today I am still active in issues concerning the Arctic. I am chairwoman of the Nordkalott Literary Society. As I told you above I am engaged in drawing up the future plans of the Sami Bibliography.

Previously one talked about "Nordkalotten," which still denotes the Arctic regions of Fenno-Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden and Finland) and the Kola Peninsula. Ragnar Lassinantti included Iceland in the term. The term "Nordkalott" is now often replaced by the term "Barents Region," in phase with the current increase in our cooperation with Russia.

In the present paper I am going to talk about the Ragnar Lassinantti Book Collection at Luleå University of Technology, about Ragnar Lassinantti as a person, and finally about the digitization of Ragnar Lassinantti's audio tape recordings.

### **The Ragnar Lassinantti Collection**

Luleå University of Technology acquired the Ragnar Lassinantti Book Collection in the autumn of 1990. The collection consists of about 13,000 volumes, most of which are works of fiction and works on history, social science, geography, the history of literature, art and religion. The main focus of the literature in the collection is on Nordic conditions, with about 2,000 volumes treating the Arctic regions of the north, including the Sami and the Laestadian movement. The collection not only contains literature in Swedish, but also in all of the other Nordic languages, especially Finnish. The archive material that belongs to the collection includes about 700 audio tape recordings.

### **Ragnar Lassinantti**

Ragnar Lassinantti (1915-1985) was a Social Democratic member of the Swedish Parliament from 1957 to 1966. Between 1966 and 1982 he was the County Governor of Norrbotten. In both his roles, as member of parliament and County Governor, he worked without respite for the development of Norrbotten and for a closer co-operation between the regions above the Arctic Circle in the northernmost part of Europe. He was unique in many ways. One example is that, while he was a member of parliament, he was also the producer and anchor of Pohjoiskalotti, the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation's (SR - Sveriges Radio) first radio program in Tornedal Finnish, the language spoken along the Torne River Valley.

### **The Nordkalott concept**

Although Ragnar Lassinantti was a Social Democrat, he took a very independent stance with regard to the party, which was unusual in Swedish politics at that time. He had a deep knowledge of the history, culture and languages of the northern regions. The north was important to him, far more than questions concerning the south. In 1972 he referred to "Nordkalott" as "perhaps the only area in the world where three nations, four languages, and five peoples (the Finnish, Norwegian, Sami, Swedish and Tornedal peoples) live in concord without support from the United Nations." In 1977 Ragnar's dream of a Nordkalott conference in Iceland came true. About 80 delegates came here to Reykjavik from Sweden, Norway and Finland, among them the County Governors of Nordland and Lapland.

The most radical of all the Nordic conferences was the one that took place in Piteå in 1962. That conference ratified a plan for concrete Nordkalott co-operation. The Nordkalott Council for Cultural Affairs was established. Books started to spread across

borders and libraries started to co-operate. Ragnar Lassinantti also took the initiative in establishing the publishing house called Tornedalica.

### **The Nordkalott Library Conferences**

The first conference was held in Kirkenes, in Norway, in 1971. The next ten years there were conferences in Kiruna, Sweden and twice in Rovaniemi, Finland. Since the conference in Vadsø, Norway, in 1983, there have been conferences every second year in Sweden, Finland, Russia and Norway. The conference in Archangel last year had a program entitled "Environment, libraries, knowledge." The next Barents Region Library Conference is to be held in Mo i Rana in Norway in May 1999. The program comprises themes such as roots and genealogical matters, Sami library services, libraries for young people, and local surroundings and the media of the future. In addition there will be social activities and some lectures that will present some radical outlooks.

### **Ragnar Lassinantti as a bibliophile**

He was really a man of eloquence and liked to make speeches and converse with people. When he prepared a speech he generally lay down and planned his speech on the bed. He had a photographic memory and an outstanding ability to read huge texts and select the most important information he needed at any given moment.

Once he received the following question in an interview: "Do you read all the books you acquire?"

"Almost all of them," he replied, "I read about one book a day."

"Can that be possible, with all your work and all your assignments?"

"No, but I skim through them and read what I consider worth reading."

When asked the question, "Which three books would you bring with you to a desert island?" he immediately mentioned *The Bible* and *Encheiridion : manual of study in the art of living* by the Greek slave and philosopher Epictetus. His third choice was *Kamaripirtiltä* by the Tornedal author William Snell. He said that he sought strength and consolation in books.

### **Luleå University of Technology**

During the 1960s, Ragnar Lassinantti was strongly committed to the establishment of a university in the County of Norrbotten. Luleå University of Technology is the only University of Technology in Sweden with such broad scope in its education and research. We conduct research within the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. We provide education in the spheres of engineering, the social sciences, the

humanities, teaching, music, media education, and drama. We have about 8,500 students enrolled and a staff of 1,200. In addition to the main campus in Luleå, we have campuses in Piteå, Kiruna and Skellefteå. In 1981 Ragnar Lassinantti received an honorary doctorate from Luleå University.

### **The Nordkalott Collection**

The Lassinantti Collection is an integrated part of the Library's other collections. It is catalogued in the database of LIBRIS, which is a national bibliographic network serving Swedish university and research libraries. All of the books belonging to the Lassinantti collection receive a special code that facilitates searching. The greater part of the collection can be borrowed by patrons of the Library. This would probably have been completely in the spirit of Ragnar Lassinantti, who was a great proponent of adult education. At present the Nordkalott Collection contains about 6,500 volumes, covering all aspects of this subject area, and it is a collection that continues to grow.

### **Digitization**

One of the projects currently being conducted by Luleå University Library is the digitization of Ragnar Lassinantti's audio tapes in cooperation with SR.

The archive material that belongs to the Nordkalott Collection includes about 700 audio tape recordings. The tapes contain Ragnar Lassinantti's radio recordings for the radio program Pohjoiskalotti, which mostly consist of interviews with people in my valley, the Torne River Valley. The name of the language spoken in the program is "Meän kieli." It is a language spoken in the Finnish-speaking areas along the Torne River Valley in the county of Norrbotten and is very much related to the language of the "Kvåner" in Northern Norway.

The aims of the digitization project are the following:

- to make the Lassinantti tapes available for research and the general public,
- to choose material for some form of electronic publication on the Internet, through co-operation between Luleå University Library and SR - material treating two main themes: on the one hand some renowned personality from the Nordkalott regions, e.g. Laestadius, and on the other hand "Women in the Arctic regions of Fenno-Scandinavia and the Kola Peninsula,"
- to utilize the digitized tapes to produce radio programs to be broadcast by the local radio station "Norrbotten Radio," the Finnish-speaking channel in Sweden "P7," and the Finnish Broadcasting Corporation (Yleisradio),
- to catalogue and index the tapes according to the "Dublin Core" to facilitate information retrieval,
- to investigate the possibility of starting an audio museum in Luleå, in memory of Ragnar Lassinantti at Luleå University Library.

SR has been broadcasting "Pohjoiskalotti" since the beginning of the '60s. SR owns the contents of the tapes and is entitled to use them and broadcast them, i.e. SR owns the so-called "signal rights." SR's Finnish-speaking channel, "P7," is interested in digitizing the tapes to preserve them and use them to make new programs. Luleå University Library wishes to keep the tapes in its Lassinantti Archive. The copyright legislation applies to recordings of authors, musicians, singers, etc., but not to recordings of ordinary people.

The tapes are being digitized and transferred to streamer tapes. These are a kind of tape that can be used to store both sound and text. SR and the University Library will each receive their own copy of the tapes. The Library's copy will be used for research on and in the Barents Region. The right to electronically publish SR's material on the Internet belongs to SR alone. However, the University Library can create links to SR's Internet pages. We can also come to an agreement on the Internet publication of short samples of the recordings.

### **Technical requirements**

Juha Tainio, who works for SR's Finnish-speaking channel, "P7," has been involved in the project entitled "Multimedia Digital Archive and Work Station for Producers of Music Programs." The aim of the project is to develop a mobile unit for the collection of sound and text for storage on streamer tapes (tapes for storage of 26 hours of linear sound). The advantage of the system is that one can store both sound and text, i.e. a typescript, working material, and sound recordings, including the actual program broadcast. The material thus becomes retrievable in the same way as in Microsoft Word. The corresponding sound files are of the ".wav" type and the sound management program is called Sound Forge. Tammerfors University's Audio Tape Archive, the Finnish Broadcasting Corporation, certain Finnish archives and SR are investigating and developing a technique for digitizing audio tapes.

### **Cataloguing and indexing the material**

We paid a study visit to the Norwegian National Library in Mo i Rana on 28th May 1998, in order to find out how the Norwegians digitize sound recordings. They presented a project entitled NDLC (the Nordic Digital Library Centre), which is a centre of expertise in the area of digital libraries. We also received information on the "Digital Radio Store," a project involving co-operation between NRK (the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation) and the National Library in Mo i Rana, concerning the digitization of radio programs. In addition, they presented a joint project conducted with Iceland and entitled "Antique Maps of Iceland."

During our study visit to Mo i Rana, our hosts emphasized the importance of cataloguing and indexing the material in phase with the actual digitization to provide the optimal and most efficient information retrieval. From the beginning our plans have included the

creation of metadata on the basis of the Dublin Core. The Nordic Digital Library Centre at the National Library in Mo i Rana has published "Guidelines on the Establishment of Digitization Services." The experience of the National Library of Norway strengthens our ambition to allocate an equal amount of resources to cataloguing and indexing on the one hand, and to the technical conversion on the other hand.

Welcome to "Nordkalotten" and thank you for listening!

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Guidelines on the establishment of digitization services  
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Isländsk kart  
<http://egla.bok.hi.is/kort/english.html>

The Lassinantti collection  
<http://www.luth.se/depts/lib/broschyr.html.en>

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