THE FOLKLORE ARCHIVES OF THE
FINNISH LITERATURE SOCIETY

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HISTORY

The scholarly interest in Finnish folk poetry was initiated in the latter part of the 18th century by the historian, Henrik Gabriel Porthan, and his students, under the impulse given by the early romantic currents. Information concerning Finnish folklore and extracts from folklore collections made by them or under their direction, preserved in Porthan's own works, in the academic theses written under his guidance, and in the manuscript of the great Finnish dictionary left by his friend, Christfrid Ganander, justify referring to these materials as the 'folklore archives of Turku Academy'. These materials would have formed an exceedingly valuable basis for the collections of the Finnish Folklore Archives. Unfortunately, all were burned in the great fire that in 1827 destroyed the entire old city of Turku.

A crucial turning point in the developing of folklore studies in Finland was the founding in 1831 of the Finnish Literature Society dedicated to the support of cultural activities in the Finnish language and the promotion of research concerning the country, its traditions, and its language. From the beginning the Society has set as one of its primary tasks the collecting and directing of the folklore collection, the maintenance of a folklore archives, and carrying on folklore research.

The earliest collections held by the Finnish Folklore Archives are those made by Elias Lönrot whose publication of the Kalevala in 1835 added much impetus to the collection of folklore in Finland. The group of collectors following upon his footsteps were stimulated to expressly collect ancient poems and incantations. The earliest collecting was

*This article consists of excerpts from an essay by Jouko Hautala published in full in English in the review Studia Fennica VII (1957) and additional materials offered by the present director of the Archives, Urpo Vento.
naturally focused primarily on the most striking and original part of the folk heritage, that of ancient poetry and incantations. In fact, many collectors considered the essential task that of bringing to light supplementary material to the *Kalevala*.

In the final decades of the 19th century the general change in scientific thought led to the creation of the geographic-historical method of research. This method was based on the concept that lawbound evolution is involved in the geographic movement of tradition and it gave a new and powerful impulse to the work of collecting folklore. The new activity was aimed at obtaining collections of material expressly for scientific research, research that no longer, as before, centered around Lönrot's *Kalevala* but on original variants of folk poetry recorded from the lips of the people. The poems and incantations collected were initially published in *Kalevalan toisinnot* (Variants of the Kalevala) and subsequently in *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* (Ancient Poems of the Finnish People).

Julius Krohn was the actual creator of the 'Finnish method' and his son, Kaarle Krohn, developed the method further. Of especial significance in the history of folklore research in Finland were Kaarle Krohn's extensive travels during the years 1881-85 for the purpose of collecting folklore. These collecting trips, which established the firm basis for his own career as a research scholar, brought to light in painstaking shorthand some 18,000 folklore items, including folktales, legends, poems, incantations, superstitions, magic, and other lore.

In 1884 Kaarle Krohn prepared a guidebook of sixty-five pages on collecting folktales. In this guide a number of legends were brought to the attention of collectors for the first time. A guide to the collection of magic appeared as a supplement of this work. Among other collectors' manuals and questionnaires mention should be made of *Ohjelma suomalaisen kansanrunouden* (A Program for Collectors of Finnish Folklore) which was published and distributed in a large edition in 1903 and re-issued in a revised and enlarged form in 1923.

A form of collecting that subsequently proved exceedingly fruitful, namely, the organization of a collecting contest, was used for the first time in 1926, when a large scale competition for the collecting of games was held among the school children of the nation. This contest yielded approximately 129,000 items, of which 79,000 were detailed descriptions of games and sports.

Martti Haavio undertook the initial responsibility for the development of the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society in 1931.
He served as the first regular curator from 1934 to 1948, subsequently becoming Professor of Finnish and Comparative Folklore research at the University of Helsinki. He stimulated another boom in folkloristic activity and at the same time steered the work of the Archives into new channels.

In 1934 the Archives gained an independent status, having its own regular staff whose exclusive task was to augment the collections and to make them more easily accessible to scholars. Concurrent with the Kalevala centennial celebration in 1935 a well advertised public folklore collecting contest was organized on a vast scale, the Kalevala Jubilee Contest. Emphasis was put on those types of folklore not previously systematically collected, notably legends and memorats (reminiscences). The outcome of the contest was so astonishing that it changed to a considerable extent the total conception held until that date concerning the content and distribution of Finnish folklore. Some 130,000 items were collected. Interested citizens who had participated in the contest were formed into a network of regular contributors or agents whose number at its greatest was over a thousand. New guides to legends and local tradition were published on their behalf. From 1936 to 1939 Haavio also edited the periodical Kansantieto (Folklore) which served as a bond to hold the collection network together. The work of collecting was systematically guided in other ways as well as by means of extensive correspondence and consultation. The staff of the Archives also participated in the field work.

World War II broke up the collectors' network. From 1948 to 1961 the curator of the Archives was Jouko Hautala and from 1961 to 1964 Lauri Simonsuuri. The collection by contests has been continued as well as expeditions by staff members of the Archives. In 1957 there was a contest devoted to the collection of folk humor concerning neighbors; in 1961, a contest involving the collecting of tales and legends for which a guidebook was written by Lauri Simonsuuri; in 1962, collecting of folk games. During the last years many business enterprises and organizations have sponsored, in cooperation with the Archives, competitions of collecting sayings, legends, popular medicine, etc. The periodical for inquiries, Kansantieto, has been issued twice a year since 1961. There now exists a new network of collectors consisting of approximately 1200 persons. Of these about 300 individuals are active collectors, working regularly every year. Books, silver spoons, and small monetary rewards are distributed to collectors. As a result of activities in the latest phase of collecting the number of items in the Archives has once more increased tremendously.

Just before the outbreak of World War II the Folklore Archives' staff undertook to make phonograph recordings with the equipment then
The great hall of the Archives
available. More recently tape recorders have been used. The field trips for the purpose of making recordings have been carefully planned with the aim of obtaining recordings representing a maximum variety of items and in as many areas as possible before the traditions die and the different dialects merge. The result of these efforts to date has been the recording of some 1,000 nine-minute discs, all of which have been copied on tape, as well as thousands of original tape recordings. The collection of recordings in the Archives at present includes approximately 2,550 hours of ancient poetry, folksongs of more recent origin, incantations, laments, instrumental music, folktales, legends, etc.

During the past years the Society has granted scholarships to experienced collectors, graduate students, and young research students for tape recording in the field. The transcription of the recordings is now underway.

PRESERVATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF MATERIALS

The Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society have from the very beginning followed the principle that the records of individual collectors should be preserved as units, without breaking them up according to subject systems. Only in this manner is it possible to keep in sight matters important in critical examination of sources, e.g. what aspects of folklore a collector preferred; what particular tales, songs, beliefs, etc., he has specifically been seeking; which ones he has possibly neglected in his search; what special points of view and details have attracted his notice; what other lore — how much and how well — his informants may have known; how reliable or unreliable or to what extent freely written from memory are his notes to be considered; etc.

All the collections have been bound and placed in alphabetical order according to the names of the collectors. However, the results of certain collecting contests have been arranged into uniform series without breaking up the collections of individual contestants.

The material credited to each individual collector is numbered in such a manner that each tale, legend, song, incantation, description of a magic practice, or a custom, etc., has its own number. Each collection is provided with an index indicating the locality where each item has been written down and the general category of folklore to which it belongs. For this purpose the collections have been analyzed and provided with symbols according to the following system:

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{a} & \quad \text{a fairy tale (Märchen) or humorous anecdote (Schwank)}
\end{align*} \]
a saint's legend
a mythical legend (mythische Sage) or memorat (reminiscence)
a historical or local legend (historische Sage, Lokalsage)
an etiological tale (Ursprungssage, Natursage)
an imitation of the sounds of nature (Naturstim-mendeutung)
an ancient poem in the Kalevalan meter (runo)
a folksong composed in a more recent meter
an incantation
a magical practice, superstition or belief
a game or sport
a lamentation
a mock sermon, tongue-twister, etc.
a primitive chant (joiku), cattle call, etc.
a proverb
a riddle
music
knowledge picked up from books and newspapers or material of individual invention. (These items are separated from the collection without being numbered.)
an ethnographic description

In many cases it has been necessary to resort to double symbols, as, for example, b³b⁴. Certain additional symbols are also used for the sake of precision, e.g. K is added in the case of data linked to some calendar date.

The main catalogue of the Archives is arranged according to the names of the collectors and it contains the same notations as the indexes of the contents of the collection. When referring to the collections of the Folklore Archives in scientific papers, the procedure is to observe its fundamental organization. Hence, in connection with any
An index card from the main catalogue arranged in alphabetic order according to the names of the collectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collector</th>
<th>Number Range</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kannonkoski</td>
<td>3836 - 3887</td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karstula</td>
<td>3888 - 3906</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinnula</td>
<td>3907 - 3913</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the main catalogue and the topographic index, a large number of special indices arranged according to subject are needed. Quite a number of these have been prepared through the years. The best known are the type indexes of the folktales accumulated up to the year 1918, compiled by Antti Aarne. This work also indexes certain legends but not as fully as the tales. Also well known is Aarne's catalogue of etiological tales extending to the same year, and of the materials received up to 1908 on imitations of the sounds of nature. These are published in FFC (Folklore Fellows Contributions) 5, 8, 9, and 33. A list of the ethnographic reports received up to the year 1936 has also been issued (Sulo Haltsonen ja E. A. Tunkelo Kansatieteelliset käsikirjoitukset, saapuneet Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran arkistoon ennen vuotta 1936. Helsinki, 1938). A. O. Väisänen's historical survey of...
the collecting activity in the field of folk music (Soumi IV: 16, Helsinki, 1917) includes a detailed list of collections of melodies.

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**Lakananveto mettumaariyönä**

Valkoosta lakanaa verettihin mettumaariyönä kasteen aikana. Oli niin tällöty, että se oli hartioos, ja yökasteen aikana sitä verettihin toisen maalla, ja sitten kun se oli likomärkä, niin tultihin omallen pualellen ja väännettiin se kastet omallen maallen, sillä lailla saatihin mantua toisen maasta. Se sillä lailla vei mannun toisen maasta omahan maahansa.

Ylihärmä. Samuli Paulaharju 22276. 1933.
- tuppimestari Juha Rannanjärvi, 56 v.
24.4. 30.

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A copy card containing a magical practice of the midsummernight

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In the 1930's Martti Haavio began a large scale project of cataloguing, or rather of systematizing the holdings of the Archives along entirely new lines. This work is still going on. The collections of a topographical area or a class of tradition are gone through at one time, the relevant memoranda being copied in toto, with no cuts, on cards which are then arranged according to the requirements of each case. In connection with the arranging, a large number of cards with cross references must naturally be written out. The card system further makes possible the continuous filling in of gaps in the catalogue as the collections grow, permits changing the order, the separation of new subdivisions, the addition of references, etc. as new materials and aspects of a subject appear and scientific development thus demands.

The following information relates to the subject indexes and copy card files:

**Folktales**

The fairy tale indexes by Antti Aarne (Finnische Märchenvarianten, FFC 5/1911 and FFC 33/1920) comprise all the variants received by
the year 1918, a total of approximately 20,000 fairy tales. Of the fairy tales and anecdotes deposited in the archives after that date a card index has been made according to Aarne-Thompson's "The Types of the Folktale" (FFC 184/1961). Long fairy tales have not been copied as a whole but on the card there has been noted a brief summary of the contents, the type number, and source reference. There are about 22,000 such cards.

**Saints' Legends**

These are arranged in alphabetical order, in part according to the events in the life of the Saviour and in part according to the names of the saints. About 1,000 cards.

**Mythical Legends**

Arranged according to "Typen- und Motivverzeichnis der finnischen mythischen Sagen" (FFC 182/1961) by Lauri Simonsuuri. About 100,000 cards.

**Historical and Local Legends**

Rearrangement of the files in progress. A type index will probably be issued. About 37,000 cards.

**Etiological Tales**

Arranged according to "Verzeichnis der finnischen Ursprungssagen und ihrer Varianten" (FFC 8/1912) by Antti Aarne. About 15,000 cards.

**Imitations of the Sounds of Nature**

Arranged according to "Variantenverzeichnis der finnischen Deutungen von Tierstimmen und anderen Naturlauten" (FFC 9/1912) by Antti Aarne. About 10,000 cards.

**Ancient Poems in the Kalevalan Meter**

1) File of clippings containing about 85,000 variant poems published in the *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* (Ancient Poems of the Finnish People) arranged in the order of their collectors. 2) Verse index of wedding poems published in *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot*. About 45,000 reference cards in the file.

**Lyric and Epic Folksongs**

(composed in a more recent poetic meter)

1) About 130,000 arranged according to topic (15,000) by copy cards of which part have been analyzed on punch cards. 2) A parallel file is
under preparation. The copy cards will be arranged alphabetically ac-
cording to the initial words of the first stanza.

**Popular Medical Lore**

Arranged primarily according to the subject entries of disease
names, in alphabetical order. About 120,000 cards.

**Calendaric Card File**

Contains data on beliefs and superstitions, magical practices,
prophecies, weather forecasts, proverbs, customs associated with
calendarically fixed dates and seasons. About 110,000 cards.

**Magical Practices, Superstitions and Beliefs**

A copy file that is increased annually by about 20,000 cards. It is
divided into four main groups: 1) supernatural beings and phenomena,
2) livelihood of man, 3) the phases of the life of man, and 4) nature.
The systematic organization of this file is not yet completed. At pres-
ent there are about 85,000 cards.

**Beliefs and Superstitions Concerning Animals**

Arranged according to zoologically classified order and alphabeti-
cally according to the names of animals. About 15,000 cards.

**Didactic Fictions**

Contains about 5,000 cards.

**Games and Sports**

Arranged according to the types of games. About 12,000 cards.

**Proverbs**

1) The general card index of the proverbs has been arranged al-
phabetically according to the two first nomina (nouns or adjectives first
appearing in the text) and furnished with reference cards. 2) Proverbs
in the form of comparisons have partly been arranged according to al-
phabetical order, as the main file. 3) The Wellerisms have provision-
ally been grouped according to their 'sayers'. Cf. Iris Järviö-Niemenen,
Suomalaiset sanomukset (Finnish Wellerism, Helsinki, 1959). In total,
there are about 500,000 proverb cards. About 35,000 reference cards
have been added to the main index.
Riddles

1) Arranged alphabetically according to the initial words of the question. 2) The parallel files contain an index grouped according to the replies per topic. About 70,000 cards.

Music

Music index of song and dance tunes arranged according to types of melodies and then alphabetically by collector. There is also a topographic index. The types into which the melodies fall are:

1. Religious songs
2. Lyric songs composed in a more recent type of poetic meter
3. Folk dance melodies (a separate experimental index of waltz melodies exists)
4. Melodies of ancient poems in the Kalevalan tradition
5. Melodies of the Lapps
6. Lamentations
7. Work songs
8. Instrumental music (horn, etc.)

At present a committee composed of three musicologists and three members of the Archives’ staff are discussing the problems of further developing the music index.

Ethnographic Descriptions

A subject card index with references covering the materials received by the year 1960 is under preparation.

Photographs

A subject classification of the thousands of photographs in the Archives is in the beginning stages.

Estonian Folklore Copy Collections

Since Estonian is a closely related language copies of holdings in the Oesti Tcaduste Akadeemia, Keele ja Kirjauduse Instituut of Tallin, Estonia, are included as a useful part of the collection. They are topically arranged in groups as follows:

1. Ancient poems and folksongs
2. Incantations
3. Magical practices, superstitions and beliefs, customs
4. Riddles
No card catalogues are written out for these collections but the copies themselves are arranged systematically with frequent reference slips. Collections of proverbs, melodies, and folktales are not in subject order. Cf. Aime Luht, 'Estnische Sammlungen im Volkskundearchiv der Finnischen Literaturgesellschaft,' (Finnisch-ugrische Forschungen XXXIV, Helsinki, 1962).

MAINTENANCE AND USE

In 1888 steps were taken to erect a building for the Society. This building, now 75 years of age, has housed the Library, the Archives, offices and the store of publications of the Society. It has also provided quarters for numerous other institutions working in the field of national studies and the national culture. In 1950 the rooms provided for the Archives were modernized. In 1958 additional space on the ground floor of the building was given to the Archives to accommodate its greatly expanded academic instructive activity as well as its recording studio and collections of recordings and microfilms.

The annual budget of the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society amounts to approximately 160,000 Finnish Marks. Of this amount c. 130,000 FM are applied to staff salaries, the remainder to collecting activities and to administrative expenses. For the most part, the state subsidy has in the past covered the expenditures of the Archives.

At the present time the Archives has the following staff: the director, seven assistants, one secretary, five typists, and one technical assistant. Some of the assistants and typists work part time only. In addition, there are two specialists who transcribe the tapes and copy them for the archives of tape recordings. During the school year there are also students working in the Archives, each eighteen hours weekly. This work is considered part of their training. They do copying or simpler types of systemizing tasks. In 1964, for example, 150 students performed these duties as 'practice' required for the lowest degree in folklore. Nevertheless, the present working staff is insufficient to keep pace with the rapidly growing volume of materials collected which amounts to approximately 40,000 items per year.

In addition to the University of Helsinki, those of Turku, Jyväskylä, and Tampere have recently included folklore research in their teaching program. While the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society acts as a central national archive, microfilm, microcharts and
photostat copies of its collections have been made for other, more recently established research institutions. Some exchange of microfilm with foreign institutions has taken place and this activity will probably increase. International service for folklore scholars through the offices of various institutions has been in practice for a long period. The officials of the Archives answer numerous inquiries concerning the Finnish tradition each year. Last year the Archives had, according to our records, 1,350 visitors, primarily students and scholars.

'A sacred place' of the Archives — a view of the collection room

FOLKLORE PUBLICATIONS OF THE FINNISH LITERATURE SOCIETY

Folktales


Suomen kansi kaskuja (Humorous Anecdotes of the Finnish People). Edited by Lauri Laiho (Simonsuuri). Helsinki, 1938.

Legends


Ancient poems in the Kalevalan meter


Calendarial folklore


Magical practices


Music


Proverbs


Discs

Suomalaista Kansanrunoutta (Finnish Folk Poetry). Recordings selected by Lauri Simonsuuri, Jouko Hautaia, and Aimo Turunen. Edited by Parja Soutkar. Three discs in box with brochure.

SK 1. Epic poetry, festive poetry, wedding poetry, and lullabies.
SK 2. Incantations, lamentations, ballads, and folksongs.
SK 3. Folktales and legends.