

The Finnmark Library A Scholarly Library in “Ultima Thule”

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Article abstract

Finmarksbibliotheket (“The Finnmark Library”) was established in the municipality of Vadsø in 1892, by central representatives of the town. It was intended to be a systematic collection “of books and manuscripts related to the history, ethnography, language, natural history, and statistics of Finnmark County,” especially “to collect everything written about the Sámi.” Its stock increased steadily, and in 1926 the library moved into its own building. In the same period, the assimilationist (Norwegianization) policy against the Sámi and Kven (Finnish population in Norway) was in its most intense phase, and the printing of Sámi and Kven books was restricted. This article explores the paradox that a library representing a pluralistic view of language and culture was established by administrators of an assimilationist policy. What role did the library play in the Norwegianization policy? Can the profile of the book collection tell us what kind of library it was?



THE FINNMARK LIBRARY: A Scholarly Library in “Ultima Thule”^{1, 2}

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Let me once again emphasize the Finnmark Library’s objectives and goals: any person who wants to study a question—or seek out any information about Finnmark—should be able to find answers or guidance in the library’s collections. This goal is still far from being realized, but if anyone reading this is in possession of any kind of material, printed or handwritten, I encourage you to send it to the library, even if it may seem insignificant. It will be received with gratitude, because it will contribute to bringing the library a step nearer to its ultimate goal [my translation].³

Georg Balke (1926)⁴

ABSTRACT

Finmarksbibliotheket (“The Finnmark Library”) was established in the municipality of Vadsø in 1892, by central representatives of the town. It was intended to be a systematic collection “of books and manuscripts related to the history, ethnography, language, natural history, and statistics of Finnmark County,” especially “to collect everything written about the Sámi.” Its stock increased steadily, and in 1926 the library moved into its own building. In the same period, the assimilationist (Norwegianization) policy against the Sámi and Kven (Finnish population in Norway) was in its most intense phase, and the printing of Sámi and Kven books was restricted. This article explores the paradox that a library representing a pluralistic view of language and culture was established by administrators of an assimilationist policy. What role did the library play in the Norwegianization policy? Can the profile of the book collection tell us what kind of library it was?

La Finnmarksbiblioteket (soit la bibliothèque de Finnmark) fut fondée dans la commune de Vadsø en 1892 par des notables de l'endroit. Elle devait voir à recueillir de manière systématique « les livres et manuscrits sur l'histoire, l'ethnographie, la langue, l'histoire naturelle et les statistiques relatives au comté de Finnmark », et plus précisément « tout écrit à propos de la langue same ». La collection s'enrichit au fil du temps, si bien qu'en 1926, la bibliothèque eut droit à son propre bâtiment. Au même moment, la politique d'assimilation (ou « norvégiennisation ») à l'encontre des langues same et kvène (parlée par la population finnophone de Norvège) atteignait son paroxysme, de sorte que l'impression d'écrits dans ces langues était limitée. Le présent article explore le paradoxe que constitue cette bibliothèque, fondée par des gens qui devaient voir à l'application de la politique d'assimilation, et qui en vint à réunir une collection représentant une vision plurielle de la langue et de la culture. Quel rôle joua-t-elle durant les années où la politique d'assimilation fut en vigueur? Que révèle sa collection quant au type de bibliothèque qu'était la Finnmarksbiblioteket?

Keywords

Sámi, indigenous, learned library, assimilation, Norwegianization

Mots-clés

Sami, autochtones, bibliothèque, assimilation, norvégisation

The Finnmark Library⁵ was established in 1892 as a classically formulated learned library in Vadsø, a town of around 3,200 inhabitants, close to the Russian border in northeastern Norway. Vadsø was the administrative centre of the region of Finnmark, and it was populated by a small but well-educated elite who represented the Norwegian state power in the high north, as the region often is called today. The Norwegian historian Einar Niemi describes Vadsø as a city “dominated by economic conservatism, with old merchant families in front.” The merchants and political and administrative leaders of Vadsø—most of the latter were civil servants from southern Norway—considered themselves as a “specially cultured people ... with a literary heritage dating back to county governor Lillienkiold towards the end of the seventeenth century.”⁶ Hans Lillienkiold, who lived in Vadsø from 1688 to 1701, produced the first comprehensive treatise on Finnmark, *Speculum Boreale*, published in Copenhagen in 1689. His treatise was part of a long tradition of ethnographic, religious, and historic texts describing Finnmark as “Ultima Thule” – a distant, cold and mysterious land – and the Sámi as the indigenous inhabitants of this northern landscape.

When the Finnmark Library was established some 200 years after the publication of Lillienkiöld's study, one of its goals was to amass books in precisely the same tradition: descriptions of Finnmark as an exotic and unknown land. Its creators also hoped to amass scientific literature about Finnmark, written by researchers educated in modern scientific thinking and practice. In other words, the library was established to satisfy the desire of the region's cultured and literary elite for a quiet, private, and scholarly library that could provide them with information about this remote part of the country. The library can be seen as a part of the Enlightenment tradition of scholarly institutions established throughout Europe from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries onward—though in Norway somewhat later, from the seventeenth century, and up to the mid-nineteenth century.

Throughout the eighteenth century, liberal ideas spread among the citizens of Norway, and knowledge about science and culture became important. Private and public libraries and reading societies were established and became domains where new ideas were communicated.⁷ Their collections show that the ideological currents from Europe and the Enlightenment had reached Norway. These collections were part of a large nineteenth-century project to build the nation of Norway.⁸ The establishment of the Finnmark Library coincided with a policy in Northern Norway described as “the Norwegianization policy,” since it was intended to encourage the assimilation of the Sámi and the Kvens, ethnic groups who in many municipalities, including Vadsø, made up over half of the population.⁹ Eriksen and Niemi define Norwegianization as a policy of assimilation whereby “the state and the majority population tried, by using the institutions of the state, to diminish the feeling of identity and unity of the minority.”¹⁰ The policy was implemented through different, and to a certain extent contradictory, methods. Some of the methods were positive and supportive, such as the payment of extra wages to teachers who made the effort to teach the Sámi children Norwegian and the printing of bilingual (Norwegian and Sámi/Finnish) schoolbooks and religious texts.¹¹ Other measures were more negative and were forced on the Sámi and the Kven, such as educational policies that banned the use of Sámi and Kven languages in schools, a policy that was not strictly enforced in every school.¹² These measures were implemented in a hundred-year period from 1850 onwards. The reason for this “dualism” in the Norwegianization policy was the dispute between the Norwegian church and the government over

whether the Sámi should be Christianized using the Sámi or Norwegian language. In the Protestant tradition, it is crucial that the sermon is held in the mother tongue, and for this reason it was important that the Sámi learned to read the Bible in the Sámi languages, “the language of the heart”, as the Sámi themselves called it.¹³ The dispute between the church and the state ended in a compromise, religious books, which until 1900 made up most of the reading material in the schools, were printed in both languages: Norwegian-Sámi, and for the Kven pupils, Norwegian-Finnish. After 1900, the state’s repressive Norwegianization policy gained ground, the Norwegianization policy was strengthened, and bilingual textbooks were gradually removed and replaced by Norwegian textbooks.¹⁴

Ironically, the schooling authorities’ efforts to learn the Sámi and Kven to read and write Norwegian, contributed to the rise of a Sámi and Kven public sphere from around 1890, in public-, school-, and private libraries these minorities found a rich selection of books that argued for a more egalitarian society. Sámi political activists used public libraries, and in particular college libraries, to study emancipating literature and history.¹⁵ This undoubtedly contributed to the first Sámi political movement from around 1900, led by Sámi intellectuals, well educated in the ideology of European liberation movements, from the French Revolution onwards.¹⁶ For the authorities this came as a surprise. They had imagined that when the Sámi read used the public libraries and read Norwegian books, they would be more easily assimilated, and become “good Norwegians.”¹⁷

My hypothesis is that the libraries had a dual function: they were used as an instrument of Norwegianization by the government, but they were simultaneously places where modern ideas about democracy, equality and emancipation were accessible to the political motivated Sámi and Kven public and their supporters. How does the Finnmark Library fit into this picture? Unlike the public libraries, and the libraries at high schools, colleges, and universities – which had collections that covered European literature, parts of world literature and scientific journals and books – the Finnmark Library had a narrower collection, concentrating on Finnmark’s nature, culture, language and history. The users had to pay a member fee, and they belonged to the economic, political, and cultural elite in Finnmark County. We know that some of them wholeheartedly supported the Norwegianization policy, while others were more ambivalent, and some in

direct opposition to this policy. The founders of the Finnmark Library do not seem to have asked questions about the Norwegianization policy, but rather been driven by a motivation to collect books, as well as an idealistic idea that knowledge collected in books, could contribute to modernization and progress. Implicit in this is a view of the original culture as something old-fashioned and something that belongs to the past. However, much of the archival materials of the Finnmark Library are lost, and we must be careful not to draw too wide conclusions based on indistinct traces. In this sense, the archives guide the discussion and the cautious conclusions drawn in my discussion below.

Sources, Previous Research, and Methodological Challenges

Archival sources tell a key part of the story of the Finnmark Library, but there is a major challenge to studying them: most of the archival material from the library was lost during the Second World War. The German authorities decided to use “the scorched earth” tactic and burned down Finnmark County when they withdrew from Russian territory, through Finnmark, in the autumn of 1944.¹⁸ Ironically, the Finnmark Library’s collection had been moved from the library building in Vadsø to a “secure” place in the neighboring municipality of Tana. The library building in Vadsø survived the burnings, one of the few untouched buildings in the region, while the “secure” hiding place in Tana was destroyed, and with it most of the book collection. What we have left today are a few documents in the county library in Vadsø, the National Library, and the State Archive in Oslo. These include the complete book catalogue from 1925, some of the annual reports, letters mainly from after 1930, a couple of short articles written about the library, some cash books, and the lending book for 1939. Some of the original books from the early period of the library are also still intact.

It may be because the sources are so sparse that not much research has been done on the Finnmark Library. There is only one scholarly work that deals with the Finnmark Library, Martha Birkeland’s “hovedoppgave” from 2004, “Museums and Libraries in Northern Norway, 1888–1940: Regionalism, Modernization and Nation Building.”¹⁹ As the title of Birkeland’s thesis indicates, she focused her research on the effect that the library had on the community; by contrast, I have concentrated on the internal development of the Finnmark Library in the first 30 years of its operation. For this purpose,

the complete catalogue from 1925 has been important.²⁰ My objective was to create a portrait of the library through its book collection. To this end, I have gone through all the books in the catalogue, around 1,500 titles.²¹ I have chosen to leave the newspaper collection out because the information in the catalogue does not give a detailed overview of this collection. My research was guided by the following questions, does the book collection indicate what kind of library this was? And was the library's profile in line with the intentions of the founders?²²

The Idea of a “Special Library” for Finnmark

The creation of the Finnmark Library was spearheaded by a handful of people who had the resources, motivation, and networks necessary to carry out such a project. The idea of creating a library—the *Finmarksbibliotheket*—was first presented to the public in an article in the local newspaper, *Finmarkens Amtstidende*, on November 13, 1892. The article was published on the front page of the paper and written by the parish priest, Peter Helgeby, who was also the editor of the paper. He wrote:

Within a small circle of men, who are all very interested in Finnmarken, the idea was recently introduced to establish a special library here in the north, where one should try to collect everything concerning Finnmark's history, geography, topography, statistics, and languages. The case has been discussed on various occasions and is everywhere met with sympathy.²³

What did Helgeby mean by “a special library here in the north” that should serve scientific, idealistic, and administrative purposes? Helgeby notes that the long distances to the central libraries, such as the university libraries in Oslo and Copenhagen, made it difficult to get a hold of the books needed to prove instructions in these subjects. He finds it difficult to link such a library to the public and municipal libraries in Vadsø, since the general purpose of these libraries is not the same as that of a special library. The latter's objectives could be best be realized through “a private association of devoted persons, who provide funds for the acquisition of what may be incorporated in such a library through annual contributions.”²⁴ In addition to new and older literature, Helgeby wanted to obtain copies of original documents from archives, libraries, and government offices in Norway and

Denmark.²⁵ Later, the Finnmark Library also decided to collect photographs of the region.²⁶

Although Helgeby wanted the support of the population of Finnmark, he wrote from the position of a public servant, and most public servants were recruited from the southern part of Norway, and had somewhat limited knowledge of the area they were set to rule:

Many officials from the south live here for a long time and have their life's work here and become interested in these areas. Many of them want to study literature concerning the different affairs of the area; a comprehensive library would meet these needs The conditions in Finnmark are in many ways interesting and peculiar Finnmark is no longer a *terra incognita*, but still, it must be looked upon—in many ways—as a *terra nova*; it is the part of our nation, which has the most promising future. Finnmark is like no other part of our country, the land of possibilities, but you only understand it when you live and work up north.²⁷

Helgeby also mentions in particular “the Lapp question,”²⁸ “the fisheries,” and “the border question.” These were central questions (as they still are today) about the Norwegian state's relation to its indigenous population (the Sámi), its national minority (the Kven), and its border relations with Russia. Commenting on the way Helgeby writes about Finnmark, Birkeland observes that “the words he chooses have almost a religious meaning, as if Finnmark were a forgotten land in the biblical sense.”²⁹ For the clergyman Helgeby, this might simply have been a natural way to express himself, but in the religious and cultural landscape in which he operated, he probably also had the Sámi and Kven populations in mind. Helgeby, like many of his contemporaries in Finnmark, was an avid supporter of the Norwegianization policy. In their view, the Sámi and Kvens were peoples that had not been included in the modernization of Norway, they were “forgotten” and the way forward was to make them into “good” Norwegians. For this purpose, language, customs, religion, and industries had to be Norwegianized. After moving from Finnmark County back to Oslo in 1900, he wrote a letter to the School and Church minister Wexelsen

wherein he offered to assist the minister in his efforts to Norwegianize the Sámi and Kvens:

When I had the honour to speak to you a few days ago, you suggested, if I did not misunderstand you, that during the work you have undertaken for Norwegianization in the so-called mixed-language districts, my assistance may be needed in the preparation and follow-up of the case.³⁰

Norwegian officials did not hold a multicultural view of this northern part of the country; rather, they saw it as a Norwegian region with “foreign nationalities”³¹ – a term often used by officials – inside its borders. The tangle of languages and cultures had to be standardized, the infrastructure modernized.³² In this sense, the Finnmark Library served the colonial ambitions of Norway. It was not a library to be used by the indigenous Sámi population or the Finnish immigrants. The objective of the intellectual and administrative elite was to modernize the region, and for this purpose they needed, in the words of Peter Helgeby, “to study the literature concerning the different affairs of the area.”³³

In his plans to build a “special library” for Finnmark County, Helgeby was supported by the county governor Nikolai Prebensen. The latter was the first subscribing member of the Finnmark Library. Prebensen came from a very rich family that ran a shipping company and lumber business in the town of Risør, in the south of Norway. He had been the mayor of Vardø (a neighbouring city to Vadsø) and took over the governor’s office in Finnmark County in 1889. He was elected to the Norwegian Parliament for the periods 1892–1894 and 1903–1906. Prebensen was a bibliophile, and we can find his name on the covers of many of the juridical and historical books that are still intact from the Finnmark Library. Birkeland points out that Prebensen was a nationalist, an agent for modernization and the Norwegianization project and a highly trusted official.³⁴ He represented the Norwegian government in discussions concerning the Norwegian–Russian border and he argued that the development of infrastructure in Finnmark was of national importance.³⁵ He played an important role in developing the Norwegianization policy; for example, he was part of a parliamentary committee that passed a land law (“jordsalgloven” in Norwegian) in 1902 that stated that to qualify as a landowner in Finnmark County you had to show satisfactory Norwegian language skills.³⁶ This law was intended to

restrict access to land ownership by “foreign nationalities,” as mentioned above. The law was in force until 1965, but it was evidently largely ignored by local authorities, since the Sámi and the Kven often sat on municipal boards and committees, and it was never strictly enforced.³⁷ However, it did show how far the authorities were willing to go, in principle, to secure what they called “national interests.”³⁸

The First Years

Nikolai Prebensen and Peder Helgeby, together with seven other representatives of Vadsø’s economic, administrative, and political elite, gathered on December 14, 1892, to establish the “special library for Finnmark.” Helgeby became the first chairman of the board. Statutes were drafted, and a petition for support and requests for gifts such as books and manuscripts were sent out.³⁹ The statutes decided, among other things, that:

§1. The library’s purpose is to collect and store books and manuscripts connected to Finnmark’s history, language, ethnography, natural history and statistics, and everything else that can inform about this part of the country and its population through the ages.

§ 3 The library will always be located in Vadsø and will be open to the public without fees in the way that the board may decide.⁴⁰

The board sent out a call for donations of books and manuscripts. They had good connections to academic institutions and scholars elsewhere in Norway and made immediate contact with the University Library in Kristiania (Oslo),⁴¹ and with the leading Sámi linguist and ethnographer Professor Just Qvigstad, at the Teaching College in Tromsø. Presumably Prebensen, who was a member of the board in the library’s early years and was himself a passionate book collector, drew on his broad network throughout Norway. One might say that the collecting strategy of the Finnmark Library was to “harvest what had already been sown,” from the Renaissance onward, in the rich tradition of intellectual, artistic, and travel literature about Northern Scandinavia. In an article from 1926, looking back on the development of the Finnmark Library, Balke writes:

The idea of a Finnmark library struck a chord and gifts began to flow in—from private individuals, from public

libraries and museums and from the editorial offices of the Finnmark newspapers. I would especially like to mention the University Library [in Kristiania, later Oslo], which from the very beginning has assisted the library's board with good advice and donated valuable gifts to the library.⁴²

However, the facilities for the library and the book collection were poor. In the early years the growing and ever more valuable collection was privately hosted by members of the board. Eventually, it was moved to the rectory, and from there to a room in the city hospital. The board feared losing the collection in a fire and moved it once more, this time to the burial chapel, which, according to Balke, "at the time consisted of two rooms and was without a stove, so the danger of fire was relatively small. The chapel would survive even a larger city fire, as it lay all by itself in the middle of the cemetery."⁴³ The question of a suitable building for the library eventually became a central part of the board's work and I will address this issue later in the article.

During the library's first 10 years, the collection grew primarily through gifts and small donations from private individuals and institutions all over Norway, through duplicates donated by other libraries, and through purchases from antique shops in Stockholm and Copenhagen. The library also provided support to the priest Georg Balke to travel to Karasjok in the winter of 1897. Here he collected "some older Sámi ('Lappish') literature." Two of the books were 130 years old and are described as very rare.⁴⁴ Much to Balke's dismay, a chest of old books, which he kept from his stay in Karasjok as parish priest in the 1880s, had burned down with the old schoolhouse.

In 1898, the library had 21 members. The annual membership fee was Norwegian Kroner 3, and the cash balance stood at NOK 496. The annual report from 1899 gives an overview of the individuals and institutions from across Norway who had donated books, magazines, brochures, or other printed documents to the library. There were 25 public employees (priests, teachers, professors, librarians, directors and others), 10 public institutions (ALM's, universities, scientific societies, and other scientific institutions), 2 private institutions (missionary associations), 4 private individuals (lawyers,

merchant, consul), and 8 editors and staff from newspapers and bookshops. Twenty of these donors were residents of Vadsø and nearby Vardø town, five were from other towns in Finnmark, and four were from Tromsø, the largest city in Northern Norway and at that time also an administrative center for Finnmark and Troms County.⁴⁵ The remaining 26 were from other parts of Norway, most of them (12) from Kristiania (Oslo).⁴⁶ As noted above, these patrons represented the administrative, cultural, and scientific elite of late nineteenth-century society. Among the public institutions that supported the library were the Ministry of Labor, the Statistical Central Bureau, and the University Library in Kristiania (Oslo).

In the archives, I could find no trace of gifts given to the Finnmark Library from the county's fishermen, farmers, miners, or workers. People along the coast of Northern Norway most often lived through a combination of fishing and farming, termed "fiskerbonde," ("fishing-farmer" in English). However, the board reached out to these groups, too. In a report from 1899⁴⁷ and in a letter to the University library in Kristiania,⁴⁸ the board describes asking for gifts from

the many dwellings in Finmarken where there are many things, which may separately not have any special value, but which by being part of a collection in a library, and being added to fragments of the same kind, will eventually form a whole. An old edition of a newspaper can be of great importance to the library by being just the one publication the library lacks for a complete collection of this special newspaper.⁴⁹

We know that the library gradually built a solid collection of the different regional newspapers in Finnmark, but we do not know if the lay population of Finnmark responded to the call for "many things ... of special value."

Who Were the Members?

Nearly all the members of the Finnmark Library belonged to the upper social strata of the town, and, according to Birkeland, based on the register from 1894, there was "a predominance of high-status professions such as consuls, magistrates, merchants, and lawyers among the modest membership of a total of 16 people."⁵⁰ In 1900, the library welcomed its

first woman member, Ellisif Wessel; the second woman did not follow until 1928. Ellisif Wessel and her husband, the doctor Andreas Wessel, were well-known radicals, strongly committed to the rights of workers in this politically turbulent time.⁵¹ There were, however, a couple of library members who did not hold such high-status professions. In 1920, the local baker became a member, and in the register from 1939 we find one person titled “worker,” who borrowed a book called “Community administration” (“Kommunekundskap”). Perhaps he wanted to use the book for an educational purpose and could not find it in the well-equipped public library in Vadsø?

What we can establish, although based on sparse sources (the cash registers and the lending protocol from 1939), is that the social and cultural backgrounds of the members of the Finnmark Library changed little between 1892 and 1939. Patrons of the library hailed from the upper class of society, and to a certain extent the middle class (teachers, municipal administrators). How many units (books, photographs, newspapers) were lent per year? Here again the record is sparse; only the lending book from 1939 is intact. There were 23 registered borrowers that year, 9 of whom lived outside Vadsø. Of the 285 units that were lent out, 140 were photographs. The opening time in 1939 was one hour every Monday, though the members who lived outside Vadsø ordered their books by post.⁵² Evidently, although the library membership was relatively homogenous and the resources somewhat limited, people made active use of the materials that were available. Such use was precisely the ambition of Georg Balke, who was the driving force in the development of the library from 1900 and the following decade.

Georg Balke: The Romantic Leader of the Finnmark Library from 1901–1910

Johan Maximilian Georg Balke was the son of the famous Norwegian painter Peder Balke. In 1880, Georg Balke was appointed the parish priest in Karasjok, a village in the inner part of Finnmark County, in the heart of *Sápmi* – the historical settlement area⁵³ – and from 1885 to 1910 he held the same position in Vadsø. Balke joined the board of the Finnmark Library in 1897 and became its chair in 1901, a position he held until 1910. As Birkeland observes, “In the beginning, Balke probably had a rather romantic

view of Finnmark. When he left Karasjok, he wrote a farewell note in the calendar which revealed that he had been disappointed in his encounter with ‘the Finns of Karasjok.’”⁵⁴ He confessed, “I have tried to live and work with compassion among the Finns (*Sámi*) of Karasjok. But I have failed many times. God will forgive me. And he must help the Finns of Karasjok to repent their hearts.”⁵⁵ Balke, like many leading authors, scientists, politicians, and bureaucrats of the late nineteenth century, saw the Sámi as “noble savages,” a people existing unchanged in the high north from earliest times, but now doomed to disappear in their meeting with a “stronger,” “more rational” and “superior” Norwegian “race”.⁵⁶ This view can also be found repeated in many of the travelogues in the stacks of the Finnmark Library.⁵⁷ Balke might also have taken a broader view on the Sámi question. He spoke Sámi and Finnish and preached in both languages, which shows that his language skills were good. The fact that he learned the languages, and used them among laypeople, afforded him a solid position in the Sámi and Finnish congregations.⁵⁸ Thus, while Balke seems to have supported the Norwegianization policy, he may, at the same time, have been skeptical of the pace at which assimilation was being carried out.⁵⁹

Beginning in 1897, when he first joined the board, and throughout his period as chair from 1901 to 1910, Georg Balke was a leading force in the development of the Finnmark Library. In his article from 1926, Balke emphasizes in particular the importance of the University library in Kristiania (Oslo), which from the very beginning “assisted with good advice and valuable gifts.”⁶⁰ In 1901 he sent a letter, also signed by two other members of the board, to Axel Drolsum⁶¹, the director of the University library in Kristiania (Oslo) from 1870 to 1922.⁶² In the letter, which assumed Drolsum’s familiarity with the Finnmark Library’s activities, Balke and the board members wrote that the objective of the library was that anyone who wanted to study or write about Finnmark should find the necessary material in the stacks. They explained that it would be a while before this goal could be achieved, but work was being done steadily to grow the collections, and over the previous year and a half, 400 new items (which Balke calls “numbers”) had been added to the collection. The board’s primary reason for writing, however, was to ask for support for their plans to establish a collection of photographs. “We recognize the role that the photography plays today, and the board has decided to establish a photo collection for Finnmark County. Photographs of the towns, villages, or any

place, ... will, in a striking way, illuminate development or stagnation, progress or decline, and thus be documents of great interest.”⁶³

Balke and his colleagues were ahead of their time when they decided to focus on photography as a novel form of documentation. Today, the photo collection of the Finnmark Library contains 145,000 images, the oldest from the 1860s.⁶⁴ In addition to photographs, the board asked for drawings, paintings, postcards, woodcuts, and pictures from illustrated magazines. We do not know how many gifts the Finnmark Library received from the University library, but since Balke specifically mentions them in his later account, we can assume that they made a significant contribution.

The two chairmen, Georg Balke (1901–1910) and Johan Beronka (1920–1931), were the leading force behind the Finnmark Library up to 1930.⁶⁵ Balke prepared the main catalogue that was printed in 1925 (and is still intact), following a simplified version of the Norwegian “seddel-katalog” system.⁶⁶ Unlike other public libraries in Norway, the Finnmark Library was not driven by trained librarians, rather by enthusiasm, patriotism, and optimism about the future of Finnmark.⁶⁷

In the period between 1910 and 1920 the Finnmark Library seems to have been almost abandoned. Birkeland finds evidence of this neglect—between the end of Balke’s chairmanship and the beginning of Beronka’s—in a gap in the cash register. She adds that “in the printed catalogue there are remarkably few registered publications dating from the period 1910–1920, which supports the assumption that the Finnmark Library did not have adequate resources to operate during this period.”⁶⁸ This dip in activity can be seen as a clear sign of how dependent the library was on the initiative of its leaders.

Johan Beronka: The Gifted Kven Priest

In 1920, Johan Beronka (or *Juhani Perunka* in Finnish) took over the chairmanship of the Finnmark Library. Birkeland writes of Beronka: “Without Beronka, the Finnmark Library could have withered away like a forgotten old collection in the attic of the primary school, until the caretaker did not bother to have the books tossed there anymore and had them thrown away.”⁶⁹ Beronka was not only the most creative but also the most

controversial leader of the Finnmark Library. His family ancestors were from Finland, and he grew up in the Kven district of Vadsø city during the latter part of the nineteenth century. About half the population of Vadsø city was at this time made up from the Kven population. Beronka was a gifted pupil and he studied theology at the University of Kristiania (Oslo). He also studied Semitic languages and Inuit dialects and subsequently took exams in Finnish and Sámi. As a student, he worked for a year as a private teacher in Lausanne, Switzerland, and he was awarded travel scholarships that gave him opportunities for further language studies in Hungary and France. He was fluent or almost fluent in 10 languages, and for many years he was a correspondent for Finnish, Hungarian, and Italian newspapers. Between 1920 and 1930, he was parish priest in Vadsø, and beginning in 1928 he was also dean of the county church.⁷⁰

Beronka was skeptical of the Norwegianization policy. In 1917, he published an article called *Finnerne under fremmed paavirkning* (“The Finns [‘Sámi’] under Foreign Influence”) in a book that took a critical standpoint on the Norwegianization of the Sámi and Kven.⁷¹ The article shows that Beronka, like many of his contemporaries, shared some of the established viewpoints of the early twentieth century on the relationship between “race” and particular attributes in people. Beronka, however, makes it clear that the authorities were mistaken in denying the Sámi and Kven the right to use their own language in schools and congregations.⁷² Beronka’s Finnish background and his critical standpoint on the Norwegianization policy put him in a vulnerable position, and he endured fierce criticism from other officials in Finnmark.⁷³

Beronka seems to have had an entrepreneurial spirit. When he started as chair of the library board, the collections were stored in a room on the third floor of the newly built Vadsø primary school. The danger of fire in this wooden building was significant. In a newspaper article in the *Finnmark Arbeiderblad* of June 28, 1922, Beronka floated the idea of a separate building for the library. In 1922, he travelled to Kristiania (Oslo), and through a contact at Norway’s largest newspaper, *Aftenposten*, he managed to get the paper to write about the plans for a building for the Finnmark Library, and to start fundraising.⁷⁴ A lawyer in Oslo and a factory director in Bergen led the fundraising efforts. They managed to collect NOK 6,500. The Norwegian Parliament granted NOK 5,000, the Finnmark county council

NOK 1,500, and from the Norwegian lottery, they received NOK 2,000. The Vadsø municipality offered the building site for free. Together this was a considerable amount of money, a substantial portion of the cost of the new building, which was around NOK 20,000.⁷⁵ At a general meeting among stakeholders of the Finnmark Library in 1923, it was decided that “a separate building of stone or concrete ought to be built to protect the valuable, and partly irreplaceable, collections of the library.”⁷⁶ In 1924, the drawing of the planned library was presented to the public. It was to contain two collection rooms and a reading room. After that, construction began. “[T]he little chapel-looking building was built at American pace,” (a Norwegian expression of speed and efficiency, not so much used today) as the local newspaper described it, and the official opening of the library took place on May 29, 1926.⁷⁷



Figure 1: The Finnmark Library as it looks today. Photo: Geir Grenersen, June 2021.

The Book Collection: What Can it Tell Us, and What is Missing?

In 1925, there were in total 3,000 items in the library, some of them unique and of great value.⁷⁸ There were also special folders with pictures, newspaper clippings, printed announcements, and other documents for each municipality in Finnmark.⁷⁹ The book catalogue for the Finnmark Library, *Katalog over Finnmarksbibliotekets bok- og avissamling*, published by Georg Balke in 1925, is organized according to an alphabetical system called *Den*

alfabetiske seddelkatalog (“The alphabetical note catalogue”).⁸⁰ Items were catalogued based on the author’s name and other fixed thematic categories, such as theology, astronomy, botany, and general philology, with subcategories like the Sámi and Kven languages.⁸¹ In addition, Balke also prepared several “special catalogues” made up of newspaper articles concerning Finnmark.⁸² These have since lost, probably during the Second World War.

The alphabetical note catalogue for the Finnmark Library is the most important artifact that has survived and that can now “speak”⁸³ to us about the first 30 years of the library’s existence. The catalogue is 110 pages long and contains references to nearly 1,500 books and magazines, some of which are works in many volumes. The catalogue is divided into 30 categories and subcategories, and many books in Sámi and Finnish and most of the major European languages, including Latin.⁸⁴

The Distribution of Books in Different Subjects

The most striking feature of the collection is the focus on natural sciences divided into the following subcategories: Anthropology (mainly physical anthropology/eugenics, 7 items, only), Astronomy and Geography, Botany, Zoology, Geology and Mineralogy, totaling over 330 items, and the focus on philology in the subcategories: General Philology (“Filologi i almindelighet”), Sámi Languages, Kven Languages. Other important categories are History, Geography, Travelogues and Ethnography, Mythology and Folklore, Archeology, totaling nearly 600 items; and finally, a smaller section on political sciences, economics, and mercantile subjects with approximately 150 items.⁸⁵

Botany is well represented with over 100 numbers; it seems like this category was particularly important, and it includes many books, periodicals, and offprints that were given as gifts from the University of Kristiania (Oslo). Many of the botany books and offprints were in Latin. Geology and Mineralogy was also an important category and is represented with over 50 items. Zoology was another important category, with over 150 items. Gustav Guldberg, professor of anatomy at the University of Kristiania (Oslo) between 1888 and 1908, is well represented in this category, with 12 works written in Norwegian, French, and German on whale anatomy,

embryology, and the behaviour of whales.⁸⁶ Whaling was an important industry in Norway and whaling in Finnmark was extensive at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Guldberg also shared the fascination of scientists at the turn of the twentieth century with eugenics and physical anatomy: some were simply influenced by it, while others seem to have held it as a form of scientific ideology.⁸⁷ Perhaps most notably, under the category of Anthropology was listed Guldberg's "A comprehensive anthropological survey of the entire population of Norway."⁸⁸ Kyllingstad explains:

Thus, the anthropological study of the racial identity of the Norwegians and Sámi was strongly connected to Norwegian archaeological, linguistic, and historical studies of national prehistory and history. All these disciplines were influenced by ideas on race.... However, a view of society and nationhood based on the idea of races with unchanging psychological characters never made a hegemonic breakthrough in any of these disciplines.⁸⁹

The point I want to make is that the eugenics trend at the beginning of the twentieth century can be registered as an undercurrent in some of the categories of the Finnmark Library's book collection. In part, it is openly expressed, as in the Anthropology category, where almost all the books are based on the prevailing eugenics ideology that held that humanity could be ordered in intellectual and behavioristic hierarchies based on physical traits.⁹⁰

The collection's focus on the natural sciences, economy, fisheries, whaling, commerce, industry, mining, forestry, and communications was based on an optimistic view about the future of the Finnmark region. "For the founders of the Finnmark Library, Finnmark was the country of the future, and it would enrich the nation if the region was better developed and modernized."⁹¹ The information about science and resource development found in the Finnmark Library was one means to achieve this goal. But there were also books voicing less progressive attitudes about race and ethnic groups. The colonial gaze had not been weeded out of the collection, and some of the men who built the Finnmark Library shared this view.

Philology, Religion, and Ethnography

In his “call to arms” in the *Finmarkens Amtstidende* in 1892 for a “special library” in Finnmark, Helgeby had mentioned, among other things “the manifold questions concerning the Lapps.” Helgeby does not tell us what he meant by “manifold,” but his ambition might have been to build up a body of texts about the Sámi in the library; a formidable task. The Norwegian classical philologist Per Pippin Aspaas sorted the texts that were written about the Sámi in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries into in three categories:

In part, there were dictionaries, grammars, and ABC books, i.e., basic linguistic or pedagogical works. These printed works became guides for how the sounds of the language were to be expressed in writing. There were also religious texts, such as catechisms and excerpts from the Bible. We can call the third type of texts ethnographic-historical, or descriptions of the [Sámi’s] cultural characteristics, often with an emphasis on their pagan religion. The ethnographic-historical works, like the dictionaries and grammars, were not written in Sámi, but in Latin, or another language. Nevertheless, such works contain a lot of information of linguistic–scientific interest, such as language tests and discussions of words and expressions.⁹²

These same categories are expressed in the organization of the Sámi books in the Finnmark Library.⁹³ The category General Philology, with its two subcategories Sámi (“Lappisk”) language and Kven (“Finnish”) language, is a rich collection comprising 365 items in total. Many of the classical Sámi linguists are represented in this category.⁹⁴

In the subclass Sámi Languages (270 works), Balke makes an interesting shift in his classification system. He adapts the reference system used by the two leading Sámi linguists of the time, Qvigstad and Wicklund’s: their “Bibliographie der Lappischen Litteratur.”⁹⁵ Why does Balke make this shift just for this one category in the catalogue? He does not say explicitly that he is following Qvigstad and Wicklund’s system; does he assume that the reader of the catalogue already knows? This seems unlikely, rather, it is

probably a system that he simply adopted because it made the cataloging of Sámi books easier for him.⁹⁶ Neither Balke nor any others of the “librarians” at the Finnmark Library were professionally trained, their main goal was to provide an overview of the stock and establish a lending system that worked. It did not matter much whether slightly different cataloguing practices were used within a single catalogue. What is most notable in the context of this study is that by using Qvigstad and Wicklund’s bibliography, Balke and others chose to refer to the most comprehensive bibliography that had been compiled up to that time on Sámi literature. This signals their ambitions for the collection.

Religious texts, such as catechisms, sermons, and excerpts from the Bible, make up an important portion of the Finnmark Library’s Sámi collection. Most of them are to be found in the category Theology, and had a main focus on the works of the missionary Thomas von Westen, the priest and linguist Nils Stockfleth, and the preacher Lars Levi Læstadius. This category contains not only sermons and catechisms, but also ethnographic-historical books, such as *Norsk Finnemissions Historie* (“The History of the Norwegian Sámi Missions”).⁹⁷ Religious works written in Sámi are spread over many categories; the Sámi Bible is placed under Lappisk, and the same goes for works by Læstadius and Luther, as well as various devotional books, altar books, hymn books, and prayer books.⁹⁸

Ethnographic-historical descriptions of the Sámi are part of a long tradition in European scholarly history. Under the library’s History category, we find a copy of Lillienkiöld’s *Speculum Boreale*.⁹⁹ The Finnmark Library paid NOK 875 for it to be copied in 1922, a large sum when we know that the library in that year had a total income of NOK 260 and a cash balance of NOK 1622.¹⁰⁰ *Speculum Boreale* was mostly written while Lillienkiöld lived in Vadsø, and the book is a rich source on the older history of Finnmark and the North Calotte.¹⁰¹ Under History, we also find classic works of Norwegian history by authors such as R. Keyser, K. Leem, P.A. Munch, Y. Nielsen, J. Qvigstad, J. E. Sars, and G. Storm. Some of the works by these historians are, even today, hotly contested, particularly concerning the question of land and water rights for the Sámi as an indigenous population. Under Mythology and Folklore we find books on Sámi paganism, and under Geography, Travelogues, and Ethnography, we find many of the traditional travel descriptions that followed in the wake of priests, politicians, and

scientists after they had stayed or visited Finnmark, often with titles like *Med ren og pulke over Finnmarksvidden* (“With Reindeer and Sledge Over the Finnmark Heath”)¹⁰² or *Reise i Lapland* (“A Journey in Lapland”).¹⁰³ These books are often written in the style of the “explorer” who travels through new lands and meets a “strange” and slightly “inferior” culture. In these travelogues, the Sámi are often portrayed as “noble savages,” simple people who would soon disappear over the horizon of modern society. One book that could have balanced this bias is lacking in the Finnmark Library’s stocks: Johan Turi’s *Muitalus sámiid birra* (“My book about the Sámi”), published in 1910 in Copenhagen in a parallel edition in Sámi and Danish. This was the first book ever written in the Sámi language by Sámi, literary researcher says:

Turi witnessed the negative consequences of the Swedish state’s assimilation policy towards the Sámi people. This is described allegorically in the book, with the subheading “The story about Sápmi’s unknown animals.” (...) He provides rich and detailed ethnographic descriptions, written by a very skilled narrator.¹⁰⁴

It has been described as a “sensation,” and during its first two years it was printed in three editions and commented on widely. Why then, did the Finnmark Library not include this book? As stated earlier, the library was in a kind of crisis in the decade between 1910 and 1920. We can see from the catalogue that few new titles were acquired in this period. When Beronka took over the chairmanship in 1920, might he have simply forgotten to order this important book? Or was Turi’s ethnographic description of skills needed to survive as reindeer herders, in this harsh and cold climate, a text that differed so markedly in quality and perspective from the many ethnocentric travel descriptions from outsiders, that the board—and Beronka—simply did not recognize its importance? Maybe they looked upon it as a sort of novel from a simple reindeer herder, a text not in line with the library’s scientific aspirations. We will probably never know the answer to these questions.

Concluding Remarks

The establishment of the Finnmark Library—the building of a scholarly library at an outpost in “Ultima Thule”—might seem like a strange idea.

And indeed, the Finnmark Library was a latecomer compared to the scholarly and private libraries elsewhere in Europe, which were established during the period between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries. However, as we have seen, Vadsø had a long literary history, dating back to the work of county governor Hans Lillienkiöld, author of *Speculum Boreale*, in the late seventeenth century. Lillienkiöld produced in all over 6000 handwritten pages on the history of Europe, Scandinavia and Finnmark.¹⁰⁵ Many of his studies on Finnmark was written during his stay in Vadsø (1687-1701). The manuscripts are, according to the historian Einar Niemi, in themselves works of art, with neat Gothic writing, frequent use of colored ink, watercolors and other drawings. These illustrations are still often used in works about the history of Norway and the Nordic countries. Niemi says that a literary and scholarly circle developed around Lillienkiöld, and that some of his colleagues (priests, other administrators) wrote topographical descriptions, theses on Sámi religion, and literary works of high quality. Over the next two centuries, officials and administrators in Vadsø followed up this literary and scholarly tradition, among them Hans Paus, who in 1768 published *Samlinger til en historisk Beskrivelse av Finnmark* (“Collections for a historical description of Finnmark”), a work still to be found in the archive of the Royal Library in Copenhagen.¹⁰⁶

The shared borders with Russia and Finland made Finnmark and Vadsø an important strategic area for Norway, and for this reason the seat of the County Governor was placed in Vadsø. The Norwegian government was unsure if it could rely on the loyalty of the thousands of Finnish immigrants to Norway.¹⁰⁷ The intensification of the assimilation (Norwegianization) policy toward the end of the nineteenth century was in part motivated by a desire to increase that loyalty. The Norwegian government’s fear of an increasingly confident and expansionistic Finland, and a politically unstable Russia, resulted in the best, hand-picked officials being sent to Finnmark to implement this policy.¹⁰⁸ The most notable among them was the county governor Nikolai Prebensen, who from 1897 was a member of the Norwegian Parliament. The other key person was, as mentioned earlier, the pastor and editor Peter Helgeby, who both worked toward the modernization of the region and avidly supported the Norwegianization policy. A third key figure was Georg Balke, who joined the board of the Finnmark Library when County Governor Prebensen left Vadsø in 1897. These three entrepreneurs made the establishment of the Finnmark Library

into a national, and to some extent Scandinavian, matter. Through their broad networks in academia, art, business and political and religious circles, they quickly built up a sizeable collection of books, journals, and photographs for the library.

The Finnmark Library's collection was built around a tension between retrospective ethnography, as shown at the beginning of this chapter, and forward-looking science. In the ethnographic collection, most of the great early works on "Lapland" are represented: Lillienkiöld's *Speculum Boreale*, von Düben's *Om Lappland och Lapparna* ("About Lapland and the Lapps"), Schefferus' *Laponia*, and many more.¹⁰⁹ These authors tried to detach themselves from earlier imaginative accounts of *Ultima Thule*, but were still strongly influenced by ancient perceptions of the northern areas as a completely different place, a strange periphery, compared to what was seen as "the center" in central or southern Europe.¹¹⁰

From 1900 the number of scientific literatures focusing on development, progress and modernity was on the rise. This was reflected in The Finnmark Library collection in categories as Industry, Mining, Fisheries, Agriculture, Forestry, Botany, Zoology, Political Science, Economics, and Trade.¹¹¹ Finnmark was, as Helgeby said in his article in *Finmarkens Amtstidende* in 1892, "the part of our country that has the most interesting development ahead ... [I]t is the land of opportunity." The collection reflects his ambitions; here, the interested administrator and others could have found scientific literature on many of the projects that they might have wanted to plan or initiate.

The library also had a relatively large and varied selection of literature on Sámi language and linguistics, some 350 books and journals by the best linguists in Europe. The leading experts on the Sámi language in Scandinavia, believed that the Sámi nation would not survive the modernization that was sweeping across Western society. For this reason, it was important to collect key documents before they disappeared. They were proven wrong, however: today the Sámi in Norway have their own Parliament,¹¹² and an increasing proportion of the young Sámi population learn Sámi as their first language, or in parallel with Norwegian.

The value of the Finnmark Library today lies in the large collection of older books, pictures, and other documents (such as maps and posters). Many documents were lost during the Second World War, but some survived. Today they constitute a sort of hidden treasure in the storerooms of the County Library of Finnmark.¹¹³



Figure 2: Books preserved from the original *Finmarksbibliotheket*. Today in the preservation of the Finnmark County Library. Photo: Geir Grenersen, June 2021.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

Geir Grenersen is professor in Documentation studies at UiT The Arctic University of Norway. His research focuses on the political relations between ethnic groups Northern Norway: Sámi, Kven (Finnish population) and Norwegians, with a particular interest on the role of libraries during the Norwegian state's assimilation policy towards Sámi and Kven between 1850-1960, a policy that still cast a long shadow in the multicultural landscape of Northern Norway.

Notes

¹ “Ultima Thule” was a term for the end of the world to the north. It is taken from the Roman writer Pliny the Elder, who wrote that *ultima omnium quae memorantur Tyle* (“ultimately known lies Thule”), describing an island far to the north, with a midnight sun. See Store Norske Leksikon, “Ultima Thule,” https://snl.no/Ultima_Thule.

² Thanks to the staff at Varanger Museum, the Finnmark County Library, lecturer Marta Birkeland, and to the editors of *Studies in Book Culture* for their outstanding work.

³ All translations from Norwegian to English are done by me.

⁴ Georg Balke, “Lidt om Finmarksbiblioteket i Vadsø,” *Finnmark Folkeblad*. Julenenummer (“Jul ved ishavet”), 1926.

⁵ Arkitekturguide Nord-Norge og Svalbard, “Finmarksbiblioteket”: <https://arkitekturguide.uit.no/items/show/1025>.

⁶ Einar Niemi, “Byen bak de nedrullede gardiner? Om sted og mentalitet – Vadsø og vadsøværingene,” in *Karlsøy og verden utenfor: kulturhistoriske perspektiver på nordnorske steder: festskrift til professor Håvard Dahl Bratrein på 70-årsdagen*, eds. Marit Anne Hauan et al., 250-271 (Tromsø museum, 2003), 56–57.

⁷ Øivind Frisvold, *Kunnskap er makt. Norsk bibliotekhistorie – Kultur, politikk, samfunn* (Oslo: ABM media, 2021), 15–30.

⁸ Johan Rørlien Henden, “Det er ikke alene et Universitets-, men ogsaa et Nationalbibliothek. Axel Charlot Drolsum i Universitetsbiblioteket, 1870–1922” (PhD diss., NTNU, 2017), 68.

⁹ Geir Grenersen, “The Role of the Libraries in the Norwegianization Policy 1880–1905,” *Proceedings from the Document Academy* 2, no. 1 (2015): [10.35492/docam/2/1/11](https://doi.org/10.35492/docam/2/1/11).

¹⁰ Knut Erik Eriksen and Einar Niemi, *Den finske fare. Sikkerhetspolitikk og minoritetspolitikk i nord* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1981), 24.

¹¹ Geir Grenersen, “Interpretations of Patterns and Actors in the Lapp Fund Documents,” *Proceedings from the Document Academy* 1, no. 1 (2014): [10.35492/docam/1/1/3](https://doi.org/10.35492/docam/1/1/3).

¹² Eriksen and Niemi, *Den finske fare*, 49.

¹³ There are three official Sámi languages in Norway: North-, Lule-, and South-Sámi. Some practice is required for people from the different language areas to understand each other in everyday speech.

¹⁴ Bård Tvette, *Skolebøker for samebarn i Norge fra Thomas von Westen til i dag* (Hovedoppgave. Oslo: Universitetet i Oslo, 1955).

¹⁵ Geir Grenersen, “Libraries and the Establishment of a Sámi Political Sphere.” In *Proceedings from the Document Academy* 5, no. 2 (2018): [10.35492/docam/5/2/7](https://doi.org/10.35492/docam/5/2/7).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Beginning in the 1860s the School Directors of Finnmark County made regular inspection trips on behalf of the School and Church Departments. Their reports show that they worked actively to use the libraries in the Norwegianization processes. See Jens Killengreen, *Indberetning om en Inspektionsreise til Finmarken – Foretaget i Tiden fra 2den Februar til 7de Juni 1886* (Kristiania: Kirkedepartementet, 1887).

¹⁸ Nina Berglund, “Northern Norway’s grief remembered.” *NewsinEnglish.no*: <https://www.newsinenglish.no/2014/10/24/northern-norways-grief-remembered/>.

¹⁹ Martha Birkeland, *Museum og bibliotek i Nord-Norge 1888–1940. Regionalisme, modernisering og nasjonsbygging* (Hovedoppgave i historie, Universitetet i Tromsø, 2004).

²⁰ Georg Balke, *Katalog over Finnmarksbibliotekets Bok- og Avisssamling* (Vadsø Trykkeri, 1925).

²¹ Birkeland lists 3,000 of what Balke calls “numbers” (“tilvekstnumre”), or items, in the catalogue. She has probably counted all the volumes in the many works, and all numbers of the journals represented in the collection: *Museum og bibliotek*, 70–71.

²² The Finnmark Library (“Finnmarksbiblioteket”) is today the name of a collection within the Finnmark County Library. It includes books, posters, papers, and thousands of photos connected to Finnmark, many of them from the original Finnmark Library. <https://finnmarksbibliotekene.no/finnmarksbiblioteket/>.

²³ *Finmarkens Amtstidende* (November 13, 1892): 1. The National Library of Norway: https://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digavis_finmarkensamtstidende_vadsoe_null_null_19410517_71_38_1.

²⁴ *Finmarkens Amtstidende* (November 13, 1892): 1.

²⁵ Birkeland, *Museum og bibliotek*, 53.

²⁶ Karl Akre, Georg Balke, and E. E. Smith, “Finmarksbibliotheket i Vadsø” (“Meddelelse 21. August, 1899.”), in *Katalog over Finnmarksbibliotekets Bok- og Avisssamling*, ed. Georg Balke, 11–15 (Vadsø: Vadsø Trykkeri, 1925).

²⁷ Peter Bernhard Helgeby, “Om opprettelsen av et specialbibliothek for Finmarken,” *Finmarkens Amtstidende* 46, no. 13 (November 1892).

²⁸ The word “Lapp,” used to refer to the Sámi up to the 1960s, is today considered derogatory.

²⁹ Birkeland, *Museum og bibliotek*, 54.

³⁰ Peter Bernhard Helgeby, “Letter to School- and Church Minister Wexelsen,” in *Samisk skolehistorie*, vol. 4, eds. Elfrid Boine et al. (Karasjok: Davvi Girji, 2010): <http://skuvla.info/skolehist/helgeby-tn.htm>. The letter is undated but was probably written between 1900 and 1902.

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- ³¹ Jens Killengreen, *Indberetning om en Inspektionsreise til Finmarken – Foretaget i Tiden fra 2den Februar til 7de Juni 1886* (Kristiania: Kirkedepartementet, 1887).
- ³² Eriksen and Niemi, *Den finske fare*.
- ³³ Helgeby, *Om opprettelsen av et specialbibliotek for Finmarken*.
- ³⁴ Birkeland, *Museum og bibliotek*, 64.
- ³⁵ Molden Gunnar, “Nikolai Prebensen,” *Norsk Biografisk Leksikon*: https://nbl.snl.no/Nikolai_Prebensen.
- ³⁶ Birkeland, *Museum og bibliotek*, 64; Eriksen and Niemi, *Den finske fare*, 81.
- ³⁷ Evjen Andresen and Teemu Ryymin, *Samenes historie fra 1751 til 2010* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 2021), 168, 216.
- ³⁸ Eriksen and Niemi, *Den finske fare*, 26, 81, 121.
- ³⁹ Balke, “Lidt om Finmarksbiblioteket i Vadsø,” 28.
- ⁴⁰ Balke, *Katalog over Finmarksbiblioteket*, 6–7.
- ⁴¹ Oslo, the capital of Norway, was named Kristiania until 1925.
- ⁴² Balke, “Lidt om Finmarksbiblioteket i Vadsø,” 28.
- ⁴³ Balke, *Katalog over Finmarksbiblioteket*, 28.
- ⁴⁴ Akre, Balke, and Smith, “Finmarksbiblioteket i Vadsø.”
- ⁴⁵ In 1902, Troms and Finnmark County was split in two separate administrative units; the main reason was that this would make the Norwegianization policy more efficient.
- ⁴⁶ Balke, *Katalog over Finmarksbiblioteket*, 13-14.
- ⁴⁷ Akre, Balke, and Smith, “Finmarksbiblioteket i Vadsø.”
- ⁴⁸ Akre, Balke, and Smith, *Brev til Universitetsbibliotekar Drolsum*.
- ⁴⁹ Akre, Balke, and Smith, “Finmarksbiblioteket i Vadsø,” 14.
- ⁵⁰ Birkeland, *Museum og bibliotek*, 66.
- ⁵¹ Lill-Ann Jensen, “Ellisif Wessel,” *Norsk Biografisk Leksikon*: https://nbl.snl.no/Ellisif_Wessel.
- ⁵² Finnmark fylkesbibliotek, *Finnmark biblioteks utlånsbok*, 72.

⁵³ There are no formal borders for *Sápmi*, but outside Norway, the *Kola* peninsula in Russia, *Lapland* in Finland, and *Norrland* in Sweden are considered parts of the Sámi settlement area.

⁵⁴ Birkeland, *Museum og bibliotek*, 59. The word “Finn” meant “Sámi” in the northern parts of Norway. Today the term is perceived as derogatory.

⁵⁵ Erik Schytte Blix, *Kirker og kirkeliv i Karasjok* (Tromsø: self-published, 1974), .71.

⁵⁶ Andresen and Ryymim, *Samenes historie*; Monica Grini, “Samisk kunst i Norsk kunsthistorie: Historiografiske riss” (PhD diss., UiT The Arctic University of Norway, 2016); Lars Ivar Hansen and Bjørnar Olsen, *Samenes historie – fram til 1750* (Cappelen: Oslo, 2004).

⁵⁷ Balke, *Katalog*, 81–87.

⁵⁸ The question of which languages should be used in sermons—Norwegian, Sámi, or Finnish—had been debated for 200 years. The church itself was divided on these language issues.

⁵⁹ Ketil Zachariassen, *Samiske nasjonale strategar* (Karasjok: CállidLágáus, 2012), 190–95.

⁶⁰ Balke, “Lidt om Finmarksbiblioteket i Vadsø,” 28.

⁶¹ Akre, Balke, and Smith, *Brev til Universitetsbibliotekar Drolsum*. Småtrykksamlingen. SA-Bibliotekataloger, Boks E – FIN. Mappe “Finmarksbiblioteket,” 1901.

⁶² Henden, “Det er ikke alene et Universitets,” 7.

⁶³ Akre, Balke, and Smith, *Brev til Universitetsbibliotekar Drolsum*.

⁶⁴ Finnmark fylkesbibliotek, *Fotosamlingen*: <https://fylkesbibliotek.tffk.no/foto-og-privatar-kiv/fotoarkiv-finnmark/>.

⁶⁵ Birkeland, *Museum og bibliotek*, 70–71.

⁶⁶ Arne Arnesen, *Katalogisering* (Oslo: Kirkedepartementet, 1916).

⁶⁷ Today, mineral resources, fisheries, fish farming, oil, gas, and tourism are important industries in Finnmark.

⁶⁸ Birkeland, *Museum og bibliotek*, 70.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 62.

⁷⁰ Einar Niemi, “Johan Beronka,” *Norske Biografiske Leksikon*: https://nbl.snl.no/Johan_Beronka.

⁷¹ Johannes Hidle and Jens Otterbech, eds., *Fornorskning i Finnmark* (Kristiania: Lutherstiftelsens Boghandel, 1917).

⁷² Johan Beronka, “Finnerne under fremmed paavirkning,” in *Fornorskning i Finnmark*, eds. Johannes Hidle and Jens Otterbech, 45–54 (Kristiania: Lutherstiftelsens Boghandel, 1917).

⁷³ Eriksen and Niemi, *Den finske fare*, 123.

⁷⁴ Birkeland, *Museum og bibliotek*, 67.

⁷⁵ Balke, “Lidt om Finmarksbiblioteket i Vadsø,” 28.

⁷⁶ *Finmarkens Amtstidende* (June 28, 1922). The National Library of Norway: https://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digavis_finmarkensamtstidendevadsoe_null_null_19410517_71_38_1.

⁷⁷ Birkeland, *Museum og bibliotek*, 74.

⁷⁸ Johan Beronka, Hagbart Lund, and Ivar Dahl, “Finmarksbibliotheket i Vadsø” (“Meddelelse 28. June, 1923.”), in *Katalog over Finmarksbibliothekets Bok- og Avissamling*, ed. Georg Balke, 15–16 (Vadsø Trykkeri: Vadsø, 1925).

⁷⁹ Johan Beronka, *Vadsø bys historie* (Vadsø: Vadsø kommune, 1933), 191.

⁸⁰ Wilhelm Munthe, *Katalogiseringsregler for den alfabetiske seddelkatalog* (Kristiania: Grøndahl & Søns Bogtrykkeri, 1925).

⁸¹ Norsk biblioteksforenings katalogkomité, *Katalogiseringsregler for norske biblioteker* (Oslo: O Fredr Arnesens Bok- og Akcidentstrykkeri, 1925).

⁸² Beronka, Lund, and Dahl, *Finmarksbibliotheket i Vadsø*; Birkeland, *Museum og bibliotek*, 70–71.

⁸³ David L. Levy, *Scrolling Forward: Making Sense of Documents in the Digital Age* (New York: Arcade, 2001).

⁸⁴ Balke, *Katalog*.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 49–50.

⁸⁷ Jon Røyne Kyllingstad, “Norwegian Physical Anthropology and the Idea of a Nordic Master Race,” *Current Anthropology* 53, Supplement 5 (2012): 46–56.

⁸⁸ Balke, *Katalog*, 28.

⁸⁹ Kyllingstad, “Norwegian Physical Anthropology,” 55.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 28.

⁹¹ Birkeland, *Museum og bibliotek*, 105.

⁹² Per Pippin Aspaas, “Forordet til Knud Leems Laxicon Lapponicum (1768–81),” in *Bibliotheca NEOLATINA Upsaliensis XVII*, eds. by Peter Sjökvist and Krister Östlund, 6–30 (Valberg: Brødrene Carlssons Boktryckeri, 2021), 8.

⁹³ Balke, *Katalog*, 20–27, 56–67, 76–78.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 57–61.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 19; Just Qvigstad and Karl Bernhard Wiklund, *Bibliographie der lappischen litteratur* (Helsingfors: Société Finno-ougrienne, 1899). Qvigstad and Wicklund include a short comment on their classification system (p. 7), which is based on land codes (F= Finland, N= Norway, etc.), and numbers for books.

⁹⁶ For example, the first “number” under “Sámi Languages” is “Translation of the Finnish Abc [sic] and Reading Book. Christiania 1837.” Balke, *Katalog*, 61, refers to this book in this way: “[see] Lappish bibliographie [Qvigstad and Wiklund] N. 16, 17, 60, 94, 165. Sv. 113, 176,” but he does not make the reader aware of the shift in his approach to cataloguing.

⁹⁷ Anders Forfang, *Norsk Finnemissions Historie* (Trondhjem: Norsk Finnemissions Forlag, 1920).

⁹⁸ Balke, *Katalog*, 62.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 72.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 15.

¹⁰¹ Viken, Øystein, “Hans Hansen Lillieskiold,” *Norsk biografisk leksikon*: https://snl.no/Hans_Hansen_Lillieskiold.

¹⁰² Axel Hagemann, *Med ren og pulk over Finmarksvidden* (Kristiania: Den Norske turistforening, 1903).

¹⁰³ Dmitri N. Bucharov, *Reise i Lapland* (Petersburg, 1885).

¹⁰⁴ Lill Tove Fredriksen and Sigbjørn Skåden, “Johan Turi,” *Store norske leksikon*: https://snl.no/Johan_Turi.

¹⁰⁵ Viken, *Hans Hansen Lillieskiold*.

¹⁰⁶ Einar Niemi, “Hans Lillieskiold – Kongens tjener, vitenskapsmann og samfunnsrefser i nord,” in *Ultima Thule*, eds. Sigmund Nettet and Helge Salvesen, 72–80 (Tromsø: Ravnetrykk, 1996).

¹⁰⁷ Eriksen and Niemi, *Den finske fare*.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 81–96.

¹⁰⁹ Balke, *Katalog*, 72, 82, 85–86.

¹¹⁰ Synnøve des Bouvrie, “Hyperboreerne og Ultima Thule i antikkens forestillingsverden,” in *Ultima Thule*, eds. Sigmund Nettet and Helge Salvesen, 13–27 (Tromsø: Ravnetrykk, 1996), 13.

¹¹¹ Balke, *Katalog*.

¹¹² Sámediggi, “About the Sámi Parliament.” <https://sametinget.no/about-the-sami-parliament/>.

¹¹³ The remaining original books from the Finnmark Library are searchable at <https://finnmarksbibliotekene.no/finnmarksbiblioteket/>.

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