

## TOPICS

*Ola Wennstedt*

### ON THE PRESERVATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE IMMATERIAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

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# TOPICS

## ON THE PRESERVATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE IMMATERIAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

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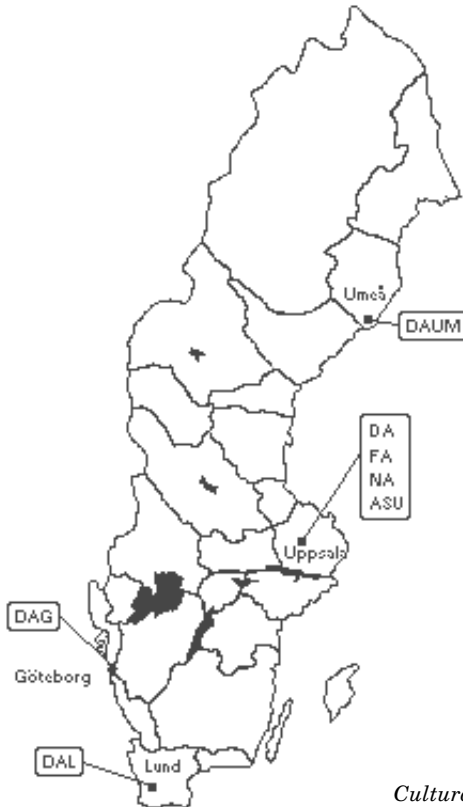
In this paper I will give an overview of DAUM, *Dialekt-, ortnamns- och folkminnesarkivet i Umeå*, the Archive for Dialects, Placenames and Folklore, in Umeå, Sweden. The paper will give a brief introduction to its organisation, history, and how we go about preserving and maintaining the immaterial cultural heritage at the Umeå archives.

## HISTORY

In the late nineteenth century a national romantic movement spread over the literary and cultural domains in the urban parts of Sweden. People became interested in the life of the countryside, their traditions and in the way the local people speak. Small dialect and folklore societies were established, and within these societies extensive activity began, with collection and registration of dialects and folkloristic material, covering the whole country. Then, in the early twentieth century, these societies got together and formed the *Landsmåls- och folkminnesarkivet i Uppsala*, the Dialect and Folklore Archive in Uppsala.

In 1955, *Folkmåls- och folkminnesundersökningen i övre Norrland*, the Dialect- and Folklore Investigation in the Upper Norrland, a project-based collection initiative, similar to one in Uppsala some fifty years earlier, was initiated. The goal of the project was to systematically collect dialects and folk traditions from each parish in the two northernmost counties in Sweden.

The choice of parish as a merit for geographic subdivision was well-considered. The parish was the natural movement area for its inhabitants (the church and the market place were in the centre of the parish, and that was where people came to and met one an-



*Cultural heritage Institutions in Sweden.*

other). Also, parishes had ceased to be administrative units some years before the project started, so the system of parishes was not going to undergo any further changes. In 1971 this project was re-organised into a governmental archive, DAUM.

Today, DAUM is part of *Språk- och folkminnesinstitutet* (SOFI), the Institute for Dialectology, Onomastics and Folklore Research which was founded in 1993 through a reorganisation of the former DOVA (the Dialect- and Placenames Archives, also the Swedish centre for folk song and folk music research and Swedish jazz history). SOFI is in direct subordination to the Swedish Government.

Currently SOFI consists of seven (archive) units located in different places in Sweden. Each one of the units covers a region, or a specific subject.

The archives located furthest to the north of Sweden is DAUM. DAUM has the geographical responsibility for Sweden's two northernmost counties, Västerbotten and Norrbotten, which together constitute a little more than one third of Sweden's total area. In this area there are three distinct cultures: the Swedish culture, the Saami culture and the Torne-valley Finnish culture with its recently officially accepted language *meänkieli*.

In Gothenburg we have DAG which, as DAUM, covers three scientific areas, but with the geographical responsibility for the western Sweden. In Lund, in the south of the country, we find DAL, the Institute for Dialectology and Onomastics. In South Sweden, the material related to folklore is taken care of by another archive, connected to the University of Lund; DAL's area of responsibility is, for natural reasons, the southern Sweden.

Finally, in Uppsala, we find the Dialect Division, the Names Division and the Folklore Division: three research divisions located within the same unit. These three research divisions are served by an archive unit. The secretary's office of the institute is also located in the archive center in Uppsala. The Dialect Division is a fusion of the old ULMA and OSD; the Name Division is a fusion of OAU and SMP; and the Folklore Division is the folkloristic part of ULMA.

## **TASKS**

Each year the Cultural Ministry distributes a regulation stating the tasks of SOFI for the following year. In the last years this regulation has been formulated along the lines "to preserve our (immaterial) cultural heritage by maintaining and mediating the knowledge of dialects, folklore, folk music, place names and personal names on scientific basis". We usually summarize the task in a more popular way, in the phrase "collect, preserve and scientifically treat and publish material concerning our immaterial cultural heritage".

At DAUM we work in all three of the scientific fields of the institute, namely dialects, names and folklore.

If we connect to DAUM's task, to *collect, preserv and scientifically treat and publish*, we notice that during the first decades work was focused on building up the collections. Archivists systematically travelled through the area with tape recorders and notebooks, and made interviews and took notes of traditions, dialectal words and place names. The collecting work focused on the historical perspective, with folk traditions and the "genuine dialects" being of certain interest. Today, financial and personell rescourses do not allow any systematic collection on a larger scale. Our possibilities are reduced to what often is called *passive collection*, that is, we take care of material that is given to us by people in general, by researchers at the university, by local history groups, and so on. For example a person who had collected press cuttings on the Saami culture since the 1960s recently donated this collection to DAUM; the collection consists approximately of 5000 cuttings. Another large donation came from the department of ethnology: 519 cassette tape recordings of student field work. The chronological perspective is also different, compared to earlier collection. Now we try to cover the present time as well as past times in our work. "Today is the history of tomorrow."

What is there to be "preserved" at the archive, then?

The archive collections now consists of the following material (numbers estimated)

- 9,000 recordings on audio tape, cassettes, video tape and wax plates. For each recorded interview a protocol is established, which briefly describes the content of the recording. The recordings also contain folk music, jazz, rock and yoik.
- 6,000 paper files containing hand-written and typed notes and narratives.
- 11,000 cuttings, mainly from local newspapers.
- 2,200,000 archive cards with information on dialectal words and place names.
- 70,000 archive cards on dialectal plant names, the largest collection kept in one place in Sweden. The collection is also digitalised and stored in a database.

- A register database of the entire collection, plus the library. A copy of the database is also published at our homepage on the Internet, where visitors can search in the database through a CGI-script. The web address is [www.umu.se/daum](http://www.umu.se/daum).
- Detailed maps of the whole region.
- A bibliographic place name register.
- A library which to a great extent covers relevant publications within the field.

The third part of our tasks, to *scientifically treat and publish*, is fulfilled by our six publication series:

A. dialects;

B. names;

C. folklore and folk tradition;

D. messages;

E. plant names.

F. place names in upper Norrland: place names in the county of Västerbotten; place names in the county of Norrbotten.

Finally, two specific projects at DAUM.

The project *Standardisering av samiska ortnamn på de allmänna kartorna*, Standardisation of Saami names on Swedish maps, is a EU-financed project in which the orthography of all Saami names on the official maps are checked. The Saami languages are spoken languages that had no official orthography until the end of the 20th century. Within this project, all the Saami names are now checked and spelled in accordance with the official Saami orthography.

The project of Estonian-Swedish plant names. In Nils Tiberg's Estonian-Swedish dictionary, compiled during the first half of the 20th century, includes a large number of plant names. These names are being excerpted from 14 microfilms and scanned with a digital microfilm reader/scanner/printer. The aim is to collect all plant names from all Swedish-speaking areas in order to obtain a collection of plant names at DAUM which is as comprehensive as possible. The project is led by former professor Sigurd Fries.