

## Editorial Note

Saami religion was the theme for the Donner Institute's tenth symposium. In 1942 Ernst Manker, one of the pioneers of Saami scholarship, wrote in the journal *Rig*: "The present state of Lapp scholarship is in brief as follows. The old Lappish culture is in a state of rapid dissolution (which does not mean that the people are dying out). In the material which has been saved from destruction there are still large gaps. [---] Many riddles are still unsolved and new discoveries have turned old theses upside down. It is high time that all forces were coordinated to build a solid foundation for future research." The purpose of the symposium arranged by the Donner Institute was to give Nordic scholars the opportunity to present "recent advances" in Saami research, and thus contribute to the "coordination of all forces" which Ernst Manker sought as early as 1942 in his contribution to *Rig*.

The congress programme was arranged so that the first day was devoted to pre-Christian Saami religion, and the two following days to the religious confrontation between Saami religion and Christianity. It is obvious that the theme for the symposium was too broad for comprehensive treatment and the aim, therefore, was rather to provide scholars in the field with an opportunity to formulate fresh research findings and describe research in progress. The arrangement of the papers in the present congress volume faithfully follows the order of the programme during the symposium.

Research into the Lapps is largely concerned with the study of a minority people's struggle to survive as an ethnic group, and research into Saami religion is largely concerned with the attempt to decide what is genuinely Saami and what is influence from the culture and religion of a superior power. This is true of research into the influence on pre-Christian Saami religion of Old Nordic and Old Finnish religion; it is true of research into Saami religion after the advent of Christianity; and it is also true, finally, of research into Saami religion and culture today—under influence from Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish society at large. It means that this research has been largely concerned with and still is concerned with source problems, together with syncretism and the problem of acculturation, that is to say questions with a central position in all cultural studies.

It should not be necessary to emphasize that it is an important task to present current Nordic research on Saami religion to an international public, since Saami scholarship is mainly pursued in the Nordic countries.

The congress volume is dedicated to Professor Carl-Martin Edsman. Professor Edsman has been chairman of the Donner Institute board from 1981–1986, having previously been a member of the board almost since its foundation. To be more precise, Professor Edsman was elected to the board on 28 May 1959, as a substitute for Professor H. S. Nyberg from the Faculty of Humanities at Uppsala University. In this capacity he served the board until 11 February 1970, when he was elected a full member; on 5 April 1971, Professor Edsman was elected vice-chairman of the Institute board and on 3 April 1981, he was elected chairman. During his time on the Donner Institute board, Professor Edsman has—as a member of the organization committee—helped with the arrangement of eight of the Institute's ten symposiums to date, besides being editor of the first congress volume, *Studies in Shamanism*, Stockholm 1967 and joint editor of the fifth congress volume, *Mysticism*, Stockholm 1970.

Professor Edsman has played a very important part in building up the library of the Donner Institute, the Steiner Memorial Library. In the very first year of the library's operation, for example, literature "on mysticism in the Far East" was acquired on the basis of Professor Edsman's suggestions. Of particular importance for the library was the contribution of Professor Edsman in 1961, when, over a period of several months, he reorganized the library's classification system, providing an index language and producing guidelines for the acquisition of material.

To illustrate the scope of the professional expertise which Professor Edsman placed at the disposal of the Donner Institute and the Steiner Memorial Library, it may be mentioned that he had obtained the degree of doctor of theology in Uppsala in 1940 with a dissertation on *Le baptême du feu* and that of doctor of philosophy in Lund in 1949 with a dissertation on *Ignis divinis*; from 1950 he was *preceptor* and professor of comparative religion with the psychology of religion in the Faculty of Humanities at Uppsala.

The bibliography of Carl-Martin Edsman's writings (*Carl-Martin Edsmans skrifter 1930–1980*, Åbo, 1982) provides eloquent testimony to Professor Edsman's exceptional breadth as a scholar. It includes approximately 300 items in the field of comparative religion and neighbouring disciplines. The systematic index thus includes 21 items under the heading "research history", 9 under "problems of methodology", 8 under "Antiquity and Christianity", 7 under "Islam", 12 under "religions of the hunters and so-called primitive peoples", 7 under "more recent religious formations", 18 under "psychology of religion and mysticism", 11 under "sociology of religion", 46 under "religious phenomenology, symbols" and 30 under "apocalypse and eschatology, death and the dead, concepts of the be-

yond". Carl-Martin Edsman the scholar, with his great expertise in his subject, came to play an important role in the life of the young research institute both in its initial stage and during its subsequent expansion, a contribution that covered a quarter of a century. I do not hesitate to suggest, however, that Professor Edsman has meant even more to the institute through qualities quite different to those which find expression in his skill as a scholar of comparative religion and as one of the leading experts in his field in the Nordic countries. I am thinking quite simply here of the role that an uncompromisingly honest individual, an extraordinarily considerate person and one unfailingly prepared to help his neighbour will always play, whatever his station in life.

Professor Carl-Martin Edsman's contribution to the foundation and development of the Donner Institute for Research in Religious and Cultural History and the Steiner Memorial Library is object of the greatest admiration on the part of the Donner Institute's board—and, if possible, of even greater admiration on the part of its present director.