

## Opening Speech

by ANDERS HALLBERG

Mr President of LIBER, Mr Chancellor of Justice (JK Göran Lambertz finns med i publiken), and Distinguished Heads and Representatives of important European Libraries,

First, a warm welcome to all of you in Uppsala and Sweden. It is, for reasons unknown to me, actually the first time in your Association's 35 years proud history that you convene in this country.

I am convinced that you will enjoy the brief but intensive Nordic summer with its bright nights in the historic surroundings of this city. Already in the Middle Ages this place was a centre of learning. In 1477, the Church, in co-operation with the secular powers and hard competition with the Danes, managed to obtain the Pope's sanction to open the first Scandinavian university here in Uppsala.

Today Uppsala University is a modern and a complete research university organized in the three Disciplinary Domains of Art and Social Sciences, Medicine and Pharmacy, and Science and Technology. The university draws much of its strength from its history and the well-established reputation that Uppsala University enjoys around the world is due in no small part to the work of earlier generations.

The eight Nobel Laureates connected with Uppsala University have, of course, all helped make Uppsala's reputation for research famous throughout the world. But a modern university cannot fulfil its prime tasks - research and education - by looking backwards and gain recognition in international scholarly circles by referring to its proud and eventful history. The excellence every seat of learning strives to obtain must be fought for in the present and evidenced only by its results, measured by international standards, and proved by building new knowledge for the future. However, it is my firm belief that more than a millennium of learned work must not pass unnoticed. It forms a firm foundation and adds to the attractions for those who belong to this university - be they humanists or scientists, students or professors - and those others who come in contact with us through exchange and co-operation programmes or conferences like the one I am happy to attend to-day.

An irreplaceable - and to many of us irresistible - part of the university is its library. To make it function properly, we must have a staff of professionals under the guidance by colleagues like you. Being a professor of medicinal chemistry, I used to take the library more or less for granted. I expected, in younger days, to find an overflow of scientific journals, Chemical Abstracts and other material in the nearby library rooms of our laboratory complex, and if necessary I was assisted by skilled librarians. And what was not found there was quickly ordered as article copies from other libraries.

Nowadays, I am happy to find the necessary sources on the computer in e-journals and other databases opulently and immediately available without delay and at any time, day or night. Few of us, I must admit, consider the efforts and challenges there are to make all this possible. The mere subscription is not enough to make the article visible on your screen. There are librarians behind, actively working and systemizing, but not physically present in the same way as before, when you met them at the library desks or shelves.

I know more about it than you perhaps would believe, since I recently had the pleasure of serving for a three-year term on the Library Board of the university. It was a fascinating period in the midst of the revolutionary transition into the world of virtual library services, now definitely predominating in the medical, pharmaceutical, technological, and scientific areas closest to my own fields of research and teaching. I am also proud that our University Library in its work on digital publication was last year, by scientific publisher Elsevier, considered to be "the pioneer in European institutional repository initiatives". I know that you will hear more about it in the coming days.

My years on the Library Board also taught me to respect the financial demands necessary to maintain a first class library. It costs - and must be allowed to cost - to increase subscriptions to e-material, still keep up a large acquisition of printed works, and arrange modern housing for users and collections. It is not free of charge to have more than 5 million volumes in the stacks - and to staff the various services provided with skilled personnel. And it is a great responsibility to safeguard the enormous collections of printed and non-printed cultural heritage material, kept in the old Library Building *Carolina Rediviva*. Almost 400 years of benevolent gifts and a broad variety of other acquisition

methods gave us a treasure from which to draw interesting items to show to visiting statesmen, scholars, and tourists and lend to exhibitions in museums and libraries all over the world.

Your conference will cover many themes. I am sure that you will return with a fond of inspiration in matters like physical and digital preservation, virtual services, access to collections and individual material, and co-operation versus competition in the library sphere. I hope that you also will bring back a good memory of Uppsala, its university and library, as an example of where old traditions cordially join with modern thoughts in the international front-line.

It is my pleasure to invite you, in half an hour or so, to a reception in the more representative rooms of this building. But first we will listen to an illuminating keynote speech on the ever-important human right of freedom of expression, given by the Swedish head guardian of the subject, the Chancellor of Justice.

Once again, most warmly welcome to Uppsala University!