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Creating a “Lapp” Character Sámi Dress Utilised as Costume in Early Finnish Theatre

Abstract

This article explores the ways in which the Sámi were represented in the early years of established theatre in Finland, starting with the Finnish Theatre (*Suomalainen Teatteri*) in 1872 and its successor the Finnish National Theatre (*Suomen kansallisteatteri*), 1902. Particular attention is paid to the role of costumes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, their designs often involving the consultation of ethnographers, archaeologists, historians, and visual artists. The widest archival evidence for this study consists of theatre photographs and plays, supported by contemporary publications and newspaper articles. Textual sources were augmented by the study of Sámi garments. By identifying and analysing the relevant plays, related stage photographs and newspaper reviews, it becomes clear that recurrent ways developed for representing Sámi people on the stage. This development of “Lapp” characters was established through costume in conspicuous ways, with the exaggeration of particular features of Sámi dress leading to a recognizable trope of the “Lapp” costume.

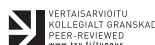
Keywords: Sámi, representations, stereotypes, costume, theatre, ethnic minorities, indigenous people, nationalism, Kalevala, Finnish Theatre, Finnish National Theatre

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Introduction

In the autumn of 2019, a member of the Finnish parliament and a well-known actor, Pirkka-Pekka Petelius, made a public apology to the Sámi community. The apology pertained to Petelius’ performance in popular TV shows of the 1980s and 1990s in which characters dressed in Sámi-style costumes were depicted as drunk and dirty-faced. The apology was followed by an extensive public discussion in which many Sámi people shared their traumatic childhood experiences of being bullied as a consequence of such portrayals (Rasmus 2019). This study of Sámi representations in Finnish theatre thus began in response to this controversial event. Once considered, the questions soon arose: What is the history of representing Sámi people in Finnish theatre, and what kind of role have costumes played in this process?¹

According to Veli-Pekka Lehtola (2012, 14), significant research has developed into how Sámi have been represented on screen, in visual arts, music and literature (Sirpa Aalto & Veli-Pekka Lehtola 2017, Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja 1999 and 2006, as well as Jorma Lehtola 2000, 2008 and 2011). Yet research into the history of Sámi characters in Finnish theatre seems non-existent. In the field of theatre research, discussion of the political perspectives and strategies of early Finnish theatre only began in the late twentieth century. In general, the history of early Finnish theatre has been considered from the viewpoint of an apparently communal ethos reflecting the dawn of a young nation fighting for its sovereignty as well as from the perspective of the interests of the working class as a means to empowerment and self-education (Seppälä & Tanskanen 2010, 11–12). While such perspectives have emphasised the fight against injustices, they have not necessarily invited research concerning ethnic minorities.

In this article, I explore the ways in which Sámi were represented in the early years of established theatre in Finland, starting with the Finnish Theatre (*Suomalainen Teatteri*) in 1872 and its successor the Finnish National Theatre (*Suomen kansallisteatteri*), 1902. Both were led by the siblings Kaarlo and Emilie Bergbom for over thirty years, 1872–1905. Particular attention here is paid to the role of costumes, their designs often involving the consultation of ethnographers, archaeologists, historians, and visual artists.

Clothing has been extensively used to maintain and emphasise social hierarchies, in uniting or separating people according to class, gender, religion, economic or ethnic background. Clothing is often utilised to segregate “us” from the

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“others” (e.g. Lönnqvist 2008, 241–242; Turunen & Niiranen 2019, 13–14, 21). Performance costume² operates in a similar manner to dress, but from within a performative context. Consequently, costumes have carried manifold purpose and meaning. They may have prompted the audience to recognise the location and epoch of a particular performance or, on the contrary, been intended to establish a timeless and undefined point of time and place. On occasion, the specific purpose of costume has been to reflect an interior world or particular themes of a performance. Alternatively, costumes have been used to portray the state of mind and social status of characters, along with contemporary values, expectations, and assumptions about gender, age, religion, nationality, or ethnic background. Costumes embody the aesthetics of performance – not only in terms of their visual contribution, but also in terms of the philosophy behind the predominant practices of an entire artistic and production team. Fundamentally, costumes reflect explicit and implicit ideas about cultural hierarchies (Weckman 2015, 6, 10–11, 15–16; Weckman 2018, 129).

This article continues the thematic perspective of my previous one, which discussed make-up practices when creating characters’ ethnicity in early Finnish stage performances and outlined the social atmosphere of the early twentieth century, influenced by nationalism, prejudices against ethnic minority groups, and eugenics, which became popular in all Western countries in the late 1800s (Weckman 2018, 104). Similarly, this article draws from the Foucauldian conception of ubiquitous power, constantly in motion and made visible by social relationships and human interactions (Foucault 1980, 74, 88–89), as well as from the theory of construction of cultural identity proposed by Stuart Hall (2002, 190–191). Hall indicates how stereotypes are created by the exaggeration and simplification of certain features, establishing them without the possibility of change and development. According to Hall, stereotypization maintains the social and symbolic order, excludes the inappropriate and different, and helps to create imaginary “normal” communities. Theatres, among others, are places where such imaginary communities have been constructed and made visible for audiences (Weckman 2018, 108).

To first identify plays in which Sámi characters were represented, this study was initiated by content analyses of several hundred photographs in the Finnish National Theatre Archive as well as close reading of published literature, newspaper critiques and play manuscripts in relation to the history of the repertoires

2 In this article I use *costume* to refer to the *dress* of a performer, worn in a performative context. According to Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins and Joanne B. Eicher (1992, 1), *dress* is “an assemblage of body modifications and/or supplements displayed by a person in communicating with other human beings.” Ingrid Mida and Alexandra Kim (2015, 12) define dress as “clothing and accessories, including hats, footwear, jewellery, hairstyles, tattoos and other forms of body adornment”. See also Isaac 2015, 554–555.

of the Finnish Theatre and the Finnish National Theatre. The first phase of the study led to the identification of six plays³ premiered in the Finnish Theatre and the Finnish National Theatre which included one or more representations of Sámi people, all pre-dating Finnish independence in 1917, when Finland was still a Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire. This was an era characterised by both the national romantic movement in the arts, constructive of the national self-images, and political rebellion against the Russian regime, which were part of a push for national sovereignty and cultural distinction (Valenius 2004, 11–12).

By identifying and analysing the relevant plays, related stage photographs and newspaper reviews, it becomes clear that recurrent ways developed for representing Sámi people on the stage. This development of “Lapp” characters was established through costume in conspicuous ways, with the exaggeration of particular features of Sámi dress leading to a recognizable trope of the “Lapp” costume. Until the mid-twentieth century, the Sámi were generally referred to as “Lapps”. This tradition was amended after political activism and the Sámi people renouncing the term as defamatory and colonialist (Isaksson 2001, 34–35; Lehtola 2005, 320). In most of the sources for this study – plays (textual), character lists and reviews – the term used to refer to Sámi people is “Lapp”. Here I use the term *Lapp character* to highlight the fictional nature of the characters presented on stage, most of which reflect mainstream stereotypes akin, for example, to *Gypsy characters* in relation to Roma people.

Textual and image sources were augmented by the study of Sámi garments housed at the time of study in the Sámi collection of the National Museum of Finland and repatriated to the Sámi Museum *Siida* in 2021, accessed via digital resources (Finna.fi). This research presented an opportunity to reflect upon costume practices, both on a material as well as a social level. For the sake of practicality, garment terms are given as those most widely spoken in Northern Sámi when necessary, bearing in mind, however, that the two other Sámi languages spoken in Finland, Inari Sámi and Skolt Sámi, have their own terms for similar garments.

The Others on stage and in society

During the early nineteenth century, certain touring theatre companies – mostly German and Swedish – travelled regularly through the Finnish region. From 1860 onwards, the first Swedish- and Russian-speaking groups began to perform with longer contracts in the Helsinki theatre houses. The first Finnish-speaking theatre, *Suomalainen Teatteri* (the Finnish Theatre) was estab-

3 *Tuukkalan tappelu* 1889, *Aino* 1893, *Kullervo* 1895, *Sota valosta* 1901, *Pohjolan häät* 1902 and *Panu* 1903. The year refers to the time the play was first performed in the Finnish Theatre or the Finnish National Theatre.

lished in 1872, followed by several regional Finnish-speaking theatres from the 1880s onwards. However, the Finnish Theatre established itself as the leading theatre in the capital and throughout the country (Seppälä & Taniskanen 2010, 13, 16, 30, 34, 37, 38).

From the early years, Finnish audiences were familiar with the kinds of stereotypical representations of Arabic, Jewish, Asian, African, and Roma people that were common in European theatre at large: plays, operettas, operas, and ballets often included scenes set in “exotic” places, with characters in stylised costumes, wearing blackface or yellowface makeup (Suutela 2005, 28; Weckman 2018, 108–109). The fact is, however, that the performance of such characters had very little to do with the reality of the ethnic-minority groups existing in Finland, most notably Roma, Jews, Tatars, and indigenous Sámi (Ekholm 2014, 165).

In the twentieth century, Finns developed a notion of their country as genetically and culturally exceptional; a cohesive island standing apart from the rest of the world containing few (or no) foreigners or ethnic minorities. Recent research, however, has identified this belief as a “delusion of unity”, a fallacy created by the historiography which was used to craft the image of a young emerging nation (Tervonen 2014, 137–138). In the process of the search for and the construction of real or true “Finnishness”, ethnic minorities such as the indigenous Sámi people were either condemned to invisibility or perceived as Other (Isaksson 2001, 180; Tervonen 2014, 137–139, 141).

This treatment is exemplified by the view of Zachris Topelius, an influential writer, playwright, poet, and historian – famous for his *Maamme-kirja* (Our Land), 1875, which described as well as defined the “real Finland”. According to Topelius, the true Finns were conspicuously those “who have grown with their heart or their goals into the nature, political situation and social conditions of this country – except the Lapps” (Isaksson 2001, 180). Ethnic Otherness developed in relation to European physical ideals, with white skin, blond hair and blue eyes identified as the privileged characteristics of true ethnic “Finnishness” (Weckman 2018, 121; Valenius 2004, 103–104). The Sámi, on the other hand, were associated with small stature, crooked legs, yellowish skin and dirtyness. Culturally, Sámi people connoted laziness, dishonesty, and lack of self-discipline (Puuronen 2012, 229). Characteristic of the social Darwinism of the era, the Sámi were considered a doomed, primitive people on the brink of extinction. Sámi people were seen and treated with curiosity, pity or scorn, as targets for prohibitive sanctions and social abjection rather than as independent agents (Lehtola 1999, 18–19; Isaksson 2001, 205–206; Puuronen 2012, 231–232).

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, researchers in ethnography and physical anthropology embarked on several field trips to the Lapland area, measuring skulls and corpses, as well as the dimensions of living Sámi people. Interviewers gathered information about habits and beliefs, collected artefacts, skulls and skeletons and removed them to southern Finland (e.g., Isaksson 2001, Lehtola 2012). Sámi families were also paid to take part in “living exhibitions” in southern Scandinavia and central Europe, presenting people from different ethnic groups and cultures. Some of the Lapp caravans also visited towns in Southern Finland on their way to and from other countries (Lehtola 2013, 324, 331–332; Baglo 2015, 49; Ranta & Kanninen 2019, 127–129). Some of these activities, including the physical anthropology projects, continued until the early 1970s (Ranta & Kanninen 2019, 119).

Nonetheless, theories of racial hygiene did not achieve as much of a common consensus in the Finnish academic community as in many other countries, such as Sweden, Germany, Great Britain, and USA. This was possibly due to the fact that European theories that emerged from the late 1800s had labelled Finns as belonging to an inferior Mongol race. And yet these prevailing attitudes concerning the purity of the nation and the fear of physical and mental degeneration clearly also took hold in Finland. They served as premises for socially-restrictive actions towards not only ethnic minorities but also other marginalised groups, such as the handicapped, mentally ill, prostitutes, and vagabonds (Isaksson 2001, 263–264; 269–271; Nygård 2001, 23, 87–89, 91–92, 137, 155, 214–215; Mattila 1999, 16–17).

The first stage appearance

It appears that the first documented stage appearance of a “Lapp” character in Finland occurred in May 1886, in a tableaux organised as part of certain festivities by *Suomalainen Seura* (Finnish Society). The director of the Finnish Theatre, Kaarlo Bergbom and his sister Emilie – the head of the costume workshop – were active in organising the tableaux. Actress Hanna Asp from the Finnish Theatre played a “Lapp” who peeks from behind a big rock in the tableaux *Väinämöisen soitto* (Väinämöinen’s Playing), dressed in “a brand new Lapp costume borrowed from the *Suomalainen Teatteri*”. (Paavolainen 2016, 557–558). This tableaux was performed again in 1899 with the addition of bears, reindeers, water and forest gods. (Paavolainen 2018, 430–431). Such a “Lapp” character, is absent, however, from the 1899 role list.

For what purpose did the Finnish Theatre own a newly-made “Lapp” costume in the spring of 1886, and what might it have looked like? No suitable production in the theatre’s repertoire at the time would have required such a costume. A possible answer to this mystery could be the visit to Finland



Image 1. The Rowers of the Empress Maria Fjodorovna's boat in August 1885. Anni Junttila on the left. HK19460919:216. Finnish Heritage Agency.

of the Emperor and Empress of Russia in the late summer of 1885. On this occasion, eight young women participated in a gift ceremony, each dressed in folk costumes, representing a Finnish province and different social classes. Emilie Bergbom was head of the organising committee and responsible

for the visuals of the ceremony, during which the Empress received a rowing boat with textiles sewn under Bergbom’s guidance (Paavolainen 2016, 522; Heikkilä 1998, 204; Aspelin-Haapkylä 1909, 230–231). For the ceremony, Anni Junttila, the daughter of a craftsman from Oulu, was selected to represent Lapland. A caption under a photograph of Junttila notes that she wore a “Lapp dress”: a dark dress with a v-neck opening at the front reaching to the waist, revealing a white shirt underneath. The dress has a darker vertical collar with rounded front corners decorated with a lighter band. It is trimmed with serrated ribbons on the neckline and shoulders and features a wide dark-ribbed decoration on the cuffs and hem. The sleeves are half-length, under which a shirt reaches the wrists. Junttila can be seen to wear a belt similar to a traditional red-and-white Sámi female *láigeboagán*, in Finnish *niisivyö* or *lankavyö*. Under her other arm, the belt seems to be hanging from her hip and tipped with what look like decorative tassels. On her head she wears what seems to be a version of *ládjogahpir*, in Finnish *sarvilakki* (a horn cap), decorated with patterned ribbons. Her shoes are not visible, occluded by the girl in front.

In the nineteenth century, there were many variations in Sámi clothing, and regional differences were not as established as they would later become (Magga 2018, 260–261). Anni Junttila’s 1885 dress, however, is not an authentic Sámi dress, but when cross-referenced with contemporary ethnographic photographs some of its features are similar to the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Norwegian Sámi dress, as well as the modern Inari Sámi and the Sodankylä-Vuotso Sámi dress (SUK74:63; SUK539:74; Sami Duodji ry 2010, 22:1, 48:1.)

All the folk costumes for the imperial visit of 1885 were made by a society called the *Suomen Käsityön Ystävät* (Friends of Finnish Handicraft), modelled upon garments from the ethnographic collection of the Museum of the Student’ Association (Kaukonen 1985, 283). Of this collection, four catalogues were published in 1883–1893. “Lapp artefacts” included 69 objects but only one garment which could have been used as a model for the 1885 “Lapp dress”. This is labelled as a female “umpitakki”, an overcoat known as a *gákti* by the Sámi (Schvindt 1889, 97, object number 8). This same garment can be found in the former collection of the National Museum of Finland repatriated to the Sámi Museum *Siida* in 2021, but now catalogued as a boy’s or man’s garment (Kataja, personal communication in 9.12.2020; SÁ2482:8). Unfortunately, Theodor Schvindt, the head of the Museum of the Student Association ethnographic collection, did not consider it important to record the origins of Sámi garments, “as there are nowadays so few Lapps and regional differences are scarce” (Schvindt 1889, 96).



Images 2 & 3. *Gákti*, “umpitakki” (overcoat) likely used as the model for 1885 “Lapp” costume. Front and back view. SÁ2482:8. Sámi Museum *Siida*.

On first comparison, the photographs of Miss Junttila’s 1885 costume and the *gákti* from the museum collection seem quite different. However, when viewing the museum garment from the rear, the resemblance is prominent. It seems as if the *gákti* pattern has been turned back to front and cut slit half-way down the serrated decoration at the middle-back. The vertical collar, traditionally part of only the male garment, was then attached to the inverted costume. In this manner, the serrated decorations which were *meant* to appear on the shoulder blades now sit on the front of the chest, originally the serrated double decoration of the middle-back, now forming the trimmings on both sides of the front slit. The trimmings on the collar and the coloured selection have also been modified. The museum garment consists of a darker fabric and lighter trimmings, but the 1885 costume has lighter fabric and darker trimmings. Instead of the traditional full length sleeves, the 1885 costume features half sleeves, worn with a white shirt similar to certain Finnish folk-dress shirts. Her silhouette seems to follow the fashionable tight-fitting style of the 1880s.

No identical *láigeboagán* belt can be found in the surviving 1880s collection, only one version with decorative tassels hanging on the side (SÁ2482:36). The *Ládjogahpir* hat was already becoming obsolete during 1880s, for either moral or practical reasons (Pieski & Harlin 2020, 83–84, 87). As a consequence, Sámi women in 1885 would more likely have worn smaller *jollegahpir* hats, which followed the shape of the head more closely. This shift was also noted in the museum catalogue, which includes one such hat made of red wool, list-

ed as a *kaviolakki* or hoof cap (Schvindt 1889, 96, object number 4). It is likely that this *ládjogahpir* hat, today part of the collection of Sámi Museum *Siida* (SÁ2482:4), was nevertheless used as a model for the 1885 costume hat. The shape of the original *ládjogahpir* is much higher and sharper, while the 1885 costume hat has an obviously softer shape. However, the modified shape and decorative features suggest that it is a deliberate interpretation of old-fashioned but impressive headgear rather than an attempt to copy the original or to represent any authentic contemporary Sámi clothing.

After the imperial visit of 1885, Miss Junttila’s “Lapp” costume may have been donated to or purchased by Emilie Bergbom and the Finnish Theatre, and it actually could be the very same “brand new Lapp costume” that Hanna Asp wore on the stage in the spring of 1886, or at least one very similar. In any case, the photograph of Anni Junttila seems to be the very first known photograph of a “Lapp” costume: Sámi dress manipulated for the purposes of performance in Finland.

Role models and sources of inspiration for early “Lapp” costumes

The study of Anni Junttila’s 1885 “Lapp” costume indicates that it was possible to use actual Sámi clothing from a museum collection as the model or inspiration for a performance costume. In the late 1800s, there existed several private and public museum collections in Helsinki, occasionally open to visitors, which included historical, ethnographic, and archaeological artefacts. The first Sámi artefact, and one of the first domestic ethnographic artefacts in general – a child’s cradle – entered a museum collection in 1830, and from 1870 the collecting of Sámi artefacts began to increase. Several collections merged together to create *Valtion historiallinen museo* (the State Historical Museum), which in 1894 had 126 Sámi artefacts. In 1902, some 215 Sámi artefacts, mostly garments and jewellery, were added to the collection after an ethnographic collection trip to Lapland. From the turn of the century until 1914, a number of large-scale collection expeditions took place, thereby expanding the Sámi artefact collection in the State Historical Museum (from 1917 onwards, the *Suomen Kansallismuseo*, the National Museum of Finland) (Puurunen 2005 13, 15, 17; Kostet 2010, 24–25; Talvio 2016, 32, 34; Harlin & Lehtola 2019, 49). The regional differences between Sámi groups were not considered particularly significant. Likewise, as shown in the case of the Sámi garment used as a model for 1885 “Lapp” costume, information concerning the exact location or even the gender of the garment’s user was not always available, contributing to the perception of Lapland as a homogeneous area (Puurunen 2005, 25–26).

In addition to museum collections, what other kinds of sources were available for the costume workshops of the Finnish Theatre and the Finnish Na-

tional Theatre? Despite the general enthusiasm in the 1800s for books depicting the dress of different peoples around the world (Taylor 2002, 150–151), literature on Sámi clothing seems to have been limited. The first thorough study of Sámi clothing in Finland was only published in 1948 by T.I. Itkonen as part of his book *Suomen lappalaiset* (Lapps of Finland). However, the Finnish Theatre’s costume workshop had its own library, and some of the original books from the late 1800s are still kept in the workshop today. These include important reference books from the late 1800s and the turn of the twentieth century, such as *Zur Geschichte des Costüme* (1861–1880), Jakob von Falke’s *Costümgeschichte der Culturvölker* (1889) and Alfred Rosenberg’s *Geschichte des Kostüms* (1905), which feature hundreds of colourful drawings depicting the history of dress and clothing from different eras and folk dresses around the world. Although central and southern European folk clothing, as well as Arabic, African and Asian clothing are very well represented in numerous detailed drawings, there are hardly any images of Finnish folk dress let alone of Sámi clothing. Only Rosenberg (1905, 352) mentions a “Lappenfrau mit kind und Lappe” as an example of regional clothing from Norway.

It would seem, then, that international encyclopaedias and reference books on dress and clothing were not very helpful in providing material for creating “Lapp” costumes, and yet domestic sources did not prove much better. Matthias Akiander’s publication in 1852 only described the dress of peasant women from Jääski (Ervamaa 1981, 24). Following Akiander, the first small-scale domestic publications of Finnish folk dress published in 1863 and 1867 featured no clothing from Lapland (Schvindt 1913,1), nor did those leaflets published in 1899 and 1902, which included fourteen folk dresses as well as two interpretations of iron-age clothing (Koti ja Yhteiskunta 1902, 90–91). While Theodor Schvindt had planned to publish a series of four books on Finnish folk dress, only the first edition was published, in 1913. What was to be the third book of the series, introducing clothing from Lapland, was never published. Folk costumes were covered in a book by U.T. Sirelius (1915), and although it does not include any images of Sámi clothing, it does refer to certain garments, such as an overcoat and shoes made of reindeer calfskin (Sirelius 1990 [1915], 186–187, 230).

Most of the literature published about the Sámi was of ethnographic interest. One interesting example from the late 1800s – and likely familiar to the Bergboms, well acquainted with the artist Albert Edelfelt – is a drawing which depicts a Sámi family in a book of the expeditions of M.A. Castrén (1878, 65). In Edelfelt’s drawing, a Sámi man wears a high-collared *gákti* overcoat with a front opening, shoulder seams and hem decorated with lighter edging, along with a belt hanging with supplies. He wears shoes with beaked toes and a

high hat, wide at the top with a wide decorative border, which resembles a Skolt Sámi *talvikapper* (SÁ2497:1) or Inari Sámi *tälvikappeer* (SÁ2275:102). Behind him, four adults and four children are portrayed in front of a *kota* (a Sámi hut). A woman nursing a baby wears an overcoat with an edged shoulder-sleeve seam. Rather like Anni Junttila’s 1885 costume, the dress features a high vertical collar which was traditionally part of a man’s garment. Another woman beside her wears high headgear that resembles the Sámi Skolt headgear. Edelfelt never visited Lapland, and worked in Paris at the time, so it is likely he took his inspiration from the Paris World Exhibition he visited 1878 (Kortelainen, personal communication in 15.1.2021). The Paris exhibition introduced a museum display with several folklife scenes including “a Lapland panorama” (Baglo 2015, 50), which may have acted as the premise for Edelfelt’s drawings. At the turn of the century, it was possible to actually meet Sámi in Helsinki, when their caravans visited the capital as a part of their performance tours which were reported and illustrated by local newspapers.

Visual artists creating the image of Finnishness

The idea of a national Finnish artistic style was born at the end of the nineteenth century, when visual artists wanted to create a profile as “Finns” in the midst of the Paris-centric artworld of the 1880s and 1890s. “National art” was thought to support and to legitimise political efforts, as well as helping to create a national self-image, considered an absolute prerequisite to the establishment of the Finnish nation state (Stewen 2008, 68, 78). However, earlier in the 1800s painters and sculptors had become interested in “Finnish” mythology and history. From the late 1840s onwards, artists began to produce “national romantic views of the harmonious Finns in peasant settings” (Fewster 2006, 110) and to record the peculiar Finnish peasant clothing (Ervamaa 1981, 23). Early medieval Finnishness was imagined and visualised by the artist R.W. Ekman, who represented pagan Finns in his 1853 painting *Suomalaisten kaste* (Baptism of Finns). Ekman carried out careful research into his subject, but also idealised facial features and highlighted the blond skin and hair of some of the key characters (Ervamaa 1981, 19–21, 22–29).

The stories and characters of the Finnish national epic *The Kalevala* inspired many visual artists in the 1800s, most notably Akseli Gallén-Kallela. His first *Kalevala*-themed painting and the first version of the *Aino*-triptych was presented in Helsinki in 1889 (Nya Pressen 1889; Wiborgsbladet 1889). The currently better-known version of the *Aino*-triptych was completed in 1892. In this version, the blond Aino is depicted wearing a Karelian (and Skolt Sámi) *sarafan*-style shoulder dress and a white shirt with puffy sleeves, demonstrating the enthusiasm towards Karelia in the late 1800s. Gallén-Kallela painted



Image 4. Akseli Gallén-Kallela: *Joukahaisen kosto* (1897). Tempera on canvas 125 x 130. Turku Art Museum. Photo: Kari Lehtinen.

several *Kalevala*-themed paintings, which evolved from the realistic and naturalistic style towards symbolism (Stewen 2008, 70–71). There are few clear references to the Sámi in Gallen-Kallela’s art, but one can be found in *Joukahaisen kosto* (Joukahainen’s Revenge), 1897. This work depicts dark-haired Joukahainen – a “lean Lappish lad” from *The Kalevala* – in a winter landscape, dressed in a light-coloured short tunic and trousers, wearing a skullcap on his head. The tunic, fastened with a ring buckle, has a Sámi man’s style high vertical collar bordered with blue ribbons which covers the shoulder and sleeve seams, and a belt worn low on the hips, forming a silhouette similar to the Sámi *gákki*. Joukahainen wears *pieksut*, old folkish footwear based on a medieval model, similar to the *čažehat*, or *vuotakengät* in Finnish, traditional Sámi summer shoes with beaked toes (Lehtinen & Sihvo 2005, 219). Later in the 1920s, Gallén-Kallela reused the idea of Joukahainen in Sámi clothing for his illustrations for the book *Suur-Kalevala* (Great Kalevala), never published (Gallen-Kallela 1925).

Visual artists clearly reused such stylistically recognisable features and garments. By the time of *Suomalaisten kaste* in the early 1850s, the dress of the peasant women from Jääski which feature in this painting had been connected with “original Finnishness”. It was considered to be “one of the most ancient Finnish costumes still to be found” (Fewster 2006, 110–111), also utilised by artist Pekka Halonen, inspired by *The Kalevala*, at the very end of the century. Along with the Jääski dress, light-coloured linen shirts and trousers became the norm for presenting ancient Finnishness in *Kalevala*-themed paintings (Konttinen 2001, 171, 173, 176). Moreover, the skullcap had already been established by artists in the early 1800s to represent an ancient Finnish male headdress. Derek Fewster (2006, 106–107) calls it an “ethnic marker of Finnishness”. This headgear, also known as *patalakki*, was a hat normally made of six wedge-shaped pieces of fabric, familiar from medieval times and still used in the early 1800s by common men but which had become obsolete by the mid-1800s (Lehtinen & Sihvo 2005, 207). However, its use was reflected in paintings, sculptures, and on the stage, even though there was no archaeological evidence for its existence from prehistoric times. It was most popular in art inspired by *The Kalevala* (Fewster 2008, 196; see for example images in Piela, Knuuttila and Laaksonen 2008) and can also be found in some ethnographic paintings of the Sámi (see images in Ojanperä (ed.) 2011, 25, 89).

***Tuukkalan tappelu* (1889) and *Panu* (1903) – creating the early history of Finland**

The first play to include a “Lapp” character as representing a Sámi person, was *Tuukkalan tappelu* (Tuukkala’s Fight), which premiered in the Finnish Theatre in March 1889.⁴ Written by Gustav von Numers, the play was inspired by the archaeological discoveries of late iron-age burial grounds in Tuukkala near Mikkeli, in 1886, which contained jewellery, textiles and artefacts (Laatokka 1889; Sahrmaa 2011, 10).

The late 1800s were politically turbulent times in the Grand Duchy of Finland, leaving established ideas of “Finnishness” in turmoil. The boundary lines between Swedish- and Finnish-speaking people that were based on language and origins became more sharply drawn, and at the same time the Russian regime began to intensify its project of Russification (Fewster 2006, 184–185). *Tuukkalan tappelu* depicts a story of two clans: the Tuukkalaiset, newcomers from the western Häme region and the local Karelian people. The young chief Tuukka falls in love and eventually kidnaps the beautiful Irja, Karelian daugh-

4 In this article, all the subsequent basic information of the production, such as the date of the premiere, the amount of performances, productions and audience per play is based on *Ilona Theatre performance database*.

ter of old and miserly Hanka. This provokes the ire of another of Irja’s suitors, the rich and mighty Karelian chief Usu. In the end, everyone dies except Irja, now pregnant with Tuukka’s child, and her mother-in-law.

The main “Lapp” character in *Tuukkalan tappelu* is Vaina, an old “Lapp” woman and slave of Hanka, who had kidnapped Vaina in her youth and who made his living by attacking “Lapp” villages and trading his captives into slavery. Von Numer’s Vaina, however, is portrayed as a cunning and self-confident old woman, and friend to the young Irja, who stands up to Hanka and is learned in witchcraft. Other “Lapps” are only mentioned in the play as victims of slave traders.

Tuukkalan tappelu is the very first play set in Finnish prehistory, in this case approximately the year 1200, and as such also the first play to visualise the appearance and clothing of the prehistoric Finns and Sámi on the stage. Director Kaarlo Bergbom admired the “ethnographic-romantic” style, and the premier was publicised by highlighting how ethnographers had been consulted on the costume and jewellery design (Paavolainen 2018, 120, 706). Most of the costumes were probably inspired by the first sketches of iron-age clothing that were published in 1887 in the third popular edition of *The Kalevala*, as well as by the interpretations of Tuukkala’s costumes drawn in 1889 (see images in Lehtosalo-Hilander 1984, 10, 11). No photographs or costume sketches exist of the original production, although several newspaper reviews mentioned the “strange” but “beautiful” and sometimes even “too realistic” costumes that had been made with special care (*Uusi Suometar* 1889; *Päivän Uutiset* 1889; *Östra Finland* 1889.) A photograph taken a few years later, depicting a prehistoric Finnish family in costumes designed by Theodor Schvindt, represented the characters of a tableaux organised in 1893. This is likely to give a good impression of what many of the *Tuukkalan tappelu* costumes looked like in 1889 (see image in Lehtosalo-Hilander 1984, 26; KK1035:1).

In the parentheses of the play’s script, the appearance of some of the characters are described, and yet there is no mention of the “Lapp” character Vaina. While one newspaper critic (*Lounas* 1889) referred to Tuukka as the “fair-haired nobleman from Häme”, and Usu as the “black-haired Karelian”, no reviews contain any information about Vaina’s appearance. The role and acting are briefly analysed, for example, with Miss Swan’s role “as a Lapp hag” described as “very weird, but she did what she could with it” (*Uusi Suometar* 1889). Vaina’s origins, however, are made clear in the dialogue, where Hanka calls Vaina a northern troll and carrion from Lapland. Vaina herself complains about her miserable fate and the bad luck of all the “Sameksen lapset”, the children of Sames, whose homes – *kotas* – have been burned, their rich soils and lakes robbed by the Finnish wolf, the Karelian bear, and the Häme lynx, who now fight amongst themselves, when before Vaina’s people lived in peace.

Altogether, *Tuukkalan tappelu* was staged three times in the Finnish Theatre and the Finnish National Theatre, and eight times in other theatres, in four waves. The first productions were staged in 1889 and 1890, the next three around the turn of the century (when the restrictions of the Russian authorities were at their most severe). The third wave came immediately after the civil war, during the early years of Finnish independence. After that, the play was not performed in an established theatre for fifty years, until 1973 saw the first of three of the last productions, staged in 1970s and 1980s.

The play *Panu*, premiered in March 1903 in the Finnish National Theatre, also involved early Finnish history and Sámi representations. This was a dramatisation by the playwright, Juhani Aho of his own popular novel, published in 1897, which described the battle between ancient Finnish pagan beliefs and Christianity (Paavolainen 2018, 545). However, the dramaturgy had to be much reduced, as the extensive novel contained numerous characters and events stretching over many years. If the audience had read the novel, they had a much broader understanding of the background of the tragic events and characters, impossible to describe in detail in the play. Most likely, the book created expectations for the stage version, which, according to the reviews, was a disappointment (Valvoja 1903; *Uusi Suometar* 1903; *Päivälehti* 1903). Subsequently, *Panu* has been produced only once, by the Helsinki Student Theatre in 1937.

In the play, Panu is the chief of a village, well-known for his skills in magic and living deep in the forests of Karelia following the change of power from the Catholic to Lutheran church in the sixteenth century. Panu has achieved his power by killing Reita, the son of a Karelian man and a “Lapp” woman, whose father had taught his grandson the powerful magic of Lapland. After the murder, Panu drove away Reita’s family, raising Reita’s daughter Annikki as a slave. Reita’s son, however, (also named Reita) having been baptised into Christianity, returns to a nearby village to revenge his father’s death. The young Reita then asks the new village priest to expose Panu’s magic. Panu has his own dealings with the local bailiff, but the new priest is set against him and all those who still exercise pagan beliefs. The bailiff visits Panu to join a bear hunt, and with Panu’s permission kidnaps Annikki, who escapes and drowns herself in the river. The priest and Reita arrive in Panu’s village and, even when Reita turns out to be weak and deceitful, Panu’s autarchy starts to crumble. The play ends in the capture of Panu, who is to be condemned and burned as a witch.

The Karelians in the novel are portrayed as guides to and comrades-in-arms of the invading Russians, therefore as betraying their old allies from Savo. The thematic tensions around the tribal confrontations that characterise *Tuukka-*

lan tappelu also shape the story of *Panu*, and yet in the play the battle between pagan beliefs and Christianity take centre stage. Still, the “Lapp” family background of Reita and Annikki is highlighted from the very beginning of the play both in the dialogue and in parenthesis. When Reita is introduced, he is described as wearing “ragged vagabond clothes, but on his head a new Lapp hat and wearing new Lapp boots” (Aho 1903, 8).

According to Pentti Paavolainen (2018, 574), Juhani Aho and his wife, the visual artist Venny Soldan-Brofelt, had a clear visual idea of the scenography, inspired by two recent *Kalevala*-themed paintings by Akseli Gallén-Kallela: *Velisurmaaja* (Brotherkiller) and *Joukahaisen kosto* (Joukahainen’s Revenge). The latter painting, in particular, is of note here because of the references to the Sámi *gákti* described earlier. These paintings represented the succession of the new symbolist style over the more naturalistic style. Likewise, this was the goal for Aho and Soldan-Brofelt, who pursued a simple stylistic approach to costumes, rather than the ethnographic and often colorful costumes that had been considered typical of Bergbom’s productions (Paavolainen 2018, 574). Although only one stage photograph of *Panu* survives, leaving few clues as to the overall look of the costumes, it is very likely that the ideas for the clothing that was presented in both novel and play were faithfully introduced on the stage. The process of designing the costumes was obviously meticulous, with Soldan-Brofelt supervising the style and materials. Certain garments were made to order, such as genuine *pieksut* shoes from Savo in eastern Finland (Paavolainen 1918, 575).

***Kalevala*-inspired plays featuring “Lapp” characters**

Painters and sculptors were not alone in elaborating the visual images of *The Kalevala* and the representations of early Finnish history. Along with historical plays such as *Tuukkalan tappelu* (1889) and *Panu* (1903), which aimed to create an image of ancient Finnish history, *Kalevala*-inspired plays formed their own sideline. Following Aleksis Kivi’s *Kullervo* in 1885, several *Kalevala*-inspired plays and operas were composed. Interestingly, many of them seem to contain “Lapp” characters, such as *Aino* (Erkko 1893), *Kullervo* (Erkko 1895), *Sota valosta* (War of Light, Leino 1901) and *Pohjolan Häät* (Erkko Pohjola Wedding, 1902), which were all performed in the Finnish Theatre and the Finnish National Theatre.

Aino (1893), *Kullervo* (1895) and *Pohjolan Häät* (1902) were a trilogy written by J.H. Erkko. According to Kari Sallamaa (2008, 34), Erkko presented a political interpretation via a realistic approach, with characters based on historical people rather than mythological creatures with supernatural skills. The first play of the trilogy, *Aino*, is set in the “heroic times of Finnish tribal

wars”, and was premiered in February 1893 in the Finnish Theatre. At least seven productions of Erkko’s *Aino* were made between 1893 and 1924, five of which were staged by the Finnish Theatre and the Finnish National Theatre, very likely re-using some of the costumes. The play is based on one of the best-known stories from *The Kalevala*, in which the young and cheeky Joukahainen – the aforementioned “lean Lappish lad” – challenges the power of the old and wise Väinämöinen, whose magic casts the boy into a swamp. Fatefully, as a means to escape, Joukahainen promises his sister Aino to Väinämöinen, causing the girl to drown herself in resistance to marrying the old man. In *The Kalevala*, either remorseful Joukahainen or “kyttösilmä lappalainen”, a Lapp with crossed or narrowed eyes, shoots Väinämöinen with his bow, but fails to kill him.

In the play, J.H. Erkko (1893) included a first scene where Väinämöinen and Aino meet in ritualistic spring festivities, when the people of Joukola come to greet those of Väinölä. Once enemies, the two tribes are now at peace, and Taina, mistress of Joukola announces the offer a thousand furs in taxes. Väinämöinen is charmed by her young daughter Aino, but her brother Jouko envies Väinämöinen and decides to challenge him. A competition of magic ensues between the older and the younger man. Jouko returns home discouraged and angry, and reveals to his parents that he has promised Aino to Väinämöinen. Erkko’s play straightforwardly follows the storyline of *The Kalevala*: the wedding festivities are organised, but Aino is not happy. Jouko tries – but fails – to shoot Väinämöinen on his way to the wedding. Aino loses her mind, runs away and drowns herself in a lake.

The list of roles bears no mention of the Joukola people as “Lapps”, but there are several indications of their distinct origins as being different from the Väinölä tribe. They are portrayed as hunters from the north, while the Väinölä people are farmers who represent the future way of life. This dispute between an old and new source of livelihood creates constant tension between the two tribes. In the very beginning of the play, the arrival of the Joukola people at the site of spring sacrifice is described as “Lapland coming with its gifts” (Erkko 1893, 11). When challenging Väinämöinen, Jouko sings a song or a spell which is “brought from Lapland, under the tongue of summer deer, mouth of wintery calf, beak of Lapland birds” (Erkko 1893, 81). Kari Sallamaa (2008, 34) has suggested that despite the hints at Lapland, the conflict of the two tribes is in fact between the farming culture of Häme and the hunting traditions of Savo. However, one contemporary review of the re-premiere of *Aino* in 1902 does interpret the Joukola people as “Lapps,” stating that he would have wished Jouko and his people to have presented more Lappish power and

“turjalaistuskaa” – Turja agony – with reference to the Turja area of the Kola peninsula, an old dwelling place of the Sámi (Paavolainen 2018, 568).

Was such an interpretation based on particular costumes? In the archive of the Theatre Museum, only one photograph of *Aino* survives from 1893, portraying the female lead Olga Poppius a moment before Aino drowns herself. She wears a simple white shirt and separate petticoat, while her apparently white, richly decorated wedding dress lies in a pile beside her. Some details of the costume are visible, such as round buckles holding rows of pearls, cuffs decorated with white serrated ribbon on a dark background, and white fringe on the side seams of the apron or dress, as seen in the sketches of iron-age clothing based on the aforementioned Tuukkala archaeological finds.

Another rare photograph of *Aino* was taken in the Finnish Theatre at the end of the first scene (*Suomen Kuvalehti* 1894, 29, 32), although the present location of the original photograph is unknown. In any case, this might be the oldest known photograph to present ancient Finnish costumes as well as “Lapp” characters on the Finnish stage. From the rather blurry printed image it is still possible to make out the whole cast in their costumes. Aino stands in the middle wearing a white shirt, a horizontally-striped and richly-decorated dress, and a white apron with a striped hem. In both groups, the men wear scullcaps. The people of Väinölä stand on the right wearing white v-neck-colored and knee-length tunics or coats, very similar to the sketches of iron-age clothing based on the archaeological discoveries at Tuukkala. The Joukola men stand on the left wearing what appear to be darker tunics with distinctive ribbon decorations on their shoulders. The men to the far left seem dressed in high-collared Sámi *beaska*-style overcoats made of fur and leather, or *peski* in Finnish. This interpretation is supported by a review published after the Finnish Theatre toured eastern Finland. The indignant writer was not satisfied with the acting, finding Mr. Halme as Jouko not “Finnish enough”, but acting as if he were some kind of “Germanic hero”, especially when considered that “both in *The Kalevala* and in this play Joukola people are referred to as Lapps.” The writer nonetheless criticised the Joukola people’s use of leather clothing in summertime, which was considered unrealistic (*Uusi Savo* 1893).

The second part of the *Kalevala*-inspired trilogy, J.H. Erkkö’s version of *Kullervo*, premiered in 1895 at the Finnish Theatre for the first and only time. *Kullervo* – a fateful story of a young man who is raised as a slave and who mistakenly seduces his own sister – succeeded as a production, adding to the contemporary enthusiasm towards *The Kalevala* (Paavolainen 2018, 370, 372). It did not, however, attain the consistent popularity of Kivi’s version, whose interpretations are still popular today. Erkkö’s *Kullervo* included many more characters than Kivi’s version, among them is Onervo “the skilful witch from

Lapland”, a nameless woman kidnapped “from Lapland from the arms of her old darling”, and a crowd of Kullervo’s allies from Lapland. Kullervo’s father, Kalervo, used to collect taxes in Lapland before a fatal fight with his brother Untamo, which ended with the massacre of Kalervo’s family. Onervo performs a shamanistic journey and foretells the final outcome of events (Erkko 1897, 151, 169, 176, 182, 195–198, 234).

In the reviews, the costumes are only mentioned in passing but were praised for their historical accuracy and for following the latest ethnographic research, being seen to portray “ancient Finnish as well as Lapp costumes” (*Päivälehti* 1895; *Nya Pressen* 1895; *Uusi Suometar* 1895). Only one writer analysed the costumes in detail, criticising Kullervo’s sleeves as too short in the first scene and his make-up and black tunic to appear strange at the beginning (*Uusi Suometar* 1895). However, I suggest the use of a black short-sleeved tunic as Kullervo’s costume was an effective way of visually distinguishing the lead character from the traditional light-linen male clothing.

The review also reveals that most of the costumes were made especially for the production of *Kullervo*. However, it is very likely that at least some of the costumes were reused from earlier depictions of Finnish prehistory – *Tuukkalan tappelu* and *Aino*, for example. There are no specific descriptions of Onervo’s or any other “Lapp” costumes mentioned in any review. Despite the fact that Onervo was a “Lapp” witch, one reviewer (*Uusi Suometar* 1895) assumes that the model for the character is a witch from Ostyak (currently Khanty), belonging to the Ugrian indigenous people from Siberia. It is unclear if the writer refers to Närhi’s acting or to his costume. However, only a few photographs survive, and none of them portrays the whole cast, so even the short, written descriptions are helpful when trying to understand the costume aesthetics.

The next *Kalevala*-inspired play, *Sota valosta* (War of Light) premiered in March 1901 for the first and only time. The play was written by a young poet Eino Leino and presented the shape-shifting character Louhi as a “Lapp witch hag” (*Päivälehti* 1901). Unfortunately, no photograph of Louhi have survived. Leino merged together two stories from *The Kalevala*: Louhi stealing the daylight and Marjatta giving birth to her son, who supersedes Väinämöinen as the ruler of the *Kalevala* people (Paavolainen 2018, 486–488). Despite the dashing sets and lightning effects, the colorful ethnographic costumes, beastly masks and a self-igniting sword acquired from abroad, the play seems not to have been a great success (Paavolainen 2018, 488–490, 574).

The third part of Erkko’s *Kalevala*-trilogy, *Pohjolan häät* (Pohjola Wedding), was commissioned as the opening play for the new Finnish National Theatre in 1902. The Finnish Theatre, established thirty years earlier, moved to the

new building in the very heart of Helsinki (Paavolainen 2018, 540–541). Erko envisioned a play that underlined the national consensus against oppressive Russian rule, while theatre director Kaarlo Bergbom’s dramaturgy aimed to enliven the static play with more action. Bergbom had to strike a balance between his own vision, the wishes of the playwright, and the strict censorship authorities, who were suspecting the play to present criticism against the Russian regime. Even the arrangements for the opening celebration and the guestlist proved complicated, due to the tensions between different Finnish political groups and the highly unpopular Russian governor-general Bobrikov (Paavolainen 2018, 529–536).

The 1902 production of *Pohjolan häät* remains the only version of the play, which was performed eleven times in the new Finnish National Theatre. In this quite undramatic production, a large number of different characters from *The Kalevala* and various Finnish nature spirits are presented during and after the planning of the wedding between Ilvo, a daughter of Pohjola, and Ilmarinen, the mighty blacksmith. No “Lapp” characters are mentioned in the role list, only “different Finnish tribes”. However, certain crossed-out scenes in the original handwritten manuscript from the Finnish Theatre include “Lapps”, who bring presents for the bride and groom, such as furs and reindeer antlers from Lapland. Louhi’s daughter, Ilvo, wishes them good luck: that wolverines would save their reindeers, the northern lights would blaze, and daylight would prosper in Lapland. Louhi’s husband, Turjo, however, seems to carry some kind of grudge against the goodwill of the “Lapps”, and later in the play refers to a war he won against Lapland tribes (Erkko 1902). It is clear in the first version of *Pohjolan häät* prior to the deletion of scenes, that Louhi and her tribe were differentiated from the visiting “Lapps”.

At the end of the original manuscript, handwritten notes by an unknown writer question how the men and women of Pohjola should be dressed (Erkko 1902). This was most likely a question not only for the costume workshop but also for the director. Only one year before, *Sota valosta* had presented Louhi as a “Lapp witch hag” (*Päivälehti* 1901). Based on previous examples, the theatre must have owned several “Lapp” costumes from earlier plays, which had successfully signalled a distinction from the clothing of the “Finnish” Kalevala people, dressed in late iron-age costumes. In the contemporary political situation, it would have been impossible to dress antagonist characters in costumes that would allude to Russia. A deletion of the scenes containing the visiting Finnish tribes would have served well for three reasons. First, by removing undramatic scenes whose events did not carry the plot forward. Second, the deleting of the visiting “Lapp” characters would have freed-up the use of existing “Lapp” costumes for the Pohjola people and at the same time created a



Image 5. Actor Mimmi Lähteenoja as Louhi in Pohjolan häät (1902). Photo: Ernst Ovesén. TeaMK0000:097:30. Theatre Museum.

distinctive, already familiar visual solution on stage. Third, the association of intimidating Louhi and the people of Pohjola even vaguely with “Lapps” – as had been done before – would have eased the uncomfortable implications towards Russia in the eyes of the hypersensitive censorship authorities.

Some reviews of the time (*Uusi Suometar* 1902; *Uusi Savo* 1902; *Lukutu-pa* 1902; *Työmies* 1902; *Päivälehti* 1902) pay little attention to the costumes, other than noticing that they were beautiful and “correct for the time period”. Greater attention is given to the plot on a general level, the opening ceremonies, and details of the new theatre building. Only one photograph from this production survives, but it seems to support my interpretation that Louhi is not wearing any random fantasy costume. Playing Louhi, the actor Mimmi Lähteenoja wears a long dark robe of a heavy woolen material, over which is placed a sleeveless tunic made of sheepskin and possibly a tablet-woven belt with iron-age motifs. On her head, she wears a dark and rather tall hat topped with what is possibly lynx pelt; the animal’s head attached to the hat, the front pawns hanging over the shoulders, and the back paws hanging behind (TeaMK0000:097:30). Fur in general had historically been used on stage to signify barbaric, wild characters. This costume resembles the first illustrations of “Lapps” in their fur clothing by Cesare Vecellio (1977, 89–90) from 1591 and 1598 as well as those by Johannes Schefferus (1979, 186) from 1673. Similar fur dresses and headpieces were also used by R.W. Ekman in his painting *Suomalaisten kaste* (Baptism of Finns, 1853). Lapland was one of the regions Ekman used as an inspiration for the clothing in his painting, and yet Jukka Ervamaa (1981, 22–23, 26–27) traces the models for pelt covered headgear to ancient Greek and Roman art. In Ekman’s drawings of scenes from *The Kalevala*, Louhi’s headgear mostly differs from that of the other women wearing veils, and Ervamaa (1981, 148) suggests her high headdress might be based on Sámi examples. This could more specifically be identified as a Skolt Sámi female headdress (e.g. SUK190:41). Similar headdress also appeared in Edelfelt’s drawing of Sámi (Castrén 1878, 65). However, a reminiscent style can also be traced from Louis Sparre’s drawing from 1892, of a sleeveless linen overdress *kosto* with high *sorokka* headgear, considered “the most ancient dress” used by old women of Eastern Orthodox origins from Karelia (Kaukonen 1985, 175).

A comparison of photographs of Louhi from *Pohjolan häät* and of Vaina – a very similar cunning old female character from *Tuukkalan tappelu* – suggests interesting similarities in costume. There are no photographs of Vaina from the first 1889 production, but the figure of Vaina can be identified in photographs from three other performances of *Tuukkalan tappelu*, two from the 1900 and 1918 productions by the *Tampereen Kansan Teatteri* (Tampere Folk Theatre) and the third by the Askola youth club in the early 1900s. The photograph from 1900 shows a woman with dark hair flowing over her shoulders, wearing a dark dress with a sleeveless, fur tunic and a tall dark cap (TeaMK2007:032:825:1). In the 1918 production, Vaina has a very similar dark dress, a sleeveless fur-tunic and tall cap (TeaMK2007:032:825:3). In the



Image 6. On the right, actor Lyyli Erjakka as Vaina in *Tuukkalan tappelu* (1918), Tampereen Kansan Teatteri. TeaMK2007:032:825:3. Theatre Museum.

Askola youth club production, Vaina is dressed in a long dark skirt and simple white shirt, with a knee-length coat of raw hide tied with a rope. On her head she wears high headgear, either a cap or a scarf tied to the back of her head. She is very likely wearing skin-darkening makeup and has had her eyebrows heavily blackened (TeaMA 127:577). Interestingly enough, this style – the longer dress with shorter fur or raw-hide tunic combined with high headgear – appears in four different productions as the costume for a “Lapp” hag.

Conclusions

The emergence of “Lapp” characters as representing Sámi people in Finnish theatre at the end of the nineteenth century occurred at the same time as the national romantic movement cultivated its images of ancient Finnish history, and when storylines from *The Kalevala* were adapted into plays, novels, paintings, sculptures and music. Also at this time, the first archaeological finds from the iron-age aroused wide interest and prompted interpretations of the pre-history and early cultures of the Finnish region. This image of Finnishness, however, was developed by excluding major aspects of indigenous history. The first museum collections based on archaeological finds and folk artefacts were a means to construct the story of a distinctive Finnish history, distinguishable from that of Sweden and Russia and yet explicitly separate from the indigenous people of the northern and eastern areas of Finland. While *Kale-*

vala-themed subjects inspired numerous visual artists, the Sámi were excluded from the stock national-romantic repertoire of character-types – with the suggested exception of deceitful Joukahainen.

While mainly excluded from the national romantic image of Finnishness in the visual arts, the Sámi were represented in the theatre, where Lapland was portrayed as a place to exploit human and financial resources, to collect slaves and to earn fortunes. Representations of Sámi people were useful as a counterfoil to Finnish identity, that is, as enemies, as slaves, as the Other, thereby serving to highlight an illusory blond-haired-blue-eyed Finnish ethnicity connected to the rest of Europe, as well as the alleged superiority and sophistication of Finnish culture. As Sámi people had little agency, “Lapp” costumes could even be used for political codification and as a visual disguise for antagonistic characters in order to evade conflict with the authoritarian Russian regime, if necessary.

Altogether, the six plays⁵ that included “Lapp” characters and premiered in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the Finnish Theatre and the Finnish National Theatre, have been staged twenty-three times. Of all the six plays, the first, *Tuukkalan tappelu* has proved the most popular. It was staged in the established theatres eleven times between 1889 and 1983, in addition to the unknown amount of productions by amateur theatre groups. Statistics of the numbers of the early performances and viewers are incomplete, and yet we know that the last three productions of *Tuukkalan tappelu*, staged between 1973 and 1983, attracted an audience of 20,230. While twenty-three productions constitute a relatively small number, these plays can nevertheless be seen to have repeated and confirmed the prevailing perceptions of Sámi appearance and behaviour for a fairly large audience.

Even when the sources for “Lapp” costumes were limited, original Sámi garments, literature and visual images of Sámi culture were available in Helsinki at the close of the nineteenth century. Most notably, artistic images presented within the academic context were most likely to have been considered reliable and thus to have influenced the visual image of the Sámi. Most of the sources described Sámi culture from a colonialist viewpoint, without an understanding of cultural or material diversities, thereby confirming misconceptions about clothing. Evidently, no attempt was made to present images of contemporary or historical Sámi clothing on stage, but, rather, to make a theatrical interpretation based on the most impressive elements of clothing, such as the tall headgear, curly-tipped shoes, and overcoats with high vertical collars and serrated decorations. Materials like animal skin and fur were em-

5 *Tuukkalan tappelu* 1889, *Aino* 1893, *Kullervo* 1895, *Sota valosta* 1901, *Pohjolan häät* 1902 and *Panu* 1903.

ployed to underline a supposedly primitive and heathen culture. The cut and the structure of the clothes were modified for a distinctive look, regardless of the original practices and customs related to gender, age or the diversity of regional Sámi cultures. The serrated decorations of the original Sámi clothing were probably modified for theatrical reasons, notably from the back of the dress to the front, being conspicuously more spectacular and recognizable when viewed from the audience. In addition, it is possible to trace a stylistic connection in the costumes of Louhi from *Pohjolan häät* and of Vaina from *Tuukkalan tappelu*, which might indicate the existence of a repeatedly used and clearly recognisable “Lapp”-hag costume in turn-of-the-century Finland. This was continuous with other stereotyping practices that were widely used in theatre costume design at the time.

The results of this study reflect both very conventional “Lapp” features, such as the already ancient stereotype of “Lapps” as users of cunning and powerful witchcraft, but also interesting new anomalies, such as the female “Lapp” witch instead of the male shaman more familiar from the literature. The female “Lapp” characters represented in Finnish plays of the late 1800s and early 1900s were typified by two tropes. The first is the bitter and cunning old woman skilled in witchcraft, such as Vaina in *Tuukkalan tappelu* and Louhi in *Sota valosta* and *Pohjolan häät*. The second is the young “halfblood” woman, like Annikki in *Panu*, who is raised as a slave in an enemy culture, who remains totally unaware of her erotic appeal and meets a tragic end, or the protagonist of *Aino* who shares the same destiny. Aino’s situation, however, is more ambivalent as she is undeniably the sister of Jouko, the “lean Lappish lad”, but is simultaneously presented as a beautiful blond girl, the very epitome of Finnishness. Compared with the established bloneness of Aino, “Lapp” ancestry produced a contradiction which could neither be settled in the visual arts nor in the theatre. The male “Lapp” characters include a powerful, greedy male soothsayer ready to sell his services in witchcraft, such as Onervo in *Kullervo* (and the Soothsayer of Lapland from the original novel *Panu*), as well as the younger “Lapp” male: an unreliable and ostentatious young man such as young Jouko in *Aino*, or the figure of the unreliable and cowardly young man, such as Reita in *Panu*. Other “Lapp” characters were either extras or simply “Lapps”, as referred to in scripts, being mostly slaves or tax-paying subordinates. It is also evident that reviewers held clear assumptions about the appearance of such characters.

The relation between Sámi people and *The Kalevala* – especially the connection with Louhi and the people of Pohjola – appears to have been the subject of constant artistic negotiation, where distinctive costumes had an essential part to play. While the earliest stage interpretations emphasised the power

of witchcraft, they also offered pity for the subjugated “Lapps”, who had not yet at that point been turned into the comic, drunk characters so familiar to the Petelius-case a hundred years later. Based on this study and as a hypothesis for the future research, it is likely that the supposedly comic image of the boozy “Lappish” male character surfaced in the aftermath of the Civil War, when the idealised notions of the upper class towards the figure of the humble trustworthy worker also changed. Moreover, the potential continuity or variability of post-civil war female “Lapp” characters on the stage, as well as the prospective connections related to the “Lapp” characters in theatre and film, need further investigation. By examining the practices related to representation of ethnic minorities, it is not only possible to expand the understanding of early Finnish theater and its substructures, but also to identify and make visible the historical strategies of exclusionary performance practices.

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Akseli Gallén-Kallela: *Joukahaisen kosto* (1897). Tempera on canvas 125 x 130. Turku Art Museum. Photo: Kari Lehtinen.

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