

1. Vermeulen 2015, 278.
2. Branch 1986, 72.
3. Kajanto 1984, 12; Kari Tarkkainen. Henrik Gabriel Porthan. <http://www.kansallisbiografia.fi/kansallisbiografia/henkilo/2599>. Read 1 May 2017; Talvio 2005, 70; Kostet 2010, 21.
4. Talvio 2005, 71, Talvio 2017, 17.

**The M.A. Castrén Collection  
at the Museum of Cultures /  
the National Museum of Finland**

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***The Ethnographic Museum in Helsinki***

In Finland, during the period 1770–1800, scholars had started the process of creating national history. At the Royal Academy of Turku, Professor Henrik Gabriel Porthan was the founder of Finnish humanistic research creating the basis for critical historical research in the field of mythology and folk poetry. In 1779, Porthan studied at the University of Göttingen, where he met August Ludwig Schlözer who identified and classified European and northern Asian languages, amongst them the Uralic family of languages. He introduced the concept of ethnography as a historical description of peoples in his *Allgemeine Nordische Geschichte* published at Halle as part of the *Allgemeine Welthistorie* in 1771.<sup>1</sup> Following Schlözer's works, Porthan had extended Schlözer's pattern of relationship to include the so-called 'Finnic' peoples, the Sámi, Biarmians, Estonians, Kurlanders, Finns, Karelians, Ingrians and Votians. In Porthan's view, the description of grammar and syntax of the Finno-Ugric languages could be achieved by visiting the speakers of each of these languages and studying them in the field.<sup>2</sup> Porthan wanted to discover the historical origins of the Finnic peoples with linguistic studies, but he was also interested in prehistory, numismatics, and art. As the librarian of the Royal Academy of Turku from 1772 to 1777, he started, upon his own initiative, to keep and inventory the Academy's numismatic and art collection.<sup>3</sup> His role was quite active as the museum keeper. The numismatic collection was augmented by donations and as a result there were 76 medals in the collection by 1796. Porthan represented the collections in his lectures, and in 1786, he was invited to be a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities. Upon H.G. Porthan's initiative, the collection *Kongl. Academiens Mynt- och Medaille Samling* was inventoried in 1802.<sup>4</sup> There was a modest ethnological collection at the Academy that had been acquired through commerce and seafaring and donations from Admiral Arvid Adolf Etholén in 1825–1826.

This collection was destroyed in the Fire of Turku in 1827, which also destroyed the Academy.<sup>5</sup>

Emperor Nicholas I's edict of 21 October 1827 ordered the University to relocate from Turku to Helsinki, which had become the capital of the Grand Duchy of Finland in 1812. In 1828, the University was renamed the *Imperial Alexander University in Finland*. The University had a Coin and Art Cabinet, containing numismatic, medal and art collections<sup>6</sup>, as well as artefacts obtained from 'indigenous peoples', especially from Alaska. Owing to donations from Admiral Arvid Adolf Etholén, the number of these ethnographic objects grew during the 1830 and 1840s.<sup>7</sup> In 1830, Professor Johan Gabriel Linsén, the director of the museum, bought a noteworthy numismatic collection from Anders Blad, while at the same time he refused to purchase a collection of Alaskan materials offered by the widow of Admiral Schismareff. Linsén argued that there were continuous additions to the Alaska collection through donations from Arvid Adolf Etholén. Nonetheless, there was only one item from Finland, a Sámi cradle.<sup>8</sup> Linsén ultimately appreciated the ethnographic collection, and in 1835, upon his initiative, it was transferred to its own museum with the original Swedish name of *Ethnographiskt Museum*, the 'Ethnographic Museum'.<sup>9</sup> The collection contained 'various curiosities, such as old weapons, clothing, jewellery etc.'<sup>10</sup> The positive attitude of the museum's director to the ethnographic collection might have been due to Linsén's visit to C.J. Thomsen in Copenhagen in 1830s.<sup>11</sup>

The historian Gerhard Friedrich Müller, in Russified form Feodor Ivanovič Miller, launched ethnography as a descriptive study of peoples in the 1730s and 1740s. This was followed by the linguist August Schlözer and the librarian Adam František Kollár with their concepts of the historical description of peoples. In 1787, Alexandre-César Chavannes, professor of theology in Lausanne, was the first to use the term 'ethnologie'.<sup>12</sup> Ethnography as a discipline was established during the nineteenth century in specialized societies and ethnographic museums. Interest in ethnography and the collection of ethnographic material spread among European museums. The first ethnographic museums were founded in St Petersburg, Leiden, and Copenhagen in the years 1836–41.<sup>13</sup> In 1841, C.J. Thomsen founded the Ethnographic Museum in Copenhagen<sup>14</sup> using the collections of the Oldnorsk Museum as its basis. In St Petersburg, the Ethnographic Museum of the Imperial Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences became an independent institution in 1836, and Anders Johan Sjögren became its first director in 1845.<sup>15</sup> The opening of a new large gallery for the ethnographic collections at the British

5. Vuorela 1977, 11/1; Varjola 1981, 52.
6. *Myntsamling, Myntkabinett, Mynt-, Medalj- och konstsamlingarna, Mynt- och medaljkabinett*, Lagus 1885, 13.
7. Varjola 1990, 26–31.
8. Talvio 2005, 74–75, Varjola 1990, 26–31; Talvio 2017, 30–32.
9. Koivunen 2015, 43; Talvio 2005, 76.
10. Talvio 2005, 76: 'åtskilliga märkvärdigheter, tillkomna genom menskohand, såsom gamla vapen, klädedrägter, prydnader m.m.'
11. Talvio 2005, 78.
12. Vermeulen 2015, 131, 314, 316.
13. Vermeulen 2015, 4, 426–427, Table 12.
14. Koivunen 2015, 43 / 65.
15. Vermeulen 2015, 409; Branch 1995, 82.

16. Kostet 2005, 25; Vermeulen 2015, 426.
17. Koivunen 2015, 4.
18. Kostet 2010, 24.
19. Koivunen 2015, 44.
20. Färling's catalogue. Utländska afvdelningen, 2.
21. Vuorela 1977, 65.
22. Minutes of the University Council 1850 1/V § 27; 'Consistorium bifaller tin inlösen af en mångd. Ethnografiska föremål, samtade af Doctor Castren under hans resors.' Record of the Ethnological collections VK432–VK448.
23. Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae 1856/4, 1863/7; Varjola 1989, 327; Varjola 1990, 43–47.
24. Varjola 1989, 328; Varjola 1990, 46; Koivunen 2015, 46.

Museum in 1845 influenced the founding of ethnographic institutes in Europe.<sup>16</sup>

In 1849 in Finland, the University of Helsinki appointed Gabriel Rein, professor of history and rector of the university, to the post of director of the Ethnographic Museum.<sup>17</sup> According to Finnish museologist Juhani Kostet, the history as an academic discipline had a strong influence on the activities of the museum. Historical research needed source materials for reference, and archive institute and museums had to be provided for them. Ethnological artefacts were regarded as sources for historians.<sup>18</sup> The Ethnographic Museum in Helsinki was quite modest; the most valuable collection was the above-mentioned Etholén Collection from Russian Alaska by Arvid Adolf Etholén, explorer and Chief Manager (Governor) at the Russian-American Company who donated the collections to the University in 1829, 1834, and 1846. The inventory indicated the amount of the items; for example 80 artefacts from the American North West, the Islands of the Pacific, and approximately 20 items from Europe.<sup>19</sup> The museum was housed in the University building, and the items were arranged in four showcases.<sup>20</sup> The collections were only for the use of students of the University.

Henrik August Reinholm, a collector of Finnish folklore, worked as the museum assistant from 1850 to 1856. His focus of interest was the collection of basic material shedding light on the history of the Finnish people. In 1839 he began a series of expeditions to different parts of southern Finland to collect folklore materials.<sup>21</sup> On 1 May 1850 the Ethnographic Museum bought from Matthias Alexander Castrén a Tungus man's costume, a Samoyed fur coat, some pipes, spoons, a comb and a knife, and Mongolian and Chinese ritual items. The museum assistant, H.A. Reinholm, most likely received and described these objects in writing.<sup>22</sup>

In 1856, Henrik Johan Holmberg was appointed museum assistant. He was a Finnish mineralogist and chemist who travelled in Russian America in 1849–1852. During his stay, Holmberg assembled a rich collection of natural history specimens and studied local languages and the ethnography of the indigenous Alaskans. In 1852, Holmberg published the results of his researches with the title *Etnographische Skizzen über die Völker des russischen Amerika*<sup>23</sup>, and offered his collection to the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Helsinki, but was turned down. The museum already had enough of these items. In 1853, Christian Jürgensen Thomsen purchased the Holmberg Collection for the National Museum of Denmark.<sup>24</sup>

H.J. Holmberg focused on inventorying and organising the collections of the Ethnographic Museum. He described the artefacts

in detail, and published the museum's first catalogue in 1859<sup>25</sup>. The principle of Holmberg's classification was based on continents, with European, Asian, African, American, and Australian sections. The Finnish artefacts belonged to the European collection. The Asian collection included Chinese items, and mostly artefacts of Siberian nomadic peoples, the Samoyed, Tungus, and Yakut, obtained by Castrén. Holmberg's catalogue pointed out two facts. Considerable additions began to be made to the collection after 1849 and it now listed 1400 items. The size of the Finnish collection changed decisively, from only a couple of items in 1849 to 525 by 1859. The principle of collecting was changing as the Finnish items became the focus with the curiosities of the 'Other' in the background.<sup>26</sup>

In the 1850s the policy of collection was passive, with the museum receiving items as donations from all parts of the world. The Alaska collection was the result of a research expedition, others were collected as souvenirs and curiosities. The museum offered a conception about cultures and peoples living outside Europe. The Samoyed fur coat, the Tungus costume, and objects of mammoth ivory represented the cultures of indigenous Siberian peoples until 1877 when the linguist August Ahlqvist made a research expedition to Siberia and purchased a collection of 100 items from the Khanty and Mansi.<sup>27</sup>

Castrén was in Helsinki after his first expedition in 1844. He studied the Komi, Sámi, and Mari languages, worked on the grammar of Yurak Samoyed, prepared his doctoral thesis, and lectured at the university on Finnish grammar. In principle, he had the opportunity to visit the Ethnographic Museum at the university, but in practice he probably did not do so.

### *Defining ethnography*

Ethnography as an independent discipline was invented by eighteenth-century German-speaking historians. The definition comprised the origins, languages, customs, and institutions of different peoples. In 1992, Zoja Petrovna Sokolova, a Russian ethnologist and expert on Siberian ethnology, wrote: 'It is no exaggeration to say that Castrén was a colossus in science.'<sup>28</sup> She was repeating the opinion of learned societies of his time, the Russian Geographical Society<sup>29</sup> and the Imperial Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences<sup>30</sup>. Castrén's work, particularly on the Samoyedic languages and folklore, was appreciated. His work covered a large geographic area from the Altai Mountains to the Arctic Ocean and from the Yenisei to the White Sea.<sup>31</sup> In 1927, Lev Jakovlevič Šternberg expressed his

25. Holmberg 1859; Koivunen 2015, 51.
26. Koivunen 2015, 54.
27. Lehtinen 2002b, 31.
28. Sokolova 1992, 10.
29. Результаты 1849, 153. Castrén was invited to become member of the Russian Geographical Society. Korhonen 1986, 65.
30. Результаты 1849, 156; Sjögren 1853, 3-32; Ламанский 1856, 24-93.
31. Результаты 1849, 156; Пыпинъ 1892, 395; Sokolova 1992, 10.

32. Штернберг 1927, 50, 53, 56; Donner 1932, 5; Aalto 1971, 87.
33. Lehtonen 1972, 226–228; Vuorela 1977, 56–57.
34. Castrén 1857, 8, Branch 1973, 256.
35. Castrén 1857, 8: ‘Det gifves ännu en kunskapsgren, som jag, både af egen böjelse och för sakens skull, anser mig förpligtad att göra till föremål för mina föreläsningar, nemligen *e t h n o g r a f i n*. Detta är ett nytt namn för en gammal sak. Man förstår dermed vetenskapen om folkslagens religion, samhällskick, seder och bruk, lefnadssätt, boningar, med ett ord: om allt, som hör till deras inre och yttre lif. Man kunde betrakta etnografi såsom en del af kulturhistorien, men icke alla nationer ega en historia i högre mening, utan deras historia utgöres just af *e t h n o g r a f i n*.’ Vuorela 1977, 20, translated by Peter Jones.
36. Haltsonen 1947, 17, 21; Lehtonen 1972, 196–197.
37. Siikala 2002, 82.
38. Lehtonen 1972, 196–197; Vuorela 1977, 17.

appreciation of Castrén’s activity from the point of view of ethnography, pointing out that Castrén was the first modern ethnologist to proclaim ethnography to be a scholarly discipline equivalent to other academic disciplines.<sup>32</sup> In Finland, Sulo Haltsonen and Juhani U.E. Lehtonen have emphasized the significance of Castrén’s research in Finno-Ugrian ethnography. Lehtonen argued that in Finland the definition of ethnography derived from M.A. Castrén. A scientific programme to explain the origins of the Finns and Finno-Ugrian peoples determined the activities of Finnish ethnologists for decades.<sup>33</sup> Castrén namely defined the subject in his inaugural lecture on being appointed to the chair of Finnish Language in 1851. He saw that it was a ‘new name for an old thing’ including the observation and research of the religion, customs, behaviour and the way of life of peoples.<sup>34</sup>

‘There exists a branch of learning which both my own interests and the nature of the subject itself lead me to regard as a field that I feel it my duty to lecture upon, namely ethnology. It is a new name for an old thing. It comprehends a science which deals with the religion, social conditions, customs, and traditions of nations, in brief with everything that concerns their inner and external lives. Ethnology could be regarded as a part of cultural history, but not all nations have a history in the highest sense of the word – it is this very study, ethnology, which constitutes their history.’<sup>35</sup>

The examples in the comparative ethnography offered by Castrén were characteristic of religion and folklore, and its crowning achievement, the Kalevala. Along with folklore, the Finnish collectors of oral materials, such as H.A. Reinholm, Antero Warelius, Elias Lönnrot and others, noted the way of life of Finnish peasants and their material culture, including costumes, dwellings and household items.<sup>36</sup> The expeditions of Elias Lönnrot, the collector of the runes of the Kalevala included the taking of notes in the spirit of cultural history. Anna-Leena Siikala has emphasized that Lönnrot’s work reflected the German research tradition<sup>37</sup>. It is also a fact that the director of the Ethnographic Museum, Gabriel Rein, supported the project of the Russian statistician Peter von Köppen, who had created a map depicting the ethnology or national characteristics of the Russian Empire. In 1846, Köppen obtained a grant for the study of conditions in Finland, and Gabriel Rein arranged that the money be placed at the disposal of the vicar of Loimaa, Antero Warelius.<sup>38</sup> In 1848, Rein published in the journal *Finlands Almänna*



*Tidning* an instruction for the collectors of regional history which consisted of geographical and statistical descriptions, and ethnographic observations.<sup>39</sup>

During his second expedition Castrén mentioned many times that the main objective was to analyse the Siberian peoples in ethnographic and linguistic perspective. Castrén followed the tradition of Russian research expeditions in describing different peoples from ethnographic, archaeological, statistical, historical and linguistic viewpoints. Han F. Vermeulen has pointed out that in Russia, the description of peoples emerged from the field in the context of the Russian exploration of Siberia and Alaska. The scientific expeditions were part of Russian expansion and the post-conquest colonization of Siberia in the nineteenth century.<sup>40</sup> The German Enlightenment was a background influence, and German philosophers and explorers also had a noteworthy role in founding the new academic discipline of ethnography.<sup>41</sup> From the point of view of research concerning the Siberian peoples, the definitive expedition was that of Gerhard Friedrich Müller in 1733–1743. He distinguished between objects from the natural world and those from material history. This distinction stemmed from the Renaissance separation of *Natura* and *Artes*. In 1740, he prepared instructions for explorers that resembled modern ethnographic fieldwork. Müller suggested that they observe ‘external’ (visible) items, such as outward appearance, clothing, and housing, via languages and physical construction, and ‘internal’ (invisible) items, such as indigenous knowledge, beliefs etc.<sup>42</sup> Most likely it was his ethnographical instructions that led the Russian Geographic Society in 1846 to research the peoples of the Russian Empire in ethnographic perspective. The first chairman of the Department of the Ethnography of the Russian Geographical Society was Karl Ernst von Baer (1846–1849), who defined as the purpose of the Society the study of different peoples, the non-Russians or so-called *inorodets* (‘peoples of different birth’) of the Russian Empire. He knew that many Siberian peoples who had existed in historical times had disappeared. Von Baer approached ethnography as a science of empire, focusing on the diversity of the human race.<sup>43</sup> For Castrén, the scientific description of the Siberian peoples was a part of the idea of the nation state, or the cultural nationalism of Herder.<sup>44</sup> Although the task was clearly a national one, and was going to strengthen Finnish identity, the expedition followed the traditions of Russian researchers. Castrén collected material as an objective researcher. He was a theoretician, and at the same time an empiricist.<sup>45</sup> The research method, comparative ethnography, adopted from the German-Russian tradition meant the observation of different peoples. On his

39. Haltsonen 1947, 23.
40. Vermeulen 2015, 23.
41. Vermeulen 2015, 21, 23.
42. Элерт -Хинтцше 2009, 11–12; Vermeulen 2015, 158, 168–169, Table 2.
43. Степанов 1946, 189; Vermeulen 215, 410.
44. Branch 1995, 83.
45. Korhonen 1971, 65.

- 46. Castrén 1855, 31–32; 1870, 149.
- 47. Sokolova 1992, 11.
- 48. Van Maanen 1988, 15.
- 49. Korhonen 1986, 50; Fewster 2006, 99.
- 50. Vuorela 1977, 21. J.G. Frazer cited Castrén's works, Frazer 1919, 173, 186; Frazer 1920, 141–143.

expeditions Castrén described the clothing, the dwellings, the ritual textiles and objects of the Sámi, Karelians, Russians, Samoyeds and Khanty as the collectors of oral tradition. On his second expedition, M.A. Castrén was funded by the Imperial St Petersburg Academy of Sciences. In his journal of 19/31 May 1845, Castrén noted that the Academy of Sciences and its scholars had furnished him with instructions to follow these guidelines to obtain these aims.<sup>46</sup> From the point of view of ethnography, the instructions were definitive: he had to get all the facts and knowledge directly from the indigenous peoples.

‘The Academy’s wish is that Mr Castrén has as his main object the study of languages and major dialects of all peoples roaming over the above-mentioned territories. ... From the historical point of view Mr. Castrén shall pay attention to the oral traditions and legends of these peoples about their origins and their ancient past. ... His long contacts with the aboriginal peoples will make it perfectly easy for him to study their physical constitution, daily life, clothes, rites, rituals and customs, standard of education and their opinions about faith as well as everything which makes it possible to describe these peoples and all their specific features.’<sup>47</sup>

M.A. Castrén used the methods of ethnographic field work, interviews and observation. The aim was to classify and compare cultures, traditions and societies like plants and to note how a single culture evolved from savage to a civilized state<sup>48</sup> Castrén was convinced that ethnography was a historical science, an instrument for illustrating the earlier periods of Finnish history. The publication of the Kalevala in 1835 inspired Castrén, and he lectured on it in the spring term of 1841 at the University of Helsinki,<sup>49</sup> Castrén accepted that every line of the Kalevala was not original, and he followed the systematic and comparative approach for the purpose of a description of different peoples. He emphasized that by its very nature ethnography should be comparative. Castrén was an ethnological theoretician defining precisely the concept of exogamy and animism before E.B. Taylor.<sup>50</sup> In the field, he was an empiricist, an observer and a collector. The Finnish cultural anthropologist Olavi Louheranta has classified the behaviour of ethnologists on the basis of John Van Maanen’s categorization, placing Castrén, and also Kai Donner, the Finnish linguist and ethnologist, in the category of field workers. The typical traits were the observation, the use of indigenous peoples’ language, adaptation to attendant conditions,

the dwelling system and clothing.<sup>51</sup> In this perspective, Castrén was a pioneer of Siberian ethnology, spending a month or more in the same place, and having the opportunity to make comparisons.

‘Comparative ethnography thus becomes unavoidably necessary for us in order to comprehend correctly our ancient songs and ancient beliefs in general. But alongside that it holds another interest for us. Together with linguistics, comparative ethnography should provide decisive results concerning the Finnish people’s kinship with other peoples. In fact, hardly any other definite way to trace this kinship could be suggested than that which is provided by a comparison of the ethnic groups’ language, religions, customs and ways of life.’<sup>52</sup>

What did this concept mean in practice? In his journal entry of 10 June 1846 by the Yenisei, Castrén noted some questions connecting ethnographic study to the systematic collecting for the description of Siberian peoples.

1. Name.
2. Family.
3. Rivers and their names.
4. Livelihoods: hunting and games fishing techniques.
5. Religion: God, magic, spirits.
5. *Kalym* – bridewealth.
6. Funeral traditions.
7. Rods for hunting and boats.
8. The Bear.
9. Tents and huts ‘землянка’.
10. Clothes.
11. Traps. (?)
12. Medicine.<sup>53</sup>

Antal Reguly, a Hungarian contemporary researcher of Finno-Ugrian languages, was involved in similar work. In 1843–45 and 1845–46, he studied the Mansi language in Siberia and at the same time he addressed their ethnography. For Reguly, ethnography was complementary to linguistic research. ‘In my studies, I am both the linguist and the ethnographer. Both sciences interest me, because it is very difficult to separate one from the other. To acquire a full result in linguistic studies, one needs the support of ethnography.’<sup>54</sup> Reguly defined ethnography in the same manner as Castrén did. ‘On my expeditions I had to observe all the traits, the appearance

51. Van Maanen 1988, 91; Louhe-ranta 2006, 258–263.
52. ‘Den komparativa ethnografin blir således oundgängligen nödvändig, för att vi rätt må begripa våra forntida sånger och forntidens föreställningar i allmänhet. Men derjemte eger den för oss äfven ett annat intresse. I förening med lingvistikken bör den komparativa ethnografin lemna ett afgörande resultat i frågan om det finska folkets slägtskap med öfriga folkstammar. Ja, det torde knappt gifvas någon annan säker utväg att komma denna slägtskap på spåren, som jemförelsen af folkslagens språk, religion, seder och lefnadsätt erbjuda.’ Castrén 1857, 11. Translated by Jüri Kokkonen.
53. MAC Coll. 539, Varia 6.
54. Korompay 1989, 119.



- 55. Szij 2012, 227.
- 56. Branch 2006, 328.
- 57. Branch 1973, 256; Korhonen 1986, 48–49.
- 58. Lehtonen 1972, 195–200, Branch 1973, 257; Korhonen 1986, 50.
- 59. See Fedorova in the present volume.
- 60. Den 15. Mars, 45. MAC Coll. 539.
- 61. Den 19. Mars, 45. MAC. Coll. 539.
- 62. See Fedorova in the present volume.

of peoples, their work, characters, clothes, customs, superstition, mythology, antiquities and all.<sup>55</sup>

For both researchers, A.J. Sjögren's contribution to ethnography and its meaning were definitive. Sjögren was deeply impressed by Johann Gottfried Herder's ideas about oral tradition as a source for historical studies.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, following Rasmus Rask's work, he emphasized comparative language studies. They both influenced his studies in Ingria, among the Komi, and later in the Caucasus. In 1844, Sjögren was awarded the rank of full academician of the languages and ethnography of the Finnic and Caucasian peoples at the Imperial Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences.<sup>57</sup> His post in the Imperial Academy served as a model for the Chair of Finnish Language and Literature founded seven years later at the University of Helsinki.<sup>58</sup>

The other factor that must be mentioned to complete the field of ethnography was the role of the Ethnographic Museum of the Imperial Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences. In 1845, A.J. Sjögren became its director. The museum's collections were quite exclusive in both the quantitative and qualitative sense, including the artefacts collected by the physical and topographical expeditions of Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt, Peter Simon Pallas and Ivan Ivanovič Lepexin, Gerhard Friedrich Müller, and others.<sup>59</sup> The Academy encouraged the explorers to collect artefacts to categorize different peoples. Before the second expedition, M.A. Castrén spent some time in St Petersburg. He visited the Hermitage, the Academy of Art and the Cabinet of Art.<sup>60</sup> On the 19th March, Castrén met Prince Mixail Aleksandrovič Dondukov-Korsakov, the Vice-President of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and saw the Academy's zoological, ethnographic, numismatic and mineral collections, and finally the collections from Egypt<sup>61</sup> which made a deep impression on him.

Upon the initiative of the Imperial Academy of Sciences and the Russian Geographic Society, Castrén obtained an ethnographical collection of objects for the Peter the Great Museum in St Petersburg.<sup>62</sup> How did the new ethnographic task of collecting items succeed? How did Castrén relate to the collection of objects for the Ethnographic Museum of the Imperial St Petersburg Academy of Sciences? In his journal entry of 1/13 December 1845 (27.2.1845–25.9.1845), Castrén listed six groups of artefacts including 10 items:

- No 1. Three common game arrows one of which is a reindeer arrow.
- No 2. Two arrows for bear hunting, the sharp one with a barb.
- No 3. Bird arrow.
- No 4. Arrow for a trap bow for otter hunting.
- No 5. The same with a string attached to the bow-string, so that when an otter touches the string along its path, the arrow will be released.
- No 6. Two common arrows for hunting large game animals, particularly reindeer arrows from Tomsk.<sup>63</sup>

Unfortunately, these artefacts are not included in the collections of the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) of Russian Academy of Sciences or the National Museum of Finland, but Castrén mentioned them in his journal as the weapons of the Tomsk Samoyeds.<sup>64</sup> After that date, Castrén mentioned twice a package and the shipping of ethnographic items to the collections of the Ethnographic museum of Imperial Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences.<sup>65</sup> In a letter to A.J. Sjögren dated 17./27.7.1846, Castrén explained the circumstances of the collecting. The Yakut fur coat, the Tungus bib, mittens, tobacco pipe, the Samoyed snow goggles, and the Ket shaman headgear were obtained via the same rural police chief who purchased the gloves in package No 18. In Castrén's opinion, the price was not high, maybe some bottles of vodka. The Tungus fur coat was bought inexpensively with seven roubles, and the Yakut one with ten roubles. The comb, the arrows, the wrist bracer for a hunter, and the birch bark boxes cost four bottles of vodka and some tobacco, approximately totalling seven roubles.<sup>66</sup> The items interested Castrén as symbols of the history of the Siberian peoples. He sent three Siberian coins, two silver *grivna* pieces and a Samoyed idol to the secondary school of Kuopio.<sup>67</sup> The Russian linguists and ethnologists B.G. Bogoraz, L.Ja. Šternberg, B.Ja Vladimircov, and J.P. Koškin highly appreciated highly the ethnographic collection acquired by Castrén.<sup>68</sup>

After M.A. Castrén's return to Finland, the press celebrated him as a researcher of Finno-Ugrian and Samoyed languages from the point of view of Finnish identity, but there were no comments on the ethnographic collection. In 1850, the Ethnographic Museum of the Imperial Alexander University of Helsinki bought objects which Castrén had apparently obtained as mementos for himself. Perhaps the collection was numerically insignificant in comparison with the famous Alaska collection, or the meaning of

- 63. 1/13, December 1845 (Dagbok 27.2.1845–25.9.1845). MAC Coll. 539.
- 64. Castrén 1846, 32–62; Castrén 1855, 184.
- 65. Castrén 1855, 257, 276–277, 352–535. Appendix. List of packages boxes.
- 66. Package list 19, 2: Yakut fur coat, 3: Tungus bib, 4: pair of Tungus mittens, 5: Tungus pipe, 8: Pair of Samoyed snow goggles, 10: Ket shaman headgear; Package list 19, 6: comb, 7: wrist bracer, 11: birch-bark boxes. Castrén noted the package material, fabric and cord which cost 4 roubles. MAC Coll. 539.
- 67. Castrén's letter 17./29.7.1846 to Fabian Collan (1817–1851), history teacher and principal of the Kuopio secondary school from 1844 to 1850. MAC Coll. 539, 37.13. I wish thank Timo Salminen for this information. Unfortunately, these items were missing in 2017. Reply from the principal of the Kuopio secondary school, Samuli Laitinen, 12.6.2017.
- 68. Богораз 1927, 34; Кошкин 1927, 112; Штернберг 1927, 48–56; Владимирцов 1927.

69. Szij 2012, 262, 326.  
 70. June 1846, Castrén 1855, 221.

the Ethnographic Museum was important only for researchers at the University. In Hungary, the case of Reguly was different. The minutes of the Hungarian Academy mentioned the Reguly report in November 1847, and the ethnographic collection was presented at the same time.<sup>69</sup>

Before going into more detail about the Castrén Collection, a few words should be mentioned about the activities in the museum's sphere after the 1850s. The Ethnographic Museum acquired the first Finno-Ugrian objects from the Mari (Čeremis) in 1856 by Aug. Ahlqvist, and after that in 1878–1880, from the Udmurt (Votiak) by Max Buch. In the middle of the 1880s, A.O. Heikel enlarged the collections by adding Mordvinian, Mari and Udmurt embroidered folk costumes. After the founding of the Finnish Archaeological Society in 1870, museum activity expanded in Finland, and the students of the University decided to collect items in the countryside. The ethnographic collection consisted of more than 4,000 items, and in 1877 the Student Museum of Ethnography was created. Both museum collections merged in 1893 to form the State Museum of History and Ethnography, which was the first step for the creation of the National Museum of Finland. At the National Museum of Finland, the Museum of Cultures is in charge of the ethnographic and Finno-Ugrian collections.

### *The Castrén Collection at the Museum of Cultures / National Museum of Finland*

Castrén observed the way of life of Siberian peoples, and he described in detail the clothing of different peoples. For Castrén, the market place in Turuxansk represented a fashion show.

‘I arrived at Turuxansk during the annual market fair. The most important part of this market fair is that it is also the time the indigenous people pay their crown taxes. – – In fact, nothing as remarkable can be found from the Turuxansk market fair as the processions of the Yenisei Ostyaks and the Samoyeds from all over as they march down the streets in their strange costumes.’<sup>70</sup>

Castrén acquired a Samoyed fur coat, and an Evenki men's costume, both of which, according to him, reflected the character of these people. The museum's records contain little information about the Samoyed coat. ‘Fur coat of reindeer hide. Samoyed. Obtained from M.A. Castrén for the price of three roubles.’

The Samoyed full fur (VK434) coat is a piece of overwear with the hairs cut very short. The ethnic designation of ‘Samoyed’ could be mean the Yurak Samoyed, or Tavgy or Avam Samoyed. The cut of this fur coat reveals that it belonged to the Nganasans or Enets<sup>71</sup> According to Andrej Aleksandrovič Popov, a scholar of Nganasan culture, this type of coat was made for everyday wear.<sup>72</sup> It is sewn of one white or black reindeer hide and it had to be procured during the summer slaughtering as the hairs were shorter then. On the front of the coat, there were two strips, which were bordered with ochre-coloured chamois. Below the belt, the garments were lined with two strips, which the larger one bordered with red chamois. White dog skin was sewn on the hem of the fur coat. Chamois gussets dyed with ochre are inserted in the armpits and in the cuffs. The undercoat had a hood, but no gloves.

The fur coat was worn, the exterior is without any hair, and consequently it is very difficult to note the colour of the reindeer hides. The low price, three roubles, suggests that Castrén acquired it in this condition. This Samoyed coat illustrated the image of indigenous peoples whose livelihood depended on the condition of natural environment and reindeer hides. It could have belonged to the Nganasans or Tavgy-Samoyeds on the term of *lû* or the Enets or Turuxansk Samoyed.<sup>73</sup> In the description of the Siberian peoples of G.F. Müller, there is a long note about the items of clothing of the Turuxansk Samoyeds which are called *págge, нарку* in Russian.<sup>74</sup> Both Russian researchers of the Enets and the Nganasans, Andrej Popov and Nadežda Prytkova, have emphasized that this type of fur coat was quite similar among the Nganasans and the Enets.

Pirjo Varjola, who published the famous Alaska collection of the National Museum of Finland, assumed that the Samoyed fur coat was made for Castrén in a Kamassian village.<sup>75</sup> It is a fact that Castrén wore a Samoyed fur coat, but the above-mentioned one without hairs is not fit for a harsh climate. In the drawing made by Castrén he is dressed in a fur coat with hairs facing outwards, and open at the front. The Nganasan and Enets overwear represents an arctic type of dress, which is closed, but the Kamassians who practised hunting in the taiga-area, had a coat open at the front.<sup>76</sup> The package list by Castrén does not mention any Kamassian items. Instead, there is an Eastern Samoyed fur coat that could precisely be the artefact in question: ‘Similar dress was worn in official situations and particularly together with the West Samoyed or Yurak fur coat; the difference between a fur coat of the Eastern and Western Samoyeds is insignificant.’<sup>77</sup> My hypothesis is probably correct, because the previous one (3/1) meant an Eastern Samoyed costume, which has a horn-shaped part on the forehead. This type of

71. Popov 1966, 124–125; Прыткова 1970, 49–53; Lehtinen 2002a, 141–153.
72. Popov 1966, 125.
73. Castrén 1855, Tawgy-Samojedisches Wörterverzeichnis, II, 43–7.
74. Миллер 2009, 134–135.
75. Varjola 1981, 60.
76. A Kamassian fur coat in the collection of the National Museum of Finland made of elk hide, which was obtained by the Finnish linguist and ethnologist Kai Donner in the village of Abalakovo in 1914. VK4934:244.
77. Package box 3/3. Castrén 1855, 276.

78. Попов 1966, 126, Figure 67/B; Прыткова 1970, 58-59.
79. Май 1846, Sym River. Castrén 1855, 213.
80. VK435:1, VK435:2, VK435:3, VK435:4; the last picture is missing.
81. Василевич 1958: 146-147; See also the item in the Castrén Collection mentioned by Fedorova herein.
82. Василевич 1958, 147.

overcoat was the Nganasan *sovik*, which was made for travelling and had a characteristic trait of the hood with a reindeer tail sewn to the front.<sup>78</sup>

On the contrary, the item of Evenki men's dress represented a festive outfit. Castrén clearly considered the Evenki costumes to be more beautiful than the other ones, and called them flatteringly the 'Siberian nobility'. These Evenki artefacts demonstrate the aesthetic preference that was typical of the museums' collecting activity in this period.

'The most remarkable part of Tungus clothing is a tight tailcoat made of chamois leather or furry reindeer skin. It is usually decorated with glass beads, strips of baize and fur and so tightlyfit that it is a challenge to button it up. Even in Tungus fashions the front of the costume should be open so that the bead-covered chest-piece may be seen in all its glory. On the top of their head, the Tungus people of Sym wear a small round Tatar cap which sparkles, also covered in beads. Their short breeches are made of fine chamois leather as are their shoes which are also embellished with bead embroidery. A carrier belt decorated with beads hangs from one shoulder, carrying a small flint and steel bag made of glass beads.'<sup>79</sup>

The men's dress contains a fur coat, a pair of boots, a bib and a strap with a powder pouch.<sup>80</sup> The price was higher than that of the Samoyed coat; the Museum bought these items for 15 roubles. The costume is very well preserved, decorated, and named by the museum's record as men's festive dress. The museum assistant, H.A. Reinholm, and later H.J. Holmberg defined the ethnic group as *Tungusic* without any notes concerning the area.

The Tungus coat (VK435:1) is made from a single reindeer skin with the legs forming the sleeves, and the hide remaining in its original form on the back. It is characterized by the cut of its straight hems with two gores.<sup>81</sup> In the opinion of G.M. Vasilevič, this type of coat was characteristic of the Evenki in the region of the River Yenisei.<sup>82</sup> The quality of the leather was affected by the changing seasons; summer coats were made from summer hides and winter coats from late autumn hides. In addition to the reindeer, the skins of wild goat were used and edged with black horsehair. The cut and the seams are sewn with reindeer-vein thread. The coat is decorated with white, blue and black glass beads along the hems, collar and shoulders. On the back, the square motif, and the two gores are



also edged with glass beads. The glass beads are sewn into a cotton fabric band of graphite colour one centimetre wide. The decoration of the back was typical of the coat's type with a straight hem.<sup>83</sup> There are two fringes of white and blue glass beads on the back. Large glass beads have been one of the emblems of the Evenki since the 17th century. The Evenki (Tungus) living in the region between the Yenisei and Lena rivers were reindeer herders, and the body-shaped fur-coat was very well suited to long sledge trips.

The footwear (VK435:2) belonging to the costume represents the moccasin type, with a long supple collar reaching to the thigh. The material for shoes included reindeer leg skins, chamois and woollen cloth. The boots were tied to the legs with strings. The moccasins were embroidered with large white, blue, black and yellow glass beads. According to G.M. Vasilevič, shoes of these types with a high collar were made for long hunting trips.<sup>84</sup> The material was reindeer hide used in winter and the decoration symbolized the local groups. Embroidery with glass beads was common to all of the Evenki regions. White, blue and yellow glass beads were used among the Evenki of the River Sym and the River Podkamenaja.<sup>85</sup> The square motifs made of small pieces of white and black skin at the knee are characteristic of the Eastern Evenki from the River Olekma.<sup>86</sup> It is also a fact that F.G. Müller's description of the Evenki men's outfit does not include any beads. He mentioned the decoration with beads only in connection to the women's costume, and in comparison with the dress of young men.<sup>87</sup>

The men's coat did not close at the front, but was instead covered with a bib (VK435:3). The bib was a piece of reindeer skin with a sharp cut. It consists of two parts, the chest and the midriff pieces. Both parts were decorated with a white cotton band which was embroidered with glass beads. At the collar and in the middle there were two chamois strings to tie around the neck and the waist. At the edge there was a piece of chamois with black horsehair. G.M. Vasilevič pointed out that the square decoration of the chest piece repeats the motif on the back of the coat. The bib furnished with the long hair of wild sheep was worn during the spring festival, *ikenipke*.<sup>88</sup>

Across the shoulders from the right to the left, the Evenki man had a strap with a powder pouch suspended from it (VK435:4). The leather belt was decorated with glass bead embroidery and cowrie shells. The leather pouch was decorated with glass beads, fringes, and a brass chain.

The remarkable value of the Evenki dress is that Castrén was able to obtain all parts of the festive dress, the coat, the bib, the shoes, and the shoulder belt. The colourful dress was made by

- 83. Василевич 1958, 163, Т. II/ d.
- 84. Василевич 1963, 28.
- 85. Василевич 1963, 20, 29, Т. XVIII/2.
- 86. Василевич 1963, 29.
- 87. Миллер 2009, 138, 140.
- 88. Василевич 1949, 44.

89. Левин 1936, 74; Прыткова 1953, 295–296; Иванов 1963, 276.  
 90. Иванов 1963, 276; Василевич 1969, 33; Федорова 1988, 91; Lehtinen 2002a, 141.  
 91. Бахрушин 1955, 71, 80; Карлов 1982, 98–99; Lehtinen 2002a, 123, 128.  
 92. Sirelius 1903, 20, 25, 56; Иванов 1963, 260.  
 93. Иванов 1963, 265.

combining different kinds of leather of various colours. The Evenki knew how to dye chamois and leather with alder bark, and also using mineral colours.<sup>89</sup> Four kinds of fringes were used on the furs and footwear of Evenki men: short reindeer hair, long dog or wild goat hair, long horsehair, and fringes cut out of chamois. The symbolic meaning of this decoration might be related to ritual activity.<sup>90</sup> With regard to bead decoration, beads were important products of the fur trade in Siberia. Cheap glass beads helped in the conquest of Siberia. In the 1540s, the Evenki were recorded as trading valuable furs for large glass beads. In the 16th century, an expedition led by P. Golovin along the River Lena had 100,000 different coloured glass beads with them along with tin and brass products and broadcloth for the needs of the indigenous peoples. Small sand beads were made in Venice, Bohemia, or Germany, and big white and blue beads in China. Since the 17th century, glass beads have been an item of fashion among the Siberian peoples such as the Evenki.<sup>91</sup> In travel accounts from the 18th century, Evenki dress is shown as very decorative.

The Castrén Collection includes an Evenki comb of bone (VK436). Referring to its shape, the museum assistant noted, ‘the comb resembles a ‘hair comb’ used by European women a few decades earlier’. It probably resembled the Spanish or mantilla comb which used to adorn loops of hair, known as Apollo knots. The handle was decorated with incised bullseyes, and paired lines pigmented black.

On the package list, Castrén noted about the comb that it was ‘used by both peoples: by the Khanty and the Tungus. Both peoples used bone and mammoth tusk to make small objects such as blunt arrows, armguards or bracers, spools for thread, pieces for the reindeer harness, cases for women’s musical instruments such as the mouth harp and others.<sup>92</sup> Sergej Vasilevič Ivanov, a scholar and expert of the art of Arctic peoples, was of the opinion that the carved motifs, such as points, diagonals, paired lines, zigzags and bullseyes, are typical of both peoples.<sup>93</sup> The incised designs were pigmented with dirt or soot. Evenki men wore their hair long, with a headband of cloth or a piece of chamois decorated with beads. The women combed their hair into two braids. The Khanty had black hair combed into two braids, which was the custom among both women and men. This raises the question whether the comb was made for personal use, for Evenki or Khanty users or for Russian merchants? It was probably made for an indigenous user and perhaps it is the one that is mentioned in the package list. If this is the case, why is it noted only in connection with the Tungus and not the Khanty? A hypothetical explanation could be that the museum

assistant was professionally involved with the former items, which were Tungusic.

The Yakut spoons (VK437, VK438, VK439) of mammoth tusk suggest the curiosities of the Arctic Circle. The museum bought three spoons for one rouble. Two of them were shaped like an 18th-century European silver spoon without any ornaments. The handle of the smallest one was decorated with carved lines and points.

A.A. Popov carried out an expedition among the Dolgans in 1930–1931. He studied their technology, among other things work with bone and mammoth ivory. He described the cheek plates for the reindeer harness and the technique of carving. Like the Nganasans and the Khanty, the Dolgans mostly carved diagonals and lines with the point of the knife, and two nested circles, bullseyes, with a tool including two nails.<sup>94</sup> It is unclear whether the above-mentioned spoons were used by the Yakuts themselves or by a European voyager, even by M.A. Castrén himself. The spoon with a short handle and a round bowl represented a type used in the Middle Ages, and earlier in prehistoric times. A similar spoon was drawn on the list of G.F. Müller, but it was made of wood.<sup>95</sup> The other ones with oval bowl resemble the Russian wooden spoons.<sup>96</sup>

The collection includes two tobacco pipes, one of which is Samoyed (VK432), and the other one is from China (VK447). The Samoyed pipe is carved of mammoth ivory. The bowl is decorated with metal inlay and the mouthpiece is reinforced with metal. The assistant described the Chinese pipe as an opium pipe, but this was later corrected to ‘tobacco pipe’. This pipe is also carved of bone and the mouthpiece is reinforced with white metal, which is decorated with checkerboard motifs.

At the end of his expedition, Castrén crossed the border into China, where he spent two months among the Buryats. He visited the Tamča Monastery in Selenga (1 March 1848), and noted in detail the interior and the decoration of the temple. The following items relating to Buddhism could have originated from his trip. In her studies of the rituals of sovereignty in Buryat Buddhism, Anya Bernstein has pointed out that in the 1700s the Buryats had no stationary monasteries, but instead mobile yurt temples. After the arrival of Tibetan and Mongol lamas, and the growth of Buddhism, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Tamča (Tamčinskij) monastery or *dacan* in the village of Gusinoe ozero was founded. In 1846 in the Trans-Baikal region there were 4,509 lamas, 34 monasteries, and 144 free-standing temples.<sup>97</sup>

The Buddha statue is of bronze (VK440). The pose is the common one, with the legs crossed, the left hand in the lap, and the right hand pointing to the ground with the palm facing inward towards

94. Попов 1937, 113–114.
95. Миллер 2009, 193, Figure 6.
96. Analogous Yakut spoons in the collection of the Peabody Museum 24-48-60/D2297; 24-48-60/D2298; 24-48-60/D2299: <https://www.peabody.harvard.edu/>. Read 26 March 2017.
97. Tamchinsky datsan: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamchinsky\\_datsan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamchinsky_datsan); [https://vbuddisme.ru/wiki/Гусиноозерский\\_\(Тамчинский\)\\_дацан](https://vbuddisme.ru/wiki/Гусиноозерский_(Тамчинский)_дацан). Read 16 June 2017; Абаева 2004, 406; Bernstein 2013, 3, 20.

98. Bell - Halén 1980, 25; Hallén 1987, 94. Bernstein noted that during the postsocialist period, 450 more statues were found in the ruins of the Aninsk Monastery. Figure 12. shows the same kind of Śākyamuni statues like the one in the Castrén collection. Bernstein 2013, 108, Figure 12.
99. Bell -Halén 1980, 201; Halén 1987, 87; Bernstein 2013, 40-41.
100. Heissig 1980, 46, 52, 102. In 1866, Adolf Bastian visited a Buryat Mongol shaman who referred to the cosmogony of the Buryat Mongols, and identified the deity as *Burchan*. Koepping 1983, 227.
101. Bell - Halén 1980, 227-234; on the Mongolian *dorje*: Berger & Bartholomew 1995, 258.

the Buddha. The headgear is a blue hood or cap with a button on the top. The statue is gilded and the lips area painted red. Castrén stated that ‘this work symbolizes the icons of the common god as the following three items. The name is ‘the statue of Cokjamiini’ (Buddha)’. The Finnish scholar, Harry Halén pointed out that it is a Śākyamuni, and by the way of its posture it represents the Buddha as Calling the Earth to Witness.<sup>98</sup>

In the museum’s records the bronze statue (VK441) is named as ‘a common, Mongolian Burchan (icon of god)’. It represents a male figure in war dress with bushy hair across his chest. In the hand can be seen a scabbard for knives and the man has an abominable grimace. In the right hand there is a scabbard for a sword (the sword is broken), and in the left hand a human heart.

Harry Halén maintains that it is the deity Beg-tse, one of the fierce protective deities, the *dharmapālas*. The deity stands defiantly, one foot resting on the belly of a horse, the other on a man. He wears armour, with his left hand across his chest and the right hand holding the scabbard of a sword. There is a scorpion on the neck of the statue. The expression of the deity is ferocious.<sup>99</sup> The name given by Castrén, *Burchan*, suggested the Mongol shamanistic religion. One of the names of the *Tngri*, a deity of Shamanism is *burqan* which also used to mean Buddha.<sup>100</sup>

Castrén acquired a ritual thunderbolt sceptre (*vajra, do-rje*, VK443) and a ritual bell (*ghantā, dril-bu*, VK442), the most important ritual elements in Vajrayana Buddhism. The sceptre, from which Vajrayana Buddhism takes its name, symbolizes the active male aspect of enlightenment often equated with skilful means, compassion or bliss. The bell (Tib. *drilbu*) represents wisdom – a female principle – the true understanding of emptiness. Like the church bell, the Buddhist hand bell sends the message to evil spirits that they must stay away from the consecrated area where the ritual is being performed. When used in rituals, the vajra is paired with the bell. It represents the masculine principle and is held in the right hand, whereas the bell, held in the left hand, represents the female principle. The bell is visualized as the body of Buddha, the vajra is visualized as his mind, and the sound of the bell is visualized as Buddha’s speech in the teaching of the dharma.<sup>101</sup>

The bell is made of bronze. The handle is topped with a closed vajra with four prongs. In the handle there is a depiction of two faces, probably symbolizing Prajnaparamita (Perfect Wisdom). The clapper is missing. There is a knob in the middle on the vajra sceptre and four prongs at each end.

M.A. Castrén himself used snuff during his journey, and offered it to his informants. In the

Castrén collection, there are two snuff bottles. The oval shaped bottle is made of the peel of a fruit, probably calabash, decorated with silver inlay and green, red, and blue precious (?) stones. (VK445) The other one is of square shape, almost circular. The bottle is made of bone and decorated with silver inlay and there is a plaited band around it decorated with precious stones and email cloisonné. Both sides are decorated with floral motifs. Martha Boyer's publication included a similar snuff bottle named *küküür* representing the Olon-Obotei tribe of the Manchu. This item was collected by Henning Haslund-Christensen in the 1930s.<sup>102</sup> (VK446) Both objects are described as 'very old, and interestingly decorated'. Both had a silver stopper also decorated with stones. Bottles of this kind with stones, corals and turquoises and repoussé elements applied on the surface are usually Mongolian-style bottles. The use of snuff gained popularity among the Mongols, and women or men greeting each other would exchange snuff bottles.<sup>103</sup>

The Castrén collection originally included a cap (VK444), made of silk and sable fur which was estimated to be valuable and bought for the sum of 12 roubles and 50 kopecks. The headdress was listed with the Buryat, Mongol and Chinese items, but without any mention about its origin, the people or the area concerned. It may have been a Buryat cap or a Buddhist ritual headdress. The item is noted in the records of the museum as 'missing'.

### *The value of the Castrén Collection*

M.A. Castrén was primarily interested in the comparative study of languages as a tool for the reconstruction of Finno-Ugrian and Samoyed origins. He had to pay attention to languages as well as material culture, customs, economy and religion. Following the example of German scholars and explorers, D.G. Messerschmidt, F.G. Müller and P.S. Pallas, he collected items for the Ethnographic Museum of the Imperial Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences, but also some artefacts for the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Helsinki. The collection shows that interest in linguistics and ethnography did not always exist in isolation. Although the Samoyed languages were the subject of attention for the linguist, the Samoyed items are very poorly represented, but by contrast, the Evenki culture is represented very richly.

The report to the Imperial St Petersburg Academy of Sciences dated 12/24 February 1852 there were no notes about the museum collection.<sup>104</sup> The artefacts were not collected systematically. Beauty was the main criterion for selection. Alongside their aesthetic

- 102. Boyer 1952, 148, Fig. 104.
- 103. Boyer 1952, 156, Fig. 107; Berger & Bartholomew 1995, 144–145.
- 104. Castrén 1870, 151. He mentioned only the manuscript concerning the ethnography of the Altaic peoples.



105. Шерген 1853, 22; Castrén 1855, 262.

value, ethnic costumes contain more socially important information than any other products of material culture. Castrén's journals indicate that he knew the difference between the costume types of Siberian peoples. On the other hand, the nomadic way of life limited the amount of individual property among Siberian indigenous peoples. Castrén described the yurts and mentioned some items of clothing, knives, small bags, boxes and weapons, but nothing else. The number of items of clothing depended on the yield of the hunting year. Collecting clothes was not such an easy task. Castrén himself desired to wear the dress of the indigenous peoples. In October 1846, Castrén became ill, because he neglected to buy a Samoyed fur coat.<sup>105</sup>

The pipes and spoons made of mammoth tusk were probably acquired as curiosities for the sake of their exotic material. It is very difficult to explain the reason to obtain the Buryat ritual objects. The monastery made a deep impression on Castrén, with possibly the collections of the Hermitage or Museum of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg also in mind.

In the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Helsinki this small material represented Siberia and the culture of its indigenous peoples until 1877, when August Ahlqvist donated a collection of Khanty and Mansi items. The collections of the Ethnographic Museum with the collections of the Finnish Archaeological Society (present-day Finnish Antiquarian Society), founded in 1870, and the Student Nations' Museum of Ethnography, founded in 1876, provided the basis for the National Museum of Finland. The Siberian collection of the National Museum of Finland went on to receive considerable additions from the expeditions of Finnish ethnologists and linguists, such as U.T. Sirelius in 1898–1900, Artturi Kanisto in 1901–1906, K.F. Karjalainen in 1898–1902, Toivo Lehtisalo in 1911–1912, 1914, and Kai Donner in 1911–1913 and 1914. At the National Museum of Finland, the Siberian artefacts belonged partly to the Ethnographic collections and partly to the Finno-Ugrian collections of the present-day Museum of Cultures / National Museum of Finland.

The Castrén collection is one of the earliest collections from Siberia and a demonstration of an ambitious effort in what at the time was still a new discipline, ethnography. Castrén's significant ground-breaking research reached the European scientific community. He considered ethnography to be a distinct discipline, and he in fact lectured at the University of Helsinki on the ethnography of the Altaic peoples. He also planned to publish the ethnographic notes from the expeditions. His legacy and example were of vital importance to later generations. Castrén's works in ethnology such

as *Ethnologiska föreläsningar öfver altaiska folken* (Ethnological Lectures on the Altaic Peoples) and *Föreläsningar i finsk mythologie* (Lectures on Finnish Mythology) are of classical value. He was the first Professor of Ethnology in the world, and all great researchers in the history of this discipline, Adolf Bastian, E.B. Taylor, J.J. McLennan and James G. Frazer, used in their studies the valuable information that they found in the works of M.A. Castrén.<sup>106</sup>

106. Vuorela 1977, 21.

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