An Origin of Swedish Folk Music
A Case Study of the National Project Skansen 1896-1899

The national project of Skansen is established at the end of the 19th century. Here, the Swedish is being created during a national romantic era by bringing folk culture from all provinces of the kingdom – to be displayed and brought to life at the capital’s open-air museum. The current research project focuses on the constitution of the Swedish when it comes to folk music. Skansen has, as an institution, become significant for knowledge production and the understanding of Swedish culture in several ways. Our contemporary understanding of Swedish folk music also originates from this time and the very event – the establishment of Skansen. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate how, and in what way, music becomes manifested and displayed at Skansen. One way to investigate this is to focus on a single fiddler – Johan Edlund from the Roslagen parish of Harg in Uppland, Sweden. Edlund, engaged as a fiddler 1896-1899, is portraited his first week at Skansen by the folk music collector Karl Peter Leffler. This book has, since its publication, been one of the oldest sources that later studies depart from. This research project, at hand, critically examines the origin of this manifestation of the Swedish. When it comes to Leffler’s transcribed music from Harg, it becomes clear that the music is not merely straight retrieved from the province to the capital. The presentation will show how national folk music is by far of a national origin but rather a conglomerate of international influences.

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