

Man buried in his everyday clothes – attire and social status in early modern Oulu

Sanna Lipkin and Tiina Kuokkanen

ABSTRACT

At Oulu Cathedral, Finland, excavations have been conducted during renovations of the church and its yard. As a result more than 300 17th- and 18th-century burials were discovered. Many of the deceased were buried in a silk or wool funeral clothes made specifically for the burial. The burial customs varied, however, as some of the deceased were buried in their everyday clothes. The best example of this is a man found wearing a plant-fibre shirt, socks and breeches. Attached to a woollen belt around his hips were a knife and a tinderbox. The clothes have features indicating higher social rank in respect to the other burials: a silk collar in the shirt and copper mixture metal buckles on the knee-level leather straps and on the belt. This article examines the textiles and the buckles of the attire and analyses the social identity of a man in a small northern Swedish town.

Keywords: funeral attire, 17th–18th-century male clothes, nålebind socks, breeches, buckles

1. Oulu Cathedral and rescue excavations

In a letter in 1605, Kaarle IX orders the establishment of Oulu in “the place where the new church was recently built” (Virkkunen 1919/1953: 91). In his PhD thesis from the year 1737, Johannes Snellmann tells that a new wooden town church was built in the 1610s at the same location as the modern Oulu Cathedral. The church appears for the first time on a map in 1648 (Fig. 1). Both church and burial ground were expanded several times as the ground filled with burials. The most desirable places for the deceased were below the choir floor. After a town fire in 1773, a new stone church was built. It was bigger than the old wooden one, and the churchyard area decreased. At the same time the population of the town increased, and a new burial ground was established outside of the town. In the beginning of the 1780s, burial in the old churchyard officially ceased. (Palola 2000; Niskala 2005; Paavola 2005; Sarkkinen 2005.)

The interior of Oulu Cathedral was renovated in 1996, as was the churchyard in 2002. During both renovations archaeological rescue excavations were executed. Even though the location of the original church and its yard are quite well known from written sources, the investigations brought new information about the different phases of the church. In addition to the church remains, approximately 500 deceased were recorded. They were found in 17 chamber tombs, about 300 coffin burials, and in re-interment locations (such as bone pits). Of the chamber tombs, only one was located within the old wooden church. All other burials, in coffins and chambers alike, were located in the churchyard. (Kehusmaa 1997; Sarkkinen and Kehusmaa 2002; Sarkkinen 2005.) These burials, and especially the dress of the deceased, offer information on the ordinary inhabitants of Oulu who could not afford to be buried under the church.

The deceased in Burial 10 is especially interesting for researchers of identity, since his dress differed from the other burials significantly. He had more paraphernalia than others and his clothes tell about his rank and status. His burial was found on the southern side of the churchyard.



1. Oulu
2. Arkhangelsk
3. Stockholm
4. Saint Petersburg

Map 3. Placenames mentioned in the article of Lipkin and Kuokkanen. Illustration: K. Vajanto.



Fig. 1. Churchyard and its surroundings in one of the oldest map of Oulu (Nikodemus Tessin, 1948) *Utländska kartor. Stads och fästningsplaner. Finland. Uleåborg nr. 6. Krigsarkivet, Sweden.*

2. General features of the funeral clothes at Oulu Cathedral

In the early 17th century, dressing of the deceased followed the same rules as with the living. It was based on class. Upper classes had permission to wear more elaborate clothes than the common people, and the greatest difference between different classes can be seen in the quality of fabrics and degree of ornamentation (Pylkkänen 1955: 35). The upper and lower classes needed to be distinguished from one another, and the dress code of each class was regulated through laws. Throughout the 17th century, the deceased were dressed simply, but towards the end of the century the funerary clothes became more festive (Rimpiläinen 1971: 244). A new church law in 1686 is indicative of the state's fight against luxury. It states that "In burial everyone has to follow the law, behave according to their own class and forsake expensive coffins and funeral garments". Coffins were not allowed to be decorated, and it was prohibited to use silver, gold, lace, gemstones, jewelry or beads in dress. Unnecessary luxury had been regulated even earlier. The first sumptuary laws were aimed mainly at priests and merchants, but by the 18th century the focus turned also to the common people, who had started to consume more. The sumptuary laws became stricter and stricter, and control was at its peak during the last ten years the old cemetery was in use. (Modée 1774, 7142–7147; Pylkkänen 1955, 35; Rimpiläinen 1971, 198–199, 207–208; Lehtinen and Sihvo 2005, 7–10.)

According to Finnish clothing historian Riitta Pylkkänen (1955, 15, 26, 29), funerary dress became simpler at the turn of 17th and 18th centuries. In Turku Cathedral (southwestern Finland) the garments of this period were not sewn into actual clothes but folded beautifully above the body. The garments could consist of one or more rectangular pieces of cloth, which were sewn or connected with pins. The clothes did not have the cuts used in normal clothes to enhance the suitability of use and the backside was sometimes missing. Only in special cases was the deceased buried in so-called everyday clothes. Even though the attire was typically made specifically for the funeral, it would still have been decorated and made according to contemporary fashion. (See also Drazkowska 2004; 2006.)

Many of the deceased buried at Oulu Cathedral had simple burial garments or were covered with a shroud. Most of the excavated burials, about 71%, did not have any clothing remains or any other personal remains. The preserved parts include the remains of funeral garment, socks, caps and hair dress. Numerous copper alloy pins were used to attach the funeral garments, caps and hair dressings (Fig. 2).

The preserved textiles are predominantly either wool or silk. Because of the acidic conditions, animal fibres preserve better in the Finnish soil, whereas plant fibres such as linen do not survive as well as protein fibres (on fibre preservation conditions, see Rast-Eicher 2003, 47). According to other Finnish burial evidence, linen however started to dis-

place silk as a material for funeral garments in the beginning of the 18th century (Pylkkänen 1955, 29). It is likely that many of the deceased in burials with no textile remains (about 70%) had linen or cotton funeral garments that have now decayed.

In general, silk cloth remains are in better condition than other materials, and it is easier to recognise what cloth they are part of. A couple of whole silk caps are preserved. Woolen textiles have preserved best next to metal objects such as



Fig. 2. Needles in the remains of silk cap found in an infant burial (23B, 1996, Photo: T. Kuokkanen).

pins. There are many examples of funeral garments attached with pins at the foot of the deceased, where cut edges of the garment were folded out of sight.

In 17th-century Maryland, pins are the only findings in burials as the textiles have usually decayed. There, most of the needles have been found around the head and might have attached the cloth covering the head or a piece of fabric supporting the chin bone. There is at least one example of this practice also in the Oulu churchyard. In Maryland the deceased were not buried in coffins, but they were tied into shrouds fixed by sewing or copper alloy needles. (DiPaolo Loren and Beaudry 2006, 261.) At any rate, using needles to attach funeral clothes seems to have been an international habit with local variations.

The needles at the Oulu Cathedral site are of bronze, except for one possible silver needle. Most of them are broken, but the intact examples are of equal size, 22–29 mm. The needles found in habitation contexts, right next to the church, are longer, 17–40 mm, and mostly made of silver (Kuokkanen et al. 2011, 1, 5). It is probable that they were used in sewing, whereas the small needles in burials were specifically made for affixing funeral clothes (see also Beaudry 2006, 24, Table). The needles are found in male, female and child burials. The size of the needle directly correlates with its use. The needles used for fastening clothes were selected based on the quality of fabric, but in funeral clothes small needles could be used for thicker fabrics also since they need not bear movement.

Sometimes the cut edges were sewn into seams, but the accuracy is not very good, which implies that the seams were not meant to be seen by the funeral guests (Fig. 3). The fabric may be partially unravelled or folded only once, and not sewn, whereas sewn hems with two folds would have been neater. Moreover, at least one hem was sewn with thick wool thread with long needle stitches. The garments were clearly made for the funeral and they were not meant to be real garments. However, some folds have been carefully sewn and folded. The garments were attached with pins at the feet and at the back or front of the deceased.

Most of the preserved woolen textiles are of fine quality, and the selection of silk in itself tells us about value of the chosen fabric. Silk clothes would have been more valuable than woolen ones (Rothstein 2003), and it can be assumed that the deceased from wealthier families were buried wearing silk funeral garments. Especially in the beginning of the 18th century, sumptuary laws concerning clothing and their control became stricter. One of the main points then was the distinction of materials: which fabrics were allowed to the common people and which to the upper classes. In general, silk was reserved for the gentry, with common people required to wear wool clothes made of homespun wool (in Finnish *sarka*). Silk was allowed to the lower classes only in caps and scarfs. (Pylkkänen 1982, 26–28; Lehtinen and Sihvo 2005, 13.) The choice of fabric and type of dress thus can strongly indicate the social status or rank of the deceased. Based on the good preservation of the silk caps and

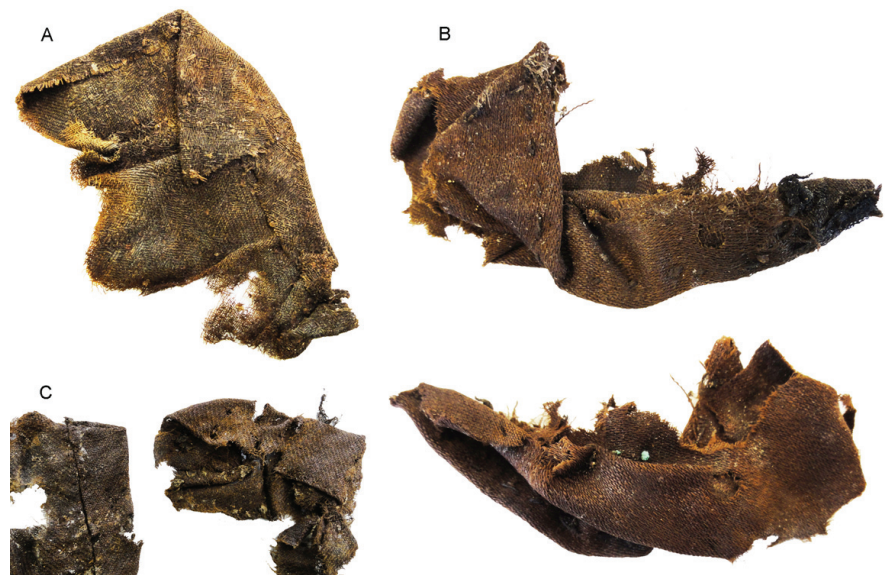


Fig. 3. Different kind of seams found at the feet of the deceased: A) Cut edges folded out of sight, silk (burial 18, 1996, female?), B) Seam of silk dress sewn with coarse wool thread, on the other side (lower) one needle used to fold the hem (burial 42, 1996, female), C) Wool seam folded twice and sewn with neat stitches (burial 21, child) Photos: S. Lipkin.

decorations, it can be assumed that clothes and other funeral textiles, such as coffin textiles and possible pillows, were generally either of wool or linen.

About half of the preserved textiles have been found at the feet of the deceased, with the rest elsewhere in the burials, mainly around the chest and head area. Most of the decorations were also recorded from the upper parts of the burials. This was also prevalent in Turku, where heads and hands were covered and female deceased were clothed also in neck and chest (Pylkkänen 1955, 36).

Sara Wacklin (1844–1845/1989, 167–168) relates in her memoirs that making funerary adornments for dead children was a pleasant social event arranged by a virgin godmother and even allowed young unmarried women and men to meet unsupervised. The children deceased have more decorations than the adults. To ensure their way to heaven, infants might have been buried in their swaddling clothes or baptismal costume. Two examples at the funeral ground represent a possible swaddling belt (Fig. 4). There is European evidence that children older than one year of age were buried in same way as adults (Pylkkänen 1955, 29; Oosterwijk 2007, 339–342), which is also visible in the Oulu Cathedral material. In total, there are 87 burials of children under twelve years of age. The percentage of child burials is surprisingly low, 36 %, except in one part of the burial ground where it is 55%. Typically, in pre-modern societies child mortality, especially of children under three, is 50% or more (Turpeinen 1978, 1979). It is possible that at some period, children were buried in a certain part of the burial ground which has not been found. Future dating of the different parts of the burial ground, and the burials within them, may provide some answers to this. It is possible that some parts of the cemetery were used by certain social groups or families.

About 30% of the deceased that were buried at the Oulu Cathedral site have decorations and/or silk or wool textiles that can be regarded as being of fine quality. They are either luxurious or semi-luxurious in nature. Of course one needs to remember that at least some of the funeral garments were recycled and made of old clothes, and it is possible that such clothes were used to dress common people. Moreover, we cannot expect that a piece of every luxurious cloth or decoration has preserved, since bodies were constantly moved at the graveyard.¹ The percentages of adult and child deceased, however, imply that children received more luxurious garments (39% of child burials) than adults (24% of adult burials). The remaining deceased, with current evidence in total about 70% of all buried individuals, were supposed to settle for simple shrouds or garments with no remains that would have preserved until present day. However, beginning in the 17th century the church had a stretcher cloth (first mentioned in 1634) that was regularly renewed. This cloth was laid on the deceased for the funeral service. It was elaborate with flounces and it was made of the finest quality wool or velvet ordered from Stockholm. It was paid for by the townsmen with salmon or butter according to their wealth,

which in return gave them permission to use the cloth when their family members died. Alternatively, they could give a donation to the church as money, supplies or work, or they could rent the stretcher cloth. (Virkkunen 1919/1953.)



Fig. 4. A swaddling belt found in an infant burial (23B, 1996, Photo: S. Lipkin)

¹ During the excavations it was noticed that some deceased were buried for the second time due to construction works. For example, right next to the wall built in 1771–1776, a couple of skeletons were found in a pit. In 1714 Russian soldiers are said to have plundered the church, and even the deceased were thrown away from their burials (Virkkunen 1919/1953: 646). In the late 18th century the poorest people were buried in a common chamber tomb and reburied at a later date in a temporary common burial outside, near the entrance of the church (Wacklin 1844–1845/1989, 6; Halila 1953, 576).



Fig. 5. An English 17th-century clay pipe from Grave 10 (1996, Photo: S. Lipkin)

3. A man in his everyday clothes

The deceased in Burial 10 was dressed completely differently than any other preserved deceased at the cemetery. He had a plant-fibre shirt with a silk collar, multi-component breeches with leather straps, socks and the remains of a wide squirrel skin belt at his waist (Appendix). The leg straps were fixed with buckles that were unique at the graveyard. Below the collar was a piece of iron, possibly a button, which had preserved a piece of textile, most likely a shirt. In addition this male deceased had a number of utensils with him, which is extraordinary at the cemetery. On the squirrel skin belt, a copper alloy square buckle was found. This buckle most probably belonged to a narrow textile belt from which the knife hung. On his right side, next to the knife, were found a small box made of wood and horn, sulphur and brimstones. Attached to the sulphur was a piece of textile, probably from a sachet holding it. Next to the knife was also a small wooden knob with a hole in the middle. Next to the left femur was the bowl of a middle-sized 17th-century English clay pipe (Fig. 5), and four coins were found next to the left ankle. (Kuokkanen and Lipkin 2011, 155–156.) These were Swedish 5 öre coins minted between 1691–1700. According to these dating artefacts, the burial is probably from the early 18th century.

3.1 Trousers, socks and leather straps – lower or upper class clothes?

Leather straps were found below the knees (Fig. 6). These were used to attach breeches and socks. During the 17th and 18th centuries, both women's and men's socks were generally knee high, and



Fig. 6. Leather straps with bronze alloy buckles (Photo: T. Kuokkanen).



Fig. 7. A piece of *nålbound* sock and multi-component corduroy breeches (Photo: Sanna Lipkin).

socks were fastened with ribbons made of silk, wool (Pylkkänen 1982, 338) or leather. Breeches and socks were worn together (Lehtinen and Sihvo 2005, 169). According to photographs taken during the excavation, the breeches were found under the leg straps and the socks were found both above and under the straps. The copper alloy buckles of the leather straps have preserved the textile in good condition. The socks are *nålbound*² and most likely homemade (Fig. 7).

Breeches were part of dress in Europe already in the 16th century, but they arrived in Sweden only in the following century. Long trousers were used contemporaneously until the 18th century, when breeches became widely used also in folk costumes. In the 19th century, long trousers again displaced breeches. The first breeches were made of chammy acquired from calves, goats, elk or deer but later of felted wool of fine or coarse quality³, or even of lower quality short flax (in Finnish *roh-din*) for everyday use. The breeches on the deceased man are multi-component corduroy (Fig. 7). The warp is made of cotton, and weft both of white and light-brown wool and light reddish silk.

Generally, trousers were fastened below the knee with brass, tin or leather buttons or with leather or textile straps and buckles (Sirelius 1915, 182–183; Vuorela 1977, 571–572; Kaukonen 1985, 225–228). The buckles were usually made of steel; silver and brass ones were rare. In some parts of Finland, such as Savonia, long trousers could also be fastened below the knees (Sirelius 1915, 180–183; Lehtinen and Sihvo 2005, 166–169).

Shoe and breeches' buckles were part of both high and low class dress in early modern Sweden. They were used in pairs: buckle shoes were worn together with breeches and the changes in the form and size of the buckles were parallel with few exceptions. (Hazelius-Berg 1952, 102; Kaukonen 1985, 91.) In the area of Finland, buckles were a part of folk dress, especially in west. (Sarkkinen 1998, 74). The use of pairs of buckles, in shoes and breeches, became more common towards the end of the 18th century. They were at their most fashionable in the 1780s. In the aftermath of the French revolution in 1789, the buckles quickly fell out of fashion. In many Swedish localities gatherings against luxury took place in 1793, and it was decided to abandon buckles. (Pylkkänen 1970, 386–387; Kaukonen 1985, 113–114; Sirelius 1915/1990, 239–240; Sarkkinen 1999, 74; White 2009, 245.)

2 In this technique thread is bind and looped with a needle. For the technique see Hansen 1990. The socks are made with two phased technique (in folk tradition made with "Finnish" stitch) that is most likely the oldest technique in Finland (Kaukonen 1960, Vajanto 2003, 9).

3 In Finland *sarka* was used for folk costumes and *verka* was finer quality felt fabric made of carded short wool.



Fig. 8. A squirrel skin belt found on the waist. The copper alloy remains still visible at the place where the belt buckle was found (Photo: S. Lipkin).

3.2 Belt, knife belt and fire-making tools

The squirrel fur belt found on the waist is about 10 centimetres wide and preserved in a length of 33 centimetres (Fig. 8). Most likely it was attached to a textile belt that was tied at the back and has now decayed. The belt would have been used to fasten the breeches. All belts, whether woven, knitted or made of leather or pelt, were generally wide (Lehtinen and Sihvo, 174–176). Squirrel pelt was an ordinary fur during the pre-modern era (Lehtinen and Sihvo 2005, 211). Attaching a belt around the cloth made it warmer (Lehtinen and Sihvo 2005, 245).

A small bronze alloy buckle was found on the squirrel skin, indicating that there also used to be another belt on the waist of the man. The small size of the buckle implies that the belt was narrow, maximum c. 1.8 centimetres (Fig. 9). This was probably a knife belt that was a part of folk costume. In probate records these belts are commonly mentioned as part of male attire. A knife in a wooden sheath was indeed found next to the right femur of the man (Fig. 10). The knife used to hang from the belt with a strap, which has now decayed. In the dress of common people the belt bearing the knife was generally woolen. (Lehtinen and Sihvo 2005, 174–175, 245.) On the other hand, everyday belts were usually made of leather (Vuorela 1977). Besides its functionality, a belt with tools was also a personal item with many meanings. For example, in the Middle Ages a belt with a silver buckle meant honor (Vuorela 1977, 578–580; Kaukonen 1985, 245).

The most precious buckles in the pre-modern era were also made of silver. Copper alloy buckles were cheaper and more common. Copper alloys were not, however, the easiest to work with, and thus not the cheapest material. The deceased's belt buckle has some decoration that also added to its value. The lack of a tongue, however, makes the use of the buckle more difficult. The presence of the buckle,



Fig. 9. Belt buckle (Photo: T. Kuokkanen).



Fig. 10. A knife found below the waist, on the right side (Photo: S. Lipkin).



Fig. 11. Brimstones and sulphur with a piece of tabby textile on the surface (Photo: S. Lipkin).

and that it was made of copper alloy, implies that the person did not belong to the lowest social ladder. (Kuokkanen and Lipkin 2011, 159.)

Next to the knife, two silicon brimstones, sulphur and a small wooden and horn box were found. On the surface of the sulphur a piece of very fine plain weave textile was found, and the round shape of the sulphur suggests that it was once carried in a small textile sachet (Fig. 11). The size of the small wooden and horn box is small, only around 3 cm in diameter and 3.5 centimetres in height. It is possible that it was used to hold tobacco for the pipe found next to the right femur.

3.3 A shirt with silk collar – luxury in a funeral garment

The shirt of the man has a filament silk collar (Fig. 12). Silk was especially valuable in the 17th and 18th centuries (Rothstein 2003). This is why the collar is a luxurious accessory in the shirt. The collar was attached to the shirt with wool threads visible in front of the shirt. The collar was not sewn on the shirt, but put on separately each time it was used. Shirts with high collars were an essential part of 18th-century male attire and they were used with scarfs (Lehtinen and Sihvo 2005, 153). A separate silk collar could replace a scarf.

The warp of the shirt is vertical and the weave horizontal. The weave is 2/2 twill, making a diagonal effect in the fabric. The number of warp threads is double in comparison to the weft threads (16/6–8). The threads are arranged so that two threads are close to one another and then there is a



Fig. 12. Silk collar and the remains of jacket. The wool threads possibly used to attach the collar to the jacket is visible in detail (Photo: S. Lipkin).

tiny space and again two threads. The appearance of the textile is thus gossamer. The shirt may be regarded as a good quality shirt and was likely not used for physical work. The fibers used for this shirt were possibly nettle, based on the small crystals visible on the surface of the fibres. This may in future be certified with polarised light microscopy and SEM (see Bergfjord and Holst 2010). Small bronze rounded button or hook used to fasten the shirt was found partially inside the fabric, below the collar.

Nettle shirts (*nättelduk*)⁴ were expensive import products. Until 1740, these were brought directly to Oulu from abroad, but from then onwards they were brought to northern Ostrobothnia by Russians via Arkhangelsk. (See Map 3, Lehtinen and Sihvo 2005, 23–29.) More commonly, shirts were made of linen (Lehtinen and Sihvo 2005, 152).

The textile of the shirt is best preserved attached to an iron artifact below the collar (Fig. 13). Elsewhere the threads are only 0.5 millimetres wide, brownish and very fragile. On the iron object they are better preserved, light in colour and 0.8 millimetres in width.

Other textiles also have been found in the burial. One is a 2/1 twill wool textile with tightly spun threads. Another is wool velvet. The find position of these textiles is not certain.⁵ In the excavation documentation it is written that the textiles were found both above and under the deceased and it remains uncertain if all the textiles were collected. These unidentified textiles are possibly parts of a bodice and/or jacket, which typically belonged to the dress of men, or remains of the upholstery of the coffin.

3.4 What sort of man?

The dating of the burial is not straightforward. Burial 10 is one of the upper burials: there are several burials below but only one above it. As interment at the cemetery ceased in the early 1780s, this denotes that the dating should be earlier. Also, although the clay pipe is from the 17th century, clay pipes could be used until they were completely broken. The pipe is certainly not new, since its stem is broken and has been remodelled for use. The breeches and their buckles could have been used already in the 17th century but were more commonly used during the 18th century. The coins give the earliest possible dating since they



Fig. 13. A piece of jacket on an iron object (Photo: S. Lipkin).

⁴ This term referred later to all good quality shirts, which most commonly were made of linen.

⁵ 2/1 twill textile was possibly found next to coffin nails between the femurs, as there is some iron oxide on it and it is stored in the same box as one piece of sock which was also found close to these nails.

have been minted between 1691 and 1700. All evidence together suggests that the man was buried in the early 18th century. However, the clothes found on the man were used and possibly recycled and at least some of them may be from the late 17th century, as is also the case with the pipe.

In the 18th century the deceased were buried in their best clothes (Talve 1990, 170), and in this sense the tools and luxurious elements in the burial tell about the era. On the other hand, namely in the 18th century the deceased were commonly covered with textiles which were not actual clothes (Pylkkänen 1955, 15, 26, 29). This seems to have been the case also in the Oulu cemetery.

Perhaps the man in Burial 10 is an exception due to his status in the community. The choices of materials imply wealth, but his status in the community may have been high because of profession or rank as well. Dressing a man in everyday clothes is unique compared to the attire of the other males in the cemetery. Furthermore, silk textiles found on men in the cemetery of Oulu are rare. There are only a couple of examples of silk funeral garments and socks. Women and child deceased however have both silk caps and funeral dresses. Elsewhere, textile traces on the mummified remains of vicar Nikolaus Rungius (c. 1560–1629) imply of his high status in the community. His skin is full of fragmented traces of at least two different fine quality textiles. These and the socks in his feet are of silk and/or cotton. He has also depressions below the knees, implying that his knitted socks were fastened with straps of which there is no traces. Vicar Rungius was buried under the floor of the Church of Saint Mikael in the parish of Keminmaa (about 100 km north from Oulu). His body has been moved post-mortem into new coffins several times and has suffered loosing, for example, of soft tissue (for the CT scan research of the mummy, see Väre et al. 2011).

More likely, the attire of the man in Burial 10 imply that he was a stranger. Many people of foreign origin lived in Oulu, and tradesmen came regularly from Karelia (Virkkunen 1919/1953, 156, 243–255). Ethnography studies have recorded Karelian artifact types almost parallel to the buckle types that were found in Burial 10. Although the buckle types U. T. Sirelius (1915/1990, 211–216) recorded are all belt buckles, it is quite possible that the same types would have been used as knee buckles as well. There are relatively few studies on knee buckles, especially with respect to the dress of the common people (e.g. Kuokkanen et al. 2012). During the 17th and 18th centuries, Oulu was a growing town where the Baltic Sea and the Oulujoki River brought many tradesmen and foreigners. For example, Karelian clasp types and a ring with Russian text have been found at another excavation site in Oulu (Kuokkanen et al. 2012, 117). Probable Karelian origin may also explain why the man was buried in so-called everyday clothes. The eastern origin may also mean that he was Orthodox Christian, and Orthodox Christians traditionally bury their deceased wearing better garments (Sidoroff 1998, 19).

The accessories present contradictory views on the identity and especially on the social status of the deceased: the buckles were made of copper alloy, which was not the most expensive material for buckles. On the other hand, the shirt, perhaps made of expensive imported nettle textile, had an expensive silk collar. The foreign multi-component breeches suggest also of the wealth of the deceased. It is probable that he did not belong to the highest class in Sweden – after all he was not buried under the church – but his dress was luxurious to the highest extent that was allowed in accordance with his class.

The fact that this male burial had unique garments, accessories and utensils in comparison with the other burials, also tells about the diversity of burial customs. Sometimes it was necessary to dress the deceased differently, and there are also other European examples that burial customs were not completely tied to their era but different customs were contemporary (for example, Drazkowska 2006).

4. Conclusions

The funeral garments, the choice of fabric and its accessories, tell about the deceased and the community that buried him. In the pre-modern era, the deceased were buried according to their class, but

without extravagant luxury. This was regulated, at least in principle, by the sumptuary laws. Additionally, most people could afford burying their family members only in simple clothes or shrouds that had little or no ornamentation. At the Oulu cemetery about 30% of the burials have semi-luxurious or luxurious garments on the deceased. Even though the garments were mainly made for the funerals, and their technical solutions were simplified and unsuitable for everyday clothes, the accessories and the garments of women and men varied according to prevailing fashion.

Burial customs, however, vary as some of the deceased were buried in their everyday clothes. One example of this in Oulu is a man in Burial 10, excavated in 1996. He wore a plant-fibre shirt, squirrel fur belt, another belt with a buckle, woolen socks, and breeches fastened with leather straps with buckles. His clothes have features that indicate higher social rank: a silk collar on the shirt, copper alloy buckles on the breeches' straps, and a belt with decorations on the waist. The utility articles found in this burial, knife, box, coins and clay pipe, are also very rare at the cemetery.

The identity of this person is complicated but interesting. The most atypical feature compared to other burials is of course the clothing, but his attire also conveys contradictory messages. He was not a poor man, but not a member of the highest elite either. On the other hand, personality in clothing was in general shown through the details because they were the most difficult part of clothing to control. In this case the uniqueness of the burial may derive from the profession, ethnicity or religion of the deceased.

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Appendix. Finds in Burial 10.

- PPM*12161:40 **White clay pipe**, middle sized bowl, 17th century
- PPM12161:41 **4 coins** (copper), corroded, diameter 22 mm
- PPM12161:42 **Knife and seath**, at the belt of the deceased
- PPM12161:43 **Sulphur in a textile sachet and two silicon brimstones**, found next to the knife
Textile: plain weave, 18 threads/cm, spin direction z/Zs-plyed, thread thickness 1.1/1.4 mm
- PPM12161:44 **Squirrel skin belt, copper alloy belt buckle**, unidentified wooden object
Squirrel skin: found under the buckle, preserved size 330 x 100 mm
Buckle: size 26 x 23 mm, weight 4.5 g
Wooden object: 49 x 36 mm, diameter of the hole in the middle 8–13 mm, length of the wooden stick fitting to the hole 29 mm
- PPM12161:45–46 **Leather leg straps and copper alloy buckles**
Buckles: size 31 x 24/25 mm, weight 15.5/16.5
- PPM12161:47 **Woolen sock and unidentified textile**. Sock was found on and under the leg straps
Sock: *nålbound* with Finnish stitch, spin direction s, thread thickness 1 mm
Unidentified textile: spin direction s/z, thread thickness 0.8/1 mm, 2/1 twill, 8/8 threads/cm
- PPM12161:48 **Silk collar and plant-fibre (nettle?) shirt**, collar is attached to shirt with wool threads. Found by the neck.
Collar: filament silk, thread thickness 0.4/0.1 mm, plain weave, 27/57 threads/cm
Shirt: spin direction z/Zs-plyed, 6–8/16 threads/cm, thread thickness 0.5 mm, 2/2 twill weave
Wool threads: z/Zs-plyed, 1.6 mm
- PPM12161:49 **Horn and wood box**, diameter 26–33 mm, height 35 mm
- PPM12161:50 **Wooden knob with a hole in the middle**, found close to knife, diameter 15 mm, weight 0.3 g
- PPM12161:51 **Piece of iron with a piece of shirt (nettle?)**
Shirt: spin direction z/Zs-plyed, 6/4/cm threads/cm, thread thickness 0.8/0.8 mm
- PPM12161:52 **Iron coffin nails**
- PPM12161:53 **Wool sock, wool, silk and cotton breeches, wool textile (unidentified)**
Sock and breeches found attached to strap buckles. Sock on and under the strap, breeches below.
Sock: *nålbound* with Finnish stitch, spin direction s, thread thickness 1 mm
Breeches: Crodroy, structure is difficult to distinguish because of carrion flies, cotton weft, silk and wool warp
Unidentified textile: velvet with no visible textile structure, wool

*PPM=Catalogue number in Northern Ostrobothnia Museum