



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

Forgotten pioneers? The Karelian connection and the role of Kaale women in the mobilization of Finnish Roma at the start of the twentieth century

Roman, R. B., & Blomster, R. (2023). Forgotten pioneers? The Karelian connection and the role of Kaale women in the mobilization of Finnish Roma at the start of the twentieth century. *Romani Studies*, 33(1), 9-29.
<https://doi.org/10.3828/rost.2023.2>

Published in:
Romani Studies

Document Version:
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Queen's University Belfast - Research Portal:
[Link to publication record in Queen's University Belfast Research Portal](#)

Publisher rights

Copyright 2023 The Authors.

This is an open access article published under a Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the author and source are cited.

General rights

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Queen's University Belfast Research Portal is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The Research Portal is Queen's institutional repository that provides access to Queen's research output. Every effort has been made to ensure that content in the Research Portal does not infringe any person's rights, or applicable UK laws. If you discover content in the Research Portal that you believe breaches copyright or violates any law, please contact openaccess@qub.ac.uk.

Open Access

This research has been made openly available by Queen's academics and its Open Research team. We would love to hear how access to this research benefits you. – Share your feedback with us: <http://go.qub.ac.uk/oa-feedback>

Forgotten pioneers? The Karelian connection and the role of Kaale women in the mobilization of Finnish Roma at the start of the twentieth century

RALUCA BIANCA ROMAN AND RISTO BLOMSTER

While studies of Finnish Kaale pioneer men within the process of Roma mobilization in Finland have become more common in recent years, little to no information or discussion has thus far focused on the role of Roma women within these processes, their visions for the future of their communities, and their connection to the shaping of Roma civic emancipation in Finland. Based on recently discovered archival sources, this article addresses these gaps by exploring the lives of two key Roma women: Ida Blomerus and Sofia Schwartz. This article also analyzes the ways in which their engagement can only be understood by considering the dynamics occurring in a particular region of the country, Karelia. Through this, the aim of this article is to demonstrate that Romani women's involvement constitutes a crucial aspect of the civic emancipation movement in Finland and that Roma women were neither passive subjects nor silent voices within the history of Roma mobilization.

Keywords: Finland, Kaale, gender, civic emancipation, religious mobilization, Karelia

Introduction: Civic emancipation and the rise of the “Gypsy Mission” and Karelia as a border region

The history of Finnish Kaale civic emancipation cannot be disentangled from the role of the first Roma-focused organization in the country, the Finnish Gypsy Mission (in Finnish, *Mustalaislähetys*), and the central impact that the connection with Russia – most specifically in the region of Karelia – had on the development of Roma activists in the country. The aim of this article is to introduce some of the key dynamics in the social and historical processes of Roma civic emancipation in Finland, with a focus on Finnish Kaale women and the “Karelian connection” that influenced their work and activities. Our analysis is based on the compilation of available sources in Finnish archives and newspapers and focuses on three interconnected issues. The first is the role of two Kaale women from the Roma movement in the region and the

Raluca Bianca Roman is Lecturer in Social Anthropology in the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics, Queen's University Belfast, 25 University Square, Belfast, UK, BT7 1PB. Email: raluca.roman@qub.ac.uk; Risto Blomster is senior archivist at the Finnish Literature Society, PO Box 259: FI-00171 Helsinki, Finland. Email: risto.blomster@finlit.fi

Romani Studies 5, Vol. 33, No. 1 (2023), 9–29 ISSN 1528-0748 (print) 1757-2274 (online)
doi: <https://doi.org/10.3828/rost.2023.2>

Published open access under a CC BY licence. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>
Downloaded from www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk by Queens University Belfast on July 19, 2023.

For personal use only. No other uses without permission.

Copyright © 2023 Liverpool University Press. All rights reserved.

emergence of two early institutions driven by Finnish Roma: the Vyborg Charter of the Finnish Gypsy Mission, the main organization working for Roma in the country, and the Finnish Roma Civilization Society, perhaps the first known Roma organization in the country. The second is the process of civic emancipation in Finland at the start of the twentieth century, and presents Karelia as divided between north-western Russia and south-eastern Finland and as a border region and a liminal space in which the Roma movement in Finland was shaped. The third is the post-1918 context and the shifting focus from the time of the Grand Duchy of Finland and the “East” to the era of independence and the “West.” It should be emphasized at this stage that while not much is known about the Finnish Roma Civilization Society (unlike the vast material available on the history of the Finnish Gypsy Mission), or about the ways in which the Society functioned, we can argue that (based on the limited existing sources on the biography of its members and its function) some of the earliest forms of Roma mobilization, and Kaale women’s mobilization, occurred in the region from as early as the twentieth century. This took place after the Gypsy Mission had begun to target Karelian Roma and moved its offices to Sortavala and Vyborg, two major centres in the region.

In many ways, Karelia has played a crucial part in the history of Finland, and its relationship with Russia, not only in the memory of those living in the border region but also in the history of the Finnish Kaale, as well as in the civic emancipation of Kaale men and women. Likewise, several localities occupy an important role, and available historical sources show their relevance to the later development of the early Roma movement in the country at the start of the twentieth century. This article focuses specifically on one of them, Vyborg, the fourth largest town in Finland in the interwar period, which at one point constituted a key site for the emergence of Kaale activism. It is noteworthy that Vyborg was not only the temporary seat of the Finnish Gypsy Mission, but also home to a large Finnish Kaale community and key to the formation of several Kaale activists, including Aleksander Åkerlund (1893–1944), Antti Palm (1874–1939), and this article’s main characters, Ida Blomerus (1890–1953) and Sofia Schwartz (1887–1932) (for more detail on their individual biographies, see Blomster and Roman 2022). Before embarking on exploring the latter, a brief history and overview of the importance of the region to the history of the Roma in the country are necessary in order to understand the dynamics occurring on the ground.

The Finnish Kaale population, with its specific Romani dialect, has been part of Finnish territories from as early as the 1500s. The territory of present-day Finland was part of Sweden until 1809, when it became the Grand Duchy of Russia, until its independence in 1917. During Swedish rule, Karelia

(and other south-eastern parts of the region on both sides of the border between Finland and Russia) was inhabited mostly by Finns, Karelians, and Russians. The region was annexed from Sweden to Russia after the Great Northern War by the Treaties of Nystad (1721) and Åbo (1743). This region, called Old Finland, had become one of the central areas of Finnish Roma settlement from the start of the eighteenth century. It is assumed that living conditions for Finnish Roma in Old Finland under Russian rule from the 1700s would have been more attractive than in the rest of the area of Finland. On the one hand, the growing metropolis of St. Petersburg gave rise to a myriad of opportunities, and, on the other hand, the practice of professions and activities was not as rationed under Russian administration in Old Finland as in the Finnish areas under Swedish control (Rekola 2018: 77). In addition to this, two policies against Roma in Finland during Swedish rule – the colonization policy and the deportation policy – have been used as explanations for why Roma settled in Karelia and the eastern parts of the Finnish territory (Thesleff 1900a: 34; Grönfors 1999: 304). While statistical data is not available for the earlier period, according to data collected by the Senate in the 1890s, the Western Ostrobothnia district and the South-Eastern Karelian and Ingrian districts near St. Petersburg were central areas of the Finnish Kaale population. Furthermore, over a third of the 1,500 Roma living in Finland (the total population of Finland at that time was around one million) lived in parishes around the region of Vyborg County (i.e. in Old Finland) (Thesleff 1898; Tervonen 2010a: 95–6; Tervonen 2010b: 91–9).

Following Finland's long-lasting connection with (and dependence on) Sweden, the nineteenth century saw greater autonomy, the rise of Finnish nationalism, and the build-up of Finnish national identity. During the last few years of being a Grand Duchy, and especially in the decades after its independence (on December 6, 1917), the socio-political climate of Finland was contoured by the rise in Finnish cultural nationalism in which a growing emphasis was placed on Finnish "language" and "culture." It was also during this time, as a Grand Duchy of Finland, that the country's national epic, the Kalevala, was published (in 1835) and when a Finnish nationalistic movement, known as Fennomania, developed. Fennomania's primary aim was to raise the status of both the Finnish language and culture to that of national language and national culture, as well as to construct a common mythical past for all the people speaking Finno-Ugrian languages around Russia (Barton 2005).

Unsurprisingly, as a community which had lived in the country for several hundred years, Kaale became part of the process of building up a Finnish national identity. This also led to scholars being primarily interested, for the reasons mentioned above, in the study of folklore defined as Finnish (or

Finno-Ugrian). Karelia and Ingria (an area around the bottom of the Gulf of Finland, in the centre of which is the present city of St. Petersburg) were treasure-troves for collectors and researchers of folklore deemed Finnish. It was in this context that Kaale were also seen as Finns, and they were part of a larger process of constructing a Finnish national identity. For example, the collection of materials from Kaale during this period, specifically within the collection of the Finnish Literature Society, were included in the repertoire of “Finnish” folklore, wherein Kaale were seen as the informants of Finnish folklore (Blomster and Mikkola 2014; Blomster and Mikkola 2017; Blomster and Roman 2021: 199–200).

What is interesting and relevant for the purpose of this article is that the relationship the Grand Duchy of Finland had with its neighbouring Russia was crucial, specifically in the region of Karelia, in terms of everyday relations, trade, and travel. Connections between the Grand Duchy and Russia were maintained and developed both by administrative measures, trade, and leisure (a train connection was established from Finland to St. Petersburg between 1867 and 1870 and a water route via the Saimaa Canal from inner Finland to the Gulf of Finland and St. Petersburg in 1856), but also at the grassroots level. St. Petersburg thus appeared to be a space for interactions and connections between peoples. In conjunction with the impact of the Gypsy Mission, the grounds were set for the development of Kaale artists and activists. Two known examples can be mentioned: Nikolay Alexandrovich Pankov (1895–1959), one of the main characters of the civic emancipation in the USSR, and his mother Yekaterina Ilyinichna, herself a member of a Gypsy choir, were both of Finnish Kaale descent. Likewise, the ancestor of the well-known Finnish Kaale artist family, the Åkerlunds, moved from St. Petersburg to Finland. It is also presumed that the members of the family were involved in the Roman Theatre in Moscow (SKS KRA. SKSÄ 2007: 134; Blomster 2012: 310; Marushiakova and Popov 2022: 531).

According to the information collected by Arthur Thesleff (1871–1920) among the Finnish Kaale (in the 1890s), there was not only one route to Russia — the “St. Petersburg route” — but several routes taken both from North Karelia, Ladoga Karelia, and from the Karelian Isthmus, which extended to the other side of St. Petersburg (Thesleff 1900b). For example, as newspaper sources point out (Schwartz 1907a: 6–7), and as the oral history documents preserved within the Finnish Literature Society (especially those collected in the 1930s and 1950s) emphasize (SKS KRA. Matti Simolan arkisto), Kaale market trips extended beyond St. Petersburg to the other parts of Ingria, areas located next to Karelia along the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland. Interestingly though, Oskari Jalkio, the director of the Finnish Gypsy Mission, also stated that “Russian Roma” themselves only seldom

travelled to the Grand Duchy. Evidently, the different Roma groups in the area, and in Russia in general (see Crowe 1996: 151–94), seldom mixed: based on Thesleff's data, only 25 Roma in Finland had declared Russia as their birthplace (Thesleff 1911: 7).

For all these reasons, the Gypsy Mission seems to have had at least some concrete plans for the Finnish Kaale in the region (or, in Jalkio's words, the "Finnish speaking Gypsies" of St. Petersburg). Oskari Jalkio had visited St. Petersburg and Narva several times. For example, in 1910, he embarked on a missionary trip to survey the situation of the Roma population in the region. Jalkio also organized a few Mission meetings attended by Roma in St. Petersburg, which, at the time, had a population of about 670,000, consisting of 20,000 Finns (O.J. 1910: 6). He mentioned that "a large percentage of Roma in St. Petersburg spoke Finnish" (*ibid.*). According to the travel report, Jalkio planned to launch operations in St. Petersburg, as well as to publish the journal *Kiertolainen* ("Vagrant") as a Russian language edition. Furthermore, according to the lists of funders published in *Kiertolainen*, donors were also found in St. Petersburg. All in all, it can be assumed that St. Petersburg had a strong foundation for the Romani activities planned by Jalkio. Also, Sofia Schwartz, the Gypsy Mission's schoolteacher and one of the main characters of the Roma civic emancipation and religious movement in Finland in the early 1900s, wrote about her own experience of coming into contact with Ingria Roma, in 1907, in the Mission's journal. This will be explored in greater depth below (see, for instance, Sofia Schwartz's accounts of her Ingrian travels below and in Marushiakova and Popov 2021: 686; Blomster and Roman 2021: 210; Blomster and Roman 2022: 388–90).

Most relevant for the purpose of this article, however, was Vyborg's connection to the Gypsy Mission, and the emergence of a Vyborg charter of the Mission, led and primarily formed by Kaale members, which was pivotal in the shaping of the two Kaale women's stories explored below. Prior to exploring these dynamics and life stories, it is necessary to look at the establishment and functioning of the Gypsy Mission, the first Roma-focused organization in the country.

The Gypsy Mission and the rise of Roma mobilization in Finland at the start of the twentieth century

While there is no space to go in depth into the history of this organization, it is worth pointing out that Mission was first set up in 1906 (officially registered in 1907), at a Tampere meeting, and led by Oskari Jalkio (1882–1952; full name, Anders Oskari Jalkio, initially Storbacka and, until 1922, Johnsson), who would become the driving force behind its initial expansion and success.

The Gypsy Mission operated in an evangelical spirit, taking the model of its activities particularly from the state of Norway, which supported missionary work among the so-called “Vagrants” in the 1840s as well as monitoring and reporting the activities of the missionary workers in Germany, Hungary, and America in the journal *Kiertolainen* (more expansive accounts of the history of the organization, from different perspectives, can be found in Viita 1967; Pulma 2006: 97–9, 160–5; Grönfors 2012; Hedman 2012; Lindberg 2012; Tervonen 2012a; Roman 2020).

While first set up in Tampere, the organization soon moved its headquarters to the city of Vyborg, in Karelia, between 1911 and 1917, some 150 km from St. Petersburg. Jalkio considered the reasons for moving away from Tampere in a text in which he described the difficulties of operating *Kodittomien koti* (Home for the Homeless), at the headquarters of the Gypsy Mission located in the suburb of the city of Tampere. Jalkio complained that it was Kaale seeking temporary accommodation in the *Kodittomien koti* who were often creating disturbances. Furthermore, according to Jalkio, Kaale in Karelia had relatively more frequent permanent housing compared with Roma in the city of Tampere and its surrounding districts. This led Jalkio to believe that the Gypsy Mission’s conditions would be easier in Karelia. If one looks at the statistics of the Finnish state for that period (more specifically, the 1890s), it is not hard to understand why the move occurred in the first place (Johnsson 1912: 9; Kronqvist 1913: 20).

Alongside processes of missionizing among the Kaale (often led by non-Roma pastors and preachers), the Mission had both a social and a religious agenda. These two dimensions – the social and the religious ones – were mutually constitutive and, in turn, influenced the formation of Kaale writers, evangelists, activists, and musicians, both men and women. What is crucial here is that the transfer of the activities of the Gypsy Mission to Vyborg in 1911 had far-reaching social goals concerning Kaale families in the country: education, employment, colonization (i.e. sedentarization) and Christianization. It is also worth noting that the activities of the Gypsy Mission were equally targeted at the entire Roma community, regardless of age or gender. As an example of this, the first Roma school was formed in Vyborg, between 1905 and 1907, and the first orphanage/children’s home for Roma children operated in Sortavala, between 1910 and 1918. Likewise, the Gypsy Mission ran special workplaces for men and women in Vyborg, from 1913 to 1914 (Viita 1967: 50–71). Additionally, some early ideas of women’s emancipation were also manifested when non-Roma women workers within the Gypsy Mission organized “closed negotiations to elevate the status of Roma women,” and when market meetings for Roma women were made available (Pohjois-Suomi 1907).

The striking fact about the Gypsy Mission in its early stages was that its activities involved numerous women of both Roma and non-Roma background. In general, it has been estimated that the large proportion of women in prominent positions in the so-called new Christian movements of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Finland was not exceptional. The activities of these movements were usually carried out by laypeople without formal training, unlike within the main Evangelical Church of the time, in which this was not a common occurrence. In such circumstances, both Roma men and women worked in the Gypsy Mission. Examples of women active in the Mission included Ida Blomerus, the head manager for working homes, and, Sofia Schwartz, a Roma school teacher. The role of non-Kaale women in the Gypsy Mission at the time might also be mentioned, such as Oskari Jalkio's wife, Helmi Jalkio, a graduate teacher. Helmi Jalkio worked alongside her husband in many ways, writing and drawing continuously in the journal *Kiertolainen* and working on the board of the Gypsy Mission. Furthermore, admission of Roma children to orphanages/children's homes and even fostering of children were practised within the Gypsy Mission, with non-Kaale women apparently playing a key role. The process by which such fostering occurred has been addressed in several of Helmi Jalkio's writings in the journal *Kiertolainen* (Kiertolainen 1907b: 24; "Setä" 1912: 4–5; Johnsson, H. 1914: 3–9).

Worth mentioning also is that, especially during its Vyborg period, there was not only a spiritual awakening but an awakening of civil rights among the Kaale members of the Gypsy Mission in the region. A unique case in point is the establishment of a charter of the Mission in Vyborg, in 1907, involving primarily Kaale members. More specifically, there were 16 Finnish Kaale members – of which 11 were women – and seven non-Roma members (Tervonen 2012b: 128). The Kaale members seemingly included several members of the Palm family, at least based on the family name: Herman Palm, Amalia Palm, Antti Palm, Aleksander Palm, Matilda Palm, Rosa Palm, Iida Maria Palm, Anna Lowisa Palm, alongside Gustaawa Enroth, Wilhelmiina Hagert, Katriina Hagert, Juhana Hörman, Amanda Bollström, Johan Herman Hedman, Wilhelmiina Korppi, and Lowiisa Isberg (Kiertolainen 1907a). The charter, however, did not last for very long in this format and, as the subsequent issues of *Kiertolainen* note, the Kaale membership gradually decreased over the next few years.

While the reasons for its short life remain unclear, we can assume the existence of tensions between the head leadership of the Gypsy Mission and the development of smaller charters. According to the writings by Oskari Jalkio, the Gypsy Mission held a rather negative position in what concerned its support of Roma's own cultural identity. What we also know

is that, shortly after its formation, the charter soon lost its monetary support from the “centre,” and that the number of Kaale members within the board gradually diminished. Nevertheless, the existence of this small “grassroots” movement among the Kaale in the Vyborg area (no matter how brief) denotes not only the potential centre-periphery tensions within the Gypsy Mission, but, quite crucially, the establishment and development of a small group of Roma activists, preachers, and artists, both men and women, who would stand both in collaboration with, and in opposition to, the Mission itself.

In what follows, we will briefly explore the short biographies of two women, whose stories point not only to the impact of the Gypsy Mission on Roma activists in the country but to the potential Karelian connection within these processes of Roma civic emancipation at the beginning of the twentieth century and beyond. The full biographies of these individuals and other early Finnish Roma activists connected to them, such as Ferdinand Nikkinen, Antti Palm, and Aleksander Åkerlund, have been published elsewhere (Blomster and Roman 2022). However, these two life stories are interesting and relevant here as they reveal the importance of understanding the historical and regional contexts which allowed and paved the way for the development of this grassroots Kaale movement in the country.

Kaale women voices within the Gypsy Mission

Ida Blomerus (1890–1953) was one of the central female figures in the activities of the Finnish Gypsy Mission in the first years of the 1910s. She was, among other things, a leading figure in the Roma Women’s Work-home. This was a company, established in Vyborg in 1913, that organized handicraft-related work opportunities for Roma women. Ida Blomerus was prominently involved in the performance and fundraising tours of 1912–1913, as a singer, speaker, and reciter of her own poems. She was also influential in setting up the Finnish Roma Civilization Society (*Suomen Romanien Sivistysseura*) and the short-lived Finnish Gypsy Theatre (*Suomen Mustalaisteatteri*, which performed from 1917 to 1919). While little is known and written about the activities and intricacies of this former organization, the few references found pointing to its existence highlight the development of a small “grassroots” Roma movement with roots in Karelia, which offered somewhat of a counterweight to the activities of the Gypsy Mission. The fact that this organization was led by a Kaale woman from Karelia is especially important and relevant here.

Ida Blomerus was born in Impilahti, in Karelia, some 200 km from Vyborg, the city to which the Gypsy Mission moved its activities in 1911 (Blomster and Roman 2022: 380–6). At the time, Impilahti, much like Vyborg, had a

large Roma population: based on a survey by the Finnish Senate on Gypsy population in the 1890s, Impilahti had 53 Roma registered at a time when 1,500 Roma were registered in Finland. In Impilahti, 33 people had the name Blomerus (TA, K 9 1895: Impilahti; Karjalan Sanomat 1912). We do not know if these individuals were related, but it is a reasonable assumption that some family connections may have existed.

There is also no information on how, and at what point, Ida Blomerus (who had graduated from the East Karelian Folk College in Impilahti, Karelia) became involved in the work and activities organized by the Gypsy Mission. We can assume that she most likely came into contact with the Mission once the latter moved its operational activities to Vyborg. What is clearly known is that, on several occasions, she acted as a speaker for the Gypsy Mission, specifically in 1910 (Johnsson, O. 1910: 6), and her photograph appeared in an article pointing to the musical activities of the Mission (Johnsson, O. 1913a: 11–12). She also seems to have held other duties within the Gypsy Mission, including serving as the chair of a working home for men and women in Vyborg, in 1913 (Johnsson, O. 1913b: 16).

From the source materials available (i.e. newspaper articles, leaflets, and brochures), we also know that, from 1914 to 1916, Ida Blomerus performed as a singer under the name of I. Cingardy-Ora (also I. Cingardy; Cingardy comes from the Romani language and means “quarrel-maker”). She often performed in worker’s houses (i.e. club houses of workers’ associations) in cities and parishes in eastern Finland, singing in a variety of languages, including Finnish, Romani, Swedish, and Russian. This would seem to point not only to her linguistic abilities but also to the international character and the overall reach of her performances. She also included emancipatory speeches on the status of the Roma at the end of her performances.

Interestingly, in 1917, Blomerus became involved in what seems to have been the very first Roma-led organization in the country, the Finnish Roma Civilization Society, which was also connected to the Finnish Gypsy Theatre led by Helinä Svensson-Timari, a non-Roma actor and reciter. The emancipation theme featured within both of these activities. Even the name Finnish Roma Civilization Society was radical in the early 1917 political context, the last months of the Grand Duchy era and in the middle of the second period of oppression or russification. “Finnish” refers to Finnishness, as its own nationality, while “Roma” (a word in the Romani language) refers to the idea of Roma’s own national identity. Neither of these ideas had been popularized at the time. Furthermore, the play performed by the Finnish Gypsy Theatre, based on the novel *Signoalla* (1857), by Swedish novelist Victor Rydberg (1828–1895), contained references to both female and Roma emancipation. It is important to note that the script of the play was written

by Elviira Willman-Eloranta (1875–1925), a well-known Finnish playwright and journalist, and one of the most prominent female influencers in the early Finnish labour movement. The kind of networks that the Roma emancipation and the Finnish women’s movement had more broadly, nevertheless, remains the subject of further research at this stage (Roininen 2007; KA. Sigurd Wettenhovi-Aspan arkisto).

Significant is the fact that Ida Blomerus, as a chairperson, was one of the first Roma women in the country to lead a radical organization. At the same time, Blomerus started a line of more than one hundred years of Finnish Roma women’s activism. This fact challenges the common notion that Roma women played a mostly passive role in the early stages of the Roma civic emancipation movement in the country (and, perhaps, more broadly).

As far as we know, according to the information published in mainstream newspapers (at the moment of writing, the only sources available on the matter), the Finnish Roma Civilization Society was founded in the early spring of 1917 (exact date unknown). To date, no material has been discovered concerning its registration and we can assume that the Society was never officially recognized. However, what is known is that it had about 20 members and that its rules were written down by Blomerus herself (though these rules have not yet been located in archives, or elsewhere). Crucial is the fact that the Society publicly remained disconnected from the religious focus of the Gypsy Mission, even publishing several articles which were critical of the Mission, in 1917, in the newspaper *Työmies* (Cingardy-Ora 1917; *Työmies* 1917a, 1917b; Blomster and Roman 2022: 383–6). This criticism can be clearly seen in the text written by Blomerus and Svensson-Timari to the Senate of Grand Duchy when applying for free tickets for the Finnish Gypsy Theatre’s tour (published also in Blomster and Roman 2022: 385):

We, the undersigned, who have set up a summer tour called “Gypsy Theatre” to assist Finnish Gypsies in their studies, beg – referring to the civically neglected status of our Gypsies, as well as the fact that the government assisted with free travel tickets on railways for religious conversion work carried out under the name of so-called Gypsy Mission, which we Gypsies have not yet come to appreciate, and have not more generally realized its blessing – humbly ask: that the Senate would be favourable to the Finnish Gypsies self-help company that we represent, and would grant the “Gypsy Theatre’s” six-person (6) stamp troupe starting today, free tickets for three months on the Finnish State Railways.

In Helsinki May 14th, 1917.

Helinä Svensson. Gypsy-born actress. Head of the “Gypsy Theatre.”

I. Cingardy Blomérus-Ora. Gypsy-born singer. Chairperson of Finnish Roma Civilization Society. (KA. Senaatin talousosasto: F3 174/3, Eb 3439).

As can be read from this document, Blomerus and Svensson-Timari justified their application by the fact that the Gypsy Mission had received free tickets for its own “religious conversion work,” which, according to their estimation, did not enjoy very wide support among the Roma. At the same time, they also refer to the importance of their own work, saying that they raise funds on their theatrical tour to meet the needs of the Roma students. However, this request was unanimously rejected, with no justification for that rejection being published (as was customary).

The Finnish Roma Civilization Society ended its operation after 1917 and the Finnish Gypsy Theatre ended its activities in 1919. No further historical sources concerning their activities can be found after this time. Much like its establishment, the reasons and circumstances for the Society’s demise remain unknown. However, one can assume that the political and historical climate at the time, the gaining of Finland’s independence on December 6, 1917, and the emergence of a bloody civil war, also made it more difficult for such organizations to function. Nevertheless, while the information available on her life story is both fragmentary and incomplete (at this stage), Ida Blomerus has an important place in the history of Finnish Roma (as well as the history of Finland), as the first female Roma leader of a Roma-led organization in Finland. Her connection with and development in the region of Karelia is surely not coincidental.

A second Kaale woman, whose life story points to the broader role of Roma women within the Roma civic emancipation movement in Finland, is Sofia Schwartz (1887–1932). While not an “activist” or artist in the sense of Blomerus, Sofia Schwartz’s story is important because she was one of the first female Roma teachers in the country. Unsurprisingly, much like Blomerus, details of Schwartz’s life circumstances are limited (for some further details, see Rekola 2010; Blomster and Roman 2021: 209–1; Blomster and Roman 2022: 387–91). Born in the parish of Kuivaniemi (located in Northern Ostrobothnia), Schwartz completed preliminary school in the parish of Paltamo in Kainuu (Swedish Kajanaland). There, she met Oskari Jalkio, in 1905, at the age of 18, while he was touring the area, looking for Roma. Jalkio later wrote in an article published in *Kiertolainen* (on the occasion of Gypsy Mission’s tenth anniversary), that Schwartz was one of the first Roma to be taken under “the custody” of the Mission’s workers (Johnsson 1914: 7). After attending preparatory courses organized by the Gypsy Mission in Kuortane in southern Ostrobothnia, Sofia Schwartz moved to Karelian Vyborg in the autumn, first as a teacher at the Gypsy Mission Gypsy School (1906–1907) and

from there to the Sortavala Seminary (a pedagogical institution), from which she graduated as a teacher in 1911 (Viita 1967: 34).

Interestingly, when the Vyborg Gypsy school closed, on February 28, 1907, Schwartz travelled to Ingria (in the south of Karelia which, at the time, was bordering Russia), allegedly sent by the Gypsy Mission, where she first met “Ingrian Roma” about whom she would later write an article in one of the first issues of *Kiertolainen* (Schwartz 1907a: 6–7). That article was simply titled “About Ingrian Roma.” In it, she embarks on an extensive comparison of Finnish Roma and Ingrian Roma (in Finnish, *inkerin romanit*), and emphasizes the importance of schooling as a means of achieving social inclusion of the Roma in Finland (and elsewhere). In fact, the emphasis on social inclusion within mainstream societies is clearly underlined in the comparative focus of her article (Blomster and Roman 2021: 209). She offers Ingrian Roma as an example of “good practice” and supports, seemingly, the Gypsy Mission’s own emphasis on the sedentarization of Roma and the importance attributed by the Mission to the raising of children in a Christian moral code. Schwartz would later also write a brief article about her work on behalf of the Mission in the city of Vyborg, also published in the Mission’s journal (Schwartz 1907b: 5–7).

It was not only the Gypsy Mission’s *Kiertolainen* but also other newspapers that published Sofia Schwartz’s articles concerning the Ingrian trip. One example of this is the short greetings written in Finnish to Ingrian Roma in the newspaper *Uusi Inkeri* (New Ingria). The following translation of the article originally written in Finnish clearly shows Schwartz’s commitment to the values of the Gypsy Mission and her engagement in Roma mobilization:

Greetings.

We have received the following from the Gypsy lady Sofia Schwartz, an employee of the Finnish Gypsy Mission sending her greetings to her Ingrian tribe:

Dear Gypsy sisters and brothers in Ingria!

My heartfelt greetings to you, the unknown Roma*, and at the same time I am very pleased to announce that the dawn [of our movement?] morning is almost upon us.

Now the God of love has begun to call especially those of us who are despised in the world and hated by it. I am one of your brethren too, and I have decided to sacrifice my life for the raising of our people. May the God of love help me in this work.

I believe that soon we can say that every Gypsy:

Oika somma kaalat êenna, / kaali de som êesta panna. / Bi menat rahhaa kaalipa; / soralo hin maan naa va fina. / Doi suksuvaanne kaalibosta. / Parni deske parno jiu.

(I am black on the surface, /

My heart is blacker. /

But I do not mourn my blackness: /

My supporter is strong. /

That is my black heart /

Transformed into snow white.)

Sister: Sofia Schwartz

* Gypsies call themselves Roma in their own language. (Schwartz 1906: 3)

Sofia Schwartz's engagement within the Finnish Gypsy Mission, and her emphasis on the pathway to mobilizing members of her community through an emphasis on the theme of spiritual (Christian) uplifting, highlights the role played not only by Kaale men, but also by Kaale women in the Roma movement in the country. Schwartz was not only a remarkable figure in terms of Kaale women's social and educational work at the start of the twentieth century in Finland but, more broadly, she represents an example of women's involvement within educational spaces. Through this, Schwartz's life story constitutes a key example of Kaale women's voices and agency as part of the Roma movement in Finland before and during the interwar period. Sofia Schwartz (later, Santamo) died of poor health, at the young age of 45, on November 3, 1932 (Blomster and Roman 2021: 209–11). Her place of death remains unknown.

While neither Schwartz nor Blomerus would become prominent figures in the wider history of Roma mobilization in the country, and their names are rarely (Schwartz) or barely (Blomerus) mentioned in the history of the Finnish Roma, they both constitute important figures within the Gypsy Mission over the years. Throughout their lives, both of their stories highlight the contribution and involvement of Kaale women in the Roma civic emancipation movement at the start of the twentieth century in Finland. Finally, both of their activities, connected to the Gypsy Mission in Vyborg, as well as their work in the region, point to the clear "Karelian connection" within the development of this movement, as well as to the central role Karelia occupied in the history of the Finnish Roma and the Finnish Roma civic emancipation movement as early as the turn of the century.

The Karelian connection and Kaale women: Revisiting Roma civic activism in the twentieth century

The first decades of the twentieth century remain a crucial point in the history of the Roma mobilization in Finland. This is particularly connected both with the impact of the evangelical Gypsy Mission on the ground and the role played by the region of Karelia in the shaping of some of the earliest Roma activists in the country. As explored in this article, Finnish Kaale women, as well as men, come to the fore as prominent voices within and outside the Gypsy Mission. They also contributed to the establishment of what appears to be the first Roma-led organization in Finland, the Finnish Roma Civilization Society.

The independence of Finland (in 1917) redrew the border with Russia. Thus, much as the surrounding majority, many Kaale families were now living their lives across the newly drawn borders between Finland and Russia, with members of their families located on each side. Future research, both in Finnish and Russian archives, as well as other field research, will contribute to understanding the lives of those stranded on the east side of the border (see, for example, Åberg 2018).

The changes in borders and social relations led to changes in the types of mobilization in the country. Under these new conditions, two things happened: the Gypsy Mission itself moved from the Karelian city of Vyborg to Helsinki, and active and prominent artists and actors, who had become known as Gypsy Mission's representatives on its state-wide evangelism and fundraising tours, moved away from the Gypsy Mission's sphere of influence. It is thus understandable that during the interwar period both the activities of the Gypsy Mission in the area and the overall information concerning Roma mobilization in Karelia diminished. Furthermore, there no longer seemed to be any particular interest in the so-called "Gypsy Question" (*mustalaiskysymys*) within the Gypsy Mission, as had been the case at the turn of the century. The interwar period, in fact, is often presented as one of the Mission's most "quiet" periods (Viita 1967: 117), with fewer activities and limited numbers of publications (the journal *Kiertolainen*, for example, had the smallest number of issues released during this time). It led to diminishing resources being directed into the Gypsy Mission and a struggle to maintain the organization's social and religious activities afloat. This also had an undeniable influence "on the ground," as both the activities and the influence of Kaale men and women are harder to trace within the Gypsy Mission after 1918.

In this article, we have taken a closer look at the life stories of two central Roma women in the Finnish Roma mobilization movement, Ida Blomerus

and Sofia Schwartz. Concerning the answers they sought to give to the so-called “Gypsy question” – namely, how to improve the social and cultural status of Roma – the two had distinct and particular voices. Schwartz was active in the first Roma school of the Gypsy Mission and worked as a teacher, whereas Blomerus distinguished herself by embarking on a career as an artist-activist, worked as a chairperson of the Finnish Roma Civilization Society, and became an entrepreneur. However, while they were different, both were united in the fact that their connection with Gypsy Mission was a significant factor in their career choices and activities aimed at improving the status of Roma before and during the interwar period.

At this point, it is worth noting again the connection of Finnish Roma mobilization to the region of Karelia, and the particularities of this region before, during, and after the interwar period. Notably, the Karelian question further arose when Finland ceded territories to the Soviet Union after the Winter War (1939–1940), and the evacuation of Finnish citizens from the area. Given that Karelia had a large Roma population, it is not surprising that Kaale were among the evacuees. Soon after the war, many Karelian Roma evacuees, who were transported to Savolax, Northern Karelia, as well as southern Finland, ended up in the surrounding areas of Helsinki. Under these conditions, talk of the “new Gypsy issue” began, with Roma evacuees living in temporary dwellings, tents, and shacks, or forming camps in the suburbs of Helsinki. This led to a group of Roma activists in the post-war period taking a centre stage, including Ferdinand Nikkinen (a former ally of the Mission, later turned critic), which later led to the founding of other Roma civic organizations in the country, such as the Roma Association (*Romanengo Staggos*) in 1953, and the Finnish Gypsy Association (*Suomen Mustalaisyhdistys*), later renamed as the Finnish Roma Association (*Suomen Romaniyhdistys*) in 1967 (Stenroos 2019; Roman 2020). During the 1960s, the Finnish National Board of Gypsy Affairs (founded in 1956, presently known as Finnish National Board of Romani Affairs) gained a stronger Roma representation, as did the Finnish Evangelical Romani Mission (1964) and numerous subsequent associations.

The interesting question is why the early Finnish Roma activism of the first decades of the twentieth century did not generate a mass movement in its time. In this respect, the question is what kind of reception the Roma activist-artists, who moved from the Karelian region to Helsinki, received both among the main population and other Roma in Finland between 1910 and the 1930s. In this context, the actions taken by new Roma activist-artists were generally seen as indicative of the national awakening of the Roma, and, as such, was both a positive and an internationally unique phenomenon. From this point of view, both the emancipatory actions of Roma and the positive

news media portrayal linked to the artists active in Finnish music and on the theatre scene were seen as supporting the same goal: to make the views of the Roma known to the wider population, and to make the structures and practices of society more equitable. In the context of this article, it is also interesting that the gender of these individuals did not arise in any particular way, especially in their own writings. An exception may have been made in editorial sections, such as in the author's self-presentation or, as in the case of Blomerus, by signing their name with the epithet of a female singer (in Finnish, *laulajatar*). Nevertheless, it can be stressed that the writings, which were aimed mainly at non-Kaale, highlighted the need for a stronger Romani identity, as well as a strong desire for a positive change in Roma living conditions, regardless of age and gender.

In contrast, due to the lack of sources, it remains unknown how the Finnish Kaale population responded to the enlightenment efforts of these Karelian Roma. No mass movement arose during this time. The reasons are manifold. Perhaps both their Karelian background and their gender (in Blomerus's and in other Kaale women's cases) might have contributed to it. For example, the position of Karelian Roma in post-Second World War Finland has been described as difficult in two ways. On the one hand, they had to find conditions for life in new non-Roma neighbourhoods, as evacuees, a task which was not always easy for the rest of the population to accept. On the other hand, as Roma from elsewhere, they were also in a difficult situation with regard to the established Roma population, especially when looking for a suitable area of residence for their families.

It is worth asking why the early Roma activism, born in the 1910s, which gave rise to the Finnish Roma Civilization Society and the Finnish Gypsy Theatre, has been overlooked in the writing of Finnish Roma history. Undoubtedly, the significant role of the Gypsy Mission as a producer of data, as well as the paucity of research on cross-border fences in Finnish disciplines, has been a factor in this. It may also be that a certain kind of anachronism (a way of seeing and interpreting the past from the vantage point of the present) presented Roma as a closed community, connected to the countryside. Educated, urbanized, and internationally oriented artists would not have fitted well with this image.

Although the Finnish Roma activism presented in this article did not mobilize a larger mass movement and, until now, has been negligible in the writing of Roma history, it admittedly played a significant role in the history of Roma civic emancipation in Finland. These processes, in which Roma women also played an important part, can be seen as the beginning of several continuums. Firstly, early Roma emancipation emerged both within and against the Gypsy Mission. In this respect, it is interesting that the

same tension has had an impact on present-day Roma politics in Finland. Secondly, the flourishing connection between Roma artists, Roma activists, and Roma associations can be noticed until the present day, having emerged several times during the twentieth century: in the 1910s–1930s, the association between the Finnish Roma Civilization Society and the Finnish Gypsy Theatre; in the 1950s, the establishment of the association *Romanengo Staggos* with several plans to set up a Gypsy Theatre; in the 1960s, the connection between the Finnish Gypsy Association, the Finnish Gypsy Theatre, and the *Hortto Kaalo* orchestra; and, in 1976, the connection between the Society of Creative Gypsy Culture Drom and the Theatre Drom.

Finally, the third continuum, and perhaps the most relevant one for the purpose of this article, can be seen in the way Roma women repeatedly found their path into Finnish Roma politics and art, both within the religious and non-religious emancipatory movement. Influenced by the Karelian connection, inside and against the Gypsy Mission, this process began as early as the start of the twentieth century, wherein Ida Blomerus and Sofia Schwartz were the most prominent female participants. Of particular interest is the fact that women's opportunities for participation in public functions have oftentimes been considered limited due to the particularities of Finnish Roma customs. Nevertheless, Roma women have repeatedly and consistently found their way not only within artistic spheres in the country, but within public and political institutions (for a list of key Finnish Roma women activists and artists, whose work interconnects political and artistic life, from the early twentieth century until the present day, see Appendix). Their role and their influence in the shaping of Roma politics and emancipatory movements in the country should not be overlooked. This constitutes an important phenomenon within Finnish Roma politics and activism which has thus far remained understudied, and constitutes grounds for future research in the years to come.

References

- Åberg, Kai. 2018. Karjalan kaaleet (romanit) osana itäsuomalaisuutta 100 vuoden hiljaisuus. *Musiikin suunta* 40. <http://musiikinsuunta.fi/2018/01/karjalan-kaaleet-osana-itasuomalaisuutta/>, accessed August 2, 2022.
- Barton, H. Arnold. 2005. Scandinavianism, Fennomania and the Crimean War. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 36 (2): 131–56.
- Blomster, Risto. 2012. Romanimusiikki rajojen vetäjänä Ja yhteyksien luojana. In: Pulma, Panu, ed. *Suomen romanien historia*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. 290–374.

- Blomster, Risto, and Mikkola, Kati. 2014. Inclusion and exclusion of Roma in the category of Finnish folklore: The collections of the Finnish Literature Society from the 1800s to the 2000s. *Journal of Finnish Studies* 18 (1): 11–45.
- . 2017. Kenen perinnettä? Romani-informantit suomen kansan vanhat runot -aineistoissa. In: Kytö, Meri, Ramstedt, Kim, and Haapoja, Heidi, eds. *Etnomusikologian vuosikirja 29*. Helsinki: Suomen Etnomusikologinen Seura. 1–40.
- Blomster, Risto, and Roman, Raluca. 2021. Finland. In: Roman, Raluca Bianca, Zahova, Sofiya, and Marinov, Aleksandar G., eds. *Roma writings in history: Romani literature and press in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from the 19th century until World War II*. Leiden: Brill Ferdinand Schöningh. 197–221.
- . 2022. Finland. In: Marushiakova, Elena, and Popov, Vesselin, eds. *Roma portraits in history: Roma civic emancipation elite in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from the 19th century until World War II*. Leiden: Ferdinand Schöningh. 359–97.
- Crowe, David M. 1996. *A history of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin.
- Friman-Korpela, Sarita, and Mäki, Anne-Mari. 2006. *Romanit toimijoina yhteiskunnassa. Romaniasiaain neuvottelukunta 50 vuotta -juhlaulkaisu*. Helsinki: Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö.
- Grönfors, Janette. 2012. Mustalaislähetyksen lastenkotitoiminta. In: Pulma, Panu, ed. *Suomen romanien historia*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. 241–49.
- Grönfors, Martti. 1999. Romanit – alistettuna marginaalissa. In: Löytönen, Markku, and Kolbe, Laura, eds. *Suomi: maa, kansa, kulttuuri*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Hedman, Henry. 2012. Mustalaislähetyksestä Romano Missioksi. In: Pulma, Panu, ed. *Suomen romanien historia*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. 250–58.
- Johnsson, Helmi. 1914. Leguna. In: *Vakavaa ja leikkiä mustalaiselämästä. Kertomuksia eri tekijöiltä*. Wiipuri: Mustalaislähetyksen keskus. 3–9.
- Kronqvist, S. 1913. Esitelmä, jonka piti Turussa Akatemian juhlasalissa rouva S. Kronqvist. *Kiertolainen* 1913 (7–9): 19–21.
- Lindberg, Väinö. 2012. Suomen romanien uskonnollinen herääminen. In: Pulma, Panu, ed. *Suomen romanien historia*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. 143–53.
- Marushiakova, Elena, and Popov, Vesselin, eds. 2021. *Roma voices in history: A source book. Roma civic emancipation in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from 19th century until the Second World War*. Leiden: Brill Ferdinand Schöningh.
- . 2022. USSR. In: Marushiakova, Elena, and Popov, Vesselin, eds. *Roma portraits in history: Roma civic emancipation elite in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe from the 19th century until World War II*. Leiden: Brill Ferdinand Schöningh. 399–606.

- Pulma, Panu. 2006. *Suljetut ovet. Pohjoismaiden romanipolitiikka 1500-luvulta EU-aikaan*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Rekola, Tuula. 2010. Santamo, Sofia. *Studia Biographica* 4. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. <https://kansallisbiografia.fi/kansallisbiografia/henkilo/9328>, accessed August 2, 2022.
- . 2018. *Drawing distinctions within complex margins “Gypsies” in the borderland of the Swedish Kingdom, c. 1743–1809*. PhD thesis. Florence: European University Institute.
- Roininen, Aimo. 2007. Willman, Elvira. *Studia Biographica* 4. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. <https://kansallisbiografia.fi/kansallisbiografia/henkilo/2976>, accessed October 17, 2022.
- Roman, Raluca B. 2020. From Christian mission to trans-national connections: Twentieth-century Evangelism and present-day religious mobilisation among the Roma in Finland. *Social Inclusion* 8 (2): 367–76.
- Tervonen, Miika. 2010a. Sortavaala, Karjalan romanikulttuurin keskus. In: Kaukiainen, Yrjö, and Nurmiainen, Jouko, eds. *Joensuu: Karjalan kirjapaino*. 95–6.
- . 2010b. “Gypsies,” “Travellers” and “peasants.” A study on ethnic boundary drawing in Finland and Sweden, c. 1860–1925. Florence: European University Institute.
- . 2012a. Jalkio, Oskari. *Studia Biographica* 4. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. <https://kansallisbiografia.fi/kansallisbiografia/henkilo/9271>, accessed August 2, 2022.
- . 2012b. Kiertolaisia, silmätikkujä ja rajojen ylittäjiä: 1800-luvun lopulta toiseen maailmansotaan. In: Pulma, Panu, ed. *Suomen romanien historia*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. 84–143.
- Thesleff, Arthur. 1898. Zigenarnas utbredning i Finland. *Geografiska Förenings tidskrift*. Häft. 2–4. Helsingfors: Geografiska Förening.
- . 1900a. [Untitled text contributing on the history and the culture of the Finnish Roma]. In: *Komiteamietintö Keisarilliselle Majesteetille, maamme mustalaisyksymyksen tutkimista varten asetettu komitea alaimisimmasti. Komiteamietintö n:o 57, 16/3 1900*. Helsinki. 73–94.
- . 1900b. Karta öfver zigenarnas utbredning i Finland. https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fil:Zigenarnas_utbredning_i_Finland_1895.jpg, accessed August 2, 2022.
- Stenroos, Marko. 2019. The Roma civil rights movement as a counter-weight for religious assimilation in Finland. <https://www.romarchive.eu/en/roma-civil-rights-movement/roma-civil-rights-movement-counter-weight-religiou/>, accessed August 2, 2022.
- Viita, Armas. 1967. *Mustalaisväestön hyväksi. Mustalaislähetystyo Suomessa v. 1904–1966*. Helsinki: Kirjapaino Aa Oy.

Newspaper articles

- Cingardy-Ora, Ida. 1917. Mustalaisten valistusharrastuksia. *Työmies* 22.5.1917.
- Johnsson, O. 1910. Työmaalta. *Kiertolainen* 7/1910.
- . 1913a. Halkotarhaseurueen matkoista. *Kiertolainen* 4–6/1913.

- Johnsson, O. 1913b. Työkodin alkaessa. *Kiertolainen* 4–6/1913.
- Johnsson, Oskar. 1912. Mustalaisten historiikka. *Kiertolainen* 4–6/1912.
- Johnsson, Oskari. 1914. Kymmenen vuotta romanilähetystyössä. *Kiertolainen* 7–12/1914.
- Karjalan Sanomat. 1912. Mustalaislähetysten hyväksi. 21.11.1912.
- Kiertolainen*. 1907a. Pöytäkirja. 10/1907.
- . 1907b. Voisitteko te auttaa minua?. *Kiertolainen* 12/1907.
- O.J. (Oskari Jalkio). 1910. Matkoilta. *Kiertolainen* 3/1910.
- Pohjois-Suomi. 1907. Mustalaiskokouksia. 27.2.1907.
- Schwartz, Sofia. 1906. Tervehdys. *Uusi Inkeri* 2.9.1906.
- . 1907a. Kertomus Inkerin-maan romaneista. *Kiertolainen* 7/1907.
- . 1907b. Työskentelyni Wiipurin romaneitten keskuudessa. *Kiertolainen* 2/1907, pp. 5–6.
- ”Setä” (Oskari Jalkio). 1912. Halkotarhaseurue. *Kiertolainen* 4–6/1912.
- Thesleff, Arthur. 1911. Suomen romanit. *Kansatieteellinen tutkimus*. *Kiertolainen* 4/1911.
- Työmies. 1917a. Suomen romanien sivistysseuran ohjelmallinen iltama. 4.2.1917.
- . 1917b. Mustalaisten valistusharrastuksia. 20.5.1917.

Archival material

- KA. Kansallisarkisto (Finnish National Archive). Senaatin talousosasto. F3 174/3, Eb 3439.
- . Sigurd Wettenhovi-Aspan arkisto.
- SKS KRA. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran arkisto (Archives of the Finnish Literature Society). Matti Simolan kokoelma.
- . SKSÄ 2007:134. Dagmar Nymanin haastattelu, 1970-luku.
- TA. Tilastoarkisto (The Statistical Archives of Finland). K 9 1895.

Appendix

A selected list of Finnish Kaale women in the service of Roma associations, arts, and sciences in the twentieth-twenty-first centuries (Friman-Korpela and Mäki 2006; Pulma 2006, Stenroos 2019; Viita 1967).

- Anette Åkerlund (Master of music, singer, university teacher in Helsinki University/Romani Language and Culture; active 2000–)
- Tuula Åkerlund (writer, editor, Romani language teacher, member of the Advisory Board for Romani Affairs, executive director of the Romano Missio; active 1970–)
- Ida Blomerus (activist-artist, chairperson of the Finnish Roma Civilization Society; active 1910–1930)
- Miranda Blomerus (activist in Sweden and Finland; active 1960–)
- Maria Friman (journalist, Finnish Broadcasting company; active 2000–)

- Sarita Friman (PhD, secretary-general of the Advisory Board for Romani Affairs; active 1990–)
- Hilja Florin (activist in Sweden and Finland; active 1960–)
- Janette Grönfors (Bachelor of Social Sciences, secretary-general of the Advisory Board for Romani Affairs; active 1990–)
- Raila Halmetoja (1950–1921; journalist, editor, chairperson of Centre for Roma Arts; active 1970–)
- Henna Huttu (Master of Arts, secretary-general of the Advisory Board for Romani Affairs; programme manager on Council of Europe/ Civilian Crisis Management Centre of Finland; active 2000–)
- Mirjam Karimus (co-worker of PhD Anna Maria Viljanen; activist in Sweden and Finland; active 1960–)
- Malla Laiti (writer, secretary of the Advisory Board of the Roma Affairs in Southern Finland, Special Designer Regional Administrative Agency of Southern Finland; active 1970–)
- Kiba Lumberg (writer, novelist, comic artist; active 1970–)
- Miritza Lundberg (Violinist, PhD student at Sibelius Academy; active 1990–)
- Päivi Majaniemi (Master of Arts; office manager of the Finnish Roma Association; active 1990–)
- Anneli Sari (singer, actor; active 1960–)
- Anneli Sauli (member of the board of the Finnish Gypsy Association; active 1970–)
- Sofia Schwartz (teacher, preacher; active 1900–1930)
- Miranda Vuolasranta (1959–; writer, politician, secretary-general of the Advisory Board for Romani Affairs, vice-president of the European Roma Forum and president of the Roma Forum in Finland; active 1970–)
- Saga Weckman (journalist, co-worker of PhD Martti Grönfors; first female vice-chairperson of the Advisory Board for Romani Affairs (1978); active 1960–)