

Academical Dress in Sweden

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If there is little written on the subject of academical dress in Sweden it is because it has never played a major role in academic ceremonies in this country, or for that matter in any of the Nordic countries.¹ We are reminded of this for example when comparing Swedish academical dress to the colourful displays of the robes and gowns in Anglo-Saxon countries. Instead the history of Swedish academical dress is primarily a story about insignia, beginning with what to wear on one's head. The insignia used in Swedish academic ceremonies are, besides the hat, the laurel wreath, the ring and the diploma. Of these it is the laurel wreath which is particular to the Swedish system, recalling the many portraits depicting Dante Alighieri.² Of course the tradition of the laurel wreath is much older than Renaissance Italy, going back to Greek mythology. It is also in Greek mythology that we shall find most of the symbols of Swedish academic ceremonies. It is the ceremony as a rite, rather than the dress itself, that plays the major role in Swedish academic festivities.

The first academic ceremonies in Sweden date back to Uppsala and the 1480s.³ The first concrete evidence of a doctoral ceremony is documented on 22 January in the year 1600.⁴ Today the academic ceremony (*akademisk högtid*) has become broader and includes doctoral promotions (*doktorspromotion*), promotions of honorary doctors (*hedersdoktorer*) and installations of professors (*professorsinstallation*).

We have no records of what academical dress was used in the Middle Ages in Sweden. Swedish academic traditions in general trace their origin back to the European continent. The earliest rules and regulations for academical dress came mostly from Paris. When France followed the pope in Avignon after the Western Schism began in 1378, Sweden stood on Rome's side. It was then natural for young Swedes to look to the German realm for their own studies and inspirations, to places like Charles University in Prague and Leipzig University. Later it was to places like Bologna and Paris that Swedish universities looked first when they developed traditions of academical dress for the University of Uppsala.⁵

The logical presentation of this paper follows the different insignia used in Sweden. The methodology is based first of all on secondary sources. Wikipedia has been used as a reference when there were no other references in the Wikipedia article consulted. Primary sources were used about specific designers and designs today, for example at Halmstad University, and by the examination of a large number of photos and some video material.

1 Most related books are about academic ceremonies, not academical dress. See for example Marin, Nevéus, and Backman, 'Jubeldoktoratet'.

2 Examples include the portrait by Sandro Botticelli, Luca Signorelli's fresco at the Chapel of San Brizio, Orvieto Cathedral, and Domenico di Michelino's painting of Dante known as *Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*, completed in Florence in 1465.

3 Nevéus, p. 9.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid, p. 16.

The Academical hat and the laurel wreath

The history of academical dress in Sweden is largely a history about hats and what to wear on one's head. The top hat in the academic tradition in Sweden has been the symbol of freedom, not in the sense of any form of academic exuberance or rigidity, but a kind that is more discreet and modest. This may seem like a contradiction to some. The hat is formal in its appearance but symbolizes a certain discretion and modesty. It symbolizes the freedom from previous obligations to the school system, for the candidate to appear as he or she wishes from here on in public as a teacher and researcher. The form of the hat should be round to remind the candidate—the *promoventi*—to give well rounded, well ordered and clear answers, unlike the sophists whose answers are unclear and resemble riddles.⁶

The system of hats has changed through time and has often been neglected and confusing. For a long time theologians wore black hats. Law candidates had white hats and the medical doctors, light blue which later changed to green. The philosophers wore violet hats according to regulations, even though we are not sure whether these were actually worn at any ceremonies. From a ceremony in 1813 we learn that the faculty of law also used violet hats. From Uppsala there are accounts from 1632 of a purple hat in use at the same faculty.⁷ In the seventeenth century the hat had a corolla, consisting of a metal band at the bottom and fine gemstones. It is possible that this actually was the laurel wreath on the outside of the hat. We know that at the same period the laurel wreath was also in use by itself, as it is today at certain faculties at certain universities. It too could be in metal, and with gemstones all around, at the bottom along the rim. From 1632 a note says: *Aurum cum gemmis, sarta tiaram* (gold with gemstones, the laurel wreath, the tiara).⁸ In the same document there is talk about a red headdress and a purple cape. The headdress brings back the association to Dante's portraits, e.g. by Botticelli, even though he often wears a red cape, a symbol of romantic love but also a colour reserved for the richest inhabitants of medieval Italy.⁹ One could say that there is a logic here as to the colours. Black for theology is consistent with the clerical dress, medical doctors and green have a long history,¹⁰ philosophy is often associated with blue, while violet and purple are often associated with the study of law.

We do not know exactly what the rules of academical dress were in Sweden in the seventeenth century and before. It seems that sometimes the laurel is used, at other times the hat. Many theories have been advanced to explain this, e.g. that the hat was for the well to do who could afford it, while the less fortunate used the laurel wreath. Backman, who is probably the most important scholar on academical dress in Sweden, suggests that it may be that both the hat and the laurel were used at the same time, so that the laurel was placed around the hat, as described above.¹¹ It may also be that the laurel wreath has been placed underneath and the doctoral hat on top. It was probably also the case, at least for some time, that the laurel wreath was recognition for having completed the bachelor's degree and that the hat was for master's and doctoral degrees. At the doctoral ceremony for philosophy during the seventeenth century one would have first received the laurel

6 Olsson, p. 40.

7 Ibid.

8 Backman, *Doktorspromotioner*, p. 40.

9 Backman, *ibid.*

10 Christianson.

11 Ibid.

wreath then the hat on top of it. In the eighteenth century the full-size hat seems to have disappeared, only to return much later.

The full-size hat was replaced with a miniature version of itself, pinned on the chest of the jacket. From 1706 in Lund the hats for the study of philosophy were miniature versions made of silk and attached, to the chest. In philosophy the miniature hats were common during the entire eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth century.¹² Another peculiarity of academical hats in Sweden is the triangular shaped hats used for a period in the eighteenth century, an ordinary tricorne. The miniature hats were copies of existing larger, full-size hats in use at the time.

The triangular hats were much lower and had large brims, reminiscent of those worn by the Caroleans, the soldiers of the Swedish kings Charles XI and Charles XII. These soldiers represented (and still evoke) a Sweden at the top of its power, the guardian of Lutheranism in Europe. These hats were shorter and more practical for everyday use, which also explains their popularity. The hat was further popularized because Carl von Linné¹³ had one and used it often, also when he travelled, even though it is difficult to find an illustration of this. Instead Linné was often depicted in his Laplander costume which he often brought with him, for example when he went abroad. The triangular academical hat of Linné had a band formed as a rosette or bows and was covered with green silk. It is said that he may have bought it in Holland. Green silk covered hats later became the fashion for doctoral hats in medicine. The same type of hat was also worn by non-academics, but in more black and grey colours.

It was common at the time that both doctors and masters had either miniature hats or miniature laurel wreaths stuck on the chests of their jackets. Sometimes the miniature hat was covered with waves of black silk. Its diameter was 140 mm, the height 24 mm.¹⁴ The miniature hat was removed in 1856.¹⁵ In time black became the standard colour for all hats and they were again of full size. Instead of the big brim of the triangular hat it has a slight brim, maybe to remind the candidate about the symbol and meaning of the roundness, as earlier explained. A new top hat was officially introduced in Uppsala in 1935 and in Lund in 1937. It is still used today. An idea with the new hat was that it resembled others and was therefore seen as practical and (at the time) could be used for many purposes, but still with its own particular features, with the oval shape and the wave-like decoration. After this the tricorne hat quickly disappeared as part of the academical dress.

The laurel wreath was kept in the motif of the buckle or silver-gilt badge that is seen on the front of the doctoral hat on top of a black bow made of silk. The hat buckles are different, with different detailed motifs on the inside. The theological faculty is the only hat without a buckle, maybe because there was a demand for greater simplicity. Instead it has a bow only. The gold buckle was introduced in Lund in the early nineteenth century, used first for doctors of Law and Medicine. It was undoubtedly the result of a late eighteenth-century lay fashion.¹⁶

All through time the laurel wreath, a circular wreath made of interlocking branches and leaves of the bay laurel (*Laurus nobilis*), has had a special place in academic ceremo-

12 Ibid.

13 Popularly known to English speakers as Linnaeus.

14 Ibid, p. 35.

15 Ibid.

16 Hargreaves-Mawdsley, pp. 183-184.

FIG. 1 *Akademisk Högtid* (the Academic Ceremony) at Linnaeus University, 2011, where the graduands wear evening dress and laurel wreaths.



nies in Sweden. The ceremonies included the participation of a number of young laurel girls dressed in classic white dresses and sandals. These are often seen depicted in old photos seated in the front at doctoral ceremonies. Their numbers seems to have varied from about half a dozen to a dozen. At the beginning there were nine, as can be seen from old photographs. There was also a male figure to represent Apollo, with a lyre in his hand. The muses¹⁷ are a reminder of the grip that music and poetry had on university life and on scholarship in earlier times. Later on the number of muses was increased, perhaps to represent the increasing number of new sciences admitted to the university. When they numbered twelve they also represented the apostles, the twelve tribes of Israel or the signs of the Zodiac, a circle of twelve 30° divisions of celestial longitude.

The ring, the ritual and the cannon salutes

Historically, doctors and masters also received a ring. Although the ring has been less common for the last generation, it is still used. We know that a ring of gold with a gemstone was used in Sweden in the seventeenth century, probably a tradition from the European continent. The early symbol of the ring may have been ‘the virtuous maiden Sofia’, the symbol of wisdom.¹⁸

Sophia (Σοφία, Greek for ‘wisdom’) is a central idea in Hellenistic philosophy and religion, Platonism, Gnosticism, Orthodox Christianity, Esoteric Christianity, as well as Christian mysticism. Sophiology is a philosophical concept regarding wisdom, as well as a theological concept regarding the wisdom of the biblical God.¹⁹

¹⁷ The nine muses in Greek mythology were considered the source of knowledge. These were Clio, Thalia, Erato, Euterpe, Polyhymnia, Calliope, Terpsichore, Urania, and Melpomene. They represented history, comedy, love poetry, song, hymns, poetry, dance, astronomy and tragedy.

¹⁸ Fehrman, p. 109.

¹⁹ See <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_\(wisdom\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_(wisdom))> (accessed 25 April 2013).

FIG. 2 *Den svenska dräkten*, the Swedish national costume.

The round shape of the ring is to symbolize eternity, reminding us that the universe is infinite.

From a promotion in Uppsala in 1707 we learn that the ring was set with blue stones, probably amethysts or topaz, the latter being the most common stone used. The ring was worn on the right hand in those olden days.²⁰ Today, for those who still receive and wear the ring, it is more commonly worn on the left hand together with a wedding ring. The same logic follows with the ring as with the buckle on the hat: it is in gold or golden colour, most often made in the form of a laurel wreath. A portion of the ring will also have a symbol representing the individual faculty. For example, the theology faculty came to use a version with a Greek orthodox cross and sunbeams. The medical faculty has a version with the rod of Asclepius. We also know that the ring was often used at the philosophy faculty, a simple ring decorated with the laurel wreath. It is less clear to what extent the ring has been used at other faculties in Sweden through history.

An important part of the doctoral ceremonies in Sweden, which can be seen as a 'rite of passage', has been the swearing in of the candidate by the head of ceremony, who is called a *promotor* in Sweden. The wordings are a bit different depending on the faculty, but for the theology faculty it has been:

Salve, doctissime licentiate!
Accipe pileum, gradus theologici insigne!
Ecce anulus, sinceræ fidei pignus!
Ecce diploma, doctrinae virtutisque testimonium!
*Vale, praeclarissime doctor!*²¹

In Lund the tradition was to say the formula in Latin, but in Uppsala Swedish was also allowed. In Uppsala candidates (*lectores*) wore a black gown during the ceremony, but also when giving their four mandatory public lectures—later two and then only one—as

²⁰ Fehrman, Ibid.

²¹ 'Latinet', Högskolan i Borås, <<http://www.hb.se/Anstalld/For-mitt-arbete/Doktorand/Doktorspromotion/Latinet/>> (accessed 26 Aug. 2014). This loosely translates as: Welcome, most learned master! Receive the hat, mark of the the theological degree! Here is the ring, token of true faith! Here is the diploma, testimonial of learning and virtue! Farewell, most illustrious doctor!



part of their doctoral promotion.²² The language of the lectures was Latin at the start. Swedish was first allowed for these occasions in 1839.²³ Much of the academic tradition in Lund came from Denmark and Copenhagen. Lund University was formed when Scandia was a part of Denmark. The idea was that Lund should educate priests and civil servants who could work in these regions, which are now a part of southern Sweden.²⁴

Then there was the cannon salute. It plays an important role during the promotional ceremony in Sweden and is still used in Uppsala. We know that the cannons were heard before the actual ceremony started, according to record at 6 a.m. and when the actual defence started at 10 a.m. A new doctor is usually honoured by two rounds.

Another vital part of the doctoral ceremonies is the nailing of the thesis to a board. This is a tradition very much alive at all universities in Sweden today. Eleven days before the presentation the actual thesis should be nailed to the institute's board, in order to make the fact known to the world. The idea is that what has been written should be spread in society, for all to read and to be used. Sometimes the thesis is nailed to the trunk of a tree which is taken inside of the school building and preserved there permanently, as at Halmstad University.

At the University of Lund the actual procession is associated with the fanfare of trumpets, the ringing of the bells from the cathedral and the cannon salutes. The sound of the bell-ringing is different at different geographical locations in Sweden. In Lund they use the Old Danish tradition of small rapid strokes on the rim of the bell, also used for weddings.²⁵ It is considered important that a part of the doctoral ceremony is held in public, a part in private. Thus, the procession is held in public through the park, called Lundagård in Lund with its special almost poetic atmosphere:

It is situated between the Lund University main building in the North, and Lund Cathedral in the South with Kungshuset in between. The park was for a long time a walled garden separating 'town' from 'gown'. Today, the one remaining (of the original three) gates, is the entrance to the Kulturen museum.²⁶

The procession to the cathedral is a public event. The less public part of the ceremony is held in the cathedral and (perhaps more importantly) at the doctoral party afterwards. At the University of Lund it has long been tradition that the theology faculty walks first in the procession, followed by the faculty of Law. In the old days members of the aristocracy used to walk first within each faculty in the procession. Today it is not common for faculty members to wear robes. Instead they wear evening dress, sometimes with discreet faculty symbols on the collar of a long academic stole, as well as doctoral hats. Unfortunately Swedish doctors' hats look the same from a distance, and only by closer examination will the viewer be able to separate them by the design of the hat buckle. There were no hat makers at Lund when the university started in 1666. Instead the hats had to be imported from Uppsala. It was the procession girls' duty to tie the laurel wreath.

²² Backman, *Doktorspromotioner*, p. 21.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ We know that in Denmark at the University of Copenhagen in 1478, all members of the University were to wear dark dress. It was forbidden to wear chains and buckles. From 1694 we know that Doctors of Theology wore a black four-horned biretta (*quadrum cornutus*), while the birettas of doctors in the other faculties were of the same shape but purple: Glud, p. 64

²⁵ Bringéus, p. 121.

²⁶ See <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lundag%C3%A5rd_\(park\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lundag%C3%A5rd_(park))> (accessed 25 April 2013).

The time and frequency of the promotional ceremonies vary. At some universities it is held every year, as in Lund; at others, as in Halmstad, they take place second year. At some universities they are held towards the end of the year, at other places at the beginning, or in the spring.

The doctoral procession in Sweden looks like a procession of a group of people going to a ball. The reason is that academic dress is only worn by a few. Most wear evening dress, with tail coat and white bow tie, and the doctors enter the ceremonial building without their distinctive hats. The same evening dress is worn frequently in Swedish society for special occasions, as at the Nobel ceremony. It is also the standard costume in Finland at academic ceremonies. When we look at the processions we see that each group or faculty is led by a person in a hat and with a colourful broad ribbon across the chest representing the color of the faculty. At the beginning of the procession there will often be a person or persons with a ribbon in the national colours, blue and yellow. Most others will be wearing evening dress, or a military uniform.

The processions are often followed by students, wearing their white student caps, which were introduced from Germany in the early nineteenth century. The student cap can be worn by anyone who has passed their high school diploma. It is common in all Nordic countries.

The Swedish student cap (*studentmössa*), used since the mid-nineteenth century, normally has a white crown, a black (or dark blue) band, and a black peak. At the front of the band is a cockade of blue and yellow, the colours of the Swedish flag.²⁷

Students in the doctoral procession typically wear a ribbon across the chest in the colours of the Swedish flag. Sometimes there is a choice between the doctoral hat and the laurel wreath used by some faculties. After the doctoral promotion there is a doctoral banquet (*doktorsfest*). The evening is often finished with dance, as at the Nobel dinner. The ceremony and the party are quite opposite in form: the first formal, serious, the latter fun and relaxed. The promotional ceremonies have a parallel in the student rites (*nollning*), or hazing, which tradition goes back to the Middle Ages. The Swedish *nollning*, literally ‘zeroing’, as the students start at zero, is less about humiliation, harassment and abuse and more about getting to know other students and the campus ground even though it still has a good portion of the first part too, unfortunately.

Fifty years after the doctoral ceremony has taken place the candidate may attend a new ceremony, the Jubilee Doctor (*jubeldoktor*), when one is honoured by colleagues.

The abandoned Insignia: the book

Another item used during the defence of the doctoral dissertation in the old days was the book, or the open book, a reminder of where the knowledge had derived. The candidate was asked to bring a book with him. Often this was a psalm book or Hippocrates if the degree was in medicine, but it could also be a large dictionary. At a certain moment in the Latin ceremony the candidate was asked to ‘open the books’ (*apertite libros*). Then later he was asked to ‘shut the books’ (*legite libros*). This was often done with certain force so the sound of the book closing could be heard in the auditorium. There was also a thrill associated with the fact of having found an old dusty book and seeing all the dust burst into the air. The closing of the book was not to symbolize that books were no longer required, as

²⁷ See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Student_cap> (accessed 25 April 2013).

the Swedish author August Strindberg came to say, but was a symbol of an encouragement, that the candidate should now go out and build his own knowledge, to make his own contributions.²⁸ The book as insignia was still used in Uppsala in 1857, but was gone by 1869.

The National Costume

In older times there seems to have been no standard for academic dress in Sweden. Instead candidates would dress more according to their taste and what they could afford. What was important was that he (it was always a he) wore a sword, which was normally set in a steel belt. Some even had silver swords made, no doubt to show off their wealth.

In 1778 Gustav III introduced 'Den svenska dräkten', The National Costume, which was then also used at academic ceremonies. It consisted of a black suit with a standing collar, a broad red sash over the right shoulder and coming down over the chest, and red rosettes at the knees and on the shoes.²⁹ The costume was designed for the nobility and the middle class in order to limit rising consumption and the import of luxury goods. These imports were considered to have negative effects on the economy and to increase poverty. Both a masculine and a feminine costume were designed. In Uppsala the costume seems to have been worn until the 1830s. In Lund it had already been dropped by 1811. Instead the candidates wore the fashion of the day, a black jacket and a black cape. From documents we know that the black cape was made of silk with a lining of velvet.³⁰ The candidates also had a powdered wig, sword at their side, and black silk stockings.³¹ Others would often wear a red silk ribbon over their shoulders. This seems to have been a particularly strong tradition in Lund.

We know of a meeting in Uppsala in 1832 when the subject of leaving the national costume was on the agenda. We also know that a Professor Sandberg was set to design a new academic dress to replace it. He drew a coat with a uniform collar and a cape of the same length, all in black. The faculty members seem to have liked the suggestions, but in 1833 the vice-chancellor or rector stated that he saw no reason to make any changes. However, not very long afterwards the national costume seems to have been replaced by white tie.

The standard black gown was often rented, typically from the same place, the Royal Theatre in Stockholm. A Professor Svandberg complained in a letter that his costume was too large and covered with white powder on the back. The costumes were used in plays and rarely cleaned, it seems. The academy also owned about fifty sets of dress itself. This is very much the Swedish tradition today: the universities own a number of gowns which they lend out, in particular to professors, who are to return them should they leave the university.

Comparison with the Finnish tradition of academical dress

The Finnish tradition of academical dress largely follows the one in Sweden.³² The main reason is that Finland was part of Sweden from the twelfth until the start of the nineteenth century. It is often the case in general that Swedish traditions are kept in Finland long after

28 Fehrman, p. 41.

29 Bergman, p. 111.

30 Backman, *Doktorspromotioner*, p. 36.

31 White stockings seem to have been most common, but black stockings are mentioned by Backman for academia.

32 Klinge, Matti.

they have been altered in Sweden. It is often said here that the world-renowned Finnish university system is nothing more than the old Swedish one, but without the pedagogical updates. It remains one of the best in the world.

In Finland and Sweden students of technology wear a special kind of cap called a *teekkarilakki* (Finnish) or *teknologmössa* (Swedish). It is similar to the cap given to all high-school graduates in both countries, but features a tuft and different kind of cockade showing what university the bearer is attending. Technology students generally wear their caps much more frequently, and thus the tuft often symbolizes university-engineers. Although different universities have different etiquettes regarding the use of the cap, it is generally not awarded to the student before he or she has completed the first year of studies. The technology student's hat may also be worn on quite informal occasions, such as together with the student over-all worn as part of the student culture at many universities.³³

The student cap is probably the most important single item of academic dress in the Nordic countries.

The University of Åbo was founded in 1640. The Rector of Åbo wore a red velvet mantle with a white silk lining. Doctors of Arts (Philosophy) and Doctors of Medicine wore a black cylindrical hat decorated with gold emblems, while Doctors of Law had red cylindrical hats with the same decorations. This academic dress was revived when the university moved to Helsinki (Helsingfors). It was also common in Helsinki to wear a military dress introduced in 1817.³⁴ For more formal academic events an evening dress white tie is usually worn, often together with special headwear or even a cape. Both countries typically use the black top hat for students who have completed their PhD. At some universities a doctoral ring is also awarded. The primary difference between Sweden and Finland is that the sword is still common in Finland, as it used to be in Sweden. In Finland the use of a cape also remains more common.

Robes and gowns today

During the past decades Sweden has seen an influence of academical dress from the Anglo-Saxon world. As many students go abroad today to study, or plan to do so, Swedish universities want to show that they can organize similar ceremonies, even though Swedish universities have so far not tried to copy their British and American counterparts directly. We see this new interest expressed in larger, more sophisticated gowns. At the same time Swedish universities are still very concerned about keeping their own particular traditions.

In Swedish academic gowns are referred to as *talar*, which is a term used very seldom outside of this context in Sweden. The term is also used in German. The term, from Latin *talaris* for a dress that goes down to the ankles, also used to imply that the clothes are made of silk. The term is found as early as the eighteenth century in Sweden, when it basically meant a costume for a public official. In Sweden it is not very often that universities make special orders for gowns. Thus we can follow the few producers and the few orders that have been placed without much difficulty.

Most of the special robes that are made are for the vice-chancellors or *rektors*. Professors and other academic staff will in most cases wear a simple cape, in toned down colours,

³³ See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academic_dress> (accessed 22 March 2013).

³⁴ Hargreaves-Mawdsley, p. 184.

which are often mass ordered. The producers of robes in Sweden can be counted on one hand. Kerstin Fröberg at Bergdala Spinnhus in Bergdala has made robes for a number of vice-chancellors in Sweden, for Växjö Universitet (which is now called Linnéuniversitetet, or in English Linnaeus University)³⁵, Blekinge Tekniska Högskola (Blekinge Institute of Technology, or simply BTH), Malmö Högskola (Malmö University) and Karolinska Institutet (same in English, or simply KI). These gowns are worn primarily by the vice-chancellor, deans, professors, emeritus professors, and by *promotors* at different academic ceremonies. Recent history shows that the process by which many of the new universities (Växjö, BTH and Malmö) had their robes made was done without much historical research and rather in a hurry, without much reference to the older more established universities in Sweden either, in Lund and Uppsala. The people responsible for deciding what to buy at the universities seldom knew what they wanted.³⁶

The vice-chancellor at Linnéuniversitetet wears a special type of gown in the university's colours with a broad edge or trimming. The *promotor* has a shoulder scarf in the colour of the faculty in which the thesis happens to be defended: blue for the humanists, green for mathematical and natural sciences, and red for the department for teacher education. The gown of Malmö Högskola is in the same shade of red and even pattern as in their logo. Similarly, the gown of Karolinska Institutet was inspired by their logo type.

At Halmstad Högskola (Halmstad University) the capes are simple, long and grey, designed by Ewy Åsvärd from Halmstad. The vice-chancellor's gown was designed by Lena Stare³⁷ and Gitt Grännsjö-Carlsson. In an interview, they said that none of them had seen an academic gown when they were given the commission.³⁸ The first vice-chancellor of Halmstad University, Sven Ove Johansson, inaugurated the gown on the 18 December 1997.

Conclusion

As we have seen, Swedish academic dress is largely a matter of what to wear on one's head. As such the Swedish tradition is quite different from the history of academical dress in other countries. The distinctive and unique part of the Swedish tradition may be said to be the laurel wreath, which is still used today by certain departments. For students it is the student cap, *studentmössa*. Another typical mark of Swedish academic dress is the insistence on wearing evening dress, including tail coat and white bow tie, with a hat. The tradition of wearing evening dress and top hat coincide, because this was what became fashionable in society at the time when the national costume, *Den svenska dräkten* of Gustav III, was replaced. Other items, like medals and ribbons, are often used in addition during academic

35 Växjö Universitet united with Kalmar Högskola and formed Linnéuniversitetet on 1 Jan. 2010.

36 Fröberg.

37 When Stare made the vice-chancellor's chain she was thinking about something concrete for inspiration. At the end her feeling was for the main building on campus where the administration sits: the trade centre, the tallest building in the city. She was in particular inspired by the eight edges of the bottom construction. This then became the main idea for the construction of the chain. Stare is a silversmith from Halmstad. She used 2 kg of silver for the chain. She normally works with traditional techniques, but when doing the chain she wanted to experiment with more modern techniques, like sawing with a water jet cutter.

38 'Rektors högtidsdräkt', Högskolan, 16 Oct. 2013, <<http://www.hh.se/omhogskolan/hogskolanfirar30ar/akademiskhogtid/rektorshogtidsdrakt.1861.html>> (accessed 13 June 2014).

ceremonies. The colours used are often either the national colours (blue and yellow) or they are toned down colours of black, grey and blue representing the individual faculties. Some of these choices no doubt go back to the ideals of Protestantism and early clerical life. In recent decades we see that the new universities have broken with much of this tradition when designing academical dress, no doubt because the designers have not been restricted to following the tradition of the older, more established universities.

As this article has attempted to show, the use of hats as academical dress has been widespread in Sweden.³⁹ Part of this has to do with a special tradition of what to wear on one's head in this part of the world, part of it is probably also due to the cold climate, where hats were needed. The hat was introduced in Scandinavian society in the sixteenth century and quickly became a status symbol, as opposed to a more common cap made of wool, sheepskin or leather and fur. As far back as the times of the Vikings the hat was an important symbol of honour. If a person threw someone's hat off, the wearer had the right to kill the offender. One may say that this is a people who take their hats seriously.

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39 As indeed it is in the other Nordic countries.