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THE LEGENDARY KIITEHENJÄRVI – AS EXPERIENCED BY FINNISH ARTISTS AND SCHOLARS

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Situated within the Kostomuksha Nature Reserve, Lake Kiitehenjärv is has never been part of Finland. Nevertheless, its significance to the Finnish people’s culture and understanding of itself is beyond dispute. The villages around Kiitehenjärv are often mentioned in connection with the origin and contents of the Finnish epic poem, the Kalevala, as well as Kalevala-based art and Karelianism. To educated Finns in the 19th century, Kiitehenjärv came to represent the Kalevala and the Karelian environment as the landscape of ancient runes, songs and the origin of ancestors. This article examines the construction and the layered structure of the Kiitehenjärv region’s cultural environment, as a travel and research destination for Finnish artists and scholars. The article is based on the notion of the cultural environment organised by interaction between cultural, institutional and individual processes.

Keywords: Kalevala, Karelianism, Kiitehenjärv, layered structure of cultural environment, construction of a cultural environment.

X. Лонкия. ЛЕГЕНДАРНОЕ ОЗЕРО КАМЕННОЕ В ПРЕДСТАВЛЕНИЯХ ФИНСКИХ ХУДОЖНИКОВ И УЧЕНЫХ

Расположенное в заповеднике «Костомукшский», озеро Каменнее никогда не было частью Финляндии. Тем не менее его значение для культуры и самосознания финского народа бесспорно. В статье рассматривается состав и многоаспектная структура культурной среды в регионе оз. Каменного как предмета творческого и научного интереса финских художников и исследователей. В основе статьи положены представления о культурной среде, оживлённой в регионе при взаимодействии различных культурных, общественных и личностных отношений.

Ключевые слова: Кеалваа, калеланинис, озеро Каменнее, многоаспектная структура культурной среды, состав культурной среды.

My first contact with Lake Kiitehenjärvi and the surrounding Kostomuksha Nature Reserve took place during a ride in the nature reserve’s car on a day in August 2006, first to the village of Akonlahdi and, from there, to the north-east shore of the lake. A house that once belonged to the Border Guard Service of Russia, Professor Aninka Waennerberg and I had applied for a research permit and collegial help from Director Sergei Tarkhov of the Kostomuksha Nature Reserve, to trace the routes followed by artists during the cultural-historical phase known as the period of Karelianism (1890–1898). Our aim was to follow in the artists’ footsteps whenever possible, making observations on the environment where Karelians had collected real-life motifs for their works and artistic endeavours.

For educated Finns, Kiitehenjärvi served as a gateway to Viena Mustala, and to Here, peddlars from Akonlahdi sang to district physician Sakari Topelius in the 1820s. Topelius paved the way for his colleague Elias Lönnrot, who travelled to Akonlahdi in 1832 to experience this rune singers’ village first hand. Lönnrot and his contemporaries were followed by Fellows in receipt of scholarships from the Finnish Literature Society and Finnish Antiquarian Society who, inspired by the Kalevala, came to Kiteitehenjärvi and, in the context of rural realism, and historical origins of the epic (Kaukonen, 1968: 107, 121 and 1984: 77–122; Silkkala, 2002: 78).

Expeditions to Kiitehenjärvi also formed a typical component of artists’ travels in the 1890s. Yrjö Blomstedt has written:

Soon a most wonderful inland lake landscape, as mysterious as we so many times before had witnessed on the other side of the border, opened up before us. The conscious notion that we were floating on the legendary fishing waters of Kalevala, in an inlet of the clear-watered Lake Kiteitehenjärvi, served strongly to intensify our feeling (Blomstedt, 1984: 1901:2).

The far-reaching legacy of Lönnrot’s travels went beyond the landscape, the Kalevala epic and the Karelian people. His prolific and
suggestive approach provided a model for others on how to conduct expeditions and the various ways of reporting on them. According to Anna-Leena Silkalu (2002: 79–81), Lönrot’s first travelogue, *Elisas Lönrothin matka* (1902; *Elisas Lönroth’s travels*) already demonstrated his tendency to combine international and Finnish research traditions. Written as diary, his notes include general ethnographic observations, personal feelings, snapshots of the progress of his travels, information on people encountered, and observations of natural conditions. My own visit to Kitelehenjärvi also began in the spirit of Lönrot. I had previously made several expeditions to Russian Karelia, during which, within the scope of the research interest in question, I observed the lives of local residents and the ways they experienced their living environment. This would now be my first visit to the Kostomuksha Nature Reserve. The importance of this visit was emphasised by the fact that the nature reserve is not open to the public and researchers can only enter the reserve and border zone by special arrangement. This means that researchers need to consider carefully why they are going to explore the terrain. My mind buzzed with questions: what kind of Karelia world opened up before the eyes of artists at Kitelehenjärvi and what was left of it today? In particular, what would a holistic approach bring to practical field work in an uninhabited region, and to what type of observations would it lead?

**KARELISM**

Yrjö Him gave a presentation in Norrköping in 1931, titled *Kalevala-themed workshops* (Akseli Gallen-Kallela, 1865–1931) and the underlying cultural trend he referred to as the “Karelian Renaissance”. This presentation was published under the title *Kalevala-materiaalit ja Akseli Gallen-Kallela sekä muutamia mietteluaita kareliainmista Suomen sivistyselämässä* (*Kalevala romanticism and Akseli Gallen-Kallela, with a few reflections on Karelian ethnology in Finnish civilization*) in Him’s work *Matkareihä ja tiljät* (*Tutkimus suomalaisesta sivistyskäestä ja Kalevala-romantikasta*; 1939; *Travellers and seers. A study on Finnish civilization and Kalevala romanticism*). Him’s idea of narrowing the scope of Karelianism to include only the art of Gallen-Kallela is significant from the point of view of Kitelehenjärvi. Gallen-Kallela made only two short trips to Russian Karelia, during both of which he headed for Leningrad and a village of Miñoa. Nevertheless, the outcome of his visits resulted as history of art, as they transformed Kalevala illustration and created a new inspiration style of art. Another outcome was a new style period, which Him termed Karelianism (Waenerberg, 2007: 206–214).

Hannes Siivola’s studies on Karelianism, including artists’ journeys to Kitelehenjärvi and Miñoa, are considered classics of the subject. In his book *Karjalan löytäjät* (1969; *The discoverers of Karelia*), Siivola divides enthusiasm for Karelia into two movements: the approach taken by the Fenomenos, who promoted nationalism and the position of the Finnish language, and Karelianism. Siivola linked the Kalevala-based Romanticism developed on the basis of national Romanticism, runing both in Finland and in the Eastern Europe, with Neo-Romanticism (Siivola, 1969: 76). In his doctoral thesis, *Karjalan kuva – Karelianmin taustaa ja velvita autonomian aikana* (1973; *The image of Karelia – the background and phases of Karelianism during the period of autonomy*), Siivola expanded this approach to cover runs collection and expeditions to Karelia. In this connection the term Karelianism evolved two meanings: the creation of a foundation and programmatic stance, and the travels in the years of high Karelianism, 1890–1896, are presented as a subplot of the programmatic Karelianism. Tours to Kitelehenjärvi are discussed in the chapter “Tutkimus Kalevalaan” (*Investigation of Kalevala*) in Siivola’s book. In this book, Karjalan laulajat (1968; *The singers of Karelia*), Väinö Kaukonen writes about the significance of Akseli and his Kitelehenjärvi to the origin of the Kalevala. Kaukonen discusses local rune singers, the collectors who traveled on the lake and the significance of the outcomes of their expeditions. Kansanununau Kauko- Karjala ja Kalevalan synty (1984; *Far Karelia in folk poetry and the birth of the Kalevala*) includes descriptions of the rune singing villages around Lake Kitelehenjärvi, their residents and the local way of life, combining materials recorded by Kaukonen himself during the war with materials recorded by Karelianists. Kaukonen writes about travels on the lake by Karelianist artists, the people they encountered and the variety of information they recorded. He emphasises the scientific and artistic value of the materials collected by artists Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Louis Sparre (1863–1964), Emil Wilkström (1866–1952), Yrjö Blomstedt (1871–1912), Victor Sucksdorff (1866–1952) and Into Konrad Inha (1896–1930). [*... the drawings and coloured works represent a unique and rich collection of picture materials of invaluable scholarly and artistic value, another such one does not exist and it can never be repeated, since the Far Karelia of the 19th century belongs to the past and substantially differs from the present*] (Kaukonen, 1994: 100). To these unique collections of picture materials, I would add the wealth of written notes, photographs and objects donated by the Karelianists to Finnish collections.

Anita Waenerberg’s article *Karelianism and the Kalevala* – *kataavasti luonnovanvaraista iliklikkuja* (2007; *Karelianism in the fine arts – from a vanishing natural resource to perpetual motion*) was written while the memories of our expedition to Kitelehenjärvi were still fresh. The article describes the concept of Karelianism and its development from an art movement into a scholarly approved and shared activity. Referring to Onni Okkonen, Waenerberg seeks to understand the meaning of field expeditions for artists considered to represent Karelianism. Of course, artists had been embarking on expeditions before the emergence of European Realism and Neo-Romantic Karelianism. Waenerberg notes that in the 1890s, such expeditions to Russian Karelia no longer were considered as mere journeys aiming at collecting material. Instead, they were “experiments for hunting material reality, vital to the imagination of artists educated in realism” (Okkonen, 1961: 188; Waenerberg, 2007: 206). Both Okkonen and Waenerberg make a clear distinction here. More collection of material could focus on foreign countries, nature or the countryside, as well as literature or art collections, and their outcomes could be exploited in art works of varying styles. In contrast, expeditions focusing on realism were indistinguishable from artistic activity itself; they were the “manifestations of realism, its essential prerequisite” (cf. Okkonen, 1961: 188–189; Waenerberg, 2007: 206). Parisian realism was therefore not just a source of inspiration underlying artists’ journeys to Kitelehenjärvi; the artists themselves were actually implementing this realism through their expeditions to what is now the Kostomuksha Nature Reserve (cf. Nieminen, 2000: 106; Waenerberg, 2007: 206).

**MOODS OF NATURE AND LIVING PEOPLE**

An article published in Päivälehti newspaper on 1 October 1890 and titled *Karjala ja sen taitteellinen merkitys* (*Karelia and its artistic significance*) is regarded as the art manifesto of Karelianism (Siivola, 1969: 82). Extensively quoted in Finnish discussions of the topic, it was in fact published after the first set of journeys to Kitelehenjärvi made by Axel Gallén and Louis Sparre, which had already announced a wish that had already been fulfilled. The article also illuminates what these realism-based expeditions meant in public discussions of the issue.

What a triumph a work of art would be if based on a subject originating there where Kalevala was sung, in the homeland of a people that has preserved the Karelian character lost or corrupted elsewhere, and how the numerous sublimes of ancient runes cleared up for us, with the keen eye of an artist presenting the environment in which rune singers have lived and from which they have surely drawn great inspiration! [...] We would need flesh and bones, light and shadows, we long to see the so-called moods of nature and living people. In short: the artistic side of Karelia is that which we crave to know. (Anonymous, 1890).

During their “Kiteleymoon in the summer of 1890, Axel Gallén and Mary Slöör (1868–1947) did some work in the cottage of Lapinsalmi in Kuhmoniemi. Louis Sparre’s interest for Finland and Karelia had been aroused in the art circles of Paris and through
his friendship with Gallén. He too travelled to Lapinsalmi, from where the two artists made two trips across the border to Kiteheherijärvi. During the first expedition, they visited at least Sappovaara and Minna, south of Lake Kiteheherijärvi, while the second journey, for which they were joined by Mary Stöör, included visits to Akonialh and Minna (Sparre, 1986: 20; Kalja, Minnerhe-Sparre, 1951: 69–74; cf. Gallen-Kallela-Sirén, 2002: 127–135).

In the summer of 1892, Sparre returned to Russian Karelia with a fellow artist from Paris, sculptor Emil Wikström. Their journey began from Akonialh, the home village of Karelians encountered earlier by Sparre. Other travel destinations included Munaniikka, Härkönemi, Sappovaara and Minna. Sparre’s travel book Kajallanal kancsona katsomus (1930; Visiting people of Kalevala) is an account of this journey. His third travel companion was his wife, the artist and crafts teacher Eva Mannheimer-Sparre (1870–1957). The couple’s honeymoon in the summer of 1893 and a “winter camp” from February 1894 onwards were spent on expeditions to Kajallana, Kokealma, Kiteheherijärvi and Minna. These journeys are described in the memoirs of Eva Mannheimer-Sparre, Taitteita ja elämää (1951; An artist’s life).

The Gallén and Sparre couples, as well as Späte and Wikström, together with Wicker, travelled around Karelia doing investigations and collecting real-life materials. They made drawings, paintings and notes and collected objects, textiles, and documentary materials for their future artistic endeavours. The drawings, sketches, and works of art created on the basis of these travels now form part of various public and private collections. For example, objects collected by Gallén are on display at the Gallen-Kallela Museum in Espoo and the Kajala, Gallen-Kallela’s home and studio in Ruovesi. Inspired by the 100th anniversary of the Kalevala (1935), Sparre donated the manuscript of his travel book to the Kalevala Society in Helsinki and his collection of Karelian objects to Kainu Museum in Kajaani.3 The materials collected in Karelia by the artists were destroyed in a fire at his art studio in Visavuori in 1896.

In 1894, architect student Jyrö Blomstedt and his architect friend Victor Sucksdorf embarked on a journey to Russian Karelia, with the intention of collecting materials for a plate collection, building style motifs and ornamental patterns. The two architects documented their expedition from Akonialh, from where they proceeded first to Sappovaara and Minna, in Härkönemi. Blomstedt and Sucksdorf donated the results – photographs, drawings and objects – to the funders of their expedition, the Finnish Antiquarian Society, while the “runes and incantations” were given to the collections of the Finnish Literature Society. Other materials from the travel are housed at the Provincial Archives of Jyväskylä and the Museum of Finnish Architecture.

This collection expedition was documented by Blomstedt in Karjalaisia rakennuksia ja koristemuotoja (1900 and 1901; Karelian buildings and ornaments). The first volume of this work, a plate collection, was published in 1900 and comprised plates with various drawings and photographs of Russian Karelia. The text was published in the second volume during the following year included a preface, an introduction, and an index. The preface explained the premises of the expedition. The introduction combined the ideological background to the project, comprising Kalevala-based and Karelia-related Romanticism, and the scholarly and national principles of the approach. The third section of the publication gave a description of the travel route through Russian Karelia, adapted to a form of a travel journal, as well as an ethnographic analysis based on previous research in the regions of Kajala and Kanteletar.

Blomstedt and Sucksdorf made use of the results of their expedition during their careers as architects and designers, and in their discussion in jornalmon Finnish architecture. The first and second volume of Karelian buildings and ornaments, a classic work on the history of Karelianism and Finnish architecture, serves as a reference work even today. This publication was later characterised as the Kalevala of architecture and a classic in the Finnish art industry.

On their expedition to Karelia in 1894, funded by the Finnish Literature Society, photographer Into Konrad Inha and philologist Kusti Karjalainen briefly visited Minna, the Sappovaara canal and Akonialh. According to Hannes Silho and Pekka Laaksonen (1999) this expedition by Inha and Karjalainen is one of the key journeys made during the height of Karelianism. The photographs taken on this five-month expedition were soon disseminated for use as illustrations in literature on Karelia. Objects collected by Inha and Karjalainen are included in the collections of the National Museum of Finland. In 1896, Inha published an article titled Lävikkumiesten kotimaat (The Peddars’ homeland). A comprehensive travelogue and description of Viiena Karelian culture, Kalevalaan laulumilla (In the song lands of Kalevala) was published in 1911.

Similarly to Blomstedt, Inha wanted to publish more than a picture book and personal travelogue, using research literature and the publications of those who had visited Karelia before him to support his observations.

The travel routes and objects of interest to artist-scholars were linked to Kiteheherijärvi in a number of ways. To a certain extent, their contemporaries used the same routes. They became enchanted by the lake and scenery, were impressed by the local people, and studied the same themes, some of which had been partly conventionalised during the course of the 19th century. In general, the artists shared an interest in magical and rough areas of wilderness, thefeaction for the lives of inhabitants of the backwoods, and a common concern about the depletion of the material environment. Brief expeditions had long-term impacts. Moods, images and ideas collected from the Kiteheherijärvi region continued to evolve in new works of art long after obvious motifs and identifiable details had been discarded.

EDITED FRAGMENTS FROM THE DIARIES OF SUMMER 2006

Acquaintance with the real-life materials described here formed the prelude to Annika Waenberger’s and my departure for Kiteheherijärvi and Minna. We took copies of literature and travelogues with us, as well as copies of photographs, paintings and drawings stored in museum collections. Intentionally imitating the approach taken by Lönnrot and the artists, we did exactly as the Karelians had done around a hundred years earlier. If only in their minds, they brought along the Kalevala compiled by Lönnrot. In practice, we sought out a relevant location in the landscape of each village. Once in position, we read aloud the travelogues and examined the photographs and surrounding landscape. We also took photographs and engaged in some writing. Annika completed some watercolour paintings.

When roaming the wilderness, the artists of the 1890s were often assisted by local guides. Renne Haverrinen, from Lentiä in Kuhmoniemi, was the guide used by Gallén, Sparre, Wikström, Blomstedt and Sucksdorf during their travels on and around Lake Kiteheherijärvi (see Lonkila, 2010: 68–77).


3 The National Museum of Finland; Objects and picture collections by Blomstedt and Sucksdorf; http://suomenmuuseumonline.fin/fi/kokoelmat; the Finnish Literature Society; the Folklore Archives; the Museum of Finnish Architecture.


Fig. 1. Annika Waenberger on the beach at Netisaari. Photo: Helena Lonkila.

H. Lonkila. The legendary Kiteheherijärvi – as experienced by Finnish artists and scholars.


Our expedition was guided by Boris, Nikolai and Sergei. Like Renne with the Karelianists, Nikolai took very good care of us over a period of several days. He seldom stayed more than 2 m from us. This was even true at night, when we could hear his steady breathing through the board walls from the apartment next door. Nikolai’s local knowledge was invaluable to us: after a brief search, we found the villages and foundations we were looking for. We made carefully planned day trips, travelling in all directions, and returned safely to our accommodation in the evening.

Fig. 2. Parnassia palustris, Marsh Grass-of-Parnassus. Photo: Annaika Waenerberg

One morning, a surprise awaited us at Lake Kittelenjärvi. Planning to spend a long day engaged in field research in Munankihtsi, Ristikunta and Härkinen, we had set out early. As soon as we headed out across the lake, a dense and dark fog enveloped us. The fog was so dense that the features of Nikolai, who was sitting at the rear of the boat, kept disappearing from sight, even though our vessel, an aluminium boat that reminded me of Sputnik, could not be considered long. After we had continued our journey through the fog for a while, Nikolai announced that we were going around in circles and that it was pointless to carry on. He suggested that we go to Neitseraari Island to eat our packed lunches, while the fog would take hours to clear. As we sat on the island, I remembered the stories of the marauding robbers, called ruotsat (in Finnish, referring to “the Swedes”), who were trapped in a thick fog on the island. Resembling the conditions of the 1890s, the view over the lake was filled with mythic beauty, with rapid changes from moment to moment. The fog veiled details and enhanced colours, sharpening my eyesight and focusing my mind on the mesmeric effect of the air and water and how people react to them.

Our expedition led us to the locations of villages visited by the Karelianists, and to views from villages and hilltops where we allowed our eyes to wander over waters, trees and moist fields on descending slopes. Although covered with a thick and high layer of raspberry bushes, these features of the landscape were clearly recognisable as fields. We visited the village graveyard in Munankihtsi, where some groppitas (Rytiköla’s article in this publication; also Rytiköla, 2009: 196) remained intact. While at the graveyard, we hung some windings-cloths. In Minoina, where to Sergei Tarkhov drove us, we discovered the presumable location of an archaic church. This church, which had remained unchanged for hundreds of years, was now lost. On its site, a rune singer once posted a poem on a gallén (Oksanen 1961). This was a scene recorded by Sparre in more than one of his classic works. This church was extensively photographed by Blomstedt, who recorded the ground and the entire group of Karelianists, including Gallén, Sparre, Wikström, Blomstedt, Sucksdorff and Inha, visited the church during their travels.

I had a reservation in a very similar way to the field work method as well as the foundation and justification for arguments, the key issue consisted of becoming sensitive to a range of observations: perceiving Kittelenjärvi, as it was seen and experienced by the artist’s reflections on his own self and his observations of different places. Tenetz refers to his method as moving on the surface and constructing of life lines and routes. He also refers to the way in which these GPS-recorded routes form a picture of his personal network and knowledge. After familiarising myself with the locations of Tenetz during our mutual expeditions to Paanaajärvi National Park, and during writing this article, I have come to understand how accurately this method, and the Japanese phrase, describes the way in which we viewed Kittelenjärvi in practice.

During my travels in Kittelenjärvi, and based on studying the maps and routes of the travellers who preceded me, the linearity of movement, moving on the surface, seemed to be essential. Through this method, the artists’ travels became textualised in the terrain, forming an imaginary and real net in the surroundings of Lake Kittelenjärvi. This net was supplemented by threads of texts and pictures brought along for the expedition. In these nets, common subjects, themes and moods shared by various travellers can be identified.

Our field work at Kittelenjärvi prompted considerations of the relationship between the textual and the experiential, by which I mean the social construction as well as experiential and individual interpretation of a cultural environment. On Lake Kittelenjärvi, the relationship between humans and nature or, in this case, the personal experience of humans as part of nature and its cycle, evoked a strong sense of self-identification with the place and the people. The artefacts we had brought with us, the written texts and the visual materials of artists and photographers, clearly promoted and advanced this process of identification. On this occasion, however – otherwise than I had anticipated – our mimetic approach did not function as a means of distancing and absence. On the contrary, it created a feeling of presence induced by the intimate connection with nature.

During the expedition, pondering upon what it was I was identifying with, I felt in contact with the same environment as the artist of the 1890s and their subjects. Based on my awareness of the fact that we had seen and experienced the same region, I engaged in a more in-depth analysis of the situation. In the 1890s, the villages were inhabited. With the desertion of the villages in the region, and the recent reduction of physical surveillance and other activities in the area by the frontier guard detachment, a certain "integrity" and sense of wilderness had emerged within the region’s natural setting over a period of seven decades. The interesting aspect of this is that, due to my closeness to nature, I realised this was all a part of what we had experienced with the wild natural environment which the artists of the 1890s imagined to be a setting for the way of life of the Kalevala and Karelia and for people living in harmony with nature.
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АРХЕОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ РАБОТЫ НА ТЕРРИТОРИИ КОСТОМУКШСКОГО РАЙОНА РЕСПУБЛИКИ КАРЕЛИЯ

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В статье представлены как общий обзор археологических работ, выполненных в Костомукском районе Карелии, так и более подробные результаты исследований интересных памятников разной эпохи, полученные за последние 30 лет.

Ключевые слова: Костомукский район, каменный век, православные кладбища, посвященные работы, археологические работы.

M. M. Shakhnovich. ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK IN THE DISTRICT OF KOSTOMUKSHA, KARELIA

A general overview of archaeological work conducted in Kostomuksha area, Karelia, as well as more detailed results from studies on interesting monuments dated from different epochs, obtained in the past 30 years, are provided.

Keywords: Kostomuksha district, the Stone Age, orthodox cemetery, trapping, archaeological work.

КАМЕННЫЙ ВЕК


В северной части оз. Каменного первые девять стоянок и местонахождений каменного века зафиксированы в 1993 г. В ином следующего года российско-финляндская археологическая экспедиция (X. Рюттег, Э. Суоминен, М. М. Шахнович) продолжила обследование восточного и южного берегов. За пять дней были зафиксированы еще 13 стоянок (Каменное X–XXII), система лавочь на полуострове Крестноволок и два оригинальных «культовых» объекта («сейдры»). Следует упомянуть и исторические памятники. Например, «Кипехтинняви» – большой плоский камень (4,2 x 2 м), в центральной части озера, на глубине 0,7 м на юго-восток от южного берега полуострова Тетринки. На нем по преданию спал знаменитый Э. Леннрот. Или «погра-