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# KARELIA AND KARELIAN PEOPLE IN NORDIC EXPEDITIONERS' PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE LATE 19TH CENTURY

## КАРЕЛИЯ И КАРЕЛЫ НА ФОТОГРАФИЯХ СЕВЕРОЕВРОПЕЙСКИХ ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЕЙ КОНЦА XIX ВЕКА

**Аннотация:** В конце XIX в. по северу Карелии — как российской Беломорской, так и финской — путешествовали многие скандинавские и финляндские исследователи. Фотография для них была средством фиксации данных — техническим и в принципе нейтральным. Якобы просто воспроизводящие реальность фото предоставляли наделённым властью инстанциям ценные сведения о населении, географии, геологии и природных ресурсах. Ориентированные на сбор этнографической информации исследователи сосредотачивались на том, что казалось им подлинным. Шум настоящей жизни заглушался, а процессы модернизации останавливались, когда фотографы творили свою Карелию с её экзотикой, мифами и народными верованиями.

**Keywords / Ключевые слова:** Karelia, late 19th century, Nordic expeditions, national identity, photography, representation / Карелия, конец XIX в., североевропейские экспедиции, национальная идентичность, фотография, репрезентация

Through images, Northern Karelia and its culture gained public awareness in Finland and Scandinavia in the late 19th century. In those days, photography was rather new, though developing rapidly. The camera offered researchers a new medium for taking notes and a means of documenting the visual aspect of their subjects in a way that was considered objective and scientific.[1] Its technical complexity dictated that the method was limited to carefully controlled circumstances at first: until the 1880s, field photography required carrying not only the camera and photographic plates but also all the darkroom equipment and chemicals. Furthermore, before a photograph could be reproduced in books or magazines, a hand-crafted printing block had to be created to replicate its content. Use of negatives and photographic printing would not become widespread until the next century.

The first Nordic expeditioners to reach Karelia, in the early 1800s, were collectors of folk poetry. They were soon followed by researchers surveying language and culture,

[1] Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," in Richard Bolton (ed.) *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography* (Cambridge MA & London: The MIT Press, 1989), 353.

along with the areas' populations, natural resources, and social conditions.[2] When Elias Lönnrot was compiling the oral poetry of Karelia in the 1830s, photography had not yet been invented; however, change was afoot. Lönnrot's work, especially significantly his publishing of the *Kalevala* epic,[3] was tied in with the emergence of photography and the other great breakthroughs of the 19th century, which we have come to refer to as modernisation. The overall development was characterised by rapid advancements in the natural sciences and technology; the conquest of information on less known parts of the world; and intentions to identify, register, and organise the phenomena encountered. These motives were often bound up with economic, political, and cultural colonialism. In parallel with modernisation and colonialism, romanticism expressed a tendency to record and preserve cultures that were considered original or unspoilt.

There were various facets to this project, informed by interests that ranged from prospecting to phrenology. Layered upon the diverse incentives behind the photography have been numerous interpretations of the resulting materials, taken as evidence for a vast array of claims. As Allan Sekula has noted with regard to the people photographed, the 'system of representation was capable of functioning both honorifically and repressively.'[4] For the researchers of the day, Karelian people always represented the other. Even beyond contexts of romanticism, as emphasis on evolutionary systems swept through the sciences, remote groups were perceived as lower levels of humanity — if not noble savages, savages nonetheless.[5]

With this article, I will introduce some of the Finnish and Scandinavian photographers who explored Northern Karelia, both Russian White Sea Karelia and Finnish Karelia, in the second half of the 19th century. This account is more historical than interpretive in focused and is aimed at providing a backdrop for interpretation, by chronicling what the Nordic expeditioners brought to the research setting and saw there.

There were several key players on the scene. Firstly, **Jens Andreas Friis** (1821–1896), a Norwegian ethnologist and researcher of Sami languages, travelled to Finland on a journey through Northern Norway, the Kola Peninsula, and White Sea Karelia in summer 1867. Collector of Finnish poetry **Aksel Berner** (1843–1892) took the first well-known photographs of Karelian rune-singers in summer 1872. In the following year, **Gustaf Retzius** (1842–1919), a Swedish researcher of medicine and

[2] Hannes Sihvo, *Karjalan kuva. Karelianismin taustaa ja vaiheita autonomian aikana* (Helsinki: SKS, 2003), 336.
[3] The *Kalevala* is the national epic of Karelia and Finland. It appeared in printed form in 1835 with a first edition compiled and edited by Elias Lönnrot on the basis of the epic folk poems he had collected in Finland and Russian Karelia. See *https://finland.fi/arts-culture/kalevala-the-finnish-national-epic/* (accessed December 12. 2020).
[4] Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," 345.
[5] Ibid, 348; see also William J. T. Mitchell, *Seeing through Race* (Cambridge, MA, & London: Harvard University Press, 2012), XII.

anthropologist, travelled Finland and Russia to investigate the distinguishing features of Finnish tribes. Representing rather different interests, **Wilhelm Ramsay** (1865–1928) was a Finnish geologist who began to explore and photograph Northwest Russia in 1887. Another figure taking several trips to the region was **Louis Sparre** (1863–1964), a Swedish visual artist who lived in Finland and made visits to Northern Karelia in the early 1890s, illustrating and photographing the people and their immediate surroundings. **Yrjö Blomstedt** (1871–1912) and **Viktor Joachim Sucksdorff** (1866–1952), both Finnish architects, recorded material traditions of Kainuu and Karelia in summer 1894. Finally, the same year saw Finnish photographer **Into Konrad Inha** (1865–1930) spend five months working in Northern Karelia. Also, Inha made several photography trips to the vicinity of Lake Ladoga in the course of that decade.

Although Inha is considered the most prominent photographer of Karelia, many of the themes and recurring motifs he emphasised had become established as emblematic of Karelian culture before his famous journeys. Village landscapes, the buildings with particular interior and exterior details, traditional costumes and crafts, the area's festivities and rituals, the chapels and cemeteries of Karelia, and its travellers and rune-singers all caught the attention of many other photographers of the late 19th century. What humanists sought in Karelia was the authentic ancient world of the *Kalevala*, which they felt was threatened by the surrounding developing society. For instance, Sparre hoped to find a land of the past 'where the national epic lived on and where the customs and lifestyle were similar to those among the *Kalevala* […] people in many respects.' He felt that 'the final opportunity to record even the smallest and most insignificant details'[6] was at hand. Likewise, Inha cited the threat of change when appealing for funds from *Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura* (the Finnish Literature Society) for his expedition to photograph Karelia: 'Year after year, those regions are marred by foreign influences from the east, south, and west alike, chipping away at the environment in which the poems of the *Kalevala* were sung.'[7]

The early photographers were central to inscribing Karelia in images. Research into art has introduced the concept of master images, long-standing visual archetypes that constantly inspire new versions and, in turn, are commented upon by those new works. Master images are culturally charged core images through which we observe the subjects represented.[8] They serve as visual guides along the path directing how imagined communities form,[9] for a photograph is not merely signs on a surface. Rather, it is a form

[6] Louis Sparre, *Kalevalan kansaa katsomassa* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1930), 17.
[7] Pekka Laakosnen (ed.) *I. K. Inha 1894. Valokuvaaja Vienan Karjalassa* (Helsinki: SKS, 1990), 6.
[8] Juhani Pallasmaa, *Maailmassaolon taide. Kirjoituksia arkkitehtuurista ja kuvataiteista* (Helsinki: Painatuskeskus, 1993, 124; Tuula Karjalainen, *Kantakuvat — yhteinen muistimme* (Helsinki: Maahenki, 2009), 21.
[9] See also Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

composed of numerous threads of discourse, together operating as an active agent in a relationship of dialogue with the world and working jointly with that world. Images are born of tales and merge into other cultural texts. Mitchell (2005) described the relations at play: 'It seems that images are not just things that appear **in** media, but also in some sense a medium, perhaps a meta-medium that transcends any specific material incarnation, even as it always requires some concrete form in which to appear' (emphasis in original).[10]

Master images control how we see, perceive, experience, and present their themes. The photographs from the 19th century gave Karelia a landscape and a face, which our eyes continue to seek and the features of which they identify. It is because of these photographs that we still consider a certain Karelian lifestyle 'typical' and 'pure' more than a century later. The format of master images extends back to the earliest traditions of painting, and it is precisely this that leads us in the twenty-first century to crop our photographs of Karelian riverside villages in the same way Inha and Sparre did in the late 1800s.[11]

The impact of master images is so deep that their contents are easily taken for granted. However, the reality of the images is confined to their respective internal world. Phenomenology regards photographs not as a part of the perceived reality but, instead, as a simplifying 'cut' that separates the subject from its original environment.[12] Tellingly, photographs from the 19th century are in black and white. While this later came to be commonly regarded as a technical deficiency, it only highlights their ability to separate themselves from the perceived reality into their own two-dimensional, simplified reality.

The images are affected by the broad social paradigms and conventions related to photography as a medium. When one examines the Karelian lifestyle expressed in photographs, it is important to ask how the early photographers chose their subjects and what they cropped out of the frame. Answers can be found both within the photographs and in the contexts beyond them. Elisabeth Edwards teased apart photography's connections with reality through the 'dense context' concept. She has emphasised that the traditional context-related matters of who, what, where, when, how, and why do not suffice to explain all the layers of meaning in photographs. Naturally, knowing the settings behind the existence and creation of the photographs in question is necessary if we are

[10] William J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 294.
[11] Karjalainen, *Kantakuvat*, 8–12, 21–22.
[12] Saara Hacklin, "Ihminen, paikka, arkisto," in Petronella Grönroos, Saara Hacklin, and Sara Ahde (eds) *Tiheä hetki. Valokuvan vuosikirja* (Helsinki: Musta Taide, 2018), 144.

to understand the photograph as a historical document, but Edwards goes further, stressing that context is more than a mode of explanation.[13]

The density of contexts can be regarded, in the photographic domain, as an abstract opacity or overlap of transparent layers. The dense network of contexts extends far beyond the situation in which the photograph was taken – Edwards writes that it is 'a dynamic and dialogical shape of broader discourses which constitute the whole cultural theatre of which photographs are part.'[14] The density of contexts encompasses links beyond the direct reality connections expressed in the photographs, connections to the creation of the photograph and to prevailing assumptions at the time of its interpretation, coupled with the connections between the two. Furthermore, continues Edwards, '[o]ther contexts, that we may never know fully, were embedded in the complexities of the moment, giving a different shape, lurking within the photographs. The silences of photographs are not necessarily an emptiness but the 'active presence of absent things.'"[15]

**Photo 1.**
*By J. A. Friis. Clergy house in Pyaozersky (Pääjärvi), possibly at Lake Topozero (Tuoppajärvi), 1867. Finnish Heritage Agency.*

[13] Elisabeth Edwards, "Negotiating Spaces: Some Photographic Incidents in the Western Pacific," in Joan M. Schwartz and James Ryan (eds) *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination* (London & New York: I. B. Tauris, 2003), 262–263.
[14] Ibid, 262.
[15] Ibid, 263, quoting Paul Válery from Greg Dening's *Performances*, 116.

**The Photographers in Karelia**

Among the first photographers of the northern stretches of Karelia, Friis had gained renown in and beyond his native Norway as a linguist and ethnologist[16] before setting out in summer 1867 on a joint expedition with historian Ludvig Kristensen Daa to Northern Norway and the Kola Peninsula. As they traversed White Sea Karelia on their return to Kuusamo,[17] Friis recorded the landscapes, buildings, and people encountered, via his photographic plates. At the time, the wet-plate technique of photography predominated, in which the plates must be coated with a photosensitive emulsion immediately before exposure, after which they have to be developed and fixed immediately. For this reason, photographers had to carry a bulky camera and heavy, fragile photographic plates made of glass, along with an array of chemicals and a full portable laboratory that permitted dimming the lights. Exposure times were so long that only the stillest of subjects could be photographed properly. Moreover, the technique's dependence on natural light restricted the scope of the photography to images captured outdoors.

In 1871, Friis published the book *Yksi kesä Finnmarkissa, Venäjän Lapissa ja Karjalassa* ('One Summer in Finnmark, Russian Lapland, and Karelia'),[18] which describes his trip and his observations on the region's population, nature, and social conditions. He was especially interested in customs and traditions. In the book, Friis quotes from a description of Russian Karelian engagement and wedding traditions provided by Russia's Pawlo Tschubynskyj in the 1865 *Trudy Archangelskavo statistischeskavo komiteta* ('Proceedings of the Arkhangelsk Statistical Committee'). That description and his own work form part of a tapestry in which marriage-related rituals carried over as a central theme of many literary descriptions and photographs (e. g., by Sparre and Inha). Later, they proved central also to Finland's first full-length documentary film, with the English title *Karelian Wedding in the Land of the Kalevala*, which was filmed in Suojärvi and released in 1921.[19]

Friis illustrated his book with woodcuts of his photographs, but one album of photographs he compiled in 1868 with his original prints has survived in Finland.[20] Nomenclature has complicated cataloguing the work, however, in that he refers

[16] Biography; see also Hans Lindkjølen, "J. A. Friis," in *Norsk biografisk leksikon*, February 13, 2009, *https://nbl.snl.no/J_A_Friis* (accessed December 12, 2020).

[17] Kari Myklebost, "In Search of Essential Lapland: The Ethnographic Travels of Jens A. Friis in Northwest Russia (1867) and Sergey Segel in Northern Norway (1907–1909)," in Tatjana N. Jackson and Jens Petter Nielsen (eds) *Russia — Norway: Physical and Symbolic Borders* (Moscow: Languages of Slavonic Culture, 2005), 144.

[18] Also printed in Swedish, as *En Sommer i Finmarken, Russisk Lapland og Nordkarelen. Skildringer af Land og Folk*, in 1872. The organisation Karjalan Sivistysseura has published a Finnish-language electronic book covering the chapters pertaining to the White Sea's shores and Northern Karjala: *http://www.karjalansivistysseura.fi/tarinat/sahkokirjat/yksi-kesa-finnmarkissa-venajan-lapissa-ja-karjalassa* (accessed December 12, 2020).

[19] See *https://elonet.finna.fi/Record/kavi.elonet_elokuva_107922* (accessed December 12, 2020).

[20] Sven Hirn, *Ateljeesta luontoon. Valokuvaus ja valokuvaajat Suomessa 1871–1900* (Helsinki: Suomen valokuvataiteen museon säätiö, 1977), 42–43.

to the region as Northern Karelia on some occasions and Russian Karelia in other places,[21] and the original location photographed cannot always be pinpointed accurately. Another relevant factor with regard to context is that, although travellers were familiar to the people of Karelia, Friis was met with curiosity and awe as a pioneering photographer. He shares his experiences in Kovda, located in the northern hinterlands of Karelia:

> *People here in Kovda accept my photographing. They gather around and watch with fascinated looks, mixed with a hint of dread, this curious contraption that has never been seen here before, turning anything and everything into a painting. My interpreter tells me that some of the older Old Believer women mumbled about it bringing diseases upon people and that it should be forbidden. However, they have now seen me take photographs of the warden and his wife as well as their priest, all of whom are alive and unscathed with a medal on their chest.*[22]

Religion is one of the central themes of Friis's imagery. He photographed churches on the shores of Norway and then Orthodox chapels as he crossed the Russian borderland. In the chronicle of his travels, he describes his trip to Lake Topozero, possibly the setting for his photograph of a Karelian clergy house. An island in the lake, on which that building stood, had once been among the bases for the Old Believers who operated outside the Church.[23] According to Friis, as many as 300 monks had earlier lived in the monastery of the Old Believers, and there once was a nunnery in the area also. All these communities had been disbanded by the authorities in the 1850s, several years before Friis's visit.[24]

The monasteries at Lake Topozero were already known to scholars, partly on account of the visits by Lönnrot.[25] They also drew a group of Finnish poetry-collectors to the area (White Sea Karelia, also known as *Vienan Karjala* in Finnish) in summer 1872.

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[21] Jens Andreas Friis, *Yksi kesä Finnmarkissa, Venäjän Lapissa ja Karjalassa. Kuvauksia maasta ja kansasta 1871* (Helsinki: Karjalan Sivistysseura, 2016), 12–13, 22.

[22] Ibid, 12.

[23] In this context, 'Old Believers' refers to a movement formed in the 17th century that opposed the reforms of the Russian Orthodox Church. Supporters of this movement lived on the remotest outskirts of the country. See also Julia A. Lajus, "Colonization of the Russian North: A Frozen Frontier," in Christina Folke Ax, Niels Brimnes, Niklas Thode Jensen, and Karen Oslund (eds) *Cultivating the Colonies: Colonial States and Their Environmental Legacies* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2011), 168.

[24] Friis, *Yksi kesä Finnmarkissa Venäjän Lapissa ja Karjalassa*, 29–33, per *https://finna.fi/Search/Results?page=3&join=AND&bool0%5B%5D=AND&lookfor0%5B%5D=%22Friis+J.+A.%22&type0%5B%5D=Author* (accessed December 12, 2020).

[25] Elias Lönnrot, *Matkat 1828–1844* (Espoo: Weilin & Göös, 1981), 221–225. Yuri Shikalov wrote about transmissible diseases in Viena Karjala, in his dissertation *Ilona on käki metsässä, ilona lapsi perehessä. Syntymä, imeväiskuolleisuus ja aviottomat lapset Vienan Karjalassa ja Vienanmeren länsirannikolla 1860-1910-luvuilla* (Helsinki: SKS, 2007).

The group consisted of Arvid Genetz, Axel August Borenius, and Berner[26] as the expedition's photographer. Eight prints of his material have survived in the archives of the Finnish Literature Society. Two of these photographs portray rune-singers Jyrki and Ohvo Malinen, and two present another highly regarded rune-singer, Miihkali Perttunen. There are also two images of buildings, one of them featuring a wooden house that resembles a church – which, according to archival records, were captured in Skiita, the area of the former nunnery at Lake Topozero. The final two images depict groups of people, one described as the family of Jouhko Karhunen and the other capturing the people who had once lived in Skiita.

Similarly to Friis, Berner and his group observed that posing for a photograph was not a matter of course for every Karelian. Borenius remarked on 'a small incident in Panozero [Paanajärvi], in which cameras were blamed unduly out of fear of spreading cholera.'[27] This is consistent with the suspicions Friis had heard expressed about photography 'bringing diseases upon people.'[28] When Inha worked in the villages of Karelia around 20 years later, he was struck by how familiar photography had become to most people in this locale over the intervening years. Nonetheless, many Old Believers remained wary of being photographed.[29]

There were many skilled masters of poetry, spells, and other oral folk traditions living in White Sea Karelia in the early 1870s. Three of them ended up in Berner's photographs in Voknavolok (Vuokkiniemi). The Malinens were members of a renowned rune-singing family, with Jyrki being one of the best rune-singers in the entirety of Russia while Ohvo was known as a seer and sorcerer.[30] Spells gave him confidence for the photography encounter, as Borenius recounted in the magazine *Suomen Kuvalehti*:

> *Thanks to his lively and fiery personality, Ohvo happily showed off his abilities and was now clad in a flashy coat – which had been offered to him by a young fellow who had visited Finland — in honour of the occasion, in contrast to Jyrki, who had declined the same offer and, instead, showed up in nothing more than his own plain but clean outfit. It is also worth mentioning, to further describe his personality, that Ohvo was chanting incantations while being photographed, as a spell against this magic he was unfamiliar with, making his 'jaw tremble and head shake' to the photographer's great dismay.*[31]

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[26] See also Axel August Borenius, "Runonkeruumatkalta Wenäjän Karjalassa v. 1872," in *Suomi. Kirjoituksia isän-maallisista aineista. Toinen Jakso, 2* (Helsinki: SKS, 1876), 246–262, *https://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi/aikakausi/binding/498425?page=253* (accessed December 15, 2020).

[27] Ibid, 253.

[28] Friis, *Yksi kesä Finnmarkissa Venäjän Lapissa ja Karjalassa*, 12.

[29] Into Konrad Inha, *Kalevalan laulumailta* (Helsinki: SKS, 1999), 116, 138.

[30] Aukusti Robert Niemi, "Vienan läänin runonlaulajat ja tietäjät," in *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot I, 4* (Helsinki: SKS, 1921), 12–13, 67–68.

[31] Axel August Borenius [A. B–s], "Runolaulu nykyisinä aikoina," *Suomen Kuvalehti 24* (1873): 278, *https://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi/aikakausi/binding/870054?page=1* (accessed December 15, 2020).

In these photos of Jyrki and Ohvo, though, the sorcerer's head does not shake but remains still. Berner made the two men sit next to each other on the steps leading to the arched door of a log house, with both looking forward diagonally. Each had his right hand extended to the other, with his right palm against the other man's. The photograph contains an intuitive reference to the first rune of the *Kalevala*, in which two singers are 'hand in hand, fingers between fingers.'[32] In the world of images, a serious competitor to this apparently authentic pose emerged in the form of an illustration that had been published in 1802 in Giuseppe Acerbi's *Travels through Sweden, Finland and Lapland to the North Cape in the Years 1798 and 1799*: the Italian artist's depiction of two men sitting side by side while holding hands was mistakenly interpreted as depicting a rune-singing occasion.[33] With this message attached, the latter image spread through the literature[34] and became so deeply rooted even in Finland that Inha would later photograph rune-singer brothers Triihvo and Poavila Jamanen, from Ukhta (Uhtua), in the same position in 1894. He wrote in his book that this was how poems were 'sung back then,'[35] although the brothers themselves were unfamiliar with such a custom.

The third rune-singer photographed by Berner in Voknavolok was the youngest son of Arhippa Perttunen, one of Lönnrot's most noteworthy sources. Miihkali Perttunen was considered the last prominent rune-singer, and Borenius and Berner recorded most of his material, 3,500 verses in total.[36] Miihkali was a poor man who had gone blind years earlier and was afflicted by hunger and other travails. He lived with his son's family, looking for a seat either atop the stove or beside the window at the door, and Berner's photographs do not flatter him. They portray a character completely different from the sturdy Malinen brothers.

In preparation for his photographs, Berner hung a coarse canvas outside on the wall of a house and placed a chair in front of it for the subject. In his time, it was common to replicate the mannerisms of portrait painting. In a full-body photograph, Miihkali is seated slightly askew relative to the camera. His feet sink into the grass, his hands are blurry, his eyes are deep in shadow, and his face is angled slightly downward. Against his shoulder is a long cane, which Miihkali presses against his body with his hand. The photograph is focused on the canvas backdrop and exudes a melancholic atmosphere.

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[32] Kalevala, 1st Rune, lines 21–22. See *http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/5186* (accessed December 12, 2020).
[33] Sihvo, *Karjalan kuva*, 206. See also Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio, *Pankame käsi kätehen. Suomalaisten kansanrunojen esittämistavoista* (Porvoo & Helsinki: WSOY, 1949).
[34] Gustaf Retzius, *Finska kranier jämte några natur- och literatur-studier inom andra områden af finsk antropologi* (Stockholm: Central-Tryckeriet, 1878), 132–133.
[35] Inha, *Kalevalan laulumailta*, 261.
[36] Niemi, "Vienan läänin runonlaulajat ja tietäjät," 4–5.

In the denser portrait shot, the focus on Miihkali's coat emphasises his ragged figure. He does not resemble a hero in appearance. Rather, he is a pale and gloomy man who has a sparse beard, a bald head, and unkempt hair.[37]

Awareness of the elements absent from the photographs affects how we look at Miihkali. Borenius's account of his trip brings out the seeming contradiction between the internal and external aspect of the man, with the comment that this was 'a small poor man clad in rags, with a cane in his hand' but also a person whose memory was astounding.'[38] Equally astounding was his vigour — attested to by the fact that he was still singing poems when Inha met him in the village of Latvajärvi, in Voknavolok, 22 years later, even though he had lost most of his hearing also by then. Inha detected an impression of the ages in his fragile appearance:

> *Miihkali was a feeble man and did not catch my attention at first, but a closer look revealed the handsomeness of his facial features. His nose, forehead, and mouth were of noble making, and agony had left a mark of wisdom in them, which in combination with his blindness cast a curious illumination of the poetic dusk upon him.*[39]

This characterisation of Miihkali's appearance refers to a correlation between his internal and external features. The statement about the 'noble' aspects of Miihkali's nose, forehead, and mouth was informed by then-current definitions from physical anthropology, and Inha considered Miihkali's 'wavy, thick silver hair that showed no sign of ageing' to be 'characteristic of a rune-singer.'[40] Inha photographed Miihkali indoors, both eating and sitting against the cottage's log wall. These close-ups of him portray not the ragged figure Berner had met but an old man holding his head high and with a face reflecting light. Behind his closed eyes, he entered a world of his own that remained hidden to everyone else.

The difference between the photographs taken by Berner and Inha is due to technical improvements in photography but also the choice of approach. Berner represented the first generation of field photographers, to whom a photograph was a remarkable achievement in its own right. Nevertheless, he skilfully managed to capture Miihkali's sensitivity. Inha, on the other hand, stepped onto the stage of White Sea Karelia as a professionally trained photographer and a national romantic who bore the goals for his expression keenly in mind and adhered to his own vision in his photographs.

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[37] Jukka Kukkonen, 'Runoretkien vanhimmat valokuvat," in Saima-Liisa Laatunen (ed.) *Lännen maita ja Karjalan kyliä.* Yearbook of the Kalevala Society 58 (Helsinki & Porvoo: WSOY, 1978), 120.
[38] Borenius, 'Runolaulu nykyisinä aikoina," 278.
[39] Inha, *Kalevalan laulumailta,* 378.
[40] Ibid.

Berner, in turn, photographed the residents of Skiita, where the Old Believers once had their nunnery at Lake Topozero. Some of the five bandanna-clad women there were quite elderly. In combination with this factor, the static, partially blurry photograph makes the people in it feel unreachable and, curiously, alludes to death. The image reminds us of the widely known international code according to which men symbolise good and young women innocence, while old women end up as incarnations of evil. 'The older and uglier, the more evil' says art historian Tuula Karjalainen about women in visual art.[41]

Only one photograph of the community known as the family of Jouhko Karhunen is preserved in the archives of the Finnish Literature Society, portraying two middle-aged men and two young women positioned against a canvas draped over the wall of a log house. One of the men is sitting on a chair, while the others are standing. There must have been more photographs, since *Suomen Kuvalehti* published an illustration depicting the same people with an additional man in 1879. Alongside this is a second illustration, which depicts two women standing outside in front of a door. The magazine makes no mention of the artist responsible for either of the illustrations, although they were both described with the caption *Kansanpukuja Wenäjän Karjalasta*, or 'National Costumes of Russian Karelia.'[42] The illustrations appeared in an article titled *Matkamuistelmia Wenäjän Karjalasta* (or 'Travel Memories of Russian Karelia'), part of series by Lönnrot.

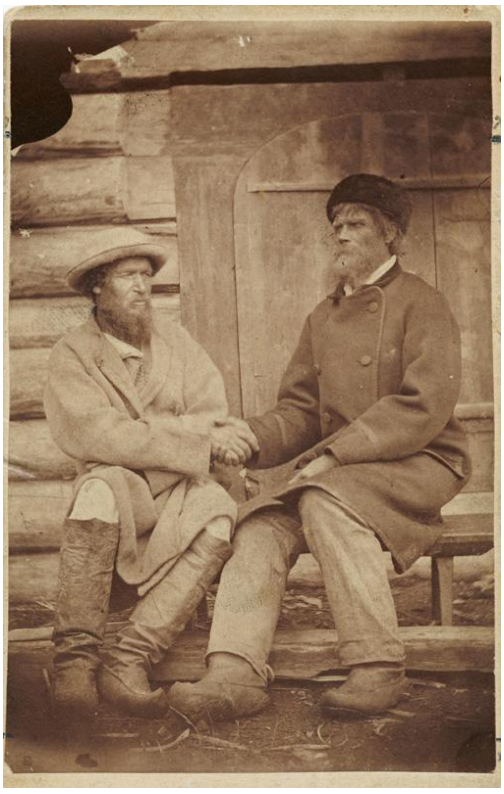

**Photo 2.**
*By Aksel Berner. Jyrki and Ohvo Malinen in Voknavolok (Vuokkiniemi), 1872. Finnish Literature Society.*

[41] Karjalainen, *Kantakuvat*, 63.
[42] *Suomen Kuvalehti* 157 (1879): 152, *https://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi/aikakausi/binding/870162?page=8* (accessed December 15, 2020).

**Photo 3.**
*Aksel Berner's 'Miihkali Arhippainen in Voknavolok,' 1872. Finnish Literature Society.*

**Photo 4.**
*By Aksel Berner. Former residents of the Skiita nunnery region at Lake Topozero, 1872. Finnish Literature Society.*

**Photo 5.**
*By Aksel Berner. The family of Jouhko Karhunen, White Sea Karelia, in 1872. Finnish Literature Society.*

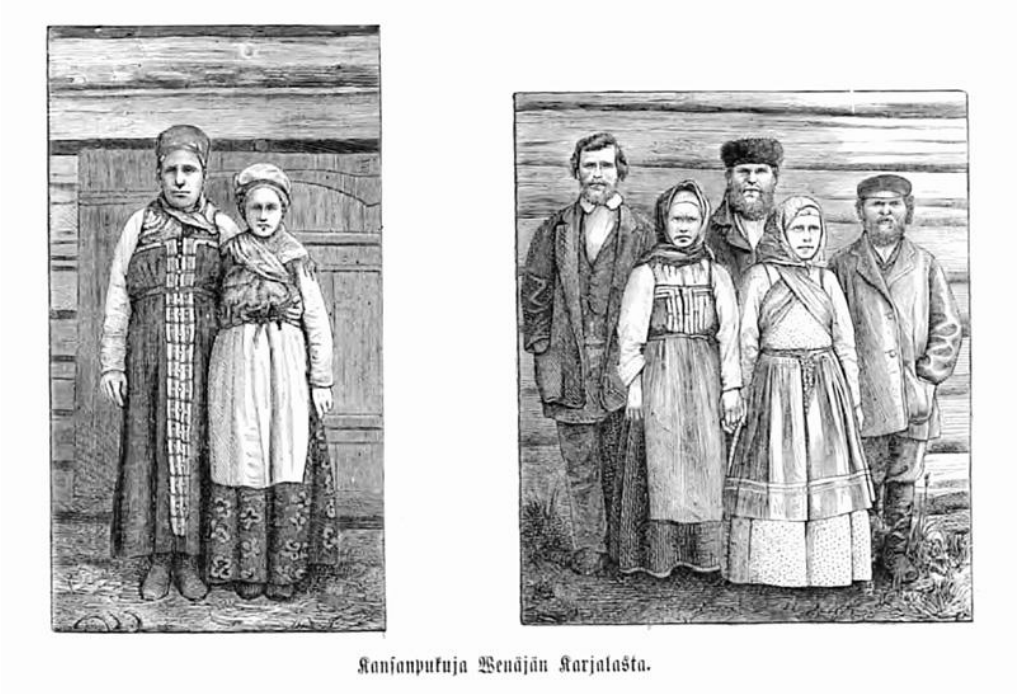


**Photo 6.**
*'National Costumes of Russian Karelia,' as published in the magazine* Suomen Kuvalehti *in 1879 (No. 157, p. 152).*

A year after Berner's travels in White Sea Karelia with his companions, Swedish anthropologists Gustaf Retzius and Erik Nordenson advanced in the southern parts of Karelia. Near the end of summer 1873, they visited Eno and Ilomantsi, then travelled through Savonlinna and Lake Ladoga to the region of Sortavala and Impilahti. They also traversed the St Petersburg area to Nizhny Novgorod and Kazan before winter arrived. Prior to their arrival in Karelia, this group had conducted field research in Tavastia (Häme). Their overarching goal was to specify which features are typical of Finnish tribes by applying anthropological methods such as measuring features, taking photographs, and collecting hair samples.

The researchers were particularly interested in the size and shape of people's skulls. In the 1840s, Anders Retzius, Gustaf's father, had developed a theory according to which populations could be divided into short- and long-skulled people, where the former represent a more primitive type than long-skulled people. From measurements conducted during their expedition, the researchers deduced Karelians to be short-skulled — though not as short-skulled as the Tavastians living in Western Finland. Compared to them, Karelians had a more well-proportioned head and a 'noble' appearance in general.[43]

The group gathered research material via many distinct methods. They took notes, made drawings, and also sent items of ethnological interest and skulls collected from old graves to Stockholm throughout the summer. Retzius, who was responsible for the photography work, was familiar with the models of anthropometric photography and recorded people's faces from the front and sides.[44] This focus on head shape may have accounted for the absence of full-body photographs and nudes from his Finnish imagery. That said, Retzius did take photographs of landscapes, buildings, and groups of people. Most of the expedition's original photographs have been lost or destroyed, but copies of printing blocks reproducing their content were widely distributed in the 1870s and 1880s.

Expeditioners' route in Finland was determined by shipping lanes and traversable carriage roads, familiar landscapes, and events where many people could be observed at the same time. Although Retzius was a researcher of medicine, ethnological interest governed how he approached people and the environment. His preconceptions of Karelian

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[43] Retzius, *Finska kranier*..., 161–162, 169; Hannes Sihvo, "Gustaf Retziuksen tutkimusmatka Karjalaan 1873," in Saima-Liisa Laatunen (ed.) *Tieteen matkamiehiä*. Yearbook of the Kalevala Society 57 (Helsinki & Porvoo: WSOY, 1977), 55.

[44] For discussion of developing the standards, see Anne Maxwell, *Colonial Photography and Exhibitions: Representations of the 'Native' and the Making of European Identities* (London & New York: Leicester University Press, 2000), 240–242 and Frank Spencer, "Some notes on the attempt to apply photography to anthrometry during the second half of the nineteenth century," in Elisabeth Edwards (ed.) *Anthropology and Photography 1860–1920* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1992), 99–107.

culture were based on literature, especially the *Kalevala*. Retzius searched for elements that typified the region, or what he regarded as typical. In Finland, he was looking for chimneyless houses, rune-singers, and Finnish zithers. He did not manage to find the latter two before arriving in Ilomantsi, one of Finland's easternmost parishes. As for the third, while Retzius and Nordenson were measuring and photographing people in the parish courthouse, an old man named Jaakko Parppei was brought there. Retzius later stated that he felt as if the mythical Väinämöinen[45] himself had arrived before them — Parppei was a revered nebulous figure of yore who enchanted his listeners by playing the zither and humming old poems.[46]

Retzius photographed Parppei outdoors, both against the wall and in nature. In the latter composition, Parppei sits on a rock with his zither in his arms while gazing into the distance. Behind him are a glade, young birches, and a roundpole fence. The rune-singer's dominant feature is his white beard, reminiscent of Väinämöinen's in older paintings, however much his clothes may point interpretations to his own time. An illustration based on the photograph delicately defines Parppei's Homeric features. Also, the illustrator rendered his beard a bit longer and thicker, his head higher, and the man himself slightly taller.

No-one in Ilomantsi could have guessed how much power the encounter between Parppei and Retzius was to gain in the history of Karelian romanticism, known as Karelianism.[47] When Retzius chose to print the picture of the rune-singer on the first spread of his noteworthy monograph *Finska kranier*, or 'Finnish Crania,' released in 1878 and presented at the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris in the same year,[48] it became symbolic of the culture of the *Kalevala*. The picture was soon reprinted in many other publications, with very different approaches and in several languages.[49] The photograph portraying Parppei eclipsed all of Retzius's other photographs in fame. However, particularly as he was among the first to photograph rural people of Finland in their actual living environment, some of his photographs of buildings and landscapes (in Sortavala, for example) can help reveal plenty of information about the people and their way of life, upon close reading.

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[45] Väinämöinen is the central character of the Kalevala, a rune-singer and seer with godly features.
[46] Retzius, *Finska kranier*..., 135–136.
[47] Sihvo, "Gustaf Retziuksen tutkimusmatka Karjalaan 1873," 143.
[48] Kerstin Smeds, *Helsingfors — Paris. Finland på världsutställningarna 1851–1900* (Helsinki: Svenska litteratursällskapet & Finska historiska samfundet, 1996), 166.
[49] See also, for example, Jean Louis Armand de Quatrefages de Bréau, *Hommes fossils et hommes sauvages* (Paris: Librairie J. B. Baillière et fils, 1884), 614, *https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/176864#page/4/mode/1up* (accessed December 15, 2020).

**Photo 7.**
*By Gustaf Retzius. An illustration of the photograph depicting Jaakko Parppei (1873) in* Finska kranier *('Finnish Crania').*

**Photo 8.**
*By Gustaf Retzius. 'Men at the Courthouse,' Ilomantsi, from 1873. Nordiska Museet.*

Retzius photographed groups of men in front of buildings in Ilomantsi and Impilahti. The presence of the camera is clearly articulated in their positions and looks. Also, the negatives record various objects that were originally intended to be cropped out during the printing and illustration stages. In some of the photographs taken in Ilomantsi, a bell tower stands on the left side, and people observing the occasion are on the right. These reveal how the photographer constructed a composition based on his vision and orchestrated everything that happens in it.

The separate elements of the photograph remind us of the network of complex factors that surround every photograph. The corner of the image leads the observers to think about the occasion, the season, the wind and weather. The presence of the onlookers conjures musings on networks in society and emotions such as curiosity and awe evoked by the occasion. The clothes of the people posing for the camera, their expressions and hand positions, and the way they hold their hats all raise questions about their background and the power relations within and beyond their group. All these aspects are closely entwined with the concept of context density introduced by Edwards.[50]

The choices that Retzius made, originally as a photographer and then as a user of the material he had compiled, were by no means arbitrary. They reflect not the people he photographed but, rather more, his own culture and his personal needs. As a photographer, Retzius remained in the role of an outside observer for whom a 'type' was more important than individuality. The portraits fulfil the imperatives of anatomical illustrations.[51] They do not convey any signs of communication with the people being photographed. The occasions arranged by the researchers for measuring and photographing people were usually voluntary but did not place all participants on equal footing. The researchers represented a foreign language, knowledge, and power, whereas the power of the subjects was confined largely to refusing to co-operate.[52] The standpoint of a researcher taking photographs is evident also in the paucity of information gathered about the people classified. Even Jaakko Parppei interested Retzius not so much as a person; rather, he was a discovery. The photography was accompanied by measuring Parppei, taking his

[50] Edwards, "Negotiating Spaces," 263.
[51] Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," 345.
[52] Christian Lovén, "Till kännedom om de finska folkstammarnes raskarakterer," *Tidskrift för Antropologi och kulturhistoria* 1: 9 (1876): 12, *http://runeberg.org/tfantrop/* (accessed December 15, 2020).

zither and clothes to a museum in Stockholm,[53] and later presenting these on a wax sculpture representing an idealised rune-singer at the *Exposition Universelle*.[54]

As the 1880s progressed, the expeditions became broader in scope and more fully defined. Alongside traditions, language, and culture, there was increasing interest in nature and its resources. Research in Northwest Russia focused on the Kola Peninsula and the development of the fishing industry on its northern shores.[55] A large Finnish expedition group headed to the peninsula to investigate the region's flora, fauna, and geology in summer 1887, with the inspiration cited as lying partially in the discovery of the Northern Passage and partially in nationalism, which encouraged possessing extensive knowledge of the regions to the east of Finland.

The youngest member of the expedition group, geologist and photographer Wilhelm Ramsay, returned to the Kola region on six occasions, with expeditions in the early 20th century taking him to locations such as the Kanin Peninsula and both Northern Karelia and Olonets Karelia.[56] Ramsay's high-quality photographs are focused primarily on geology and geography, but they provide interesting views of the northern regions' urban areas and industries too. The photographs differ in content from those reflecting the perspective of humanist-oriented researchers. While they were more past-oriented, Ramsay enthusiastically recorded the present of his time and its various developments.

In addition to Ramsay, the Kola Peninsula was photographed by another member of the expedition group, botanist A. O. Kihlman. Also, the leader of the expedition group, zoologist K. A. Palmén, had studied photography. He continued the photography work in the Kola Peninsula with a further expedition, in 1889. More than a hundred of the resulting photographs depicting nature have survived.[57]

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[53] Gustaf Retzius, *Finland i Nordiska museet. Några bidrag till kännedomen on finnarnes gamla odling* (Helsinki: G. W. Edlund, 1881), 144, *https://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/101429/Finland_i_Nordiska_Museet_n_gr.pdf?sequence=1* (accessed December 15, 2020).

[54] Daniel Alan DeGroff, "Artur Hazelius and the Ethnographic Display of the Scandinavian Peasantry: A Study in Context and Appropriation," *European Review of History — Revue européenne d'histoire* 19: 2 (2012): 162–163; Smeds, *Helsingfors — Paris*, 162–163.

[55] Lajus, "Colonization of the Russian North," 170.

[56] Martti Lehtinen, "Ramsay, Wilhelm," *Kansallisbiografia-verkkojulkaisu. Studia Biographica 4* (Helsinki: SKS, 1997–) May 4, 2001, *https://kansallisbiografia.fi/kansallisbiografia/henkilo/7118* (accessed December 15, 2020); see also the information Kalevi Rikkinen provided about the expedition: Kalevi Rikkinen, *Suuri Kuolan retki 1887* (Helsinki: Otava, 1980).

[57] These can be found in the collection *Tutkijoiden Lappi* at the Oulu University Library; see *http://www.kirjasto.oulu.fi/lapinkuvat/kuva-albumit* (accessed December 15, 2020).


**Photo 9.**
*By Wilhelm Ramsay. Mount Kivakka (Kesten'ga/Kiestinki), 1891. Finnish Literature Society.*


**Photo 10.**
*By Wilhelm Ramsay. Mount Kivakka (Kesten'ga/Kiestinki), 1891. Finnish Literature Society.*


**Photo 11.**
*Wilhelm Ramsay's 'In the Village of Seesjärvi,' 1901. Finnish Literature Society.*

Karelianism reinforced by nationalism peaked in Finland as the 19th century drew to a close, in the era referred to as the golden age of art. The beginnings of so-called High Karelianism are commonly linked to an expedition by two artists in particular. In summer 1890, the Swedish Sparre and both Akseli Gallen-Kallela and his wife Mary Slöör visited the villages of Northern Karelia twice. Two years later, Sparre set off again. This time, the expeditioner, who had been born in Italy and now lived in Finland, was accompanied by sculptor Emil Wikström to Northern Karelia and remained there for several weeks. After that, he visited Russian Karelia with wife Eva Mannerheim in 1893.[58] On his first expedition, he had produced several illustrations; in 1892, he has additional tools — Sparre was carrying a camera. Several copies of the photographs have survived in Finland, and eight of them were published in his book about his travels in the region, *Kalevalan kansaa katsomassa* ('Visiting the People of the *Kalevala*') in 1930. The book contains many illustrations also.

Sparre, whose skills extended from painting to furniture design, was never characterised as a photographer. For many artists of his generation, photography represented a technique, one that could be used for drawing out and examining visual themes.

[58] Helena Lonkila, "Syvällä Sydänmaassa: Yrjö Blomstedtin ja Victor Sucksdorffin Kainuu," PhD diss. (University of Jyväskylä, 2016), 113, *https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/48751* (accessed December 15, 2020.)

When they fashioned many types of image on the basis of the motifs they identified, it was not always obvious which came first. A good example is the photograph corresponding to the illustration of the Nokeus village landscape, signed by Sparre in 1892 and now found in the Press Photo Archive of the Finnish Heritage Agency.[59] Sparre himself described the artistic results of his trips to Northern Karelia as modest.[60] However, his illustrations are accorded respect as representations of the Karelian lifestyle. For instance, the National Museum of the Republic of Karelia, in Petrozavodsk (Petroskoi), chose Sparre's illustration titled *Opas* (literally, 'Guide') for its ethnographic exhibition as an example of a Karelian hunter.[61]


**Photo 12.**
*Louis Sparre's 'Woman Reaping with a Scythe,' 1892. Finnish Heritage Agency's Press Photo Archive (JOKA).*

[59] Sparre, *Kalevalan kansaa katsomassa*, 79.
[60] Ibid, 164.
[61] Ibid, 101. The drawing was presented as 'Carelian Hunter with Firelock, 1893' in this ethnographic exhibition, in 2019.

**Photo 13.**

*By Y. Blomstedt & V. J. Sucksdorff. Residents celebrating the 'Jortana water blessing' festivities on the shore of the Rukozero (Rukajärvi), 1894. Finnish Heritage Agency.*

**Photo 14.**

*By Y. Blomstedt & V. J. Sucksdorff. Burial crosses in the Luvozero (Luvajärvi) cemetery, 1894. Finnish Heritage Agency.*

In summer 1894, I. K. Inha and his companion linguist K. F. Karjalainen were not the only ones who travelled in the northern town of Olonets (Aunus) and White Sea Karelia. The expedition by architects Yrjö Blomstedt and Victor Joachim Sucksdorff gave Finland 150 photographs and roughly 500 illustrations of Russian Karelia and Kainuu. The two researchers were interested primarily in buildings and textiles. After the expedition, they published a broad-based introduction to the material culture of the northern portion of Russian Karelia. This work, *Karjalaisia rakennuksia ja koristemuotoja* ('Karelian Buildings and Forms of Ornamentation'), was released in two volumes, in 1900 and 1901.[62]

In Finland, the Karelian style of wood-based construction and decorative ornaments were viewed as products of the same spirit that had yielded the *Kalevala*.[63] Researcher Helena Lonkila draws a connection between the Blomstedt–Sucksdorff expedition and discovery, exploration, and visualisation of the real world as reflected in the *Kalevala*, writing: 'Inspired by the *Kalevala*, artists set out on their expeditions with the epic in their pocket. The Karelian culture, and more broadly folk culture, was read and written through the verses of the *Kalevala*.' Lonkila emphasises that 'the *Kalevala*, its discovery and creation as well as examination and reminiscence of the phenomenon' were exploited to 'replace the already weak connections of poems to the real world.'[64]

Lonkila's description can be applied not just to Blomstedt and Sucksdorff but also to Inha. However, the latter's work surpassed all his predecessors' and contemporaries' photographs of Northern Karelia in both quality and quantity, and it is impossible to evaluate any of the material he inspired without taking his style into account. There are many reasons for his dominant influence: he stayed in White Sea Karelia much longer than the others did and always concentrated on photography. Furthermore, he had excellent equipment at his disposal, coupled with training and practical experience that contributed to high-quality output. He was technically gifted, visually insightful, and socially skilled.

Also, Inha's method of exhibiting and disseminating his photographs worked exceptionally well. New photographs of Northern Karelia were displayed in an exhibition in Helsinki soon after his return, in late 1894, and it was not long before the first image plates for books were carved from them. His photographs were sold in Ståhlberg's photography shop as prints, they were reproduced for the latest postcards, and corresponding illustrations accompanied numerous magazine articles. When the first edition of Inha's book *Kalevalan laulumailta*, whose title translates to 'From the Song Lands of the *Kalevala*,' was released, in 1911, the Finnish audience were already familiar with the photographs used in it.

Inha's work overshadows that of the other photographers. For this reason, very few Finns know that Blomstedt and Sucksdorff photographed the same cemetery in Luvozero (Luvajärvi) as Inha in summer 1894, and it is not easy for a layman to differentiate between

[62] Lonkila, "Syvällä Sydänmaassa," 13, 16.
[63] Ritva Wäre, *Rakennettu suomalaisuus: Nationalismi viime vuosisadan vaihteen arkkitehtuurissa ja sitä koskevissa kirjoituksissa* (Helsinki: Suomen Muinaismuistoyhdistys, 1991), 125.
[64] Lonkila, "Syvällä Sydänmaassa," 37.

photographs by the various authors of the day. For instance, Sparre had illustrated burial monuments in Luvozero and Miinoa, and the same motifs were visible when Inha later moved on to the cemeteries in Kostomuksha (Kostamus) and Keret, while Blomstedt and Sucksdorff visited the graveyards of Miinoa and Rukavaara. Also, other themes for which Inha became known had already featured in photographs by Blomstedt and Sucksdorff: men playing Finnish skittles, round-dancing women, religious festivals, and landscapes of rapids. The architects seldom took photographs of people, but they were more versatile than Inha in photographing buildings and gardens. It seems that the only advantage displayed throughout his imagery lay in higher quality.

The photographs of people that Inha had taken in Northern Karelia differed from the mainstream of the time, in which recognisability was considered the most important factor. For Inha, the most crucial element was found in the dynamics of personal presence, which was emphasised in his photographs of women and children. Whereas women commonly remained distant in photographs from the late 19th century and children were regarded as insignificant, Inha focused his objectives directly on women and children. He showed them waking up on their beds or going about their usual business at home or on the village streets. Random people became special through Inha's emphatic gaze elevating children as individuals, complete personalities. Moreover, he did not hold back from presenting women on equal footing and as active agents in the community.

The rune-singers photographed by Inha were always men, even though women also sang for him. In his images, the counterpart of a masculine singer was a feminine weeper. For instance, Inha captured a series of numerous photographs portraying a weeper named Maura in Jyvöälahti, who posed for him both standing and sitting, clad in various outfits. His most well-known weeper photograph was composed at the cemetery located to the north of Lake Ladoga, in Suistamo, in 1895.

Western photographers were fascinated by cemeteries mainly for the contrast against Protestant graveyards. Karelian cemeteries were not merely burial or memorial sites but also spaces for meeting and for transcending boundaries, regulated by strict social norms. Cemeteries, chapels, and churches alike were environments that connected Karelia's world of beliefs and symbols with visible, material, and hence visually representational structures.[65] The silence and stillness of the photograph depicting the Suistamo cemetery radiate contextual density, evocative of the above-mentioned active presence of absent elements.[66] Young girls, women, lamentations, graveside memorials, the forest, and exceptional bathing with light fill the photograph with signs. They inspire the observer to perceive such continuities or abstractions as sanctity and death, which are not visible in the photographs themselves.

[65] Aija Paakkala, *Kylillä Kajalassa. Karjalaisen asuinrakentamisen ilme* (Helsinki: Rakennuskirja, 1985), 37.
[66] Edwards, "Negotiating Spaces," 263, 268.


**Photo 15.**
*I. K. Inha's 'Little Girl Giving a Nose Kiss,' taken in Ukhta (Uhtua) in 1894. Finnish Literature Society.*

**Photo 16.**
*I. K. Inha. The cemetery in Suistamo in 1895. Finnish Museum of Photography.*

**More than Photographs**

All these people who photographed Karelia represented an iconic phenomenon of the last few decades of the 19th century: that of the expeditioner and data-collector, for whom photography offered a new means of recording data. Photography was not regarded as art at the time — the medium was considered mechanical and neutral at its core. Our time, in contrast, approaches the notion of neutrality in photographs as an illusion. The image of Karelia as conveyed in the old photographs visualising myths is a narrow and fragmented cropping of something resembling a reality. At the same time, it is more or less the only widely recognised image of these lands.

The expeditions that produced these photographs were brave in many respects, but they were also largely predetermined. The photographers focused on what was achievable and technically possible along their route, and their voyages were aligned with the interests of the era. They were driven by personal curiosity and ideals, but also by a thirst for adventure and by financial motives and political ambitions. Seemingly innocent photographs provided the power structures with valuable information about the population, geography, geology, and natural resources.

The photographers' voyages in Northern Karelia followed in the footsteps of Lönnrot. These men visited the same villages one after another, met the same people, and explored the same destinations. Their routes, local guides, boatmen, and lodgings too were the same as other Karelianists'. The photographers thoroughly swept this geographically small poetry-dominated area and turned out a visual summary with the same spirit, referring back to Mitchell's definition of a meta-medium.[67] Ever since, it has inspired new imageries, along with many other means of expression.

The earliest photographic material from Karelia came into existence at a time when modernisation was bringing radical changes to lifestyles on the photographers' doorstep. Karjalainen points to a desire to capture 'the ideal of originality and pristineness, from the multivalued societies to the communities of unity and social cohesion.'[68] Awakened by clear change casting its shadow over the pre-industrial communities of Europe, this collective desire transformed some of the photographs into master images, with ability to spread across national and regional culture boundaries, thus rooting themselves as an ingredient in larger identity.

Master images get replicated and repeated. They live both in the past and in the present, and they are not only images but also symbols.[69] Their symbolism makes the images permanent and fills their surroundings with constantly shifting contextual

[67] Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*, 294.
[68] Karjalainen, *Kantakuvat*, 41.
[69] Ibid, 21, 32.

density. For instance, the photographs Inha took in Karelian villages in 1894 have been published time and time again in recent years, in both Finland and Russia, and they appeal to newer generations. They reinforce stereotypes and provide a spiritual safe haven, to which the observers can withdraw with their interpretations.

The repressive regimes articulated by the photographs and photographic archives representing the regions of Karelia have not yet received extensive research. What we do know is that the Karelianists considered themselves mediators between past and future. As photographers, they focused on what seemed original to them: rune-singing, spinning at a spindle wheel, festive folk costumes, bear-hunting, and sacrificial feasts. They cropped things they considered inappropriate or worthless out from their photographs. The world of the ethnographically oriented photographers in Northern Karelia was devoid of trade, sea connections, imported goods, schools, government, and officials. These were overlooked or cropped out. The Karelia presented here had no quarrelling, no cattle-tending, and no felling of trees for the new sawmill industry. The sounds of real life were stilled and modernisation was arrested when the photographers constructed their own Karelia with its exoticism, myths, and folk beliefs.

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