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Cultural Landscape Dynamics of Transboundary Areas: A Case Study of the Karelian Isthmus

Tatiana Isachenko

Abstract: Transboundary landscapes are the territories most prone to change. Their dominant cultural landscape is determined not only by natural processes, ethnic features, internal state politics, and foreign politics but also by the human memory and existing mental space. The goal of the research presented in this article was to demonstrate how the change in political borders influenced the Karelian landscape. Ethnic changes, and the corresponding changes in how the landscape was viewed, led to an altered pattern of land use, which sometimes resulted in the creation of an almost new type of cultural landscape. The ways in which the landscape existed in the minds of the people and in the attitudes of local authorities could also bring about a change in the landscape.

The Karelian Isthmus (the territory of Russia adjoining the state border with Finland), which has belonged to different states and has repeatedly changed its ethnic structure, was studied as a transboundary cultural landscape. The study focused most specifically on the local cultural landscape at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries, when the Karelian Isthmus became a sort of bridge connecting Russia and the countries of the European Community.

Dominant and subdominant cultural landscapes were examined, based on the author’s field research and interviews. During the last one hundred years, there have been three main stages in the development of cultural landscapes in the Karelian Isthmus—Finnish, Soviet, and Russian (post-Soviet)—as well as two transition periods when restructuring of the settlement system and land use took place. The three dominant landscape types (agricultural; rural-agricultural; and collective-garden and recreational) that correspond to the three main stages are considered in this article, as are the three subdominant cultural landscape types (military, estate, and countryside). These transboundary territories are unstable, most of them belonging to relict landscapes, the traditional features of which would need to be maintained. The preservation and development of transboundary landscapes are a concern of all neighboring countries.

Key Words: Cultural landscape, transboundary landscape, the Karelian Isthmus, landscape change

Introduction

Today, the term “cultural landscape” is in widespread use and, as is the case with the term “ecology,” its meaning has become diversified. Initially, cultural landscape referred to an actual territory, with a given environment that had been used for a long period by humans and been changed by economic, social, and intellectual activity (Kalutskov 2000, 2008; Sauer 1925; Vedenin 1990). The natural basis of a cultural landscape, and its evolution under human influence, is a traditional subject of study for geographers. In parallel, those in the Humanities study how the same landscape is reflected in various cultures, therefore making it possible to transform a material object into a specific philosophical category. In this article, the cultural landscape and its dynamics are considered from the point of view of physical and areal geography.

Transboundary Territories: Border Changes and the Modification of Cultural Landscape

Transboundary territories are appropriate for studying the structure and typology of cultural landscapes, in particular because their development has been strongly influenced by changes in their national domination and ethnic composition.
A great deal of modern geography has been devoted to boundary studies, including its classification and generalization (see, e.g., Kolosov 2003; Kolossov and O’Loughlin 1998; Rumley and Minghi 1991). The study of how cultural landscapes interrelate with boundary territories can be divided into two research periods. In the first period (beginning in the mid-1950s), boundary territories were investigated using traditional geographical methods, and the borders were considered according to their territorial aspect; this was followed by the development of the concept of a (trans)boundary landscape and an examination of the evolution of (trans)boundary territories. In the second period (beginning in the 1990s and ongoing), along with traditional research, a postmodernist approach has prevailed. Borders are considered both a territorial concept and a social construction. Finnish geographer Anssi Paasi’s 1996 study made a substantial contribution to this research. Paasi’s work and other new perspectives have led to the evolution of different approaches to transboundary landscape research, approaches that take into account ethnic, social, cultural, and mental aspects (Häkli and Kaplan 2002; Herb and Kaplan 1999; Landgren and Häyrynen 1997; Martinez 1994; Migdal 2004).

The goal of the present research was to demonstrate how the shape and image of the Karelian territory were influenced by the change in its political borders. Ethnic changes, and the corresponding changes in how the landscape was viewed, led to an altered pattern of land use, which sometimes resulted in the creation of an almost new type of cultural landscape. Because mental notions of landscape are capable of changing physical landscape, it is important to examine not only the political, social, and cultural roles of borders but also how the shifting of borders can change the landscape and its social functions.

The phenomenon of ethnic transboundarization took on new importance for post-Soviet Russia after the collapse of the USSR in 1991. The transformation of the previously purely formal boundaries between the USSR’s Soviet Republics into state boundaries inevitably resulted in a change in regional cultural landscapes. These landscapes, the long-time development of which has been determined by their transboundary position, are analyzed in this article.

The Karelian Isthmus as a Transboundary Territory

The object of this study, the Karelian Isthmus, has belonged to different states and has repeatedly changed its national composition. Today, its territory may be likened to a bridge or corridor connecting Russia and the countries of the European Community. Transboundary cooperation has developed progressively throughout the world, and there are now dozens of examples of transboundary (ethno-cultural and economic) regions in Western Europe. Indeed, the core of West-European economic integration is transboundarization (Gerasimenko 2005). Every year, more than a million people cross the boundary between Russia and Finland in the Karelian Isthmus. Moreover, the construction of the Skandinavia motorway in the early 1990s is a major reason why the Vyborg custom office today leads the North-Western federal okrug (district) in collecting federal revenues. This influx of people clearly has an influence on the image and outlook of the territory’s present landscapes.

Situated in the northwest of European Russia, the Karelian Isthmus divides Lake Ladoga and the Gulf of Finland, and includes the state boundary between Russia and Finland (fig. 1). This isthmus has long been a zone of interest for various states. A lengthy conflict over the isthmus between Novgorod Russia and Sweden ended with the Orehovets (Pähkinälinna) Treaty of 1323, which divided the territory into a western (Swedish) and an eastern (Russian) part. With the signing of the Stolbovo Treaty in 1617, the Karelian Isthmus became entirely Swedish. By that time, the Karelian, Russian, and Ingrian Orthodox population, in particular, had been almost entirely replaced by Finnish Lutherans. The Great Northern War of 1700–1721 resulted in most of the isthmus being included in the Russian Empire and the new state border between Sweden and Russia being moved to a slightly more southern position than the current Finnish-Russian boundary. After the war, Russian immigrants streamed to the isthmus, especially to the southern and eastern parts that had belonged to Russia since before the seventeenth century.
In 1809, following the last Russian-Swedish war, Russia conquered a territory called New Finland, where the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland had been created, with its own constitution, a diet, and a state language (Swedish until 1863, then Finnish and Swedish). The boundary between the Grand Duchy and the other Russian provinces actually became a historical and geographical frontier, which in turn determined the peculiarity of the modern cultural landscapes of the Karelian Isthmus (fig.1). The Russian Revolution of 1917 led to the transformation of the Grand Duchy into the independent state of Finland. Later, as a result of World War II, the northern and central parts of the Karelian Isthmus were ceded to the USSR, which then joined the territory with the existing Karelian-Finnish Soviet Republic and, after 1944, joined part of it with the Leningrad oblast (province). In just a few months in 1944, more than 200,000 Finnish people were evacuated from the isthmus (Isachenko, G. A. 1998); the area was subsequently repopulated by migrants from the central and northern provinces of European Russia: Vologda, Kirov, Vladimir, Kalinin (Tver), and Yaroslavl (Balashov and Stepakov 2001). After the war, a toponymic sterilization of the territory took place, when nearly all the Finnish names of villages, cities, lakes, and rivers were replaced by Russian names, and the whole history of the Karelian Isthmus was erased and rewritten (Balashov 2003).

Today, the central and northern parts of the Karelian Isthmus (the subjects of this study) form Vyborg and Priozerksy administrative rayons in the Leningrad oblast. The 2002 census results for this territory indicated a population of 256,400. It is interesting to compare this figure to the one given in Balashov’s 1996 study, which noted that the total number of inhabitants of the Karelian Isthmus evacuated to Finland between 1939 and 1940 was 295,900.

The centuries-long hostilities between Russia and Sweden and political and ethnic changes in the twentieth century led to the creation of various multi-layered cultural landscapes in the Karelian Isthmus, which today are undergoing continual change. It is especially interesting to study the specific aspects and dynamics of its cultural landscapes at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries. After 1991, major changes took place in the isthmus. Previously restricted borders became accessible, allowing Finnish people originating from the area to visit their native places. The local people’s interest in the history of the territory increased, and the first guidebooks, local history periodicals (Balashov 1996, 2003; Kraevedcheskie zapiski 2000, 2004; Vuoksa 2001, 2003), and even manuals (Dmitriev and Lihoi 2003) were published. In many respects, the mental layer of the landscape changed.

Fig. 1.
The Karelian Isthmus
a – The boundary between the Grand Duchy of Finland and other Russian provinces (1809–1917)
b – The modern boundary between the Republic of Karelia and the Leningrad region
c – The modern boundary between Russia and Finland
Research Methodology

When a cultural landscape changes, its natural base remains its most stable part. The features of relief, geological structure, water bodies, and natural vegetation are considered the basis of a cultural landscape. In existing physical-geographic regionalization (Isachenko, Dashkevich, and Karnauhova 1965), the northern part of the Karelian Isthmus is situated on the edge of the Baltic crystalline shield, and the central and southern parts are mainly within the limits of low plains covered by quaternary deposits (mainly sands).

The historical-geographic analysis undertaken in this study has allowed the specific land use and changes in the landscape pattern to be described, according to the historical period of development of the cultural landscape. On the landscape map, several layers reflecting the specific development of the Karelian Isthmus have been used, and in every subsequent layer, the elements inherited from the previous stages of development have been marked, especially the critical periods in which the type of cultural landscape changed.

The author used field and cameral study methods. With the exception of landscape research, the fieldwork included interviews for clarifying the landscape preferences of local residents and visitors and for investigating local people’s perception of the cultural landscape. The analysis of different-time maps and photographic data was carried out, as was toponymic research. The classification of the cultural landscapes of the Karelian Isthmus was constructed as a matrix, which includes both its natural basis and specific landscape functions and development patterns. Based on these functions and development patterns, several types of modern cultural landscape were identified: agricultural, rural, town, estate, collective-garden, military, mining, industrial, recreational, and countryside. Each type may have been subdivided further, depending on its position in the system of regional physical-geographic units.

Political Changes and the Changing Dominant Cultural Landscape of the Karelian Isthmus

During the last one hundred years, the Karelian Isthmus has undergone three main stages of cultural landscape development: Finnish, Soviet, and Russian (post-Soviet). In addition, there were two transition periods, during which the settlement system and the land-use pattern were restructured (table 1).
### Table 1: Periods of cultural landscape development in the Karelian Isthmus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Main stages and transition periods of development</th>
<th>Time period (years)</th>
<th>Dominant system of settlement</th>
<th>Dominant cultural landscape</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>Highest degree of agricultural development; many villages with isolated houses, small agricultural areas determined by natural landscape</td>
<td>Up to 1939 and 1941–44</td>
<td>Point (distance between houses up to 1 kilometer within village limits)</td>
<td>Agricultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet</td>
<td>Ethnic change and adaptation of the incoming population Propagation of collective mentality</td>
<td>1940–41 and 1944–50</td>
<td>Creation of large villages with streets (distance between houses from 50 to 100 meters)</td>
<td>Rural-agricultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organization of collective and state farms: enlargement of rural settlements and agricultural areas, and abandonment of remote arable lands and hay meadows Creation of massifs of collective gardens Links with natural landscape became weaker</td>
<td>1950–91</td>
<td>Linear (along streets in large settlements and agrotowns)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Changing people’s consciousness from collective to individual Change in foreign and internal politics (change of frontier zone regime)</td>
<td>1991–2000</td>
<td>Formation of dacha (cottage) areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(post-Soviet)</td>
<td>Degradation of collective and state farms; abandonment of arable lands and hay meadows Recreational reconquista Gradual conversion of collective gardens into cottage areas, and creation of new cottage areas Links with natural landscape become closer</td>
<td>2000 to present</td>
<td>Linear - areal (streets in villages and agrotowns; and clusters or massifs of collective gardens and cottage areas)</td>
<td>Collective garden and recreational</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* The table is based on the author’s 2004–06 fieldwork results. The cultural landscape typology was elaborated for some key plots and extrapolated for all investigated areas. Detailed characteristics of the Pukinniem-Berezovo plot have been published (Isachenko, T. 2005; Isachenko, T. E. 2007).

*Note:* Words in italics specify the transition periods in the history of the cultural landscape formation of the isthmus.
Dominant Types of Cultural Landscapes in the Karelian Isthmus

Agricultural

The highest point of agricultural development in the isthmus had been reached by the end of the 1930s. During this period, all areas that could be used for agriculture were exploited, the degree and character of use preconditioned by the natural features of the landscape. The settlement system, which had been established centuries before, was determined, first of all, by the presence of landscape sites appropriate for agriculture and settlement. The first settlements were founded close to morainic, sandy hills and granite ridges (selkä in Finnish; selga in Karelian); the lake terraces with clay soils were settled and developed later (Granö 1953). The majority of settlements in the northern part of the isthmus occupied areas of granite ridges and lake terraces, with houses built on the selga and fields and hay meadows created on the terraces (Isachenko, G. A. 1998).

The agricultural type of cultural landscape dominated the territory. Houses or farms (talo in Finnish) were the centers of local development and were usually gathered in villages, where the distance between houses could sometimes exceed one kilometer. The number of farms making up a village was determined by the presence of agricultural areas; that is, it was preconditioned by the landscape features. Given the structure of these settlements, the landscape cannot be qualified as rural—it was merely agricultural with a rural component. Managed forests were also included in the structure of agricultural use, as they represented part of the populated space.

Beginning in 1940 and up to 1950, sweeping ethnic change modified the area’s development pattern and its cultural landscape. The Finnish population, which had lived according to the landscapes of the Karelian Isthmus, was replaced by natives of the central part of European Russia, who found the idea of living in isolated houses surrounded by taiga forest inconceivable. Thus, the idea of village enlargement was conceived, supported by the official Soviet ideology of collectivism. In the beginning, however, the growth of these settlements did not impact the structure of the cultural landscape to a great extent, since small villages of twenty to thirty houses could support the existing (Finnish by origin) land-use and agricultural systems.

Rural-agricultural

Communist party and Soviet authorities further enlarged villages in the 1950s, a policy that was to have irreversible consequences. Houses from remote villages were moved into the center of collective farms (kolkhozes) and state farms (sovkhozes), and small and remote fields were deserted. The policy frequently contradicted commonsense: because of the very brindled landscape structure (e.g., plots with crystalline rocks), it was not possible to create large massifs of arable land. At the same time, settlements and fields situated far from the central village (poselok in Russian) were abandoned, thus, beginning the desolation of the agricultural landscape. The system of land use, formed over centuries, had been disturbed. New villages, with five to ten times more houses than in the Finnish period, formed a new type of rural cultural landscape that sometimes had no connection with agriculture. Some large settlements became centers of fishing or mining (mainly granite and sand excavation); others, due to their size and function, became known as agrotowns (agrorod in Russian), among them Pervomayskoe (former Kivennapa), Michurinskoe (Valkjärv) and Leninskoye (Haapala) (fig. 2). As these large settlements (they were not formal towns) became centers of cultural landscape development, the extent of agricultural land decreased.

By this point in time, the number of rural settlements in the area of the Karelian Isthmus that was ceded to the USSR in 1940 had decreased tenfold (Isachenko G. A. 1998). However, despite their reduced numbers, villages continued to play an important role in the landscape, and this resulted in a new type of cultural landscape in the Karelian Isthmus: rural-agricultural.
In the 1960s and 1970s, the first collective gardens (massifs of land plots, measuring from 600 to 1200 square meters, that were designated for gardening use by urban settlers) appeared, and their role in the landscape began to increase.

Collective-garden and Recreational

During the 1990s, following the collapse of the USSR in 1991 and the subsequent disintegration of state farms, former arable lands, hay meadows, and pastures became overgrown and covered by forest. In some parts of the isthmus, up to 68 percent of the land cultivated before the early 1950s reverted to forest or became paludified (Isachenko and Reznikov 1996). The number of permanent village residents declined sharply, and the transformation of cultural landscapes in desolated and close-to-wild landscapes (Semenov-Tian-Shansky 1928) continued. In parallel, the process of reconquista (the secondary development of previously used areas) began (Isachenko, G. A. 1998). Prior to this period, two factors had limited the construction of summer cottages on the Karelian Isthmus. First, city dwellers were not officially allowed to have summer residences in the country; second, a vast frontier zone with a strict border regime existed. Since the 1990s, however, empty houses in villages and abandoned land plots have been bought by city dwellers (mainly from St. Petersburg) and turned into summer residences (dachas) or, to some extent, used for building permanent suburban housing. The restoration and growth of old collective gardens and the appearance of new garden massifs continued; the areas not suitable for agriculture (e.g., boggy plains and even peat bogs) were taken over first, followed by abandoned agricultural lands. In many respects, large areas of collective gardens now form the image of the cultural landscape of the Karelian Isthmus. A good example of this is the Dunai collective garden, an 18.9-square-kilometer parcel of land not far from the southwestern coast of Lake Ladoga. A new interest has also emerged in the abandoned Finnish villages and houses found on the isthmus: new country houses (cottages) are very often built on their bases.

The postwar growth of St. Petersburg also created the need for new recreation areas. The Karelian Isthmus, thanks to its location and natural conditions, is an ideal area for health resorts, rest houses, and sports centers, including those for alpine skiing. Today, woods, lakes, and the coast of the Gulf of Finland in the Karelian Isthmus are subjected to constant and increasing pressure for recreational use.
For example, although the area of Losevo (formerly Kiviniemi) near the well-known Losevskye Rapids (which were artificially created in 1857) is no bigger than a few square kilometers, several thousands of people often gather there to go rafting and water slaloming and attend tourist festivals and fairs. The area has some rest houses and hotels, but most visitors live in tents and cook over campfires, the consequences of which are littering and destruction of herbaceous vegetation.

As a whole, the agricultural landscape of the Karelian Isthmus is gradually being transformed into a collective-garden and recreational cultural landscape. Also, over time, the small, temporary summerhouses known as dachas are being replaced, one by one, with comfortable cottages, where it is possible to live year-round. Many of these new cottage areas, which are typically closed communities, have been built in different parts of the isthmus since 2007, a process stimulated by its position as a bridge connecting Russia and Europe.

Subdominant Cultural Landscapes of the Karelian Isthmus

Military

Throughout history, the boundary position of the Karelian Isthmus has dictated the existence of a significant number of military cultural landscapes: from ancient fortresses and castles, such as Vyborg, Korela, and Tiversk, to twentieth-century forts and military ranges covering hundreds of square kilometers, such as the still-functioning Rzhevsky range, which is about 750 square kilometers in size (Reznikov and Skolozubova 2003). Most of the ancient military landscapes have been transformed into other types of cultural landscapes; for instance, the castles of Vyborg and Priózersk (formerly Korela and Kexholm) each became the core of towns that were formed long ago. Other military landscapes have never been transformed.

The construction, function, and eventual destruction of the former Ino fortress determined the view, the image, and the perception of the surrounding area. The fortress and its nearby positions, an area of almost three square kilometers, were located near the shore of the Gulf of Finland, ten kilometers from the northwestern edge of St. Petersburg (fig. 1). Begun in 1909, Ino was completed in 1917; several publications (Amirhanov and Tkachenko 2004; Mihalenia 1996, 1997) have described the history of its construction and its eventual destruction. Before the fortress could be constructed, several dachas in the area had to be bought from their owners.

Fig. 3. The former Ino fortress, a pile of the ruins
Over the course of the construction, an artificial gulf was dug, three kilometers of railways and seven kilometers of roads were built around the fortifications, and trees were planted over a 12,000-square-meter area for camouflage. The construction of the fort was more than a military action, however. The owners of the dachas, having sold their land plots to the Russian government, described their act in a petition addressed to Russian war minister V. A. Suhomlinov as “... moral support for the Russian colony living among the Finnish population and the Finnish administration, which are alien by their spirit and their language” (Mihalenia, 1996). In 1918, despite Finland having achieved independence, the fortress remained the property of Russia, but after the Finnish demanded that it be disarmed, the Ino fortress was blown up on May 14, 1918.

During her 2006 fieldwork, the author of this article observed and described the landscape of the former fort. Situated in a low terrace on a thick layer of quaternary deposits, the modern relief is formed by glacial, limno-glacial, and marine accumulation and looks like a slightly inclined sandy plain. Nonetheless, the natural base of the cultural landscape has been seriously modified. In some spots, the relief visually resembles the edge of the Baltic crystalline shield, with open rocks, while in other places, it resembles the hilly cameo landscape of the central Karelian Isthmus. What look like piles of boulders and rocks covered with forest are actually blown-up blocks of concrete (fig. 3); these “boulder” piles and “rock” walls are from five to ten meters high. Because the composition of the concrete resembles limestone, small caves, stalactites, and stalagmites have been created (fig. 4), features that are otherwise typical only to karstic areas.

The artificial water system has been maintained: dikes, sometimes filled with three to five meters of water (fig. 5), surround Ino’s fortifications. The contrast in height between the artificial shafts and the ditches reaches eight meters, giving the area an affinity with the typical hilly cameo landscape.

Because the natural base of this landscape has been irreversibly changed, an essentially new cultural landscape has been created. Nonetheless, the territory of the former fortress still qualifies as a military landscape: it is used for summer military camps, and the fortress’s weapon emplacements, railway lines for moving weapons, trenches, and the like remain visible. In short, the landscape of the Ino fortress has a strong mental component, which inspires first-time visitors to the site to become immersed in its past.
Moreover, the militarization of the region developed in parallel with its economic development. Today, 2 to 3 percent of the territory of the isthmus (not taking into account public, half-accessible military ranges) is used for military purposes (Isachenko, G. A. 1998).

Estate

Special attention must be given to country estate and countryside landscapes, as they bear the hallmarks of both Russian and Finnish cultures. An estate landscape, which is considered to be a nostalgic type of cultural landscape, involves two or more cultures and memory about the past. The country estates typical of the Russian mainland were not common in the Karelian Isthmus, however. Because peasants living on the isthmus had personal freedom and landowners could not force them to do hard labor, major transformations of natural landscapes were generally not possible. As a rule, country estates on the isthmus had only an economic function. Yet, a few of them acquired the visual attributes of a classical country estate landscape; the birch alley in Pukinniemi (now Berezovo), next to the border between Leningrad oblast and the Republic of Karelia, is one example (Isachenko, T. 2005). Another even more brilliant example is Monrepos, which was built near Vyborg in the eighteenth century (Kishiuk 2001). During its creation, two traditions were followed: the mid-European–Russian culture of Romantic parks, with symbols and associations, and the Finnish and Scandinavian traditions of integrating parks into the landscape with as few modifications as possible. The Monrepos landscape was organized in the manner of a building interior: nothing superfluous, each detail useful and beautiful. Still a symbolic landscape for many Finns, Monrepos is well known and is described in numerous Finnish and Russian sources (Gundersen 2003; Kishiuk 2001; Knapas 2003; Kraevedcheskie zapiski 2000, 2004). Today, the estate is both a museum and a popular recreational area, ensuring its maintenance and development.

In contrast, a small country estate located in Asila (Asilanhovi) is almost unknown, even though, despite its small size, it is similar in many respects to Monrepos. In 2004, the author carried out a field study of the Asila estate, which included interviewing local people. This late-eighteenth-century country estate is in the northeastern part of the Karelian Isthmus, now the territory of the Republic of Karelia (fig. 1). Located on the Asilanjoki River, it included a wooden manor house, several stone service buildings, a large agricultural area, and a park.
While the owners of Monrepos (the baronial von Nicolay family, originating from Germany) were able to take complete advantage of the area's potential and create a kind of national landscape, the owners of Asila did not have the financial resources to create a large Romantic park. However, they successfully used the features of the landscape by creating a millpond on the river and an alley that forms the axis of the park. Now the one-hundred-year-old limes, oaks, elms, ashes, larches, firs, and silver poplars are among the highlights of this small park. The lane runs along a small terrace on a slope, continuing to the top of a granite hill, where a beautiful view to the Asilanjoki River valley and surrounding forests opens up. This viewpoint, which is twenty-five meters above the river, visually enlarges the park. In addition to the park, several of the former estate's service buildings are still visible; these stone buildings were used by a farmer, whose attempt to create a farm on the estate was unsuccessful. The manor house burnt down in 2006, and the people who currently live on the Asila estate are neither able nor willing to conserve and develop the estate. Thus, it is now an example of the decay of the area's estate landscape. Although the return of the natural landscape helps to maintain some of its artificial elements, such as its exotic trees and bushes and a modified hydraulic network, this country estate is doomed to return to complete wilderness. For this reason, this type of cultural landscape must be maintained in the local collective memory, since it will likely disappear as the local population changes.

Countryside (Dachas)

Starting in the mid-nineteenth century, rich people’s dachas began to play the role of country retreats, many of them even having a small park next to the house. In the second half of the century, as it became fashionable for the Russian intelligentsia to rent summerhouses in the Finnish territory, the culture of dachas and interest in Finnish culture and traditions increased. At the beginning of the twentieth century, an art exhibition that included the work of Finnish artists Akseli Gallen-Kallela and Pekka Halonen took place in St. Petersburg. These Finnish artists presented images of the Finnish epic poem Kalevala and the natural landscape of Finland that were previously unknown to the public. Those who viewed their artwork observed that the landscape of the Karelian Isthmus was in harmony with its inhabitants, in contrast to the “soulless stones” of St. Petersburg. In response to these new images, a stream of “recreants” rushed to the Karelian Isthmus, the coast of the Gulf of Finland, and the Saimaa Canal, all of which were considered the most prestigious areas for dacha construction. Today, little has changed. Vacationing next to the Finnish border (in Finland and in Russia) is still very popular. Many Russian people rent or buy cottages in southeastern Finland and in the Karelian Isthmus, attracted by the unfamiliar Finnish culture and the picturesque nature of the area.

Although most of the dachas constructed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have been destroyed, some are still used for tourism and recreational activities. Many are in the area of Zelenogorsk (formerly Terijoki), Komarovo (Kellomäki), and Repino (Kuokkala) and leave visitors feeling nostalgic for the Silver Century of the Russian and Finnish cultures that have long since faded away.

Modern dacha settlements are an entirely different type of cultural landscape. Because they do not have the cultural and intellectual “saturation” of the early twentieth-century dachas, their space is organized differently. For example, dachas or cottage areas built in the last decade are surrounded by high fences (four to five meters in height). At the same time, on the Karelian Isthmus, the influence of Finnish culture on the architectural features of some of the newly built summerhouses, and the materials used for their construction, is still evident.

The townscapes of the Karelian Isthmus are not discussed in this article, as the complexity of their structure and their many time layers would require a separate study. However, it is interesting to note that the mix of Swedish, Finnish, and Russian cultures, as well as their adaptation to the surrounding landscape, has resulted in townscapes that do not exist elsewhere in Russia (e.g., Vyborg, Priozersk-Kexholm, and Primorsk-Koivisto).
Conclusion

Transboundary landscapes are the territories most prone to change. The dominant cultural landscapes in these territories change due to boundary shifts and state policy changes. In the case of the Karelian Isthmus, state policy on the new border areas occurred in two stages.

In the first stage, the state policy included: 1) ignoring the near-boundary territory as an area for cooperation between neighboring countries; 2) designating the newly adjoined land as aboriginal and modifying its image according to the state-created image (the territory was not mentioned as a boundary land); 3) changing the local population entirely; and 4) transforming individual mentality into collective consciousness. A major consequence of this policy stage was that, because the new inhabitants did not take into account the specific landscape features of their new and quite different “primeval” landscape, the common cultural landscape changed very quickly and became more homogeneous.

By the second stage, the policy had been substantively modified: 1) cooperation between neighboring countries was oriented to the transboundary territory, which was redefined as a bridge for trade and cultural communication; 2) the area was now designated as multicultural (the territory labeled as a transboundary region); and 3) the collective consciousness was to be gradually transformed into individual mentality. The population had become interested in the history of the territory and more appreciative of the previous layers of the cultural landscape. As a result, the landscape has become more diversified.

The dominant cultural landscape is determined not only by natural processes, ethnic features, internal state politics, and foreign politics but also by the human memory and existing mental space. When a territory is first ceded to a different state, the memory of its past disappears (through toponymic change, destruction of homes and buildings, and sometimes altered land use); later, however, the advantages of utilizing the past to enhance the image of that territory are better understood. Today, the positioning of the Karelian Isthmus as a territory that encompasses both Russian and Finnish-Swedish cultures is very popular. Indeed, surveys of different social groups have shown that this new image has penetrated the mass consciousness. The image is used to attract tourists, and Finnish and Swedish names are extensively used for business enterprises and cottage areas.

Subdominant cultural landscapes of transboundary territories are extremely unstable, most of them belonging to relict types, and their existence is greatly determined by the state. These types of landscapes cannot change or update, only disappear; they occupy a very small area and are strictly associated with certain historical periods. In the first stage of the state policy for the new border territory, such landscapes were either ignored or destroyed. Now, however, growing interest in the area’s local history and in tourism development provides some hope for the restoration of these landscapes. Although maintaining and developing these areas will take a great deal of effort, it is the only way to preserve the territory’s landscape and cultural diversity and to increase its attractiveness. As several researchers have noted, the vast number of changes made at the turn of the twentieth century will not permit the landscape to be returned to its traditional state (Palang and Printsmann 2005), but elements of the traditional cultural landscape can be maintained in the modern landscape. The traditional features of the transboundary landscape and the cultural elements of past periods that are found in the present landscape clearly need to be protected. Fortunately, this appears to be possible in the Karelian Isthmus due to the closer cooperation that now exists between Finland and Russia.
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