Dvina Settlements in Finland

Built environment as Reflection of Culture

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Abstract

This article is about the architecture of the Hietajärvi and Kuivajärvi, which are Dvina (Viena) Karelian villages located in the southeastern part of the Suomussalmi municipality, next to the Russian border. As a minority culture between the Eastern and Western worlds, this rare village community is part of just three Dvina Karelian villages within Finnish territory.

This research explores the characteristic features and developments of the built environment in these villages, explaining the cultural, historical and political reasons for the changes in the building stock. This is based on archives, photograph analysis, site observation and villagers' interviews. Dvinese culture was a politically sensitive subject in the 20th century. During WWII, villages were burned. The article especially focuses on the postwar reconstruction period, looking at the change that took place in the villages' built environment, as they were built according to new design principles that were largely foreign to the local building culture.

Considering that the built environment is the visual manifestation of its culture, Dvina culture was silenced during the Cold War, as evidenced by changes in the built environment. This silenced history led to collective memory loss, impacting building skills and knowledge. Therefore, memories of these local building methods have now disappeared due to the history and politics of the original refugee-settled villages.

Organizing reconstruction in a way that would support the identity of communities after the wars is still a very topical issue in Europe.

Keywords: wood architecture, Dvina culture, place identity, Karelia, Viena

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLE

Introduction

This article examines the Dvina community's built environment in Finland under cultural change. We research changes in the built environment that have affected communal identity, wellbeing and cultural viability. Moreover, we focus on the community's response to changes aimed at strengthening the local culture, with buildings being at the core. According to a recent study of place and individual identity, interest has shifted to groups who have had drastic changes influencing their built environment, such as disasters that stem from war or the effects of climate change that force them to relocate villages. The research around these topics has also focused on the study of the cultural contexts of trauma (e.g., Kivimäki & Leese 2021) Robert Bevan explores how cultural destruction, including the destruction of buildings and cities, has been widely employed throughout history, and how cultural destruction from the early 20th century onward has become an insidious process in which the history, present and future of a people is erased. Postwar reconstructions define an acceptable culture that may focus on the external characteristics of the winning party's or majority's culture (Bevan 2016). In this article, we study how environmental change arose from the war destruction of the Dvina villages, how it was reconstructed without respecting local building traditions and how the community responded to the change in its built environment. Our interest is also in the community's ability to recover and its attempts to rebuild its identity through architectural solutions.

The destiny of Dvina villages was the first closure of the state border that cut social and cultural connections in the 1920s. The second adversity was WWII, when the villages were burned. The third, and maybe as bad as the first two, was the built environment replacing buildings having Finnish norms during the reconstruction period.

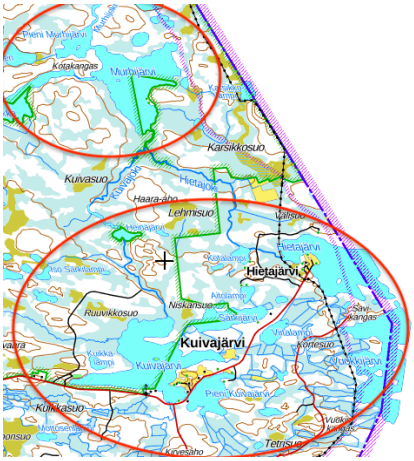
The study of structural colonialism's influence on architecture has intensified in recent years and has brought a new perspective to the study of cultural minorities, a study that has not been accompanied by colonialist measures. There is strong research evidence based on the ideas of social and environmental psychology that colonial architecture affects people's sense of identity, with an emphasis on people's perception and its transformation. It is also accepted that the broader social context plays an important role in their perception of the architecture in relation to national identity today (e.g., Youn & Uzzell 2011). Although there is no question of colonialism in the case of the Dvina, it is clear that the village was built from the ideals, instructions and regulations of the dominant culture's architecture, which deviated from the culture-specific and customary ways of construction. This article highlights the postwar change in both planning and architecture related to minority culture and the means of adaptation and the recovery process. The topic has been studied in the context of Saame culture (Soikkeli 2020, 2021) but not in the Dvina community. The article does not seek to prove that the method of reconstruction chosen by the majority culture alone would have caused the loss of Dvina building culture. A reversal of the traditional way of building certainly would have taken place even if the reconstruction had allowed buildings to be constructed according to tradition. However, the change would have been less radical if the non-Karelian majority had permitted villages to be built according to an old tradition, allowing the community to decide for itself which parts of the building tradition should be preserved and which parts would fade away in time.

Only in about the last 20 years have there been some projects aiming to strengthen minorities´ cultural identity and bring out silenced aspects of their history. There is often such great memory loss that many community members are not even aware of their cultural background or cultural features such as language, customs or history. The built environment is one of the most challenging features because maintaining it requires both money and knowledge, as well as awareness of its role in cultural identity. According to the theory of collective memory (Halbwachs 1992), reconstruction of the past is possible if the group's consciousness is preserved. That means that those who remember Dvinese traditional knowledge can reconstruct the past. Memory social-frameworks structure individuals' memories and vice versa; collective memory needs individuals for this memory framework. If individuals' interaction with their

community has not continued, then collective memory has not either. The continuation of the human cultural frame of reference is possible only with continuing the group's existence and memory. Social thinking is collective memory. Only things considered worthy of remembering and that are allowed to be remembered will survive in society (Halbwachs 1992, 21–22; Arppe 2016, 45; Löfström 2012, 156)

Case villages Hietajärvi and Kuivajärvi

Dvina Karelia has been famous for its rich poetry tradition. Dvina poetry villages include those that still exist and that have provided poetic material for the Kalevala and Kanteletar, and that have been influencing the emergence of Karelianism. On the Finnish side, the villages are dual-villages Hietajärvi and Kuivajärvi in Suomussalmi (Figures 1–2), and the village of Rimmi in Kuhmo. The former are the case villages of this study.



Figures 1-2. Hietajärvi and Kuivajärvi villages, Murhijärvi fishing lake area. maps: https://asiointi.maanmittauslaitos.fi/karttapaikka/

According to oral history, the first resident arrived from Russia on the shores of Lake Hietajärvi in the 18th century. Historical sources also suggest that the first inhabitant would have settled in the area as early as the 17th century. Authorities' descriptions of the villages can be found from the 1890s (Rytkölä 2005, 13–19). The natural connections of the villagers, especially the ecclesiastical life, were largely directed to the Dvina villages behind the border, where the influence of the Russian state and the church was weak due to their remote location (Rytkölä 1988, 15; Rytkölä 2005, 119).

The Russian Revolution and the independence of Finland in 1917 marked a change of life for the villages, as the border to the east was closed for about 70 years. The long-lasting interaction with Dvina on the Russian side was cut off (Rytkölä 2005, 273). World War II brought a significant turnaround in the built environment, as Finnish troops burned down the villages in 1940 to complicate Russian war operations. As a result, the traditional Dvina architecture disappeared. During postwar reconstruction, the houses were built according to Finnish customs and standardized planning (Rytkölä 1988, 52, 79). The current article focuses on traditional architecture and the change brought about by the reconstruction period.

Although the Dvina Karelians in Hietajärvi and Kuivajärvi do not share the history of the southern migrant Karelians in Finland, whose story was part of the Finnish story and whose the ceded land affected everyone, and it was a shared Finnish sorrow. On the other hand, the Dvina still lived in their old region, but their environment changed and they became Finnish. They felt marginalized and unable to maintain their identity connected to the built environment and building tradition: the change was visible and part of everyday life. Also, after the war the general attitude was somewhat negative towards the Orthodox, who were considered Russians. The Dvina community faced that as well as, for example, the Skolt Saame (Lehtola 2015, 131). Sometimes it was easier to hide the identity of Dvina in postwar Finland.

This article examines the kind of change that the devastation of the war and the reconstruction of the villages brought and how it had affected the built environment and the identity of the place. The main questions are the following: Were any of the Dvina cultural features visible in the top-down regulated reconstruction of the village? How did the villagers experience change in their identity in relation to the built environment? Did the liberation of the political climate a few decades after the war bring new themes to the built environment? How is Dvina culture reflected today in the built environment in the villages?

Data have been obtained from archives (Finnish Literature Society SKS, Juminkeko Foundation, Ethnological Collection in the National Museum of Finland, Provincial Archives in Oulu, Karelian Culture Association KSS, The

National Archives of Finland and The Finnish Heritage Agency), observations of building stock in the villages and interviews. The methodology of this research is a cultural science approach and this is an architecture case study. Archived data provide the detailed research guidelines, whereas on-site observations and interviews from locals supplement the missing or undocumented data. This combined method of data collection provides a more holistic cultural understanding.

This research focuses on how the Dvinese cultural environment changed from the original tribe environment to the one of today. Halbwachs´ *theory of collective memory* (Halbwachs 1992) is adopted in this case study to show the connection between environmental change and the role of collective memory in Dvina villages. Methods used for the research were first archives´ data, primarily photos, to discover the essence of the lost tribe environment before WWII, in addition to asking villagers about the features of buildings not found in the photographs. After that, the process of environmental change was researched by observation on site, studying data in the archives and interviewing villagers. Understanding the process of change in an environment requires recognizing the background actors throughout the years – commonly known ideologies and political and cultural trends to realize a set of cultural-historical circumstances.

Figure 3. Kuivajärvi village in 1934. Saavinen House is in the middle, and Hilippa House is on the right. (Courtesy of the Finnish Heritage Agency, photo by Eino Leskinen.)

Research data with historical factors supports the significance of collective-memory theory in practice and logically proves the reasons for the gradually processed change in the environment. The theory explains the roles of social acting, remembering and forgetting, contributing to environmental change, giving answers for acts that happened, as well as the motives of both state officers and tribe members to execute decisions at times. The research object is a visible village environment, which is concrete material and physical architecture resulting from modification by multiple actors; these actors have inseparable ontological dependencies (such as political, sociological, cultural, cultural–historical and identity essences) in the wholeness, which lends itself to a more holistic cultural understanding of the essence and features of these villages today. The built environment is inseparable from the social and cultural aspects; they all interact.

Dvina building tradition

In Dvina, the style of houses was simpler than in southern Karelia. Trends did not spread from Russia to the Dvina periphery, as they had in the trade areas of southern Karelia, where were galdaris (balconies) and rich motifs were carved in wood. Dvinese dwellings were archaic, but houses were large, so even fifty people (close relatives and staff) could live under the same roof (Kirkinen 1981, 37). There is not much documented visual information available for prewar houses, other than a few surviving outbuildings and a few photographs from the years 1917 (Paulaharju, 3490:2068-2181. MV), 1934 (Leskinen 1934. KM) and 1935 (Figure 3), which show the change in the built environment.

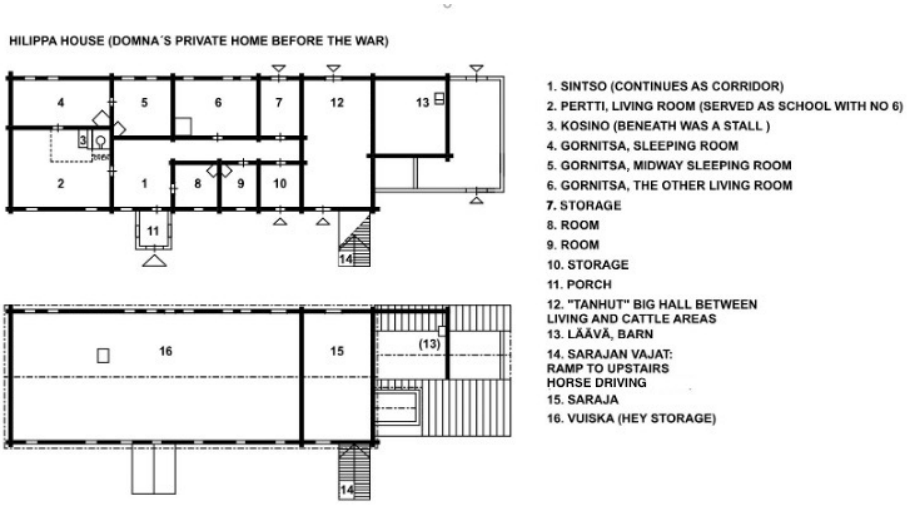


Figure 4. Plan of Hilippa house (Domna Huovinen´s private home) before WWII. For the after-war dwelling on the same plot, see Figure 15.

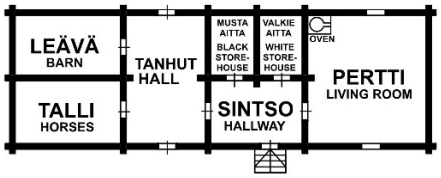


Figure 5. House, Ranta-Miikkula's plan according to Jussi Huovinen. The house that had been at the Ranta-Miikkula plot before WWII. Partly burned, only part of the barn remains (Tervonen 1992).

Figure 6. The Hietajärvi Traditional House-plan (Hietajärven perinnetalo. JKS).

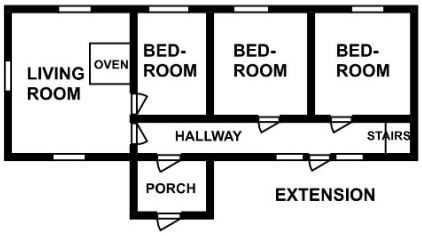


Figure 7. Ortjo Huovinen's house plan in Hietajärvi village center. The building was extended later. The standardized houses were originally quite small; see Figure 15 (Tervonen 1992).

Before WWII the houses in Dvina were single-story log structures, with rectangular bases, a roof with a ridge and a cold hay-barn attic space above the residential floor. Underneath the floor were storage pits for food. The main building in Dvina was a long rectangle, and at the other end was the main living room, which was entered from a hall (Figures 4–6) (Jussi Huovinen, interview 2016/05/07; Vilho Huovinen, interview 2016/01/11). At first, houses had just a living room. Bedrooms were built on the other side of the hallway when needed and when wealth made it possible. The hallway's narrower side was the depth of the whole house. Along the hallway were smaller rooms for household facilities and storage, and at the end of it was space for cattle and hay storage (Paulaharju, nide E28, 1892-1904, 3. SKS). There were some variations in plans throughout the Dvina. The traditional Karelian buildings of Hietajärvi and Kuivajärvi were of this older type, similar to the aforementioned one (Tervonen 1992).

Before the war there were just a few decorated windshields and windows in the buildings of the village. The windshield boards were painted white, overlaid with ornate motifs inspired by ornamental patterns from mythology. Each village in Dvina had its own pattern combination, for example, the late Jussi Huovinen (1924–2017) made the patterns for the windshields according to the wood-ornament model from Luvajärvi village (Jussi Huovinen, interview 2016/01/19). The geometry of the patterns consisted of basic shapes: circles, triangles and squares (Pentti Huovinen, interview 2016/05/07), which, by varying rhythms, formed ornamental patterns. The head of the house's crane deer was carved in the shape of a bird. There were five wooden pegs on the roof ridge. The ornaments seen from the decorated eave-board ends were of the following themes: trident (a handlike object), spinning wheel and mortar. After the mortar

was a fish motif, a fish skeletonlike shape. [A mortar was previously used to pound fish bones for feeding cows (to get calcium).] (Jussi Huovinen, interview 2016/05/07). The bird theme was also typical of northern Russian monastic crafts (Rytkölä 2009, 15). The Dvinese found ideas to ornament using motifs from everyday life.

From the few war-preserved buildings and a few prewar photographs, it can be concluded that before the wars the building culture of Hietajärvi and Kuivajärvi villages was more functional than decorative (Figures 8, 9). In Dvina architecture, features that seemed to be purely decorative actually had logically explained reasons behind them (Jussi Huovinen, interview 2016/05/07). In fact they were related to either functions or mythology linked to religion (Paulaharju, nide KJ 45, places 17683 ja 17684, 1957. SKS; Siikala, Harvilahti, Timonen 2004, 130). Pre-Christian beliefs were mixed with Christian beliefs in Dvina.

Figure 8. House Hilippa and its yard in 1935. (Courtesy of the Finnish Heritage Agency, photo by Uuno Peltoniemi.)
Figure 9. House Miikkula. The decorative themes can be found in window panels, but otherwise the facade is simple. (Courtesy of the Finnish Heritage Agency, photo by Uuno Peltoniemi.)

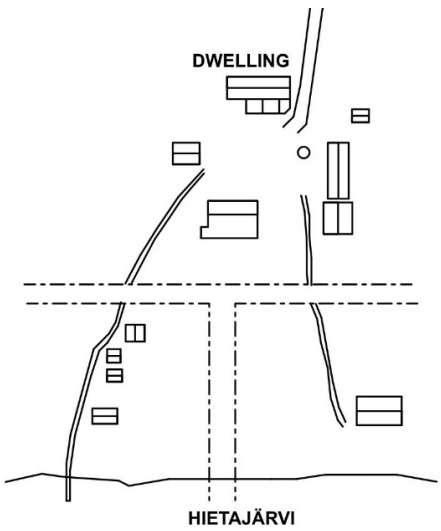


Figure 10. House Jussila's courtyard. Jussi Huovinen´s home isn´t Dvinese, but locations of buildings on his plot are (Tervonen 1992).

Multiainen, which is a mold filling installed against the house foundation, was a peculiar Karelian structure. In the Dvina region, multiainen was constructed outside the building in Russia, but inside the building on the Finnish side. The Finnish Dvina multiainen frame was built of logs and it was next to the exterior wall. The exterior wall was built so that on top of the stone foundation was birch bark, curved side down, as water protection between the wooden structures and the stone plinth. Above multiainen frame there was a floor; multiainen naturally insulated the interior from the cold (Jussi Huovinen, interview 2016/05/07; Jussi Huovinen, interview 2016/06/21).

The birch bark roof, the combined roof of boards and birch bark, was the oldest form of roofing, perhaps still used in the 19th century. Following the birch bark roofs before and after the war, two-layered shingle roofs were used, where the upper shingle was wider than the lower shingle. The shingles had to be knotless and their wood grains had to be dense (Jussi Huovinen, interview 2016/05/07; Veikko Huovinen, interview 2016/06/20).

In addition to the residential buildings, in Dvina there were several different household buildings, such as granaries, barns, saunas, outdoor toilets and warehouses (ambari) on pillars to store food. There were also storage buildings made of thin slatted logs, so air could go through and keep the hay dry. Jussi Huovinen´s courtyard presents a typical Dvinese yard and illustrates plot structure (Figure 10).

Ambaris were smaller than those built on a normal plinth, more the size of a low closet resting on poles, to prevent the animals from entering. The warehouses were sometimes two-floored and were shared by many families. There were warehouses for various items, along the path from the main building to the beach, and also close to the house. The main household buildings closest to the dwelling house were a barn, a hay barn, a sauna and a log shed for fireplace wood. Dark, windowless huts were typical for overnight stays in the summer. Dvinese huts had square plans with gabled roofs; if there were any windows, they were tiny (Virtaranta 1978, 48–49).

Buildings outside the villages

Fishing and hunting huts in the wilderness were the first buildings in Karelia. They are similar to the first Karelian buildings used for living and saunas. Huts were used during hunting and fishing trips for overnight stays, and the cottage plans were square and they had one room. Their roofs were gabled or sloped and had a shutter for smoke to get out. A stone stove stood in a corner, next to the door. At first these cottages and saunas were without chimneys; they were “smoke huts.” Samuli Paulaharju has documented traditional smoke huts in the 1900s (Paulaharju 1983, 9–10, 15–17, 20). There, interiors of the smoke saunas in the villages of Hietajärvi and Kuivajärvi look in principle similar to those in Paulaharju´s drawings documented in Karelia. That, along with the rough stone fireplaces and partly earth-floored huts, indicates a connection between the smoke saunas and later dwellings in Karelia.

Figure 11. Domna Huovinen's fishing hut. Domna's hut was built after 1935, but before the war that began in 1939. (Photo M.N.)

The tradition of wilderness huts has been long preserved. For Dvina inhabitants, their lifestyle, living in the woods and building huts freely in the wilderness was more difficult when crown control came. Even so, under the Swedish regime, the issue was not controlled. Later however, under Finnish rule, some clashes with the state forest administration about building wilderness huts on state land have occurred (Metsähallitus) (Rytkölä 2005, 33). The Dvinese did not recognize the concept of forest ownership in the same way as the official state had.

Today, villagers have fishing huts in forests and on the islands of Lake Murhijärvi. Buildings there were not burnt down during WWII; they were saved because they were not documented and were not on war burning-plan maps. The huts’ appearance is close to the Dvinese residential buildings, as they are the most modest and are the oldest variations of some buildings from prewar times. Still, huts also present the basic structure of outbuildings in village areas, constructed of logs in many cases. In the forest huts, the structure was rougher than those in the village. Fishing huts were flanked on long corners, but the log heads did not match in length; they were left at different lengths without any systematic rhythm.

Figures 12-14. Karhunen hut. (Photo M.N.)

The reason to build in the forest was, first of all, functionality. On the island Saunasaari, there are three fishing huts built side by side, of which Domna Huovinen's descendants' fishing hut is the most massive (Figure 11). Instead of a floor it has natural ground and the ceiling is made of half-split logs that are simply piled up on other logs on the wall to the required ceiling height, so that the split log halves go through the exterior wall. The spaces between the logs are patched with moss (sphagnum). The fishing hut is built on a stone foundation. Because initially there was no chimney in the building, there was a rectangular, almost square-shaped, opening carved in the upper side of a log to vent smoke. Also in the hut is a simple horizontal three-part divided window pane, the height of a couple of logs.

The log walls were not constructed of logs of the same thickness as those in residential buildings, but instead trees of very different thicknesses meet in the corners, making it impossible to secure them with conventional joints. The walls are also folded, such that every other log is folded to join together and the

intervening logs are only shaped at their ends to correspond to the residual voids (Jyrki Huovinen, interview 2016/06/20). Samuli Paulaharju has also depicted the forest hut in Karelia, which shows the same style as the hunting lodge in Dvina (Paulaharju 1983, 9–10, 15–17, 20).

Next to Domna Huovinen's fishing hut is Karhunen´s fishing hut (Figures 12–14). The building was originally a smokehouse, without a floor, just earth (Veikko Huovinen, interview 2016/06/20). This building is more precisely constructed than Domna's fishing hut and thus resembles more residential buildings. It was built in the 1930s (Tervonen 1992).

Unlike those of the residential buildings, the hut's roof is a sloping roof. A special board-carved locking joint holds the water ceiling (Figures 12–14). The lock connects the log both under and above the roof. The log boards are on the top and birch bark as water insulation is beneath that. The roof joint makes the building quite technical – in a way, timeless. A similar roof structure has also been found in another fishing hut (Virtaranta 1954. KA), and the same kind of joints are typical in other regions of Dvina, as shown by Samuli Paulaharju's manuscript drawing of a sauna from 1901, from the village Vuokkiniemi (Paulaharju 1901:12. SKS). The ceiling is made by simply piling boards that extend to the exterior walls and are supported by those walls. The top of the highest wall under the water roof is laid with logs, similar to hay-storage walls in fields.

War destruction and reconstruction of the villages

In 1940, Finnish soldiers were ordered to destroy the Hietajärvi and Kuivajärvi building stock, aiming not to leave residences to the enemy. For decades there has been a debate about burned Dvina, whether it was actually necessary or if there were other reasons for burning it. There were quite cruel elements in the implementation of the extermination, for example, leaving animals inside a burning barn (Veikko Huovinen, interview 2016/06/20).

After the war, villagers who had been evacuated returned to their homes and faced a bleak sight: only stone stoves remained unburned, and the remainder of their homes had been destroyed. The forest huts and a few modest courtyard buildings were left, such as four saunas, two cow barns and a hay barn, one hut and a storehouse. Today, only three buildings remain (Vilho Huovinen, interview 2016/11/01; Tervonen 1992; Kalevi Huovinen, interview 2016/05/07; Jussi Huovinen, interview 2016/01/19). People whose homes had been burned had no other choice, for economic reasons, than to follow officials' plans to rebuild the villages after the war.

Figure 15. Domna Huovinen´s family home. The house was built after WWII, during the reconstruction period. (Photo M.N.)

The rebuilt postwar building stock started a new era in the villages (Figure 15). It was not based on the local culture, nor the wishes of villagers. The postwar era interrupted the continuity, ending a centuries-old tradition and replacing it with a built environment of another culture. In a *Seura* magazine interview dated 1964 (Numminen 1964), the villagers described how the locals experienced the construction authority's position on new building stock; the settlement authorities did not allow Karelian-style houses to replace the burned-out ones, and this was referred to in the article as "the common sadness of the village." It is important to understand the background. The political climate of the 1930s and 1940s was no longer colored by cultural elements but by extremist politics. There has also been some controversy over the fact that in order to receive war compensation for postwar construction new buildings could not be built in the Karelian way; some understood this rule to mean that building traditional Karelian houses was forbidden (Numminen 1964).

In Karelia it was usual to build houses together for each family in turn, so the whole village was involved in the building project. The Building Bureau of the

Kajaani Agricultural Society Settlement Committee was responsible for planning the buildings and supervising their implementation in the villages (Jussi Huovinen, interview 2016/01/19). This was feared and villagers were warned not to irritate the committee. People were very cautious towards the Finnish state and official authority. Many of the villagers, and looking further back in history, almost all from previous generations, were either refugees from past wars or descendants of previous refugee waves (Karjalaiskylien kehittäminen 1986, 6).

Reconstruction in Finland was strictly organized and financed by the state. Postwar countrywide reconstruction in Finland was in practice implemented with standardized houses, which many architects and institutions had planned. Plans were published by, among other organizations, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the building department of the Ministry of Transport and Public Works (KYMRO); and the Finnish Association of Architects. Both the general appearance of the buildings and the methods used in constructing them were similar (Soikkeli 2021). Standardized, and on some rare occasions prefabricated houses, were planned to house so-called model families (Saarikangas 1993: 345-353, 362-364). In Finland during the rebuilding period, construction in the countryside was defined by the guidelines of the Ministry of Agriculture. The rapid revitalization of the countryside was fundamentally important for restoring the country, which relied heavily on its agriculture (Soikkeli 2021).

The new standardized houses differed from the Finnish building tradition in the countryside. The simple design and the shortage of building materials affected the architecture of the boxlike buildings, which had pitched roofs and scanty detail. The number of rooms and the surface area were regulated through state-subsidized housing loans. There had been building types specifically designed for the Karelia region during the war, partly because it was in Karelia where the traditional style of construction had been very original. Otherwise, general types were used all over the country, and also in Karelia after the war, which had effects on the ways of living (Soikkeli 2021).

Looking at the existing houses from the reconstruction period, everything defined in the instructions was implemented, but many features were adapted from prewar construction style, except the room hierarchy. The spirit of the rooms with ax-carved walls and the style of ovens are Karelian. During the postwar reconstruction, the houses were built around existing, unburned fireplaces (stoves and pipes) (Numminen 1964). In the Dvina villages some of the reconstruction-period houses are log-walled. The use of log construction was typical in the countryside for the period, especially in the early stage of reconstruction. Jussi Huovinen relayed how corner pads were made in Dvina with “locked corners” (Jussi Huovinen, interview 2016/05/07). Some of the house-builders were upset about a ban on building long corners, but feared reactions from the authorities if they were to voice their concerns (Tervonen 1992). It is interesting to note that houses were in some cases extended later, retaining the same massing, longer rectangular plan form – as the buildings before the war (Figure 7).

In the Oulu Provincial Archives files of the Kajaani Agricultural Society is documentation of two houses built after WWII in Dvina villages (in the 1940s), and the documents contained the words "Swedish Gift House Grants" (Ruotsin lahjataloavustukset) (Kajaanin Maanviljelysseuran asutustoiminnan johtajan arkisto 47 hc:8. 1948. OMA). Kuikka House was one of those. In light of the files, it is likely that Finnish construction authorities had taken Swedish regulations seriously. The documents of the Kajaani Agricultural Society give an idea of the carefully controlled, supervised and reporting requirements described in the forms, where the progress of the reconstruction was monitored with the accuracy of the plots, by the Settlement Committee of the Central Federation of Agricultural

Societies (Kajaanin Maanviljelysseuran asutustoiminnan johtajan arkisto 47 hc:8. 1948. OMA).

After the war, Riiko House (Timonen) was first built in the village of Hietajärvi (Vilho Huovinen, interview 2016/03/02). It had been implemented with Swedish Gift House Grants. Still, the house did not follow given standardized plans in all features. The interior cladding was not in the living room there either, but the ax-carved walls according to the Dvina tradition were (Kajaanin Maanviljelysseuran asutustoiminnan johtajan arkisto 47 hc:8. 1948. OMA). According to Jussi Huovinen, only one house, Karttimo dwelling (Kuikkalehto) in Kuivajärvi, was not built according to the drawings of the Kajaani Agricultural Society (Jussi Huovinen, interview 2016/06/21).

An exception to building exterior features during the reconstruction period is the Kuivajärvi chapel, built in the year 1957 (Rytkölä 1988, 49). Building plans signed by Esko Aro date from 1956 (Rakennushallitus Iaa. 1984. KM). The style of the log building is more Karelian, with its long corners and other characteristics. One can speculate as to why traditional decorative themes were not used in other buildings just after the war. One reason is certainly the changed appearance of the buildings, that is, the decorative motifs did not feel like a natural character in a completely new type of building. The second reason is certainly that the construction process was strictly supervised and regulated. The third and most important reason was the changed atmosphere: Dvinese culture was a politically sensitive subject in the 20th century: one did not want or dare to emphasize the minority culture. This was a common way of thinking for decades in villages after the war and it also included many other parts of a culture set; like religion, language was not taught, etc. The Dvinese were seen as Russians, which was a threat to cultural survival after WWII. Built environment is the most sensitive and the most fundamental cultural aspect to be lost, as it is the largest and most visual embodiment of culture. For some reason it is also the least explored of Finnish Dvina culture. Tribe houses also used to be a playground for a tribe's social interaction, and unfortunately their traditional form was mostly gone when model houses replaced them.

Figure 16. Iivana´s house in Jussi Huovinen´s yard. (Photo M.N.)

After the war, house Huovinen was built in Hietajärvi for an older couple and there was no need for a big house (Figure 16). House Huovinen is a rare reconstruction dwelling house devoid of plans drawn by any professionals. The house has a few new additions, such as a concrete block foundation. It is not covered with board cladding like most other residential buildings in the village today, although there is a translucent finish on the exterior log walls. The building consists of only three rooms: a hallway (sintso), a chamber (gornitsa) and a living room (pertti) with a kitchen in the same space. The cattle (läävä) are missing, as well as the "tanhut" for storing hay above the first floor, and the slope (sarajan vajat) to get to the saraja is missing for the same reason. Unboarded facades, together with ornamented windshields with scale dimensions of massing, give the house a local Karelian-house look.

Facade and corner paneling were unknown in Dvina. Paneling on buildings came to the villages only in the 1960s. It altered the built environment and the appearance of the buildings, although houses after the war were already Finnish standardized houses. Adding porches to the longer side of buildings was also a Finnish influence in Dvina. Only after the 1990s did the villagers begin to add Karelian ornamental motifs (carved wooden boards) to the exterior facades, when Dvinese buildings began to be valued. Decorations alone do not make buildings Karelian, of course, but they were the easiest to add and one of the rare components that could be added retroactively to existing houses. Also, Dvinese features are still seen, for example, in interior ax-carved log walls (Tervonen 1992).

Figure 17. Hietajärvi Traditional House. (Photo M.N.)

A remarkable new building project was the reconstruction of the prewar Karelian family house, at Jussi Huovinen´s yard: the "Hietajärvi Traditional House," planned in 2002. The Juminkeko Foundation implemented the project in cooperation with Jussi Huovinen and architects Aleksanteri Jääskeläinen and Asko Kaipainen (Figure 17, also 6) (Hietajärven perinnetalo, JKS). The cattle shelter is in the end of the house, in an extension of the residential building, separated by the entrance hall. Horses could get into the building, the second floor, along a wooden slope. The living room is at the other end of the building. Close to the kitchen beside the living room is the kosino (a wooden boxlike structure close to the chimney). From there is access to underground storage, through the hatch on the floor. Occasionally, household animals, such as sheep, were kept in Dvina in this type of underground floor. Still, most commonly only food and household utensils were stored there (Jussi Huovinen, interview 2016/05/07).

Right after WWII, in Dvina the roofs were shingle roofs (Jussi Huovinen, interview 2016/05/07; Pentti Huovinen, interview 2016/05/07), but afterwards, in the 1960s and 1970s, shingle roofs were changed into felt or sheet-metal roofs (Veikko Huovinen, interview 2016/06/20; Tervonen 1992). Another characteristic feature of the houses in the villages was that when houses were extended later, in the 1960s, they were extended along the main body of the house, whereas elsewhere in Finland postwar standardized houses´ masses remained more compact, because they were enlarged in the vertical direction first, by adding insulation to the cold attic, floor, walls and ceilings.

Figure 18. Rantala House, 2016. Ornamental themes are rich, all of which were never featured in the prewar building stock of the area, such as galdari, decoration themes and the porch type. (Photo M.N.)

Rantala house in Hietajärvi (Figure 18), with all its storehouses, lies opposite the village settlements, behind the shore. At one time the plot used to be part of a state border zone, which was later realigned (Tervonen 1992). It is a standardized house, with building components not typical of Dvina culture. Those features were added later. This example proves the importance in general of the Karelian culture to its present owner, who is actually from South Finland, not rooted in these Dvina villages.

Before WWII, in the traditional Dvinese dwellings, cooking was done in a combined living room and kitchen space, where the chimney served both to heat the space and as a baking oven. The cooking area had not been separated with walls from the living room. In Karelian dwellings, beside the main chimney were wooden benchlike structures, kosinos, which served as beds for the elderly. The living room with its kitchenette was the main room. The rest of the rooms were mainly storage rooms for different purposes. In Dvinese homes there were only a few bedrooms and the rest of the family both lived and slept on the living room floor. Standardized houses changed Dvinese culture and everyday social interactions; these were not the homes of large families. Before the wars, families included many generations and sometimes also other relatives and staff working at farms and as nannies. Because the standardized house was only suitable for smaller families, the Karelian social system was gone forever after WWII. In the Finnish standardized house, mother was a housekeeper and her spaces at home for doing housework were the kitchen, bedroom and children's rooms. The living room was mainly left to the rest of the family, who had more time to spend there when at home. Fathers´ work areas were thought to be outdoors, with mothers´ indoors (Saarikangas 1993: 363, 369). In Dvina women also worked outside doing farm work, so social standards there between genders were more equal than in the West. Moreover, because the rooms were on two floors in a small house, taking care of the children, for example, was more difficult than in a traditional single-level house solution.

Recent building stock

The building stock in the Dvina villages today is a collection of features of different decades. The Dvinese moved to the cities beginning in the 1960s as a part of

national urbanization and adapted Finnish culture in the hopes of an imagined better future and also to earn money in something other than agriculture. At the same time, the promotion of the Karelian culture was a guided tourist activity of the country along the eastern border during the same decade (Kirkinen 1981, 56).

The Domna house project in Kuivajärvi village met the demand of giving a public face to Karelian culture and serving tourism. Domna house was built in 1964 to commemorate the keen singer Domna Huovinen (1878–1963). The first Domna house got official permission in the 1950s, but the building was not implemented. The house drawings presented the typical 1950s trend in Finland (SY-tunniste 158 Karjalan sivistysseuran arkisto. KA). Local teacher Olavi Lehmuskoski persuaded the villagers to ask for a clubhouse to be built in their community. The proposal was made to the Karelian Culture Association (KSS), which established the Domnan Pirtti Foundation to implement the project. The Domna house was donated to the Suomussalmi municipality by the KSS and the UKK Institute. The Domna building was built by the Väinölä Foundation, and the KSS was the decisive partner in the project. Later, the Domnan Pirtti Foundation was abolished and the house was shifted to the Väinölä Foundation. The villagers took part in the building process, as Uuno Korhonen from Joensuu was the construction site manager (SY-tunniste 158 Karjalan sivistysseuran arkisto. KA).

Figure 19. Domna´s house and its opening ceremony in 1964. (Courtesy of the Finnish Heritage Agency, photo by Pekka Kyytinen.)

Domna house (Figure 19) is a two-story building, originally planned to host cultural activities. For locals it was the place for various events and for tourists it served as a youth hostel, café and place for cultural events. It also served as a central place during the village summer festivals (Praasniekka) that folks from all around the world attended, including relatives of villagers. Suomussalmi municipality took ownership in 1972, but suddenly sold the house in 2013 to private buyers.

Domna house does not correspond to any type of building that has ever been in Dvina (not in size or style), but that is not commonly known. The plan even included a police lockup, a small museum, tourist facilities and rooms for the caretaker. Therefore, the plan type was a public building, not the reconstruction of a traditional dwelling functioning as a club and tourism hub. Domna house

Figure 20. Former Border Guard station. It is now serving as a hostel, in Kuivajärvi. (Photo M.N.)

does not represent the Karelian house type of any region, but in its external features, size and details it can be classified as belonging to the building tradition of southern Karelian areas such as Aunus. It represents a monument, a symbolic gate to the cultural East–Byzantine cultural district for Finnish tourists. Domna house and the chapel, built in 1956, were the only common gathering places for villagers, and not only for them, but also for all belonging to the tribe, such as those who visited villages during festivals and holiday seasons after moving away. Public places have their essence of being shared places and part of shared memories.

A typical Finnish building in villages was the Kuivajärvi village school, built in 1959 and planned by Reino Ruokolainen. It was a rectangular, gabled, single-story, vertically timber-paneled wooden building with two entrances (Oulun lääninhallituksen kouluosaston arkisto, OMA; Tervonen 1992). The school burned down in 2012 ("Entinen koulu paloi Suomussalmella," 2012). The school, along with the Border Guard station (Figure 20), having almost the same structure as the school, were Finnish institutional additions in the Dvina villages, located close to village housing, but not in the village center.

Conclusions

Cultures have sites, but they are also placed in mind. Visual worlds consist of both physical and mental existence. The original built environment with social community and cultural features is inseparable. After WWII Dvinese generations were left only part of the culture, because of the war destruction. As a consequence, in many aspects comprehension of Dvinese culture is a combination of imagination, spoken or read history, and visiting sites beyond the border. Many sites are destroyed in war and only the remains of culture are left. Understanding culture also wholly comprises psychological values that one has grown up to believe in and respect, not just adapt later on some level or in some part. The Dvina Karelian built culture that had been based on a rooted environment with cultural and social interactions is mostly already lost. However, the few fishing and hunting huts that survived the war have been valuable memories for the community and a delicate connection to the lost village and the building tradition.

The school was a significant emblem of Finnish culture and basic education brought to the villages. Domna house symbolized the Karelian face for tourists and the chapel alongside it represented Orthodox tradition in Orthodox religion-based villages. All of these buildings convey much of the political significance of their construction timing to introduce the area, but in a controlled way: tourism with Domna house, educating the Dvina children as proper Finnish citizens at school, and thirdly, offering a religious space for Dvina villagers. Those buildings presented mixed cultures, which are also seen in the village building stock in general.

Attitudes towards Dvina villages in Finland have varied during different decades. The location close to the state border and minority culture made villages a hard-to-define area, a politically sensitive subject. In Finland, Dvina villages are mostly seen as an alien, isolated region of the cultural East, but also the farthest Western Byzantine cultural district in the West, even called “villages on the wrong side of the border.” Religion, the building of hunting huts wildly in the forests, language and family connections to Russian Dvina made the community the subject of troubles and suspicions right after the war. Forgetting their language, culture and religion, shaming their roots, assimilating to the main culture and proving to be proper citizens were tools to survive. The trend of the postwar time supported that process of assimilation to another culture. Media, schools and officials created images of good family life and living standards to follow. Standardized houses provided specific frames for a proper Finnish family lifestyle and family

size, and exteriors of houses had to be aligned with the accepted outlook. A fresh start to the new post-WWII life for the Dvinese meant cutting one´s roots and memory.

The destiny of Dvina villages was the first closure of the state border that cut social and cultural connections in the 1920s. The second adversity was WWII, when the villages were burned. The third was the built environment replacing buildings with Finnish norms during the reconstruction period. These results caused the memory-loss process to begin, which made the third part the most fundamental end for tribe housing culture when one thinks of lost continuity. Worth mentioning is that the last two were executed by state order.

The Dvinese as refugee-backgrounded folk from different culture concept faced change in their built tradition after WWII; tribe tradition was first wiped away and then replaced with another culture's housing types. The message was clear: the past was to be forgotten and plans of new houses were to be followed. Construction was supervised. Signs of pressure to forget the cultural features were many. People were seen as Russians in after the war climate. Forgetting the past and assimilating to the majority were the ways they tried to guarantee their acceptance in the eyes of the majority folk.

Negative attitudes affected folk identity. Regulated model housing types provided to follow in the reconstruction was the most visual act to support the process. Political, sociological and cultural wholeness supported cultural forgetting in fear of Russia and in fear of being expelled beyond the border. Still, Karalian features in the built environment were able to be seen somewhere, such as in carved interior log walls, huts, in a chapel, in a traditional house and in locations of housing in the village environment.

Trade, school and chapel were once essential basic services, the hallmarks of the vitality of the village community and of a functioning everyday life. Now only the chapel is left for public use, but just occasionally in summertime, and sometimes also the Hietajärvi Traditional House, but just for certain group events. Praasniekka festivals have shrunk from happenings with thousands of people to minor, privately organized family festivals. The local municipality sold Domna house and stopped funding and advertising Praasniekka festivals a few years ago. The circle had been closed at some point. Although most things have disappeared, religion or its features in the environment, such as graveyards, are the clearest partly survived elements that have in some way preserved Karelian cultural continuity, even without destroying the old pre-Christian cultural and intangible cultural features. Environment and locations of sites within the landscape may be the most lasting features of tradition, not the buildings (Figures 2, 10).

From the late 1990s to the present, villages have raised the interest of professionals charged with preserving culture, and some projects have been initiated, like the recommendation to add external Karelian elements to present buildings. However, that does not bring a cultural environment to life; rather, it presents more as a memory of something that has been lost. Decorating is not the way to save lost heritage or a societal system, on the contrary, it is more like gluing souvenirs on facades of one culture to another. Tradition is in structures also, both built and in mind. Also, the problem is that cultures are researched through other cultures' worldviews, making the reading of traces and features hard, if not impossible, on some levels.

According to Halbwachs´ theory, reconstruction from the past is possible if the consciousness of the group is preserved. Right after the war, trend in Finland was unified culture, so the past was seen as better forgotten, to stop possible troubles with borderland dwellers missing their relatives or longing for an

independent Karelia. The Dvinese themselves were afraid of a new war and being sent back to the border, so assimilation was seen as the way to stay alive and succeed in life. Years later, assimilation has been so complete that younger generations identify themselves only as Finnish folk. The generation that still maintained memories was also the very same who had to live through hard times of shame and silence – and now that generation is mostly gone. That can be seen also in Dvina villages' built environment. It is a confusing combination of styles. Recalling the past is hard. New Finnish folks who have come to villages from somewhere else see, as tourists, mainly just hunting possibilities, not Dvina cultural aspects. That latest wave of summer inhabitants are those who do not have roots there, and the rest just do not recognize them on a cultural level. There are no social interactions anymore; people come to spend time and rest, isolating themselves in their summer huts. The culture has changed. The interviews in this article have revealed a lot of knowledge. They have also brought a lot of painful memories through the decades, stories that people wanted to tell about the culture and destiny. People have been asked so much throughout the years during interviews, but nobody has asked what they really wanted to tell. The role of memory is essential in societies´ communality and identity, and the intact sites also support continuity of traditions. Halbwachs´ theory of collective memory proves in this case study the connection between environmental change and collective memory as an inseparable and interactive union in Dvina villages. Environment as visual culture embodiment is always connected to the social community and identity consciousness.

The appearance of new building stock in the Hietajärvi and Kuivajärvi villages after the war was not a matter of chance, because it was the result of a controlled reconstruction project. It is unfortunate and irreversible that memory and information on prewar building stock, building techniques, traditional color schemes, etc. were still available right after the war, but the use of traditional knowledge was, in practice, prohibited. Minds and culture can be controlled by memory and images. The basis of cultural permanence is the preservation of memory, the ability of society to reconstruct memories through times (Arppe 2016, 118). By losing memory, the continuum is cut off and erased. In Dvina villages, that led to the destruction of memory-based identity, cultural memory.

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