

## E.M. Kolpakov, A.I. Murashkin & V.Ya. Shumkin THE ROCK CARVINGS OF KANOZERO

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Ten years ago, in 1997, the first rock carvings (the Kamenniy-1 group) were discovered at Lake Kanozero on the Kola Peninsula, north-western Russia (Fig. 1). Now, after the investigation of the Lake Kanozero rock art sites by a team under the leadership of Vladimir Shumkin, over a thousand carved figures have been recorded.

The southern part of Lake Kanozero is located about 28 km north of the main shoreline of Kandalaksha Bay on the White Sea, 16 km to the north of Pil'skaya Bay. At present, it lies 52.7 m above sea level. According to the geologist Matti Saarnisto (pers. comm.), Kanozero was isolated from the White Sea basin during the Mesolithic period, 8,600 calendar years ago. The lake,

which is surrounded by bogs, is an enlarged part of the River Umba.

The petroglyphs are found on the western banks of three islands (Fig. 2) – Goreliy (Burned), Eloviy (Spruce; Figs. 3-7) and Kamenniy (Rocky; Figs. 8-21) – and a separate site with exposed bedrock called Odinnokaya (Lone; Fig. 22) close to the mainland, on the eastern shore of the lake. The petroglyphs are found on even rock surfaces at the altitude ranging from zero (Eloviy-2 and -3) to eight metres above the present water level of the lake. Altogether 18 groups of figures have been identified, each group occupying a separate rock surface. The smallest group (Goreliy-3) has only a single figure, while the largest group

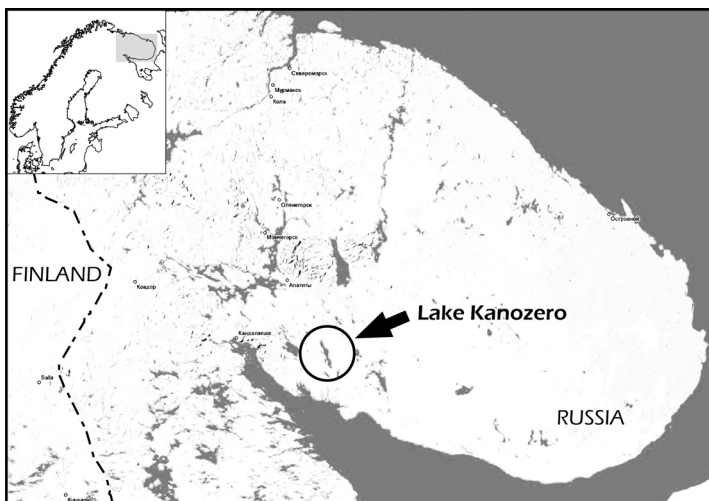
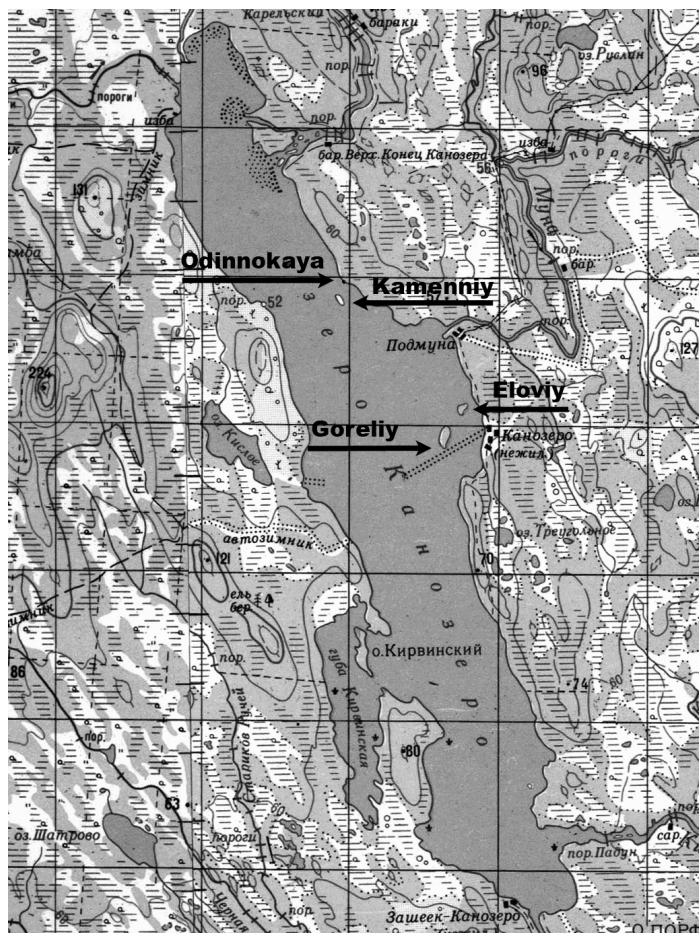


Fig. 1. Kola peninsula and lake Kanozero.

Fig. 2. Lake Kanozero and localities of rock carvings.



(Kamenniy-7; Figs. 16-21) consists of more than 430 figures. Twelve figures have been recorded on the island of Goreliy, 278 on Eloviy, 666 on Kamenniy, and 61 at the Odinnokaya rock site.

The dominant theme of the Kanozero rock carvings is whale hunting using harpoons and boats (e.g., Fig. 16). This theme is depicted in 25 out of a total of 70 pictorial compositions. Furthermore, four compositions depict the hunt of other animals – bear, elk, beaver and an unidentified animal – from a boat. This calculation includes only the compositions that have the following three elements: a boat, a whale (or other animal) and a rope connecting the boat and the animal. In addition, a total of 123 boats and 42 whales (or fish) not connected by a rope can be found. The bow of the boat depicted is often decorated with an elk's head (e.g., Fig. 10).

Only a single scene depicts bear-hunting on

dry land (Kamenniy-7; Fig. 20). At the same time, this is the most complex of all scenes, consisting of 70 separate elements, including a hunter armed with a spear, skiing tracks, a bear and the tracks of a bear.

A second compositional theme consists of a man – an anthropomorph with discernible male attributes – holding or grasping a woman – an anthropomorph with discernible female attributes; e.g., Fig. 8). The male figure has large hands raised up with bristling fingers. In the Russian research tradition, such a figure in rock carvings is designated as 'Bes' (the Devil). At Kanozero, the hand of the 'Bes' is connected to a woman.

Amongst the images of boats and whales, depictions of walking elk and wild reindeer are seen (e.g., Fig. 3). In most cases, it is not possible to distinguish between elk and reindeer, because the images are very schematic, lacking specific

attributes. From a total of 105 cervid images, we are able to identify 22 elk and 8 reindeer with certainty. The images of wild reindeer feature antlers, whereas elk and unidentified cervids are depicted without antlers. Apart from a single instance mentioned above, there are no scenes that depict elk or wild reindeer hunt.

The rock carvings of Kanozero share certain traits with the carvings at Chalmn-Varre (River Ponoy, Kola Peninsula) and those of Zalavruga, located on the River Vyg near the White Sea coast in Russian Karelia. At the same time, it should be pointed out that there are also many significant differences between these rock carving sites.

The carvings of Kanozero also share a number of similarities with those of Alta (Norway) and Nämforsen (Sweden), as well as with the rock paintings of Finland. A few similarities can even be found with the rock carvings at Lake Onega, Russian Karelia.

As of yet, we have no scientific data for dating the rock carvings of Kanozero. However, if we consider the similarities and dissimilarities these carvings share with the neighbouring assemblages of rock carvings, the dating of which is better understood, it is possible to conclude that the first carvings at Kanozero were made during the Neolithic period.



*Fig. 3. Group Eloviy-1.*



Fig. 4. Group Eloviiy-2.



Fig. 5. Group Eloviiy-3.



Fig. 6. Group Eloviiy-3. Central part.

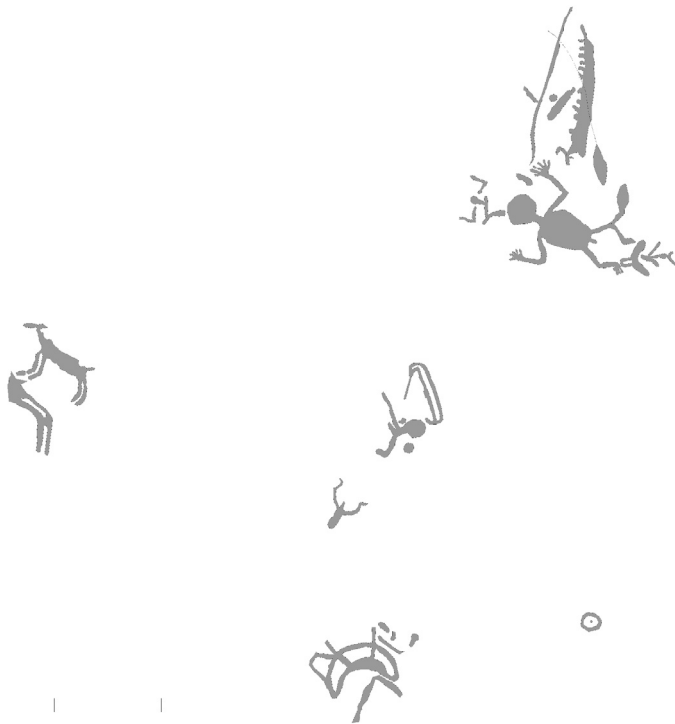


Fig. 7. Group Eloviiy-6.



Fig. 8. Group Kamenniy-1. Southern part.



Fig. 9. Group Kamenniy-1.

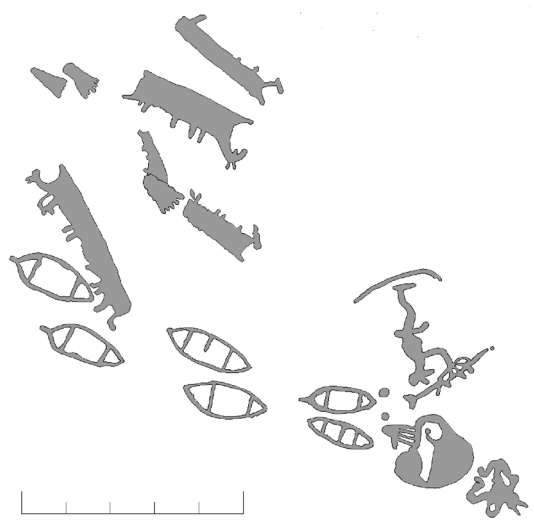


Fig. 10. Group Kamenniy-1. Northern part.



Fig. 11. Group Kamenniy-1. Central part.



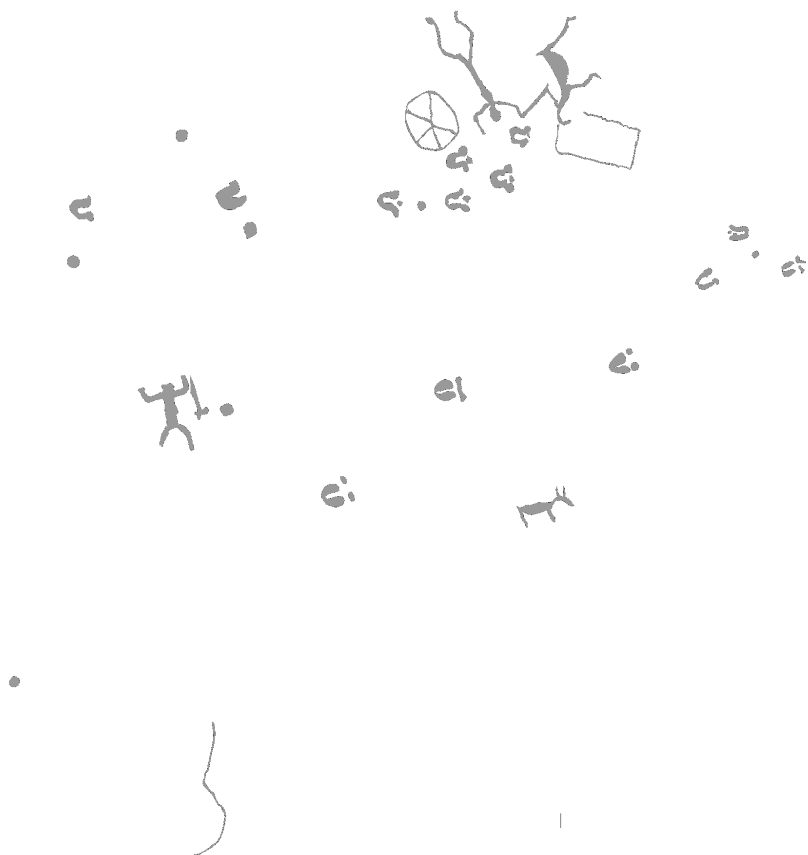
*Fig. 12. Group Kamennyi-3.*



*Fig. 13. Group Kamenniy-4.*

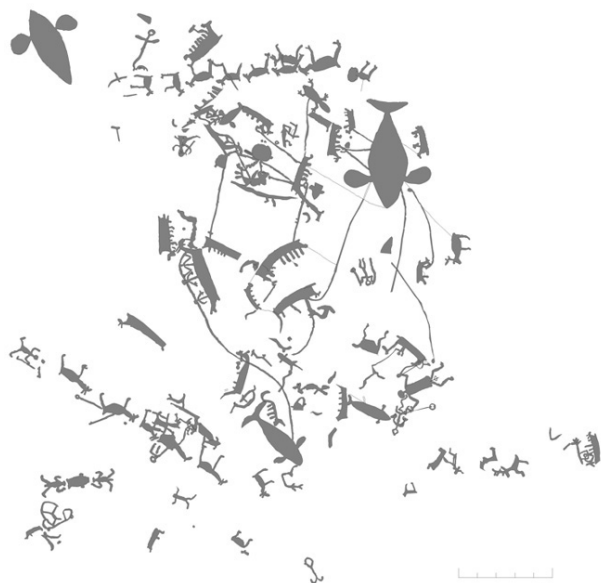


*Fig. 14. Group Kamenniy-5.*



*Fig. 15. Group Kamenniy-6.*

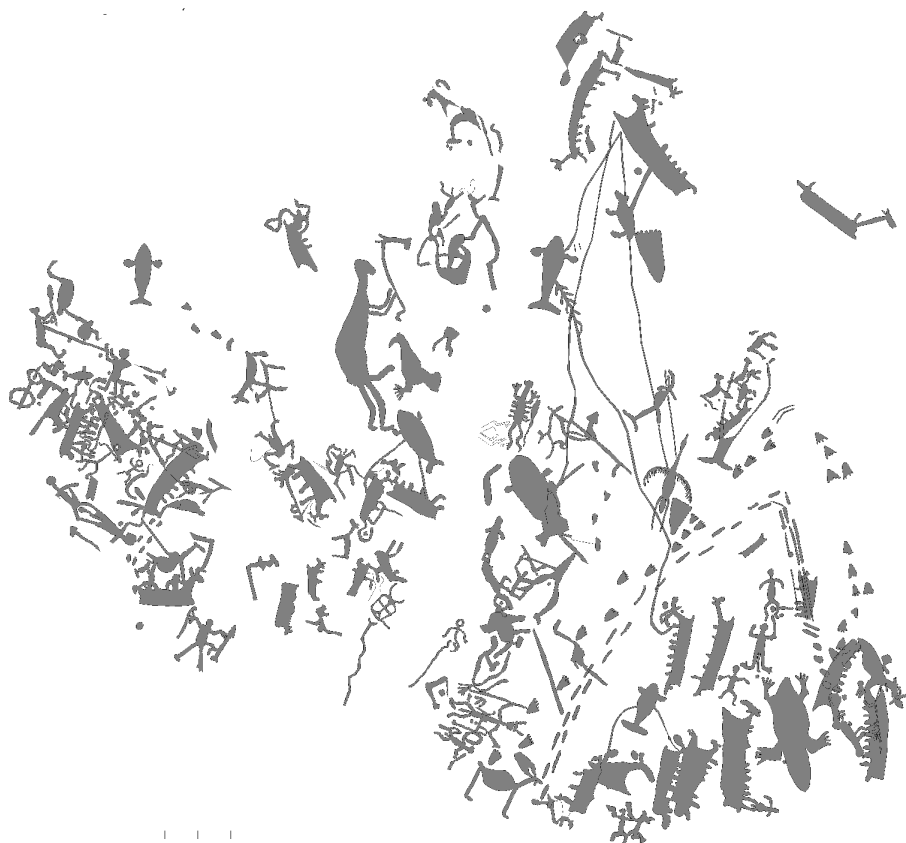




*Fig. 16. Group Kamennyi-7. North-western part.*



*Fig. 17. Group Kamennyi-7. Central part.*



*Fig. 18. Group Kamennyi-7. South-western part.*



Fig. 19. Group Kamenniy-7.



Fig. 20. Group Kamenniy-7. North-eastern part.

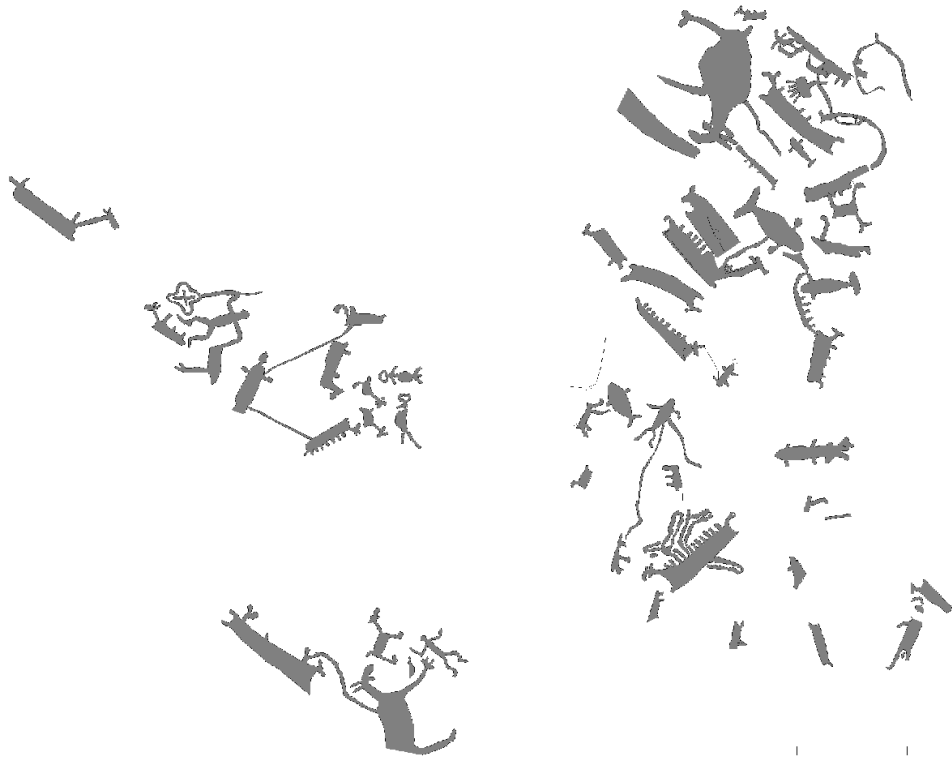


Fig. 21. Group Kamenniy-7. South-eastern part.



*Fig. 22. Group Odinnokaya.*



*Fig. 23. Group Kamenniy-7. View to NE.*