

# **The Role of the Kalevala in Finnish Culture and Politics**

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The question has frequently been asked: would Finland exist as a nation state without Lönnrot's Kalevala? There is no need to answer this, but perhaps we may assume that sooner or later someone would have written the books which would have formed the necessary building material for the national identity of the Finns.

During the mid 1980s, when the 150th anniversary of the Kalevala was being celebrated in Finland, several international seminars were held and thousands of pages of research and articles were published. At that time some studies appeared in which the birth of the nation state was examined from a pan-European perspective.

## SMALL NATION STATES

"The nation state - an independent political unit whose people share a common language and believe they have a common cultural heritage - is essentially a nineteenth-century invention, based on eighteenth-century philosophy, and which became a reality for the most part in either the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. The circumstances in which this process took place were for the most part marked by the decline of great empires whose centralised sources of power and antiquated methods of administrations prevented an effective response to economic and social change, and better education, with all the aspirations for freedom of thought and political action that accompany such changes."

Thus said Professor Michael Branch (University of London) at a conference on the literatures of the Uralic peoples held in Finland in the summer of 1991. The phrase "Language is my homeland" had been chosen as its theme; writers and researchers from many of the peoples speaking Finno-Ugrian languages subject to russification in the former Soviet Union and who were concerned about the future of their own cultures participated in the conference. Referring to a study by Anthony D. Schmidt (1986), Branch noted that in the rising nation states the intellectuals often had recourse to creating a past as part of an identity, to creating history in order to legitimize and reinforce the present. When reshaping the past, they used existing scholarly subjects to their advantage: history, comparative linguistics, archaeology, sociology, anthropology, ethnology and folkloristics.

According to Schmidt, "There are two ways in which the community can be located and its 'true state' revealed: through poetic spaces and golden ages. The first involves the uses of landscape, the second the uses of history. The one roots the community in its distinctive terrain; the other charts its origins and flowering in the age of heroes. Both together provide a history and metaphysic of the individuality of the community, from which an ethic of regeneration issues to lead it forward."

Expressing his agreement with the viewpoint of Miroslav Hroch (1985), Michael Branch spoke of a process of mystification, whose stages are (1) the creation of a national past and its treatment as an historical truth which is morally justified, (2) a period of political action, and (3) a phase of institutionalization, during which an administrative and educational system is created in the national language. Hroch and Branch consider Finland the epitome of the development of a nation state. The process, which started in the 1820s and continued within the sphere of Helsinki University and the Finnish Literature Society (FLS), first produced J.L. Runeberg's *Elgskyttarne* (The Elk Skiers), which was an epic poem written in Swedish containing a description of the life of the people, and then Lönnrot's Kalevala (Branch 1991: 12).

Starting from the 1810s, there was a social need for these poetic works. J.G. Linsen, who was one of the so-called Turku Romantics, had wanted Finnish poetry to have a broader temporal perspective and historical depth. Later when he was the head of the FLS in the 1830s, he must have been happy about the Kalevala. At the same time, the FLS announced a competition for the translating of Runeberg's poem **Elgskyttarne** (The Elk Skiers) into Finnish and the translating of the Kalevala into either Swedish or German.

## MYTHICAL HISTORY

The Kalevala fulfilled the expectations of a nationalistic educated class for a work which would raise Finnish culture to the level of that of Sweden and Russia. The Kalevala became the object of a cult around which a mythology of its own began to be spun. Hannes Sihvo's study of Karelianism, which was a devotion to Karelia which originated in the late 19th century, specifies the following basic myths taken seriously by Lönnrot himself and already outlined in the previous century by H. G. Porthan.

(1) The ancient Finnish world view was thought to be reflected in the Kalevala and original folklore. (2) The Kalevala was understood as a description of the ancient Finnish original religion - Lönnrot's aim was to leave out Christian motifs from the epic, making Väinämöinen the last receding figure of the heathen age. (3) The Kalevala represents the ancient Finnish legends, which are also linguistically very close to ancient Finnish. (4) The dispersion of the Finno-Ugric peoples, the Finnish tribe, is symbolically presented in the Kalevala. (5) The struggle between good and evil is allegorically depicted in the Kalevala, the opponents being Väinämöinen and Louhi the mistress of the North, in other male and female types

the fundamental character of the Finns and variations between tribes are evident. (6) The picture of the return of Väinämöinen, the national hero, has carried the utopia of the better future of the people (Sihvo 1973: 98-100).

During the 1830s and 1840s, Finnish and Hungarian researchers had begun to clarify the details of the relationships of the Finnic languages and the entire Finno-Ugric language family, whose peoples lived among the Russians and other peoples in northern Eurasia. In the foreword to the 2nd edition of the Kalevala, as the historical background to the poems, Lönnrot sets out the view of ancient Biarmia, which would have been located to the east of Finland, in the area stretching from the south-eastern shores of the White Sea through Onega and Ladoga to the Gulf of Finland. Thus Lönnrot himself first showed the way "for the mythical history", the formation of whose details has always been a popular hobby, even if the results of such research are not always to be taken very seriously. Most recently Martti Haavio has sought ancient Biarmia on the basis of the philological material ("The Rise and Fall of Biarmian Power", 1965); he left the idea in the air that one day archaeologists would still dig up some concrete evidence.

The earth is all the time revealing its secrets to archaeologists, and for example, those speaking at the seminar organized in 1985 entitled "Ancient poems and reality" were on the basis of new finds of money able to chart ancient trade routes more precisely than before. Discoveries of forged money have, on the other hand, captured the imagination of poets, so that Paavo Haavikko wrote a poem ("Twenty and one", 1974), in which he also presents his own explanation of the Sampo myth, according to which the *sampo* was a money mint stolen from Constantinople by the Vikings. The solving of the riddle of the sampo has fascinated both laymen and professional scholars. Drawings found in recent years on the cliffs of Lake Onega and the paintings of people and animals on the cliffs of the Finnish lakeland have led researchers to study both the Kalevala and original ancient poetry (e.g. Niilo Valonen: *Ancient Folk Poetry in Eastern Karelian Petroglyphs*, 1984). With a little goodwill, common motifs can be found, although the ancient cliff artists and Lönnrot's singers are separated from one another by millennia.

## LITERATURE IN TWO LANGUAGES

Lönnrot's first version of the Kalevala appeared in 1835 in a small edition of 500 copies and was in any case read by very few. For most educated people in the country only its translation into Swedish enabled them to become familiar with the epic; the Old Kalevala appeared in Swedish in 1841 and the "New" 1849 edition some 15 years after the original. The opinion of the respected poet J.L. Runeberg had an immediate positive effect on the attitudes of the educated class, but the struggle for the official position of the Finnish language in the 1860s alienated the Swedish-speaking upper class from the Kalevala. Evidence of this is perhaps provided by the fact that a new imprint of the Swedish Kalevala was not required for more than 50 years, as the German translator of the work, Hans Fromm, has

noted (Fromm 1987: 93). Swedish literature already had a long tradition behind it, and there was both original Swedish literature and works translated from the major European languages available in Finland, too. Swedish was the dominant language in the media. Long into the 19th century the language of science was still Latin, and Russian was required in the administration.

With the Kalevala, Kanteletar (1840) and other publications based on folklore and his newspaper articles, Lönnrot created models for the literary use of the Finnish language. Whereas earlier religious literature, such as bibles, hymn-books and books of homilies and the small amount of other poetry and prose published in Finnish were based on the south-western dialects, the Kalevala enriched developing literary Finnish with elements from the eastern dialects and the Karelian language. It can be imagined that reading the Kalevala with a western vocabulary would not have been particularly easy. And so Lönnrot's lectures on the Kalevala as professor of Finnish at Helsinki University were mainly explanations of words. Lönnrot was one of the foremost specialists in folk dialects of his day and he developed wise compromises in solution to linguistic disputes. For a couple of decades he concentrated on preparing a Finnish-Swedish dictionary (1860-80), stabilizing the orthography and inventing thousands of neologisms both for everyday use and to meet the needs of science. For example, the Finnish word for "literature" **kirjallisuus** was developed by Lönnrot; it was first used in the name of the Finnish Literature Society (Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura).

## THE KALEVALA AND NATIONAL ART

Already before the Kalevala had appeared, the most famous of the mythical heroes of the folk poetry, Väinämöinen had inspired artists. In the House of the Turku Academy, there is a series of reliefs made in the 1810s by Eric Cainberg, one of which depicts a theme well-known from the Kalevala "Väinämöinen's playing". The relief which was commissioned was supposed to show the pre-Christian culture of Finland, and in accordance with the instructions received, the artist had to depict "Väinämöinen, the Finnish Mercury and Orpheus, the inventor of fire, the boat and the lyre, the tutelary god of all the arts". A little later, a statue of Väinämöinen "the Finnish Apollo" was ordered from a Danish sculpture for the Monrepos Park in Viipuri (Vyborg), of which only pictures have been preserved. A play based on folk poetry was also made about Väinämöinen and his name came up in the early lyric poetry of the time.

The Kalevala romanticism which originated after the appearance of the epic finally established Kalevalaic themes in literature, art and music. J.Z. Blackstadius, a Swede, was the first to paint Väinämöinen as a white-bearded kantele player (Väinämöinen and the maid, 1851). The painter R.W. Ekman, who had travelled in Eastern Finland and Karelia depicted Väinämöinen as a powerful hero type in the 1850s and 60s; his most famous work shows "Väinämöinen's playing". At the same time, the sculptor C.E. Sjöstrand made Väinämöinen into an antique divinity or a

folk leader reminiscent of Moses of the Old Testament. The most well-known of Sjöstrand's sculptures is "Kullervo speaking to his sword" (1868). These artists were products of the Stockholm Academy of Arts, and their model was the art depicting Scandinavian mythology.

Some artists had already begun to give the figures from the Kalevala human features, too, portraying them according to the people they had seen in Karelian villages. But the researchers of national art and the artists' patrons pointed out that one could not think of Väinämöinen as any old country bumpkin, but rather a demigod (Knuuttila 1978: 20).

Five artists participated in the competition for illustrations with a Kalevala theme in 1891. The competition was won by Akseli Gallen-Kallela with 11 sketches of which some were finalized in his later works. This artist decorated the Finnish pavilion at the Paris World Exhibition in 1900 with Kalevala frescoes on the arches (The forging of the Sampo, Ilmarinen ploughing the field of adders, The defence of the Sampo and The arrival of Christianity in Finland), which almost 30 years later were re-executed in the vaults of the National Museum in Helsinki; in the same spirit "Kullervo's departure for war" also originated as a fresco in 1901. In these monumental paintings, Gallen-Kallela visualized his imagination of heroes of ancient times, but in symbolic language they also represented the aspirations of his own day. Several clearly definable stylistic periods are evident in his studies and interpretations of the Kalevala: Väinämöinen trying to catch the red-cheeked maiden in a national romantic lakeland landscape is totally different from the monumental defenders of the Sampo. Although the figure of Väinämöinen already admits to quite many interpretations from Lönnrot onwards.

Even today, Gallen-Kallela's Kalevala pictures dominate the visions of the epic in the minds of Finns. Although many other artists have later illustrated the work, the images he created are engraved in the consciousness of the people. Art historians have at different times seen or consciously not seen the social and national tendencies in Gallen-Kallela's works, which can with good reason be considered a statement of his views both in principle and personally. "The defence of the Sampo" or "Kullervo's curse" can be seen as the artist's own bursts of creative energy or as a statement of the fate of his little home country. What is certain is that Gallen-Kallela's paintings have built the Finnish identity and can be compared to the Kalevala as treasures of national art. In the words of Seppo Knuuttila: "However, as treasures amongst treasures they hold an exceptional position: works of art with their countless reproductions and applications planned to serve various ends have an active effect on the contents of our collective view of the world" (Knuuttila 1978: 74). When Paavo Haavikko's TV film ("The age of iron"), consisting of themes from the Kalevala, was made a decade ago, Gallen-Kallela's influence was noticeable in it.

## THE KARELIA OF THE ARTISTS

The new wave of Kalevala romanticism in the late 19th century ignited an interest in Karelia, the last home of the ancient poems, where it was still possible to find people able to sing the original runes. Karelia aroused the enthusiasm of both the pioneers in the academic research of folklore and the student corporation representing eastern Finns who supported them, and who organized two competitions for illustrating the Kalevala (1885, 1891). The result, known as Karelianism, was a pilgrimage of artists to the eastern parts of Finland and to Russian Karelia, whose borders were open until the revolution of 1917.

In the wake of the students and researchers of language and folklore came the painters, sculptors, photographers, composers and writers. The search for a national past in distant forests and on far shores was not just a Finnish phenomenon. Dalarna, the land of river valleys, was the object of the same kind of pilgrimage in Sweden, just as was Iceland - the island of sagas in the Atlantic - to all Scandinavians, or Ireland and Scotland to the Celts of Western Europe. The British Celtic movement was also backed by its own epic, James MacPherson's *The Poems of Ossian* (Sihvo 1973: 291-93).

The reality of "Karelia of the Runes" did not always match the expectations of the pilgrims: they also came up against poverty, drunkenness and russification. Nevertheless with time, idealism usually overcame their disappointment. Lauri Honko, when characterizing the initial stages of the development which he calls the Kalevala process, stated: "The great paradox of romanticism was the idealization of the people, although the people were distant, and the portrayal of the people as creative and active, whereas in reality they were oppressed and passive" (Honko 1987: 132).

## LITERATURE AND THE THEATRE

Kullervo, who first appeared in the Kalevala in 1849, is one of the most dramatic male characters in the epic. Fredrik Cygnaeus, the aesthete, published a significant study as early as 1853 "On the tragic element in the Kalevala" and lectured on the subject at the same time as Lönnrot at Helsinki University. Among the audience listening to these gentlemen's lectures, was a student, Aleksis Kivi, the future Finnish national author. Kivi took part in the play-writing competition organized by the FLS in 1860 with a play about the Kullervo theme, and won first prize.

The contradictory, violent and vengeful Kullervo has been compared to the heroes of the dramas of antiquity and Shakespeare and to Job of the Old Testament. Kullervo also interested Sakari Topelius, who wrote in Swedish, however, he dealt with another hero, Lemminkäinen, whose adventures "among the maidens of the island" he transferred to the islands of the Mediterranean, in the spirit of

Romanticism (The Princess of Cyprus, 1869), from where Lemminkäinen nevertheless returns to his poor, bleak homeland in the north.

After a pause of a couple of decades, Kalevala themes returned to literature, at first in J.H. Erkko's plays *Aino* (1893), *Kullervo* (1895), *Pohjolan häät* (The Wedding at Pohjola, 1902) and in Juhani Aho's novel *Panu* (1879). As elsewhere in Europe, the national ideal needed the theatre as its forum. The themes were taken from history, but the message of the play was symbolically connected with the contemporary political situation. Although the characters and events in the plays were from mythical history, the aim was to make the costumes, stage scenery and other props ethnographically "genuine". The painters of and experts in stage scenery were artists of Gallen-Kallela's.

J.H. Erkko's "The Wedding at Pohjola" was performed as the inaugural play at the new National Theatre in Helsinki to great public acclaim. After all the play had been written as a play for national unity; as the country at that time was being torn apart by both disputes over language, struggles between the generations of Fennoman politicians and demonstrations by the rising working class. In the play the female ruler of the Kalevala's Pohjola, Louhi, could be identified as the representative of the Russian empire, just as in Gallen-Kallela's painting "The defence of the Sampo" the Louhi bird of prey could be connected with the eagle in the tsar's coat-of-arms.

As a journalist, Juhani Aho, after his journey to Karelia in 1892, suggested subjects connected with the Kalevala and Finnish ancient history to writers. The background to his novel, *Panu*, was the Karelianistic delusion, the belief that the Kalevala was a document of the religion, customs and world view of the ancient Finns. Aho did not base his knowledge of folk beliefs only on the Kalevala, for he was also familiar with the research of the leading folklorists Kaarle Krohn and Matti Varonen. In the same way as Aho, Eino Leino, the poet, was already inspired by the Kalevala in his youth and later moved in the Karelianistic artistic circles. He developed his own version of the epic's poetical metre and adopted it as his means of expression (Helkavirsiä, 1903).

## THE KALEVALA IN FINNISH MUSIC

It has been calculated that about 350 compositions based on Kalevalaic themes have been composed until the present. They have been produced fairly evenly over the decades, although the natural peaks were the anniversary years of the epic, such as its centenary in 1935 or its 150th anniversary in 1985 (Aho 1985: 8). The big event this year has been the opera *Kullervo* by the composer Aulis Sallinen, whose premiere was in the USA a few weeks ago. Sallinen's music was also heard in the background of the film *The Age of Iron* (1982).

It is considered that the first work with a theme from the Kalevala was Filip von Schantz's *Kullervo Overture*, whose premiere was at the inauguration of the new theatre in Helsinki in 1860. In the late 19th century, one of the greatest Karelianist

composers was Robert Kajanus (the orchestral works *Kullervo* 1881, and the *Aino Mystery* 1885); he used old folk melodies as the base for his works. The most famous Finnish composer's, Jean Sibelius', *Kullervo Symphony* was born one hundred years ago, and in honour of its centenary this work for choir and orchestra has returned to the programme. Sibelius' plans for an opera based on J.H. Erkko's texts were never realized, but he produced many orchestral and choral works (e.g. *The Lemminkäinen Suite* 1893-95, *The Daughter of Pohjola* 1906, *The Birth of Fire* 1902/1910, *Tapiola* 1926).

A German, Karl Meer-Berhaus, composed the first Kalevala opera 1890-91 (*Die Kalewainen in Pochiola*). The Finn, Oskar Merikanto's opera *The Maid of the North* (1899) won a prize in the composition competition organized by the FLS. Erkki Melartin's opera *Aino* (1907) was considered as being of great artistic merit. Armas Launis also composed an opera based on the Kalevala and Aleksis Kivi's play *Kullervo*.

Aarre Merikanto and Uno Klami, important composers of the 1920s and 30s, were inspired by the Lemminkäinen episode in the Kalevala; Klami's Kalevala Suite was extremely popular. For the centenary of the New Kalevala in 1949, works were commissioned from Selim Palmgren (*Väinämöinen and the Killing of the Bear*) and Ahti Sonninen (*Let's Strike Our Hands Together*), in which national romantic tones can still be detected. Tauno Marttinen is considered to have broken this tradition (*Kokko, the Bird of the Air* 1956, *Panu, the God of Fire* 1963, and the ballet *The Liberation of the Sun*). A new stratum in the music with a Kalevala theme is represented by compositions influenced by jazz (Eero Ojanen: *Väinämöinen's Playing* 1975, and Seppo Paakkunainen: *Kalevala, 7 parts* 1983-85), rock parodies (Juice Leskinen, 1985) and performance art (Lauri Nykopp: *The Voice of the Spirit*, 1983).

## FROM THE KALEVALA TO FOLKLORE RESEARCH

Interest in the research of the original folk poetry had its origin in the need to prove that Lönnrot's Kalevala was really based on genuine tradition. It was during the 1870s that the idea of publishing the notes accumulated in the collections of the FLS in the form of a broad scholarly edition first occurred. At the same time, there was also a desire to supplement the collections with new material. The project was ultimately realized with the 33 volume *The Ancient poems of the Finnish People* published between 1908 and 1948, containing 85,000 poems in the Kalevala metre; this publication bound in black leather with gilded embellishments became another symbol of the spiritual independence of the Finnish people.

Familiarisation with original folklore showed that the living oral tradition was rich, nor was it necessary to seek the rune singers only in distant Karelia, for they were also to be found in Western Finland. One of the first representatives of comparative folklore - later the first professor in the subject at Helsinki University - was Kaarle Krohn, who in a work published in 1885 in the name of his father Julius

Krohn (The History of Finnish literature I/Kalevala) showed that the epic poems used in Lönnrot's Kalevala were not just Finnish national property, but that the themes of the songs were international borrowed goods. Naturally the logical consequence of Krohn's observation was that it was not worth trying to discover the history of the Finnish people in the Kalevala or the epic folk songs behind it. But Finland needed its mythical history nor did it want to stop dreaming of its heroic period.

## THE KALEVALA, FOLKLORE AND THE SIN OF NATIONALISM

In 1862, Elias Lönnrot had published an abridged version of his Kalevala as a school textbook, and in the next decade Julius Krohn's fervent introduction was added to the schools' readers. William A. Wilson, an American cultural historian, quotes these words as typical examples of the spirit of the times in his work *Folklore and Nationalism in Modern Finland*:

"Noble and sturdy like Finland's ancient wilderness pines, the poems of the Kalevala have through the centuries endured bad weather, endured cold winds. Hunger often exhausted Finland's children; war swallowed Finland's heroes; but the Finnish people did not die, did not disappear" (Wilson 1976: 46).

*Maamme-kirja* (The Book of Our Country) by the historian Zachris Topelius was published for the first time in Finnish in 1876 and since then has been reprinted countless times. Wilson disapproves of Topelius' patriotic eulogy of the Kalevala:

"For no folklore collection in the world is like the Kalevala. It reflects the character of the Finnish people, and although much of it appears pagan and strange to our age, there is in it a profound wisdom, a simple beauty, and a moving love of the fatherland... As a result of such teaching, patriots of the coming years, alluding to the Kalevala, would be able to rally increasing numbers of Finns to the nationalistic cause" (Wilson 1976: 47).

The struggle of the Finns in the 1890s against the incipient process of russification naturally caused a continuous need to take advantage of the public rituals of the anniversaries of Lönnrot and the Kalevala which had become national symbols. The 28th February, the date when Lönnrot signed the foreword to the Kalevala, was first celebrated in 1885. A great event was arranged to mark the centenary of Lönnrot's birth in 1902, in connection with which the memorial sculpted by Emil Wikström, the winner of the competition organized for sculptors, was unveiled in the centre of Helsinki; the national poet Runeberg had been commemorated with a statue some years earlier. The 75th and 80th anniversaries of the Kalevala were celebrated impressively in 1910 and 1915. The journalist and poet Eino Leino wrote on Kalevala Day 1910:

"The Kalevala and its celebration are only a symbol of the right of the Finnish people to defend their own existence as a nation and as a civilized people. A nation which has created the Kalevala has not been born into the world without reason" (Wilson 1976: 60).

When examining the opinions and writings of folklorists during the period of Finnish independence in the 1920s and 30s, Wilson continually ticks them off for their nationalistic overtones. Undoubtedly, there was considerable demand for the leading folklorists Kaarle Krohn, Väinö Salminen and Martti Haavio during those years as speech-makers at various national celebrations, and in these speeches and their writings intended for the public at large they really did speak of the Kalevala, folk poetry and the fatherland with capital letters. They were engaged in politics and their published speeches show that the speakers were rooting for their homeland. Wilson was not pleased with the fact that the old Kaarle Krohn could not say the word "fatherland" without tears in his eyes, or that Väinö Salminen would have wanted a larger Finland, which would have included the Karelians on the Russian side of the border, or that Martti Haavio, as a representative of the first academic generation of independent Finland also used his poetic gifts for propaganda purposes. If Wilson had applied folkloristic genre analysis to his research material, he would have noticed that it consisted almost entirely of ritual texts: speeches and obituaries. The same men as academics wrote entirely different texts, in which it is more difficult to find patriotic emphases.

When the centenary of the Kalevala was celebrated in the Helsinki Fair Centre in 1935, Wilson observes Field-Marshal Mannerheim sitting in the front row, under whose command Finland later fought against the Soviet Union in the forests of Karelia. And in the same decade he discovers Matti Kuusi, the future professor of folkloristics at Helsinki University, going around as a travelling preacher for the Academic Karelian Society (a nationalistic political movement before the 2nd World War) speaking about the Kalevala and the fatherland. The same man was during the war an educational officer and now during his retirement days he is a popular speaker at events organized by the war veterans' societies. Matti Kuusi, just like all of us, has many roles: as a researcher he has been interested not only in the old epic but also African proverbs and riddles and phenomena of modern popular culture, but as a cultural politician his aim has been to influence the thought and behaviour of ordinary Finns.

## THE UBIQUITOUS KALEVALA

Is there any other book in world literature like the Kalevala, which has had such a profound impact on its original language and which has become to the same degree a source of identity symbols? Kalevala Day on 28th February is an official flag-raising day, when many kinds of annual events are organized: among others, The Kalevala Society, founded by researchers of "the national sciences", Gallen-Kallela

and other artists early this century, lays a wreath at Lönnrot's statue in Helsinki and holds its annual general meeting; on the previous evening the Finnish Cultural Fund holds its annual ceremony of distributing grants and its annual party in Finlandia Hall.

A good example to illustrate Kalevala culture in Finland is the use of names originating in the epic. Ilmarinen, Lemminkäinen, Väinämöinen, Louhi and Sampo have been used as the names of steamers and other ships. Virtually all the Finnish insurance companies, which market various kinds of security services, have taken their names from the epic: Ilmarinen, Kaleva, Kullervo, Osmo, Pohjola, Sampo, Tapiola, Wellamo. Most Finnish towns and cities have names originating from the Kalevala; in many towns there are parts where all the names are Kalevalaic. The Kalevala has also been used in tourism, and especially in Eastern Finland during the past few decades "Kalevala villages" have sprung up. The Karelian Republic, which is part of the Russian Federation, is together with the Finns developing the renovation of the former home villages of Lönnrot's best rune singers, to organize tourist trips "in the footsteps of Lönnrot", etc.

This year another important book from the point of view of the national identity was celebrated in Finland: the first entire Bible was published in Finnish 350 years ago. Its significance for the Finnish literary language and on the Finnish world view has been at least as great as the Kalevala's.

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