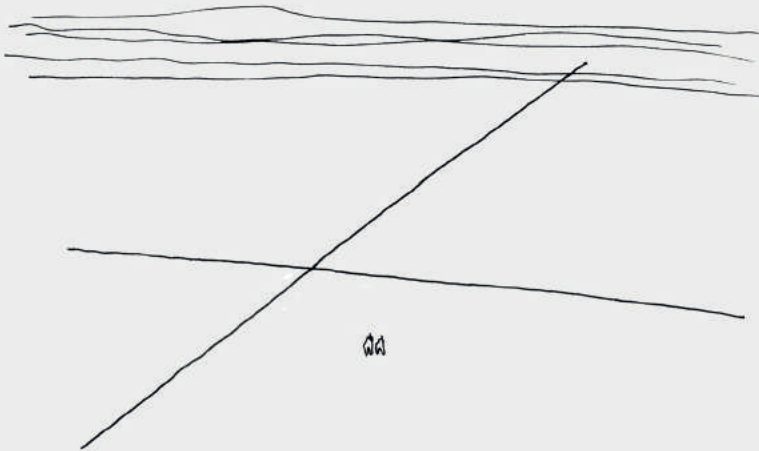


# Brasilia: the Alvorada Symphony

Vinicius de Moraes



# Brasilia: the Alvorada Symphony

The Brazil's Capital Construction, 1956-1960.

Vinicus de Moraes

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© Oscar Niemeyer / SPA

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**Márcia Nascimento** (b. 1982), **Nuno Costa** (b. 1984).

They have a Degree in Architecture from the University of Minho (DAA-UM, 2007) and a Master Degree from the University of Santiago de Compostela (USC, 2009).

Since then, they run their activity as architects developing their own works from which should be underlined the project Tapio Wirkkala's Saivaara Monument, awarded with grants, among others, from the Arts Council of Finland (TAIKE, 2014) and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (FCG, 2017).

They are co-founders of Kärjäkivet (2019, onwards).

## Synopsis

“Kärjäkivet” is a periodical publication of thought and criticism that was born from a wider project developed around a proposal which was never accomplished, concerning the Saivaara Monument, elaborated in 1978 by the legendary Finnish artist Tapio Wirkkala.

*“In 1975, the President Urho Kekkonen expressed as his wish that his monument should be placed in northwestern Lapland, on the Saivaara mountain. [...]”*

*How to make a monument on a site that is naturally so beautiful that one cannot take away anything from it, neither is man able to add anything to it? Tapio Wirkkala ended up with a proposal in which all the materials of the monument have been picked from the mountain itself.*

*The monument consists of a straight, paved, almost imperceptible path crossing over the Saivaara mountain. Five stones will be raised from the mountainside to the summit of the mountain, [...]. These stones will form a circle, similar to the court venue stones of the old days [called in Finnish as “Kärjäkivet”], on which the wise men of the village got together in order to decide about common matters. The one who has the strength to climb up the stony path may sit on these stones, look at the landscape and think. This artless monument is not going to change or destroy the landscape.”*

Tapio Wirkkala Rut Bryk Foundation Archive, 1978

In this sense, this publication intends to accomplish, not in form but in content, the idea of Tapio Wirkkala for the Saivaara Monument: the creation of a place where men of all races and colors can gather together to think.

For that purpose, an online platform was created where different invited authors gather together through texts, illustrated and edited in small booklets, expressing their thoughts on architecture, art and culture in general, with the Saivaara Monument as the main driver.

Based in Portugal, it is published, as a general rule, every quarter, by adding a new text that can be viewed or downloaded online.

## Editor's Note

Márcia Nascimento  
& Nuno Costa

Brasília: the Alvorada Symphony is a symphonic poem composed in 1959 by Antônio Carlos Jobim (music) and Vinicius de Moraes (lyrics) to be presented at the inauguration of Brasília in 1960. The poem, which is published here in its English version, is divided into 5 movements, each one of them sublimely expressing the transition process from a completely wild territory to what would then become the new capital of Brazil.

The interest of integrating this poem in this sequence of publications, lies essentially in this transition between nature and architecture through the hand of man. As Paulo Mendes da Rocha told us "*architecture is to build the habitability of nature*" and this definition can be applied to the construction of the city, the shelter or simply the path. What changes are the grades of transformation.

This issue was prepared in close cooperation with the VM Cultural in the person of Georgiana de Moraes to whom we would like to address our special thanks. We are grateful also to the Jobim Music, Antônio Carlos Jobim Institute (IACJ) and the Public Archive of the Federal District (ArPDF) for their courtesy regarding the authorizations for the published images.

Saravá!



Tom and Vinicius in Brasília, 1960.

## Brasilia: The Alvorada Symphony <sup>1</sup>

### I - The Desert Tableland

Vinicius de Moraes,  
Poet, Composer, Singer,  
Dramaturge and  
Diplomate.



Juscelino Kubitschek. Feet in immensity, the first time in the “cerrado”, 1956.

© ArPDF. Photo: Jean Manzon

In the beginning there was the void...  
The ancient pain-free solitudes.  
The tableland, the infinite waste  
In the beginning there was the wild land:  
The blue sky, the pungent-red soil  
And the sad dull green of the scrub.  
There were ancient solitudes bathed  
By gentle streams  
Rowing softly through the woods.  
There was no-one. The solitude  
Seemed like no man  
Talking about no thing.  
Indeed, the soulless fields  
Seemed to speak, and the voice that rose  
From the great reaches, from the twilight vales  
No longer seemed to hear the footsteps  
Of the old explorers, the rugged pioneers  
Who, in their search for gold and diamonds,  
The hills echoing their gunshots,  
The sadness of their cries and the fury  
Of their violence against the Indian, expanded  
The frontiers of the Homeland far beyond its treaty-bound limits.  
- Fernão Dias, Anhanguera, Borba-Gato,  
You were the heroes of the first westward marches,  
To conquer the wild country  
And the vast and lonesome plains!  
But you are gone. And from the meeting place  
Of the three great basins  
Of the three millenary giants:  
Amazonas, São Francisco, River Plate;  
From the new roof of the world, from the lightened tableland  
Are also gone the stricken tribes of old  
And the frightened beasts.  
There remained only the pain-free solitudes  
The no-end, the infinite waste  
Where, at the end of the day  
The partridge called  
Rousing the melancholy cry of the jaó.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Alvorada” - Dawn.

<sup>2</sup>“Jaó” - Tinamou.



From the wooded belts along the river banks.  
And night wood fall. In the celestial meadows  
The stars burned nearer  
And the Southern Cross  
Seemed destined  
To be planted deep in Brazilian soil:  
The Great Cross raised  
Above the somber growth of the "cerrado"<sup>3</sup>  
To bless the new explorer  
The daring pioneer  
The conqueror  
The Man!

A tall wooden cross indicates, in Brasilia, the presence of faith.

© ArPDF

<sup>3</sup> "Cerrado" - grassland containing scattered and stunted trees.



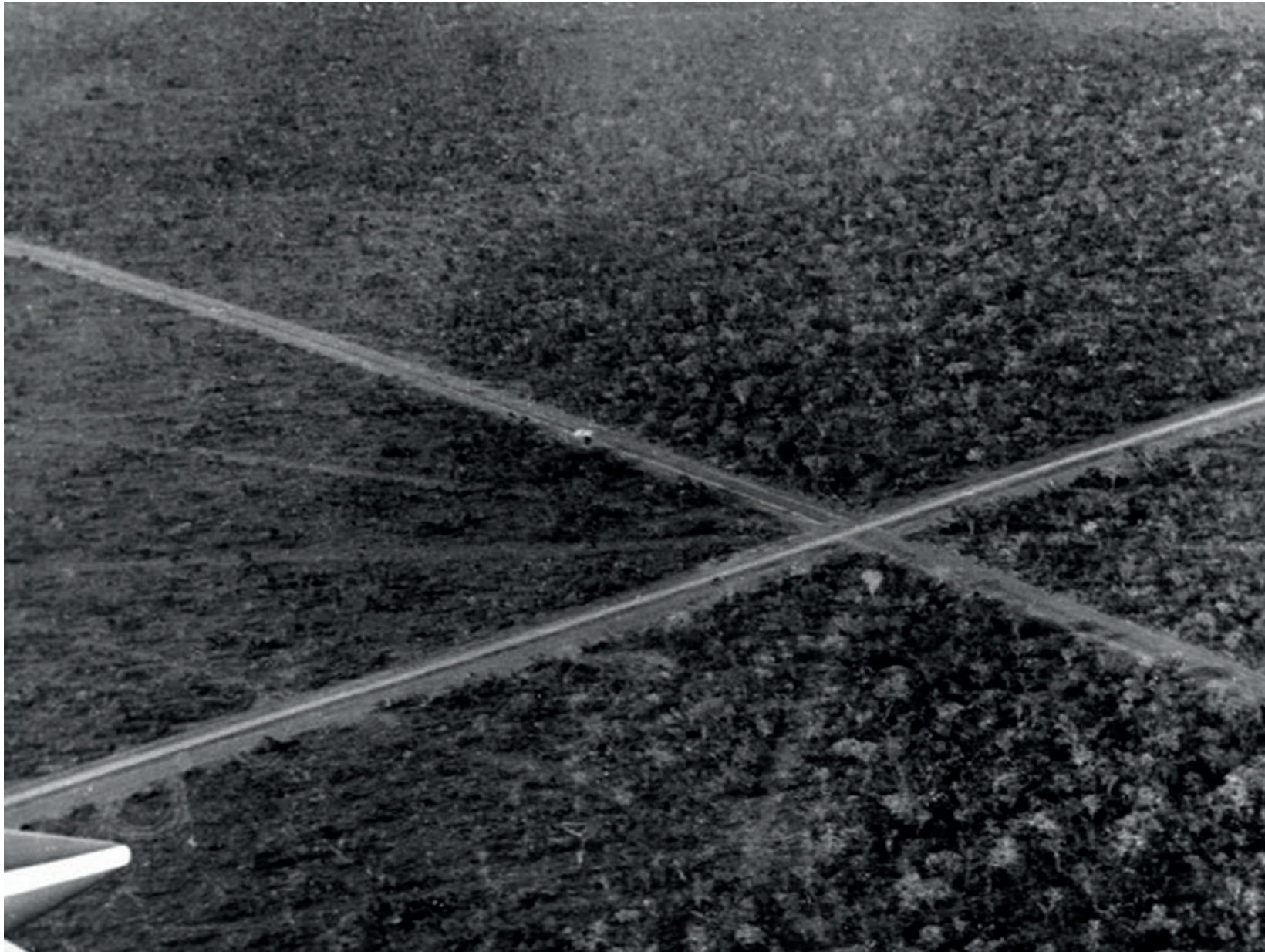
Clearing the land (Bernardo Sayão Road), 1959.

© ArPDF. Photo: Agência do Estado

## II - Man

Yes, Man had come,  
 Finally and forever he had come.  
 He was there to stay. His eyes reflected  
 A singleness of purpose: to stay and conquer the solitudes  
 And the horizons, to clear the land and create, to found  
 And build. His hands  
 Were innocent of weapons  
 Other than those of peaceful labour. Yes,  
 This at last was Man: the Founder. His face bore  
 The determined look of pioneers at old,  
 But no longer were gold and diamonds the object  
 Of his greed. He calmly faced  
 The setting sun which lit, in its descent into the night  
 The dreadful monsters and beasts of the west.  
 His eyes then turned towards the stars which shone  
 In the immense dome sustained  
 By sightless pillars of darkness.  
 Yes, it was Man...  
 He came from far, through great solitudes,  
 Slowly and painfully. He still suffered from the roughness  
 Of the ways, the aching memory of the deserts,  
 The weariness of the tangled forests  
 Self devouring in the subterranean struggle  
 Of their giant roots, and the entwining  
 Embrace all their boughs. But now  
 He had come to stay. His feet took root  
 In the red soil of the Tableland. His look  
 Laid open the vast untouched lands  
 Within the infinite circle of the horizon. He deeply breathed  
 The fresh fragrant air of the wild land. Yes, he would plant  
 In that desert a city as pure and white...

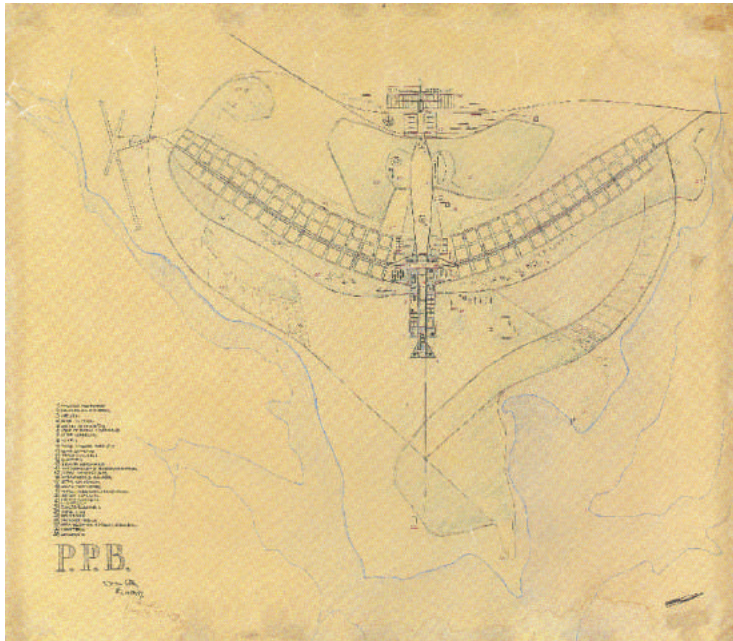




The crossing of the monumental axis with road axis, the zero point, 1957.

© ArPDF. Photo: Mário Fontenelle





- "... as a flower in that lonely, rugged land..."<sup>4</sup>  
 - A city rising from the lonesome waste.

- "... like an eternal message of grace and poetry..."<sup>4</sup>  
 - A city that by day would wear a bridal dress

- "... in which the architecture would stand out white,  
 Floating in the deep darkness of the plateau..."<sup>4</sup>  
 - A city that by day would work gaily

- "...In an atmosphere of monumental dignity..."<sup>4</sup>  
 - And by night, in hours of languor and yearning

- "... with the magic brilliance of dramatic lights..."<sup>4</sup>  
 - Would fall asleep in a Palace of the Dawn!

- "... A city of happy people enjoying life in all its fragility,  
 understanding the value of pure things ..." <sup>4</sup>  
 - And would be like the Southern Cross  
 Planted in the Country's heart.

- "...born of the primitive gesture of one who marks a spot or takes  
 possession of land: two lines intersecting at right angles – that is,  
 the sign of the Cross itself!"<sup>5</sup>

Brasilia Pilot Plan. Architect Lucio Costa, 1957.

© Instituto Antonio Carlos Jobim, Lucio Costa Archives. Drawing: Lucio Costa.

<sup>4</sup> Oscar Niemeyer quote.

<sup>5</sup> Lucio Costa quote.



Retirantes/ Candangos arriving at Brasília, 1958.

© ArPDF. Photo: Mário Fontenelle

### III - Arrival of the “Candangos”<sup>6</sup>

Now it was time to build, and to build a new tempo. For that, it was necessary to draw on every vital resource of the Nation, to call together all men who wanted to work and believed in the future: to build, at a new time, a New Time.

Responding to the mighty call for help in this giant task, workers started to come from all points of the huge country: simple and quiet men, feet like roots, face of leather and hands of stone. On foot they came in on-cars on mule-back or lightly squeezed, like cattle, in bemired trucks. They came by all possible and imaginable means of transportation, drawn from every corner of the immense Homeland – but mostly from the North; The Middle-North, and from the North-East, in their hard and simples sweetness; they arrived in large droves from the Great-East, from the “Mata” Zone, the Central West, and from the Great South. They came silent, but full of hope, often leaving behind wives and children in the expectation of better days to come. They came from so many towns and cities of the great Country, but mostly from the North. From so many towns whose names were homesickness in their cars, in the music and within the rhythms of the great Country...

(Two speakers alternately)

- Boa Viagem! Boca do Acre! Água Branca! Vargem Alta! Amargosa! Xique-Xique! Cruz das Almas! Areia Branca! Limoeiro! Afogados! Morenos! Angelim! Tamboril! Palmares! Taperoá! Triunfo! Aurora! Campanário! Águas Belas! Passagem Franca! Bom Conselho! Brumado! Pedra Azul! Diamantina! Capelinha! Capão Bonito! Campinas! Canoinhas! Porto Belo! Passo Fundo!

(Speaker n. 1)

- Cruz Alta...

(Speaker n. 2)

- Drawn from every corner of the immense Country...

(Speaker n. 1)

- To build a city pure and white...

(Speaker n. 2)

- A city of happy people...

<sup>6</sup> “Candangos” – manual workers from the North and North-East of Brazil.

#### IV - The Work and the Building

- Much more was needed than ingenuity, tenacity and invention. Needed were a million cubic meters of concrete and a hundred thousand tons of reinforcing bars, and thousands of sacks of cement, and half a million cubic meters of sand, and two thousand kilometers of wire.

- And a million cubic meters of gravel was needed, as needed were four hundred kilometers of rolled steel and many thousand tons of lumber. And sixty thousand workers! Sixty thousand, drawn from every part of the huge Country, but specially from the North. Sixty thousand "candangos" had been needed to clear, dig, stake, saw, nail, weld, push, cement, plane, polish – to build the white walls...

- O, weightless white walls!
- Like feather so white...
- O, towering structures!
- So light, and so pure...

As it laid gently by angel's hands upon the pungent red soil of the tableland, amidst the inflexible music, the poignant music, the mathematical music of human labour in progress...

Of human labour which portends that the die is cast and action irreversible.



Workers in the construction of the dome of the Federal Senate.

## The Chant

And at labour's end, while darkness slowly enfolds the day, with their hard hands emptied of work and their eyes filled with the sight along horizons, the workers go to rest, longing for their homes so far away, their woman so far away. The song they sing, which adds to the sadness of the sun dying in the ancient solitudes, seems to call to the women left behind in expectation of better days: the women into standing in doorways, and probably still standing there with their hands full of love and eyes filled with the sight at end less horizons. The women who, many miles away, many hills afar, in the hope that some day, by the side of their men, they too might participate in the life of that city born in our communion with the stars. Women who, one morning, watched their men go forth in search of work to buy them the little happiness they do not have, a little nothing to let them see the future shine in their children's eyes. This very work which, at the close of day, shepherds the workers back to the deep and fundamental solitude of the night that slowly falls over the tableland...

## V - Chorus

### I Chorus (Men)

Brasilia, Brasilia, Brasilia, Brasilia, Brasilia  
BRAZIL!

### II Chorus (Men)

Brasilia, Brasilia, Brasilia, Brasilia, Brasilia  
BRAZIL!

### III Chorus (Mixed)

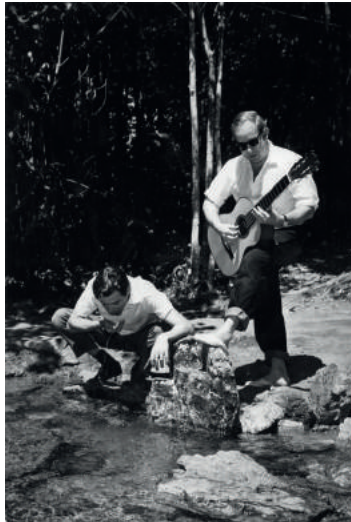
Brasilia, Brasilia, Brasilia, Brasilia, Brasilia  
BRAZIL!

### IV

Land of the sun  
Land of the dawn  
Landing holding high in the sky  
Like a beacon, the sign of the cross  
Land of sunshine  
Sweet land of hope, and a promise  
Of peace and of love for the world  
Brotherly land  
O, Soil of Brazil...  
... Soul of Brazil...

Land of poetry, song and love  
Land which one days has found its heart

Brazil! Brazil!  
Ah... Ah... Ah...  
B r a s i l i a!  
Ding! Dong!  
O ... o... o... o



Tom and Vinicius in Brasília, 1960.

© Jobim Music. Instituto Antônio Carlos Jobim. Photo: Jader Neves.

Georgiana de Moraes<sup>7</sup>

First of all, I want to say that Vinicius de Moraes' family is very happy to participate in this publication.

There is a funny story about the passage of Tom and Vinicius through Brasília, at the time of its construction.

The two were staying at Catetinho (then a Palace for dispatches from the President, totally improvised), when they heard a noise of water at the back of the house.

They asked the watchman what the noise was.

You do not know?

It's just that here there's drinking water (água de beber), mate..

So they were inspired and composed *Água de Beber*

*Água de Beber* became a great success for the duo.

A big hug

Georgiana

<sup>7</sup> Georgiana de Moraes, daughter of Vinicius de Moraes and Director of VM Cultural.



## Vinicius de Moraes

Vinicius de Moraes born in Rio de Janeiro on October 19th, 1913.

He was a Brazilian poet and lyricist whose best-known song was *A Garota de Ipanema* [The Girl from Ipanema], which he co-wrote with the composer Antônio Carlos Jobim.

Author of numerous volumes of lyrical poetry, Moraes began his literary career as an adherent of the Brazilian Modernism in vogue around 1930. A period of studying English literature at the University of Oxford and residence in the United States as vice-consul of Brazil in Los Angeles (1947-50) broadened the scope of his verse, which was further enriched by his interest in theatre and the film industry. The result was a gradual movement away from poetic experimentation and toward an increasingly prosaic treatment of everyday themes with the sensuous lyricism that became his hallmark.

In the 1950s Moraes joined with younger musicians in forming the bossa nova style, incorporating elements of Brazilian samba and international jazz. His later years involved intense musical collaboration and a prolific outpouring of popular song lyrics. His theatrical libretto *Orfeu da Conceição* (1956) formed the basis of the prizewinning film *Orfeu Negro* [Black Orpheus] 1958.

He died in Rio de Janeiro on July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1980.



## KÄRJÄKIVET

Finnish word meaning “court stones” or “circle of stones”: places of judgment (originally iron age graves), where judgments were held and justice carried out, accordingly to the Finnish National Board of Antiquities.

In the ancient times, they were important places where the primitive leaders of the North got together in order to discuss and decide about common matters.

[www.karajakivet.com](http://www.karajakivet.com)

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