

Highlights of Research in Scandinavia on Forest Finns

Maud Wedin

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Abstract

The end of the 16th century saw the start of a westward migration of so-called Forest Finns from Eastern Finland to the Scandinavian conifer belt. Today Forest Finn buildings, place names and areas called Finn forests, still remind about the colonisation. The earliest descriptions dealing with the Forest Finns have been published in travel books of various kinds, which primarily deal with other issues than Forest Finns. The late 18th century saw the start of publications concerning the Forest Finns as main subject. 1817-21 Carl Axel Gottlund was the first one to make study visits in the Forest Finn areas. In 1888 the first thesis was written. During this time also study trips made by Finnish scholars to the Forest Finn area of Värmland started, in order to study the language and culture. During the 20th century came research and publications dealing with Forest Finnish economy, settlements, maps, genealogy, family names, place names and architecture, often limited to smaller geographical areas in Norrland, Bergslagen and Solør-Värmland and also limited subject fields. Since the 1990s the research has gained new ground thanks to better conditions for interdisciplinary co-operation. Also the founding of Forest Finn network FINNSAM (www.finnsam.org) has improved the possibilities for mutual interchange between both spare time researchers and scholars. For the time being there are quite a number of projects going on and a selection of them will be presented in this article.

The Forest Finns

During the late 16th and the first half of the 17th centuries, vast areas of the Scandinavian conifer belt were colonised by Finnish slash-and-burn cultivators, mainly originating from Savolax in eastern Finland. Referred to as Forest Finns, they settled down in large areas, which reached from Tiveden in southern Sweden to Lapland in the north, from Gästrikland on the east coast to Norwegian Telemark in the west. Although this colonisation mainly occurred in a relatively short, intensive period, the settlements became more concentrated during the following century. Gradually the Finns assimilated in the Scandinavian population, the pace of this process varying in different areas.

A number of preserved Forest Finnish buildings, but especially the place names remind about the Forest Finnish settlement and the language which once was spoken there. Some old villages are still called Finn-villages and Finn Forests.

Previous research

The publications from the 17th and 18th centuries, i.e. travel books and reports of field trips to the Forest Finnish areas, deal with the origins of Forest Finns as parts of wider geographical accounts (Wedin 2007:370-] 371).

The first publications describing the Forest Finns appeared at the late 1700s and early 1800s. The influential works of the Finnish professor H.G. Porthan (Porthan 1873 [1793]) and German geographer Rühls, were however based on second-hand information since they never visited the areas themselves.

C. A. Gottlund was the first Finnish scholar to visit the Forest Finnish areas, and his diaries from 1817 and 1821 are valuable sources for later research (Gottlund 1984, Gottlund 1986).

During the 1880s, Albrekt Segerstedt, a teacher at the college of education in Karlstad, collected information about the Forest Finns by sending questionnaires primarily to teachers and clergy in different Forest Finnish areas in Sweden and Norway. In 1888, the first thesis on the Forest Finns was defended by Petrus Nordmann, titled *Finnarne i mellersta Sverige* (The Forest Finns in Middle Sweden). Around this time Finnish scholars, mostly linguists, folklorists and ethnologists, started to make field trips to certain Forest Finn areas, particularly to northern Värmland, which was the last stronghold of Forest Finnish language. These field trips continued until the middle of the 20th century.

During the 20th century, a number of publications dealing with the Forest Finns' distribution, economy, settlements, maps, genealogy, family names, place names and architecture appeared. Some of them dealt with Scandinavia (Lönborg 1902) or provinces of Norrland (Gothe 1945) or Bergslagen, but most studies, however, were often limited to smaller geographical areas and to restricted topics. Moreover, many of the publications were flawed by poor source criticism and a lack of scientific planning.

Many authors have relied upon the older literature as their main source and have uncritically quoted earlier authors instead of doing their own basic research. Statements made by a scholar in the late 1800s, based on uncertain sources, have been repeated unquestioningly in many books, thus becoming gradually axioms that have not been properly investigated. It is a generally accepted fact in the literature about Forest Finns that they chose to settle in high terrain. This generalised idea, however, is based on the situation in Värmland during late 1800s. Old maps clearly show that the earliest settlements were situated in lower terrain, preferable close to lakes. Another widespread, but nevertheless, false notion tells about regular fights between the Forest Finn settlers and the Swedish farmers, sometimes even described as wars. The court books however tell about occasional small conflicts but there are no signs of sheer battles between the ethnic groups (Broberg 1988: 50-54). Research on the Forest Finnish has hence during a long period of time been built on a fragmentary basis, and fundamental research turned out to be necessary from a comprehensive perspective.

From the later part of 20th century the research has undergone a distinct qualitative change. The research methods have improved, especially since the late 1900s. The awareness of the multilingual and fragmentary nature of the sources has raised the research standards by making the scholars more cautious when drawing conclusions. At the same time, new perspectives and methods, such as more problem-orientated approaches, have provided a new fruitful basis for the research on Forest Finnish culture, migration and history. Further on, the necessity to gain knowledge about different cultural aspects from a multidisciplinary perspective constitutes a challenge for today's scholars.

Since the late 1980s, several theses dealing with the Forest Finns have been published. Per Jonsson's *Finntorparna i Mången* (Forest Finn crofters in Mången) from 1989 was a historic-materialistic dissertation about the proletarianisation of Forest Finns in Hällefors in Bergslagen. Tuula Eskeland wrote in 1994 her dissertation *Fra Diggasborrå til Diggasbekken* (From Diggasborrå to Diggasbekken)

about Forest Finnish place names in Finnskogen in Norway. The following year, Gabriel Bladh defended his doctoral dissertation about the Forest Finns in northern Värmland, called *Finnskogens landskap och människor under fyra sekler* (The landscape and people of Finnskogen during 400 years). In 2002 Eija Lähteenmaki wrote her thesis about the early Forest Finnish migration to Karlskoga during late 16th century, with the Finnish title *Ruotsin suomalaismetsien synty. Savolainen liikkuvuus vanhemmalla Vaasa-kaudella* (The origin of the Swedish Finn forests and Savolax mobility during the older period of the Vasa kings). In 2005 Riitta Taipale defended her licentiate's thesis about Forest Finn language *Varmilanninsuomalaisten kielenvaihdosta ja kielen kuolemasta. Kolmen metsasuomalaisen kupin toimituksia*. The most recent doctoral dissertation; *Den skogsfinska kolonisationen i Norrland* (The Forest Finnish Colonisation in Norrland) was defended by Maud Wedin in 2007. (Jonsson 1989, Eskeland 1994, Bladh 1995, Lähteenmaki 2002, Taipale 2005 and Wedin 2007).

Increasing co-operation, multidisciplinary projects, seminars and conferences have stimulated research on the Forest Finns resulting in a number of books and other publications, such as the handbook *Det skogsfinska kulturarvet* (The Forest Finnish cultural heritage) from 2001 (Wedin ed. 2001).

Several projects in the vast research programme "Interaction across the Gulf of Bothnia" (Swe *Svenskt i Finland - Finskt i Sverige*, Fi *Kahden puolen Pohjanlahtea*), which took place 2000-2003, also dealt with Forest Finnish issues. The aim of the programme was to study the co-existence between Swedish in Finland and Finnish in Sweden, and the dependence, non-dependence, interaction and tensions between the countries - historically, today and in the future. Human geographer Gabriel Bladh, historian Eija Lähteenmaki, historian Niclas Persson and human geographer Maud Wedin participated with the project "*Skogsfinnarna i Sverige - migration, kolonisation och assimilation*" ("Forest Finns in Sweden - migration, colonisation and assimilation") (Bladh & Wedin 2006). Marja-Liisa Keinänen and Gunilla Bjerén participated in the project "The ethnicity and the gender" investigating the renaissance of the Värmland Finnish culture (Keinänen 2004; Keinänen & Bjerén 2006).

At the moment there are a number of projects in progress and some of them will be presented in this article.

FINNSAM

In order to promote co-operation and make the organising of common activities easier, academic scholars and non-academics interested in the Forest Finnish research started a network called FINNSAM (*Finnbygder i samverkan - Finnbygder i samvirke* - Forest Finn areas in co-operation) in 1992. The organisation works for the communication and co-operation between scholars, spare time scholars, institutions and organisations dealing with Forest Finnish topics.

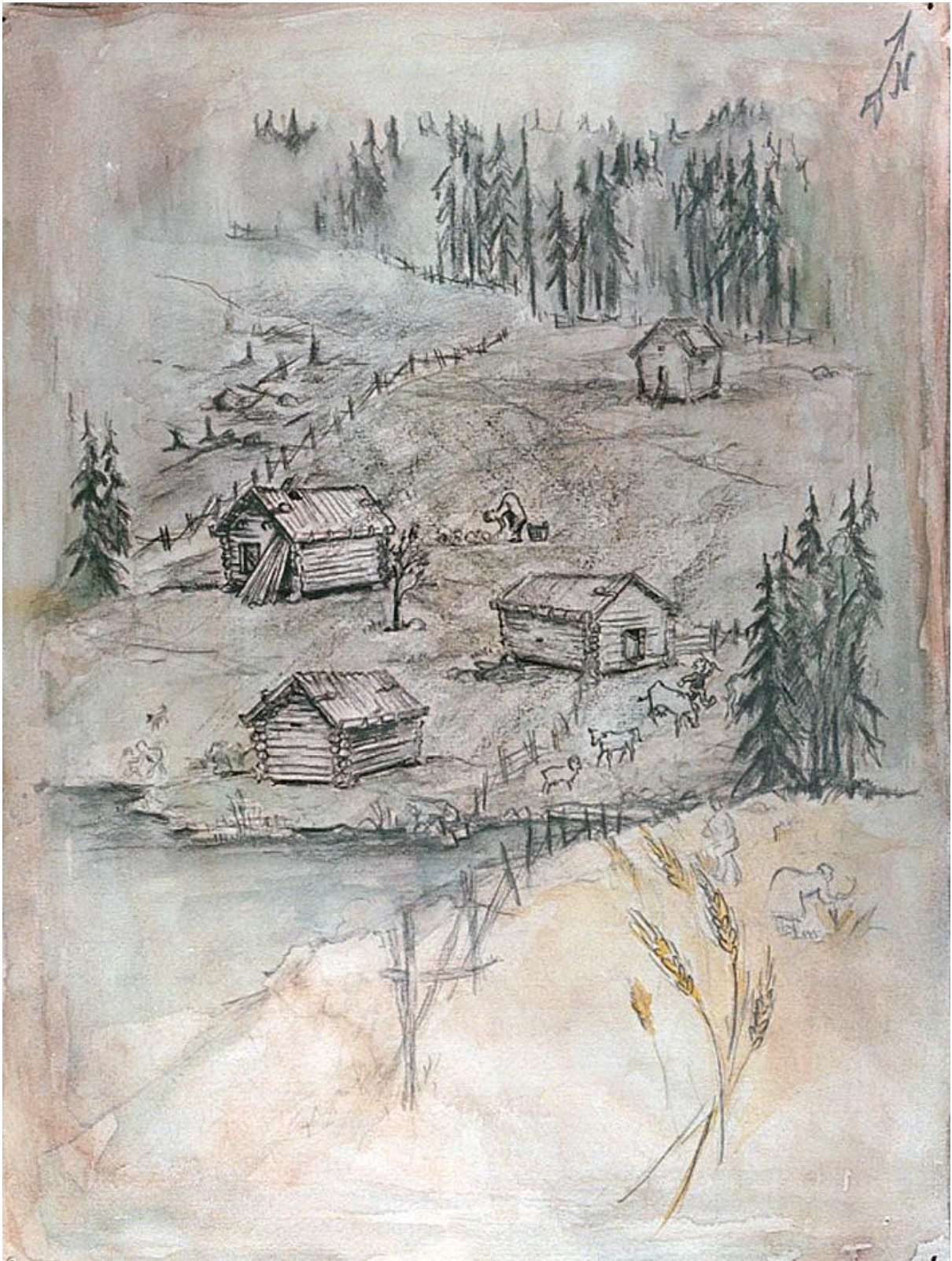
FINNSAM arranges two to three conferences annually, which are hosted by each Forest Finnish area in turn. The organisation has also launched projects dealing with literature on Forest Finns, preservation of buildings, investigations of family names, place names, settlements, archives and genealogy. The conferences and projects are presented on the homepage www.finnsam.org.

FINNSAM also co-operates with other projects dealing with Forest Finns, such as Forest Finn landscape and strategies together with University of Trondheim until 2007, Forest Finn archaeology together with Mid Sweden University, Forest Finn acculturation and assimilation at Hugo Valentin Centre, Uppsala University, the family name project together with Karlstad University and Copenhagen University.



*FINNSAM-conference at Alfta Forest Finn Museum, Skräddrabo , Alfta parish in Hälsingland 2008.
Photo: Klas-Göran Sannerman*

The research on Forest Finns today and tomorrow



*The Forest Finn settlement Lillmörsjön, in Torp parish, Medelpad as it might have looked like 1624.
Painting: Margareta Lindman*

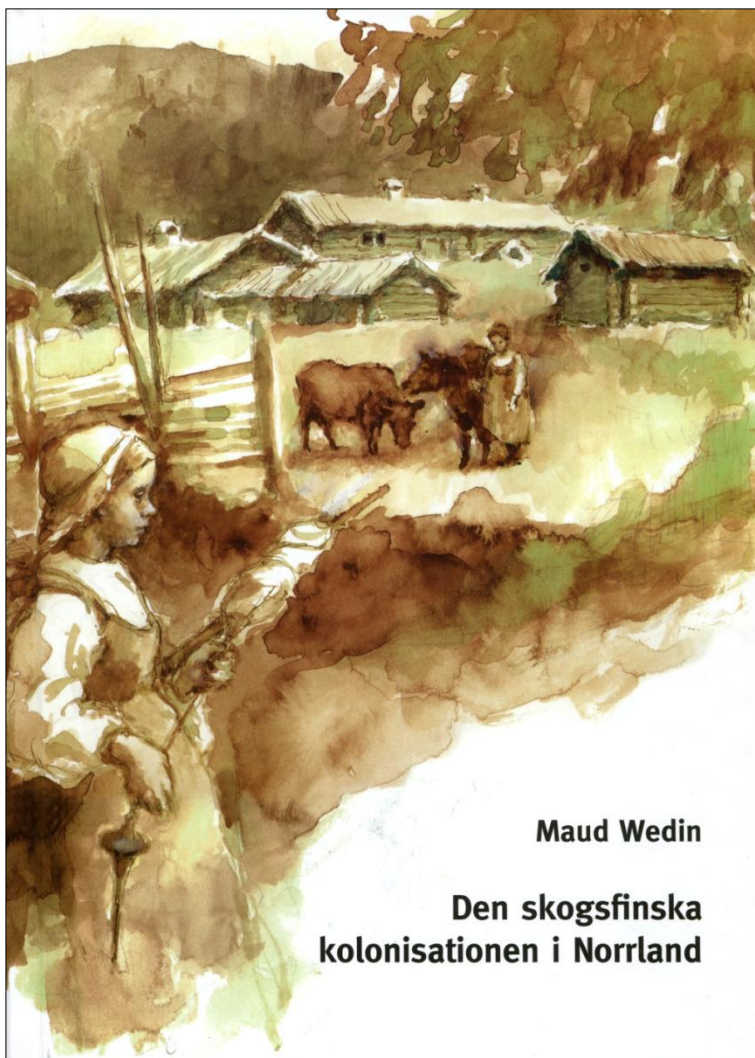
The Forest Finnish colonisation in Norrland

In her PhD dissertation, *Den skogsfinska kolonisationen i Norrland*. (The Forest Finn colonisation in Norrland, Sweden) 2007, Maud Wedin studies the Forest Finnish migration, colonisation, sources of livelihood, landscape and culture in Norrland from a historical-geographical perspective. Her further aim was to illustrate these issues from the perspectives of gender and age.

The main concept in the thesis is strategy, but the concepts cluster and ethnic markers are also used as tools. The thesis addresses the following questions:

- What aspects of Forest Finnish history require further investigation, thematically and geographically, against the background of earlier and current research?
- How is the concept of Forest Finns as well as related concepts to be defined? What are the characteristics of the Forest Finnish colonisation and culture?
- How do the Forest Finnish activities manifest themselves both from a top-down perspective as well as from a perspective regarding the Forest Finns as actors and subjects? Here the main concept of the thesis, strategies, is introduced.
- How can the Forest Finnish strategies be illustrated and investigated from a landscape perspective?

This research is still ongoing with the aim to learn more about the Forest Finn colonisation in a broader perspective.



Maud Wedin

**Den skogsfinska
kolonisationen i Norrland**

Maud Wedin's dissertation
*The Forest Finn colonisation in
Norrland (Sweden)*

The acculturation and assimilation of Forest Finns in Central Scandinavia

As earlier scholarship has devoted very little attention to the processes of acculturation and assimilation, there is an urgent need to open up new fields of Forest Finn studies. (Wedin 2007:329) In order to shed light on these complex processes from a comparative and multidisciplinary perspective, a new project titled "The acculturation and assimilation of Forest Finns in Central Scandinavia" has been launched under Maud Wedin's supervision. The project intends to combine theories and methods from a number of disciplines, such as history, comparative religion, geography, social anthropology and gender studies. The project will also draw upon the fast growing field of intersectional studies which stresses the importance of investigating how the variables of ethnicity, class, gender and age interact and contribute to various kinds of orders of subordination and power. The aims of the project are:

- to study the assimilation and acculturation of the Forest Finns during 18"-20th century from multidisciplinary and comparative perspectives,
- to study the role that local authorities, especially the clergy, played in the gradual assimilation of the Forest Finns during this period,
- to study the role of folk beliefs in the maintenance of Forest Finnish identity.

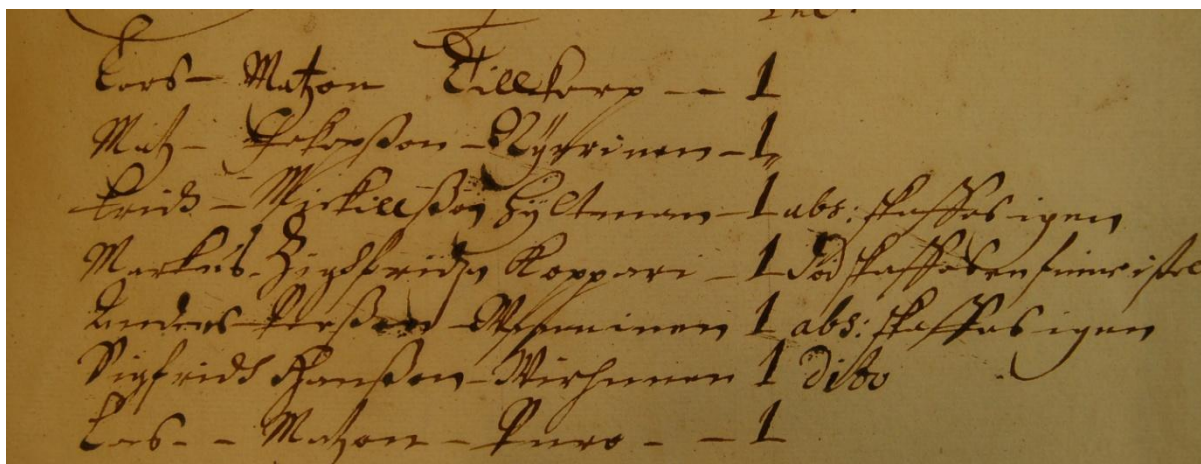
During the colonisation, specific cultural features such as slash-and-burn cultivation, chimneyless buildings, cuisine (e.g *Swe motti*, *Fi mutti*), language and folk beliefs served as distinct ethnic markers of Forest Finnish identity. Towards the 18th century the impact of the surrounding Scandinavian culture gradually led to changes in the Forest Finnish culture. As the result of this gradual process, the Forest Finnish culture eventually came to lose most of the properties that once distinguished them from their neighbours and the Finns adopted cultural features from the surrounding society. Moreover, changes in subsistence activities, the sources of livelihood, and living conditions during the 19th century accelerated this process. These socio-economic changes combined with the long-time regular interaction between Finns and Scandinavians implacably led to acculturation and gradually to assimilation.

The first part of the project, headed by Maud Wedin, will investigate the background and the initial stage of the process of acculturation and the subsequent assimilation of the Forest Finns.

In 2009 PhD Maud Wedin and her colleague Doc Marja-Liisa Keinänen received research funding during three years (2010-2013) from the Swedish Research Council (*Swe Vetenskapsrådet*) for the project "With Fire, Sisu and Magic – Acculturation and assimilation among Forest Finns in Värmland, Orsa Finnmark and Norrland", within the Hugo Valentin Centre at Uppsala University.

Forest Finn family names

The Forest Finn naming tradition differs radically from that of Norwegian and Swedish farmers. Where the Scandinavians used only a first name and a patronymic, the Forest Finns had family names typical of Eastern Finnish traditions, ending with -inen, such as Tarvainen or Hiioinen. The rich sources from the 1600s, 1700s and 1800s on Finnish family names in this area are crucial when tracing a person's movement over long distances. The family names are therefore important for the investigation of migration pattern and identity issues.



Military record with Forest Finn family names from Nås parish in Dalarna. Photo: Jan-Erik Björk

The FINNSAM and Karlstad University family name project is based on the name information found in original documents in Norway and Sweden by independent researchers. FINNSAM plays an important role in linking those involved in the project to share, discuss, interpret, compile and develop the final database. Today the database contains around 6.200 items with examples of different family names. Most of these names are linked to several sources and the material has been collected during more than ten years of thorough source studies. Associate professor Sirkka Paikkala from the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland (KOTUS) and Tuula Eskeland from the University of Copenhagen have participated in working groups as language consultants.

A more long term and yet less official research project is the collection of source data for a migration database. The following issues are the most important used in this work:

- names and particularly family names in old original sources as law records, church records, censuses and tax lists,
- family names in the documents written by C.A. Gottlund in 1817 and in the 1820s,
- family names in place names,
- genealogical research,
- publishing articles,
- co-operation with other researchers in different geographical and subject areas.

The project members are Jan-Erik Björk, Gabriel Bladh, Bo Hansson, Lars-Olof Herou, Jan Myhrvold, Niclas Persson and Maud Wedin. The report from this project is a useful tool for institutions and scientists and was published 2009 (Bladh, Myhrvold and Persson, eds 2009). The project is still going on. One aim is to find out family names that are hidden in Forest Finn place names.

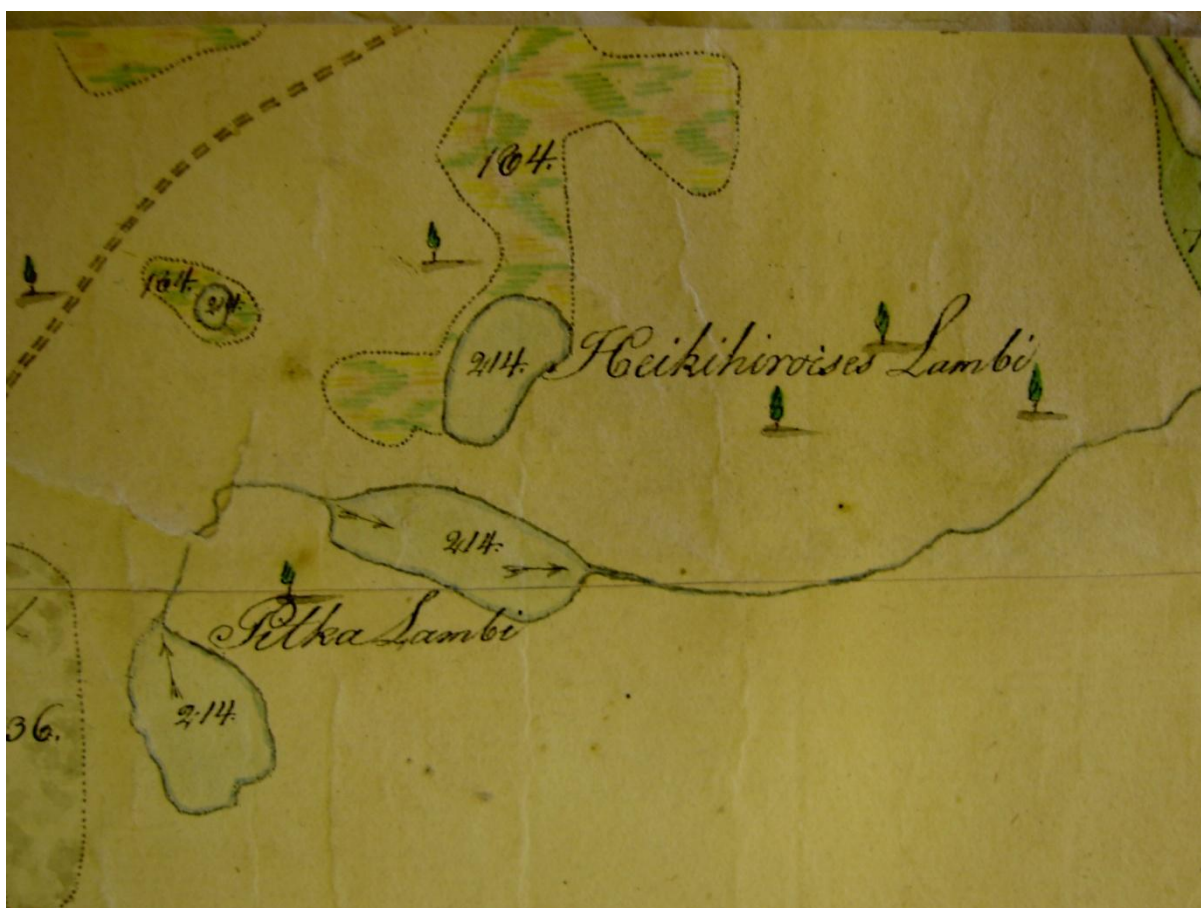
Forest Finn place names

Today, remnants of Finn language and dialect can be traced in the place names that have been preserved in many Forest Finn areas, especially in the names of small lakes (Fi *lampi*), swamps (Fi *suo*) and small mountains (Fi *mäki*) (Wedin 2007:311-326, 381-382).

These place names serve as a good example of the strategy of the Forest Finns to name their surroundings in Finnish in order to claim access rights to an area. Place names can also give information about the local sources of livelihood. The frequency of certain names shows that many Forest Finn place names mark the areas of importance for haymaking and cattle-raising. However, the fact that the most usual Finnish names refer to small lakes (Swe *tjärnar*, Fi *lampi*) indicates that fishing was an important part of the Forest Finn economy. On the other hand, these names also refer to haymaking, as the small lakes were surrounded with rushes (Swe *sjöfräken*) and bogs (Swe *slåttermyr*), which provided fodder. Names referring to slash-and-burn activities exist but are not as common as names connected to haymaking, which suggests that the regulations against swidden cultivation reduced the amount of names referring to it.

Secondly, place names can be used to study the ethnic patterns or strategies of naming which the Forest Finns employed in these areas. In the compound place names the first element *Finn-* or *Svensk-* marks the ethnic boundaries of the settlements in the borderland areas.

Thirdly, issues of property ownership come forth in the names that refer farms, such as *Raja-* ('border') and to possible disputes over these borders, e.g. names with the first compound *Riita-* ('dispute', in Finn Forests often spelled as *rita*).



Map from of the small lakes Heikkihiroises Lambi (The small lake of Heikki Hiironen) and Pilka Lambi (The small lake close to a boundary where they had made marks in the trees with an ax) Ockelbo parish, Gästrikland. Photo: Maud Wedin. Kopparfors arkiv, Landsarkivet in Härnösand 18th century

Furthermore, the social strategies are shown when surnames and family names are used in the place names to claim access to an area (see the map) and as a last example the culture structure can be found when a place gets a name due to an event or phenomenon. The project, headed by Maud Wedin, dealing with place names includes:

- putting together databases with geographical coordinates, meaning of the names, their context and so on,
- to study names from a linguistic aspect,
- to study the naming strategies related to economy and sources of livelihood,
- to study economical and social strategies, for instance in land claiming.
- to study place names which content Forest Finn family names

Forest Finn buildings



Smoke cottage in Käckåsen, Lekvattnet in Värmland. Photo: Maud Wedin

The Forest Finn buildings, which were constructed in a traditional style, have functioned as ethnic markers distinguishing the Finnish settlements from the Scandinavian ones. The houses were built of logs with the dovetail corner ties typical of the north Scandinavian Barents region. Chimneyless smoke ovens (Swe *rökugn*, Fi *savu-uuni*) for heating the houses have been an important element in the Forest Finn culture in Scandinavia, as well as in Finland (Nesholen 2001, Östberg 2001).

The dwelling was a so-called "smoke cottage" (Swe *rökstuga*, Fi *savutupa*), without any chimney. The main living room housed a large square smoke oven that, once heated, would store the heat effectively. It was situated in a corner of the room and could take up almost a quarter of the floor

area. The smoke was led to the roof through a wooden channel in the ceiling. If the construction was done properly a maximum amount of heat would be retained in the room while the smoke would be led out without causing any discomfort to those in the room. Smoke cottages are mainly preserved in Värmland in Sweden and Solør in Norway (Wedin 2011).



Smoke oven in the smoke cottage Mattila, Östmark parish in Värmland. Photo: Maud Wedin

Another typical building of a Forest Finn farm was the sauna, a small square house for steam baths. The stone oven in the sauna was a simple construction which would heat up quickly and gave off its heat in a few hours. A platform for bathing was constructed on the back wall of the sauna right under the ceiling. This kind of saunas can still be found in some places and have, along with smoke cottages, been preserved in quite a number of places in Bergslagen, Värmland and Solør.

The third type of building characteristic of the Forest Finn settlements was the drying house (*Swe ria, Fi rihi*). It resembles the sauna with a stone stove in the corner, but is higher to allow for the thin cross-timbers that made a floor on which the rye was dried. The sheaves of rye were placed standing on the timbers and dried in the heat and smoke from the stove below. Today there are drying houses left mainly in Bergslagen, in the border area between Gästrikland, southern Hälsingland and Dalarna and also in Central Norrland.

FINNSAM has launched a project, headed by Birger Nesholen at the Museum for Forest Finn culture in Norway (No *Norsk skogfinsk museum*, www.skogfinskmuseum.no) and Maths Östberg from the Forest Finn Museum of Alfta (*Swe Finnskogsmuseet*, www.finnskogsmuseet.se), for the investigation of the Forest Finn buildings.

The aims of the project are:

- to investigate the development and historical specialisation of the smoke oven technology,
- to investigate and register existing smoke oven buildings (in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia and Russia),
- to carry out heating experiments in different types of smoke oven buildings and in constructed experimental buildings,
- to study the ways these buildings expressed Forest Finn identity,
- to co-operate with other projects dealing with Forest Finn buildings, for instance the Forest Finn archaeology project.



A smoke sauna in Bergslagen. Photo: Bo Hansson

The archaeology of the Forest Finns in Central Sweden

The migrating Forest Finns settled down in Central Sweden primarily during the first decades of 17th century. Written sources or other kinds of data on the Forest Finn life-style and material culture before around 1750 are fairly scarce. Archaeological excavations of crofts and farms historically documented as cleared by Forest Finns are slowly filling in the lacunae in our materials. Excavations of three sites led by Professor Stig Welinder from Mid Sweden University, Härnösand, were ongoing until 2008.



Excavation of the Forest Finn settlement of Grannäs, Alfta parish in Hälsingland. Photo: Lasse Söderlund

These sites, which, are:

- Grannäs in Alfta parish, Hälsingland; dated by dendro-chronology, coins and clay tobacco-pipes to circa 1610-1720. According to the historical documents the first settlement permission was given 1613.
- Råsjö in Borgsjö parish, Medelpad; dated by coins and pottery to about 1650-1700. According to the historical documents the first settlement permission was given 1620.
- Svartviken in Stora Skedvi parish, Dalarna; dated by coins, pottery and clay tobacco-pipes to circa 1690-1820.

The excavations of all these sites was completed in Grannäs in 2008. Preliminary results were made public during FINNSAM's spring conference 23-25 of May 2008 in Alfta, which also turned out to be the year of the final excavation.

The excavations provide us more detailed data on the 17th century traditional Forest Finn buildings and have demonstrated the practise of slash-and-burn-cultivation (possibly Fi *huuhta*), the establishing of infield corn-cropping, and the integration of the households in market economy.

During 2012 a book about the excavations and the results is written by the participants, edited by Professor Stig Welinder.

Forest Finn migration to New Sweden

The colony of New Sweden was founded on the Delaware in 1638, when Fort Christina was built at present Wilmington. During 1640-1660 quite a number of Forest Finns from the Scandinavian Forest Finn areas emigrated to New Sweden (Herou 2001).

The background to the Swedish ambitions of colonisation was the urge to excel as a country of great power. The first settlers in New Sweden were prisoners or people who the authorities forced to move, but after some years voluntary settlers also joined New Sweden. However, the Swedish project of colonisation was short (1638-1655) as the Dutch soon came into power (1656-1664), but the emigration, especially that of the Forest Finns continued until the middle of the 1660s, even though the colony was not Swedish anymore. During the Swedish period of colonisation approximately 22% of the "Swedish" settlers were Finns, but during the succeeding Dutch period, about 53% of the population in Delaware were Finns. (Herou 2001: 255)



Lower Swedish Cabin, Darby Creek. Photo: Maud Wedin

Forest Finn biographies in New Sweden

There are two ongoing projects about Forest Finn migration to New Sweden. First, a FINNSAM project led by Maud Wedin, basing on the research conducted by Peter Stebbins Craig and Lars-Olof Herou. This biographical project largely deals with some Forest Finns who emigrated to New Sweden from Norrland, Dalarna and Värmland. The project investigates their names, background and life stories as well as their pattern of emigration. One of the objects of this study is Pål Larsson Kämpe who migrated to New Sweden about 1654, possibly joined later by his sister and her husband (if they were not passengers on the ship Waghen who sank 1664). Pål Jonsson Mulikka and his family moved from from Hälsingland via Orsa Finnmark to Delaware 1654. A river in New Jersey is still called Mullica River and there is a town called Mullica Hill. A number of Forest Finn families moved to New Sweden also from Värmland, for example the brothers Anders and Bengt Jonsson from Salungen in Brunskog parish. They reached Delaware 1653 on their 9th expedition.

An important family were the Minkkinen family, represented by Johan Grelsson, who also was the companion of Mårten Mårtensson, the grandfather of John Morton, and his family.



Map of Grundsjön, Borgsjö parish in Medelpad, probably the Minkkinen settlement 1639. Olof Tresk 1639. Photo: Maud Wedin



Grundsjön 2012. Photo: Maud Wedin

The DNA study of the Forest Finns in Delaware and in Scandinavia

A well-known family of the newcomers was Mårten Mårtensson and his family. John Morton, who signed the declaration of independence in 1776, was a descendant of this family as Mårten Mårtensson was his grandfather. The family has often been referred to as the Marttinen family from Savo province or sometimes mentioned as originating from Rautalampi in Finland. However the name Mårtensson being the same as Marttinen is not a relevant conclusion, since Mårtensson is a patronymic name meaning 'son of Mårten'. The history of Mårten Mårtensson and his family is yet not complete and no traces are found so far. Probably they were companions with the just mentioned Johan Grelsson (Minkkinen) and his family.

A research project by historian Auvo Kostiainen and William Morton - a descendent of the Morton family - proposes a new way to study the connection of the Mårtensson family to Forest Finn areas in Sweden and Finland. Using DNA-based genealogical research it is possible to trace descent along the male family line. Their tentative, genealogical study of the roots of William Morton, shows that he is a descendant of the Mårtensson family and related to John Morton, and his ancestry leads back to the 17th century Delaware. Further DNA tests will maybe shed some light on the issue.

The Y-DNA study on William Morton was undertaken by specialists of the Genographic project (<https://www3.nationalgeographic.com/genographic>). It was found that William Morton has many exact DNA male matches. Many of them are from the United States, and bear the DNA of the Delaware settlers. There are a few individual matches from Sweden and Norway. Interestingly, large numbers of DNA exact matches are from contemporary Finland. These exact match individuals in the four countries have common ancestry with William Morton and therefore with Mårtenssons from Delaware. The study helps to explain the ancestry of a number of present day Americans back to the Delaware colony. The roots of William Morton, John Morton as well as many of the Delaware settlers, seem to extend especially to Finland. However, the study is in progress and new ways of continuing the research are under consideration.

In 2009 a Forest Finn DNA project was founded, led by Jan Myhrvold, FINNSAM (www.fennia.nu). The test objects are persons with father or mother lines back to Forest Finns. Through DNA testing they hope to find connections between today's Forest Finn ancestors back to the colonisation period at a micro level that would have been impossible to find 10 years ago.

Sweden in the Delaware valley. Everyday life and identities in the seventeenth century colony of New Sweden

In 2009 Magdalena Naum, Ulla Zagal-Mach and Fredrik Ekengren at Department of Archaeology and Ancient History at Lund University received funding to initiating a research project entitled "Settling the New World - Peopling the Past. History and Heritage of New Sweden". 2011 they also got funding from The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation with the headline title.

By focusing on the subjects of identity, migration and various aspects of colonial experience, the project should be relevant and interesting for an academic as well as a broader public in Sweden, Finland and in the USA. The project will also contribute to the widening of perspective on the colonial endeavor in New Sweden. Although the history of the colony is a subject of a century-long research, the majority of studies are based on documentary sources. By incorporating archaeological and anthropological approaches and focusing on material aspects of everyday life in the colony the project will bring new and relevant insights about the experiences of the settlers. Furthermore, the project being situated within the field of historical archaeology will contribute to the development of newly established historical archaeology research. Also the Forest Finn part will be investigated.

The results of the project will be published in a series of articles in peer-reviewed journals and conference volumes. <http://www.ht.lu.se/o.o.i.s?id=23922&p=413>



The Swedish clergy and the assimilation of the Forest Finns

The ethnic awakening that C.A. Gottlund initiated in the Forest Finn areas between 1817 and 1823 was important for organising the Finns who felt they were facing an imminent assimilation. The activities of Gottlund are therefore a vital object to study. His political and religious campaign for the autonomous jurisdictional district and Finnish parishes in Solør-Värmland, affected not only the Forest Finns but also the surrounding Swedish society, including the clergy.

The 19th century Sweden was a country that began to more clearly consolidate its inner political and social structures into a nation. The social institutions started to get more obvious tasks to fill and to see to that people and minorities would conform to the role as citizens in the nation.

The church and its clergy worked during many centuries as a prolonged arm of the State, and thus the clergy automatically became an utter agent in the integration and assimilation of the Forest Finns. The question is whether the clergy worked for the interaction of the Forest Finns in the society during the time after 1809, or whether the goal of their activities was a smooth assimilation of the Finns. We have to remember that, after all, it was the local clergy who was to implement the churchly and societal edicts, laws and regulations concerning the Forest Finns. The priests were the mediators between the higher instances of the church and the local Finnish population. The aim of this project, led by PhD student Niclas Persson, Karlstad University, is therefore to find out what the attitudes of the individual priests were, whether they agreed with the church's view or deviated from that, and if they did, in what ways. In other words, whether the priests acted in unison or whether their views and attitudes varied.

A highly important matter to study is whether the view of the church and the clergy did change after C.A. Gottlund's political rally and his petition to the king signed by twelve Forest Finn activists from Värmland and Solør. They pleaded for an autonomous district and three Finnish parishes, which were to be situated on both sides of the Swedish-Norwegian border. The fact that the entire state apparatus as well as the clerical estate were involved in the processing of Gottlund's petition, which led to a thorough investigation of the social, economical, and religious situation of the Forest Finns in the area, must have influenced the attitudes of the local clergy. The intention is to find out what changes if any at all occurred, in attitudes of the regional and local clergy after 1823, due to this matter.

A further aim is to investigate how the Forest Finns acted in questions concerning themselves as an ethnical group, whether they had a mutual agenda or whether they acted merely on their own, as individuals or families seeking to integrate into the Swedish society without any common interests.

The role of folk beliefs in the maintenance of Forest Finn identity

It is a fairly commonplace practice in popular and even in earlier scholarly literature - both in Finland and Sweden - to depict the Forest Finns as poor Christians, who stubbornly held to their age old "superstitions" and magic. As late as 1925 the newspaper *Stockholms-Tidningen* wrote:

It is a common understanding that the Finns who moved to Sweden were, and perhaps still are, superstitious and inclined to false notions. One, who has been in personal contact particularly with elder persons of Finnish descent, has to assert that this indeed is the case.

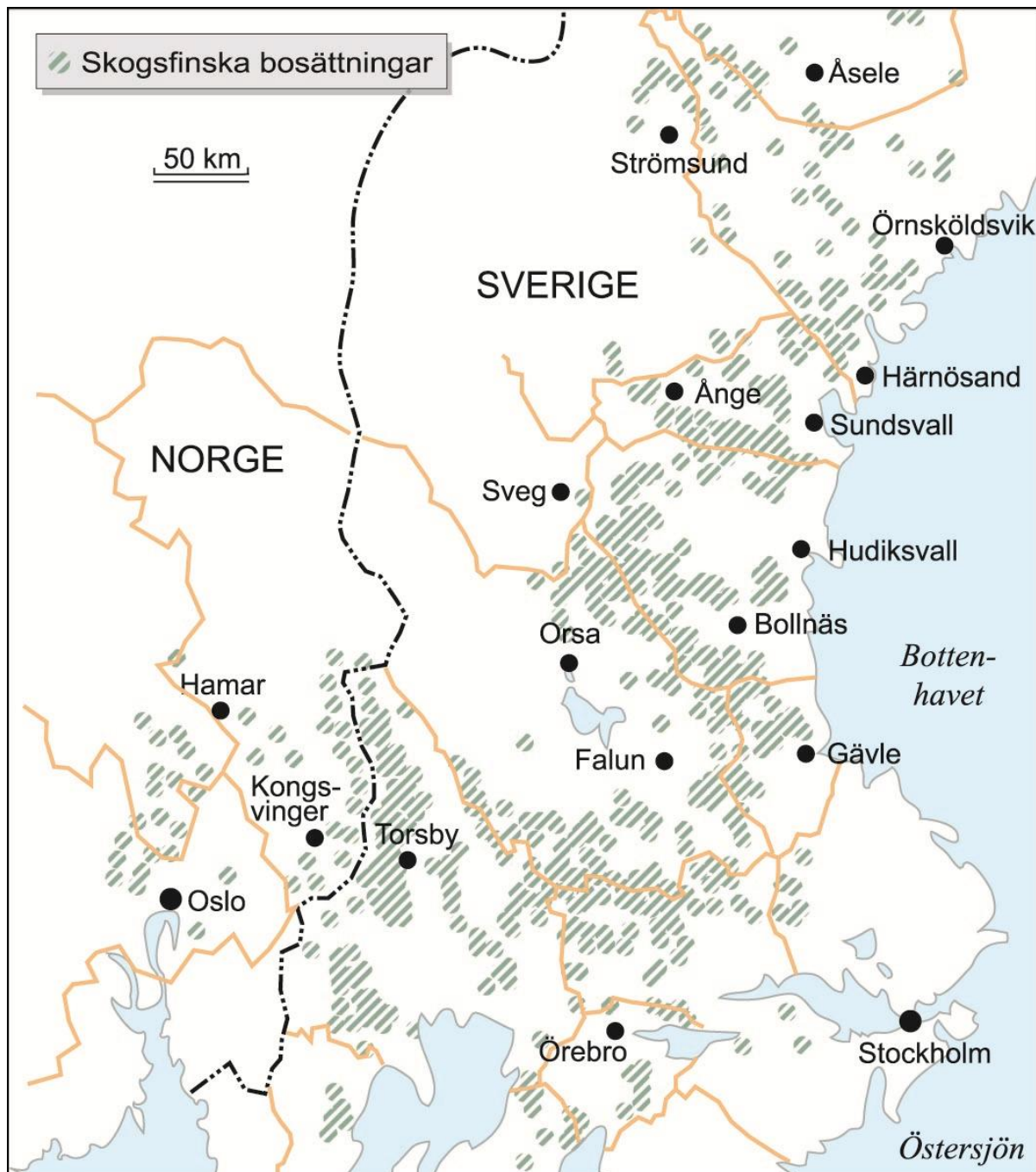
Even though there were some areas where the Finns practised their "superstitions" until the beginning of the 20th century, we have no reason to assume that the average Forest Finn greatly differed from the average Swede or Norwegian in this respect. The folklore archives both in Sweden and Norway witness of the practice of magic by Swedes and Norwegians throughout the 19th century. This kind of stereotyping can be seen as a way of communicating cultural differences and defining the boundaries of an ethnic group. By accusations of superstition and witchcraft the dominating group defines the subordinate group as a deviating, in this case, even backward, uncivilised other.

The purpose in this project, which is led by a historian of religion Marja-Liisa Keinänen, is to study the role that the Forest Finn beliefs and ritual practises played in the demarcation of ethnic differences and in upholding ethnic identity. The first aim is to study how the notion of "superstition" was utilised to demarcate ethnic differences. The project concentrates first of all on studies of the 19th century source materials that largely reflect the views of the Swedish authorities (priests, school teachers etc.), but to some extent also on the views of the Swedish locals, in order to see how Finns have been depicted regarding their religiosity. Secondly, the study focuses on the ways the Finns themselves utilised the stereotypes of their superstitiousness and practice of magic, since there is some indication that they consciously encouraged the fear that Swedes felt for them. The study views this as a strategy of boundary keeping. Thirdly, there will be discussions about the actual ritual activities of the Finns as a means of maintaining their ethnic identity. The focus will particularly be on healing practices - Finns were renowned as healers - and certain practices that were linked to Forest Finn subsistence economy. This is important since magic rituals were closely intertwined with hunting, fishing, and swidden cultivation - the latter being an important marker of Finnish identity.



*Pentagramme.
Photo: Seppo Remes*

Forest Finn settlements in Scandinavia



Map of Forest Finn settlements in Scandinavia. Maud Wedin and Tove Johansson 2004.

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