

# 1 Felice Vinci - Troy in Finland

Stuart L. Harris, November 2011

## Summary of Troy in Finland

In *Homer in the Baltic*<sup>1</sup>, **Felice Vinci** presented substantial linguistic evidence from place names that the Trojan War occurred in the Baltic.

Figure 1: Stuart Harris and Felice Vinci in Rome at his favorite trattoria, 2004.



With the aid of detailed maps and a keen eye for systematic linguistic changes, he discovered numerous place names in Scandinavia that corresponded geographically with those of Homer. His procedure was iterative, with one discovery leading to the next. His great breakthrough was the identification of a sequence of names that corresponded one-for-one with Homer's **List of Ships** when circling anticlockwise around the Baltic Sea beginning in eastern Sweden north of Stockholm.

By following clues from Homer, he was able to pinpoint the palace of Ulysses at Ithaca, near the center of the most western island among a chain of islands off the southern coast of Denmark, today called Lyø. Athens was in southern Sweden, Crete in northern Germany, Egypt in Poland, Cyprus an island off Lithuania, and Troija in southwest Finland. Felice ended with, "I've done my work. Now it's up to archaeologists to find these cities."

"I'm game. Where would I look for Troy?" I inquired in an email in the spring of 2002.

"Somewhere close to the village of **Troija**, between Helsinki and Turku."

"You have to be kidding!"

"No, that's where it is, at the north-eastern end of the Baltic, just like Troy in Turkey is at the north-eastern end of the Mediterranean. There are lots of Greek names nearby. Remember the Baltic is wine dark and too murky to snorkel, and it can snow in late spring, unlike Troy in Turkey. Both seas have no tide."

Thus began my journey into archaeology.

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<sup>1</sup> Felice Vinci, *Omero nel Baltico*, saggio sulla geografia omerica, 1990, Palombi Editori, Roma. An English abstract is found on the website <http://www.dipmat.unipg.it/~bartocci/ep2vinc2.htm>. Reprinted in English as "The Baltic Origins of Homer's Epic Tales", 2006, tr. Amalia de Francesco, Inner Traditions, Vermont.

## Director of Archaeology predicts failure

Figure 2: Felice Vinci's map of Homeric place names in the Baltic.



## Director of Archaeology predicts failure

I walked into her paneled office feeling giddy, the excitement of the chase. Finland at last, windows open to the smell of flowers. And now Mrs. X, the director herself, would advise me. What a lucky break. Any other time she would shuffle me off to some underling, but her archaeologists were all out in the field. So many boxes lying around, her desk afloat in a sea of boxes. Her staff must ship the stuff back, expecting her to organize it. She must be good, not many countries have a woman at the top. How do I start? Do I need a formal introduction? Will she even listen? I'd better let her speak first.

It's quitting time. How could he be so rude? No appointment. Just like the rest, he thinks these long days give me more time to work. Can't he see? I'm the only one left. My staff's gone, no help at all. Look at this mess, no time to organize it. That's where I should be, in the field, directing a dig. 'An American,' she said, just off the boat. He looks it, no respect, not even a tie. If he needs a conference speaker, I'm too busy. No, too energetic, must be on his own errand. An amateur, maybe. You'd think he'd plan better, come to Helsinki in the fall when its not so hot. I'll make it quick.

"Did I hear correctly, that you want to explore Finland to find lost cities of the Bronze Age? Such fine weather for digging. Why pursue such fantasies?"

"I've reason to believe there were Greek cities in the southwest, cities with non-Finnish names like Troija."

"How can you be so sure that Troija is not a Finnish name? Besides, you'll never find a single city, for a very good reason: there weren't any people. We've looked, and we can't find any trace of people let alone cities; no tells, no garbage mounds, no foundations, no pottery, no burials, no

roads, no fortifications. The few bronze-age items in the museum are mostly swords from Denmark.”

“Well, I have hopes.”

“You’ll need more than hopes. Now if you’ll excuse me, I have reports from real archaeologists that need my attention.”

“Thank you for your time,” I mumbled, ears burning, and backed out the door into a long hall of offices, dark and silent during the summer field season.

## **John Catto joins the search**

“Stu, it may have looked promising, but this is definitely not Troy.”

We were waist-deep in grass, having circled around the ruins of a manor house that overlooked Lake Kisko at Troija where Felice Vinci had suggested we begin our search for Troy. John had read Homer’s *Iliad* five times, visited most of the Greek islands as a teenager with his father, and was a renowned photographer for National Geographic. He had decided to accompany me on this wild goose chase just in case it might be true.

“Look, the foundation stones are too small for Troy, the site is not nearly big enough, and there aren’t any burial cairns on top of hills.”

He refrained from saying mountains. When Homer talked about snow-covered peaks he was not thinking of the Rockies where John lived. The highest hill here might be a hundred meters. “Well, at least we know two reasons why archaeologists can’t find people. They built houses with wood, not clay bricks, so there aren’t any tells. And all the pots and plates in the museum of Troija were either baskets or wood, so there was no pottery.”

“Whatever. I’m ready for lunch. Where’s the closest town?”

“Perniö, ten kilometers.”

“Let’s go. Maybe they know something about the swords in the Helsinki museum.”

## **Anna the librarian recognizes swords**

“The library seems decent. Let’s go in.”

“You think they’ll have books on swords?”

“I’m hoping, in the archaeology section.”

It was modern and sunny, lots of teenagers on vacation. A slim, pretty woman with her hair in a bun met us.

“Good morning, gentleman. I’m Anna, the Perniö librarian.”

“Hello Anna, I’m John Catto and this is Stu Harris.”

“How may I help you?” Her piercing eyes took us in, two tourists with cameras and American accents.

“We’re trying to track down some Bronze Age swords in the National Museum in Helsinki.”

“What do you mean ‘track down swords’?”

## A foursome shows how to find cairns

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“The museum didn’t give any provenance.”

“Do you have a picture?”

“Yes, they’re in this photo.”

*Figure 3: Bronze Age swords in the National Museum, Helsinki.*



Anna studied the photo and motioned us to follow. She was agitated, tapping the photo on her hand. “Those fools, took the best swords we had and don’t even know how to mount them. I’d brain the lot.”

“Your swords! What did you mean?”

Anna took a book from a shelf labeled Archaeology and turned to a picture. “Here they are. About five kilometers east of here a farmer found these swords in his barley field.”

“That one looks the same.”

“Royal swords, the finest work, protected by the sea.”

“So his field was once under the sea?”

“Yes, the only metal we ever find comes from under the sea. Now, why the interest?”

“There’s an historian from Rome named Felice Vinci, who has this theory that the Trojan War was fought near Perniö.”

“Never heard of him.”

“Felice thinks he’s found Ithaca, the home of Ulysses, on an island off Denmark.”

Anna didn’t answer. She turned and looked through a wall of large windows, where cars slowly passed by in the shimmering heat. We waited. At last she faced us. “Dear God Almighty, it might be true.”

“What? Why is that?”

“The swords are from Denmark.”

## A foursome shows how to find cairns

“Stu, we’ve got company. Look to your left.”

“A Moose! It must think we’re crazy, John, wandering around these bogs in circles. Without a compass its hard to walk in a straight line.”

## A foursome shows how to find cairns

“I think we need a better plan. None of these hills have cairns. Lets go back to Perniö where the farmers found the Danish swords.”

We worked our way back through furrowed swamps to the rental car and headed for town, but soon Stu pulled over to the side of the road. “John, I want to check this thing on the map, it might be a cave,” and wandered off into the pine forest.

Two days and all we’ve found is a moose. This is pointless. Look at him, thrashing around in the woods. Stu’s clueless, incompetent. Maybe I can pull this out. But how? Ask the locals, they know the territory.

I left the car and walked up the road to look for locals. Behind a screen of pines I heard voices, some words in English, a foursome having breakfast around a card table on the lawn.

“Good morning, I hope I’m not disturbing you. My name is John Catto, a photographer from National Geographic, looking for Bronze Age ruins. Do you know of any old sites around here?”

The foursome examined the athletic young man in khaki shorts with two cameras around his neck, who spoke with the difficult American accent, and jointly nodded their heads in assent. He’d come to the right place.

“Glad to meet you, John. My name is Kai. I just might have what you’re looking for. Let me get a map,” and went inside. The others introduced themselves and cleared the table for action. Kai returned and spread out a topo map. “Just got this map, John, its new. Look here, on that hill across the road. Bronze Age Monument it says in technical Finnish.”

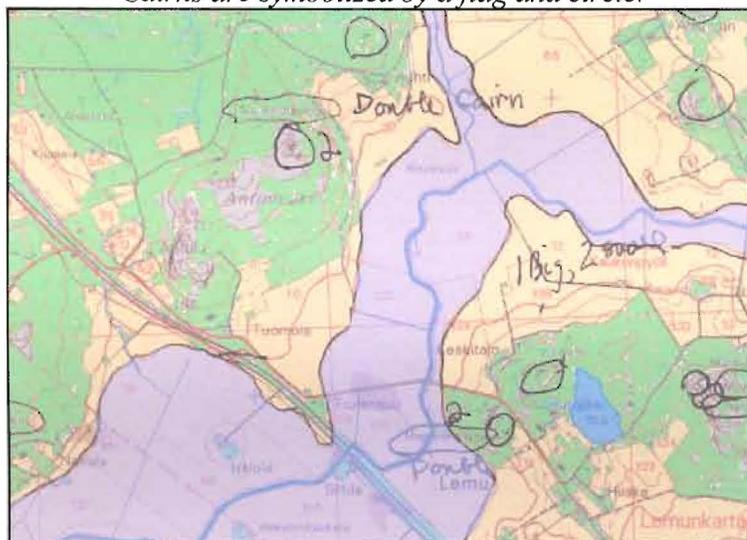
Everyone peered at two little flags atop the hill. “I’ve seen them,” said his wife, “two stone cairns about five meters high, covered with lichen, overlooking the valley.”

“There are more flags here,” exclaimed the second man.

“Look, they’re everywhere, all around us, a treasure trove!”

“Wait a minute!” I shouted, and ran off to find Stu.

*Figure 4: Part of the topo map of Perniö that the foursome marked up. Cairns are symbolized by a flag and circle.*



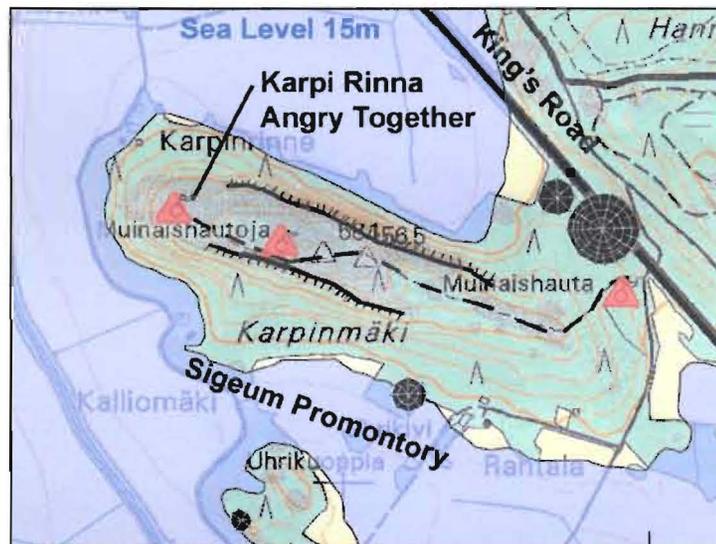
## Felice recognizes Hector's son Astyanax

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### Felice recognizes Hector's son Astyanax

Two days after John's breakthrough, he returned home to Colorado. We had climbed hill after hill and found lots of cairns, they were everywhere in southwest Finland, but we were no closer to finding Troy. I had run out of ideas. For me the highlight was a cairn at the end of a long promontory shaped like an upturned axe blade, just south of Perniö. I looked at the waving fields of barley that covered the old seabed and started to cry. Someone really important, an admiral, had been honored with this huge effort, maybe 50,000 great stones, now scattered by treasure seekers and never replaced. From here he could gaze out over his beloved sea forever. It later turned out to be the cairn of Achilles and Patroclus, named 'Angry Together'.

*Figure 5: The cairn of Achilles and Patroclus rose 30-40 feet high at the very tip of Sigeeum Promontory, a rock shaped like the blade of an axe rising straight up from the sea. Muinais\_hauta means Bronze-age Grave'. To view the cairn, walk one kilometer west from the top of the saddle on King's Road, Route 52, three kilometers south of Perniö.*



*Figure 6: Stereo view of the ransacked cairn of Achilles and Patroclus at the tip of Sigeeum Promontory. Note the huge size of the stones. Treasure hunters and archaeologists moved aside a large fraction of the stones, no easy task. What happened to the golden cup of Hephaestus? Perhaps some local farmer knows.*



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## Felice recognizes Hector's son Astyanax

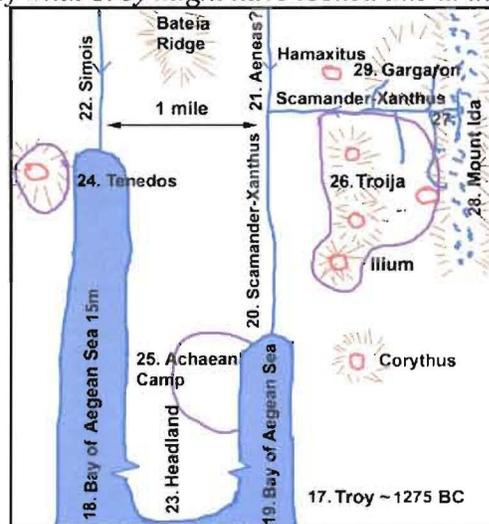
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John never spoke to me again. His last question was to ask if burial cairns had ever been found in Greece and Italy (yes). It was one of the great failures of my life. My wife was sick that such a great opportunity was lost.

Back home I e-mailed Felice of my failure, the terrible interview in Helsinki, the only bright spots being the swords and cairns. "Don't give up, Stu. Re-read Homer now that you know what the country looks like. Trust Homer. He never lies."

So I re-read Homer, and drew a map of what I thought the countryside might have looked like. Two parallel rivers flowed south to empty into the sea, separated by a broad headland where the Achaean army had camped. To the east of the rivers was **Mount Ida**, which must also run north-south, not a mountain but a ridge. The two parallel rivers were **Simois** to the west and **Xanthos / Scamander** to the east. I tried to think if I had ever seen parallel rivers on a map, and could not recall any.

Figure 7: Map of what Troy might have looked like at the time of the war.



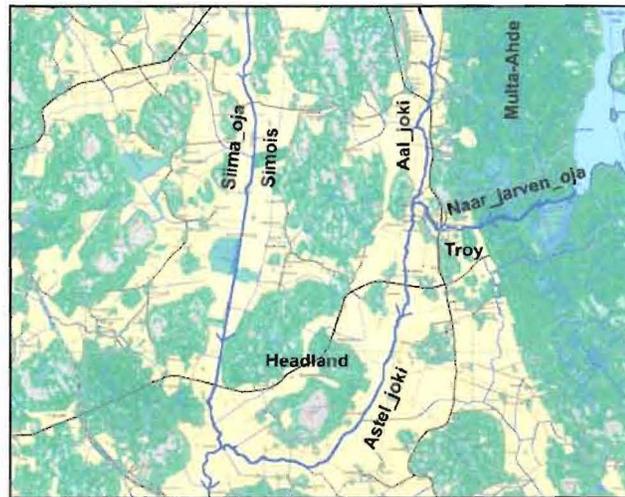
Anna the librarian said the swords were found under the sea. I had already estimated sea level during the Trojan War, about 15 meters above present sea level, because Finland has been rebounding ever since a mile-high ice sheet melted. On a topo map of the Perniö Commune I drew a line at 15 meter elevation. Troy was near that line, but where? Half the map was under water, most of it planted in barley.

On a topo map, it's hard to visualize hills but easy to see rivers. Did any parallel rivers flow south into the sea? YES! Right in the middle of the map were two such rivers, and to the right of them a mountain ridge, nearly ten kilometers long. The eastern flank of this ridge was covered with hundreds of springs that flowed east into a lake. Ida with all its springs! Now what were the names of the two rivers? **Siimaoja** on the left matched **Simois**!

## Google picks out Pohjola

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Figure 8: Two parallel rivers east of Perniö.



“Felice,” I e-mailed, “I think I’ve found Simois; its Finnish name is Siimaoja meaning ‘Mead Ditch’. But the name of the parallel river to the east does not match Xanthos or Scamander. It actually has three names, Aaljoki, Naarjarvenoja and Asteljoki. Do these mean anything to you?”

His answer came right back, a stupendous feat of recall. I knew he had studied Greek and Latin, but this was pulling the proverbial needle out of a haystack.

Hi Stu,

The name "Asteljoki" for the River Scamander is intriguing. It sounds vaguely similar to "Astyanax" (I don't remember the exact English spelling), that is, Hector's son, whose name was also "Scamandrius" (Il. VI, 402-403); the alteration between N ("Astyan-") to L ("Astel") is found in the French word "niveau" that becomes "level" in English and "livello" in Italian.

Thank you for the news! As to Olympus, in my opinion it lay in Northern Finland, near a region called "Pieria".

As to Hellespont (often called "broad Hellespont"), it was the sea in front of Troy. However, in this "foxhunt", I think that you are catching the fox called Troy.... You'll seize it very soon!

Ciao, Felice

## Google picks out Pohjola

First I looked for the name Ida on the long ridge with all the springs and there it was, way to the north, Musta Ahde meaning ‘Black Slope’.

Troy, then, lay somewhere along the western flank of Mount Ida, between the mountain and the river Scamander. That still left a big territory to search. None of the names looked familiar. Where to start?

To narrow the search, I used two different sea levels. When Prince Scamander arrived from Crete with one third of the survivors around 1450 BC, they rowed their longships right up to Troy. I raised sea level to that of 1450 BC, 17.5 meters, and noted the eastern shoreline.

*Figure 9: The sea went past Troy in 1450 BC.*



But at the time of the Trojan War around 1275 BC, the sea stopped some distance from Troija. So I lowered sea-level to that of 1275 BC, 15 meters, and noted the new eastern shoreline. Between these two extremes lay Troy.

*Figure 10: The sea stopped short of Troy in 1275 BC.*



OK, now for Troy itself. Finns name their farms and put each name on the map. There were lots of names in tiny type, but only six seemed to satisfy sea level: Alimmainen 'Lowermost', Ylimmäinen 'Uppermost', Pohjola 'Northland', Rukoushone 'Prayer house', S. Talo 'Sermon building', and Ylikulma 'High Corner'. Which was Troy?

Google had just come out, a fast search engine. I entered each name in Google to see what would happen. Nothing, nothing, ..., and then BOOM, twenty-five thousand hits at a time when that was huge. The farm was called **Pohjola**.

## **I might be a terrorist**

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The name Pohjola meant nothing to me because English speakers never see it, just the translation 'North Farm'. But for Finns, this was the mother lode. Finns have been searching for Pohjola for three hundred years, everywhere but next to Perniö. They were misled by where they had found most of their source material, in Karelia near Russia. These oral histories, collected into a book called *Kalevala*, recounts that Trojan headhunters came from across the sea and settled at Pohjola, their prince married the local princess, and they began to build a trading empire centered around a water-powered grist mill named Sampo. Here I was searching for Troy and found Pohjola, which Finns say was occupied by Trojans!

So how did Troy originate? According to Greek history, the Trojan immigrants lived in the local town, but soon established a new town nearby on a hill they named Troija after themselves. So Troija and Pohjola were not the same, but next to each other. Pohjola founded by Finns dominates Finnish history, while Troija founded by Trojans dominates Greek history. My bet was Troija lay beneath that building called 'sermon building', since churches traditionally occupy the most sacred spot. Sermon building was in the center of a forest on top of a knoll that ran north-south for about a kilometer.

I sent away for high resolution aerial photographs to see what I could see.

## **I might be a terrorist**

Weeks went by and the digital aerial photos I ordered from Finland never arrived. I finally called.

"Ahhh, we're sorry for the delay, Mr. Harris, but the government had to finish running a background check on you."

"A background check?"

"Ahhh, yes, why would anyone in California want high resolution photographs of empty farmland in Finland?"

"They think I'm a terrorist?"

"Ahhh, maybe so. A railroad passes through the center of the photos."

"Did I pass?"

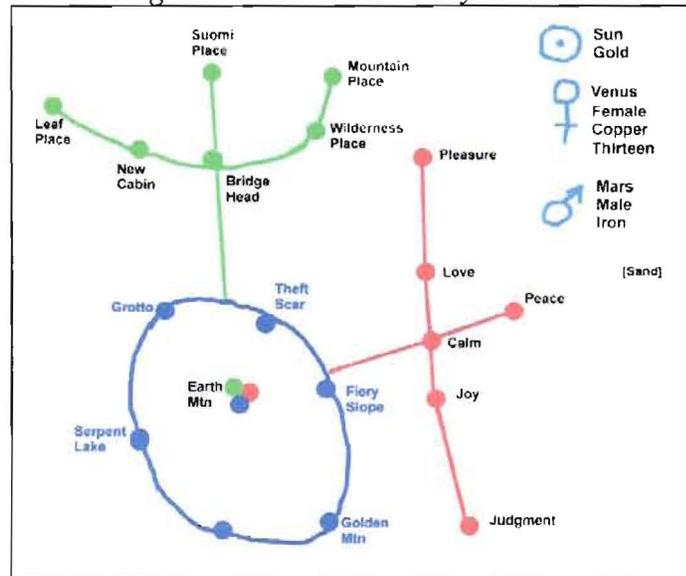
"Ahhh, yes, I will send them right out. They're about 100 Mbytes each."

Why indeed. Shortly after WWII, the United States gave Finland some very special cameras to take aerial photographs of their country. The Finns lost no time and flew planes back and forth at every opportunity, especially in spring and fall with no snow on the ground and no leaves to block the view. From them they created the finest topographic maps yet made. For my work, these photos are priceless. Nothing was touched during the war, no trees harvested, no new buildings. Roads were still dirt, no macadam to conceal what lay beneath. And most of all, the fields had not been touched by deep plowing that destroyed all trace of ancient settlements. Satellite photographs on Google Earth have lost this vision into the past.

When the digital photographs arrived, I loaded them into Photoshop and looked around where I thought Troy might be and saw nothing unusual.

Then I went north, to a place called Multamäki meaning 'Earth Hill', the highest hill in the area, and looked around for Olympus. Again nothing. Some nearby places had strange names and seemed to form a trident and a female symbol. The names Pleasure, Love, Peace, Calm, Joy and Judgment form a collection that innumerable religious groups use. Suomi Place had the same name as Finland. Later these would make more sense, but not now. I was searching for ruins.

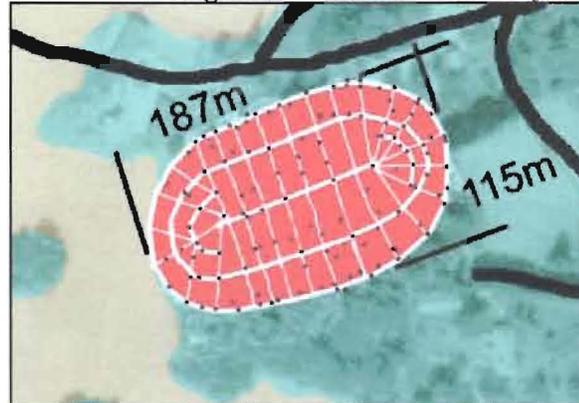
Figure 11. Multamäki and symbolism.



For some reason, a small patch of woods beside the road next to Love caught my eye. If I looked at shadows instead of highlights, some black dots seemed to form a straight line. With nothing else to do, I connected the dots on my computer. Now I saw more dots in straight lines, and connected them as well. Soon I had a collection of straight lines going every which direction. What did it mean? Some of the lines were almost parallel, and if I redrew them carefully, they were exactly parallel. Another set seemed to cross at right angles, so I redrew them exactly at right angles, still within the outlines of the dots. Now some other lines seemed to circle this mesh, and if I looked closely, an oval circled the mesh, with radial lines at each end. It looked like a circus tent from the top.

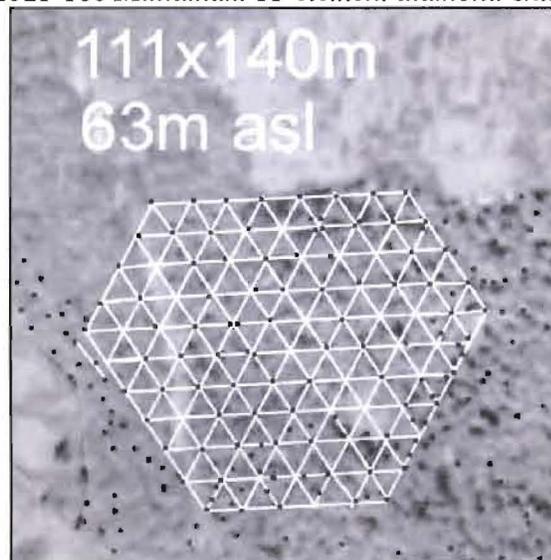
I started over, this time with the circus tent as my model, and made a symmetrical figure, with lines spaced evenly. How long was it? Over a hundred yards! Was this a fluke?

*Figure 12: Not the original, but similar to what I first drew.*



Another patch of trees seemed to have a pattern and I again drew lines to connect black dots or smudges in every which direction. This time the parallel lines formed a hexagonal grid, not a square grid. I re-connected the dots at exactly sixty-degree angles and a hexagon appeared. This was amazing! The square grid might be from planting, but not a hexagon. I looked closer and saw that I could extend the hexagon, make it larger, with fainter dots around the outside. I did this until I could go no further. Now it looked diamond-shaped.

*Figure 13. 2021-10b Multamäki 11-element diamond-shaped building.*



I went back to the circus tent and found that it encompassed an entire hill. For a pitched roof this would reduce the length of the center posts. Back to the hexagon. It was on a slope, so posts could be nearly the same height going up a hill. What was the optimum slope for a sod roof? 15-18 degrees.

For a week I played around, connecting dots wherever I thought I saw a pattern in the woods. It was not intuitive, the eye tends to see highlights and ignore shadows. Nearly all the figures were based upon a hexagon. I developed a way to make perfect hexagons in Photoshop, and made

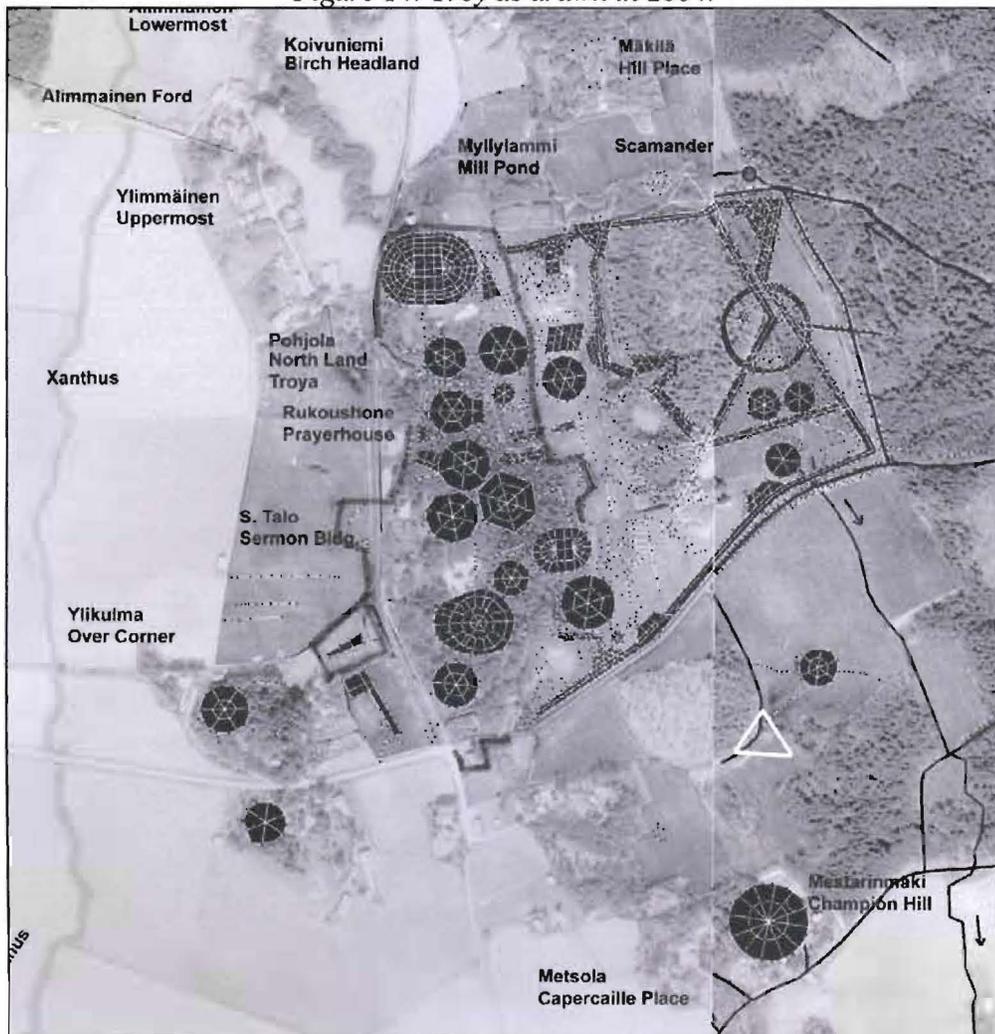
special layers, one for dots, one for main beams, one for cross beams, one for the outline, and another to fill in the outline.

These things must be buildings, but how was that possible? They were immense, seldom less than a hundred yards across. If dots represented posts, then they were on thirty to forty foot centers. Close to every building was a name. Some made no sense, but others did. What if the farm name had survived for countless generations? A sobering thought.

## Troy in Finland

Back I went to the Troy site and looked around for the same kinds of patterns. Now the landscape began to tell a story, and even fields retained black smudges in straight lines. With the right enhancement, empty fields would come alive with dots in straight lines. I drew for a month, night after night, driving my wife crazy. "Come to bed!" she'd say and turn out the light. But what a picture emerged! A city a kilometer on a side, ringed by walls and towers, that had been expanded in stages.

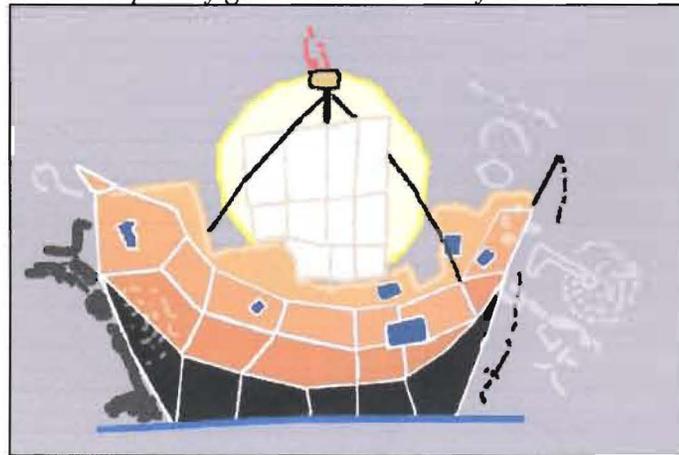
Figure 14: Troy as drawn in 2004.



## **Ollie Kuussari explains the black dots in the landscape**

A year later I went back to Finland to find out what those black dots were. Olli Kuussari had a house on Lake Kisko, where John Catto and I had started out. He got a boat and rowed me to an island in the lake with an astounding figure in the landscape, an ocean-going sailing ship. It had a square sail made of rectangular hides sewn together, an enclosed deck, portholes, a chain-link anchor cable and a center-mounted stern rudder, an ideal placement for fast tacking. Behind the ship was a great sun, the emblem of the Hanseatic League. To me it looked something like a Chinese junk. The lake was part of the sea around 2200 BC, when the island was either a port or a training center. A line along the axis of the mast went through Finland, across the Baltic, to Gdansk in Poland, the ship-building center of the Baltic.

*Figure 15. Ship and figures on the island of Musalo near Troija.*



We went to a line of dots that formed the water line, and found a row of spruce stumps. They weren't very big, maybe a foot in diameter, but still the farmer had cut them down to sell. "That's what you see, Stu, dark spruce trees against a light background of pine trees. When you cut down a spruce tree, a new one grows from the stump. Those ancient carpenters must have used spruce for posts to withstand rot. After they burned down, spruce seedlings would take root in the post holes filled with remnants of the spruce. When that spruce died, another would take its place, ad infinitum."

I thanked Ollie and his wife, and drove along twisting back roads to Troy with a long list of questions the site had to answer, beginning with foundation stones laid by Poseidon.

You are invited to contact Stuart Harris about this or any other archeological topics at PO Box 60281, Palo Alto, CA, 94306; Stuart.Harris -at- sbcglobal.net; 650-888-1859