

# Sven-Donald Hedman, Archaeologist and Friend

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Figure 1. Fieldwork in Russia in 2014. Sven-Donald in the camp on Sredniy Peninsula, Murmansk Oblast. Photo: Bjørnar Olsen.

This book is dedicated to the memory of Sven-Donald Hedman, a Swedish archaeologist whose professional interests were mainly in the north. Sven-Donald collaborated closely with Norwegian, Finnish and Russian archaeologists, and also with colleagues in Canada and the United States. His fieldwork trips were dedicated to the forest and mountain areas of

Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia – to almost every corner of Sápmi. The urge to find answers to new questions inspired him to head off the beaten archaeological track. Likewise, Sven-Donald's interests in archaeology were not confined to any narrow time span but extended from the time of Fennoscandia's first settlers to 20th-century archaeological sites.

This collection includes seven articles closely related to Sven-Donald's main field of research, written by authors with whom he collaborated over several years. Most of the papers focus on the so-called hearth-row sites, which can be dated to the Late Iron Age and the early medieval period. Sven-Donald directed and took part in several of the investigations discussed here, most notably at the two Pasvik sites, Brodtkorbneset and Steintjørna. In other projects, he was a highly valued collaborator. The volume is based on the proceedings of a seminar dedicated to the memory of Sven-Donald, held 4 March 2016 at the Centre for Sámi Studies of the University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway. The seminar was very well attended, with Sven-Donald's family as specially invited guests. Talks and discussions took place in a pleasant atmosphere and thus well in his spirit as a scholar and person. The authors remember Sven-Donald as a generous and immensely gifted colleague, a person who always had a smile for you even in the toughest field conditions.

Sven-Donald Hedman was born 1953 in Arjeplog, Northern Sweden. His interest in archaeology began early. He was only 12 years old when he found his first stone arrowheads on the lake shore near his home in Stensund. He handed the finds over to the local museum (Silvermuseet) in Arjeplog and continued to search for more finds and sites. Already as a teenager he took part in several archaeological excavations near Arjeplog. His path to academic archaeology, however, was longer than for most of us. He had children as a young man and worked for several years as a carpenter in order to secure the economy of his family. Nonetheless, he never gave up his dream of ultimately becoming an archaeologist, and at the age of 30 he began his studies in archaeology at Umeå University. These studies were crowned by his doctoral thesis in 2003, *Boplatser och offerplatser. Ekonomisk strategi och boplatsmönster bland skogsamer 700-1600 AD*. It is based on material from numerous hearth and hearth-row sites, several of which he had ex-

cavated himself. Its main topic was the emergence of reindeer husbandry and whether there was a connection between changes in settlement pattern and transitions in the reindeer economy. One of Sven-Donald's conclusions was that the new environmental preferences characterizing the location of the hearth-row sites from the Late Iron Age onwards could be explained by new needs for pasture in a reindeer herding economy (Hedman 2003).

Sven-Donald was deeply engaged in Sámi archaeology, broadly defined. He carried out extensive fieldwork in the boreal forest zone, where also quite young sites drew his attention – sites that still were on their way to becoming what we traditionally think of as archaeological sites. They included so-called culturally modified trees, including traces of the removal of pine inner-bark for food but also drawings and other depictions – some of them from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but also younger. Sven-Donald was interested in the diversity of traces left by humans in the past, irrespective of age, and he was a master in finding them. Together with his soil sampling probe, which always accompanied him, he was a familiar sight in both the forest and mountain regions. While hearth and hearth-row sites in the forest region probably were his foremost field of interest and expertise, the so called *ställo* sites in the mountain areas were also close to his heart. He surveyed extensively in high mountain areas to find and record new sites, in both Sweden and Norway, and above all in the Saltfjell area (Hedman 2015).

As an archaeologist Sven-Donald worked in the early 2000s at the Norrbotten Museum, where he headed the project *Skog och historia* (Forest and History) and gained wide experience of all kinds of ancient monuments in the forest areas, skills that became important for his later projects. In 2007, he was appointed to a post-doctoral position at the University of Tromsø as part of the research project *Home, Hearth and Household in the Circumpolar North* (HHH) (Anderson et al. 2013). This was a large international project with subprojects in the United States,



Figure 2. Inspecting a newly found weight. Sven-Donald and Petri Halinen at Steintjørna, Pasvik, 2012. Photo: Bjørnar Olsen.



Figure 3. Taking a break on a sunny afternoon on the shores of Lake Lovozero. Sven-Donald and Anton Murashkin, Lovozero, Russia, 2007. Photo: Petri Halinen.

Canada, Alaska, Russia, Finland, Norway and Sweden, and Sven-Donald fitted easily into the international atmosphere of the large research group. His extensive knowledge of dwelling sites and the environment was very important for the success of the project. The discovery and first excavations of the rich hearth-row sites in the River Pasvik area in Eastern Finnmark, Norway, took place as part of the HHH project and became a milestone in Sven-Donald's research career (Hedman and Olsen 2009, Halinen et al. 2013).

In 2012, he became the leader of the project *Hunters in Transition*, financed by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (The Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences). This project continued earlier studies of the hearth-row sites in the River Pasvik area, now focusing on the Steintjørna site, which was excavated in 2012 and 2013. It also included the excavation of a hearth-row site at Östra Hobergräsk, Västerbotten, Sweden. This project was multidisciplinary, utilizing the methods of environmental archaeology, metallurgy, osteology and genetics. Its results were important for Swedish,

Norwegian and Finnish archaeology, and, needless to say, very important for Sámi archaeology. The last article of the project was published in *Rangifer* (Hedman et al. 2015), slightly more than a month before Sven-Donald passed away – and more was to come (Jerand et al. 2016). The research group has continued to publish articles in which Sven-Donald's impact and research are still highly visible (Røed et al. 2018). This impact continues with the publishing of this volume.

Sven-Donald was a very social person, a person with a big heart. In the field, he often brought an additional heart with him, a smoked and dried reindeer heart. He carried it with him for that irresistible treat during breaks – coffee breaks, lunch breaks, chatting breaks, whatever breaks. Wherever we dug or surveyed he generously shared both of his hearts. It was always enjoyable to discuss, talk – or just be silent with Sven-Donald. In the midst of the northern wilderness, deep in the forest, just being with him – in search of something interesting. A pit, a marked tree, a dwelling, a hearth. Two hearths, then a hearth row. If it was there, he would find it.

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