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"A Dense and Sickly Mist from Thousands of Bog Fires: An Attempt to Compare the Energy Consumption in Slash-and-Burn Cultivation and Burning Cultivation of Peatlands in Finland in 1820–1920"

Kunnas, Jan

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In historical research about fire-clearance husbandry in Finland the focus has been on burning of forests, while swamps and other peatlands have been neglected. Kunnas claims that this neglect is not acceptable. His calculations show that the amount of biomass measured by energy value burned on peatlands surpassed the amount burned in slash-and-burn cultivation after the mid-nineteenth century. A comparison with other sources of carbon dioxide shows also, that burning cultivation of peatlands was by far the greatest source of carbon dioxide in Finland during the whole of nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century. Burning cultivation of peatlands has been practised in peat-rich countries at one time or other throughout Western Europe. In these and other peat-rich countries, the inclusion of the emissions from burning cultivation could substantially alter historical carbon dioxide emission estimates.

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