



Freden, friköpen och järnplogarna

Drivkrafter och förändringsprocesser under den agrara
revolutionen i Halland 1700-1900

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Fil mag

With an English Summary

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Abstract

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TITLE: Freden, friköpen och järnplogarna – Drivkrafter och förändringsprocesser under den agrara revolutionen i Halland 1700-1900

ENGLISH TITLE: Peace, freeholding and iron ploughs – Motivating forces and processes of change during the agricultural revolution in Halland 1700-1900

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The thesis studies the agricultural revolution in the province Halland in southwestern Sweden. New tools, land reclamation, new cultivation systems, better livestock, enclosures and freeholding during the period 1700-1900 are investigated. The source materials consist of estate inventories, land survey documents and present descriptions.

The thesis analyses theories about the motivating forces behind the agricultural revolution used by researchers from throughout northwestern Europe: Theories about large farmers, enclosures, corn prices and the market and finally a bottom-up theory.

The results of the study are that the main motivating force behind the agricultural revolution's advances in Halland from 1720 to 1860, and to a large extent thereafter, has been social conditions that were positive for the peasants – one aspect of the bottom-up theory.

Another aspect of the bottom-up theory is that, areas with many peasant freeholders experienced faster development than the others and the areas with many tenants experienced the worst development. The thesis' findings clearly show that this was the case.

A third aspect of the bottom-up theory is peasant rationality. Many of the findings in the study have been able to reinforce the picture of rational behaviour.

The first time that Halland's farmers sold their agricultural products on a market to any great extent was around 1860. After 1860 the bottom-up theory therefore joined with the market and, to a certain degree, prices as the engine behind the changes. It stands to reason that the peasants could not have been affected by prices or a market before 1860.

According to the large farmers theory, a group made up of large farmers with many employees was required for an agricultural revolution. But there were almost no large farmers of that kind in Halland. And yet an agricultural revolution took place.

Several researchers maintain that radical enclosures were the decisive motivating force behind the agricultural revolution. But this thesis has been able to show that neither land reclamation, the introduction of new crops, new cultivation systems nor new tools were inhibited by the open field system that existed before the radical enclosures. Consequently radical enclosures was not a motivating force, but rather *a part of* the great agricultural transformation.

KEYWORDS: history, Halland, Sweden, northwestern Europe, 18th century, 19th century, agricultural revolution, motivating forces, peasants, freeholders, bottom-up theory, estate inventories, agricultural tools, land reclamation, cultivation systems, enclosures, livestock.

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