

Sverige och Nordlanden

Förvaltning och nordlig expansion 1250-1550

with an English summary

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ABSTRACT

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Since the nineteenth century Sweden has been described in research as a kingdom on the European periphery whose development during the Middle Ages was determined by specifically national characteristics. More recent international scholarship emphasises the common characteristics of the history of the European states. An entire system of cultural events, through the dominance of the papacy, was copied and permeated throughout kingdoms and principalities.

This thesis utilizes a systemic perspective and applies the over-arching hypothesis that social developments in Sweden during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries followed the same patterns that underpinned social change and territorial expansion in other peripheries of Europe. The thesis aims to explain the state formation process through the Swedish position as a realm within the papacy.

This thesis examines the hypothesis that the Swedish state formation process can be understood from the territorial management and the administrative systems used. General results are linked to Max Weber's definition of the territorial state in which the state has a legal system with well-planned and rationally established rules for administration and taxation both in the core area, and as a method of territorial expansion. Such systems have been distinguished in the medieval sources, analyzed and explained in this study.

This thesis shows that the systems for mark planning and assessment were not only used in the core area of the realm, but also as the means when the Swedish Crown annexed the northern parts of Sweden and Finland in the fourteenth century.

The study is conducted on two chronological levels. The first part examines the period between 1250 and 1297 when a new legal system was prepared and finally enshrined by the king. The source material primarily consists of the Law of Uppland and diplomas. The second part examines the period between 1297 and 1550 in which the source material consists of the Laws of Uppland and Hälsingland, diplomas, land registers, and taxation documents. Based on data from the land registry, the medieval taxation in the northern provinces has been reconstructed and followed over 250 years.

This thesis brings to the fore valuable knowledge of the state formation in Sweden and gives the provinces of Nordlanden a chronological history that has been unknown until now.

Keywords: state formation, territorial expansion, legal change, medieval state, assessment, taxation, peasants.