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"Medieval Slash-and-Burn Cultivation: Strategic or Adapted Land Use in the Swedish Mining District?"

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Emanuelsson, Marie, and Ulf Segerstrom. "Medieval Slash-and-Burn Cultivation: Strategic or Adapted Land Use in the Swedish Mining District?" *Environment and History* 8, no. 2 (May, 2002): 173–96. doi:10.3197/096734002129342639 . The general view in Swedish historiography of an inherent conflict between iron-making and the practice of slash-and-burn is questioned on the basis of this palaeoecological case study of repeated slash-and-burn cultivation from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries in a mining district of central Sweden. An alternative thesis of a mutual association between iron-making and the practice of slash-and-burn is put forward. Deliberately used by the mining peasant, slash-and-burn was a way to turn forest resources into cereals, animal fodder and charcoal for iron-making. However, the initial practice of slash-and-burn ceased after c. 400 years, when competition for forest resources arose due to the scarcity of local forest. The new situation seems to have brought about changes in land use from slash-and-burn cultivation to field cultivation and a meadow-field-rotation system. This study also shows that the practice of slash-and-burn and its relationship to the use of forest resources may be crucial for understanding the historical relationship between iron production and agriculture in the Swedish mining district. All rights reserved. © 2002 The White Horse Press

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