

Summary

Field-names of the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland World Heritage Site

By Viktoria Bengtsdotter Katz

The Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2000 on account of its long cultural history and its adaptation to the physical constraints of the local geology and topography. An intangible dimension of the cultivated landscape is language, and changes in cultural systems affect the functioning of place-names. With funding from the Institute for Language and Folklore, a study was made of field-names – here limited to names in use for arable fields in 1960 and 2013 – in two villages in the area: Frösslunda and Ventlinge.

In the study, which was conducted in 2013, all the farmers in the two villages were interviewed. To document names from 1960, interviews were carried out with former farmers or, if they were no longer alive, their children.

A total of 183 names were collected. The results reveal radical changes in the toponymic landscape. Extensive loss of names is shown to have occurred on several agricultural holdings, as small farms have been combined into larger holdings or stone walls removed to create larger fields. An example from Frösslunda shows that three field-names from 1960 have now disappeared, their place taken by a new, single name.

Naming principles are also changing. When farms change owners or farmers, all the existing names may be replaced. On a farm in Ventlinge, all the field-names used in 1960 have made way for new ones comprising the village name *Ventlinge* as their main element and a point of the compass as a qualifier, e.g. *Ventlinge södra* and *Ventlinge nordvästra*. Naming is thus becoming more collective in character.