

Preface

When the faculty of the Stockholm School of Economics met on November 8, 1928, Eli F. Heckscher, professor of economics and statistics, offered a proposal calling for the establishment of an institute for research in economic history. The faculty, followed one week later by the School's Board of Trustees, gave its assent, and on June 18, 1929, Heckscher was awarded a personal professorship in economic history and appointed director of the new institute.

The research tradition to which Eli F. Heckscher gave his imprimatur still characterizes much of the work performed within the Institute for Research in Economic History (EHF) at the Stockholm School of Economics. This is especially true of the cross-disciplinary nature of the research, but it also applies to the emphasis on business history and historical economics. With the approach of the fiftieth anniversary of Heckscher's December 23, 1952 death, it seemed only fitting that the EHF Institute should participate in marking the occasion. Thus, a symposium celebrating Heckscher's many scholarly contributions was organized under the auspices of the Institute. An organizing committee consisting of Ronald Findlay, Rolf G. H. Henriksson, Håkan Lindgren, and Mats Lundahl was given responsibility for the planning and scholarly content of the symposium.

The planning was based on our conviction that Eli F. Heckscher, together with Knut Wicksell, Bertil Ohlin, and Gunnar Myrdal, belongs to a group of Swedish economists who have received wide-spread international recognition for their work. At least in Heckscher's case, his major contributions go beyond economics as such to include the discipline of economic history. Among economists, he is primarily known for his path-breaking work on international trade, while among economic historians his fame rests on his now classic works on *Mercantilism*, *The Continental System*, and *Swedish Economic History*, all of which

have appeared in English translation. In Sweden, Heckscher founded, and indeed molded, economic history as a scholarly discipline. Thanks to his grounding in economic theory and his extensive list of publications, Heckscher remains relevant to this very day. Inevitably, his research results have been modified in numerous regards. Nevertheless, for many modern scholars his body of work remains both a starting point and a challenge. The goal of the symposium, therefore, was to create a forum where economists and economic historians could meet to develop a picture of how relevant Heckscher's research program and results are perceived to be by current practitioners of the two disciplines.

The results of the conference "Eli F. Heckscher, 1879–1952: A Celebratory Symposium," are presented in this volume. Many individuals have made valuable contributions to the creation of this book. First and foremost there are the authors, who have patiently awaited the results of their labor, as well as the numerous commentators, who are as follows: Lena Andersson-Skog, Bob Coats, Richard Friberg, Ylva Hasselberg, Maths Isacson, Jan Jörnmark, Olle Krantz, Jonas Ljungberg, Anders Ögren Jan Ottosson, Tom Petersson, Ronny Pettersson, Lars Pålsson-Syll, Örjan Sjöberg, Hans Sjögren, Bo Södersten, Richard Sylla, Kersti Ullenhag, Daniel Waldenström, and Kurt Wickman. The insights provided by these commentators have without question facilitated the work of preparing the contributed papers for publication.

The conference would not have been possible without the support of the SSE and its president Leif Lindmark. Administratively, success, before, during, and after the conference can largely be credited to the self-sacrificing and unselfish work performed by the staff of the EHF Institute, especially Britt-Marie Eisler and Krim Talia. Moreover, without contributions from a number of leading Swedish research funding sources, the conference could not have been held. Thus the organizing committee wishes to extend its heartfelt appreciation for the financial support provided by the Central Bank of Sweden, Jan Wallander's and Tom Hedelius's Foundation, Prince Bertil's Foundation, the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation, Marianne and Marcus Wallenberg's Foundation, the Swedish Research Council, and Timbro AB.

Last, but certainly not least, a special thank you is due the grandchildren of Eli F. Heckscher: Eva, Einar, Sten, and Ivar. They participated in the project with great enthusiasm, providing family photographs and Eli's school essay. Their personal recollections of their grandfather,

which are included in this volume, shed important light on Heckscher as a private person. Our picture of this great scholar would be incomplete without their contributions. Tragically, Eva Heckscher died before she could see her loving account of her grandfather in print. We wish to honor Eva by dedicating this book to her memory, and to thank Dag Klackenberg for the brief sketch of her life that he has provided.

New York and Stockholm, 7 June 2005

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