

Preface to the online edition

The delimitation

I had originally intended to only treat the professional role of the king - a kind of modern royal mirror. If the king does not rule, what does he actually do? But the discussion on Thomas Sjöberg's anti-biography "The reluctant monarch" (2010) made me realize that the king's person was as important as what he accomplishes. New Year 2010/11 I therefore restarted the whole project as a regular biography 1946-2013. During the research phase I also read biographies about the rest of the royal house. These were so amazingly poor that they could not be used as references. The biography was therefore extended to include chapters on the King's parents, his sisters, Queen Silvia, the children, Prince Bertil and Princess Lilian. Eventually reaching 69 chapters, three appendixes & just over 1600 citations divided into nine sections:

- Nearest family.
- 1946-1976. CG's upbringing & the status of the Swedish monarchy.
- 1943-1976. Silvia Renate Sommerlath.
- 1973-1996. Government I.
- 1996-2013. Government II.
- CG as a private individual
- Press relations.
- The children
- Conclusions.

This was more than I had expected and made the biography practically unpublishable without serious editing. A note: Part 1 covers CG's life 1996-2013 (40 years of reign). Part 2 covers CG's life 1996-2023 (50 years of reign), but does not contain much new information on his life and deeds.

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The sources

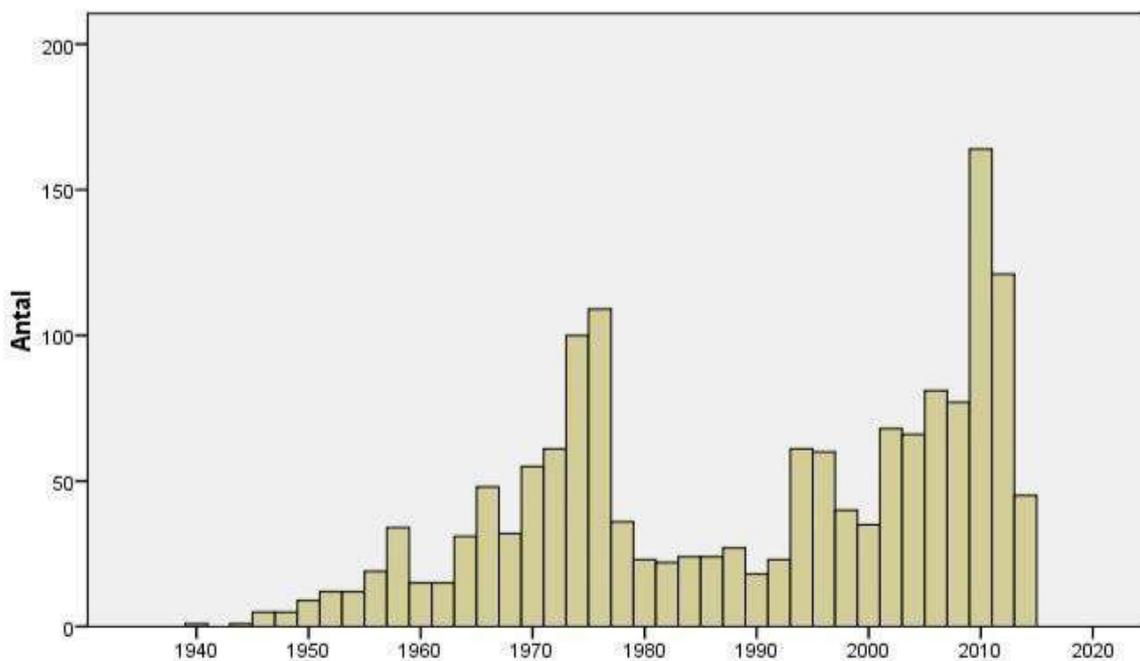
The Bernadotte family archives - 400 shelf meters - are in a depot at Ulriksdal Castle. None of the biographies published about today's royalties make use of this material. It is however mentioned that authors have been given access to private photo albums, scrapbooks and granted interviews. I myself have vacuumed various sources for this kind of information and also searched public archives. As the Royal House is Sweden's most closely monitored institution, this has paid dividends. The fact that it has not been done before is probably because it is so arduous. It took me five years full-time. "The truth is out there," but it's very diluted. In the first step, the information search was broad but gradually narrowed. It was made through:

1. The Royal Library, Stockholm & Uppsala University Library, The Library of Parliament - Biographies, memoirs, standard works, investigations, research reports, internal memos, letters etc.
2. Internet - Odd information, internal reports, pictures & gossip.

3. A selection of daily and weekly newspapers. Since newspapers & magazines did not become searchable on the internet until after 1996 it meant browsing about 400 vintages manually.
4. Media Archives - A couple of hundred hours of image and sound files from SR, SVT, TV4 & the publicist club.
5. The archives of the Parliament, the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Archives, the War Archives, the City Archives, the Archives of the Labour Movement, the archives of the opinion research organisation Sifo, the State Administration, the Personal Courts and others
6. A small number of telephone interviews and written questions with mixed results.

About half of the data comes from daily and weekly newspapers. The weeklies have a bad reputation as sources but if someone named gives an interview, one must assume that time, place and report are correct. I avoid anonymous sources, data denied by the object, incomprehensibly informed journalists & information from a much later date. E.g. I trust more Titti Wachtmeister's own denial in *Hänt i Veckan* 1972 that the relationship between her and Crown Prince Carl Gustaf did not exist than when the journalist Lena Rainer in 1996 cites an anonymous "unassailable" source who claims the opposite. The ambition has been that the sources should be as close as possible in time & place. Accordingly, the dates of the source references are roughly equally spaced over the period 1946-2013 with the exception of two peaks in the 1976 and 2010 wedding years (Figure 1). This should however not be interpreted as meaning that everything then was about the wedding. Many other things were discussed.

Figure 1. Frequency distribution for publication dates of all citations. (N≈1600.)



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Content

As the king's upbringing has been so special, it is difficult to describe his psychology. I have judged it to have intrinsic value to follow him as closely as possible in order to understand his social situation and how he functions. The scientific term is “lived experience”. The literary term is “point of view”. The method is usually direct quotes. The disadvantage is that it has considerably lengthened the biography.

When the information is sparse or missing, it has often been difficult to understand what is going on. I have rewritten some chapters again and again as I have found new information. The technical term is “hermeneutical interpretation circles” - the problem is reworked until the interpretation stabilizes. Such a case has been what really happened during the Sigtuna period. My interpretations and those of others differed widely and it took months before I had gathered enough information to present a convincing interpretation of my own. It is in such cases that I have done interviews.

The political morass that is the Torekov compromise affects how the king's profession is depicted. When Crown Princess Victoria delivered her tribute speech on the anniversary of King Carl Gustaf's 40th year of reign, she said that his greatest contribution had been to make the Torekov compromise work and that she admired his perseverance. The biography gives concrete expression to this as far as is possible. My own view is that regardless of whether the king is formally “above the parties” or not he has a constitutional function and has views on public policy issues. It can have escaped no one that this has made him controversial.

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Continuation

There are both advantages and disadvantages to work as I have done “outside the system”. The advantage is that as a pensioner you sit in your ivory tower and do not have to take anyone into account. The disadvantage is that there are no colleagues to talk to and to keep you in check. In the scientific community you quickly learn that you work as a collective. I needed a reference group - but the subject is too narrow, too contentious & there is no Swedish tradition of academic biographies of living persons. That is journalist work. The next best option is to publish online. Anyone who feels compelled to contribute is welcome.

Stockholm, December 31, 2013

/ Erik Söderman /

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Comment on the translated version

The English version is based on the original Swedish version. The text was first processed using the Systran Swedish to English translation program, then corrected manually. It is not a word by word translation. Details that are not self explanatory are explained. Sources are not translated. As noted elsewhere this is a pilot study. Facts & conclusions should be treated with

caution. For complete biographies of CG's family 1818-2018 I refer to part 2 (to be translated; eta 2022-09-01). For discussions about the Swedish monarchy as a system 1718-2018 I refer to part 3 (to be translated; eta 2022-12-01).

Stockholm, April 30, 2022

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