

Chapter 26 : “A modern court”

The court has always consisted of two parts, the working court and the ceremonial court. At the end of Gustav VI's reign, the organization of the working court was heavily criticised. The critics, it seems mainly to have been Gösta Lewenhaupt, CEO of Swedish IBM, and Stig Ramel, CEO of the Swedish Trade Association, found it strange to divide the court into independent personal fiefs and fill the leading positions with pensioners. Prince Bertil, honorary member of the Export Association etc., supported this modernization. The “troika” wanted a “business organization”: An energetic CEO and under him Chief Financial Officer, Head of Staff, Ceremony Manager, Public Relations Manager etc.¹ They and also Gustaf VI were uninterested in the ceremonial court which at the end of Gustaf VI's reign had suffered the great death.

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At the end of King Gustaf VI's reign the working court is said to have had two functions: To serve the king's daily needs and to protect him against people in general. As for serving, some 30 people were employed at the different castles and followed him on trips. There were no festivities, he was too old: “The King only lived at Stockholm Castle for a few months in the autumn. Between December and April he lived at Drottningholm Castle, April and May he moved to Ulriksdal Castle and June, July and August he spent at Sofiero. In the autumn, because of his archaeological interest he travelled to Italy ...

When he was not on state visits abroad, meals were served at fixed times: At 9:00 there was breakfast, at 13:00 lunch and at 19:00 dinner. King Gustaf VI Adolf liked Swedish home cooking such as dillkött (boiled meat in dill sauce), raggmunk (potato pancakes) but also Italian dishes.”² This everyday life took place behind a mystifying facade:

The court and nobility form the protective curtain through which the people should be able to glimpse but normally not clearly see the king and his family. The Sovereign should come close enough to the people so that he can be admired, but at the same time keep such distance that he cannot be judged and analysed. During various periods this has been handled by editor Sten Egnell, Gösta Lewenhaupt and Stig Ramel.

The routine royal information concerns trifles. The court must protect the monarch and his family from contacts with the public and from publicity perceived as alien to the role. When royal figures make mistakes or break the law, the court panics.³

The Marshal of the Realm (CEO) had the external responsibility (contacts with the Parliament, the government and applying for the appanage; In rank the 4th most important person in the realm (after the King, the Prime Minister and the Speaker), the 1st Marshal of the Court (vice president) had the internal responsibility (finance and administration) and the Court Warden was responsible for the king's estates (fixed property). Each royal person also had his own Marshal of the Court or the equivalent responsible for his or her representation. In addition to the regular courtiers, there were Chamberlains, the male equivalent of Lady-in-waiting, and Master of ceremonies, the male equivalent of Mistress of the Robes. Any

¹ Åke Ortmark. De okända makthavarna : de kungliga, militärerna, journalisterna. W & W, 1969.

² Marianne Eriksson. Christer Adolfsson serverar under prinsbröllopet. Karlstad, mobil.nwt.se, 2010-06-16.

³ Åke Ortmark. De okända makthavarna : de kungliga, militärerna, journalisterna. W & W, 1969.

decisions circulated as internal memo's and were often ignored or circumvented. The length of employment was often so long that the underlings thought they knew better than their bosses what was good for them.

At the time of CG's accession, the “inner circle” of the court consisted of faithful servants with a varied but extraordinarily qualified background: Prince Bertil, the Marshal of the Realm and 1st Marshal of the Court admiral Stig H:son Ericson, the Court Warden former executive Sixten Wohlfahrt (1899-), the private secretary baron Carl-Fredrik Palmstierna (1903-1993) and Mistress of the Robes baroness Astrid Rudebeck (1893-1982). Their recruitment differed ...

One may have been raised in a family that for generations devoted themselves to service at the court and married someone with the same qualifications (as Mistress of the Robes Astrid Rudebeck, the sister of Court stable master Carl Eric von Platen). Or you may have told a story that caused the king to belly laugh until his chair broke (as the secretary Carl-Fredrik Palmstierna). Or you could have been hand picked by inscrutable military fingers to a post as adjutant and then risen in the ranks on your own qualifications (as Marshal of the Realm Stig H:son Ericson, adjutant 1937). There are so many paths that lead to the king, but as in many other contexts, only the most capable reach the goal. What strikes you when, within a short space of time, you meet those who are considered closest to the king, is a natural kindness, an atmosphere that seems saturated with culture and cosiness. The king is surrounded by an exquisite distillation.⁴

As Crown Prince, CG had a separate court. 1968-1973 it was led by Lieutenant General Malcolm Murray. CG was at times assisted by Sibylla's chamberlain Gösta Lewenhaupt, but he did not want to continue after the death of his wife in 1972. Besides his work at IBM took all his time. In 1973-1975 Atlas Copco (probably at Marcus Wallenberg's initiative) loaned CG the economist Count Tom Wachtmeister, one of Princess Margaretha's acquaintances, as chamberlain. This seems to have happened on the spur of the moment. Prince Bertil was scheduled to visit Atlas Copco on September 1, 1973, but his father was dying. CG stepped in for a short visit where he appears to have met Marcus Wallenberg. The position was part-time. Wachtmeister was also director of Atlas Copco's long-term planning. He was to serve as CG's economic adviser for a symbolic remuneration, with the task of teaching him more about Swedish industry. The salary from the court he claimed corresponded to a pair of new shoes each year. For the management job at Atlas Copco, however, he got 150 thousand a year so he didn't suffer any hardship.

After CG's accession on September 15, Wachtmeister took over as 1st Marshal of the Court on October 1. His first assignment was to carry out an organizational investigation of the court administration. Because wage benefits such as food and shelter at the castle during Gustaf Vs time were not counted as taxable income, many people's pensions were very low and they were allowed to continue working as long as they were able. CG seems to have put the investigation in the drawer pending natural resignation. This was commented on by the surrounding community as an expression of respect for tradition but was probably rather an effect of CG's management training. Hurry slow! The first concrete measure was to dismiss the domestic staff at the various castles and to introduce an upper age limit for employees of 70 years. (This was especially relevant for the castle guards. It was something of a tradition among the Stockholm police that pending their pension, they sought employment at the castle.

⁴ Maud Wester. Den inre cirkeln kring kungen (I). Vecko Journalen, 1971:10.

As guards they worked every third day and kept at it for as long as they could.⁵ Nowadays the majority of the guards are former train drivers.) The subsequent measures were aimed at reducing administrative costs by reducing duplication of effort and making the allocation of responsibilities more comprehensible to outsiders. The number of employees was reduced to about 200 full-time, another 400-500 when necessary, and the budget to about 200 million SEK. The ambition was to pay market wages. However, this only applied to lower positions. Management positions were moderately paid honorary duties. Wealth was a must. At the end of 1975/76 the number of employees at the Royal Court was reportedly 15 full-time employees and 61 pensioners, half-time employees and remunerative services.⁶

The organizational changes were fully implemented in 1978, but by then Wachtmeister had long returned to Atlas Copco for a CEO post. New 1st Marshal 1975-1980, was the naval officer and Phd in economics and politics Björn von der Esch (1930-2010). New Marshal of the Realm 1976-1982 was the lawyer Gunnar Lagergren (1912-2008). The choice of economist von der Esch was allegedly due to the fact that CG from 1975 had to pay taxes and therefore needed help to clean up his economy. The choice of the lawyer Lagergren was allegedly due to the need for legal assistance in interpreting the new constitution. There were rumours that von der Esch was to act as yet another father figure for CG. When asked about it in an interview, von der Esch replied that this was not the case. CG's upbringing was long since over.

In 1975, Wachtmeister appointed the diplomat Jan Mårtensson (1933-) as CG's private secretary, speech writer and press spokesman. His duties included "business intelligence" and reporting about it to CG and Silvia. At the time, there were territorial disputes between 1st Marshal von der Esch and Marshal Bengt Colliander, and Mårtensson was therefore placed under the direct authority of CG as head of administration and responsible for CG's external activities. Mårtensson stayed on until 1979 when the informant Elisabeth Tarras-Wahlberg took over some of his duties.

From the end of 1978, the court was led by a loosely organized management team where people were co-opted as needed:

- King Carl XVI Gustaf, 32 years, chairman.
- Queen Silvia, 34 years, when necessary vice-chairman.
- Marshal of the Realm Gunnar Lagergren, 66 years.
- 1st Marshal of the Court Björn von der Esch, 48 years.
- Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Malcom Murray, 74 years, but will soon retire.
- Head of administration Jan Mårtensson, 45 years.
- Chief lady-in-waiting Countess Alice Trolle-Wachtmeister, 51 years.

The staff was long time recruited from acquaintances and on personal recommendations. There were both 3rd and 4th generation employees in the king's service. The jobs were lifelong. It was considered something of a revolution when the post of Court Warden was advertised in the early 1970s. They got over 200 responses and chose Claes Nordström, Naturvårdsverket, later Marshal of the court.

In 1993, the Court, like the state administration in general, had to save. Public Relations consultant Mats Dellham was commissioned to conduct a new organizational inquiry. The

⁵ Bert Miller. Kungen och hans hus 1. Hemmets veckotidning, 1964:5.

⁶ Per Gudmundsson. Kungens nya hov. Kvällsposten, 1975-11-01.

organization was flattened, the Marshal of the Realm became head of a regular management team and reported to CG. However, this change seems to have only concerned internal matters. The external representation continued roughly as before. From 1995 with a greater emphasis on information issues:

- The King
- The Queen
- Marshal of the Realm
- 1st Marshal of the Court
- Mistress of the Robes; 1st Lady of the Court
- Chief of Staff
- Chief lady-in-waiting
- Crown Princess Victoria's personal Marshal
- Chief information officer (CIO)
- Court superintendent; curator

In 1999, CG's role was described as:

The King exercises his leadership of the Court primarily through a special council, H.M. The King's Council of the Royal Court, which acts as a group executive. The council has been created by CG, meets a few times a year and discusses long-term issues. [There is no information on who was included but according to CG it was “a group of skilled and experienced people, women and men with a background in business, defence and culture.”]

Every Tuesday, he takes part in planning meetings where the program for the next year or year and a half, is discussed. The points are the trips, visits, audiences, inaugurations and other events in which the King will participate. The King receives 7,000-8,000 requests per year from different parties, but the King and Queen only have time for about 400. In other words, 95 per cent of all requests are ignored.⁷

[In 1981, the number of letters was about 10 thousand a year. Initially, CG received many marriage proposals, mostly from abroad, Spain. Sometimes it was the mothers themselves who asked out their daughters. Many letters were from children. A book of these letters was published. Even unpleasant letters were answered but these were few, 1:500 according to a 1983 report.]

The royal etiquette was relaxed. In 1973, CG abolished the practice of bowing or curtsying every time he was in the vicinity - “the reverence”. It embarrassed him. Respect was enough. In 1976 Marshal of the Realm Gunnar Lagergren introduced the “you reform” for employees addressing each other. For CG, the you reform meant that he was addressed as “the king” (not his highness or the equivalent) and that the staff did not need to request an audience but just knock on his office door. Silvia responded to a question about the reverence that it didn't particularly concern her, “you get used to it”. In 1978, when she received her own court, she introduced it every morning for her employees. The inconsistency of the etiquette makes the staff prefer to avoid it. It can go as far as hiding in the toilet.

⁷ Åke Österlund. Här är det jag som är kung. Tidningen Chef, 1999:5, s 34-38.

Normally CG does not accept group visits, but he made an exception for three classes of Sami schoolchildren. The Labrador Charlie sneaked along and joined the children. Charlie was then appointed royal castle dog with the task of being patted at children's receptions.

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The Ceremonial court enjoyed a short flourish following the end of the war. The MP's visits after the ceremonial opening of Parliament were resumed. Also, the so-called "presentation Cours" for noblewomen and wives of senior military officials, officials and politicians. (The minimum requirement for participation was that the man had the rank of colonel or an equivalent Order.) You first left your card with the Mistress of the Robes in her apartment. You were then presented by somebody already presented. A court dress was initially compulsory, optional from 1952.

This years cour [1946], as the so-called unofficial cour two years ago with several hundreds presented, took place in Victoria salen, impressive in all its ugliness: the plush, velvet, carpets and mosaics. But to me the cour in Vita Havet was even more stately: a single undulating wave of black-clad ladies with white and black-squared puff sleeves and three-meter-long trailers, which were carried up by the lady next in line in order to keep the correct distance. And so you paused for a while in front of the gallery with the royal ladies and did the hovering, which they had practised for weeks, deep, deep to the floor, and at the same time feared that you would never get up again or that an accident would happen to the lady who presented you - which even occasionally happened on the slippery parquet floor.

After that, tea is served in Queen Sophia's dining room. The royal ladies preside at their separate tables reserved for the top-ranked. The rest of us sit where we please.⁸

The presentation cour satisfied the practical need to give access to the castle balls. In 1962, however, Queen Louise abolished the cour and replaced it with "democratic ladies' lunches" for professional women (she herself trained as a nurse at the English Red Cross), which was then copied by Sibylla, and which seems to have inspired entire generations of noblewomen to obtain vocational training: preschool or primary school teacher, advertising, bank teller, Barlock business school, housewife, nurse, physiotherapist and what else.⁹ Some of them later worked for Silvia.

In the State Calendar of 1957, the royal court still occupies nine pages with some hundred names of people with brilliant and historical titles. This is the ceremonial court, whose creator is Queen Christina who had the Spanish model in mind, a starry dome over the earth bound working court. The stars are rarely lit - only at the ceremonial opening of the Parliament and on foreign state visits - and those attending attend it at their own expense. It is the ancient kingdom of Sweden's way to manifest itself and its traditions outwardly.

It seems that the stars now are fading though. One cannot escape from the impression that the recent change of throne has brought a radical change to the Swedish court, the first radical court since Queen Christina. The number of pages in the National

⁸ Vecko Journalen, 1946:5.

⁹ Vecko Journalen, 1962:8.

Calendar with the list of the Lords and Ladies of the Court is decreasing year by year. The ranks have been reduced by half.

The rationalization of the court has been carried out so discreetly that hardly anyone has noticed it and we have been spared the noise, fever and paroxysms that can follow an inevitable moulting.¹⁰

The tradition of the court survived until 1972, when the diplomatic wives were introduced to Queen Louise and later Princess Sibylla before attending the royal dinner. Then it was over.

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The Royal ball of 1960, one of the last great with 27 royal participants, mostly from the younger generation, was like this:

At 20.30 the guests gather two stairs up in the east vault [training their hovering skills]. Most girls wear long dresses. The boys wear tails, except the officers who wear uniform. Everyone has gloves, but in general there is a discussion about whether or not to remove them when greeting. Finally, a court official usually gives directives, and then it often becomes the case that the right glove is taken off.

Another court official (usually a chamberlain) makes sure that the invitees stand two and two, lord and lady, outside the door of the White Sea, where the royals are waiting. The chamberlain scrutinizes the names and calls them in a loud voice as the couple enters. Then you walk across the floor to first greet the king and queen, the girls curtsy, the gentlemen kiss the queen's hand, then bow for Sibylla and the princesses.

Everyone then gathers at the far end of Vita Havet until the dance opens with a Vienna waltz. [Champagne and punch are served.] The King and Queen usually dance the first dance. This year, it is Arvid Sundin's orchestra that plays. The dances vary: Everything from waltz to cha cha cha and rock'n'roll.

In each room there are magnificent flower arrangements. Loose flowers, flower beds of potted plants [lilacs, azaleas, daffodils and tulips]. There are also bowls of sweets and cigarettes. Christina and Carl Gustaf usually sit on the balcony above Vita Havet with some comrades and look at their big sisters' friends. Christina can't join in until she's 18.

Supper is served around 12 o'clock at small tables. Long tables with dishes - soup, main dish, dessert, coffee - stand ready at one wall. The main dish and dessert you serve yourself. Soup and coffee are served by footmen. Some elect are invited to sit with the princesses - three tables - the others can sit wherever they want. The King and Queen and the older guests usually sit in an adjacent room.

You dance until 2 a.m. The card says "pick up at 0200" and that means the ball will be called off. And then the 300 or so guests can go home after a successful evening. Because at the castle everyone has fun.¹¹

¹⁰ Hans-Eric Holger. I fest och prakt. Vecko Journalen, 1957:51/52.

¹¹ Stor bal på slottet. Vecko Revyn, 1960:11.

This particular ball was organized by Sibylla to find princes for the daughters. Gustaf VI wanted to downplay it since he didn't like rumours about tender feelings. The ball was as made for TV but only a group picture of the royals was ever published. The castle balls appear to have been replaced with the Amaranther balls. New ambassadors were received in the Amaranther Order as part of the accreditation process. When Queen Elisabeth visited Sweden in 1956, 1500 Amaranths danced at the City Hall in the presence of the King and Queen. The biggest Swedish ball ever. The Amaranther ball is held every even year. Over time, the Innocence ball has acquired the same "royal" status and is held every odd year. Here's a description of the Amaranther ball 1968:

The Swedish Amaranther ball attracted 718 participants and was held as usual at the Grand Royal in Stockholm. "The elegance of whisking toilets, elegant hair sets, glittering tiaras and jewellery, old Orders and old ceremony makes the Amaranther ball the last remnant of rococo in this stressed time." - The Grand Master reads out what is required of a real Amaranther - friendship, sincerity and trust. Then the special sign of the Order - right hand to the lips and heart followed by clapping. Then, the 400 expectant recipients are admitted after practising one hour in the Winter Garden bowing and curtsying in order to make the perfect reverence for the Grand Master and Mistress.¹²

The Innocence order was in theory somewhat more modern with statutes from 1765. An order for those who wanted to socialize according to the rules just before the French Revolution. Maybe it adds spice to dance on a volcano. In any case, CG is a member of both.

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Between Princess Christina's marriage in 1974 and CG's marriage in 1976, there were no royal ladies, so no ladies-in-waiting were needed. It was not until the reorganization of 1978 that Silvia received her own court. The break seems to have been due to childbirth, education in the Swedish language, a shortened version of CG's Royal Schooling, representation, Swedish driver's license etc. which all had higher priority. Chief Astrid Rudebeck lent a hand when necessary. Chief means to be the King and Queen's adviser, administrator and deputy hostess. Rudebeck had a civil defence background 1939 to 1953 and her military habits were still in place. The wives also helped out, e.g. Cecilia Nilsson, wife to the adjutant Bengt-Herman Nilsson and Signe von der Esch, wife to the 1st Marshal of the Court Björn von der Esch.

On arrival in 1976, Silvia wanted to refurbish the "Queen's Office". In particular she wanted a typewriter. At this time, typing was still low status. The court realized that they had a pleb in their midst. Silvia's later choice of ladies-in-waiting strengthened that impression. She employed only professional women. At one stage all of Silvia's ladies-in-waiting, even the most noble, were trained nurses. Silvia believed that it ensured good social competence. The court was immensely male in the most negative sense of the word, but at the same time, due to all the cuts, full of anxious boot-licking. Silvia was extremely annoyed being dismissed with "as the Queen wishes" and then nothing happened. Because she demanded much of herself, she also demanded much of her surroundings. There was internal critique that she should calm down so as not to steal attention from CG and the rest of the Bernadotte.

¹² Hänt i Veckan, 1968:11.

From 1978 Silvia's court consisted of herself and two ladies-in-waiting, Sibylla's former lady-in-waiting Dagmar Nyblaeus and Elisabeth Olsson (born Lewenhaupt), later professor of physiotherapy. That year, Alice Trolle-Wachtmeister's appointment as chief of woman's auxiliaries ended. Silvia called her and asked if she wanted to be Chief lady-in-waiting, i.e. head of the Queen's court. This she wanted and signed on for six years. (She was a substitute MP but her husband considered it too time-consuming. The post as Chief lady-in-waiting was not full-time.) Trolle-Wachtmeister (1926-; born Tornérhielm) had a background as nurse, social worker, caretaker of her own castle, municipal politician, 16 years with the Woman's Auxiliary and lady-in-waiting at the Royal Castle of Stockholm 1975-1978. She and Silvia had met in 1974 at Princess Christina's wedding, in 1975 during a hunt in German Berleburg where they were both guests of Princess Benedikte of Denmark and several times afterwards at her estate. They got along well. Silvia asked her to attend her childbirth in 1977. It went too fast for her to arrive, however, nor did CG arrive in time, but she had the honour of afterwards presenting the baby to Speaker Henry Allard, Prime Minister Thorbjörn Fälldin and Marshal Gunnar Lagergren so that they could see that everything was in order. (No changeling!) "It was a difficult task to become Chief lady-in-waiting and run the organization. There was no job description. At one point, I complained to the Queen, who then just said: 'Yes, that's actually why we asked Alice.'"¹³ - "In 11 years there had been no queen at the castle, everyone had their territories and here I suddenly was. Then it was not so easy to switch from being a manager to taking hardly any decisions at all. The King and Queen are keen to have direct contact with the Swedish people and decide for themselves on most things."¹⁴

As Chief lady-in-waiting, Trolle-Wachtmeister accompanied Silvia at state visits and also at her charity work. She is very forceful and court functionaries who refuse to listen to her or the queen have had a hard time. She is known as "Panzer-Alice". She always delivers straight answers on any topic to anybody. The Trolle family dates from the 14th century and has seen it all. Her 2004 fortune was close to 350 million, contributing to her spine. That said, she is a traditionalist and belonged to those who wept that Crown Princess Victoria had the wrong sex.

In 1993, the art historian Louise Lyberg (1932-), an old friend of Princess Margaretha, held the position and in 2003 recruiting consultant and baroness Kristine "Kinne" von Blixen-Finecke (1946-), former lady-in-waiting. Trolle-Wachtmeister continued 1994 and forward as Mistress of the Robes which service had been resting since 1974. The workload eased. She only had to participate when other countries' heads of state visited Sweden. By 2000, the Queen's court had grown to eighteen people: kitchen staff, chefs, courtiers, maids, governors, secretaries and so forth. (Traditionally, the household staff were always part of the Queen's court.) The ladies-in-waiting corresponded to the CG's adjutants and like them worked part-time, one week at a time. Their remit was somewhat vague because it was determined individually based on their background. The position of lady-in-waiting was delicate. Silvia insisted on a personal conversation, sometimes without the person knowing what was going on. Afterwards Trolle-Wachtmeister called and told them about the offer and concluded that if you declined, it was nothing you told in public.

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As Queen, Silvia must for the first in her life take an interest in her dress. The mantra was that "a queen's evening clothes should be politically correct". People around her now

¹³ Christina Magnergård Bjers. Drottning Silvia. Ekerlids förlag, 2001 [baserad på intervjuer med Silvia m fl].

¹⁴ Silvia-bilagan. Svenska Dagbladet, 1993-12-19.

afterwards claim that this should be interpreted as the Queen not wanting to appear like a fashion victim, but can by all means dress moderately. Be that as it may, the wedding dress was obviously the first try, simple cut but expensive fabric. Complete with a jewellery in the area of 5-10 million. In less solemn contexts, it was often a pastel-coloured cocktail dress with a hat according to the English model. It was all about being recognized.

In official contexts, the courtiers wore court uniforms. Most of them were from the late 19th century and heavily worn and patched. The ladies-in-waiting used their own evening dresses and a badge but easily disappeared in the crowd. In 1988, Silvia and Princess Christina gained support for a special court dress. The new court dress, similar to the old from the days of King Gustaf III, was sewn up in dark blue velvet, a two-piece jacket with grilled puff sleeves and two kinds of skirts: A straight, barely floor long, for tuxedo occasions and full-length for formal occasions.¹⁵

The mutual protocol between CG and Silvia was extensively discussed. They agreed that CG would be first served at official events, Silvia at family events. The Court is full of such arbitrary rules that are sometimes communicated to the public. For example, the more times you attend official dinners, the closer you are placed to CG.

¹⁵ Lis Granlund. Hovets dräkter – tradition och förnyelse. I: Lena Rangström (red). Hovets dräkter. Stockholm: Livrustkammaren & Höganäs: Bra böcker, 1994.