

Preface to the online edition

This is a book of mini-biographies (=a combination of résumés & character sketches) describing the Bernadotte dynasty as a social group with its privileges, duties & problems. The biographies include the persons upbringing, schooling, vocational studies, character moulding, education, hobbies, ideology, socializing, health & careers. The selection of persons described is based on inclusion and exclusion criteria:

- Inclusion criteria are king, queen, their children & grandchildren. To this is added in-laws, lovers & mistresses.
- Exclusion criteria are that the person has no connection to Sweden and/or that biographical information is missing.

The demographics & the documentation makes the selection up to and including Gustaf V consist of three generations. Due to information shortage the selection is then reduced to two generations. This amounts to some 70 biographies covering 250 years.

The biographies are not written in chronological order but first backwards in the order Carl Gustaf & his generation, Gustaf V & his generation, Jean Bernadotte & his generation. Then forwards filling the gaps. The reason has been to include a learning process in the design – the generational data is interpreted in relation to both the past & the future. This “jumping” back and forth also helps maintain the same criteria during the ten years 2009-2018 that it took to write the biographies.

The ambition has been to read all the biographical literature that exists in the field. This has been facilitated by the fact that the library search system Libris includes hits even on single journal articles. The biographies overlap. A bonus from reading all has therefore been to find information in unexpected places. Otherwise, the literature search has been done in the normal way based on Libris, Worldcat, reference lists, internet & newspaper databases. The emphasis is on printed information. The scope is about 1000 books & 2000 articles. Archive searches have only been done to answer single specific questions. Foreign literature in French, German, English, Danish & Norwegian is included in the original language. Finnish literature is included in translation. Potential information bias is that no Russian literature on the subject has been found. Another problem has been the lack of citations. In most cases, however, I have been able to locate the sources.

The interest in the members of the royal house has varied, but even historical icons such as Karl XIV Johan & Folke Bernadotte have long gaps that become noticeable when one year after year follows them in the tracks. Posterity has been more interested in their heroic role & love affairs than in the daily work & career building. This applies even more to the women. Concerning the love affaires, the mythology has been so extensive that the source checking has been delegated to appendices so as not to interfere with the exposition.

Depending on the available information, the length of the biographies vary widely, from 1 to 100 pages, but the ambition has been to keep them short. They can sometimes be read as a person's life from the cradle to the grave. But some are similar to problem inventories: information is missing or difficult to interpret. Charles XIV John's biography has caused me most problems.

Stockholm, 1 January 2021

/ 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 this is a biographical study. For discussions about the Swedish monarchy as a system 1718-2018 I refer to part 3 (to be translated; eta 2022-12-01).

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