

Appendix : Prince Eugene's women.

Eugene's relationship with women has over the years been discussed from all possible angles. He has been considered asexual (seraphic) - mother bound – homosexual - having sublimated his sexuality in art - refrained from sex to preserve his artistic freedom - having malformed genitalia - having one or more unknown mistresses - visited brothels during his stays abroad - etc. No evidence for any of this is available. Wennerholm¹ has a longish discussion on the subject without reaching any conclusion. Wikipedia makes Eugene into a closet homosexual. No source however.

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His mother made at least one attempt to get Eugene married. In March 1887, he accompanied his brother Carl at a blumenausstellung in Frankfurt, a meeting with parties and meetings for the mediatized Princely House of Germany, where the young people would also get to know each other. Eugene thought the participants - mostly rural nobility - looked rather everyday to fit a prince. He complained to his mother that it was like meeting burghers. His brother Carl found the situation unpleasant. It was so obvious why they were there and none of the girls acted natural - they did not even dare to address them. In the letters to his mother, Eugene took it from the humorous side. In a letter to his old teacher Otto von Frisen, he described it as a pure meat market: "But one thing I hold on to is that I never again will repeat the experience of visiting these various 'exhibitions' to review the 'objects'. I did it once with Carl in the spring and that was enough. I think it so immoral and unnatural that I have become even firmer in my decision than before [to remain single]."² One might wonder how Eugene in practical terms thought that a prince wedding came about. The most natural thing, of course, is to start with a list of suitable candidates, but no such list has been found. His parents do not seem to have put any effort into it.

Later in 1887, his brother Oscar proposed to the lady-in-waiting Ebba Munck, and in 1887-88 his father Carl & Eugen signed an assurance not to do anything similar. The choice of wife was draconian: Either royal or none at all. For Carl, it took him until 1897 when he married his Danish cousin Ingeborg. Eugen opted for lifelong abstinence.

1891 there was a rumour that Eugen would become engaged to his Danish cousin Princess Louise (1875-1906), 1897 another rumour that he would become engaged to the Duchess Olga of Württemberg (1876-1932). Referring to de Gotha, there was no shortage of candidates, but evidently of will. Eugene later stated that his signature was pure blackmail - if he did not sign, he would not have been allowed to continue his art studies. He replaced love with friendship, parties, work and travel to Italy. In a letter to Helena Nyblom in 1892, he explained his position:

I have never said that I would not want to marry a "civilian", that Teddy [Teodor Lundberg] has misunderstood, but I would never like my position to be like Oscars, the ambiguity of his position has always plagued me, neither one nor the other. [I want it the English way.] Either have my birthright - with the exception of succession – or not. I do not need privileges for making my way in the world.³

¹ Wennerholm 1982: ss. 108-113.

² prins Eugen 1942: s. 36; Meister & Sidén red. 2015: s. 97.

³ Zachau 1989: ss.129-130.

This did not mean that Eugene only socialized with men. But he met only with married woman such as Anna Borg, Henriette Coyet, Helena Nyblom, Ulla Celsing, about ten are known. Those closest to him were Ebba Bonde, Amelie Posse and Margit Friis. As a special favour they were allowed to call him “uncle”. Others called him “the Prince”. He seems to have avoided unmarried & younger woman to avoid misunderstanding about his intentions. However, after 1905, when he arranged Waldemarsudde's garden, he installed three women's sculptures representing his sexual (?) fantasies: Per Hasselberg's The frog & The waterlily and Bror Hjort's The sleeping girl.

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After World War II, Karin Pyk and the Countess Ebba Wallenberg-Bonde were the only credible candidates left. The proof for Karin Pyk is that both appear in Richard Berg's painting Summer Evening from 1899 which seems a bit thin because they did not even pose at the same time. Eugene & Ebba Wallenberg-Bonde met during his stays at brother Carl's summer residence Fridhem during the 1920s and they was often seen together after she separated. Ebba is the closest that Sweden has come to a dollar princess, in her case a crown princess. (See next appendix.)

Referenser

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