

Appendix : The women of Oscar I.

Oscar I has a reputation as a womaniser, but it's only been possible to identify four or five women in his life: His mother, her lady-in-waiting Jacquette Löwenhielm (1797-1839; b. Gyldenstolpe), his wife Josephine of Leuchtenberg (1807-1876), Finnish Gustava Björklund (1794-1862) and artist Emilie Höggqvist (1812-1846). There are also two names: Ebba Frölich (1797-1816) and Mathilda d'Orozco (1796-1863). Frölich was daughter of the stable master. d'Orozco was Spanish, married a Swede in 1817 and a valued harp player. Oscar is said to have courted them, but no information is available.¹

A consistent feature of Oscar's upbringing is that his mother and other women were considered irrelevant and/or harmful. Oscar was raised not only without playmates but also without girlfriends. At balls and other events, however, he met Queen Charlotte and her ladies-in-waiting, which has since given rise to a number of rumours. The Queen initially served as his nanny, later as his "entertainer". Oscars governor opposed the activities. For example, there is an episode from 1815 when he interrupted Oscar's "beginner's course in courting the ladies" viz. talking to Charles XIII's former mistress, now his father's mistress, Mariana Koskull (1785-1841) with the line: "For God's sake, my lady, spare the third generation, you are corrupting everyone at once."² Oscar also had to promise to be in bed by 10, even if it meant leaving an ongoing ball.

In 1818, both Charles XIII and Queen Charlotte died, and the court life cancelled during the mourning, then it picked up again. During Oscar's bachelor years 1819-1823, there were many balls, soirees, dinners, concerts, excursions and French amateur theatre. The autumn of 1820 is considered to have been the peak. In 1818, Oscar served for three weeks as director of the royal theatres. In 1819-1823 he produced plays and performed in them. In 1821, he allegedly had a relationship with his co-star Jacquette Löwenhielm, but this has not been verified.

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Gustava Björklund (1794-1862)

According to Per Erik Wahlund, Charles John, c. 1823-1824, was in a relationship with Finnish Gustava Björklund (1794-1862), but it seems more likely that the relationship was with Prince Oscar during the time that he waited for his young bride to become legal. What speaks against Charles John is Gustava's deficient French & that it seems unlikely that Jean immediately after Desirée arriving in Sweden would have taken a new mistress. Gustava's descendants, however, are convinced of the contrary.

Gustava later made herself a name as a restaurateur and cookery writer, but during this time worked as a maid (?) at the Djurgården restaurant "the French inn". Gustava had a son out of wedlock Gustaf "Reinhold" (1817-?) and now gave birth to yet two daughters: Lovisa Elisabeth "Carlsson" (1824-?; unmarried, died young) & Henrietta (Andrietta?) Gustava "Carlsson" (1825-1886; 1848 m. Törneman). There are documents that Gustava later received an allowance from the court, that the daughters received private education from the court-

¹ Söderhjelm & Palmstierna 1944: s. 71; Sundberg 2004: s. 220.

² Drottning H E Charlotta 1942: s. 487.

connected Niklas af Wetterstedt who also accompanied them on a trip to Paris and that Henrietta after her husband Törneman's death received a pension from the court.³

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Emelie Högqvist (1812-1846)

“The wages of sin is death.”
Romans 6:23.

Oscar was c. 1836-1842 in a relationship with the artist Emelie Högqvist. Emelie was born on April 29, 1812, as the daughter of the head waiter Anders Högqvist (?-1835?) and his wife, Anna Beata Hedvall (1781-1835?), both employees of count Carl De Geer af Leusta. Emelie was the middle child of five siblings born 1807-1819. She began her career 1821-1826 as a student at the Opera ballet & Selinder's childrens theatre and 1826-1828 toured in the provinces with Bergengren's Theater Society. From 1828 to 1845, she was at the Royal Theatre. In her early years she mostly played supporting roles. After a study trip in 1834 to Paris, her career improved. She was primarily a comedian. Admired for her beauty, vitality & light natural playing style. However, she was considered too weak a voice and presence for the big dramatic roles. Due to illness, her career ended in 1845, but she played 125 roles of various kinds.

Little is known about Emelie's schooling, but in 1823-1826 (?) she attended a girls' school. She is said to have been significantly better educated than her competitors. For example, she read much fiction - both Swedish and foreign - and later in life held a literary salon, the so-called Thursday receptions.⁴ 1834, 1837 & 1839 she made study trips to Paris, 1839 also to London. She spent most of her time watching shows at the Comédie-Française. Her role model was that of the actress Mars Monvel (1779-1847). Emelie's French seems to have been good enough to follow the plot in the plays & to read entertainment literature. While with her lover Bloomfield c. 1831-1834, she also learned some English. Both of her lovers regarded her as an educational project. There are similarities between Emelie and Desirée: The desire for independence, in a proto-feminist spirit to move about in men's clothes flirting with the girls, the charm, the self-absorption, the desire to leave a legacy and something difficult to define something destructive far inside the soul.

Emelie's private and professional life is documented in several romanticized biographies (Sylvia 1890; Lindwall 1916; Horn (1942). In addition, there are obituaries, memories, letters & short biographies (Björklund 1847; Vannqvist 1847; Crusenstolpe 1852; Odd 1857; SBL 1863; Stålberg 1864: ss. 195-196; Jolin 1867 & 1872; Hellberg 1870: Part 2, ss. 209-210; Blanche 1873; Hedberg 1884: ss. 74-92; SBHL 1906; Meijer-Granqvist 1912; Key 1915: Part 1, ss. 283-306; Swahn 1924; Wieselgren 1939; Lindenbaum 1952: ss. 161-177; Wikland, 1971). She is also a supporting character in the later Oscar I, queen Josephine & Bernadotte biographies and there is a Swedish feature film by Gustaf Molander “Emelie Högqvist“ (1939) starring Signe Hasso. Hasso's style of acting is said to resemble hers.

The authors August Blanche (1811-1868), Orvar Odd (Oscar Patric Sturzen-Becker) (1811-1869) & Johan Jolin (1818-1834) belonged to her circle of acquaintances and

³ Wahlund 1991.

⁴ Personne 1913: del 5-8; Wieselgren 1939.

their novelettes & “memories“ should be reasonably reliable. What seems to have most fascinated them was the contrast between Emilie's soulful stage portrayals and her dispassionate approach to the acting profession, her high-ranking lovers & to fate.

Emilie's first known lover was Baron John Arthur Bloomfield (1802-1879), son of the English minister. He came to Sweden in 1826 as legation secretary and stayed until 1833. It is unclear when the relationship started, 1831 has been mentioned, but it ended in 1834 in London. Oscar is believed, after an insistent courtship, to have succeeded him 1836-1842. With Bloomfield, she had a daughter, Tekla (1833-?). With Oscar she had two sons, Hjalmar (1839-1874) & Max (1840-1872). She used to call the boys jokingly the Dukes of Lapland because the county was vacant. Lapland and Jämtland were not duchies. All three children were accommodated with a foster family in Hamburg in 1842. As Emilie was unmarried, she was legally a minor. Her own and her children's guardians were first General Customs Director Carl Henrik Gyllenhaal (1788-1857), then Post Director Carl Johan Hellberg (1815-1877;). Both were Oscar's political agents - the offices were sinecures. Emilie's lax morality was later blamed on her mother:

One has heard the most horrible stories about how this mother - entirely unworthy of the mother name - *sold* her daughter, when only fourteen years old, to an old wealthy libertine, one whose name all the inhabitants of Stockholm quite well remember; how she persuaded - *trudged*, *whipped* her to enter on the way of vice, when the girl of instinct recoiled from the gruesome, made-up old spook.

Not only did Emilie as a child attend the Royal theatre's ballet school, where her older sister and the other girls were a bad influence; But there is also mention of how her mother arranged balls for them, balls that were visited by officers, diplomats, as well as many others among the capital's most elegant bachelors, and where the moors were lax. We are now asking: how would the poor child fare in such circumstances and in such an environment?⁵

This sounds evocative but has been difficult to verify. In any case, Emilie's life consisted mainly of work. Her mother moved in to care for Tekla, but died in 1835. Later she had a governess. There is an “interview“ with Emilie from the winter of 1845/46 about her acting method, evidently based on total empathy:

Forgetting she repeated, as her voice became increasingly vibrant and lively - there we have a spur, which is good for an artist, a spark to light the holy fire. To forget ourselves and to move with all our being into another soul, that is our highest, our most difficult task. - As boring and soul-killing it may be; in the manner of a schoolchild, to learn a character, to imprison your thoughts within another person; in the end this forced labour is good for you, but you have to forget the effort. The more the words and thoughts of the role are lodged in memory, the more we inhabit the character.

What kindness and consolation for a heart, who wants to forget, to identify with someone else who suffers or rejoices on our behalf, a dream figure of course, but who gets life and reality on loan.

Alas, how many times, when I played a young loving girl, a child from the countryside, a heroine of the noblest quality, one of the angels, so rare on earth, so common in the theatres; how I have not wept with joy that at least for a few hours

⁵ Crusenstolpe 1852; Stålberg 1864: s. 195; Lindwall 1916: s. 14.

every evening in the limelight I may be such an other-earthly creature. I have sought to take it with me, to sort of live a double life; and I have often continued my role in the dreams, basking in the memory of attaining the heights.⁶

Emilie was among the highest paid actresses but also received money & gifts from her lovers: Until 1831 she lived at home. In the spring of 1832, Bloomfield rented her an apartment at Salviigränd 1 in the corner of Västerånggatan near the castle, the so-called Masreliez rooms. In 1836, Oscar rented her a parade floor on the corner of Freds- & Malmstorgsgatan, near Gustav Adolf Square, where she lived until her death. How much money she received is not known, but the floor was preciously furnished. In 1842/43, she travelled to Germany & Italy. She held a salon, albeit in the smaller format, assisted her friends and relatives with handouts and supported three children of her own, two nieces, a governess & two maids. However, the estate of silver, dresses, coats, jewellery, fabrics, etc. did not cover the accumulated debts. The number of dresses, almost 400, was then called luxury cravings but would probably today be described as a psychiatric diagnosis - much was not enough. She is said to have died of pulmonary tuberculosis, cancer, or gallstone (?) but the correct diagnosis appears to have been syphilis. August Blanche described her during a visit in February 1846:

My first visit after arriving in Stockholm was, of course, my benefactor in the Palin house. She was sick, tormented by the suffering that would soon end this short, but brilliant life. Her face had slimmed since I last saw her and the shadows around her eyes were deeper, but they shone, that unfathomable sky-blue gloss, that nothing seemed to extinguish, and she gave me her hand.

- It is not always I am able to give someone my hand, says Emelie Höggqvist. Sometimes my arms are paralysed, and it is hard not being able to reach your toes. However, thorns are the prize of the roses you once received.⁷

And Jolin just before her leaving for Italy:

Emilie Höggqvist had been hopelessly ill. She received visits from her friends before she made her trip abroad. ... See my fingers [she said], if they may still so be called, no ring, even a child's ring, can stay put. Ten knitting needles, dear [you]. And she played joked around with her half paralysed hands, which were now almost transparent.⁸

I.e. neurological symptoms similar to Oscars and which in him was diagnosed as “paralysie générale“ (brain syphilis). But since Emilie preferred to spend her last time abroad – she died in Turin on December 18, 1846, where she is buried – we will never know for sure. We don't know anything about her relationship with Oscar either. Emilie was later referred to as “maîtresse en titre“ or “courtesan“, but mistress is probably a better name. In her lifetime, as I have said, she cared for the children herself, then Oscar paid an allowance until their day of authority & a foundation plate for adult life. The couple's two sons died abroad: Hjalmar in London 35 years old, Max in China 32 years old. Tekla married a German.

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⁶ Jolin 1867: s. 45; Jolin 1872: s. 16.

⁷ Blanche 1873. I: Blanche 1890: ss. 273-274.

⁸ Jolin 1872: s. 31.

Jacquette Gyldenstolpe (1797-1839; 1817 m. Löwenhielm; 1838 m. Troil)

Oscar I's relationship with Jacquette Gyldenstolpe has not been verifiable. "The evidence" is "guilt by association" which over time has gained wings. However, the rumour did not become public until her ex-husband Löwenhielm's obituary.⁹ As Nobel Prize winner John Wheeler has said about people's propensity to believe in something just because others do: "Surely [they say] where there's smoke there's fire? No [I say], where there's so much smoke there's smoke."

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Jacquette was born on July 3, 1797, in Stockholm as the daughter of Major General Count Nils Gyldenstolpe (1768-1844) and his wife Countess Aurora De Geer (1779-1834). She served as lady-in-waiting to Queen Charlotte and later to Queen Desirée. In 1817 she married Count Carl Gustaf Löwenhielm (1790-1858), lieutenant colonel at Charles John's staff. In 1838, she married the diplomat Uno von Troil, moved with him to Constantinople, but died the following year in cholera. Jacquette & von Troil had two children: Emilie Jacquette (1832-1913) & Charlotte Emelina (1833-1911).

In 1927, Löwenhielm's recollections were published. The marriage was concluded on September 18, 1817. His father seems not to have appreciated the daughter-in-law, was absent from the wedding and afterwards caused the couple a lot of financial difficulties. Instead, Oscar handed him the bride. The couple spent the winter at Long's mansion in Värmland, which Löwenhielm leased from his father. There they found that they were not a good match. Perhaps everything had moved too fast.

She had some work with the household and with the park, she occasionally amused herself with music and drawing, but I never managed to interest her in serious literature and yet she was in sore need of education and culture. After some time I was almost convinced to remain a country gentleman for life and devoted my soul to farming, hunting and the like.

I enjoyed country life and had an premonition that court and city would bring me misfortune. I feared the stay there all the more, as my affairs were rather tangled, and my young wife had a definite taste, inherited by her mother, for wastefulness, precious toilets and all manner of trinkets. Only staying away from the capital could have cured her. Her uncommunicative and suspicious character developed day by day, and anything that was contrary to her taste and whim angered her to an often terrifying degree. The mildest objection put her in a bad temper, which she unashamed and unjustly let me suffer.¹⁰

The military terms of employment included a six-month leave in the event of marriage. On March 18, 1818, Löwenhielm returned to service. Queen Charlotte was dead, and Jacquette lacked anything to do. Charles John did not appreciate her, but let her suffer his bad temper. Löwenhielm installed her at Finspong's castle at her mother's to rescue her from the situation. Not so good a choice, It turned out. In the autumn of 1820, she visited Rosersberg and Gripsholm Castle where she participated in the court's masquerades & French amateur

⁹ Svea folkkalender 1859: s. 142.

¹⁰ Löwenhielm 1927: del 1, ss. 148-149.

theatre: "The success of my wife in this doing was less for her talent than for her glorious beauty and elegance, and it contributed even more to our rift."¹¹

The only additional information is that the relationship between Löwenhielm and Oscar at this time was bad - Oscar treated him with "cold and indifference"¹² - but that in 1821 he was appointed his chamberlain. During the summer, Oscar visited Finspong castle and socialized with Jacquette and her parents. In March 1822, Löwenhielm received a posting as a diplomat in Vienna & to act as an Oscar's agent in the negotiations for the terms of his proposal to Josephine of Leuchtenberg. This seems rather strange if Oscar at the same time cuckolded him. Several foreign service postings followed. Jacquette stayed at home. When, during a visit in 1827, Löwenhielm found her apartment so preciously furnished that one could suspect her of receiving gifts from a lover, he began divorce proceedings.

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Oscar & Jacquette's relationship becomes clearer if the information is presented chronologically: In 1821, Jacquette and Oscar played together in "La Revanche" (13 and 20 February) and "Les folies amoureuse" (27 February). During the summer he visited her and the family. On October 2, he wrote his adjutant about her continued participation:

"I know you are not keen on it, and I promised not to try to persuade you, but I think that your stay at Rosersberg will coincide with their stay and they tend to be quite fun as you know. The repertoire is now being set up, and I will first send the roles that both you and the Countess ought commit to playing. There is one Costume pièce, and as I have already decided that I will include everybody, I need to know if the Countess approves of the drawing I have made of her dress."

Three days later, he sends Jacquettes three roles: Euphemie in "Gaston and Bayard", Angelique in "Les fausses infidélités" and Sophie in "Le Philosophe sans le savoir". At the same time, he sends her "two projects to Costumer for Tragedieu". "Ask the Countess to decide which one she likes the most," he writes, "as well as the fabric's and the number she needs. The white front in the dress should of course be Atlas... I will then buy everything so that the Countess only has the trouble to sew the dress. The stripes I would like to know of what breadth they should be." Oscar had decided to pay everything himself. "As the costumes required in this piece are quite expensive, I have decided to reuse them. Also write if it is worth sending these fabrics to Finspång. I assume you will be here before that. Your role is also included."¹³

From the rehearsals at Rosersberg Castle on 21 November 1821:

The crown prince, who is said to address countess L. by her first name and the same in reverse, has had an argument with her. He handed over a role to her, which she did not want, and in order to put an end to his repeated persuasions, she she tore it in pieces and threw it on the fire. [It seems to have had something to do with the content. The play was rehearsed but Charles John forbade it to be shown.]¹⁴

From a masquerade ball with the Spanish Minister on January 3, 1822:

¹¹ Löwenhielm 1927: del 1, ss. 158-159.

¹² Löwenhielm 1927: del 1, s. 162.

¹³ Söderhjelm & Palmstierna 1944: ss. 85-86. [Brev i Långarkivet.]

¹⁴ Wachtmeister 1915: s. 141.

He [the Crown Prince] had lately been very interested in Countess Jacquette Löwenhielm, born Gyldenstolpe, but at this masquerade ball he seemed to prefer her cousin Mina Gyldenstolpe.

...

During the ball, Charlotte Wrangel entered the ladies' dressing room to remove her mask; She stood there alone, when a woman barges in and throws herself on a chair spasmodically crying. Charlotte approaches, invites water, helps her to remove the mask, and sees that it is Countess Jacquette Löwenhielm, whom she has spoken to only a few times before, but now complains with the utmost vehemence against him (the Crown Prince) who forgets her for "that little flirt", weeps and complains. Charlotte was petrified. She had not expected this shameless trust of a person she hardly knew.¹⁵

From a supper at Gustaf Adolf Fredrik De la Gardie (1800-1833), son of the general etc. Jacob De la Gardie, January 30, 1822:

The other day I was at one of the gatherings, which De La Gardie junior annually gives, and where the prince also was. I have never seen anything as deplorable as this gathering. All the ladies sat by themselves round a table in a corner, separated from the rest by the prince and countess L. [very animated.] Out of respect, all the young gentlemen kept themselves to a corner of their own, whispering among themselves.¹⁶

And finally a "gazette" of Hampus Mörner from February 1822 that circulated in transcript:

*Beautiful as a spring day, but cold as ice
was Count Löwenhielm's Countess.*¹⁷

The rest of 1822 Oscar spent courting. No further information is available. The relationship, if it ever existed, was over. Jacquette's conspicuous lack of reverence has been considered to speak in favour of a relationship, but she was actually of a noble family and they met daily.

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The court official Johan Nauckhoff has told of a continuation. In 1824, Jacquette was appointed one of Desirée's maids of honour and in that position she attended dinners. She was placed opposite to Prince Oscar. According to Nauckhoff, she then flirted with him in the most appalling way. After such a dinner Charles John called on Nauckhoff and asked him to inform the countess that she could expect a visit:

One hour later we were on our way to Countess Löwenhjelm, who lived two stairs up in the room next to the Hall of State, with a view of the outside yard, I first, then H:M: on his own, with a cloak. After arriving at the countess' inner room, I took the cloak – there was no maid - and let him in; And then I waited. About three quarters later H:M: opened the door, received his cloak, and returned to his quarters. He had a strange smile and seemed agitated. Obviously something had happened but he didn't

¹⁵ Silfverstolpe 1908: del 3.

¹⁶ Wachtmeister 1915: s. 160.

¹⁷ Personne 1913: del 4, s. 83. [Versifierad tidning av greve Hampus Mörner, ca. 1822-02.]

tell: "Vous n'avez pas besoin de parler du notre cours - je ne veux pas faire de l'éclat."¹⁸

How this should be interpreted is unclear. Maybe Nauckhoff considered Jacquette a slut & a hiking trophy. There are more indications of this. My own interpretation, however, is that she, like several other of Desirée's maids of honour, Jacquette angered Charles John through her lack of subservience.

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Oscara Meijergeer (1815-1884)

Oscar I's unverified relationship with Jacquette Gyldenstolpe allegedly resulted in a child. This child would be the foundling Oscara who in 1815 (?) was left outside countess Louise Meyerfelts (1745-1817; b. Sparre) door at Drottninggatan in Stockholm. The first years of her life is known only by the information she herself has passed on and which is recorded in her obituary through a friend.¹⁹ "When found she was wrapped in a lace-fitted linen. There was also a small plate engraved with 'Oscara'." There are several dates of birth:²⁰ Since Meyerfelt died on September 16, 1817, Oscara must have been born before then, but there are alternative birthdates 1815-1829.

The obituary continues: "The said countess took her into the house and cared for her. After a few years, however, she was adopted by the Excellency [Gustaf] W[etterstedt] at Finspong, where she spent her youth." Wetterstedt was married to lady-in-waiting Aurora De Geer, who had a daughter in the 1st marriage Jacquette Gyldenstolpe who lived at home from 1819 to 1822 (?) and seems to have cared for her. Oscara lived with the Count and Countess until September 19, 1833, when she married Prussian artillery lieutenant Gustaf Adolf Hilder. As a married woman, Oscara lived in Norrköping and later in Silesia, Germany. She had two children, Oscara Jacquette Aurore (1834-1842) and Gustaf Oscar (1836-1888). Over time, Oscara seems to have felt increasingly convinced of her noble lineage, and renamed herself Meyer Geer (=Meyerfelt + De Geer), later abbreviated to Meyerger. She may also have suggested being of royal lineage, but there is no information.

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The rumour of Oscar's royal ancestry seems to have evolved in parallel with the rumour that Oscar & Jacquette had a relationship. The first hint is in Löwenhielm's obituary: "It was even whispered that Count Löwenhjelm closed his eyes to what was evident to the world, and that this was precisely the reason for throughout life being favoured at court."²¹ But it is not stated unequivocally until 1900: "After 11 years of marriage [1828], the Countess gave birth to a most delightful little girl, who in baptism was given the name Oscara."²² Which the author claims is the reason for the divorce the following year.

Oscara's lineage is then considered given, although no records - no church books, no family traditions - are recorded as evidence. Carl Fredrik Lindahl "Lazarus" (1900: s. 350), Claes

¹⁸ Nauckhoff 1844: s. 115.

¹⁹ Norrköpings Tidningar, 1884-05-01, s. 2; Aftonbladet, 1884-05-02, s. 3; Dagens Nyheter, 1884-05-03, s. 2; Kalmar [Tidning], 1884-05-10, s. 5.

²⁰ Ingrid & Olof Bergström. Anbytarforum, 2008-07-06. <<http://aforum.genealogi.se>> (2016-01-01).

²¹ Svea folkkalender 1859: s. 142.

²² Lazarus 1900: s. 350.

Lagergren (1922: 95), Vivi Horn (1928: Page 348) and later authors, up to 2016 about twenty of them, refer to rumours or to each other. The origin of the rumours appears to be the newspapers Hemmet : läsning för ung och gammal, Vårt land & Fäderneslandet that at this time published serials on the subject authored by Paul Meijer-Granqvist (1867-1940) under various pseudonyms:

Carl XV's last love. Home in 1898: n:r 1-44. (Also published as book 1918.)
The truth about Helga de la Brache. Home 1914: 1-37, 57-58.
When Carl Gustaf was young. Our country 1908:117-254.
King Charles's last love. The Fatherland 1910.
Royal Love. Fäderneslandet 1916-17.
Bernadotte and Women: Carl Johan and Marianne Koskull. The Fatherland 1924.
Oscar I and Countess Löwenhielm. Fäderneslandet 1924-25.
King Oscar and Emilie Höggqvist. Fäderneslandet 1926-27.
Prince Gustaf and Josephine Hamilton. Fatherland 1927.²³

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Helga de la Brache (1817-1885)

The hints of Oscara's royal background seem to have inspired the teachers Helga de la Brache (1817-1885; b. Aurora Magnusson) and her friend Henrika Aspegren (1819-1871) to a similar deception: Helga was supposed to be the daughter of Gustav IV Adolf. This was first a way of ripping off the gullible, but in 1860-1870, with help from the surroundings, resulted in a state pension. Helga also tried to extort money from the dowager queen Josephine by referring to documents in her possession that she did not want to show. This aroused suspicion. The discovery of the fraud caused a huge stir and the debate never seemed to end. The fraud + trials + debate lasted from 1860 to 1920. Everything is well documented. I refer to Hallendorff (1924), Linder (1924) & Aspegren (1979). However, as the affair is only tangentially about the Bernadottes. In brief.

According to the deception, after their divorce in 1812, King Gustaf IV and Queen Frederika remarried in 1816. Helga was born in 1817, -19 or -20, but was then adopted. In 1842, she was supposed to have handed over the papers of her pedigree to Prince Oscar.

A later description was that Helga was a changeling. This version was based on the fact that the mother at her confirmation had told her that her own child had died at birth but that through the care of Countess Aurora af Wetterstedt (whom the mother claimed to know after being employed) it was replaced by the illegitimate child between Count Carl de Geer (alternatively Prince Oscar) & Aurora von Stedingk (one of Oscar's co-stars at the court theatre), who thus was she, Helga. Queen Josephine seems to have suspected something in that way, given her some money, but then had second thoughts.

The correct version was that Aurora Magnusson was the daughter of the customs official Anders Magnusson (1792-1826) and maid Charlotta Palmgren (1783-1853). The friends, possibly a lesbian love affair, got by through private lessons and ripping off relatives & acquaintances.

²³ Oscarsson 1985: s. 325.

Helga brought her pension to court. After her death, the process was taken over by her lawyer who ran it until 1910 - now with the implication that Alexander I, as guardian of King Gustaf IV's children, had left a fund to Charles John for their maintenance, which he had confiscated on his own behalf. Articles on the subject continued to be published until 1920 and then sporadically. The journalist and politician Per Albin Hansson, later prime minister, belonged to those who believed in the story.

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