Scripts of Kingship: Essays on Bernadotte and Dynastic Formation in the Age of Revolution

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Celebrating Monarchy
Panegyrics as a Means of Representation and Communication

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In the summer of 1810, the four estates of the riksdag gathered in Örebro in order to elect an heir to the Swedish throne. The election had been preceded by a number of diplomatic changes of direction, but when it was eventually held on 21 August, Jean Baptiste Bernadotte was elected by general consensus. In the evening of the same day, his appointment was celebrated at “the club of the honourable Peasant Estate” with a song written for the occasion:

BERNADOTTE!
O! Swerges hopp och Hieltars ära!
Tag den lott
Wärt hjerta will Dig bära.
Swea röst
I dag Dig allment kallar.
Glädjen skallar – känslan swallar
Uti wåra bröst.

Blif wår Far:
Du trogna Barn bland oss skall finna.
Glädjens dar
För Manhem låt upprinna.
Tukta swek.
Låt ingen styfbarn vara:
Lik wår CARL i fred och fara
samt i bardalek.1

1 “BERNADOTTE! Oh, Sweden’s hope and heroes’ honour. Accept the vocation we offer you with our hearts. Unanimously, Swea’s voice summons you today. The joy resounds, the feelings abound, in our bosom. Become our father! You will find faithful children among us. Let the day of happiness break for Manhem. Punish perfidy, let no one be a stepchild. Like our King Charles in peace and danger, as well as in warfare.” “Svenska Enighetens glada stämma, wid Riksdagen i Örebro, höjd på Hedewärda Bondeståndets Klubb, d. 21 Aug. 1810”, Örebro Tidning 45, August 23 1810.
Two days later, the song was printed in the local newspaper, where the author, Hans Olof Sundelius, a former clergyman, characterised it as “the joyful voice of Swedish unanimity”. Even though the song had primarily been composed for members of the fourth estate, the author claimed it expressed a nationwide feeling of optimism.

What makes Sundelius’s song interesting is not so much its lyrical idiom – which obviously was rather simple – but the fact that it was sung at the peasantry’s club. It is also worth noticing that it was composed as an imitation of Carl Michael Bellman’s widely known *Gustafs skål* (‘A toast to King Gustav’), a song intimately associated with Gustav III’s *coup d’état* and abolition of the parliamentary constitution in 1772. Bellman’s song achieved great popularity and, in the following decades, it was widely sung as a tribute to the Swedish king.

Yet, in this specific setting the song cannot have been entirely uncontroversial. After Sweden’s military defeat by Russia in 1808–09, the Gustavian autocracy had lost most of its legitimacy, and among the aristocratic officers who had taken the initiative to depose Gustav IV Adolf, allusions to Gustav III’s coup must have been most unwanted. On the other hand, there is reason to suppose that many members of the fourth estate wished for a strong royal power as a counterbalance to the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. When Sundelius imitated Bellman’s song, it was, therefore, probably seen as an expression of the peasants’ wish for a politically active monarch. Moreover, Bernadotte was portrayed in the song as part of a long and influential tradition of monarchical patriarchalism that emphasized the king’s duty to protect his subjects as well as the people’s subordination to royal authority.

Sundelius’s song was the first one to address Bernadotte as heir to the Swedish throne. It was followed by numerous poems and orations, and in

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2 For further details about Sundelius’s biography see *Linköpings stifts herdamme* (Linköping 1943), pp. 246–249. At the time Sundelius wrote the song, he was waiting for the king’s decision about his appeal against the resolution of the cathedral chapter in Linköping to dismiss him from priesthood. The members of the fourth estate supported his appeal, and in a letter to Charles XIII, a number of representatives of the estate applied that his appeal should be granted. Moreover, in the course of the *riksdag* Sundelius composed a poem addressed to Charles XIII, published in *Örebro Tidning* 32, July 26 1810.


4 A preliminary bibliography of the literary celebrations during Bernadotte’s time as crown
this essay it is my intention to discuss the importance of demonstrative poetry in creating the image of the Bernadotte dynasty. Traditionally, demonstrative or "epideictic" poetry has been identified with pre-modern society, dominated by a "representational" form of publicity according to Jürgen Habermas's *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (1. ed. 1962). In his study, Habermas stated that the public sphere of the early modern period did not function as a forum for political communication but as a showground for the self-display of the elite, the status of which it aimed to confirm. As a result, celebratory writings similar to Sundelius's song have usually been interpreted as a means of political propaganda, directed from above and executed by writers and publicists loyal to the authorities.

In my opinion, this way of understanding panegyrics is too simplistic, and by examining some pieces of poetry addressed to Bernadotte and his family, I would like to modify the traditional view of panegyrics as ideological indoctrination or simple flattery. As I will suggest, the large number of panegyrical poems from the 19th century cannot be interpreted merely as a form of ritual or as part of the royal propaganda machinery. Rather, we should recognize the panegyrical genre as a channel for an exchange of legitimacy that provided not only a medium for the authorities to communicate suitable messages to the people, but also offered citizens a possibility to articulate political opinions. I will, therefore, argue in this essay that the genre should be conceived of as an important medium for political communication.

Before doing this, however, some words need to be said about the nature of panegyrics in classical rhetoric and in the literary practice of the early modern period.

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The Epideictic Genre

From ancient times, epideictic rhetoric has formed a constituent part of political life. At present, the term panegyric has a derogatory connotation, usually understood as flattery or outright adulation. According to classical rhetoric, however, the aim of the genre was to demonstrate the honourable or shameful in specific situations, and in his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle pointed out *genos epideiktikon* as a particular genre of persuasive discourse. The genre was not so much concerned with the process of political or judicial decision-making but with displaying accepted values by offering praise and blame: rather than persuading the audience to carry out a certain line of action, it aimed to inspire the listeners and clarify the significance of the present moment. Aristotle, therefore, labelled it "epideictic" or "demonstrative", a definition echoed in the Latin term *genus demonstrativum*.7

Originally, epideictic rhetoric had been performed orally, and in ancient Greece the genre was closely connected with *panegyres*, the public festivals of city-states. But the *genus demonstrativum* was also cultivated as a literary genre, particularly in late antiquity. Panegyrical speeches and texts were produced by many orators and writers, and together with the Athenian sophist Isocrates, whose *Panegyricus* (380 B.C.) was widely admired, the Roman author Pliny the Younger was held in high esteem due to a laudatory speech in honour of the Emperor Trajan (100 A.D.). In Imperial Rome, demonstrative rhetoric was a central part of the political culture and strongly connected with the rule of the emperors.8

The humanist revival of classical rhetoric during the Renaissance meant a revival of epideictic literature. Eloquence was an ideal of the period, and the classical forms of the Roman *genus demonstrativum* were taught systematically in schools. Pupils were also taught to compose occasional poetry, which played an important part in the social life of the early modern period.9

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9 See further O. B. Hardison, *The Enduring Monument. A Study of the Idea of Praise in Ren-
Sweden, the number of panegyrics addressed to kings and other royal personages increased throughout the 17th century, reaching a peak in the last two decades of the century, when a large amount of celebratory texts was dedicated to Charles XI and Charles XII. Also in the course of the following century, a great number of panegyrical poems and orations were produced. This was particularly the case in the early 1770s, when Gustav III’s coup d’état was accompanied by a great number of celebrations, portraying the king as Apollo, bringing light and order back to the North. In the later years of the Gustavian autocracy, enthusiasm for panegyrics declined. Yet, the identification of the king with Apollo remained, and in a famous poem written on account of the dedication of Johan Tobias Sergel’s statue of Gustav III in Stockholm in 1808, it was employed with fervour by Johan Olof Wallin, an ambitious clergyman who ended his career as Archbishop of Uppsala. By the publication of his poem, Wallin immediately achieved the position of master of the heroic idiom of Gustavian panegyrics.10

In the following decades the view of epideictic oratory and literature changed deeply. The traditional notion of panegyrics had been called into question frequently during the previous century, but in the first decades of the 19th century it was almost totally rejected. Both the romanticists and the liberals completely despised it, although for different reasons. The romanticists, on one hand, discarded all kinds of political panegyric as a matter of principle since, according to them, the genre lacked aesthetic value and was unworthy to be called poetry. The liberals, on the other hand, made no objections to political literature but questioned the panegyrical idiom for being too devout. Rather, they preferred to cultivate a conversational and “realistic” literary discourse to expose and discuss social and political questions.11

Thus, the notion of epideictic literature was continually contested during the first part of the 19th century. Still, it is obvious that it offered an impor-

tant medium of communication. Even though the genre had lost a good part of its literary reputation, the production of panegyrics continued, and throughout the reign of Charles xiv the genre was regularly used to proclaim political values. The importance attached to it is illustrated by the fact that Henrik Ibsen, a well-known pioneer of modern drama, began his career by writing celebratory poems addressed to the Bernadotte dynasty. By nature, the panegyrical genre was large and multifarious, and in this essay I will concentrate on three types of political panegyric: first, poems written by royal commission for State occasions in Stockholm, then poems written by local authors on account of the royal family’s journeys to various parts of Sweden, and finally a kind of short poetic toasts sung or recited at festivities arranged by the many voluntary associations of the time.

Panegyrics by Royal Commission

A central part of the panegyrical genre is represented by poems written for State occasions in Stockholm. In most cases, coronations and royal weddings or funerals included a number of solemn cantatas that explained the meaning of the ritual to the spectators. As part of the ceremonies, the cantatas served as officially authorised panegyrics, and normally the task of composing the librettos was conferred to poets close to the Swedish Academy or the Royal Theatre. Originally, the librettos were composed for the ceremonies at hand, but as they were regularly printed in the newspapers afterwards, they were made available to a wider reading public.

The libretto composed by Bernhard von Beskow for the delayed coronation of Queen Desideria in 1829, is a good example of this. Appointed as private secretary to Crown Prince Oskar in 1825, von Beskow became a member of the nobility two years later, when he also took a seat as one of the eighteen members of the Swedish Academy. Accordingly, he was well known to the king and the royal family when he composed the libretto.


13 Ivar Simonson, "von Beskow, Bernhard", Svenskt biografiskt lexikon 4 (Stockholm 1924), pp. 65–83. The importance attached to the libretto is illustrated by the fact that H. A. Kullberg’s libretto for Charles xiv’s coronation in 1818 had been unfavourably reviewed by several crit-
It appears that von Beskow fulfilled his task to perfection. Depicting Sweden-Norway as a peaceful, pastoral landscape, he combined elements taken from classical mythology with elements from the old Norse tradition. In the previous centuries, the Roman myth of the Golden Age had often been employed for royal coronations, that were said to inaugurate a new era of peace and prosperity.\textsuperscript{14} In accordance with this tradition, von Beskow tried to illustrate the flourishing, peaceful period that had begun with Bernadotte's accession to the throne:

Fredlig sol på bergen ler.
Sänkta svärd och lösta pansar,
Gyllne ax bland eklöfs-kransar,
Blida taflan Norden ger.
Blommor viras utaf Friden
Kring den lia, hvarmed Tiden
Bärjar, men ej härjar mer.

Lugnets stjernbild, ärans glans,
Stråle samfält öfver Norden!
Verld-skalf vandra genom jorden,
Nordbon ser dem trygg, ty hans
Fjellborg skola de ej skaka.
Sköldmön ses, som fordorn, vaka
På dess spets med lyftad lans.\textsuperscript{15}

In keeping with the nationalist idiom of the period, the classical elements were amalgamated with motifs from the old Norse tradition, and written in


\textsuperscript{15} "The sun smiles peacefully over the mountains. Lowered swords and unbuttoned armour, golden ears among garlands of oak leaves, paint a quiet picture of the North. The peace winds flowers around the scythe, by which father Time harvests, but never hurts anymore. The constellation of peace, the brilliance of honour, may shine together over the North. The world may tremble by earthquakes, but the Norseman will view them calmly, since they cannot budge his fortress in the mountains. Like in former times, a \textit{valkyria} is seen watching from the top of the mountain with her spear raised." Bernhard von Beskow, \textit{Ord till musiken i kyrkan vid Hennes Majestät Drottning Eugenia Bernhardina Desiderias krönung. Den 21 augusti 1829} (Stockholm 1829).
a lucid, visual style, the libretto represented snowy mountains, clear sunlight, bold Norsemen and a legendary woman warrior (sköldmö), watching the people from the top of a mountain. Thus, the libretto reflects the interest at that time in the national topography as well as in Geatish folklore in a way that brings to mind the interest in the Northern wilderness that characterises an important part of the landscape paintings of the 19th century.  

However, the message of von Beskow’s libretto was not entirely unequivocal: behind the affirmative language, the libretto echoed a feeling of danger, that draws attention to the fact that the coronation took place in a period of social and political upheaval. As pointed out by Torvald Höjer, King Charles and his men observed the chain of events on the continent very cautiously, and when von Beskow maintained that the “earthquakes” shaking other parts of Europe would never reach the sun-lit idyll of Sweden-Norway, there is reason to interpret the libretto as a poetic incantation against the threat of political unrest on the European continent.

Another cantata written by royal commission is the series of couplets composed by Carl Wilhelm Böttiger for the so-called National-Divertissement celebrating Bernadotte’s silver jubilee as Swedish monarch at the Royal Theatre in 1843. Böttiger was not quite as closely associated with the court as von Beskow, but as Professor of Aesthetics at Uppsala University and having composed a number of patriotic poems, he was more or less a poet laureate. Thus, four years later in 1847, Böttiger could take a seat as a member of the Swedish Academy.

As with von Beskows poem, the National-Divertissement emphasised the

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19 Cf. Sverker Ek, “Böttiger, Lars Fredrik Carl Wilhelm”, *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* 7 (Stockholm 1927), pp. 171–180, and Paul Fröberg, *Skalden Böttiger* (Stockholm 1943), pp. 213–242. It is worth mentioning that Böttiger also composed a panegyrical prologue to Gaspare Spontini’s opera *Ferdinand Cortez*, which was performed as part of the festivities in 1843, as well as *En majdag i Wärend*, a popular vaudeville celebrating Charles XIV. For further details, see Fröberg (1943), pp. 229–237.
prevailing interest in the national landscape and folklore. But whereas von Beskow had concentrated on the Northern landscape, Böttiger focused on the people, and in his couplets a number of typical Swedish characters including a peasant from Scania (En skånsk bonde), a man from Dalecarlia (En Morakarl) and a peasant girl from the middle of Sweden (En Vingåkersflicka), paid homage to the king. Rural people from various provinces of Sweden had figured in Gustavian panegyrics, but most probably Böttiger had borrowed the characters from Christian Didrik Forssell’s Ett år i Sverige (1827–32), an illustrated book containing pictures of Swedish peasant costumes and ways of life.20

In the political discourse of early 19th century Sweden, the self-governing, free-holding peasant played an important part as the allegedly true holder of ancient virtues. The literary portrayal of the peasantry was deeply idealised, and in a renowned poem called Odalbonden (‘The Yeoman’) published in 1811, Erik Gustaf Geijer had turned the Geatish yeoman into a personification of freedom and industriousness: being “a man of his own” and “no one’s slave and no one’s master”, he served as a moral prototype for modern citizenship.21 Moreover, he personified truthfulness and loyalty to the king, who was said to trust in the unselfish support of the peasants.

Geijer’s poem set the tone for the literary portrayal of the peasantry for a long time. In his couplet, Böttiger depicted the Scanian peasant as a freedom-loving man of action rather than a man of words, owning his strip of land since long ago:

Svenska bonden ärfde svenska jorden,
Men han ärfde och fädrens sinn'.
Stor i handling, aldrig stor i orden,
Lägger han sig om trohet vinn.
Plogen vänder han med kraft än lika seg,


Herre är han själv uppå sin ärfda teg,
Ej på tinger hans ord är falt,
Men evigt älskar han den kung, han valt.

Se, från Lappland ända ner till Skåne
Samma idoga, raska nit!
Årets växt bestäms av sol och måne,
Och dernäst utaf bondens flit.
Re’n ur smälta drifvor skjuter grödan ung,
Gamle bondemän omkring sin gamle kung
För en framtid då sörja ej,
Men hviska: “ännu lefver gamle Frey”.

Asserting that all peasants “from Lapland all the way to Scania” had inherited the industriousness of their forefathers as well as their freedom-loving mentality, the couplet reiterated a central theme in Geijer’s *Odalbonden*. However, according to Böttiger, the typical quality of the Swedish peasantry was its loyalty to the king. Since the peasant had chosen his King together with his fellow countrymen, he stayed loyal to him. “Forever he loves his elected king”, Böttiger affirmed and in the following stanza he suggested a mysterious connection between the affection felt for the monarch and the welfare of the people by identifying the king with Frey, an old Norse god of fertility alleged to have been the progenitor of some *Geatish* rulers of ancient Sweden. Combined with eagerness and industriousness, true affection for the monarch thus constituted the best protection against failing crops and bad times.

**Panegyrics from the Provinces**

Writing *ex officio*, von Beskow and Böttiger spread the official portrayal of the relationship between the king and the people. Consequently, their librettos can be interpreted as parts of the royal propaganda machinery.

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22 “The Swedish peasant inherited Swedish soil, but he inherited the mind of his forefathers as well. Great in deeds, but not in words, he strives for faithfulness. He turns the plough forcefully as before, he owns his strip of land, he never speaks falsely at the local court, but loves forever his elected King. Behold, from Lapland all the way to Scania, unchangeable industriousness, vigorous zeal! The year’s crop is determined by the sun and the moon as well as by the peasant’s diligence. Shoots grow in thawing snow, old peasants gathered around their elderly king do not worry about the future but whisper: “Old Frey is still alive”. Carl Wilhelm Böttiger, *Samtide skrifter* 3 (Stockholm 1858), pp. 2 f.

19. Scanian peasants from Torna. Several of the personages acting in Carl Wilhelm Böttiger’s National- Divertissement in 1843 seem to have been derived from Christian Didrik Forssell’s and Johan Gustaf Sandberg’s Ett år i Sverige (1827–32), an illustrated book on peasant ways of life, reflecting the vivid interest in Swedish history and folklore within the expanding bourgeoisie. (Uppsala universitetsbibliotek. Photo: Uppsala universitetsbibliotek.)
Most panegyrics addressed to the Bernadotte family were, however, produced spontaneously, composed and printed on an author’s own initiative in order to mobilise the hearts and minds of the local people. This was particularly the case with the many journeys made by the members of the royal family to various parts of Sweden-Norway. The arrival of a royal person in a provincial town was a carefully organised public event, painstakingly coordinated by the local authorities. Normally, the royal visitor and his entourage were met at the town gate by the county governor, the magistrate, the local clergy and the leading citizens, who escorted him into the centre of the town, accompanied by cheering crowds and gun salutes. Having arrived there, the guests were greeted with speeches by the chief magistrate and the vicar, as well as with songs and poems sung by schoolchildren. After having been paid homage by the citizens, the royal visitor went on to a formal banquet, arranged by the magistrate or the leading citizens.

Epideictic rhetoric played an essential part in the festivities and in addition to being addressed with songs and speeches, the visitor was normally honoured with poems written for the occasion. In many cases the poems were printed in advance, so that they could be delivered to the guests and read by the audience, but frequently they were also submitted to the local newspapers that usually contained lengthy reports about the festivities.

On the whole, the contents of the poems were quite repetitive: almost without exception the authors testified to the joy and wonder felt in the presence of the monarch and other members of the royal family. Moreover, the authors repeatedly declared that this joy naturally articulated itself in poetic inspiration. An illustration of this is found in a poem written on account of Charles’s visit in Gothenburg in 1819, in which the citizens were portrayed as children, cheerfully gathering around their beloved father:

Upp, fröjda dig, Götha! din Borg har fått sluta
Den dyrkade Drotten i trovärdig famn,
[...]

A colourful description of the festivities arranged on account of Charles XIV’s visits in Uppsala in 1819 and 1834 is given in Claes Annerstedt, “Om Karl Johans beröring med Upsala universitet och besök i Upsala”, Carl Johans Förbundets handlingar för åren 1915-1918 (Uppsala 1918), pp. 18-44. A contemporary report of Charles’s and Crown Prince Oskar’s arrival in Linköping in 1819 is given in Linköpingsbladet 47, June 12 1819.

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Most probably the celebrations in Gothenburg had been carefully organized, and many citizens probably experienced them merely as a formal procedure. In the poem, however, the ovations were described as a spontaneous outburst of happiness, passionate and impossible to control. As well as paying tribute to the king, the author took the opportunity to confirm the sincerity of the public’s feelings for the monarch.

A similar line of argument was developed in a poem printed in Lund in 1823, in which the tributes paid to the king were described as tokens of the people’s heartfelt love:

Men högt på thronen ses CARL JOHAN vaka.
För hwad HAN gett sitt folk,
ger folket nu sin kärlek fritt tillbaka,
och sången är dess tolk.

Also in this poem, the ovations were described as a “free”, spontaneous expression of the people’s love for the king. By doing so, the author alluded to the king’s motto, “The love of the people is my reward” (Folkets kärlek, min belöning), as if intending to reinforce the truth of the motto.

Another facet of the poems written on account of the royal journeys is the attempt to inscribe the new dynasty into the historical mythology of Sweden. This mythology included a number of historically and politically significant towns and regions. One such region was the province of Dalecarlia, “the native soil of Swedish liberty”, according to Christian Didrik Forssell’s

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35 “Rise, Gothia, rejoice! Your burgh has enjoyed the felicity of clasping the venerated ruler in its arms [...] Receive, oh King, the truthful tributes we offer to you. Pardon that they are delivered in a happy, boisterous way, but the storm of enthusiasm is an offering to you from your grateful nation.” Versar, afsjungne på en Bal uti Götheborg vid HANS KONGL. MAJ:TS Höga närvaro (Göteborg 1820). If not otherwise indicated, the poems referred to henceforth are available in Uppsala universitetsbibliotek, Verser rörande svenska kungliga personer. Karl xiv Johan med gemäl.

36 “Charles is seen watching, sitting on his throne. What he has given his people, the people are now giving back freely with love in the shape of a song.” Skålar, afsjungne den 1 december 1823 (Lund 1823).
Ett år i Sverige, which was intimately connected to the legendary adventures of Gustav Vasa, King of Sweden 1523–1560. It had played an important part in the official panegyrics to Gustav III where the parallels between the two monarchs had been carefully pinpointed, and in the opera GustafWasa (1786), Johan Henric Kellgren and Johann Gottlieb Naumann had depicted Gustav Vasa’s struggle in Dalecarlia against the Danish King Christian as a prototype for Gustav’s struggle for political dominance.

In close accordance with this tradition, Bernadotte was likened to Gustav Vasa almost immediately after his arrival in Sweden. His solemn entry into Stockholm in 1810 was celebrated with a performance of Gustaf Wasa at the Royal Theatre, and when he visited Falun, the provincial city of Dalecarlia, some years later, the parallels between him and Gustav Vasa were put forward explicitly:

Med redlighetens enkla ton
Du hyllas, Konung! i de bygder,
Der fordom banan till en thron
Sig öppnade för Wasas dygder.
På Swerges frälsning stod Hans rätt,
Som Din, att Swerges Krona bära;
Som Hans, skall ock Din hjelte-ätt,
I sekler wärda hennes ära.

In Gustavian panegyrics, authors had usually focused on the ancestral bond between Gustav Vasa and Gustav III. The poems addressed to Charles XIV followed another line of argument, and in the poem both he and Gustav Vasa were described as self-made heroes, having “redeemed” Sweden thanks to their martial virtues. As a consequence, both could claim to be lawful rulers of Sweden.

27 Forsell (1827), p. 3.
29 “With an upright, simple melody you are greeted, Oh King, in the provinces where once upon a time the way to the throne was opened for the virtues of Vasa. His right to carry Sweden’s crown was founded, like yours, on his salvation of Sweden: like his, your heroic dynasty shall preserve the glory of Sweden for centuries.” Sånger till Hans Maj:t Konungen och Hans Kungl. Höghet Kron-Prinsen. Afjungne under Deße Høge Personers wistande i Dalärne år 1819 (Falun 1821).
The proposal of toasts played an important part in the festivities arranged by the aristocracy and bourgeoisie. This caricature by Hjalmar Mörner 1830 shows a dinner scene with two obviously inebriated guests in the foreground. (Lithography. Private owner. Photo: Uppsala universitetsbibliotek.)
But sometimes Dalecarlia was also deployed as a symbol of political constitutionalism. For instance, in the poem quoted above, the author indicated that both Gustav Vasa and Bernadotte had achieved their position as king thanks to the support of the common people. Whereas Gustav Vasa had obtained the Crown thanks to the support of Dalecarlian peasants, Bernadotte had been elected monarch by representatives of the entire people, and at the same time as the author eulogized Charles for having delivered Sweden from the chaos of the Napoleonic Wars, he tactfully reminded the king of the fact that he owed his position to the people. Subsequently, the Bernadotte dynasty could succeed only as far as it based its power on popular support.

In this case, the demand for political influence was implicit. In several poems it was stated more explicitly. For instance, in a song printed in Lund in 1832, the king was openly told that he could gain the citizens’ affection only by being “a man of the people” (Du folkets kärlek vann, och vinner den, men blott som folkets man). The phrase may be taken as an allusion to Bernadotte’s humble extraction as well as to his motto (“The love of the people is my reward”), but it was probably intended primarily as a reminder of the fact that he had been elected king by the riksdag, a circumstance that demonstrated the people’s right to political influence.

Another place of historical significance was the city of Uppsala. The city was assumed to have been a centre for the pre-Christian worship of the Norse gods, and since a number of ancient Swedish kings were supposed to have been buried in the grave mounds in Gamla Uppsala, the city held a prominent place in the historical mythology of Sweden. It was also the seat of the Geatish League, an association of academics and civil servants striving for the revival of old Northern traditions. When King Charles and Crown Prince Oskar visited Uppsala in 1819, their visit was, therefore, portrayed as a revival of Sweden’s ancient past:

Der Odin i högen är lagder
Der wandrar på grafwar en kommande Nord,
Som, färdig till åra och bragder
Och styrd af Din ätt, skall förvåna vår jord. –
Här är endast framtid: här stå icke mer
De forntida murar, de ramlade ner. –

30 Till Hans Maj:t Konungen den 12 september 1832, af den Studerande Ungdomen i Lund (Lund 1832).
Crown Prince Oskar receiving a sword from the Geatish warrior-god Odin at the burial mounds in Gamla Uppsala. Studying at Uppsala University in the early 1820s, Oskar was in contact with members of the Geatish League, a group of academics and civil servants trying to revive old Northern traditions. (Engraving by Hugo Hamilton in K. A. Nicanders Runor (1825). Photo: Uppsala universitetsbibliotek.)
Men forntida, trofasta slägten
Af hoppfulla ynglingar fostras Du ser!\(^{31}\)

The song, that was sung by students standing on parade, focused not so much on the king as on the youthful students who characterised themselves as an “ancient, faithful generation”, willing to fight for “honour”. Even though most of the external evidence of the power of the ancient Goths had fallen into ruins since long ago, the spirit of them was still alive, and if led by the king, the students promised to amaze the entire world with their bravery. As indicated, the song was composed in a belligerent idiom, reminiscent of the military activism typical of many political poems from the 1810s.\(^{32}\)

In the poem from Dalecarlia, the king was compared with Gustav Vasa. In this case, he was associated with Odin, the old Norse warrior-god. The comparison was frequently used and was sanctioned by the king himself: already in 1812, Bernadotte had ordered a painting showing Odin’s arrival in Sweden and meeting with the legendary King Gylfe, thus illustrating his role as defender of the realm as well as his relationship with the elderly Charles XIII.\(^{33}\)

According to the myth, Odin had been followed on the throne by his son Yngve Frey, and that the identification of Bernadotte with Odin could also include Crown Prince Oskar is demonstrated by a picture in K. A. Nicander’s *Runor* (1825) which portrays Crown Prince Oskar receiving a sword from the hands of Odin at the grave mounds in Gamla Uppsala.

### Panegyrics in the Social Life of the Bourgeoisie

A third important type of panegyric is represented by toasts composed in verse for banquets or other festivities within the bourgeoisie. This type of

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\(^{31}\) “Where Odin is buried in a grave mound, a coming North is wandering in the hills. It is ready for bravery and honour, and led by your descendants, it will astonish the world. In our town is only the future: here are no more the ancient walls, they have collapsed. — But you will find an ancient, honest generation of young men brought up in hopefulness.” “Sång till Hans Maj:t Konungen samt H. K. H. Kronprisen vid deras ankomst till Upsala den 17 Oct. 1819. Af de studerande Nationerna”, *Stockholmsposten* October 22 1819.


22. A scene from a society ball in Stockholm, 1820. Some of the attendees are identified in pen writing below the scene, for instance, the Countesses Brahe and Fersen and Colonel Peyron, as well as the ambassadors of Britain, Prussia, and Denmark are mentioned. A printed version exists with the title “La société de Stockholm en caricatures en 1820”. (Water colour. Private owner. Photo: Svenska Porträttarkivet, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.)
poem lacked classical precedents and had been introduced in Sweden during the latter part of the 18th century. However, it emerged fully in the first decades of the following century, when the genre rapidly became popular, and towards the middle of the 19th century, it dominated panegyrics completely. Nonetheless, the genre has been almost totally neglected by scholars.\[34\]

This type of panegyric was closely connected to the social life within the new voluntary associations of the period and reflects the increasing political importance of the bourgeoisie. The voluntary associations had many different aims including religious, cultural and philanthropic, and included members from various social groups. They seem, however, to have recruited members particularly from the middle classes, who regarded the associations as an arena for political participation; although several associations gained sanction through royal patronage the members met there as free citizens rather than as royal subjects.

Within the social life of the associations, banquets, balls and other festivities played an important part. They were often celebrated on royal name days or other occasions related to the royal family, and the festivities regularly included a number of toasts in verse addressed to the royal family. In many cases, the toasts seem to have been printed in advance but they were often published in newspapers as well. Usually the poems were anonymous, but as the readers of the papers were told when and where they had originally been sung, there is reason to assume that they served as a means of advertising the associations to the public.

One feature that makes the toasts interesting, is the way they reflect the bourgeois family ideology of the early 19th century.\[35\] On the continent, the image of royalty had been transformed during the previous century, and as pointed out by Simon Schama and Linda Colley, royal dynasties were usually

\[34\] A notable exception is found in Håkan Möller’s study of Johan Olof Wallin’s poetry, which includes a detailed analysis of a versified toast from 1837 to Christopher Hughes, American ambassador to Sweden. Möller (2000), pp. 327–345. That drinking-songs were used as weapons in the political debates is noticed in Sten Carlsson, Grupper och gestalter. Studier om individ och kollektiv i nordisk och europeisk historia (Stockholm 1964), pp. 143–163, and in Ann Öhrberg, Vittra fruntimmer. Författarroll och retorik hos frihetstidens kvinnliga författare (Hedemora 2001), pp. 209 ff.

\[35\] For a comprehensive description of this ideology, see Jonas Frykman & Orvar Löfgren, Den kultiverade människan (Lund 1979), pp. 74–130.
described as “companionate” families, consisting of husband, wife and children. The royal aura was demystified and domesticated, and instead of being described as holy beings installed by God, royal persons were portrayed as a family or “a domestic parlor group”.

The process of domestication is easily recognised in the toasts dedicated to the Bernadottes. Over and over again, the dynasty was portrayed like a bourgeois family: the toasts normally contained poems addressed to all members of the royal house, not only the king but also the queen, the crown prince, the crown princess as well as their children. Specific qualities were ascribed to each person and, taken together, the toasts articulated a set of social roles revealing a “family romance” parallel to the one described by Lynn Hunt in *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (1992).

According to these roles, men were depicted as protective fathers. The role of father to the people was firmly anchored in the traditional language of royal patriarchalism, and as indicated in the introduction to this essay, Bernadotte was celebrated as the father of all Swedes as early as 1810. Performing this role, he had to maintain justice and paternal care, and in the poem quoted in the introduction, Bernadotte was urged to act like a respected *pater familias*, treating his subjects like children: “Become our father/ You will find faithful children among us.” As children, Swedish subjects should, in turn, reciprocate this paternal care by showing obedience and holding the king in veneration.

Moreover, according to this ideology men should prove themselves useful in public life. In several toasts, the king was, therefore, portrayed as the defender of the realm, safeguarding freedom, peace and prosperity. On this point, the panegyrists frequently alluded to Bernadotte’s martial merits from the Napoleonic Wars, which were said to have granted him the status of hero. How this theme was carried out, is illustrated in a toast to the king proposed on Charles's name day in 1830:


37 Cf. Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley 1992). The “family romance” unfolded in the toasts differs in many respects from the French one described by Hunt, but the way she confronts the gender ideals of the period is applicable also to the gendered language of the versified toasts.
In the form of a prayer, the toast described King Charles as an aged but heroic defender of Sweden, blessed by the Almighty. Thanks to God he had overcome the dangers of the Napoleonic Wars, and in the poem the author described the king as an instrument for God’s protection of Sweden. By virtue of his martial virtues, he had restored peace and affluence and, in the toast, the author asked God to reward the monarch with a “glorious evening” that would guarantee that civic virtues would thrive in Sweden even in the future.

Whereas the king was portrayed as the father of the entire people, the queen and the crown princess were usually depicted as mothers of the royal children. According to the panegyrists, their most important duty was to bear and bring up an heir to the throne, and in a toast from 1830, Queen Desideria was praised as a mother:

Och hvad moders-fröjd du njuter!
Se, Carl Johans Kungastam
Sköna, friska grenar skjuter.
Gud, Er Ått gör lyckosam!39

38 “Oh God Almighty, we beseech you, save our King Charles! Preserve for Svithiod, the days of our beloved King, be forever his protector. His daytime was victorious; may a glorious evening be his reward. May his sceptre maintain all civic virtue among us. Oh God, listen to our prayer.” Skålar, afsjungne vid Carls-dagens firande i Gefle, år 1830 (Gävle 1830).
39 “What a bliss of maternity you enjoy! Behold, beautiful, fresh branches sprouting from the stem of King Charles. May God bless your family!” Skålar, afsjungne vid Carls-dagens firande i Gefle, år 1830 (Gävle 1830).
At this time, however, Desideria, who was born in 1777, was growing old. Most likely the “beautiful, fresh branches” were represented by Crown Prince Oskar’s and Crown Princess Josefinas children. In the toasts, the role of mother was particularly connected to the youthful Josefinas, who was regularly portrayed as a paragon of delicacy, goodness and maternal care, the female virtues characteristic of the bourgeois family ideology. In this respect, Josefinas can be compared with Queen Louise of Prussia (1776–1811) and Princess Charlotte of Great Britain (1796–1817), who both functioned as romanticist symbols of motherhood: as pointed out by Günther de Bruyn and Linda Colley, Queen Louise and Princess Charlotte were almost turned into secular counterparts to the Catholic Virgin Mary.40

The way the fantasy of motherhood was projected upon Josefinas, is illustrated by a toast dating from 1842 that pays tribute to her female and maternal virtues:

Ja! Redan, som Furstinna,
Du ärad är och stor,
Men störst likväl, som qvinna,
Och ärad mest, som Mor.
Se der Ditt väldes styrka,
Din tjuskrafts hemlighet!
Ty heldst will menskan dyrka
Det godas Majestät.41

The principal quality that made Josefinas worthy of praise was, according to the author, not her position as a royal person, but her femininity and her role as a mother. As a woman she represented goodness and care, and in possession of a particular female charisma (tjuskraft), she was able to conquer everyone. Rhetorically the poem reflects the family ideology of the period, according to which the woman bore the task of creating a peaceful and pleasant home for the family.

41 “Even as a princess, you are great and honoured, but you are greatest as being a woman, and most honoured as being a mother. Behold, in this you find the strength of your dominion, the mystery of your charisma. Since most of all, men want to worship the majesty of goodness.” “För H. K. H. Kron-Prinsessan”, Den 28 Januari 1842 i Kalmar (Kalmar 1842).
23. Crown Princess Josefina and Prince Charles. This painting explicitly called attention to her position as the mother of the Bernadotte dynasty. In the background, there is a portrait of her husband Crown Prince Oskar, whereas the young Prince Charles holds in his hand a medallion showing his grandfather Charles xiv. (Oil painting by Fredrik Westin 1826. Nationalmuseum. NM Grh 1695. Photo: Svenska Porträttarkivet, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.)
According to this ideology women were closer to the transcendental sphere and were thought of as mediators of piety and self-sacrificing love. They were usually portrayed in emotional terms, and while fathers should be venerated, mothers should be loved and idolized. This ideal is clearly recognisable in the toasts dedicated to Josefina, who sometimes was described in a sentimental, semi-religious idiom:

En Andakt ljuf vår känsla genomfåfvar,
När för vår tanke, Dyrkade! Din bild,
Af godhet, Dygd så Himmelsk skön, framfåfvar,
Med blicken sänkt till Folket, hög och mild.
[...]
I huslig krets, i Kungaborg, i Rike
Du Nordens Prydnad! Utsprid Sällheten!
Och som i Dygd, i Sällhet ej Din Like
Du äge, som Furstinna, Mor och Wän.42

In this toast, Josefina — herself a Catholic — was portrayed almost like the Madonna, benignly watching over the people from above.43 She was described as a personification of goodness and virtue and, in addition to being glorified as a princess, she was praised as a “mother” and a “friend”. As such, she was said to evoke feelings of devotion (andakt) and happiness (sällhet), a fact that illustrates the poem’s place in the family ideology of the time. By equating the family, the dynasty and the nation, the poem projected the bourgeois family ideal onto the nation.

As a consequence of this projection, Josefina’s role as a mother formed a parallel to the king’s role as the father of the people. But whereas the duties of the father were performed in public, the maternal virtues were confined to the domestic sphere. According to the family ideology, women should focus strictly on their duties as housewives and mothers, and in a well-known ser-

42 "A feeling of devotion pervades us, as we perceive the adored picture of you, characterised by goodness and heavenly virtue, sailing through the air and looking down on the people compassionately. […] In the household, in the palace as well as in the realm, spread out happiness, you adornment of the North. Like in virtue, you have no equal in happiness as being a princess, a mother and a friend.” Skålar, afsjungne i Gefle den 28 Januarii 1828 (Gävle 1828).

43 Josefina’s position as a Catholic at the Protestant Royal Court in Stockholm is described in Gunnel Becker, “En katolsk kronprinsessa och drottning”, in Gunnel Becker & Kjell Blückert (eds.), Drottning Josefina av Sverige och Norge (Stockholm, 2007), pp. 69–102.
mon delivered in 1827, Johan Olof Wallin declared that it was against the very nature of women to be mentioned or even noticed in public. A true woman must refrain from all kinds of public attention, even praise.  

For practical reasons, this ideal of seclusion was not fully applicable to female members of the royal house, but sometimes the ambiguities of praising them were reflected in the toasts. For instance, this is illustrated in a poem dedicated to Queen Desideria in the early 1840s:

Drottning! Du, hvars namn
Bor i tacksam famn,
Gömdt af nöden, som Du stödde.
Du, som lefver blott
För den ljufva lott,
Att i sår, der smärtan glödde,
Gjuta tröstens balsam, medlidsam och huld.

[...]

Hur vi sjunga må,
Blifver Du ändå
Högre älskad än besjungen.
Ty den stilla dygden vill ej rytetts pris,
I det tysta blommar hennes paradis.

In the poem, the dual character of the role of queen is uncovered, insofar as the queen was praised for her philanthropic activities at the same time as the readers were told that her “quiet virtues” never sought the praise of men, but “flourished” in obscurity. Therefore, it was better to honour her by silent love rather than by verbal tributes. Essentially, the toast was based on a rhetorical anomaly: the Queen was publicly praised for not seeking public attention.


45 “Oh Queen, You, whose name lives in the hearts of the poor, who you have helped. Compassionate and mild, you live only for the good destiny of pouring the balm of comfort into the wounds of a burning pain. [...] No matter in what way we sing, you will be more loved than praised. Since your quiet virtues seek no praise but flourish rather in obscurity.” "För H. M. Drottningen", Den 28 Januari 1842 i Kalmar (Kalmar 1842).
Panegyrics as a Means of Representation and Communication

As indicated by the discussion above, the production of panegyrical poetry served several functions during the first half of the 19th century. Besides serving the purpose of illustrating the importance of a specific occasion and paying tribute to members of the royal family, the poems proclaimed moral and political values, as well as demonstrating an author's rhetorical and poetic skill. It is also evident that they reflected several of the most significant cultural and political trends of the period, for instance the interest in the Northern landscape and the Geatish mythology, as well as constitutionalist ideas and the bourgeois family ideology. Fulfilling all these aims, the poems served as a means of political representation as well as of political communication. Hence, the genre cannot be reduced to conventional ritual, ideological indoctrination or simple flattery. On the contrary, it must be recognized as an important way of producing political and ideological meaning.

First and foremost, it should be emphasized that the cited poems served as instruments of representation. Through them, royal personages and citizens were made aware of one another: while von Beskow’s and Böttiger’s cantatas gave a symbolical presence to the common inhabitants of Sweden-Norway as a backdrop to the royal ceremonies in Stockholm, toasts recited or sung in verse by members of voluntary associations symbolized the royal family in relation to the emerging bourgeoisie. Particularly in the latter case, it is evident that the poems served as symbolic representation as they literally represented the ruling dynasty by verbally giving its members presence in the local arena.

The main purpose of most panegyrical poems was to assert loyalty to the monarchy, and since both citizens and royal personages were regularly described in a highly idealised way, the genre as a whole seems to corroborate Jürgen Habermas's description of a pre-modern “representative” public sphere. Rather than being celebrated for what they had actually accomplished, both parties symbolized ideal values and virtues. Whereas the members of the royal family were portrayed as caring and protecting, the citizens were invariably described as happy, humble and industrious.

Despite all this, it is obvious in my opinion that the poems also served as a means of political communication. As shown by several of the examples
quoted above, the authors made use of the panegyrical genre in order to gain support for political opinions and demands, from the royal personages themselves as well as from the reading public in common. This fact indicates that the genre served not only as a means of representation, but as a channel for the communication and exchange of political meaning as well. This communicative function can be observed most clearly in poems composed in connection with royal journeys, which local writers took advantage of in order to direct political messages to the king. For instance, when a number of writers declared that Bernadotte owed his position as king to the people’s consent and could only gain the citizens’ affection if he acted like “a man of the people”. However, the function is also visible in the toasts, which to a large extent dealt with defining social roles.

As a whole, the panegyrical poems evoked many different political beliefs and ideals and, in spite of their submissive, celebrative idiom, it seems justifiable to interpret them as rhetorical claims, made by various groups and individuals in order to articulate political values and prescribe attitudes to the readers. The production of panegyrics cannot, therefore, be understood merely as a means of flattery or state-propaganda, but must be recognised as an important means for the exchange of political meaning. In the light of this fact, there is good reason to maintain that the panegyrics addressed to the members of the Bernadotte dynasty also served as parts of a modern, “bourgeois” public sphere of political debate.