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978-0-521-31182-3 - The Early Vasas: A History of Sweden, 1523-1611

Michael Roberts

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THE EARLY VASAS:
A HISTORY OF SWEDEN, 1523-1611

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GUSTAV VASA IN OLD AGE

by Cornelius Arendtz

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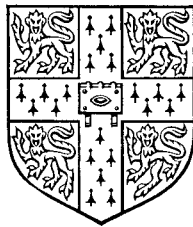
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The Early Vasas

A History of Sweden, 1523-1611

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To
Copper *and* Alan

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. . . for what is here display'd is no History
of the Wars of the *Turks* and the *Roman*
Empire . . . whereof the whole World abides
the Issue, every man apprehending a general
Servitude and universal Thraldom: no, it is
no greater matter than a Relation of how
things stood in *Sweden* for some few years;
which to know is by no means incumbent
upon all.

GUSTAV II ADOLF: *Introduction to a History
of his own Times*

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*The maps are adapted from those in the author's 'Gustavus
Adolphus', vol. 1, by kind permission of Messrs Longmans,
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Preface

Though the history of the Swedish Reformation has attracted the attention of a few non-Swedish historians, there seems to be no extended account in English of the general history of Sweden in the sixteenth century. I hope that this book may serve as an elementary introduction to the subject, and may supply some of the information necessary to an understanding of the 'Age of Greatness' which followed. In a work of synthesis such as this there seems little point in distracting the reader by footnote-references to authorities in Swedish, and except at a few points I have made no attempt to do so; but I have tried to provide a bibliography which may be of assistance to any who should wish to pursue their inquiries, and which will also give to those acquainted with the literature some idea of the authors whom I have found most useful. I had originally intended that the book should end with a survey of social and economic developments during the period, in so far as they had not already been touched on in the preceding chapters. But I soon found that I should in effect have been repeating something I had written already; and though it would have been satisfactory to re-write some passages which I could now wish otherwise, it did not seem to me that this was a sufficient reason for extending this volume by an additional sixty or seventy pages. I must therefore ask the indulgence of the reader, and refer him to the chapter on the state of Sweden in 1611 which opens volume II of my *Gustavus Adolphus*; and which forms, indeed, a natural link between this book and that.

I should like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to those who have helped me in various ways in the writing of this volume: to my friends and colleagues who have read all or part of it in manuscript and above all to f. Riksarkivarien Dr Ingvar Andersson, who with unwearyed kindness read the whole text, and saved me from many errors; to Professor J. C. Beckett and Principal J. L. Haire; to the Senate of The Queen's University, Belfast, who generously gave me sabbatical leave so that I might finish it; to Svenska Institutet för Kulturellt Utbyte (and especially to Docent Gunnar Ahlström) for innumerable kindnesses on many occasions, culminating in an invitation to spend two months in Sweden as their guest; to Mrs Anthea Orr, for invaluable

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and long-suffering assistance in preparing the text for the press; to Messrs Longmans, Green and Co. for their permission to reproduce the maps. Some of the first draft was written when I had the honour to hold the Hugh Le May Fellowship at Rhodes University, Grahams-town. It was an extraordinary privilege to be able to spend a year of uninterrupted work in my old University: I can well believe that other holders of the Fellowship have employed their tenure of it more profitably; but I am sure that none has derived from it a more poignant pleasure, or quitted Rhodes at the end of their term with more affectionate regret. For this experience I am deeply grateful. And it is to two Old Rhodians, pupils of long ago, and my friends and colleagues now for close on thirty years, that I venture to dedicate this book.

M.R.

*Belfast**December 1967*

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Glossary

arvförening — Succession Pact.

beställning — an allocation, by way of wages, of specific crown revenues.

fribetsmil — the area within a radius of one Swedish mile of a manor, within which the manor-owner enjoyed absolute freedom from taxes and burdens: lit. ‘mile of freedom’.

frälse — lit. ‘deliverance’; i.e. exemption from most taxes and burdens, or obligation to render them at only half-rates: the characteristic privilege of nobility. Hence *frälsebonde*, a peasant of the nobility; *frälsejord*, noble land; *frälsestånd*, the Estate of the Nobility, etc.

förläning — allocation of crown revenues and services to an individual, by way of remuneration or reward, the beneficiary having the right to collect them himself (in contrast to *beställning*, where the revenue was collected by the crown’s agents, and subsequently paid over).

härad — a county; hence *häradshövding*, a sheriff, with both judicial and administrative functions; and *häradsting*, the county court.

herredag — an afforced meeting of the *råd* (q.v.), often not easily distinguishable from a *riksdag* (q.v.).

hovkansler — court chancellor.

konungaförsäkran — charter given by kings soon after accession, or as a condition of accession.

lagman — a provincial judge.

landshövding — a provincial governor.

landslag — the national code of law drawn up about 1350 by Magnus Eriksson.

landsting — the assembly of the province (cf. *häradsting*, above).

län — a (non-hereditary) fief.

ofrälse — not exempt from taxation; non-noble.

reduktion — resumption by the crown of alienated lands and revenues.

riksdag — a meeting of the Estates.

riksföreståndare — lit. ‘representative of the realm’; regent.

rusttjänst — provision of a prescribed number of properly armed horsemen for service with the king’s army: cf. knight-service.

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Glossary

råd, riksråd — council, council of the realm; a member of this body. Hence *med råds råde*, with the council's counsel.

sammansvärjning — a conjuration, a swearing-in-common, for political purposes.

ståthållare — a governor (of a province or a castle); cf. Statthalter, stadhouder.

sätessgård, säteri — a manor, a private estate of a member of the nobility, to which special fiscal exemptions attached.

utskrivning — a militia-levy.