

—— Annie Mattsson, »'The place is swarming with libels'
– Manuscript Publication of Oppositional Texts During the
Reign of Gustav III (1771–1792)«

—— A B S T R A C T ———

The article is based on some of the findings from the author's doctoral thesis, *Komediant och riksförrädare. Handskrift-cirkulerade smädeskrifter mot Gustaf III* (approx. *Jester and traitor. Manuscript published libels against Gustav III*), and concerns the manuscript publishing of oppositional libels during the reign of Gustav III (1771–1792).

Some of the terms and definitions from Harold Love's *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-century England* (1993) are applied to the material in order to deepen our understanding of the clandestine system of diffusion of these texts. The dominant type of publishing was in this case »user publication«, where interested readers made their own copies and showed them to others. Particular interest is given to the role of the copier, who often combined functions of production, distribution and consumption in one person. The copiers are also the link in this system where we through manuscript collections can identify individual participants to a much larger extent than is the case when it comes to the anonymous authors and readers who never made any copies.

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—— Keywords: oppositional pamphlets, user publication, author publication, posting, judgment of posterity

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■—»THE PLACE IS SWARMING WITH LIBELS«

Manuscript Publication of Oppositional Texts

During the Reign of Gustav III (1771–1792)¹ —■

■— In 1771 Gustav III ascended the throne of Sweden as a promising young leader of the country. His coup d'état of 1772, through which he strengthened his own power considerably, was generally seen as the much needed rise of a unifying power in a realm divided by party struggle, conflicts between commoners and nobility and disagreements between the king and the diet. However, as time went by, the opposition against the king grew and the political landscape in Sweden became more polarized. The high nobility together with groups of commoners from the country's elite found themselves robbed of much of their former influence, and objected against the king's increased tendencies to repress the opposition and expand his own power. In the end the conflict cost the king his life through the famous assassination at the opera house in March 1792.²

At the king's funeral faux rune stones flanked the coffin. Inscriptions on the stones praised Gustav III as just, merciful, brave and wise.³ At the same time a completely different proposal for an epigraph to the king was circulated in manuscript. In the various versions of this work the king was described as, among other things, a traitor, thief, perjurer, tyrant, and »sodomitical arch-bishop«.⁴ This posthumous libel was among the harsher directed towards Gustav III, but manuscript published lampoons of different kinds had followed him throughout his reign. In the beginning the oppositional works in circulation seem to have been comparatively few, but as the political situation became more turbulent at the time of the Russian War of 1788 and Gustav's second coup d'état of 1789, the verbal attacks became more frequent and the king was depicted as a cruel tyrant. The manuscript published libels against Gustav III will be the main focus of this article, with the emphasis on their production, distribution and consumption.

— PUBLICATION THROUGH HANDWRITING —

Europe, including Sweden, had a lively and established manuscript culture during the eighteenth century and it is at this time possible to talk about a publication of texts not only through print, but also via manuscript. The definition of »published« in this context is not quite as straightforward as it might be in the case of printed material. In *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-*

century England (1993), Harold Love introduces useful terms and definitions which can help us understand the circulation of handwritten material during early modern times. There are several similarities between the manuscript culture of seventeenth century England and that of eighteenth century Sweden, which makes it fruitful to apply Love's terminology to a Swedish material. A first attempt to use Love's work to increase our understanding of Swedish manuscript culture during the reign of Gustav III was carried out in 1999 by Niclas Areskog in his licentiate thesis.⁵ I am in my work indebted to his efforts, and hope to deepen and nuance our understanding of the subject by using a larger body of material and a wider scope.

Love formulates a useful definition of publication as when someone »knowingly relinquishes control of the future social use of the text«. ⁶ However, working with eighteenth century material we often have only one preserved copy of a text and lack further information about its origin or possible circulation. In such cases it is hard to say whether or not the text remained private or was shown to others. When attempting to categorize libels as published or unpublished I have, in these unclear cases, based my decision on circumstances such as whether the content and form of the work indicates that it was intended for a wider audience and if it has been written down together with other texts which exist in several copies.

Manuscript publication could be chosen over print for a variety of reasons, but with a majority of the oppositional works against Gustav III it is quite likely that it was primarily fear of persecution which made the authors and distributors choose this medium. Before the king's coup of 1772 Sweden had experienced a few years of relatively extensive freedom of the press, during which a large part of the political debate could take place through the medium of print. However, Gustav III gradually increased governmental control over the printed word, and as expressing their opinions through print became more and more precarious the opposition found themselves increasingly reliant on the media of handwriting and oral transmission.⁷

In France, we have at this time large scale enterprises where illegal texts were printed outside the country, smuggled over the border and sold from under the cloak.⁸ In Sweden we have very few examples of this kind of activity from the political opposition.⁹ Crucial differences between Sweden and France are of course the size of the countries, and of the languages. Printing abroad and smuggling into the country would be an expensive and dangerous affair and hardly worth the effort when the audience was comparatively small. In the case of French clandestine prints, the printer could by contrast expect an interest not only in the large country of France, but all over Europe.¹⁰

Officially it was according to Swedish law equally illegal to write accusations against the king with a pen as it was to have them printed. The statute regulating the liberty of the press in Sweden at this time actually regulated the liberty of writing and the press. The exact title of the statute of 1774 is: *Kongl. Maj:ts nådiga förnyade förordning och påbud angående skrif- och tryck-friheten* (approx. Renewed gracious royal statute and decree concerning the liberty of writing and press).¹¹ In practice, however, it was very rare that someone was convicted over handwritten texts. While the king and his government gradually increased their control over the printing presses, they never managed to restrain the handwritten word.¹²

In the political culture of eighteenth century Sweden, manuscript publication played an important role in several ways. It was not only used to spread oppositional pamphlets and libels, but it was also a channel through which it was possible to get hold of official and unofficial documents concerning political affairs, transcriptions of speeches and documents from judicial proceedings. In a political climate where the king often tried to stop the printing of official documents and where printed newspapers were hard pressed by the government, the handwritten and the spoken word along with foreign newspapers were the channels through which news about internal Swedish affairs could reach the country's citizens. This article will mainly focus on oppositional pamphlets and libels which, as a rule, were originally intended for manuscript publication of some sort.

— THE MATERIAL FOR THE STUDY —

My work concerning manuscript published oppositional texts from the time of Gustav III is based on a material consisting of 150 titles. The titles each exist today in somewhere between one and forty-three known copies. The corpus of these texts has been comprised from the contents of fifty-seven volumes in seven libraries and archives in Sweden and Finland (which during the eighteenth century was a part of the Swedish kingdom). Among these volumes are commonplace books and collections from the reign of Gustav III, collections made by historians or historically interested persons at a later date, and capsules containing separates from different sources gathered together by archivists. The selection of volumes has been made with emphasis on manuscripts which seem to originate from Gustav III's reign or a time shortly after his death.¹³

— OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANTS AND FUNCTIONS

In his study concerning the diffusion of manuscripts in seventeenth century England, Harold Love describes three different modes of scribal publication: author publication, entrepreneurial publication and user publication. In the first case the

original author is in charge of the duplication of his or her own text.¹⁴ In the case of clandestine oppositional works this was probably not a popular alternative, since the authors wished to remain unknown.

Entrepreneurial publication means that copies are made to be sold. Love gives examples from England where large numbers of copies were made by professional scribes.¹⁵ There is no evidence that this sort of entrepreneurial publication took place to any notable extent in Sweden, and even if there had been professional scribes and dealers in manuscripts available, this sort of organized and centralized distribution was less suitable for the diffusion of clandestine texts.¹⁶

The most prevalent kind of manuscript publication in Sweden seems to have been what Love calls »user publication«, where interested readers copied a text and offered friends the opportunity to make their own copies. If the texts were found interesting enough by the readers and they were introduced in a larger network, this often turned out to be a surprisingly efficient way of spreading a pamphlet. One especially popular libel against Gustav III still exists today in forty-three known copies spread over the realm, from Lund in the south to Helsinki in the east.¹⁷ User publication also had the advantage of being cheap, easy to hide and hard to quell.

Using Love's terminology, it is in the case of manuscript publication meaningful to make a distinction between the initiatory act (where a text is first put into circulation) and the replicatory act (where it is »re-published« as someone continues the circulation by, for example, showing a copy to a friend).¹⁸ To further our understanding of the process of publication in the case of the oppositional works against Gustav III, it can also be useful to discuss the functions of production, distribution and consumption, and how different participants related to these functions.

The original author obviously took part in the production, but it is also likely that he or she actively tried to put the text into circulation and thereby took part in the distribution. No doubt there were many consumers of the works who were only consumers and read a copy made by someone else or heard it read aloud, but we know that some readers made their own copies. Through the act of copying they received the opportunity to make adjustments in the text, and even those who made no conscious alterations of the content put their own mark on their copy by using personal orthography and handwriting, choosing the paper and the position of the text on the paper and possibly adding ornaments and comments. Thereby they became co-authors of a kind and took part in the production. By making a copy and perhaps showing it or reading it to others, many copiers took part in the distribution of the work as well.

Even if there was no mass-production by professional scribes, there might have been for example personal secretaries who made copies for their employers, and they could then be viewed as producers and distributors who were not actual consumers of the works. There might also have been distributors who were not producers or consumers, but played the role of couriers and the like. Another type of participants in this system were the collectors, who did not necessarily make copies, but sometimes collected other people's manuscripts. In the case of my material, these collectors were often historians active during a period following the reign of Gustav III.

It can be useful to keep these intricate relations between the functions of producer, distributor and consumer in mind as we now move on to take a closer look at the different participants in this system of manuscript publication.

— THE AUTHORS AND THE INITIATORY ACT —

As a rule, the authors of libels against the king were anonymous, even if contemporaries often made more or less credible guesses regarding their identity. Both contemporaries and historians of later times often suggested noblemen and well-to-do burghers or civil servants as possible authors, but in most cases the suggestions seem to be based on unfounded rumours. The forms and contents of the works confirm the impression that many authors came from higher levels of society, as they seem to have had a solid education and the texts often defend the interests of the nobility. All guesses concerning the identities of the authors mention men, but it is likely that there also were women who wrote manuscript published oppositional texts. For example, a libel from 1789 carries the title »Inpromptu av Fru — — — över den 27 April« (approx. »Impromptu by Mrs — — — of the 27th of April«).¹⁹

Manuscript published oppositional texts may have been written with different purposes in mind. Some seem to have been aimed at winning over those not yet convinced. Other texts lack proper arguments and have such a malignant tone that they can hardly have been intended to convince sceptics. These texts may instead have been written in order to be circulated within oppositional networks and to function as a way of bonding the group and consolidate a shared set of values.

In most cases the contents and forms of the texts indicate that the author was writing for a wider audience, but it is of course possible that he or she never intended the work to be spread outside a small group of friends or family. In such cases the text might have been introduced into wider circulation by someone other than the author.

Distributors, and especially authors, who wished to put a text into circulation, faced the problem of initiating the circulation without risking being exposed. Even if they were unlikely to be

convicted by a court for writing manuscript pamphlets, many people, especially in the capital Stockholm, were in one way or another dependent on the king and the government. Being exposed as an author of libels against the king could most probably have led to dismissal from a public office or difficulty receiving governmental permission for various enterprises.

If the aim was primarily to reach others within an oppositional network, a useful strategy must have been to simply show the text to reliable friends and perhaps tell them that you had received it from someone else. It is also possible that authors sent their works anonymously by mail to people who might be interested in their content and continue the circulation. For example, the king's sister-in-law Hedvig Elisabeth Charlotte writes in her diary of 1789 that some of the oppositional libels in circulation at the time had been sent by mail to several members of the nobility, but that no-one knew who the authors were.²⁰ These cases might count as a version of what Love calls »author publication«, as the author could have made several copies of his or her work and sent them anonymously to a group of people. Of course, we cannot be sure that it actually was the author who sent the copies, or even that Hedvig Elisabeth Charlotte's information is reliable. It could be that people who themselves had actively made copies of libels claimed that they had received them by mail in order to avoid the king's wrath. Unfortunately, it lies in the nature of clandestine activities that it is hard to find reliable documentation concerning them.

Testimonials from the period preceding Gustav III's reign report on a custom of delivering political libels to the politicians they addressed. This could be done by posting it on their doors or even throwing it into their houses.²¹ To some extent this custom seems to have lived on during the following period. In the manuscript collection of one of the influential royalist brothers Nordin, there is for example a copy of a widely spread libel against the brothers which is still kept in its envelope, addressed to Johan Magnus af Nordin himself.²² This was of course not done in order to put the work into circulation, as the target of the libel was unlikely to spread it further. It was rather a way of asserting that the target was informed of how much hatred his actions caused.

If the goal was to reach as many people as possible outside a more or less closed network, the authors may also have been inclined to post their works in a public place. Comments in diaries and memoirs from the period show that libels were posted at street corners in Stockholm during the night.²³ As Areskog remarks, this was hardly a safe enterprise. The streets in Stockholm were lit during the darker months of the year and fire guards patrolled the streets. In addition to this, Gustav III soon organized a system of police spies in the capital in order

to keep himself informed of all oppositional activity.²⁴ Even if someone managed to successfully post a text on a trafficked street corner without being spotted, the chances were that it would be removed by the police before it could be read by any passers-by. Ideally an interested reader would snatch the text before the police got to it, and thereafter continue its circulation through chain copying. There is at least one known example of a libel with glue on the back which was seemingly snatched from a street corner in Stockholm, and in one case a note in connection with a copy of a libel says that it was first found pinned to a wall.²⁵

Notes with other manuscript published libels claim that the texts were found written on a wall or door jamb at a garden house at the king's summer residence of Haga.²⁶ These comments seem to be of a similar kind to those which claim that the original was first found in the king's room or in his pocket.²⁷ The same kind of claims can be found in connection with political satires in England during the seventeenth century, and they are better taken *cum grano salis*. In Harold Love's words it was »much easier to announce that a satire had been posted in the king's bedchamber than actually to place it there«, and notes of this kind were probably a way of piquing the readers' interest.²⁸

We do, however, know that oppositional graffiti did exist in Stockholm. For example, in 1782 a nobleman was convicted for engraving a derogatory comment against the king on a window at a coffee house. He was sentenced to death but allowed to flee the country.²⁹

There are indications that the methods of introducing oppositional texts into circulation changed over time. Testimonials concerning graffiti and texts posted in public places seem to be slightly more common during the earlier years of Gustav III's reign. In 1779 the king's sister-in-law Hedvig Elisabeth Charlotte notes in her diary that »libels are in vogue and are posted every day on the street corners of Stockholm [...]. The police make daily rounds to take them down and find out who has written them.«³⁰ The oppositional politician Axel von Fersen confirms this, as he notes in his journal the same year that you would often find »glued to street corners texts against the King, his government, and court, which the police must remove at dawn«. ³¹ Ten years later the political situation in Sweden was more turbulent and polarized, and the number of libels against the king in circulation seems to have drastically increased. It is possible that the increased repression from the government at this point made the public posting of libels more precarious and that circulation was therefore more often initiated by showing the texts to trustworthy friends or sending them by mail. This theory is supported by Hedvig Elisabeth Charlotte's comment from March 1789: »The place is swarming

with libels and poems against the King, they are very harsh and are only shown between friends.«³²

A change in the methods of publishing libels could partly account for the striking difference in the number of titles preserved from the period 1772–1785 in comparison to the latter part of the reign. For example, the fifty seven volumes which constitute the basis of this study contain only four titles dated 1779, the year when both the king's sister-in-law and his political opponent testify to the large number of libels posted on street corners.³³

— PROBLEMS FACED AND ATTEMPTS TO CONQUER THEM —

The king and the royalists controlled most media during this period in Swedish history, and through the churches the king's words could reach almost the entire country. The opposition, on the other hand, were for the most part restricted to the media of handwriting and oral transmission, and taking part in their communication always entailed a certain element of danger. The people involved in the production and distribution of manuscript published libels against the king certainly had many obstacles to overcome, but they often showed resourcefulness and tactical skills.

A rather specific problem that faced those who wished to reach a wide audience through manuscript publishing was that even though the ability to read was widespread in Sweden, those with only a rudimentary knowledge of reading often only knew Gothic print, as used in the Bible. It seems that at least some distributors had taken this into account. A note in connection with a copy of a libel from 1789 says that it was first found pinned to a wall and written with »large Swedish letters«, which must mean that it was written by hand but in Gothic print letters.³⁴ This is also the case with the aforementioned libel with traces of glue on the back.³⁵

There are also examples of very short libels in the form of epigrams and riddles, which would have enabled oral transmission. It would have been very easy to memorize and repeat a short, poignant and rather clever epigram such as the, in original rhymed, »With the Gustavi among us happens/ what in our country/ often occurs with clover seeds/ third mowing, poorest hay«. ³⁶ Another example of a work with a form which facilitated oral transmission is a verse written in the same style as a series of popular royalist songs and intended to be sung to the same melody.³⁷

Along with the printed word and public speeches, the royalist camp had more or less monopolized the use of visual media such as paintings, wood cuts and medals. There are some examples of preserved sketches with caricatures of the king, but they seem to have been intended for a limited audience of

close friends.³⁸ The opposition simply had no access to efficient ways of duplicating pictures. It is of course possible to imagine that simple hand drawn pictures could be duplicated. There is even an example from the period of public distribution of rather crudely hand drawn political caricatures, but in that case it was a royalist caricature.³⁹ There is however no evidence that oppositional pictures were distributed to a wider audience. Instead, oppositional authors made use of ekphrasis, the art of describing pictures with words. Royalist medals and paintings were met with verbal descriptions of alternate motifs which were, to our knowledge, never realized in visual form. There is one exception, where we know of an identifiable model for the ekphrasis in the form of a Danish printed caricature of the Swedish king from the time of the Russian War, when the Danes were allied with the Russians.⁴⁰ It would seem that this visual propaganda from a foreign country was translated into verbal propaganda used by the national opposition.

As we have seen, reaching a large audience in manuscript was hard, and doing so with illegal manuscripts was even harder, but some authors did their best to use the situation to their advantage. In a handful of works we can find direct or indirect comments on the situation of the freedom of the press, indicating to the reader that the handwritten word was more trustworthy than the printed word, since it was not under governmental control. The message was that only through the medium of handwriting was it possible to present the whole truth.⁴¹

— THE COPIERS —

While almost all authors remain anonymous, some of the people who made copies of libels can be identified through their preserved archives. Among them are poets, priests, noblemen, civil servants, academics and burghers.⁴² What they had in common was that they all belonged to an intellectual elite with a formal education. To what extent members of other societal groups took part in the distribution of oppositional libels is hard to say, since their belongings were never preserved to the same extent. We can, however, at least be quite certain that the members of parliament from the peasant estate were interested in the political documents in circulation and tried to keep themselves informed about their content. Of course, these men also belonged to the absolute elite among land-owning peasants. While few copies can be traced with any certainty to women, it is most likely that there also were females among the copiers. The women of the nobility in particular were often well informed and interested in political matters. Ladies from the higher nobility even held a rather substantial unofficial power, as can be seen from the controversies surrounding the refusal from several of them to appear at the royal court in 1790.⁴³

The copies preserved today are of several different kinds. Some are included in commonplace books and collections of poetry. Others are found in notebooks which only contain libels against the king and his followers. In some cases the owner of the copies has bound them together with other political texts from the same time, often of both the printed and manuscript circulated kind. There are also examples of what Love calls a »separate«, which he defines as »an individually circulated short manuscript which was written as a unit«. ⁴⁴ Among these are a few which stand out. They are all in quarto, are written by the same meticulous hand, have title pages and are sometimes sewn through the fold. These separates are found in two different archives and sometimes occur in two separate but very similar copies. It would seem that, in this case, we are dealing with a copier who made several copies with the intention of distributing them. ⁴⁵ Unfortunately, there is no additional information to be found in connection with these manuscripts, and it is thus impossible to say for sure if the copier distributed them to friends, sent them anonymously by mail to presumptive readers or perhaps sold them for money.

As already stated, it was possible for copiers to make changes in the works and function as active co-authors, but it seems that the majority of the copiers I have encountered were rather conscientious and did their best to reproduce the exact wordings of their original. Sometimes there are notes, explanations, continuations or answers added to a libel, but then it is often clearly indicated that this is an addition which was not part of the work as it was originally encountered. It is notable that the content of the works are often the same, but that the titles tend to differ. Apparently the title was not seen as an important part of the work.

It is remarkable that so few made use of the opportunity to »improve« the text they were copying. One reason for this was probably that the copiers were interested in documenting and keeping informed about the political debate. In that case, most participants in the distribution would try to ensure that what they read and spread was identical to the text others had encountered, in order to make sure that they all were part of the same discussion. The ownership of a trustworthy copy of a political pamphlet probably also had a social value. Since they were illegally diffused through manuscripts it was sometimes hard to get hold of the texts, and owning copies showed that you had contacts and were up to date with the political debate. A copy of an interesting text could also presumably be used in a sort of bartering trade in social networks.

There are, however, a few examples of identifiable copiers who made conscious changes in libels. In one case the motive is quite obvious. The nobleman, courtier and eventually oppositional politician Adolf Ludvig Stierneld simply added a comment

about himself in a widely spread parody of a court carousel from 1779.⁴⁶ It would seem that he was piqued at not being found important enough to be mentioned, and decided to amend this. This minor episode highlights that being mentioned in a libel was not only a bad thing, but also spoke of your own importance.

In the case of Pehr Johan Höppener, a royalist writer turned dogmatist with a personal grudge against the king, it would seem that the comparatively extensive changes he made in a libel from 1787 were motivated by a more general wish to improve and update the text. In one instance he has spelled out an equivocal word which is censored in all other known versions, and many of his other adjustments also serve to make the already vulgar text even ruder. Another addition to the text concerns events which took place after 1787.⁴⁷

Stierneld and Höppener both made adjustments on single occasions, and neither adjustment seems to have reached beyond their own notebooks. In the case of two specific libels we encounter another type of phenomenon. While most libels are copied very conscientiously, these two appear in several different versions. One is a compilation of character descriptions of important men in the war command, which at some point seems to have been fused with a similar list of character descriptions of influential royalist politicians. The lists exist in both Swedish and French.⁴⁸ The other title is the aforementioned epigraph of the king, which consists of a list of unflattering epithets for the king, often ending with a short list of mourning royalist politicians. The version with the longest list of epithets lists twenty-four, while the shortest only covers four.⁴⁹ What both these titles have in common is that they take the form of lists, which means that they do not have a natural beginning, middle and end, unlike most other libels which are of a more narrating kind. This means that it is very easy to add or subtract parts without disturbing the structure of the work. The message of the epigraph is also kept mostly intact even if some accusations against the king are added or deleted.

Another example of a libel which occurs in different versions is the aforementioned epigram comparing the third Gustav to the third mowing of hay, which gives the poorest quality. This work appears with several different wordings, but the point is always the same. In this case the reason for the differences was probably that it was orally transmitted to a large extent.

— TESTIMONIALS FROM PARTICIPANTS: CARL GUSTAF NORDIN AND ANDERS LANAERUS —

We have already met two identifiable copiers in Stierneld and Höppener. They both belonged to the king's critics at the time when they made the copies, but there were also royalists who

in one way or another took part in the diffusion and consumption of oppositional manuscript published libels against the king. One of them was Carl Gustaf Nordin, the younger of the aforementioned influential royalist Nordin brothers. He was a priest, a politician and a close collaborator with the king himself. His motivation for collecting and copying oppositional works was probably primarily that he wanted, and needed, to keep informed about the political debate. He mentions manuscript published political works at several instances in his journal, and he sometimes claims that he can tell who the authors are from the style and the political views expressed.⁵⁰

Through his notes we get access to some rare examples of how the distribution of manuscript published texts worked in practice. At one point he writes about an oppositional draft for a new constitution which was circulating in manuscript. He comments that he had heard talk about what the draft was about, but that it proved hard to obtain a copy. At long last he managed to get hold of the text from his shoe maker.⁵¹ This confirms the impression that in order to get your hands on clandestine manuscript published works it was important to have a large network containing politically informed and interested people. Firstly you had to obtain knowledge about the texts available in circulation, and secondly you had to find someone who owned a copy and was willing to show it to you.

Nordin's testimonials also show that a work could continue to retain its importance for a long period of time. In 1791 he mentions reading the aforementioned parody of the court carousel from 1779 and comments that it now reads as a precursor of what would come.⁵² That texts could continue to circulate for a long time could explain why the libels preserved in the largest number of copies are the parody from 1779 along with two libels from 1786.⁵³ They all seem to have kept their political relevance until the king's death and were probably circulated up until then. It is therefore natural that they should exist in more copies than the libels from a later date.

The example of Nordin shows that there were royalist copiers of oppositional works, but the most zealous copiers and collectors of libels against the king were, not surprisingly, oppositional. One of them was the priest Anders Lanaerus, who owned a large collection of oppositional manuscripts. There are several circumstances which make Lanaerus' collection especially interesting. It consists of several large notebooks into which he has copied manuscript published works with a very careful and distinct hand, often adding ornaments of different kinds. While this is comparatively common, the emblematic illustrations made in connection with the texts are quite unique. Most volumes in the collection contain what seems to be a mix of printed texts, manuscript circulated texts and Lanaerus' own comments and descriptions of the political

developments during the last four years of Gustav's reign. These volumes are illustrated with emblematic pictures and in one case personally drawn maps of naval battles, in colour. Two other volumes contain Lanaerus' own diaries from the diets of 1792 and 1800.⁵⁴

A large amount of time and work was put into all of these volumes, both the copies and the original works, and they raise questions about the intended audience. For whom were they intended? It is possible that Lanaerus showed them to friends and family, but there is also the possibility that we ourselves are the intended readers, or at least posterity in general. Sven Delblanc has coined the term »the posterity doctrine« to describe how important the concept of the judgement of posterity was during this period.⁵⁵ The thought that future generations would judge Gustav III and find that he was a tyrant is a recurring theme in the oppositional texts of the time. A parallel theme is that the king's political enemies will be viewed as heroes fighting for the freedom of the country. Gustav III himself had similar but reversed hopes, as toward the end of his reign he tended to see himself as a misunderstood hero who would be revered and celebrated by the unbiased court of posterity. According to Delblanc, Gustav III considered it an important task for his court poets to bear witness to the greatness of the king before the tribunal of posterity.⁵⁶ It is possible that Lanaerus wished to act as a witness of the prosecutor in order to help us cast a just sentence.

This is another possible intention from the participants which should be taken into account when we study this type of system of manuscript publication. The act of posting a libel in a public place no doubt tells of a wish to reach a wide contemporary audience. The act of showing texts to friends and copying them into commonplace books also demonstrates an intent to disseminate the works, but the motive may in such cases have been personal rather than political, since the ownership of manuscript published texts increased your status and strengthened your position in political and social networks. When we find large numbers of political manuscripts neatly written down into folio notebooks, sometimes with comments and ornaments added, the copiers might have been motivated by a wish to give themselves a clear overview of the political debate. They may also have showed their collections to others in order to establish a view of themselves as politically interested and informed, but in a society where the thought of the tribunal of posterity was very much alive, the intended readers of these notebooks may not only have been the copiers themselves and their contemporaries. Perhaps we should therefore add ourselves, the historians of posterity, to the consumer category in this system. ■

■ — ENDNOTES —

1 This article is based on my doctoral thesis: Annie Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare. Handskriftcirkulerade smädeskrifter mot Gustaf III*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Skrifter utgivna av Litteraturvetenskapliga institutionen 45 (Uppsala, 2010). When a manuscript published work is referred to in the article, references will be given to the bibliography in the dissertation, but when a specific copy of a manuscript published work is referred to, references to archive and volume will be given.

2 For an account of the political conflicts between Gustav III and the opposition see for example: C[laes] T[heodor] Odhner: *Sveriges politiska historia under konung Gustaf III:s regering*, part I–III (Stockholm, 1885–1905), Anders Larson: *Sammansvärjningen mot Gustav III* (Uppsala, 1959), Charlotta Wolff: *Noble conceptions of politics in eighteenth-century Sweden (ca 1740–1790)*, Studia Fennica Historica 15 (Helsinki, 2008).

3 Ingrid Söderhamn: »Som Apoteos betraktad. Scenografin till Gustaf III:s likfärd tolkad ur källperspektiv« in Anders Grönvall (ed.): *Vetenskapssocieteten i Lund Årsbok 1997–1998* (Lund, 1999), 110.

4 Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 219–222, 384–390.

5 Niclas Areskog: *Gustav III och paskillanterna. Studier i en litterär subkultur* (Uppsala, 1999).

6 Harold Love: *Scribal publication in seventeenth-century England* (Oxford, 1993), 39.

7 For an overview of the development of the liberty of the press during the reign of Gustav III see for example: Stig Boberg: *Gustav III och tryckfriheten 1774–1787* (Stockholm, 1951) and Elmar Nyman: *Indragningsmakt och tryckfrihet 1785–1810* (Stockholm, 1963).

8 These activities have been studied by, among others, Robert Darnton in his *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge Mass. & London, 1982) and *The Forbidden Bestsellers of Pre-revolutionary France* (New York, 1995).

9 Stig Boberg: *Kunglig krigspropaganda*, Studia Historica Gothoburgensia 8 (Gothenburg, 1967), 56, 62–64.

10 Clandestine French books had a market all over Europe, including Sweden. For a discussion of the import of books into Sweden during this period see Anna-Maria Rimm: *Böckernas vägar. Den svenska bokhandelns import av utländska böcker 1750–1800* in *Sjuttonhundratalet* 2011.

11 *Kongl. Maj:ts nådiga förnyade förordning och påbud angående skrif- och tryck-friheten gifven Stockholms slott, then 26 april 1774* (Stockholm, 1774), Areskog: *Gustav III och paskillanterna*, 37–38.

12 Areskog: *Gustav III och paskillanterna*, 45–49.

13 For a complete list of the volumes and a discussion of the selection, see Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 25, 246–248. I wish to thank Ingemar Carlsson for his scholarly generosity and support in my work with establishing this corpus of texts.

14 Love: *Scribal publication*, 47.

15 *Ibid.*, 47, 73–79.

16 See Areskog: *Gustav III och paskillanterna*, 54–55.

17 This libel from 1786 is often called »Lagman T... Bref från Vallhall till konungen«, although the title varies between different copies. Bibliographical details can be found in Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 257.

18 Love: *Scribal publication*, 44–43.

19 Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 277.

20 Hedvig Elisabeth Charlotta: *Hedvig Elisabeth Charlottas dagbok, part III*, Carl Carlson Bonde (ed. and transl.) (Stockholm, 1907), 59.

21 Ingemar Carlsson: *Olof Dalin och den politiska propagandan inför «lilla ofreden»* (Lund, 1966), 57–59.

22 Riksarkivet (The Swedish National Archive), Stockholm: Sjöholm, Nordinsamlingen vol. 40.

23 Fredrik Axel von Fersen: *Riksrådet och fältmarskalken m.m. grefve Fredrik Axel von Fersens historiska skrifter*, part IV (Stockholm, 1869), 158–159, Hedvig Elisabeth Charlotta: *Hedvig Elisabeth Charlottas dagbok, part I*, Carl Carlson Bonde (ed. and transl.) (Stockholm, 1902), 217.

24 Areskog: *Gustav III och paskillanterna*, 74–76, 82, see also Nils Staf: *Polisväsendet i Stockholm 1776–1850*, Monografier utgivna av Stockholms kommunalförvaltning (Uppsala, 1950).

25 Riksarkivet (The National Swedish Archive), Stockholm: Strödda historiska handlingar, vol. 40, Parti- och smådeskrifter under Gustaf III. I wish to thank Karin Sennefelt for bringing this document to my attention. Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 286.

26 Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 252–254.

27 *Ibid.*, 286, 288.

28 Love: *Scribal publication*, 82–83.

29 Staf: *Polisväsendet i Stockholm*, 73.

30 My translation. Riksarkivet (The Swedish National Archive), Stockholm, Ericssbergsarkivet, Hedvig Elisabeth Charlottas samling, Hedvig Elisabeth Charlottas Dagbok, »Lettre au mois de Novembre de 1779. de Gripsholm«. In original: »les Pasquinades, sont on vouge, il y en à eut d’afficher chaque jours au coin des rues de Stockholm [...] La Police est occupée journallement à faire de revue generale, pour enlever ces libelles, et decouvrir ceux qui les écrivent.« See also the Swedish translation in Hedvig Elisabeth Charlotta: *Dagbok, part I*, 217.

31 My translation. von Fersen: *Historiska skrifter*, part IV, 158–159. In original: »uppklustrade på gathörnen skrifter beträffande Konungen, hans regering och hof, som polisen måste borttaga vid daggroningen«.

32 My translation. Riksarkivet (The National Swedish Archive), Stockholm, Ericssbergsarkivet, Hedvig Elisabeth Charlottas samling, Hedvig Elisabeth Charlottas dagbok, »Lettre au mois de Mars 1789 de Stockholm«. In original: »Les libelles et les vers contre le Roi fourmillent, il y en a de tres violent qui ne se montrent qu'entre amis.« See also the Swedish translation in Hedvig Elisabeth Charlotta: *Dagbok*, 59.

33 Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 76, 252–254.

34 Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 286, Linköpings stiftbibliotek, Linköping, H96 Småskrifter. Politisk vers och prosa från 1700- och 1800-talen, 245.

35 See above footnote number 25.

36 My translation. In original: »Med Gustafwer hos oss händer/Hvad som uti våra länder/Plägar skie med Klöfwer Fröö./Tredie slotten gier sämsta Höö.« Uppsala universitetsbibliotek (Uppsala University Library), Uppsala, F581 Strödda politiska skrifter i prosa och vers rörande K. Gustaf III:s tidevarf samlade af Öfversten och Ridd. C. M. von Gerden. Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 298.

37 Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 281.

38 The most famous caricatures are made by Carl August Ehrensvärd. See Sten Åke Nilsson: *1700-talets ansikte. Carl August Ehrensvärd* (Stockholm, 1996), and Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 133.

39 Uppsala universitetsbibliotek (Uppsala University Library), Uppsala, Nordin 951 Nordins anekdoter och handlingar till sin tids historia, Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 58, 184.

40 Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 129, Bent Blüdnikow: *Sladder og satire. Københavnerliv i 1780'erne* (Copenhagen, 1988), 143.

41 Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 65, 184.

42 Ibid., 70–73.

43 Erik Lönnroth: *Den stora rollen. Kung Gustaf III spelad av honom själv*, Svenska akademien 200 år (Stockholm, 1986), 222–223, Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 217, 285.

44 Love: *Scribal publication*, 13.

45 Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 63, Riksarkivet (The National Swedish Archive), Stockholm, Ericssbergsarkivet, Manuskript- och avskriftssamlingen 45, 46, 47, Kungliga biblioteket (The Royal Library), Stockholm, Vs147.

46 Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 108, 253–254, Uppsala universitetsbibliotek (Uppsala University Library), Uppsala, E138 Pasquiller och andra politiska skrifter 1728–1788 särdeles för Gustaf III:s tid.

- 47 Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 143–144, Kungliga biblioteket (The Royal Library), Stockholm, D:158:2 Höppner, Ströskrifter 1668–1798.
- 48 Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 220, 266–267.
- 49 Ibid., 219–222, 295, 384–390.
- 50 Carl Gustaf Nordin: *Dagboksanteckningar för åren 1786–1792*, Historiska handlingar 6 (Stockholm, 1868), 123, 128, 149.
- 51 Nordin: *Dagboksanteckningar*, 79.
- 52 Nordin: *Dagboksanteckningar*, 148–149.
- 53 Mattsson: *Komediant och riksförrädare*, 76, 253–254, 256–258.
- 54 Lunds universitetsbibliotek (Lund University Library), Lund, Hist Sv GIII A. Lanaerus Handlingar och skrifter rörande allmänna sakerna i Sverige 1789–1800, A Lanaerus Samlingar och anteckningar I-VII.
- 55 Sven Delblanc: *Ära och minne. Studier kring ett motivkomplex i 1700-talets litteratur* (Stockholm, 1965), 65–66.
- 56 Delblanc: *Ära och minne*, 168–172.
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