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# THE SWEDISH ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD: ALLEGED RESTORATION, ALMOST REVOLUTIONARY REFORMATION, AND RESTORATION AGAIN

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## **Introduction**

The Swedish system of orders of knighthood consists of four orders, the Order of the Seraphim, the Order of the Sword, the Order of the Polar Star and the Order of Vasa. The first three of these were established in 1748, and the last in 1772. In this article, I will discuss how the orders came to be established, how and why two of them were made dormant in 1975, while at the same time the functions of the other two were greatly curtailed; and I will conclude with the plan to resume using the orders again from 2023 as rewards for meritorious achievements. The author wrote a legal historical report for the committee preparing the 2023 reform,<sup>1</sup> and the findings of that report are part of the basis for this article. To those findings will be added a discussion about the heraldry and symbols in the insignia of the orders. A fifth order, the Order of Carl XIII, was established in 1811. It is a state order but only for freemasons, and is thus a very peculiar entity which will not be covered here.<sup>2</sup> Also not included are the medals that are part of the central honours system.

In Sweden, during the late Middle Ages and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, collars of knighthood of a more temporary nature existed, and there were plans which never materialised to establish actual knightly orders. However, an understanding of these predecessors (and the misunderstandings about them) is important to set the historical context for the orders that were founded in the later eighteenth century, primarily the Orders of the Seraphim and the Sword.<sup>3</sup>

## **Alleged Restoration: The establishment of the orders The decision-making process 1748–51**

The Swedish orders of knighthood were established through an ordinance 23 February 1748 entitled ‘three orders of knighthood’.<sup>4</sup> The background to this development can be traced to the short reign (1718–1720) of Queen Ulrika Eleonora, when ennoblement had been used frequently to reward meritorious contributions, but it was felt that as an alternative a means of distributing honorary titles was needed along the lines of the many other countries which at that time had orders of knighthood as part of their reward systems.<sup>5</sup> Already in the 1720s and 1730s, there were plans for two or three orders with seraphs, swords or the polar star as significant symbols. Baron Carl Hans Wachtmeister made sketches for the insignia of three orders in 1727.<sup>6</sup> In 1738, the matter was discussed in Parliament but came to nothing.

A decade later, the successor to the throne, Adolf Frederick of Holstein-Gottorp, who was elected as such in 1743, happened to hold a Russian order, that of St Andrew. Only if there existed Swedish orders could he avoid wearing the Russian one. If he, as a monarch, wore only a Russian order, Sweden might have been seen as subordinate to Russia. Along similar lines, it was considered important that Swedish citizens should

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Left, *Figure 1*: Count Carl Gustaf Tessin wearing a robe of a councillor of the realm, the collar and insignia of the Order of the Seraphim, and the insignia of the Orders of the Sword and the Polar Star. Painting by Gustaf Lundberg (1695–1786), photo: Hans Thorwid, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm; right, *Figure 2*: coin from the reign of Eric XIV with the collar of the Order of the Saviour surrounding the royal coat of arms, Nordiska Museet, Stockholm, photograph by Thomas Adolfsson.

receive Swedish orders and so not be tempted to receive foreign orders which might encourage dependency on a foreign power. The Russian ambassador was known for having tried to bribe members of parliament in this way.<sup>7</sup>

The president of the chancellery (roughly equivalent to a prime minister) Count Carl Gustaf Tessin (**Figure 1**) was behind the proposal, which was formally put forward to the secret committee ('sekreta utskottet') by the superintendent Carl Hårleman, and it was written either by Anders Johan von Höpken or by Tessin himself.<sup>8</sup> In the proposal, the Order of the Seraphim, the Order of the Sword and a third order, so far without a name, were mentioned. The reason why the Order of the Seraphim and the Order of the Sword were mentioned by name was that their names and insignia took inspiration from collars with angels' heads, and the Baltic Order of Knights of the Sword (see below).<sup>9</sup>

The orders were to be granted by the King in Council. This was during the Swedish Age of Liberty 1719–1772, when parliament, especially the estate of the nobility, and the council were the central arenas for power; with the king having a more symbolic role. The ulterior motive of Tessin might have been that the orders could be useful for the governing party in the two-party system of the time.<sup>10</sup> After a presentation before the King in Council, a group consisting of among others Tessin, von Höpken and Hårleman were assigned to draft statutes for the orders. The draft was put forward for the first time 23 February 1748, was approved in council 14 March and was signed by the King 21 March; however, 23 February 1748 counted as the formal day of approval.<sup>11</sup>

The last parliamentary session had finished in 1747, and the next session started in 1751. The same year, King Frederick I died, and Adolf Frederick succeeded to the throne. According to § 45 of the Instrument of Government of 1720, parliament had to scrutinize the actions of the Council since the previous parliamentary session, including the statutes made by the King in Council.<sup>12</sup> The ordinance about the orders was discussed extensively at the House of Nobility. Baron Johan Didrich Duwall suggested that the orders of knighthood were to be removed from the council to a separate chapter of the orders, and the King then made a proposal to the same effect. The reason for this reform was, according to Duwall, that the method had developed to grant orders not for meritorious achievement, but rather based on rank and years of service in a specific position. The problem could be avoided, according to Duwall, if the King was given the independent right to grant orders, and that would make a wider distribution of the orders possible. Others, such as Baron Carl Otto Hamilton, thought that the orders were to be dealt with by the council, otherwise there was a risk for having two parallel councils. However, the changes in the ordinance were approved with 372 votes to 277.<sup>13</sup> The estate of peasants also approved the change.<sup>14</sup> Within the clergy, the view was that the council ought to have influence over the appointment of Knights of the Seraphim and the Commanders of the other two orders.<sup>15</sup> The burghers wanted the function of the council unaltered.<sup>16</sup>

As the constitutional law was at the time, in such a matter approval from two estates was sufficient for the King's proposal to be adopted. A new ordinance was published 25 November 1751.<sup>17</sup> The orders were now independent from council. The chapter of the orders took the place of the council with regard to the decision-making powers relating to the orders. The King (formally in the chapter) was the sole decision-maker appointing new knights and commanders.<sup>18</sup> In practice, the president of the chancellery kept his seat as chancellor of the orders until 1768.<sup>19</sup>

Let us now turn to the different orders and discuss the way two of them were not established but – allegedly – restored; they got a Swedish-Baltic ‘invented past’,<sup>20</sup> a ‘medieval past’,<sup>21</sup> though they were actually based on French models. This history has been researched especially by Antti Matikkala (1979–2019),<sup>22</sup> and I would like to honour his memory by mentioning that his research – on which I base my text – was always rigorous and careful.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Order of the Seraphim**

This order was defined as ‘restored’ in the preamble to the 1748 ordinance. Its purpose was to honour foreign kings and princes, and Swedish men who had made exceptional contributions in public service and were dignified enough to have the highest offices in the realm, ranking as lieutenant-generals and higher. Princes of the Swedish Royal Family were to be born knights of the order.<sup>24</sup>

During the seventeenth century, there was a belief that a collar with angel's heads had been handed out by Swedish kings to knights during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. There is no evidence for this, and it is highly unlikely – collars developed only later in other countries.<sup>25</sup> There is a collar on the monument of the thirteenth century king Magnus Barnlock (‘Ladulås’, r. 1275–1290) in the Riddarholmen church in Stockholm, but that monument was erected only in the sixteenth century, a

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Left, *Figure 3*: The ‘Order of the Seraphim’ from André Favyn, *Le théâtre d’honneur et de chevalerie* [---], Paris 1620, part II, p. 1365; right, *Figure 4*: Baron Carl Hans Wachtmeister’s sketch for an Order of the Sword, 1727, photograph by the author.

fact that was forgotten in the seventeenth century when it was used as evidence for the thirteenth century origin of the order.<sup>26</sup>

From the time when king John (Hans) was crowned as King of Sweden in 1497 (r. 1497–1501), during the Kalmar union, there is more certain information that a collar with angel’s heads was handed out to Henrik Gyllenstierna. This collar was, however, not related to an organised order of knighthood, but was rather a personal gift of honour.<sup>27</sup>

Eric XIV (r. 1560–1568) used a collar, called the Order or Collar of the Saviour. On coins (**Figure 2**), his coat of arms was surrounded by a collar with angel’s heads and the Vasa symbol, which is probably a sheaf.<sup>28</sup> Eric XIV himself described the collar in Latin as consisting of fleurs-de-lis and angel’s heads (a collar ‘qui liliis et capitibus angelicis constat’), but this still probably refers to the Vasa symbol and the angel’s heads.<sup>29</sup> The Vasa symbol in this context was, by the Flemish writer Frans Mennens in 1613, interpreted as patriarchal crosses.<sup>30</sup> An illustration in André Favyn’s book *Le Théâtre d’Honneur* from 1620, ‘l’ordre de Svede dict dv nom de Iesvs, ov des Seraphins’<sup>31</sup> (**Figure 3**) appears to be a continued misunderstanding of Eric XIV’s order and its alleged predecessors from the fourteenth century.<sup>32</sup> However, the design was brought back to Sweden in the 1690s through a preliminary drawing by Elias Brenner (1691)<sup>33</sup> and a final version by Erik Reitz (1694) for Erik Dahlbergh’s *Suecia Antiqua et Hodierna*.<sup>34</sup> Both pictures are

divided into six parts, with the Order of the Seraphim according to Favyn top left, the Baltic Order of the Swords and Belts top right and the actual Order of the Saviour of Eric XIV in the second row right. Favyn's design later served as a model for the 'restored' Order of the Seraphim.<sup>35</sup>

In the sketches of Carl Hans Wachtmeister from the 1720s, the insignia differed from Favyn's drawing and Eric XIV's collar, but seraphs were included.<sup>36</sup> In the 1748 ordinance, the collar was defined in Ch. 1 § 20 of the statutes for the Order of the Seraphim, and it consists of eleven golden seraphs and eleven blue patriarchal crosses. The design now resembled closely the one of Favyn. In the centre of the badge, the letters IHS, a cross and four nails derive from Favyn's drawing. Eric XIV had used a picture of the Saviour in the badge of his order,<sup>37</sup> but the insignia have a connection to another short-lived Swedish order, the Order of the Name of Jesus that was briefly used by Charles X Gustaf in 1656.<sup>38</sup> The ribbon is light blue, and the French Order of the Holy Spirit (Order of the Holy Ghost) was used as a model in this regard.<sup>39</sup>

### The Order of the Sword

This order was also defined as 'restored' in 1748 and its purpose was to honour commanding officers after having served for more than twenty years in times of peace, or fewer years in times of war, or after having shown bravery. Princes of the Swedish Royal Family were to be born knights of the order.<sup>40</sup>

Historically, there is a background in the Livonian Order of Sword Brothers, established in Riga in 1202 but subsumed in the Teutonic Order in 1237. The Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order was dissolved in 1561, when Sweden began to conquer parts of the order's holdings. Livonia was Swedish during the period 1629–1721.<sup>41</sup> Supposedly, the same order was also called the Order of the Military Belt, and this is why a belt is seen in the insignia. The belt was illustrated in Mennens' book from 1613. Elias Ashmole followed Mennens in presenting the swords with curved blades.<sup>42</sup> Drawings of these insignia were included in Elias Brenner's and Erik Reitz's drawings for Erik Dahlbergh's *Suecia Antiqua et Hodierna*.

The insignia in use from the 1720s as sketched by Carl Hans Wachtmeister differed from those described by Brenner and Reitz, and the ribbon in Wachtmeister's drawing was yellow with blue stripes near its borders (**Figure 4**). This coincides with the ribbon that was adopted in 1748. Thus, the collar with swords and belts was a result of a mainly invented past: Even though there had been a Livonian Order of Sword Brothers, that order had little to do with the new order and its insignia. The design of the ribbon was perhaps influenced by Wachtmeister's sketch, or independently based on the Swedish colours. (**Figure 5**.)

### The Order of the Polar Star

The purpose of the Order of the Polar Star was to honour those who through civic virtues, genius and acts beneficent to society deserved it. The reference to the Polar Star was explained in the preamble; as the polar star does not know decline (*nescit occasum*), the same should be valid for the reputation of Swedes. Princes of the Swedish Royal Family were to be born knights of the order.<sup>43</sup>

The Order of the Polar Star could not have drawn on an ancient order, but on the other hand, the polar star was an important Swedish symbol. As Heribert Seitz wrote

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Left, *Figure 5*: the star and sash of a Commander Grand Cross of the Order of the Sword; right, *Figure 6*: the star and sash of a Commander Grand Cross of the Order of the Polar Star. Photographs by The Royal Orders of Knighthood.

in 1938, it was not a coincidence that the polar star was chosen as a symbol for the third order: In the seventeenth century the polar star had become a symbol of Sweden and its position in the north, and it was used by Charles XI and Charles XII in cyphers. The motto *nescit occasum* referred not only to the polar star but also to Sweden and its honour. In the eighteenth century, the symbol was connected to learning and genius, something that seems to have started when the Royal Academy of Sciences adopted the polar star as its symbol in 1741.<sup>44</sup>

Carl Hans Wachtmeister used the polar star as the insignia of the third order. Even though the insignia got a different design in 1748, the polar star remained. In the collar, the polar star and the cypher of Frederick I are represented. The ribbon is black, to contrast the light of the star to darkness, and there is reason to believe that the French Order of St Michael with its black ribbon was used as a prototype. The latter order was founded in 1469 and had developed into an order for civil achievements.<sup>45</sup> (**Figure 6**)

### **The Order of Vasa, added in 1772**

In 1772, King Gustaf III established the Order of Vasa for those who had made important contributions to agriculture, the arts, or commerce. He wished to display his maternal descent from the Vasa dynasty. It was the first order where the awards were not linked





*Figure 7: the collar of the Order of Vasa, photograph by the author.*

to the recipient's birth or rank; princes of the Royal Family were not to be born knights of the order.<sup>46</sup> This was a time when industrialists, factory and foundry owners, peasants and workers were observed – they could have an impact on the Swedish economy, and were to be rewarded through orders and medals.<sup>47</sup>

The order of Vasa was given a different form to the three earlier orders, with an oval rather than a star-shaped badge. A green ribbon was often used for rewards with connection to the countryside and its industries, for example the medals of the Royal Patriotic Society, where the ribbons are green and yellow.<sup>48</sup> In the collar, the Swedish coat of arms is accompanied by the caduceus (staff of Mercury) and cornucopia, indicating the purpose of the order; in between we see alternating the Vasa symbol and the nettle leaves of Holstein, referring to King Gustaf's Holstein-Gottorp descent (**Figure 7**).<sup>49</sup>

### **An Almost Revolutionary Reformation: Making the Orders dormant in 1975**

During the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, the distribution of the Order of the Sword and the Order of the Polar Star was increasingly linked to rank within the hierarchies of the military and civil services.<sup>50</sup> This had partly been the case from the outset. This had been especially the case with the Order of the Sword, which was Baron Duwall's reason for suggesting that the decision-making power should be transferred to a chapter of the orders in order to make the assessments freer, but unfortunately this administrative change did not have any effect. On the contrary, the vast majority of the grants followed rank. This led to recurring criticism by Members of Parliament.<sup>51</sup>

In 1947, a new system of classes and degrees of salaries of civil servants was introduced.<sup>52</sup> Soon after, in 1955, a similar system was introduced for the Orders of the Sword and the Polar Star. The number of years of employment in specific positions defined what degree of an order the recipient would be granted. For example, a professor or a district judge would receive a knighthood of the Order of the Polar Star after four years of service and be raised to commander after 18 years. Similarly, a lieutenant

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colonel would receive a knighthood of the Order of the Sword after 15 years of service. The Order of Vasa was the only one considered a 'free order', meaning that it could be distributed according to more open criteria.<sup>53</sup> Notwithstanding, this order came to be distributed to leaders of companies etc. in a way that was comparable to the Orders of the Sword and the Polar Star, albeit in another sector of society.<sup>54</sup>

This more or less automatic system for granting knighthoods led to strong criticism against the orders. The criticism led to a radical re-examination of the orders of knighthood in the 1960s and 1970s. The Social Democrats in particular refused to accept orders for political reasons,<sup>55</sup> and the matter was brought before parliament again in 1969 through a private bill. This time, parliament made an unfavourable statement with regard to the orders. The knighthoods were understood as remunerations for being employed by the state, and the parliamentary committee concluded:

*'The system of orders of knighthood has its origins in the social system of past times, and the principles for awarding orders as a reward for community efforts can hardly be reconciled with a contemporary democratic approach. The committee therefore sees with satisfaction that steps have been taken to dismantle the orders as a state reward for public service.'*<sup>56</sup>

Parliament approved this conclusion,<sup>57</sup> and the 'steps already taken' were that the coordination of the proposed grants of knighthood were no longer to be done by the ministries. Proposals were instead to be sent directly from state and private entities to the Royal Orders of Knighthood.<sup>58</sup> Thus, the orders of knighthood were no longer understood as rewards for meritorious achievements for society at large, but rather primarily attached to public service – that is, public employment.

In 1972, the government published its investigation on how to handle the orders of knighthood<sup>59</sup>, in a paper which focussed to a great extent on the orders as part of the remuneration for civil servants:

*'Such a system [where the orders and medals are based on rank and level of salary] mirrors an outdated society of classes and is contrary to modern principles of equality. In many circles, orders are seen as more "posh" than medals, and such an estimation seems actually to be the basis of the present system of honours. [---] Thus, the present system is clearly unsatisfactory and ought to be changed as soon as possible.'*<sup>60</sup>

There were proposals to start awarding orders of knighthood following individual examination of the recipient's merits by the Royal Orders of Knighthood,<sup>61</sup> but such a reform was not considered feasible 'for practical reasons'.<sup>62</sup> It was not explained further in any detail why such a reform was not possible, rather giving the impression that the decision had already been made.<sup>63</sup>

At much same time, a new Instrument of Government was adopted which reduced the formal powers of the King, although his formal decision-making power as regards grants of orders was not affected. Parliament was given the power to limit the categories of people to whom orders could be distributed.<sup>64</sup> The institution that was 'The Royal Orders of Knighthood' (*Kungl. Maj:ts Orden*) has retained its peculiar legal status as being neither a state agency within the civil service nor a private entity. It is a foundation-like independent organisation that can be attributed to a group of organisations that I have defined as 'legal entities attached to the office of Head of State'.<sup>65</sup> It retains this status, in line with the similar status of the royal household, accepted in the preparatory works to the 1974 Instrument of Government.<sup>66</sup>

In the 1973 governmental bill, the understanding of the orders as part of the remuneration for civil servants was even further enhanced:

*It is [---] out of the question that the state maintains or participates in a reward system that is considered unfair by large groups of employees. This, as has emerged from the discussions with the staff organisations, is the case with the current system. [---] A reformed system of orders cannot in practice be designed and applied in a way that corresponds to the basic requirement of equality and uniformity in the assessment of the work efforts of different categories of personnel.*<sup>67</sup>

The decision by parliament was that the orders were no longer to be distributed to Swedish citizens.<sup>68</sup> According to the new governmental ordinance that entered into force January 1st, 1975, the Order of the Seraphim and the Order of the Polar Star were retained, but were only to be granted to foreign heads of state, holders of similar offices, and foreigners who had undertaken important services for Sweden;<sup>69</sup> and to foreign diplomats as part of reciprocal exchange.<sup>70</sup> The Orders of the Sword and of Vasa became dormant.<sup>71</sup>

At this time, the colour of the ribbon of the Order of the Polar Star was changed from black to blue and yellow. This was probably done to strengthen its symbolic connection with Sweden. In 1995 the possibility of distributing the Orders of the Seraphim and the Polar Star to members of the Royal Family was reintroduced. This was in the context of Crown Princess Victoria turning 18 and becoming eligible to act as head of state.<sup>72</sup> Nowadays, the Order of the Polar Star is again granted within the Royal Family with the black ribbon instead of the blue and yellow, which is used for foreign recipients. There is reason to believe that the black ribbon will be reintroduced more generally in 2023.

### **Restoration Again: A new system of rewards in 2023**

In 2018 a political agreement between all political parties except the Left Party was announced. A committee was to be established to review the public system of orders and medals, the public flag flying days, and the public funding of the royal family and the royal household. The basic political compromise was that orders of knighthood were to be granted again, whilst the number of working royals and the number of flag flying days were to be reduced.<sup>73</sup> In the meantime, on October 7th, 2019, the King decided that the title of Royal Highness was to be used only for the children of the King and the Crown Princess.<sup>74</sup> This resembles the rules applied in Denmark<sup>75</sup> and the United Kingdom.<sup>76</sup>

The King's decision was in line with what could be expected from the committee, which therefore dealt primarily with the orders of knighthood, the public statement of accounts of the royal household, and the flag flying days. When it was appointed, the government instructed the committee to draw up proposals for changes that were necessary to resume the awarding the Order of the Polar Star and the dormant Orders of the Sword and of Vasa.<sup>77</sup>

The political parties were represented in the committee, and the former Speaker of parliament Björn von Sydow was appointed chairman. Entirely in line with the political agreement of 2018, the committee suggested that the orders of knighthood were to be distributed again to Swedish citizens. The main work of the committee with regard to orders of knighthood dealt with how the cooperation between the chapter of the orders of knighthood and the government was to be arranged.<sup>78</sup> In the Governmental bill to Parliament April 13th, 2022, the Government made clear that the eighteenth-century orders were to be restored:

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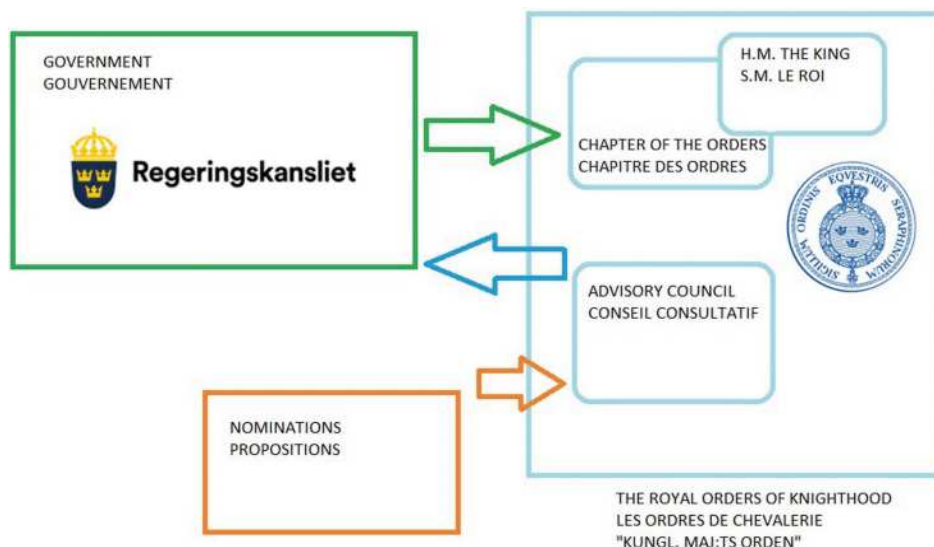


Figure 8: the new structure of the decision-making process, diagram by the author.

*'Sweden has for a long time had a reward system with different types of awards that have been used to cover the need that our community has had of recognizing and rewarding individuals and their efforts. [...] Some of the rewards in today's award system are over 250 years old and are already for that reason of a cultural historical interest.'*<sup>79</sup>

This attitude is an almost complete reversal of that which prevailed in the 1960s and 1970s. The difference cannot be explained by a shift in political parties governing Sweden: even though majorities have shifted back and forth, the Social Democrats governed Sweden when both the 1973 bill and the 2022 bill were handed to parliament. The political compromise in 2018 made the reintroduction of the orders acceptable, and presumably the Social Democrats also found reason to believe that rewards could have a function in a modern society. But the distribution of orders is not going to be connected to classes and degrees of salaries of civil servants:

*'It is the government's view that a re-introduction of the orders of knighthood is based on the premise that the system is democratised and modernised. Such a reformation is possible, however it should be done in a careful way, as the system of orders is more than 250 years old [...]. Against that background, the government shares the committee's view that a reform of the reward system should be based on the awards that the state has [...]. A reward reform of the kind currently in question means primarily, as regards the state orders, that the awarding of rewards within the Order of the Sword and the Order of Vasa be resumed and that both Swedish and foreign citizens will be able to be awarded with decorations.'*<sup>80</sup>

When 'the awards that the state has' are mentioned, it is in opposition to the possibility of instituting new orders. The cultural historical value of the existing orders forms the argument for them being restored – quite contrary to the 1960s and 1970s arguments that they belonged to 'past times.' The Orders of the Sword, Polar Star and Vasa will be granted to Swedish and foreign citizens for meritorious military achievements or achievements in the public or private sector, respectively.<sup>81</sup> The Order of the Seraphim



*Figure 9:* portrait of H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, in 2023 celebrating his Golden Jubilee. He is wearing the collars of the Orders of the Seraphim, the Sword, the Polar Star and Vasa. Photograph by Thron Ullberg ©The Royal Court of Sweden.

shall continue to be reserved for members of the royal house and foreign heads of state, and holders of similar offices.<sup>82</sup> On 15 June 2022 parliament approved the guidelines proposed by the government, as regards the reformed public reward system and how it should function.<sup>83</sup> A new ordinance was issued by Government on December 15, 2022.<sup>84</sup>

In the new system, the general public will be encouraged to nominate persons to be considered for knighthoods. An advisory council will be organised within the Royal Orders of Knighthood, and its members will be appointed by the Chapter of the Royal Orders of Knighthood on proposal from the government. The advisory council will assess the nominations and can also add names. The council will make a suggestion to the government, which then will approve or reject names. This list will be handed back to the Chapter of the Royal Orders of Knighthood, where the King will make the final decision.<sup>85</sup> (**Figure 8**) This somewhat complicated structure is arranged in order to combine the King's position as head of the orders and fountain of honour (*fons honorum*) with the Government's political responsibility according to the constitution (**Figure 9**).

## Conclusion

In 1748 three Swedish Orders of Knighthood were established. Two of them, the Order of the Seraphim and the Order of the Sword, were considered restorations of old orders. Even though there had been collars with angel's heads and symbols of Christ, and a Baltic order of the sword, the 1748 orders were inventions connected to some useful historical facts and fictions. The Order of the Polar Star did not have such an invented background, but the polar star had a history as a Swedish royal symbol and as a symbol of learning.

In the 1970s, an almost revolutionary reformation took place. The orders were not formally abolished, but were reduced significantly in importance. Only the need for international diplomatic exchange kept the chapter of the orders and the organisation around it functioning. The arguments were critical towards the traditional approach, and the change took place at the same time as the reduction of the King's constitutional responsibilities.

The most recent development has seen a reconnection with the historic background, utilising a cultural historical heritage that was waiting to be used and appreciated. The government has invoked this heritage in a way that is opposite to the attitudes of the 1960s and 1970s. It also represents a reformation in the sense that the old way of distributing the orders based on employment status will not be resumed, and only meritorious achievements will be rewarded. The cultural heritage is to be used in a modern and democratic way. It remains to be seen how the new traditions will develop.

<sup>1</sup> Martin Sunnqvist, 'Under konungens enskilda styrelse, Statschefen, kungahuset, hovet och ordensväsendet i konstitutionellt och rättshistoriskt perspektiv', appendix to SOU 2021:74, *Ett modernt belöningsystem, de allmänna flaggdagarna och redovisningen av anslaget till hovet* (Stockholm, 2021). Important texts include Ernst E. Areen and Sten Lewenhaupt, *De nordiska ländernas riddarordnar*, vol. 1–2, (Stockholm, 1942); Karl Löfström, *Sveriges riddarordnar*, (Stockholm, 1948); Tom C. Bergroth, 'En Svensk Riddare=Orden', *Kring instiftandet av ett ordensväsende i Sverige år 1748* in *Livrustkammaren 1997–98*, pp. 2–90; Staffan Rosén, 'From the Common History of the Russian and the Swedish Orders of Knighthood' and 'Swedish Orders Today' in Antti Matikkala and Staffan Rosén (edd.), *Perspectives on the Honours Systems. Proceedings of the symposiums Swedish and Russian Orders 1700–2000 & The Honour of Diplomacy*, (Stockholm, 2015), pp. 85–100 and 309–313; and Antti Matikkala, 'Gustaf Adlerfelt, Orders of Knighthood and Charles XII' in Matikkala and Rosén 2015, op. cit., pp. 13–84.

<sup>2</sup> See Tom C. Bergroth, 'The Royal Order of Charles XIII – the Fifth Swedish Order' in Matikkala and Rosén 2015 pp. 101–116; and Tom C. Bergroth, *Kungliga Carl den XIII:s Orden*, (Stockholm, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> Antti Matikkala, 'Creating a 'Medieval Past' for the Swedish Orders of Knighthood' in Katie Stevenson and Barbara Gribling (edd.), *Chivalry and the Medieval Past* (Woodbridge, 2016), pp. 35–60.

<sup>4</sup> Kongl. Maj:ts Nådiga Förordning den 23 februari 1748 angående Trenne Riddare-Orden, printed separately, and e.g. in Areen and Lewenhaupt 1942 vol. 2 appendix I, and Löfström 1948 pp. 239–282.

<sup>5</sup> Areen and Lewenhaupt 1942 vol. 1 pp. 3–11, Bergroth 1997–98 pp. 6–11 and 19–20, and Rosén 2015 pp. 86–88.

<sup>6</sup> Bergroth 1997–98 p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> As ref. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Bergroth 1997–98 pp. 18–19.

<sup>9</sup> Bergroth 1997–98 pp. 22–26.

<sup>10</sup> Areen and Lewenhaupt 1942 vol. 1 p. 11.

<sup>11</sup> Areen and Lewenhaupt 1942 vol. 1 p. 27; Bergroth 1997–98 pp. 21–26.

<sup>12</sup> Nils Herlitz, *Grunddragen av det svenska statsskickets historia*, 3rd ed. (Stockholm, 1946), pp. 164–165.

<sup>13</sup> Ridderskapet och adelns protokoll, vol. 18, 1751–52 (Stockholm, 1911), pp. 78–81, 129–130, 176–178, 181–186, 197–199, 213–215, 216 and 337–373.

<sup>14</sup> Bondeståndets protokoll, vol. 7, 1751–56 (Stockholm, 1963), pp. 60–63.

<sup>15</sup> Prästståndets protokoll, vol. 3, 1751–52 (Stockholm, 2007), pp. 69–91, 95–101.

<sup>16</sup> Borgarståndets protokoll, vol. 10, 1751–52 (Stockholm, 2008), pp. 74–80, 82–89, 95, 97 and 343–344

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- <sup>17</sup> Kongl. Maj:ts Förnyade Nådige Förordning den 25 november 1751 angående Trenne Riddare-Orden, printed separately and e.g. in Areen and Lewenhaupt 1942 vol. 2, appendix III.
- <sup>18</sup> Ordinance of 1751, 1 ch. § 3 in the statutes of each of the orders. See also Areen and Lewenhaupt 1942 vol. 1 pp. 30–33, 44.
- <sup>19</sup> Areen and Lewenhaupt 1942 vol. 1 p. 94.
- <sup>20</sup> Matikkala 2016 p. 35.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup> See above all Matikkala 2016.
- <sup>23</sup> Antti Matikkala was a past chairman of the Cambridge University Heraldic and Genealogical Society and also a board member of the Societas Heraldica Scandinavia. A bursary for young heraldists' participation in congresses and colloquia has been set up in his name.
- <sup>24</sup> Ordinance of 1748, preamble and Ch. 1 § 7 of the statutes for the Order of the Seraphim.
- <sup>25</sup> Hans Hildebrand, 'Heraldiska studier. I. Det svenska riksvapnet' in *Antiqvarisk tidskrift för Sverige*, vol. 7, 1884–85, no. 1, pp. 71–74; D'Arcy Boulton, 'The Curial Orders of Knighthood of the Confraternal Type. Their Changing Forms, Functions, and Values in the Eyes of Contemporaries 1325–2006' in Guy Stair Sainty and Rafal Heydel-Mankoo (edd.), *World Orders of Knighthood and Merit*, vol 1–2 (Delaware, 2006), pp. 205–239.
- <sup>26</sup> Matikkala 2016 p. 52.
- <sup>27</sup> Matikkala 2016 p. 36.
- <sup>28</sup> Nils Ludvig Rasmusson, 'Svenska ordensdekorationer på mynt. En heraldisk-numismatisk studie' in *Meddelanden från Riksheraldikerämbetet*, vol. IX, 1940, pp. 123–124.
- <sup>29</sup> Hildebrand 1884–85 pp. 52 and 75.
- <sup>30</sup> The picture is reproduced in Matikkala 2016 p. 39.
- <sup>31</sup> André Favyn, *Le théâtre d'honneur et de chevalerie [---]*, Paris 1620, part II, p. 1365.
- <sup>32</sup> Matikkala 2016 pp. 38–42.
- <sup>33</sup> Matikkala 2016 p. 47.
- <sup>34</sup> Erik Dahlbergh, *Suecia Antiqua et Hodierna*, 1698–1715, plate 1:9. Brenner's picture is reproduced in Matikkala 2016 p. 47; both pictures in Matikkala 2015 p. 25.
- <sup>35</sup> Matikkala 2016 p. 42.
- <sup>36</sup> 'Skiss till Serafimerorden målåd av friherre Carl Hans Wachtmeister 1727', Livrustkammaren, europeana.eu. Original kept by the Royal Orders of Knighthood in the exhibition in the Apartments of the Orders of Chivalry at the Royal Palace, Stockholm.
- <sup>37</sup> Bergroth 1997–98 p. 22.
- <sup>38</sup> Matikkala 2015 p. 24.
- <sup>39</sup> Bergroth 1997–98 p. 39; Matikkala 2016 p. 50.
- <sup>40</sup> Ordinance of 1748, preamble and Ch. 1 §§ 6–8 of the statutes for the Order of the Sword.
- <sup>41</sup> Matikkala 2016 pp. 36–38.
- <sup>42</sup> Matikkala 2016 p. 45.
- <sup>43</sup> Ordinance of 1748, preamble and Ch. 1 § 7 of the statutes for the Order of the Polar Star.
- <sup>44</sup> Heribert Seitz, 'Nordstjärnan, symbol för fosterland och snille' in *Fataburen. Nordiska Museets och Skansens årsbok 1938*, pp. 89–116; Areen and Lewenhaupt 1942 vol. 1 pp. 6–7.
- <sup>45</sup> Bergroth 1997–98 p. 25.
- <sup>46</sup> Statutes for the Order of Vasa, 29 May 1772, Ch. 1 § 7, printed separately and e.g. in Areen and Lewenhaupt 1942 vol. 2, appendix IV.
- <sup>47</sup> Ylva Haidenthaller, *The Medal in Early Modern Sweden. Significances and Practices*, (Lund 2021), pp. 253–306.
- <sup>48</sup> Bengt Gustaf Jonshult, *Kungl. Patriotiska Sällskapets medaljer och hedersbelöningar* (Stockholm, 2019).
- <sup>49</sup> Areen and Lewenhaupt 1942 vol. 1 p. 304.
- <sup>50</sup> Rosén 2015 p. 309.
- <sup>51</sup> Sunnqvist 2021 p. 350.
- <sup>52</sup> Statens allmänna avlösningsreglemente, SFS 1947:411.
- <sup>53</sup> Protokoll hållet vid extra ordenskapitel den 16 februari 1955, Kungl. Maj:ts Ordens arkiv, Ordensprotokoll vol. XXXIII, 1951–1955, A1a:33.
- <sup>54</sup> Ordinar och medaljer. Promemoria upprättad inom statsrådsberedningen och finansdepartementet, mars 1972, Ds Fi 1972:5, p. 41.
- <sup>55</sup> Ordinar och medaljer [---] Ds Fi 1972:5, p. 28.
- <sup>56</sup> Allmänna beredningsutskottets bet. 1969 p. 6 (my translation).
- <sup>57</sup> Rskr. 1969:118.
- <sup>58</sup> Ordinar och medaljer [---] Ds Fi 1972:5, pp. 15–17.
- <sup>59</sup> Ordinar och medaljer [---] Ds Fi 1972:5.
- <sup>60</sup> Ordinar och medaljer [---] Ds Fi 1972:5, pp. 32–33 (my translation).

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- <sup>61</sup> Ordnar och medaljer [---] Ds Fi 1972:5, pp. 3–4; Kungl. Maj:ts Ordens arkiv, Handlingar rörande utredningen om ordensväsendets avskaffande, FXI:3, 1972–73, promemoria den 26 september 1972, utredning angående ett reformerat ordensväsen, bilaga 1, remissyttrande.
- <sup>62</sup> Ordnar och medaljer [---] Ds Fi 1972:5, pp. 33–34.
- <sup>63</sup> Cf. Rosén 2015 pp. 309–310.
- <sup>64</sup> Ny regeringsform, ny riksdagsordning, SOU 1972:15, pp. 139–140.
- <sup>65</sup> Sunnqvist 2021 pp. 76–79, 82–86 and 363–378. See also Rosén 2015 p. 311.
- <sup>66</sup> Prop. 1973:90 p. 176.
- <sup>67</sup> Prop. 1973:91 p. 25 (my translation).
- <sup>68</sup> Rskr. 1973:266.
- <sup>69</sup> Ordenskungörelsen, SFS 1974:768.
- <sup>70</sup> Rosén 2015 p. 312.
- <sup>71</sup> Rosén 2015 p. 311; prop. 2021/22:232 p. 6.
- <sup>72</sup> Förordningar om ändring i ordenskungörelsen, SFS 1995:497; SFS 1995:1205.
- <sup>73</sup> Konstitutionsutskottets bet. 2017/18:KU28; rskr. 2017/18:337.
- <sup>74</sup> Protokoll i hovären den Nr 13/2019 H.D.
- <sup>75</sup> Christian VII, anordning 23 september 1774, Rigsarkivet, Kongehuset, diverse dokumenter 1668–1868.
- <sup>76</sup> Decisions by George V and Elizabeth II, The London Gazette 14 December 1917 issue 30428 p. 13086 and 8 January 2013 issue 60384 p. 213.
- <sup>77</sup> Dir. 2019:76.
- <sup>78</sup> SOU 2021:74, pp. 77–107.
- <sup>79</sup> Prop. 2021/22:232 pp. 5 and 7 (my translation).
- <sup>80</sup> Prop. 2021/22:232 p. 10 (my translation).
- <sup>81</sup> Prop. 2021/22:232 p. 16.
- <sup>82</sup> Prop. 2021/22:232 p. 17.
- <sup>83</sup> Konstitutionsutskottets bet. 2021/22:KU39, rskr. 2021/22:393.
- <sup>84</sup> Förordning (SFS 2022:1800) om Sveriges främsta utmärkelser.
- <sup>85</sup> SOU 2021:74 pp. 79–90, prop. 2021/22:232 pp. 4–33.