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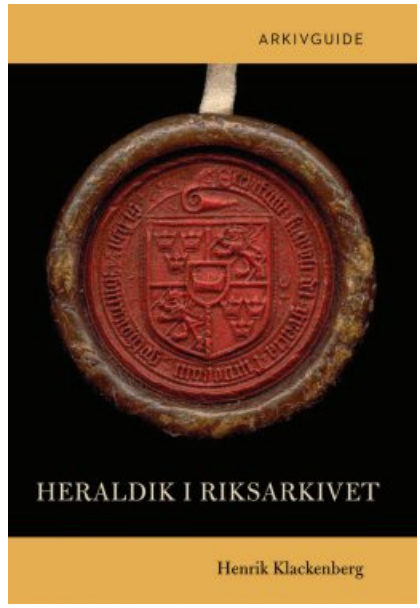

Henrik Klackenberg, *Heraldik i Riksarkivet: Arkivguide* (Skrifter utgivna av Riksarkivet 48), Stockholm: Riksarkivet, 2025. 236 pp.,
Paperback ISBN 978-91-87491-44-3. 250 SEK.

Henrik Klackenberg was State Herald of Sweden 1999–2022, a position at the National Archives in Stockholm. At the end of his tenure, he took periods of leave of absence to work on this book, which he then finalised in the year following his retirement. *Heraldry in the National Archives* belongs to a series of Archive Guides published by the National Archives and is the first publication of its kind in Sweden to focus on heraldry.

Klackenberg undertook a thorough survey of *Riksarkivets beståndsöversikt* – a collection overview of the National Archives published in eight parts between 1996–2006; the ninth part from 2011–2012 concerning individual archives was not included. From the descriptions in this overview, he identified approximately 200 collections and archives which he examined to look for heraldic material, both primary sources in the form of heraldic pictures (drawings, paintings, prints, seals and seal matrixes), and secondary sources in the form of texts describing heraldry in some way. This extensive and meticulous work has resulted in a very valuable and helpful guide for anyone doing heraldic research at the National Archives. In addition to its usefulness, the book is generously and beautifully illustrated with photos of the very best quality. This is especially evident in the many clear and distinct pictures of seals and seal matrixes, that can be notoriously difficult to produce.

The presentation of the archives and collections is divided into three time periods: Medieval (1200–1550) characterized by monochrome seals; Early Modern (1550–1900), with larger numbers of heraldic sources, now also polychrome, through genealogical works and territorial heraldry; and Modern (1900–2000), when the well-organized archive of the Heraldic Authority creates a natural overview of heraldry in Sweden.

For material after the year 2000, digital searches provide much easier access, making this kind of guide less essential. The collections for each time period are then arranged according to themes. The Medieval period is grouped into Swedish and foreign seals and coats of arms, respectively, and a third section for later depictions of medieval coats of arms. There are a few early letters patent granting arms from this period. The foreign material is dominated by a rich archive from Estonia and Livonia, including coats of arms of the Grand Masters of the Teutonic Order. The jewel in the National Archives from this period is the spectacular *Bergshammars vapenbok,* a roll of arms created in 1455–1460 by King of Arms Hendrik van Hessel at the court of the Duke of Burgundy (**Figure 1**). It contains 3388 coats of arms from all over Europe painted in splendid colours (luckily, it is available online).[1]

The Early Modern period has a number of themes: arms and seals of royalty, cities and territories, authorities, the nobility and other individuals, both Swedish and foreign, and also a section about the early heraldic authority in Sweden – *Riksheraldikern*, the Herald of the Realm – and his forerunners. There are several nice series of seals of the Great Coat of Arms of Sweden spanning different dynasties, and good examples of seals of cities and territories from different time periods, including later depictions

Figure 1: Coats of arms of the King of Hungary and his vassals from the Bergshammer Roll of Arms (pp. 56–7)

1 https://sok.riksarkivet.se/bildvisning/R0001216

Figure 2: Prince Carl Gustav's coat of arms as Grand Duke of Finland, 1802 (p. 84)

Figure 3: Registration certificate for the arms of Consul-General Hans Edvard Henke, entered in the roll of arms of the National Heraldry Office, 1935 (pp. 190–1).

that can be valuable when the originals have been lost. The seals of all the four courts of appeal at this time are depicted – a good example of how this book can serve also as reference literature for historic seals and coats of arms in Sweden. The old and extensive collection *Genealogica* is a prime source for genealogy and heraldry of the nobility, but a huge number of smaller collections are also important. There are several collections of seals of the nobility, created in the late nineteenth century when this was popular, and also collections of bookplates. The National Archives has a rich collection of royal and princely heraldry in great splendour (**Figure 2**) in treaties of the state and treaties of the royal house (e.g. regarding marriage relationships) from throughout Europe, and less lavish examples in the collection *Diplomatica,* which contains miscellaneous correspondence with other states. In this section there are many fine examples and detailed lists of which states are represented in which collections. The last section in the Early Modern period covers the activities of the early Heralds of the Realm and the precursors to what became *Riksheraldikereämbetet*, the National Heraldry Office, the heraldic authority in Sweden. This section gives a good overview of the historic development and the somewhat scattered work performed in a time when the function and responsibilities of the Office were still unclear. Most of the examples deal with new or augmented coats of arms for the nobility, but in the latter part of the nineteenth century the scope was widened to include official heraldry on buildings and in public places.

The Modern period is divided into the records of the Heraldry Office (**Figure 3**), and foreign seals and coats of arms. From 1903, when Adam Lewenhaupt became Herald of

the Realm, the Heraldry Office has kept to the same archival principles as other authorities in Sweden. The material is well structured into multiple series and gives a good picture of the heraldic development during the twentieth century. Klackenberg describes the incorporation of the Office into the National Archives in 1953, later changes in how the Office has been organized, and in what parts of the archive specific material is kept. The Office deals primarily with official heraldry; one major task was the creation of many municipal arms in the latter half of the century, but it also consulted on personal heraldry and for a short period of time in the 1930s even kept a roll of arms of commoner coats of arms. This overview is very valuable for anyone who would like to research heraldry in Sweden in this time period, and is richly illustrated with beautiful concept drawings. In the modern era where signatures alone have increasingly replaced seals, the previously rich heraldry in the foreign material has become sparser, but some interesting items are still to be found in the collection of the royal house. There is also a short introduction to heraldry, heraldic literature, and research; a chapter on the purpose, creation, and limitations of the book; an heraldic dictionary; and, last but not least, there are extensive footnotes and references.

All in all, this is a very valuable addition to the heraldic literature in general, not only in Sweden. It provides guidance for the researcher who knows what they are looking for, as well as pointing out numerous avenues of possible research to peruse in the extensive collections of the National Archives of Sweden. The 200 illustrations are wonderful and of consistent high quality. Even if it is in Swedish without any summary in English, I still believe it can be useful for a non-Swedish-speaking audience, and definitely enjoyable to anyone who appreciates the beauty of heraldry.

Henric Åsklund