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Secretaries as Agents in the Middle of Power Structures (1560–1680)

Access of information, possession of information, and distribution channels of information have always been key elements in efficient power networks. Often the information needs to be kept secret, but how good are secretaries at keeping secrets, and how is their trustworthiness measured anyway? Because of the nature of government, it needs structure, and so it creates loci of power; places where different streams of information merge to be used as an integral part in the decision-making process and so sent off elsewhere. The problem is, of course, that people in power cannot be present at every important locus at one and the same time, yet they still need the information. So they naturally turn to the people who happen to stand in the middle of that information traffic, but who cannot use it directly for their own benefit because they lack the formal position of power. The world knows these people as secretaries.

Secretaries wielded formal power that was invested in their formal post and duties, as well as informal power which derived from practical factors: their position at the core of the central power, their proximity to the king, social relations, and access to knowledge. Positioned at the nexus of power networks, secretaries gained information from various sources and persons and could perform as mediators between the ruler and his or her subjects. In this way, they gained influence over decision making, even though it was not part of their official duties. This situation was promoted by the Vasa kings, who treated secretaries as their allies in trying to keep the aristocracy in check.

In this chapter we look at the Royal Chancery secretaries¹ (*sekreterare*) in sixteenth and seventeenth century Sweden. It is a period when the administrative structures of Sweden went through remarkable changes in a relatively short period of time.² The expanding administration and bureaucracy created a new operational environment for secretaries which simultaneously increased their informal power to influence matters, because they had greater access to the flow of information and the inner circle of people who made the decisions. This personal contact made it much easier to influence decisions.

In the sixteenth century, the administrative structures in Sweden were so basic that the king was personally running the whole administration, or at

least supervising it. The latter part of the century is known for being the time when there was a power struggle between the monarch and nobility, and it was also around this time that secretaries began to have more influence over decisions, even making some independently for themselves. In fact, it was during this period of transition that they perhaps had the most power, or at least certainly more than in later centuries, when the bureaucracy caught up with them. By the seventeenth century the formerly powerful position of secretaries was just a distant memory, but that did not mean that secretaries had become completely powerless. They just adapted, and dived into the world of social networks in the knowledge that control of information is also power.

Even though secretaries played a significant role in the early modern administrative system, they have still been mostly seen as office workers, and have therefore been given surprisingly short shrift in historical studies. In this chapter we aim to lift them from this obscurity into the limelight. Firstly, we will study the official instructions that were given to secretaries, to better understand the structural context in which they worked, as this clearly determined much of their agency. In these normative operational environments like the Royal Chancellery, Council of the Realm, and collegia, secretaries had to work under certain rules, but in the long run, the norm was actually constant change, so it meant that the secretaries had to be ready to adapt their agency around these changes. By studying secretaries over a relatively long time period (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) we can track the formal changes, and see how they affected secretaries' agency in real terms.

In previous research, it has usually been thought that the power of secretaries ended in Sweden by the end of the sixteenth century.³ In some sense this is correct, but in another it is not that simple. It is true that in the sixteenth century, monarchs ruled Sweden largely with the help of secretaries, whereas by the next century they were helped by the Council of the Realm and its accompanying administrative bureaucracy. But this does not mean that secretaries lost their power all together; it just took on a more informal shape. For the years it covers, Ivan Svalenius' seminal work on the history and composition of the chancellery, *Rikskansliet i Sverige 1560–1592*, provides a solid context for analyzing this informal power, as it presents the socio-economic background of its secretaries, their careers, networks, and detailed biographies.⁴ Meanwhile, Svante Norrhem has studied the officials of the Royal Chancellery in the seventeenth century and compared them with those of Spain, France, and England. He shows that a very important part of agency for secretaries relied on the patronage networks they belonged to.⁵

Secretaries have often been neglected by historical studies or, at best, are mentioned randomly. So to be able to create a more solid database, we have used collective biography as a quantitative method together with more traditional qualitative source materials like official instructions, minutes, royal letters, and personal correspondence. Using prosopographical methods to collect information like this from several different biographical collections (including official rolls) allows us, not only to analyze the role

of secretaries in their operational environment, but also to generalize more reliably about them. For instance, we have a better idea of the usual length of their careers, their age when appointed, the kind of tasks they handled, and how often they changed office. Our hypothesis is that the longer a secretary's career was, the more information and skills he would have. Secretaries were able to create a personal network where their role was to act like a nexus that connected members from different social networks, especially with regard to patronage. By connecting biographical and private sources with normative material, we hope to thereby shed more light on the actions of the secretaries and interpret their agency more effectively.

The Royal Chancellery as a nexus for power

In his well-known treatise *Del Secretario* (1564), the Italian scholar Francesco Sansovino popularised a theological metaphor describing secretaries as being as close to their prince as angels are to God.⁶ Although the administrative context of Sansovino's secretaries was quite different, the same could be said of the royal secretaries of sixteenth and seventeenth century Sweden. All over Europe, in fact, the significance of secretaries grew during this period, and as modern states developed, they became important wielders of power, assisting their sovereigns in foreign politics and domestic administration. As the demands placed upon the secretaries increased, there was a need for education, training, expertise, and even specialisation. These were the first steps in the professionalization of secretaries into skillful state officials who commanded respect.⁷

Secretaries grew more prominent within the Swedish government during the 1530s and '40s, when the Royal Chancellery was established and set up according to German imperial principles. The innovator behind this and other reorganizations of the central administration was Conrad von Pyhy (d. 1553), a well-educated jurist who had served the German Holy Roman Emperors before he came to Sweden in 1538. The Royal Chancellery henceforth became a central administrative body consisting of Swedish and German (and Latin) departments, run by a chancellor and under the close surveillance of Gustavus Vasa.⁸

Some highly trusted secretaries acquired a lot of influence from their kings in this way. For example, there was Jöran Persson (c. 1530–1568) (Eric XIV), Johan Henriksson (d. 1592) (John III) as well as Nils Chesnocopherus (1574–1622), Erik Jöransson (Tegel) (1563–1636) and Johan Bengtsson Skytte/Schroderus (1577–1645) (Charles IX).⁹ Their position was in practice that of a minister, and it resonates well with Spain, England and France, where one of the most powerful offices of state, by the mid-sixteenth century, became the Secretary of State – held by some prominent individuals, such as Thomas Cromwell.¹⁰

However, in Sweden the royal secretaries' position remained informal and very much dependent on their personal relationship to the king. Apart from his favourites, even the ordinary royal secretaries working in the chancellery had practical power because of their proximity to the king and

the fact that they were the ones who presented governmental matters to him. Their influence in fact grew so strong in the 1530s and 1540s, that the period became referred to as the “rule of the secretaries” (*sekreteraregementet*).¹¹ The aristocracy and councillors of the realm frowned on this for decades, until in the 1620s a restructuring of the administrative system took effect. The end result was a collegiate system where secretaries’ apparent positions of power turned into more discreet forms of influence.

In the power struggle of the 1590s, most secretaries remained on the lawful king’s side, even if he did not have the full support of the ruling elite. From an administrative point of view, secretaries were the king’s personal servants and so when King Sigismund did eventually lose his battle against Duke Charles, they all lost their jobs; and none were appointed to the new chancellery that was set up in 1602. Charles, who became King Charles IX, understandably wanted to start with a clean slate, knowing full well what an important position they had in an administration. Using the experiences he had gained previously in his dukedom, he pushed for further centralization of the administration,¹² but with the same number of secretaries. Many see this as the point when the power of secretaries began to wane, and the process was completed under the next king, Gustavus Adolphus, when he eventually put the high aristocracy in control of all the major organs of the central administration.¹³

In 1611, the new king appointed Axel Oxenstierna (1583–1654) as Lord High Chancellor¹⁴ and under this man’s guidance, a new collegial form of government took shape. The Royal Chancellery was now led by Oxenstierna with help of two councillors of the realm and the royal chancellor (*hovkansler*). In effect, it meant that all the important decisions were made by members of the higher nobility now, instead of secretaries as it had been in the previous century. The other change was that, from 1618 onwards, their work was now clearly regulated by a specific job description and instructions concerning it. These reforms did not happen overnight though; in fact, it was not until 1626 that these chancellery instructions finally included such important details as their working hours. During the week they were expected to work from 6 to 10 am and from 2 to 5 pm, except on Wednesdays and Fridays when work started later at 8 am. On Saturdays, they only worked in the mornings from 6 till 10. The work done everyday was also controlled, as every secretary had to keep a record of what they had done so they could be checked by the Lord High Chancellor.¹⁵

However, these reforms to the administration¹⁶ increased the overall amount of bureaucracy that was needed in government, and this in turn increased the need for further secretaries. In the sixteenth century, however, secretaries were resented by the nobility to such an extent that they pushed through new privileges which guaranteed that all high offices in the administration were only open to the noble estate. The problem was, however, that there were not enough skilful people among the nobility capable of doing the required jobs. This potentially difficult situation actually benefited the high nobility though, who through patronage of their own ennobled secretaries could now control various parts of the administration. It was a win-win situation for both the secretaries, ensured of a job; and the

high nobility, ensured of a large number of gratefully loyal servants. The result was a new estate of noble civil servants in Sweden.

By the end of the seventeenth century, 258 civil servants had been ennobled, and 46 of these were actually secretaries. Appointment as a secretary did not instantly guarantee a noble title though; sometimes they had to wait years, and it also depended on the post's location. If it was in the central administration, the average waiting time was five years, while in local government it was 8½. The best option, career-wise, seems to have been to serve either in the Chancellery Collegium or Crown Repossessions Collegium, where the average age for an officeholder to become noble was 38. In other collegia, it was over 40, with the worst option being the Admiralty, where it was 46.

Gustavus Adolphus and Oxenstierna's first orders for the Royal Chancellery were that the Lord High Chancellor was now in charge of it.¹⁷ The first clear structural reform happened in 1618, when it was ruled that only one person was now responsible for forming an official archive in the chancellery, so that all important documents could be found quickly. The number of actual 'secretaries' may not have grown, nevertheless three skilful clerks were ordered to serve the secretary in charge of the archive – normally secretaries only got two.¹⁸ The workload nevertheless kept increasing, so that only 18 months later the number of secretaries hired by the chancellery had risen to nine. At the same time, a second clerk joined the Archive and some secretaries now had three clerks helping them, so overall the number of personnel had grown.¹⁹

By the end of the 1620s, the reforms to the Royal Chancellery had stabilized and Gustavus Adolphus paid more attention to the Council of the Realm's role in supervising the administration. The Council not only got a clear description of its precise role, but it also had to draw up minutes for every meeting, so that king could check on what had been decided later.²⁰ Henceforth reforms to the high administration continued steadily, as from 1625 to 1630 the Council of the Realm got new instructions annually.²¹ Its most important task was to ensure the safe running of the administration when the monarch was abroad leading the army. The instructions stated that six councillors of the realm needed to stay permanently in Stockholm and attend the council meetings, so there would be no interruptions in the day-to-day running of the administration.²² The number of councillors required to stay in the capital city soon became ten, however,²³ and because the workload of the higher administration was now clearly greater (with the number of council meetings increasing), so was there a need for more secretaries.²⁴

As the tasks of the Royal Chancellery steadily increased, so did the accompanying bureaucracy, and the diversity of staff it employed.²⁵ In 1639, there were amanuenses, introducers, clerks, copyists, caretakers, hired men, and carriers working alongside secretaries at the chancellery.²⁶ By 1661 the reforms at the Royal Chancellery were pretty much complete and after that it operated without any major changes for another 140 years. As the number of secretaries grew, it became evident that some kind of ranking would be necessary. For instance, 'Royal Chancellor' (*hovkansler*) became the title of the secretary in charge of all others, and 'Secretary of State' was another honorary title received by some.²⁷

The rule of secretaries (1560–1600)

In the late sixteenth century, the Swedish realm was administered by the king and whoever he graced as a close trustee at the time. Increasingly those most favoured were found to be among his non-noble secretaries, much to the resentment of the nobility.²⁸

Though most of his German-inspired reforms to the central administration were too specialized and eventually had to be abandoned, Gustavus Vasa's simple idea behind organizing the chancellery proved to be permanent. The 'Swedish department' took care of domestic correspondence, presented matters to the king, and copied and archived documents. Other ways to distribute the workload within the apartment were attempted, but most stayed on paper. However, practical specialization within the home office did take place, as some secretaries specialised in correspondence with bailiffs, others in appeals from the king's subjects, and others in 'important letters'.²⁹

Meanwhile, foreign policy was mostly the responsibility of the 'German department' of the chancellery, which maintained contacts with foreign princes as well as organized delegations and envoys.³⁰ The leading secretaries were even present in face-to-face negotiations with foreign powers, as diplomatic delegations usually consisted of two to three councillors of the realm and a secretary.³¹ Some of these experts in the chancellery, like Erik Matsson (1520s–1593) and Hans Eriksson Kranck (before 1571–after 1626), gained a status that was effectively comparable to noble office holders.

After Gustavus Vasa's "German period" the number of secretaries in the Swedish department went up as more Swedish-born men from the bourgeoisie and clergy acquired a higher education. Many of them were educated in jurisprudence, and this also made them an asset in other matters of the realm.³² Six secretaries worked permanently in the chancellery during the reigns of Eric XIV and (apparently) John III. Each was responsible for a particular policy area and assisted by scribes and copyists. In addition, there were usually seven other secretaries or "more qualified people" with varying temporary commissions.³³ Eric XIV, John III and Charles IX all nominated an aristocratic Chancellor of the Realm to lead the chancellery, but this was largely a symbolic and titular post.³⁴

When John III seized power in 1569, the chancellery underwent some serious changes. In order to make some concessions to the aristocracy as well as distinguish his rule from the previous administration, John III renamed some secretaries of the former administration mere "chancellery staff". Four one-time supporters of Eric XIV were condemned to death or replaced, and several others died of natural causes around the same time.³⁵ In the last years of John III's reign, the number and political influence of office staff in central government increased once again. This clearly coincided with the king's growing alienation from the aristocracy. Indeed, during the internal crisis that followed his death in 1592, the staff numbers went down again to ten people.³⁶

The length of secretaries' careers varied widely. They were most volatile in the German department where careers lasted typically 1–5 years, whereas they were notably longer and more established in the Swedish department.

A third of the secretaries there (14 to be precise) worked in the chancellery for 20 years or more, another third for 10–19 years, and only five for less than eight years. The most senior was a Finn called Erik Matsson, who was first employed by Gustavus Vasa and remained in service until 1593 – a total of almost 50 years. He began his career in the Chamber and was made Chamberlain (*kammarråd*) by Eric XIV. Even though he had been one of the dethroned monarch's closest servants he managed to maintain his influential position even after Erik's deposition. According to Bengt Hildebrand, this continuity testifies either to his meagre political influence, or to his personal flexibility and indispensable value in the chancellery.³⁷

Clemet Hansson Oliveblad, the son of a burgher, had almost as long a career (45 years), and so did the genealogist, Rasmus Ludvigsson (d. 1594) (41 years). Both were born in Stockholm. Oliveblad's work in the chancellery was continued by his son Ivar Clemetsson. Ludvigsson, whose nickname among colleagues was "Sapientia" or "Sapientia in confusione" had studied in Rostock in his youth. There were also some that had a career of almost 30 years even in the German department, namely Ambrosius Palmbaum, Herman Bruser (d. 1588) and Mattias Schubert (d. 1611).³⁸

The influential position of royal secretaries was a novelty in Sweden's sixteenth century administration that became most prominent under the reign of Eric XIV and had a resurgence again in John III's time. It was an important factor that rocked the delicate balance of power between the king and aristocrats in the Council of the Realm. Because of their low birth, secretaries were outside the traditional aristocratic power networks at the core of the realm. At a time when the significance of written documents rose hand in hand with the bureaucratization of state structures, all documents concerning the king went through the hands of these low-born secretaries. They composed the official documents and letters, and presented or read documents that arrived to the ruler, as well as reported on statements received from foreign envoys.³⁹

To the aristocracy's horror, their influence grew beyond this too. In principle, the chancellery was just an executive body, but it seems clear that secretaries had influence over more than just the form of the documents they composed. A massive amount of minor documents were actually left to the secretaries to compose, and some royal letters were not even signed by the king. Occasionally the secretary even made a note that the king approved the document without reading the whole text. In the reign of Eric XIV, common civil servants thus achieved previously unheard of political importance and some even had the possibility to exert real political power. According to Michael Roberts, in this way they became instruments in fostering the king's anti-aristocratic policy.⁴⁰

This was sure to provoke resentment among the aristocracy, who were used to having this kind of influence for themselves. Secretaries presented a threat simply by being physically close to the sovereign. They were constantly in a position to exert influence over his decisions, whereas the Council of the Realm gathered only occasionally with the councillors staying mostly away from the centre of power on their estates in the country.⁴¹

According to many researchers, power fell into the secretaries' hands because of the political situation in Sweden, as the sons of Gustavus Vasa were trying not to delegate their power to the aristocracy. Both Eric XIV and John III were almost paranoid about the high nobility's lust for power, so it was natural that they relied on lower estate secretaries who owed their new status personally to the king. Through them, the rulers could be sure that they had reliable control over the central administration and archived state documents.⁴²

The royal secretaries thus became known for being an institution of commoners. There were virtually no sons of noblemen as secretaries in the sixteenth century, and the secretaries were usually not ennobled during their career. Most of them came from a bourgeois background in Stockholm. Leading secretaries had the chance to become wealthy and many of them were rewarded with fiefs and ended up owning stone houses in the capital. Some of them even lent great sums of money to the Crown. In line with Michael Roberts, Ivan Svalenius sees favouring the secretaries as the sovereigns' attempt to create a functional bureaucracy by engaging the bourgeoisie in central administration to capitalize on their royalist tendencies. This connects Sweden to the overall pattern of state-building that was going on across Europe too. As the expansion of princely power was achieved at the expense of the Church and aristocracy, royalty across the continent sought political support from the burghers and merchant estates. In Sweden, they were relatively few in number and low in influence, but apparently eager to fill the political power vacuum left by the clergy after the Reformation.⁴³

Another fact worth noting is how the overall political importance of the eastern part of the realm grew. By the time John III died, 11 of the 15 secretaries were either born in Finland or connected to that part of the realm through marriage.⁴⁴ This was an effect of the war against Russia that dominated John's foreign policy, diplomacy, and inner administration. A better known result of the war was the special position and privileges that the Finnish nobility gained for being mainly in charge of the Swedish war efforts. During the next century, there were always people in the chancellery that took care of Finnish matters and understood the Finnish language.⁴⁵

There were continuous demands in the constitutional negotiations between king and aristocracy during John III's reign that the nobility be more actively involved in the chancellery; and this increased in the ensuing inner power struggle following his death. In 1585 and 1593, the Council of the Realm even had plans to recruit and train sons of the aristocracy for the king's service, but they never came to fruition. Ivan Svalenius has pointed out that, despite these plans, in practice the aristocracy were not so eager to train their sons up for royal service as secretaries. His interpretation is that they instead wished to transform the whole system by making the humble secretaries previously dependent on the king into prestigious aristocratic state officials working in the chancellery. In the following century, this finally happened and once again king and aristocracy were allied; but in comparison with the rest of Scandinavia it took a long time. In Denmark,

for instance, this kind of aristocratic-royal alliance had occurred already in the early sixteenth century.⁴⁶

However, the “rule of secretaries” need not to have been a poor choice per se. Its bad reputation stemmed from aristocracy’s fierce political denigration. It was mainly the Swedish councillors and other high aristocracy who gave secretaries as a whole a bad reputation, thus demonising the whole administrative practice and making the most prominent secretaries infamous as individuals. The aristocracy had over the centuries developed a discursive practice of nominating Swedish-born noblemen as the primary group whenever there was talk about granting privileges or appointing powerful positions. For a time, however, they were satisfied with the prominent position they gained when John III dethroned his brother in 1568.⁴⁷

After 1575, however, the king started relying on his secretaries in dealing with controversial ecclesiastical matters and economic negotiations vis-à-vis the nobility. The frustrated aristocracy targeted their consequent resentment against the secretaries. Hogenskild Bielke (1538–1605) called them “a loose party” that cannot be relied on.⁴⁸ This contemporary formulation is worth noting: since the bourgeois secretaries were outsiders to the reciprocal aristocratic networks of trust and solidarity, there were no pre-existing bonds of loyalty to guide mutual interaction. The essential elements of social relations – predictability, loyalty and trust – were missing, thus making the secretaries dubious ‘others’ in the eyes of the aristocracy.

How the secretaries actually viewed this has received far less publicity in the literature however. After all, in the history of winners, there is no space for an alternative view of the “rule of the secretaries”. Most of the secretaries were educated and had gained years of expertise in administration, unlike the high-born aristocrats, who only realized the importance of education from the secretaries’ example. As Ulf Sjödel has pointed out, members of the nobility did not traditionally even meet the qualifications for working in the chancellery, such as linguistic skills, university education and experience abroad. On the other hand, the other central body that took care of finances, the Chamber was traditionally led by an aristocratic Chamberlain (Sw. *kammarråd*).⁴⁹

As B. Boëthius has pointed out, the agency of secretaries was personal and informal in nature and therefore has generally left no historical traces. The echoes preserved of the secretaries’ own voices stress their competence, even in contrast to the aristocrats. In fact, one gets the impression that it was the secretary who took care of the actual matters in diplomatic missions, while the aristocratic members were there to give a good impression of the realm.⁵⁰ There are only some hints as to what their actual agency consisted of. One outstanding case concerns Johan Berndes (d. 1602), who allied with his colleagues and successfully elaborated for the sovereign the necessity of a milder policy, when John III had ordered the confiscation of noble properties in the newly conquered Estonian area.⁵¹

One reason behind much of the aristocracy’s bitterness towards the secretaries was that Eric XIV created a system in which they were used to

keep a check on the aristocracy; as the king suspected them of trying to gain more power. At the master controls of this machinery was procurator Jöran Persson. Eric XIV created this post for him as head of the chancellery, but in practice it meant that Persson was in control of the judicial system. Jöran Persson has become a historically well-known figure as a personification of the many grievances associated with Erik's rule. Because Persson's story has been told by his opponents, he has become a scapegoat; research has in fact shown that he may have striven to balance the whims of an unstable king. He was succeeded in his role as "minister of control" by the active Catholic and Jesuit supporter, Johan Henriksson, who became as hated as his predecessor. Henriksson had the added honour of being suspected of poisoning Eric XIV after he had been deposed and imprisoned, and was tried in court for another murder as well.⁵²

Another influential secretary was Sven Elofsson (b. 1533), son of a pastor, who was hired to the chancellery when in his 20s by Gustavus Vasa. His job as a royal trustee involved participating in several foreign missions and he gained considerable wealth. Sven Elofsson stands out for his Self-confidence, as he resigned from service under John III for religious reasons. Instead he entered Charles IX's service and remained there for the rest of his working life. In his retirement, he wrote his memoirs on recent Swedish history (1556–79) called 'Paralipomena'. This is extraordinary in the Swedish context for this time period and reflects a certain trust in his own worth and capabilities. A later publisher added a note to say, "The very well-known secretary of King Gustav and his sons". The memoirs mark the beginning of a lasting tradition that would portray Gustavus Vasa as a heroic state-builder – a measure against whom all his successors were judged, and often found to be lacking. Elofsson even went so far as to note that "together with King Gustav, the realm's vigour and well-being have been laid in tomb and are gone".⁵³

Powerful secretaries and the nobility – forming networks of agency

In 1589, the councillors of the realm openly confronted John III, and forced him to abandon his plan to bring his son, King Sigismund of Poland, back to Sweden. The humiliated king was furious, calling some of the councillors traitors, and threatening to suspend them, among other things. However, the councillors' reaction gives an idea of where lay the real power to influence decision making. They chose to send a letter to secretary Olof Sverkersson (d. after 1609) asking him to placate the enraged king, even though Sverkersson was the person who had delivered the king's infuriated answer to the aristocrats in the first place. The secretary was not on good terms with the lords; in Sweden, he was called "Vändekåpa" (coat turner) and in Finland, "Perkelsson" (devil's son). The plea was unsuccessful, but it reveals that even the aristocrats felt obliged to rely upon the disrespected secretary's help as their best option to influence the king.⁵⁴

This was by no means a unique example of noblemen collectively appealing to royal secretaries. The following year the commanders of Narva

castle wrote a letter addressed to the “secretaries and staff of the chancellery”, plainly asking them to use their “good advice and influence” on the king, so that the starved mercenaries in Narva would get provisions. At the same time the noblemen asked the secretaries to further their own cause, so that they might have their estates returned after having them confiscated the year before.⁵⁵ Even the reviled procurator, Jöran Persson, received petitions from the highest aristocracy in the 1560s.⁵⁶ It was thus necessary and practical to recognise the power of the secretaries.

An earlier, as illustrious example of relying onto secretaries’ help is Mikael Agricola (c. 1510–1557), the famous Finnish reformator and later bishop, who was in 1548 replaced as rector in Turku. Via a middleman, Agricola had a plea written to the royal secretary Olof Larsson to maintain his position. The try was, however, unsuccessful.⁵⁷

To illustrate how the secretaries mediated on behalf of the nobility’s power networks, and integrated themselves into them, it is worth looking at some more concrete examples. Here again, the secretaries’ own voice is seldomly preserved; their agency has to be reconstructed from other sources. Especially people living in the peripheries of the realm had very limited possibilities to access the king in person. A much-used strategy was to contact a secretary first and try to enlist his help in the matter at hand. This worked best for people in a considerably good social position who could rely on a strategy of reciprocal exchange, being themselves in a position to offer some valued counter services.

One such person was nobleman Arvid Henriksson Tawast (c. 1540–1599), who served throughout the 1580s as commander of Swedish infantry. He was born into Finnish nobility but made a successful career in the military and civil administration, was ennobled and became one of the leading figures in the eastern part of the realm. His mansions were located inland in the province of Tavastia.⁵⁸

In fact, Tawast’s letter collection is one of the rare ones from the Finnish part of the realm that has been even partly preserved in the archives from that era. His letters address other noblemen with the polite title “brother”, creating a symbolic brotherhood between peers. The word had a strong reference to equality and solidarity. The noble “brothers” formed a steadfast network of friends always ready to help one another. But there was one who received the honour of being called “brother” without being a noble – Secretary Hans Eriksson Kranck. This is remarkable in itself, but Tawast went even further, in 1583, when he wrote to Kranck with the plea, “I trust you, dear brother of my heart, that you are helpful [...]”.⁵⁹ The term “heart” is usually reserved for correspondence with family only, and outside his family, Tawast uses it only when talking to a couple of noblemen who seem to be his closest friends.⁶⁰

Why does this secretary occupy such a special position in Tawast’s social network? Hans Eriksson Kranck was born in Turku, the son of an office-holder in the local administration. He started working as a scribe in the chancellery from 1571, and was promoted to secretary between 1578 and 1581. Over the years he had become a specialist on politics in the Eastern Baltic, which perhaps explains why the commander of infantry was so eager

for his attention. Kranck's Finnish origins and his large family networks there made it easier for the nobility in Finland to connect with him. His importance to foreign policy was substantial. Kranck was also in with the pro-Catholic circles, becoming Sigismund's secretary in Sweden after John III's death. This means that during the civil conflict that followed, he was an extremely important supporting connection for the royalists in Finland.⁶¹

Arvid Henriksson Tawast asked for Kranck's help on two major occasions in his career. The first was when he was trying to rid himself of an assignment to build a fortress in Ingria in 1583; and the second when he tried to secure himself position as a district judge in 1590. In both cases, Tawast also wrote to the king, but he clearly made sure that he was in the secretary's good books first. Because Kranck's responses have not survived, we only have Tawast's letters to base an evaluation of their relationship on. It is clear that Tawast considered their relationship important, and it seems it was also confidential. Kranck seemed to benefit from his good relations with the nobility in the form of gifts. This reciprocal exchange is hard to distinguish from a kind of bribery or corruption. For instance, Tawast sent Kranck's wife a roll of cloth as a gift to accompany his pledge concerning his request to not have to build the fortress in Ingria. Tawast also assured his readiness in the future, promising to compensate Kranck's "benevolent brotherly goodwill with all that is good"⁶²

Another royal secretary with whom Arvid Henriksson Tawast networked was Erik Eriksson Bris (1550s–after 1623) (scribe 1587, secretary 1591–98). It is also worth noting that he was born on the Finnish side of the realm (in Helsinki).⁶³ Tawast wrote a letter to clear himself regarding severe complaints made about his actions before Duke Charles and the Council. Tawast began his undated, extensive letter by asking that the secretary "do the best for me as my good friend and be benevolent and helpful to me in this matter, as much as the law and justice permit". This shows the grey zone between help and corruption that secretaries had to navigate in their everyday agency between the king and his subjects.⁶⁴

Tawast had probably chosen Erik Eriksson to write to because of his close relations to Duke Charles. It is also interesting that later, Eriksson switched sides and became a royalist, in the end fleeing the country with his colleague Olof Sverkersson, converting to catholicism and entering Sigismund's service in Poland and Livonia.⁶⁵ The crisis in the 1590s put the royal secretaries that had cooperated with Duke Charles into an ambiguous position and forced them to take a stance. Tawast as a known royalist maybe had knowledge of Erik's inclinations already at the time of writing.

Another powerful secretary was Michel Olofsson (1550s–1615), who served Duke Charles in 1591 and was one of his most trusted men. He received pleas from a number of high-ranking royalists, and one of them was Arvid Tawast, who asked him to act as his "patron" (*fordrare*) in helping him to obtain a repayment from the Duke, to whom Tawast had loaned 1000 daler.⁶⁶ Again, Tawast promised future services in return for the secretary's good will.⁶⁷

The deviant use of rhetorics places secretaries completely apart other non-noble office holders with whom Tawast was in correspondence. Being

in a high position himself, Tawast rarely uses the word *fordrare* at all; it only occurs when addressing Marshal Claes Fleming (1535–1597), the highest-ranking person in Finland.⁶⁸ One can only assume that the practical power that royal secretaries wielded was more than a match for the foremost members of the aristocracy; and this was exactly what they constantly complained about to John III.

It is remarkable that informal influence worked the other way round too. John III also used his secretaries as brokers in his attempts to influence noblemen. If there was a fine line between noble networks and corruption, there was an even finer line between royal persuasion and blackmail. For instance, in 1576 Henrik Claesson Horn (1512–1595) had (face to face) refused the king's request to accept an assignment to negotiate with the nobility in Finland. He left the royal premises, reached his ship, and was just setting sail for Finland, when Hans Kranck arrived to remind him of what the king had asked, so Horn felt obliged to accept the assignment against his will.⁶⁹ It is hardly coincidental that John III used his most influential Finnish secretary to persuade a Finnish nobleman; on the contrary, it shows that he was aware of their mutual networks and chose the secretary he deemed would have the most clout.

Secretaries as brokers and their patronage networks

Meritocracy was an unknown concept in the Swedish administration of the seventeenth century.⁷⁰ A more important factor in deciding recruitment and careers was social connections.⁷¹ In seventeenth century Sweden, patronage was an open and morally accepted part of personal agency. In practice, this meant finding a good patron to support one's job search within the royal administration.⁷² Secretaries were no exception, in fact they were almost the opposite. Their job was so sought after by non-nobles, that by the 1650s the competition was already very stiff. Nevertheless, some skills were still of course needed.

One of the key skills secretaries have always needed is the ability to protect information. And the secrets they were charged to keep were often more intangible and troublesome than what the royal guards were protecting. In 1592, Duke Charles (later to become King Charles IX) gave orders as to how his chancellery should be organised. The first regulation dealt with the secrecy of files, and orders were given as to which secretaries should keep the key for the files.⁷³ But before a secretary could be given such key, the king had to know if he could trust that person. Trust has always played a big part in human relations and always been greatly valued.

By the start of the seventeenth century, the "reign of the secretaries" was but a distant memory for most of the high nobility. They certainly did not want those days back, and the best way to keep the secretaries under their thumb was through patronage. By using patronage networks both parties got what they wanted, but it required reciprocal trust with both sides expected to abide by existing social and moral codes. In patronage relationships, trust was built by repeated actions without self-interest.⁷⁴ Edvard Ehrensteen

(1620–1686) was born in a lower order clerical family, but with his social skills he managed to get connected to the high nobility and eventually with loyal service he was able to gain the trust of the King Charles X Gustav. He became a royal secretary and the king's trusted man who advised him on almost every matter and prepared all the important documents. He was described as a trustworthy, quick-witted, experienced servant, but his best feature was the ability to create social and unofficial (intelligence) networks to access information.⁷⁵ A similar kind of description was given to the other secretary from the king's chancery, Johan Fagraeus (Strömfelt) (1587–1644), whose qualities were alertness, practicality, and trustworthiness.⁷⁶ Access to secrets and keeping a secret was part of the operational environment especially for those secretaries whose responsibilities were to record important meetings. For example, all the Council of the Realm meetings needed to be transcribed, exactly as matters were discussed in the meeting (with no editing) and more often than not, members did not agree on things. Because of the nature of these minutes, secretaries were not allowed to discuss them with anyone either, without clear instruction.⁷⁷

In the seventeenth century, the pen became as important a tool as the sword; and gaining skills in writing and organizing documents meant good career opportunities. The whole government was run via written documents (such as letters of order, instructions, donations, and letters of attorney), and letter writing had become a fixed part of everyday life. It helped maintain or create social relationships.⁷⁸ Because letters were such an important channel for passing information, secretaries were vital in high-level administrative work. In practice this meant that secretaries had to read all incoming letters, if they were not indicated as private, and then present them to the officeholder. All outgoing letters were written by secretaries too, if the matter was not really private.⁷⁹ This practical aspect of secretarial work placed them at the nexus of flows of information crucial for the exercise of power. They were also in a place where they could show their trustworthiness or exploit it for their own good. Being a secretary was thus a source of individual personal agency, and there was the chance that the job could further their own personal goals in life.

The vast expansion of Sweden's administration at the beginning of the seventeenth century created a good market for the secretaries, as the administration was always short of quality secretaries. When Gustavus Adolphus stepped outside Sweden to lead his army in 1621, he ordered nine Councillors of the Realm to stay in Stockholm and rule the country through the Council.⁸⁰ In a few years the meetings of the Council of the Realm went from only a few meetings per month to over 20.⁸¹ The workload of secretaries was growing and the demand for new recruits was constantly there in the 1630s and 1640s. This growing need was already being seen in the growing salaries that the Royal Chancellery had to find for the secretaries that it did already have.⁸²

In the seventeenth century, the privileges of the nobility guaranteed them all the high administrative offices in the government. But it was also now accepted that secretaries had a fair share of official power in their hands and their job was well respected, to such an extent that it was now considered

a position worthy of a noble. But the situation in the sixteenth and at the turn of the seventeenth century was that none of the secretaries were nobility. This situation did not sit well among the mindset of the nobility, but the problem was they could not offer good secretaries from among themselves, as their education and goals were still centred around the military. The solution was thus to ennoble the best secretaries, or at least those who had the best connections – with the idea that ‘making them one of us’ would be the best way for the nobility to regain some influence.⁸³ Transforming the environment in this way created totally new ways to advance or fail the careers of secretaries. Patronage became the key element in starting and advancing secretaries’ careers, and both sides benefited from the arrangement. The commoners who once clamoured for a secretarial position now got social status too, while nobles got loyal clients. The everyday agency of secretaries thus became less formally defined as it became subject to the more informal networks of patronage, and the patron-client relationship.

The number of ennobled civil officials rose steeply after the 1620s. In fact, almost half of all ennoblements in the seventeenth century were of civil servants and 26% of that half were of those in the central administration. Working in government administration generally meant a good chance of getting ennobled, because 66% of those who were not ennobled for being in the military came from the administration or judiciary. If we include the diplomats in this figure – they usually worked as secretaries before – the number goes up to 71%.⁸⁴ In France there was a similar practice. The distinguished position of a *secrétaire du roi*, writer of the royal documents, was seen to be so prestigious, that whoever bought this venal office, got nobility for their whole family. Thus it was a highly valued and understandably expensive post to buy. We can see this, from the Swedish perspective, as another example of a practice which, as Collins has mooted,⁸⁵ further enhanced the monopoly of noble power rather than undermining it – as others have sometimes suggested.

Almost everybody then who worked as a secretary in the Royal Chancellery from the 1620s onwards was ennobled.⁸⁶ The most secure way to receive a noble title was to work as personal secretary to the Lord High Chancellor of the Realm – Axel Oxenstierna. Anyone who held this position went on to be ennobled.⁸⁷ The expansion of the Royal Chancellery and its responsibilities happened almost in tandem with the rise in noble civil servants, albeit with a delay of about two years to allow for the ennoblement. Nils Tungal (1592–1665), who had been trained at Uppsala university and abroad, followed his older brother Lars Tungal (1582–1633) into the Royal Chancellery. Lars had been appointed as a secretary in 1621 and had a solid position in the chancellery.⁸⁸ In 1625, Nils was appointed as a clerk and almost immediately he was relocated to work for Axel Oxenstierna.⁸⁹ In addition to his work as a clerk he also had to do some work as an official representative, but throughout all this time the cooperation between Tungal and Oxenstierna stayed very cold.⁹⁰

But Nils Tungal’s luck turned quickly, because in 1626 Axel Oxenstierna had to travel abroad to take care of governmental business, and the Royal Chancellery had two nobles put in charge of it at the same time. The first,

Carl Eriksson Oxenstierna died early in 1629, and Per Gustafsson Banér (1588–1644), the second noble, singlehandedly took over responsibilities of the Royal Chancellery as Vice-Chancellor of the Realm. In this time, Per Banér had become Tungel's patron and in October 1629, Tungel was appointed as his secretary and worked as Banér's close subordinate and client.⁹¹

But Per Banér and Nils Tungel's patron-client relationship took a dramatic turn in the summer of 1644. During a meeting of the Council of the Realm, Banér got seriously ill. He bravely participated in meetings for the next two days, but after three weeks he died at the age of 56. With the loss of Per Banér, Nils Tungel lost his patron, which not only affected his present job but also his career and life in general.⁹² He had to make quick decisions and act accordingly, so by letter he informed the Lord High Chancellor, Per Brahe the younger (1602–1680), that Per Banér had passed away.⁹³ This information did not come as a surprise for Brahe, because he had been present at those meetings when Banér got sick. The real reason to approach Brahe was, of course, to let him know that he was ready and willing to serve him and was asking him to be his patron.⁹⁴

This illustrates how social networks had become essential for secretaries to operate. Nils Tungel had to rebuild his own because without a high profile patron he could not carry out his job, let alone advance his career. This urgency made him approach Per Brahe again just few days later, even though he did not have anything new to report, perhaps just to show his willingness to serve the Count. In his previous letter to him he had simply addressed him by his title, but in this one he was already describing Brahe as a "magnificent patron."⁹⁵ Nils Tungel survived a predicament which could have cost him his career and cut off his agency;⁹⁶ so to prove his worth to Brahe he began to report on what was going on in the Royal Chancellery and Stockholm in general.⁹⁷ This relationship benefited both parties: Brahe's patronage network gave Tungel a social security, while Brahe was able to keep tabs on the flow of information in the capital, now that he had Tungel listening in. Perhaps most important for Brahe though, was that through Tungel he was able to influence the king's decisions, as he was physically present when matters were decided and could relay this unofficial information back.⁹⁸ This extra dimension to the work of a secretary was a key element and created a major part of their agency. In fact, this kind of influence was so valuable that sometimes secretaries were able to profit from it further.⁹⁹

Secretaries usually acted as a broker, because their instructions usually came from their patrons. Sometimes these instructions were vague: for example, Tungel reported to Brahe that he would do as much he could to get Brahe's bailiff (*hopman*) ennobled;¹⁰⁰ other times, when it was a matter of appointments, the instructions were more specific. In 1658, Per Brahe, as Chancellor of the Royal Academy of Turku, informed the king that there would be an opening for a history and politics professor at the Academy, and that the Academy had elected two candidates for the position. One of the nominees was Brahe's client and the other belonged to a rival's network. Brahe naturally sang the praises of his own client and merely mentioned the other by name, so that there would be no misunderstanding as to who the

king should appoint for this ‘open’ job.¹⁰¹ Just to make doubly sure though, Brahe contacted the king’s secretary and let him know too, at the same time instructing him to persuade the king (as if it were his own opinion) who the best man for the job was.¹⁰² For secretaries acting as a broker in this way, it was a chance to grow their agency by gaining both the king’s and the patron’s trust, but there was always a risk that they might misjudge the political situation and end up limiting their agency in the future. In this respect, their power was largely based on their social skills and sensitivity to situations in which decisions were made and where they were often personally present.¹⁰³

Per Brahe had a great need for information, because of his position as second in rank to the king. To be able to act intelligently in his many different offices he needed a constant flow of information about what was going on. It was particularly important that he had access to the information nexus of the Royal Chancellery. All the correspondence concerning the kingdom’s affairs went through it, via the secretaries there. Brahe was not able to personally tap into this information flow all the time, however, because of the other social commitments to attend to. Every year around November time, for example, he travelled with his family from the capital down to his fiefdom in Visingsborg,¹⁰⁴ so he had to rely on his client Nils Tungel¹⁰⁴ to report on all the important happenings in Stockholm.

Tungel was very happy to be able to serve Brahe in this way, it seems judging from the kinds of rhetorical expressions he uses in his letters to his patron.¹⁰⁵ They not only reveal that this was one source of his agency (giving him strong status among other secretaries and inside the administrative hierarchy), but also what kind of social codes Tungel had to use to fulfil his role as Brahe’s client. Tungel’s reports included information on the movements of the Swedish navy among other war efforts. For instance, he vividly described Admiral Claes Fleming’s unfortunate sea battle in which he was fatally wounded, his struggle for life lasting no more than two hours before he finally died at 6 am on 27 July 1644. In the same letter he also included an extensive description of the political situation in Central Europe.¹⁰⁶

From the kingdom’s point of view, the war news was important, but Per Brahe was also very keen to hear about the movements of important people. Tungel had to report when foreign ambassadors arrived or left Stockholm and where they were being accommodated. Sometimes Tungel also even reported on what kind of catering was being arranged.¹⁰⁷ But most important of all was to report on the movements of the ruler, because the power was very much tied to the physical presence of the monarch; although Tungel only reports on the movements of foreign leaders once, when he informs Brahe of the death of Czar Michael I of Russia and the succession of his son.¹⁰⁸

Per Brahe also wanted to monitor the core of administrative power, so Tungel’s job was to inform him of all the movements of the councillors of the realm, of who was dying, and of any new appointments made.¹⁰⁹ All this affected everybody’s personal agency, because the core of the high power network was so small. Any shift in personal relations or positions there could have an effect on the larger operational environment. Tungel’s personal

reports also usually included copies of the most important documents that had arrived in the Royal Chancellery. He did not feel that his task of fulfilling Brahe's wishes had been an onerous one, as only once he writes that he is in a rush because of a heavy workload.¹¹⁰

With the right social connections, Nils Tungal was able to advance his career even though he had lots of troubles in his personal life. Thanks to Per Brahe he was able to push his personal agency further than many of his other colleagues, but even his agency had limits. He could not help but get himself mixed up in one too many misdemeanours from which his mighty patron could not save him anymore. The cost of crossing the limits of his personal agency were huge. Nils Tungal lost his job and reputation and lived the rest of his life in obscurity. Rather than being remembered as a great royal secretary and court chancellor, people remember him more for his failings.¹¹¹

From formal power to informal power

In major European countries, the sixteenth century was the era of powerful secretaries, working in close contact with the monarchs.¹¹² In this chapter, we have examined how this changed in Sweden in the long run, especially after the governmental reformation in the 1620s. It has been assumed that the power of secretaries diminished as administrative structures expanded. On closer examination, the actual differences appear to lie in the change of the operational surroundings which expanded remarkably, thus making the secretaries less visible within the government.

The specific situation in Sweden was due to the aristocracy's concern in the late sixteenth century with the "rule of the secretaries". In the eyes of the aristocracy, the practical but informal power wielded by these commoners that remained outside the aristocratic networks of trust and loyalty was a central administrative problem. As they saw it, secretaries were a hindrance to aristocratic endeavours at creating a governmental structure that would secure for the aristocracy a formal, recognised position and actual influence in central government and the decision-making processes.

For kings, secretaries were seen as trustworthy because they were personally dependent on the king for their social status, whereas for the nobility, they represented a threat. The solution was to try to find a way to somehow assimilate the secretaries into aristocratic networks. In the sixteenth century, the nobility's strategy of calling them "brothers" or "patrons" and establishing reciprocal exchange relations with them were attempts in this direction. During the following century, this took the form of a system of patronage.

This resulted in the administrative reforms of the 1620s made between the king and aristocracy. The power exercised by the royal secretaries was now shrouded, but it did not necessarily disappear at all. Their agency simply became more informal, to suit the new administrative structure. The question remains as to whether the "reign of the secretaries" really had been a problem, or whether it was just a convenient target for the aristocracy who

felt marginalized from the real sources of power. As far as the secretaries themselves were concerned, they saw themselves as educated, experienced, and seasoned practitioners, who were true servants of the king and the backbone of Sweden's administration.

The 1620s in Sweden marked the beginning of a new era as some members of the nobility decided to serve the king as civil servants rather than militarily in the king's army. At the same time, the noble estate was infused with new blood with the many civil servants that were ennobled as the state's governing apparatus grew. This change had a huge effect on the agency of secretaries. Even though they may have lost their direct power, they gained social recognition for the time period when it really mattered; and they became part of a large social group in the vastly growing administrative machinery where influence was real power. In some senses, secretaries' operational environment actually grew larger, so their potential for agency was increased, but operating inside it became more complicated when they had to navigate so carefully the private and public spheres of patronage networks – personal connections were valuable and social skills vital.

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NOTES

- 1 Persons employed in the Royal Chancellery to carry out correspondence and administrative tasks.
- 2 See Figure 1. The administration and legislature of Sweden 1560–1720 in *Personal Agency and State Building in Sweden, c. 1560–1720: Approaches and Perspectives* by Petri Karonen and Marko Hakanen, p. 26.
- 3 Richard Bonney, *The European Dynastic States 1494–1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 334; Svante Norrhem, *Uppkomlingarna. Kansli-tjänstemännen i 1600-talets Sverige och Europa* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell international, 1993), pp. 29–31; Michael Roberts, *The Early Vasas. A History of Sweden, 1523–1611* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 436–437.
- 4 Ivan Svalenius, *Rikskansliet i Sverige 1560–1592* (Stockholm: Riksarkivet, 1991).
- 5 Norrhem, *Uppkomlingarna*, p. 165.
- 6 Francesco Sansovino, *Del Secretario, o vero formulario de lettere missive e responsive* (unknown publisher, 1569; first edition by Francesco Rampazzetto, Venetia, 1564), p. 1.
- 7 Richard Bonney, *The European Dynastic States*, pp. 331–334; Christopher Black, *Early Modern Italy: A Social History* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 96; Nancy Kollmann, *Crime and Punishment in Early Modern Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 50.
- 8 Björn Asker, *Hur riket styrdes. Förvaltning, politik och arkiv 1520–1920* (Stockholm: Riksarkivet, 2007), p. 80; Petri Karonen, *Pohjoisen suurvalta. Ruotsi ja Suomi 1521–1809* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 2014), p. 83; Dick Harrison, Bo Eriksson, *Norstedts Sveriges historia 1350–1600* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 2010), p. 450.
- 9 Harrison - Eriksson, *Norstedts Sveriges historia*, pp. 454–455; Roberts, *The Early Vasas*, p. 436.

- 10 Nils Herlitz, *Grunddragen av det svenska statsskickets historia* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & Söners Förlag, 1928), p. 75; Bonney, *The European Dynastic States*, pp. 331–334; Lars-Olof Larsson, *Arvet efter Gustav Vasa. En berättelse om fyra kungar och ett rike* (Stockholm: Prisma, 2005).
- 11 Roberts, *The Early Vasas*, p. 42; Ulf Sjödel, *Infödda svenska män av ridderskapet och adeln: kring ett tema i Sveriges inre historia under 1500- och 1600-talen* (Lund: Gleerup, 1976), p. 13.
- 12 Mats Hallenberg, Johan Holm, Dan Johansson, “Organization, Legitimation, Participation. State formation as a dynamic process – the Swedish example, c. 1523–1680”, *Scandinavian Journal of History* 33, 2008, pp. 255–256.
- 13 Svalenius, *Rikskansliet i Sverige*, pp. 58–59.
- 14 The office had been empty after Svante Bielke died in 1609.
- 15 Nils Forssell, “Kansliet från Gustav II Adolf till år 1660”. In: Wieselgren, Oscar, Forssell, Nils, Munthe, Arne, Forssell, Oscar, Liljedahl, Ragnar (eds), *Kungl. Maj:ts kanslis historia del I: kansliets uppkomst, organisation och utveckling intill 1840* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells boktryckeri, 1935), p. 25.
- 16 See figure 1, *Approaches and Perspectives* by Petri Karonen and Marko Hakanen, p. 26.
- 17 *Samling av instruktioner rörande den civila förvaltning i Sverige och Finnland* (ICF) (Stockholm: Hörbergiska boktryckeriet, 1856), pp. 295–297. A few years later the job descriptions and arrangements were reorganized by order of the king, because the number of secretaries was expanding. ICF, pp. 298–299.
- 18 ICF, pp. 300–302.
- 19 ICF, pp. 302–305.
- 20 N. A. Kullberg, “Förord”. In: Bergh, Severin (red.), *Svenska riksrådets protokoll i 1620–1629* (Stockholm: Kungl. boktryckeriet P. A. Norstedt & söner, 1878), pp. 7–10.
- 21 *Svenska riksrådets protokoll 1878–1959* (Stockholm: Kungl. boktryckeriet P. A. Norstedt & söner, 1878–1959), I, pp. I–XLVI.
- 22 *Svenska riksrådets protokoll*, I, pp. IX–X.
- 23 *Svenska riksrådets protokoll*, I, p. XIII.
- 24 In 1622 and 1624 one secretary would introduce matters on the agenda, but after that the number starts to increase steadily. By 1626, three secretaries were doing this, in 1627 the number was six, in 1628 eight, and in 1629 there were nine secretaries doing the job. *Svenska riksrådets protokoll*, I.
- 25 The growing diversity of jobs is reflected in the wages: Lord High Chancellor of the Realm 4000–6000 silver daler, Councillor of the Realm 1000–1500, Chancellor 1200–1800, Secretary of State 1000–1500, secretary 800–1200, presenting official 400–750, clerk of Lord High Chancellor 300–450, actuary 450, registrar 400, office clerk 250–375, copyist 150–225, hired man 100–150, and courier 52–78. Forssell, *Kungl. Maj:ts kanslis historia*, p. 41.
- 26 Administrative personnel rapidly expanded from 1620s onwards. Ingvar Elmroth, *För kung och fosterland: studier i den svenska adelns demografi och offentliga funktioner 1600–1900* (Lund: Gleerup, 1981), pp. 207–209.
- 27 Forssell, *Kungl. Maj:ts kanslis historia*, pp. 35–36, 47–48; James Cavallie, Jan Lindroth (eds), *Riksarkivets beståndsöversikt, Del 1: Medeltiden, Kungl. Maj:ts kansli, Utrikesförvaltningen. Band 2*. Skrifter utgivna av Svenska Riksarkivet 8 (Stockholm: Riksarkivet, 1996b), p. 582; James Cavallie, Jan Lindroth (eds), *Riksarkivets beståndsöversikt, Del 1: Medeltiden, Kungl. Maj:ts kansli, Utrikesförvaltningen. Band 1*. Skrifter utgivna av Svenska Riksarkivet 8 (Stockholm: Riksarkivet, 1996a), p. 62.
- 28 Nils Edén, *Om centralregeringens organisation under den äldre Vasatiden (1523–1594)* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1899), p. 209; Herlitz,

- Grunddragen*, p. 75; Jerker Rosén, *Svensk historia I: tiden före 1718* (Stockholm: Svenska Bokförlaget, 1962), p. 445.
- 29 Edén, *Om centralregeringens organisation*, pp. 54–57, 98–107, 210–214; Pentti Renvall, John E. Roos, “Keskitetyt hallintolaitoksen kehitys?”. In: Suolahti, Gunnar et al. (eds), *Suomen Kulttuurihistoria II* (Jyväskylä: Gummerus, 1934), pp. 139–140; Svalenius, *Rikskansliet i Sverige*, pp. 28–29, 37–44; Karonen, *Pohjoisen suurvalta*, p. 83.
 - 30 Svalenius, *Rikskansliet i Sverige*, p. 29; Harrison – Eriksson, *Norstedts Sveriges historia*, p. 450.
 - 31 Wilhelm Tham, *Den svenska utrikespolitikens historia I: 2. 1560–1648* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt, 1960), pp. 9–10.
 - 32 Edén, *Om centralregeringens organisation*, pp. 103–105; Sjødell, *Infödda svenska män*, p. 13.
 - 33 Edén, *Om centralregeringens organisation*, pp. 203–209; Svalenius, *Rikskansliet i Sverige*, pp. 15, 27–37. The number of secretaries seems to drop in John III’s early reign, but according to Svalenius, this is likely to be an illusion due to different principles in naming the people in salary registers.
 - 34 Asker, *Hur riket styrdes*, p. 80. Councillor Nils Gyllenstierna was appointed Chancellor of the Realm (Sw. *rikskansler*) by Eric XIV and remained in the post for 30 years (1560–90). Councillor Erik Sparre was the next to receive the title in 1593 from Sigismund and to keep it during the inner crisis until his execution in 1600. Edén, *Om centralregeringens organisation*, pp. 195–201.
 - 35 Svalenius, *Rikskansliet i Sverige*, p. 15; Larsson, *Arvet efter Gustav Vasa*.
 - 36 Roberts, *The Early Vasas*, p. 307; Svalenius, *Rikskansliet i Sverige*, pp. 34–35.
 - 37 *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* (SBL), A–Stålhammar (Riksarkivet, Stockholm, 1917–2013) (Bengt Hildebrand), Erik Matsson, [<http://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/artikel/15404>], accessed November 24, 2015; Svalenius, *Rikskansliet i Sverige*, pp. 29–30.
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 - 41 Rosén, *Svensk historia*, p. 445; Roberts, *The Early Vasas*, p. 307; Svalenius, *Rikskansliet i Sverige*, p. 51; Larsson, *Arvet efter Gustav Vasa*.
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 - 44 Svalenius, *Rikskansliet i Sverige*, p. 57.
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 - 47 Sjødell, *Infödda svenska män*, pp. 11–21; Svalenius, *Rikskansliet i Sverige*, pp. 16–17, 52.
 - 48 Svalenius, *Rikskansliet i Sverige*, p. 6: “lösa parti som man litet på byggja kan”, p. 52; Roberts, *The Early Vasas*, p. 307.

- 49 Sjödell, *Infödda svenska män*, pp. 14–15; Svalenius, *Rikskansliet i Sverige*, pp. 6–7.
- 50 Svalenius, *Rikskansliet i Sverige*, pp. 51–52 presents some examples of the secretaries' own points of view.
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- 53 Sven Elofsson, “Paralipomena”. In: *Handlingar rörande Skandinaviens historia XII* (Stockholm: Elméns och Granbergs Tryckeri, 1825; original 1599), p. 122: “samt med honom i grafven är ock Riksens karskhet och välmåga nederlagd och försvunnen”; Larsson, *Arvet efter Gustav Vasa*.
- 54 SBL (Ivan Svalenius), Olof Sverkersson Elfkarl (Potomander) [<http://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/artikel/7750>], accessed November 9, 2015; Pentti Renvall, *Klaus Fleming und der Finnische Adel in den Anfangsphasen der Krise der neunziger Jahre der 16. Jahrhunderts* (Turku: Turun Yliopisto, 1939), p. 56; Larsson, *Arvet efter Gustav Vasa*.
- 55 SRA, Kanslitjänstemäns koncept och mottagna skrivelser, vol. 9, Arvid Tawast, Henrik Abel (von Minden) and Erik Johansson to the secretaries and staff of the chancellery, November 8, 1590, Narva: “secreterare och Cantzelij förwanter”, “der god råd och tilskyndhen”.
- 56 SBL (Jerker Rosén), Jöran Persson [<http://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/artikel/12296>], accessed November 9, 2015.
- 57 Viljo Tarkiainen, Kari Tarkiainen, *Mikael Agricola, Suomen uskonpuhdistaja* (Helsinki, Otava, 1985), pp. 86–87, 315–316; Anu Lahtinen, “Mikael Agricola aatelisvallan verkostoissa”. In: Häkkinen, Kaisa, Vaittinen, Tanja (toim.), *Agricolan aika* (Helsinki, BTJ Kustannus, 2007), pp. 31–32.
- 58 Ulla Koskinen, *Hyvien miesten valtakunta. Arvid Henrikinpoika Tawast ja aatelin toimintakulttuuri 1500-luvun lopun Suomessa*. Bibliotheca Historica 132 (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 2011).
- 59 SRA Arvid Henriksson Tawasts samling (AHTs), vol. 1, Arvid Tawast to Hans Kranck, 2nd of June, 1583: “Jag förseer mig och till tig min h[järtats] käre broor attu är behielpig”.
- 60 Koskinen, *Hyvien miesten valtakunta*, pp. 137–142.
- 61 Svalenius, *Rikskansliet i Sverige*, pp. 100–101.
- 62 SRA AHTs1, Arvid Tawast to Hans Kranck, 2nd of June, 1583: “din welwillig brod:ligit benegenhett mz alt gott förskylle och förtiene”; Koskinen, *Hyvien miesten valtakunta*, pp. 381–382.
- 63 SBL (Erik Anthoni), Erik Eriksson Bris [<http://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/artikel/15398>], accessed November 9, 2015; Svalenius, *Rikskansliet i Sverige*, pp. 59, 72, 97–98, 100–101.
- 64 SRA AHTs1, Arvid Tawast to Erik Eriksson, undated: “i wille göre wäll sosom mijn godhe wän och ware migh i saachen Befordelig och hielplig så mykit lagh och rätt kan medgifue”.
- 65 SBL (Erik Anthoni), Erik Eriksson Bris [<http://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/artikel/15398>], accessed November 9, 2015.
- 66 SBL (Lars-Olof Skoglund), Mickel Olofsson [<http://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/artikel/9344>], accessed November 9, 2015.
- 67 SRA AHTs1, Arvid Tawast to Michel Olofsson, undated.
- 68 Koskinen, *Hyvien miesten valtakunta*, pp. 123–124.
- 69 SRA AHTs1, Henrik Claesson (Horn) to Arvid Tawast, 3rd of February, 1576, Haapaniemi.

- 70 See more about professionalism, *Approaches and Perspectives* by Petri Karonen and Marko Hakanen, p. 26.
- 71 For example Professor Michael Gyldenstolpe (1608/9–1670) urged his son Nils to advance his father's matters by asking help from the secretaries Johan Schäder (who was working as a personal secretary of Per Brahe) and Henrik Tawast (who was working in the Royal Chancellery). A. A. A. Laitinen, *Michael Wexionius* (Helsinki, K. F. Puromiehen kirjapaino, 1912) pp. 137–138; Marko Hakanen, "Career Opportunities. Patron-Client Relations Used in Advancing Academic Careers". In Karonen, Petri (ed.), *Hopes and Fears for the Future in Early Modern Sweden, 1500–1800* (Helsinki, The Finnish Literature Society, 2009), pp. 112–114.
- 72 S. N. Eisenstadt, Louis Roniger, *Patrons, Clients and Friends. Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 205; Norrhem, *Uppkomlingarna*, p. 165; Marko Hakanen, Ulla Koskinen, "From 'friends' to 'patrons': Transformations in the social power structure as reflected in the rhetoric of personal letters in sixteenth- and seventeenth- century Sweden", *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, 2009, pp. 15–17; Hakanen, "Career Opportunities", pp. 100–101.
- 73 ICF, pp. 294–295.
- 74 Bernard Barber, *The Logic and Limits of Trust* (New Brunswick & New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1983), pp. 9, 16–21; Norrhem, *Uppkomlingarna*, p. 52; Piotr Sztompka, *Trust: A Sociological Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 99–101.
- 75 SBL (S. U. Palme): Edvard Philipsson Ehrensteen [<https://sok.riksarkivet.se/SBL/Presentation.aspx?id=16711>], accessed October 27, 2015.
- 76 SBL (Roger Axelsson): Strömfelt, släkt [<https://sok.riksarkivet.se/SBL/Presentation.aspx?id=34602>], accessed October 27, 2015.
- 77 Severin Bergh, *Rådsprotokoll och därmed jämförliga i Riksarkivet förvarade protokoll. Meddelanden från Svenska riksarkivet* (Stockholm: Riksarkivet, 1912), p. 293.
- 78 Lars-Arne Norborg, *Källor till Sveriges historia* (Lund: Gleerups, 1968), pp. 217–218; Toivo J. Paloposki, *Suomen historian lähteet* (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 1972), pp. 161–167; Stina Hansson, *Svensk brevskrivning: teori och tillämpning* (Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet, 1988), pp. 39–41; Anu Lahtinen, *Sopeutuvat, neuvottelevat, kapinalliset: naiset toimijoina Flemingin sukupiirissä 1470–1620*. *Bibliotheca historica* 108 (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 2007), pp. 30–31; Janne Haikari, *Isännän, Jumalan ja rehellisten miesten edessä. Vallankäyttö ja virkamiesten toimintaympäristöt satakuntalaisessa maaseutuyhteisössä 1600-luvun jälkipuoliskolla*. *Bibliotheca Historica* 121 (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 2009), p. 28. Apart from communication letters functioned also as an official document of donations or appointment to the office etc. Seija Tiisala, "Power and Politeness: Languages and Salutation Formulas in Correspondence Between Sweden and the German Hanse", *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, 5:2, 193–206, p. 194.
- 79 Minna Nevala, "Accessing Politeness Axes: Forms of Address and Terms of Reference in Early English Correspondence", *Journal of Pragmatics* 36, p. 2127; Terttu Nevalainen, "Letter Writing: Introduction", *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, 5:2, p. 187.
- 80 Bergh, *Rådsprotokoll*, pp. 279–280. The Council minutes can be partly compared to records of received and sent letter records in the sixteenth century, because the Council of the Realm's duty was to issue administrative instructions. Meetings usually began by secretaries reading out loud received letters.
- 81 Bergh, *Rådsprotokoll*, p. 287.
- 82 Forssell, *Kungl. Maj:ts kanslis historia*, pp. 73–76.
- 83 Norrhem, *Uppkomlingarna*, p. 36, see also p. 183; Ingvar Elmroth, *Från överklass till medelklass: studier i den sociala dynamiken inom Sveriges adel 1600–1900*, (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2001), pp. 142–144.

- 84 For more on the professions of ennobled civil servants, see Elmroth, *Från överklass till medelklass*, p. 145.
- 85 James B. Collins, *The State in Early Modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. xxxii.
- 86 Bergh, *Rådsprotokoll*, pp. 283–284.
- 87 Forssell, *Kungl. Maj:ts kanslis historia*, p. 44. Before the 1620s, only six civil servants were ennobled, two from the Royal Court, two from local administration, and two from the judiciary. Fahlbeck 1898, pp. 184–185.
- 88 Forssell, *Kungl. Maj:ts kanslis historia*, p. 29; Gustaf Elgenstierna, *Riddarhusets stamtavlor* (Elektronisk resurs, version 3.0. Riddarhusdirektionen, Stockholm, 2002), Tungel, Table 2 and 3.
- 89 Forssell, *Kungl. Maj:ts kanslis historia*, p. 30.
- 90 Anders Fryxell, *Berättelser ur svenska historien* (Stockholm: Åttonde delen. L. J. Hierta, 1838), p. 178; Forssell, *Kungl. Maj:ts kanslis historia*, p. 43.
- 91 Forssell, *Kungl. Maj:ts kanslis historia*, pp. 29–30.
- 92 SBL, Band 2, p. 665; NFL II 1904, p. 834; *Svenska riksrådets protokoll*, X pp. 551–553.
- 93 Nils Tungel wrote that Banér died on 12th of July, a day later than other biographical sources maintain.
- 94 Nils Tungel to Per Brahe 16th of July, 1644, SRA, SS II, E8150.
- 95 Nils Tungel to Per Brahe 24th of July, 1644, SRA, SS II, E8150.
- 96 Patron-client-relationship might broke, if the other party could not fulfil the expectations of the role. Look for example the case of Israel Schultz. Fabian Persson, “Att leva på hoppet: om misslyckade klienten”, *Historisk tidskrift*, 112, pp. 316–329.
- 97 Nils Tungel to Per Brahe 8th of August, 1644, SRA, SS II, E8150.
- 98 Per Brahe to royal secretary 21st of February, 1658 PBB I 1932, 50. Cf. Ulla Koskinen, “Friends and Brothers: Rhetoric of Friendship as a Medium of Power in Late 16th-Century Sweden and Finland”, *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 30, 2005, p. 245.
- 99 Royal secretaries were well aware of their possibilities to influence and use their informal personal power. Usually people who were about to get their ennoblement documents from the Royal Chancellery had to pay for the secretaries. Nils Tungel was no exception in this matter. Forssell, *Kungl. Maj:ts kanslis historia*, pp. 78–80.
- 100 Nils Tungel to Per Brahe 10th of December, 1648 SRA, SS II, E8150.
- 101 Per Brahe to King Charles X Gustav 19th of February, 1658 PBB I 1922, p. 49.
- 102 Per Brahe to the royal secretary 21st of February, 1658 PBB I 1922, p. 50.
- 103 Nils Runeby, *Monarchia mixta: maktfördelningsdebatt i Sverige under den tidigare stormaktstiden*. Studia Historica Upsaliensia VI (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 1962), pp. 392–404. For more on the importance of secretaries, see also Koskinen, “Friends and Brothers”, p. 245.
- 104 Brahe 1806, pp. 48, 51–52, 54, 70, 78, 81–82. The letters Tungel sent to Brahe were usually dated between December and February. SRA, SS II, E8150.
- 105 Nils Tungel to Per Brahe 10th of December, 1645, SRA, SS II, E8150.
- 106 Nils Tungel to Per Brahe 8th of August, 1644, SRA, SS II, E8150.
- 107 Nils Tungel to Per Brahe 24th of July, 1644, 10th of January, 1646, SRA, SS II, E8150.
- 108 Nils Tungel to Per Brahe 10th of December, 1645, SRA, SS II, E8150.
- 109 Nils Tungel to Per Brahe 16th of July, 1644, 10th of December, 1645, 13th of December, 1645, 10th of December, 1648 and in January 1656, SRA, SS II, E8150.
- 110 Nils Tungel to Per Brahe 7th of February, 1646, SRA, SS II, E8150.
- 111 Svenskt biografiskt handlexikon: [<http://runeberg.org/sbh/b0644.html>]; Nordisk familjebok: [<http://runeberg.org/nfcj/0185.html>]
- 112 Norrhem, *Uppkomlingarna*, p. 163.

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