

Designations of Origin in 15th Century Stockholm

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Abstract

In this paper, designations of origin referring to persons living in Stockholm, Sweden, from 1483 to 1492 are analysed. They indicate that the individuals so designated mainly came from Finland (then a part of Sweden), Denmark and a few Swedish provinces. It is clear that the vast majority of immigrants to the city were not known by designations of origin, and that the designations used were hardly representative in terms of the origins of the immigrants at large. As reasons for this lack of representativeness, perceptions of various regions and groups and the respective places held by the designations of origin in a lexicon or onomasticon are proposed.

1. Introduction

I am currently in the process of investigating name phrases in Stockholm around the year 1500. By the term *name phrase*, I mean a noun phrase that designates an individual, typically with a personal name as its head. (See Ryman 2008. The corresponding Swedish term *namnfras* was first used by Mats Wahlberg [1999].) A *name-phrase element* is an element of such a phrase; for instance, the two name phrases *mester / Berendh / Nøtheke* (Master / Berend / Notke) and *Oleff / Andersson / i tørnit* (Olaf / Anders' son / in the tower) each consist of three name-phrase elements. Name-phrase elements may or may not be names in themselves.

Written name phrases referring to the male inhabitants of Stockholm often consist, apart from first names, of patronymics, occupational terms and bynames. With the exception of German surnames, bynames were seldom inherited.

In most cases, name phrases denoting immigrants to the city do not differ from those referring to natives. One exception is German surnames, which are common. Another is Finnish bynames and Finnish forms of first names, which are used to some extent – more commonly, Finnish forms are adapted to Swedish. A third is designations of origin (or of ethnicity), for instance *hælsinger* (from the province of Hälsingland) and *finne* 'Finn', which are the subject of this paper. (I do not deal with the question of whether or not these designations had evolved into names.)

Late medieval Sweden was part of the Scandinavian union with Denmark and Norway. During the period that I consider in this paper, though, it was in practice independent under a regent. Present-day Finland was part of Sweden, and was sometimes referred to as the East Land (*Østerland*). Stockholm was by far the biggest city in Sweden, with approximately 6,000 inhabitants (Carlsson 1984: 14).

The following survey is based mainly on the council records for the years 1483–92. The council served both as a governing body of the city and as a court. The period is covered by the second volume of the published edition of *Stockholms tänkeböcker* (STb 2). (The Swedish *tänkebok* corresponds to Middle Low German *denkebök*, Latin *liber memorialis*.)

2. Presentation of the designations of origin used

Individuals who do not live in Stockholm generally have their place of residence as part of their name phrase. This particularly applies to farmers, who are normally known by their village name: *Biörn j Bierby* (Stb 2: 418) (Björn in Bärby).

In name phrases referring to residents of Stockholm, designations of origin are comparatively rare, considering that the share of adult residents not born in the city has been estimated at 70 per cent or more (Carlsson 1984: 14). Name phrases denoting women normally do not make use of designations of origin, which is in line with a strong general trend whereby bynames and the like are seldom used in the name phrases of women.

German surnames that were originally designations of origin (for instance *Westfal*) are not treated here, as they probably became attached to the original bearer before his, or his descendants', emigration to Stockholm. Swedish bynames were normally not inherited. There is, however, one known inherited designation of origin in my corpus. Andres Svensson Hælsinger was the son of Sven Hælsinger (STb 2: 204 – here *Hælsinger* has obviously become a surname). I also find that, in one case, *finne* has a different background from the normal one (see below).

In the main, however, I believe that these designations should be taken at their face value, as testimonies to the background of the persons so designated, as perceived by Stockholmers. Deviations from this could even be perceived as disturbing, as can be seen from this entry from 1519: *Same dag rettades en karl, som the kallade Hans Jwthe och war likvel fød j Estlandh* (STb 5: 265: On the same day a man they called Hans Jute was executed, and yet he was born in Estonia).

The designations used are generally lexicalized, often in forms well known in the whole of Scandinavia. First, however, I will take a look at some unusual forms.

In a few cases, names of villages and towns are used in apposition (*Jasper Norby*, STb 2: 126, *Pedher Mansson Skarpaker*, *ibid.*: 192, *Laurens Hanson Tælie*, *ibid.*: 240, *Laurens Jønsson Telie*, *ibid.*: 396, *Hans Østhammer*, *ibid.*: 226; more uncertain: *Peder Skogh* *ibid.*: 225). In one case a place-name is used in a compound, with the first name as the second element (*Trosa Joan screddere*, STb 2: 223). In a couple of instances there are parallel forms where the place-name is preceded by a preposition in the normal manner (*Jesper j Norby*, STb 2: 421, *Joan skreddare aff Trosa*, *ibid.*: 51).

Two interesting cases are *tolker* 'interpreter' in *Magnis tolk* (STb 2: 74) and *finne* in *Henrik Fynne* (STb 2: 65). Here, the name-phrase elements should probably not be taken at face value; they are, rather, bynames formed from the first elements of compound village names. The first evidently refers to the village of Tolky near present-day Helsinki (see STb 3: 302), the second probably to the village of Finnby on the island of Nagu (Nauvo) off the coast of south-west Finland (see STb 2: 85). These bynames were probably coined in the local environment, before the name bearers moved to Stockholm, as the villages in question were hardly well known in Stockholm.

In most instances, the designations denote origins in Swedish provinces (40 men, 3 women). References to foreign nationality are fairly common (17 men, 1 woman), while Swedish villages, parishes and towns (6 men, all of them cited above) occur infrequently. The few instances found are mostly places fairly close to Stockholm. There are seven occurrences denoting origins in Danish provinces and two referring to origins in foreign cities (one man, one woman).

Among the Swedish provinces, Finland – *finne* (18) 'Finn' – accounts for nearly half of the cases; there are, furthermore, three instances of *finska* 'Finnish woman'. Also common are two other provinces, Hälsingland – *hælsinger* (7) – and Västergötland – *væstgöte* (7), while origins in other provinces are denoted in one or two cases each (Ångermanland – *angerman* 1, Småland – *smalændinger* 2, Tavastland – *tavaster* 2; see below concerning *tørboe* 2, *skoboe* 1).

In this connection, I should mention *butnakarl* (man of the northern Baltic region), which appears in the name phrases of as many as 14 men. In this context, the word seems to designate a man trading in the north rather than a man of northern origin, but it is likely that the majority of these men were born in the northern regions, and the designation at any rate shows the importance of the north in the minds of Stockholmers (see Friberg 1983: 46–48 concerning *butnakarlar* in Stockholm).

The provinces closest to Stockholm, Uppland and Södermanland, were probably where most immigrants to the city originated. Naturally, the corresponding designations *uppländinger* and *sudherman* were of little use as a means of identifying individuals in Stockholm, and they do not appear in name phrases. In a couple of cases, origins in areas within these provinces are designated (*Andres Tørbo*, STb 2: 186, and *Laurens Tørbo*, *ibid.*: 327, referring to present-day Södertörn, south of Stockholm; *Joan Skobo*, *ibid.*: 1, probably referring to the parish of Sko, situated on the tip of a peninsula in Uppland, present-day Skokloster).

Among national designations (in a wide sense), the only common one is *iute* (14) (literally ‘Jutlander’, but here probably in most or all cases ‘Danish’). Included in this number are the compounds *Østher jwte* (STb 2: 138) and *koffwer jwte* (*ibid.*: 135), but not *Jwute kopperslagere* (*ibid.*: 225), where *Iute* is used as a first name. The element *øster-* may refer to the man’s home being situated in the eastern part of the city, while *kover-* may possibly be a form of Old Swedish *kogher* ‘quiver’.

There are a few other national designations: one each of *guti* (referring to the people of the island of Gotland), *ester* ‘Estonian’ and *thydhisker* ‘German’ (written *tøsk(er)* and the like; the modern Swedish form *tysk* will be used henceforth). There is also one *tyska*, ‘German woman’. In addition, there are two instances of *skotte*, possibly ‘Scotsman’, and one *lætte*, possibly ‘Latvian’ (Old Swedish *lættoghe*, Modern Swedish *lett*).

There are two bynames that are probably references to nationality. There is one man with the byname *Garper*, which is a (partly derogatory) Swedish term for Germans. In one case, the common byname *Bagge* ‘ram, male sheep’ in all likelihood denotes Norwegian origin. (That *bagge* could be used derogatively or jocularly to refer to a Norwegian is well known; that *Peder Bagge kopperslagare* was born in Norway is likely, see STb 2: 256.)

Among foreign provinces, the only country represented is Denmark, with *skanunger* (3) (‘from the province of Scania’) and *fiunboe* (4) (‘from the island of Funen’). (Concerning *iute*, see above.)

Foreign cities are represented by *revalske* (from Reval, present-day Tallinn in Estonia) and *rigiska* (from Riga in Latvia, the woman *rygiska Kaderin*, STb 2: 400).

3. Discussion

There are just a few designations that are really popular: *finne*, *iute*, *hælsinger* and *væstgøte*. To these may be added *butnakarl*. This is clearly not representative. A number of Swedish provinces, smaller regions in the neighbourhood of Stockholm, and the Germans should be better represented.

Special problems are posed by the cases of the Germans and Finns of Stockholm. I will discuss these matters first, and then address the question of representativeness.

The Germans constituted a large and influential group in medieval Stockholm. Most of them were probably born in the city, but there was also a group of immigrants, among both burghers and guests. Up to 1471, the city council had been divided into a Swedish and a German half, but that year, as a national manifestation, the German half was abolished by the Swedish government.

Certainly, the Germans were perceived as a group of their own. At the same time it must have been unclear in many cases whether a given individual with German ancestry was to be regarded as German or Swedish. There are cases where the same man served on both the German and the

Swedish half of the council, and after 1471 a few of the German councillors remained on the council. (See for instance Lamberg 2001: 57–64, Mähl 2008: 20–27, Moberg 1989: 28.) According to Göran Dahlbäck (1998: 17–18), Germans were counted as Swedish in the second or third generation.

According to some evaluations, based on name forms, the Germans constituted about a third of the persons named in the tax roll of 1460. In view of the points above, that number must be considered questionable. Furthermore, the tax rolls only named heads of taxpaying households; there was probably a considerably smaller element of Germans among servants and the poor. (See Dahlbäck 1998: 16–18, Lamberg 2001: 57–59.)

A few examples should suffice to show that Germans were perceived as a group, and that *tysk* could be used in descriptions of individuals.

In 1493 a Renholt Lhusen (probably a first-generation Stockholmer, Sjödén 1950: 297–298) was reported as saying: ‘When the Germans were removed from the council, they lost their feet, soon they may lose their heads’ (*nar the tøske ware affsetthe aff radzstuen, tha myste the føtherne, thet worder ey langt til, at the her nest miste hoffwdet*, STb 3: 71). In a promise to pay fines, a wine seller’s servant stated that he had friends, both Swedish and German, who could lend him money (*Hanis, Øryan winmans dreng, sagde ... ath han wilde niwta ther wanner til, swenska och tyska*, STb 2: 135).

Another man is described as the German who is staying in Schimmelpenning’s house (*tysken, vtj Skymmelpeningx huss sitter*, STb 2: 316) – the host was a former German councillor (Sjödén 1950: 262–263).

It can of course be said that the Germans in Stockholm were too numerous for the designation *tysk* to be useful in name phrases. Furthermore, German surnames, which were commonly used, served as markers of nationality. To a large extent, existing German name phrases were used in Swedish contexts (with varying adaptations to Swedish).

I would suggest, however, that this view is not entirely pertinent. For one thing, insufficiently distinctive name-phrase elements do not seem to have troubled the Stockholmers. In the 1460s, there are at least four *Henrik finne* in the records (Nikula 1980: 182–186, see also SMP 3: 299–307); in STb 2 there are three or four *Iønīs finne* (and one more *Iønīs* who is called *finne* in another source) and maybe eighteen *Pedher Olsson*.

The virtual absence of *tysk* as a name-phrase element may be due, rather, to the old status of the Germans as an elite in the city. The city was their home ground, and that status was transferred to almost all newly arrived Germans as well. Only a few unknown and occasional visitors, probably in most cases of low status, were referred to as Germans in the (written) name phrases denoting them.

The Finns also constituted a large group in Stockholm. As mentioned before, Finland was a part of Sweden, and Finns, whether Finnish- or Swedish-speaking, were not regarded as foreign (but cf. Dahlbäck 1998: 25–27, who regards Finnish speakers as a nation apart). In research about Finns in Stockholm in this period, the Finns have often been depicted as a relatively poor group, but there were also a number of Finns among the established burghers. (See Tarkiainen 1990: 21–32, Carlsson 1984, Nikula 1980.)

There are many cases where *finne* or *finska* is used as a description. A couple of examples: a woman is mentioned as *the finska hustruna* ‘the Finnish wife’ (STb 2: 178), and an unknown party in an inheritance matter is called *finnen her j byn* ‘the Finn here in town’ (ibid.: 593).

Unlike the situation regarding the Germans, however, it is hard to find instances where the Finns are marked as a category of their own, opposed to Swedes (as noted by Carlsson 1984: 18). There is one recorded case, in which a burgher in the town of Raumo in Satakunta (*kodwxeme Antte*) is fined for calling Swedish merchants ‘Swedish dogs’ (STb 1: 271). Furthermore, it has

been stated that the Finns were perceived, and perceived themselves, as more of a nation apart than inhabitants of other Swedish provinces (Rekola 1986: 6, cf. Tarkiainen 2008: 198–199).

But who was a Finn? Originally, Finland was the name of the south-westernmost province of the East Land (now *Finland Proper*). In the 15th century, however, it became more common to use the name *Finland* to refer to the whole of the East Land. The corresponding *finne* could also be used in the wider sense, according to Kari Tarkiainen (2008: 260). Is that the case in the Stockholm city records as well?

In a relatively few cases, people's origins become known in inheritance matters or when they are convicted of a crime. A few of these individuals are men known by the name-phrase element *finne*. I know of one case from the province of Tavastland (Häme) (STb 3: 161) and three probable cases from the province of Satakunta (Nikula 1980: 180, 188, 195). The results are meagre, but as far as they go they support the claim that *finne* could be used in a wider sense.

Furthermore, there is evidence for the use of *Finland* in a wider sense in STb 2 (taking in the province of Nyland [Uusimaa], STb 2: 303, 593, the province of Tavastland, *ibid.*: 130, 379, and the province of Satakunta, *ibid.*: 293, 394).

Exceptions may have been the northern coastal region, which on both sides of the Baltic could be called *Norrabutn* (STb 2: 475, 589), and the Åland Islands (*ibid.*: 150, 151, 580). In the case of *Norrabutn*, the north–south axis seems to have been more important than the east–west one. In the case of Åland, the islands may have been considered too separate from mainland Finland. In both cases, the use of *finne/finska* to refer to individuals from these regions may have been precluded.

As noted above, there are two cases of *tavaster* (from the province of Tavastland) in STb 2. The designation *alændinge* (from Åland) is recorded both earlier and later. Later on, *nylændinge* (from the province of Nyland) appears as well (Nikula 1980: 179). Whether a man from Tavastland would be called *finne* or *tavaster* may have been a matter of chance.

Today, there is a distinction between *finländare* 'Finn', *finne/finska* 'Finnish-speaking Finn' and *finlandssvensk(a)* 'Swedish-speaking Finn'. According to Göran Dahlbäck (1998: 25–26), Swedish-speaking people from Finland were not considered to be Finns in Stockholm. The opposite view, that *finne/finska* was used irrespective of language, is held by Kari Tarkiainen (2008: 244–245, 260). However, according to Ritva Lisa Pitkänen (2003: 282–283), the byname *Finne* was used to refer to some members of the Finnish-speaking minority in a Swedish-speaking part of Finland in the 17th century. In the 20th-century dialects of the Åland Islands, the meanings 'Finnish-speaking person' and 'person from the Finnish mainland' are both known (Ahlbäck 1976– 2:51). Many Swedes today do not trouble themselves with the linguistic distinction.

It seems improbable that the people of Stockholm would have made a strict linguistic distinction as to who was a Finn and who was not. Possibly, however, a Finnish-speaking person was a more prototypical *finne/finska*, which may have made it more likely that the designation would be used in that person's name phrase.

If the geographical information is detailed enough, it should be possible to draw conclusions about language, as the settlement of Swedish-speaking people in Finland is fairly well known, mainly coinciding with the distribution of the Swedish dialects of Finland today (map in Ahlbäck 1976– 1: XIX and in Tarkiainen 2008: 220, personal communication from Peter Slotte, 25 April 2008, Tarkiainen 2008: 112–115, 126, 129–130, 134–139, 142–146, 213). I have found no evidence of *finne* used in the name phrases of individuals from the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland. (One such case would have been *Henrik finne* from the island of Nagu, but, as stated above, I find it more likely that in his case *finne* refers to his origins in the village of Finnby.) It is quite possible, however, that a larger corpus would have yielded a different result.

Why use a designation of origin, and why not? I propose that the following factors are relevant:

1. The number of people from a certain region or belonging to a certain ethnic group.
2. The perception of that region or group, in their native land and as an immigrant group.
3. The place of a certain designation in a lexicon and/or onomasticon.

These factors may explain the poor representativeness that we see in the material studied. The people of Västergötland (in western Sweden) and of Finland may have been seen as more foreign than those of Östergötland (to the south of Stockholm, in eastern Sweden). Above, I have argued that the Germans retained the status of an in-group.

Furthermore, in my opinion there existed quite a limited stock of designations of origin that were normally used in name phrases in Stockholm, and people originating from locations not covered by this stock would rarely have designations of origin as elements in their name phrases.

The results of this study are preliminary, and it does not treat social and situational variation, of which the former at least would have shed light on some of the issues. In conclusion, I would like to stress that designations of origin were one possibility among many in name phrases referring to immigrants to the city, and that in most cases they were not used.

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