

sionen om publikationernas form och innehåll hade vunnit på att placeras i en bredare kontext. Det är också förvånande att så lite uppmärksamhet ägnas åt hur den ekonomiska och moraliska diskussionen i tidskrifterna förhåller sig till de riksdagar som sammanföll med utgivningen: riksdagen 1731 i fallet *Mercurius* och riksdagen 1734 i fallet *Argus*. En annan diskussion som hade vunnit på fördjupning gäller *Bref Om Blandade Ämnen*. Hos Gjörwell finns genomgående en konsekvent hållning, i sättet att argumentera för moraliska, religiösa och nyttoinriktade ståndpunkter. Sahlstedts kritik kan absolut ses en kamp mellan gammalt och nytt, men det behöver inte handla om synen på brevformen. Den kan även läsas som att den 23-årige Gjörwell och den 38-årige, etablerade Sahlstedt positionerade sig på den sena frihetstidens kulturella fält.

Som helhet ger arbetet ett antal nya insikter. Det är olika genrer som tas upp och Forselius visar hur breven anpassas till tidskrifter och fungerar på skilda sätt beroende på dessas syften. Detta perspektiv och den remedierade funktionen har tidigare inte belysts i högre utsträckning och studien erbjuder därmed ett intressant komplement till tidigare forskning.

Stefan Ekman

Juha-Matti Granqvist, *Helsingin porvaristo Viaporin rakennuskaudella (1748–1808): sosiaalibistoriallinen perustutkimus* [The Helsinki burgher community during the construction of the fortress of Sveaborg (1748–1808)], *Historiallisia tutkimuksia Helsingin yliopistosta*, XLII (Helsinki: Helsingin yliopisto, 2016). 278 pp.

The burghers have received plenty of attention from Finnish and European historical researchers. This central group of town-based

communities provides perspectives on urban history, political development, the organisation of various local activities and even the Rise of Europe. There are considerable national varieties in how the history of the burghers is written, reflecting differences in the status of the group and in the conventions of historiography between nations, as Juha-Matti Granqvist states in his PhD dissertation. Finland is characterised by a long tradition of local urban histories, which provide a relatively comprehensive overall survey of the burghers. In Finland and the other Nordic countries, the burghers have not been idealised as 'islands of freedom in the ocean of feudalism'. Due to the non-existence of feudalism, it has been possible to examine town communities in a more unbiased way than elsewhere in Europe.

Granqvist's dissertation is representative of traditional social historical research on the burghers, focusing on defining who the burghers were, their social structure and dynamics, and their social boundaries with other urban groups. The author examines the burgher community of Helsinki in the late eighteenth century. His aim is to analyse 'the social reality' of the burghers of Helsinki: how the community was constructed, how the different groupings within the burgher community were formed, and how they exercised their political and economic power in the community. Granqvist examines the conflicts between the groups of burghers in addition to their responses to external threats. However, economic activities are left outside the scope of the study, even though burghers' status was defined primarily by the economic factor. In explaining the roles of the various groups, a deeper analysis of the burghers' businesses would have been useful.

The author refers to the Finnish academic Eino Jutikkala and his notion of the 'classic analysis of social history', including the concept of the group, which dates back to the 1960s. This rather old-fashioned view is also reflected in the subtitle: 'social historical ba-

sic research'. Aligning himself with traditional notions of social history has kept the author from benefiting from more recent ideas, such as those related to networks and elites. He does not discuss the concept of community in any detail, even though it has long been used in research on preindustrial towns. As a social-historical construct, the concept of the group could have had potential; but it is not fully problematised or exploited in the analysis.

Granqvist is convincing in focusing on Helsinki, which was by no means a typical Swedish town in the eighteenth century. However, because of the massive construction work that took place on the fortress of Sveaborg during this period, Helsinki became a typical example of another type of town at the time: the early modern European military town. Helsinki is an interesting case because of its rapid expansion, its status as a twin town and the related close interaction between the burghers and the military. The study is limited to the period of the construction of the fortress (1748–1808). This is a coherent period, although possible changes prior to or after the construction remain obscure.

The study combines qualitative and quantitative analysis. The quantitative section makes use of an extensive catalogue of the burghers. This involves careful deliberation about who really was a burgher of Helsinki. This was not always apparent, as indicated by the author's many definitions and classifications. Through an arduous analysis, Granqvist is able to elaborate on the size, development and social construction of the Helsinki burgher community to a considerable degree. Surprisingly, burghers made up only a small proportion of the inhabitants of Helsinki and other towns in the Swedish realm. According to the author's classification, there were seven major groups amongst the Helsinki burgher community: craftsmen, merchants, sea captains, lesser burghers, grocers, restaurateurs and butchers. Most of these were divided into

sub-categories, with those in different sub-categories having different rights and privileges to do business.

The group of craftsmen was the most diverse. Before Sveaborg was founded, only the most basic forms of handicraft were found in Helsinki. In parallel with the quickly growing population and the construction of the fortress, the number of craftsmen grew steadily: from about thirty in 1748 to almost a hundred in 1808. The merchants, on the other hand, were divided into wholesale traders and haberdashers. The former, who had the right to conduct both foreign and domestic trade in all merchandise, formed the leading group within the burgher community, whilst haberdashers traded in retail goods, such as hardware and textiles. Closely associated with the wholesale merchants were the sea captains, who, following a centuries-old tradition, often operated as merchants' commercial agents and associates. Later in their careers, several captains became merchants themselves.

There are many important findings in Granqvist's study. In the context of towns in the Swedish realm, the development of the Helsinki burgher community often followed national trends, including the growth of the craftsmen group. However, merchants were an exception, as they succeeded surprisingly well in guarding their interests. Merchants were able to remain a very small, closed group: in 1748 there were twenty-five merchants and in 1808 the number was roughly the same, despite the fact that the population had grown six-fold and business opportunities in all areas had expanded immensely. Thus, the merchants were extremely successful in channelling this new wealth into their own hands.

The development of the lesser burghers in Helsinki also differed from that of the same group in other Swedish towns. During the latter part of the eighteenth century, there was a five-fold increase in the number of lesser burghers in Helsinki. Granqvist argues that

due to their basic economic structure, the lesser burghers reacted to growing business opportunities with a different logic from that of the merchants. The merchants, who used an external workforce, were able to expand their trading houses and hire new employees. The lesser burghers, who typically relied on the labour of their own family, had no such opportunities. Thus, increasing opportunities led to a growing number of entrepreneurs.

Despite their rapidly growing numbers, the lesser burghers had little influence on the town's politics, leading to increasing power struggles. When acting unanimously, the lesser burghers and craftsmen had the power to overrun the merchants in town elections. However, this happened only rarely. In contrast, the merchants usually stood behind their common candidate in town elections, further supporting their dominating role. Despite the fact that the burghers were a privileged group and the merchants were able to rely on their strategy to keep their ranks closed, the burgher community was relatively open and in a state of constant change. It was a dynamic community, as new people were able to become lesser burghers and even the merchant families were occasionally forced to allow new people to acquire merchant status. This shows that the breakdown of the society of estates had already begun in towns.

Juha-Matti Granqvist's dissertation is a solid study. It succeeds in combining quantitative analysis and specific empirical findings. As far as possible, the author provides conclusions that are more general by comparing Helsinki with other towns of the realm. From methodological and conceptual points of view, the study is traditional. It is clear that it would have benefited from new trends in social history, including more intense dialogue with the research of pre-industrial burgher communities in Europe as a whole, not just in Finland and Sweden. However, Granqvist consistently addresses the task of the study, providing sev-

eral important results from late eighteenth-century Helsinki. Because of its firm empirical basis, it makes an important contribution to the research on burgher communities in Northern Europe.

Mika Kallioinen

Alfred Sjödin, *Landets SångGudinna: Johan Gabriel Oxenstierna och naturdiktens genrer*, diss. Lunds universitet (Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam förlag, 2014). 336 s.

Johan Gabriel Oxenstierna (1750–1818) är sedan länge försvunnen från litteraturlistorna i litteraturvetenskap. Inom Bellmanstudierna är han ihågkommen för några dagboksanteckningar där han som 19-årig tjänsteman berättar hur han skrattade sig fördärvad då han såg Bellman framföra sina ordenskapitel. För egen del stötte jag på Oxenstierna under mitt arbete med gustaviansk dramatik, som författare till politiskt korrekta tillfällespjäser och som översättare av den smått chauvinistiska franska komedin *Soliman den II. eller De Tre Sul-taninnorna*, där fransyskan Roxelane överglänsar sina icke-franska rivaler om sultanens gunst. Att läsa Oxenstiernas stora diktverk *Skördarne* trodde jag inte var mödan värt. Alfred Sjödens doktorsavhandling *Landets SångGudinna: Johan Gabriel Oxenstierna och naturdiktens genrer* (2014) visar att poeten Oxenstierna tvärtom är väl värd uppmärksamhet.

Johan Gabriel Oxenstierna föddes in i den svenska sociala eliten – medlem av en prestigefylld adelssläkt, ättling till rikskanslern Axel Oxenstierna – och samtidigt i den litterära eliten genom morbrodern, skalden Gustaf Fredrik Gyllenborg, en av frihetstidens ledande diktare. Hans bana ter sig i mycket som ämbetsförfattarens, med Bo Bennich-Björkmans term: en ung man som skriver för att skaffa sig meriter i en karriär vid hovet eller kans-