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**THE MALMBERG PAPERS:
NEGLECTED SOURCES FOR THE HISTORY
OF THE GREAT NORTHERN WAR**

I N 1942 and 1943 Uppsala University Library, more or less by chance, managed to acquire a large number of 17th and 18th century documents originating from the archive of the Swedish Governor General of Livonia. Some were found at a local scrap dealer, others were obtained from private collectors. The material was traced back to the recent bankruptcy of Captain Ernst Malmberg (1867–1960), a writer and collector who for a long time had been a prominent member of the cultural establishment. The library staff began to sort and catalogue the collection (in total somewhere between 1,000 and 1,500 documents) and it was brought to the attention of Per Wieselgren (1900–1989), who in the 1930's had been a professor at Tartu and was very familiar with the old Swedish archives in Estonia and Latvia. In 1949 Wieselgren wrote a short article about the “Malmberg papers”, in which he stated that a Swedish collector (undoubtedly meaning Malmberg) had come across the material in Berlin “many years ago”.¹ However, both Wieselgren and the library staff appear to have been puzzled by the fact that so many of the documents had the very distinctive blue marks of the Riga archival commission, which was created by the Russian government in 1897. It was well-known that private collectors, such as the historian Carl Schirren (1826–1910), earlier had been granted access to the old Swedish archive and been allowed to remove documents, but after 1897?² It would seem that Wieselgren and others were not entirely convinced by the “Berlin story”, but apparently attempts to try and find out if the documents could possibly have been removed after the archival commission had finished its work were unsuccessful. Much later the archivist Bertil Broomé? (1913–1980), in the course of a study of

Swedish manuscript collectors, found that Ernst Malmberg had been auctioning off similar documents as early as before World War I.³ Indeed, Ernst Malmberg had been one of the first Swedish researcher to use the archive of the Swedish Governor General of Livonia after the publication of the Bienemann catalogue in 1908.⁴ It is perhaps possible that he had been allowed to take some documents, for example because the archival commission had not been able to determine where they should be placed, but the sheer size of the collection and some of the material included indicates that the issue could very well be more complicated than that. Despite the efforts of Per Wieselgren and others the Malmberg papers were never systematically arranged or catalogued, so they have been used by relatively few scholars. Nowadays they are kept in three large cardboard boxes, marked "Dorpat-Riga-papper, 651 F: 1–3".

The collection covers the whole history of the Swedish province of Livonia, but the bulk dates from the period 1700–1710.⁵ There are many receipts and small notes, suggesting that Malmberg in general was more interested in autographs than content. However, included are also a large number of letters from both civilian officials and military officers. Worth mentioning here are the commander of the Finnish army Georg Lybecker (about 30 letters), the commander of Narva Henning Rudolf Horn (about 20 letters) and Per Cuypercrona, the Swedish representative in Danzig (about a dozen letters). Several of Lybecker's reports concern his Ingrian campaign in 1708, some written during it and others just after. One interesting bit of information is found in letter dated Vyborg 2 June, where Lybecker suggests that if Lewenhaupt intends to march towards Ingria he could temporarily borrow 6–7,000 infantry from the Finnish army.⁶ Among Horn's letters one finds half a dozen from 1700, including one which reports on the arrival in Narva of the Russian envoy Andrey Khilkov. Khilkov was, Horn writes, a very pleasant man who could speak some Italian but tried to hide that he understood and spoke German.⁷ Another group of Horn letters dates from March–May 1704 and contains information about the arrival of the first Russian forces. Zacharias Aminoff, in 1706 garrison commander at Vyborg, is represented by three letters from October and November 1700 containing descriptions of the first skirmishes between Russian units and the Swedish relief army and the attempts to bring letters to Narva. Two peasants, who had earlier managed to leave the besieged town were sent back with letters hidden in a cane, but they could not get through as the Russians had built a large entrenchment.⁸ An old

German hat maker, who had been in the Russian camp, claimed that they had tried to storm Narva but were beaten back having lost 4,000 men. He had been offered a reward of 50 rubles if he returned with information about the size of the Swedish army and where it was positioned, but Aminoff sent the hat maker to Reval. Three letters from Florian Thilo von Thilau, stationed at the border post Neuhausen, describes rumours from Russia during the spring and summer of 1700. It was said, Thilau wrote on 21 July, that uncommonly large bridges were being built on the road between Pskov, Novgorod and Moscow and the latest letters from the Russian capital suggested that the peace agreement with the Ottomans had been signed. Two other Thilau letters detail events in late July and early August 1702, just before he was captured by Russian forces.⁹

Another interesting group of letters dates from the first months of 1708 and contains descriptions of the situation in Livonia and Courland as General Lewenhaupt waited for his final instructions from Charles XII. Particularly valuable here is a report from Major General Stackelberg to Lewenhaupt, dated Mitau 12 June, about how the preparations for the departure of the army were progressing. Practically everything was ready, Stackelberg informed Lewenhaupt, only two regiments had not yet fully received the intended supplies.¹⁰

Another group of letters from the same year concerns the Swedish expedition to the Dorpat area. On 20 December 1708 Lieutenant Colonel Nicolaus von Vettern reported on the interrogation of a Russian prisoner he calls "Germa Laiam" from Pechory, who together with a peasant called Jacob (hired to act as translator) had crossed the border to trade with the Livonian peasants. The Swedish asked him if he had received permission to do this. Yes, the prisoner said, the Voivode of Pechory had allowed it, but also told him to try and find out about the Swedish forces in the area. When asked about where the Czar and the Swedish King were, he said he didn't know and hadn't heard anything about a battle between the two. About the Russian forces at Pechory he said that there was one regiment dragoons under Colonel Morosinsky quartered in and near the village, but only a very small detachment of infantry. The prisoner was then asked about a Russian party which had appeared in the area 8–10 days before. Yes, that was 300 men from Morosinsky's dragoons who had brought back a large amount of clothes, cattle and horses. There was no other cavalry in the area, just three infantry regiments at Pskov.¹¹

Another large group of document concerns the military situation after the departure of Lewenhaupt's army. Notable here is some lists of soldiers and officers returning from the Lesnaya battle and estimates of the strength of the Riga and Reval garrisons.¹²

The collection also contains a substantial number of letters from Krzysztof Zawisza, one of the most prominent members of the Sapieha faction, as well as from other Lithuanian nobles.¹³

¹ Wieselgren, P. *Studier i LRKkA // Apophoreta Tartuensia*. Stockholm, 1949. P. 177–185.

² Broomé, B. *Handskriftssamlarna och de svenska arkiven 1700–1950*. Stockholm, 1977. P. 380. A substantial part of Schirren's collection has ended up in Riksarkivet, Stockholm. Most of it consists of excerpts and copies, but there are also 15 volumes of original documents. Volume 4 contains many dispatches from Swedish representatives in Russia and Poland during the late 1690's and in volume 13 one finds two lists of travelers passing through Neuhausen on their way to or from Russia (1698–1699).

³ Broomé, B. *Arbetsmaterial till en fortsättning av "Handsskriftssamlarna och de svenska arkiven..."* (unpublished manuscript in Uppsala University Library). Broomé found Malmberg among the sellers at auctions in 1913, 1914, 1916, 1928, 1934 and 1941.

⁴ Похлебкин В.В. О работе шведских историков в русских архивах в XIX – начале XX века // *Скандинавский сборник*. Вып. 4. Таллин, 1959. С. 69.

⁵ There is for example a considerable amount of letters and other documents from the 1650's, including some which deal with military operations in Lithuania.

⁶ Uppsala University Library. Dorpat-Riga-papper, 651 F:1. Lybecker letters can be found in both F:1 and F:3. (Precise references to individual documents can unfortunately not be given as the papers are neither systematically arranged nor numbered).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 651 F:1.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 651 F:3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 651 F:1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 651 F:1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 651 F:3.

¹² *Ibid.*, 651 F:1 and F:3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 651 F:1 and F:3.