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Learning postal business by military occupation and intellectual merger in seventeenth century Europe

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Introduction

Organized postal communication has its background in the need for quick access to information. This need increased in Europe during the seventeenth century, among other things due to the rise of international diplomacy. In the beginning of the sixteenth century diplomatic envoys were a rare sight in Europe. Just a century later this had changed, and a lively traffic of diplomats took place all over the continent. Spain, France and Holland were amongst the states that opened permanent embassies in each other's countries. The international diplomacy made a breakthrough in the period up to the Peace of Westphalia.[1]

The diplomats soon started to send written reports to their employers. This made the establishment of postal services vital, with the aim of getting information home to the state government. The Swedish chancellor, Axel Oxenstierna, writes in several letters about the need of being informed of the political situation in Europe. According to Oxenstierna the Swedish government was continuously afraid of being uninformed about the conditions in Europe.[2] To solve the matter of the transportation of the mail, several different postal systems where created on the continent. In the beginning these were very simple. As the need for information increased these rudimentary systems developed into permanent postal services. The transport of the mail had then been organized within the frame of an organization, complete with rules and regulations for the field of activity.

So far, the research of the postal services in Europe, and the rest of the world, has mainly concentrated on the development in separate countries. The background to the emergence of the post has often been connected with the development of the diplomacy, as shown above. Other explanations have been the economical development concerning the commerce and the news-service. Together with the diplomacy, these have been the main explanations for the establishment of the organized postal service.[3]

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[1] E. John B. Allen, *Post and Courier Service in the Diplomacy of Early Modern Europe*, Martinus Nijhoff, Haag, 1972 pp. 136-138; Matthew Smith Anderson, *The rise of modern diplomacy, 1450-1919*, Longman, London, 1993, pp. 41-42. Mai'a K. Davis Cross, *The European diplomatic corps: diplomats and international cooperation from Westphalia to Maastricht*, Palgrave Macmillian, 2007, pp. 39-40.

[2] See as an example the letters to; Gustavus Adolphus, December 13, 1630, AOSB-1:5, s. 711-712; Gustavus Adolphus, September 28, 1632, AOSB-1:7, s. 561; the Government, August 26, 1634, AOSB-1:12, s. 309; the Government, Mars 29, 1636, AOSB-1:15, s. 285. (AOSB, *Rikskansleren Axel Oxenstiernas skrifter och brefvexling,* published by Kongl. Vitterhets-, historie- och antiqvitetsakademien, förra avdelningen, vol. 1-15, Stockholm, 1888-1977.)

[3] Some examples on the literature about the development of postal services are; Otto Madsen, *Et nyttigt og gavnligt Postværk. P&Ts historie til 1711*, vol. 1-5, Copenhagen, 1991; Finn Erhard Johannessen, *Alltid underveis. Postverkets historie gjennom 350 år*, vol. 1-2, 1647-1920, Elanders, Oslo, 1997; Wolfgang Behringer, *Im Zeichen des Merkur, Reichspost und Kommunikationsrevolution in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Göttingen 2003; Philip Beale, *A History of the Post in England from the Romans to the Stuarts*, Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot, 1998; Richard R. John, *Spreading the News. The American Postal System from Franklin to Morse*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1995.

In the following text I will argue that the development of the Swedish post did not entirely follow this line of development. The Swedish postal service was organized with much inspiration and experience from Europe, but in its final design it had certain distinctive features. The most characteristic has to be the use of farmers for the delivery of the mail together with the fact that the post was foremost organized to meet the needs from the growing state administration. These two features are distinct symbols of how the Swedish postal service were organized in 1636 when the first postal ordinance was given. In this text, I will show two examples of how the Swedish State administration acquired experience and knowledge of postal organization, prior to the ordinance in 1636. The purpose is to show how the Swedish State gathered information about running a postal service throughout its empire.

Correspondents and diplomacy

From the beginning of the seventeenth century a network of Swedish informants, called correspondents, was established. These men sent regular written reports to Stockholm and to chancellor Oxenstierna. The majority of the letters regarded the political situation on the continent.[4] The information gathered by the correspondents were of great importance to the Swedish government and their perception of the political climate in Europe. However, the largest problem was not the procurement of the information, but the transport of it to Stockholm. Early on, Hamburg became the center for the mail from the Swedish correspondents, and it was from here that the reports were sent to Stockholm. The details about this postal communication are unclear. Most likely the transport was solved from time to time with special couriers, and most often the system seems to have worked badly. In some of his letter's king Gustavus Adolphus complains about the slowness in the communication. The information that reached the king was obsolete when it got there.[5]

It was to enhance the transport of the correspondent's reports that the Swedish administration tried to promote efficiency of the postal service with Europe. The Dutchman, Lennart van Sorgen, was appointed Sweden's first official agent in Hamburg. van Sorgen was one of Oxenstierna's most frequent correspondents, and in 1620 he was consulted to further organize the postal communication with Sweden. Oxenstierna asked him in a letter from January 3, 1620, to work out a plan for a permanent postal service between Stockholm and Hamburg. The letter from Oxenstierna is lost, but we know of it

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[4] Heiko Droste, "Hieronymus von Birckholtz: Sveriges förste underrättelseman", in, *Personhistorisk tidskrift*, 1998 (94), pp. 76-77.
[5] Droste, 1998, pp. 76-77, 85.

thanks to van Sorgen's answer from February 21, 1620.[6] In his answer van Sorgen gives details about how the postal service should be organized. He starts by underlining that there is no need for any communications further than Hamburg. From the city the mail could be transported with any of the continental postal services that reside there. After that he states how he thinks that the post line should be arranged. In his proposal van Sorgen shows great familiarity with the methods for postal communication, used elsewhere in Europe.

> [R]egarding the method for this postal service, it would be best to locate them [the post messengers] 5, 6, or 7 miles from each other. The mail should be sent enclosed in a bag, forwarded by a rested man and a fresh horse, transported from one post messenger to another, in this way dispatched through night and day.[7]

Lennart van Sorgen suggested a relay post according to known principles. He also proposed that the changing stations should be placed outside the town walls to prevent the closed city gates from delaying the post messengers at night. This way of arranging the postal line would transport a letter from Hamburg to the Swedish border in Markaryd in approximately five days. The cost of the arrangement would be between 1,600 and 1,700 Swedish riksdaler (dollars) a year. Finally, van Sorgen wondered if "it was the will of the Swedish king, that the merchants in Amsterdam, who has business in the Kingdom of Sweden, also may use this postal service".[8]

Compared to other proposals for postal communication between Sweden and Europe, this offer by van Sorgen became a reality. Proof of that can be found in the preserved source material. Mainly it concerns ten letter cards from the postal line between Hamburg and Stockholm.[9] The letter cards are from between 1623 and 1626 and contain lists of around 100 merchant letters sent from Hamburg to Stockholm.[10] The one who has most thoroughly investigated the postal line from 1620 is the Swedish postal historian Teodor

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6   Letter from Lennart van Sorgen, February 21, 1620, Oxenstiernska samlingen, Axel Oxenstierna av Södermöre, E721, RA. (RA, the Swedish National Archives, Stockholm.)
7   "De ordnung van dussen post, sol mihr duncken am tho sijn eben die selbige, […] die ordonieren von einander 5, 6 oder 7 mailen, nachgelegenheijt des oorths, vndt man schicket de brieven forth in eine valisa verchlossen, die wurden durch ein frisch pfeert vndt frisch man von der eine post an der and:e gebracht vndt also vber nacht vndt tagh expedieert", letter from Lennart van Sorgen, February 21, 1620, Oxenstiernska samlingen, Axel Oxenstierna av Södermöre, E721, RA.
8   "Gernn wissen, ob ess seijne ko. M:t genediges wolgefallen mochte seijn dass die Kauffleute hie vndt zu Amsterdam, so ihre negotia haben in dass koningreich schweden, ihnen von ditto post auch solten deinen", letter from Lennart van Sorgen, February 21, 1620, Oxenstiernska samlingen, Axel Oxenstierna av Södermöre, E721, RA.
9   A letter card is a list of the mail sent from a post office. At the delivery at its final destination, the letter card was posted on the post office wall, for the public to see who had mail to bee collected.
10 Ten letter cards from the year 1623-1626, Kanslikollegium, arkivfragment från Tidösamlingen och från vissa posttjänstemän, GV:1, RA.

Holm. On the letter cards Holm has identified several names belonging to burghers and merchants in Stockholm. Amongst the names are Paridon von Horn, Erich Larsson and Peter Gröneberg. All of them were burghers in Stockholm who pursued business with the Swedish crown and used the postal line to Hamburg for their correspondence.[11]

The preserved letter cards were signed by a man called Hans Jakob Kleinhans. He was the Imperial postmaster and seems to have been the man who handled the Swedish postal service in Hamburg. Most likely he has done so by direction of van Sorgen. An official Swedish post office in Hamburg was not opened until 1674 when the Swedish state were granted a permit to do so. Before that the post was run through the Swedish agents house and in co-operation with the Imperial post that was allowed to have a post office in the city.[12] It is also Kleinhans who has signed the economical account that is preserved from the Swedish postal business in Hamburg. The account runs between July 28, 1620, and July 15, 1621.[13] It concerns the postage rate that has been paid for the letters that merchants and other private persons have sent from Hamburg to Stockholm. The postage rate to the Swedish border has been paid in Hamburg and the receiver has most likely paid for the rest of the cost when the letter was delivered in Stockholm. The account tells us that there has been sent one postal messenger each week to Stockholm. Besides the government letters, which we do not know the quantity of, the messengers have been carrying between one and ten private letters. The account includes a total of 175 letters for the period. It also states that there have been a few letters sent in the opposite direction from Stockholm to Hamburg. Kleinhans has not made any list of those, but concludes his account by saying that if it is requested he can do so in the future.

To sum up, clearly the Swedish State during 1620, with the help of Lennart van Sorgen, organized a permanent and regular postal communication between Hamburg and Stockholm. Most likely it is the increasing communication with the crown's correspondents that lay behind the establishment. The postal service is a clear improvement of the previous connections between Hamburg and Sweden. By way of the post from 1620 knowledge of postal questions built up within the Swedish administration. The connection included only one postal line and nothing was done to organize the postal communication inside the Swedish empire. Those letters should further on still be transported with couriers and Royal messengers. This is an important observation. The government was foremost

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[11] Teodor Holm, *Sveriges allmänna postväsen, ett försök till svensk posthistoria*, vol. 1, P. A. Nordstedt & Söner, Stockholm, 1906, pp. 64-66.

[12] Carl-Gustaf, Klein, "Det svenska postkontoret i Hamburg. En epok i svensk posthistoria", in, *Postryttaren - Postmusei Årsbok*, no. 44, Stockholm, 1994, p. 83.

[13] "Verzaichniss was wochentlich von denen Kaufleute Brieffe…", undated, probably from the end of July 1621, Kanslikollegium, arkivfragment från Tidösamlingen och från vissa posttjänstemän, GV:1, RA.

concerned with the administration's mail. Although, the line was opened for private letters, the amount of them was small and the main thing was the government's mail. This is one distinctive feature of how the Swedish administration organized the post. As stated above, one of the things that differ the Swedish post from other postal service's in Europe is the tight connection to the needs of the state administration.

When the post was formalized in 1620 it became a part of the Royal intelligence service. The crown had tried out different solutions for the transportation of the mail and by help of Lennart van Sorgen the communication was organized in the form of a rather simple organization. The organizational form later allowed the system to increase in volume for the years to come and to collect knowledge and improve efficiency for the coming postal services inside Sweden proper. I see the postal line from 1620 as the administrations first experience of a formalized postal service, organized by the Swedish State. The line between Hamburg and Stockholm shall be seen in the same way as the knowledge acquired by the Swedish State officials that came to work on the European continent during the Thirty Years' War. This postal connection made European knowledge available for the upcoming empire in the North. The postal line from 1620 was one experience that influenced the formalization of the postal services in Sweden in 1636.

Experience through military occupation

After the Swedish intervention in the Thirty Years' War in 1630, a major part of the state administration was situated in the German territories. The participation in the war meant that Swedish state officials came in contact with new models of organization. Those new ideas and organizational patterns were of great influence on the expansion of the state administration at home. Previous research has pointed out the armies during the Thirty Years' War as examples of effective organizations. Through the regulations of the military the armed forces gained control over competence and the result was better efficiency of the units, partly due to uniform standards and joint training of the soldiers. Studies of the organization of armies and navies have explained the organization itself as the driving force in the development. William H. McNeill has described the introduction of drill in armies as a key to understanding the increasing capacity of the military forces during the seventeenth century.[14] This organization of the armed forces had great influence on the civilian

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[14] William H. McNeill, *The pursuit of power: technology, armed force, and society since A.D. 1000*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1982, pp. 117-143, esp. pp. 140-141; Jan Glete, *War and the State in Early modern Europe. Spain, the Dutch Republic, and Sweden as Fiscal-Military States, 1500-1600*, Routledge, London, 2002, p. 216: also, Jan Glete, *Navies and Nations. Warships, Navies and State Building in Europe and America, 1500-1860*, Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Stockholm, 1993.

administration. After the intervention in the war the Swedish occupation forces built up a postal organization in the occupied parts of the Holy Roman Empire, or "the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation" to give its full title. The preserved source material is fragmentary. In spite of that we can understand that the system was fairly extensive. When the organization was at its peak in 1635, it engaged a number of Swedish Royal postmasters at different post offices.

When the cities in the northern part of the Holy Roman Empire where occupied by Swedish forces, the post offices were taken over. In most cases they belonged to the imperial post and the commonest solution for the Swedish administration seems to have been to put a trusted German man in charge of the office. At most places the service seems to have continued without interruptions, mostly with the same personnel, except for the man in charge. In a few places new post offices where established alongside the older imperial offices.[15] The takeover of the imperial post offices shall of course be seen as part of the needs of the military forces. Besides that it was also a part of the organization of the civilian society. The military forces had special couriers for important messages and the postal services run by the Swedish administration was mostly used for civilian purpose. In Leipzig a Swedish postmaster was appointed just after the capture of the city. From November 20, 1631, we have a preserved timetable from Leipzig, explaining for the customers how to send their mail. "He who wants to send his letters to the above-mentioned towns, shall on the stated times leave his mail to the Royal Swedish post office, where it will be further dispatched".[16] Another timetable was published in Leipzig in April 1632.[17]

The man who was appointed Royal Swedish postmaster in Leipzig was Anders Wechel. The same man would later be recruited to organize the Swedish postal services and move to Stockholm in 1636. Besides his work as a postmaster in Leipzig Wechel also functioned as a correspondent to Axel Oxenstierna. A total of fourteenth letters is preserved from his correspondence with the chancellor.[18] Very soon Wechel understood that there were

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[15] So was the case in Leipzig where the royal Swedish post master hade a fierce fight with his imperial colleague. The battle was about the control of the postage rate that the mail was generating; Paul Gerhard Heurgren, *Svensk militärpost i krig och fred från 1600-talet fram till andra världskriget*, Kungl. Generalpoststyrelsen, Stockholm, 1961, pp. 38-40, see also; *Sveriges krig 1611-1632*, supplement vol. 1, generalstaben, Stockholm, 1937, p. 346.

[16] "Wem nun obbestimbter Orter bin zuschreiben belieben möchte der selbe wolle unberschwert seine Brieffe an obgemelte Tage und Stunden in das Königliche Schwedische Post-Gewelbe benzeiten zuschicken oder zubringen bedacht senn.", *Königliche Schwedische Post-Ordnung*, royal ordinance, November 20, 1631, KB. (KB, the Royal Swedish Library, Stockholm.)

[17] Post timetable from Leipzig, April 1, 1632, tidtabeller, ankomst- och avgångstider, 421AC3b, PMA. (PMA, the archives at the Swedish postal museum, Stockholm.)

[18] Letters from Anders Wechel in; Oxenstiernska samlingen, Axel Oxenstierna av Södermöre, E749, RA.

money to be made of the postal business. Proof of that is the new list of postage rates for Leipzig that he published in august 1632. [19]

Another Swedish Royal postmaster, Johann von den Birghden, was appointed in Frankfurt am Main. Birghden was an experienced man in postal business. In 1599 he became the manager of the postal station in Rheinhausen and in 1625 he was appointed Imperial postmaster in Frankfurt am Main. Due to Birghden's Lutheran faith he came in conflict with the count, Leonard von Taxis, a zealous catholic. Birghden therefore had to leave his position and fight a hard battle to get it back.[20] Something he did not succeed with until Swedish forces captured the city. On December 22, 1631 he was awarded a privilege from the Swedish king.[21] Similar solutions like the ones with Wechel and Birghden where found in other occupied cities. We have proof of appointed Swedish postmasters from Stettin and Augsburg.[22]

The procedures with the Swedish appointed German postmasters are typical for how the Swedish State solved its organizational problems. The Swedish army became successful due to imported expertise and this way of importing experienced personnel influenced many parts of the administration. The German postmasters had the experience and knowledge of running larger postal organizations. As the future would show the Swedish state administration took advantage of the competence. The foremost example of this is the recruitment of Anders Wechel as the first director of the Swedish postal service in 1636. To a large extent, this way of doing things explains why the Swedish postal service was organized in the way it was done. Earlier the transport of mail in Sweden had been solved in a very simple and expensive way. As the amount of mail increased, the cost of the transportation rose to intolerable levels and the system was more than unreliable. A change became necessary and the models for this organization were to be found on the European continent. The state already had experience from organizing the military forces in a more bureaucratic way. To chose the same method to organize the postal service was therefore natural.[23]

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[19] Postage rate and times for the departure of the mail, Leipzig, August 6, 1632, postpass och posttaxor, 421AC4b, PMA.

[20] Heurgren, 1961, pp. 43-44.

[21] Privilege for Johan von den Birghden, December 22, 1631, Svenska postförordningar på tyska, excerpt-samling, 1631-1724, PMB, (PMB, the library at the Swedish postal museum, Stockholm.); Generally about von den Birghden in; Karl Heinz Kremer, *Johann von den Birghden, 1582-1645, kaiserlicher und königlich-schwedischer Postmeister zu Frankfurt am Main*, Bremen, 2005.

[22] Heurgren, 1961, pp. 50-51.

[23] More examples on this method of importing expertise to the complex organizations of the Swedish state, are to be found in the production of drapery goods and ironware, see; Magnus Mörner, "Invandring i Sverige under stormaktstiden", in, *Människor, landskap, varor & vägar. Essäer från svenskt 1600- och 1700-tal*, Atlantis, Stockholm, 2001, pp. 190-200.

On October 30, 1633, chancellor Axel Oxenstierna published a privilege for the German postmasters in the name of Queen Christina, "Post-Patent und Salva-Guardia". The most interesting with the text is not the stipulations about protection, but Oxenstierna's view of the postal service as an organization. The aim of the privilege was to reintroduce the postal service to certain cities. In the text Oxenstierna justifies why it is so important that the postal messengers should not be hindered.

> [I]n the public interest and the extension and preservation of the indispensable commerce, shall the postal services in the empire [referring to the Holy Roman Empire], to the Netherlands, […] France and other places be reinstated and put in order.[24]

Further down the chancellor writes: "[T]he indispensable postal service in the empire can once again end up in decline and complete ruin, almost in un-repairable damage."[25] Except for the reintroduction of the post the privilege states that it is forbidden to take the postmasters' horses without paying for them. It is also forbidden to commit cruelties to the postmaster and his family. This formulation is a direct renewal of a privilege given by Gustavus Adolphus in Kitzingen in 1632.[26]

In the rhetoric about the postal communication on the continent it was mainly two arguments that the Swedish government emphasized, partly the significance for the commerce, partly the importance for something called the "community", or, the best of the "public". To simplify, the postal services are important to the economy and for the spread of information. Oxenstierna gives expression for this in the privilege from 1633. In the text it is very clear that it is the economy that has most to benefit from a functioning postal service. Compared to the contemporary discussion in Sweden, this is some different rhetoric and different arguments for why the post should be organized. In Sweden most of the discussion was tied to the problems with the *skjutsningsplikt* (the obligation for the farmers to offer horses for public transport). This difference, further developed in my dissertation, is one of the explanations to why the Swedish post was organized as it was.

Previous research has seen the Swedish postal services on the continent as either without importance, or as completely freestanding, in relation to the postal organization in Sweden proper. If we regard the postal communication as a part of the organization of the

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[24] "[D]em allgemeinen Wesen zum besten und zu Vermehr- und Erhaltung der unentbehrlichen Commercien das hochnotwendige postwesen im Reich nach den Niderlanden, See-Stätten, Frankreich und andern Orten wider einzuführen und anzustellen verordnet", "Post-Patent und Salva-Guardia", October 30, 1633, Svenska postförordningar på tyska, excerptsamling, 1631-1724, PMB.

[25] "[D]ass unentbehrliche Postwesen im Reich leicht wider in Abgang und gäntzliche Ruin zu fast unwiderkehrlichen Schaden und Praejuitz dess gemeinen Wesens und deren commercien", "Post-Patent und Salva-Guardia", October 30, 1633, Svenska postförordningar på tyska, excerptsamling, 1631-1724, PMB.

[26] Gustavus Adolphus privilege for the peasantry, Mars 16, 1632, Svenska förhållanden, 82 Aa 23/25, KB.

Swedish State, however, it looks like something else. The postal organization in the Holy Roman Empire was foremost built up to serve the commerce and the merchants. Oxenstierna is very explicit in his support for the commerce and the importance that the postal services had for its success. As I see it, this is a part of a state organization process. The aim was to organize the Swedish State in a new and better way. In most cases it dealt with streamlining and improvements in efficiency throughout the administration. The central theme for the organization of the state was to gather competence and resources, with the primary target to extract more resources for the wars. The inspiration for the design of the postal service was to be found on the European continent. I like to underline the importance that the Swedish postal matters in the Holy Roman Empire had in this process. The experience that the Swedish State officials gained on German soil was of a profound significance for the coming organization within Sweden. If we connect the doings in Europe with the development in Sweden, it helps to explain why the postal service was constructed as it was in 1636.

The Swedish postal experience

The text above has described two examples of how the Swedish State administration acquired knowledge on postal services, the postal line to Hamburg in 1620 and the postmasters in Swedish service during the Thirty Years' War. Distinguishing for the early traces of an organized post in Sweden is the connection to the state affairs. The postal line from 1620 was introduced with the sole purpose of improving the state administration's communication with Europe. Some private letters were transported, but they were of minor importance. The big thing was to enhance the flow of information from Europe to Sweden. I argue that this distinguish the Swedish post from its colleagues on the European continent. The Swedish post was foremost introduced by way of the government. Unlike some of the postal systems in the northern parts of the Holy Roman Empire the merchants of Sweden did not establish their own postal networks. The reason for this is the much smaller number of merchants within Sweden proper and the government's rigorous control of the commerce. To simplify, the commerce in Sweden was the commerce of the Swedish State.[27]

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[27] The trade policy that the Swedish government initiated in the beginning of the seventeenth century advocated massive control over the commerce. The crown sought to direct merchants to selected cities where the trade with foreign countries were allowed. These regulations were part of the states attempt to gain total control over the Swedish export; see Sven Lilja, *Tjuvehål och stolta städer: urbaniseringens kronologi och geografi i Sverige (med Finland) ca 1570-tal till 1810-tal*, Stockholm, 2000, pp. 266-268.

During the German war the Swedish administration became familiar with the organization of different postal systems. As we have seen chancellor Oxenstierna understood the post's significance for the commerce. In his privilege from 1633 he is explicit about the relation to the trade. However, this line of argument is not used at home. In Sweden the discussion is concentrated on the problems with the *skjutsningsplikt*. This, I argue, shows how the Swedish administration gained knowledge of postal systems, but changed the contents to suit Swedish conditions. The most obvious example of this is the use of farmers for the delivery of the mail. In the royal ordinance that introduced the Swedish post in 1636 the farmers are ordered to carry the mail in return for exemption from some of the taxes and soldier transcription. This is a very distinguishing feature for the Swedish postal service and an example of how the state officials changed the continental postal systems to suit the conditions in Sweden.

The study above has partly shown a new picture of the background to the establishment of the Swedish postal service. Compared to previous postal historians, I like to stress the importance of the relations with the European continent. The Swedish postal service got its design from different organizational patterns, found in Europe. The contacts between Sweden and Europe have been many and have in a profound way influenced the shaping of the Swedish post, and also the rest of the state administration.[28] The emergence of the postal service can therefore be placed in a *state organization process*. The process shall be seen as the continuation of the state formation process, discussed by many scholars.[29] One characteristic for the organizational process is the testing between different solutions to the organizational problems. The development from a very rudimentary postal system to the emergence of the official Swedish post in 1636 is a good example of this. Many different plans and ideas about the state's organization where tried out in the beginning of the seventeenth century. This text has described two experiences that the Swedish State got in postal matters.[30] The ideas that survived proved to be the ones that made best use of

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[28] The intellectual fellowship with Europe is a major factor in understanding the transformation of the Swedish state during the seventeenth century. The influence of ideas is not only related to the organization of the postal service, but to many other parts of the state organization. In my thesis I will further develop this discussion.

[29] Various thoughts and conceptions about the state formation process can be found in; Harald Gustafsson, *Gamla riken, nya stater. Statsbildning, politisk kultur och identiteter under Kalmar-unionens upplösningsskede 1512-1541*, Atlantis, Stockholm, 2000; Hendrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors*, Princeton University press, Princeton, 1994; Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990-1992*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1992 (1990); Michael J. Braddick, *State Formation in early Modern England c. 1550-1700*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000; se also the previous mentioned Glete, 2002. (The literature on the subject is extensive and the works mentioned above is only a couple of examples.)

[30] My dissertation will include a careful investigation of many different plans, suggestions and ideas for the Swedish postal organization.

competence and resources in their field. By looking at the postal service as a state organizational matter, we can explain its establishment. The various testing between different solutions may seem unstructured, but if we place it in an organization process it becomes comprehensible.

In the study above, it has been made clear that the Royal ordinance of the Swedish postal service in 1636 was not a stroke of luck. I argue that the ordinance shall be regarded as the outcome of a long process, starting around the year 1600. The shape of the ordinance was in a profound way influenced by the experience that the Swedish administration got from their adventures on the European continent. In the final ordinance text in 1636 several of these experiences was put together to organize the Swedish postal service. When the Swedish State administration grew, the need for information increased. A development that escalated when Sweden intervened in the Thirty Years' War. The conclusion must therefore be that the design of the Swedish postal service comes from a mutual background of literature and ideas, shared by all of Europe. The postal services are no exception from other parts of society and shall be regarded as part of a general transformation. Sweden is in this respect no exception, rather a part of an overall development throughout Europe. However, the state officials in Stockholm changed the European postal systems to fit the needs of the Swedish empire. In this case the Swedish post in 1636 was organized after a specific Swedish postal model, based on the Swedish postal experience in Europe. It is my opinion that the previous research about Sweden's postal history has neglected this perspective.