

Hans Corneel de Roos in interview (again) with Adrien Party for Vampirisme.com about his continuing research on the Icelandic and Swedish translations of *Dracula*.

Sunday, 26 March 2017.

Dear Hans, you gave us an interview just a few days ago, on 22 March. Today, three weeks have passed since you announced the “Swedish connection” discovered by Rickard’s Berghorn in the *Children of the Night Dracula Conference Bulletin* – the link between the Swedish and the Icelandic versions of *Dracula*. I read your article again and noticed that you did not tell us about the anonymous translator and editor of *Mörkrets makter*, the Swedish version of *Dracula*. Do you have any idea who he or she was?

As a matter of fact, I *do* have. But it is not easy to find the evidence, of course. Authors who use pseudonyms normally do not want to be uncovered. Sometimes, their identity remains hidden forever.

But you have a hypothesis? Why don’t you tell us about it?

The evidence is still very thin. But on the other hand, I am not sure if it ever will get any better [laughs]. For years, I tried to find a personal connection between Bram Stoker and Valdimar Ásmundsson. I never could find any hard proof. Now I am looking into the Swedish versions, of course, and I am curious to see who was involved on the Swedish side. For the serializations in *Dagen* and *Aftonbladet*, starting in in 1899, and for the later republication in the weekly magazine *Tip-Top*, the translator or editor is always the same. This also applies to the feuilleton reprint I received from Stockholm, with 264 pages. He or she used the pseudonym “A–e.”

If all these versions were edited by one and the same person, then it would be important to know who “A–e.” was. Did no one ever find out?

Maybe someone found out already – but he surely did not publish on it. At least not in a form I could find via the Internet till now. In our interview for the Conference Bulletin, Rickard Berghorn told me that he had “a good speculation who he was,” But he never told me more. From his words, at least we can suspect it is a male person. That would match my own hypothesis.

And your own hypothesis is?

Unfortunately, I know nothing yet about Swedish literature and journalism of the 19th century. So, I thought it better to leave it to Rickard to present his theory first. But there was one lead I stumbled over quite early, and yesterday, I had some time and was bored and curious and the same time. A very dangerous condition! And so, I picked up this thread again.

Where did you start?

I was convinced that this translator-editor, if it was not Harald Sohlman himself, the Editor-in-Chief of *Dagen* and *Aftonbladet*, must have been be a person quite close to him, an author or journalist he trusted. Both in Hungary and in Iceland, it was the Editor-in-Chief who translated the novel himself. It is like in any other company, I think. The boss never has time for anything, but he wants to decide what paintings are hanging on the walls of the office, or what sculpture is standing in the entrance hall. The serialization of Stoker's novel was an important project, both in Sweden and in Iceland. The newspapers tried to attract new readers with an exceptional story, and to win more subscribers. Therefore, I thought that Sohlman would not leave this translation – or rather this adaptation, as the Swedish says that *Mörkrets makter* is a “Svensk bearbetning” – to some subordinate employee or to an unexperienced writer. *Mörkrets makter* shows that this translator/editor must have had a very quick pen in order to create the daily episodes and the reprint more or less simultaneously. Someone who could write fluently and had an erudite background – assuming here that he added at least some of the details himself. A professional book author or a senior journalist. So that was one starting point for me. The other one is the pseudonym as such, of course. “A–e” suggests that this person has a name that starts with “A” and ends with “e.” Or that “A” and “E” are two outstanding letters in any other way.

And where did these thoughts lead you?

I started looking for persons that would meet all criteria:

- [A] Professional authors or journalists
- [B] A personal connection with Harald Sohlman
- [C] A certain authority and a broad education or interest
- [D] The letters “A” and “E” as important letters in their name.

Mathematically speaking, I was looking for the overlap or intersection of four different sets. But as I did not know much about Sohlman and his colleagues, I decided to start with the Swedish newspaper archives, assuming that an anonymous but otherwise well-respected translator, author or journalist would show up in the newspapers, sooner or later. And because this person should be connected to Harald Sohlman, I simply started searching for articles mentioning Sohlman, hoping that Mr. X would be mentioned there as well. I only selected articles between 1 January 1890 and 31 December 1901, as the contact should not be older than 10 years and persons who became connected with Sohlman only after 1901 might be irrelevant.

And what did you find?

One trivial problem was that the name of Sohlman, being the Chief Editor of both *Dagen* and *Aftonbladet*, was printed at the top of every newspaper. This caused a lot of noise in my data. I had to select only those entries in which Harald Sohlman was mentioned next to other people he worked with or with whom he had

met at some dinner or meeting or some other official event, etc. I only took a closer look at the snippets that looked promising to me; many of them were repeated, like official announcements or advertisements.

The first interesting lead were snippets that listed the editorial staff of *Aftonbladet* for the year 1892. Here we find a “Redaktionsekreterare,” an editorial secretary, named **Gustaf A. Aldén**. In other snippets, he is listed as “Redaktör” (editor) directly next to Sohlman, while the other journalists only were mentioned as “medarbetare” (employees or free-lancers). Moreover, this Aldén was a “fil. kand,” while Sohlman himself was a “jur. kand.” This means, Sohlman had studied Law, Aldén Philosophy. With two capital letters “A” in his name and an accentuated “é,” he could be an interesting candidate. But by the end of 1892, his book with the title “Medborgarens bok” (Citizens Book) was published, and in 1893, we do not see his name next to that of Sohlman anymore. Aldén still appears in other contexts, as “Redaktör” or “Redaktionsekreterare,” but no cooperation or contact with *Aftonbladet* and Sohlmann is documented any more.

Was this the only suitable candidate you could find?

Fortunately, I found another series of snippets, from the first half of the year 1899, just before the serialization of *Mörkrets makter* in *Dagen* started. In May 1899, the release of a commemorative publication or *Festschrift* was announced, in honor of the 25th anniversary of **Publicistklubben**. This association of journalists and photographers was the lead I had detected two weeks ago already; Sohlman seemed to be a regular member. But I had forgotten to make proper screenshots and when I had difficulties tracing it again, I did not follow up immediately; the comparison between the Swedish and the Icelandic texts was more urgent. Publicistklubben remained at the back of my mind, though, as it might have offered Sohlman an ideal opportunity to meet and co-operate with other high-ranking journalists. Now this release of the *Festschrift* publication seemed promising to me, as the advertisements contained the names of all collaborators. Under the heading “Textbidrag” (Text contributions), I saw not only Sohlman’s name (which was the keyword of my search), but also that of a certain “**Andersson-Edenberg**” – sometimes spelled with one “s” only. As the “A” and the “E” stood out in this name, I decided to take a closer look. Two articles, in *Aftonbladet* and in *Svenska Dagbladet* of 26 May 1899, revealed that Mr. A. Andersson-Edenberg, together with Mr. H. Victorin, had been the editor of this commemorative publication and played a leading role in the society. As Harald Sohlberg was the Editor-in-Chief of one of Sweden’s leading newspapers, it only seemed logical that he had been well acquainted with this Andersson-Edenberg.

Could you find out more about Andersson-Edenberg’s career as a journalist?

Searching for occurrences of this name in the Swedish newspapers now, I found out that Andersson-Edenberg till 1873 had been the editorial secretary of *Dagens Nyheter*. For the year 1873, he is listed among the “ordinarie medarbetare” (regular staff) of *Svenska Familj-Journalen*. An advertisement in *Kalmar* of 29 December 1883 shows that he now was **Editor-in-Chief** of the *Familj-Journalen*. It thus became clear to me that in 1899, with his decades of experience, his name must have had quite some

weight in Swedish journalistic circles. In the report on the Olympic Games in Stockholm in 1912, his name is prominently listed as a member of the Press Committee.

Another important clue is that already Harald's father, August Sohlman, had written contributions to *Svenska Familj-Journalen* in 1873 – at least, he had *promised* to do so – when Harald was 15 and Albert was nearly 40. Harald's father died in June 1874, in a boat accident. I also just found out that both Albert and Harald had both been active in committees formed at the Twelfth Meeting of Journalists in August 1895; together with other colleagues, Harald took responsibility for organizing the 13th Meeting in Visby in 1898. In December 1895, there was a meeting of *Publicistklubben* where the preparation of the international press congress in Stockholm in 1897, the year of the Stockholm World's Fair, was discussed. Again, Harald Sohlman was involved in this initiative, while Albert was a member of the committee preparing an event to celebrate the association's yearly festivities on 25 January 1898. Moreover, Andersson-Eden actively supported better pensions and other social security plans for journalists. Without having further details now, I suspect that Albert and Harald must have regularly met even before the preparation of the 1899 *Festschrift*.

Did you find out more about Andersson-Edenberg's personal backgrounds and interests?

As my research efforts are extremely fresh still, I can only offer some fragmentary information here.

- From genealogical websites, I found out that Anders Albert Andersson-Edenberg was born on 5 April 1834 in Helgarö församling, Edeby, in Södermanland, east of Stockholm. He had seven brothers and sisters, all younger than him, except Erik Albert (*1830) and Emma Charlotta (*1832) – but they both died still in the year they were born – Emma Charlotta even within two weeks. His little sister Anna-Sophia (*1845) died in 1850 already, five years old. These must have been very hard times in the Swedish countryside.
- In the years 1857-59, Anders Albert started out as a teacher at an agricultural school. From 1864 on, he worked as a journalist.
- On 17 May 1867, he married Gabriella (Gella) Magnus. They had five children: 3 boys and two girls. Gella died on 25 September 1899, while the *Mörkrets makter* serialization was still running. Their daughter Agnes died of blood poisoning on 26 December 1900.
- After his journey to Rome, he published a long text or a booklet about his stay there: *Ett besök i Rom 1870*.
- Already his article *Flitens skrinlaga frukter* about the accumulation of capital and the virtue of frugality (*Svenska Familj-Journalen*, Year 1872, Volume 11, pp. 213-215), shows that he had in interest in developing a broad philosophical understanding of society.
- In August 1874, he was one of the initiators of *Publicistklubben*.

- He died on 24 March 1913 and was buried on 31 March.

Why do you think that of all people, Anders Albert Andersson-Edenberg actually may have been the person you were looking for?

First, there are the criteria we already discussed: long years of journalistic experience, fluid writing, travel abroad, erudite, on equal footing with Harald Sohlman, and their recent cooperation for the *Festschrift*. And then the name itself, of course. **Anders Albert Andersson-Edenberg. In initials: A.A.A-E. That sounds like a name that could be shortened to “A–e”.**

And I found out something more. I discovered that this Anders Albert had been translating stage plays from Norway, written by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (1832-1910), the 1903 Nobel Prize Winner in Literature. Andersson-Edenberg translated, among others, the play *Mellan drabbningarne: skådespel i en akt*. This translation was published by Bonnier in Stockholm in 1867. And, as the title page shows, Anders Albert Andersson-Edenberg used a pseudonym here: A.E. In my eyes, that pretty much looks like “A–e”.

Source: *Mellan Drabbningarne. Skådespel I En Akt. Af Bjørnstjerne-Bjørnson. Öfversatt Av A. E. (Uppförd å Kongl. Dramatiska Theatern i Stockholm). Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag/ Alb. Bonniers Boktryckeri, 1867.*

For the translation of two other plays by Bjørnson, *En glad gosse – Skildring ur folklivet* and *Jonas Tværmoses missöden*, he used the pseudonym “Erzo.”

Source: Linnstrom, Hjalmar. *Svenskt Boklexikon. Åren 1830-1865. Part A—L.* Stockholm: Hjalmar Linnströms Förlag, 1883. p. 134, p. 192

It seems that our Anders Albert, for one reason or another, preferred to work under a pseudonym for such translations.

Are there any other known pseudonyms he worked under?

Until now, I found nine:

A.E.	Edbg	Erzo
A. E-g	Eg	Chippus
Adauctus	E-g	Testis

Source: Kungliga biblioteket/Sveriges nationalbiblotek. *Sveriges periodiska litteratur. Pseudonym- och Signaturregister*

As I checked in the newspaper archives, he used the name “Chippus” in 1868 already – for *Dagens Nyheter*, he commented on an important art exhibition. “Audactus” and “Testis” are names he used for his columns as a Stockholm correspondent in the 1890s. Altogether, we see four fantasy names; the other five are combinations of letters and hyphens. I think that “A–e” would fit very nicely in this collection.

Do you think that this is enough to prove that “A–e” was Anders Albert Andersson-Edenberg?

Haha, after my experiences with *Makt myrkranna*, I am very reluctant now to believe anything, or even only to present a hypothesis. I do not even know for sure if our candidate spoke English! The three plays he translated were from Norway. Let's pray that the Swedish version does not turn out to be based on a still earlier Norwegian adaptation. *Mørkets makter*. That would kill me! [laughs] We would need to know more about Anders Albert Andersson-Edenberg before we can make a more definitive appraisal. I do not expect any correspondence between A.A.A-E and Harald Sohlman to turn up in which the two gentlemen agreed on a fitting pseudonym for the *Mörkrets makter* project. But if we look a bit deeper into the other texts authored or translated by A.A.A-E., we may find further clues. For the moment I would say, this looks like an ideal match. Again, it is the turn of Swedish literary historians now to react and come up with further ideas. I wanted to retire from all of this, remember?

Hans, we thank you for chatting with us again!

Postscript : After finishing this interview, Hans mailed me a screenshot of an E-book he had just been able to purchase from Sweden: A reproduction of the text of *Ett besök i Rom*, published in *Svenska Familj-Journalen* in 1870, written by Anders Albert Andersson-Edenberg. Both chapters were signed with the pseudonym “A.-E.”

Texts by Anders Albert Andersson-Edenberg that are still available as E-Book:

- Borgholms slottsruin
- Ett besök på Djurgården sommaren 1868
- Ett besök i Strängnäs 1874
- Skildring av Dalälven (1876)
- Skildring av Huskvarna år 1880

Sveriges gamla skattkammare (Svenska familj-journalen: illustrerad månadsskrift, innehållande svensk-historiska samt fosterländska skildringar och berättelser ...; 1877, p. 176-182)

The mentioned book by Gustaf A. Aldén:

Medborgarens Bok av Gustaf A. Aldén

Inbunden bok. Lars Hökerbergs. Åttonde uppl. 1896. 900 ca s. Inbunden. Klotband mycket vacker rygg. 17,5 x 11,5 cm. 720 gram