

# Jurisdictions and Records for Swedish Genealogy

By Geoffrey Fröberg Morris AG®

At the end of this presentation, you will be able to identify key jurisdictions within the Swedish Lutheran Church, Civil Offices, and the Court system. Further, you have a basic understanding of the key records they kept.

## Jurisdictions in Swedish Lutheran Church

### Diocese (Stift)

The diocese has authoritative jurisdiction over the deaneries, chapelries, and parishes within the diocese. Every diocese is under the direction of a bishop. Each diocese has a central administrative organization called domkapitel. Multiple dioceses make up an arch-diocese that is under the direction of the arch-bishop. The bishops work together in leading the Swedish Lutheran church with the arch-bishop in Uppsala.

### Diocese Records

Handlingar: Supporting documents for the cases

Protokoll: Record of items brought to the attention of the diocese

Skiljobrev: Records regarding divorce

Visitationsprotokoll: Record of diocese visitations to the pastorats

Äktenskapshandlingar: Documents regarding marriage (i.e. matters of diocese approval)

### Chapelry (Pastorat)

A pastorat is made up of one, two, or more congregations (församlingar) depending on the circumstances. The head minister (kyrkoherden) of the parish often had assistance by another minister called a komminister (sometimes called kaplan). The parish that the minister lives in is called the mother parish or moderförsamling. The other parish(es) in the pastorat is called the annex parish or annexförsamling. Sometimes the priest kept one record of the whole pastorat in one book, other times there is a separate book for each congregation. Multiple pastorats make up a kontrakt (deanery.)

### The Parish (Församling or Socken)

The parishes were formed in early medieval times when people built a church in the places they would gather for religion. As the population grew in rural areas or cities, new parishes were created or old ones were divided. When the population of a place increased, the work load for the priest increased as well necessitating a division of the parish. The priest would keep track of the residents of the parish by organizing the parish into neighborhood (rote), village (by) and/or farm (gård or hemman). Each village and farm had a name and sometimes also a number (especially in the southern Sweden). The geographic size of a parish was influenced by the population density. The boundaries for the parishes were mostly set (especially in the southern part of Sweden) before recorded history. Many parishes have remained virtually unchanged, while others have been combined with the evolution of society.

## Parishes in Cities

Small towns would have one parish for the community. Larger cities would have multiple parishes within the same city. With urbanization the number and size of city parishes grew. In larger cities, there are *territorial* parishes (meaning the parish has a specific boundary) and *non-territorial* parishes that were offered for the whole city such as the German merchants in Stockholm. Depending on the city, sometimes there is a main parish for the residents of a city (stadsförsamling) with a “rural” parish (landsförsamling) for the residents living in rural areas around the city.

## Parish Records

Födelse och dopbok: Birth and christening record

Lysning och vigselbok: Engagement and marriage record

Död och begravningsbok: Death and burial record

Husförhörlängd: Household examination

In och utflyttningslängd: Move-in and -out record

\*There are many other records that a parish created. See Nationell Arkivdatabas (NAD) to see a full listing for the parish of interest.

## Civil Jurisdictions

### County Administration (Länsstyrelse)

Before 1634, the civil jurisdictional authority belonged to the provinces. In 1634 it was decided to switch to a county structure (län) kingdom wide. When the county boundaries were created, some counties matched the old province, other provinces were divided into multiple counties, and some provinces were combined to create a county. During the centuries that followed the number of counties fluctuated. By 1810 there were 24 counties which generally remained the same up until 1997.

Each county was led by a Länsstyrelsen which was made up of a Landkansli and a Landskontor. The Landkansli was responsible for permissions and appointments. The Landskontor was responsible for all economic matters such as tax collection.

### County Administration Records

The county administration (länsstyrelse) archives include records from the offices of the landkansli and the landskontor. In the landkansli you will find among other records passjournaler (record of people who requested a travel pass), gästgivari dagböcker (the record of people using the government inns), and correctional facilities.

### Landskansli Records

Fångvård: records for correctional facilities

Gästgivari dagböcker: record of people using the government inns

Passjournaler: record of people who requested a travel pass

## **Landskontor Records**

Avkortningslängder: delayed taxes

Mantalslängder: record of the mantals tax

Generalmönsterrullor: the general muster rolls

Restlängder: taxes or fees paid out of normal order

Jordeböcker: the real estate tax

Tiondelängder: tithing

\*Duplicates of the mantalslängder and the jordeböcker were sent to Stockholm.

## **Fögderi (Kronofogde and Häradsskrivare)**

The county was divided into areas called a fögderier (-deri = singular.) Each fögderi had an appointed Kronofogde and Häradsskrivare over the area. The Kronofogde was responsible for collecting taxes, fines, and fees. He would carry out compulsory auctions and was the manager over the Länsman. The Häradsskrivaren was subordinate to the Kronofogden. His responsibilities included creating the mantal tax records and the real estate tax records (jordebok.) Like the kronofogde archive, the häradsskrivare collections were inconsistently preserved. For family history research the häradsskrivare archive is a resource to look for additional copies of tax records. Because the kronofogden was constantly traveling with his duties, the records he kept were inconsistently preserved.

## **Kronofogde Records**

Auktionsprotokoll: record of auctions

Kronouppbördsböcker: tax collector records

Bötesredogörelser: accounts of fines

Saköreslängder: record of people fined

Femårsberättelser: five yearly accounts

Skattläggningar: tax assessments

Gästgivaridagböcker: innkeepers' records

Soldattorp: soldattorp

## **Judicial Jurisdictions**

### **District Court (Häradsrätt or Tingslag)**

The härad in Sweden is referring to a smaller jurisdiction that in early times could have been associated to a population group or to a place that had a specific geographical boundary. Whatever the case, the härad in Sweden started with a judicial nature. All of the provinces (landskap) were divided into smaller areas called Härad throughout mid to southern Sweden, and Tingslag or Bergslag in Northern Sweden. In coastal areas they might be called Skeppslag. The härads would use a tingplats as the place of judgement. Sometimes the härad had its own tingplats, other times a tingplats was shared with other härads. Eventually the tingsplats evolved into the Häradsrätt (a local court at the lowest judicial level). In the cities they were called a Rådhusrätt. Where multiple härads shared a tingsplats they might have united the härads to become a Domsaga.

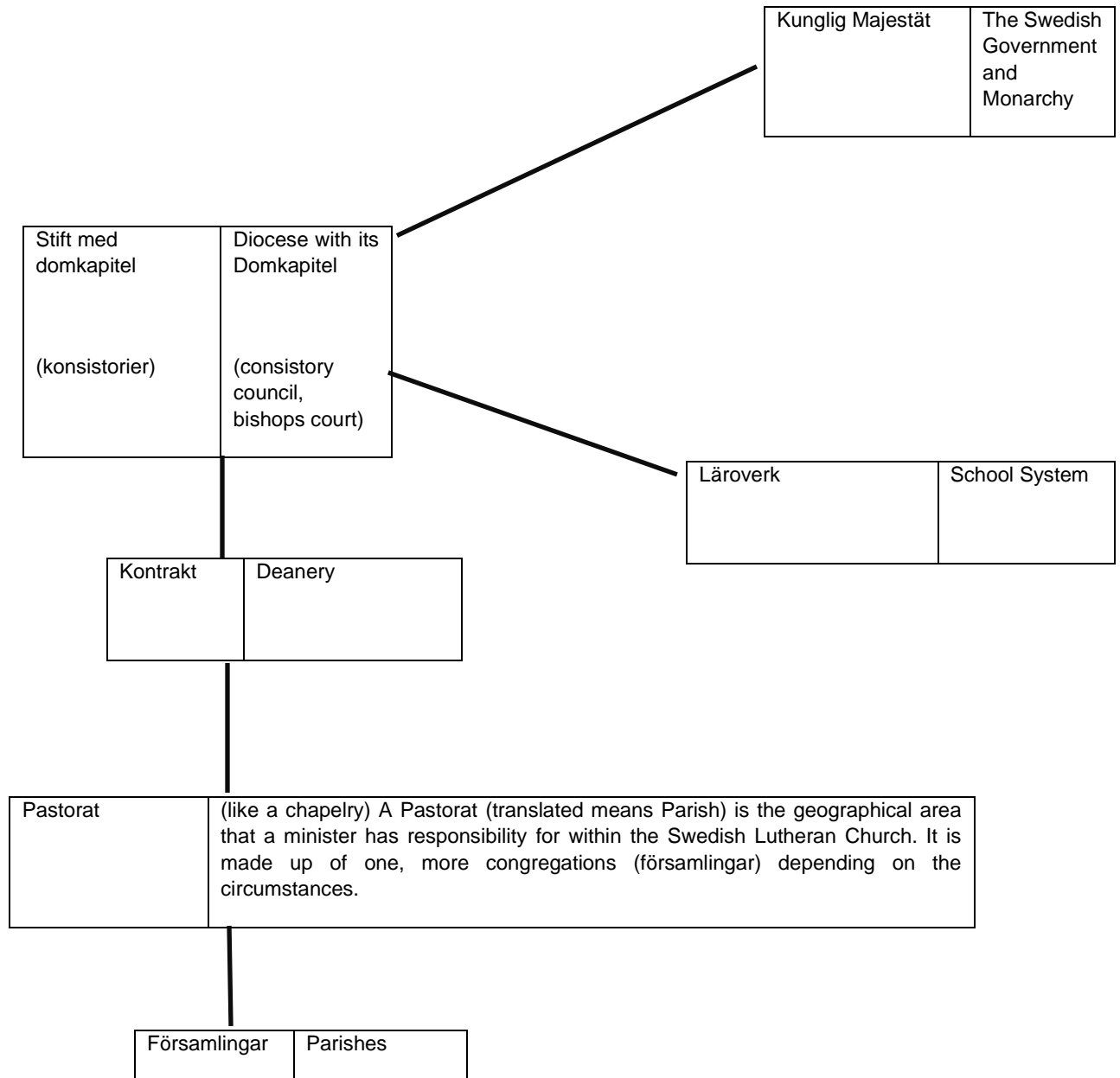
### **District Court Records**

Dombok: a record of court proceedings. Generally regular court sessions were held 3 times a year.

Boupteckningar: a record of probates (division of estate after a person died)

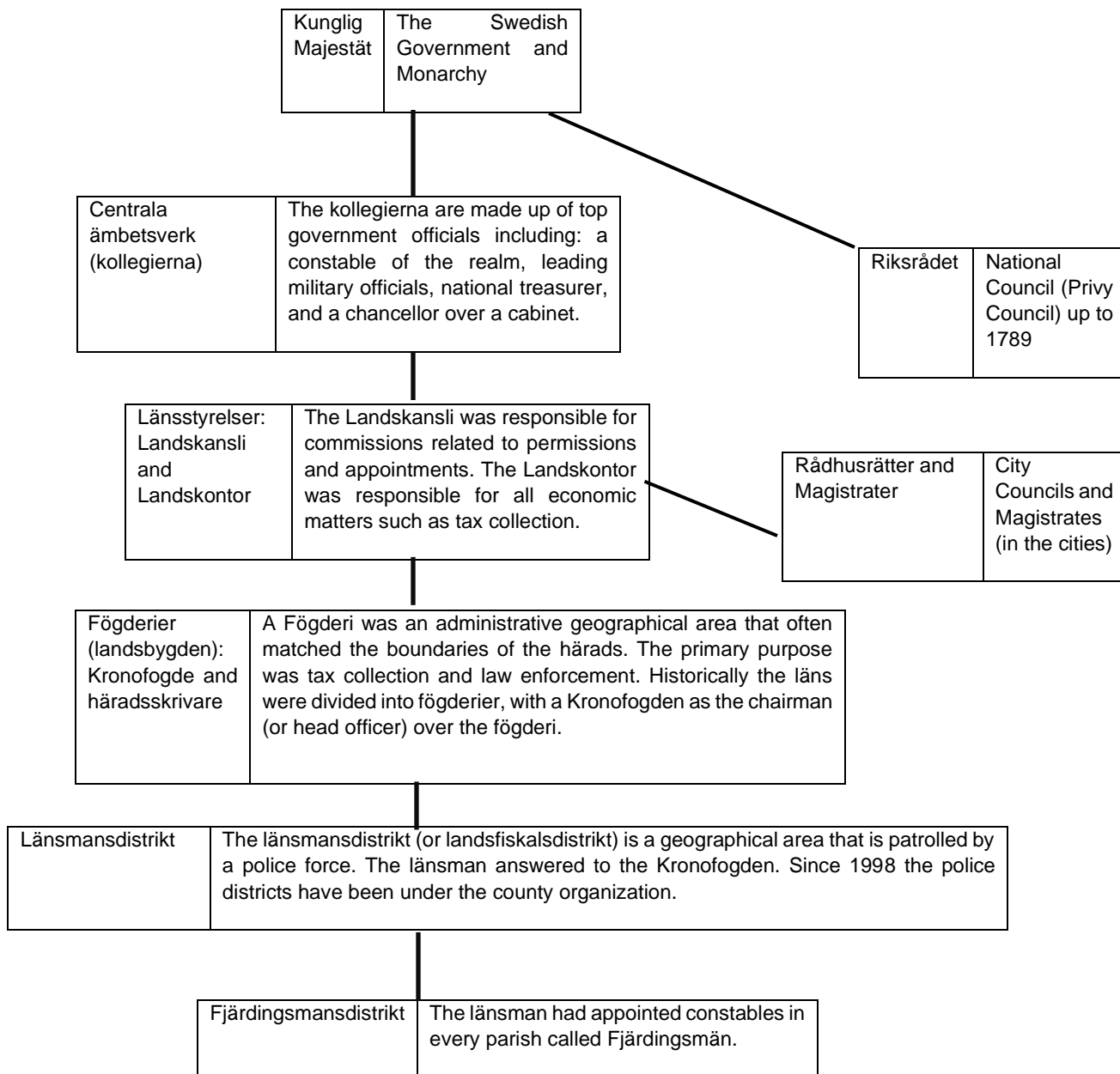
Inteckningsprotokoll, Småprotokoll: court decisions often held in between the regular sessions

Organizational structure of the Swedish Lutheran Church from the 1650's up to the early 1900's:



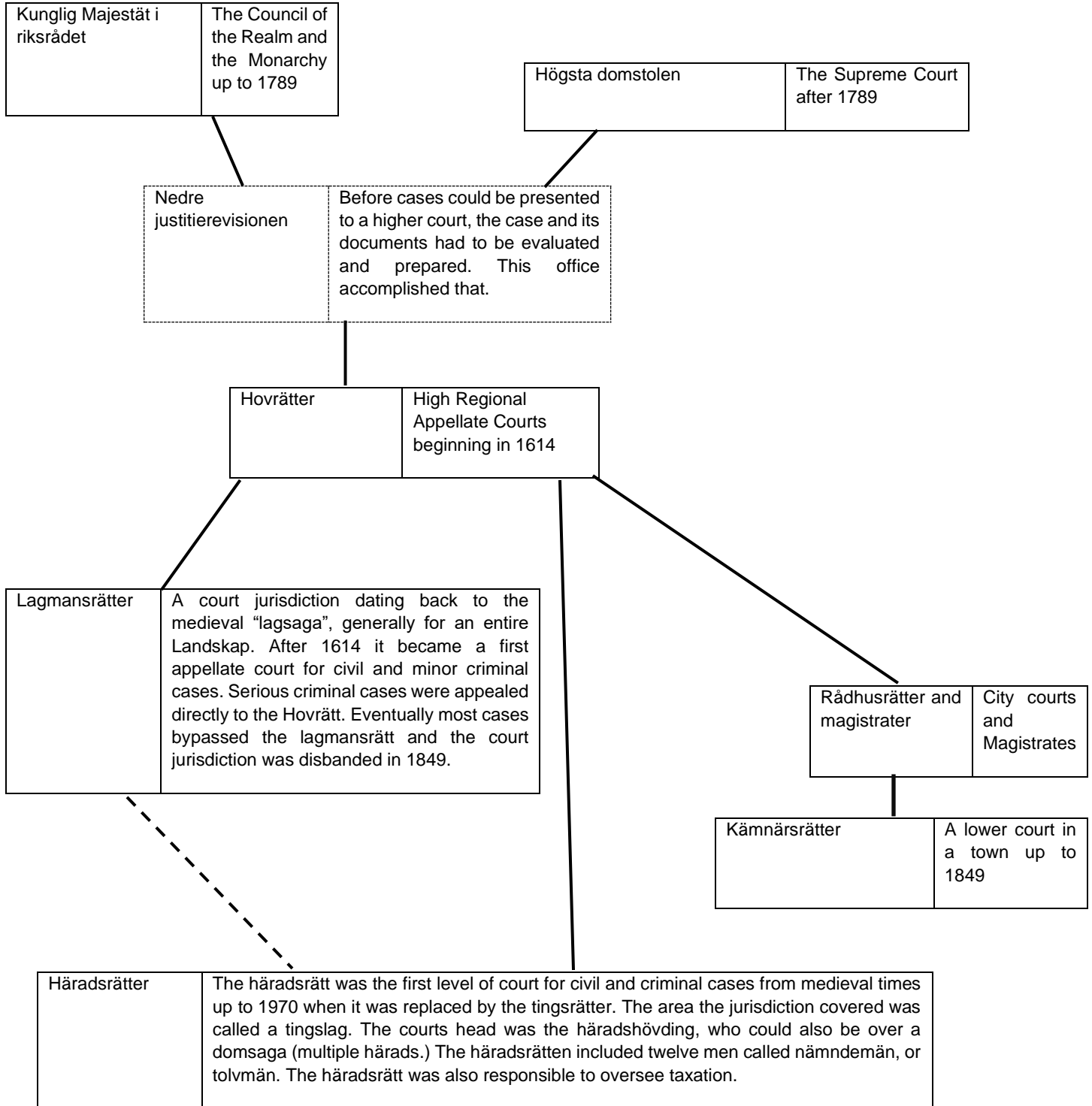
Based upon the Swedish Church Administration structure as found in: [Hur riket styrdes: Förvaltning, politik och arkiv 1520 – 1920](#) by Björn Asker

Organizational structure of the Swedish Civil authorities from the mid 1600's up to the beginning of the 1900's:



Based upon the Swedish Civil Administration structure as found in: [Hur riket styrdes: Förvaltning, politik och arkiv 1520 - 1920](#) by Björn Asker

Organizational structure of the judicial system from the mid 1600's up to the beginning of the 1900's:



Based upon the Swedish Judicial Administration structure as found in: [Hur riket styrdes: Förvaltning, politik och arkiv 1520 - 1920](#) by Björn Asker