

Summary

Chronsough rides again

Decorative spelling of surnames

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Unlike with place-names, there is a tendency in Swedish for surnames to be written differently from the words they are made up of, a practice referred to as decorative spelling. Nevertheless, in the established name stock certain spelling traditions exist. The *ä*-sound, for instance, is often represented as *e*: *Hellberg* rather than *Hällberg*, and *Engman* instead of *Ängman*. The letters most commonly used for decorative purposes are probably *h* and *z*. Silent *h*, as in *Wahlberg* for example, is ultimately modelled on German orthography, e.g. *Hahn*, *Ehrenpreis*.

A review of applications for new names submitted in recent years to the Swedish names authority, the Patent and Registration Office, reveals an erosion of people's linguistic instinct as far as the spelling of surnames is concerned. Applicants insert a decorative *h* in the 'wrong' place, e.g. *Romanhberg*, reverse the established combination *-dt-*, resulting for example in *Vintderdag*, and spell the *v*-sound *-vf-* instead of the old *-f-*, e.g. *Ridderhavf*.