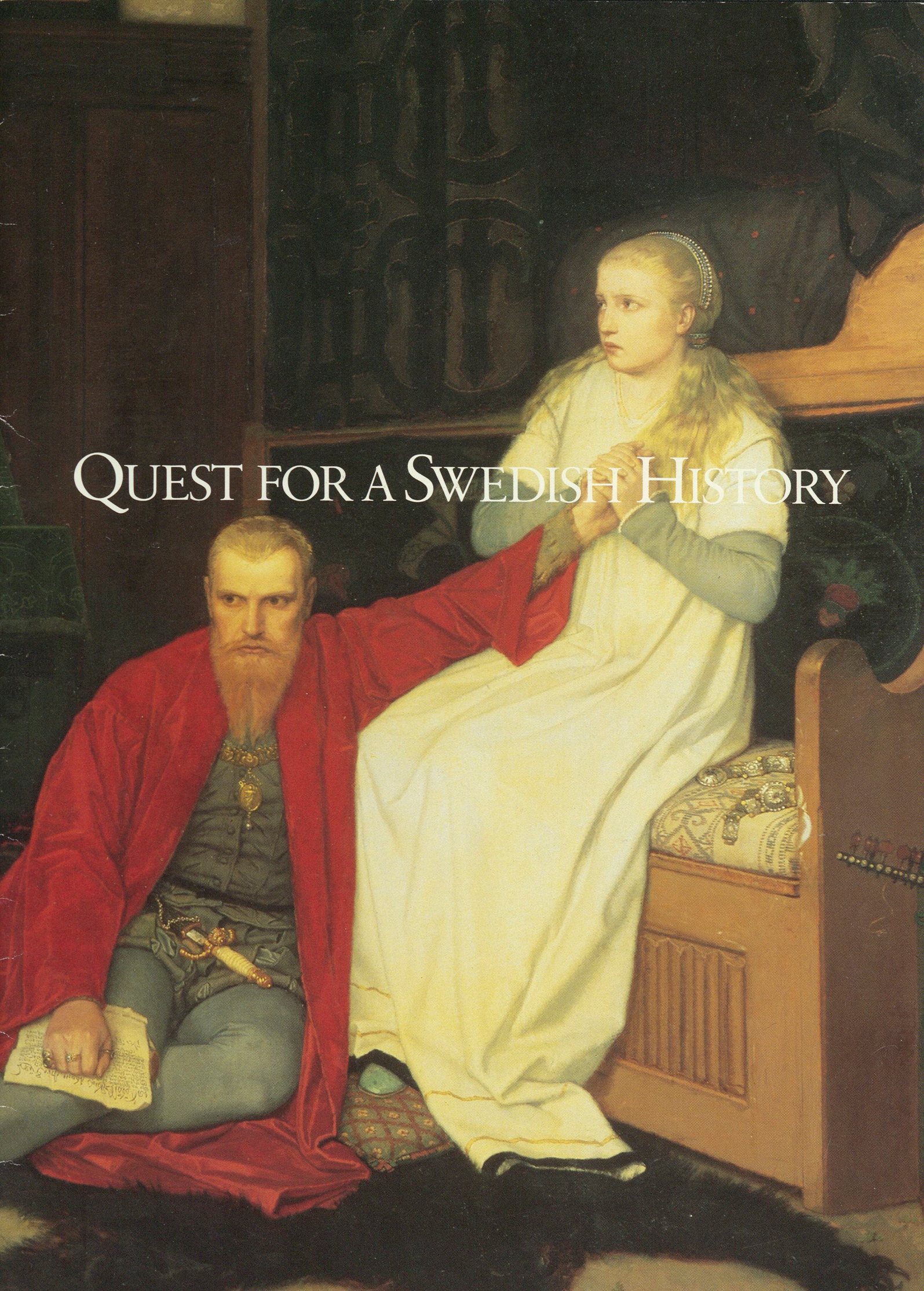


Quest for a Swedish History

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UTLÅNAS EJ

Den svenska historien 1993

Swedish history really starts on a grey day about 10,000 years ago, when the first hunter came squelching through the icy slush and spied through the swirling mists a land that was eventually to be known as Sweden.



But the Quest for a Swedish History, the major new exhibition, scheduled to open at noon on March 21, 1993, in Stockholm, offers everyone a personal opportunity to take a stroll through Sweden's history. To prevent you from becoming too exhausted, we start somewhat later than the advent of the first hunter.



The exhibition starts in Old Uppsala, around 400 A.D. You enter a Sweden which in those days consisted of small chiefdoms. You then wander through the many centuries and varied epochs of Swedish history. You experience and feel the fabric of history. You see how Sweden develops and you end in the here and now, with a chance to look into the future. What'll it be like? Behind you lies the story of how Sweden came into existence.



[1993]

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En route, you get to see the Vikings burn and pillage, but you also see them build and create things. You are present when Ansgar preaches at Birka, you see monasteries and churches, you watch mediaeval Sweden take shape before your eyes. Chiefdoms become provinces, merging in their turn to become the kingdom of Sweden. A crusade to Finland binds Sweden and Finland into a single kingdom, linked to the rest of Europe by the Church.



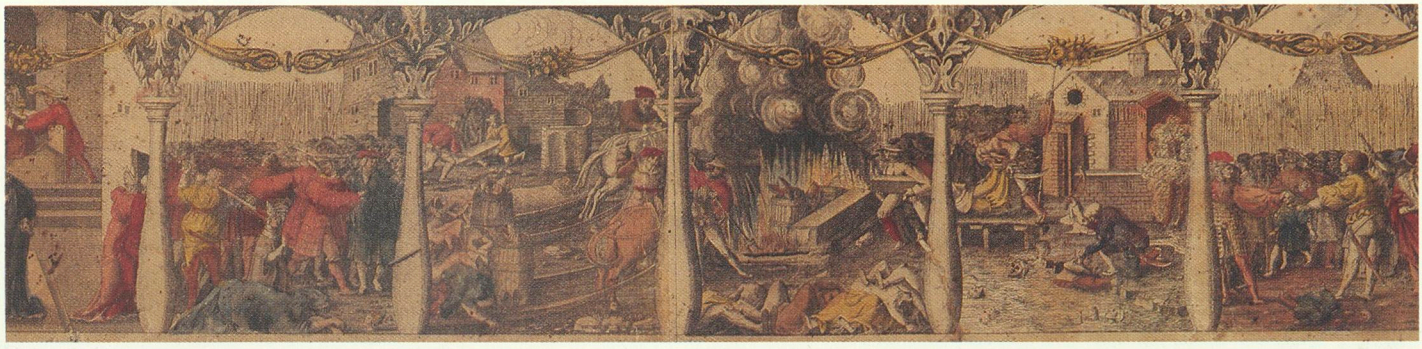
You can follow in the footsteps of our first world star, Birgitta, the only Swedish saint deemed worthy of papal approval. You see the Black Death spread throughout the country and into the mediaeval cities, where you were as likely to hear German as Swedish spoken in the crowded streets.



Long before the EC, the Nordic countries were united as one. Just think what might have been achieved if it had never been dissolved...



At this point, you can step right into Stortorget (the Main Square) in the Old Town of Stockholm, and experience a bloodbath! King Christian was convinced that Swedish resistance to the Union had been crushed, once and for all.



But you then see Gustav Vasa enter the scene, builder of the nation – or, as others saw him, just another tyrant. After 400 years, we break with Roman Catholicism, to make way for Protestantism. The first Swedish and Finnish books are printed. This marks the start of a new era.



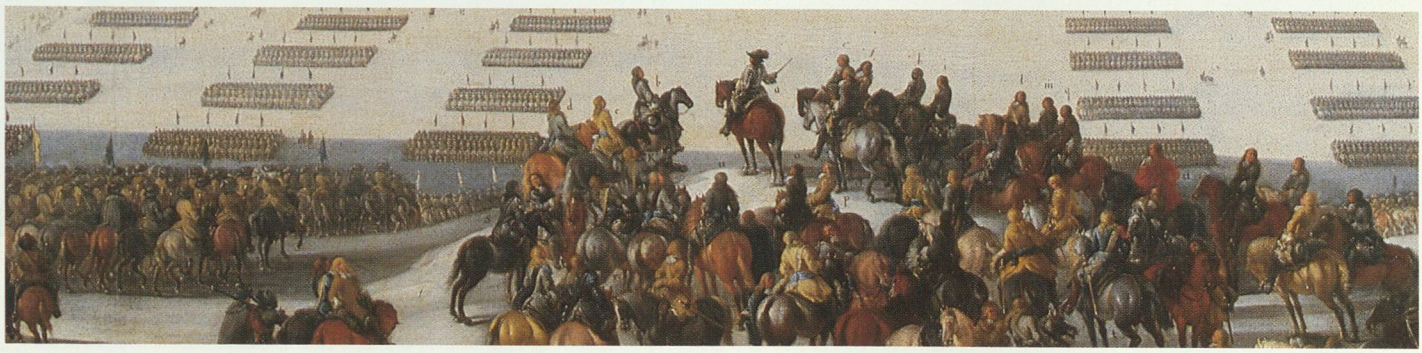
The sons of Vasa, the Swedish renaissance, glittering palaces and blood-drenched fraternal feuds. Sweden's frontiers are extended south of the Gulf of Finland, Estonia becomes Swedish.



The Thirty Years' War and Sweden's period as a Great Power, during which Gustav II Adolf pursues a policy of aggressive expansion on the Continent, and the Swedish Empire is extended at the cost of terrible destruction in the occupied territories. Back in Sweden, the foundations of modern bureaucracy and state administration are being laid. You can take a look at the Falun copper mine, when it was the largest in the world, and meet the Wallonian craftsmen who made Sweden the world's foremost manufacturer of cannon.



You can test the ice which lay over the Great Belt. When Karl X Gustav's army crossed where no-one else had dared, the Swedes were able to win the war and reclaim the whole of southern Sweden. Which is how we ended up with our present frontiers. But what if the ice had broken?



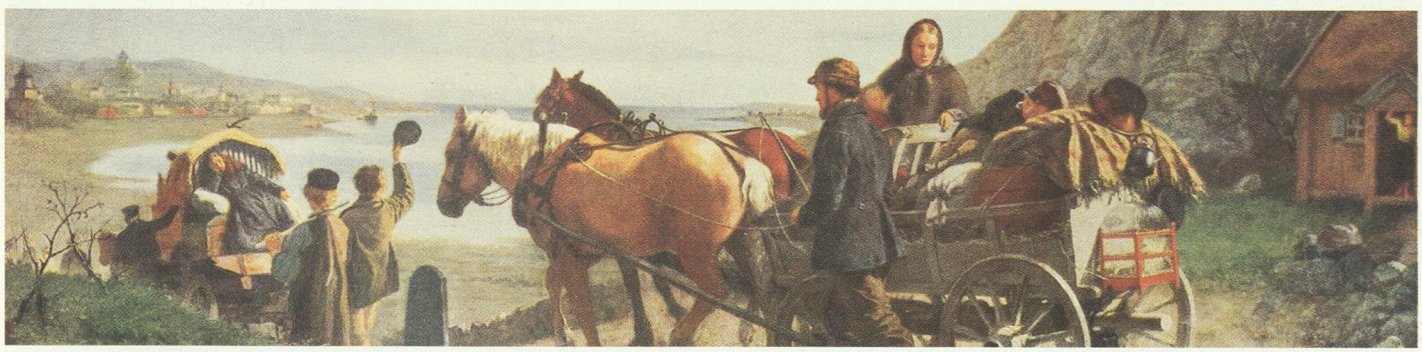
You can participate in that fateful moment when the shot finds it mark in Halden, felling Karl XII, whose death heralds the end of Sweden's period as a Great Power. The Russians wreak havoc along our coast while thousands of Swedish prisoners of war sit and rot in Siberia. You can read their letters and find out how their families learned to survive here at home.



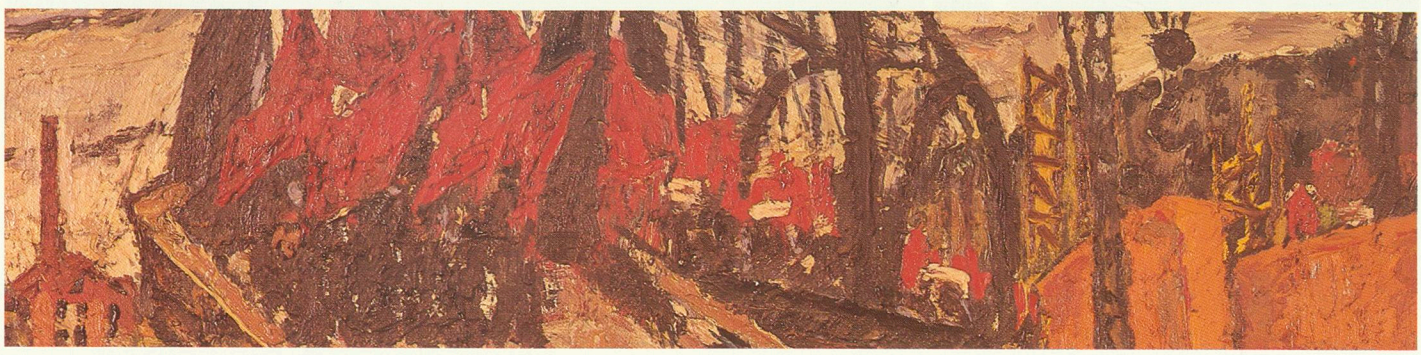
The eighteenth century was the Age of Enlightenment, a period when culture and science flourished. Here, you'll be serenaded by the songs of Bellman and accompany Linneus on a nature ramble with his students. Learn how Gustav III carries out his own revolution yet, while at the Opera, himself dies a victim of an assassin's bullet.



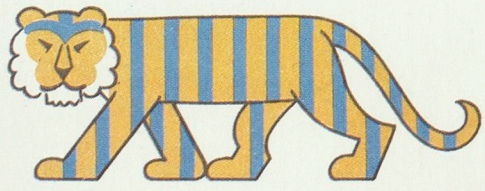
This glittering period of history ends in catastrophe: Finland is wrested from the kingdom. Sweden is halved at a stroke. A new Sweden emerges, born of a new age, with new forms of communication. Canals are dug and, more important, workers lay the first rails for a national network, drawing distant parts of the country closer together. With the introduction of rail services, clocks throughout the country are set to Swedish standard time. Prior to 1870, each place observed its own time. The landscape changes and Swedes soon become used to a completely new way of living, featuring folk highschools, a booming forest industry and factories which turn out Swedish inventions which establish global markets.



However, this is also the Sweden of poverty, forcing mass emigration to America and the rise of the first popular movements. The triumph of democracy, the growth of the labour movement, parliamentary government and the introduction of universal suffrage. And the dream of a Swedish Welfare State.



Then came war. Our state of readiness could perhaps have been better. However, thanks to a policy of neutrality during the war years, Sweden, with its industries and population intact, was raring to go when peace was finally declared. We soon found ourselves in a world with a standard of living which just kept on rising, a world in which soon every Swedish citizen would own a Volvo. "Guest-workers" were recruited from other countries to help man our shipyards, which were among the largest in the world, as well as to feed the other booming sectors of Swedish industry.



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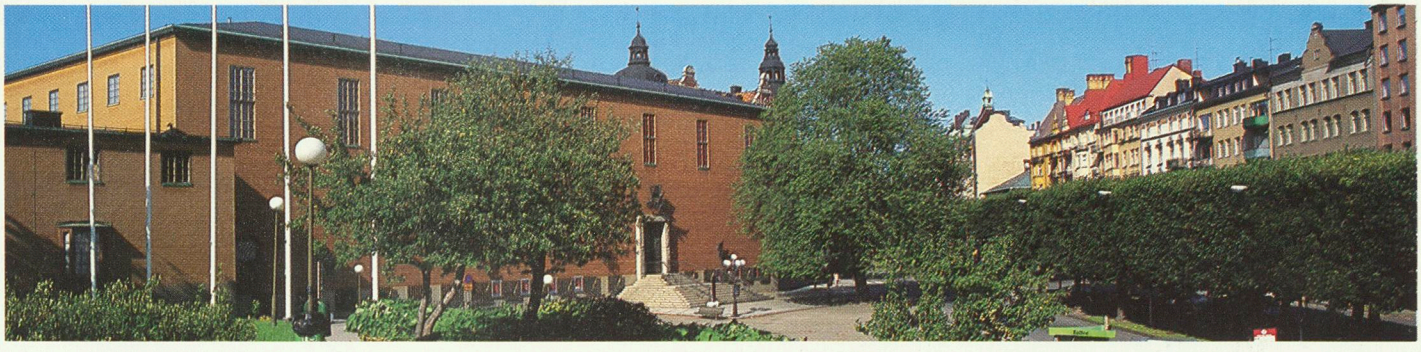
And so to the present, a time of sobering statistics, a rude awakening to the demands of reality, an age painfully aware of each threat to the global environment.



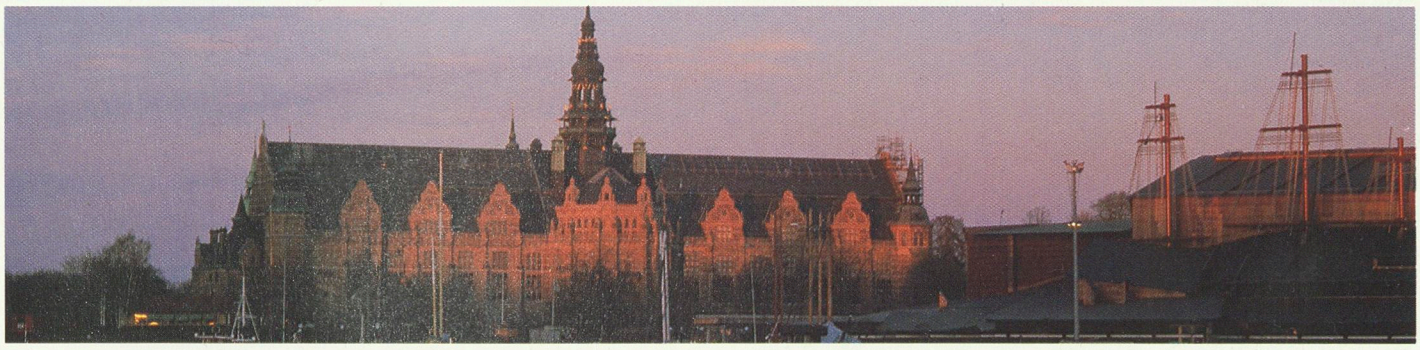
The whole of Swedish history now lies behind you, you stand on the threshold of tomorrow and look ahead, into the future. The final room of the exhibition indicates the alternatives. Which route shall we choose?



The Quest for a Swedish History is the largest project ever attempted by Sweden's museums. But it is even more than the largest and most visually exciting museum exhibition ever presented to the public. It is also the first time that Sweden's many museums have collaborated on staging exhibitions which feature the same theme simultaneously throughout the country. It is also the first time that the country's museums have planned a joint action which could well prove one of the great events of the year!

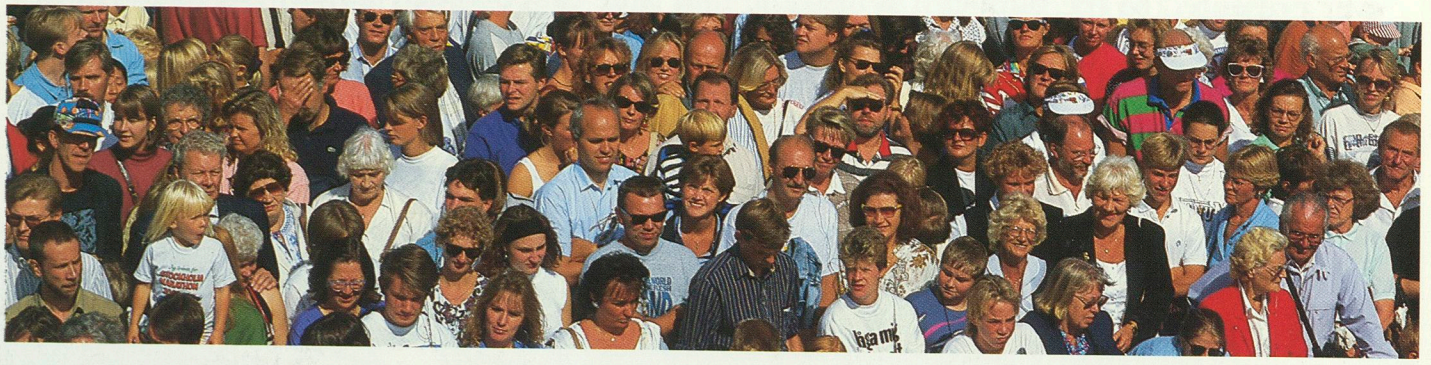


The entire programme revolves around the major exhibition in Stockholm. It completely fills the main floors of Statens Historiska museet (the Museum of National Antiquities)–up to 1520–and Nordiska museet (the Nordic Museum)–from 1520 to the present day. In contrast to the national focus of the central exhibition in Stockholm, county and other museums will concentrate on local history. In all, about 30 museums will present their own exhibitions.



These different exhibitions are also intended to illustrate the subtle interrelation between national and local history, to demonstrate how major decisions and events at the national level affect the lives of ordinary people and the development of individual communities.

Join us, as we rediscover our history at first hand. 1993 will be an historic year in Sweden–in every sense!



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Organizing museums:
Statens Historiska museum, Stockholm
Nordiska museet, Stockholm

Co-organizing museums:
Stockholms läns museum, Stockholm
Upplandsmuseet, Uppsala
Södermanlands museum, Nyköping
Östergötlands länsmuseum, Linköping
Jönköpings läns museum, Jönköping
Smålands museum, Växjö
Kalmar läns museum, Kalmar
Länsmuseet Gotlands fornsal, Visby
Blekinge läns museum, Karlskrona
Kristianstads läns museum, Kristianstad
Kulturen, Lund
Hallands länsmuseer, Varberg och Halmstad
Bohusläns museum, Uddevalla
Älvsborgs Länsmuseum, Vänersborg
Skaraborgs länsmuseum, Skara
Värmlands Museum, Karlstad
Örebro läns museum, Örebro
Västmanlands läns museum, Västerås
Dalarnas museum, Falun
Länsmuseet i Gävleborgs län, Gävle
Jämtlands läns museum, Östersund
Västerbottens museum, Umeå
Norrbottens museum, Luleå

Collaborating museums:
Sundsvalls museum, Sundsvall
Arbetets museum, Norrköping
Göteborgs historiska museum, Gothenburg
Malmö museer, Malmö

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