
PART A – ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

1 SUMMARY

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) is one of the internationally best known of Swedish writers. After a successful career as a scientist and a technician he went through a religious crisis in the 1740's, which ended in a revelation commanding him to devote the rest of his life to interpreting the Holy Scripture and reporting what he had seen and heard in the world of spirits and angels. In obedience to this divine task, he spent his last twenty-five years writing a great number of books, in which he attempted restoring the internal sense of the Biblical Word, as he understood it. After his death in 1772, his manuscripts, some 20 000 pages, were donated by his heirs to the Royal Academy of Sciences in Stockholm, of which Swedenborg was a member. It is one of the biggest existing collections of manuscripts from the 18th century, and besides one of the very few in modern times that has served as the basis for a new Christian church. Swedenborg's message has found many receivers all over the world, and at least some of them look upon his manuscripts as relics. Because of their holy status many of the papers were also reproduced in a photolithographic edition as early as around 1870 by American and British Swedenborg congregations, and the technique was then used for the first time on a large scale. There are still quite a few Swedenborg societies and churches extant, particularly in the United States and the United Kingdom. Some of these are translating and publishing his writings in new editions.

2 DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR

2.1 Name (person or organisation)

The Swedish National Memory of the World Committee

2.2 Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated

2.3 Contact person (s)

Professor Emeritus Inge Jonsson, Member of the National Committee of Sweden

2.4 Contact details (include address, phone, fax, email)

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3 IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

Name of the Documentary Heritage: The Emanuel Swedenborg Collection

Country: Sweden

State, Province or Region: Stockholm

Address: Center for History of Science, The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Box 50005, SE-104 05 Stockholm, Sweden

3.2 Description

Description and inventory: The Emanuel Swedenborg Collection consists of approx. 140 items of some 20 000 pages, approx. 5 m shelf of manuscripts, original editions and letters by Emanuel Swedenborg. The collection covers Swedenborg's years as a scientist and a technician, when Swedenborg was an Assessor in the College of Mines, as well as his life after the religious crisis he went through in the 1740's. It is one of the biggest existing collections of manuscripts from the 18th century, and besides one of the very few in modern times that has served as the basis for a new Christian church.

There are several catalogues and inventories of the Collection, the earliest was made in October 1772, i.e. the year Swedenborg died and when the Collection was donated to the RSAS. The latest, and most comprehensive inventory is a strictly chronological catalogue, printed in 1910, which also covers manuscripts and printed works by Swedenborg held in other collections. The Collection is registered in the Swedish National Archival Database (NAD) and is in the custody of The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Box 50005, 104 05 STOCKHOLM, Sweden.

Provenance: When Swedenborg died in London in 1772 his collection of manuscripts in London were gathered and sent to Sweden. This part of the collection was then drafted onto Swedenborg's manuscripts in Stockholm. The heirs of Swedenborg donated the whole collection of manuscripts to the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, of which Swedenborg had been a member. The Collection has since then belonged to, and has been cared for by, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

Assessment of physical state and conditions: The material is stored in a controlled environment set at 40%RH and 18C°. The storage fulfils the requirements of the Swedish National Archives. The Swedenborg archive consists mainly of bound volumes in leather or parchment. There is no urgent need for conservation. There are no fading or fugitive media or damaging pigments or inks (e.g. copper or iron gall ink corrosion) or other damage that cannot be managed or prevented by climate control or careful handling. The damage present within the archive are above all of mechanical nature, i.e. bindings with brittle and/or damaged spines and corners, tears and creases on the pages etc.

At present there are no immediate plans for more extensive conservation measures, because of the preservation status of the archive and the relatively limited demand for the material. To meet a possible rise in demand, the volumes would be provided with protecting boxes, preferably clamshell-boxes, to avoid dirt, further damage and loss of material. The damaged bindings will eventually be restored.

Bibliography:

- Crasta, Francesca Maria; *La filosofia della natura di Emanuel Swedenborg* (Milano, 1999).
- Dunér, David; *Världsmaskinen: Emanuel Swedenborg och naturfilosofin* (Nora, 2004). Dissertation to be published late September 2004.
- Eby, S. C.; *The Story of The Swedenborg Manuscripts* (s.l., 1926).
- Jonsson, Inge; *Swedenborgs skapelsedrama De Cultu Et Amore Dei En studie av motiv och intellektuell miljö* (Stockholm, 1961). To be published in English in 2005.
- Jonsson, Inge; *Swedenborgs korrespondenslära* (Lund, 1969).
- Jonsson, Inge; *Visionary scientist: The effects of science and philosophy on Swedenborg's cosmography* (West Chester, Penn., 1999).
- Jonsson, Inge ; *A Drama of Creation: Sources and influences in Swedenborg's The Worship and Love of God* (West Chester, Pa, to be published in 2005).
- Lamm, Martin; *Emanuel Swedenborg: The development of his thought* (West Chester, Pa, 2000).
- *Swedenborg and his influence*, eds. Erland J. Brock et al. (Bryn Athyn, 1988).
- Woofenden, William Ross; *Swedenborg researcher's manual: A research reference manual for writers of academic dissertations, and for other scholars* (Bryn Athyn, 1988).

Visual documentation: see CD-ROM

Referees: - Swedenborg Society, 20–21 Bloomsbury Way, London WC 1A 2TH, UK

- Library of The Academy of the New Church, Bryn Athyn, Pa., USA
- Professor Tore Frängsmyr, director of Center for History of Science

4 JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

4.1 Authenticity

There is no doubt about the authenticity of the documents, since it was donated by the heirs immediately after Swedenborg's death and has been controlled on many occasions by experts.

4.2 World significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability

It is one of the largest extant collections of manuscripts from the 18th century, it consists of texts from all periods of Swedenborg's long life, it contains valuable information about both scientific and theological ideas of the European Enlightenment era, and finally it is one of the very few manuscript collections, out of which a new Christian church has emerged.

4.3 Criteria of (a) time (b) place (c) people (d) subject and theme (e) form and style

Time: It reflects both scientific and theological ideas of the European Enlightenment era.

People: The collection represents the original writings of a man whose interpretation of the Holy Scriptures and revelations served as a basis for a new, and still existing, Christian church.

Subject and theme: Again, the collection represents the basis of a new, and still existing, Christian church.

Form and style: The collection has to a large extent been the subject of photolithography, which, as a physical object, gives it an important place in the history of science.

4.4 Issues of rarity, integrity, threat and management

Rarity: It is a large collection of manuscripts from the 18th Century, which forms the basis of a new Christian church.

Integrity: The collection was donated to the Academy immediately after Swedenborg's death. Some original manuscripts have been bound or rebound after being donated to the Academy. The original covers of the books are still kept in the archive. A few volumes were found to be missing when an inventory was done in 1934.

Threat: The Collection is not under any threat, and normal archival procedures are enough to ensure its security.

Management plan: The Collection falls under the same care as the rest of the archival material at the Center for History of Science. It is managed in a way that will ensure its long-term preservation.

5 LEGAL INFORMATION

5.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences

Box 50005

104 05 STOCKHOLM

Sweden

Phone: +46 8 673 95 00

Fax: +46 8 15 56 70

E-Mail: info@kva.se

5.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details, if different to owner)

The Center for History of Science

Fax: +46 8 673 95 98
E-Mail: centrum@cfvh.kva.se

5.3 **Legal status:**

(a) Category of ownership

Private

(b) Accessibility

The collection is open for research/public access in reading room.

(c) Copyright status

No copyright restrictions.

(d) Responsible administration

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences

6 **MANAGEMENT PLAN**

6.1 There is no printed management plan as such, however the archival material is handled according to normal archival procedures, with the care of the collections supervised by a trained conservator. The material is available to researchers in a reading room, under the supervision of the staff. Qualified personnel do all handling of the material and researchers must follow the standard practice of reading rooms for rare books and manuscripts. The archivists and conservator judges whether the material is handed out to a researcher, and access to the material is limited by the status of the material, e.g. brittle paper, damaged binding etc. The relatively limited size of the archive, i.e. the number of fonds under the supervision of the Centre for History of Science, allows for an easy overview and therefore makes it easy to observe conservation needs of a more urgent kind.

At present there are no immediate plans for more extensive conservation measures. This is due partly to the financial situation and the limited facilities for conservation measures, and partly to the preservation status of the archive and the relatively limited demand for it. An increase of interest in the material would create new demands for conservation measures and new priorities.

7 **CONSULTATION**

7.1

- a) The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Box 50005, 104 05 Stockholm, Sweden
- b) The Centre for History of Science,
Dr Karl Grandin, assistant director (karl.grandin@kva.se)
Maria Asp Romefors, archivist (maria.asp@kva.se)
- c) The Swedish National Memory of the World Committee

PART B – SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION

8 **ASSESSMENT OF RISK**

8.1 There is an underfunding of conservation measures, which in the long run could risk the safety of the material. The presence of a conservator as part of the staff is not secured, as there is a lack of funding.

The Collection might be at risk if the demand for it is greatly increased, however the copies provided by several libraries around the world will limit some of this risk.

9 **ASSESSMENT OF PRESERVATION**

9.1 *Present physical state:* The damage present within the archive are above all of mechanical nature, i.e. bindings with brittle and/or_damaged spines and corners, tears and creases on the pages etc.

History of preservations: The collections have as far as we know been stored on library shelves, as, from its arrival, the Collection was an integral part of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences library. Some original manuscripts have been bound or rebound after being donated to the Academy. The original covers of the manuscript volumes are still kept in the archive.

Preservation facilities: Paper conservator for the care of the collections, including both archives and objects. The facilities available today are designed for basic conservation treatments of smaller items and small-scale projects, rather than large numbers of maps and atlases, i.e. dry and wet cleaning and repairs of bound volumes and single sheets of manuscripts or art on paper.

The person responsible for preservation: Jonas Häggblom, conservator at the Center for History of Science