ORGANISING GEOLOGY FOR DISPLAY
THE MUSEUM OF THE SWEDISH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, 1871-1915

Christer Nordlund

On 15 May 1871 the Museum of the Swedish Geological Survey (SGU) opened its doors to the general public. The new museum halls in the centre of Stockholm were cleaned and furnished, and minerals, species of rocks, soil types and fossils arranged in systematic orders. A bust of the founder and former director of SGU, Professor Axel Erdmann (1814-1869), was placed in the anteroom, and the high status of the museum confirmed by the presence of representatives of the Swedish government. The geology of Sweden was organised for display and from now on everyone was welcome to witness it for free.

Here, in an historically famous street Mäster Samuelsgatan, the official Swedish Geological Museum was housed for almost a half century. This epoch came to an end in the 1910s, when SGU including its geological collections, was incorporated into the Swedish Museum of Natural History (Naturhistoriska Riksmuseet) in the Frescati district. This geological museum is not, however, very well known either in the current literature of museology or history of science, and the main aim of this essay is to bring it to light, not least as an important part of Swedish nationalistic discourse.

I am not primarily interested in deconstructing the collections in themselves, or the scientific research within the museum in detail. Instead, my aim is to provide a more extensive description of the museum in both its historical and cultural contexts. Starting with a discussion of the «New museum idea» I will continue with a summary of the establishment and development of the museum and its collections, from 1867 to 1915, the case of science and education within the museum, and end with a discussion about its relationship to national and international exhibitions in this period.
Geological museums, as well as natural history museums, zoological museums and botanical gardens are typical of modern European cultural expression during the nineteenth century. The samples within these museums were often collected by private natural historians, sometimes connected to county and civic philosophical societies and field clubs. Since a passion for geology (and mineralogy) was quite strong at this time, many collections of stones and minerals were made, especially in Britain. «Geological advance and opportunity, combined with widespread interest in natural history gave birth to the literary and philosophical movement which swept through much of Britain», according to the geological museum curator Simon Knell. Results of such work in Sweden could be seen for example in the mineral collections of the Mine Councillor Nils Psilanderhjelm and the natural history collections of Gustaf von Paykull and Adolf Erik Grill (which formed the basis of the Swedish Museum of Natural History, established in 1819).

Economic prosperity related to industrialisation, allowed governments in several countries to support the development of buildings to house these accumulated collections. During the second half of the nineteenth century, prominent geological museums for the public, staffed by expert researchers, were established in London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Zurich and Budapest, to name only the most distinguished. Several of these were connected to the Geological Survey of each respective country. The Geological Museum of SGU was almost totally financed by the Swedish government. In addition to this, the museum also received gifts from industry and from generous individuals.

Modern geological museums served many purposes, among which the training of mining engineers, scientific research, and public education and cultivation, are the most obvious. The diverse tasks of the museums are today commonly categorised as «the new museum idea». As several studies have shown, scientific museums, as symbols of rationality and knowledge, power and prestige, were also an important part of the official glorification of the nation. Museums in Victorian Britain for example, founded in an imperialistic context, exhibited not only objects gathered from Great Britain but as far as possible specimens from the colonies within the Empire. In the Royal Institution and the Museum of the Geological Society of London, for example, the specimens from Britain were subdivided by counties and the foreign ones by countries. The museums simultaneously expressed an agency of control towards these countries, and proved the cultural power of Britain. Something similar might be said about the Sedgwick Museum in Cambridge and the German museum of colonial science in Hamburg.

In the case of the Geological Museum of SGU, on the other hand, most of the objects were gathered during SGU's geological surveys, and therefore the objects were almost exclusively collected from localities within Sweden. The official aim was consequently to display the unique geological character of the nation – 'to tell a story about its foundation' – as well as its rich supply of useful and valu-
able natural resources; to integrate fashionable geology into the cultural and national identity of Sweden. Therefore, it is possible to regard the Geological Museum of SGU as an expression of the nationalist movement in Sweden. The collections had political connotations as I will show in the following.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MUSEUM

The nucleus of the museum collection was already gathered by the end of SGU’s first working year, in the summer of 1858. Geological samples were collected by individual geologists who arranged them in specially constructed cabinets inside SGU’s small institution at Lilla Nygatan 20 in Stockholm. Later on, these samples were completed with the director Axel Erdmann’s private collections of minerals, stones and soil types, which were donated to the ‘museum’ in the 1860s. From the beginning, SGU also started to collect cube-shaped examples of ornamental stones and other species of rocks. In the opinion of SGU, Sweden was very fortunate in both the diversity and the amount of its beautiful and useful stones, and this favourable situation had to be taken into account. In 1866, 115 different kinds of cube were proudly exhibited at Allmänna Industriutställningen (The General Industry Exhibition) in Stockholm, the first exhibition in which SGU participated. It is easy to understand that SGU’s responsibility for industry was in the minds of the geologists from the very beginning; its first aim was to examine and make an inventory of Swedish geology, especially in order to support agriculture, mining, and similar industries.

As the survey developed, the geological collections inside the Geological Bureau (Geologiska byrån), as the institution was usually called, grew rapidly. In 1861, Axel Erdmann wrote to the Minister of Public Administration and described the need for new premises. The campaign continued and two years later the Government approved Erdmann’s request and decided to construct a new house at Mäster Samuelsgatan 36 (later renumbered 44). The building was primarily intended to house the Swedish Technical School (Svenska Slöjdföreningens söndags- och aftonskola), a Swedish geological museum, and other exhibitions connected with industry and agriculture. Later on, it was decided that the whole institution of SGU should also be housed there.

In the autumn of 1867, SGU moved its activities and collections to its new building. Museum halls and a chemical laboratory were established on the ground floor, and a library, six work rooms, and two offices for the director, on the first floor. The museum was divided into several different sections, whose style changed over time. The main section was the Large Museum Hall, which was thirty metres long, thirteen metres wide and two floors high. It had a balcony gallery along one side and large windows along the other. Initially, there was also one room for the mineral collections, one for storing samples, one for unpacking materials, and one anteroom. A grant of 18,000 Swedish crowns was made by the government for equipment and furnishing.

It took a lot of work to organise, label and catalogue the collections, and it was
several years before the first exhibition was completely finished. The master of engineering A. Verner Cronqvist was employed as a museum assistant in 1867, but as he was also engaged as a chemist he spent most of his time in the mineralogy laboratory. The director Axel Erdmann, who carried the main responsibility for the museum, unfortunately died in 1869. In order to get the project off the ground, his son Edvard (1840-1923) took on responsibility for the museum’s work. He had graduated from the Institute of Technology in Stockholm in 1861 and since then had worked as an assistant geologist at SGU, principally on the survey in the province of Skåne in the south of Sweden. In 1871, Edvard Erdmann became the curator of the new museum; a position he held until 1910.

Like curators in many other natural history museums in Europe and elsewhere at this time, Erdmann had a great deal of responsibility and was independent with regard to the organisation of work inside the museum, despite having to follow general orders from the director. Erdmann tried hard to convey geology to the general public, both through exhibitions and texts. Among other works – for example as the secretary of Geologiska Föreningens i Stockholm Förhandlingar (Transactions of the Geological Society of Stockholm) – he published the well-known textbook Populär geologi (Popular Geology) in 1874, and wrote most of the articles concerning geology in the first and second editions of the Swedish encyclopaedia, Nordisk familjebok. Through his writing, Erdmann made an ambitious effort to spread the honour of both Sweden and the geological research carried out by the Swedish geologists. Proud to be a civil servant, he was indeed one of the most active spokesmen for the ‘Swedish school of geology’. According to C. J. Otto Kjellström, Erdmann only become upset if somebody made fun of his patriotism.

THE FIRST EXHIBITIONS

The Large Museum Hall was furnished with 38 specially designed cupboards fixed to the walls, much like the national geological museum in Vienna. The idea was that these cupboards should display collections of species of rocks and soil types typical of each of the administrative provinces in Sweden, thereby constituting a Swedish natural landscape in miniature. Since SGU started its survey in the middle of Sweden, the first collections that were finished were the administrative provinces of Nyköping, Stockholm, Västerås and Dalsland. Soon the cupboards for Södra Ålvborg, Kristianstad, Malmöhus, Örebro and Uppsala were also full. In one way, these geographical arrangements used the same pedagogical method as Artur Hazelius used when he created the open-air museum Skansen two decades later, displaying the typical cultural heritage of each administrative province in Sweden in different sections.

In addition to the province cupboards, eleven separate exhibition cases were placed on the floor. Through their glass doors, visitors could inspect different kinds of samples related to geology of the Quaternary Age: soil deposits, bog iron ore, molluscs, vertebrates, etc. Most distinguished of all the specimens was a single fossilised insect wing found on Gotland. Together with a scorpion kept at
the Natural History Museum, this was considered to be part of the oldest terrestrial species known at this time in the world. In addition, some pillars and pyramids made of the cube-shaped examples of ornamental stones and other types of rocks, stood on the floor; an exhibit which gave an almost 'ancient' impression. It also became an aim of the museum to display other aspects of scientific geology, particularly the results of different kinds of geological processes, such as earth weathering, foldering, pressing, and other phenomena. In 1876 some exhibition cases were set up specifically for that purpose.

It is interesting to note that the Geological Museum always contained both artificialia and naturalia, that is both geological objects and geological artefacts. Therefore there were not only old 'historical objects' but also modern objects. A special collection of samples connected with Swedish industry and 'practical geology' was displayed for several years in one of the smaller rooms. This collection of
metals, bricks, pottery, cement, glass, porcelain, pit-coal, peat, fertilisers, etc. was created in co-operation with about 40 owners of Swedish factories, metal works and quarries. In addition, a separate exhibit containing an ore-collection from the ore-fields in Sweden was established in the middle of the 1870s at the request of the new director of SGU, the polar traveler and quaternary geologist Otto Torell (1828-1900).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MUSEUM

Extensive rebuilding of the museum was carried out between 1879 and 1880, during which some of the installations were changed. The restoration was finished on 9 April 1880 when the museum was officially opened in the presence of the king of Sweden, Oscar II. Later a portrait of the King hung in the museum as a memorial to this occasion. The exhibitions were, however, constantly changing as the collection increased. Thousands of new samples were brought to the museum each year; in 1883 they numbered approximately 100,000 in total, in 1898, 140,000 and in 1910 more than 200,000. At the end of the 1870s, Erdmann started to sort out samples which did not necessarily have to be displayed in the museum. These samples were put in boxes and stored in the basement. In 1893, SGU had 393 such boxes and in 1898 almost 1,000. Samples associated with petrography and palaeontology formed the biggest collections. The steady influx of specimens was due both to the increase in the number of geologists and the extension of the railway network throughout Sweden.

From Edvard Erdmann's humorous text Geologiska brottstycken: Tillfällighetens skämt (Geological Fragments: Accidental Occurrences), signed by the pseudonym «En Elak» (An Evil One), it is possible to imagine the curator's problematic situation in the museum. One picture with the caption «Museiföreståndares kritiska belägenhet» (The curator's critical situation) shows Erdmann himself standing scratching his head in the middle of piles of storage boxes. In the text below the picture, the author explains that the museum is receiving far too many samples, and hopes that at least some trains are going to be cancelled. «In deep cellar-vaults, such an amount of material is stored, that one is tempted to believe that 'stones are growing'».

In the 1890s, the exhibition of the administrative provinces was finally 'completed' with Småland, Dalarna,Gotland and Öland, and the provinces in the North of Sweden too. In addition eighteen oil-paintings depicting geologically important landscapes were donated to the museum. These were painted by the artists Artur Bianchi, Fritz Lindström and Björn Ahlgrensson, and funded by one of SGU's employees (probably Erdmann himself). Some of the paintings, which were usually painted from photographs, were very large, some more than three metres in length. The island Gotska Sandön, the Ömberg region, the mining district Kirunavaara, and the mountains Åreskutan and Sulitelma were among the motifs.

At the turn of the century, the museum became a little more open to international circumstances. In the interests of the Swedish chemical-geological industry,
Plan och Undersökningars Museum 1874.

Förklaring till tav 1. — Sveriges Geologiska Undersöknings Museum 1874.

Stora Musealen: 1—26. Höga, vägglästa skåp med glastäckta överdelar, för lånssamlingar (se fig. 1). Följande är ordnade: 3 och 4 Nyköpings lån; 5, Stockholms lån; 6 och 7, Västerås lån; 14 och 15, Dalsland, skälf urbergets som Dalformatio-
ens bergarter; 21, 22 och 23 Kristianstads och Malmöns lån (urborg, kambränsfält, trista, jura och krit); 28, Kambränsfält
från Öster- och Västergötland, Närke, Dalarna och Norrland. — 1—11, kristländs, glastäckta, dubbelstående bordmonster inschällande: 1, berg- och jordarter från egendomarna Tosterup i Skåne och Skotten i Halland, utgående illustration till de däröver uppsatta geologiska och agronomiska kartorna; 2, samling av torv från olika landskap; 3, gevövler, gevövsm, jaik, småjaikorna e.m.; 4, och 5, moränbildningar, glaciailer, postglaciailer, morass e.m.; 6, samling av konkretioner (marlske e.m.); 7, mol-
terser från Sveriges glaciala och postglaciala avläggningar; 8, detaljsamling av grov och sand från rustenstenar i Örebro och Nykö-
pings lån samt dillevalven och d. sand från Södertällets västkust; 9, lämningar av teriebrater från svenska glaciala och postglaciala
bildningar samt samling av artikiska växter insamlade i Skåne, Mecklingburg, Bayern, Schweiz och England av A. G. N°mmers;
10, svenska sjö- och myrämaler; 11, provstykten visande båda lager, diskordant skiktning, gångar, akant, förklynning m. m.
— m, m, tvenne pyramidformade monter med malmstuffer; P två, omräning 3 meter höga fyrfärgs polare, uppbyggda av 170
huggen, delvis polerade kuber av svenska byggnads- och prydlnadsbergarter; P, två mindre pitefer ter uppbyggande praksstykten av
respektive skiktad järnmal från Striebeins grava och järnmalmsbreccia från Norbergs malmfält.

Framför pelarna mellan de vägflästa skåpna är större praksstutider uppstålda, nämligen orteskall, linsformig, 60 cm. i
diameter, från Hunneberg; hollor av orteskall, svavelkis e. m. ur alunskiffer vid flera lokaler; sandsten med båtformiga mär-
ken, uralkisten med högt lager av hålledsliga; konglomerat av transversal skiktning; granit med innesluten klingtona
skynken av gneis; granitgrus med granater av 5—7 cm. stora; konglomerat från Dalands; kalkstoa från Sköne; silverk-
haltig biygians från Sala grava; myralling, 60 cm. stort stycke, från Skåne, m. m. m. m.

I den andra avdelningen vid muesealens södra del: S, förstaden trädstam (barröd) från Iliganis stenbrotstuga, nära 5
m. lång; gl, glaciärmade bergskäller och jökelsteln; på båt till höger diverse större bergartspovr. I som den motsatta, bortre av-
delningen är placerade de gamla stülhårorna, t. t. till förvaring av prov från under arbetet varande kartbädd.

Förrullen: a, hyllformad ställning uppstående olika slag av svenska lera, järn och tillverkade produkter, såsom eldstad
tegel, polytänger, husgerdsskärmt m. m. av eldstad lera; vitlätterat kakel, dräkningserö, mur- och taktug, krambaskorgs m. m. samt
prov visande brödaton hos tegel av olika sorter lera. — 5, hyllformad ställning med koppar-, järn- och blyämaler jämte därav
framtäslade metaller och hyttprodukter. — c och d, på konsoller vidande mindre förstoraemonter, vari förrade rämmen och produkter:
fångat och ofogtigt glas jämte rämmen; portlandasement jämtale rämmens därill; alunskiffer och därav beror rödlägg, alun,
järnvitrill och svavelmyra; uralkisten och silikasisk snittsten med därav bränd halk; provstykten av porfyr e. m. samt smutre
snipade och polerade prydands- och hushållsformmal dåtv. — e, pidental av flanugen grå Stolhammsgranit, varit hytt av Pro-

Plan of 'The Large Museum Hall' drawn by E. Erdmann in 1874. It has 26 high
cabinets and 11 freestanding low exhibition cases.
samples related to this field were gathered from factories in North America, Germany, England, Russia, France, Belgium and Holland. A large collection of boulders from Denmark, Germany, Holland and England was displayed as well. It should also be noted that some of the oil-paintings which were bought to the museum represented non-Swedish motifs, for example, the famous volcano Vesuvius. However, in the exhibitions of 'pure geology', almost all the material was from Sweden.

In 1897, the geologist Alfred Elis Törnebohm (1838-1911) became the new director of SGU, and like the former directors, he wanted to leave his mark on the museum. In Törnebohm's view, the museum was too traditional and needed to have a more modern, advanced and scientific approach. Therefore, many of the exhibitions related to practical geology and industry were removed and replaced with several new exhibition cases, showing examples of different geological phenomena, principally connected with Törnebohm's own area of research: dynamic geology. In addition, geological maps, profiles and other scientific pictures were put on the walls to display geological processes. It should, however, be mentioned that when Johan Gunnar Andersson (1874-1960) became the next director in 1906, he decided that the museum should exhibit industrial samples, and such an exhibition was once again constructed.

Thus, the four permanent directors of SGU – Erdmann, Torell, Törnebohm and Andersson – had a significant influence on the character of the museum, just as the contemporary context influenced them. The museum always expressed a fusion of Swedish academic science and scientific practice, but there were debates about whether the main focus should be theoretical scientific geology or practical geology connected with industry. As the historian of science and ideas Ulf Lindberg has discussed, this situation was not unique to the museum but applied to SGU's activity as a whole during this period. Similar controversies concerning the exhibitions were also common in other geological museums, for example, in the Museum of Practical Geology in London, in the Ecole des Mines in Paris, and in the Mining School in Freiberg.

SCIENCE AND EDUCATION

What then was the scientific role of the museum in geological discourse? One of the most obvious purposes of geological museums, in addition to other natural history museums, was to offer a space where objects and information could be gathered and analysed. According to the anthropologist of science Bruno Latour, these spaces, which he names «centres of calculation», were important nodes in the research processes – the «cycles of accumulation». Such cycles were in short, a way of becoming familiar with things which are distant: (1) scientists were sent away on fieldwork and expeditions, (2) they made measurements, wrote in travel books and gathered objects, (3) these «immutable and combinable mobiles» were brought back to the centre, where specimens, maps, diagrams, logs, books, etc. were formed in «centres inside the centre», (4) scientists then went away again and more elements were gathered in the centre, and so on.
was carried out in order to compare and contrast the collected specimens so as to distinguish the details that divide one object from another. Through this work, geologists tried to identify and classify, to organise the materials into representative collections, according to the traditional method of natural history. The Museum, or more precisely Edvard Erdmann, had always to be prepared to supply the geologists with concrete information and to show reference material from all over Sweden whenever it was needed for research. Thus, the purpose of the collections was not only the accumulation of samples, but, by the selection of samples to provide examples, and to complete a set. Collecting related to taxonomy was intended to be the scientific method, «a process which is clearly circular and self-supporting», in the view of Susan M. Pearce.

This museological work contributed to a new view of the historical past (in a geological sense) and an interpretation of the materials that had been created through this process. There were also ideas that this material from nature, by the application of modern «scientific» principles, could be improved and then better used in industry. Thus, there were strong connections between theory and practice within the museum; it was both a science museum and a museum of science; it was a space where geological knowledge was expanded, codified and objectified.

For general education, the geological museum was open to visitors each Monday and Thursday between 1 and 3 p.m. and hence provided a contact between geology and the public. SGU did not charge an entrance fee, and to help visitors Erdmann wrote a small guide book entitled *Kort vägledning i Sveriges Geologiska Undersöknings Museum* (A Brief Guide for the Geological Museum of the Swedish Geological Survey) which contained both information about SGU and the different collections, and an illustration of the museum as well. Looking at the painting of the museum from 1874 that was published in Erdmann’s booklet *Sveriges geologiska undersöknings museum* (1916) (The Museum of the Geological Survey of Sweden) one may believe that the exhibitions were popular and crowded. But, in reality the number of visitors seemed to have been very small, according to Erdmann, less than ten per day. Presumably, there was a general idea of an educational project, to teach and to socialise the visitors and make them participate in the bourgeois order. But like today – for example, in the Natural History Museum of Sweden – it seems likely that most of the visitors were children and students from different schools, particularly from Stockholm and Uppsala.

According to Anders Damberg, the former SGU archivist, there were also some environmental difficulties within the building, which obviously made the museum less attractive and fashionable. Since part of the building lay below ground level, some of the walls were damaged by damp. In addition to the smell of mould, the premises often stank of urine since people used to urinate outside the building. Thirdly, it was often very cold inside. The heating was only on in the morning, and therefore the temperature usually dropped five degrees or more in the afternoon when the museum was open. The building itself also appeared to have defects.
As the geologist Gerard De Geer explains, some formation of cracks and other «geological structures» on the walls were sometimes more complicated than the «real geology» outside the building.

Nevertheless, SGU and its museum facilitated geological education in many other ways, in addition to the various exhibitions. From all the duplicates of samples that the museum acquired, Erdmann made smaller sets of stone, soil and fossil collections, that were sent to other scientific institutions, secondary schools and adult education centres, both in Sweden and abroad. Since these collections became quite popular, the museum duplicates were soon exhausted. In 1907 SGU was therefore able to continue this activity. Furthermore, the museum lent samples as well as maps to different institutions and also responded to inquiries regarding geology from the general public. The museum received on average more than one hundred inquiries each year.

**NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS**

The development of institutions such as the Geological Museum of SGU may also be understood in the spirit of the great temporary international exhibitions between 1851 and 1939. The aim of these exhibitions was, as is well-known, to stimulate trade, industry and good practice...
in craft and design. Principal features of the ideology were optimistic, modernistic visions of progress, faith in technological rationality and the importance of commerce and international competition in science, technology and industry. Of course, they were also shaped by, as they shaped, the nationalist movement.

In order to spread the glory of Sweden and its geology, SGU participated in exhibitions in London in 1862, Dublin in 1865, Paris in 1867, Vienna in 1873, Philadelphia in 1876, Paris in 1878, Chicago in 1893 and Paris in 1900, and in fact won many distinguished prizes. In addition, from 1862 until 1915, SGU also participated in twelve international exhibitions for industry, agriculture and geology and eleven national exhibitions for industry and agriculture. Even if many of SGU's exhibitions looked similar, SGU and Erdmann in particular worked hard to adjust to the local circumstances and always tried to describe the most recent research results that had been carried out by Swedish geologists.

Among those exhibitions, SGU was particularly well represented in Vienna, Philadelphia, Paris and Chicago. But the most impressive exhibition by SGU during this period – if we are to believe Erdmann – was beyond doubt the «Exhibition of the Swedish Geological Survey» at the Skandinaviska konst- och industriutställningen (The Scandinavian Art and Industry Exhibition) in Stockholm in 1897. To this event SGU was specially invited by the Royal Ministry of Public Administration, and through a letter from Otto Torell to the director of the Ministry, SGU was given funding to display an extended exhibition.

In this letter, Torell rhetorically described the scientific and industrial importance of geology and complained about the fact that knowledge in this research field was still too poor among the general public. Therefore, it was of great significance that SGU had the opportunity to set up an impressive exhibition. SGU was given a fifty square metre rectangular room at Djurgården, which contained different kinds of geological collections as well as all SGU's maps and several hundred geological books and dissertations. As much as possible was done to interest and inspire the visitors, and to encourage a sympathetic view of geological research and Swedish nature.

The great 11th International Geological Congress in 1910, which was arranged by the Geological Society of Stockholm and held in Stockholm, should also be mentioned in this context. During this meeting – which is considered to be one of the most important events in the Swedish history of geology – famous geologists from all over the world were invited to see the museum. For this event, the museum was «festively dressed» and showed as far as possible the «fantastic Swedish geology» and the high standard of geological research, which had been carried out by Swedish geologists. A new museum guide was also printed. As Erdmann proudly stated, the museum with its collections, maps and scientific literature did indeed give an impression of «completeness and realised orderliness».

In 1910, geology was one of the most celebrated sciences in Sweden, not least because of its connection with the polar expeditions and the results within quaternary geology, notably the 'discovery' of the marvellous ice-age. On the one hand it
served industry, on the other it fitted the nationalistic atmosphere. However public as well as scientific interest declined slowly but surely, and it could be said that the big Congress was the beginning of the end of SGU’s participation in large exhibitions. Apart from its anniversary celebration in Göteborg in 1923, SGU’s extended official exhibition activities have since then been very sparse.\footnote{60}

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

From its founding in 1871 until 1915, the Geological Museum of SGU served many interests. As I have suggested, the museum played an important role in the institutionalisation of geology in Sweden during the second half of the nineteenth century. It was the place where geological samples from the extended geological surveys were gathered, analysed and documented. It can be characterised, in the words of Latour, as a «centre of calculation». It is
clear that this centre was regarded as playing an important role both in the industrialisation process and the development of theoretical geology. But, the museum and its exhibitions should also be analysed as part of a wider natural history museum movement at the end of the nineteenth century; a movement in which public education and glorification of the nation were significant tasks. In this context, the establishment and development of the geological museum – as with other museums in Sweden during this time – was also a part of the Swedish nationalist movement.

In 1900, SGU had to rent some external
premises to house its constantly growing collections. But as this space problem increased, SGU started to plan for a totally new building. The aim was to get its own building, but when this plan failed, it was decided in 1905 that SGU should be incorporated into the new expanding Swedish Museum of Natural History (much like the Museum of the Geological Society of London became part of the British Museum) and become a part of the growing scientific landscape Frescati.61 The reconstruction of the museum began in 1907 and was completed in 1915, when an area of 1,400 square metres was granted to SGU.62 A new epoch in the history of the Geological Museum of SGU began, but this history lies beyond the scope of this essay.

It should finally be mentioned that the Geological Museum no longer exists. When SGU celebrated its 125th anniversary in 1983, optimistic plans for a rebuilding of the museum halls were presented and discussed.63 But instead of a renaissance for the geological exhibition in Sweden, the entire geological museum was closed by the Swedish Minister of Culture, Bengt Göransson, a year later.64 Nevertheless, it appears that the idea of displaying geology is still alive in Sweden, since plans to create a new geological museum (within the same building as before, the Natural History Museum) are now in fact being prepared. Perhaps it will be possible to visit this new museum in 2008, when SGU celebrates its 150th anniversary?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For their help in the process of producing this essay, the author would like to thank Prof. Roy MacLeod, Department of History, University of Sydney and Dr James A. Secord, Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge. Thanks also to Joanna Ball, Whipple Librarian, University of Cambridge, Lars Johansson, Librarian at the Swedish Geological Survey, Uppsala, Prof. Sverker Sörlin, Department of Historical Studies, Umeå University and Catriona West, Officer at the Whipple Museum of the History of Science, University of Cambridge.
NOTES


7. Except for the Geological Museum of SGU, smaller geological museums were also established in Uppsala and Lund in co-operation with the universities, and at the Technical school in Kristianstad as well. See for exemple Karl A. Grönwall, «Tekniska skolans i Kristianstad Handels- och industrimuseum», Geologiska Föreningens i Stockholm Förhandlingar 33 (Stockholm, 1911). Mineralogical collections have been housed in the Swedish Museum of Natural History since 1819.

8. See, for example, Susan Sheets-Pyenson, Cathedrals of Science: The Development of Colonial Natural History Museums during the Late Nineteenth Century (Kingston, 1988), pp. 3-23.


16. Edvard Erdmann, Sveriges geologiska undersök­nings museum: Dess första anläggning, samt till­växt, innehåll och utseende m.m. före flytteningen


22. Erdmann, *Sveriges geologiska undersökningars museum*, p. 5. During the first decade Erdmann participated in the geological survey at the same time as he was curator. From the middle of the 1880s his main work was inside the museum.


35. Erdmann, *Sveriges geologiska undersökningars museum*, 15. Later on, SGU bought four more paintings by some other artists. It seems that the generous employee was Edvard Erdmann himself, see for example Gerard De Geer, *"E.E."*, in *En elak bok: Tillägnad en snäll sjutioårning 31 oktober 1910* (Stockholm, 1910), p. 39.


41. Ibid., pp. 215-237.


43. Pearce, Museums, *Objects and Collections*, p. 85.

44. Edvard Erdmann, *Kort vägledning i Sveriges Geologiska Undersöknings Museum* (1874). The guide book was also available in French, *Petit guide au Musée du Lever géologique de la Suède*.


49. In Swedish: folkhögskolor.


54. Erdmann, *Sveriges Geologiska Undersöknings Utställning vid Allmänna Konst- och Industriutställningen i Stockholm 1897*, p. 4; Edvard Erdmann, «Kort redogörelse för Sveriges Geologiska Undersöknings utställning af kartor m.m. vid Nordiska industri- och slöjduitställningen i Malmö 1898», Guide paper (Stockholm, 1898). Erdmann had the responsibility for SGU’s exhibitions at all these exhibitions.


63. By that time SGU owned approximately three million samples.

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Christer Nordlund is a doctoral candidate at the Dept. of Historical Studies (History of Science and Ideas) at Umeå University. He is currently preparing his dissertation Huru naturen danat Sverige: Nation, vetenskap, och nivåförändringar, 1870-1920 ('How Nature Founded Sweden: Nation, Science, and Shoreline Displacement, 1870-1920').

Adr: Dept. of Historical Studies, S 901 87 Umeå
Fax: +46-90143374
Email: Christer.Nordlund@histstud.umu.se