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Pictures from Sweden in the 1600s

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Pictures of Sweden from the 1600s

Erik Jönsson Dahlbergh (1625 – 1703) possessed one of the more individual dispositions and personalities in Sweden during its age of imperial greatness. Born into a modest background, raised as a foster child, he transcended his social background and climbed the occupational and social ladder in a career of ever-expanding administrative authority.

His primary field was military, but he demonstrated a broad cultural agility. He is most renowned for his richly illustrated topographical survey *Suecia antiqua et hodierna* (Sweden past and present), to which he devoted the greater part of his life. It contains more than 350 etchings

based on his original drawings of sites of historical and contemporary interest in Sweden. Admired and criticized by his contemporaries and successors, Dahlbergh singlehandedly created the first systematic visual record of Sweden. Before his *Suecia*, Sweden's visual image was veiled in shadows.

By 1693, he had held a variety of positions invested with great influence, including those of chief administrator of Bremen, Verden, and Livland, all recently annexed territories. He requested to be relieved of his duties in 1702, nine months before his death on January 16, 1703.

The *Suecia*, as it is called, was not

completed in Mr. Dahlbergh's lifetime. The material for the intended work was preserved, and has now been digitized by the *Kungliga Biblioteket* (Royal Library), which is the national library of Sweden. This work contains 353 engravings with 469 motifs of different kinds: manorial estates, gardens, cities, antiquities, churches, provincial heraldry, maps, and portraits. There are also a number of drawings by various artists.

All pictures are free to download as jpps or tiff files. There is some information on the web site in English, but more will come.

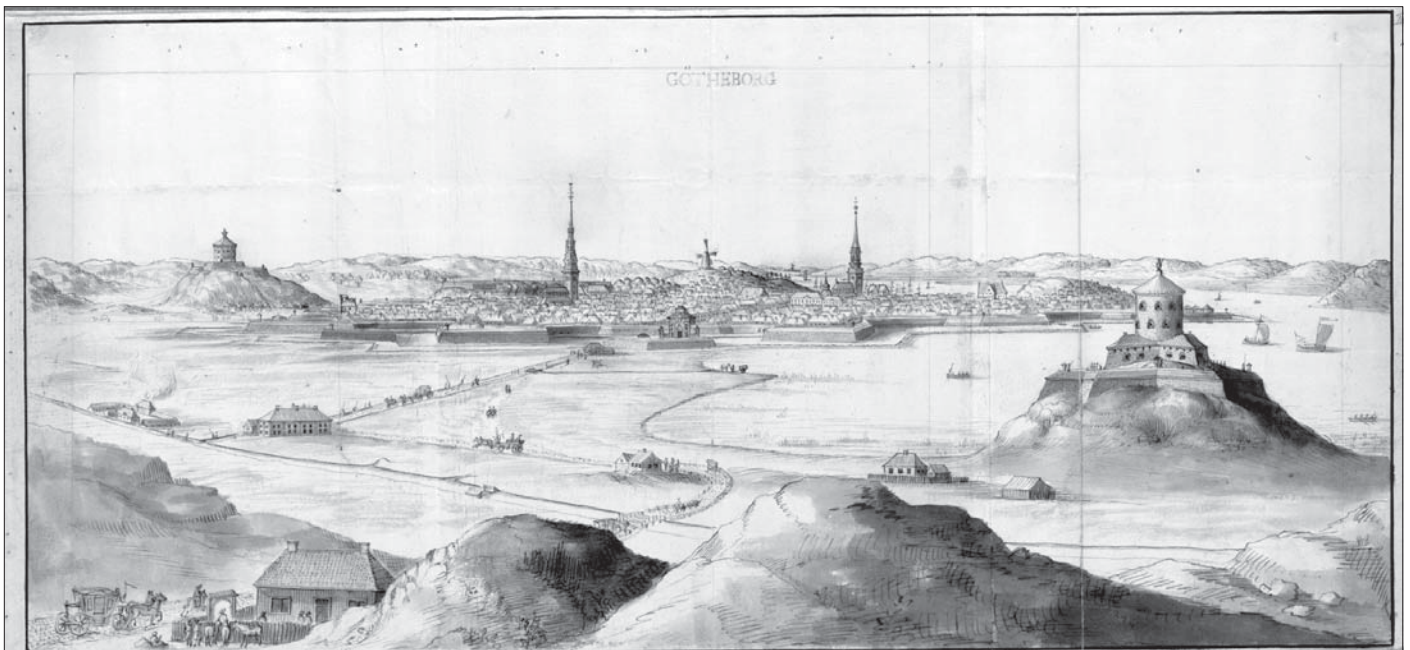
See link on page 30!



Jönköping, engraved by Willem Swidde in the 1690s on commission from Erik Dahlbergh.



The Falun great copper mine, engraved by Johannes van den Aveleen in 1701.



This pen and ink drawing of Göteborg was made by Johan Litheim after 1708, but on commission from Erik Dahlbergh. Note the two small, round fortresses, called Kronan (The Crown) and Lejonet (The Lion). The churches are Domkyrkan (the cathedral) and Tyska kyrkan (the German church).