

2025

# ANNUAL REVIEW



Polmanarkivet

[POLMANARKIVET.COM](http://POLMANARKIVET.COM)  
HEJ@POLMANARKIVET.COM

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“The history is in the records, but the legacy is in the people. 2025 was the year Polmanarkivet truly came alive, defined by the new connections we made with descendants around the world. We look forward to deepening these connections and illuminating the stories we have yet to find.”

Jake Peterson, Director





## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

### DEAR FRIENDS,

Three years ago, Polmanarkivet began with a core mission: to connect the personal histories of the Polman, Pählman, and von Pohlmann families to the wider narrative of Swedish heritage. While our early work focused on the necessary groundwork, this year our emphasis deepened. We moved beyond simply collecting artefacts and records to interpreting them.

This evolution led to our most prolific publishing year yet. As we uncovered more complex narratives, we felt a greater urgency to share them, publishing over 15 original articles and the *Legacies in Letters* virtual exhibition. Another major milestone was authoring the definitive Pählman family article on Wikipedia. Submitted for “Good Article” review, this work ensures that the family’s history is preserved accurately for the widest possible audience.

On the research front, our dive into the court records (Sunnerbo *dombok* and Stockholm *tänkeböcker*) has been particularly illuminating. We often see our ancestors through the lens of their famous portraits – stoic, dignified, and noble. But the legal records paint a much more colourful picture.

“It has been a huge year for Polmanarkivet, with a new website and further research and translation for the Legacy in Letters project. I was honoured to curate an exhibition drawing from these historically important correspondences. We will continue to find innovative, creative ways to bring stories to our audience.”

Kriti Bajaj, Editor

We found Major Jöran Polman involved in a bizarre dispute where he ripped a man's beard – a far cry from the figure dressed in pink silk hanging at Skokloster Castle. Two generations later, we found his grandsons, Jöran and Clas, causing a rowdy disturbance at the Nygård Inn. These stories don't diminish the family's legacy; they humanize it. They reveal our ancestors not merely as names on a page, but as real, complicated people.

However, the most rewarding aspect of 2025 was not what we found in the archives, but who found us. The reach of Polmanarkivet enabled us to connect with descendants from around the world. These conversations have been a powerful reminder that while the history is in the records, the legacy lives on in the people.

I invite you to explore the following pages to discover the milestones of this past year. The progress we have made – and the community we have built – would not be possible without your support.

With gratitude,



**Jake Peterson**  
Director



# ABOUT POLMANARKIVET

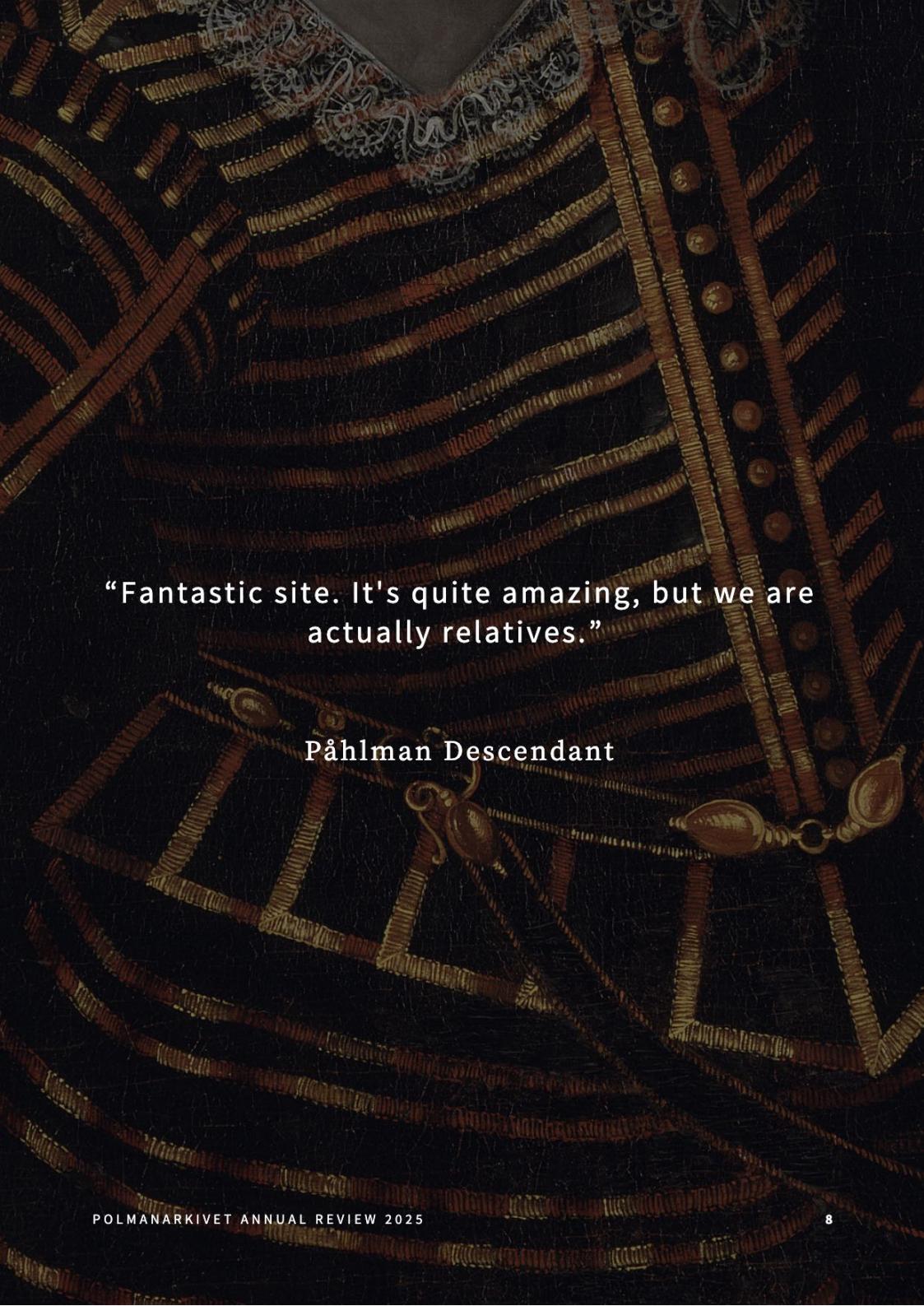
## A LITTLE BIT ABOUT US

In 2022, *Arcadia: Peterson Family History and the Secrets of a Swedish Nobleman* was published, documenting a Swedish noble family and their descendants across Sweden and America. A year later, what began as a family history book evolved into a digital museum. Polmanarkivet's vast collections go beyond the limitations of a traditional book.

*Polmanarkivet is the largest museum of cultural history and stories about the Polman, Pålman, & von Pohlmann family.*

Polmanarkivet is a digital archive and museum with an extensive repository of digital collections, interactive exhibits, and research material. Established in 2023, Polmanarkivet has been illuminating the lives and histories of the Polman, Pålman, & von Pohlmann families and bringing forgotten stories to life. We are responsible for collecting and disseminating items that might be of genealogical or historical value.





“Fantastic site. It's quite amazing, but we are actually relatives.”

Påhlman Descendant

# PURPOSE, MISSION & VISION

## OUR PURPOSE

To illuminate the lives and histories of the Polman, Påhlman, & von Pohlmann families.

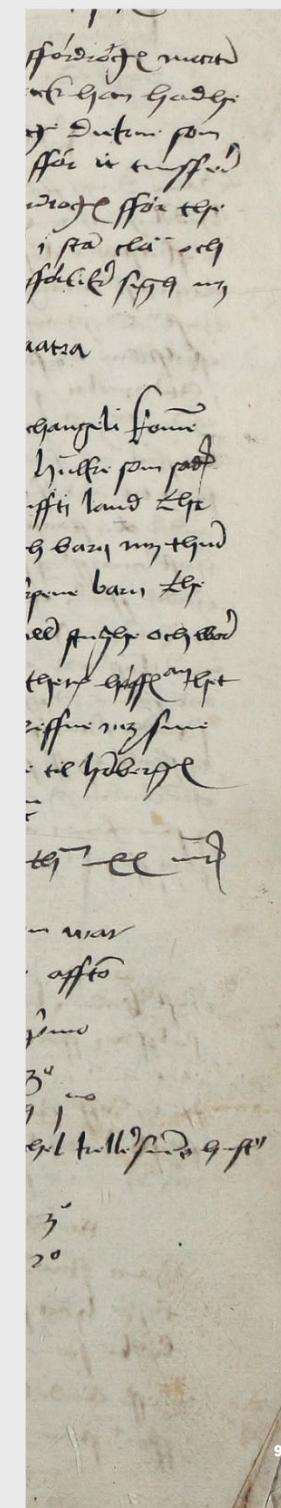
## OUR MISSION

We bring the Polman, Påhlman, & von Pohlmann past to life through stewardship, research, and storytelling.

## OUR VISION

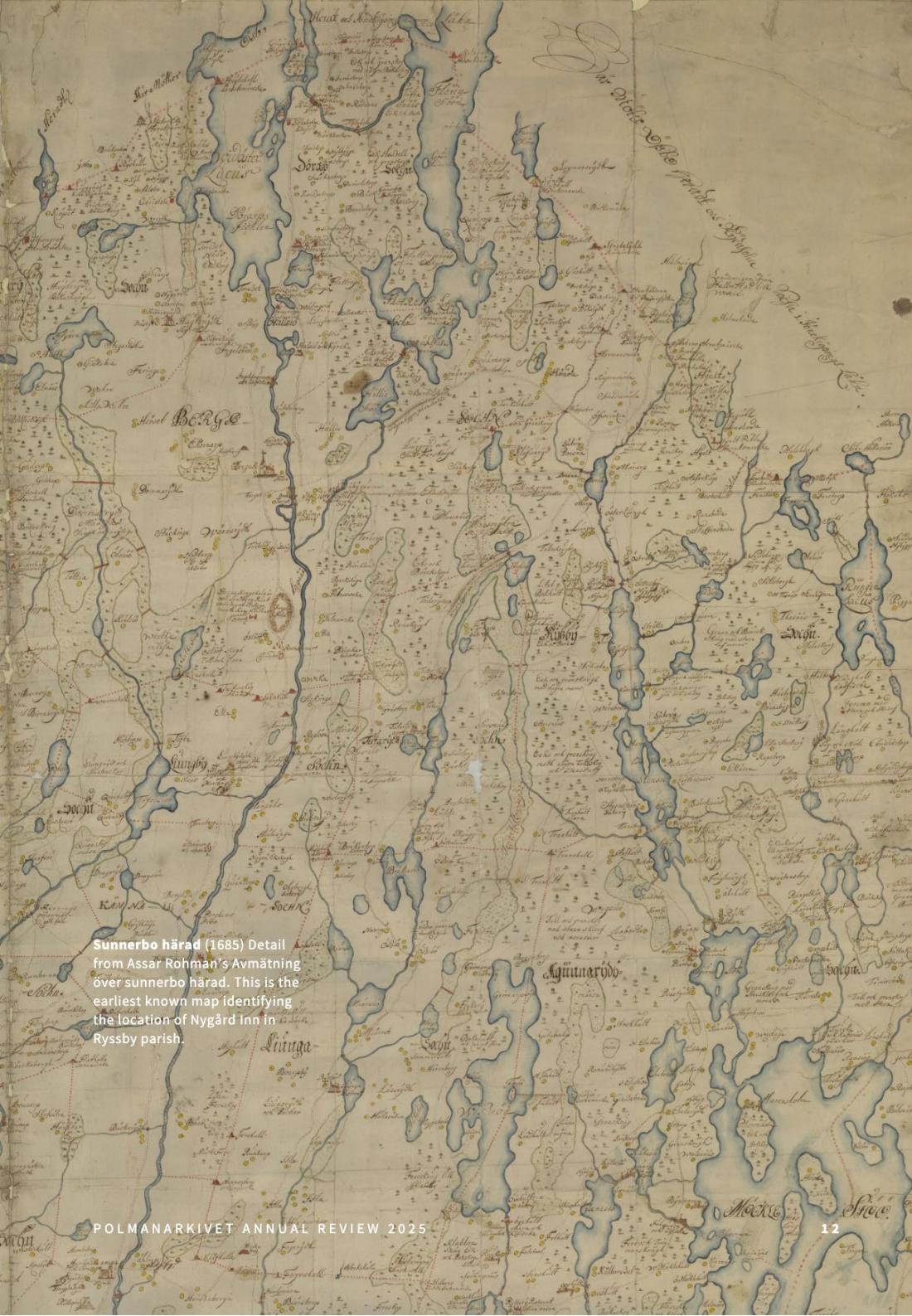
We strive to collect and disseminate materials that have genealogical, historical, or cultural significance, and ensure that our collections are appropriately stored, preserved, managed, and researched.

We are driven by an ambition to delve as far back into history as possible, documenting every Polman, Påhlman, and von Pohlmann that ever existed. We aim to engage archivists, curators, and genealogists to realise this ambition to preserve this history.





**The Tavern Brawl La Rixe (1855)**  
by Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier.  
A depiction of a violent dispute,  
illustrating the chaotic  
atmosphere of the incident at  
Nygård Inn involving the Polman  
brothers.



## YEAR IN REVIEW

## JUDGEMENT & DAILY LIFE: THE SUNNERBO COURT RECORDS

For decades, our understanding of the family was shaped by military rolls and nobility calendars. But in 2025, we undertook the extensive work of identifying every reference to the Polman and Pålman families within Sunnerbo.nu project transcripts, translating these 17th-century accounts from Swedish into English.

The Dombok (court book) is not a polished history; it is a transcript of community life. I see the Pählmans not just as noblemen, but neighbours, plaintiffs, and defendants – unfiltered, complicated, and deeply human.

This year's research uncovered the family as active, often volatile participants in local society. We revealed Major Jöran Polman's alleged misuse of military authority in a 1621 land dispute and detailed the rowdy behavior of his grandsons, Jöran and Clas, at the Nygård Inn in 1695. Research is ongoing into the 1648 tragedy at Kvänjarp involving Johanna Pählman, a complex case regarding the death of a servant. We look forward to sharing the full narrative of this significant event in 2024.

By translating these records, we look past the polished façade of nobility to the authentic reality of their lives in Småland.



# YEAR IN REVIEW

## LEGACIES IN LETTERS: MISSIVES TO THE FUTURE

Is there anything more intimate than the handwriting of a person, flowing through time? Quills dipped in ink, scrawls on pages, royal signatures, galaxies of adjectives, sealed with wax, transported across maps.

In 2025, we launched Legacies in Letters, a virtual exhibition that explores not only the reasons people wrote letters, but the emotions and sincerity we can glean from them. We highlighted the hurried, shaky hands; the self-pitying or flattering sentences; the decisive pleas.

Our virtual collection now comprises 29 catalogued letters spanning from 1601 through 1795. Through our ongoing endeavor of funding their translation into English, missives that were once readable only by a select few are now accessible to a global audience.

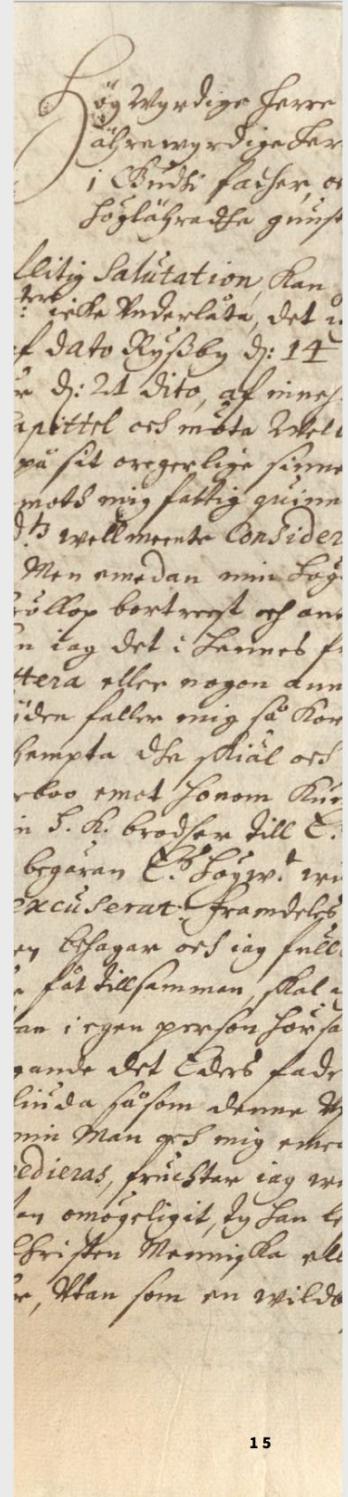
These letters were often purposefully aimed at certain outcomes – a means for the writer to be considered by those in higher positions, such as royals, the church, and the state. Today, they provide invaluable evidence for historians to connect the dots where no other documentation exists.

As we invited visitors to do this year: *Let's heat our letter openers. We've got mail from the past.*



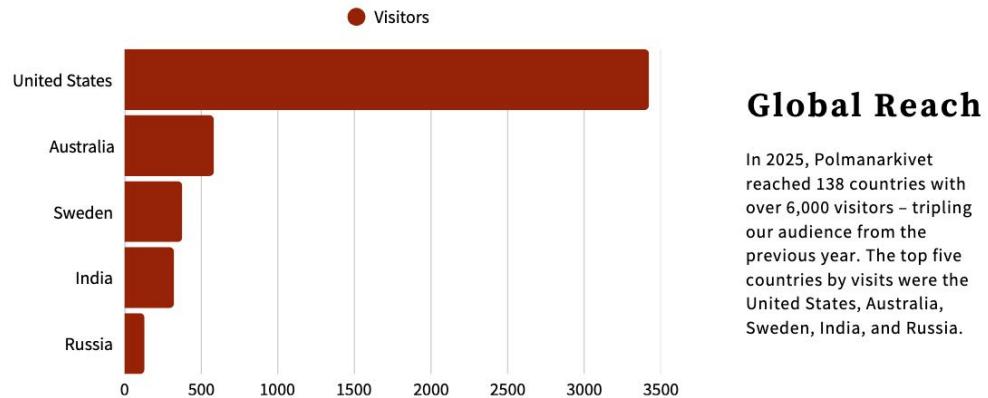
### Von Pohlmann seal

A copper alloy seal with the coat of arms of the Pohlmanns dated between 1800 to 1880. At the end of the 19th century, the seal belonged to Aleksei von Pohlmann, one of the last members of this now extinct noble family. Photo: Tallinna Linnamuuseum



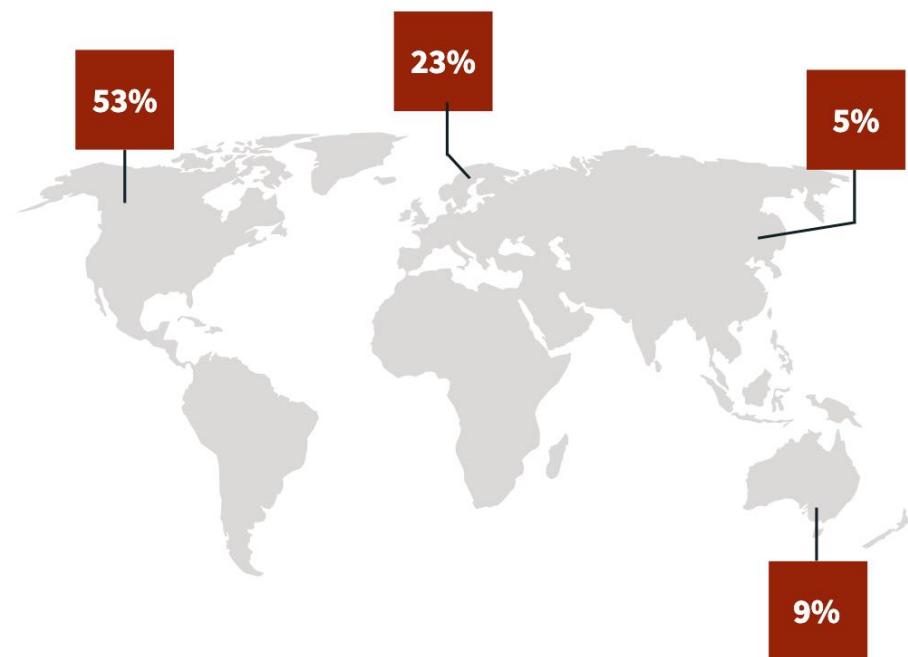
# ARCHIVE STATISTICS

*Preserving the Polman legacy, by the numbers.*



## Global Reach

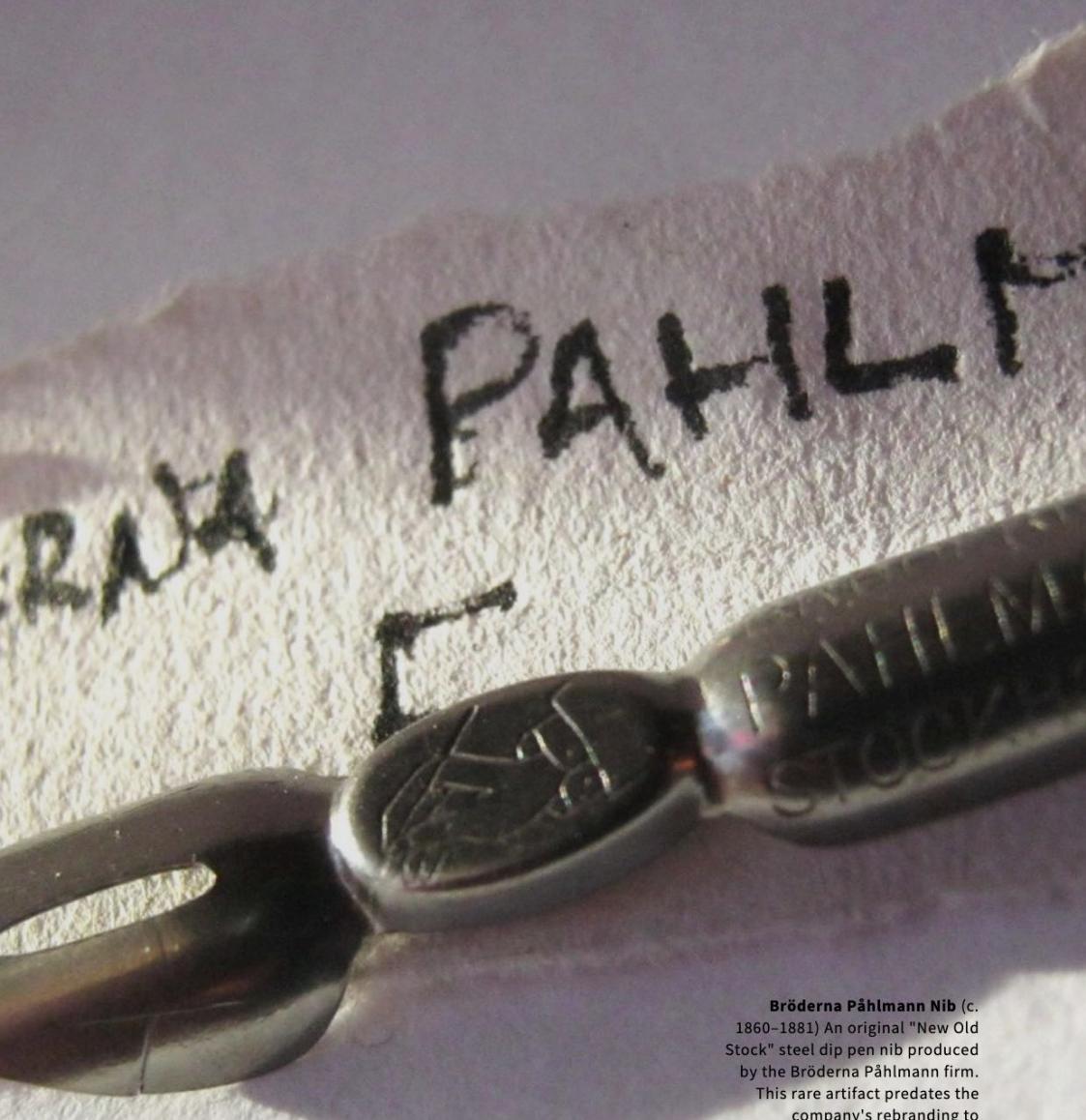
In 2025, Polmanarkivet reached 138 countries with over 6,000 visitors – tripling our audience from the previous year. The top five countries by visits were the United States, Australia, Sweden, India, and Russia.



# PUBLISHED WORKS

In 2025, we prioritised transforming historical data into accessible narratives, publishing over 15 original articles that bring the Polman, Pählman, and von Pohlmann legacies to life.

- DEC 19** A Very Livonian Christmas
- OCT 29** The Colourful Characters of Nygård inn
- OCT 3** Tallinn: An Offbeat Travel Guide for History Lovers
- SEP 12** The Officers of Skokloster Castle
- AUG 17** Pählman family (Wikipedia)
- AUG 7** Commanding the seas: Hanseatic League and the Victual Brothers
- JUN 13** Sons of Vasa
- MAY 16** The One Where Jöran Polman Ripped Off a Beard
- MAY 2** How We Organise Six Centuries of History
- APR 18** The Story of Captain Jöran Polman's Portrait at Skokloster
- MAR 31** Protector of the Realm: Gustav I of Sweden (1496-1560)
- FEB 28** Rediscovering Jürgen Polman the Elder's Obscure Portrait
- JAN 31** Digital Tools Every Historian or Researcher Should Know



**Bröderna Pählmann Nib** (c. 1860–1881) An original "New Old Stock" steel dip pen nib produced by the Bröderna Pählmann firm. This rare artifact predates the company's rebranding to Pählmans Handelstitut in 1881. From the Polmanarkivet physical collection.





# LOOKING AHEAD

Polmanarkivet is an independent, donor-supported archive, and our pace is organic, guided by where the evidence leads us. In the coming year, we intend to focus our resources on three key areas:

## UNEARTHING THE HUMAN NARRATIVE

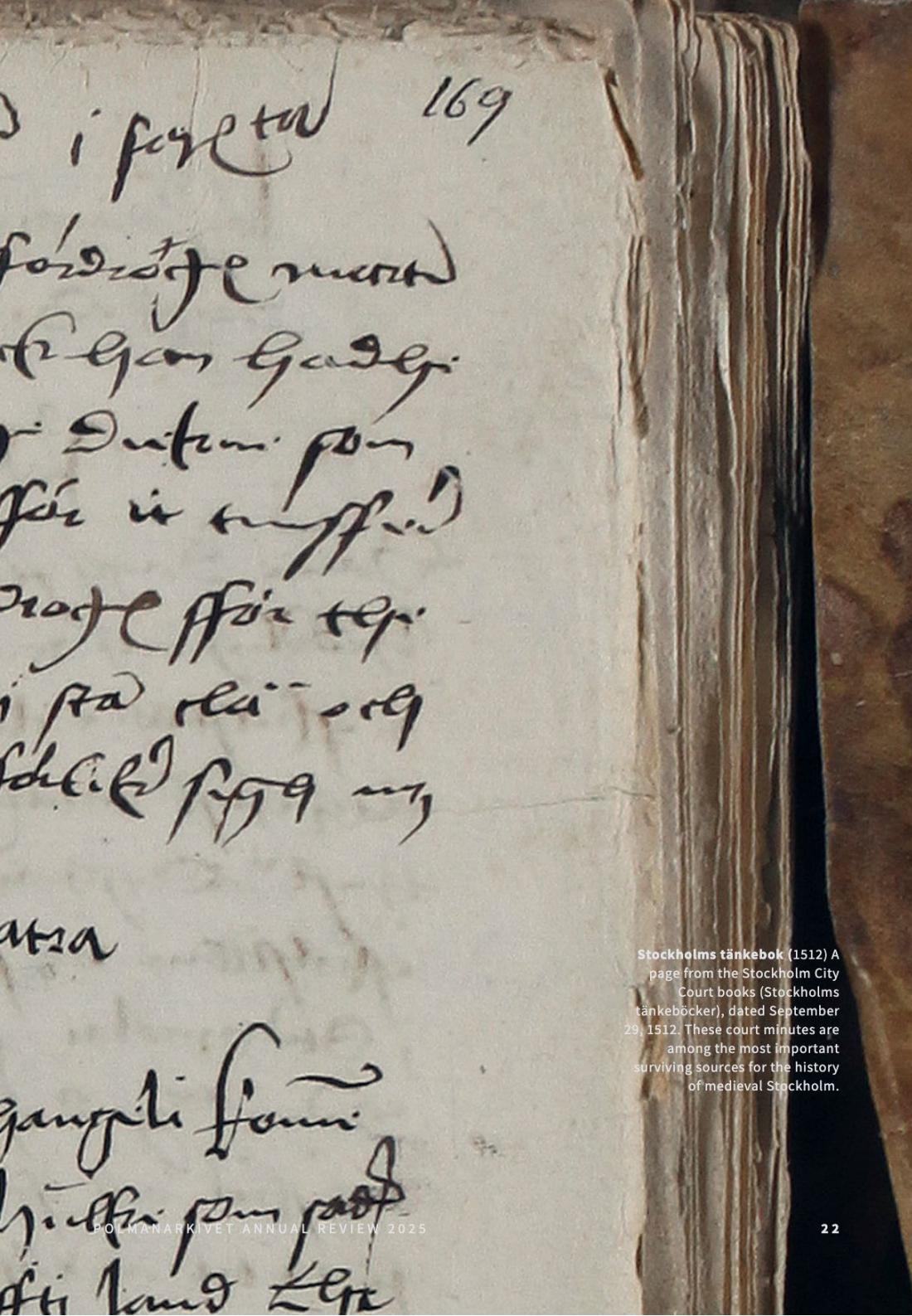
We will continue our work with the Sunnerbo court records. By transforming these legal accounts into accessible articles, we aim to reveal the lived experiences, conflicts, and daily realities of the family in the 17th century.

## TRACING THE ORIGINS

A primary objective is to trace the lineage beyond the earliest known progenitor, Hans Polman. To assist in breaking down this “brick wall,” we will begin the translation and analysis of compiled genealogies from the 19th and 20th centuries currently held in the Swedish and Estonian National Archives.

## CONTRIBUTING TO SCHOLARSHIP

We aim to submit our first research paper, *The Violence In All Places Rages*, to a peer-reviewed journal. This study utilises the letters of Margareta Silversparre to explore the lived experience of intimate partner violence and survivor agency in early modern Sweden.



**Stockholms tänkebok** (1512) A page from the Stockholm City Court books (Stockholms tänkeböcker), dated September 29, 1512. These court minutes are among the most important surviving sources for the history of medieval Stockholm.

## OUR HUMBLE THANKS

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Polmanarkivet thanks all our volunteers, patrons, donors, and visitors for their unwavering support. We are immensely grateful to the many institutions worldwide for their tireless work and incredible generosity, including:

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Påhlmans Handelsinstitut  
Rahvusarhiiv  
Riddarhuset  
Riksarkivet  
Sara Norman Walker  
Skoklosters slott  
The Rewind  
The Swedish Organizer



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