

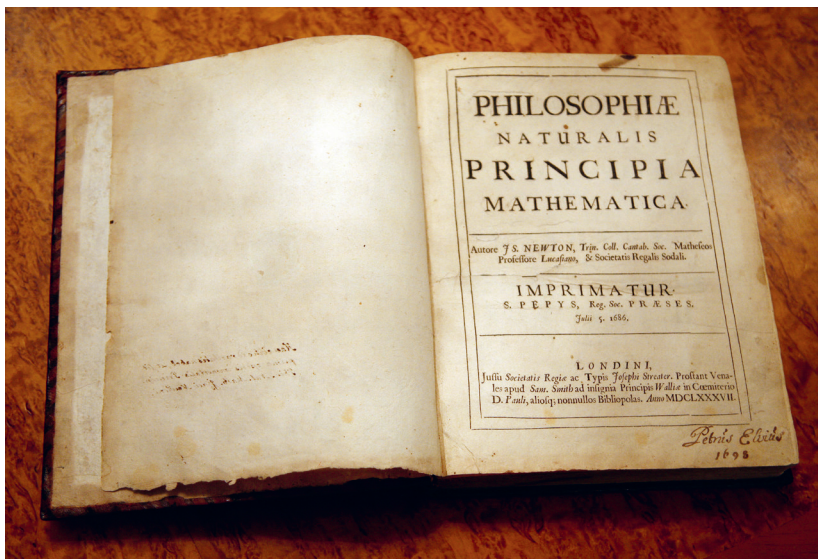
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Return of the Well-Traveled Book

Preface: The theft of a treasured book from Carolina Rediviva, the Library of Uppsala University, has been eloquently described in an essay entitled “A Well-Traveled Book with an American Connection” by Professor emeritus Bo Sundqvist, former Vice Chancellor of Uppsala University. This article references the facts set forth in Professor Sundqvist’s essay. I had the honor of being present when the “well-traveled book” made its return to Uppsala University after an absence of more than forty years. This essay describes the extraordinary ceremony when the book made its return.

In 1687 Isaac Newton published his great work on the mathematical principles of natural philosophy, *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, most commonly referred to as the *Principia*. Its publication has been described as “one of the most influential events in the history of natural science.”

There is evidence that Newton’s ideas were being discussed by professors at Uppsala as early as 1700. Petrus Elvius, who taught mathematics at Uppsala, purchased a copy of the *Principia* in 1698. Elvius later was appointed Professor of Astronomy at Uppsala. There were mixed reactions to Newton’s work in the scientific community. By the 1730s Newton’s ideas were strongly supported by the Uppsala Professors of astronomy, Anders Celsius and Samuel Klingenstierna. One of Professor Klingenstierna’s students became Professor of Astronomy at Uppsala, and he donated his collection of books to Uppsala University. That collection included the copy of *Principia* purchased by Professor Elvius, and that copy, which became known as the “Elvius *Principia*,” remained in the collection of the Uppsala University library, *Carolina Rediviva*, for more than 200 years.



Title page of Newton's "Principia" from 1687 at Uppsala University Library.

In the 1960s the "Elvius Principia" was stolen from *Carolina Rediviva* while it was racked on a table and being used by a researcher. The book turned up at an auction in 1981 and, again, at a *Christie's* auction in 2004. The catalogue for the *Christie's* auction brazenly stated that the book had been in the library of Uppsala University for over 200 years! Uppsala University's Chief Librarian, Professor Ulf Göranson, contacted *Christie's* and demanded return of the stolen book. *Christie's* declined to return the book, stating that the book had been in Switzerland for more than the short statute of limitations in that country, and therefore the seller had good title to the book.

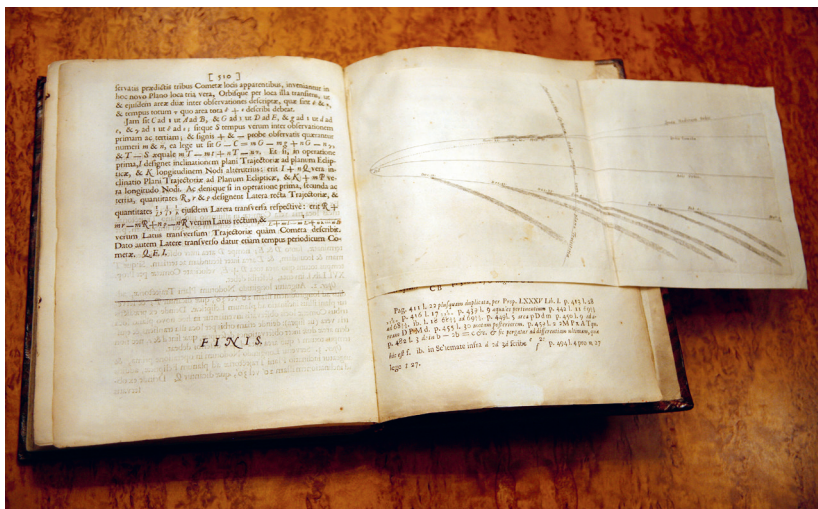
The book was purchased at auction by an American stockbroker and book collector who learned that the book had been stolen from the Uppsala University library. The purchaser informed the Uppsala University Library that he would be willing to donate the book to the Uppsala Library on the condition that he could obtain an American federal tax income tax deduction for the value of the donation. Under the provisions of American tax law, in order to obtain a federal income tax deduction for a gift, the gift must be made to a "501(3) organization" described in a provision of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States. Neither

Uppsala University nor any European University could provide an American tax deduction for a gift to the University.

I was in Uppsala in 2007 for a Symposium celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Exchange Agreement between the Uppsala University Law Faculty and the University of Minnesota Law School when I met with Professor emeritus Bo Sundqvist, the former Vice Chancellor of Uppsala University. Professor Sundqvist invited me to be a Director of a new organization to be known as the “American Friends of Uppsala University (AFUU)” and to assist in establishing the organization. One of the purposes of the AFUU would be to obtain American tax qualification as a “501(3) organization” in order to provide a deduction from American income and gift taxes for donations made by Americans for the benefit of Uppsala University. The AFUU was incorporated in the U.S. as a Delaware corporation on September 5, 2007. Professor emeritus Bo Sundqvist was the President of the corporation, and Marianne Andersson, senior legal advisor of Uppsala University, was Treasurer. Other original Directors were Lyndon Olson, former U.S. Ambassador to Sweden; Nils Hasselmo, former President of the University of Minnesota; Thomas Tombrello, professor emeritus, California Institute of Technology; in addition to myself. On September 26, 2008 AFUU was granted tax-exempt status by a ruling of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service as a “501(3) organization.”

The return of the book to Uppsala University Carolina Rediviva occurred on December 2, 2008 at the Consulate of Sweden in New York City in the U.S. It was an extraordinary and beautiful ceremony hosted by the Consul General of Sweden, Ulf Hjertnsson and his wife, Karin. I had the honor of attending the ceremony, together with the AFUU President, Bo Sundqvist; the Chief Librarian of Uppsala University, Professor Ulf Göranson; and the American donor. (Professor Ulf Göranson had been a visiting professor at Minnesota in 1986 as part of the Uppsala – Minnesota Exchange Program.) Also in attendance were other AFUU board members Marianne Andersson and Lyndon L. Olson, Jr., as well as the fundraising officer of Uppsala University, Merike Ronéus.

I want to describe for you what an extraordinary ceremony took place as the well-traveled book made its return to Uppsala University after an absence of some forty years. I arrived in New York City in the late afternoon on December 2, 2008. It was a cold and blustery day in New York City. After checking into my hotel, I took a cab to Sweden’s Consulate on the upper East Side of New York City and approached the building



End page of Newton's "Principia" from 1687 at Uppsala University Library.

through the cold wind. When the door opened, I was invited in by a white-gloved wait-staff person and entered an ornate and warm room in contrast to the cold and grey weather outside. The staff-person took my coat, and I looked around and saw a high ceiled, well decorated room. It was an extraordinary setting for this remarkable ceremony.

I joined the others for aperitifs and then the ceremony began. We sat in a row of nine seats in that beautiful room for the ceremony. The Chief Librarian, Professor Göranson, gave some remarks about *Principia*, its significance and history, particularly among the scholarly community at Uppsala University in the early 18th century. At that point, Professor Bo Sundqvist invited the donor to join him in the front of the room, and the donor presented the book to Professor Sundqvist who accepted it on behalf of the AFUU. The small group of nine of us in this beautiful setting then applauded and congratulated the donor for his generosity to the University before we moved to a beautiful formal dining room in the Consulate for a lovely dinner. A delicious meal and wine served by the white-gloved staff in this beautiful formal dining room completed the enchantment that made the return of the book an unforgettable evening.

Upon his return to Uppsala University a couple of days later, Professor Sundqvist completed the return of the well-traveled book to Uppsala University by delivering the book from AFUU to then Vice-Chancellor

Anders Hallberg, who in turn presented it to Professor Göranson, the Chief Librarian.

The book's travels were complete. An exhibit was prepared in the entrance lobby of *Carolina Rediviva* to show the book and describe the events and travels of the book. The "Elvius Principia" was back home.

The AFUU has subsequently received several gifts for Uppsala University from American donors and provided tax deductions for the donors. The precedent of the "well-traveled book" and the creation of AFUU as a 501(3) organization continue to provide great benefit to Uppsala University and donors wishing to receive an American income tax deduction for their gifts to the University.

The creation of the AFUU has a direct connection to the Exchange Agreement between the Uppsala University Law Faculty and the University of Minnesota Law School. My invitation from Professor Bo Sundqvist to assist in establishing the AFUU occurred when I was in Uppsala for the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Agreement. The AFUU now counts the Exchange Agreement as a primary example of the friendship that exists between Uppsala University and its American Friends.