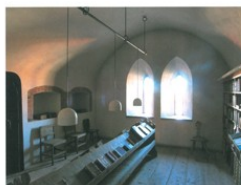


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med bidrag av Claes Gejrot

Historieskrivning vid Uppsala
domkyrka under högmedeltiden

Handskriften UUB C 92 och dess källor



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Christian Lovén, with Claes Gejrot, *Historieskrivning vid Uppsala domkyrka under högmedeltiden. Handskriften UUB C 92 och dess källor*, (Samlingar utgivna av Svenska fornskriftsällskapet, Serie 1, Svenska skrifter 96), Svenska fornskriftsällskapet: Uppsala 2012. 148 pp.

Much to later historians' dismay, medieval Sweden never had its Bede or Saxo. In fact, very few historical texts of any kind were written in Sweden before the second half of the fifteenth century. The early material consists of modest metrical chronicles in the vernacular, and lists of kings and bishops, and austere annals in Latin. One of the oldest documents of Swedish historiographical activities is the small Uppsala manuscript C 92, written at the turn of the thirteenth century. Due to the scarcity of material, the catalogues and annals it contains, occupying just ten folios, have been much discussed in scholarship, especially since Sture Bolin's days in the early twentieth century. The subject of Christian Lovén's book, *Historieskrivning vid Uppsala domkyrka under högmedeltiden*, essentially a commentary to the manuscript C 92, is, then, hardly new. Yet this solid piece of scholarship is in no way redundant. It puts together earlier research in a helpful way and also contributes much new information. Lovén's monograph has no overarching argument, and it is essentially arranged as a commentary to the various texts found in the manuscripts. The volume also provides editions of these texts and a facsimile of the manuscript. Unavoidably, this kind of structure detracts from the book's readability and will limit its audience largely to specialists. Nevertheless, Lovén's work will be greatly appreciated by all those needing to use the texts found in the Uppsala manuscript C 92, and by all with an interest in historical writing in medieval Scandinavia.

The first text in UUB C 92 is a catalogue of popes that ended originally at ca. 1305, but was continued later in the fourteenth century by other scribes. Lovén edits the list in the form of a table in which he also includes comparative data from many other similar catalogues. In fact, the study of the catalogue of popes goes far beyond the Uppsala list. Lovén scrutinises all the comparable catalogues surviving from Scandinavia and he provides ample general background on the medieval history of the genre. This is a valuable analysis for those working with similar material. Nevertheless, the way in which the various catalogues discussed connect with the list found in the manuscript C 92 is not explained to the reader

as the catalogues are introduced. Instead, he or she will have to read through Lovén's discussion of a plethora of texts before reaching conclusions on what their relationship to the main topic is. This way of presenting information without making evident its relevance for the argument somewhat reduces from the book's appeal. That said, with his thorough comparisons Lovén certainly provides new, interesting light on the list of popes found in the manuscript C 92. Lovén shows that the early parts the Uppsala catalogue are related to Martinus Polonus' (known also as Martin of Opava, d. 1278) work but that its later elements derive from Hugh of Saint Victor's list. He also includes an illuminating discussion of the possible contacts between Uppsala and the Augustinian house of Saint-Victor in Paris.

Less is said about the next text of the manuscript, a list of Uppsala's archbishops found on folios 3r–3v of the Uppsala manuscript. The catalogue of kings, following the list of bishops on folio 4r, receives a lengthier treatment. Most of it revolves around the relationship of the Uppsala catalogue to information found in Icelandic sources. As with the catalogue of popes, the contents of the list are presented in a table that also includes comparative data from other similar catalogues. The longest text in the manuscript is the annals found on folios 4v–10v. Lovén shows its dependence on earlier Dominican annals and suggests plausibly that this may have to do with the close connection Uppsala had with the brothers of Sigtuna. Lovén also discusses a now lost *obiit* list (i.e., a list reporting dates of deaths) that was evidently used as a source for both the list of bishops and the Annals.

The last chapter of the book approaches historical writing in medieval Uppsala in the light of all the texts found in the manuscript. It is, for the non-specialist reader, the most important section of the volume. Lovén presents a lengthy list of the probable sources, ca. 20 altogether, used in the making of the manuscript C 92. This makes it explicit that there were many historical texts available at the Uppsala cathedral around 1300. At the same time, it is evident that almost all these texts were brief catalogues of kings and bishops, and that relatively few narrative histories, local or European, were used in the making of the manuscript. Lovén perceptively points out how the latter activity coincides with the writing of the Miracles and the Office of St Erik. It can be added that much other Swedish hagiographical material also saw light in this period, including the *Legend of St Henry*, on the patron saint of the diocese of Åbo (Turku), suffraganship of Uppsala.¹ At the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Swedish dioceses were re-creating their past and having historical narratives, most often hagiographical in their nature, written down. These wider perspectives could be pursued further than Lovén does.

In the conclusions Lovén also addresses the question of how much of the medieval historical writings produced in Sweden may have been lost over the centuries. His guess is that at least fifty annals of various sorts, since lost, must once have existed (p. 110). One argument that might be advanced against such a high estimate is, as Lovén points out, that no local historical works are found

¹ Tuomas Heikkilä, *Sankt Henrikslegenden*, Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland – Bokförlaget Atlantis: Helsingfors – Stockholm 2009, 149–154.

among the many surviving parchment fragments from the Swedish realm, some 40,000 folios preserved in Sweden and little less than 10,000 now kept in Finland.² These fragments of books, usually complete bifolia from liturgical manuscripts, survive because they were used as wrappings for bailiffs' accounts from the 1530s onwards. Lovén's defence against an argument based on the fragments is that historical works were often written in small format and relatively often on paper. Leaves of small parchment manuscripts, or of any paper manuscripts, were not suitable for use as covers of accounts. These are certainly factors that may have contributed to the loss of historiographical material. Another one to consider could be that in religious houses annalistic notes were often found in manuscripts containing information, including copies of legal documents, concerning the possessions of the house. Once the religious houses had been suppressed, there was little incentive to preserve books with such material. Indeed, the records of many monasteries and convents were probably purposefully destroyed to make it more difficult for these institutions to recreate themselves should Catholicism be restored, which was not an unimaginable possibility.

Nevertheless, when thinking about the possible losses, we should also keep in mind that history books in medieval Europe were by no means always small, and that monastic histories were not always connected to legal documents in manuscripts. Sparse annals were often copied in modest books, of which the C 92 is a good example, but fully fledged narratives were also reproduced in large and lavish formats. Furthermore, scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were interested in historical texts and did salvage a good deal of books containing such. Thus, while it is probably true, as Lovén suggests, that many modest annals were destroyed, it is somewhat unlikely that the lost manuscripts would have contained very lengthy historical texts of which we would not know.

Lovén's *Historieskrivning vid Uppsala domkyrka* is a highly welcome piece of good scholarship. At the same time, the book has its limitations stemming from its slightly awkward structure and specialist scope. It provides much information, but its reader will have to be seriously interested in the various topics to be able to digest it. Some more general questions, especially why did the Swedish ecclesiastics write history when they did, and the way they did (or did not), could have been addressed in more depth. This said, the book is an excellent companion to the important Uppsala manuscript and an important addition to scholarship on medieval Swedish historical writing.

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² The fragments conserved in Finland are now available on-line in digital reproductions at <http://fragmenta.kansalliskirjasto.fi/> (accessed 21.11.2012).