Abstracts

Thursday 1.12.2016

Session 1 (House of Science and Letters, room 404)

Chair Elina Räsänen

1. María Montesinos Castañeda (Universitat de València)
   Temperance’s images in European Visuality of Middle Ages and Early Modern Era

Since the Antiquity, thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, Cicero or Macrobius have thought about the Temperance, as in the other Cardinal Virtues, like the basic mainstay of collective moral. This thinking was transferred to Middle Ages through authors like Augustine of Hippo or Isidore of Sevilla, although Saint Thomas Aquinas was who ordered and classified all virtues. He called them Cardinal Virtues, related between them and defined each one in its functions, parts and opposites. This literary thinking is translated in visual the representations of Temperance. The visuality of the majority of virtues come from representations of the famous Psycomachia by A. Prudence. The different images of this battle contribute to the making of the individual image of each virtue. Then the pervivence of images, the visual exchange between territories or the written sources, are some of the reasons which the Temperance is represented in different ways. This shows a continuity and variation in the image of Temperance, what has like result visual images with distinct attributes which represent the same concept. Based on this, it consists in tracing, diachronically, of the continuity and variation that the image of Temperance shows, literaly and visually in the different ambits of the european territory.

2. Katri Vuola (Åbo Akademi University)
   A Female Saint or a Saintly king? New Interpretations regarding the Iconography and Meaning of a 14th Century Sculpture

This paper will discuss a formerly polychromed wooden sculpture named Unknown Saint that belongs to the collection of The National Museum of Finland. The sculpture is dated to the last decades of the 13th century and it originates from the memorial church of Saint Henrik in Nousiainen (Nousis). The identity and even the gender of the almost life-size, standing sculpture has puzzled art historians in the 50’s and 60’s,
but since then little interest has been paid to its material form or plausible meaning in the medieval ecclesiastical context.

The sculpture is a rarity in the Nordic context, and contains several interesting aspects. On the basis of a new examination and iconographical analysis of the sculpture, I suggest firstly a new interpretation for the identity of the depicted saint. Secondly, I discuss the possibility that the sculpture would in some phase of its history have been encountered in a horizontal position thus resembling a commemorative tomb effigy. This would mean a radical new comprehension of its role. Thirdly, x-raying the sculpture revealed an unidentified metal object hidden inside the head. This find might prove to be substantial for understanding the meaning of the sculpted saint in its medieval context.

My paper is part of my doctoral study in which I examine wooden sculptures - their manufacture, acquisition and use in the bishopric of Turku (Åbo) during the 13th and 14th centuries. In short, the presentation concerns the Nousiainen sculpture's plausible changing form and functions in time and ecclesiastical space (during the Middle Ages) with the notions of sacral image and simulacra (likeness of a human being). It will also demonstrate how the tension between vertical and horizontal in ecclesiastical sculpted works manifested itself in this particular case.

3. Ragnhild M. Bø (University of Oslo)

   From Material to Immaterial Presence – Engagements with Saints before and after the Reformation

   In this paper, I address some of the ways sacred thoughts materialized by exploring some examples of how saints were present in people’s lives before and after the Reformation beyond the many pictorial and sculptural representations in churches and households. First, drawing on Danish books of hours from the fifteenth century and an ‘ethnography of prayer,’ I intend to uncover how material manifestations of saints merged with the religious words that were sung or spoken, e.g. by having vax candles formed in the evoked saints’ images. Such devotional practices disappeared when the halo and the help of saints were denounced after the Reformation, and, as sixteenth-century spiritual guidance books from Scandinavia tell us, all prayers were destined to God the Father alone. However, saints continued to be part of people’s everyday lives as their actions and vitae were transformed into tropes in folk songs and folk tales. The Virgin Mary and St Catherine are but two examples of former saintly protagonists whose immaterial presence became manifest when non-religious words were sung or spoken – their alleged power possibly lingering on between the lines.
Session 2 (House of Science and Letters, room 405) Chair Anu Lahtinen

1. Sanna Supponen (University of Helsinki)
   *Reconstructing magister Mathias’ Alphabetum distinctionum from parchment fragments*

   *Alphabetum distinctionum* of magister Mathias of Linköping (c. 1300–1350) is estimated to be the largest (c. 700 pages) medieval biblical distinction collection. Distinctions were alphabetically arranged Bible concordances which were mainly used for preparing sermons. However, only 1/3 of this Mathias’ greatest work has survived and leaves are scattered in six different archives/libraries, mainly in Sweden and Finland. In my paper I present some methodological approaches how to reconstruct the disposition and the content of the work. Paper is based on my doctoral thesis project about the use and the theological background of the *Alphabetum*.

2. Jaakko Tahkokallio (National Library of Finland)
   *The post-Reformation afterlife of printed Catholic service books: an overview of the evidence at the National Library of Finland*

   Catholic liturgical books were found in Finnish parish churches long after the Reformation. While the sturdy leaves of parchment books were gradually recycled, usually as wrappings for bailiffs’ accounts, books printed on paper were not suitable for this kind of re-use. As a result, a relatively large number of late-medieval printed service books have survived to the present more or less intact, often in original binding. Many of these books were updated and used after the reformation, and even their mere survival testifies to their continuing significance – or at least acceptability – at the parish level.

   The vast majority of this material is kept at the National Library of Finland. It remains relatively little used, despite the possibilities it offers for the study of reformation-era religious culture. In my presentation, I offer an overview of the material, examine its survival history, ponder on the issue of data loss, and give examples of the kind of research questions it could be put to answer.

3. Stina Fallberg Sundmark (The Swedish History Museum)
   *Objects under Confiscation – Perspectives on the Confiscations of Ecclesiastical Possessions in Sweden and Finland during the Reformation*
The Middle Ages did not know of any absolute division between the sacred and the profane. Personal jewelry such as brooches, clasps and finger rings could be provided with images of Christ and the saints and with prayer inscriptions which were thought to give the owner protection and help. Perhaps they could also function as instruments of devotion in some sense.

Such personal jewelry could also be in possession of a church through donation. In this paper I will discuss what might have been the function and meaning - economic as well as pious - of these kinds of objects in the ecclesiastical space. I will also discuss what happened to these objects at the Reformation and give examples how their function and meaning changed.

The point of departure for the paper are the documents of Gustav Vasa’s confiscations of church silver from Swedish and Finnish churches during the 1520th to the 1540th.

Session 3 (House of Science and Letters, room 404) Chair Katja Fält

1. Agnès Desmazières (Groupe Sociétés Religions Laïcités, CNRS – EPHE, Paris)
   Toward a Sacralization of Religious Vows? Religious «Consecration» and the Solemnity of the Vows in Thomas Aquinas’ works

This paper aims at studying how the notion of consecration became a key-concept for Thomas Aquinas’ understanding of religious vows. It will demonstrate how his conception of religious vows progressively shifted away from the human and contractual perspective developed in his early works, like his Commentary of the Sentences, and moved toward a sacral one, more precisely formulated in the Summa theologiae. In particular, in his later works, he defended the idea that the solemnity of the commitment to the service of God, which is achieved in the religious vows, does not come from the public character of the ceremony but from the action of God who consecrates the monk or the nun. The paper will also show the motive of his evolution, i.e. a greater consciousness of the irrevocable nature of religious vows. In this presentation, I will not only focus on the theological discussion, but also underline the influence of liturgy and canon law on the debate around the nature of religious vows. I will also highlight the parallels with Aquinas’ conception of the consecration of places and objects.

2. Marika Räsänen (CESCM)
   The cult of a reformer: the case of Thomas Aquinas and his relics
In our days, Thomas Acquinas (d. 1274, canonized in 1323) is typically remembered as a scholar, not as a saint. However, if we take a look at the art of Fra Angelico, for example, we readily notice the prominent role he has given to Thomas among other saints. Fra Angelico (ca. 1395–1455) has himself received a fame of a significant voice of reform who expressed Dominican observant idealism in his paintings in the fifteenth century Italy. In consequence we can assume that for him Thomas was one of the main saintly reformers of the Dominican Order.

The present paper argues that Thomas’s cult as a reformer was already launched by Elias Raymondus, Master of the Order of Preachers (1367–1378/99) at the end of 1360s with the translation of the saint’s relics from Italy to Toulouse. To enforce the reform, and probably also the relic cult, Master Elias tried to connect two bodies together, Thomas’s and Christ’s. He did not succeed completely: the cult of Thomas’s relics seems to have remained relatively local when the cult of the saintly reformer spread to a various communities instead. Signs of Thomas’s success can be found from all over the Western Europe, from South to North, from the beginning of the fifteenth century. From the late Middle Ages onwards, the cult was actively used in the different reforms of the Catholic Church. Although Elias’s idea remained somewhat half-finished, I suggest, that the connection between Saint Thomas as a specialist of the body of Christ and the cult of Corpus Christi, paved the saint’s popularity. The iconography of altar panels, prayer books and early prints suggest that Saint Thomas Aquinas was perceived as the renovator of the devotion of Christ’s body broadly in Europe. With regard to the role Thomas gained in the fifteenth century, I would emphasize the importance to Master Elias who is largely neglected figure in the history of the Dominican Order and early reforms because he chose the ‘wrong’, i.e. Avignon, papacy when the Great Western Schism (1378–1417) began.

3. Anthony Lappin (National University of Ireland Maynooth)

Statues (and relics), but mainly (and increasingly) statues

I will discuss the different functions played by statues and relics in the western European middle ages: relics I shall argue are more linked to questions of authority and legitimation, but are generally not on display; statues to representation and para-liturgical devotion, but, crucially, are almost constantly visible. I shall further argue that there is a significant change at the beginning of the thirteenth century, where statues are given a much more explicit role within the creation and maintenance of sacred space, and through their capturing an imagistic representation, begin to eclipse relics in devotional terms, eventually progressing – via miraculous narratives – to the creation of automata. I will also take into consideration modern psychological and cognitive studies of "susceptibility" and empathetic preferences and make final observations on the psychological violence of iconoclasm.
Friday 2.12.2016
Session 4 (HSL, room 505) Chair Kirsi Kanerva

1. Sonja Hukan (University of Turku)
   *The Goat and the Cathedral – Archaeology of Folk Religion in Medieval Turku*

Written sources on everyday lived religion in medieval Finland are scarce. However, large archaeological excavations where medieval soil layers are studied have lately been conducted almost yearly in Turku. This fieldwork has sometimes unearthed curious finds, such as an upside-down buried goat skull by a boundary marker between building plots. Such finds offer previously unknown evidence of the medieval worldview in southwestern Finland.

The aim of this paper is to introduce material signs of folk religion that archaeologists have discovered in the medieval soil layers of Turku. Moreover, an important question is how we can interpret these signs and what they reveal of everyday religion. The striking proximity of the centre of institutionalized religion manifested as the Cathedral of Turku to evidence of “unsanctioned” practices offer an intriguing viewpoint to the discussion.

2. Terese Zachrisson (University of Gothenburg)
   *Holy Images, Superstition and Popular Piety in Post Reformation Sweden*

The average village church of 17th Century Sweden still displayed an abundance of representations of the holy in painted, carved and sculpted form. Recent scholars have pointed out that the images of the saints were allowed to remain in the Lutheran churches as a result of the reformers’ successful reevaluation of their meanings and functions. However, these studies have often not paid sufficient attention to how these objects were perceived by local communities. This has obscured the fact that an image could have several different meanings, where both new and traditional notions of sacrality could intermingle. My paper will address how the medieval sculptures of Christ and his saints could be used on a local level. In struggling with the immediate needs of rural society, these sculptures were sometimes believed to have the power to heal the sick, ensure prosperity and ward of ill fortune. As a number of cases will demonstrate, even in a Protestant context holy images continued to convey power and to act as access points to the divine. I would argue that in taking popular notions of sacrality into serious account, we will increase our understanding of the complex mental landscapes of the early modern period.

3. Tõnno Jonuks (Estonian Literary Museum) (& Meelis Friedenthal, University of Uppsala)
**From spindle whorl to lithic amulet – a stone disc from Rattama, South-Estonia**

This paper will discuss a unique stone disc found as a stray find from a field in South Estonia. The disc has been exhibited in a county museum for decades as a spindle whorl and thus received no scholarly attention. The well-kept secret of exceptional symbols on the other side of the disc was “betrayed” when a new exhibition was composed. What originally looked like symbols of a zodiac circle turned rather to be a material representation of an Early Modern Age seal to lock evil spirits and secure its owners luck. Such seals are described in 17th century books of magic but to the present authors no material example is known. The disc will be introduced and its chronological and spatial context will be discussed.

**Session 5 (HSL, room 405) Chair Marika Räsänen**

1. Elisa Pallottini (University of Utrecht)

   *Inscribing sanctity. The uses of the writing on Romanesque reliquaries for making relics*

This paper explores some essential issues of a renewed approach to the study of inscriptions connected with the practices of the veneration of relics in Western medieval Christianity. It focusses on a selection of inscriptions on Romanesque reliquaries from Northern Europe (Germany, France and Mosan area). My argument is that these writings not only provide scholars with a wide range of information about the relics and the events related to them, but should be understood also as an essential part of the reliquaries’ complex visual programs in which the written word, materials, images and decorations interact with each other in order to make present and supply that which lies beyond sensory perception; namely, the sacred power of a holy person mediated by the relic, which was usually concealed to the faithful’s eyes. I argue that the value and meaning of inscriptions connected to relics don’t necessarily rely on their ‘pragmatic’ function (for instance, as tools of memoria, authentication or commemoration), nor on the readability or visibility of texts; rather, on the presence of the writing itself and its intrinsic relation with the object as a whole. Therefore, this paper approaches the relation between text, writing, support, sacred matter and performative aspects of medieval inscriptions, around the questions of the scriptural efficiency in the process of mediation of the relic as a sacred object.

2. Sofia Lahti (Åbo Akademi University)

   *The social life of relics and reliquaries in the medieval north*
The history of relics and reliquaries largely follows the same lines of development in the Nordic countries as it does in other parts of Europe. The regional differences can often be traced back to the persons behind the cult and its practices. Those persons are, on one hand, the local saints, and on the other, the local people interacting with the relics and reliquaries. In some cases, these two roles coincide – a known Nordic example is that of St Birgitta, who was involved in the cult of relics prior to becoming an object of cult herself.

In this paper, I examine a selection of “social networks” around relics and reliquaries in the Nordic countries. My focus is on the commissioners, donors and owners of relics and reliquaries – mainly regents and ecclesiastic authorities, but also private persons – and the circumstances under which they were in contact with the precious items. In the same vein, the paper concludes with a brief survey on how the remaining reliquaries’ are displayed in Nordic museums/churches and how they are perceived by our contemporary Nordic societies.

3. Louise Berglund (Örebro University)

*Fashioning influence: St Birgitta and the loci of the sacred*

When St Birgitta was about 40 years old, around 1343, she began receiving the visions that were to transform her from a mighty and learned noblewoman in Sweden into an influential agent in the intertwined spheres of politics and spirituality. Her very first political revelation appeared to her in Arras, positioning her as a transnational agent from the outset. In this paper I wish to discuss how St Birgitta crafted her position as an international woman of influence. Key aspects are the time and place of her key revelations, and her interaction with specific saints and holy objects, in reality as well as in visions. These interactions ranged from meditations before sacred objects in churches to encounters with saints in visions and on pilgrimages. I will analyse the effects these interactions had on her credibility as a mediator and critic of contemporary affairs.

*Session 6 (HSL, room 505) Chair Reima Välimäki*

1.—2. Professor Markus Hiekkanen & Professor Jyrki Knuutila (University of Helsinki)

*Reformation continuum 1—2. Aspects on the change of the place of the ritual of baptism during the period of Lutheran Orthodoxy in the Diocese of Turku*

During and after the Reformation some aspects of the church interiors were in a flux of change while others remained unchanged. Studies carried out since the 19th century have focused especially to those which can directly be led to the theological thinking of late catholic theology, e.g. the dismantling of altars. While
these 16th century changes are fundamental, less has been said about the continuum of the Reformation during the following century in the Archdiocese of Uppsala.

One of these is the abandonment of the ritual of baptism in its traditional place in the nave of the parish churches and, its removal inside the chancel. This removal, while seemingly innocuous (and thus not much notified by the scholars), had fundamental effects, in fact the sense of sacrality, in the church interior in its appearance, use and sense of collective sharing. The ritual was physically distanced from the parishioners to a place which was not accessible for them at least normally. The chancel gained in focus and a place where the most important ecclesiastical ceremonies took place. The intimate contact with the first and foremost sacrament must have been felt deeply, we assume. On the other hand there might also have been consequences to other ceremonies such as sermon.

The first of the papers, by Hiekkanen, will deal with the physical and visual as well as practical consequences of the change in the church interior. In this respect also other reasons for the fundamental change than those of theological interest may be detected. Based on this issue, the second paper, by Knuutila, will touch the matter partly from the aspects concerning possible detectable theological arguments by high clergy to abandon the old habit of the ritual of baptism outside the chancel or choir. Here an analysis of the ideas and decisions made by the chapters and the bishops of different dioceses in the Archdiocese of Uppsala will take place with its interpretation as well as gathering material from the German speaking Lutheran areas in present Germany. Thus, there is the question of ecclesiastical legislation, as well.

3. Senior curator Elisabet Regner (The Swedish History Museum)

*Objects and spaces for domestic devotion: change and continuity from Medieval to Early*

In the medieval and early modern periods, devotion was practiced not only in ecclesiastical space but also in private and domestic settings. During the medieval period, this private devotion was practiced with the help of rosaries, devotional images, relics and prayer books. In some social groups, particular spaces in the home could also be created for devotion, but this would not have been possible for most individuals.

This paper is based on results from an ongoing research project concerning late medieval private devotion, and will trace change and continuity in the material expressions of personal and domestic devotion from ca 1450 to 1650. The source-material for this study is primarily archaeological finds from present-day Sweden and will range from burial finds to standing buildings. The paper will focus on the use of specific devotional
objects such as images and books and the use of space for domestic devotion. The importance of understanding the use of objects and images to create a sense of devotional space in an ordinary domestic setting will be explored. The paper will also focus on questions concerning the curating of objects, keeping older devotional items and perhaps also practices after the reformation.