

Medeltiden materialiserad
-
om etablerandet, aktiverandet och bevarandet av
minnesplatser i Ranrike

Henrik Alexandersson

Institutionen för historiska studier

With an English summary



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

Akademisk avhandling för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i arkeologi vid Göteborgs universitet, som med tillstånd av humanistiska fakultetens dekanus, kommer att offentlig försvaras torsdagen den 18 mars 2021 kl. 14.00. Disputationen sker digitalt via Zoom.

Abstract

Title: Medeltiden materialiserad - om etablerandet, aktiverandet och bevarandet av minnesplatser i Ranrike
English title: Middle Ages Materialised – On the Establishment, Activation and Preservation of Places of Memory in Ranrike
Author: Henrik Alexandersson
Language: Swedish, with an English summary
Supervisors: Elisabeth Arwill-Nordbladh and Thomas Lindkvist
Department: Department of Historical Studies, University of Gothenburg
Series: GOTARC, Series B. Gothenburg Archaeological Theses 76
ISBN: 978-91-85245-82-6

This thesis revolves around medieval material culture and the way it has been activated, circulated and used in arrangement and creation of memories in a long-term perspective. Focus is on medieval churches, church sites and the furnishings of churches in Ranrike, which is the medieval name of the northern parts of the province of Bohuslän on the west coast of Sweden.

The following questions are central to the study: Where has the medieval material culture been located over time, and how and when is it activated and rearranged? Based on material culture, the purpose is to investigate and problematise the formation and maintaining of a culture of memories. The theoretical perspective of the thesis involves a discussion and problematising of the creation and maintaining of places for memories, which may, as shown in the study, be of a temporary or long-term nature. The methodology can be characterised as a close-up study of materiality, text, pictures, landscape and places. Particular emphasis is directed towards archives as depots of memories and communicators of knowledge about material conditions. Several layers of time, activation and movement can be revealed by following the material culture in different categories of sources.

The Middle Ages materialise not only physically in various forms of spatiality but also through the information of the written material. Further, the conditions for collecting knowledge are considered, as well as the standard of documentation and archiving.

The three first case-studies of the thesis deal with the places of the local community and their religious, political, economic, social and cultural functions. The two final case studies are thematic. The first focuses on abandoned churches, memory and forgetting, and the other discusses the exhibition of ancient church art at the Gothenburg tricentennial Jubilee Exhibition in 1923.

The study shows that it is difficult to tie an artefact to a specific placement, site or time. Objects change direction, meaning and significance over time. A particular object may have had a broad range of simultaneous meanings at the same point in time. Activation and circulation of the creation of memories has been uncovered at a local, regional and national level.

The preserved medieval material culture of Ranrike is greatly varied, even though the major part of it has disappeared. Items and memories stretch out in time, but get a foothold and materialise in different places, in diverse forms of spatiality and in various categories of source material. The concept of the Middle Ages is loaded, and each period produces, arranges and maintains its own ideas of the Middle Ages.

Keywords: memory, churchyard, cemetery, archive, medieval, material culture, maritime history, itineraries, Bohuslän, Ranrike.