

Papers from the Conference on Church Archaeology in the Baltic Sea Region (26–30 August 2013)

Foreword

*Janne Harjula, Sonja Hukantaival, Visa Immonen, Anneli Randla and Tanja
Ratilainen*

This issue of *Mirator* represents the outcome of the *Conference on Church Archaeology in the Baltic Sea Region* held on the 26th to 30th of August 2013 in Turku, Finland. The roots of this conference are in the long tradition of Scandinavian gatherings called *Symposium för nordisk kyrkoarkeologi* ('Symposium for Nordic Church Archaeology') started in 1981 in Moesgård, Denmark. The third symposium in the series was held 1987 in Turku. Over a quarter of century later, church researchers gathered in Turku for the second time – the eleventh time in the series of these events – with a wider scope. The event was an international conference with English as the language of discussion instead of the Scandinavian languages spoken in the earlier, smaller symposia.

The 1987 symposium was organized by the National Board of Antiquities and Turku Provincial Museum. The central figure in arrangements and active in other church archaeology symposia was Dr Knut Drake (1927–2013), at the time the head of the Turku Provincial Museum. Knut was also adjunct professor in art history in Åbo Akademi University in Turku since 1972 as well as in medieval archaeology in University of Turku since 1986. After retirement he dedicated his time to full-time research right until the end; his latest research focused on the construction history of Turku Cathedral.¹ Dr Drake was awarded the Oscar Montelius medal by the Swedish Antiquarian Society in 2011. This is the only time the award has been given to a Finnish citizen. The 2013 conference and its proceedings are dedicated to the memory of Knut Drake.

The main responsibility in organizing the 2013 conference was taken by the Society for Medieval Archaeology in Finland together with Department of Archaeology in Turku University, Turku Centre for Medieval

¹ See e.g. Knut Drake, 'Turku Cathedral', in *Finland and Tallinn. Report and Proceedings of the 151th Summer Meeting of the Royal Archaeological Institute in 2005*, Supplement to the *Archaeological Journal* 162 (2006), 56–59.

and Early Modern Studies, Mikael Agricola Society, the Finnish Society for Church History and the Institute of Practical Theology, Faculty of Theology, University of Helsinki. The conference was made possible through financial support by the Turku Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies and the Finnish Society for Church History. The conference was also financed by the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, Letterstedtska föreningen, Swedish-Finnish Cultural Foundation and Matka-Hermes Company. Tanja Ratilainen from the University of Turku, Department of Archaeology, carried the main responsibility for coordinating the conference.

In the 1987 symposium in Turku, there were some fifty participants and fifteen papers. This time fifty papers plus posters were presented and almost a hundred scholars participated from the Baltic Sea region: Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, and Russia. The two keynote presentations were given by Professors Jes Wienberg and Markus Hiekkanen. Wienberg represents Medieval Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology and Ancient History, Lund University, Sweden. Among his many duties and projects, the *Churches on the Baltic Sea* project, which he successfully lead, should be mentioned. Hiekkanen has recently worked as Lecturer in Art History at the University of Helsinki, Finland, and as adjunct professor in medieval archaeology at the University of Turku. His well-known 650 page manual of medieval Finnish stone churches first published in 2007² is a corner stone in the field of Finnish church research. In 2013, the President of Finland awarded Hiekkanen the honorary title of Professor.

During the past few decades, the scope of church archaeology has expanded immensely from its traditional focus on monumental buildings and can presently be described as a multidisciplinary field of research. This issue acts as a relevant example of this development. The topics of the papers were selected from, and their content based on the presentations at the conference.³ The articles offer fresh approaches using diverse source materials in a pioneering form of church research. Themes include alternate viewpoints and new methodologies to old source materials, and discussions with a special focus on questions of unofficial religious practices related to church contexts. Nevertheless, all contributions have in common an emphasis on material culture, characteristic to current historical archaeology in the Baltic Sea Region.⁴ This issue, first two planned selections of papers from the conference, is *Mirator's* first thematic collection dedicated to

² Markus Hiekkanen, *Suomen keskiajan kivikirkot*, Finnish Literature Society: Helsinki 2007. Second edition published in 2014.

³ Another selection of papers presented at the conference is planned to be published in printed form.

⁴ For a recent review of historical archaeology in Finland, see *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 4/2013.

archaeological studies. The editors are grateful for the efforts of the authors of the contributions and *Mirator* for publishing the papers.

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Janne Harjula, PhD
Archaeology
School of History, Culture and Arts Studies
University of Turku
janne.harjula[at]utu.fi

Sonja Hukantaival, MA
Archaeology
School of History, Culture and Arts Studies
University of Turku
sonja.hukantaival[at]utu.fi

Visa Immonen, PhD
Turku Institute for Advanced Studies
University of Turku
visa.immonen[at]utu.fi

Anneli Randla, PhD
Faculty of Art Culture
Estonian Academy of Arts
anneli.randla[at]artun.ee

Tanja Ratilainen, Lic.Phil.
Archaeology
School of History, Culture and Arts Studies
University of Turku
tanja.ratilainen[at]utu.fi