

# JOHN III VASA AND UPPSALA CATHEDRAL AS A RENAISSANCE MAUSOLEUM\*



By Peter Gillgren

*When Uppsala Cathedral was refurbished in the late sixteenth century, John III Vasa made sure that the Vasa dynasty, his own closest allies and the just fight against Eric XIV were prominently displayed. The presence of the national saints St Eric and St Bridget were retained. Side-altars were kept and built in the newly furnished chapels, interconnecting them with the service at the high altar. One single artist, Willem Boy, was made responsible for the most important works. The campaign connected Uppsala Cathedral with continental prototypes, while contrasting with the ideals of Swedish funerary chapels in the following Baroque period.*

On 10 May 1573 the Swedish king John III Vasa composed a heated letter to Ivan IV of Russia.<sup>1</sup> John certainly had every reason to be upset with Ivan. A more or less permanent conflict of war was going on in the Baltic region; when John and his consort Catherine Jagiellon were imprisoned in the 1560s Ivan had impudently tried to get Catherine delivered to Russia; after John had managed to seize the throne from his brother Eric, Ivan promised armed support to Eric. But this particular letter is concerned with other, apparently equally important, matters: the question of noble descent.

Evidently Ivan had, in a previous letter, indicated that John was not worthy of his crown because he was of lowly birth and his ancestors were mere peasants. In his ten-page letter John answers with the same invectives. The arguments, if one may talk of such in this context, are that the Swedes had always elected their kings from among the nobles, that John's father Gustavus I Vasa could trace his lineage back to the most noble families of Sweden and

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\* Some of the materials and arguments of this article have been presented at conferences in Åbo and Stockholm, published in Gillgren 2009 and reworked again for this particular occasion, not least in relation to the important publications of Dahlbäck *et al.* 2010–2016.

<sup>1</sup> Uppsala University Library, F 528 (Gustaviana 54). The letter has been copied in several versions. A shortened and more polite version was published in Silfverstolpe 1880, 553–554.

that Ivan's letter shows him to be totally lacking any virtue and, consequently, must be of lowly birth himself. Finally, John tells Ivan that he should send some of his men to Sweden so that he can show them – so that they can see with their very own eyes – proof of the Vasa family's splendid origins.

Playing with the thought of Ivan sending a delegation to Sweden for such research, what would John have had to show them? Documents, letters and seals are mentioned in the letter. But it is also possible that the Swedish king, at the very same time as the letter was written, was planning for a more monumental manifestation of his royal dignity. Because of the rumors that Ivan and others were spreading about the Vasa family it would certainly be beneficial to demonstrate its splendor and magnificence for all Europe with a prominent and public monument. This may be an important reason for the changes that Uppsala Cathedral went through in the 1570s, when the old Gothic cathedral was gradually refurbished into a Renaissance mausoleum – in order to celebrate the legitimacy, the power and the glory of the Vasa family.

### **Uppsala Cathedral in the Late Sixteenth Century**

Uppsala Cathedral is a three-aisled basilica from the late thirteenth century (Fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> It has been the seat of Swedish archbishops for centuries, and it still is. The patron saint is St Laurence, but from early on – and increasingly so in the sixteenth century – greater prominence was given to St Eric, a Swedish king and national saint who, according to legend, was killed in a fight close to the church in the year 1160. In the early sixteenth century the church was, very much due to donations from the nobility of the surrounding regions, a prominent landowner and it had about thirty prebendaries or stipends serving the family altars in the church, allowing members of the clergy to live from estates donated by the respective families.<sup>3</sup>

Due to Gustavus Vasa's struggle against King Christian II in the 1520s, and the following Reformation, the church of Uppsala suffered severe losses. These losses were mostly due to the king's and the noble's economic problems, which greatly reduced the church's land possessions and confiscated much of its valuables. After the Diet in Västerås in 1527 the church had to return almost half of the prebends to former owners.<sup>4</sup> But despite the Reformation and the problems of keeping up with traditional obligations, no reorganization of the church interior seems to have taken place during the first half of the sixteenth century. The cathedral also seems to have been in good enough condition to serve both for the coronation and for the

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<sup>2</sup> Dahlbäck *et al.* 2010–2016. For an overview in English see Sjöholm 1982.

<sup>3</sup> Dahlbäck 1977, 361.

<sup>4</sup> Dahlbäck 1977, 346–357.

funeral of Gustavus Vasa, in 1528 and 1560 respectively. What must already have been understood, though, was that the changing political and religious circumstances would sooner or later entail a remodeling of the church interior – and, perhaps, even the exterior.

Unfortunately, there are few good sources from the sixteenth century at place today, and besides the still standing monuments in the church, our best knowledge about the Renaissance period is to be gained from late seventeenth-century sources. Two plans of burial places in the church from the 1660s and 1680s (Fig. 2), together with a number of drawings by Eric Dahlberg from the late seventeenth century and the writings of Johan Peringskiöld from the early eighteenth century give us an idea of the church interior before the devastating fire of 1702.<sup>5</sup>

The eastern part of the church was occupied by the choir, where St Eric held a prominent position. An altarpiece from the late sixteenth century depicted his legend, probably painted by Bernt Notke from Lübeck (Fig. 3).<sup>6</sup> Close to it was the reliquary of the saint, remade in the 1570s by the goldsmith Hans Rosenfeldt under the supervision of one of John's most called-for artists, Willem Boy (Fig. 4).<sup>7</sup> A chancel screen surrounds the choir and separates it from the ambulatory. In the chancel some of the bishops had their tombs, notably the first Lutheran archbishop Laurentius Petri, dead in 1573.

Connected to the ambulatory circumscribing the choir are five large chapels. The two on the south side belonged to the Leijonhufvud and the Horn families. The first one used to contain the raised tomb of Sten Eriksson Leijonhufvud, killed by one of Eric XIV's men in 1568 during John's struggle for the crown (Fig. 5).<sup>8</sup> It was one of the very first raised tombs in Sweden and was decorated with colonettes, classical urns and armory. Coats of arms were numerous.

The second one still preserves the decorated slab for the admiral Klas Kristerson Horn and Kerstin Jacobsdotter Krumme, who died in 1566 and 1575, respectively (Fig. 6). It has some typical Mannerist ornaments, such as the scrollwork, but is simpler in design than Leijonhufvud's monument and may already have been initiated in the reign of Eric. However, a lost inscription tablet dated 1569 indicates that this chapel was also furnished under John's regime.<sup>9</sup>

The father of St Bridget, Birger Persson, was buried in the church and a separate chapel in the northeast is dedicated to him. His fourteenth-century,

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<sup>5</sup> Peringskiöld 1719; Sundquist 1971, 114–147; Bengtsson 2010c, 13–14.

<sup>6</sup> Thordeman 1954, 419 ff; Bengtsson 2010b, 45–60.

<sup>7</sup> Bengtsson 2010b, 124–133.

<sup>8</sup> Peringskiöld 1719, 104; Bengtsson 2010c, 117–126.

<sup>9</sup> Peringskiöld 1719, 100–101; Bengtsson 2010c, 103–115.

black, marble slab from Tournai is still today kept in the church (Fig. 7). Birger was an important nobleman but it does not seem to be for that reason alone he is memorized, since the map has designated the chapel as “the grave of St Bridget’s father”. The little Bridget is depicted together with her brothers and sisters on the border of the impressive, large stone.

The Sture family also has a chapel on the north side of the building and the cathedral was an important memorial place, which recorded the sufferings of the Sture family during the reign of Eric XIV.<sup>10</sup> The chapel kept extensive documentation of the unrighteous pursuit against the family. The pierced clothes of the murdered Nils Sture were on display as well as the straw crown that Nils was obliged to wear on the occasion of his mock procession in Stockholm 1566. The objects can still be seen in the treasury of the cathedral. There were also plans for a tomb monument to be executed by Willem Boy. A thorough description of the iconographical program mentions reliefs representing Eric’s attack on the imprisoned members of the Sture family – stabbing them to death with his own hand. The family was also meant to be represented kneeling in prayers before the Savior.<sup>11</sup>

The monument was never completed, and it is unclear why. We know of it through documents left behind by Hogenskiöld Bielke, who was executed on the orders of Charles IX in 1605. If not before, all plans for such a monument were most certainly withdrawn at that time. It is clear that Charles IX did not approve of John’s plans for Uppsala Cathedral. When Eric passed away in his prison in 1577, having probably been poisoned to death, Charles wrote to John urging that he must see to that their brother got a proper burial place and tomb in Uppsala. Even if Eric had made some blameworthy mistakes he had, nevertheless, been the king of Sweden for a number of years and, most importantly, such an action might prevent the spread of rumors that were currently circulating. But John was resolutely against all such undertakings and instead he saw to it, that Eric received a degrading burial and a mock monument in Västerås Cathedral.<sup>12</sup> Charles himself is buried in Strängnäs.

### **The Vasa Chapel**

In the Middle Ages the easternmost chapel was dedicated to Our Lady and contained a number of tomb slabs. During the 1550s Gustavus I decided to use it for his queen’s and his own final resting place. After the Västerås recess in 1527 the prebend for the chapel had been claimed and returned to the Bielke family. Gustavus Vasa, however, was eager to get hold of as many of

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<sup>10</sup> Bengtsson 2010c, 85–101.

<sup>11</sup> Wideen 1986, 8.

<sup>12</sup> Åberg 1962, 60–80.

the estates as possible when they were returned by the church. He therefore put his secretary Rasmus Ludvigsson to work on researching his family's origin. The combination of the king's power and Rasmus's monopoly on most of the stately and churchly archives made the work extremely rewarding. Among other findings, Rasmus managed to show, rather dubiously, that the king was related to the Ture Bengtsson Bielke who had founded the prebend in the late fourteenth century. Gustavus therefore claimed ownership of the estate. After some negotiations he settled for half of the prebend, and through this affair he also acquired the most prominent burial place in the cathedral of Uppsala – and in all of Sweden.<sup>13</sup> The beautiful monument that was delivered from the workshop of Colijn de Nole in Utrecht is still preserved by the church, in repository. Probably it did not remain for very long in the chapel, since new plans emerged after the death of Gustavus Vasa himself in 1560 (Fig. 8).<sup>14</sup>

After Gustavus's death and no later than in the 1570s, more monumental plans for the chapel took form.<sup>15</sup> Willem Boy was made responsible for the work and it is mainly the results of his efforts that can be seen in Erik Dahlbergh's drawings and prints of the chapel from the late seventeenth century (Fig. 9). Walls and ceiling are covered with stucco works in the Moorish style that was so popular in the sixteenth century. The Gothic clustered piers have been redesigned into engaged and fluted columns. Tablets with the king's family tree and an epitaph are to be seen on the walls. In the background stands an altar, possible from the Middle Ages. In Dahlbergh's time it was decorated with a painting of the Last Supper, a perfectly Protestant motif. But a statuette of the Madonna, damaged but still preserved in a parish church in southern Sweden, with Gustavus Vasa's weapon on the back shows such a close affinity with the queen's tomb that it is reasonable to assume that it was originally made for this altar (Fig. 10).<sup>16</sup> In my opinion it is likely to be from the same workshop as the tomb. Perhaps it was taken down when the earlier tomb was replaced, but it may also have been kept until the synod in Uppsala 1593, when the Reformation was reinforced following the conflict with John's Catholic son, Sigismund III Vasa of Poland. Until then the importance of the Madonna in the Protestant Swedish church had not been all together settled, as can be seen from the writings of Laurentius Petri and John's so-called *Red Book* of 1574.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Söderberg 1977, 47.

<sup>14</sup> Schéle 1958, 83–107.

<sup>15</sup> Bengtsson 2010c, 23–54.

<sup>16</sup> Gillgren 2009, 94–104; Lindblom 1921, 163–167.

<sup>17</sup> Brodd 1982.

A raised tomb stands in the middle of the room (Fig. 11). On its sides are representations of the arms of the nation as well as the Swedish counties. There are also inscription plates on the tomb and on the walls, celebrating Gustavus Vasa as the “the Goth’s staff” (Gustaf) and *pater patria*. On the lid, the king and the two dead queens Catherine of Saxe-Lauenburg and Margareta Leijonhufvud are portrayed. At the corners stand four obelisks. They are of a striking design, with small ionic ornaments situated between the obelisk and the plinth (Fig. 12). This makes them identifiable with the so-called Caesar obelisk in Rome, as depicted in the architectural treatise of Sebastiano Serlio. It is the one marked with a *P* and the inscription DIVO (Fig. 13).<sup>18</sup> The appearance of the obelisks in Uppsala must be read as an indication that Renaissance political and cultural ideas had a distinct influence in Sweden at the time. Swedes now, also, wanted part of the celebrated Roman glory.

It has never been entirely clarified what responsibility Eric XIV, respectively John III, had for the new furnishing of Our Lady’s Chapel and Gustavus Vasa’s tomb. Since Eric had already had a part in the plans in the 1550s it is probable that he continued his engagement after the father’s death in 1560.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, so much of the finished result departs from the earlier plans, that much of what can be discerned today is possibly the result of John’s activities in the 1570s and 1580s. After the great struggle for power between the brothers in the 1560s, John formally received the throne in January 1569. Shortly thereafter, in 1572, both the city and cathedral of Uppsala were struck by a severe fire, necessitating considerable restoration work – as can be seen from John’s extensive correspondence with craftsmen and artists in Uppsala from the period.<sup>20</sup> Indications that most of the final design dates from John’s reign is evidenced from the expensive works from Colijn de Nole’s workshop which were set aside, and that the inscription of Gustav’s tomb not was executed until after 1583, when Arenth Palardin was given instructions for it.<sup>21</sup> It is also the view of Peringskiöld that the tomb was built during John’s, rather than Eric’s, reign.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Jagiellon Chapel**

In addition to the five traditional burial chapels of the ambulatory, King John rebuilt an old chapterhouse into what is today one of the best-preserved Renaissance interiors in Sweden, the Jagiellon Chapel that dates from around

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<sup>18</sup> Serlio 1547, 76; Gillgren 2009, 115–125.

<sup>19</sup> Almqvist 1910, 119.

<sup>20</sup> Silfverstolpe 1875, 253–273.

<sup>21</sup> Silfverstolpe 1876, 232.

<sup>22</sup> Peringskiöld 1719, 61.

1590.<sup>23</sup> The original work is once again attributable to Willem Boy, this time in collaboration with the stucco worker Antonius Watz.<sup>24</sup> A drawing by Eric Dahlbergh shows that the chapel had its own, newly built altar (Fig. 14). On the wall is seen a painting representing Catherine in prayer beneath an altar with a crucifix, an iconography that recalls the one planned for the Sture Chapel. Stucco angels remind one of the decorations of St Eric's reliquary (Fig. 4). The present wall paintings in the Jagiellon Chapel are all from the nineteenth century and we know little of their original appearance. It is well known that Catherine was a Catholic but nothing in the iconography today shows any traces of Catholic faith. It is not impossible that the lost paintings had such motifs, perhaps representing Catherine's patron saint, the learned St Catherine of Alexandria.

A sculptured portrait of Queen Catherine is placed on the high tomb. A long inscription speaks about her noble birth and her marriage to John. The sufferings during Eric's regime, how she was imprisoned together with her husband and how Eric negotiated with Tsar Ivan IV about delivering her to Russia are dealt with extensively.<sup>25</sup> On both sides of the tomb stand heavy marble columns connected by an arch, carrying a gilded crown (Fig. 15). This architectural detail is so prominent that it has, not unexpectedly, been the subject of a number of interpretations.<sup>26</sup> An obvious parallel is the emblem of Emperor Charles V, with the two columns, the arch, a crown and the motto *plus ultra*. A similar composition can be seen on John's seal, where he sits on the throne surrounded by the same symbols. We come even closer to John's and Catherine's personal imagery if we compare the arrangement of the tomb with their respective monograms (Fig. 16). In John's case the columns construct the stems of the letters *I(oannes)* and *R(ex)*. For Catherine they represent the stems of the letters *K(atharina)* and *R(egina)*. In the chapel the columns may represent both Catherine herself as well as her joining together with John through marriage. Like the obelisks in the Vasa Chapel, the arched columns are fine examples of the Renaissance striving for emblematic symbols that are both visibly striking and ambiguous in meaning.

### After John III

John III died in 1592 and was succeeded by his son Sigismund. But the lawful king's position as both a Catholic and king of Poland made his situation difficult and uncertain. Uppsala Synod in 1593 and the continuing advance of the radical reformation in the Netherlands saw to it that a clearer demarcation

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<sup>23</sup> Bengtsson 2010c, 55–78.

<sup>24</sup> Fulton 1994, 209–235.

<sup>25</sup> Peringskiöld 1719, 71–73; Gillgren 2009, 132–135.

<sup>26</sup> Fulton 1994, 231–234.

was drawn between Catholics and Protestants. Another son of Gustavus I, Charles, soon seized power but was not crowned until 1607.

The tomb for John III was executed in Poland by Willem van den Blocke (Fig. 17).<sup>27</sup> A disagreement between Sigismund and Charles about who was to pay the expenses led to it being kept in Danzig until the late eighteenth century, when it was finally taken to the cathedral in Uppsala. It is of a type that is frequently seen in Poland, more seldom in Sweden. John is lying on his side with face towards the spectator, resting the upper part of his body on his right arm. Besides the decorative and emblematic elements, the monument presents two battle pieces, sculptures representing David and Solomon, and an epitaph. The latter depicts John's virtues, his struggle against Eric and the Russians, and finally reveals that his son and inheritor of the throne raised the tomb.

The intended setting of the monument is uncertain. It has generally been assumed that it was meant for Uppsala Cathedral, but it has not been possible to find a proper location for the large work.<sup>28</sup> Correspondence from the late 1590s shows that the intention at that time was to place it in the Vasa Chapel, even though it seems ill fitted and too large for this space.<sup>29</sup> Even a smaller monument than this would greatly have disturbed the harmoniously designed and well-positioned tomb of Gustavus Vasa.<sup>30</sup> It is not impossible that John, and after him Sigismund, intended to build a new chapel closely interrelated with the cathedral. A suitable place, in that case, would have been on the south side, right across from Catherine's chapel, where the Oxenstierna Chapel was later built (Fig. 2). This would also have been in accordance with the Polish tradition, with the building of Sigismund II Chapel in Cracow in the early sixteenth century and Sigismund III Vasa's own chapel in the same style in the middle of the seventeenth century.<sup>31</sup> The first chapel of this type in Sweden, though less refined, was designed around the middle of the sixteenth century in Sorunda, south of Stockholm, supposedly inspired by Polish precursors.<sup>32</sup> Catherine's chapel is located in a part of the church that was formerly separated from the ambulatory, but was opened up by John III. The new asymmetrical disposition of the chancel would have been repaired, had a similar chapel been built on the other side of the choir (Fig. 2). This may very well have been John's intention in around 1590 when Catherine's chapel was furnished, but if such plans existed they were probably handed over to

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<sup>27</sup> Hahr 1913, 27; Bengtsson 2010c, 62–72.

<sup>28</sup> Fulton 1994, 194–204.

<sup>29</sup> Bengtsson 2010, 63.

<sup>30</sup> Lindahl 2016, 66.

<sup>31</sup> Colvin 1991, 240–241.

<sup>32</sup> Lindahl 1969, 94–103; Bennet *et al.* 1972, 40.



John's son Sigismund and were not asked for any more after 1593; not by the Swedish bishops nor by the future king Charles IX.

### **A Renaissance Mausoleum**

It has become clear that the plans for Uppsala Cathedral in the reign of John III follow some general principles. They could be summarized as follows:

1. St Eric remains the most important saint of the church and keeps his place by the high altar. He represents the connection back in time, the lineage of the Swedish church and kingdom back to the twelfth century. A chapel for "St Bridget's father" is also kept. It is well known that John had a special preference for the Bridgettines.<sup>33</sup> They and their founder were resources both for his national and religious ambitions. Close to the altar of St Eric are the graves of the Lutheran bishops, covered by slabs not set above floor level, again showing that the Swedish church had an admirable and continuous history – despite the break with Rome.
2. The Vasa family and its allies dominate the new interior and the just fight against Eric's tyranny is thoroughly demonstrated. Altars are kept and built in the side chapels, linking them liturgically to the high altar.
3. The chapels of the ambulatory are furnished in a modern Northern Renaissance style. One individual artist, Willem Boy, is made responsible for the execution of the most important monuments.

If we take a look around in Europe we can see that the development is not unique.<sup>34</sup> The mausoleum was one of many ancient traditions rediscovered by the Renaissance. However, as with so many other antique phenomena it was of little use unless modified to fit with contemporary ideas – in this case ideas about burials and memorials. Before the Neo-classical period it seems to have been undesirable to isolate prominent individuals from the cult and from the congregation.<sup>35</sup> This is true for the most well-known Renaissance example, the *Tempio Malatestiano* in Rimini. The medieval church was rebuilt by Leone Battista Alberti, in the middle of the fifteenth century and transformed into a mausoleum for the Malatesta family. The rebuilding is certainly more radical than in Uppsala, but the idea is similar. The most important change is that one artistic concept and one dynasty is allowed to dominate the interior design, while religious and liturgical traditions are upheld. The same changes can be seen in Milan, where the Sforza family had Bramante rebuild the entire

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<sup>33</sup> Lindblom 1961.

<sup>34</sup> Colvin 1991, 232–252.

<sup>35</sup> Colvin 1991, 322–323.

choir of S Maria delle Grazie to create room for the family chapel. Extensive rebuilding also takes place in other places, like in Granada, Paris (St Denis) and London (Westminster Abbey). Although the solutions differ greatly, in accordance with the local patrons and traditions, the main artistic, political and religious ambitions seem to have been the same.

The little we know about the exterior of Uppsala Cathedral supports such an assumption. In the print of Johan Peringskiöld from the late seventeenth century, two large spires dominate the church. We know through the writings and documentation of this same author that they were installed in 1613–1619 (Fig. 18).<sup>36</sup> But below them we see another, for us already well-known motif. Both the towers are decorated with obelisks at the corners. The obelisks seem rather out of place beside the swelling Baroque spires, even though parallels have been drawn with the design of the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam.<sup>37</sup> It is not impossible that the obelisks in Uppsala had already been raised when a new roof was installed after the fire in 1572. We know from John's correspondence with Uppsala that he ordered a new copper roof and enough timber to furnish the two main towers with "pointers" (*spitzer*) in 1579.<sup>38</sup> In any case, the outside obelisks are most certainly related to the interior obelisks of the Vasa tomb. The local spread of the motif can be observed at the still standing chapel of the Sparre family at the church of Norrsunda, a little south of Uppsala, that dates from the 1630s (Fig. 19), where the fake brick exterior contrasts with the almost silhouetted obelisks.<sup>39</sup>

Together with King Gustavus Adolphus's chapel at the Riddarholm church in Stockholm, which is also from the 1630s, the Sparre chapel marks the beginning of a new and specifically Protestant tradition of funerary chapel building. Such chapels, specifically built for the purpose and formally attached to a church building but architecturally separated from the choir and from ritual, were widespread in Sweden in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Ideologically positioned between Renaissance and Neoclassical ideals, they were public but still self-contained family projects, micro-cosmoses without any altars and in many ways contrary to the ideas of John III and his time. For him, the interaction between the architectural elements, the funerary monuments and the cult were nothing but crucial.<sup>40</sup>

The print of Peringskiöld does not show clearly whether the obelisks of Uppsala Cathedral, in all their details, were modelled on those of the Vasa tomb, neither could it have been perceived from ground level. Still, the

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<sup>36</sup> Peringskiöld 1719, 24.

<sup>37</sup> Bengtsson 2010a, 448–449.

<sup>38</sup> Silfverstolpe 1875, 269; Sundquist 1971, 108–114.

<sup>39</sup> Bonde & Roland 1912, 33–34.

<sup>40</sup> Liljegren 1947, 88; Colvin 1991, 270–281.

obelisks were the signal of a new and distinct era in the history of the Swedish kingdom and the cathedral in Uppsala, and their association with imperial dignity was still strong enough for them to be used at the coronation of Charles XI in 1675. They can be seen in David Klöcker Ehrenstrahl's painting of Uppsala Cathedral during the ceremony (Fig. 20). The reference to the Vasa obelisks would have been apparent for the participants in the cathedral and served as a reinforcement of the legitimate standing of the Swedish kingdom.

The Uppsala obelisks hark back to the obelisks that were brought from Egypt by the Romans and that were then looked upon as incredibly old antiquities. One and a half millennia later they were rediscovered by Renaissance humanists and were soon considered indispensable for all princely and imperial iconography. For about a century, until the unfortunate fire of 1702, they crowned the towers of the Uppsala Cathedral and announced their urgent message all over the surrounding plains.

The heart of the matter is the same as with John's angry letter to Ivan. The question of noble descent was more than a question of pride. Genealogical investigations initiated by Gustavus I and carried out by Rasmus Ludvigsson not only fabricated a glorious past for the Vasa family. It also made it enormously rich, graced it with a much-needed legitimacy and, most important in this context, presented an opportunity to manifest the new economic, political and cultural situation within and without the old cathedral of Uppsala – for everyone to see with their own eyes.

### Illustrations



Fig. 1. *Uppsala Cathedral*. Late fourteenth century. Restored in the 1880s. Uppsala.

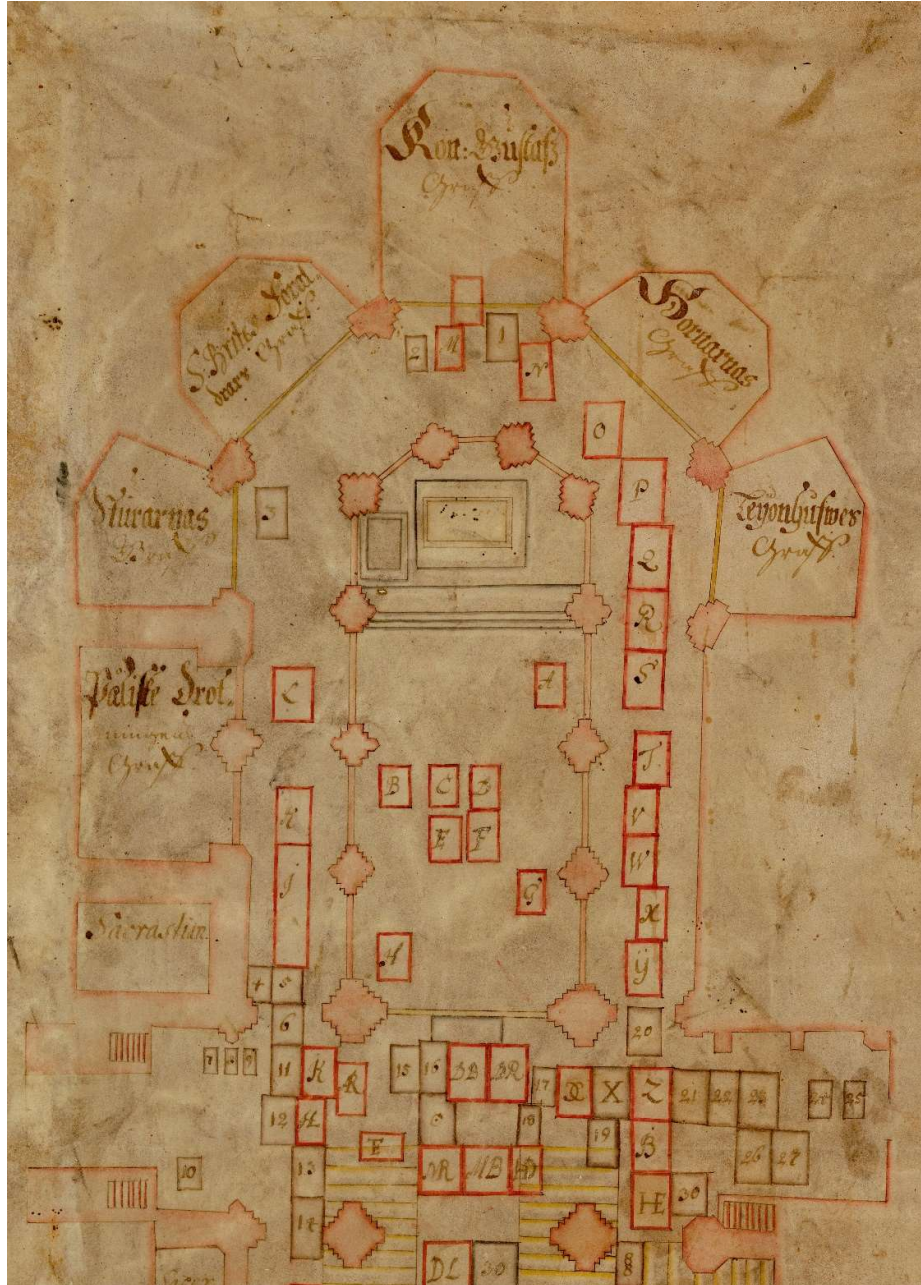


Fig. 2. Plan of burials in Uppsala Cathedral. Around 1680. Source: Uppsala University Library. Top. Pl. Uppsala. Handteckningar. 3. Domkyrkan-interiör.



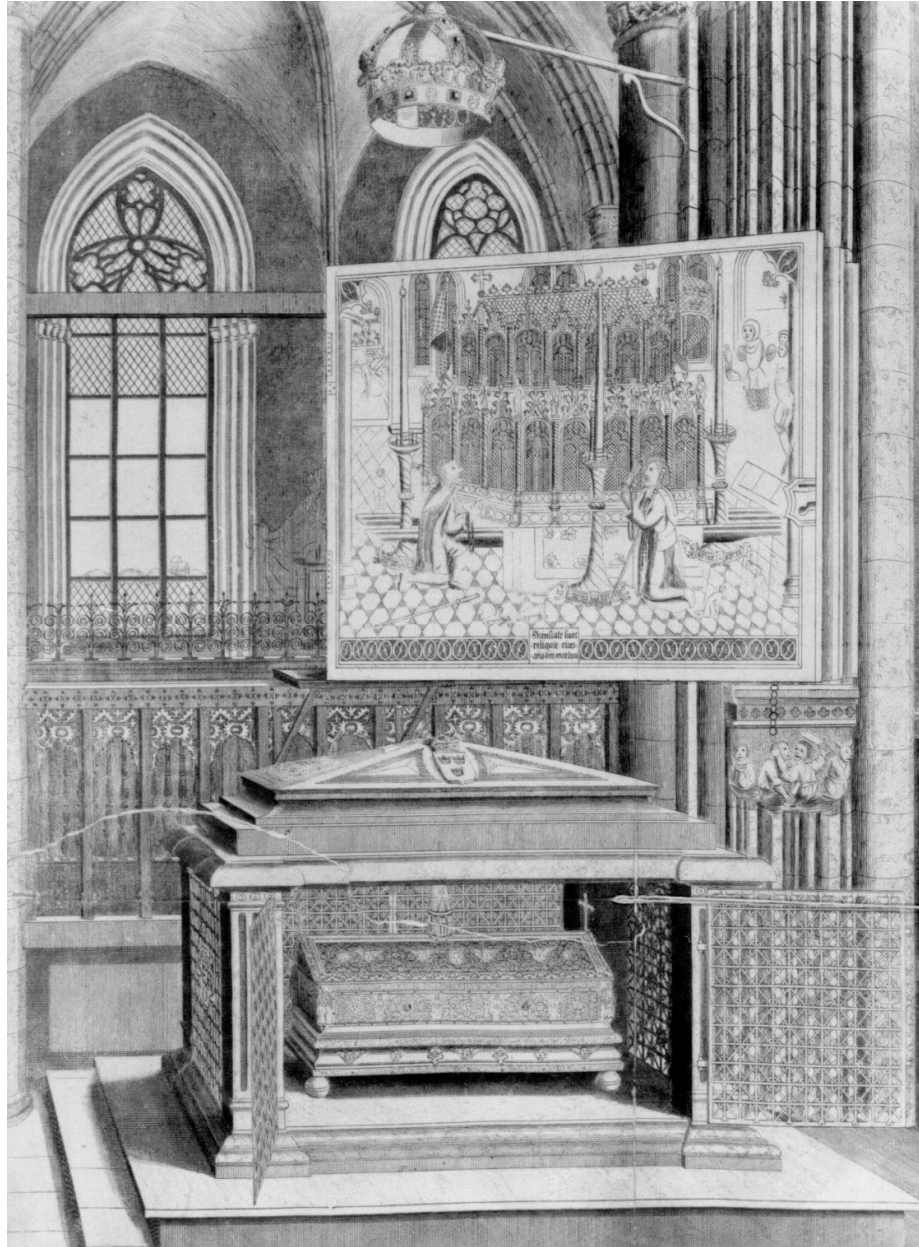


Fig. 3. Bernt Notke, *The St Eric altarpiece*. Late sixteenth century. Source: Print from Peringskiöld 1719.

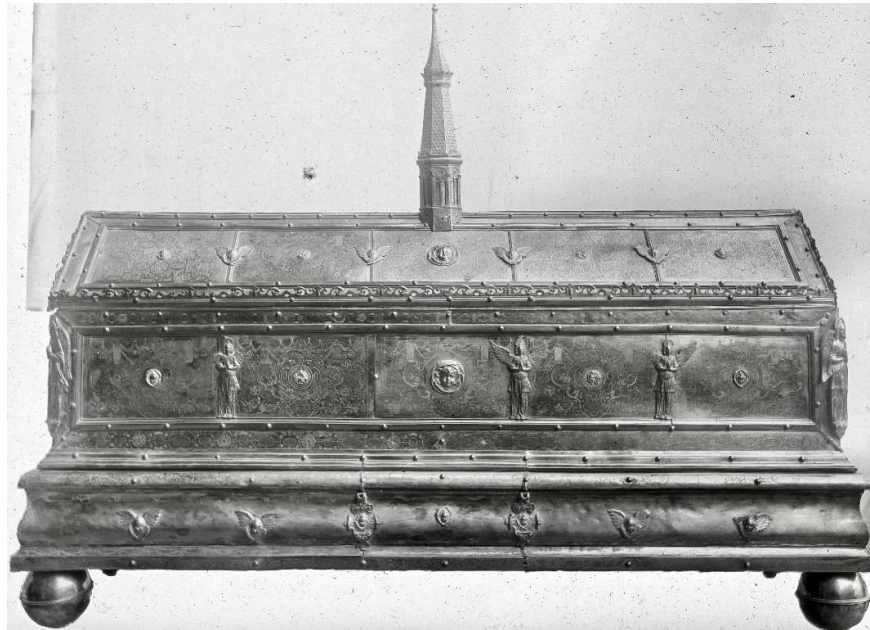


Fig. 4. Willem Boy & Hans Rosenfeldt, *The reliquary of St Eric*. 1570s. Uppsala Cathedral.



Fig. 5. *The tomb of Sten Eriksson Leijonhufvud*. 1570s. Uppsala Cathedral.  
Source: Print from Peringskiöld 1719.

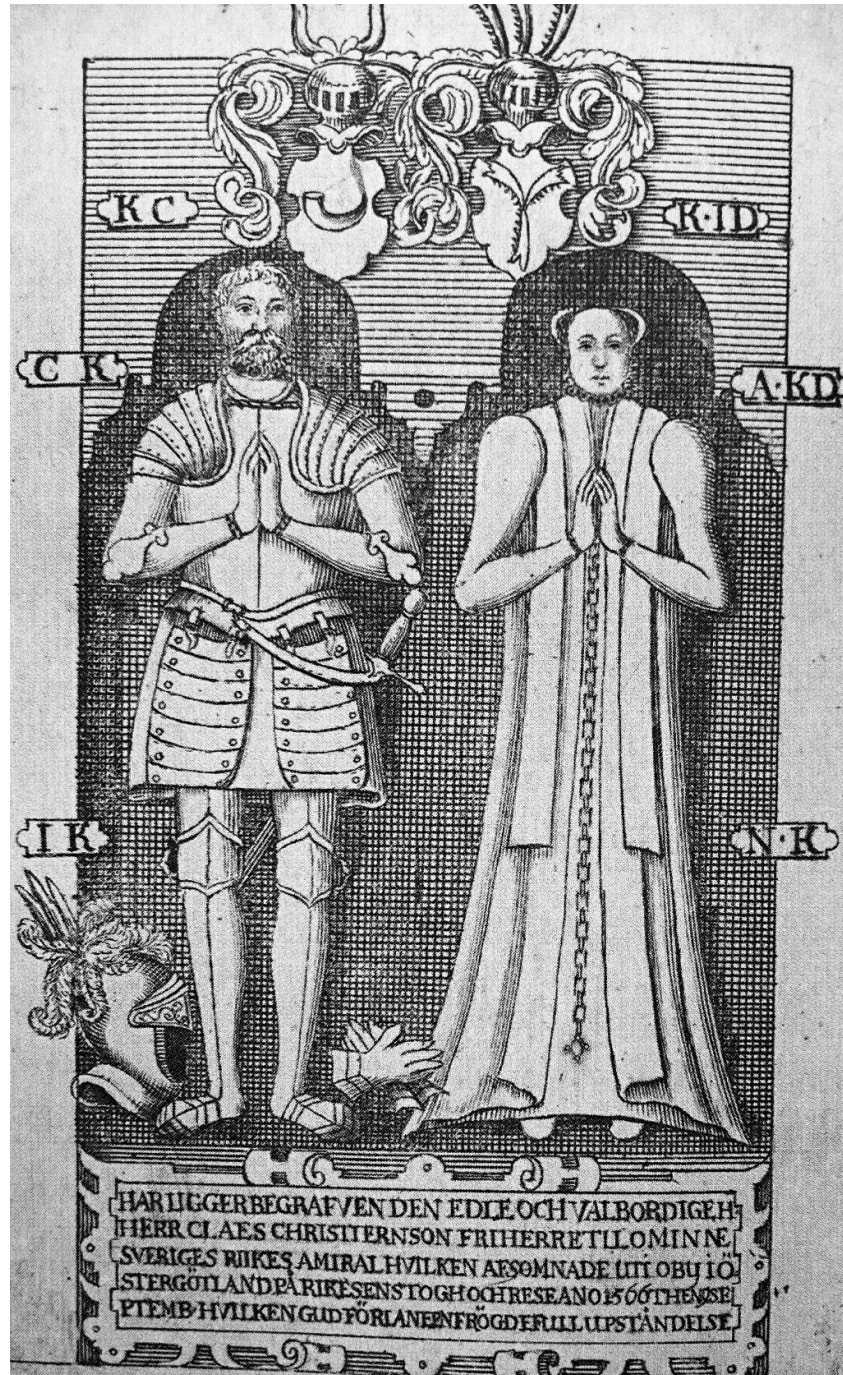


Fig. 6. The tombstone of Klas Kristerson Horn and Kerstin Jakobsdotter Krumme. 1570s. Uppsala Cathedral. Source: Print from Peringskiöld 1719.





Fig. 7. The tombstone of St Bridget's parents. Late thirteenth century. Uppsala Cathedral. Source: Print from Peringskiöld 1719.

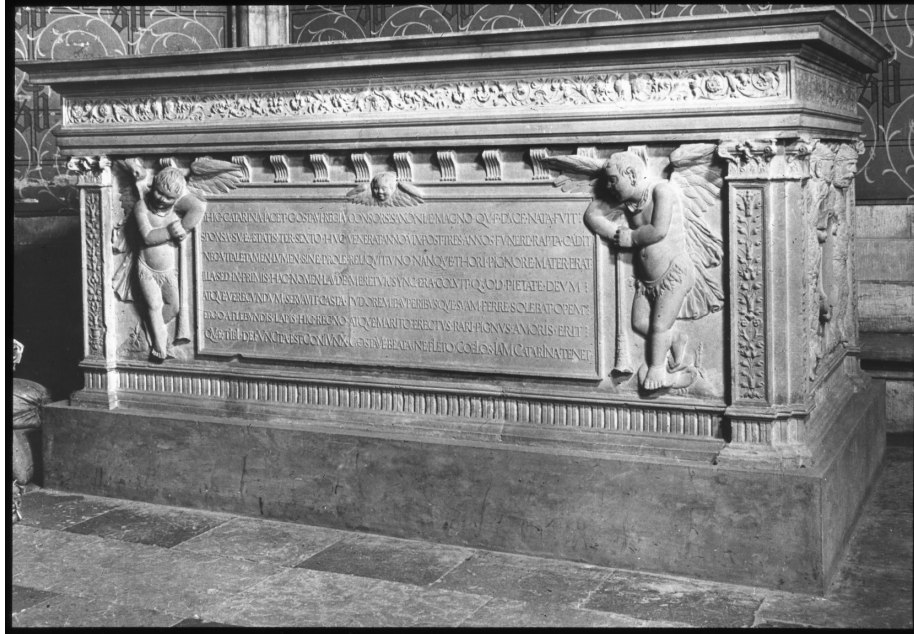


Fig. 8. Colijn de Nole, *The tomb of Gustavus Vasa's consorts*. 1550s. Uppsala Cathedral (in magazine).



Fig. 9. Willem Boy, *The Vasa Chapel*. 1570s. Uppsala Cathedral. Source: Drawing by Erik Dahlbergh, late seventeenth century.



Fig. 10. Colijn de Nole (attributed to), *The Madonna with child*. 1560s. Örtomta church (Östergötland).





Fig. 11. Willem Boy, *The tomb of Gustavus Vasa and his consorts*. 1570s. Uppsala Cathedral.



Fig. 12. Willem Boy, *The tomb of Gustavus Vasa and his consorts*. Detail. 1570s. Uppsala Cathedral.

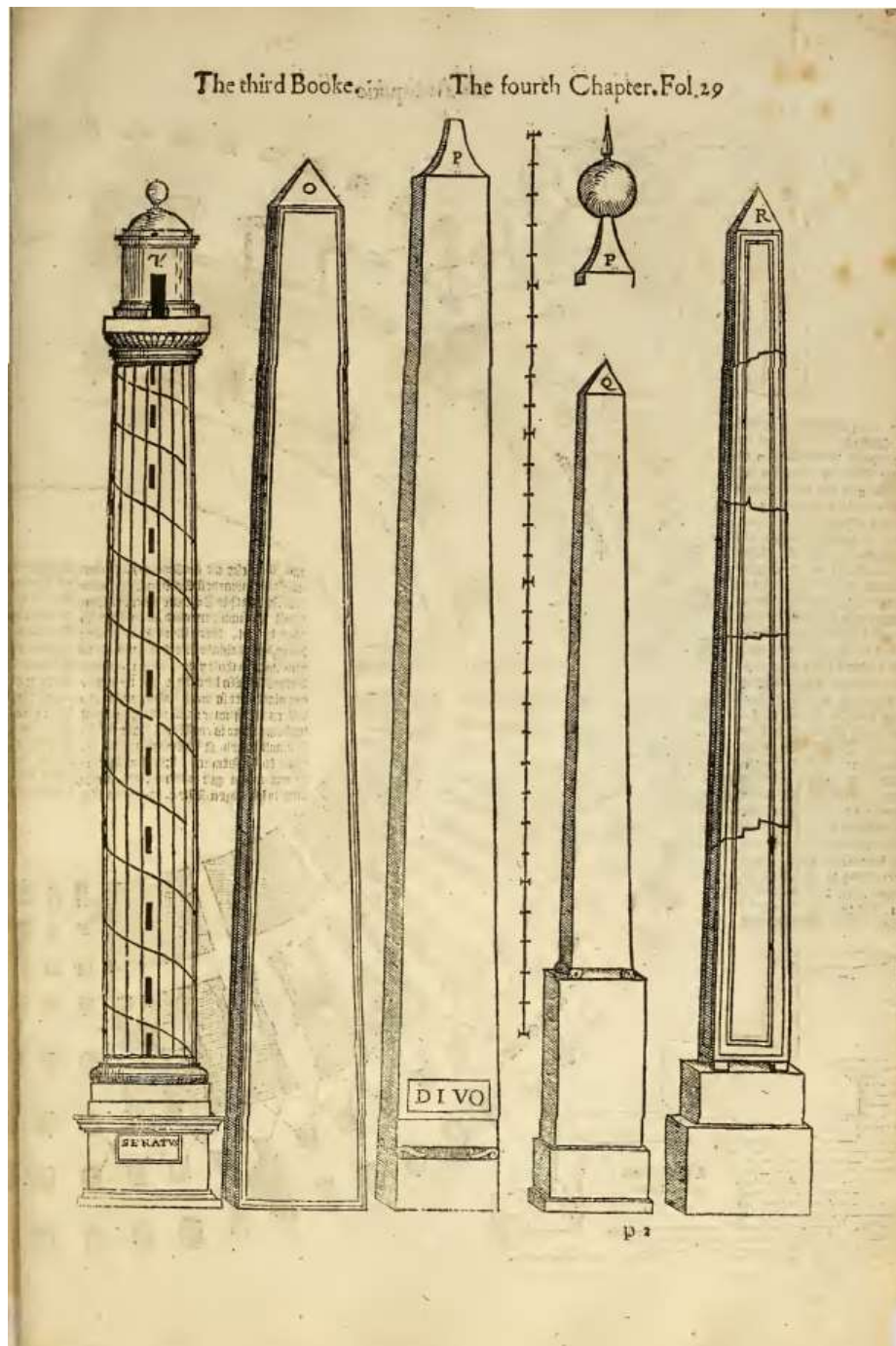


Fig. 13. Sebastiano Serlio, *Obelisks in Rome*. Source: *Architettura I* (Venetia, 1547).



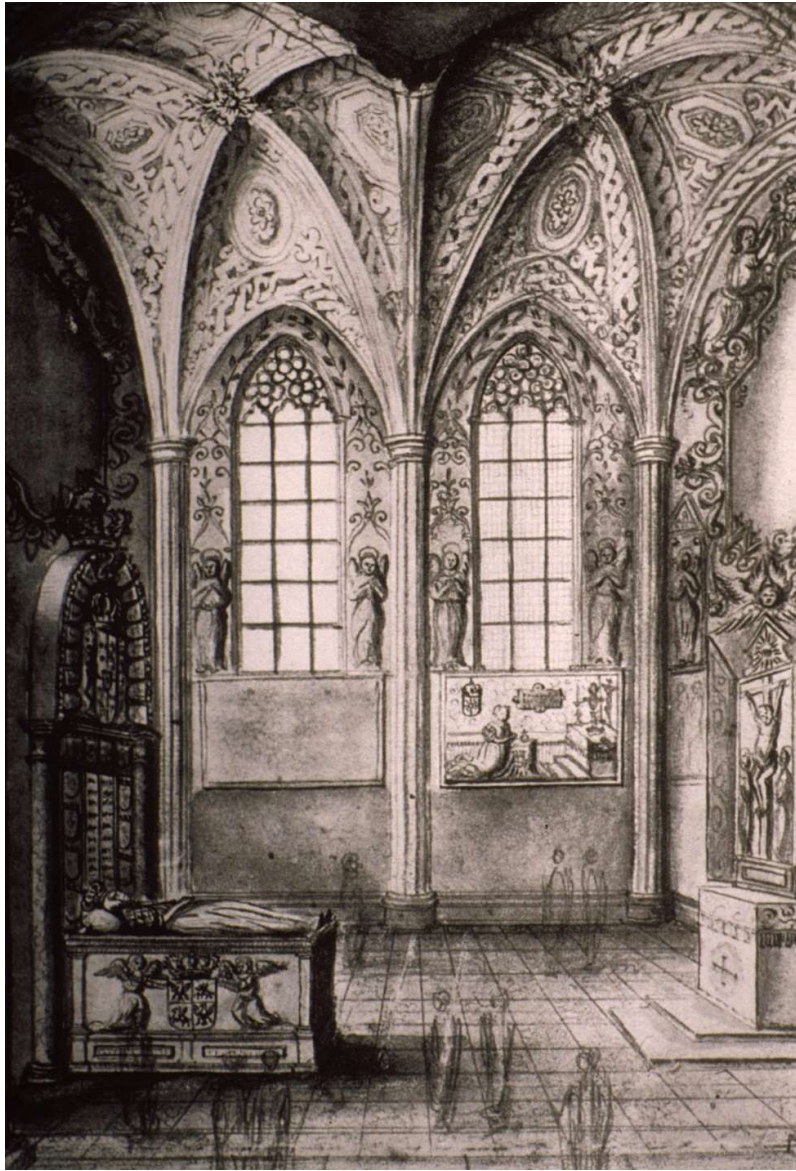


Fig. 14. Willem Boy, *The Catherine Jagiellon Chapel*. Around 1590. Uppsala Cathedral. Source: Drawing by Erik Dahlbergh, late seventeenth century.



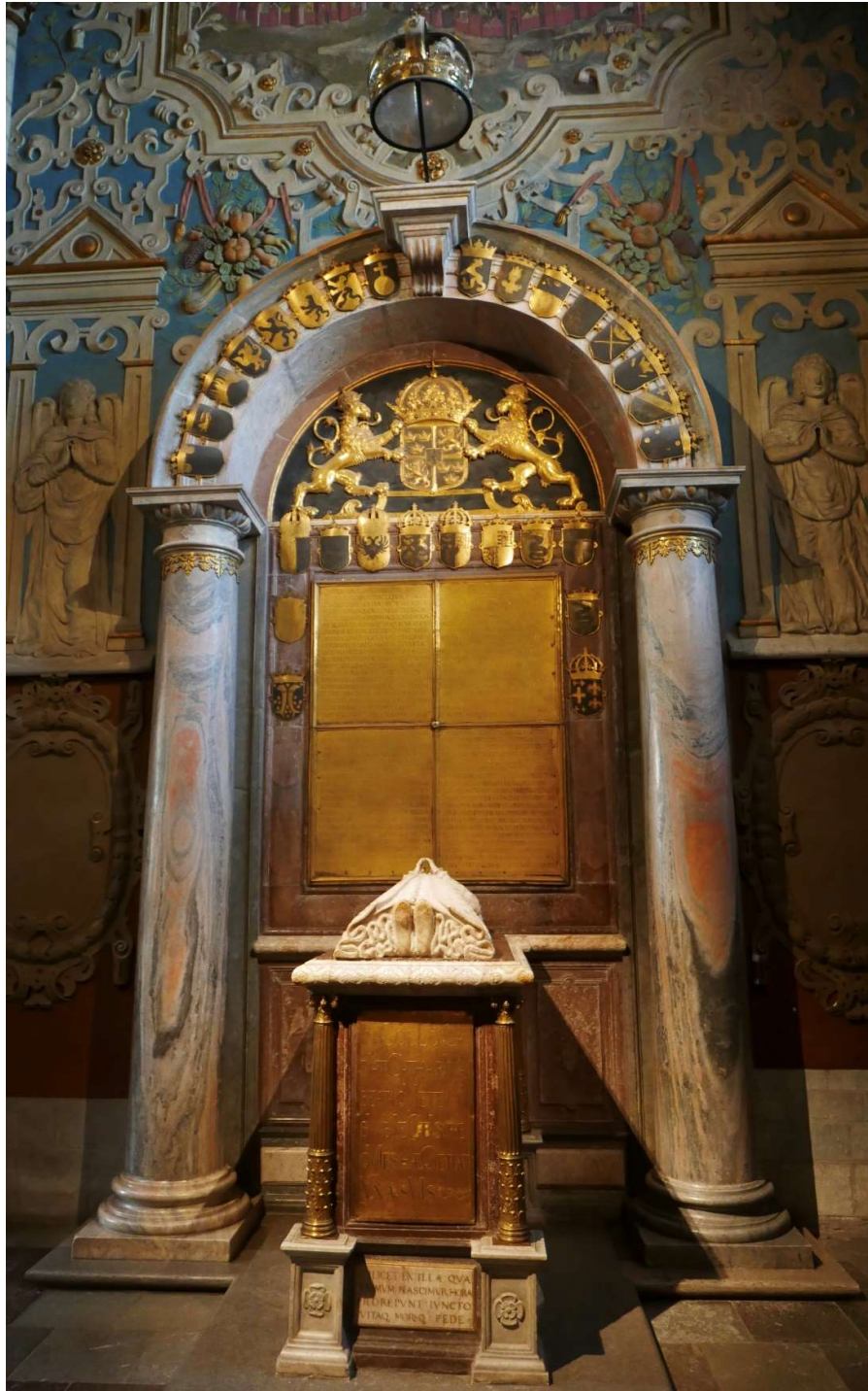


Fig. 15. Willem Boy, *The tomb of Catherine Jagiellon*. Around 1590. Uppsala Cathedral.



Fig. 16. *The monograms of John III and Catherine Jagiellon. 1570s. Museum Three Crowns (The Royal castle, Stockholm). Terracotta wall-tiles.*





Fig. 17. Willem van den Blokke, *The tomb of John III*. 1590s. Uppsala Cathedral.

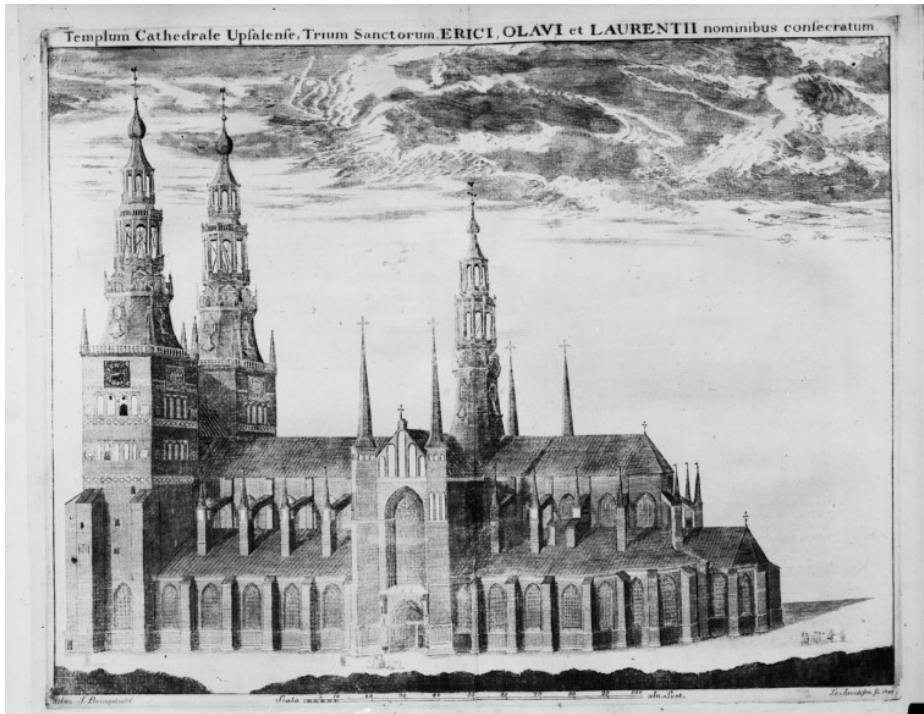


Fig. 18. *Uppsala Cathedral in the late seventeenth century*. Source: Print from Peringskiöld 1719.



Fig. 19. *The Sparre Chapel*. Norrsunda church (Uppland). 1630s.

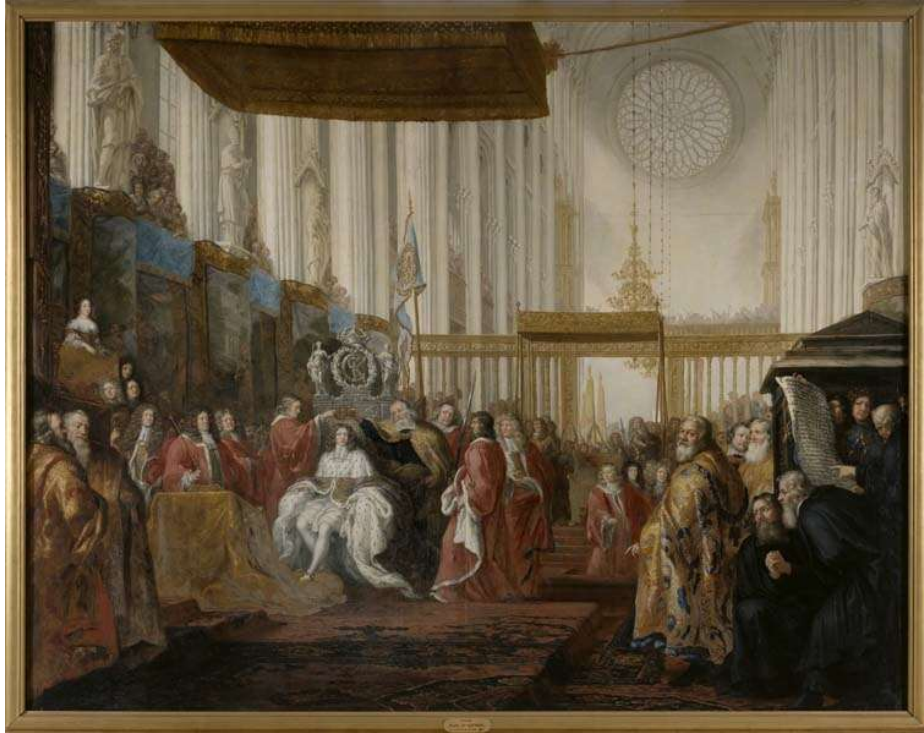


Fig. 20. David Klöcker Ehrenstrahl, *The coronation of Charles XI in Uppsala Cathedral*. 1675. National museum (Stockholm). Oil on canvas.

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