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Review of the doctoral thesis *Pious Gifts in Late Medieval Stockholm in the Context of Baltic Towns* by Piotr Kołodziejczak

Purpose and aims

Piotr Kołodziejczak's thesis concerns pious gifts by inhabitants of medieval Stockholm. The purpose of the thesis is to "highlight which features of pious gift-giving in Stockholm were typical or untypical for towns and cities of the Baltic Sea Region" (p. 9). The purpose is further formulated as providing a comprehensive picture of gifts for pious purposes in Stockholm. By comparing the phenomenon with some other towns and cities in the Baltic Region, the thesis aims to identify features that were characteristic for Stockholm and to evaluate if these were unique for Stockholm or common for the entire Baltic Region. There is further an aim to evaluate if common features had spread to Stockholm from main centres of the Baltic Region. The main questions posed in the thesis are (although with some deviating wording in the second question than in the thesis on page 10):

1. How did local laws, customs and practices impact burghers' pious gifts in Stockholm?
2. Did some characteristic forms of pious gift-giving emerge in Stockholm in the late medieval period? Were these untypical of the rest of the analysed Baltic towns or were they simply copied from the "core" cities, such as Lübeck and Danzig?
3. Did Stockholm burghers and suburban dwellers share the same ideas and thinking patterns concerning pious gifts with the rest of the urban population around the Baltic Sea, or were those limited or delayed in their spread by Stockholm's alleged "peripherality"?

In short, the empirical analysis in the thesis seeks to answer who gave what kind of pious gifts for what purpose in medieval Stockholm. The results are then mainly compared with studies on pious gift-giving in towns and cities in the Baltic Area. Based on the results of these studies, the questions can be sufficiently answered. Kołodziejczak argues the originality of the thesis by stating that it is the first monograph treating the topic in Stockholm and that it is the first more systematic attempt to apply a comparative approach to the research on pious gifts in Stockholm.

Using a comparative perspective is a fruitful method to better understand a problem or a place in the Middle Ages. However, in this case, it is unclear why a comparison with the Baltic Region is of particular interest. Admittedly, such a comparison has not been done before, but there are previous studies that have seen similarities with other parts of Europe. I would have wished for a more elaborate motivation of the comparison.

As the empirical study reveals, there are hardly any sources concerning pious gifts from Stockholm before the fifteenth century, why I think the third question could have been changed or deleted, since it is not possible to answer if there was a delay in spread from alleged core to periphery that late.

There is a vast previous literature concerning pious gifts in the Middle Ages, in which many kinds of scientific problems are dealt with. The thesis could have gained a more worked-through problem formulation if these studies had been used more systematically in the introduction. As is, the aims and questions of the thesis are poorly motivated and little discussed. I still find them interesting and fruitful.

Critical remarks on the sources, methods, selections, and theoretical framework of the thesis

There were several possible paths to choose in a study concerning pious gift-giving with medieval Stockholm at the core. The aim could for example have been to study gifts to religious institutions in Stockholm, to better understand the institutions and Stockholm. Where did the donors come from? Which social groups endowed which institution? Which role did the institutions have for Stockholm and for donors outside of Stockholm? A study focusing only on the parish church St Nicholas could also have been interesting. However, the focus of Piotr Kołodziejczak's study is the pious gift-giving by the inhabitants of Stockholm. It is thus the Stockholmers rather than the religious institutions of the town that are the centre of attention. Gifts to the religious institutions in Stockholm coming from others than the Stockholmers themselves has thus not been included in the study. I see no problem with choosing to focus on the gift-giving within the town, but it would have been good with a more thorough discussion on why certain choices were made.

One question which is never addressed in the thesis is the relationship between pious gift-giving by residents of towns and cities and non-burghers, living in the countryside. Why is a specific culture of pious gift-giving to be expected in a town compared to the people (in Sweden roughly 95 percent of the population) who did not live in towns? There are several studies on pious gift-giving in Sweden which do not make this distinction (and references to these works are found in the thesis by Kołodziejczak). There were most likely the same motives underlying gifts to for example Vadstena abbey, regardless of if the donor had his/her address in a county parish or in a town. The motives for choosing the inhabitants of Stockholm for the thesis could have been stated a bit clearer.

Stockholm had guests from other parts of the Baltic Area during the shipping season and many of the inhabitants were of German descent and had relatives in towns of the Hansa. From my point of view, having compared Swedish town administration and political culture in Northern Europe, there is no reason to expect that there should be a separate town culture in Stockholm than in other towns and cities in the Baltic Area. However, it can be good to further establish this by studying a different aspect of town life.

The thesis works with a theory on centre and periphery in the Baltic Sea Area. There has been an understanding of the leading towns of the Hansa as the core cities of this region, particularly Lübeck, influencing the whole area on all aspects of life. This understanding has however been challenged in the last decades, as Kołodziejczak demonstrates (see p. 9f.). The thesis reveals that pious gifts might not be a suitable theme for a study on centre and periphery. Towns and cities in the Baltic Area were centres for Stockholm concerning trade and personal relations of many burghers, but the Christian world was much wider. The royal houses/aristocracy/clergy in Sweden were often not primarily oriented to the east but to the south (Rome) and to the west (for example Swedish queens from Denmark/Norway, Flanders, England). For religious practice in Sweden, there is no reason to expect that Lübeck or Danzig functioned as main core.

Stockholm has been described as an ethnic melting pot, with a high mobility amongst its burghers and intense relations both inland and over the Baltic Sea. The town was the centre of Sweden already in the Middle Ages. Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz belongs to the researchers who have highlighted how fluid the identity could be (in 'Interplay of Identities: German Settlers in Late Medieval Stockholm', *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 2004: 29/1, pp. 53–67). It is quite difficult to define who can be considered to be an inhabitant of Stockholm. Kołodziejczak has chosen to define them as burghers and sub-urban dwellers of Stockholm. One detail that I wish to correct in the thesis is the statement that a prerequisite for being a burgher in Stockholm was ownership of immovable property on the Town Island of Stockholm (p. 12). This is not true. There were burghers in town who did not own the land or the house where they lived. It is also unclear where the geographical boundaries of the town law were in the late Middle Ages.

It becomes a challenge for Kołodziejczak to establish who should be included in the study and not. In Appendix 1, he has listed 242 gifts. However, some of these gifts are clearly not from Stockholmers. One example is Katarina Erengisladotter, whose gift to the Franciscans in Stockholm are nr 34 in Appendix 1. Katarina belonged to the high nobility in Sweden and never lived in Stockholm, as has been described by Tuula Rantala (in "Monastic Donations by Widows: Morning Gifts as Assets in Planning for Old Age and Death in Fifteenth-Century Sweden" in Mia Korpiola and Anu Lahtinen (eds.), *Planning for Death. Wills and Death-Related Property Arrangements in Europe, 1200–1600*, Leiden 2018, p. 74f.) and by Johanna Andersson Raeder (in *Hellre hustru än änka. Äktenskapets ekonomiska betydelse för frälskvinnor i senmedeltidens Sverige*, Stockholm 2011, pp. 71-81). Kołodziejczak has made a note in the appendix where it is unclear if a donor was a burgher of Stockholm or not, and Katarina Erengisladotter is one of these uncertain donors in Appendix 1. Investigating uncertain cases a bit more would have made it possible to exclude people like Katarina from the list.

However, in the quantitative analyses of the thesis, 50 of the gifts in Appendix 1 has been removed, because Kołodziejczak finds it uncertain whether they were burghers or if it concerned financial transactions rather than pious gifts. It would have been good if it had been stated in Appendix 1 exactly which of the 242 gifts that are included in the 192 gifts of the study. I can't find that any of the "uncertain" gifts are used or discussed anywhere in the thesis, which makes me wonder what the purpose was to include them in Appendix 1. Regardless of this unclarity, I strongly believe that Kołodziejczak based his study on 192 gifts that he has been able to verify as given by inhabitants in Stockholm.

One final remark concerning selection in the study is that gifts which primarily were given for exchange of bodily care have not been included in the study. As Gabriela Bjarne Larsson and other researchers have established, it is very difficult to make a distinction between care of the soul and of the body in the Middle Ages. Gifts were often given to receive care of body and soul combined.

Kołodziejczak chose to not include such gifts in the study, and he also motivates this choice (p. 11). Still, it has an impact on the description of pious gifts in medieval Stockholm.

The source material mainly consists of preserved individual documents by Stockholm inhabitants and the preserved medieval town books of Stockholm. Particularly the property registers preserved from 1420 to 1498 includes information on many pious gifts. However, there is also a register written in the eighteenth century, with short descriptions of property transactions in letters that are now lost. There are 27 gifts in Appendix 1 deriving from this register. Since the register thus is an important source of the thesis, it would have been good to do some source criticism on it to try and establish that it is a reliable source (printed as a supplement to *Stockholms stads jordebok 1420-1474*, pp 439-458). Since some of the letters have been preserved in original, it might be possible to make an evaluation of the source by comparing the originals with the register. Generally, though, I think that the sources are treated respectfully and with sufficient caution. Kołodziejczak demonstrates an awareness of that the availability of sources highly influences the results of his study (see for example p. 92f.). Particularly, gifts which did not include immovable goods, or the rent thereof, have scarcely been recorded.

Structure and content of the thesis

Introduction

The introduction of the thesis is only ten pages long. These pages cover introduction to the study, purpose and aims, descriptions of the method and the source material, previous research and a disposition of the thesis. All this in ten pages means that the text is very general and does not go into details about why the study is of interest, exactly what will be studied or how this can contribute to the understanding of the medieval world. The approach of the thesis can be described as inductive, where results of the empirical study are presented first, and then analysed with the help of previous research and comparison with studies in other towns and cities in the Baltic Area.

Chapter 1

The first chapter has the heading "The gift". This is the longest chapter in the thesis (69 pages) and has few subheadings. One subchapter is 26 pages long and the reading would have benefitted from more subheadings. The chapter starts with a mapping of the religious institutions in medieval Stockholm and a background on the Reformation in Sweden. This background is then followed by presentation of the first empirical study. In most of the part-studies, a quantitative method is used, analysing the pious gifts from different angles. 192 pious gifts were chosen as a foundation for the quantitative analysis, from 1315 to 1521. Kołodziejczak starts by accounting for the recipients of these 192 pious gifts. The results show that 42,2 percent of the gifts endowed the town church St Nicholas in Stockholm, often in the form of gifts for different altars and chantries inside the church. Second most common was the Franciscan convent in Stockholm (14,6 percent). Next, the study shows that 88,8 percent of the 192 pious gifts in the study had only one recipient. Some donors gave several pious gifts, so the 192 gifts were given by in total 147 separate donors. Most donations were given to

recipients in Stockholm, but a map is also provided to show the location of the few recipients outside of Stockholm.

The inheritance law of Swedish towns (in the Swedish town law from the middle of the fourteenth century) clearly stipulated how the inheritance should be distributed and it restricted how large share of the property that could be taken from the heirs and given to other recipients, such as religious or charitable institutions. Everyone thus had a right to give away one tenth of the inheritance if they had children to inherit them. If they had no children, they had a right to give away one third of the property. One year after the death of a testator, the heirs had a right to reclaim the given share. However, if the heirs gave their consent, a larger share could be given, and/or an agreement could be put in writing that the heirs would make no claim of the property or rent, which was meant to last in perpetuity. Kołodziejczak have identified multiple examples of such formulations in the sources. The gift often consisted of the annual rent from real estate, and not the real estate itself.

Individually drawn up wills are very few in the preserved source material. Kołodziejczak argues that this is a result of lack of safekeeping of wills at the town archives (unlike Lübeck) and a preference of the town-dwellers of gift-giving during their lifetime instead of in their afterlife. This is understood as a result of the inheritance law. Donating in one's lifetime meant that the endowed institution or chantry could benefit from the gift for a longer period than one year after the donator's death.

That pious gifts in Sweden in the late Middle Ages mainly have been preserved in the form of donations for a particular recipient rather than in the form of fragmented wills, have been shown in previous literature and there are also similarities with for example Denmark. Kołodziejczak finds that his results are in line with previous studies on Swedish pious gifts. He however makes his comparison with the Baltic Region, where fragmented wills continue to be a main method to give pious gifts. In this comparison, Stockholm is seen as atypical in the Baltic Area. I think that since previous studies show similarities with other parts of Europe, Kołodziejczak could have problematized his own comparison and discussed the decrease of fragmented wills in the late Middle Ages shown for various places a bit more. Keeping a focus on the Baltic Area on Stockholm, can maybe say something about Stockholm's place in the Baltic Area, but it doesn't contribute to an understanding of the similarities with the rest of Scandinavia and Western Europe.

At the end of the second chapter, some of the results of chapter 1 is summarized: "Moreover, due to heavily regulated inheritance law and the lack of safekeeping of burgher wills at the town archives, testamentary bequests for pious purposes, and wills in general, seem significantly less popular in late medieval Stockholm than in many other Baltic towns at that time." (p. 125). One thing that I don't quite understand is the difference between the Swedish town law and Lübeck Law. The Swedish Town Law was much more specific concerning inheritance than the Lübeck Law, which was used in many towns in the Baltic Area. In Kołodziejczak's description of Lübeck law, it seems that it prohibited donations of land plots and real estate to religious institutions (see p. 65). This gives the impression of being a greater obstacle than the Swedish inheritance law. Since harder restrictions of the Swedish law is one of the main results of the thesis, I wish this would have been further discussed.

Next Kołodziejczak studies the temporal distribution of gifts, from 1315 to 1521. From the diagram it is possible to deduce that only 21 of the 192 gifts were given in the fourteenth century, 35 in the period 1400—1449, 104 in 1450-99 och 31 between 1500 and 1521. He identifies a small decline in numbers from the 1490ies.

Kołodziejczak seeks possible correlations with both epidemics and known indulgences for particular institutions in Stockholm but finds only one possible correlation between several gifts and a plague in 1440 and a correlation between gifts and indulgences to the Choir of the Soul in the Town Church in

Stockholm. He draws the conclusion that there were no general correlations. He ends the subchapter with a discussion on the longevity of the foundations made in Stockholm and he concludes that the burghers often found ways to ensure the longevity of gifts despite the restrictions in the law.

In subchapter 1.4 he accounts for six types of gifts: chapels and altars; prebends, masses and other religious services; prayers and good deeds; everlasting light; material gifts and founding of pilgrimages. He gives examples from the source material (many taken from the few preserved wills of the fourteenth century) of all of these different types and argues that similar typologies have been created for some other towns. He concludes that "the burghers of Stockholm shared a common understanding of what a gift for a pious purpose was in the late medieval Baltic region and, more widely, in medieval Christian Europe" (p. 87f). The comparison with the Baltic region appears as less relevant, since this Christian culture was shared throughout Europe.

Kołodziejczak concludes:

Based on the collected data that may serve as a representative sample, I would argue that there is no reason to assume that pious gift-giving was less popular in Stockholm than in other places around the Baltic Sea. However, it should be emphasised that the legal framework, created by the Swedish Town Law and local administrative praxis in Stockholm, was less favourable for donors than legal conditions in, for example, German-speaking towns and cities located along the southern Baltic coast. Nevertheless, the benefactors from Stockholm sometimes tried and succeeded in making their foundations and donations irredeemable and thus long-lasting. (p. 87)

Chapter 2

In chapter 2, the focus lies on the donors. Kołodziejczak starts by studying the gender of the donors and their occupational background. 6 gifts given collectively by guilds and council are omitted, so the quantitative analysis is based on 186 gifts. The results are that 43 percent of the gifts were given by men, 31,7 percent by females and 25,3 percent jointly by couples. According to Kołodziejczak, the high number of females participating in pious gift-giving is not surprising, since previous studies on the subject in other parts of Sweden have shown similar results. In comparison to some studies on towns on the other side of the Baltic Sea, the share of females in this study is higher. This study could have contributed to the discussion on gender relations in the Middle Ages, but it is not further discussed in this thesis.

Concerning occupations, only 15,1 percent of the donors had craft-related bynames. The majority of merchants in the preserved sources is explained by their relative wealth in relation to craftsmen. An assumption is made that craftsmen also gave pious gifts, but probably minor gifts and not immovable property or the rent thereof, which is what the preserved documents are mainly recording. However, the study shows that there were both more well-paid occupations represented among the donors, such as goldsmiths or tailors, but also butchers, bakers and other less paid occupations. No comparison is made with other studies or other Baltic towns concerning occupations.

The study also shows that 31,2 percent of the 186 pious gifts were given by council members and their female relatives. Of these in total 58 gifts, 24 were given by councillors and 5 by burgomasters, 14 by widows of former council members and 1 by a wife, as well as 14 gifts from former and future members of the council. It was among these members of the town council that the most costly pious gifts were given.

Kołodziejczak goes on to argue that gifts could be used as a means of social promotion, relating to previous research of Lübeck, Livonia and Danzig claiming this. He writes: "burghers used the prestige and good reputation acquired through donations and foundations for pious purposes to both establish themselves as good governors within the town councils and enter those councils in the first place" (p. 102). However, when it comes to establishing this for medieval Stockholm, the evidence is weak. Only four cases can be brought up, over this 200 years period, of men who made political advancements after giving a pious gift. Two Stockholm burghers became councillors after issuing their wills (in 1376 and in 1510) which included pious gifts. In 1420, two Stockholm burghers founded a choir in the Town Church. One of them are known to be a councillor first in that same year. It is however not clear whether he became a member of the council before or after entering the council. The other burgher was already a councillor, but advanced to burgomaster a couple of years after creating a prebend in the same choir. In my opinion, these few cases are not enough to claim a correlation between pious gifts and political advancement/improved social prestige in Stockholm. Kołodziejczak also highlights that these four men were of German descent, and draws a conclusion: "Apparently, the pattern of making pious donations and foundations in order to advance in the social hierarchy of the Stockholm urban community is more noticeable in the case of German councillors and burgomasters". I think that the sources are too scarce to make such an assumption. That council members gave pious gifts might have increased their social prestige, but this is not possible to establish from the sources. It might just as well be a result of their piousness, of group pressure and/or of them having a better access and understanding of the importance of recording transactions in the town books.

Kołodziejczak goes on to discuss religious foundations as a means of supporting one's family, based on four examples. Two of them concern the Kansten family in the 1370ies. All four bequeathed relatives who were priests, monks and nuns at different religious establishments.

In the last section of the chapter, Kołodziejczak searches for traces of the donors' mentality. He shows that several pious gifts from burghers of Stockholm in the late fifteenth century onwards promoted Marian and Rosarian piety in Sweden. No comparison is made with other studies concerning this. He just establish that "the increasing interest in Marian piety were rather characteristic of Latin Christian religiosity of the late Middle Ages in general, and it seems that the population of the Kingdom of Sweden (including Stockholm) followed suit". He also finds traces of other widespread religious beliefs in the sources, such as viewing prayers and good deeds as "quantitative goods" and belief in purgatory.

He highlights that the town council founded morning masses in the Town Church, which he argues could have been for the common good of the townspeople going off to work. He also gives examples of gifts of movables needed for worship, which he sees as testimonies of "liturgical awareness" of the donors.

The town council often held patronage rights to altars and prebends after the donors death or after a few generations of the donors family. This was similar to many other towns and cities. Also the regents of the territory could hold patronage rights, guaranteeing the continuity of foundations and donations.

The main conclusions of the chapter are accounted for in the final sub-chapter:

It has been stressed several times throughout this chapter that the church benefactors in Stockholm had the same goals as their counterparts in other Baltic towns. They also shared some mental features and thinking patterns that were characteristic of the Hanseatic sphere of influence or the whole of Christian Europe. Stockholmers, just like their relatives, acquaintances and trade partners from Lübeck and

Prussian towns, used impressive religious foundations as a source of prestige and a means to achieve social promotion. At times, they tried to secure the well-being of their kinsmen by appointing them as chaplains serving at the places of worship which they founded. Most, if not all, of the religious thoughts reflected in donation and foundation documents, such as the focus on Marian and Rosarian piety, treating prayers and good deeds as 'quantitative goods' and attempting to relieve the souls suffering in Purgatory, were not local inventions either, but a proof of the shared Christian religiosity.

Chapter 3

In Chapter 3, public aspects of pious gift-giving, gifts that concerned the whole community of medieval Stockholm, are analysed. This mainly concerns gifts for charity, to provide for the poor people of Stockholm.

Since there are not many wills preserved from Stockholm burghers it is impossible to establish if the same practice of giving alms in wills existed, as it did in some other towns in the Baltic area. However, alms for the poor are mentioned in five of the preserved wills.

There is one known almsgiving foundation in Stockholm in 1434, giving rent from a house for a mass celebration in the Town Church, in which also alms for the poor were to be collected every Sunday. Kołodziejczak writes: "As only one such example of an individual almsgiving foundation was found, it can be concluded that the inhabitants of late medieval Stockholm preferred collective forms of care for the needy." (p. 129). He goes on to describe the different charitable institutions in Stockholm and the result of the quantitative analysis is that 20,8 percent of the analysed 192 pious gifts included at least one endowment for one of the charitable institutions. A total of 53 separate gifts were recorded and a table show their distribution among different institutions. Most of these gifts were not recorded in the form of fragmented wills, which included alms along with division of the property, but as separate donations for single charitable institutions. Still, Kołodziejczak makes a comparison with the wills of Reval, in which 25 percent of the pious bequests was aimed to relieve the needy according to a study. Kołodziejczak concludes: "The quantitative analysis offered here indicate that poor relief was of secondary importance also for urban and suburban dwellers in Stockholm" (p. 133). However, he gives examples of a couple of donations which put charity at the centre.

Kołodziejczak makes a distinction between collective and individual forms of commemoration. He identifies three institutions as "communal" efforts in Stockholm: the Homestead of the Soul, the Fund of the Sunday Alms and the Fund of the Friday Alms. He sees these as atypical of the Baltic region, since "public" alms funds is not known from Lübeck or Prussian towns. He however stresses the similarities with towns in other parts of Europe, where hospitals and chantries for public alms were more common. Admittedly, there is no sources that can tell exactly how these alms funds were organized in Stockholm, except for them having assigned administrators by the town according to the book of offices. Kołodziejczak however finds it plausible that they were managed by the town council and supported by the general population of Stockholm, rather than being charities of a specific guild. He concludes: "Thus, it can be concluded that charity and almsgiving were more communal and "public" activities in pre-Reformation Stockholm than in the other Baltic towns and cities, against the background of which Stockholm has been compared" (p. 137).

I find these results interesting, and they may well indicate a larger difference between the role of the council in Stockholm and many other towns and cities in the Baltic Area. However, the evidence that the Fund of the Sunday and the Friday Alms should be viewed as communal poor relief is not that

strong. For example, Sunday alms was donated in 1434 by a private donor (see above), and it can't be ruled out that the Fund of the Sunday alms in later references was a private initiative. If the town council only held the patronage rights to it, does not make it exclusive. Still, it is an interesting discussion and comparison.

I would also like to point out that there is evidence of active poor relief from guilds in Stockholm in the preserved books of the Corpus Christi guild in Stockholm. I think it would have enriched the study to include the late medieval account records of this guild more, including lists of members, fees paid for processions and candles at funerals, baths for the poor and so on to show the complexity of pious gift-giving in Stockholm. Kołodziejczak however shows an awareness of the importance of guilds, listing chantries in the town church and other religious institutions where different guilds held patronage rights.

Institutional versus private charity in the Middle Ages has been discussed in previous research concerning Western Europe (see for example Adam J. Davis, "The Social and Religious Meanings of Charity in Medieval Europe" in *History Compass* 2014: 12/12: 935–950 with references) and it would have been great with a more elaborate analysis on the subject in the thesis.

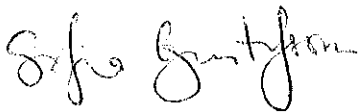
Kołodziejczak continues by investigating the relationship between Germans and Swedes, concluding that "the intermingling of local Swedish- and German-speaking burghers and foreign merchants reinforce the impression of Stockholm being a well-integrated urban community in the late Middle Ages, also with regard to pious gifts." (p. 145).

There was no guild exclusive for the town council, but the council had their own places of worship in the Town Church as well as patronage rights to some prebends and altars. The town council managed some pious foundations and donations, which Kołodziejczak concludes was rather typical of the Baltic Area. He also points to other activities by the town council, such as receiving the pope's permission to use a portable altar and planning of a chapel for St Birgitta. All in all, he concludes that charity-related gifts in Stockholm had a more communal approach than what was common in other towns and cities of the Baltic Region. "The findings reaffirm, in terms of lay piety, the opinions expressed by previous researchers that late medieval Stockholm was a politically and socially well-integrated town not disturbed by internal conflicts and violent revolts known from larger cities, such as Lübeck and Danzig" (p. 151).

Conclusions of the review

Gift-giving was a complex phenomenon, concerning the welfare of the soul in the afterlife, but also expectations of bodily care, prestige, and touching questions about community, gender and group pressure. Gift-giving in medieval Stockholm is only known from a few sources. These can tell us something about gift-giving, but they can never give us the whole picture of this complex issue within the town. In the thesis *Pious Gifts in Late Medieval Stockholm in the Context of Baltic Towns* Piotr Kołodziejczak has taken on the difficult task to gather the scattered source material concerning pious gifts by the inhabitants of Stockholm from 1315 to 1521 and analyse them from many different angles. With his Polish perspective, he has not only managed the task to learn how to read medieval sources in Swedish but has also taken on the challenge to analyse the sources from Stockholm in the context of the Baltic Area. The comparative perspective adds an interesting dimension to the study and contributes to the discussion on centre and periphery in medieval Europe.

This review has been done in accordance with the Legal Act of 20 July 2018, *Law on Higher Education and Science*, article 187(1)–(3). The candidate illustrates general theoretical knowledge in the discipline and an ability to independently conduct scientific work. The subject of the thesis is an original solution to a scientific problem. The thesis is a scientific monograph. I thus find that the doctoral thesis meets the requirements set out in Legal Act of 20 July 2018, *Law on Higher Education and Science*, article 187(1)–(3). Although the review has identified some weaknesses of the thesis, I recommend that the candidate Piotr Kołodziejczak receives the doctoral degree.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sofia Gustafsson'. The script is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first letters of the first and last names being prominent.

Sofia Gustafsson