



REPORT

St. Henry's Cathedral, Helsinki, Finland Restoration of the three statues on the façade

The restoration of the three statues on the façade of St. Henry 's Cathedral in Helsinki was carried out by the specialist firm Ukri Oy under the constant supervision of the National Board of Antiquities of Finland (Museovirasto). Intendent Ulla Setälä was responsible supervisor.

St. Henry's Cathedral, built in 1858-1860, is one of the oldest neo-Gothic churches in Finland. It was designed by German-born Architect Ernst BeInhard Lohrmann (Westphalia 1803- 1870 Stockholm) who followed Carl Ludvig Engel as Chief Architect in Helsinki. The church was blessed and taken into use on September 16th 1860. From the earliest photographs it can be seen that the three statues were then already in place on the façade.

Lohrmann had previously completed the Lutheran Cathedral of Helsinki where the twelve apostles on the roof, cast by the S.P. Deravanne zinc foundry of Berlin in 1845-1847, form one of the largest collections of zinc sculptures in the world. A decade later Lohrmann turned again to Berlin for the two zinc statues of Apostles to be placed on the façade of St. Henry 's. The cast-iron statue of St. Henry, Patron Saint of the Catholic Diocese of Helsinki, was instead ordered from Paris.

After many months of examinations and preparation, the statues of St. Henry, St. Peter and St. Paul were removed on August 17th, 2016 and transported directly to Puhdistus.fi in the city of Tampere. This firm is specialised in laser removal of paint and corrosion and is considered to be the best in Finland. The first step was the analysis of the paint layers in several places on each of the three statues. This had to be done mechanically using surgical tools as it was found that removing each layer by laser altered the colours.



During the 146 years on the Cathedral façade the statues had been overpainted many times - for example there were up to nine layers of paint and rust-prevention on the statue of St. Henry. On the back of each statue an area was left documenting the complete history of the painting layers. Once this process was completed, the statues were carefully cleaned by laser down to the original metal, revealing details that had before been masked by the thick layers of paint.

St. Henry - The statue of St. Henry is of cast-iron and proved to be very badly corroded by rust especially at the back. On the base is the cast inscription "*JJ Ducl Me de Forges, PARI S*". This foundry was established in 1823 and from 1828 was directed by three generations of the Ducel family, the work of Jean-Jacques Ducel was known in Paris from about 1830. (Note - there are several works of art from France in the Cathedral - for example the mid-late 19th-century metal bas-reliefs of the Via Crucis and the statue of the Madonna of Lourdes by Eugene Lapayre (1846-1926) also from Paris.)

St. Peter and St. Paul - These two statues are of zinc and were also badly damaged and corroded. A plaque on the base of St. Peter reads "*Zinkguss van L. Lippold in Berlin*", given the similarities it is probable that the statue of St. Paul also comes from the Lippold zinc foundry which was known and important in Berlin from before 1844.

Part of **the keys of St. Peter** were missing and had been mended with a clumsy and incorrectly formed replacement. The same is true of the **middle finger of St. Paul**. Much time was spent on finding the correct forms and then the correct positions for the replacements. The two **zinc bases** of these statues were also removed and restored.

The laser-stripping of the three statues down to the original metal was completed by the end of September 2016. They were then moved from Tampere to Pori, to the firm of Sateenkarivärit specialised in the repair and painting of metal. While the numerous cracks, open seams and broken pieces were repaired, discussions and meetings continued in Helsinki on the final colour of the statues (based on the analyses of the paint layers) and on the types of paint to be used.



After two inspections when samples of different shades were placed on the Cathedral façade, the final shade of white was selected in agreement between the National Board of Antiquities and the Cathedral authorities. Regarding the types of paint and anti-corrosion and protective methods to be used, Intendent Setälä asked for additional advice from outside experts on the best and most durable way to treat cast-iron and zinc statues placed outside and exposed to the Finnish climate. This final decision having been made, the repaired statues were treated and painted in Pori. The repaired zinc bases of the Apostles Peter and Paul were instead painted in Helsinki so that they could be fixed to the façade at the same time as the anchorages for the three statues were prepared.

On December 8th 2016, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, the restored statues of St. Henry, St. Peter and St. Paul were transported from Pori to Helsinki and replaced on the façade of the Cathedral of St. Henry.

Report by
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