

**RECOVERING A FORGOTTEN COLLECTION:  
DERMATOLOGICAL MOULAGES AND ANATOMICAL MODELS IN STOCKHOLM**

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Hundreds of dermatological and venerological moulages are currently stored in a warehouse south of Stockholm, Sweden, along with some exquisite anatomy models from the wax workshop of La Specola in Florence. These models and moulages belonged to Karolinska Institutet (KI), which is one of Europe's leading medical schools and life science research centers. KI once had a number of museum collections, containing thousands of specimens, models, instruments and images that were (or had been) used in education, research, and medical practice. These collections have for the most part been destroyed. The museum of pathological anatomy, for example, was terminated in the 1960s. Some remnants of the once extant collections were preserved, however, by Stockholm's Museum of Medical History. Since the Museum closed in 2005, the moulages and models are kept in storage together with the rest of the collections.

This paper presents and discusses KI's historic wax models and moulages of normal and pathological anatomy. The paper will describe the history of the collection as well as explore possible ways of making it relevant to diverse audiences today. There are plans to start up a project combining scholarly research and conservation of the moulage collection. Many of the moulages suffer from being displayed and stored in harmful conditions over the years, but some are still in excellent condition.

A preliminary study of the moulages, reveal that they were made from the 1890s to the 1920s, judging from inventories and notes on some of the labels. The original catalogs have been lost. All moulages are mounted in the classic way, on a black wooden board, with the edges wrapped in fabric. Most are numbered and supplied with hand-written labels stating the condition represented. (6)

A large group of these moulages was made at the Pathoplastisches Institut in Berlin. Some were signed by Fritz Kolbow, who collaborated with Rudolph Virchow and the Deutsche Hygiene Museum in Dresden, and was admired for making moulages so realistic that they could be taken for real body parts. (5) Many of these are from the early 1900s, but there are also a few from Kolbow's post-WWI operation, labeled "Atelier für medizinische Lehrmittel, Berlin N.W.". Smaller numbers of moulages were made at the Charité hospital in Berlin, by the Viennese father and son Henning, and by Von Johnsen in Freiburg. One moulage that stands out in its superb attention to detail was made by the masterful Beretta, at the Hôpital St Louis in Paris. The label states that it displays "Pityriasis rubra pilaris (Maladie de Devergie)" of the left hand.

It is not possible to say how many of the unmarked moulages that were produced locally. Two Swedish artists appear by name, Evy Björling and someone who appears by the name Nelken. Evy Björling (1843-1947) was married to Emanuel Björling (1869-1939), who worked at the clinic of venereal and dermatological diseases in Malmö from 1910. So far, nothing is known about Evy Björling's training or how her moulages ended up in the collections in Stockholm, but it seems likely that she worked alongside her husband, producing moulages representing cases at the Malmö clinic. Björling's work in the Stockholm collections covers a variety of syphilitic lesions as well as conditions such as psoriasis, ecthyma, and partial albinism. Her signature resembles those of other moulage artists, painted in white next to the cast on the lower right hand side.

The artist signature "Dr. M. Nelken fecit" appears on a few labels together with a "Dr. Almkvist." It has not been possible to figure out who Nelken was, but Johan Almkvist was a well-known professor of syphilology and dermatology at KI 1913-1934, as well as a leading specialist at St Göran's hospital in Stockholm. The hospital opened in 1888, and its clinic for venereal diseases functioned as teaching clinic for students from KI. Edvard Welander, Almkvist's predecessor, had obtained funding from KI and the Swedish parliament in 1904 and 1908 in order to purchase moulages as teaching tools, to

make up for a lack of sufficient numbers of patients at the clinic. By 1911, the clinic had acquired 135 moulages. Some of the moulages might also have belonged to the Swedish Finsen Institute, situated at S:t Göran's hospital 1901-1986. (6)

The moulage collection was mainly a teaching collection, taxonomically arranged and used for reference. But wax models could also function as heuristic devices in the life sciences, and, as Nick Hopwood has shown, as three-dimensional publications of research results. (3) And the nineteenth-century practice of making research-based embryonic models in wax continued in Sweden well into the twentieth century.

Karolinska Institutet's anatomy museum also owned a few anatomical models manufactured at La Specola, Florence, in the early nineteenth century. (1) They were the pride of the Anatomy Museum, and were described as a sensation that made the Museum worth visiting, even for the general public (2). The Stockholm public could also see moulages similar to the ones at KI if they visited Lützes Panopticon, an entertaining and sensationalist wax museum near the fairground. These different kinds of wax models and moulages are discussed in the paper, as well as the different audiences and cultural contexts.

Finally, a number of questions will be raised regarding the current and future fate of the moulages. How can we find resources to preserve and display these interesting medical heritage artefacts? Is it possible to engage medical students and professionals in this endeavour? Could the multi-disciplinary approaches of the field Medical Humanities be productive here? What can the general public gain from engaging with this type of historical medical artefacts? And how do we convince the hitherto un-interested stakeholders to support us?

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