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On September 18–22, 2001 the Symposium Castella Maris Baltici VI was held in Lithuania. This is already the 6th symposium for the researchers of the medieval castles. The first symposium was held in Turku, Finland in 1991, the second – in Nyköping, Sweden in 1993, the third - in Malbork, Poland in 1995, the fourth - in Estonia in 1997, and the fifth – in Denmark in 1999.

The topic of the conference held in Lithuania was "Contacts and Genetically Dwellings in the Castle Buildings". Over 40 scientists participated in the conference from Denmark, Belarus, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, Russia, Great Britain, Poland, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania. In the conference there were not only reports presented but also the most famous castles of Lithuania visited in Vilnius, Trakai, Kernave, Kaunas and Klaipėda.

The time of this conference coincided with the European Heritage Days "Defensive Fortifications in Lithuania".

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Dr. Albinas Kuncevičius
(the historic region of Ukraine) which made part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as well. The historical sources directly say that the building of the Upper and the Lower castles in Luck / Lutek was launched by the prince Lubart (Gedymin / Gediminis’s son; the prince of Volhyn in 1340–1346) (Parniak, 1997: 23–24). It was really significant castle ensemble more complex than regular castles. Some researchers consider that Lubart has only erected the walls and the towers of the Lower castle. It was continued by his son (G. N. Logvin 1967: 102–107). But anyway it was a grandiose building enterprise which proved that the great powers of the state had been acquainted with the stone castles building. Most likely Volhyn craftsmen themselves took part in the construction. Yet there must be no doubt that the information and technological exchange with the Belarusian and Lithuanian territories of the GDL existed. Again it is necessary to mention the fact that in the middle of the 14th century the prince Koriaš’s sons (who was the Duke of Volhyn / Volhynia) continued the complete system of fortifications (the strong stone castle in Kamieniec as its part) in Podolek lands (south-west of Ukraine). No stone fortifications existed there before when the territory was controlled by the Tartars (M. Hrulevski 2001: 134).

The large-scale castle building in the first half of the 14th century demanded enormous expense of financial resources and labour forces of the state. The traditional Belarusian curse is one of the evidences of the efforts: «Let you carry the stones to the Kreva castle!»

It is the middle of the 14th century the castles are not built any more. The castle building in Belarus was renewed only by the end of the 14th century. If we compare the course of events and some indirect evidences from the annals we shall come to the conclusion that this happened as a result of the plague pandemic of 1347–1351. In these conditions the government could not mobilize the population for large scale building. The government could only afford to modernize the state castles at the end of the 14th century. New towers were built in the castles of Kreva and Lida. That was the time when the GDL together with the Polish Kingdom was preparing for the war against the Teutonic Order.

Afterwards these regular castles were not rebuilt. Has been preserved the 14th century layout. At the same time many European regular castles were rebuilt. For this reason the archaic types of regular castles in Belarus and Lithuania are of great value.

I have not mentioned all Belarusian castles. I have just tried to illustrate the difficult and sometimes unexpected history of castle building in Belarus and to show the different factors which affected this process.

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**Norwegian Castles North of the Arctic Circle**

**Oystein Ekroll**

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**Burgen in Norwegen nördlich des Polarkreises**


**Oystein Ekroll**

Wilmansveita 2
N-7012 Trondheim, Norway
Castles are usually associated with the more densely populated areas of northern Europe. Towards the Arctic north, the density of castles diminishes greatly. Norway contains only a dozen royal castles and only a very few and small private ones (Fig. 1). The lack of castles can be partly explained because Norway was a poor and sparsely populated country, and partly because it was a corner of Europe, mostly isolated from neighboring countries. Invading Norway was very costly and would give little gain. There are, however, some castles that are usually not included in the lists of medieval Norwegian medieval castles, because they are situated in the remotest parts of the country. They were also built in a context that today is almost unknown to most Norwegians.

Parallel with the eastern expansion of German settlers into Slavonic and Baltic lands, there was a northward movement in Norway, Sweden and Russia to gain control of the northern part of the Scandinavian peninsula. The aim was to gain control of new territories, exploit the natural resources and tax the indigenous population.

The oldest history of this region is still difficult to interpret. There are very few written sources until the late Middle Ages, and modern political difficulties have created many more problems. In Norway, a burning political question is the ethnicity of the various prehistoric or even medieval cultures. Can archaeology tell whether the remains come from people who called themselves Norwegians, Swedes, Sami or Russians? Or did the people whose remains we excavate think of themselves in any of these terms at all?

The 13th century: Tromsø

Norwegian sources tell that around the middle of the 13th century, the first direct conflicts took place between the states of Norway and Novgorod. In 1250/51, a peace treaty was agreed between King Hákon of Norway and Prince Alexander Neveis of Novgorod, settling the conflicts in the Arctic areas. However, this treaty did not last long, and over the next 200 years there were irremovable raids and fights. (The history of this conflict is discussed by Ragnhild Hagsaat 1994).

Soon after, the onslaught of Mongol armies caused havoc in Russia, and some peoples from the White Sea region migrated westwards to avoid this danger. The saga of King Hákon tells that he gave them land in the fjord of Malangen near Tromsø and made them Christian. (The Saga of Hákon Håkonsson, chapter 33). The setting of people in this area was not incidental. The area around Tromsø seems to have been the northern border area of the Kingdom of Norway in the 12th–13th centuries. The settling of peoples in the border region acted as a protection for the rest of the kingdom. This area is also the northern limit for the cultivation of grains and thus a farming culture. Combined with fishing and hunting it was possible to establish a stable, permanent frontier settlements. This peaceless situation lasted until the end of the 15th century. In 1478 Novgorod was conquered by Czar Ivan of Moscow and its power was broken. Thereafter the Russian expansion turned more eastwards than northwards, and the pressure on Finnmark was lifted.

King Hákon had an active policy of securing the northern part of his kingdom. He built a church on the site of the present town of Tromsø ("Troms Island"). It seems probable that he also built a small castle there, to give the seabard power a seat as well. The site of the church at Tromsø is on a small promontory sheltering the bay where the first settlement grew up in the 13th century. On the other side of the bay, another promontory harbours a circular earth wall, locally called "Skansen" (Fig.2). This name is only a couple of centuries old, probably deriving from the Napoleonic wars 1807-1812 when cannons were put up here to defend the town from English naval attacks. It is situated on the narrowest point in the strait (c. 600m wide) between the island and the mainland, where all ships sailing along the coast had to pass. It could therefore control the communications in an excellent way. It was first described in 1743 as the ruin of an old fortress surrounded by a moat. Local tradition told that it was built as protection against the Russians. The officer who made the description observed that the fortress was defenceless against cannons which in a siege could be placed on surrounding hills (Nissen 1960:21). This implies that it was built before the introduction of firearms. The moat was still visible and filled with water in the early 18th century (Arntzen 1971:5). Later urban development has pushed the water further back.

Only a small part of the circular earthen castle - two sections of the walls have been excavated in 1973 and 1990 by archaeology students of Tromsø University (Fig. 3) (the most recent discussion has been made by Berteelsen 1994 in vol 1 of "The History of Tromsø"). The castle has today an external diameter of c. 60 m. The semicircular moat was probably filled with water from a small brook, and the castle was therefore connected to dry land only in each end of the moat. The gravel dug up from the moat was used to built up a plateau higher than the surrounding area.

The circular wall was made of turf, kept in place by a dry stone wall on the outside. On top was pro-
Excavations on the presumed site in 1963–64 have not yielded any trace of this castle (Eriksen 1995: 153). It is therefore possible that this first castle stood on the same site as its successor, where the best harbour was. To judge from the later castles, the walls were probably made of turf and dry stone, with timber buildings inside the walls.

The climate in this region is severe, and constant repairs were necessary. Some time in the second half of the 15th century a new castle was built on a site called "Østervågen" (Eastern Bay), which is the old harbour of Vardo. The castle is first mentioned in 1490, but may be older. It was known as "Støket" (the Palace) and existed until 1734, when it was replaced by the present star-shaped fortress on a different site. The second castle was fortunately mapped and drawn so that we have a good impression of what it looked like, at least in its latest phases. The castle was square, with two diagonally placed bastions, on the NE and SW corners, armed with 11 cannons. Inside the walls were several wooden buildings. According to a survey of 1694 it measured c.126 x 126 feet (39 x 39 m) externally. The walls were of different height, but mostly 12–14 feet (3.7–4.3m) tall, with battlements 3 feet (1m) tall (Willoch 1960a: 67) A detailed survey of 1711 tells that the walls to the west and north were of solid masonry, 1.8m thick, while eastern and southern wall were constructed of stone and turf (Fig. 4). The two bastions were built of turf and earth. They seem to be later additions, probably from the early 17th century, as they are not shown on the oldest depiction of the castle, made in 1594 by the Dutch explorer Jan H. van Linschoten and copied on a later Dutch map by Johannes van Keulen from 1692 (Fig. 5). Linschoten describes the castle thus: "Close to the beach of the south harbour lies the palace, which is not strongly armed. It is constructed of masonry with spires and battlements of wood that are half decayed, so that it could hardly resist an attack from a well-armed ship" (Nissen 1960: 41 (author's translation).

The small engraving on the map shows a square castle ("l Slot"), seen from the east, with straight walls and no bastions, seemingly constructed of solid masonry. There is a small gate in the eastern wall. On top of the two southern comers can clearly be seen timber-built towers, and on two northern comers thin "spires", probably the ones Linschoten refers to in this text. A road or walkway leads to the harbour (Figs. 6-7).

In 1599 the castle received its only royal visit before Oscar II's visit in 1873, when the young King Christian IV travelled all the way to the Russian borderland to inspect this remotest part of his kingdom. It was also clearly a political act, to demonstrate that the king was willing to defend his border region against both Swedish and Russian expansion. This king modernized several of the Norwegian fyrkantet castles into modern fortresses, and it is probable that he also gave instructions to modernize this old fashioned and badly maintained castle during his visit (Nissen 1960: 36 f). In 1699 several pieces of artillery were...
sent from the Arsenal in Copenhagen to Vardøhus (Willoth 1960b: 177). This probably marks the completion of the two bastions.

Between 1734-38 a new, star-shaped fortress was built some hundred meters further to the west (Fig. 8). This fortress did miraculously survive World War II, when the town of Vardo was bombed and almost completely destroyed.

The 15th century: the fortified church of Trondenes

Towards the end of the 14th century the position of the Catholic Church in northern Norway grew stronger. This was the archbishop's own diocese, and gradually the archbishops also assumed secular powers on behalf of the king, who by now resided in Denmark, a very long distance away. This also included the defence of the region. The bastion of the Church in the north was to be the church of Trondenes south of Tromsø, near the modern town of Harstad (Fig. 9). This was commercially an important area because of the cod fisheries, which gave the Church large incomes, both in tithes and taxes.

Trondenes became an collegiate church, where the priests serving 13 parishes resided together, travelling by sea to their separate churches. Trondenes had the largest income of all parishes in the diocese of Nidaros, and it belonged to the archdeacon of the cathedral chapter. In the very long period between 1427-1487 the archdeacon Svein Eriksson resided here, and he was in all probability the builder of the nave and responsible for the richly decorated interior with choir stalls and several altars.

Towards the end of the 14th century started the building of a church here, which took more than a century to finish. In Norwegian circumstances, this is a large church. The nave measures externally 24 x 17 m and the chancel 13.5 x 11.5 m. Recent dendrochronological datings show that the timber in the chancel roof was felled in the winter of 1399/1400, and that the timber in the nave roof was felled in 1434 or shortly after, at least before 1442. The east gable of the nave was finished or repaired with timber felled 1504/1505 (Storsletten 1995: 154). This coincided with an inscription on the now recast large bell telling that it was cast in Amsterdam in 1507 and donated by the archdeacon Mogens (Ryjord 1913: 16. He writes 1500, but the inscription gives the year as MCCCC VII, which must be read as 1507).

The church is built on a small promontory, and the walls stand directly on the rock. The church was surrounded by a still partly preserved curtain wall (Figs. 10–11), which must have covered an area of minimum 60 x 40 m, perhaps more. The best preserved part lies east of the chancel and has three sides. In the corners stand two small towers. Between them the terrain is raised c. 50 cm, perhaps as a sort of battlement. The two towers are entered from this raised area. The walls are 1 m thick, and are today preserved up to a height of 3 m above the churchyard surface.

Both towers measure c. 3 x 3 m externally, and they contain each a small room that measures only 1 x 1 m. Both have doorways with steps, and the doorway of the southern tower has remains of iron hinges for a door that opens outwards, not inwards as was common in the Middle Ages. The steps would have prevented this. But it also means that the to
Die Burgen auf der Insel Hjelm – ein Nest für Gesetzlose


Nils Engberg
National Museum of Denmark
Danish Middle Ages and Renaissance
Fredenshahns Kanal 12
DK-1220 Copenhagen, Denmark