



CASTELLA MARIS BALTICI 6

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Front cover: Castle of Trakai

Photos by Albinas Kuncevičius

Back cover: Royal palace in an Upper castle.

*Corrected S. Lasavickas sketch-project 1977–2001,
3 - D view by V. Abramauskas, drawn by A. Mizgirienė*

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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, Kernavė, Kaunas and Klaipėda.

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

This conference was organised by the Public Institution Academy of Cultural Heritage established by Vilnius University, Vilnius Academy of Arts, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania and Department of Cultural Heritage Protection. The Symposium Castella Maris Baltici VI was sponsored by the Department of Cultural Heritage Protection.

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Dr. Albinas Kuncevičius

mainly covered by star vaults. The main hall is a special premises which is covered by the nervure vaults, while traces of the polychrome and wall painting remnants of frescoes can be observed on the walls.

The forecastle was constructed in the third phase, the dynamics of which developed as follows: first of all the towers with fortification walls, then western casemates and finally the eastern ones. This part of the castle was constructed in the lower islands, mainly in the peat area. Here and there the foundations were put directly into water therefore, a specific wooden construction was put under foundation. The towers were erected in the most convenient highest points of the islands. The forecastle comprised of the four massive towers. The ground floors have a quadrangle plan with rounded upper floors. Only the central tower over the entrance gate has quadrangle shape in all the floors (10,4 x 11,45 m). This tower had a draw - bridge .

The Western casemates have two-storeys. The premises of the first floor were covered by the wooden beam ceiling, and the premises of the second floor were covered by the nervure vaults.

In the third phase the construction of the castle was essentially accomplished. Just the southern casemates and small triangles were built a little later (S. Mikulionis 1975).

It must be mentioned that the round shaped towers in the forecastle of Trakai castle on the island were used as fence against the mass cannon fire

which was the latest stage in the construction of Lithuanian fortifications (S. Mikulionis 1975).

This story is just a short excursion through the unique surroundings of Trakai town. It is only one version of the medieval fortification system, mainly based on the material collected by the architect S. Mikulionis, one of the authors of restoration projects of Trakai castles in 1960–1990. The further research, we hope, will provide additional data .

Conclusions

1. In 14–15 century Trakai was one of the best fortified strongholds of the Great Principality of Lithuania.
2. The kernel of Trakai fortification system – two stone castles were surrounded by other elements – bridges, Tartar and karaims settlements, mounds.
3. Both castles were not constructed at once and formation of both took a long time. They were demolished and rebuilt several times.

Authors of drawings - B. Krūminis, S. Mikulionis, A. Steponavičius.

Authors of photos - M. Sakalauskas, A. Steponavičius, G. Filipavičienė

Jonas Glemža

MEDININKAI CASTLE

Die Burg Medininkai

Die Burg Medininkai aus der Zeit um 1300 ist das älteste gemauerte Architekturdenkmal in Litauen. Diese Burg entspricht dem Kastelltypus und ist das grösste Exemplar unter den anderen Burgen der LDK (Kauno, Kernaves, Lydos) Burgen.

Die Burg besteht aus einem viereckigen Hof (1,8 ha gross), die Mauern haben eine Höhe von 15 Metern und bestehen aus Rollsteinen mit Ziegelstreifen. Die 567 Meter lange Umfassungsmauer besitzt vier Türme. Die Mauern der Burg und die Reste der Türme hat man seit 1954 zu untersuchen und konservieren begonnen.

1991 wurden die Arbeiten wieder aufgenommen, und jetzt sind alle Umfassungsmauern konserviert. 1993 hat man beschlossen, den fünfgeschossigen Donjon wiederaufzubauen, von dem der erste Stock und eine Ecke in der Höhe der fünf Geschosse erhalten war. Das Donjon wird mit Unterbrüchen wiederaufgebaut, jetzt sind etwa 40% der Arbeit gemacht. Die Bauten sind vom Staat finanziert, der amerikanische Litauer Architektur- und Ingenieur-Verband half freiwillig. Die Burg ist ein wichtiges Objekt für den Tourismus in Litauen.

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Medininkai castle belongs to the type of enclosure castles. This type of castle begun to be constructed in Germany and Scandinavia at the end of the 12th century, in Livonia and Prussia in the 13th century and in Poland in the 14th century.

Medininkai Castle can be dated back to the end of the 13th century and the beginning of the 14th century. It is the largest castle of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL; XIII–XVIII c.) among the castles of that period. Krėva and Lyda castles (these are in the territory of the present Belorussia) and the old Kaunas enclosure castle, belong to this group of castles.

Medininkai castle, like the other mentioned castles of GDL, is rectangular in layout. The castle was built in the low swampy area like Krėva castle. Medininkai castle consists of an enclosure with defensive walls 567 meters long, with four towers forming a courtyard of 1.85 ha. The castle is surrounded by double moats and a system of ramparts, and occupies in totality the area of 6.5ha. The enclosure walls are 15 m high, 1.9 m thick in the lower part and taper upwards. External walls are built of even rows of stones, while the internal interior walls are filled in layers with smaller stones and mortar. Bands of bricks 1.5-1.9m wide employ early Gothic masonry in the external northern and eastern

walls. The castle has the oldest brick wall which has survived above the earth's surface in Lithuania. That is why this castle is the oldest architectural monument in Lithuania.

There are four defensive towers. The first researcher of the castle (research started in 1955), architect S. Lasavickas, considered that two towers, eastern and western, where there were gates above the earth's surface, and the principal tower (donjon), had functioned in the earlier stage of the castle. Later there were erected the southern and north gates were erected at the height of five metres with draw-bridges.

Among four towers the principal tower is in the north-east corner of the castle. It was five-storeys and 30m high. In layout the tower is 14.2x15.4 m. The south-east angle of this tower has survived with all five storeys; only the first floor of the tower has survived completely. Four storeys were covered by wooden coverings (holes of beams for covering partly survived), while the fifth floor was covered by vault of brick.

In the wall of the tower there was erected a staircase. The entrance to the defensive gallery of enclosing walls was only on the fourth floor.

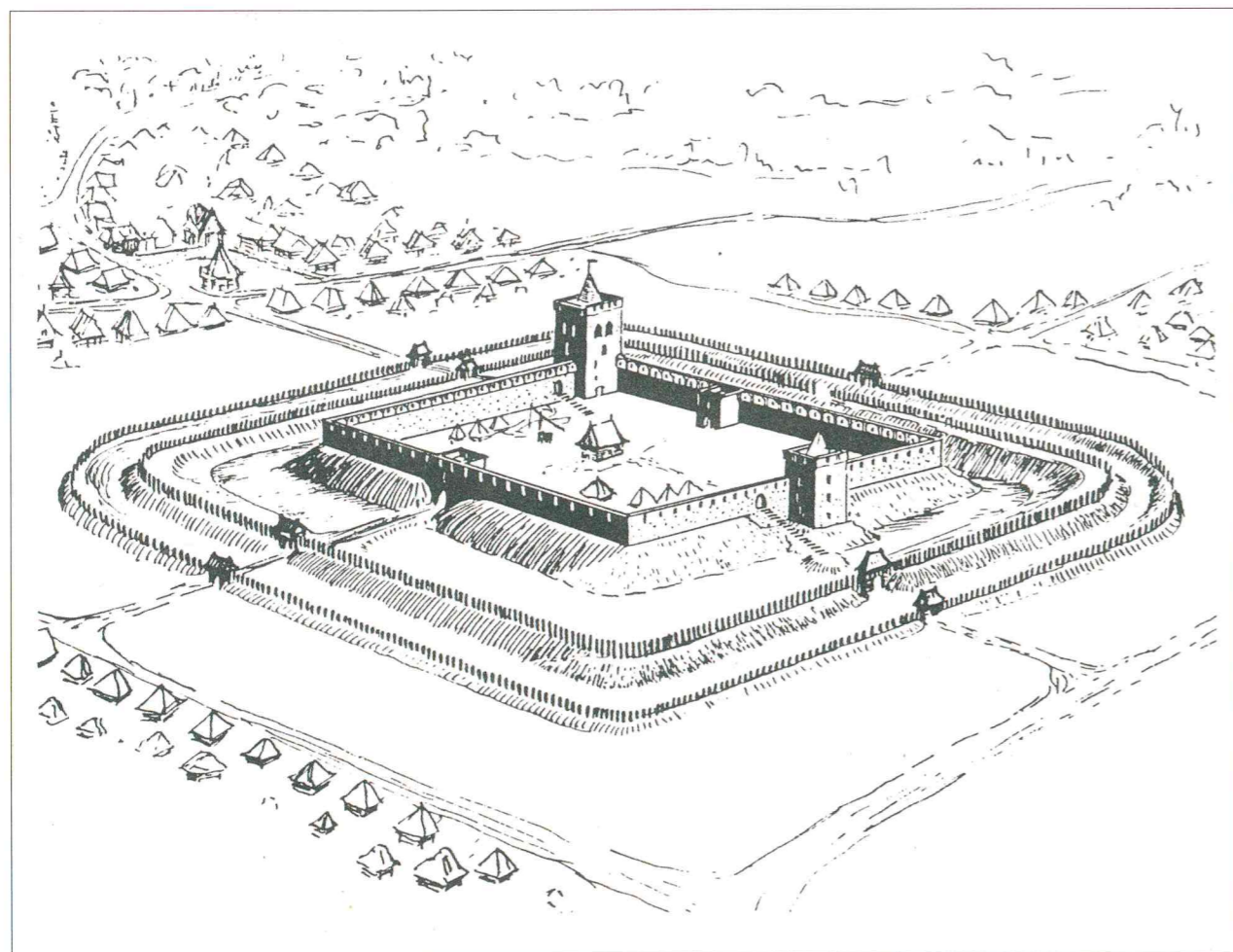


Fig. 1. The historical reconstruction of the Medininkai castle (by architect S. Lasavickas), photo: M. Sakalauskas



Fig. 2. The north-east corner of the Medininkai castle before conservation (1958), photo: M. Sakalauskas

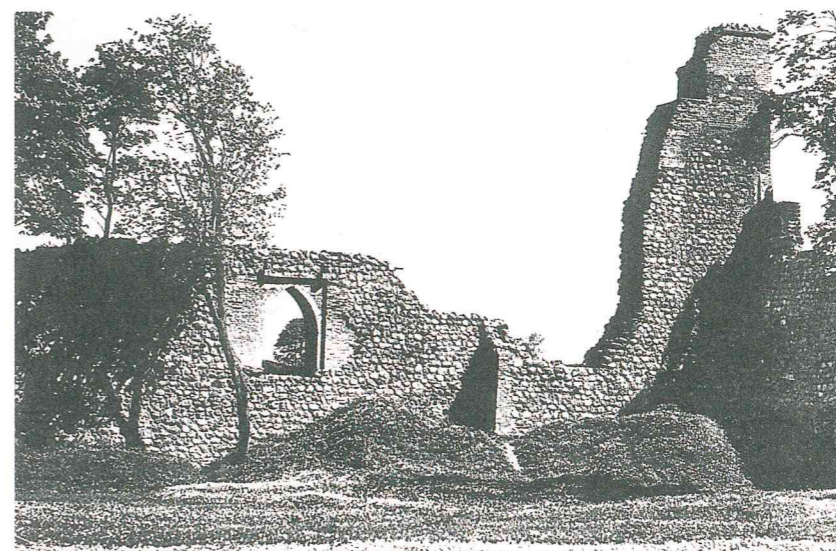


Fig. 3. The north-east corner of the Medininkai castle after conservation (architect S. Lasavickas), photo: M. Sakalauskas

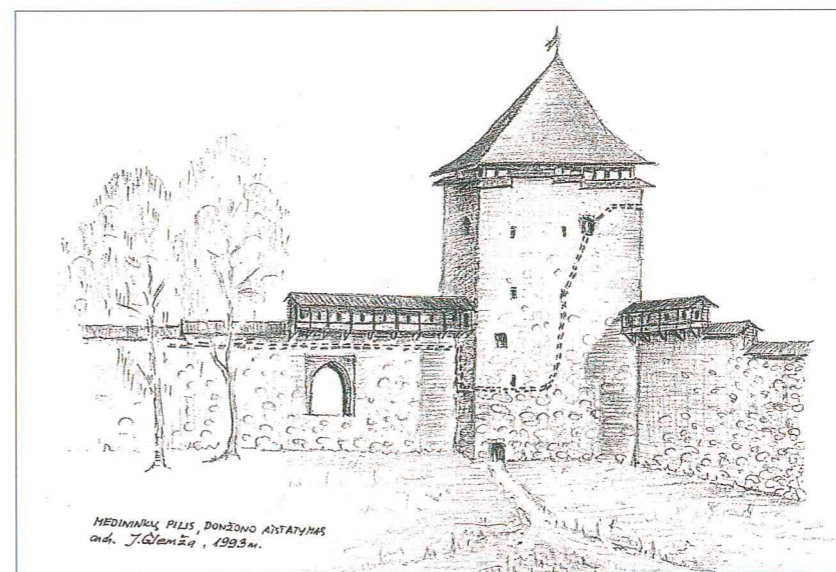


Fig. 4. The project of rebuilding of the principal tower (north-east of Medininkai castle), (by architect J. Glemža (1993)

The preservation of the castle is partially an outcome of the First World War. The German military ordered the local inhabitants to take stones from the castle for construction of the road to Minsk. But German officer appeared, a former worker in monument protection, and destroying destruction of the castle ceased. That episode is considered to be the beginning of the castle's preservation.

In 1959–1962 works of research and conservation of the castle led by architect S. Lasavickas, were carried out. An archaeologist K. Mekas fulfilled archaeological recording. Then enclosure walls was conserved, and the destroyed stone walls rebuilt. The protective layer consisting of concrete and stones covered the top of the walls. The remains of towers had been conserved as well. The openings of the northern and western gates and the first floor of the eastern tower were slowly restored. Later, about 1970, the work was reinvigorated for a short period but was not completed.

Having regained Independence in Lithuania, the Culture Fund of Lithuania, supported by Cultural Heritage Conservation Department, raised the idea to put in order Medininkai castle as the oldest architectural monument in Lithuania. American-Lithuanian Engineers and Architects Association supported this idea and established the M. P. A. Fund (Fund for rebuilding Medininkai castle).

Thus the works in the castle were again renewed in 1991. While the enclosure walls of the castle were covered by new protective tiled roofs, were being planned, including projects for conservation of the castle led by architect S. Mikulionis who, unfortunately, died in 1992. At the same time archaeologists V. Urbanavičius, G. Aleliūnas and A. Merkevičius continued archaeological researches.

In 1993 there was an announcement for a competition for a

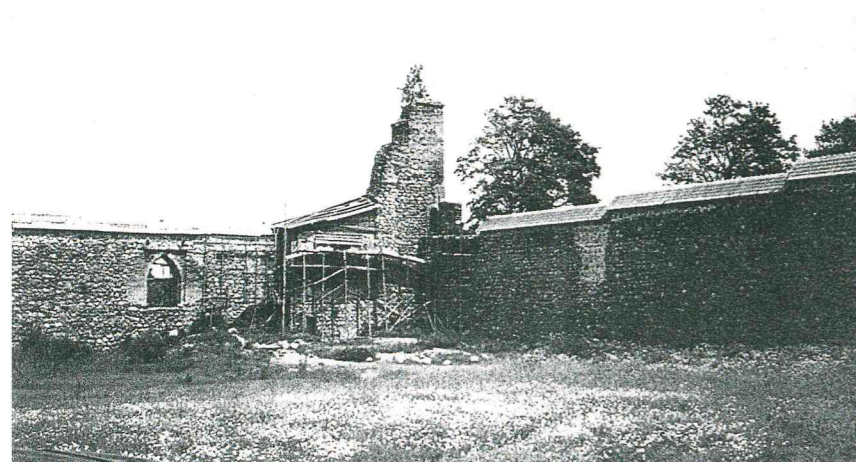


Fig. 5. The north-east corner of Medininkai castle in the process of conservation and rebuilding of the principal tower (1999)

project to rebuild of the principal tower (donjon) of Medininkai Castle. Architect J. Glemža won the competition and took over responsibility of scientific research adviser for works of conservation-rebuilding.

Christofer Herrmann

DEUTSCHORDENSBURGEN IN DER „GROSSEN WILDNIS“

Castles of the Teutonic Order in the “Great Wilderness“

The castles in the Great Wilderness, a wooded and wide border zone between the state of the Teutonic Order and Lithuania, shows the late style of castle architecture of the second half of 14th century. *Two tendencies:*

1. The larger castles (convent castles) were built in a ‘style of reduction’, in other words the traditional form of four-wing-construction without additional elements such as a keep or corner towers.
2. The ground plans of small castles show different variations. They are regular and have only one or two wings.

But in detail the arrangement of buildings and the decoration of the outside are more varied.

It seems that the “reduction style” of the convent castles is a conscious sign of traditionalism. It does not proof a lack of creativity in architecture, because the architecture of the small castles demonstrates the existence of new ideas in castles building. The development of castle architecture in the state of the Teutonic Order was broken off suddenly after the battle of Tannenberg in 1410.

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