



## **CASTELLA MARIS BALTICI 6**



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Front cover: Castle of Trakai

*Photos by Albinas Kuncevičius*

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**O**n September 18–22, 2001 the Symposium Castella Maris Baltici VI was held in Lithuania. This is already the 6<sup>th</sup> 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**

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*Raman Likhshapka*

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THE WESTERN EUROPEAN ARTICLES  
AND INNOVATIONS IN THE CASTLES'  
MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE BELARUSIAN  
NIOMAN REGION  
IN THE 14<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> C.

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Die westeuropäischen Erzeugnisse und deren Einfluss auf die materielle Kultur der Schlößer in der Region des Flußes Nioman (Nemen, weißrussischer Teil) im 14.–17. Jahrhundert

Die archäologischen Ausgrabungen in den Schlößern Kreva, Lida, Navahrudak, im alten Schloß in Hrodna geben die reiche Kollektion der Importerzeugnisse. Es ist möglich, die kulturellen und ökonomischen Verbindungen der Re-

gion aufzuzeigen und den Einfluß dieser Erzeugnisse auf den Alltag der Bewohner der Schlößer zu untersuchen.

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Archaeological research on the castles of Kreva, Lida, Navahradak, Mir, Lubča, Halšany and the Old Castle of Hrodna produced a rich collection of imported articles. It was possible to analyse the finds, to retrace the cultural and economic contacts of the region and observe their influence on the everyday life of the castles residents.

The changes which can be observed in the castle material culture of the Belarusian Nioman region during the 14th–17th centuries are in line with the European cultural and economic processes of that period. The analysis of the imported articles from the castles' material culture allows us to reconstruct one of the aspects medieval everyday life's.

Leaving aside the issue of how and when the pattern of the stone castle was adapted in the region of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, we shall dwell on the conditions under which some technological improvements and articles got to the castles from abroad. For this purpose it will be convenient to distinguish two types of castles according to their owners: the

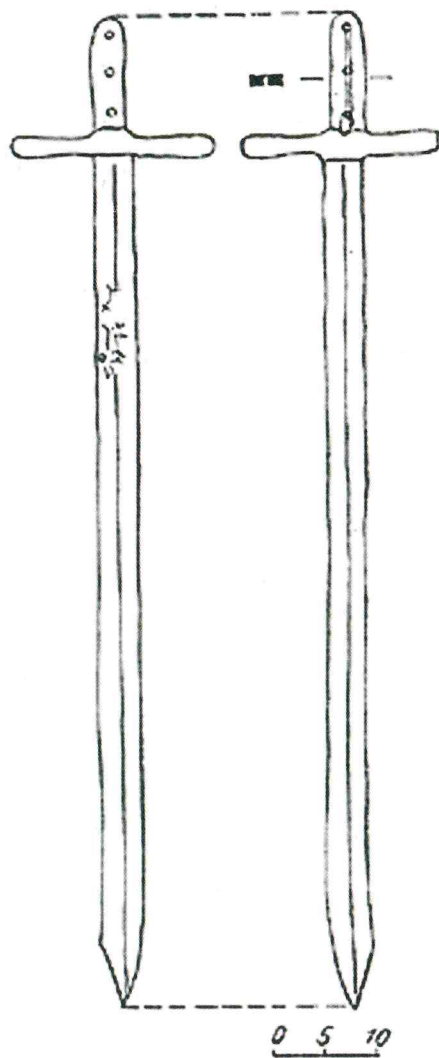


Fig. 1. Cord from the castle of Lida. 15th c. (Trusau, 1987)

state castles which were in the possession of the Grand Duke and the private ones belonging to the magnates. In this connection the difference between two periods of the functioning of the castles is quite conspicuous: they respond approximately to the 14th–15th centuries and to the end of the 15th–17th centuries.

### The 14th–15th centuries

The state stone castles were built by the duke's order to defend the western borders of the state from the Knight's Order's raids. The large scale building campaign was launched in the first half of the 14th c. The old wooden fortresses were reconstructed into stone ones (Hrodna, Navahradak) as well as new rectangular castles appeared (Kreva, Lida).

Medieval European civilization was formed through information exchange between different regions of the Continent. Material culture is one of the phenomenon's aspects. According to the latest investigations, the castle of Kreva was one of the first stone castles with a residential tower in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It was built either at the beginning or during the first half of the 14th centuries. (Dziarnovich A. 1996)

The tile - stoves made it possible to reside in the main corner tower all the year round. Although we are not going to disprove the hypothesis according to which tiles could be adopted in Belarus from Poland, some archaeological finds and written sources make us admit the existence of direct contacts with the Low German cities (including the contacts between Polack/Polatsk principality and the Hanseatic League).

Tile making had been known in the Alpine region and Saxony from the 12th–13th century. At the beginning of the 14th century tiles appear in central Germany. They are widely spread in the northern Germany from the end of the 14th century, in Scandinavia – in the 15th century, in Latvia the 16th. The earliest patterns of stone tiles on the territory of Belarus were found in Polack and the castle of Kreva. Dendrochronology gives an indication that the Polack finds date from the very beginning of the 14th century. These early types of tiles look like cylindrical pots, hence the name "pot-shaped" tiles. The earliest Polish tiles date approximately from the middle of the 14th century. Those are later modifications with square opening. The earliest patterns are known in Lubeck from the 12th – the beginning of the 13th century. This city became the centre from which German merchants and missionaries made their way to the south-eastern lands of the Baltic region. In 1282 the city of Riga joined the Hanseatic League. Still earlier in 1229 the trading agreement was concluded which had been regulating the barter between Smalensk, Polack, Vi-

ciebsk and Riga during the middle ages. For some years until 1307 when Polack land formed part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania it had been enclosed within the Archbishop of Riga's sphere of influence. A few years later the Grand Duke Giedymin (Gediminas) addressed the craftsmen (masons particularly) of the Hanseatic cities through the Archbishop of Riga, inviting them to the state. Pot-tiles analogous to those from Polack were also found in the lowest archaeological stratum of the Lida castle (the first half of the 14th century).

The Belarusian term for "tile" is further evidence of the direct adoption of pot-shaped tiles from Germany. There are several equivalents in the old Belarusian language for this word. "Kachiel" or "kachla" is among them. For instance the standard Polish term is "kafella" ("kachel") is also known as an archaic variant. Taking into consideration the likeness we can assume that the term was borrowed from the same source simultaneously (Dziarnovich A. 1996)

The second half of the 14th to first half of 15th centuries was the flourishing period in the history of the Hanseatic League. It had its trading centers in Polack on the Dźvina river. After 1410 GDL is more actively involved into the trade of the Baltic region. (Kraucevič 1991). The cord from the Lida castle dates from the 15th century. This transitional type of cold steel between sword and sabre is a unique artefact in the Belarusian material. There are two brands on its blade, one of which (the "wolf") indicates that the half-finished product of the cord comes from a German city (Passau?) (Trusau A. 1980).



Fig. 2. Fragment of Italian majolica from the castle of Lida. (Zdanovič, 1993)

### The end of the 15th–17th centuries

The end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries is the time when numerous private stone castles came into existence. Since 1569 on (the Lublin union of the Polish Crown and the Grand Duchy) the Nioman region turned out to be the geographical centre of the newly-formed federation. Archaeological investigations of the castles provide us with new types of artefacts.

The kaolin clay pots sherds of the 16–17th centuries are present in the material culture of practically all the castles. Yet the most numerous collection comes from the Mir castle of the Radzivilos (about 20% of all glazed ceramics). Just a few fragments were found in state castles. The vessels of this kind are also characteristic for Vilnia/Vilnius, Troki/Trakai, and the Punia settlement in Lithuania. They were manufactured in Ilza, Poland (Zdanovič 1993).

Trading with the German cities along the Rhein is evidenced by the collection of 16–17th centuries stonewares. In the state castles they only are represented by a fragment from Lida castle (Fig.3). At the same time there are plenty of them in the private castles of Mir, Lubča and Halšany. Similar articles are present in Lithuanian and Latvian cities, Pskov, Novgorod (Zdanovič 1993).

A sample of the Italian majolica second quarter 16th century comes from the castle of Lida. Italy loses its leading role in the European decorative ceramics in the 17th century (Hanieckaja I. 1988). The highly glazed pottery tradition was developed in the Netherlands. Its production started to dominate the European market. Delftware is represented in the castle material culture with single articles from the



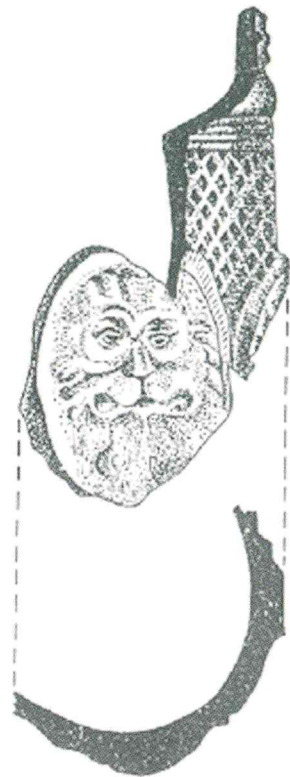


Fig. 3. Fragment of stoneware. 16th - first half of 17th cc.  
The castle of Lida (Zdanovič, 1993)

Mir and Kreva castles. (Zdanovič 1994 ; Trusau A. Minsk 1996)

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Netherlands take over the initiative in the Northern European sea trade. During the continuous wars in the first half 17<sup>th</sup> century the Dutch smoking pipes become widespread throughout the Europe. Those are the characteristic artefacts in the Belarusian private castles' material culture (Zdanovič 1994).

It is also in Mir castle where fragments of 17<sup>th</sup> century Venician glass.(Trusau 1984).

## Conclusion

The first period is represented exclusively by the materials from the state castles. Foreign influence in their material culture is revealed mainly through the finds of weapons and some building technology improvements.

The magnates' residential castles built during the second period had quite the different program from that of the earlier state castles-fortresses. All this could not but have its effect on both. The state castles gradually lost their significance. Quantitative and qualitative changes in the material culture of the private ones are conspicuous. New expensive and fashionable (as a rule imported) items represent their owner's wealth and tastes.

### *,Imported articles in the castles' material culture*

Castle	Article	Date,c.	Origin
Lida	cord	15	Germany (Passau)
Mir, Halšany, Lubča, Lida, Hrodna, Kreva, Navahradak	kaolin clay ware	16-17	Poland (Iłza)
Mir, Lubča, Halšany, Lida	stone ware	16-17	Germany (Köln, Westerwald)
Lida, Mir, Kreva	majolica, highly glazed ceramics	16-17	Italy (Urbino), Holland (Delft)
Mir, Kreva	glass	17	Italy (Venice)
Mir	kaolin clay pipes	17	Holland

Werner Meyer

# BURGENBAU UND NATÜRLICHE UMWELTBEDINGUNGEN

## Castle Construction and Environmental Conditions

Medieval castle construction depended on environmental conditions in the following areas:

- Ground Soil
- Building Site
- Building materials
- Climate

How craftsmen, under the guidance of a Master, worked under the restrictions of these natural conditions to actualize the architectural requirements of their clients depended largely on current architectural trends, tradition, and local customs. The period of European castle construction between the tenth and sixteenth centuries experienced many

changes in the nature of the relationship between castle construction and environmental conditions. It is not always possible, therefore, to make a direct link between the requirements of a given natural environment and certain approaches to castle construction.

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