



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.

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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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Especial thanks deserve my colleagues who organised this event Rita Mosiejienė, dr. Justina Poškienė and dr. Gintautas Zabiela.

Dr. Albinas Kuncevičius

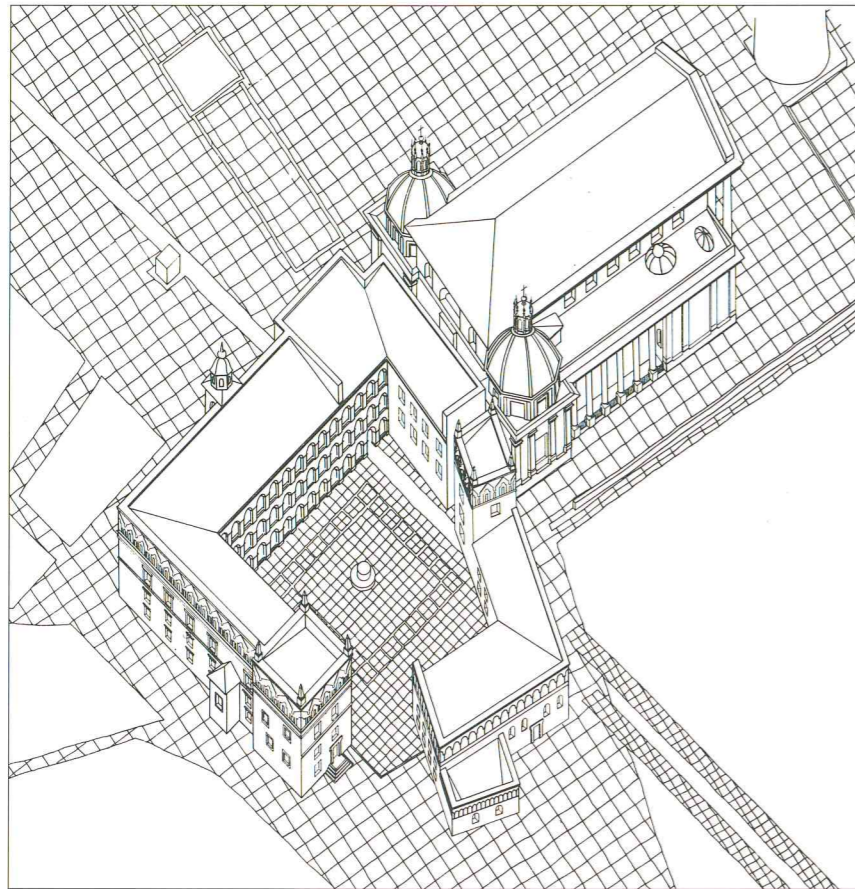


Abb. 9. Rekonstruktion der Wilnaer Unteren Burg nach (Kitkauskas, 1989)

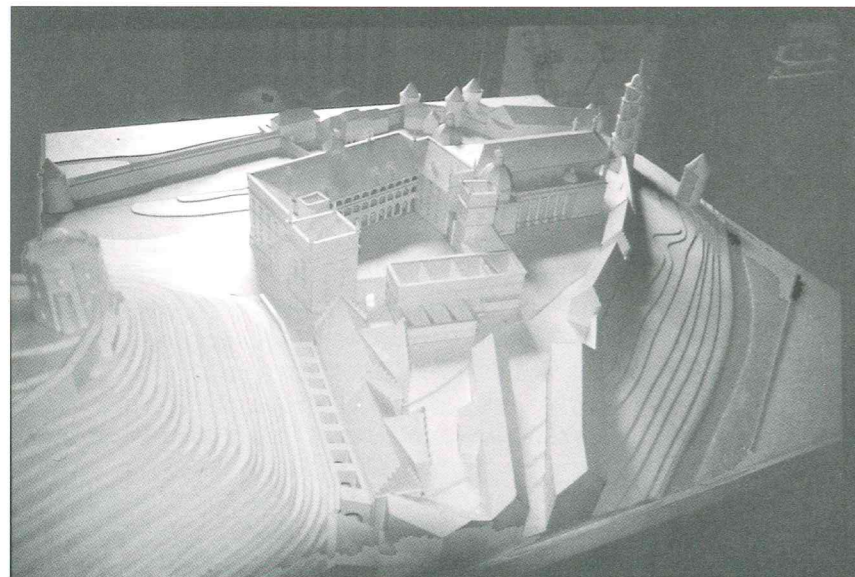


Abb. 10. Modell der Wilnaer Burg nach Vladas Drėma in dem Museum der Unteren Burg

Gintautas Zabiela

CASTLE WARFARE BETWEEN LITHUANIA AND THE ORDER IN LOWER PANEMUNĖ IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES

Der Krieg zwischen den litauischen und den Ordensburgen im Unteren Panemunė im späten Mittelalter

Vom Ende des 13 bis zum Anfang des 15. Jahrhunderts begegneten sich im Unteren Panemunė zwei unterschiedliche Auffassungen über den Burgenbau (Abb. 1). Dadurch wird diese Region interessant bei der Beobachtung des beiderseitigen Einflusses der Burgen. Seit dem Kriegsanfang in Panemunė bis etwa der Mitte der 30er Jahre des 14. Jahrhunderts baute sowohl der Orden als auch Litauen die für sie üblichen Holzburgen, die als Stützpunkte für die Realisierung weiterer strategischer Ziele galten (Abb. 2–3). Seit 1336 verhängte der Orden eine Blockade über die litauischen Burgen, indem er gegenüber den litauischen Burgen am anderen Flussufer die den Litauern noch unbekanntes Burgen vom Typ "motte and bailey" baute (Abb. 4). Diese Burgen, die in kurzer Zeit erbaut werden konnten, doch nicht genug fest waren, lösten die taktischen Ziele der Festigung der Positionen in Panemunė. Die erfolglose Verteidigung der Mauerburg in Kaunas (Abb. 5) im Jahre 1362, ermöglichte

dem Orden, die litauischen Holzburgen im Unteren Panemunė zu zerstören und die Kriegshandlungen ins Landesinnere zu rücken (Abb. 6). Die Kontrolle über die Region des Unteren Panemunė gewann Litauen erst wieder nach der Tannenberger Schlacht (Abb. 7).

In den über 100 Jahre lang andauernden Kämpfen erwies sich Litauen als ein für die Neuerungen auf dem militärischen Gebiet aufnahmefähiges Land. Dies war besonders deutlich um die Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts. Im Burgenbau äußerte es sich im Bau gemauerter sowie motte and bailey Burgen. Dagegen bewährte sich die Bauweise der gemauerten Ordensburgen Gotteswerder und Marienburg bei Kaunas nicht. Aus diesem Grunde kehrte der Orden zu den Holzburgen dieses Typs zurück, die inzwischen ziemlich modifiziert worden waren und an die in einer flachen Gegend erbauten Befestigungen erinnerten.

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The East Baltic region of the 13th and 14th centuries was an arena of permanent conflict between the local residents and the Order, which settled in the area. As the local residents were pagans, historians sometimes refer to these encounters as the Northern crusades. The main rival of the Order in the region was the pagan Grand Duchy of Lithuania, crusades against which were launched with the blessing of the Pope. Despite the ideological motive of christening pagans, which dominated in these combats, the fundamental nature of the wars was economic and political. Therefore from time to time the Order audaciously attacked Christian lands as well (the duchies of Russia and Poland). The historical intricacies of these wars have been analysed in relevant publications of historians on a number of occasions (for instance Lietuvių, 1964). Some information about castles of both sides participating in the battles can be found in these publications as well. Nevertheless, a comprehensive study on the role the castles played in the campaigns of the Order in the East Baltic area during the late Middle Ages is not available. The main reason is that on the whole investigations of the east Baltic castles have been quite limited and they are not yet known very well. The pre-

sent article aims at revealing the role of castles in these wars with reference to one region, namely the Lower Panemunė. The choice of this region was not accidental. It was here that the collision of two different concepts of castle building was most obvious and the battles of the 14th century were most violent.

Both combatants used castles of different types for defence and fortifying positions in the country. In Lithuania, wooden castles prevailed both before the beginning of these wars and during the whole period of wars, including the beginning of the 15th century (Zabiela, 1996). Though no precise data have survived, the available information leads to the opinion that construction of brick castles in Lithuania started in the middle of the 14th century. Nevertheless, the total number of brick castles by the beginning of the 15th century was only 11 (Kuncevičius, 2001:18). By comparison, written sources of the time contain data on 64 wooden castles (Baranauskas, 2003:77), while the total number of remaining castle sites, i.e. late hill-forts, can be reckoned at about 450 (Zabiela, 1995:74). The Order which had started construction of castles in the east Baltic area from wooden castles as well (Thorn, Kulm, Marienwerder, Reddin (Dusburg, 1861:49–50(III:1), 56(III:8), 56–57(III:9),

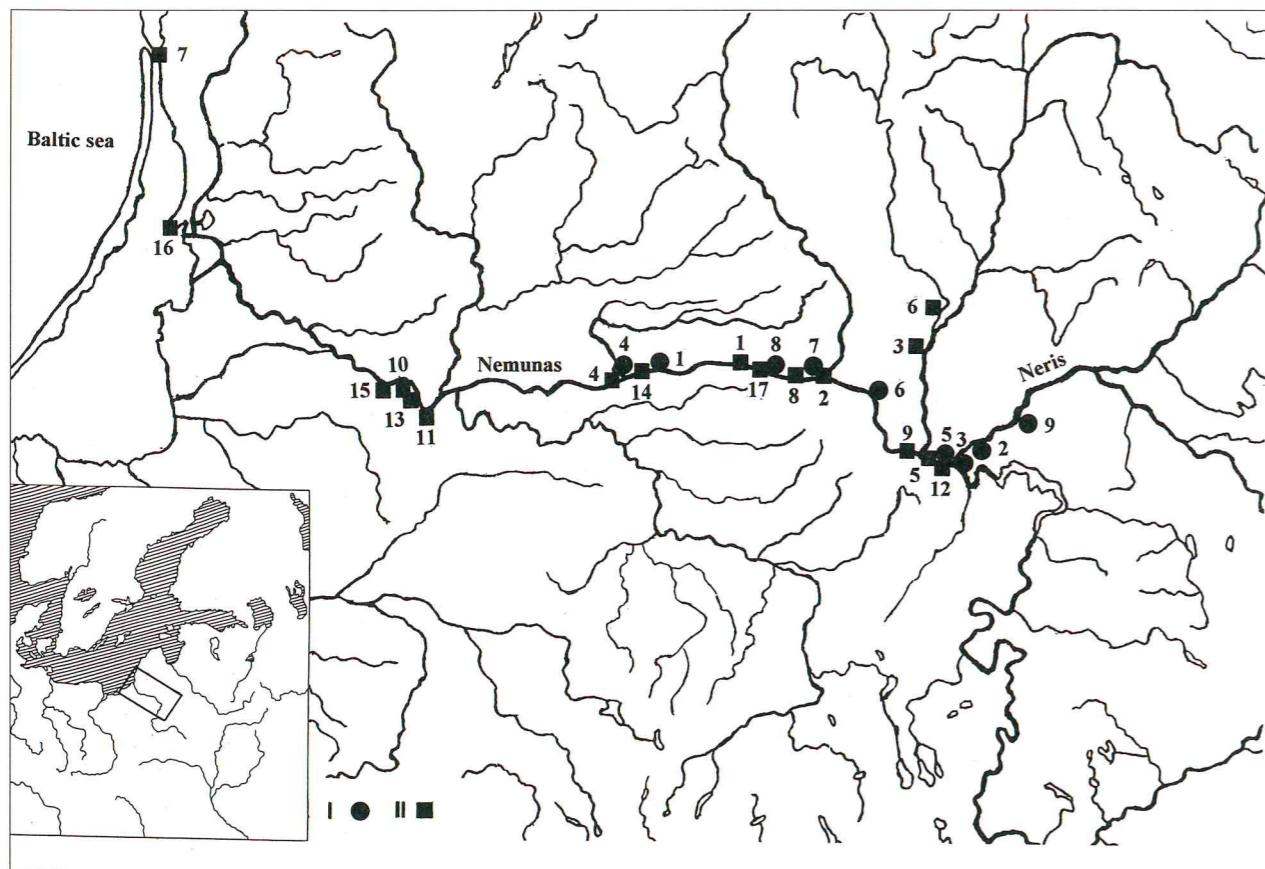


Fig. 1. The castles in the Lower Nemunas in the end of 13th century-beginning of 15th century. Lithuanian castles (I): 1 - Bisenė; 2 - Eiguliai; 3 - Kaunas; 4 - Kolainiai; 5 - Naujasis Kaunas; 6 - Paštuva; 7 - Pieštė; 8 - Veliuona (Junigėda); 9 - Visvaldė. Order castles (II): 1 - Baierburg; 2 - Dubissenburg; 3 - Friedeburg; 4 - Georgenburg (Jurbarkas); 5 - Gotteswerder; 6 - Königsburg; 7 - Klaipėda (Memel); 8 - Marienburg; 9 - Marienwerder; 10 - Neuhausen; 11 - Ragainė (Ragnit); 12 - Ritterswerder; 13 - Schalauerburg (castle of Skalovians); 14 - Skirsnemunė (Christmemel); 15 - Tilžė (Tilsit); 16 - Windenburg; 17 - without name (Veliuonos Pilaits). Drown by G. Zabiela



Fig. 2. Excavations in Veliuona hillfort. Photo: L. Krzywicki

58–59(III:12)), soon began to build brick castles employing brick technologies unfamiliar to the local people. The first brick castle erected by the Order in Prussia was built at Thorn in c 1250–1255 (Torbus, 1998:62,677). The number of conventional brick castles alone, built in Prussia by the beginning of the 15th century, amounted to 38 (Torbus, 1998:52).

Lower Panemunė became the arena of conflict between the Order and the already consolidated Grand Duchy of Lithuania at the end of the 13th century when the Prussian (main) branch of the Order (the Crusaders) had almost conquered the local Prussians, and other tribes which were more or less related to them. They approached the Nemunas, one of the largest rivers in the east Baltic area, in wide-ranging ranks and even crossed it at some points. At its lower reaches (same as in other places), the Nemunas did not serve as a river dividing tribes or state formations, rather the opposite. From as early as the end of the Viking period it was a considerable trade route and a particular economic region densely populated by the tribes of upland Lithuanians and Scalvians. Historical data about these tribes are very scarce. We do not know the more precise date in the 13th century when the upland Lithuanians joined the state of Lithuania, while the wars of the Scalvians against the Order are only described in a few chapters of the Chronicle of Petrus Dusburg (Dusburg, 1861:133–135 (III:180–188)). Having conquered the Scalvians, the Order immediately encountered Lithuania and seems to have underestimated the new enemy. This is testified by the network of castles of the Order in the region. Apart from the castle of Klaipėda (Memel), built in 1252 (it was turned into a brick castle already by 1253 (Žulkus, 2002:28), which was more important with a view to controlling the mouth of the

Nemunas as the trade route and uniting the two branches of the Order (Žulkus, 2002:20), than safeguarding against Lithuania, the Order built no more than the Ragainė (Ragnit) castle in 1289 and the Schalauerburg castles in 1293, all on the left bank of the Nemunas. The castle of Ragainė (Ragnit), where a commandant was stationed until as late as 1525, became the focal point of the Order in their marches to Lithuania along the Nemunas. Both castles were wooden. Construction of the brick castle of Ragainė (Ragnit) began only in 1397 (Torbus, 1998:242, 582).

At the beginning of the war against the Order the function of Lithuanian castles at the Lower Panemunė was not defensive, directed against the Order, but

rather that of controlling the territories. They were not adapted for defence, which was demonstrated by the first attacks on the castles during which they were occupied very quickly (Bisenė was occupied in the winter of 1283–1284 in just half a day (Dusburg, 1861:147(III:222)), while the Kolainiai castle withstood a day-long attack in 1290, but was abandoned soon afterwards (Dusburg, 1861:152 (III:238)). Though the sites of the above castles have not been finally localised and their presumed hill-forts have not been excavated, their external features indicate that these had been typical Lithuanian wooden castles, built on elevated protuberances (Zabiela, 1995:75). The Nemunas, as an important natural defence line, was not controlled by Lithuanians at all. This is clearly witnessed by an event, which took place in 1295 when a platoon of crusaders sailed entirely unobstructed down the Nemunas from Gardin to Veliuona and were beaten only there (Dusburg, 1861:160 (III:260)).

The situation began to change in 1291 when Lithuanians built the castle of Junigėda (Veliuona) at the Nemunas (Dusburg, 1861:154(III:244)). It is very likely that another strong Lithuanian castle of Pieštė (mentioned in 1293) was built in the region at approximately the same time (Dusburg, 1861:158 (III:254)). Those two wooden castles were the key defensive castles of Lithuanians on the lower reaches of the Nemunas and survived until 1364 (Marburg, 1863:546–548 (59)). The remaining hill-forts of both castles witness that their construction followed the old Baltic layout tradition with a triangular courtyard and an impressive rampart on the most easily accessible side as well as high steep slopes. The Pieštė (currently Seredžius) hill-fort has not been investigated, while the Veliuona hill-fort was excava-

ted by Ludwik Krzywicki (1859–1941) in as early as 1912. The interesting findings of these excavations have not been published (Kulikauskas, Zabiela, 1999:153). The surviving material testifies that the wooden castle of Veliuona was not different from other Lithuanian wooden castles of the 14th century.

The strong defensive castles of Lithuanians that emerged at Panemunė hampered the activities of the Order in the region and forced it to search for means to neutralise them. The recurring operations aimed at ravaging the area and the partially changed direction of military expeditions (more towards Samogitia) failed to produce a substantial effect. The Order reverted to its tactics tested already 70 years before

and built its own castles in the territories of the enemy devastated by military activities and practically uncontrolled with a view to preparing a base for its forthcoming marches to the depths of Lithuania. In 1313 the Master rallied "all his troops" and built the castle of Skirsnemunė (Christmemel) (Dusburg, 1861:178(III:315)). The exact site of the castle has not been finally established as one of the probable locations (the hill-fort of Maštaičiai-Norkūnai (Tarasenska, 1997:142–143) has not been excavated, while the other location at Skirsnemunė-Pilaitė has been totally washed off by the Nemunas (Zabiela, 1995:251). The scanty description of this wooden castle of the Order shows that it had a fortified foot settlement and a defensive ditch (Dusburg, 1861:181(III:324)), there was also a church (Dusburg, 1861:178(III:315)). The castle did not live up to expectations. It seems to have been too weak and located too closely to strong Lithuanian castles. The Order could not assemble sizeable forces for its marches to Lithuania in this castle. Ragainė (Ragnit) continued to serve as its main base. On 1 August 1328 the Order abandoned the castle of Skirsnemunė (Christmemel) (Dusburg, 1861:214 (Supplem.:3)).

This was not the end to the attempts of Crusaders to fortify their positions in Lower Panemunė by building their own castles. The idea to create a new power base for attacks was not neglected though a new tactic of blocking the main Lithuanian castles by

their own, built at a small distance and supplied via water routes, was undertaken as well. As the Order had to build these castles on the flood lands or the low islands of the Nemunas, they were constructed following the classical example of motte and bailey castles (Zabiela G., 2001b). It was then that the Lithuanians directly encountered this type of fortifications.

The first such castle was Marienburg, built by the Order in 1336 "on the island of Romainiai, between Veliuona and Pieštė" (Marburg, 1863:490(21)). In the same time the order built other castle Georgenburg (Jurbarkas) (Marburg, 1863:490 (21); Canonici, 1861:281). The Lithuanians destroyed newly built Ma-

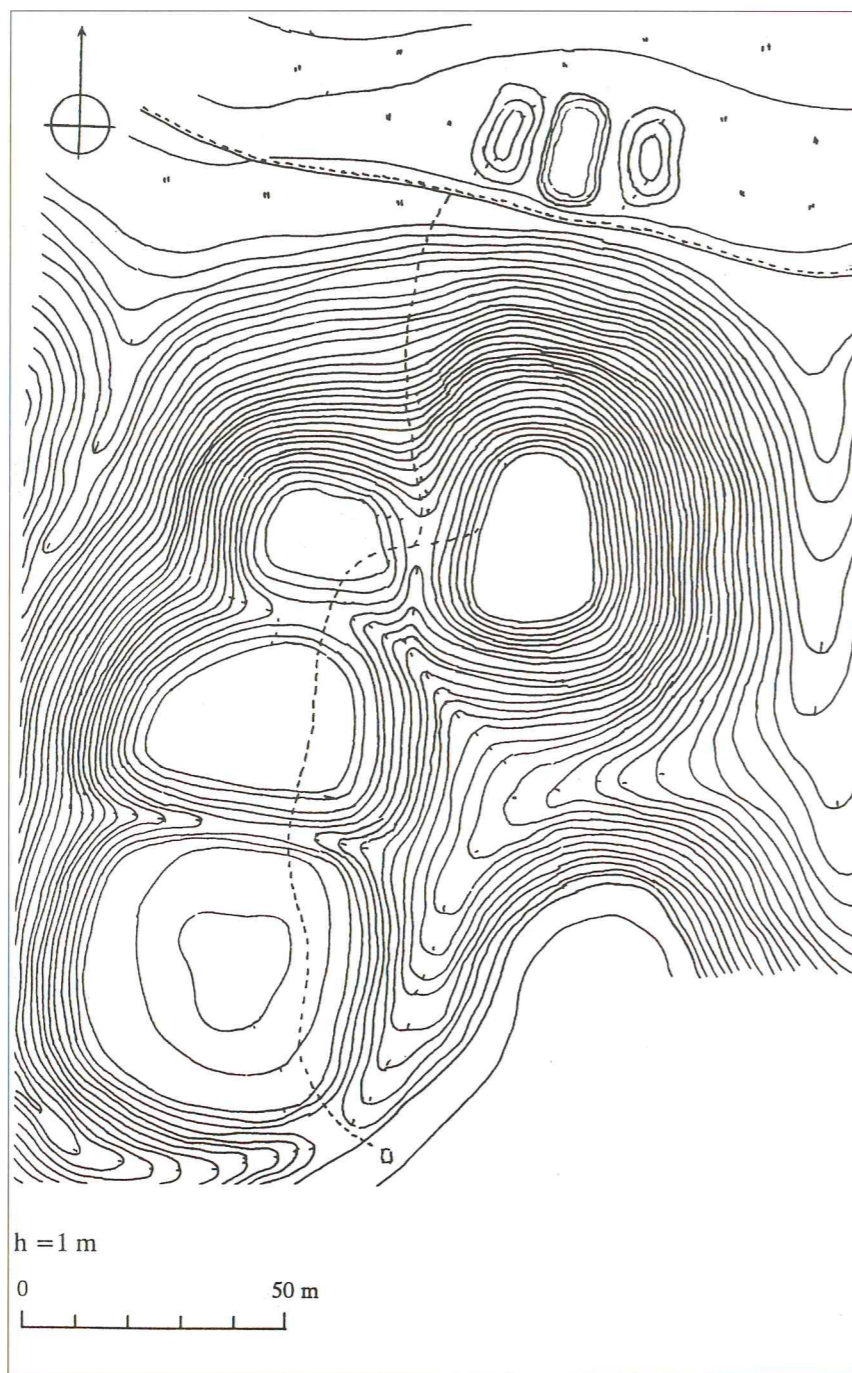


Fig. 3. Map of hillfort in Maštaičiai-Norkūnai (according: Tarasenska, 1997:142)

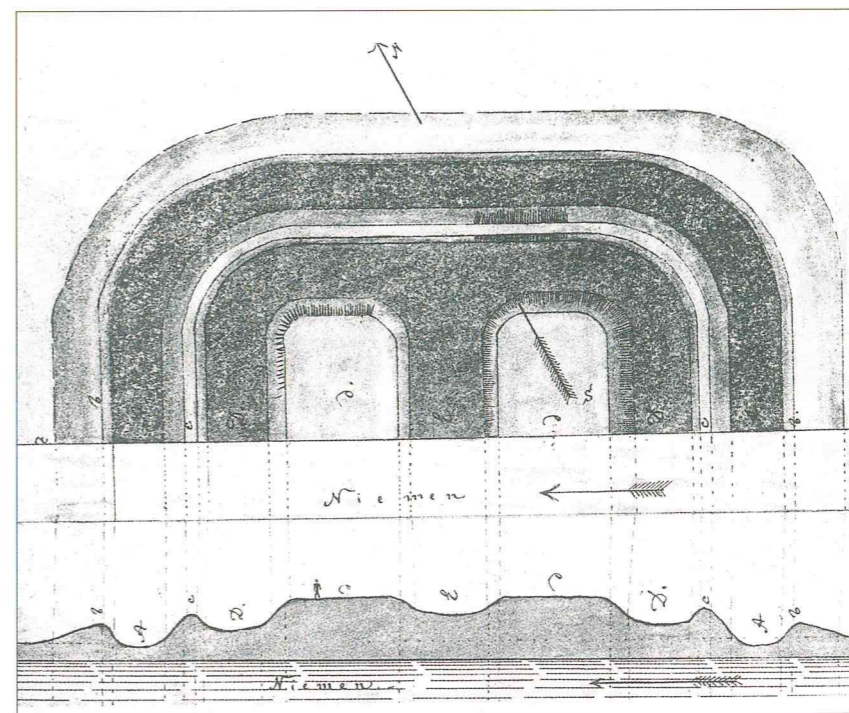


Fig. 4. The motte and bailey castle site Veliuonos Pilaitės in the end of 19th century: C - castle sites; A, D, E - defensive ditches, b, c - defensive ramparts (according: Tautavičius, 2001:73)

rienburg castle right away, thus demonstrating their skills of launching assaults on wood and earthwork fortifications. In 1337 three new castles were built. One of these, Marienburg, was rebuilt after destruction. Another unidentified castle, sprang up on an island "close to Veliuona where they fenced in, built two fortified houses (*duas domos*) and organised defence from these" (Marburg, 1863:493(23)). These fortifications are comparable to the castles of Veliuona (Lietuvos, 1975:179–180), excavated in 1965 (Tautavičius, A. 1966; Tautavičius, 2001:70–77). These were motte and bailey type fortifications as well. Third wooden castle reinforced with clay was built close to the first one and quite a large garrison was stationed there, including 100 soldiers, 40 brothers of the Order, 40 marksmen, a lot of vitings (Prussians) for the defence of the castle and reconnaissance of the locality (Marburg, 1863:493(23)). The latter castle was named Baierburg in honour of Henrik, Duke of Bavaria, who participated in the march. Baierburg was built as the Order's central castle in Lithuania from which it could rule over the country after its conquest. It was also expected to house the centre of the new Lithuanian archbishopric (Ivinskis, 1989:70). The instantly staged attack of Lithuanians was not successful, though it lasted for 22 days and employed the techniques of siege as well as wall-breaking facilities (Marburg, 1863:493–494 (23)). The site of the latter castle has not been established, though publications often identify it with the castles of Veliuona mentioned above. It seems that this was not a further motte and bailey castle but

one resembling Lithuanian castles built on a slope protuberance in an elevated valley of the Nemunas. However, it was not very mighty and most probably constructed too close to Veliuona. Baierburg was burnt down by the Master himself due to the general strategic situation, and a new castle of Baierburg was built one mile down the river (Marburg, 1863:501 (30)). Its site has not been located either.

The situation in Panemunė began to change when Lithuanians lost the battle of Strėva in 1348. Before long, the Veliuona castle surrendered, but was soon rebuilt by Lithuanians. The Order was not yet fully established in the Lower Panemunė and Lithuanians used this point to break into Prussia quite often. For defence purposes, the small number of the existing castles had to be increased. In 1360 Neuhäusen was built close to Tilžė

(Tilsit) and Windenburg on the cape of Ventė. Both castles were built in the depths of the territory that was under the Order's rule by for quite a long time. In an attempt to prevent the Order from intruding further into the depth of the country and striving to ensure reliable control over the strategic locality, the confluence of the Nemunas and Neris rivers, Lithuanians, in the meantime, built the brick castle of Kaunas at this spot. On the evidence of the latest investigations, this castle was built in c 1361 (Žalnierius, 2002:35). The first castle of Kaunas was doubtless the first Lithuanian brick castle mentioned in written sources (1361, see Marburg, 1863:530(53)) and most likely the oldest Lithuanian brick castle. At the same time, new castles were built around Kaunas and those, which had been constructed earlier, were being fortified (Paštuva, Eiguliai, Karmėlava (Visvaldė - see Baranauskas, 2003:66)). It is most likely that a double defence ring of castles was formed around Kaunas at this time (Zabiela, 2001a:204).

Seizure of the brick castle of Kaunas in 1362 not only opened the way for the Order to the depths of Lithuania, but also rendered the castles of Lower Panemunė, possessed by Lithuanians, unimportant and difficult to maintain. The demolished Kaunas castle temporarily lost its significance. Following the tactics of the Order, Duke of Lithuania Kęstutis immediately tried to cover it by building a castle on the island of Virgalė, downstream of Kaunas, which is known in the chronicles under the name of Naujasis (New) Kaunas. Judging by the settings, this must have been a motte and bailey castle, the first castle of this type

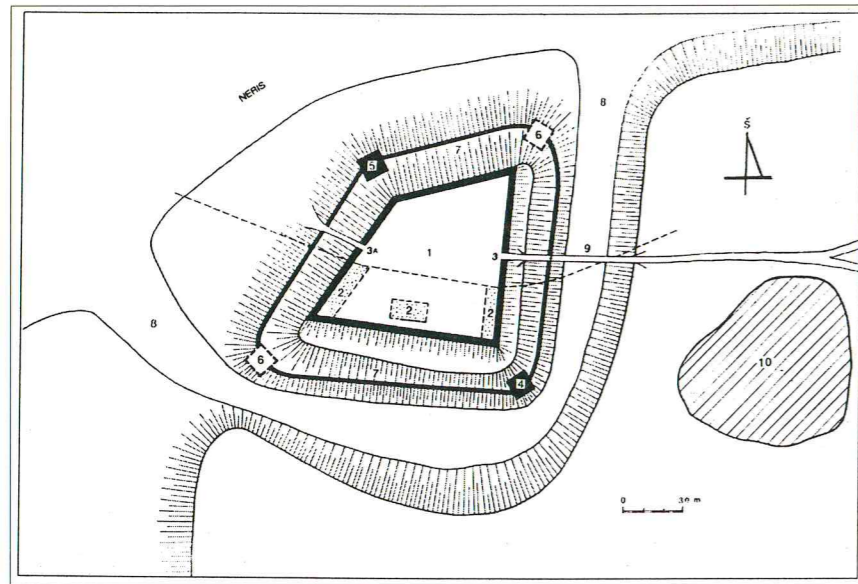


Fig. 5. The map of first castle in Kaunas: 1 - yard, 2 - houses, 3 - gate of Nemunas, 3a - gate of Neris, 4 - fore-work tower of Nemunas, 5 - fore-work tower of Neris, 6 - places of not erected towers, 7 - wall of fore-work, 8 - defensive ditch, 9 - bridge, 10 - settlement of middle of 14th century (according: Žalnierius, 2002:18 pav. 3)

built by Lithuanians. In 1363 this castle was occupied and burnt down. The same year both key castles of Lithuanians in the Lower Panemunė, Pieštė and Veliuona, were occupied as well. Despite subsequent attempts to rebuild them, in reality the battles shifted to the environs of Kaunas and later on receded further away from the Nemunas river. In the Lower Panemunė, changeable battles went on only close to the castles of both the Order and Lithuanians located in the vicinity of Kaunas. This first of all holds true for the castle of Naujasis (New) Kaunas, which was being rebuilt and seized again (Oksas, 1995:43–46). The remaining descriptions of fights at this castle present some details about it. There was a bridge with two towers leading to the castle located on an island (Marburg, 1863:546 bh(59)). In 1368 Lithuanians began bricklaying works here that were never completed. In 1368, when Veliuona and Pieštė fell, the Order immediately built the castle of Marienburg by the Nemunas and the brick castle of Gotteswerder on the island of Virgalė. According to its meagre description, the Marienburg castle was surrounded by “a rampart with a fence” (*sepe circumfodit*) (Marburg, 1863:558 (70)). In 1384 a further castle of Marienwerder was built on an island opposite Kaunas (Marburg, 1863:626 (137b)). The latter seems to have been a brick castle as well, since “bricks and other necessary stuff was brought from Prussia” for the construction works (Marburg, 1863:645 (151)). The brick castles, which were most probably motte and bailey type constructions, did not live up to expectations, as they were both occupied the same year they were built. Today, no traces of these castles exist. At the same time, Georgenburg (Jurbarkas) and Baireburg survived and were reinforced in the territories of the Lower Panemunė occupied by the Order earlier.

certain modification of the motte and bailey type castles, which bears more resemblance to castles built on plains or just field fortifications rather than classical castles of this type. All the castles of the Order situated on the lands of Samogitians in Lower Panemunė were ultimately destroyed by Samogitians in 1409.

After the battle of Tannenberg (1410 m.) the political situation at Lower Panemunė changed essentially. With a view to controlling the area, the Lithuanians rebuilt the castles of Pieštė and Veliuona in 1412 (Batūra, 2001:107). The latter became their focal point in the region again. It is believed to have been built of brick, but its presumable site has not yet been excavated. On the evidence of the surviving hill-forts, these castles were comparable to those which endured until the sixties of the 14th century.

The region of Lower Panemunė at the end of the 13th and at the beginning of the 14th centuries is a rewarding for the investigation of the interaction of both fighting parties due to the intensive war actions, which went on in the area and the preserved historical sources, which describe these actions. In spite of the shortage of archaeological evidence that could shed light on the castles, some conclusions can be made already now.

From the very beginning of the war in the Panemunė area, during the midthirties of the 14th century, both combatant parties built customary wooden castles, which were considered to be bases for the realization of further strategic goals.

From 1336 the Order began to blockade the Lithuanian castles by building the motte and bailey-type castles that were not yet known to Lithuanians. Those castles, rapidly built, but not very strong, solved

These castles were destroyed by Vytautas in 1384 and rebuilt afterwards. In addition, the Order built Ritterswerder down the Nemunas in 1390 (Marburg, 1863:645(151)), then Gotteswerder, in an attempt to conquer Samogitia (1389 m.), and after that Friedeburg (Almonaitis, 1998a:123–124). The last new castles were eventually built by the Order in 1405 (Königsburg, Dubissenburg, Tilžė (Tilsit), Skirsnemunė (Christmemel)) (Almonaitis, 1998:152–158,168). It is noteworthy that one of these, Königsburg, was built for the Order by its then ally Vytautas in just 8 days. An available description of the construction of the latter (piling of a rampart and digging of a ditch (Almonaitis, 1998a:152; Almonaitis, 1998b:4) testifies to a

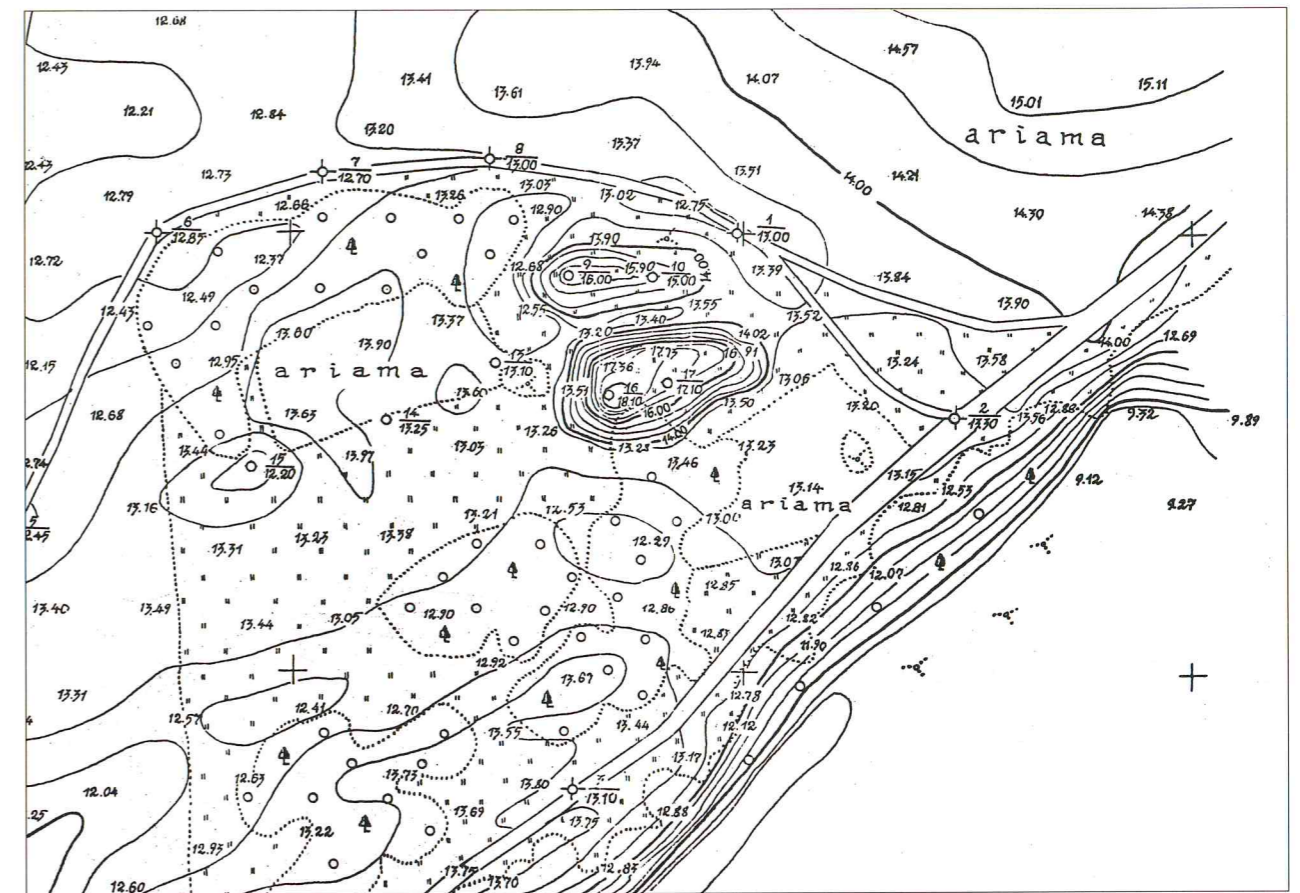


Fig. 6. Map of castle site Georgenburg (now Kalnėnai Pilaitės near Jurbarkas). (according: Zabiela, 2001b:19 pav.6)



Fig. 7. Castle site Pieštė (hillfort Serežius) in 1960. Archive of Institute of Lithuanian history Inv. Nr.10218

the tactical objectives of reinforcing positions in Panemunė.

The unsuccessful defence at the brick castle of Kaunas made it possible for the Order to destroy the Lithuanian wooden castles in Lower Panemunė and transfer the war actions further into the depth of the country. Lithuania regained actual control of this region only after the battle of Tannenberg in 1410.

During the battles lasting for more than 100 years Lithuania demonstrated considerable receptivity to various novelties in the military sphere. This became especially noticeable in around the middle of the 14th century. As regards castles, this was basically manifested in the construction of brick castles and the motte and bailey-type castles. The efforts of the Order, in the meantime, and construction of brick castles of Gotteswerder and Marienwerder close to Kaunas

did not bring about the expected results. The motte and bailey type castles reinforced with brickwork were still too weak compared to the input of resources. After a while, therefore, the Order returned to wooden castles of this type, which seem to have been considerably modified and displayed more resemblance to fortifications built on plain localities.

The available data on the castles of Lower Panemunė testify to their fairly complicated development during a relatively short historical period, and we have just embarked on revealing its aspects in more detail.

1. I'm grateful to Mgr. T. Baranauskas for consultations in this case.

Algirdas Žalnierius

THE FIRST CASTLE OF KAUNAS

Die erste Burg von Kaunas

Die erste Burg von Kaunas entspricht dem Typus des viereckigen Kastells, die im Territorium des Grossfürstentums Litauen in der Mitte des XIV. Jahrhunderts gebaut wurde. Die Burg stand am linken Ufer des Flusses Neris, ungefähr 600 Meter nach Nordosten vom Zusammenfluss von Neris und Nemunas, am Platz einer frühgeschichtlichen Siedlung. Gemäss den Funden datiert man die Siedlung ins X. bis XII. Jahrhundert. Bis ins XIX. Jahrhundert schwemmte der Fluss den grössten Teil der Burg weg.

Den Verteidigungskomplex der Burg, der etwa 4 ha umfasst, bildete ein Viereck in Trapezform. Die Höhe der Umfassungsmauer beträgt 12 m, die Stärke 2,5 m. Die Mauern der Burg bestehen aus Stein, aus Ziegeln die Schiessöffnungen, das Tor, vielleicht der Oberteil der Mauern und der Mauerschalen auf der Aussenseite. Die Fläche des Burgdorfes misst 5200 Quadratmeter. Gemäss den Forschungsergebnissen wurden bis zur Belagerung von 1362 nicht alle geplanten Befestigungen beendet. Für den Bau der Burg dürften ungefähr 16000 Tonnen Baumate-

rial verbraucht worden sein, aus dem Verteidigungsgraben etwa 70000 Kubikmeter Kies ausgehoben. Im Dorf der Burg standen Wohn- und Wirtschaftsgebäude.

Während der Untersuchung kamen sehr wenig Funde zum Vorschein. Das waren Kochtöpfe mit dem Stempeldekor. Den grössten Teil der Funde von 1362 bildeten die während der Belagerung verlorenen Spitzen für Armbrust-Bogen- und Ballistenpfeile.

Am Ende der Regierungszeit des Fürsten Gediminas ergaben sich reale Möglichkeiten und Bedingungen, um in Kaunas eine erste Burg zu bauen, und die Voraussetzung ergab sich nach 1348, nach der Schlacht von Strevo, weil dieser Feldzug des Deutschen Ordens eine ernste reale Gefahr für die Hauptstadt des Grossfürstentum Litauens Vilnius bildete. Vorbereitungsarbeiten für den Bau der ersten Burg von Kaunas setzten 1359 bis 1360 ein, der Bau dauerte bis 1361 und war im Frühling 1362 noch nicht abgeschlossen.

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