

English Summaries

This is a book on castles!

By Fritze Lindahl

This is a book on castles written in honour of Hans Stiesdal on the occasion of his 70th birthday. Besides being an expert on medieval castles Hans Stiesdal has also studied many other subjects to perfection, e.g. Danish churches, Danish clocks and Danish literature of several centuries so that these themes might also have been the topic of a book in his praise.

We are many friends of Hans Stiesdal's who want to thank him for his inspiration to our work, for never failing helpfulness and for his warm friendship.

On behalf of all his friends
Fritze Lindahl

Danish private castles before 1250.
A contribution to a disputed issue

By Nils Engberg

It has been the prevailing opinion that before the middle of the 13th century no private castles existed in Denmark. By private castle is meant a fortified site used for the protection of a nobleman and his family. Recent excavations at fortified sites have, however, also revealed buildings from the 12th century. It is the purpose of this paper to examine the archaeological results to see whether it is possible to put forward the opinion that private castles existed as early as the 12th century.

10 fortified sites can be archaeologically dated to the 12th century. At six of them there is a certain connection between the fortification,

the moat, the ramparts and the buildings. At the remaining four only the buildings are dated with certainty to that period, but they are also taken into account here. The moated sites are primarily situated on Zealand and three of them can be attributed to the Hvide family.

The conclusion is that during the civil war from 1131-1157, when particularly members of the Hvide family played an important part in the different – and changing – alliances, there was a need among some of them, and probably other members of the nobility as well, to fortify their homes. We have located some fortified sites on Zealand, and after systematic research three have been found on the islands south of Funen. A fair guess is that they will soon be located in Jutland, too.

Some remarks concerning private
fortification in Scania and stilted towers in
Denmark

By Ingolf Ericsson

It is remarkable that small noble castles are exceptionally rare in Scania. The most typical private castle of western and central Europe – the motte – is practically unknown, as are crannogs. On the other hand some large castle-mounds, like Turestrup (fig. 1) and Vallén (figs. 2-3), as well as manorial sites e.g. Svenstorp (fig. 5) are known. The Scanian development differs from that of present day Denmark, where a lot of mottes and other small castles of the nobility and gentry is known. They often belong to the second third of the 14th century. The situation in Scania, on the contrary, with its few private castles is very similar to that of medieval Sweden. More attention should be paid to the fact that Scania, during the period of

intense private castle-building in medieval Denmark actually did not have a Danish regent. Between 1332 and 1360 Scania was ruled by the Swedish king Magnus Eriksson. This could be at least one of the reasons for the similarity of development of private fortification in medieval Sweden and Scania during the 14th century.

At the end of the Middle Ages and in the early 16th century private noble sites were normally manors without true fortifications. Between 1396 and 1483 it was forbidden to fortify private residences. The only real private castle of medieval Denmark, that we know was built during this period, is situated in Scania – Axel Iversen Thott's Lillö (fig. 4). A later example is the famous Glimminge built by Jens Holgersen Ulfstand in 1499.

In the second part of the paper the existence of 'stilted towers' with an open ground floor is discussed on the basis of tower remains at Abinger, an English motte excavated in 1949 (fig. 6). This interpretation by the excavator B. Hope-Taylor (cf. figs. 7-8) was also accepted by Danish scholars, who were searching for local parallels. The paper argues against this interpretation. It is far more probable, that the 'stilted' construction of Abinger – as well as that of other mottes and crannogs, also in Denmark – was a pile substruction or foundation of a wooden tower.

Finally, two central problems of Southscandinavian fortification research are mentioned: the lack of a clear and unmistakable terminology and the relative lack of modern excavations. The interpretation of medieval fortification in Denmark is still often based on limited written sources, in which mainly sites and/or owners are mentioned, or on structural parallels/similarities with far better preserved fortifications from abroad. The possibilities of modern medieval archaeology should be applied far more to castle and fortification research.

Dendrochronological investigations in 'Kärnan', Helsingborg

By Torkel Eriksson and Thomas Bartholin

The article deals with the dating of the very symbol of the Swedish town Helsingborg, a medieval keep which once was a tower of defence in the middle of a large circular castle. For a long time it has been called 'Kärnan', which is the Swedish word for a stone of a fruit, as for instance a plum.

The castle originally belonged to the King of Denmark. Its encircling wall, which was destroyed shortly after 1658, is supposed to have been erected in the 12th century. Kärnan is younger and built roughly on the same spot as a predecessor from the same time as the wall. But when? In a dissertation from 1934 the new keep is supposed to have been erected around the year 1429, which is the year when the customs duty of Öresund was invented by King Erik from Pomerania. However, also other dates have been proposed, e.g. shortly after 1360, when the Castle of Helsingborg and all Scania was recaptured to Denmark after having belonged to Sweden for 28 years.

In order to try to get an answer to the question when Kärnan was built its original ceiling beams have been investigated by means of the dendrochronological method. These beams are situated in the ceilings over the cellar and the next two floors. They are made of oak, and today the curve of annual rings for oak in Scania goes back to the 11th century.

The investigations were made at different times between 1976 and 1991. Out of 20 original beams 19 could be dated, most of them exactly. On the second floor six of eight beams gave the result that the trees must have been cut down during the winter 1316-17, and on the first floor another six beams are from the winter 1315-16. In the cellar the four original beams do not have any sap-wood (alburnum), and consequently the dating of them could not be exact. However, the distal preserved annual rings of them are from shortly before 1300. Thus it can be supposed that they are from roughly the same time as the other beams.

The investigation shows that the constructing of Kärnan was initiated by Erik Menved, who was King of Denmark 1286-1319. As a matter of fact this is not astonishing, for during his reign there were many reasons to strengthen the Castle of Helsingborg.

Sandgravvold

By Hans Krongaard Kristensen

Today the castle mound of Sandgravvold is almost totally gone. The original appearance, therefore, will never be known. Some traces, though, are still preserved in the ground and previous investigations have shown that the castle was an important structure in some ways.

The castle itself was placed on an islet in a small lake, which is now dry. A bridge – about 300 m long – connected the islet with the mainland. Near the pierhead were earthworks with two mounds and a surrounding moat and bank (called Klosterknoldene):

The wooden bridge is the best investigated part of the structures. Lots of posts from the bridge were found and part of the bridge deck was uncovered.

On the castle islet it was possible to observe the structure of the mound with poles rammed down round the edge and filled in with peat, sand and clay. On the other hand it was impossible to distinguish the building pattern of the site.

Some artefacts were found, partly during excavation and partly as casual finds on the ground. The finds give a good picture of the pottery used at the castle. Among the artefacts were also weapons. For instance a gauntlet.

The castle is not mentioned in written sources, whereas the estate is mentioned in 1342. A coin struck c. 1250 was found on the mound. Probably, the castle functioned from the end of the 13th to the middle of the 14th century.

The Age of Næsholm – Dendrochronological or numismatic dating. The archaeologist's dilemma

By Nils Engberg

When Vilhelm la Cour in the 1950s finished his archaeological excavations at the fortified site of Næsholm, it was impossible to make a dendrochronological dating. During the excavation posts from the bridge were examined, and in 1989 the Danish National Museum decided to re-excavate 13 of the posts. As a result seven were dated to 1278 and four to 1320. The excavation by Vilhelm la Cour showed that bridge and castle are part of the same construction and it seems certain that the castle was built in 1278 like so many other private castles from that period of almost constant civil war in Denmark (c. 1250-1350). The bridge was repaired in 1320. But coins from the time of king Erik Plovpenning were found at the castle and as stated earlier by Jørgen Steen Jensen, this means that as early as in the 1240s-50s there must have been activity at the site. Being an archaeologist, a user of datings, one is in a dilemma. Two of the

methods considered to be the most reliable gave different datings by 30 years! In this case the dendrochronological dating is considered to be the correct one, but then how can we explain the presence of the Erik Plovpenning coins? Three possible solutions are suggested. The southern part of the fortified site is artificially built, and possibly the coins have been part of the rubbish fetched elsewhere. It is also possible that the coins were lucky pennies, i.e. used after they have lost their currency value. Or maybe they were part of a hoard. In a similar hoard from Bornholm deposited c. 1285 were several Erik Plovpenning coins. Finally, it is suggested, that the presence of this special coin at Næsholm is due to a combination of two or all three possibilities mentioned above.

The dating of Næsholm – dendrochronologically or numismatically?

By Jørgen Steen Jensen

When was the fortified site of Næsholm built? A discussion of numismatic versus dendrochronological evidence.

The author, who is a numismatist, discusses the numismatic evidence of an early dating, probably to the 1240s, of the fortified site of Næsholm in Odsherred. Five coins from Erik Plovpenning (1241-1250) (fig. 1) support this suggestion. They were found scattered over the whole area during excavations in the 1930s and the 1950s. The author discusses the possible circulation period of the coins in question. They are rarely found in hoards later than 1250/55, which indicates that their circulation was restricted, probably because of their withdrawal.

Their circulation was clearly much more restricted than the later coinage (1234-1241) of the father of Erik, Valdemar II, and the coinage of his brother Christopher I (1252-1259), and the author thinks this supports a thesis that the construction of Næsholm took place earlier than the dendrochronological indications of 1278, with repairs in 1320.

The archaeologist, however, cannot accept this point of view. Among the explanations of the old coinage, which are put forward by Nils Engberg, the numismatist would prefer the one, which suggests that earth may have been removed from destroyed farmhouses when the fortifications of Næsholm were made.

Grimsborg, Jels, Refsø and Dresvold. The earthwork castle excavations of Hans Neumann in the 1940s

By *Lennart S. Madsen*

Between Kongeåen and the present Danish border with Germany 183 medieval earthwork castles have so far been recorded. Only 17 have been subjected to any thorough archaeological excavation most of which conducted by Dr. Hans Stiesdal. But in the 1940s Hans Neumann, curator of Haderslev Museum from 1936 to 1977, carried out some little known excavations at four castle sites north of Haderslev.

Grimsborg (Vonsbæk parish, Haderslev district)

On a small headland stretching out into a cove just north of Haderslev Fjord, Neumann in 1941 excavated the remains of an anonymous square stone building, dated to the first half of the 14th century. Though there are no fortifications to be seen to-day, a 14th century stone building on a hard-to-reach headland must indicate some sort of defence purpose.

Jels voldsted (Jels parish, Gram district)

Jels voldsted consists of an – in a medieval environment – unusual semicircular rampart covering three sides of a spit stretching out into a lake. The side towards the middle of the lake is not protected by a wall, and here Neumann examined an area with about 80 large posts which in 10 rows went from the shore into the lake. They were interpreted as the remains of a building to protect the otherwise unprotected beach, but are as likely to be the remains of a bridge or a jetty. The structure can be dated to the 14th century, and nothing has so far been found at Jels to support the theory, that Jels dates back to the 11th century and the time of the South Jutish 'Jarls'.

Refsø 'Slotshjerg' (Sommersted parish, Gram district)

Refsø is a classic Danish 14th century earthwork castle: two mounds surrounded by ditches. On the main mound Neumann in 1949 excavated two structures, a wooden tower which seemingly must be dated to the beginning of the 15th century, when Refsø also is first mentioned in historical sources, and a stone building from the 16th century that functioned even in the 17th. In the mid 15th century this was the centre of one of the larger estates in South Jutland and

Emmike Esbensen is not likely to have been satisfied with just a simple wooden tower.

Dresvold (Skodborg parish, Frøs district)

The anonymous castle-mound of Dresvold is to-day hardly discernable and nothing can be found on the mound itself. But a little north of the mound Neumann excavated the well-preserved remains of a stone building of which the basement seems to have been a bakery. Three phases of a large baking oven was examined and through coins and ceramics dated to the 14th century.

Although executed in the 1940s Neumann's excavations are still valuable. Primarily in underlining one of the results of Danish medieval archaeology in recent years: the Danish earthwork castle seems to be almost exclusively a 14th century phenomenon. But secondly his results also pinpoint some of the remaining problems; primarily typology, but also whether we should still excavate castle mounds when the nearby unprotected farm itself could reveal much more about medieval everyday life.

Old news about Kogsbøl Castle Site

By *Johannes Hertz*

The castle site of Kogsbøl in Southern Jutland consists of a low mound, 170×170 m, subdivided by ditches into a rectangular part and an L-shaped part (figs. 1, 2, and 3). There is a hollowed-out section, 30×30 m, connected with one of the ditches which was proved by drilling to hide in its centre a mound, 15×15 m, which was once levelled into the surrounding ditch, see reconstruction in fig. 5. There is no evidence on which a dating can be made. The author discusses possible functions of this and some other small-scale castle-mounds.

'Eriksvolde' – an unfinished castle?

By *Karen Løkkegaard Poulsen*

The earthwork 'Eriksvolde' is a double motte-and-bailey on the Danish island of Lolland bordering the Fehmarn Belt in the south-

ern part of the Baltic. There are no historical sources relating to the site. Traditionally, however, it has been ascribed to the first half of the twelfth century. In 1977, Dr. Hans Stiesdal took the initiative for the first major examination of 'Eriksvolde'. The excavation was directed by the present author.

Twentythree trenches were cut through the double earth walls, the barbican, the entrance dam and at the edge of the northern mound. The southern mound was left untouched. The object of the investigation was to find dating evidence and to reveal the earthwork's main constructional features. The question of location and investigation of functional details were not given priority due to the character of the manpower employed and the way the work had to be organized. The excavation was organized as a project for young unemployed people, 10 young men and women at a time, with a foreman and under the supervision of one archaeologist. The archaeological dating of artefacts, the dating of coins, and the dendrochronological dating of wooden posts and artefacts contributed to date the construction of the earthwork to 1342-1344. As the excavation progressed, the question arose whether 'Eriksvolde' was ever finished as a castle. But the object of the 1977-excavation was not to solve that question. New trenches have to be dug to settle functional problems, and a different working force organized to undertake the task.

The paper examines the evidence of the 1977-excavation, especially discussing those details which bear upon that question. Primarily, they are the evidence emerging from the surface of the earthwork, the entrance dam, the excavation squares on top of the earth walls in search of structural remains, the culture deposits in the moats, the two bridges from the barbican to the southern mound and between the mounds, and finally the smithy on the northern mound. Eventually, it is shown that a lot of the evidence is in favour of a site ready for action, even if it was only needed for a very brief period of time.

The ditches at Alsted

By Per Bugge Vegger

The paper describes a partly excavated double castle mound with one mound weakly fortified. The castle mound was only used for a few decades before it was destroyed and a farmhouse was built on the spot. It is suggested that the castle mound was built and owned by the Danish king Valdemar Atterdag around 1350.

The earliest Egholm. The predecessor of Egholm Slot

By Connie Jantzen

The earthwork of Egholm Slot is located in a marshy water-logged area close to Lindenberg stream, north-west of Gl. Skørping in Himmerland. The earthwork consists of two artificial mounds surrounded by a ditch and ramparts, the whole site being divided from the open land by a ditch to the south and the east.

Dendrochronological dating of two posts from the ditch west of the castle mound indicates that building activities were carried on into the 1350s. Just 200 m south of Egholm Slot another fortress, Egholm I, was discovered in the 1950s; this was completely excavated between 1985 and 1987. Egholm I proved to consist of a small, low, oval, artificial mound *c.* 22×18 m, which was surrounded by a kind of palisade. On the mound the 6×6 m base of a wooden tower was the only evidence of buildings found. The fortress was entered from the south. A fascine *c.* 2 m broad went from dry land into the marshy area. From here a bridge more than 100 m long led to the south-west corner of the mound. Some sort of gate was placed near the south end of the bridge.

Despite a wide search no evidence of a bailey was found, so Egholm I was probably built as a private stronghold.

According to dendrochronological dating, Egholm I was probably built in the autumn of 1334. A seal belonging to one Sigfred Sehested, Knight, was found in a layer of wood chips near the tower, which gives us good reason to believe that the builder of the stronghold was this nobleman from Holstein. Sigfred Sehested was probably one of the mortgagees to whom the King had pawned large parts of Denmark at that time.

No weapons were found during the excavation. This, combined with the fact that only a few objects from daily life were found, indicates that nobody actually lived in the fortress, or was forced to defend it for long periods of time.

We do not know if it was Sigfred Sehested who wanted a stronger fortification and therefore built Egholm Slot, but according to a written source the owner of Egholm Slot was still from Holstein in 1372. After 1374 the castle was bought by King Valdemar Atterdag and it stayed in royal hands until 1391 when his daughter Margrethe I bestowed it upon the monastery of Our Lady in Ålborg with the specific order that the buildings were to be pulled down and never to

be rebuilt. Egholm Slot returned to the crown in 1527 when the monastery was dissolved.

Trøjborg, a Danish Castle 1347-1854

By Johannes Hertz

Trøjborg is situated in the south-west corner of present-day Denmark, about 15 km north of the town of Tønder (fig. 1). It was first mentioned in 1347. In 1407 it was acquired by Queen Margrethe I, who put the castle and its revenues at the disposal of the see of Ribe. From the evidence of excavations the mediaeval castle is known to have consisted of a 30×30×2,5 m artificial mound (fig. 2) constructed of earth, turf, and timber (figs. 3 and 4), with a strong brick tower, 13×13 m, whose foundations go down to the very bottom of the marsh (figs. 5, 6, and 15).

In 1566 Trøjborg came into the possession of the Rantzau family, a noble family whose members were among the earliest and keenest builders of castles and manor-houses in the French-Dutch Renaissance style in Denmark. In 1580-86 Peter Rantzau (1535-1602) erected a castle in this style on the site of the old castle of Trøjborg, probably with the assistance of Hercules von Oberberg (ca. 1520-1601). Unfortunately, virtually all the works of this 'Vitruvian' architect – most of them constructed for the King or for the Duke of Slesvig – have vanished, including his masterpieces, the splendid castle of Haderslev (Hansborg) and Tønning.

Trøjborg was demolished in 1854 by its then owner, but an impressive ruin still survives (figs. 13 and 19). The castle is also known from a number of pictures, one of which is the view of Tønder by Braun and Hogenberg from about 1587 (fig. 10). Another was painted about ten years before the demolition (fig. 12). The castle rose directly out of a water-filled moat and was further surrounded by a substantial rampart and a system of outer moats which also enclosed the farm (fig. 32).

Apart from a draw-bridge the castle-building had no fortification features. Its four wings of equal height framed a small quadrangular courtyard, and in each corner there was a polygonal staircase-tower crowned by an elegant onion-domed spire. The walls were built of red brick; sandstone was used for ornaments on the upper gables (figs. 17 and 18) and for the ornamental gateway (fig. 22).

The ruin was excavated and restored under the author's supervi-

sion in 1959-76. It appeared that the orientation and proportions of this strictly regular and symmetrical building were defined to a surprisingly great extent by the foundations of the castle's mediaeval predecessor. Even the gateway was placed directly above the mediaeval draw-bridge pit (fig. 14a).

The vaulted basement contained a kitchen and other domestic areas, two wells (figs. 25 and 27), an outlet and privies (figs. 28 and 29) can be seen. The disposition of the two upper storeys can be partly reconstructed on the basis, *inter alia*, of old building-accounts. The castle's largest room, situated on the first floor of the southern wing, was the 'deer-hall', probably decorated with paintings of deer with the heads carved out of wood and mounted with real antlers; two of the heads are preserved (fig. 30). The sandstone dial and the works from a tower clock are on display in the museum of Tønder (figs. 20 and 21). The numerous objects retrieved from the moat during excavations (fig. 33) throw light upon living-conditions at Trøjborg during five centuries.

The armour of the town and the maintenance of the boatswains

By Vivi Jensen

One of the very few surviving records of the official undertakings of the council of Danish towns in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance is the town book of Kolding. In it various matters dating from 1493-1635 are recorded. Some are about the duties of the town in times of war. Unique for Denmark is a list from 1509 numbering and describing the arms and armour in possession of the town and naming the men who are responsible for it. The arms were 6 cutlasses, 2 broadswords, 1 polesword, 1 poleaxe, 1 halberd and 4 crossbows. By buying and renting extra pieces the armour was supplemented to equip 24 men. It consisted of 8 helmets (7 so-called iron-hats and 1 bascinet), 4 collars, 1 'breast-and-back', 1 padded cuirass, 18 'half backs' and 2 backs, 24 so-called 'cancers' which seem to mean composite breastplates of the gothic type, and 7 rerebraces. One mayor and one member of the council were to go along with the men as a guarantee of their good behavior.

It is suggested that 'breast-and-back' and bascinet were worn by the mayor, cancer and back and a helmet by the member of the council. 23 men could be equipped with 'cancers', but only 20 with

'half backs'. One had to make do with the cuirass which according to its number on the list cannot have been much valued. 4, perhaps the crossbowmen, got a collar instead of a half back. The 10 rerebraces are suggested to go (one each for the left arm) with the hand-to-hand-fighting arms, excepting the two cutlasses carried by the magistrate who was not supposed to enter battle personally. Not a very impressive force, but they were probably primarily meant to serve the fleet as mariners onboard a man-of-war, while fighting battles ashore were mainly done by hired German lansquenets.

Further lists of men responsible for the arms and armour of the town suggests political dissociation between the magistrate and King Christian II who was dethroned in 1523.

Finally, there is a short survey of the many extra taxes imposed on the town for military purposes during the years until 1635 when the book ends.

The Northern Town Gate of Ribe – a vanished trade mark of the town

By Per Kristian Madsen

The first part of this paper presents a rediscovered drawing from 1836 by the Danish architect Theophilus Hansen (1813-1891). Hansen later became one of the most famous architects of 19th century Europe, his main works being exclusively bound to the cities of Athens and Vienna. His drawing (fig. 1) gives an architect's impression of Ribe's Northern gate, which was demolished 1843 and which appears on old maps and prospects (figs. 3-5) and on local naive paintings (figs. 10-12). The drawing is compared to the contemporary works by the painter Jørgen Roed (1808-1888). During their common stay in Ribe 1836 the two artists studied the Romanesque cathedral of Ribe (figs. 8-9). Here, also, it is obvious that Hansen was a strict follower of the ideals of his teacher at the Academy, G. F. Hetsch, concerning the central perspective drawing. Roed grips his motive in the way, which he had been taught by C. W. Eckersberg – and his primary teacher, H. Hansen. During a stay in Rome from 1838-41, Roed proved his ability as one of the most able Danish interpreters of architecture. This can be seen in his drawing from 1841 of Ribe's Northern Gate (fig. 7), which shows his convincing understanding of plastics and tectonics. Contrary to Villads Villadsen, I, therefore, see this drawing as Roed's original work and not as

a copy from the rediscovered drawing by Hansen. This is known to have been borrowed by Roed in 1838, but remained unknown until the autumn of 1991. The drawing was used for an engraving in 1854 (fig. 6).

On this basis the second part of the paper discusses the dating of the Northern Gate. It is proposed, that it was erected at the end of the 13th century, as it shows some similarity to the Great Tower of the cathedral (fig. 14), which was built between 1283 and 1333. The first mention of the northern stone gate is in 1314. The proposed dating, however, has to be confirmed by archaeological excavations as no proper dating may be put forward only by way of comparison with other preserved town gates. These show a rather uniform shape throughout the late Middle Ages. It seems characteristic, that the more simple gates were erected by the wealthiest towns (figs. 16-19), and that small towns preferred to build the most elaborate town gates. Finally, the function of the gate is discussed. The hypothesis is, that it should be understood as an inner gate between the old town on the northern river bank and the new town, which grew up on the southern bank from a. 1150. In this way the gate is interpreted as a token or trade mark of the prosperous town.

The Hald of the Viborg biskop and the lord lieutenants – and something of Brattingsborg and Niels Bugge's Hald

By Jens Velleu

The eight paragraphs of the paper deal with essential aspects in the history of the castle built by the Viborg bishop at the end of the 1520s on a headland in Hald lake approx. 10 km south of the cathedral town of Viborg.

The oldest picture of the castle – from about 1675 – in the so-called 'Resens Atlas' – is discussed. The picture shows the various buildings of the castle in a somewhat distorted perspective with their functions specified.

After the Reformation in 1536 the castle was handed over to the crown and the lord lieutenant had his seat at the newly built biskop's castle.

From estate accounts, descriptions of the buildings and inventories made at the take over of new lord lieutenants we receive a number of snapshots of the condition of the castle.

Important elements are the round tower with its dungeon and the gatehouse with embrasures. The inventories list the various types of cannons found in the tower and on the earthworks.

The castle was vacated and demolished shortly after 1700.

Extensive excavations have been made at the mound. In 1889 the tower was dug. It was then restored and finally an apartment was built on top of the ruin as an imitation of the situation shown by the drawing of Resen and described by the estate accounts.

One paragraph treats the finds which were made at the site over the years. A cast of a small cannon ball with a diameter of 5 cm attracts special interest. Casts also appear in the inventories.

The last paragraph treats the constellation castle-mill. The damming at Non Mølle at the end of Hald lake has changed the topography. The mill is mentioned for the first time in 1516-18. However, it is certainly considerably older. No doubt extensive damming took place after 1423, as a row of posts in the lake round the earthwork is dendrochronologically dated to that year. According to evidence the 1420s saw a remarkable activity at Hald.

Underwater-archaeological finds at Bispens Hald

By Hans Gadgaard, Jesper Hjerminde and Jens Velle

From 1979 to 1985 divers from Viborg have reported several underwater wooden structures around Bispens Hald (the bishop's castle of Hald) in Hald lake south of Viborg. A structure consisting of several hundred oak posts was found east, north and west of the earthwork. In 1985 three posts were dendrochronologically dated to 1423 – a

period when until now no building activities have been recorded at Hald.

Life in the Castle – and its Neighbourhood

By Rikke Agnete Olsen

Most of its time the medieval castle was more manor than fortification, and the normal peaceful life led there by the owner or his representative reflects the ideals of the period and affected the neighbourhood.

The ideals were the same all over the country and in all the different social layers from the royal court and the seats of the bishops to the home of the small local squire living in his village and perhaps no better off than the peasants around him.

The effects of castle or manor in the neighbourhood depended on the social and economic influence of the owner. Naturally the great landed proprietors who owned land all over the country knew better what was to be expected and could afford to do so. He could build a bigger church and adorn it more beautifully than his poor colleague or relative. He and his household could also eat and dress more like at court or abroad, where fashion was created.

However life in castle and manor was basically agricultural life, and like on any big farm it was based on selfsufficiency and also for that reason it was led along the same lines. The crops and the seasons of the year decided what had to be done.

Closely studied, the various written sources from the period offer enough information to create a coherent general description of manorial life in and around the site at least in the late Middle Ages.



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