



THE ASSOCIATION
OF CASTLES AND MUSEUMS
AROUND THE BALTIC SEA

International Conference

OUR SECRET OBJECTS

Thursday September 12. 2024

10:30-11:00

Registration and Coffee

Rehbinder House,
Tallinna tn 5, Rakvere

11:00 - 11:05

Welcome

Ina Līne, President of the Board of the Association of Castles and Museums
Around the Baltic Sea

11:05 – 11:10

Introduction on behalf of Rakvere Castle and Foundation Virumaa Museums

Viljar Vissel, Executive Board Member, Foundation Virumaa Museums

11:10 – 11:40

Elbląg – Reinterpretation. Traps and Victories

Grzegorz Stasielowicz, MSc, The Archaeological and Historical Museum, Elbląg

Elbląg is almost 800 years old. As a result of the fighting at the turn of January and February 1945 between the Wehrmacht and the Red Army, a large part of the city was destroyed, especially its oldest parts. The years after the end of the war marked the city with many changes, which led, among others, to: to "clear" the Old Town of the ruins of tenement houses, and the New Town to be completely rebuilt. Currently, for almost 40 years, the process of rebuilding the Old Town, known as "Retroversion", has been ongoing. It is, as it were, a process of "reinterpretation" of the former Old Town complex. It is perceived differently, differently by tourists and differently by residents.

11:40 – 12:10

Small Findings Make Big Story

Dzintra Spradzenko, MA, Rundāle Palace Museum

The Rundāle Palace Collection is one of the oldest in the holdings of the Rundāle Palace Museum. It was started to be created in the early 1970s. The creation of this collection is closely related to the restoration of Rundāle Palace (1964–2014), as its base of objects consists of various finds in the Palace and its territory, as well as the original construction parts of the building found or removed during the restoration. The collection consists mostly of fragmentary evidence and does not contain many striking and vivid artifacts, but they play an important role in shaping the great story of the Rundāle Palace.

The Rundāle Palace Collection has almost 700 items from the period 18–20 century. Currently, a small part of this collection can also be seen by visitors in the exhibition "The History of Rundāle Palace Construction" placed in the basement of the Palace's western wing. Over time, the collection has served the needs of the scientific restoration of the Palace, mostly for the study of the forms and materials of construction parts. It has largely been a kind of working material for the rebirth of the most luxurious and important rooms of the Palace.

In my opinion, one of the most interesting groups of items from the Rundāle Palace Collection is building details. They most directly allow us to discover the twists and turns of the Palace's construction history. Fragments of plaster and other materials found and removed during the restoration help to reveal what is invisible at first glance – starting from the historical processing technologies and ending with the changing understanding of the restoration work processes.

12:10 - 12:40

Newly discovered ceiling painting in the House of Estlands' nobility: the story of its de-/remounting, conservation, dating and context.

Hilkka Hiip, PhD, Estonian Academy of Arts

In the course of renovation work on the House of Estland's Nobility in the beginning of 2023, a magnificent find came to light in the Baroque building abutting on Kohtu Street – a figural plafond painting on a canvas attached to the ceiling. It was concealed behind a new coved ceiling that was built in the mid-19th century, although the painting had been hidden behind coats of paint and support beams considerably earlier. This find is sensational since it adds to the number of rare and fragile canvas plafonds, only a few of which survive in Estonia. The technique used and the style of depiction of the surviving canvas plafonds makes them exceptional. All surviving canvas plafonds in Estonia are dated based on style and are believed to originate from the prime of the Baroque era from the end of the 17th century to the mid-18th century. That was a time when Estonia went through substantial political and economic fluctuations – famine, the Great Northern War, and plague. Nevertheless, not one of the surviving plafonds has a documentally verified dating. Yet the canvas

ceiling discovered in the House of the Nobility has been successfully connected with relative certainty to a precise time of completion with the help of archival sources and dendrochronological examinations. The story of the discovery, conservation and dating of the canvas is at the centre of the presentation.

12:40 - 13:10

Does the size matter? The Peace of Kiel 1814 and its importance for Sweden

Bengt Kylsberg, Former Curator at Skokloster Castle

After a telephone call in autumn 2013 from Germany and Dr. Sonia Kinzler who was asked to be the curator for a memorial exhibition in Kiel with the name *Der Kieler Frieden 1814*. The "memorial room" on the first floor at Skokloster Castle became of new importance. She asked me if we have any emblems of the Piece of Kiel 1814. She had looked all over Germany and Denmark without any trace of emblems connected with 1814 and Kiel. Of course we had, so she came to Skokloster just a few days later and was thrilled about the emblems connected with Bernadotte and the piece of Kiel.

We lost Finland in 1809 to Russia. The king Gustav IV was blamed and all his family lost forever their right to any Swedish property or any official position in the country. The king was forced to leave Sweden and died broken and poor as Colonel Gustafsson in Switzerland. Finland had been an integrated part of Sweden since around 1300.

Sweden needed a new sovereign and the king's old uncle stepped in as Karl XIII, but without any heirs, so a crown prince had to be elected. A Danish duke was chosen, but he died after a few months in Sweden.

So now, a new *crown prince* had to be chosen. The lot fell on one of Napoleons field marshals, *Jean Babtist Bernadotte*, a very successful soldier. The idea was to wage war once again with Russia. Bernadotte was of another idea and met the Russian Emperor in Åbo 1812. The meeting ended on mutual understanding who the enemy was – Napoleon. In 1813 and the horrible battle of Leipzig, called *Völkerschlacht*, the Northen army, led by Bernadotte was little involved in the fighting. The Swedish army was speared to be used against Denmark in the following year, which ended with the Peace of Kiel. Denmark had to surrender Norway to Sweden.

13:10 - 13:40

LUNCH

13:40 - 14:10

Inspired by the signs on the bricks or David od Turaida Castle

Gunta Zakite, MA, Head of Department of Education and Communication

Justīne Timermane, MA, Main Specialist – Historian

The collection of the Turaida Museum Reserve contains a wide collection of antiquities obtained during the archaeological research of the Turaida Castle. One of the groups of antiquities is bricks, tiles and floor tiles made of fired clay, which are collectively referred to as "building ceramics". Some of the medieval building ceramics can still be seen in the walls of the castle buildings today, but some have ended up in the collection. In the course of archaeological research, the most characteristic

ancient bricks and their fragments with the evidence left by human fingers, indentations or animal footprints have been collected. However, one brick stands out among others with a figurative pattern.

The special object of our report is a brick found in Turaida Castle with a figure drawn on it. Attention was drawn to the brick in 1997 by architect restorer Dr.h.c. Gunārs Jansons, who worked for many years studying the architecture of Turaida Palace. The brick was observed as an isolated find. The brick with the pattern is of local origin and similar to the others both in terms of clay composition and color tone. It may have been used for the chamfered edges of window niches.

Gunārs Jansons was interested in the naive, yet confident hand drawn image on the brick. What did the ancient author want to portray? Is it a dance pose or part of a ritual? The figure has raised hands and a long object is in one of them, one eye can be seen to be closed. Reflecting on the time (around the 14th century) when this brick with the drawing could have been created, Gunārs Jansons imagined that in the right hand of the image there is a sling, the left eye is closed, but the right is open as if aiming, and the image of the legendary David created under the influence of biblical stories came to his mind image.

Since then, in the expositions and stories of the Museum Reserve, the figure on the brick has been interpreted as the image of David. Thinking about the appeal of historical stories to children, in 2016 the book "The Book of Tales and Games of David from the Turaida castle" was published, where David emerging from the brick becomes a child's companion while getting to know Turaida Castle. While developing the children's line, since 2023, the creation of new elements in the exposition has been started, which would tell a historical story at an appropriate level for children. Turaida Castle Dāvids has become the symbol of this exposition.

At the moment, two have been introduced into the expositions and more additions are waiting in line, which take "David" out of the context of an image created in the Middle Ages. David has already become a symbol of communication, announcing various themes of Turaida's exposition. 2023 the exposition "Davids eats, but does not break the dishes" was opened, with a focus on the medieval ceramics and food culture of Turaida Castle. 2024 season, the digital game "Davids goes to defend his home" was launched, which educates visitors about the events of the Great Northern War in Vidzeme, putting David in the role of a soldier. In the future, Dāvids will also be housed in other places in the exposition, making them more accessible to children.

Meanwhile, the "original" David, that is, the brick, is an integral part of our main exhibition. It is a sight to see in both excursions and educational programs. In order to promote the study and preservation of the subject, in 2024. in the summer, as part of his study practice, digital archeology student of Leiden University Mārcis Kļaviņš created a digital model of a brick using the photogrammetry method, with the help of which it is possible to create a digital representation of an object from images. The model will allow you to see both the practice of making bricks and the maintenance of preservation. Repetitive modeling will allow you to monitor the changes that the subject experiences. The detailed computer data, in turn, will be able to provide

information about the properties of the material, which will be able to supplement our research knowledge about Turaida building ceramics. The digital brick is planned to be integrated into our digital collection database, where it will hopefully soon be available for rotation and viewing, thereby facilitating the availability of Turaida's "secret" objects to a wider audience.

Cooperation with the intern allowed us to better understand the advantages of digital products as aids in the communication of historical stories. Also in the future, we hope that not only "David", but also other objects could be viewed and studied digitally through digital models.

14:10 - 14:40

Object and historical truth in the imagination of interpretation"

Ināra Bula, MA, Head of the Cēsu Museum and president of ICOMOS Latvija

14:40 - 15:10

Ina Līne, MA

15:10 – 15:40

Days After World War 2 around the Baltic Sea (D.A.B.S). Proposal for cooperation and Project Outline

Gregory Leighton, Phd, The Malbork Castle Museum

Every one of our castles and museums in the Association of Castles and Museums around the Baltic Sea has its own post- second world war history. This presentation will pose the question of how we can draw on these experiences to explore and describe this history together. Uncovering new facts and new knowledge as part of an international research team will help build a single picture of the effects of the war on the castles of northern Europe and their history after the war. However, the presentation will highlight how D.A.B.S is not a project about war, but rather the effects of war and the ways of overcoming them. As we all know and see around us, such a mission resonates strongly with us today. The D.A.B.S. project will focus on the post-war reality of our museums and castles, the scale of war damage, reconstruction, restoration, in addition to aspects of development and management. Another important part of the project will be to advocate for more research into lost and dispersed collections and movable equipment. The presentation will propose a plan and schedule for collaboration and cooperation, in addition to contributing to the conference's theme of "Our Secret Objects".

15:40 – 16:00

Closing words, time for discussion.



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