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CULTURE CLASH OR COMPROMISE VIII

**Der Ostseeraum
und Kontinentaleuropa
1100 – 1600**

Einflußnahme – Rezeption – Wandel

herausgegeben von

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Fortresses, Storehouses and Symbols – ambiguous churches of the Baltic Sea

Jes Wienberg, Lund

Remarkable medieval churches

On Öland there is a large stone house, which is frequently visited by tourists. Is it a church, since the building seems surrounded by a church yard? Is it a storehouse from Visby, which has been stranded? Or is it maybe an Order castle, which has come down on the wrong side of the Baltic Sea? Both yes and no, it is the deserted church of Källa (Fig. 1), and the mighty stone house once was a church, a storehouse and a fortress at one and the same time. A Romanesque stone church from the 12th Century was gradually enlarged with several storeys so it became a high house with several functions under the same roof: At the base a church room, then a store and at the top a crenelated archers' storey with a view over land and sea (SvK 128, 1969; Boström 1978b).

Källa is only one of many remarkable churches along the old shipping route from Denmark to Estonia, which deviate by its architecture. Here we meet churches which at first sight seem widely differing, but they have been gathered under common concepts as defence works, defensive churches, fortified churches, castle churches, multi-functional churches and latest churches with non-sacred rooms.

Since more than 350 years different views have replaced each other. The debate has concerned the right name for the church type, its distribution and dating, who built the churches, how the churches were used, and against whom the churches were fortified.

That I wish to participate in the debate once more, is not because of the appearance of new source material. The few



Fig. 1: The deserted church of Källa on Öland. Photo Jes Wienberg 1999.

relevant written sources are well known, just as the monuments are well documented by now. I can neither contribute finds of more round churches, new dendro-chronological datings nor building archaeological analyses. Instead I will propose a combination of the existing theories, demonstrate the fusion between the sacred and the profane, show up-to-date results of research concerning the Danish Baltic Sea empire, the crusades and the Canute Guilds in order to gain an insight into the churches and finally comment upon the complementary relationship between texts and buildings of the Middle Ages. But first, I want to show, why a group of churches at all have been considered to be peculiar.

Orders and architecture

The notion of the »normal« Romanesque church type is based on the decisive assumption, which is seldom expressed, that each function had a room or a building of its own. Thus the type of the »normal« churches is due to the assumption that the sacred and the profane were kept apart, just as different profane realms were kept separately. In short, behind the definition of normality we can perceive a doctrine of the orders, which dictated that the church, the farm, the castle and the town belonged to different categories.

The doctrine of the orders was an ideology which divided people into at first three, later four, groups, each with a characteristic function or task: *Oratores* – those who prayed, i.e. priests, monks and nuns; *laboratores* – those who worked, i.e. peasants and craftsmen; *bellatores* – those who fought, i.e. knights, esquires and soldiers; finally *mercatores* – those who traded, i.e. merchants. The doctrine was an ideology in the sense that it described how society ought to be organized (Duby 1980; Wienberg 1993, pp. 145 ff.).

However, the division into quarters was only an ecclesiastical ideal and no reality. Medieval people might transgress the categories by exercising several functions – either simultaneously or gradually through course of their lives: The lord of the manor was both a warrior and a farmer. The same person might act as a farmer in the countryside and a citizen in the town. The rectors, members of the lower clergy, remained farmers, while the bishops of the higher clergy were recruited from the aristocracy. And in the age of the crusades the roles of the praying monk and the fighting knight were united in the military orders. The status depended on the context.

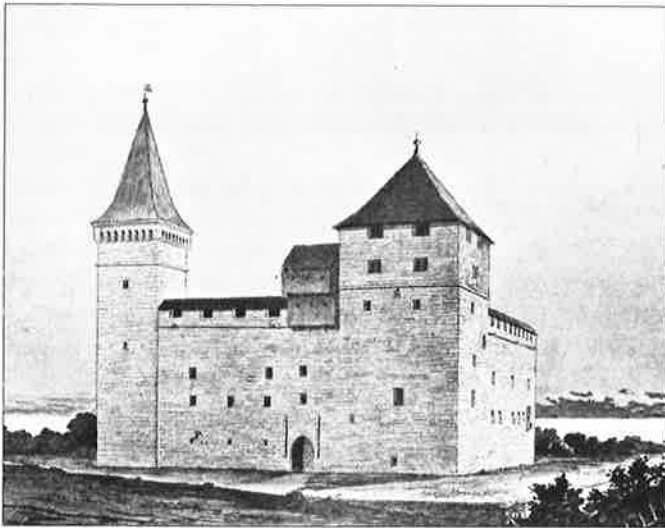


Fig. 2: Arensburg (Kuressaare) on Ösel (Saaremaa), Drawing in Seuberlich 1907.

The doctrine of the orders remained a Utopian ideal in the Middle Ages, nevertheless it has achieved greater influence in later periods. The society of the Middle Ages has been seen as just a society of orders. Everywhere in academic literature, in fiction, in exhibitions, movies and drama, we see the division of the landscape and the people – countryside and town, church and castle – peasant and citizen, monk and knight! Every field has its own »discourse«, i.e. its standard works, its conferences, its specialists or at least its own chapters (cf. André 1997, p. 41).

But just as the doctrine of the orders only was an ideal, the architecture did not follow any division with a sharp border between the sacred and the profane either. On the contrary, we have found plenty multi-functional environments and buildings: The church might be a part of the manor. The monastery united the functions of a church and a manor. The castle was not only the home of a knight, but also the main building within a fortified farm, which might have its own chapel and in practice functioned as a minor town. As a »congested countryside« the town covered stables, shops, churches and fortified towers. And the other way around, we find a »dispersed town«, where urban features occurred in the countryside, as on the isle of Gotland. Thus the church, the farm, the castle and the town were interweaved in terms of function, architecture and mentality.

But not only hybrid forms are known. The function might change during the lifetime of a building: Many royal manors were turned into monasteries, just as plenty of manors might have become rectories. Villages were raised to towns, and towns were again reduced to villages. Fortresses and palaces might be turned into churches. Rather seldom, however, churches or monasteries were transformed to purely profane buildings before the Reformation.

A proper functional fusion might be seen in the uniting of castle and the monastery in the military orders. The Teutonic Order created its own architecture with convent houses in Livonia (present Estonia and Latvia) and Prussia from c. 1250, and especially after 1300. A monumental example is the headquarter of the order Marienburg, now Malbork, in Polen. The architecture of the order was imitated by local princely bishops and also other monastic orders. Thus the well preserved Arensburg (Kuressaare) (Fig. 2) on the island of Ösel (Saaremaa) was

erected as a convent house by the bishop of Ösel-Wiek in the 14th Century (Alltoa 1993a). And the Cistercian monastery in Padise in Estonia, which was erected in the period 1317–1448, is more reminiscent of a castle than of a monastery (Alltoa 1993 b; Tamm 1993, p. 204).

The problem with these remarkable churches are consequently created by a sharp categorization of the architecture using the doctrine of the orders as a model. A great number of buildings simply fall outside the archetypes of the four orders, because they mix functions. The problem with the remarkable churches has then been to solve with the help of three major explanations – the defensive church, the profane functions and the symbolic form.

Research history – defense, function and form

Defense

From the records of traditions concerning churches for defense on the islands of Öland and Bornholm by antiquarians and topographers in the 17th and 18th Centuries the theory of the defensive churches (also called the fortification theory) emerged: The totally dominating explanation of a number of deviating churches was, that they had been erected as defensive churches in times of unrest. The defensive churches were thought to have functioned as a refuge for the parishioners, especially elderly, women and children and their possessions. The churches were equipped for passive defense with barriers at doors, narrow staircases, archers' galleries and arrow slits and possibly also outer walls and towers.

The very first documentation was accompanied by the very first explanation. The research began by the antiquarian Jonas Haquini Rhezelius, who in 1634 was sent out from Stockholm to describe ancient monuments. In his travel diary from the visit to Smedby on the island of Öland the 27 of July 1634 Rhezelius took down the local opinion: »This church is constructed both as church and as defense, to protect against enemies.« (SvK 108, 1966, pp. 4 ff.; Boström 1966, pp. 61, 70 ff. quotation; 1978a) But the valuable sketches and notes by Rhezelius remained in obscurity for a long time.

The first time an explanation of the remarkable churches came into print was in the topographical work on Bornholm from 1756 by master builder general Lauritz de Thurah. He wrote on the round churches: »Some believe, that the same churches had been built in the heathen or other old times, and that they were supposed to serve in the later as defense or as citadels and fortified towers, to which either the inhabitants of the province might have taken refuge, and also with their money and most precious furnitures, and from there have defended themselves against pirats, as well as attacks of other enemies, or also possible, in case the inhabitants themselves in those times exercised common piracy, they might likewise have used the mentioned towers as refuge, when they were chased by the opposite party« (Thurah 1756, p. 52).

The idea, that the churches might have been arranged for defense of the population and its possessions in periods of unrest, was gradually regarded to apply to more and more types of churches during the 19th Century by researchers as the polyhistor Carl Georg Brunius, the archaeologist Hans

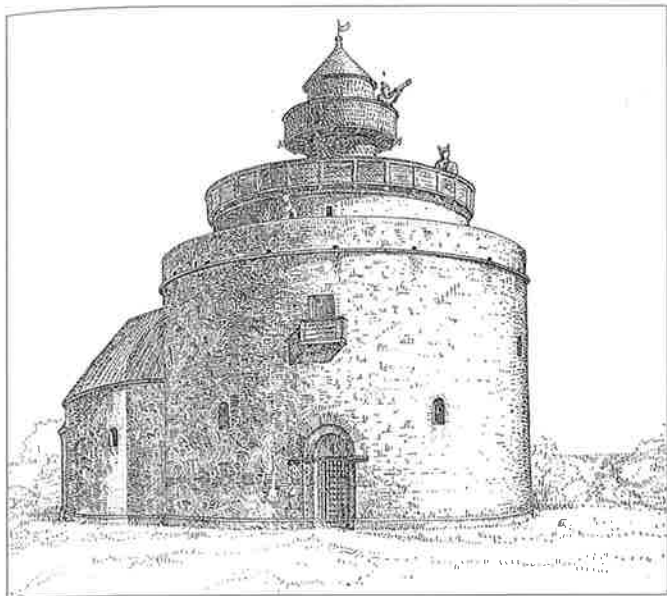


Fig. 3: The church of Nylars reconstructed as a fortified church. Drawing by Charles Christensen 1940 in the National museum in Copenhagen.

Hildebrand and the archaeologist J. B. Løffler (Brunius 1850, pp. 13 ff.; 1860; Hildebrand 1875, pp. 18 ff., 26 f.; Løffler 1883, pp. 130 ff.). And after this the defensive churches occur in almost all surveys of architecture or history of art and also in a great number of larger or minor books and articles on single types, regions or monuments.

As a reaction a debate emerged in the Danish periodical *Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie*. The debate was started by colonel Otto Blom, who denied the occurrence of fortified churches in Denmark. Comparing medieval fortresses, Blom found, that the churches which had been pointed out were not convincing as fortifications. Example after example was rejected, so that only one single church survived the investigation, namely Nylars (Fig. 3) on Bornholm (Blom 1895). The article was followed by several Swedish contributions for and Danish contributions against the occurrence of fortified churches (Ekhoff 1899; Løffler & Mackeprang 1902; Mathiesen 1902, pp. 54 ff.; Jensen 1918).

The architect C. G. Schultz estimated, that the Swedes had gone too far by claiming the defensive character of the churches, and that they had met a Danish scepticism, which »only gave way, so to speak church by church« (Schultz 1945, pp. 84 f.). However I would rather see a rise of contrary options during the 20th Century, which partly went beyond the countries: On the one side the *maximalists*, who found a defense everywhere at churches with a deviating plan or on an elevation. Maximalists are known from Sweden as well as Denmark and Germany (e.g. Hildebrand 1884–98, II pp. 671 ff.; Ekhoff 1899; Frölén 1910–11, I pp. 81 ff.; Beckett 1924, I pp. 164 ff., 181 ff.; Tuulse 1955, pp. 115 ff.; Tuulse et al. 1960; Boström 1982; Hinz 1985 with a catalogue; Lange 1987). On the other side the *minimalists*, who have been sceptical to accepting defensive churches except from a few plain examples which had an archers' gallery. Several minimalists have been representatives of an antiquarian tradition connected with the National Museum in Copenhagen (e.g. Mackeprang 1920, pp. 38 ff.; Langberg 1955, I pp. 68 ff.; Johannsen & Smidt 1981, pp. 52 ff.; Kjær & Grindler-Hansen 1988, pp. 43 ff.; Jacobsen 1993, p. 59, 68), but some are also known from Sweden (e.g. Steffen 1901, pp. 33 ff.).

With changing datings different opinions concerning the reason for the fortification of the churches has followed: The churches would have been fortified against attacks from king Erik Præstehader of Norway or the outlaws in the 1280s (Thurah 1756, p. 53). The churches would have been strongholds in the struggle between the church and the kingship – i.e. between archbishop Eskil and Valdemar the Great in the 12th Century, between archbishop Jakob Erlandsen and Christoffer I and Erik Klipping in the 1250s and 60s or between archbishop Jens Grand and Erik Menved in the 1290s (Friis 1853–56, p. 153; Wiborg 1853–56, pp. 525 f.; Frölén 1910–11, I pp. 136 ff.). But soon the opinions converged, so that heathen Wends, Curonians and Estonians were pointed out as the main threat at the Baltic Sea, either in the period before the conquest of Rygen in 1169 or in the period c. 1170–1240 (e.g. Brunius 1860, pp. 127 f., 155; Beckett 1924–26, I pp. 164 ff.; Tuulse 1955, pp. 159 ff.; Boström 1982, pp. 25 f.; Lindgren 1995, pp. 94 f.; Nielsen 1998, p. 31).

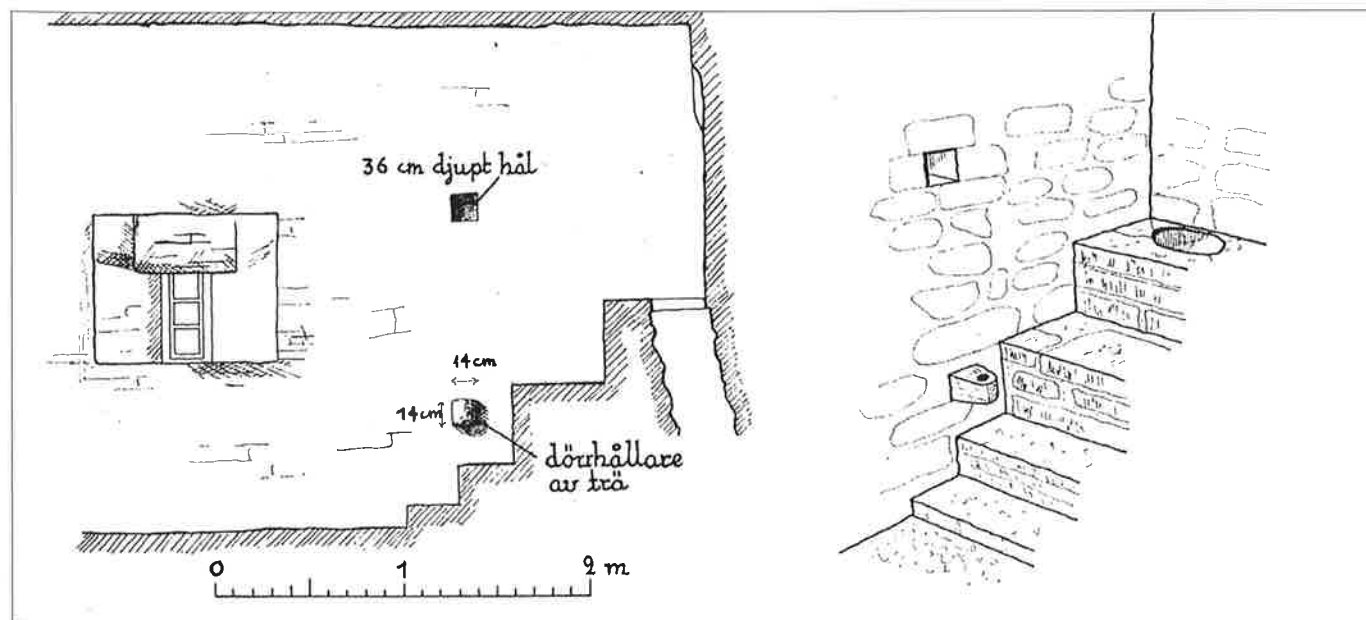


Fig. 4: The toilet in the church tower of Föra on Öland. Drawing and sketch in SvK 142, 1972

Profane function

Another major theory has accentuated the profane functions of the churches and neglected the role of fortification. The churches would have been used for staying or habitation, as storehouses for commodities or as treasure houses.

Thus the rural dean Abraham Ahlqvist mentioned in his *Ölands Historia och Beskrifning* that the church of Källa, just as Föra, were used as »Convivii house (guest-room) partly for the clergymen, during their mutual visits, partly for travelling monks.« (Ahlqvist 1825, II 1, p. 91, 126 quotation) In the church tower in Föra, just as in Alböke, we find arrangements for a fireplace and a toilet (Fig. 4) which prove that the church tower might be used for habitation.

The idea of the churches as hostelry received new attention through the investigations in the 1950s by Iwar Anderson of the church of Halltorp in Möre. In a cellar under the church room wall benches and traces from habitation and handicraft were found. Here strikingly many coins and even preliminary works of seal-matrices belonging to bishops of the 1240s were found. The finds were interpreted by Anderson as traces of crusaders (Anderson 1956, pp. 19 ff.; 1960, pp. 18 ff.; see also Andersson 1983, pp. 193 f., 200).

Later the art historian Ragnhild Boström discovered finds by »vacuum-cleaning« towers and lofts. It revealed that many churches on the isle of Öland were used for habitation (Boström & Nilsson 1971; Boström 1982, pp. 32 ff.; cf. also Eriksson 1983 on Bjälbo).

The theory of the so-called merchant churches, i.e. churches which were used seasonally by visiting merchants for service and storage of commodities, has influenced the interpretation of the churches at the Baltic Sea. Starting from the well known St. Peter in Novgorod especially the historian Paul Johansen claimed the existence of many merchants' churches in Northern and Eastern Europe in the 1950s and 60s. The extraordinarily many churches in e.g. Lund, Visby and Roskilde, he thought were due to the fact, that they were merchant churches. And inspired by this also churches outside the towns have been interpreted as merchant churches. The theory, however, has been much debated (Johansen 1965 a; 1965 b; cfr. Yrwing 1980, Andrén 1985, pp. 34 ff. and Nyborg 1990, pp. 18 f.). Regardless of the criticism it might be said, that using churches as stores was not that much uncommon in the Middle Ages.

The upper storeys in the round churches of Bornholm, just as the vaulted rooms of the towers, have been interpreted as stores for commodities. The first time the idea appear in the handbook *Hvem byggede Hvad*, where the architect C. G. Schultz writes that the towers at the churches of Åker and St. Ib were used as storehouse or warehouse for commodities and taxes (Schultz in Langberg 1952 pp. 136 f., 246). Later the viewpoint was vigorously stated by the author and historian Palle Lauring in the travelguide *Bornholm*. Lauring rejects completely that the churches of Bornholm had been defensive churches: »It is more difficult with women and children, who always are placed in all wet tower rooms of the gloomy churches. One is told here (St. Ib), in Østerlars, in the other three round churches, in the church of Åker, everywhere where there is a scary stone room, it is meant for the unfortunate women and children. One might see them, sitting here, waiting, while the men are fighting. One sees it with the eyes of the Romantic 19th Cen-

ture, because the myth is created by Romanticism. There is not a single authentic account on women and children in the towers, not a single line about them ever work sitting here. It is guess.« (Lauring 1957, pp. 118 f.)

The historian Erik Skov, who took part in the publishing of Bornholm in *Danmarks Kirker*, in the same way interpreted the round church of Østerlars as a storehouse or warehouse for grain and furs of the trade farmers (Skov 1960).

And since the 1950s several others have suggested, that the upper storeys in the churches were used as »treasuries«. Thus the building archaeologist Iwar Anderson proposed, that the small rooms in the church of Halltorp in Möre might have been used as »treasuries« in times of unrest (Anderson 1956, p. 11). But regarding the initiative to the treasuries and their more specific content, the opinions vary: Grain belonging to the peasants or a local magnate (Poulsen 1977, pp. 131 f.); refuge or treasury for the travelling king (Johannsen & Smidt 1981, p. 59); storehouse for commodities or »tax collecting centre« to the local nobility (Anglert 1985, pp. 34 f.); storehouse for the taxes and duties of the archbishopric (Wienberg 1986, pp. 56 ff.); storehouse for the taxes in kind of the peasants (Ferm & Andersson in SvK 207, 1989, p. 51 f. with note 31); storehouse for taxes or »supporting points in a system of control« for the royal family, the »folkungeæt«, and the central power (Anglert 1993, pp. 166 f.).

Together with these interpretations new viewpoints followed concerning the fortification of the churches: The medieval archaeologist Marit Anglert suggested, that the churches in Möre and on Öland were fortified by magnates in order to oppose the expanding central power (Anglert 1985, p. 33). I myself suggested that the fortification of the round churches on Bornholm was aimed either against attacks of pagans or against rebellious local peasants (Wienberg 1986, pp. 56 ff.).

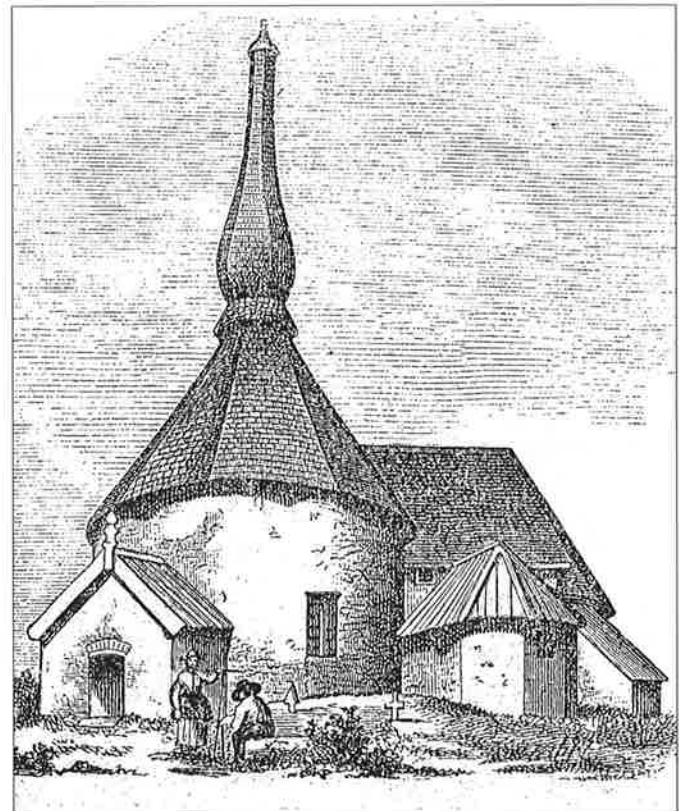


Fig. 5: The round church of Skörstorp in Västergötland. In Hildebrandt 1875

Symbolic form

Parallel with the theory of the defensive church and the theories on the profane functions of the churches a third theory occurred, which also was meant to explain the peculiar churches. The unusual plan or architecture of the churches was explained with reference to their symbolic function. Important buildings in the Christian world were taken as a model: The architecture was supposed to send a message.

The round churches belong to the first category of churches, whose forms were interpreted in terms of their symbolic meaning. Already in the handbook *Den kyrkliga konsten under Sveriges medeltid* the archaeologist Hans Hildebrand understood the Nordic round churches (Fig. 5) as an imitation of Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, which became known by the crusades (Hildebrand 1875, pp. 22 f.). And after this reference to Holy Sepulchre and other central buildings frequently in the literature commenting upon. On the other hand it is in the very recent decades, that the symbolic effect of architecture has been emphasized as an explanation in Scandinavia (e.g. Johannsen & Smidt 1981, pp. 50 ff.; Wienberg 1986, p. 54; Kærulf Møller 1987, pp. 140 f.; Kjær & Grønder-Hansen 1988, p. 45).

Gradually the symbolic interpretation has been applied to more and more categories of churches: not only to round churches, but also to churches with round towers, polygonal churches, churches with eastern towers and broad western towers (e.g. Tuulse 1968; 1969). Scandinavian kings, aristocrats and princes of the church imitated the architecture in Palestine as well as the exemplary great powers such as the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the Carolingian Empire and Germany of the Ottos and Staufer.

This approach has expanded under the influence of German scholars as Günter Bandmann; some approaches embrace the deviation, some embrace the church considered to be normal, sometimes not only single elements have been interpreted symbolically, but the whole church building. To begin with, the perspective was used in the study of more developed buildings, but later the analysis was extended to all churches regardless of rank and size (e.g. Johannsen & Smidt 1981, pp. 94 ff.).

Combinations – fortresses, storehouses and symbols

The field of remarkable churches is both heterogeneous and ambiguous. There is a long distance, not only geographically, but also architectonically between the churches which have been considered to be defensive churches, churches with non-sacred rooms or symbolic churches. But actually this does not surprise. Because the only thing the remarkable churches have in common, is the fact that they differ from the »normal« churches.

Still, the three main theories have often been presented uncompromisingly as mutually excluding regarding the correct interpretation: Either the church was a defensive church, or a storehouse, or a symbolic building. Exceptionally clear is the rivalry between the interpretations of the church of Kalundborg with its five towers. Here the unusual architecture simply cries for an explanation. And the scale of the research has swung backwards and forwards between fortification and symbolic form, at present in favour of symbolism (a historical overview

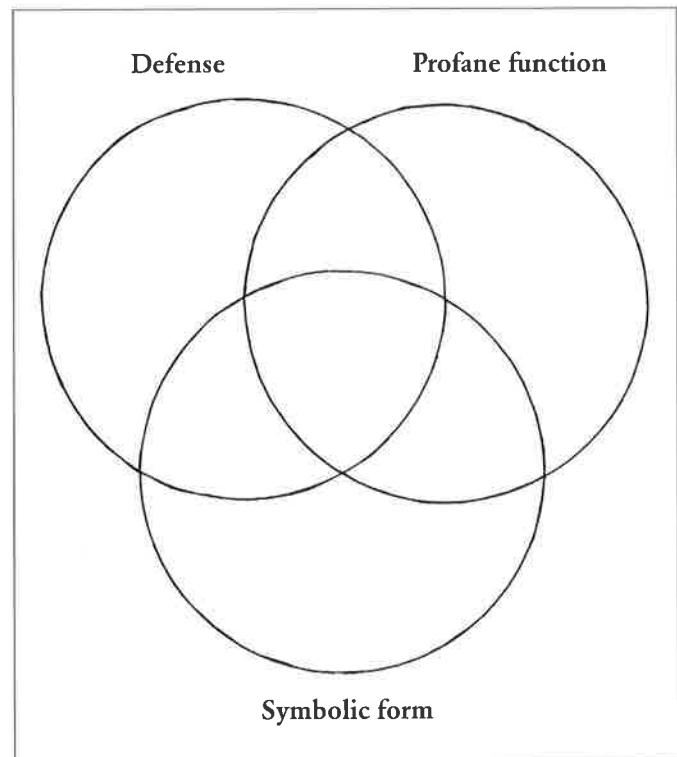


Fig. 6: Combination of theories concerning defence, profane function, and symbolic form

of the research in DK IV Holbæk, 29–31, 1996, pp. 3045 ff.). In the same way the reader might be confronted with categorical statements in which the theory of defence is rejected as a fallacy or as obsolete in relation to the theory of the profane functions (e.g. Anglert 1993, p. 164; Anglert & Sjögren 1998).

In my opinion all three theories are relevant. They are relevant because churches in fact have been used as refuge (recent in vain in Rwanda), just as many churches have elements of fortification. Churches have held non-ecclesiastical functions such as habitation, store and treasury. And churches have had symbolic meanings. But none of the three theories is by itself sufficient to cover the whole range of churches considered to be not normal. It is necessary to combine the theories.

A simple synthesis of the three theories might be that we have a symbolic defense of churches, with non-ecclesiastical functions, too. A possible crenellating then is more a symbol than a means of real fortification. As has been stated several times in connection with research: Without moats and ramparts and high sitting entrances, that is a strong defense at the base, the churches were weak as fortresses in relation to the castles of their age. But this synthesis might only explain a few churches. Too many peculiar churches are left outside.

The theories might be combined in a plain model (Fig. 6), which allows the majority of the peculiar churches to be categorized in relation to the variables defence, profane function and symbolic form. For each of the seven fields of the model I will mention some examples as an illustration:

1) *Defence-function-symbol*, i.e. churches which unite elements of fortification with non-ecclesiastical functions and a symbolic plan. Examples are the round churches of Østerlars and Nylars on Bornholm, both with three storeys, a church room, a store and at the top an archers gallery, which at Nylars was crenellated (DK VII Bornholm, 1954–59, pp. 244 ff., 383 ff.).

2) *Defence-function*, i.e. churches with fortificative elements and

non-ecclesiastical functions, but without a symbolic plan. A very good example is the church of Källa on Öland with three storeys (SvK 128, 1969).

3) *Function-symbol*, i.e. churches with non-ecclesiastical functions and a symbolic plan, but without elements of fortification. As examples two central plan churches on Zealand might be mentioned: The round church of Bjernede with an upper storey in the round nave and Store Heddinge with a polygonal nave, where the chancel has an upper storey (DK V Sorø, 1936, pp. 351 ff.; VI Præstø, 1933–35, pp. 53 ff.).

4) *Symbol-defence*, i.e. churches with a symbolic plan and elements of fortification, but without non-ecclesiastical functions. An example might be the church with five towers in Kalundborg on Zealand, where it is difficult to decide, which part of the building was fortification, and which part is due to a symbol and at the same time room for non-ecclesiastical functions is missing (DK IV Holbæk, 29–31, 1996, pp. 3017 ff.).

5) *Defence*, i.e. churches with elements of fortification, but without non-ecclesiastical functions and without a symbolic plan. An example might be Tranebjerg on Samsø, where the church tower might be changed into defence, maybe for the bailiff of the island (DK IV Holbæk, 25–26, 1993, pp. 2561 ff.).

6) *Function*, i.e. churches with non-ecclesiastical functions, without a symbolic plan and without elements of fortification. Plenty of the churches might belong to this group: Bjälbo in Östergötland, where the church tower was arranged as a palace on the manor of earl Birger (Eriksson 1983); Kinsarvik in Hordaland, where the loft was used for keeping the canvas of the navy (Christie 1986); St. Mary in Visby with a mighty storage loft above the middle nave (SvK 175, 1978, pp. 110 ff., 164 ff.); the churches of Kaarma, Karja and Püha on Ösel, where the rector might have had his habitation above the sacristy (Tuulse 1940; 1945) – and many others.

7) *Symbol*, i.e. churches with a symbolic plan, without elements of fortification and without non-ecclesiastical functions. Examples are churches with round or polygonal towers as Hammarlunda in Scania and Lärbro on Gotland (Gustafsson & Weidhagen 1968; SvK 42, II Gotland, 1935, pp. 93 ff.). Many of the round churches must also have belonged to this category, but it is difficult to decide, when only the plan or the lower parts are known. Examples might be All Saints in Roskilde and the basilica St. Michael in Slesvig (Schultz 1950; Vellev 1997).

Multiple concepts

The trouble with delimiting and understanding the peculiar churches result from the multiple concepts of the field. The literature swarms with various concepts which seldom are defined or explained. Often the choice of a concept seems to be a little casual and might vary in the very same text. But it is possible both to systematize the concepts and to observe different tendencies in the course of time.

Just as the research history the concepts can be divided into three groups. Firstly concepts which emphasize fortification: Defensive work, defensive church, church castle, parish fortification, fortification work, fortification church and fortified church. Secondly concepts which point out the functions of

the church: Warehouse church, multi-functional church, storage church and church with non-sacred functions or rooms. Thirdly concepts which had their starting-point in the architectural form of the church: Round church, polygonal church, cross church, central church, pack-saddle-church, church with round tower, church with eastern tower and rectangular church with several storeys.

During the 18th and 19th Centuries the odd churches were compared with fortresses. Carl Georg Brunius was the first who characterized the churches as defensive works (Brunius 1850, pp. 13 ff.). But as far as I know the concept of the defensive church appeared much later, namely in a book by Hans Hildebrand, in which he mentions Källstad in Östergötland (Hildebrand 1907, p. 25). The theory on the church as a refuge was by then fully established. And the concept of the defensive church became uniting and widely spread during the entire 20th Century (e.g. Tuulse et al. 1960; Lindgren 1995, pp. 94 f.). As the theory of the defensive church was rejected, also the concept of the defensive church was criticised. Gradually new words and formulations were used to characterize the functions of the churches: »Upper storey for clerical or secular use« (Wanscher 1943, p. 37); »profane purpose« and »supply rooms« (Åkerlund 1945, p. 75, 80); »stores« (Schultz in Langberg 1952, p. 137); »secular use« (Langberg 1955, I p. 69); »storage house« and »warehouse« (Lauring 1957, pp. 121 f); »very un-ecclesiastical use« (Skov 1960, p. 2); »profane activity« and »profane field storey« (Anderson 1967 pp. 29 f); »storage church« (Wienberg 1986, p. 45); »non-ecclesiastical functions« and »profane rooms« (Andersson & Bartholin 1990, p. 183).

Most clear is the tendency in the works by Marit Anglert, who writing about the churches in Möre and on Öland firstly used the words »fortified church« and »non-sacred functions«, then »multi-functional churches« and »non-sacred space« and lately churches with »non-sacred rooms« (Anglert 1985, p. 19, 27; 1993, p. 164, 167; Anglert & Sjögren 1998).

In the attempts hitherto at new interpretations it was common to accentuate the division between on the one hand the ecclesiastical, the holy or the sacred – and on the other hand the non-ecclesiastical, the profane or the secular. The contrast between the sacred and the profane, between the holy and the secular, is a categorization known especially from works by the sociologist Émile Durkheim and from the historian of religion Mircea Eliade. However the categorization has influenced our whole world of thoughts including archaeology. And it is considered to be so fundamental that a synthesis seems impossible. We achieve an either-or, where either the one or the other is permitted to dominate: Either a sanctification (e.g. sacred kingship) or a secularization (e.g. the French or the Russian revolution) (cf. Durkheim 1912, pp. 50 ff.; Eliade 1968, pp. 10 ff.; Garwood et al. 1991).

The categorization into sacred and profane is in itself a testimony of a secularization. The dichotomy was established in Europe in the same period as church and society separated. The division reflects a modern world-view. In order to understand medieval mentality and material remnants, I claim it to be necessary to observe the mutual dependence between the sacred and the profane. The sacred and the profane do not constitute a dichotomy, but a continuum. Cosmos contains both the holy and the secular without final boundaries. The spheres overlap both in time and space. Materially it might

be expressed in an *architecture of fusion* which transgresses the boundaries of the four orders. The fusion might also be expressed with another concept by Eliade as a »coincidentia oppositorum«, that is, a coincidence of contrasts (cf. Altizer 1963, pp. 81 ff.).

In the church of Källa we observe the symbiosis between the sacred and the profane. Within the walls of the churchyard and the church building elements of heaven and earth were integrated. The sacred and the profane were at the same time divided (in different storeys) and united (into one building). But just as we lack words for the symbiosis between the sacred and the profane, we lack words for the churches which reconcile both.

In my opinion the best concept so far is that of »multi-functional churches«, because it might refer both to the sacred and the profane, and because it is open to ambiguity. But still it is not a correct description. Because all churches have been multi-functional, even if the function were not always assigned separate rooms. Churches have, apart from liturgy, had plenty of functions, from arsenal, seamount, school, library, room for a guild and archive to granary and beer cellar (cf. Uldall 1931–32; Kjær & Grønder-Hansen 1988, pp. 143 ff.). And the concept of multi-functional churches can hardly cover all the churches which in course of the time have been regarded as defensive churches. But owing to the lack of an alternative I will continue to use the concept of multi-functional churches.

The question then is, why at all an architecture of fusion appeared?

Holy defense

When Christianity was introduced into Scandinavia, the church was totally dependent on the defense by the mighty. As the historian Carsten Breengaard argues in *Muren om Israels hus*, it was especially the King, who had to protect the clergy against the arbitrariness of the mighty (Breengaard 1982, pp. 104 ff.; cfr. Skovgaard-Petersen 1984). The political and social dependence got its material expression in the integration of the church into the sphere of the king and the mighty: The manorial church on the croft of the manor, the village church between the farms of the village, the town church in the middle of the town and the castle chapel as a part of the castle itself.

Gradually as the church won in strength and was established as an institution with the right to receive tithe and testamentary gifts, the relationship between the church and the mighty changed. Sheltered by church laws, immunity and solid incomes the church could gradually free itself from the protection by the mighty. The European investiture contest and the local fights between the King and the bishops show the development towards *libertas ecclesiae* especially during the 13th and 14th Centuries, that is the liberty of the church from secular influence.

In the development towards liberty there is a medium phase, where the church had won in strength and prestige, but still was protected by the mighty. In my opinion it is in this phase of mutual dependence, the multi-functional churches appear. Now the symbolism and the holiness of the church could contribute to the protection of the non-ecclesiastical functions. Where the church had been located on the manor, in

the middle of the village, in the middle of the town or inside the castle, the activities of the manor, the village, the town and the castle moved into the churchyard or even into the church building. The workshop of the manor, the barn of the village, the warehouse of the town and the hall of the manor were organised in the church tower, in the »cellar« of the church or maybe as a storey above the nave or the chancel. And just as the agrarian, urban or military activities outside the church might be casual, seasonal or permanent, the activities within the church might be the same.

Consequently a symbolic protection of previously profane functions was common to the multi-functional churches. These profane functions were turned sacred by their location within the church. The aim was to integrate functions in the church, so that they became a part of the holy church. Thus the so-called »non-sacred rooms« were just sacred!

However my interpretation is not totally new. The historian Hugo Matthiessen in *Torv og Hærstræde* already emphasizes the connection between the market square and the town church: »In the dark Middle Ages it was probably by no means unnecessary, that the peace of the market square in addition sought support in the consecrated area of the church«. Further he says that »On the holiday, when bells sounded for feast, not only the churchyard was taken into use, no, the noise and vitality of the market poured as a lake over the graves of the dead into the sanctuary itself, filling the church vaults with the echo of earthly joy.« (Matthiessen 1922, pp. 71 f.).

The author and historian Palle Lauring gives in the guidebook *Bornholm* a characterization of the round churches and church towers of the island as »The warehouse of the settlement covered and protected by the holyness of the church, the idea is simple.« (Lauring 1957, s 122 f.). After this, spokesmen of the profane functions have indicated in single lines that trade

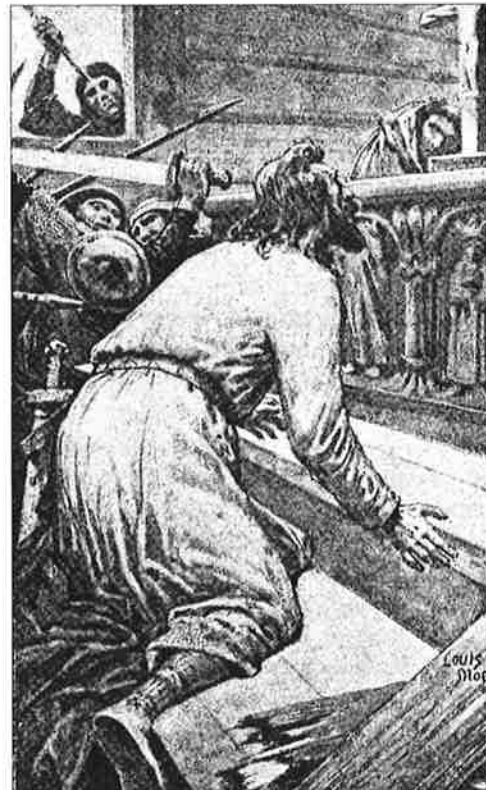


Fig. 7: The death of Canute the Holy in St. Albans in Odense 1086. Illustration by Louis Moe to Saxo Grammaticus, Danmarks Krønike, 1898.

maybe was conducted in shelter of the church peace (Anglert 1985, pp. 34), that the peace and symbolism of the church might mean a defense of stored taxes (Wienberg 1986, p. 58), and that the churches united the sacred and the profane (Wienberg 1989, p. 31). The mention of stables on the churchyard of Vestervig in 1489 and the prohibition by Kristian II in 1521 against markets in churchyards shows, that trade was in fact exercised on the ground of churches, at least in the late Middle Ages (Matthiessen 1922, pp. 71 ff.; Uldall 1931–32, pp. 224 f.). But the perspective has to be wider and include not only market trade and taxes, but the whole spectrum of activities which moved into the church.

The church peace and the church asylum are well known from canonical texts, hagiographical texts, chronicles and the Nordic laws, and the subject has aroused interest with the focus on space in the latest years. That the idea of church peace was widespread, is obvious from the many examples of people with greater or lesser luck seeking refuge in the churches, from Canute the Holy in St. Albans in Odense 1086 (Fig. 7) to duke Skule in the monastery of Elgeseter in 1240. In several laws fines were laid down in a hierarchy, according to which the lowest amount had to be paid for crimes committed on the way to the church and the highest for crimes committed at the altar (Hildebrand 1898–1903, III, pp. 837 ff.; Palme et al. 1959; Hamre et al. 1977; Nilsson 1991; Harrison 1998, pp. 22 ff.; Andrén 1999).

The many activities which were located on the churchyard or carried on inside the church building, everything from crusaders staying over night to storing of furs, must have been covered by the peace of the church and the relatively high fines of the church law. Thus the Scanian Church law from about 1210 mentions protection of things which were placed in the church (DGL 1: 2, s 825–827/§4).

The multi-functional churches appeared in a phase when *regnum* and *sacerdotium*, King and church, cooperated. We see a sacred anointed kingship by the grace of God, at the same time as the clergy had a share in the rule and property of the kingdom. And we see on the one side the peace by the king over towns, markets and harbours, and on the other side the peace by the church over the church and the parish. Several scholars pointed to the complementary function between the towns and the fortified churches. These churches were built in regions where the royal power was absent or weak, i.e. in areas without towns or royal castles. Thus Palle Lauring finds that the churches of Bornholm were connected to a local trade »before the great boom of the towns« (Lauring 1957, p. 122). And scholars have suggested, that storage churches might have become superfluous with the establishment of castles or towns nearby (Wienberg 1986, p. 58 on Hammershus; Anglert 1993, pp. 166 f. on Borgholm and Kalmar).

The task is now more specifically to find a context in which the multi-functional churches at the Baltic Sea and their fortification became meaningful. But first it is necessary to specify the chronology.

Chronology

Crucial for the interpretation of the multi-functional churches is their dating. The chronology was, however, uncertain for

a long time. Often the historical interpretation decided the question. Thus the round churches of Bornholm were dated to the years before the conquest of Rygen 1169, generally around 1150. It has been presupposed, that they were built as defensive churches against the Wends (Wienberg 1986, pp. 50 ff.).

Building archaeological investigations since the 1940s in Möre and on Öland made obvious that the development of the churches was much more complicated than previously supposed. The churches went through several phases from »normal« Romanesque churches to later warehouse churches or pack-saddle-churches. The transformation of the churches in Möre and on Öland to multi-functional churches were firstly re-dated with conventional methods to the 13th Century (Åkerlund 1945; Tuulse 1955; Anderson 1960; 1967; Andersson 1983; Boström 1983). I myself argued that the round churches of Bornholm also ought to be redated to the 13th Century (Wienberg 1986, pp. 52, 60).

Later astonishing dendro-chronological datings came from Halltorp, Hossmo and Vøxtorp in Möre and also from Resmo on Öland, which dated the upper storeys and the fortification later and by this almost out of reach for heathen attacks. Especially Hossmo is well dated by now: I Wooden church; II Stone church c. 1120; III Chancel tower c. 1180; IV Upper storey after 1194; V Fortified upper storey c. 1242 +/-5 (Andersson & Bartholin 1990; Boström & Bartholin 1990; also Anglert 1993).

The complicated development of the church of Källa has not been fixed yet with the help of dendro-chronology. There is only a single dendro-chronological dating to 1316 +/- 5 from re-used timber in a window. Basing her arguments on building archaeological analysis, comparison with other churches and the common historical development, the art historian Ragnhild Boström asserted the following development: I Wooden church c. 1050–1100; II Stone tower added to the wooden church in the 1170s; III Stone church replacing the wooden church c. 1200; IV Profane upper storey in the beginning of the 13th Century; V Archers' storey and reduction of the tower around the middle of the 13th Century (SvK 128, 1969; Boström 1978b; Boström & Bartholin 1990, pp. 207 ff.). The phases are convincing, but the individual datings must be assessed with scepticism, because they are closely related to the theory of defensive churches and suppositions regarding different external threats.

Using the dendro-chronological datings it is possible roughly to sketch periods for the stone churches in Möre and on Öland. Hypothetically the periods might include Bornholm, where the churches also went through changes, but from where we still lack exact datings: *Period I*, c. 1100–1170: »Normal« churches. *Period II*, c. 1170–1240: Multi-functional churches, partly new buildings, partly by rebuilding. *Period III*, c. 1240–1340: Multi-functional churches were fortified, some new churches of this kind were built. *Period IV*, after c. 1340: Gradually end of multi-functional use and prohibition against the fortification of churches.

With the well dated church of Hossmo and the periods as starting point I will now take a closer look at the development at the Baltic Sea. The multi-functional churches thus seem to belong to the age of the Danish Baltic Sea empire, while the fortified churches appeared at the decline of the empire (cf. Wienberg 1989, p. 30).

Churches, crusades and Saint Canute Guilds

Under the Valdemarians, that is, during the rule of the Kings Valdemar the Great (1157–82), Knud Valdemarsen (1182–1202) and Valdemar the Victorious (1202–41), a Danish expansion took place around the Baltic Sea. Between 1169 and 1222 the countries along the southern coast of the Baltic Sea, from Holstein in the west to Curonia in the east, and also Estonia, were conquered or subordinated. However, the kidnapping of Valdemar the Victorious in 1223, the defeats at Mölln 1225 and at Bornhöved 1227 caused that the areas had to be given up. The age of the great power ended. Rygen remained under Danish rule until 1325, and Estonia formally, but not in effect, until 1346 (Skyum-Nielsen 1971, pp. 184, 213 ff., 276 ff.).

The Danish expansion around the Baltic Sea took place on different fronts and with several co-operative strategies in a race with especially Swedes and Germans. The expansion made use of the mission as well as of war, trade and colonisation. The cross, the sword, the scales and the plough co-operated.

A more or less peaceful Danish influence on churches and church building at the Baltic Sea has been claimed by several scholars: The art historian Ragnhild Boström has regarded the churches of Hulterstad and Resmo on Öland as erected by Danish master builders (Boström 1967; 1999, p. 84). The historians Curt Wallin and Nils Blomkvist connected the chapel of St. Canute at »Backaborg« or Gråborg on the isle of Öland respectively to the Danish Saint Canute Guild. They interpreted the chapel as the core in a »Canute factory«, i.e. a merchant church of the Saint Canute Guild (Wallin 1975, pp. 30 ff.; Blomkvist 1979a, pp. 196 ff.; 1979b, pp. 77 ff.). The medieval archaeologist Karin Andersson indicated Danish influence in Möre (Andersson 1983, p. 200). The archaeologist Ola Kyhlberg argued that the Danish archbishop Andreas Sunesen participated in the creation of the Gutasaga (Kyhlberg 1991, pp. 15 ff., 233 ff.). And recently the art historian Kersti Markus accentuated Denmark as a great power at the Baltic Sea until 1240 and has argued for a hitherto overlooked Danish presence on Gotland (Markus 2000 a; 2000 b).

The expansion was however first and foremost military, carried out by the navy. Many Danish crusades in the Baltic Sea are known, even if the information is scarce and scattered: To Mecklenburg in 1147 and Rygen in 1159–69, to Öland in 1170, to Finland in 1191 and 1202, to Ösel in 1206–07 and 1222, to Estonia in 1194, 1197 and 1219–1220 and to Prussia and Samland in 1210. A for a long time planned crusade to Estonia departed in 1244, but only came to Ystad in Scania (Gallén et al. 1964; Christiansen 1980, pp. 48 ff.; Hørby 1992; Jensen 2000; Schmidt 2000). The crusades had the blessing of the popes, but the borderlines between plunder, conquest and Christianization were diffuse. Crusade meant holy war.

The crusades had as an intermediate aim to gain control over the transit trade especially of furs over the Baltic Sea from Russia/Novgorod to Germany/Lübeck. But the crusades themselves made trade boom. The crusades demanded supplies of weapon, horses and food – and also the pagans needed supplies. Thus the crusades had as a consequence, that a blooming war economy arose around the Baltic Sea from the middle of the 12th Century to the middle of the 13th Century, where the neutral island of Gotland lead the way by selling to both sides. The connection between war and trade has not, however,

attracted much attention until now (Nyberg 1976; Blomkvist 1997, p. 56; Wienberg 2000, pp. 78 ff.).

Of importance in this context is the Danish Saint Canute Guild, which was a protective guild with Canute Lavard, later also Canute the Holy, as safeguards. King Valdemar was a member of the guild and supported the establishment of a house of the guild on Gotland. The Saint Canute Guild was prevalent in the Danish towns and in the Baltic Sea region along the trading routes to Reval (Tallinn) (Weibull 1947; Wallin 1975; Gilkær 1980). Thus the Saint Canute Guild represented a part of the Danish expansion in which the sacred and the profane were united, just as in the multi-functional churches.

In my opinion the majority of the multi-functional churches might be connected to the trade in the wake of the crusades. But the multi-functional churches were used as churches all the year round. And trade might be in the hands of local aristocrats as well as farmers, clergy and guilds. Thus the multi-functional churches can not be reduced to neither merchants' churches nor to churches only for the Saint Canute Guild.

More fundamental I would claim, that the multi-functional churches were an architectural analogy to the cooperation between the King and the church, to the brotherhood of the Canute Guilds and to the armed mission of the crusades. Because what characterized the churches, the politics, the guild and the crusades was the symbiosis between the sacred and the profane. The period of cooperation began with the church feast in Ringsted in 1170, at which the father of Valdemar the Great, Canute Lavard, was canonized, and the son Canute was anointed and crowned heir to the throne. The period ended in 1245, when the chancellor of the king, bishop Niels Stigsen of Roskilde, was exiled. But this general interpretation does not explain, why the multi-functional churches were common on Bornholm, in Möre and on Öland.

Hitherto the answers have referred to external threats, to farmers' trade and to the absence of towns. The neighbourhood to the Baltic countries might give cause for another explanation. The symbiosis has its most pronounced expression in the Teutonic Order and Livonia, which have been called a »theocratic experiment« (cf. Christiansen 1980, p. 118). Our knowledge of the political and social structure on Bornholm, in Möre and on Öland is however limited. The relationship between the Danish and the Swedish royal powers was not unambiguous. And despite many runic stones an aristocracy was apparently lacking. A »theocratic« structure, in which the chieftain also was a priest, and where the manor was a parsonage, can not be supported. But maybe the concept of a »land community«, which has been applied to Friesland and Gotland, might also be of relevance on Bornholm and Öland (cf. Ganse 1990).

Denmark under the Valdemarians has been characterized as a crusader state, and we find several traces of a crusader ideology (Hørby 1992; Jensen 2000): Saint Canute Guilds, the cross flag on coins of Valdemar the Great and Knud Valdemarsen as well as the debated wall-painted cavalry friezes in the churches. But the best expression of a crusader ideology probably were the round churches, which as symbols for Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem has been more or less firmly connected with the age of the crusades or to crusaders by several scholars (Frölen 1910–11, I pp. 7 ff., 136; Johannsen & Smidt 1981, pp. 105 f.; Wienberg 1986, p. 54; Andrén 1989). However the round churches, as the churches with round towers, need not indicate that the

building owners themselves had participated in the crusades, but simply that they wanted to express their sympathies with the ideology. Then the round churches, which mainly occurred on Zealand, on Bornholm, in Möre, in Västergötland, in Östergötland and in Uppland, and the churches with round towers, which mainly occurred in Southern Jutland and in Scania, might represent individuals or regions which approved the ideology. And we see a picture which Gotland showing its neutrality by the absence of symbols for the crusades. Apart from the polygonal church of All Saints in Visby among the

island referred to the patron saints of the churches (Ericson 1962). Parish names after saints otherwise only occurred in the towns and at pilgrimage churches (e.g. St. Olof in Skåne). Thus Bornholm appears to have been a sacred landscape in the middle of the stream of crusaders, merchants and pirates. But the demonstration of the crusader ideology on Bornholm need not only have been a sign turned outwards. It might just as well have been directed at the natives of Bornholm, who traditionally (as well as the Gotlanders) had lively contacts with their pagan neighbours.

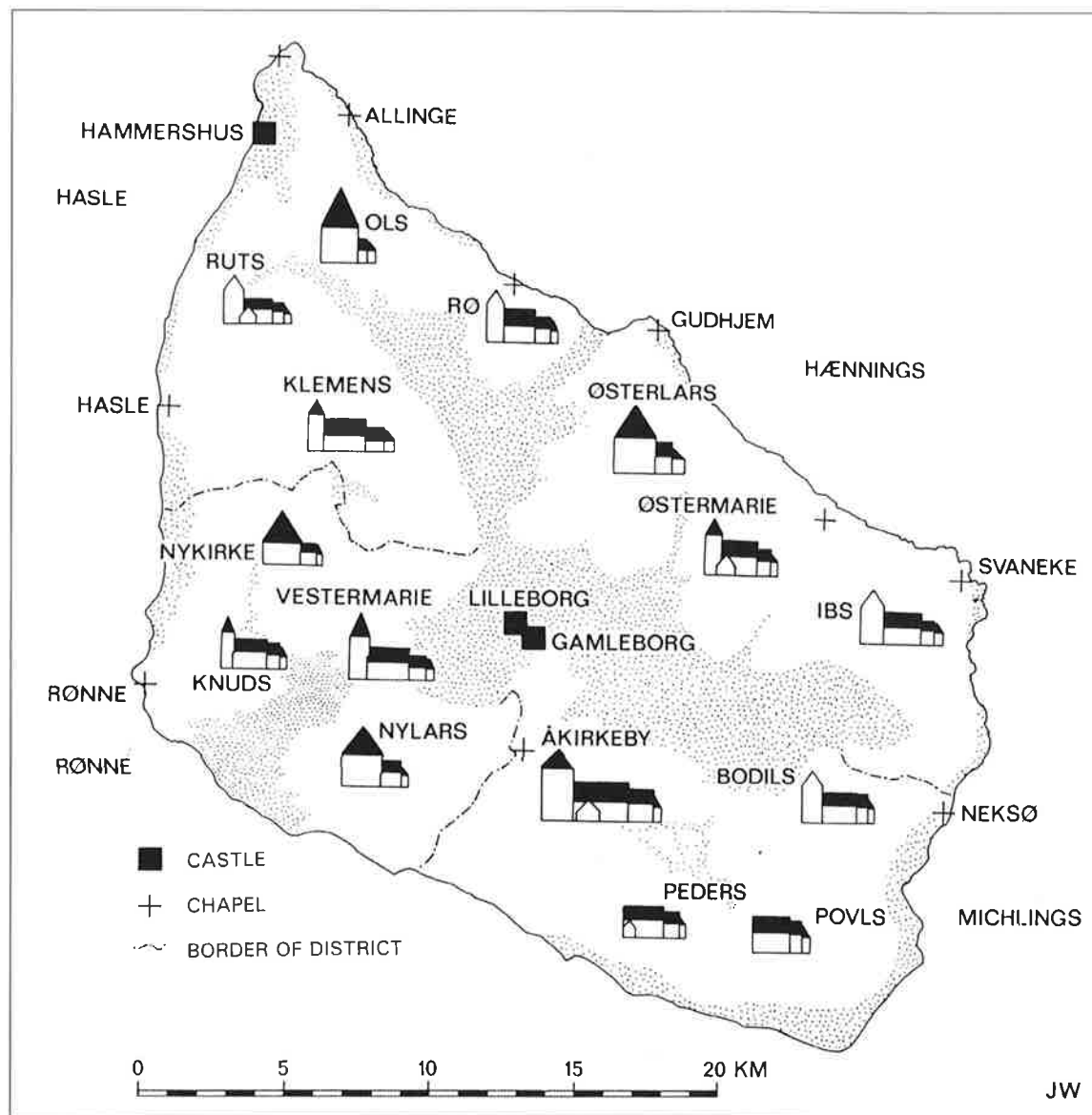


Fig. 8: Bornholm in the Middle Ages. After Wienberg, 1986.

95 parish churches in the countryside there was not a single round church and not a single church with a round tower. In the light of the crusader ideology Bornholm (Fig. 8) differed from the other regions: Bornholm belonged to the archbishop of Lund, i.e. the archbishop which supported the crusades. The archbishop had erected Hammershus high on a cliff, where it was well visible to all who followed the sailing route to the Baltic Sea. Of 15 Romanesque parish churches no less than 4 were round churches. And most of the parish names of the

Defense of the Holy

The theory of the defensive church unites Möre, Öland and Bornholm under a common threat of heathen attacks. According to the theory of the merchant church the peculiar churches of the regions might find a common explanation. But in case the churches are characterized as multi-functional and are connected to the state formation process, there is a need for individual explanations.

In the latest decades the multi-functional churches in Möre and on Öland, as well as the strange ring forts on Öland, have been seen in the context of the regional political developments (e.g. Anglert 1993, pp. 166 ff. and Borg 2000, pp. 9 ff.). This concerns the position of Möre and Öland in the conflict between rival Swedish royal families and the Valdemarians, the decline of Köping and the rise of Kalmar and the importance of the mythical King Bugislev, the Earls Birger Brosa and Ulf Fase and also Duke Knud Valdemarsen of Reval, later of Blekinge. But the sources only permit a few flashes of enlightenment. Most of this political storytelling remains speculations. And the political development in Möre and on Öland was hardly the same on Bornholm.

On Bornholm the situation was, if possible, even worse. Three of the four districts on Bornholm were subordinated to the seat of the archbishop in Lund as an endowment. There was a royal castle, Lilleborg, and later the castle Hammershus, which belonged to the archbishop (Wienberg 1986; Nielsen 1998, pp. 13 ff.). But about the power the king and the archbishopric really wielded over the island we do not know anything. Even if it is tempting to connect the fortified churches to the church struggles, it is guesswork. And the church struggle hardly was extended to Möre and Öland.

The developments in Möre, on Öland and on Bornholm might again be explained in the same way. The conditions were, however, that the Baltic Sea empire of the Valdemarians stretched out over the later national border between Sweden and Denmark, and that the multi-functional churches followed the same chronological development. There can not be any doubt, that the Danish Baltic Sea empire did exert an influence at least on Öland. Still the chronology is quite hypothetical. If the dendro-chronological datings from Möre and Öland are representative, it means, that the churches were fortified in the same period as the towns and many of the manors. Even if some churches, towns and manors were fortified already in the 12th Century, the greater part might belong to the so-called Danish »age of civil war«, c. 1240–1340. The fortified churches thus become part of the classical question concerning the era of the private castle. But why then were churches, towns and manors fortified? Or with a reformulation of the holy defense: Why was it even necessary to defend the sacred?

The fortifications belong to the period of unrest after the death of king Valdemar the Victorious in 1241: »God knows, with his death the crown fell off the head of the Danes«, as it is formulated in the annual of the monastery in Ryd (Ryd Klosters Årbog, p. 57). But the situation opens to many specific interpretations. On the one hand the period from the 1240s was filled with uttermost real conflicts between different branches of the royal family, between the king and the church, between the king and the aristocracy, within the Scandinavian kingdoms and between Christians and pagans, and apart from this several rebellions. And on the other hand the fortification of a few churches and many minor castles is not convincing.

The fortification of the churches reminds of the battlements in medieval England (Coulson 1982). And it reminds of the elements of fortification at the manor houses of the Renaissance (cf. Uldall 1931–32, p. 126). In both cases we find weak symbolic fortifications, where the aim partly was to manifest the aristocratic rank, partly to deter attacks. The fortification could not be used in real war, but might prevent burglary,

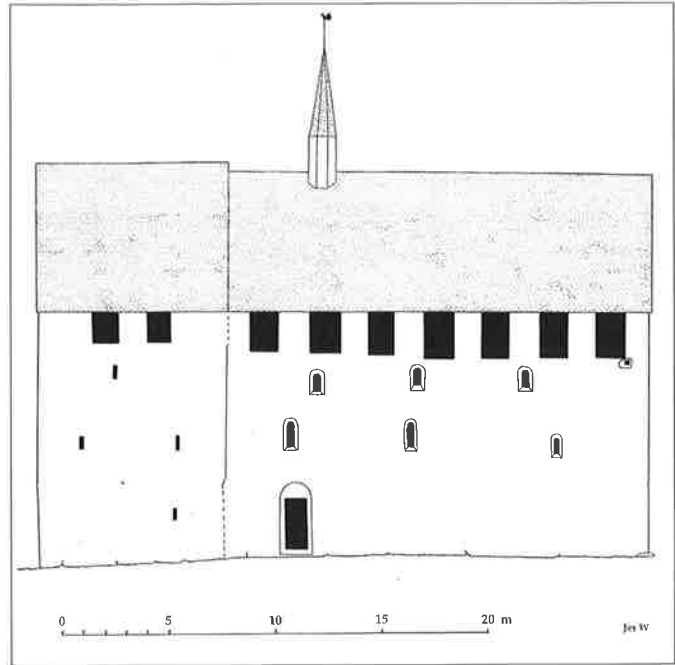


Fig. 9: The church of Källa in the middle of the 13th Century. Drawing based on the information in SvK 128, 1969

robbery, kidnapping and riots by villagers. In a period with political unrest and decentralisation of power (i.e. feudalisation) specific needs and cosmological conceptions united in a both-and. The fortification appeared as the authority of the king and the law no longer was sufficient to secure peace. The need was largest in the periphery of the kingdoms, that is, on Bornholm far from Zealand, and in Möre and on Öland far from Middle Sweden.

The fortification might be conceived as a real defence in a period of unrest and as a symbol. Källa might have had an archers' storey, because the church in fact was threatened, but the fortification might also be an imitation of the wall around Heavenly Jerusalem. In the same way the city wall of Visby might be a necessary defence against external enemies, a practical borderline to be able to put duty on commodities from the countryside, a symbolic boundary around an urban identity and a symbolic imitation of Heavenly Jerusalem. And the highly situated Hammershus might be a fortified strong point for the archbishopric, a sign of the sovereignty of the archbishopric over Bornholm and an earthly imitation of the Heavenly Castle. The difficulty in deciding if the multi-functional churches in fact were fortified or not, might thus have its background in a conscious architectural ambiguity. Källa was meant to look like a castle (Fig. 9), but not to function as one.

The fortification might be an answer to external military threats. The cause could have been the last pagan reactions before the Teutonic Order managed to rule Livonia. Thus the Order suffered several defeats in the decades after 1242 (Christiansen 1980, pp. 89 ff.). A pagan reaction might have meant new waves of attacks over the Baltic Sea. And what was a better target for the pagans than a church, being a symbol of the crusades? The churches and the monasteries were exposed in the rebellions in Livonia, so also the great Estonian rebellion of 1343 (Jakobsson 1989, pp. 20 f.). By this we are in fact back at the starting point, namely the theory of the defensive church and the external enemies.

The fortification might also be an answer to internal threats. If external expansion no longer was possible, the unrest could be turned inward (cf. Lindkvist 1988 and Vandkilde & Bertelsen 1999). When the Danish expansion at the Baltic Sea was forced to come to an end, and the crusader ideology therefore no longer was convincing as a political force of solidarity, the aristocracy and the clergy might have created a symbolic militarization of the churches as part of an internal mobilization.

The dating of the fortifications to the middle of the 13th Century also opens up new perspectives on the Baltic Sea. Halltorp and Kläckeberga in Möre and also Källa on Öland, which can be called castle churches, might have been inspired by the convent houses of the new great power of the Baltic Sea – the Teutonic Order. Thus the Baltic countries need not only to be seen as the home of raging pagans, but also as an architectural model. At present the datings west and east of the Baltic Sea converge, even if they have not reached each other yet. And looking at drawings we might observe both architectural and functional similarities between Kläckeberga, Källa and Arensburg (Kuressaare) (cf. Åkerlund 1945, pp. 63, 67; SvK 128, 1969, p. 333; Tuulse 1942, p. 220).

By the way, the Estonian art historian Armin Tuulse, who had to flee to Sweden, pointed out several churches as defensive churches in Estonia. Here the erection of multi-functional churches or fortified churches apparently continued until around 1500. Probably the development must be understood on the background of both internal and external threats, partly struggles between the German nobility and the Estonian peasants, and partly attacks from Russia (Tuulse 1940; 1945). As the social and political relations were quite different from those in Scandinavia, this becomes another story which demands its own critical investigation.

The liberation of the church

Finally after the middle of the 13th Century the church was able to free itself from the protection by the mighty. The ownership of the churches by the mighty was changed into the rights of the patronage, while the farmers took over the administration. Materially the change can be observed in a physical and symbolic separation of the church and the mighty laymen: the special seats of the king and the queen were removed on the initiative of the archbishop (Cinthio 1997), as plenty of aristocratic galleries in the towers were blocked up in the following centuries. The church and the parsonage were separated from the croft of the manor. Later the manor often moved away from the church (Well illustrated at Bjäresjö cf. Callmer 1992, Skansjö 1992 and Wienberg 1993, pp. 58 ff.). And the Romanesque style was replaced by the Gothic (cf. Bolvig 1992; Wienberg 1993, pp. 63 f.). But the liberation from the protection by the mighty also meant, that the church no longer had to accept the use of the holiness of the churches for non-ecclesiastical needs. Now both the use and the erection of multi-functional or fortified churches came to an end.

That the intimate nearness between the manor and the church was seen as a potential problem, becomes apparent already by the rules of archbishop Andreas Sunesen from the first decades of the 13th Century. By these rules, the archbishop

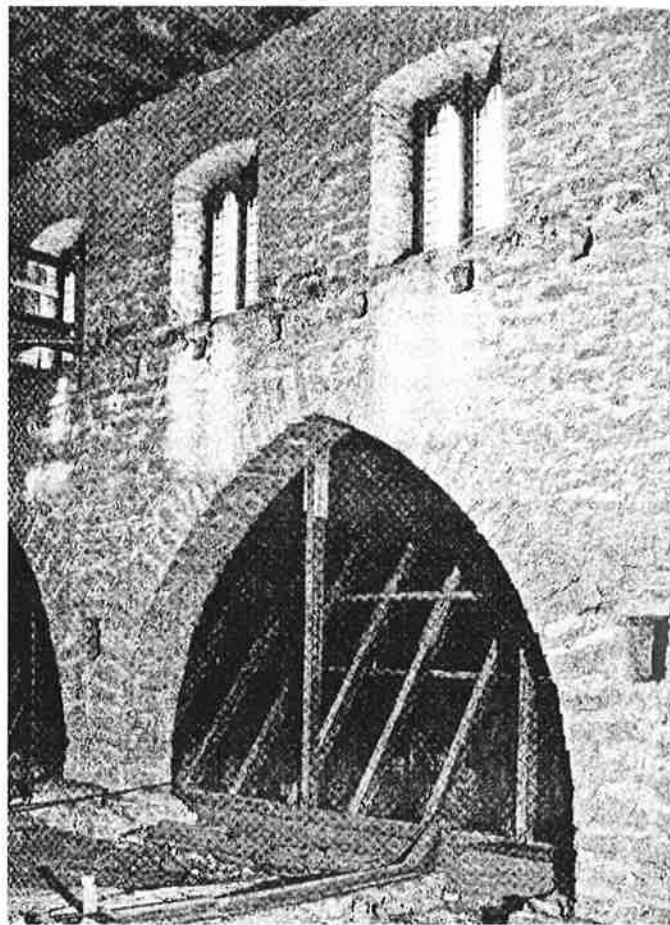


Fig. 10: The clerestorical storey or storage loft at St. Mary in Visby. Photo 1975 in SvK 175, 1978

tried to regulate the service in the »manors of the lords«, so that there should be a »proper house, designated to this service exclusively«, and that the embellishments of the church were not allowed to be »brought to ordinary houses in a thoughtless or improper way« (DD/DRB 1 IV no. 65).

That archbishop Eilif of Nidaros in the 1320s demanded, that items should out of the church, it testifies that the clergy no longer was willing to accept the use of the church by laymen: »No priest must permit that chests, kitchen utensils, fishing nets, marine equipment or anything else in the church, unless it is to protect it against plunder or fire, but even then it must be moved away as soon as possible. Everybody who contravenes, has to pay a mark.« (Lysaker 1991, p. 14)

The (mis)use culminated at St. Mary in Visby. The mighty store loft at St. Mary (Fig. 10), which is dated to c. 1310–40, was both the youngest and the largest one (SvK 175, 1978, pp. 110 ff., 164 ff.). The liturgical treasures of the churches were hereafter kept in wall cabinets or in a sacristy. The tithe however went to a church barn at the wall of the churchyard. The church barn was located at the border between the sacred and the secular, farthest away from the church building, though inside the sacred area.

Thus the liberation of the church from the protection by the mighty meant, that the multi-functional church was divided into different functional parts – a church with a sacristy and a separate church barn. The liberation of the church meant that the symbiosis between the sacred and the profane broke up. Here finally the concepts of sacred and profane as independent categories were released.

The churches were fortified in the 13th Century, nevertheless it was not until in the 14th Century, that the phenomena appeared in written sources. The first mention was in an order by bishop Svend of Århus in 1342: »Further all, each and everybody, who with armed men or archers fortify, occupy or take possession of church towers or churches to turn them into fortifications or defensive works without the authorization, approval and consent of their prelates and chapters, shall by the very action incur the verdict of excommunication« (DD/DRB 3 I no. 256). The prohibition was repeated and confirmed for the whole archbishopric in 1345, 1376, 1383 and 1425 (DD/DRB 3 II no. 153; 4 I no. 33; 4 II no. 342; LÄU 3, no. LIV).

That fortified churches appear in the texts in the 1340s, might obviously be a result of a new problem they represented. In the diocese of Århus we know of several churches, where the churchyard was fortified in this period (e.g. Malling cf. Schultz 1945 and DK XVI Århus, 26, 1984, pp. 2305 ff.). It might also be the church, which now tried to regulate the fortification. The fortification was not in itself inadmissible, but it demanded the consent by the clergy. Just as the royal power tried to regulate the fortification of towns and private castles as a part of a centralization, the church tried to regulate the fortification of the churches as a part of its liberation.

Ambiguous churches of the Baltic Sea

On Öland there is a large stone house, which is frequently visited by tourists. It is the deserted church of Källa, and the mighty stone house once was a church, a store house and a fortress at one and the same time: At the base a church room, then a store and at the top a crenelated archers' storey with a view over land and sea. So far so good!

But who erected and changed the church of Källa? When did it happen and why? Was the church ever defended against attacks? If so, who were the defenders, and who were the attackers? Were they Christians, pagans or both? Who kept what in the store? From where did it come, and whereto did it go? And how was the house in Källa conceived at that time? As a church, a warehouse or a castle? The uncertainties overshadow the certainties.

We lack any specific contemporary evidence, that the churches were erected for defence. There is no contemporary information on the use of the upper storeys. In the cases the churches according to written sources actually were used for refuge or as military strong points, the churches do not seem to have been fortified. Thus the churches might be used for defence, but they were not necessarily built with this purpose. Only Kläckeberga and Hossmo in Møre have elements of fortification and are known to have appeared in conflicts, but the fortification and the incidents probably belong to quite different times (Åkerlund 1945, pp. 49 ff.; Tuulse 1955, pp. 137 f).

A few churches unambiguously were used for a shorter or longer habitation. The accommodations varied from low cellars to vaulted halls, just as the inhabitants belonged to different social categories – crusaders, craftsmen, earls and priests. But traces of heating or sanitary arrangements are exceptions. In most cases there are no traces at all, which might have made the habitation pleasant. Yes, these rooms were often dark and uncomfortable. So even if the churches were located along

the sailing route of the crusades, only a few of the remarkable churches around the Baltic Sea can be interpreted as hostels or residences.

There are numerous both written and material evidence of trade over the Baltic Sea and of the Saint Canute Guilds. But the trade and the guilds can not definitely be connected to the multi-functional churches. And the multi-functional churches lack clear evidence of having been used as warehouses. There are no hoists (except at St. Mary in Visby) or traces of commodities. And far from all upper rooms might have functioned as warehouses, considering the difficult admittance and their minimal size.

It is obvious, that churches, which were ascribed a certain importance, were copied frequently. And theological writings tell us, that the architecture had symbolic meanings even in its smallest details. But the concept of copy was conceived quite generously. It was a long way from the holy places of Jerusalem and the profound readings by the Fathers of the church to the Baltic Sea and the church building on Bornholm. The meaning might change en route and might have been changing during the Middle Ages. The meaning was also dependent on the eyes which were looking. In short, as there is no simple correlation between form and content, the message of the church builders often remains obscure.

The change in interpretation from defensive church to multi-functional church has been rather a shift in perspective than a question of new sources. The shift in the 1980s must be estimated on the background of three conditions: Firstly a new view appeared on the social structure of the Middle Ages as more hierarchic than previously presumed. The new opinion that the early churches were built by an aristocratic elite was difficult to reconcile with the idea that the church served as a refuge for ordinary parishioners. Secondly the state formation process in Denmark, but especially in Sweden, was thought to have taken much longer and was seen in the regional context. The picture of a central royal power and a well defined kingdom was replaced by competitive families and federations of more or less independent regions which only gradually and with resistance were united. Thirdly the churches were re-dated, first using conventional methods, later using dendro-chronology. But the new datings only appeared, when the change in perspective already had occurred. First the theory came – then the empirical evidence followed!

Thus the situation allows no categorical statements. We may find arguments for and against in principle any explanation. There is simply too great distance between the texts and the monuments in the past itself. The incidents of the texts and the masonry of the church archaeology are complementary perspectives: Incompatible, though both necessary. We lack a »Gesta Bornholmiae« as well as a »Chronicle of Öland«, which might build a bridge over the ravine.

The methodological gap which was supposed to open up an historical archaeology instead is revealed as a fascinating vacuum. Where we might have expected a discipline, we instead find the undisciplined. In the vacuum everybody might spin his or her own story with the remarkable medieval churches as set pieces, and with royal sons, Slavonic princes, brothers of Saint Canute and crusaders as actors. The ravine between texts and monuments invites to hypotheses, interpretations, fantasies and ravings.

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