Spatial Organisation in the Late Medieval Häme Castle

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Finland; Häme castle; spatial organisation

The Häme Castle

The Häme Castle is located in Inner Finland, in the northern part of the town of Hämeenlinna on the western shore of the lake Vanajavesi (Fig. 1; 2). It was established in the late 13th or early 14th century by the Swedish Crown, which ruled Finland at that time. In the Middle Ages, the castle either belonged to the Swedish Crown or was held in fief by a liege lord appointed by the king. In the administrative reforms carried out by king Gustav Vasa, the Häme Castle came under the direct authority of the king, and the bailiffs taking care of the castle and its fief were accountable to the king for their actions (Vilkuna 1998, 12–16).

During the earlier part of the Middle Ages, the main castle served as accommodation for the castle's staff, but during the 16th century it became cramped and uncomfortable. New dwelling and working rooms were built next to the protective curtain wall and even outside it (Vilkuna 1998, 24–25). The final end to the castle's use as a dwelling came in the form of a fire in 1659. The building remained in a state of disrepair until repairs were conducted at the beginning of the 18th century in order to renovate the castle into a garrison. During the Finnish War, in 1808, the castle fell under Russian military rule. The Häme Castle was used as a prison from the 17th century onwards. This continued until 1953, when the Finnish Council of State made a decision to restore the Häme Castle as a historical building monument. The investigation and restoration of the main castle was completed in 1979, and the outer bailey in 1988 (Ailio 1917, 148–155; Drake 1968, 24–25; Gardberg 1993, 62–63;

Luppi 1992, 1; Stenius 1973, 4; 10–15; 18–22; 26; 32).

The Häme Castle has been a subject of study for over two hundred years. Traditionally, researchers have been interested in questions concerning the castle's age, founder and situation in the early medieval province of Häme. More recent studies have investigated the castle's housekeeping and everyday life, as well as the outer bailey and the power of the lords of the castle (e. g. Ailio 1917; Appelgren 1891; Drake 1968; 1996; 2001; Hockman 2000; Luppi 1996; Salminen 1990; Uotila 1998, 113–119; Vilkuna 1996; 1998). I wanted to concentrate on the internal functions of the castle and how the organisation of the relationships between the residents can be seen in the spatial organisation of the castle. These kinds of questions have been discussed particularly in the Nordic Countries and Great Britain since the 1980s (e. g. Andersson 1997; Erikson 1995; Fairclough 1992; Hansson 2000; Mogren 1995; Nordeide 2000).

Space as a Subject of Research

The study of a castle's internal organisation has been approached, on the one hand, through archaeological artefacts and, on the other hand, through structures. In the case of the Häme Castle, the use of artefacts turned out to be problematic. The variety of artefacts is extensive and their dating range is equally broad, all the way from the Middle Ages to the 20th century. Furthermore, when you consider the numerous repairs carried out in the castle at different times, in connection of which the

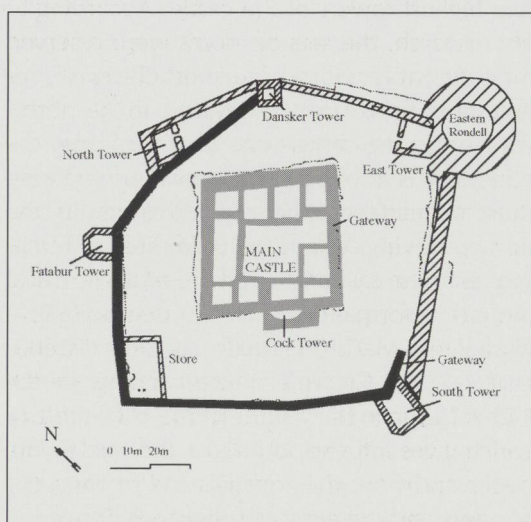*Fig. 1: Häme Castle. View from the north-west (photo: Martti Lampila).*

Fig. 2: Main castle and outer bailey of the Häme Castle (Luppi 1992; 1996. Illustration: K. Uotila 1998).

rooms have been thoroughly cleaned out and renovated, using artefacts as the basis of formulating my research question did not seem like a very fruitful starting point.

There is, however, good and varied material available concerning the structures of the main castle in the Häme Castle: research reports of the various investigations carried out in the castle, Knut Drake's thorough doctoral dissertation on the castle's building history and plans made of the main castle's rooms for different purposes, dating as far back as the end of the 17th century. Taking into consideration my source material, I eventually decided to use the so-called Access Analysis in my research. The creators of Access Analysis, Bill Hillier and

Julienne Hanson, published 'The Social Logic of Space' in 1984, in which they described several methods that they had developed for studying buildings and environment. Out of these methods, Access Analysis is best suited for studying the spatial organisation of wide and complex buildings, which is why archaeologists have adopted and applied the method to their own research materials (e.g. Andersson 1997; Fairclough 1992; Foster 1989; Mathieu 1999; Nordeide 2000).

Access Analysis is based on the accessibility of different spaces from a chosen starting point, or so-called carrier space – for example the outside of a building. However, Access Analysis alone does not tell what function rooms were used for. That is why I used a decision-tree diagram, in which the rooms' function is determined with the help of yes/no questions related to their structural features (Fig 3). This method (called Feature Analysis) has previously been used together with Access Analysis by James R. Mathieu in his research on the differences and similarities of spatial organisation in four Welsh castles dating from the end of the 13th century (Mathieu 1999). The benefit of the Feature Analysis is that it requires the researchers to clearly state their reasons for assigning a certain function to a given room and it gives an opportunity to make interpretations about rooms whose function has previously not been determined, for example due to insufficient structural information. By combining the results from the two different analyses, one can identify spaces and sets of rooms, in this case in the Häme Castle, reserved for different functions.

To define the functions of the rooms in the Häme Castle, I have divided them into accommodation, defence, storage, lobby, working area and hall. I chose the criteria that define the different functional room types by adapting examples from other studies to my own material (e.g. Hansson 2000, 27; Mathieu 1999, 123–124). On the basis of structural features, I was not able to determine a sole function for all the rooms, so some of them were assigned a designation which described several functions, such as defence/working area or accommodation/working area. The room functions derived with the help the decision-tree are interpretations, but their advantage is the fact that all rooms have been defined with the same criteria. In addition to

identifying the function of individual rooms, one can also make deductions about whether some part of the castle was reserved primarily for a particular function.

Spatial organisation in the Häme Castle

In my research I carried out two of the kind of analyses described above. The first analysis examines what is called the Corner Tower stage in Knut Drake's terminology (Fig 4). According to Drake, this last medieval building phase of the Häme Castle ended latest by the year 1520, that is, at the end of the Middle Ages in Finland (Drake 2001, 215). The second analysis deals with the castle in the early modern times.

I wanted to concentrate on the use of the main castle from the point of view of the people who lived and worked there. Therefore, I chose the outer bailey ward as the carrier space of my access diagram, and I took into consideration the entrances from the outer ward to the castle's first floor via the curtain wall's Dansker and Fatabur tower. I left other structures in the outer bailey out of the diagram also due to of problems of source criticism. Reconstructing the ward is considerably more difficult than reconstructing the spaces of the main castle. On the other hand, when I did not take into consideration the dwelling houses which, according to the archive sources, were built on the outer ward at the end of the 16th century, the analysis reveals how the

structure of the main castle changed when its significance as accommodation diminished. The access diagram depicting the Corner Tower stage shows how the castle's space was divided into sets of rooms that had their own central space, room or lobby (Fig 4). People could move between the central rooms along a wooden gallery encircling the castle's inner ward on the level of the first floor. One can distinguish four sets of rooms: those on the ground floor, those in the Cock tower and the rooms on the first and second floors of the northeast and northwest wings. The highest floors of the castle's wings were connected to each other by passages and stairs, and they did not form a group around a certain focal space. From the highest rooms one could access the two highest towers of the castle. According to my research, the sets of rooms were reserved for different functions. The most clearly distinguishable functions were those of the northwest wing, which was intended for living, the guardrooms in the highest floors and the residential quarters connected to them in the northeast wing. Who then used these different spaces in the castle? I found the required background information for my interpretations from Anna-Maria Vilkuna's doctoral dissertation on the Crown's house-keeping in the Häme Castle in the middle of the 16th century, which gives information about the castle's occupants: the Crown's officials and soldiers, the servants and the artisans (Vilkuna 1998).

The northwest wing had more spaces for accommodation than any other set of rooms. In Knut Drake's suggestion for a reconstruction,

Fig. 3: Decision-tree. DF = Connected with defence space; OBW = Outer bailey ward.
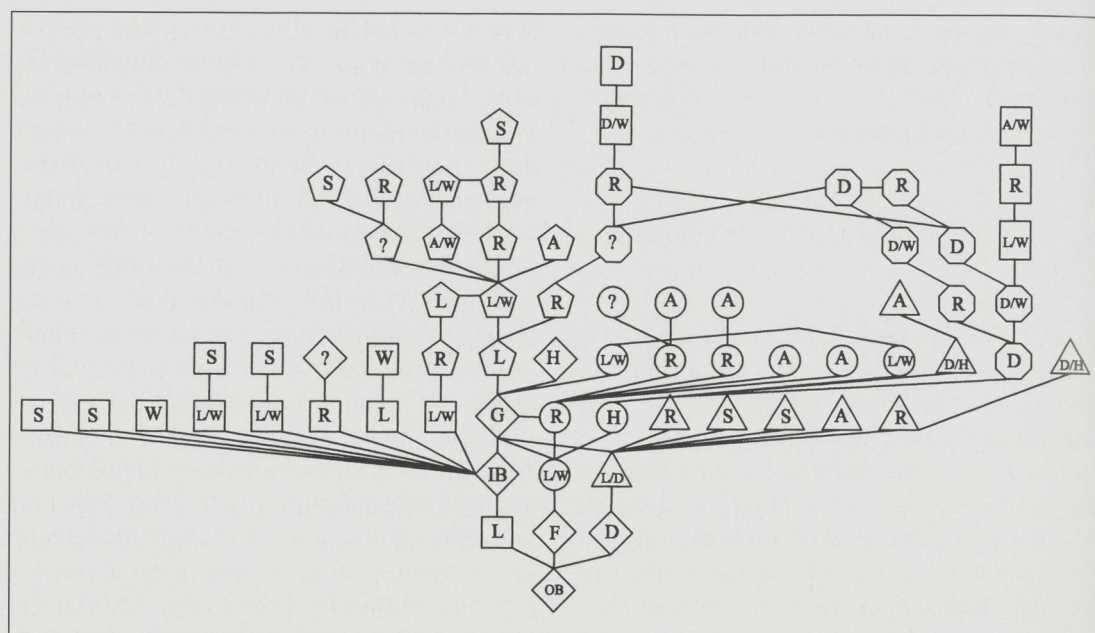

Fig. 3 decision-tree diagram.

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Fig. 4: Häme Castle in the Corner Tower Stage. A = Accommodation, D = Defence area, S = Storage, L = Lobby, W = Working area, H = Hall, R = Staircase, G = Gallery, IB = Inner ward, OB = Outer bailey ward, D = Dansker tower, F = Fatabur tower, ? = Unknown.
Symbols: Square = Ground floor, Circle = Northwest wing, Triangle = Northeast wing, Hexagon = Upper floors, Rectangle = North and West towers, Pentagon = Cock tower, Diamond = Area not belonging to a specific set.

the northwest wing's rooms were connected to a latrine, which is considered one of the features of dwelling quarters (Drake 1968, 94; 103). It is notable that the northwest wing was the only set of rooms from which one could not access the other parts of the castle without going through the wooden gallery. It therefore seems, that the residential wing of the castle was deliberately segregated from the other areas. In previous studies, the northwest wing has been believed to be the accommodation of the castle bailiff and other higher staff, and my research supports this hypothesis.

In addition to dwelling rooms, the northwest wing also contained lobby and working areas. From the wooden gallery one could access the wing's hall through these areas via two different routes. One route went via an imposing portal in the north-east wall of the inner ward decorated with niches and brick ornamentation, and into a lobby. From there, one ascended along a large staircase to a small tower room that had a door opening into the hall. Philip Dixon, who has studied the spatial organisation of castles as a symbol of power and influence, has noticed from his material that the lord of the castle's halls were usually accessed via one or more lobbies or staircases

(Dixon 1998, 47–48; 55). Perhaps in the Häme Castle, too, the constable wanted to impress his guests by letting them walk through two imposing entrances before receiving them in the castle hall. The other route from the wooden gallery to the same hall went through a small room at the other end of the hall, which was connected to the Fatabur or storehouse tower in the curtain wall. The small room also had a stove for heating up the adjacent hall.

The northeast wing housed dwelling and storage areas, but they were also connected to the guardrooms via a stair, which is why some of the rooms in the wing were given the additional functional designation of defence. From the northeast wing one had access to the curtain wall's Dansker tower, which has been interpreted as serving a defence function in the castle. Most of the castle's residents were soldiers in the middle of the 16th century, and on the basis of my analysis it would seem that the castle's northeast wing was reserved for them. The highest spaces in the castle's wings were reserved for defence. These guardrooms differ from the castle's other spaces in that one could move between them directly and that they were not located around a certain focal space.

One could access these rooms from the stairs of the Cock tower's lobby and from the North-east wing.

During the early Middle Ages, the Cock tower protruding from the castle's southwest wing had a gate leading to the outer ward. In the late medieval times, this connection no longer existed, and the castle was entered from the outer ward through a room located on the ground floor of the southeast wing. However, the tower still had great significance as a passage route to the castle's first floor. It contained the only internal staircase between the castle's first and ground floor. In the access diagram, I took into consideration possible wooden stairs or a ladder leading from the inner ward up to the wooden gallery on the first floor. But if these did not exist or if they were not in permanent use, the Cock tower was the only route from the ground floor to the castle's first floor. The stairs leading to the first floor did not ascend directly to the central room of the tower, but to a small windowless lobby next to it. From there one could get to the wooden gallery via the central room and its lobby on the side of the inner ward. Coming from the tower to the gallery, one could immediately see on the other side of the inner ward the castle's most impressive wall, decorated with brick niches, and the portal leading to the lobby of the Northwest wing's hall. People arriving to the castle were undoubtedly impressed by what they saw.

According to my interpretation, the spaces in the Cock tower were dwelling, lobby, working and storage areas. The tower also had a connection to the ground floor and to the castle's uppermost defensive areas, which makes it even more difficult to determine its primary function. Perhaps the tower was not intended for any individual activity, but rather in the late Middle Ages it had different spaces for different functions. It was nonetheless significant in controlling the passage between the ground and the first floor.

The spaces on the ground floor were storage and working areas, although these rooms were the most difficult ones in the castle to interpret. Previously, the rooms have been interpreted as working and dwelling quarters for the castle's servants, and it has been presumed that the castle's kitchen and chapel were located there (Ailio 1917, 177; Gardberg 1993, 57). The rooms on the ground floor were used for storage until the 20th century. It is possible, that during floor renovations and cleaning work the fireplaces and ovens that possibly existed in the rooms were destroyed. On the basis of my analysis, the ground floor nevertheless had more rooms suitable for storage than any of the other sets of rooms.

I carried out a second analysis of the spatial organisation of the Häme Castle after the 1560s. A kind of finality to this phase under analysis is the fire of 1659, after which the use of the castle as accommodation is considered to have ended (Drake 1968, 24–25; Ailio 1917, 148–155). The changes carried out in the Häme Castle did not affect the spatial organisation of the castle very much. The changes were mainly due to some of the doorways and stairs being bricked up. By blocking up entrances, the castle in a sense returned to an earlier medieval custom of locating rooms around one central space, so that one could not walk through the rooms. When other castles in the Swedish realm were renovated into residential use from the mid-16th century onwards, halls and rooms were built in such a manner that one could move from one room to the next without going through the central space (Gardberg 1959, 377–378).

Sources indicate that after the middle of the 16th century the residents of the Häme Castle began to move to the wooden buildings on the outer bailey ward, because the main castle had become uninhabitable. According to my analysis, however, the number of rooms used for accommodation in the main castle increased at this stage. One reason for why the castle now had more spaces identified as small dwelling rooms than during the earlier stage may be the fact that the castle became a prison during the 17th century. The prison needed more small spaces that were easier to guard – it was no longer so much a question of guarding the entry to the castle but rather guarding the way out of there.

Conclusion

It has been considered that the model for the Häme Castle can be found in the monastery-like castles of the Teutonic Order in the Baltic countries. Undeniably, the parallels for the plan of the Häme Castle can be found in the Baltic countries. But was the spatial organisa-

tion of the late medieval Häme Castle a result of solutions that were modelled on monasteries, or was it related to a new way of organising the castles' internal space that began at the turn of the 16th century? Comparing the organisation and use of space in the Häme Castle with other Finnish, Baltic and Nordic castles would be interesting for studying questions of dating and building tradition. The problem is, that few similar studies have been carried out, and few castles have rendered good enough source material to make similar analyses possible.

I will personally continue my research of spatial organisation in castles within the 'Finnish Virtual Archaeology' project that began in 2002. The project will last for three years and it involves four researchers, MA Kirsi Majantie, MA Carita Tulkki, MA Terhi Mikkola and PhD Kari Uotila. The objectives of the project are to produce new research data on different aspects of daily medieval life in Finland and to develop the methods of virtual archaeology in fieldwork, reporting and actual analysis, as well as in a new kind of visualisation of the research field.

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