

The Old Cathedral of Viborg

Historical Archaeology of the Easternmost Cathedral of the Swedish Empire*

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A Trans-Religious Sanctuary

On 18 February 1940 an incendiary bomb wrecked the Old Cathedral of Viborg¹. The fate of the edifice, since then a forlorn ruin, represents the unsettled history of the borderlands between Finland and Russia. The town, nowadays located in Russia, has been part of Sweden (1293–1710), Russia (1710–1917, 1944–) and Finland (1917–1944). The Old Town of Viborg, although largely renewed during successive occupations and re-buildings, still represents this transnational past where Swedish, German, Russian and Finnish histories of the Baltic have intertwined over the centuries (Fig. 1a).

The multinational and polyglot history of Viborg has been underlined in a multitude of studies that cover the secular history of the town.² The equivalent discussion of religious buildings and history has, in contrast, evoked little attention. Along with the transitions of power, religions have changed as well, settling down to the very same buildings one after another. The Old Cathedral of Viborg, the subject of the article, was a catholic sanctuary until the 1520s and a Lutheran church from the 1520s to 1710. Between 1554 and 1710 the church was the easternmost cathedral of the

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¹ The Swedish name of the town ‘Viborg’ is used throughout the article since it mostly deals with the Swedish era. In Finnish the name of the town is Viipuri (or Wiipuri) and Vyborg (Выборг) in Russian.

² For recent literature, see e.g. Pentti Paavolainen & Sanna Supponen (eds), *Monikulttuurisuuden ajan Viipuri* (Viipurin Suomalaisen Kirjallisuusseuran Toimitteita 17), Viipurin Suomalainen Kirjallisuusseura: Helsinki 2013. Piia Einonen, ‘Myyttinen Viipuri ja monikielinen todellisuus – etnisen alkuperän ja kielen merkitys 1800-luvun alun kaupunkiympäristössä’, *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 1/2013, 3–16. Unfortunately almost every piece of historical literature on Vyborg is published only in Finnish or Swedish. See also Aleksandr Saksa & Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen, ‘Viipuri (Sw. Viborg, Ru. Vyborg)’, in Hans Andersson, Gitte Hansen & Ingvild Øye (eds), *De første 200 årene – Nytt blikk på 27 skandinaviske middelalderbyer* (Universitet i Bergen Arkeologiske Skrifter 5), Universitet i Bergen: Bergen 2008, 393–400. On the churches of Viborg in German, see Markus Hiekkänen, ‘Die mittelalterlichen Stadtkirchen in Finnland’, [Robert Schweitzer](#) & [Waltraud Bastman-Bühner](#) (eds), *Die Stadt im europäischen Nordosten. Kulturbeziehungen von der Ausbreitung des lübischen Rechts bis zur Aufklärung* (Veröffentlichungen der Aue Stiftung 12), Stiftung zur Förderung deutscher Kultur: Lübeck 2001, 453–469.

Swedish empire.

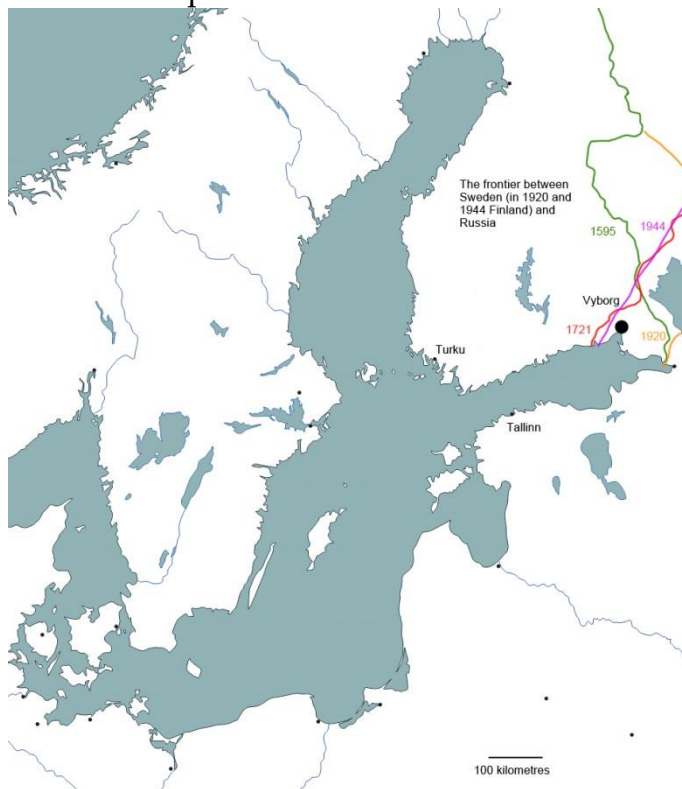


Fig. 1a. Viborg between Sweden and Russia.

After the Russian Conquest in 1710 the building was transformed into a Russian Orthodox church. After the construction of a new Russian Orthodox cathedral was completed in 1788, the edifice was converted into an armoury and magazine, but ecclesiastical life returned there again, when it was first, in 1913, restored to a Russian Orthodox church, and five years later to a Lutheran church.³ These five

shifts of religion render the trans-religious past of the sanctuary relatively exceptional even on a global scale (Fig. 2).

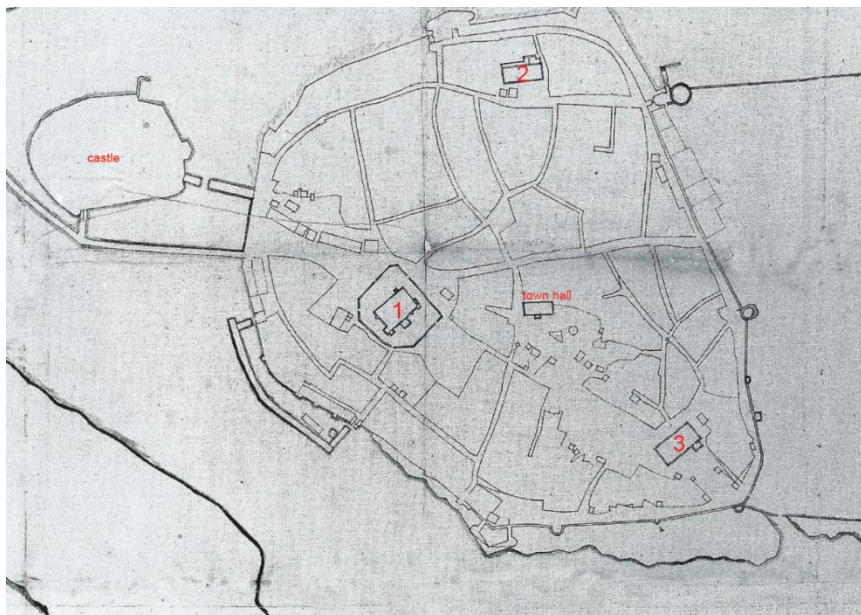


Fig. 1b. The first survey of the town of Viborg from 1636 shows, besides the Cathedral (1), the architectural remnants from the 1490s, and the churches of the Franciscan (2) and Dominican (3) Convents. The National Archives of Sweden, Stockholm.

³ Markus Hiekkanen, *Suomen keskiajan kivikirkot*, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura: Helsinki 2007, 549–550.



Fig. 2. The former medieval Parish Church and the Old Cathedral of Viborg seen from the belfry in 2011. Photo: Panu Savolainen.

The present enquiry on the Old Cathedral started in 2010.⁴ The goals of the project include creating a 3D-survey,⁵ and drafting a preliminary plan for the possible conservation of the ruins, but they also cover the re-evaluation of the architectural history of the edifice in the light of novel archaeological and historical data.

The sanctuary became the second cathedral in Finland when it was made into the see of the newly founded Diocese of Viborg in 1554. It was also the easternmost cathedral of the Swedish empire. Due to its remarkable history, the church has been the subject of several archaeological and historical studies already in the late 1880s, the early 1910s, and in the 1980s.⁶ Publications from the late 19th, and the early 20th century are, however, also

⁴ The project was launched after the initiative of Markus Hiekkänen in 2009 and is steered by the Mikael Agricola Society. Fieldworks in Viborg are carried under the direction of Aleksandr Saks, affiliated with the Russian Academy of Sciences. The project has received a total funding of 81,000€ from the Alfred Kordelin Foundation in 2010–2014. Because the future of the funding is unclear, results obtained thus far are published in the article at hand.

⁵ The survey was made by Kari Uotila in 2010, and Panu Savolainen in 2011.

⁶ *Wiipurin Sanomat* 18.8.1886; Gabriel Lagus, *Ur Wiborgs Historia*, Wiborg stad: Wiborg 1893; Juhani Rinne, 'Viipurin entinen tuomiokirkko', *Suomen Museo* 1914, 53–67; Juhani Rinne, 'Viipurin entinen tuomiokirkko II', *Suomen Museo* 1914, 79–94.

the latest explorations of the church based on primary sources.⁷ The aim of this article is to offer an outline of the new results and perspectives, where both archaeological and archival records, as well as the re-interpretation of the old research documentation – the intermingling of textual, spatial and material worlds – play a central role.

Between Texts, Archaeology and Architecture

Such major edifices as churches, where textual evidence often complements the material record in relatively unambiguous manner, are vital research subjects for historical archaeology. However, within the Finnish medieval historiography, dominated by the scarcity and the equivocal nature of written sources, interconnecting these pieces of fragmentary documentary evidence and discerning the age of standing buildings and structures is far from straightforward. Accurate written information that can be linked with certain constructions is rare.⁸ While typological and scientific dating methods have been applied to the medieval ecclesiastical architecture of Finland, remarkable inconsistencies have been pointed out in the previously established chronology of masonry constructions on the basis of documentary evidence and scientifically established datings since the 1990s.⁹

The study of the architectural history and archaeology of the medieval stone churches of Finland has largely focused on discovering the initial period of their building during the Middle Ages. Since the times during and after the Reformation were less wealthy and financially inappropriate for new construction works, most of the medieval churches preserved the outline of their medieval appearance, with the exception of the transformations related to the changes of ecclesiastical practice during and after the Reformation in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Therefore poverty became a fortuitous archivist, since the majority of the medieval stone churches in Finland have eluded heavy transformations.

The case of the Old Cathedral of Viborg is exceptional among the stone churches in the medieval Diocese of Turku (i.e. the area of present-day

⁷ For the later research concerning the Old Cathedral, see Vjatseslav Tjulenev, 'Viipurin arkeologisen tutkimuksen tuloksia', *Viipurin Suomalaisen Kirjallisuusseuran Toimitteita* 8 (1987); Markus Hiekkänen, 'Viipurin keskiaikaiset kivikirkot ja niiden kohtalo', *Viipurin Suomalaisen Kirjallisuusseuran Toimitteita* 15 (2005). For a comprehensive review of literature on the formation of the Vyborg parish and town, see the references in Hiekkänen 2007, 612.

⁸ The only written evidence detailed enough to be referenced to a certain part of a building is the vaulting of the nave of the Turku Cathedral from 1466; Reinhold Hausen ed., *Registrum ecclesiae Aboensis eller Åbo domkyrkas Svartbok med tillägg ur Skoklosters codex Aboensis*, Riksarkivet: Helsingfors 1890, no. 576.

⁹ Markus Hiekkänen, *The Stone Churches of the Medieval Diocese of Turku: A Systematic Classification and Chronology*, (Suomen Muinaismuistoyhdistyksen Aikakauskirja 101), Suomen Muinaismuistoyhdistys: Helsinki 1994.

Finland).¹⁰ In the 15th century it was the easternmost outpost of the catholic faith in Sweden, and according to Markus Hiekkänen, the edifice was the most resplendent medieval sanctuary in the diocese after Turku Cathedral. The architecture of the church follows the typical composition of parish churches in the medieval Diocese of Turku, consisting of a sacristy, a rectangular nave, and a porch. The rather exceptional features of the edifice were its size – it was among the largest churches in the diocese – and the details of the earliest vaulting system.¹¹

Almost everything in the present ruinous state of the edifice is evidence of the nineteenth-century Russian armoury, not of the late medieval church. Besides the very few and fragmentary areas of the only infallibly medieval type of brick bond,¹² the monk's bond, the walls of the edifice exhibit early modern alterations. They are mainly traces of the transformation of the building into an armoury, accomplished in 1809. The extensions and renewals of the church before the fire of 1793 were for the most part covered or destroyed by the early-nineteenth-century construction work.

Sometimes texts and drawings can provide meaningful help in reading the palimpsest of structures in edifices with intricate constructional history. Written evidence on the Church of Viborg, casting light on the construction activities before the eighteenth century, is lamentably scanty: The old account books are preserved only from 1599–1601,¹³ and 1655–1665,¹⁴ and besides these accounts, there exists only a few pieces of information. The accounts evince, however, that the church was under constant reparations, since every year there are references to several expenses demanded by the construction works, like salaries to carpenters, masons, smiths, glaziers, and other workmen.¹⁵ The first survey of the edifice date back to the Russian Orthodox era of 1710–1788,¹⁶ but there survives an axonometric drawing of the town plan of Viborg from 1642 where the church is represented.¹⁷ This

¹⁰ For the area of the diocese, see e.g. Hiekkänen 1994, 14–18.

¹¹ Hiekkänen 2007, 549–550.

¹² In Finland, the Middle Ages ends with Gustavus Vasa rising to power in 1523, and the subsequent beginning of the Reformation. With relative certainty only the monk's bond can be considered as a medieval structural feature in Finland. For further information, see e.g. Liisa Seppänen, *Rakentaminen ja kaupunkikuvan muutokset keskiajan Turussa – Erityistarkastelussa Åbo Akademin päärakennuksen tontin arkeologinen aineisto*, Historian, kulttuurin ja taiteiden tutkimuksen laitos, Turun yliopisto: Turku 2012, 654–659.

¹³ Helsinki, The National Archives of Finland, KA 267.

¹⁴ Helsinki, The National Archives of Finland, KA 7060.

¹⁵ Helsinki, The National Archives of Finland, KA 7060. The reparations are named sometimes, and many of the windows of the southern facade were remade during 1655–1665. In 1599–1601, or 1655–1665 there were no larger renovations under work, since all the expenses for construction works are single and rather small.

¹⁶ St Petersburg, The Russian State Archives for Military History, Fond 349 opis 7 delo 16.

¹⁷ Stockholm, The National Archives of Sweden, Utländska kartor, Stads- och Fästingsplaner, Finland,

drawing is, however, relatively schematic and should not be interpreted as a detailed depiction of the edifice's architectural features.

The subsequent analysis focuses on three separate subjects that have idiographic or methodological relevance in respect to the Church of Viborg, or church archaeology and written sources at large. First, some updated conclusions about the phases of the church's construction are sketched out. After that, we discuss briefly the results of the recent archaeological excavations, and lastly we present a way to use the seventeenth-century account books from an archaeological and spatial perspective. As the project hopefully continues in the future, depending on funding, novel archaeological data will probably cast more light especially on the earliest phases of the sanctuary.

The Stages of Construction – Old and New Insights

The town of Viborg was founded around 1400, and according to the archaeological data, an urban fabric of wooden constructions originated in the last decades of the fourteenth and the first half of the fifteenth century.¹⁸ During the first decades of the fifteenth century also the parish church of Viborg, the later cathedral, emerged in the documents.¹⁹ The first written references to the parish church date to the 1410s, but they are thought to refer to a wooden church. According to the archaeologist and art historian Markus Hiekkänen, who draws both on typological explanation and historical contexts, the initial phase of the masonry-built church was completed in 1435–1445.²⁰ Already at the turn of the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, there were also a Dominican and a Franciscan Convent in the town. The presence of two friaries, and the existence of the town walls constructed in the 1490s make the urban topography of Viborg exceptional in medieval Finland.

From the viewpoint of architectural history, the importance of the parish church of Viborg lies in its status as the sanctuary of a wealthy urban community in the second largest town in medieval Finland. The relation of its first phase of construction with the ecclesiastical architecture of the southern coastal areas of the Gulf of Finland, present-day Estonia, is obvious. Octagonal limestone columns that supported the first vaulting are a unique

Wiborg.

¹⁸ For the most recent views, see Aleksandr Saksa, 'Kaupunkiarkeologiaa Viipurissa – Kaupungin alkuvaiheen ongelma', in Hanna-Maria Pellinen ed., *Maasta, kivistä ja hengestä – Earth, Stone and Spirit: Markus Hiekkänen Festschrift*, Arkeologia, Turun yliopisto; Taidehistoria, Helsingin yliopisto, Suomen Kirkkohistoriallinen Seura & Suomen keskiajan arkeologian seura: Turku & Helsinki 2009, 226–239.

¹⁹ Johan Wilhelm Ruuth, *Wiipurin kaupungin historia*, Wiipuri 1908, 22–23; Rinne 1914, 79–80.

²⁰ Hiekkänen 2007, 549.

feature in Finland, and evidently a southern import.²¹

There are three academic syntheses for the relative and absolute chronology of the church's construction stages.²² All of them agree about the relative dating of the distinctive phases, but differ in respect to absolute datings (Fig. 3). The first comprehensive account on the chronology of the construction was given by the State Archaeologist Juhani Rinne in 1914. He was the first to be able to distinguish two separate building phases, the northern and eastern extensions. Hiekkänen's and the archaeologist V. A. Tjulenev's argumentations mainly follow Rinne's ideas, although both propose different datings for the two extensions.

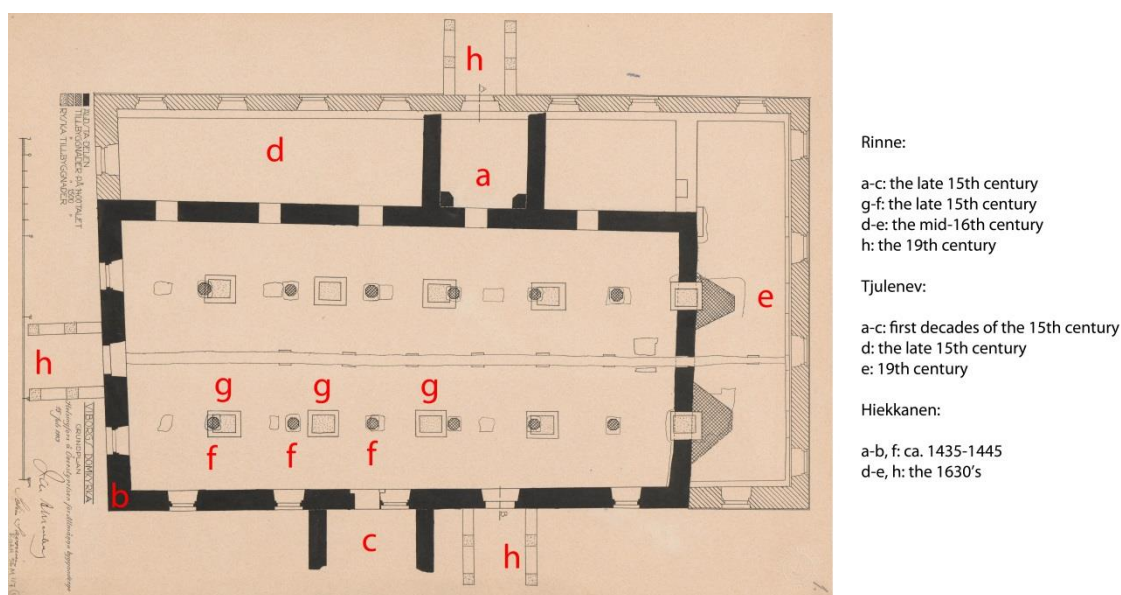


Fig. 3. Different conceptions about the dating of the various parts of the church. Map: Panu Savolainen.

Due to the alterations and demolitions over centuries, the reconstruction of the initial building stage as well as the successive extensions and modifications has to be based extensively on historical drawings and observations made especially in 1913. Juhani Rinne, who studied the edifice in 1913, saw much more evidence left of the pre-nineteenth-century structures than we now can. The medieval northern wall of the nave was demolished in 1979.²³

Moreover, the debris that has been dumped in the ruin area since the Second World War has elevated the surface of the ground significantly, covering the lower surfaces of the walls. Along with Rinne's excavations, the

²¹ Rinne 1914, 59–60; Hiekkänen 2007, 549.

²² Rinne 1914; Tjulenev 1987; Hiekkänen 2007, 548–551.

²³ Architect Victor Dmitryev, pers. comm., August 2012; В. А. Тюленев, Отчеты по Выборгу, St Petersburg, The Archives of the Archaeological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

church was measured by the architect Jac. Ahrenberg, whose drawings are, even despite of their reduced character, important sources for understanding the structures that do not exist any more.²⁴

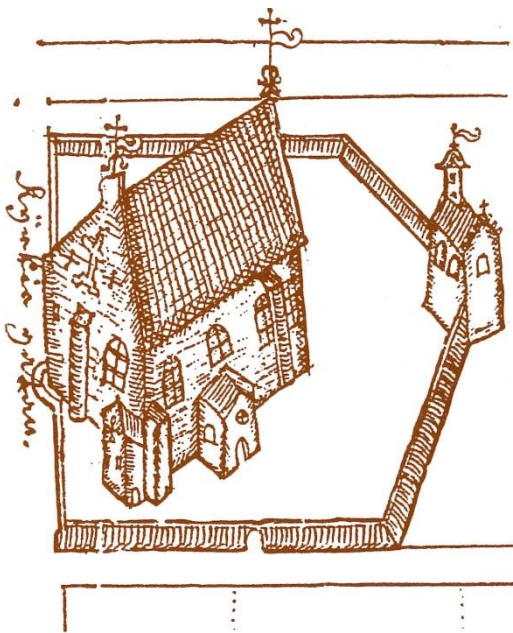


Fig. 4. The church in the 1642 town plan. The National Archives of Sweden, Stockholm.

Although significant new information about the structures has not emerged from the recent years' research, several important new conclusions can be drawn due to the strength of the old material.

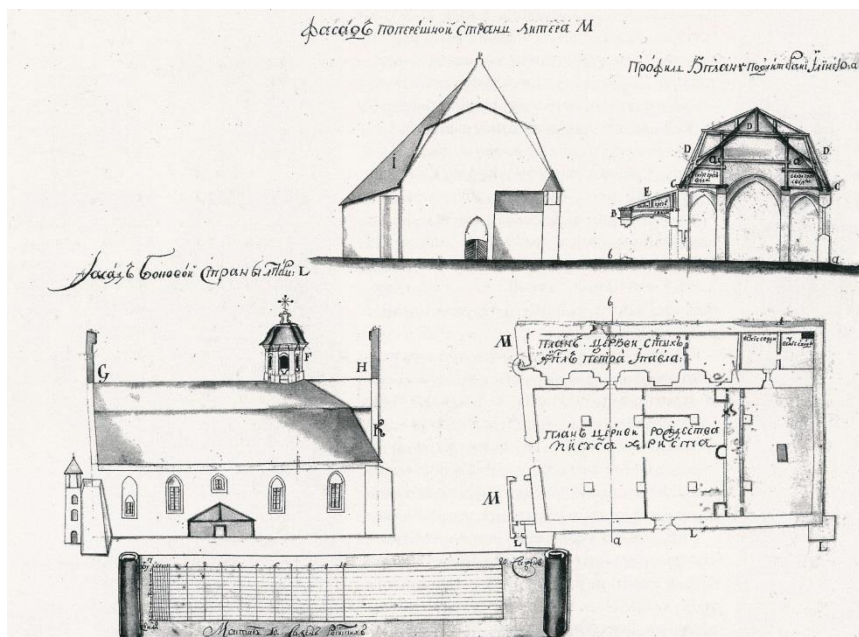


Fig. 5. The church in a survey made in 1744. The western gable was extended in the last years of the sixteenth century or at the beginning of the seventeenth century (marked with grey shading) to incorporate the northern extension, yielding a relatively asymmetrical result. The Russian State Archives for Military History, St Petersburg.

²⁴ Helsinki, The Archives of the Superior Office for Public Buildings (Yleisten rakennusten ylihallitus), architect Jac. Ahrenbergs survey drawings of the Old Cathedral, 1913.

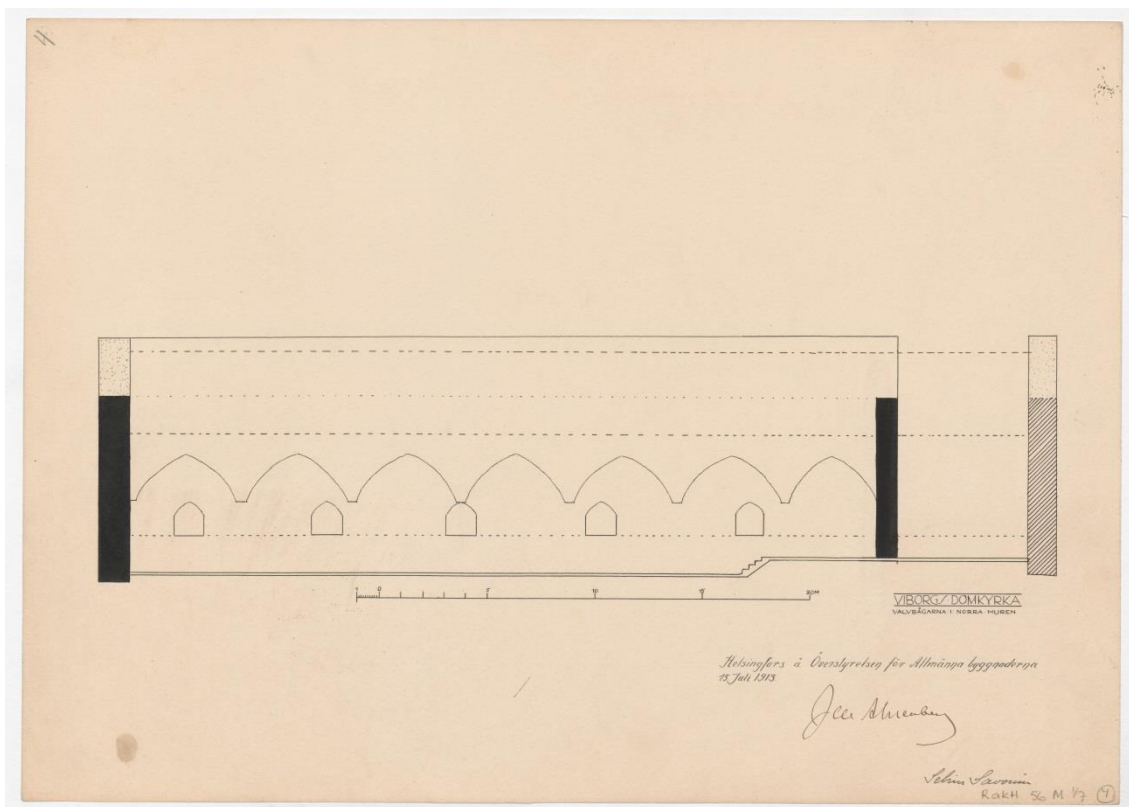


Fig. 6. Architect Jac. Ahrenberg's section from 1913. The Archives of the Superior Office for Public Buildings, Helsinki.

A few novel remarks on the chronology of construction can be made on the basis of a minute re-evaluation of surveys and drawings of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The most essential new interpretation can be made on the eastern extension (Fig. 3, e), which was previously dated to the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. A comparison to the survey of 1744 shows clearly that the eastern extension is later, as both medieval gables are still visible in the façade drawing. Thus the northern and eastern extensions do not belong to the same period, while the eastern extension dates back only to the transformation of 1805–1809 (Figs. 4–6).

Another interesting question lies in the chronology of the two vaultings (see Fig. 3, f–g). The second one, with four pairs of rectangular columns, was documented in the survey of 1744. The first vaulting, which is known only from the archaeological observations of 1913, consisted of six pairs of octagonal limestone columns. The arches of the first vaulting, later walled up, are visible in the photographs taken by Rinne in 1913. Moreover, the same feature is the main motive in one of the sections made by Jac. Ahrenberg (Fig. 6) during the same expedition. Therefore the first vaulting was actually completed; it was not just an unrealised plan.

Both Rinne and Tjulenev dated the first vaulting to the beginning of

the 15th century, and the second one to the renovation made in 1494.²⁵ The dates of the vaultings are connected with the completion of the façades, because the windows of the southern façade in the 1744 survey follow the division of the second vaulting with four pairs of columns. Since the windows represented in the drawing from 1744 of the southern façade exhibit a medieval type of fenestration, it seems probable that both vaults were accomplished during the Middle Ages. These observations support the idea that the first vaulting, if ever finished, was destroyed in the 1477 town fire, and the second one was built in the 1490s.²⁶ The second vaulting with rectangular columns was demolished in 1805–1809, when the church was transformed into an armoury.

The northern, nave-like extension is exceptional among medieval and early modern ecclesiastical buildings in Finland (Fig. 3, d). Various propositions on its dating have been made, but no clear evidence exists to support any of them. The purpose of this ‘fourth nave’ may be traced back to the Orthodox era, when it was used as a chapel dedicated to St Peter and St Paul (see Fig. 4). According to the same survey plan, the eastern part of the extension included a sacristy. By using the information provided by the map of 1636 and a letter from 1689, the use of the northern part in the end of the Swedish era can be partially retraced. A correspondence between the Governor Anders Lindhielm and the King of Sweden shows that the sacristy and the council room of the consistory were ‘small and obscure’ and located beside one another. The proposition of the king was that the wall between them could be removed in order to gain a bigger space for both purposes.²⁷ It is highly probable that these two rooms were the same that are visible as separate spaces in the 1744 survey.

The western part of the extension may have been a single elongated space already from the beginning. The town survey of Viborg from 1636 (see Fig. 1) indicates that there was an entrance in the middle of the northern façade. As the northern part was a nave-like single space in the 18th century, it probably had the same function and shape already earlier. Rinne’s description of the structure of the northern wall indicates that the arcades,²⁸ which were later walled up, were opened to the wall between the northern

²⁵ Rinne 1914, 80–81; Tjulenev 1987.

²⁶ A tractate in the Palmskiöld Collection (quoted in Ruuth 1908, 23) in Uppsala University Library quotes a text that was carved in one of the columns of the Old Cathedral in Vyborg: ‘Gentes scitote propinqvae sive remotae; Quod testudo natu fuit huic templone locata; Anno Milleno CD sub nonaqvegeno; Quarto structura numeri qvi certificantur; Quo castellanus miles Nicolaus Erichson; Tempore plebanus Dnus Dothleus eodem. MCD monstrant annos Dni simul XC; IIII quatuor ac hujus templi perfectio scitur. Anno milleno cccc bis duo nonaqvegeno; Sub Quarto Christi testudo loco datur isti’.

²⁷ Lagus 1893, 138.

²⁸ Rinne 1914, 60–61.

nave and the extension, but Rinne's observation is unclear. However, the plan of the survey from 1744 indicates that open arcades could have existed in the wall and become later walled up only later. The section drawing of the survey also shows that the northern extension was structurally independent of the walls of the nave, having its own walls on every side to support the vaults.



Fig. 7. The chronology of the construction of the old cathedral. Map: Panu Savolainen.

The joint of the nave and northern extension is still partially visible in the western façade. Medieval monk's bond is identifiable in the older part of the façade, and in the extension, the oldest units are made in Renaissance bond with much smaller bricks.²⁹ This difference refutes Tjulenev's idea that the northern extension could be late medieval. The visible structures do not give

²⁹ The joint of the walls is preserved only partially, and the upper part of the wall was entirely remade in 1805–1809.

any clues for dating the extension more precisely. The survey of Viborg from 1636, where the extension is visible, provides a *terminus ante quem*. On the basis of historical context, any date for the construction from the late 16th and the early 17th century is possible.

Numerous skilful master builders worked in Viborg from the 1560s to the 1590s when the eastern fortification was constructed.³⁰ Also after the fire of 1627 a German master builder was commissioned to lead the renewal of the town plan and to supervise the construction work in public buildings.³¹ The documents of the town court from the late 1620s and the early 1630s do not give any further information on any construction works going on in the cathedral. The dating of the northern extension remains thus unclear (Fig. 7).

The Excavations of 2011–2013

The cathedral has witnessed a number of excavations in 1886, 1913 and in the 1980s. They are all deficiently documented. The edifice was excavated for the first time in 1886 by the State Archaeologist Johan Reinhold Aspelin. His main objective was to discover the grave of the famous first Protestant Bishop of Finland Michael Agricola (c. 1510–1557). The sole information on the excavation is a newspaper article from the same year.³² The excavations of 1913, conducted by Juhani Rinne, were documented somewhat better. However, Rinne's notes and sketches have since disappeared, and the only source on the structures and finds are the few dozens of photos and drawings published in his articles in 1914.³³ The excavations made by Tjulenev in 1985–1989 were reported only in brief, and e.g., any detailed picture on the locations of the trenches is difficult to discern from the report.³⁴

Because of these constraints, the two excavation trenches opened in late summer 2011 were dug to areas that were known to be totally intact and not disturbed by any previous excavation (Fig. 8). Both trenches were located in the churchyard but alongside the nave. The excavations were intended to intersect the annexes which are visible in the maps of the 1630s and the 1640s. The main goal of the fieldwork was to create a more detailed

³⁰ Ruuth 1908, 150–159.

³¹ Ruuth 1908, 256.

³² *Wiipurin sanomat* 18.8.1886. Juhani Rinne mentions in 1914 that he had used Aspelin's notes on the 1886 excavation, but these have since disappeared.

³³ Rinne 1914.

³⁴ В. А. Тюленев, *Кафедральный собор Выборга: к вопросу о строительной истории // Древности славян и финно-угров, Доклады советско-финляндского симпозиума по вопросам археологии 16–22 мая 1986 г.* Санкт-Петербург 1992, 177–181; В. А. Тюленев, *Изучение старого Выборга*, Санкт-Петербург 1995, 50–54, 82; В. А. Тюленев, *Отчеты по Выборгу*, St Petersburg, The Archives of the Archaeological institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

picture of the shape and chronology of the annexes.



Fig. 8. The excavation trenches during 2011–2013. Map: Panu Savolainen.

Beneath the modern layers, the trench A revealed the sidewalls of a porch and a brick-made pavement (Fig. 9). On the pavement, Russian coins from 1718–1725 were discovered, and beneath the pavement, a Swedish coin from 1635 was unearthed.³⁵ Therefore the pavement probably dates to the years when the church was transformed into a Russian Orthodox sanctuary at the beginning of the 1720s. Beneath the sidewalls, vestiges of a previous porch were uncovered.

It had been slightly narrower than the later one.

Fig. 9. Trench A, a brick pavement, and the side walls of the porch, supposedly from the 1720s. Photo: Aleksandr Saksa.

The layers below the brick pavement consisted of several mixed layers with indications of fire. These layers contained mixed human bones, probably in a secondary context, and they were fragmentary and showed no signs of intentional deposition. The lowest units were intact, and several well-preserved burials were discovered, even the coffins were partly preserved (Fig. 10). A



³⁵ Aleksandr Saksa, *Viipurin vanha tuomiokirkko, vuoden 2011 kaivaukset, kenttäkertomus*, St Petersburg, The Archives of the Archaeological institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

radiocarbon date from one of the pieces of birch bark, taken from the same context as one of the coffins, gave the most probable dating to 501±32 BP. The stratigraphy suggests that the burials were older than the porch.³⁶ On the basis of the radiocarbon dating, it is probable that the porch was constructed during the last decades of the Middle Ages or even later. There is a written account of about 1,700 bricks that were used in building the porch (Sw. *kyrkofarstugan*) in 1573.³⁷



Fig. 10. Trench A, late medieval burials on the site of the later porch. Photo: Aleksandr Saksa.

Trench B revealed the same supporting structure that is visible in the drawings made in 1636, 1642 and 1744. The structure was made entirely of stones, at least of in its lowest parts, and it had been demolished down to the ground level in 1805–1809. Hence it was impossible to extract any further information about its construction and materials.

Trench C was opened in August 2013 in order to locate the medieval sacristy and the structure of the nave's old

northern wall. The purpose of the trench was also to map the area and determine the depth of the excavations of 1886. The uncovered structures were mainly related to the 17th- and 18th-century burial chambers located under the church pavement.³⁸ It appears that they were emptied in 1886, but the underlying units are probably intact. Excavations were to be continued in the same location in 2014.

The Archival Archaeology of Burials

The role of texts and other documentary records in archaeology increases when we approach modern times. The burials discovered on the site provide

³⁶ Saksa 2011.

³⁷ Helsinki, The National Archives of Finland, KA 5381, 8.

³⁸ Saksa 2011.

an example of the use of written records to complement and prospect archaeological data. The Old Cathedral of Viborg, with its churchyard, was the main graveyard of the town from the Late Middle Ages to the end of the Swedish era. Accordingly, the majority of the early modern town dwellers of Viborg and inhabitants in nearby parishes were buried on this site. Almost all townsfolk in Viborg were buried to the old cathedral or its churchyard. In the accounts, there are occasional references to burials in the church of the Siikaniemi suburb, and the old church of the Dominican Convent. Nevertheless, according to the accounts, over 95% of the deceased inhabitants of Viborg were interred to the old cathedral.

Graves have been encountered in all of the excavations conducted in the old cathedral. In 1913, Juhani Rinne discovered grave chambers of the most wealthy town dwellers inside the church, while the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century graves discovered in 2011 represent the lower classes of the townsfolk. Osteological analyses usually deal with individuals rather than masses, but written sources can be used to shed light on the quantitative aspects of the same subject. Comparative analysis of the documentary and archaeological data is not yet conceivable, since only a few burials have been excavated and analysed. The issue is presented here rather to point out the methodological challenges.

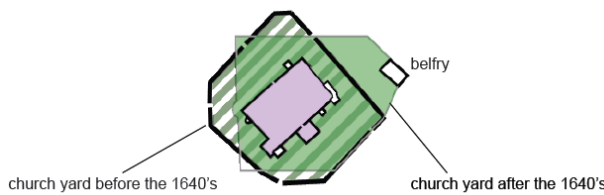
Documentary information on the burials is extracted from the account books of the town parish. From the Swedish era, ending in 1710, there survive accounts from the years 1599–1601 and 1655–1665.³⁹ Although they altogether cover only 14 years, the accounts mention 638 burials in the church and the churchyard. This allows a quantitative analysis to be performed. The accounts list also the burial costs for the parish, distinguishing between the cost of the burial place and the fee for the chimes. Thus they also allow a rough analysis on the interrelation between social status and the location of graves to be conducted.

A burial place in the choir was valued to three dalers, while elsewhere in the church the cost was two dalers, and in the churchyard 12 öre ($\frac{1}{2}$ dalers). When the costs of the chimes are added to the expenses of a burial place, the difference in the burial costs between the church and the churchyard is illustrative of the supposed difference in social statuses (Fig. 11).

The statistics reveal also the relation between gender and burial places. According to the accounts, the burials of children and women were concentrated on the churchyard, while the burials of men were made much more commonly under the pavement of the cathedral. Among the 638 burials in 1599–1601 and 1655–1665, there were 177 women, 186 men and 275

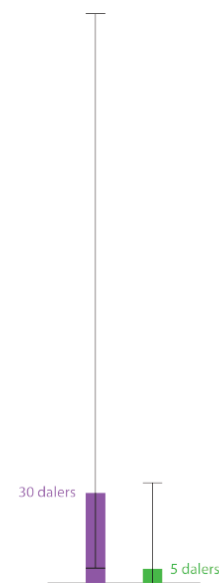
³⁹ Helsinki, The National Archives of Finland, KA 267, and KA 7060.

children. There were large monthly fluctuations in the number of burials, and also the plague epidemic of 1656–1657 is evident in the data. The ratio of the burials made either in the church or the churchyard indicates that some of the older graves had to be repeatedly removed from the cathedral. During the 14 years under scrutiny, 45% of the burials were made inside the church, and no significant change in this ratio is visible in the material of 1599–1601 and 1655–1665. On the basis of the accounts, the total number of burials in the church and the churchyard, if the frequency was more or less constant from the Late Middle Ages to the eighteenth century, was somewhere between 10,000 and 20,000.



year	female	male	child	total				
1599	1	19	7	13	10	14	18	46
1600	4	17	8	13	6	16	18	46
1601	5	15	9	9	10	11	24	35
1655	5	6	4	9	13	10	22	25
1656	3	5	7	8	25	15	35	28
1657	0	9	0	5	0	20	0	34
1658	11	17	20	13	16	11	47	41
1659	2	3	0	3	1	1	3	7
1660	6	6	7	3	11	4	24	13
1661	5	3	4	3	13	7	22	13
1662	2	3	3	2	7	0	12	5
1663	5	11	4	8	21	8	30	27
1664	3	6	8	5	12	3	23	14
1665	2	3	3	8	7	3	12	14
total	54	123	84	102	152	123	290	348
total		177		186		275		638

a) burials in the CHURCH and the CHURCH YARD



a) funeral costs in the parish accounts of the ceremonies of the burials in the CHURCH and the CHURCH YARD

Fig. 11. The annual number of burials made to the church and churchyard according to gender and age (a), and the ratio of the burial costs inside the cathedral and in the churchyard (b). Statistics: Panu Savolainen.

Our example shows that the use of accounts, even when they are fragmentarily preserved, may offer essential information for understanding the burial practices, and the frequency and the amount of burials on a certain site. This is accomplished with only a minor amount of resources compared with archaeology. The comparison of the written evidence with the archaeological data will be relevant when more graves will be excavated and analysed in the church and the churchyard.

The social topography of the churchyard of Viborg has some parallels to Linköping Cathedral in Central Sweden, where a comprehensive chronological picture of its cemetery from the 12th to 19th centuries has been

reconstructed.⁴⁰ Although the case of Linköping consists mostly of archaeological material, it is comparable to the case of Viborg, enlightened mainly by documents. Viborg resembles Linköping, another episcopal town in seventeenth-century Sweden, in the concentration of the burials to one cemetery after the Reformation.⁴¹ Even though there were two other parish churches in Viborg, i.e. the church of the Siikaniemi suburb and the old Dominican church, all burials were made, besides four exceptions among the 638 burials, in the cathedral or the cathedral cemetery. In Viborg, as in Linköping, the social segregation between the church and the churchyard as a burial place appears remarkable (Fig. 11).⁴² These examples signals the possibilities of a simultaneous documentary and archaeological analysis, which in the context of burials can unveil minute statistics on the social hierarchies of the urban community, even on the level of identifiable individuals.

Conclusions

As the second ecclesiastical building in rank in medieval and early modern Finland, the architecture of the Old Cathedral of Viborg has been exceptional in several ways. The initial stage of the building with its limestone columns may have resembled, more than any other medieval church in Finland, the sacral architecture of the southern coasts of the Gulf of Finland. Moreover, as the palimpsest of the later extensions and modifications, partially due to the changes of religion along with the political history, show, it is unusual in the Finnish context.

The study of the Old Cathedral of Viborg is an exceptional archaeological and historiographical endeavour, because of the heavy alterations made at the beginning of the 19th century, and the several previous excavations which have swept away the hidden traces of any earlier structural and cultural layers. We have here introduced some ideas on how qualitatively differing pieces of information – existing structures, data from archaeological excavations, historical drawings and texts, and previous archaeological and survey documentation – may together be used to uncover the intricate architectural history of an edifice that has almost entirely lost its ecclesiastical character and visible older structures.

The enquiry of the medieval stone churches of Finland usually does

⁴⁰ Caroline Arcini & Göran Tagesson, 'Kroppen som materiell kultur – gravar och människor i Linköping genom 700 år', Anders Kaliff & Göran Tagesson (eds), *Liunga. Kaupinga. Kulturhistoria och arkeologi i linköpingsbygden*, Riksantikvarieämbetet arkeologiska undersökningar skrifter 60: Stockholm 2005, 283–319.

⁴¹ Arcini & Tagesson 2005, 308.

⁴² Arcini & Tagesson 2005, 311–312.

not deal with post-medieval alterations, and written sources from the Middle Ages are usually too deficient for the purposes of historical archaeology. The nature of the preserved documentary evidence changes from the 16th century onwards, and in the case of post-medieval times, there still are many unexplored ways to use the written material for archaeological purposes.

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