

6-1-2016

A place to visit in Sweden: The Trelleborg

Elisabeth Thorsell

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag>



Part of the [Genealogy Commons](#), and the [Scandinavian Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Thorsell, Elisabeth (2016) "A place to visit in Sweden: The Trelleborg," *Swedish American Genealogist*. Vol. 36 : No. 2 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol36/iss2/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center at Augustana Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Swedish American Genealogist by an authorized editor of Augustana Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@augustana.edu.

A place to visit in Sweden: The Trelleborg

During a recent visit to Trelleborg in Skåne, on the southernmost tip of the province, one day we visited the Trelleborg Viking Museum, which we found very interesting for anyone who likes to learn about the Vikings.

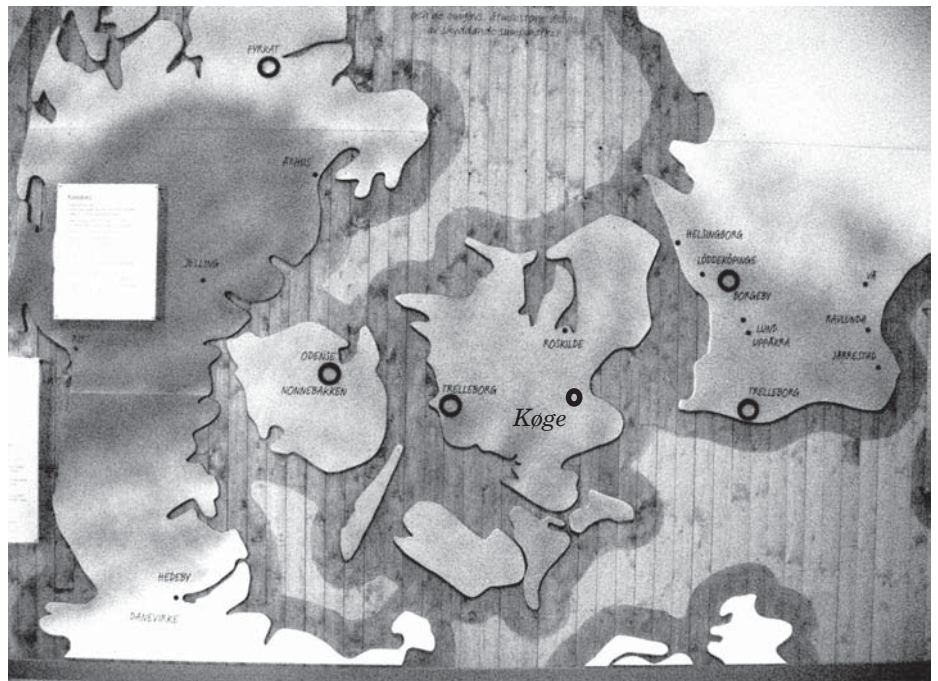
The city is named for the giant Viking fortress Trelleborg, which had namesakes in many other places in then Denmark (Skåne did not become Swedish until the Peace of Roskilde in 1658). There are at least five known ones, and possibly some more that have not yet been found and excavated.

A “trelleborg” was a round open space of roughly a diameter of about 125 meters (410 feet), or larger. It had a high wall made of earth and sod, and was strengthened by high wooden poles. Those were called *trällor*, which explains the name. Outside there was a shallow ditch. There were usually 4 entrances in the four directions, guarded by portcullises. The fortresses are always close to a waterway.

The oldest are dated to the 700s, but most of them were built during 980s by command of *King Harald Bluetooth*, a very powerful ruler. On his memorial stone at Jelling it says “he made the Danes Christians.” He is also supposed to be the one that introduced taxation in his realm, for which he needed many soldiers and clerks to collect the taxes, and also easily defended places to keep the “income.”

Inside the “trelleborg” the garrison lived in thatched wooden houses, built in a square. They also had cookhouses, forges, and other necessary buildings.

The “trelleborg,” in Trelleborg was found in 1988 when the city expropriated an old block in the town. It was excavated in 1988–1991. The fortress was, when it was built, around 200 meters from the shore of the Baltic, but nearby was a lagoon, that made it possible for Viking ships to anchor by the “trelleborg.” A quarter of the old fortress has been recon-



Map showing the Danish trelleborgs. Now a new one has been found close to Køge on Sjælland. The two now Swedish ones are Borgeby and Trelleborg.

structed and is now a nice museum.

The new “ringborg” in Denmark

In 2014 Danish archeologist Søren Sindbæk of Aarhus University and *museumsinspektør* Nanna Holm of the Danish “Borgcenter” found the 5th known “ringborg” [a term preferred by the Danes] in Denmark, west of the city of Køge and is called *Vallø Borgring*. It has not yet been excavated, except for some very preliminary digs.

The Danish “ringborgs” were placed about a day’s march from each other, and this indicated that there was a fortress missing in eastern Sjælland. The newly found one had a strategic location where the major roads from Ringsted and Roskilde met. By using modern technology, laser measuring etc, it was found that the archeologists’ assumptions were correct, which was proved by the first research dig.

(Source: Wikipedia)

Elisabeth Thorsell



Models of the houses.



Entrance with portcullis.