

# Castle Heritage: Living History, Identity and Events in Danish and English Castles

Sara Helin-Long

## Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Chapter 1: The Danish Case	5
Chapter 2: Kronborg Castle	8
History of Kronborg Castle	8
Kronborg Castle and Shakespeare's Hamlet	10
Website Language and Building a Narrative	11
Conclusions Regarding Kronborg and <i>Hamlet</i>	14
Chapter 3: Egeskov Castle	16
History of Egeskov Castle	16
Egeskov Castle Events	16
Who Visits Egeskov Castle?	18
Chapter 4: The English Case	20
Chapter 5: Bolsover Castle	22
History of Bolsover Castle	22
Bolsover Castle, English Heritage and Events	22
Chapter 6: Leeds Castle	27
History of Leeds Castle	27
Leeds Castle Foundation and Events	28
Discussion	31
Concluding Remarks	34
Bibliography	35

A common, universal image of a castle does not exist. Rather, the word castle inspires various images, feelings and memories which although unique to an individual are greatly formed by the history and culture of the society that surrounds them. The public's perception of castles and their role varies from country to country and can be influenced by factors, such as the type of castles which the country has (Medieval, Renaissance etc.) and the present day use of those castles.

In Denmark, the construction of castles was delayed due to the strength of the Vikings and were built as strongholds and those of which were not destroyed, remain in royal possession.<sup>1</sup> Danish castles are for the most part currently in use as private and royal residences. If not in use as a private residence, there are castles which are used as hotels and wedding locations or privately owned and used as a photo location due to the nice aesthetic provided by the grand structure and the stately grounds. A special case in Denmark is Kronborg Castle which provides tours to its visitors about its history and its narrative link to the novel, *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare. In England, in the early modern period (~1500-1800) castles in addition to country houses were seen as “an elitist phenomenon with clear hierarchical structures”<sup>2</sup>. Currently, many English castles are under the protection of organizations such as English Heritage which maintain the grounds and provides information about the site to its visitors.

In Denmark and England, castles can also chose to host public (re-enactments, theatre, markets etc.) and private (weddings and banquets) in addition to providing tours and public access of the castle grounds to the public. Examples of both public and private events which are hosted at castles will be the focus of the upcoming chapters. The analysis will be centered around the public events because as will be seen they enable and encourage additional revenue and interest to the castle in the hope of sustaining engagement and financial stability to maintain the grounds.

The goal is to explore the impact of events such as re-enactments, seasonal events or open-air theatre and cinema on the public's perception and knowledge of a castle. The following discussions will also be addressed: historical authenticity and relevancy of the events, the impact of the events on the identity and image of the castle and the relationship between the events and the local and international population's perception of the role of the castle in its countries heritage. In part, the focus on events is because events are usually targeted towards the location population— although there are instances when the event is internationally known and attended — and therefore provide unique insight into how an image of a castle is formed and sustained in

---

<sup>1</sup> Rikke Afgete Olsen, “Danish Medieval Castles” (Aarhus University Press, 2014), 14-27.

<sup>2</sup> Frida Keuer, “What to Do with Heritage: A Comparative Study of the Usage and Perception of Country Houses and Castles” (Wijk bij Duurstede, 2016), 17.

the castle's local setting. Additionally, although castles which host events often also offer tours or other services, the events are the most intimate way in which the general public can interact with a castle because they allow the attendees to spend leisurely time on the castle grounds.

Given that events hosted at castles in Denmark and England is a broad subject, I will focus the essay by providing four case studies. Before I present the case studies, I will provide a historical overview of the role of castles in Denmark and England in order to give context to the subject. There will be two case studies each for Denmark and England. The case studies will be as follows: Kronborg and Egeskov Castle in Denmark and Bolsover and Leeds Castle in England. The case studies were chosen because they are representative of the event scene in the respective countries but also because they provoke questions about the relationship between the events, historical authenticity to the castle history and the public's perception and identification to the castle. To conclude the case studies, I will both evaluate each case individually because of the difference in history and current functions of castles in each country and discuss the comparison between the two cases in order to put them in perspective.

### The Danish Case.

In Danish Medieval Castles, Olsen chronicles the emergence of castles in Denmark beginning with the Medieval castle. The presence of Vikings in Denmark until the 11th century delayed the influence of western European and therefore the first record of castles as royal or private structures is not until the beginning of the 12th century.<sup>3</sup> These castles were constructed with the purpose of providing protection to the owner from outside forces and thus became categorized under the Danish term “borg”. The Danish dictionary, Den Danske Ordbog, defines “borg” as a “fortified building or building complex constructed (in the middle ages or earlier) as a dwelling for a prince, a grandmother or the like. typically includes buildings for waiters and soldiers as well as stables, workshops, etc.”<sup>4</sup> To be a proprietor of a Medieval “borg” symbolized social prestige which was reflected in the social structure that existed within them: the feudal system. Unfortunately, not many Medieval castles in Denmark remain standing. As the need for Medieval castle lessened, their stones were repurposed by the townspeople and the Royal Crown. In Denmark, there are now approximately 1,000 castle mounds.<sup>5</sup>

In Danish, the Renaissance castles in Danish are named “slot”, defined as “large, richly decorated building (or building complex) listed as a residence for a king, prince, richman or the like. and, for example, equipped with one or more towers and possibly”.<sup>6</sup>

The castles which are still standing and in use—including well-known Rosenborg, Amalienborg, Frederiksborg, Egeskov and Kronborg—are in the Renaissance style. Many castles are still in use as royal or private residences and therefore are not widely open to the public and do not host public events. Additionally, there are sixteen royal castles and palaces which although are open to public viewing through tours, do not regularly host public events.<sup>7</sup> However, there are a couple exceptions such as the participation of Amalienborg Palace and Rosenborg Castle’s in culture night which is an annual culture day held in Copenhagen that more than 280 museums, theaters, libraries, churches and parks participate in.

Before I elaborate on the subject of Danish castles and the events they host, I will define the terms and research parameters of the Danish case. In the following section, I make the

---

<sup>3</sup> Olsen, 14-27.

<sup>4</sup> Retrieved from <http://ordnet.dk>.

<sup>5</sup> Olsen, 12-16.

<sup>6</sup> Retrieved from [http://ordnet.dk/ddo\\_en/dict?query=slot](http://ordnet.dk/ddo_en/dict?query=slot).

<sup>7</sup> Danish Royal Palaces. Accessed on May 15, 2018. *Pay a Royal Visit*. Retrieved from <http://kongeligeslotte.dk/en>

distinction between private and public events. For the purpose of this report, I categorize private events as events which occur only because of pre-booking and planning by an individual person or company, the attendees paid for the event and are part of one group. The public events are pre-planned by the castle or an outside organization, advertised and accessible to the greater public and sometimes but not always free. Another important clarification is which structures were included in the search for events hosted at Danish 'Castles'. As previously outlined, there are two Danish words which could be used for the English word, Castle: *slot* and *borg*. The structures which are castles by the definition of once being a fortress typically have the word *borg* included in their names such as Kronborg, Charlottenborg, and Shackenborg. In Danish, the word *slot* has been added onto not only these castle's names but also to the names of country houses. Furthermore, many of the royal palaces classified under *slot* also contain the word *borg* in their names such as Rosenborg, Amalienborg, and Christiansborg. When used for these royal residences, the word *slot* becomes palace while for the previous examples *slot* is translated into castle. Therefore, country houses using the word *slot*, royal palaces and traditional fortress castles were included in the search parameters.

In Denmark, as previously stated the majority of castles do not host public events and instead are used for wedding locations, photo shoot settings, hotels or bed and breakfasts, banquets, nature activities and private residences. The castles which lend themselves to these types of services, such as Clausholm Castle, Næsbyholm Castle, and Bernstorff Castle are available to rent for private events but consequently not widely open to the public through tours or broadly advertised events. During these private events, the castle's space undoubtedly feels populated and therefore semi-public but in order to create this atmosphere and experience, the price is quite high. To rent Clausholm Castle, which is beautiful but not incredibly well-known, for a one-day photo shoot is 12.000 DKK(1.610 euros), to rent Næsbyholm Castle for a wedding is 25.000-45.000 DKK(3.355-6.039 euros) depending on the season plus an additional 1.395 DKK(187 euros) per person and to rent Bernstorff Castle for an eight-hour banquet(min. 25 persons) is 1.465 DKK(197 euros) per person. Given the high price of participating in an event at one of these castles, they were not chosen as a focus in these case studies because of their limited access to the greater Danish population even though they do have the ability to host large events although private. However, because these exclusive castle events are one way in which a small group of the Danish population engages with and forms their opinion about castles, I will briefly comment upon them.

The decision to have a wedding, go to a New Year's banquet or stay in a castle is a purposeful choice to have a significant event or vacation in an aesthetically beautiful and historic setting. However, most likely for these types of events the picturesque structures and grounds are more important than the history of the space. In contrast, during more public events such as

open-air theatre, Christmas markets and other seasonal events, haunted castles, and fares, the setting provided by the castle is a bonus but not usually the sole reason for the event. The majority of these events are held on the grounds of the castle and not inside but there is normally an option to view or tour the castle for a reduced price therefore drawing additional attention to the castle. The history of the castle is more accessible during the public events and sometimes the history even inspires the events which are held at castles, such as Shakespeare theater at Kronborg Castle. In the booking descriptions for the private events, I could not find any obvious possibilities to learn more about the history of the castle.

In the following section, I will present the two Danish case studies: Kronborg Castle and Egeskov Castle. They were chosen because they both provide the possibility to analyze the motivations behind, purpose of, and potential impacts of the events hosted at the castles on the public's perception through advertisements of the events, interviews with the organizers and the use of relevant literature. The purpose of the case studies is to present the history of the castle along with its current functions and relationship with the public in order to investigate the relationship between the history of the castle, the authenticity of their events and the impact on the public's perception and knowledge of the castle.

The first case study I have chose to present is Kronborg Castle because of its unique history and relationship with the long-standing events of *Hamlet* performances. The history of Kronborg castle has become intertwined with the story of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* therefore greatly overshadowing Kronborg's own importance in Danish history. The focus of this case study will be the annual Shakespeare festival which is performed on the grounds of Kronborg and how this event engages the public and impacts their image of Kronborg Castle.

The second case study, Egeskov Castle, is a better representation of the castles in Denmark which yearly host multiple public events. Egeskov is intriguing because it is in the minority of functioning castles in Denmark by hosting public events even though it is still privately owned and inhabited. Egeskov Castle also views themselves as unique among Danish castles because they have a commercialized focus and "run a full Tourist attraction, with historic garden, Playgrounds, Museums etc."<sup>8</sup> In total, there are only thirteen castles— including the two case studies and those castles which only participate in the culture night event— which host public events in Denmark. Among those thirteen, Egeskov Castle along with Shackenberg Castle and Gram Castles is one of the castles which hosts the most diverse and number of events which indicates that the events have a more active role in how the castle engages with the public than the case of other castles in Denmark.

---

<sup>8</sup> Henrik Neelmeyer (personal communication, May 16, 2018)

“To thine own self be true”<sup>9</sup>: Kronborg Castle

### *History of Kronborg Castle*

To preface the section devoted to Kronborg Castle it should be noted that this section does not contain interviews with employees of Kronborg Castle nor Hamletscenen. Therefore, some questions are left unanswered regarding specific website content of the organizations and their perspective on the following discussion.

Among the more well-known castles in Denmark, Kronborg Castle attracts 250.000 visitors a year and can be found in the town of Helsingør (Elsinore)<sup>10</sup>. The visitor number can be found on the Kronborg website and seems to only include visitors to the castle itself not the events. The 250.000 visitors to Kronborg is significant, especially when compared to other Royal castles which are located in Denmark’s capital city of Copenhagen: Rosenborg and Amalienborg. Rosenborg is home to Denmark’s crown jewels and Amalienborg Palace is the residence of the Royal family. According to Rosenborg’s 2017 Annual Report, in 2017 Rosenborg had 382.499 visitors while Amalienborg had 151.682 visitors which is a combined 534.181 visitors. Of the 534.181 people who visited the Royal palaces, 150.000 of them were Danish citizen which indicates the popularity of the palaces to not only foreign tourists but also Danes themselves.<sup>11</sup> Considering Kronborg’s location (approximately an hour north of Copenhagen), the high amount of visitors demonstrates its lasting importance in Danish history and significance as a tourist site. Furthermore, Kronborg Castle is not located in the capital, Copenhagen, as Rosenborg and Amalienborg Castles signifying that the visitors took a purposeful journey to experience Kronborg Castle.

The history of Kronborg Castle begins 1574 when Hans van Paeschen was commissioned by King Frederik II to build the castle, which was built upon *Krogen* (the castle of King Erik of Pomerania) and was completed by 1585. In 1629, the castle was largely devastated by a fire but was restored under Christian IV and mostly in accordance with its original characteristics. The castle as a defensive structure was realized under Frederik III (1648-1670), Christian V (1670-1699), and Frederik IV (1699-1730).<sup>12</sup> The space of Kronborg has been inhabited by a

---

<sup>9</sup> Hamlet Act I, scene III

<sup>10</sup> Danish Royal Castles, *The History of Kronborg Castle*. Accessed on May 15, 2018, <http://kongeligeslotte.dk/en/palaces-and-gardens/kronborg-castle/explore-kronborg-castle/the-history-of-kronborg-castle.html>

<sup>11</sup> Kongernes Samling *The Royal Danish Collection*, "Årsberetning 2017," Accessed on May 15, 2018, <http://www.kongernessamling.dk/content/uploads/2015/02/%C3%85rsberetning-2017.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> “WHC Nomination Document” (UNESCO, 2000), 81.

prison, under military control and until 2013 housed the Maritime Museum of Denmark. Now Kronborg Castle is open for guided tours, private interactive tours and available for rent.

Although the architectural construction, the strong fortifications and the various inhabitants of Kronborg contribute to the castle's image and history, it is the location of Kronborg which provides greater understanding to its historical significance within Danish culture. As Kronborg Castle is positioned at the narrowest part of the Sound between Denmark and Sweden allowing Denmark to control the passageway from the North Sea into the Baltic Sea. Denmark controlled the seaway from 1429 until 1857, greatly aided by the strategic location of Kronborg Castle in the 1500s and therefore providing Denmark with a great source of economic revenue due to tolls on ships while also becoming an outward symbol of the nation's political power and strength.<sup>13</sup> In 2000, Kronborg Castle was inscribed onto the UNESCO World Heritage List for the significant role it played in the history of the region and its value as an "outstanding example of the Renaissance castle".<sup>14</sup>

In addition to Kronborg's role as a sea-side fortress, the site also inspired the setting of Elsinore in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and is the resting place of the mythical Holger Danske (Holger the Dane). Holger Danske, popularized by the Danish author Hans Christian Andersen, is a Danish national hero who according to myth is slumbering in the underground passages of Kronborg and will rise again come Denmark's day of need.<sup>15</sup> As Kronborg Castle became the real-world site of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and the legend of Holger Danske, the public narrative which Kronborg presented about itself has become increasingly influenced by these two fictional stories rather than by the castle's remarkable history as a strong sea-side fortress. Undoubtedly the popularity of Shakespeare and Andersen has contributed to the strong and long-standing association of these two fictional stories with Kronborg Castle.

---

<sup>13</sup> UNESCO, "Kronborg Castle," Accessed on May 15, 2018, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/696>

<sup>14</sup> UNESCO, 1

<sup>15</sup> Anne Sophie Refskou, "Whose Castle is it Anyway?" (2017), 126

### *Kronborg Castle and Shakespeare's Hamlet*

Danish author Hans Christian Andersen's Holger Danske has maintained a strong connection to Kronborg in the cultural upbringing of Danes but it is Shakespeare's *Hamlet* which has prevailed as the more well-known story of Kronborg. The adoption of the term 'Hamlet's Castle' on Kronborg's website in reference to and instead of the name Kronborg itself,<sup>16</sup> in addition to a long tradition of open-air theatre performances of *Hamlet* on the grounds of Kronborg signify their deliberate marketing to truly become 'Hamlet's castle'. This marketing strategy while effective in attracting visitors provokes questions about Kronborg's authenticity as it relates to its identity and position within Danish heritage. In the process of the researching this case study, attempts were made to find information in teaching guides, newspapers and academic articles about how Kronborg Castle, Shakespeare and *Hamlet* are taught in school or discussed in Denmark in regards to Danish Heritage in the present day but this information was not conclusively found.

Therefore, in this section I will focus on the theatrical productions of *Hamlet* in order to explore how the development of this event has shaped the way that Kronborg identifies itself and if that presentation is historically accurate and consequently authentic. The current open-air theatre performances of *Hamlet* are performed during the Shakespeare Festival by Hamletscenen which in August of 2018 will celebrate 10 years at Kronborg. However, the first *Hamlet* performance occurred years before in 1816 in honor of the bicentenary of Shakespeare's death.<sup>17</sup> More than 100 years later, in 1937 the first international production of *Hamlet* was performed by the English company Old Vic.<sup>18</sup> In the New York Times report, the actors gained a glowing review for their performance in front of 1.800. The review ends with the following assessment: "The play will be repeated four times and probably in following years if the experiment is successful".<sup>19</sup> The "experiment" was and continues to be a definite success and from 1937 onwards the play has become a reoccurring event at Kronborg.<sup>20</sup> In 2016, the anniversary performance — 200 years since the first performance of *Hamlet* on the castle grounds and the

---

<sup>16</sup> Kronborg, "Visit Kronborg Castle," Accessed on May 15, 2018, <http://kongeligeslotte.dk/en/palaces-and-gardens/kronborg-castle.html>.

<sup>17</sup> Refskou, 122

<sup>18</sup> Refskou 124

<sup>19</sup> New York Times: "1,800 see 'Hamlet' Given at Elsinore"

<sup>20</sup> Danish Royal Castles. *The Story of Hamlet*. Retrieved from <http://kongeligeslotte.dk/da/slotte-og-haver/kronborg-slot/udforsk-kronborg-slot/historien-om-hamlet-paa-kronborg.html>

400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death — was attended by more than 200.000 people.<sup>21</sup> The anniversary performances were part of the Shakespeare festival. Until 2012, the Shakespeare festival was named the Hamlet Festival and only interpretations of *Hamlet* were seen at Kronborg. Now there is the possibility to view a greater variety of Shakespeare plays and consequently the presence of Shakespeare himself has increased rather than just *Hamlet* even though the author himself has little historical connection to Kronborg, Helsingør or Denmark.<sup>22</sup> .

Here it should be noted that the Shakespeare festival is the only major event which is held at Kronborg Castle and is, in fact, not organized and arranged by Kronborg Castle itself but another organization, Hamletscenen. Established in 2008 by the Danish Ministry of Culture and the Municipality, Hamletscenen is an independent organization but is directly associated with Kronborg Castle.<sup>23</sup> The Shakespeare festival is greatly popular not only in Denmark but it also attracts an international audience and therefore is worthy of investigation as an intriguing case study even though not directly organized by Kronborg Castle.

### *Website Language and Building a Narrative*

In the following section, I discuss the websites of Kronborg and Hamletscenen because they provide valuable information on how the castle and the Shakespeare festival chooses to present itself to potential visitors or those looking for more information. The website is indeed a valuable source of information because it allows those who are not on site to access information but I cannot say whether the same information is provided on site during tours or additional information given on site. On the homepage of the Hamletscenen website, there is no direct mention of why the festival is hosted at Kronborg. Perhaps, they assume that the visitors to the website will already be familiar with the connection of *Hamlet* to Kronborg. Hamletscenen does provide a detailed history of *Hamlet* at Kronborg under the history section but it is the second to last link out of twenty on the side menu bar (Ticket and practical information along with information for groups are all found before the history). In addition to providing context for why the Shakespeare festival is held at Kronborg, the Hamletscenen website also presents Kronborg as an aesthetically well-suited setting for the performances of the Shakespeare plays.

---

<sup>21</sup> Magnuson, A. *July Performance: Up close and personal with Hamlet the Dane and friends*. Retrieved from <http://cphpost.dk/activities/july-performance-up-close-and-personal-with-hamlet-the-dane-and-friends.html>

<sup>22</sup> Authentic Copenhagen. *Hamletscenen: Shakespeare festival at Hamlet's Castle*. Retrieved from <http://authenticcopenhagen.com/copenhagen-festivals/performing-arts-festivals/hamletscenen-shakespeare-festival-at-hamlets-castle/>

<sup>23</sup> Retrieved from <http://hamletscenen.dk/en/about-the-theatre/history/>

Our backdrop is the beautiful Kronborg Castle, the constantly changing Danish weather, the screech of gulls and the glimmer of stars. In this context, the weather is a highly respected co-player, guaranteeing that each performance is an almost magical experience. The Shakespeare Festival is an open-air theatre event where the clouds and the stars are silent spectators.<sup>24</sup>

The Hamletscenen website also provides a video which shows the ambience of the castle during the festival. The imagery is beautiful and the text on the video tells of the beautiful ambience, advertises a picnic and advises an invitation to your loved ones. However, the text on the video is written in Danish which is curious given the international nature and appeal of the event and the fact that the performances are given in English. Conceivably this could be a way to embrace the Shakespeare and *Hamlet* narrative into a Danish history.

The open-air theatre performances of *Hamlet* are not the only way in which Kronborg Castle associates itself with Shakespeare's play to its visitors. Their website gives information on the history of the castle, group tour options and the possibility of renting the castle all which include options related to Hamlet. The website now promotes "Hamlet Live" which is a limited time experience from June 1st - August 31st 2018. The Hamlet live performances do not seem to be associated with the Shakespeare festival *Hamlet* performances Interesting, despite the clear association with Shakespeare and Hamlet on the website which I will elaborate upon, information about the Shakespeare festival cannot be found on the Kronborg website. The Hamlet Live event is targeted towards everyone and is performed in English. Kronborg describes there event as follows:

Hamlet Live is an interactive theatrical experience. Hamlet, Ophelia, Claudius, Gertrude and Polonius take up residence in the castle halls and private chambers during the summer. When visitors walk into the Courtyard of Kronborg Castle, they tumble right into the story. The fate of Hamlet unfold before their very eyes as they walk around the castle. No one knows who they will meet and when. Hamlet Live is a live performance that will play out daily. During all the opening house of Kronborg Castle. You will meet the characters as you walk through the castle.<sup>25</sup>

Kronborg's new interactive experience is solely focused on the story of Hamlet. It is an interesting addition to the visitor experience because it is reminiscent of living history through re-enactment but classifying it under those terms is difficult because of the fictional nature of

---

<sup>24</sup> Retrieved from <http://hamletscenen.dk/en/about-the-theatre/>

<sup>25</sup> Retrieved from <http://kongeligeslotte.dk/en/palaces-and-gardens/kronborg-castle/hamlet-live/unnamed.html>

*Hamlet* and Shakespeare himself. The complication is due to the previously discussed problems *Hamlet's* lack of historical authenticity in the history of Kronborg Castle.

Furthermore, for the period of the Hamlet Live event(three months) the visitor experience seems to be dominated by *Hamlet*. The ticket for that three-month duration includes both access to Kronborg and the Hamlet Live event because it occurs throughout the whole day and within all parts of the castle. Although there is no mention of the Shakespeare Festival, Kronborg castle has found ways of incorporating optional group tours and non-optional interactive experiences centered around Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and therefore enhancing the relationship between the *Hamlet* narrative and Kronborg.

There appears to be a correlation between the popularity of the *Hamlet* performances, currently the Shakespeare festival, at Kronborg and the continuing purposeful association between the two for tourists. It is possible, but not likely given the upcoming discussion, that the association is also for Danish people but the Hamlet Live and Shakespeare festival are both conducted in English. The Kronborg website provides the option to be viewed in Danish or in English and depending on which language is chosen, there is slight variation of language in how Kronborg labels itself. For the purpose of this case study, perhaps the most interesting difference is found in the introductory information on the home page of the website. On the Danish site, the opening information states "Discover Kronborg; The Castle is known throughout the world as Hamlet's castle" while the English site states "Visit Hamlet's Castle; Explore Kronborg- the castle world known as Hamlet's castle".

The difference in language is subtle but offers insight into how Kronborg castle chooses to represent itself to different audiences. To a Danish visitor of the site, Kronborg is still the predominant name and the *Hamlet* association is secondary while to a non-Danish visitor to the English site the first name and representation of the castle is "Hamlet's Castle". The clear preference to advertise Kronborg as the home of Hamlet to foreigners along with the greatly internationally attended Shakespeare festival indicates a possible change of Kronborg as a Danish site to a global site. One commonality in the English and Danish version of the website's presentation of the castle which supports this idea is the introductory phrase: "UNESCO slot"/"UNESCO Castle". This distinction categorizes the site as not only important in Danish history but as a 'world heritage site' furthering Kronborg's global status.

### *Conclusions Regarding Kronborg and Hamlet*

Once a symbol of Denmark's political and social strength, Kronborg castle is now widely thought of as the home of the fictional *Hamlet* and now perhaps, secondly appreciated for its architectural beauty and maritime history. The change while financially profitable for the castle, and the town of Helsingør (which has adopted the phrase 'Home of Hamlet')<sup>26</sup>, creates problems inauthenticity of representation due to not only a limited historical relationship between Shakespeare and Kronborg but also the disputed history and biography of Shakespeare himself. The following discussion on the relationship between Kronborg's history and Shakespeare should be prefaced by saying that Shakespeare's biography is by no means definitive.

Did Shakespeare ever visit Kronborg Castle? And does his play, even though about the prince of Denmark, actually tell a Danish story? If not, what does it mean that the story has dominated the modern narrative of Kronborg Castle? These are among the questions which form the discussion regarding Kronborg Castle and its position in Danish heritage and identity. Most likely Shakespeare did not visit Kronborg but learned of the life and ambience of the castle from a troupe of English performers who visited the castle in 1586 and who would later go onto act with Shakespeare.<sup>27</sup> There is little historical connection to the story of *Hamlet* and the life of Shakespeare but nevertheless the castle provides many options for the visitor to interact with the story of *Hamlet* on the castle grounds. Moreover, neither the information provided about Shakespeare and Hamlet on the Kronborg website nor the optional private guided tours present the controversial history of Shakespeare or discuss the relationship between the castle and the play. The Kronborg website tells the story of how Kronborg is the site of inspiration for *Hamlet* and states the history of the performances on the grounds.

Is *Hamlet* a Danish story? At this point, a response require nuance because although Shakespeare not Hamlet the character were not Danish, the story has for centuries not been performed on the castle grounds and therefore has become part of Danish history. Nevertheless, there are defined opinions on this subject. The strong opinion of two renowned Danish Shakespeare translators, Valdemar Østerberg and Johannes Sløk, are shared in David Hohnen's *Hamlet's Castle and Shakespeare's Elsinore*: "The circumstances and the characters in "Hamlet" are not Danish!" says Østerberg and Sløk shares a similar sentiment stating "the play has no exact geographical location, its "Helsingør" has nothing to do with Helsingør or Kronborg".<sup>28</sup> However, although Hamlet might not be considered a Danish story, it has been suggested that the

---

<sup>26</sup> Refskou 121

<sup>27</sup> UNESCO, 81 and Refskou, 123

<sup>28</sup> David Hohnen, "Hamlet's Castle and Shakespeare's Elsinore," Accessed on May 15, 2018, Retrieved from <https://www.b.dk/kultur/vaere-eller-ikke-vaere-paa-kronborg>

story was indeed inspired by a Danish one. It is thought that Shakespeare published *Hamlet* in 1601 and was inspired by the 13th-century play *Amleth* written by Saxo Grammaticus who was Danish.<sup>29</sup> The story of Amleth tells a similar story which is depicted in Shakespeare's play. This inspiration is another component of the story which is not mentioned on the Kronborg Castle website. It is understandable that in order to keep the text brief not all aspects can be included, however the possible connection to Danish history would be an intriguing factor in connecting Shakespeare's *Hamlet* further to the heritage of Kronborg and Denmark.

Despite the significant role Kronborg Castle played in Denmark's economic, political and social history, Kronborg's website does not provide many options to learn more about the historical significance of the castle as a sea-side fortress or military stronghold. Before 2013, the Maritime Museum could provide an in-depth history but the museum is no longer housed at Kronborg. Considering the questions surrounding Shakespeare's presence at Kronborg and *Hamlet* as a Danish story, the overwhelming presence of *Hamlet* on the website is interesting. On the website, not even the mystical story of Holger Danske is as represented as *Hamlet* even though to the Danish people the name and myth is as widely known and is always associated with Kronborg Castle. Moreover, although the story of *Hamlet* at Kronborg is consistently found on the website, there is no mention that the play was inspired by the work of a Danish author. It seems as if *Hamlet* has already become intrinsically connected with Kronborg and therefore established its place within Danish history, identity and heritage. Refskou states

While Kronborg and Elsinore cannot quite compete with more famous hyperreal homes of Hamlet and Shakespeare, they do have a Shakespearean performance tradition which has provided—and continues to provide—a rather unique and purposeful occasion for intercultural intersections of Shakespearean text, place, performers and audiences. As a Shakespearean location Kronborg will have to continue to negotiate its identity in terms of local-global discourses...<sup>30</sup>

The question moving forward is what becomes of Kronborg's position in Danish heritage where it has previously held a prominent position of a symbol of power and a place of a national myth apart from Shakespeare and *Hamlet*. Will the histories of the sea-side fortress, Holger Danske and the inspirations behind *Hamlet* be lost to greater audiences in favor of the more profitable *Hamlet*?

---

<sup>29</sup> Muir, K. (1984). Saxo and Hamlet. *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 35(3), 370-372. doi:10.2307/2870387

<sup>30</sup> Refskou 131

## Egeskov Castle

### *History of Egeskov Castle*

The history of Egeskov Castle, located on Funen island, officially begins in 1405 with a farmhouse owned by Lydike and Jørgen Skinkel. The farmhouse stayed the same until 1545 when the new owner, Lindsay Frands Brockenhuus, started the construction to build the castle as it is seen today. Completed in 1554, Egeskov Castle was built as a defensive structure and therefore, was placed in the middle of a lake upon a foundation of oak trees.<sup>31</sup> The oak foundation combined with the desire to maintain tradition by keeping the name of the previous farmhouse, resulted in the name Egeskov which translates to “oak forest”.<sup>32</sup>

After the completion of Egeskov, the castle continued to be privately owned and has been in the possession of the same family since 1784. The park gardens could be accessed by the public in 1959, however it was not until 1986 that the castle itself was opened to the public. The property also houses a museum. According to Henrik Neelmeyer, the Director/CEO of Egeskov Castle, the castle was opened to the public out of necessity to develop the castle as an attraction in order to earn money to maintain the castle. In order to further develop the attraction, the castle began hosting events after the year 2000 and now hosts more than twelve events per year.<sup>33</sup> The events are organized by the Event Team consisting of three people from marketing, director in charge of development and execution of the events and finally they are coordinated with the CEO, Henrik Neelmeyer, and the Count, Michael Ahlefeldt-Laurvig-Bille.

### *Egeskov Castle Events*

In the case of Egeskov Castle, its historical importance is based on its architecture and its current situation of being a private home which choose to open to the public. Additionally, there is a connection with Hans Christian Andersen who visited the site a couple times. A paper doll which was designed by Andersen is housed at Egeskov Castle in addition to a trial route around the grounds. However, there is no dominant narrative at Egeskov Castle like which was seen in the case of Kronborg and therefore the event types are varied. Egeskov hosts a variety of events such as Motorcycles meets and races, concerts, Sankthansaften (Saint John’s Eve), Christmas markets, Halloween themed events and an event which features the fairytale characters of Hans Christian Andersen.

As previously stated, there is a connection between the castle and H.C. Andersen and therefore the Egeskov website provides the history of H.C. Andersen at Egeskov which involves

---

<sup>31</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.egeskov.dk/historie>

<sup>32</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.egeskov.dk/slottet>

<sup>33</sup> Henrik Neelmeyer (personal communication, May 16, 2018)

Andersen designing a small dressing doll named Augusta Snorifass in the 1860s. The doll and her magnificent and extensive wardrobe is now exhibited at Egeskov. The historical connection of Andersen to Egeskov is documented through Andersen's diary entries which indicate that he visited the castle twice. Although there is not a strong association between the author and the castle, Egeskov has detailed the castle's relationship with the author on their website and, as mentioned, hosted one event about H.C. Andersen in 2017: *H. C. Andersen Paraden gæster Egeskov Slot* ("H. C. Andersen The parade guests Egeskov Castle"). Egeskov describes the event on its Facebook page as follows: "At the castle, a real fairy tale takes place when the H.C. Andersen parade gives a potpourri of the many famous figures from H.C. Andersen's fairytale world".<sup>34</sup>

In the event description, the specific relationship between Andersen and Egeskov is not mentioned. The details of the event depict Egeskov as a fairytale setting which given the nature of Andersen's work makes sense. Although the setting and description is fitting, the historical relationship is not directly mentioned and there are no other events which are specifically related or intended to promote the history of the castle. When asked if there is a connection between the events and the history of the castle, Neelmeyer states "Not really, but we plan our events with connection to our exhibitions e.g. Old timer cars, Motorbikes etc".

In addition to events coordinated with the exhibits, events are also planned by season. For example, school holiday season is kept in mind in order to appeal to families. During low season, Egeskov Castle organizes special interest events such as Motorbikes, Classic Day Old Timer cars and Garden Walks. The special interest events help improve the visitor numbers during traditionally less active times. Generally, all generations are thought of throughout the whole season but the primary aim is the special interest events.<sup>35</sup>

Apart from the special interest events, Egeskov also hosts seasonal events such as a Halloween event. A Halloween event was held in 2017 and the Facebook description, similarly to the H.C. Andersen event emphasized the atmosphere created by the castle.

At Egeskov you get a whole day of play and adventure. It is decorated with pumpkins and Halloween moods in different places in the garden. In the forest you may want to get lost in the maze...<sup>36</sup>

Because the castle does not seem to have the mission to relate their events to the history of the castle, the description promotes the atmospheric setting provided by Egeskov. The description

---

<sup>34</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/events/1208664429261311/>

<sup>35</sup> Henrik Neelmeyer (personal communication, May 16, 2018)

<sup>36</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/events/1959797374305843/>

provided for the Halloween event and the H.C. Anderson event both romanticize the setting and focus on immersing the visitor in the beauty and grandeur of the castle grounds.

### *Who visits Egeskov Castle?*

The majority of those who visit the castle come from Denmark(70%) and therefore one of the main focuses of the castle is to encourage repeat visitation and provide a great day out for families. The remaining 30% of visitors mostly come from Germany, Norway, Holland and China.<sup>37</sup> Egeskov promotes its event through Facebook, LinkedIn and Tv advertisement. Although the history of the castle is not promoted through the event, the events encourage interest in the castle and historical information can be found on the website for those who become interested. Egeskov states the following about their intended goal for relating to the public: “We and the family are proud to show their history and inform about our Cultural heritage, hopefully visitors are enlightened after a visit at Egeskov”. Although it was necessary to open the castle grounds to the public in order to create revenue to maintain the castle and its grounds, now the castle intends to maintain revenue while also creating interest in the castle and its history.

A final note, I briefly mentioned the luxurious nature of some castles in Denmark and Egeskov could fall into the same categorization. Egeskov does not offer itself as a wedding or photo shoot location or for rent(perhaps in part because it is still a private residence) but the price of visiting the castle is high. The ticket price varies depending on the season: Off-peak an adult ticket costs 190 DKK(25 euros) and a children’s ticket costs 110 DKK(15 euros) and during peak season the prices rise to 220 DKK(30 euros) and 130 DKK(17 euros) respectively. On average, museums in Denmark cost 110 DKK(15 euros) to visit making Egeskov very expensive. The price of admission to Egeskov is even more expensive when considering museums institutions are usually free for people under the age of 18. Interestingly, many of the events which Egeskov organizers such as the Veteran Motorbike Race, Classic Days Vehicle Festival and Autumn Holiday do not require tickets. This allows people to visit the castle, gain interest in Egeskov and hopefully encourages increased revenue. They are able to gain more revenue because during special event days such as the classic car shows, they offer additional services such as “nostalgic camping” and “Opportunity to participate in driving”. The opportunity to participate in driving is part of the entrance fee and is included in the one-day ticket of 160 DKK( 22 euros) and the camping is an additional 350 DKK(47 euros).

---

<sup>37</sup> Henrik Neelmeyer (personal communication, May 16, 2018)

## The English Case

In England, there are a great amount of castles more than there are in Denmark. For this reason, in the English case I only evaluated and researched events which take place in structures which are known as castles. I did not include country houses in the search in England. Additionally, in England country houses and castles have a distinct history from each other and are defined separately by distinct names in the English language. In Denmark, the names of ‘country houses’ have been given addition which is the word *slot*. Given the focus on terms in establishing the research parameters, I will begin by providing a definition of a castle.

The word castle is useful to define in this study but it should be noted that the word was not used before or during the Medieval ages. The word has become representative of many words and classifications which existed during the time period.<sup>38</sup> In *The English Castle*, Goodall states

A castle, we are told, is the private and fortified residence of a lord. By this definition castles seem relatively easy to identify. Their character as fortifications removes them from the sphere of merely domestic building and their role as lordly residences not only distinguishes them from forts or defended settlements but also places them in a specific European historical and social context: the feudal society of the Middle Ages.<sup>39</sup>

The castle is a fortified dwelling of a lord. The feudal system was a medieval hierarchical society which consisted of kings, nobles, knights and peasants. Furthermore, as we will see, the period of the Middle Ages greatly inspires the image of castles and the events which they host in England, particularly the image of a knight.

Hugh Braun details the history of English castles in the book *The English Castle*. Braun argues that the earliest castle-like structures which would evolve into the traditional imaginations of a castle were no more than fortified strongholds constructed from earth, straw and boards. The next significant stage in the development of castles in England was the arrival of William the Conqueror in A. D. 1066.<sup>40</sup> During this period, motte-and-bailey castles were built. The bailey was an enclosed courtyard and the defensive structure. The motte acted as an additional level of defense and were typically made out of earth and anywhere from 3 to 30 meters in heights and 30 to 90 meters in diameter.<sup>41</sup> The stone castle appeared more consistently in the 13th century.

---

<sup>38</sup>John Goodall, “The English Castle” (Yale University Press, 2011), 4

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Hilaire Belloc, “Foreward” in *The English Castle*, ed. Hugh Braun (Batsford, 1947), v

<sup>41</sup> Sidney Toy, “Castles: Their Construction and History” (Dover Publications, 1985)

However, with technological advances the stone castle became obsolete by the later 14th century and castles had to become truly impenetrable. Although the construction of castles continued, from 1120 the “number of castles in England was probably in continuous and more or less rapid decline”.<sup>42</sup> Finally, “the English castle is to-day one of three things: a ruin, a restoration, or a fragment on to which has been a later dwelling house unsuited to war”.<sup>43</sup>

The castles which have been restored or renovated are more available to the public than those which exist in Denmark. English castles give tours, host events, provide accommodations and offer fun nature activities on the grounds such as golf course, walks and sporting events. Maintaining the integrity and history of the castle is important in England and even more so for the organization English Heritage which maintains the one of the case study sites (Bolsover Castle). There are other organizations in England which also maintain historic sites such as The National Trust and Historic England, however a site maintained by English Heritage seemed the most appropriate given the nature of the research- events and heritage- because they are a heritage organization and therefore their focus in events is providing a historical or heritage based experience and they also have a few events which are hosted at multiple sites, such as medieval re-enactment events.

English Heritage maintains over 400 sites, including monuments, historic buildings and castles. Through tour visits, events and other revenue, English heritage services more than 10 million people each year. Under the care of English Heritage, these properties are able to bring to life the story of England to over 10 million people each year.<sup>44</sup> The English Heritage organization is divided into territories and each territory has teams such as marketing, restoration and events which manage the sites in the area, including castles. Castles which are not under the care of English Heritage, often have their own foundations which manage the castle.

Among the more common events hosted in castles in England are Medieval re-enactments, seasonal-holiday (Easter, Halloween, Christmas) and open-air theater and cinema events. These events are held on castle grounds and are advertised as a fun day out with friends and family. Although these events are held outside of the castle, there is often an opportunity to also visit the castle for a reduced admission price. The reduction in price incentivizes visitors to learn more about the history and architecture of the castle while they are already enjoying the castle grounds. The case studies I have chosen host the before mentioned types of events along with others. The case studies for England are Bolsover Castle and Leeds Castle.

---

<sup>42</sup> Goodall; 4

<sup>43</sup> Beloc; v

<sup>44</sup> English Heritage, “About us,” Accessed May 15, 2018, Retrieved from <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about-us/>

The first case study is Bolsover Castle which was chosen because it is under the care of English Heritage and hosts a variety of events specific to the castle and also national castle related events. Bolsover Castle hosts medieval re-enactment events and events related to its own history. The second case study is Leeds Castle which was chosen because it is independent of English heritage, well-known and offers many events and other ways the public can access its grounds such as accommodation, a restaurant and golf course. Leeds Castle will provide an interesting case study because events are not a necessary part of its existence to provide revenue. Furthermore, for the most part, the events which take place at Leeds Castle do not center around the history of the castle.

## Bolsover Castle

### *History of the Castle*

The history of Bolsover Castle, located in Derbyshire, begins in the 11th century with William Peveril. Peveril, a knight of William the Conqueror, was granted possession of Bolsover manor, in addition to a new castle at Nottingham.<sup>45</sup> In 1155, Peveril's son was on the opposition to Henry II and subsequently Bolsover was relinquished to the Crown and remained in their possession until the reign of Edward I (1272-1307). During the following years, Bolsover fell into abandonment and decay. The estate would remain in disrepair until 1600 when Charles Cavendish purchases Bolsover with the intention to convert it into his main residence. Cavendish commissioned Robert and John Smythson to build the castle (1611-17) which begins the construction of the Bolsover castle which exists today. Charles' son, William Cavendish, inherits and completes the restoration and renovation of the land (1618-33). In 1649 during the reign of King Charles I, Bolsover Castle went through a short period of deliberate destruction by the parliamentary council of state in order to prevent the estate from being used by Royalists. After the period of deliberate deconstruction, in 1650, William Cavendish was able to buy back the estate and then granted the property to his sons. They initiated and carried out the repairs(1650-1676) to the castle's wounds which were inflicted in 1649. The decline of the property began during their ownership and later the estate would be passed onto other owners, the Dukes of Portland, who kept Bolsover until the early 19th century. After their ownership, the castle was mostly used as a vicarage until 1956 when the Ministry of Works gained possession of Bolsover. The Ministry of Works stabilized the structured which had been damaged by the environment. The Ministry gradually opened the site to the public. The castle which exists today was preceded by a motte and bailey and stone structure (early 12th century) both of which are no longer in existence.<sup>46</sup>

### *Bolsover Castle, English Heritage and Events*

Currently, Bolsover Castle is taken care of by the organization English Heritage. Each region within English Heritage has an Event Manager supported by a small team which is responsible for the coordination of events. Bolsover Castle is in the territory of North and North Midlands which is managed by Paul Robson. In 2018, the North and North Midlands territory has over 200 events planned and specifically, 26 events at Bolsover Castle. The planning for

---

<sup>45</sup> English Heritage, "History of Bolsover Castle," Accessed on May 15, 2018, Retrieved from <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/bolsover-castle/history/>

<sup>46</sup> Historic England, "Bolsover Castle," Accessed on May 15, 2018, Retrieved from [http://www.pastscape.org.uk/hob.aspx?hob\\_id=316209](http://www.pastscape.org.uk/hob.aspx?hob_id=316209)

these events begins in August of the previous through January and involves many department such as marketing, curatorial and the property managers of each site.<sup>47</sup> The involvement of multiple departments allows for expert opinions in each step of the process of planning and executing the events. All of the public events are organized by the Event Manager's team. Third party events are not common but must also be approved by the Event Manager's team. Additionally, in the territory, not specifically at Bolsover Castle, there are over 50 member-only events which occur. The events team are concerned with maintaining historical accuracy and authenticity but also keeping in mind the events "need to be entertaining, safe and profitable".<sup>48</sup>

English Heritage is, as name implies, concerned with preserving and continuing England's heritage. Therefore, the events which occur at the castle are generally concerned with historical authenticity and accuracy to the castle or specific site. Robson states that "at least 70% of events are connected to the story of the site in some way".<sup>49</sup> The example provided is that because Bolsover has a strong history of riding, horses stables and horses linked to Cavendish, there are event series such as "Cavendish's Horses: The Lecture Demonstration Series" which took place in 2016. The description for these events, specifically "Cavendish's Horses: The lecture Demonstration series" describes the relationship to the history of the castle more so than most event descriptions do.

Step into the historic Riding House at Bolsover Castle for a unique evening lecture-demo series showcasing the ground-breaking techniques of William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Newcastle, one of Europe's great horsemen and a forefather of modern dressage... Let us take you on a journey through the history of the training of horses from Cavendish to today.<sup>50</sup>

The description makes the event sound appealing but also provides historical information about why the event is hosted at Bolsover. Moreover, from the description it is clear that this event was specifically designed and organized to be held at Bolsover Castle whereas some of the other events are held at Bolsover to appeal to a greater audience such as the Medieval and seasonal events or because of the castle atmosphere like open-air theater. However, a horse related event is not on the upcoming calendar.

---

<sup>47</sup> Paul Robson (personal communication, June 5, 2018)

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Facebook, "Cavendish's Horses: The Lecture Demonstration Series," Accessed on May 15, 2018, Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/events/250316892016768/>

The second event type which is held at Bolsover are the castle related national events such as Clash of Knights, Grand Medieval Joust and Medieval Mayhem. These specific events are held at multiple castle locations such as Beeston Castle, Belsay Hall, Kenilworth Castle and Pendennis Castle. The event calendar provided by Robson show that for the 2018/19 season there will be eight Medieval related events at Bolsover Castle including Clash of Knights, Knights and Princess, Grand Medieval Joust and Medieval Mayhem. These are re-enactment events which could be categorized as living history which is part of the marketing for the events along with being a fun weekend event for the family. In 2017, Bolsover also held the Grand Medieval Joust. The description for the event, includes aspects which could appeal to a great variety of people.

Experience a spectacle of speed and skill as four of the most masterful knights in the kingdom, mounted on their magnificent steeds, battle for good or evil! ...The living history encampments will take you back in time, where you'll be kept entertained by the court jester and merry musicians. Budding knights can enjoy their own hero moment as they test their bravery in the hobby-horse jousting. Fun for all the family this bank holiday weekend - travel back in time with us and have the time of your life!<sup>51</sup>

The atmosphere of knights and medieval costumes appeal to a more general audience while the aspect of living history and a family outing appeals to a narrow part of the population.

In these types of events, Bolsover uses professional performers or re-enactors who are fully aware of the content of each event. The English Heritage brand strapline is 'We bring History to Life'. Re-enactment events although fun and enjoyable also lend for the possibility for the visitors to engage with some aspects of the castle's history. Re-enactment and living history is an easy for the visitor to engage with the history while still enjoying a fun weekend. The description of the event tries to appeal to various audiences therefore, hopefully, the grander events can attract a new audience to the castle who can then begin to engage with Bolsover Castle and other English Heritage sites.<sup>52</sup>

Lastly, Bolsover also hosts events where "the castle is simply a backdrop" such as open-air theater. In the upcoming calendar, the theater events include "Chapterhouse: Little Women" and "Chapterhouse: Robin Hood". The description for the events focus on setting the scene for the play.

It is a story full of romance, love, passion, friendship; a story where hope will always outdo heartache and hardship if you just have the courage to follow your

---

<sup>51</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/events/155409845030265/>

<sup>52</sup> Paul Robson (personal communication, June 5, 2018)

dreams. The tale of these four sisters is brought to life in a brand-new adaptation from Chapterhouse, featuring glorious period costume, traditional live music and a story of self-discovery to warm your heart.

Little Women and Robin Hood are both classic stories. For this reason, it is most likely easy to get people to attend the event. The castle is not present in the creation of the ambience and so it will truly become a “backdrop” during these events. However, due to the easy nature of the event, a varied and large audience most likely is in attendance.

In this case study, the focus has been on presenting how the different events are marketed towards the public. My interest in this is because the descriptions show how the castle chooses to represent itself to the potential visitors of the events. I have shown excerpts of the event descriptions in the advertisements for the events which can be found on the English Heritage Bolsover Castle website and Facebook. The marketing department needs to attract visitors to the castle at all times and events need to appeal to various audiences in order to attract as great of an audience as possible.

Imagery is important as is the use of social media. If the event is classed as non-historical such as Kite Festival than the marketing is ‘a good day’ out focus. If the event is historical then there is usually a clear message around the sites history or character from the site.<sup>53</sup>

English Heritage has conducted audience research in order to understand who visits their site and why. Consequently, different audiences are targeted depending on the event and time of year (school or summer holidays). The marketing reflects this because there are certainly people who are interested in the history of the site but there are also people who simply want to enjoy the castle grounds and this knowledge is reflected in the event descriptions. The part of the population of visitors which is interested in the grounds is also taking part of a historical or heritage based experience even if unintentional to them. At Bolsover and similar sites, it is difficult to isolate the aesthetic historical setting from the history of the castle and grounds. In the end, the events serve many purposes such as attracting visitors, providing entertainment and promoting the site.

By attracting visitor and promoting the site, the events help achieve the corporate charitable aims which are “to protect and preserve the historic sites in our care for future generations”.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, it is smart to not over-adverse the history aspect of the events but rather allow for the visitors to discover their interest on their own time. A final note, there has

---

<sup>53</sup> Paul Robson (personal communication, June 5, 2018)

<sup>54</sup> Paul Robson (personal communication, June 5, 2018)

been additional research concerning the visitors to the event and the reception of the events but it is not possible for me to obtain these statistics.

## Leeds Castle

### *History of Leeds Castle*

Leeds Castle, once described as “The Lovliest Castle in the World” by Lord Conway in 1913, is located in Kent, England. The first documentation of the original Norman stronghold is in the Domesday Survey of 1086.<sup>55</sup> However, the manor of Esledes (now known as Leeds) was thought to have been founded around 871-899 under the reign of King Alfred the Great. In 1086, the Manor of Esledes was owned by Ode the Bishop of Bayeux but his ownership would not last long when a few years later his nephew, King William ‘Rufus’ II became displeased with his uncle and granted ownership of the property to Hano de Crevecoeur. His descendants maintained ownership for the following 175 years. During this period, Hamo’s grandson constructed the first stone Castle in 1119. Shortly after the construction of the Keep and Bailey, in 1139 Leeds Castle and the de Crevecoeur family had their first experience with political turmoil. The de Crevecoeur family survived the royal politics and maintained ownership of the Castle. From this time period, not much remains of the structures.

In the 13th and 15th, Leeds Castle was a Royal Castle beginning with the ownership of Queen Eleanor of Castile in 1278. During this period, the defense and domestic features of the castle were constructed and improved upon. In the 16th century, the castle was transformed from “a fortified stronghold to a magnificent royal palace”.<sup>56</sup> Beginning in 1517 until 1523, the castle was constructed into a luxurious, comfortable place for King Henry VIII and his wife. In the 17th century, Leeds Castle began to be privately owned, beginning with the St. Leger family in the 1550s until 1618 and ending with Lady Baillie’s ownership in the 1920s. Lady Baillie wanted to recreate a largely medieval castle and commissioned multiple architect overtime to construct her vision. The castle was used as a great country house, hospital and rehabilitation center during World War II and eventually a family home. In 1974, Lady Baillie passed away and left the estate to the specially created organization the Leeds Castle Foundation. The Leeds Castle Foundation aims to preserve the castle in order for future generations to also enjoy the beautiful grounds.

---

<sup>55</sup> Leeds Castle, “Norman Stronghold: The 11th and 12th centuries,” Accessed on May 15, 2018, Retrieved from [www.leeds-castle.com/History/Norman+Stronghold](http://www.leeds-castle.com/History/Norman+Stronghold)

<sup>56</sup> Leeds Castle, “Tudor Palace,” Accessed on May 18, 2018, Retrieved from <https://www.leeds-castle.com/History/Tudor+Palace>

### *Leeds Castle Foundation and Events*

The Leeds Castle Foundation still maintains the grounds and manages its estate. The castle was only opened up to the public in 1976 because of the realization that the endowment alone did not cover the costs of maintenance. Today it is one of England's top tourist attractions with over 600.000 visitor per year. Currently Leeds Castle has many ways in which the public can visit its grounds, such as a golf course, restaurant, tour groups and wedding and conference accommodations. In addition to these services, Leeds Castle hosts a multitude of events throughout the year including Grand Medieval Joust, open-air movies, Festival of Flowers and sports events.

The events hosted at Leeds Castle are arranged by the Events Manager and are chosen in order to engage all visitors to the castle. According to [Helen Ellis- Education Manager], the events program is designed "to appeal to everyone throughout the year". During the organization of the events, in order not to compromise the grounds of the castle or the castle itself, "all departments work closely with each other, so that the fabric of the castle, the contents and the grounds and wildlife are not compromised".<sup>57</sup> Leeds Castle certainly accomplishes their varied events agenda by hosting a triathlon for athletes, a Medieval Joust for families and history enthusiasts and hosting The Festival of Flowers which attracts visitors from around England.

In addition to the specific events, Leeds Castle also hosts seasonal events such as Christmas markets and smaller events for families, specifically children, during the school holidays.<sup>58</sup> Through these events, in addition to their multitude of visitor attractions, it is clear that Leeds Castle is attentive to all potential audiences. Furthermore, the Leeds Castle website categorizes their events by target audience, such as "Family & Children", "Music, Theatre & Cinema", "Activities", "Sport", "Wildlife", "Christmas", "Displays & Exhibitions" and "Charity Events". A category which is not included on the website is history or a related category which could include events such as the Grand Medieval Joust. Instead, on the website the joust is listed under the categories of "Family & Children" and "Sport".

The information about events and analysis in the following section is based on information gathered through the Leeds Castle website and the Leeds Castle Facebook event page. Facebook was used to gather more information about events which have been hosted in the past because the website only provides information about upcoming events and activities. In the following section I will look at the event hosted at Leeds Castle, their relationship to the Castle and how the Castle is presented to the public through the events. In order to do this, the "What's On" section and its categorization on the website will be examined along with the description of

---

<sup>57</sup> Helen Ellis (personal communication, May 8, 2018)

<sup>58</sup> Helen Ellis (personal communication, May 8, 2018)

the events. The discussion in the following section will be centered around the following ideas: the relationship between the events, the history of Leeds Castle and the public who attends the events, the authenticity of the events and the representation of the castle in the marketing of the events.

The “Upcoming Events” section features concerts, open-air cinema and theatre, sporting races, Medieval Jousts and Christmas/winter events. As previously stated, there are a multitude of event options for people of varied interests and therefore Leeds Castle is able to attract a greater audience. Furthermore, the events which are hosted at Leeds Castle seem to be large capacity events, such as the open-air cinema/theatre, Grand Medieval Joust, Christmas markets and the Festival of Flowers. Not only are the events intended to serve a large audience but events such as the Festival of Flowers appeals to a diverse audience from around England.

The majority of the events are included in their regular ticket price which is 25 euros for a seasonal pass. The seasonal pass allows the visitor to regularly visit Leeds Castle for the duration of one year. There is no option to buy just a day-pass. The seasonal pass ticket is not ideal for one-time visitors but indicates an effort to provide greater and more frequent access to the castle, its grounds and the majority of events to the local population.

One of the larger capacity events hosted by Leeds is the open- air theater. Leeds Castle is not the only Castle which hosts open-air theatre or cinema events or chose to screen the Harry Potter movies. Lulworth, Warwick, Rochester, Cardiff and Swansea’s Oystermouth Castle are among the other castles that also screen Harry Potter. The movie is also screened at Alnwick Castle because the movie was partially filmed on the site of Alnwick Castle. Even though the movies do not have a specific connection with Leeds and other castles, the castle provides an aesthetically pleasing, fitting backdrop and atmosphere to show a movie such as Harry Potter. For the cinema events, similar to the Bolsover case, the atmosphere is most important and the castle serves as a backdrop. This can seen in Leeds’ description of the Harry Potter screening: “A spell-binding night out for all muggles! Get ready to wave your wands for a magic evening watching the first ever Harry Potter film set against the dramatic backdrop of Leeds Castle”<sup>59</sup>. The Luna Cinema also provides an atmospheric description for the open-air cinema events— although the description is not exclusive to the Harry Potter event- which occur at Leeds Castle: “Famed as the world’s most beautiful castle, Leeds Castle near Maidstone in Kent makes the

---

<sup>59</sup> Leeds Castle, “Open-Air Cinema: Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone,” Accessed on May 15, 2018, Retrieved from <https://www.leeds-castle.com/What%E2%80%99s+On/Family+&+Children/Open+Air+Cinema:+Harry+Potter+and+the+Philosopher's+Stone/>

perfect setting for cinema under the stars”.<sup>60</sup> In both descriptions of the event — Leeds Castle website and The Luna Cinema website — the Leeds Castle and grounds is not the focal point of the event but rather is described and used as a nice setting to show the film. The open-air cinema screenings at Leeds Castle include *Harry Potter & the Philosopher’s Stone*, *The Italian Job*, *Dirty Dancing* and *Mamma Mia!*

Performances produced by the Open-Air theatre, includes *Pride & Prejudice*(Chapterhouse Theatre Company), *Hamlet*(The Changeling Theatre) and *Peter Pan*(Immersion Theatre). Of the theatre and *Hamlet* productions I have found to be hosted at Leeds Castle, none of them are associated with the specific history of Leeds Castle. Rather they are chosen to please all potential audiences. Movies such as *The Italian Job* and *Dirty Dancing* most likely attract an older audience while the *Harry Potter* movie is targeted towards children and families but is also more greatly popular. The open-air cinema seems to be a new in devour, or recently has become more popular, with three open-air cinema events occurring at the beginning of August 2018. A previous open-air cinema night, “Royal Wedding Fireworks & Open-Air Cinema Evening”, which screened *Mamma Mia* occurred in 2011.<sup>61</sup>

Undoubtedly, Leeds Castle as a background setting is a selling factor for events such as the open-air theatre and cinema as well as the sporting events. The clear role of the castle during these event as strictly part of the aesthetic is the reason I chose to focus on the open-air theater in this case study. Even if the open-air cinema is greatly financially beneficial, how is the public’s perception or knowledge about the castle affected if the Castle is only seen through exciting events, beautiful accommodations and fun activities? Does the history and importance of the Castle become lost in the extra services provided by the Castle?

---

<sup>60</sup> The Luna Cinema, “Leeds Castle,” Accessed on May 15, 2018, Retrieved from <https://www.thelunacinema.com/leeds-castle>

<sup>61</sup> Facebook, "Royal Wedding Fireworks & Open-Air Cinema Evening," Accessed on May 15, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/events/1119681118058512/>

## Discussion

There are more castles in England than there are in Denmark. There are also more castles in England which choose to open themselves up for public consumption and viewing. It might be because there are simply more castles to choose from in England, however from researching castles and their events, I am left with the impression that English castles favor public interaction more than Danish ones. The reason for this is not conclusive but it is possible that it is due to organizations such as English Heritage whose mission is to maintain the sites in order to preserve the heritage for future generations. Additionally, they want to attract visitors to all of their sites in order to increase knowledge about them.

In the cases of England and Denmark, the history and current function of castles greatly vary. For this reason, I will mainly evaluate the countries individually but will discuss them together in order to put the cases in perspective. In Denmark, there are royal palaces, castle ruins, castles which can be rented and those which host public events. Both of the Danish case studies are focused on castles which host public events. However, the type of public event which the Kronborg and Egeskov host are different. Kronborg centers its tourism, including its main event (Shakespeare festival), guided tours and interactive experience events (Hamlet Live), around one primary narrative: Shakespeare and *Hamlet*. In contrast, Egeskov does not have a main theme to its events. Their goal is to attract a variety and greatest amount possible of visitors through specialized and popular events. The types of events also vary but are consistent with the properties of each case. For instance, because *Hamlet* is a play, it is natural that the events which take place at Kronborg have performative qualities: Shakespeare festival organized by Hamletscenen and Hamlet Live organized by Kronborg Castle. The specialized events of Egeskov Castle, include many car related events and walks. According to Neelmeyer, the car events increase revenue during the low season but they also fit well into the setting of a water castle.

What is the impact of the events on the participants of the events perception and idea of the castle and how the castle itself presents itself to the public? In the case of Kronborg, it is clear that Kronborg castle has constructed a purposeful association with the story of *Hamlet* but there is no definitive way to determine the effect of the *Hamlet* performance events on the public's perception and the choices of the castle to continue with the relationship. Nevertheless, there are ways to discuss the potential impact. In 2016, the Shakespeare festival had 200.00 attendees while Kronborg Castle has a yearly visitor number of 250.000 not including the visitors to the Shakespeare festival. Undoubtedly, the Shakespeare festival is a primary way in which the Danish and international population interact with the castle ground but not so much with the castle itself or its greater history. Especially because in this event of open-air theatre, the experience is focused solely on the performance and the ambience. There is no encouragement or

for night performance no option to view the castle from within. Given the large number of attendees to the Shakespeare festival it is curious that there is no mention of the event on the Kronborg website. Kronborg has its own organized performative event which is Hamlet Live which takes place throughout the day and is performed in English, like the Shakespeare festival. The use of English in both events is an indication that both events are inclusive of an international and touristic audience. However, the choice of language although not consistent with location is consistent with the performance given Shakespeare's English heritage.

In the English case studies, re-enactment, living history and open-air cinemas were the focus. Re-enactment events regularly occur at Bolsover Castle and they are marketed as both living history and fun days with the family. Re-enactment and living history were also part of the Hamlet Live event at Kronborg Castle. The living history type of events, however, play different roles in each castle. I will begin with Bolsover. The estate of Bolsover has a place within Medieval history and even has a history of a siege. Therefore, the Medieval re-enactment events such as the Medieval Joust and Clash of Knights can fit with the history of the castle. Re-enactment allows the visitor to become interested in the history through a spectacular event and then possibly make the effort to engage more with the castle and learn its historically accurate medieval history. In *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture*, de Groot states the following about the relationship between living history and the audience: "Re-enactment and heritage performance can contribute to meaning by reinserting the body, making the empty landscape of the past live again".<sup>62</sup>

Participating in a living history event enables the visitor to truly feel like part of their surroundings and its history. The visitor can feel the past coming to life around them and this type of experience most certainly makes an impact on the person. "Living history participants strive to lose themselves in historicity".<sup>63</sup> Although the re-enactment events at Bolsover Castle evoke some part of authentic history, they do not specifically tell the story of the castle because the medieval re-enactment events are hosted at multiple castle locations. Consequently, the re-enactment is not specific to the individual castle's history and is rather a fun event for the family. It could be said that the setting of the grand castle and stately grounds inspires the event and therefore making it an aesthetic event rather than a historical one. Nevertheless, through an event like the re-enactment, a person can become interested in the castle and its specific history.

The case of the living history event at Kronborg castle is different. During the Hamlet Live event, visitors are able to walk with the *Hamlet* characters and become immersed in the

---

<sup>62</sup> Jerome de Groot, "Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture" (Routledge 2016), 110

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, 123

story. The problem is that *Hamlet* has a complicated relationship with Kronborg Castle. Hamlet along with the other characters who walk around the castle during this event evoke an imagined past. A New York Times news article reviewing a production of the play in 1930 evokes a similar feeling of an imagined past: “Only today see how the cast has changed... And there is left of all that was, only the thrill of pacing out a pattern of legendary footprints”.<sup>64</sup> The “legendary footprints” of Hamlet never existed nor did the ‘original cast members’. Alone the Hamlet Live is not problematic because it is reasonable to evoke or perform a story in its inspired setting. However, when combined with the other marketing techniques to intertwine the story of Kronborg and Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Hamlet Live becomes a further step into creating the Kronborg experience into the *Hamlet* experience. The argument could be made that this living history event is evoking the history of the play performances rather than the story of *Hamlet* at Kronborg. In this case, Hamlet Live makes more sense because certainly at this point the performance of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* is part of the authentic history of Kronborg.

The question of impact of the living history event at Kronborg remains. It is likely that this event only furthers visitor’s perception of Kronborg as Hamlet’s. It should be noted that according to Knudsen *et al.*, “tourism sites are *chosen* by host societies to *represent* something about their society to the world...”<sup>65</sup>. Given this notion, the question becomes what does Kronborg want to tell the world about itself? Given the detailed look at the English version of the Kronborg website it is clear that the representation of the castle to the world is based in the narrative and myth-like character of Hamlet. What does the *Hamlet* connection tell the world about Kronborg Castle and consequently Denmark? The relationship connects the site and country to a greater network of sites based on the figure of Shakespeare. It connects Denmark to other parts of the world as the Kronborg port once did as well.

Kronborg Castle has always been willing to be the site of *Hamlet* performances and given The New York Times reviews from the 1930s, the performances have consistently been performed in English and intended for an international audience. The dedication and success of *Hamlet* productions to an international audience is established by the multiple reviews of the events in The New York Times which is an American based newspaper. This *Hamlet* performance events have always affected the perfection of Kronborg because of its International nature. It is recently that Kronborg Castle and Helsingør have adopted the perception themselves.

The comparison between the cases of Kronborg and Bolsover castle seemed fitting given the events which they host. Leeds Castle and Egeskov Castle do not host remarkably similar

---

<sup>64</sup> “Hamlet Castle Viewed Today” (New York Times, Oct. 26, 1930)

<sup>65</sup> Knudsen *et al.*, “Myth, National Identity, and the contemporary tourism site: the case of Amalienborg and Frederiksstaden” (2014), 55

events but the reason for opening themselves to the public is the same. They both opened in order to gain revenue to maintain the castle grounds. Additionally, they both heavily rely on their grounds as a space which attracts visitors, especially in the case of Egeskov because it is still privately inhabited. For these reason in addition to the motivation behind hosting the events, I will discuss Egeskov and Leeds Castle. The events which they host are intended to attract and please audiences therefore, the types of events which they host are clearly not focused on presenting the history of the site which could impact the events attendees' and visitors' to the site perception of the castle. However, it is not possible for me to determine the true impact on perception because it was not possible to conduct interviews with the visitors to the events at Egeskov and Leeds Castle.

### Concluding Remarks

Only one of the castles among the case studies truly keeps questions like historical authenticity and accuracy in mind while planning the events which is Bolsover Castle. The reason for this is because it is maintained by a great heritage organization, English Heritage. It seems likely that the focus on maintaining and distributing the history of Bolsover to the public not only through tours but also the events creates a greater interest in the castle as a historic site. This is because the public is allowed to engage with the the site and its history in a fun way such as re-enactments and open-air theatre and then explore further if wanted. In some ways this is true as well for Kronborg Castle because the Shakespeare festival, in particular, is so highly publicized a larger audience can become the story of Kronborg apart from Hamlet. Meaning the performance aspect becomes an authentic part of the history and heritage of Kronborg Castle. The difficulty in this case is that the two stories are already so linked together that it might be difficult to go beyond an already very intriguing story. In the case of Leeds Castle and Egeskov Castle, they are most definitely historic sites. However, when purely seen through the events which they host, their role becomes primarily an aesthetic one. They both encourage family days and enjoyment of the grounds not only during events but throughout the year. Both Leeds and Egeskov provides season tickets to their site which includes many if not all of the even which encourages people who live locally to often engage with the site. This encouragement most likely allows people who live nearby the sites and often frequent them to perceive them as beautiful and enjoyable places to spend time rather than strictly historical sites.

## Bibliography

- “1,800 See 'Hamlet' Given at Elsinore.” *New York Times*, 4 June 1937.
- Ellis, Helen. “Leeds Castle Interview.” 8 May 2018.
- “HamletScenen – Shakespeare Festival at Hamlet's Castle.” *Authentic Copenhagen*, 28 May 2016, [authenticcopenhagen.com/copenhagen-festivals/performing-arts-festivals/hamletscenen-shakespeare-festival-at-hamlets-castle/](http://authenticcopenhagen.com/copenhagen-festivals/performing-arts-festivals/hamletscenen-shakespeare-festival-at-hamlets-castle/).
- “Hamlet Castle Viewed Today.” *New York Times*, 26 Oct. 1930.
- ICOMOS DK. “Kronborg Castle.” *WHC Nomination Document*, 15 May 2018, [whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/696rev.pdf](http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/696rev.pdf).
- Goodall, John. *The English Castle: 1066-1650*. Yale University Press, 2011.
- Groot, Jerome De. *Consuming History Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture*. Routledge, 2016.
- Knudsen, Daniel C., et al. “Myth, National Identity, and the Contemporary Tourism Site: the Case of Amalienborg and Frederiksstaden.” *National Identities*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2014, pp. 53–70., doi:10.1080/14608944.2013.876399.
- “Kronborg Castle - Kongelige Slotte.” *A Historic Experience*, Danish Royal Palaces, [kongeligeslotte.dk/en/palaces-and-gardens/kronborg-castle/rent-a-castle.html](http://kongeligeslotte.dk/en/palaces-and-gardens/kronborg-castle/rent-a-castle.html).
- “LEEDS CASTLE.” *The Luna Cinema - 2018*, [www.thelunacinema.com/leeds-castle](http://www.thelunacinema.com/leeds-castle).
- Magnuson, Annaleah. “The Copenhagen Post - Danish News in English.” *CPHPOST*, [cphpost.dk/activities/july-performance-up-close-and-personal-with-hamlet-the-dane-and-friends.html](http://cphpost.dk/activities/july-performance-up-close-and-personal-with-hamlet-the-dane-and-friends.html).
- Muir, Kenneth, and William F. Hansen. “Saxo and Hamlet.” *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 3, 1984, p. 370., doi:10.2307/2870387.
- Neelmeyer, Henrik. “Egeskov Castle Interview.” 16 May 2018.
- “NORMAN STRONGHOLD.” *History - Norman Stronghold*, 28 Feb. 2018, [www.leeds-castle.com/History/Norman+Stronghold](http://www.leeds-castle.com/History/Norman+Stronghold).
- Olsen, Rikke. *Danish Medieval Castles*. Aarhus University Press, 2014, 14-27.
- “Pay a Royal Visit.” Retrieved from [kongeligeslotte.dk/en](http://kongeligeslotte.dk/en).
- Refskou, Anne Sophie. “Whose Castle Is It Anyway? : Local/Global Negotiations of a Shakespearean Location.” *Multicultural Shakespeare*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2017, pp. 121–132., doi:10.1515/mstap-2017-0009.
- Robson, Paul. “Bolsover Castle Interview.” 5 June 2018.
- Samling, Kongernes. *Årsberetning 2017*. The Royal Danish Collection, 15 May 2018, [www.kongernessamling.dk/content/uploads/2015/02/%C3%85rsberetning-2017.pdf](http://www.kongernessamling.dk/content/uploads/2015/02/%C3%85rsberetning-2017.pdf).
- Toy, Sidney. *Castles: Their Construction and History*. Dover Publications, 1985.