

THE LIVES OF HOSTAGES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE CONVERSION AND ACCULTURATION OF LIVONIA AND PRUSSIA DURING THE BALTIC CRUSADES IN THE 13TH CENTURY

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Abstract

Chronicles of the 13th-century Crusades in Livonia and Prussia are full of descriptions of the Catholic conquerors demanding hostages from local elites, but the fate of these hostages and the influence they may have had on the processes of religious conversion and societal change in the east Baltic has attracted little attention. This paper explores the lives of Livonian and Prussian hostages, and argues that they may have functioned as vessels of acculturation, who furthered the Christianisation and 'Europeanisation' of their homelands, and cemented new power relations and world-views.

Key words: hostages, Medieval history, Baltic history, Crusades, Northern Crusades, Christianisation, Europeanisation, intercultural relations.

Anotacija

XIII a. kryžiaus žygius Livonijoje ir Prūsijoje aprašančios kronikos pateikia daug informacijos apie krikščionių užkariautojų imamus įkaitus iš vietinio elito atstovų, tačiau įkaitų likimui, jų įtakai vietinių bendruomenių tolesniam religiniam atsivertimo procesui ir visuomenės kaitai rytiniame Baltijos pakraštyje iki šiol istoriografijoje neteikta didelio dėmesio. Šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjamos Livonijos ir Prūsijos įkaitų gyvenimo istorijos, parodant, kad įkaltai vietinėse bendruomenėse veikė kaip akultūracijos nešėjai, lėmę tolesnius christianizacijos ir europeizacijos procesus savo gimtuosiuose kraštuose, jiems perteikdami naują galios ir pasaulio suvokimo požiūrį.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: įkaltai, viduramžių istorija, Baltijos regiono istorija, kryžiaus žygiai, Šiaurės kryžiaus žygiai, christianizacija, europeizacija, tarpkultūriniai santykiai.

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This research was carried out within the framework of the project PUT 1422, 'Coexistence, isolation, and cultural interchange in medieval Livonia (1200–1550)'.

In 1230, the city of Riga, the episcopal seat of the young missionary Church province of Livonia, faced numerous accusations formulated by the papal vice-legate Baudouin of Alba. Among those grievances was a charge concerning the fatal stabbing of a hostage whom Baudouin had received from a tribe of Curonians,¹ natives of what is nowadays western Latvia. Only the previous year they had surrendered to a Crusader army led by the vice-legate himself, accepted the rule of the Catholic conquerors and received baptism.² The Riga authorities responded to Baudouin's accusations that the hostage had been murdered by a man who wished to avenge his late brother, a monk from the nearby monastery of Dünamünde, whom the Curonians had killed during a raid on the lands of the Bishopric of Riga three years earlier.³

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This dramatic episode sheds a light on some usually less apparent facets of the practice of hostageship that was widely utilised during the Crusades and Christianisation, which permanently altered the east Baltic region in the 13th century. The grievances of Baudouin the vice-legate are certainly understandable in the context of the political struggles, because the demanding of hostages cemented the power and influence of the Catholic conquerors and missionaries on volatile frontiers of Christendom such as Livonia and Prussia;⁴ but since hostages were, first and foremost, people, hostageship also had a very human dimension, as the unpredictable and sad end of the aforementioned Curonian clearly exemplifies.

Catholic conquerors demanded hostages from native Livonian and Prussian elites on at least 40 known occasions during the expansion of their ecclesiastical and secular power in the 13th century. At times, local nobles gave up groups of two or three dozen people.⁵ Thus, hostages were quite numerous and probably noticeable in the everyday life of Livonian and Prussian borderland societies. In addition, they con-

¹ *Liv-, Est- und Curländisches Urkundenbuch*. Bd. 1. Hrsg. von Friedrich Georg von BUNGE. Reval, 1853 (hereafter, *LUB I*), № 106, § 7, Sp. 140–141.

² *LUB I*, № 103–104, Sp. 134–137. See also: AUNS, Muntis. Acquisition of the Acquired: The Establishing of a Real Administration in Livonia. In *The North-Eastern Frontiers of Medieval Europe. The Expansion of Latin Christendom in the Baltic Lands*. Ed. by Alan V. MURRAY. Farnham, 2014, pp. 179–188; ASARIS, Jānis; MUIŽNIEKS, Vitolds; RADIŅŠ, Arnis; VIRSE, Ingrida; ŽEIERE, Irita. *Kurši senatnē = Couronians in Antiquity*. Rīga, 2008, 143.–149. lp.

³ *LUB I*, № 106, § 7, Sp. 140–141.

⁴ Hostages as pillars of power structures and guarantees of political relations in the Baltic crusades is a topic for another paper. For an older cursory overview regarding Livonia, mostly Estonia, see: BLUMFELD, Evald. Über die Geiselschaft während der Kämpfe in Alt-Livland im 13. Jh. *Eesti Teadusliku Seltsi Rootsis Aastaraamat = Annales Societatis Litterarum Estonicae in Svecia*, 1980–1984, IX. Stockholm, 1985, S. 17–28.

⁵ Some examples can be found in: *Heinrici Chronicon Livoniae* (Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, 31). Ed. Leonid ARBUSOW, Albertus BAUER. Editio altera. Hannoverae, 1955 (hereafter, *HCL*), cap. IV, § 4, p. 14; Lib. III, cap. IX, § 2, p. 26 (for English text see: *The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*. Transl. and with a new introd. and notes by James A. BRUNDAGE. Madison, WI, 1961); and: PETER von Dusburg. *Chronik des Preußenlandes* (Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters, Bd. 25). Übers. und erl. von Klaus SCHOLZ, Dieter WOJTECKI. Darmstadt, 1984 (hereafter, *PDC*), Teil III, Kap. 17–27, S. 118–129.

tributed to the broader processes of conversion and acculturation in the east Baltic. When the Pope ordered the Rigans to hand over local hostages to Baudouin, it was so that the vice-legate could 'dispose of them as needed for the state of the land, dissemination of the faith, and the honour of the Church.'⁶

Many recent studies, notably by Adam Kosto, have provided valuable insights into the finer details of hostageship in the Middle Ages,⁷ but the Baltic region has thus far received meagre scholarly attention. The current paper aims on one hand to expand the general research on Medieval hostages to Livonia and Prussia, and on the other hand to fill a gap in the studies about the Crusades and Christianisation in northern Europe that have explored this topic only cursorily. This paper focuses on the mundane aspects of hostageship, such as administration, education and imagology, but it also explores how hostages influenced the wider and deeply impactful processes of acculturation and social change in Livonia and Prussia in the 13th century.

Hostages and intercultural relations

Before delving into events and developments on the 13th-century Baltic frontier, we must emphasise that Medieval hostageship differed from what we usually envisage when speaking of hostages today. Nowadays, as a rule, the term denotes a person who is captured violently, and threatened, in order to influence the actions of third parties. During the Middle Ages, however, hostages (in Latin *obses*, *obsides*, in Middle High German *gîsel*, *gîsele*) were given, not taken: they were surrendered as pledges, on forming treaties or agreements. Hostages were sureties, assuring that those who gave them would adhere to promises made. Although often exacted from defeated opponents under duress, they were never forcefully seized.⁸

The distinction between prisoners and hostages is a vital one. The former were mostly taken as spoils of war during the crusading campaigns in the Baltic; contemporary chronicles often describe how conquerors carried off the native population as a sort of booty.⁹ These prisoners could not hope for dignified treatment, and many probably ended up at European slave markets.¹⁰ Hostages, on the other hand,

⁶ LUB I, № 120, Sp. 156–157.

⁷ A full biography of recent studies on Medieval hostages would be far too extensive to include here. The main work is: KOSTO, Adam J. *Hostages in the Middle Ages*. Oxford, 2012.

⁸ KOSTO, A. *Hostages in the Middle Ages...*, pp. 5–9, for a longer overview, see pp. 199–227.

⁹ BENNINGHOVEN, Friedrich. Zur Technik spätmittelalterlicher Feldzüge im Ostbaltikum. *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung*, 1970, Jhg. 19, Hf. 4, S. 631–651. See, for example: HCL, cap. XIV, § 10, p. 81–83.

¹⁰ GILLINGHAM, John. Christian Warriors and the Enslavement of Fellow Christians. In *Chevalerie et christianisme aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*. Dir. Martin AURELL, Catalina GIRBEA. Rennes, 2011, p. 237–256, especially p. 243–245; EKDAHL, Sven. The treatment of prisoners of war during the fighting between the Teutonic Order and Lithuania. In *The Military Orders. Fighting for the Faith and Caring for the Sick*. Ed. by

were distinguished by a certain aura of ceremonial sanctity that accompanied vows in the Middle Ages,¹¹ such as those sworn at surrender and conversion rituals, where hostages were usually rendered. They were not taken in war, but given during diplomatic ceremonies, and resembled guests rather than prisoners. Thus, the arbitrary mistreatment of hostages was also always considered dishonourable.¹²

The demanding of hostages was common across Medieval Europe,¹³ but the practice may have been more important on the expanding frontiers of Christendom, where Catholic lords needed effective assurances of the loyalty of recently subjugated and converted tribes and rulers. On such turbulent borderlands, it was difficult to institute stable power relations and establish a reliable infrastructure, especially since the diverse Baltic and Finno-Ugric peoples who populated Livonia and Prussia were organised into political units and communities that differed (to a varying extent) from the Scandinavian and German realms where the Catholic conquerors originated from.¹⁴ Hostageship, on the other hand, was a universally comprehensible practice that has been utilised throughout human history all over the globe.

Hostage giving was as common among the archaic Papuan peoples of Indonesia as among early Celtic tribes of Europe; it was employed by warring feudal Japanese clans, as well as rival Ancient Greek *poleis*; and the practice was widespread in the Chinese, Roman, Ghana and Inca empires alike.¹⁵ Hostageship secured agreements both within and across cultural borders: for example, framing political relations between the East Roman emperors and nomadic Scythian and Cuman peoples.¹⁶ Likewise, Medieval English kings made use of the practice on their Scottish and Welsh

Malcolm BARBER. Aldershot, 1994, pp. 263–269; NIKŽENTAITIS, Alvydas. Prisoners of War in Lithuania and the Teutonic Order State (1283–1409). In *Der Deutsche Orden in der Zeit der Kalmarer Union 1397–1521* (Ordines militares. Colloquia Torunensia Historica, X). Hrsg. von Zenon Hubert NOWAK, Roman CZAJA. Toruń, 1999, S. 193–208.

¹¹ ALTHOFF, Gerd. The Variability of Rituals in the Middle Ages. In *Medieval Concepts of the Past. Ritual, Memory, Historiography*. Ed. by GERD Althoff, Johannes FRIED, Patrick J. GEARY. Cambridge, 2002, pp. 71–87.

¹² SLATER, Colleen. “So Hard was it to Release Princes Whom Fortuna Had Put in Her Chains:” Queens and Female Rulers as Hostage- and Captive-Takers and Holders. *Medieval Feminist Forum*, 2009, vol. 45, no. 2, pp. 13–14; KOSTO, A. *Hostages in the Middle Ages...*, pp. 35–39.

¹³ KOSTO, A. *Hostages in the Middle Ages...*, pp. 4–5.

¹⁴ ŠČAVINSKAS, Marius. Some notes on the issue of the development of the Balt society in the ninth to the 13th centuries in the context of the socio-political structures of the Baltic region. In *Societies of the Past: Approaches to Landscape, Burial Customs and Grave Goods* (Archaeologia Baltica, vol. 19). Klaipėda, 2013, pp. 82–101; MÄGI, Marika. Late prehistoric societies and burials in the Eastern Baltic. In *Societies of the Past...*, pp. 177–194; KALA, Tiina. The Incorporation of the Northern Baltic Lands into the Western Christian World. In *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier, 1150–1500*. Ed. by Alan V. MURRAY. Aldershot, 2001, pp. 3–20.

¹⁵ For a short overview see: SMAIL, J. Kenneth. The Giving of Hostages. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 1997, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 81–84; for a longer description: LUTTEROTH, Ascan. *Der Geisel im Rechtsleben: Ein Beitrag zur allgemeinen Rechtsgeschichte und dem geltenden Völkerrecht* (Abhandlungen aus dem Staats- und Verwaltungsrecht, Bd. 36). Breslau, 1922, S. 178–207.

¹⁶ KOSTO, Adam J. Hostages during the First Century of the Crusades. *Medieval Encounters*, 2003, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 3–4.

frontiers,¹⁷ and hostageship regulated diplomacy between Christians and Muslims on the Iberian Peninsula.¹⁸ It is therefore hardly surprising that hostages were often demanded at the meeting of pagan and Catholic societies in the Baltic borderlands.

Off to captivity

Crusading chronicles abound in descriptions of holy war campaigns that result in the defeat of pagan tribes and rulers, and the ensuing rituals of baptism and hostage giving. As the Grand Master of the Order of the Brothers of the Sword (the main German military force in Livonia in the first third of the 13th century) proclaimed to the defeated Estonian elders in 1220: 'If you are willing to worship with us the one true God, to be moistened by the font of holy baptism, and to give your sons as hostages, we will make a perpetual peace with you.'¹⁹

This quotation makes it apparent that the hostages were usually the sons of the leading nobles of the pagan society. They are often referred to as *pueris* or *kindere*, or children.²⁰ In 1208, the Germans of Riga received the 'boys' (*pueris*) of the defeated Selonians from the fortress of Sēlpils.²¹ In 1212, Bishop Albert of Livonia 'demanded the boys [*pueros*] of the Livs as hostages' when facing an uprising.²² After the island of Saaremaa (Ösel) was conquered by a Crusader army in 1227, 'many men gave their child [*kint*] away.'²³ From the Curonian stronghold of Aizpute, 'children [*kindere*] were claimed as pledges' by Rigans in 1261.²⁴ Hence, noble offspring were probably quite young when they were taken away from their parents. The exact ages of these boys are of course never mentioned, and may have varied remarkably, especially when large numbers of hostages were exacted at the same time.

¹⁷ PARKS, Annette P. *Living Pledges: A Study of Hostageship in the High Middle Ages, 1050–1300*. PhD thesis. Emory University. Druid Hills, 2000.

¹⁸ FIERRO, Maribel. Hostages and the Dangers of Cultural Contact: Two Cases from Umayyad Cordoba. In *Acteurs des transferts culturels en Méditerranée médiévale* (Ateliers des Deutschen Historischen Instituts Paris, Bd. 9). Ed. by Rania ABDELLATIF, Yassir BENHIMA, Daniel KÖNIG, Elisabeth RUCHAUD. München, 2012, S. 73–83; RODRIGUEZ, Jarbel. Captivity and Diplomacy in the Late Medieval Crown of Aragon. In *Center and Periphery: Studies on Power in the Medieval World in Honor of William Chester Jordan*. Ed. by Katherine L. JANSEN, G. GELTNER, Anne E. LESTER. Leiden, Boston, MA, 2013, pp. 107–120.

¹⁹ *HCL*, cap. XXIII, § 9, p. 164–167.

²⁰ This is not at all uncommon: in Medieval Europe a substantial number of hostages were either children or adolescents. Cf. KOSTO, A. *Hostages in the Middle Ages...*, pp. 31–33.

²¹ *HCL*, cap. XI, § 6, p. 53–54.

²² *HCL*, cap. XVI, § 3, p. 104–108.

²³ *Livländische Reimchronik*. Hrsg. von Leo MEYER. Paderborn, 1876, Vers. 1683, S. 39. An English prose translation of this Middle High German text is also available: *The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle* (Indiana University Publications. Uralic and Altaic Series, vol. 128). Trans. with an Historical Introd., Maps and Appedices by Jerry C. SMITH, William URBAN. Bloomington, IN, 1977.

²⁴ *Livländische Reimchronik...*, Verse 5988–5989, S. 137.

The well-known chronicler Henry of Livonia reports that in the year 1200, his patron Bishop Albert received around 30 sons of prominent Livs as hostages.²⁵ The Curonians seem to have rendered about as many when they surrendered to the Crusader army in 1229–1230.²⁶ Peter of Dusburg, the author of the ‘Chronicle of Prussia’, reports that some 30 Prussian hostages were kept in the Teutonic Order’s castle at Bartenstein in the early 1260s, and another 12 were held captive in the castle of Heilsberg not far away.²⁷ These accounts compare well with the records of 12th-century Crusades on the southern shore of the Baltic Sea. There, the Wendish (Slavic) Duke of Mecklenburg gave his son and 23 other noble offspring to the King of Denmark on swearing fealty to the monarch in 1185.²⁸ The inhabitants of the island of Rügen rendered 40 hostages to the Danes when surrendering to their crusading army in 1168.²⁹

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Where the hostages were then taken to seems to have depended on how far the crusading and Christianising enterprise had developed in their home regions. During the 12th-century holy wars in the southern Baltic, most Wendish hostages appear to have ended up across the sea in Denmark, or across the River Elbe in the Holy Roman Empire. After the Danish king took the island of Rügen, he ‘received the sons of the nobles as hostages and led them off into his own country’.³⁰ Hostageship was probably organised in a similar manner during the first stages of Catholic expansion in Livonia and Prussia as well, when German missionaries and religious military orders had not yet secured a solid foothold and established a well-developed network of stone castles. Bishop Albert of Livonia took the above-mentioned 30 Livish hostages he received in 1200 to Germany the next year,³¹ and the Teutonic Order also sent its hostages from Prussia to Magdeburg in the 1230s.³²

Things were different in later decades of Christianisation and conquest. Henry says explicitly in his chronicle that in 1219, Estonian hostages were kept in Livonia.³³ This is affirmed by the events of the revolt that broke out in Estonia in 1222–1223. The Estonians demanded their sons back, in exchange for imprisoned Brothers of the

²⁵ *HCL*, cap. IV, § 4, p. 14.

²⁶ *LUB I*, № 103–104, Sp. 134–137.

²⁷ *PDC*, Teil III, Kap. 94, S. 214–217; Teil III, Kap. 119, S. 236–239.

²⁸ *Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum* (Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, 14). Ex recensione I[ohanni] M[artini] LAPPENBERGII, ed. Georgius Heinricus PERTZ. Hannoverae, 1868, Lib. III, § 4, p. 75–77.

²⁹ SAXO Grammaticus. *Gesta Danorum = The History of the Danes* (Oxford Medieval Texts). Vol. II. Ed. by Karsten FRIIS-JENSEN. Transl. by Peter FISHER. Oxford, 2015 (hereafter, *SGD*), book XIV, ch. 39, § 25.

³⁰ HELMOLD von Bosau. *Slawenchronik* (Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters, Bd. 19). Neu übertragen und erläutert von Heinz STOOB. Mit einem Nachtrag von Volker SCIOR. 7. Aufl. Darmstadt, 2008, Teil II, Kap. 109.

³¹ *HCL*, cap. V, § 1, p. 15–16.

³² This is mostly recorded in relation to the well-known hostage Henry Monte: *PDC*, Teil III, Kap. 91, S. 212–215; see also: GRANT, John; URBAN, William. Henry Monte and the Prussian Rising of 1260. *Lituanus*, 1978, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 5–20.

³³ *HCL*, cap. XXIII, § 9, p. 164–167.

Sword and German merchants. Since the request was met hastily,³⁴ the hostages were apparently not delivered from far away. In 1219, the Danes launched their own Crusade in Estonia, and in the mid-1220s the hostages that they had received had not been taken to Denmark, but were instead kept in the main overseas outpost at Tallinn (Reval).³⁵ Later, in 1290, the boys demanded from the island of Saaremaa were thereafter divided between two Livonian convents of the Teutonic Order (which had absorbed the Brothers of the Sword in 1237).³⁶ As has been mentioned, Prussian hostages were likewise kept in the castles of Heilsberg and Bartenstein³⁷ in the 1260s, when the Teutonic Knights had secured their domain in Prussia. Some were also held in Königsberg at that time.³⁸

Due to the sparse and incidental nature of the reports, very little is actually known about how the hostages were administered. The boys were probably kept in the custody of whoever held lordship over their homeland. One Livonian treaty from 1248 specifically states that not only the captured territories, but hostages as well, should be divided proportionally between the bishop and the Teutonic Order.³⁹ Since the boys were quite numerous, the costs and effort that their upkeep demanded were probably not negligible. The religious military orders had a well-managed system of convents and castles,⁴⁰ many of which certainly housed hostages, but how the bishops of Livonia and Prussia administered their hostages is more difficult to say. As for the King of Denmark, he seems to have kept his Estonian hostages in the castle at Tallinn.⁴¹ It is possible that the local administration was responsible for the boys, who could effectively be threatened there, should their fathers attempt to drive the Danes into the sea.

In Livonia, the bishops possessed many hostages, but similar reports from Prussia, where the Teutonic Order quickly overshadowed episcopal power, are scarce. Still, there are records that even the early missionary Bishop Christian had hostages in

³⁴ *HCL*, cap. XXVI, § 9, p. 191.

³⁵ *HCL*, cap. XXIX, § 7, p. 213–214.

³⁶ *LUB* I, № 536, § 4, Sp. 667.

³⁷ *PDC*, Teil III, Kap. 94, S. 214–217; Teil III, Kap. 119, S. 236–239.

³⁸ *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Samland*. Heft 1. Hrsg. von Carl P. WOELKY, Hans MENDTHAL. Leipzig, 1891, № 78, S. 46.

³⁹ *Liv-, Est- und Curländisches Urkundenbuch*. Bd. 3. Hrsg. von Friedrich Georg von BUNGE. Reval, 1857, № 200, Sp. 37–40.

⁴⁰ ARSZYŃSKI, Marian. Die Burgen im Deutschordensland Preussen als Quelle zur Erforschung der Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens und seines Staates. In *Werkstatt des Historikers der mittelalterlichen Ritterorden. Quellenkundliche Probleme und Forschungsmethoden* (Ordines militares. Colloquia Torunensia Historica, IV). Hrsg. von Zenon Hubert NOWAK. Toruń, 1987, S. 97–109. BENNINGHOVEN, Friedrich. *Der Orden der Schwertbrüder: fratres milicie Christi de Livonia* (Ostmitteleuropa in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart, Bd. 9). Köln, Graz, 1965, S. 37–62.

⁴¹ *HCL*, cap. XXIX, § 7, p. 213–214.

the 1220s and 1230s, and so did the Bishop of Sambia later.⁴² Based on known Livonian parallels, we may presume that Prussian prelates possessed perhaps a third of the hostages from their respective provinces, in proportion to how much of the local lands belonged to their secular domain (*Stift*). Some boys were maybe given to the care of vassals of both Livonian and Prussian bishops.

German merchants also achieved remarkable influence in Livonia, and acquired lands as well as hostages.⁴³ In 1246, the burghers of the city of Lübeck, in cooperation with the Teutonic Knights, carried out an attack on the northern Prussian province of Sambia, and took prisoners, who were afterwards baptised in Germany and also gave hostages to affirm that they would stay true to their new faith.⁴⁴ These hostages could have remained in Lübeck. Large cities in Livonia and Prussia, such as Riga, where the bishop, German merchants and the Brothers of the Sword all had properties and privileges,⁴⁵ perhaps became new homes for many hostages.

When it comes to covering the costs of hostageship, one document from 1232 provides a very valuable insight. Dealing with the division of land and rights in Livonia, it states that while German merchants stayed in (garrisoned) Mežotne castle in the recently subjugated region of Semigallia,⁴⁶ they had to make no expenditure on hostages. But if they were to leave the stronghold, they had to cover the expenses pertaining to one third of the local hostages, since they were in possession of one third of Semigallia. All expenses for hostages from other lands were to be allocated in a similar proportional way.⁴⁷ The document does not say where the boys were kept, but it hints that those who came from the same region could have been administered jointly. This information is curiously at odds with many reports that emphasise how vigilantly the warring Catholic factions tried to retain physical possession of the hostages given specifically to them, as proof of their rights in certain territories.⁴⁸

⁴² *Preußisches Urkundenbuch. Politische Abteilung*. Bd. 1: *Die Bildung des Ordensstaates*, 1. Hälfte. Hrsg. von Rudolf PHILIPPI. Königsberg, 1882 (hereafter, *PUB*), Nr. 134, S. 100–102. *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Samland...*, № 78, S. 46.

⁴³ MUNZINGER, Mark R. The Profits of the Cross: Merchant Involvement in the Baltic Crusade (c. 1180–1230). In *The North-Eastern Frontiers of Medieval Europe. The Expansion of Latin Christendom in the Baltic Lands*. Ed. by Alan V. MURRAY. Farnham, 2014, pp. 329–351.

⁴⁴ *PUB*, Nr. 189, S. 136–137.

⁴⁵ BENNINGHOVEN, Friedrich. *Rigas Entstehung und der frühhansische Kaufmann* (Nord- und osteuropäische Geschichtsstudien, Bd. 3). Hamburg, 1961, S. 68–97.

⁴⁶ On the conquest and subjugation of Semigallia, see: URBAN, William. The Military Occupation of Semgallia in the Thirteenth Century. In *The North-Eastern Frontiers of Medieval Europe. The Expansion of Latin Christendom in the Baltic Lands*. Ed. by Alan V. MURRAY. Farnham, 2014, pp. 189–202.

⁴⁷ *LUB I*, № 125, Sp. 160–163.

⁴⁸ One well-described quarrel is recorded in: *LUB I*, № 36, Sp. 41–43.

Preachers or warriors?

This outline concerning the administration of hostages also provides us with some tools for exploring what roles the boys played in the monumental social and cultural developments that transpired in their home regions. One prominent theory suggests that hostages were taken off to German (and perhaps Danish) monasteries, or other centres of learning, where they were given a Christian education.⁴⁹ Before heading for Livonia, the chronicler Henry, for example, could have met Livish hostages during his studies in the Segeberg monastery, a missionary education centre on the River Elbe.⁵⁰ Native preachers would certainly have aided the processes of Christianisation in their homelands, spreading the word of God in their own language, and there are references to indigenous missionaries,⁵¹ but was this really the fate of most hostages exacted in Livonia and Prussia?

We should take into account the fact that hostages were rendered by the native military aristocracy: the fathers of these boys were the ruling elites of pagan communities, and, despite suffering losses in the holy wars, they often retained their local power base and prestige after the Crusades and Christianisation.⁵² The native nobility were partly integrated into the new political structures of the borderland societies, and autochthonous warriors formed part of the armies of the Catholic conquerors. Hostages were therefore heirs to regional leaders and sons of minor nobles, and had legitimacy at home; as a matter of fact, serving as a hostage sometimes even bolstered one's prestige.⁵³ Since amicable relations developed at times

⁴⁹ BRUNDAGE, James A. Introduction: Henry of Livonia, The Writer and His Chronicle. In *Crusading and Chronicle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier. A Companion to the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*. Ed. by Marek TAMM, Linda KALJUNDI, Carsten Selch JENSEN. Farnham, 2011, pp. 4–5; FAVREAU-LILIE, Marie-Luise. Mission to the heathen in Prussia and Livonia: the attitude of the religious military orders toward christianization. In *Christianizing peoples and converting individuals* (International Medieval Research, vol. 7). Ed. by Guyda ARMSTRONG, Ian N.WOOD. Turnhout, 2000, p. 151; URBAN, William. *The Prussian Crusade*. Lanham, MD, 1980, p. 171.

⁵⁰ JOHANSEN, Paul. Die Chronik als Biographie. Heinrich von Lettlands Lebensgang und Weltanschauung. *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 1953, Bd. 1, Hf. 1, S. 10; see also: KIVIMÄE, Jüri. *Henricus the Ethnographer: Reflections on Ethnicity in the Chronicle of Livonia*. In *Crusading and Chronicle Writing...*, p. 82.

⁵¹ BLANKE, Fritz. Die Missionsmethode des Bischofs Christian von Preußen [1927]. In *Heidenmission und Kreuzzugsgedanke in der deutschen Ostpolitik des Mittelalters* (Wege der Forschung, Bd. 7). Hrsg. von Helmut BEUMANN. Darmstadt, 1963, S. 359–362; FAVREAU-LILIE, M.-L. Op. cit., pp. 150–152.

⁵² VALK, Heiki. From the Iron Age to the Middle Ages. Local nobility and cultural change in Estonia in the 13th century. In *The Reception of Medieval Europe in the Baltic Sea Region (Papers of the XIIth Visby Symposium held at Gotland University, Visby)* (Acta Visbyensia, XII). Ed. by Jörn STAECKER. Visby, 2009, pp. 273–292; JÄHNIG, Bernhart. L'Ordine Teutonico e il cambiamento della vita dei Prussi = Der Deutsche Orden und die Veränderung der Lebensformen der Prussen. In *L'Ordine Teutonico tra Mediterraneo e Baltico: incontri e scontri tra religioni, popoli e culture = Der Deutsche Orden zwischen Mittelmeerraum und Baltikum. Begegnungen und Konfrontationen zwischen Religionen, Völker und Kulturen*. A cura di Hubert HOUBEN, Kristjan TOOMASPOEG. Galatina, 2008, p. 173–194.

⁵³ KOSTO, A. *Hostages in the Middle Ages...*, p. 200.

between the hostages and those who held them,⁵⁴ Catholic rulers could have made useful allies of the boys who grew up at their court, and who would later form a group of loyal regional dignitaries.

The 11th-century Scottish King Duncan II, for example, grew up in England as a hostage, was knighted there, and in 1094 ascended the Scottish throne with English support.⁵⁵ Both Duncan and his friends in England reaped the benefits: the former claimed the throne, the latter acquired an ally beyond their northern border. In the context of the Baltic Crusades, a closer example is the mid-11th century Wendish Prince Gottschalk, who spent his youth as a hostage in the Holy Roman Empire. He was later overthrown at home in 1066, possibly because he was perceived as unduly German and Catholic in a largely pagan Slavic society.⁵⁶ As vital as the conversion of the native peoples was for the Christian conquerors of Livonia and Prussia, new rulers also needed to fortify their secular power, and hostages could have furthered their local political base.

The case of the best-known Prussian hostage, Henry Monte, speaks in favour of this 'warrior' hypothesis, rather than the prominent 'missionary' theory. Henry was the son of a nobleman from Natangia at the southeast tip of the Baltic Sea. The region was subjugated by the Teutonic Order and the Crusaders in 1239, and Henry, at that time possibly between ten and 15 years old, was given up as a hostage by his father.⁵⁷ He was then taken to Germany, perhaps in the train of the returning crusader Prince Duke Otto I of Braunschweig,⁵⁸ and he eventually arrived in Magdeburg, a missionary centre on the River Elbe. The city had a distinguished cathedral school,⁵⁹ and it is presumed that Henry studied there.⁶⁰ In reality, however, very little is known of the life of the hostage in Germany.

Curiously, there are no records of a Teutonic Order convent in Magdeburg at that time. There was a commandery in 1224, but there are no reports of knights stationed in the city during the following decades.⁶¹ Did the Order entrust their hostage to the watch of the strict cathedral school? We also know of a curious detail: that

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 45–46.

⁵⁵ PARKS, A. Op. cit., pp. 49–55.

⁵⁶ KAHL, Hans-Dietrich. Heidenische Wendentum und christliche Stammesfürsten. Ein Blick in die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Gentil- und Universalreligion im abendländischen Hochmittelalter. In KAHL, Hans-Dietrich. *Heidenfrage und Slawenfrage im deutschen Mittelalter: ausgewählte Studien 1953–2008* (East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, vol. 4). Leiden, Boston, MA, 2011, S. 191, 211.

⁵⁷ PDC, Teil III, Kap. 25–27, S. 126–129; GRANT, J.; URBAN, W. Op. cit., pp. 5–8.

⁵⁸ GRANT, J.; URBAN, W. Op. cit., p. 8.

⁵⁹ PÄTZOLD, Stefan. Von der Domschule zu den Studia der Bettelorden. Bildung und Wissenschaft im mittelalterlichen Magdeburg. *Concilium medii aevi*, 2001, Bd. 4, S. 81–82.

⁶⁰ FAVREAU-LILIE, M.-L. Op. cit., p. 151.

⁶¹ MILITZER, Klaus. *Von Akkon zur Marienburg. Verfassung, Verwaltung und Sozialstruktur des Deutschen Ordens 1190–1309* (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens, Bd. 56). Marburg, 1999, S. 279.

Henry had close contacts with a 'noble and wealthy' citizen called Hirtzhals, who is said to have done 'many good things' for the hostage in Magdeburg.⁶² Whatever the exact nature of Henry's stay in Germany was, he probably returned to Prussia in the early 1250s. It has been presumed that, like many local nobles, he then fought alongside the Teutonic Knights against other native tribes.⁶³ He must have gained great renown at the time, because when a large Prussian uprising broke out in 1260, Henry was chosen to be the leader of the rebellious Natangians.⁶⁴

In this case, there are no reports that a hostage, often presumed to have studied in a cathedral school, was involved in any missionary work. He does seem to have demonstrated military prowess, however, to the extent necessary to be elected to lead the Natangians, who probably based their choice on his expertise in battle. Writing about the Prussian revolt, the chronicler Peter of Dusburg also paints a picture of Henry Monte as a skilled and fearsome warrior, and describes how he often inflicted devastating defeats on the Teutonic Knights because he was so familiar with their tactics, which he had probably learned earlier.⁶⁵

Overarching generalisations should naturally not be based on this one extraordinary example, but it does hint that religious education may have been somewhat secondary in the upbringing of hostages. Dusburg writes in his chronicle that 'other Prussians who had been brought up since their childhood with the brothers [of the Order]' accompanied Henry during the revolt, and calling out in German, which they hence spoke fluently, lured the Teutonic Knights into traps and slaughtered them.⁶⁶ Acquiring a religious education did not necessarily, of course, affect one's fighting skills, but these men appear to have been trained for battle, and not to preach sermons. Also, the convents of the Teutonic Knights did not provide missionary training: priests of the order learned elsewhere, and the Christianisation of the Baltic frontier was advanced mainly by clerics who had studied in the Elbe region.⁶⁷ Hence, at least those hostages who were kept in the Livonian or Prussian castles of the Teutonic Order could not receive a comprehensive religious education.

Emphasising the potential military and political roles of hostages should not be considered an outright rejection of the theory that they did missionary work. The Catholic conquerors could certainly benefit from preachers who not only spoke the local language, but were also familiar with local customs and had personal connections.

⁶² PDC, Teil III, Kap. 91, S. 212–215.

⁶³ GRANT, J.; URBAN, W. Op. cit., p. 10.

⁶⁴ PDC, Teil III, Kap. 88–89, S. 208–211.

⁶⁵ PDC, Teil III, Kap. 104, S. 224–227; Teil III, Kap. 123, S. 242–243; Teil III, Kap. 167, S. 286–287.

⁶⁶ PDC, Teil III, Kap. 167, S. 286–287.

⁶⁷ ARSZYŃSKI, M. Die Burgen..., S. 106; ARSZYŃSKI, Marian. Die Deutschordensburg als Klosterbau. In *Die Spiritualität der Ritterorden im Mittelalter* (Ordines militares. Colloquia Torunensia Historica, VII). Hrsg. von Zenon H. NOWAK, Toruń, 1993, S. 158–159; FAVREAU-LILIE, M.-L. Op. cit., p. 150.

This was especially important in the earliest phases of Christianisation, which was also when most hostages seem to have been taken to Germany, possibly to Saxon missionary centres. Actual data that hostageship was utilised for fuelling Catholic missions in the Baltic region, is, however, technically non-existent.

Life and death in confinement

We can only speculate about the lives of hostages in captivity, but some hypotheses can be formulated, based on sporadic reports and on our knowledge of the society of the east Baltic during the Crusades and afterwards. In later centuries, the Low Middle German word for hostage *gîsel* was commonly used on the island of Saaremaa to designate casual members of German noble households who were rendered by Estonians as a certain fixed duty.⁶⁸ In the aforementioned document, which decreed how merchants should cover the expenses pertaining to hostages, the latter were mentioned alongside messengers.⁶⁹ Hence, hostages perhaps constituted a group of people that was maybe administered similarly to messengers. As such, they could have been common members of aristocratic *famila* already in the 13th century; for example, in the households of the vassals of the bishops or the Danish king. Some hostages probably remained in the courts of the rulers themselves.

Hostages who were given to the Teutonic Knights had to find a place in convents that were home to the Order's knights, priests and servant brothers. Since hostages were, at least initially, young boys, they must have largely stood out among the residents of the castles, since, as a rule, the Teutonic Order did not accept wards who were under 14 years of age. At times, however, the monastic knights failed to refuse the requests of powerful nobles,⁷⁰ and hostages from Livonia and Prussia may thus have met the offspring of European nobility. Hostages were probably looked after by servant brothers, some of whom themselves possibly came from the local populace of the borderlands.⁷¹ The boys probably dined alongside the residents of the convent who were not sworn to the Order, spent much of their free time in the refectory like other members of the household, and took part in religious services.⁷²

⁶⁸ TIİK, Leo. Giiselerid ja giiseleraha. Saaremaa pantvangid XIII–XVII sajandil. *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 1974, nr. 3, lk. 167–171.

⁶⁹ LUB I, № 125, Sp. 160–163.

⁷⁰ MILITZER, Klaus. *Die Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens*. Stuttgart, 2005, S. 87.

⁷¹ MASCHKE, Erich. Die Schäffer und Lieger des Deutschen Ordens in Preußen. In MASCHKE, Erich. *Domus Hospitalis Theutonicorum. Europäische Verbindungslinien der Deutschordensgeschichte. Gesammelte Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1931–1963* (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens, Bd. 10). Hrsg. von Udo ARNOLD. Bonn-Godesberg, 1970, S. 85–86.

⁷² Marian Arsyński provides a lively description in: ARSZYŃSKI, M. *Die Deutschordensburg...*, S. 152–157.

Contacts between native hostages and Catholic foreigners were certainly casual in the castles of Livonia and Prussia; but did the close proximity of people from different cultural backgrounds also cause friction? One Curonian was stabbed to death in Riga, after all. The conquerors certainly treated the local people with some scepticism and contempt,⁷³ but as Rasa Mažeika has demonstrated, based on the chronicle of Peter of Dusburg, the author's comments about the barbaric lifestyle of the pagan Prussians are not inherently derogatory towards the natives, but rather emphasise that the lack of Christian teaching in their lands had left them in such mental darkness that they venerated false idols.⁷⁴ Hence, Catholics may even have seen indigenous hostages as 'good' locals, a sort of intellectual bridgehead, through whom they imagined the light of God's word would penetrate the spiritual darkness of pagan society.

Whether the perception of Livonian and Prussian peoples eased the execution or mutilation of their hostages is another question, however. One might think that the lives of hostages hung by a thread: given as collateral for the loyalty of their fathers, the boys' lives would be forfeited when a rebellion broke out, and it often did. Nevertheless, during the period of the Crusades in Livonia and Prussia, we know of only two occasions of hostages being executed or maimed. Dusburg's detailed descriptions of these events leave the impression that the author considered them extraordinary. It is therefore unlikely that other cases were simply ignored by those who penned the narrative of the holy wars. Henry of Livonia always pays pedantic attention to hostages in his chronicle, but never mentions executions. Giving his account of 12th-century events in the Baltic region, the famous Danish writer Saxo Grammaticus also devotes much space to describing how the King of Denmark threatened to hang a hostage, even though the monarch really had no such intention, but merely used the prospect for intimidation.⁷⁵

Throughout the Middle Ages, the killing of hostages was rare everywhere in Europe. In total, under 2% of those rendered as surety were executed.⁷⁶ The history of the Baltic Crusades is certainly volatile and rife with revolts, but hostages were probably considered too valuable to simply be put to the sword. They were, after all, a sort of investment; not to mention that killing one's own wards was emotionally difficult.

⁷³ Regarding the mistrust and imagology on the Baltic frontier, see: KALJUNDI, Linda. Waiting for the Barbarians: Reconstruction of *Otherness* in the Saxon Missionary and Crusading Chronicles, 11th–13th Centuries. *The Medieval Chronicle*, 2008, vol. 5, pp. 122–124.

⁷⁴ MAŽEIKA, Rasa J. Violent Victims? Surprising Aspects of the Just War Theory in the Chronicle of Peter von Dusburg. In *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*. Ed. by Alan V. MURRAY. Farnham, 2009, pp. 123–140. See also: FISCHER, Mary. *Des tūvils kint? The German Order's Perception of its Enemies as Revealed in the Krōnike von Prūzinlant. Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 2007, Bd. 244, S. 260–275.

⁷⁵ *SGD*, book XIV, ch. 26, § 12.

⁷⁶ KOSTO, A. *Hostages in the Middle Ages...*, p. 39.

Furthermore, once hostages were executed, they could no longer be used as leverage; while their release was sometimes a bargaining chip in negotiations, like those mentioned above that achieved freedom for many captured Brothers of the Sword and German merchants during the Estonian uprising in 1223,⁷⁷ or when the Prince of Pomerelia, in 1249, accepted the harsh peace demands of the Teutonic Order in return for the release of his previously rendered son.⁷⁸ The death of hostages, on the other hand, would most likely not have put an end to any revolts, but rather incited them further.

It is still likely that the treatment of hostages was influenced by how conquerors perceived the locals. Holy wars in Livonia and Prussia were initially intercultural conflicts, and somewhat ruthless, as such clashes usually are,⁷⁹ but at first the conquerors never executed hostages.⁸⁰ Relations deteriorated during major revolts, like those that broke out in Prussia in 1242 and 1260. Conquerors then saw locals as traitors, and (at least rhetorically) apostates.⁸¹ As a result, warfare in Prussia became increasingly brutal, in a manner characteristic of 'subcultural' conflicts, where the fight against demonised 'internal foes' takes more ferocious forms than intercultural clashes usually do (the suppression of heresy is a good example).⁸² In 1249, the Prussians slaughtered the hostages the Teutonic Knights had rendered to them.⁸³ In the English-Welsh wars of the same era, when the Welsh started decapitating prisoners, the English responded the same way.⁸⁴ Were Prussian hostages thus in more danger in later decades?

The two aforementioned reports of mutilating or killing hostages come from the later days of the Prussian Crusades. They describe the events of the second revolt in the 1260s. On the first occasion, the Order's castle at Heilsberg was sieged by rebellious Prussians. When the suffering of the starving garrison became unbearable, they fled the castle, taking with them 12 Prussian hostages whom they subsequently blinded. The mutilated boys were then sent back to their fathers as a warning.⁸⁵

⁷⁷ *HCL*, cap. XXVI, § 9, p. 191.

⁷⁸ *PUB*, Nr. 213, S. 147–152.

⁷⁹ MORILLO, Stephen. A General Typology of Transcultural Wars – The Early Middle Ages and Beyond. In *Transcultural Wars from the Middle Ages to the 21st Century*. Ed. by Hans-Henning KORTÜM. Berlin, 2006, pp. 33–36.

⁸⁰ For example, The Teutonic Knights killed a Prussian man who refused to pay them taxes, but left his son, whom he had given as a hostage, unharmed: *PUB*, Nr. 134, S. 100–102.

⁸¹ KALJUNDI, L. Op. cit., p. 123; see also: JANSON, Henrik. What Made the Pagans Pagans? In *Scandinavia and Christian Europe in the Middle Ages. Papers of the 12th International Saga Conference, Bonn/Germany, 28th July–2nd August 2003*. Ed. by Rudolf SIMEK, Judith MEURER. Bonn, 2003, pp. 250–256.

⁸² MORILLO, S. Op. cit., pp. 36–42.

⁸³ *PDC*, Teil III, Kap. 66, S. 182–85.

⁸⁴ STRICKLAND, Matthew. Rules of War or War without Rules? – Some Reflections on Conduct and the Treatment of Non-Combatants in Medieval Transcultural Wars. In *Transcultural Wars from the Middle Ages to the 21st Century*. Ed. by Hans-Henning KORTÜM. Berlin, 2006, pp. 124–125.

⁸⁵ *PDC*, Teil III, Kap. 94, S. 214–217.

A few years later, Bartenstein was also besieged. Its defenders managed to hold out, but at one point the Prussians killed two respected German men-at-arms, and then celebrated their feat, bragging loudly. The infuriated garrison responded by setting up gallows on the castle walls, and publicly hanging, one-by-one, 30 sons of Prussian nobles who had been given to them as hostages.⁸⁶

The two episodes are quite different. In one case, the mutilation of hostages was a calculated move, in order to demonstrate resolve and dishearten those Prussians whose sons were still in captivity. In the other case, the hanging of hostages was seemingly a rather impulsive act of revenge that did little to relieve the situation of the besieged, and only infuriated their enemies. The two garrisons' actions were clearly not guided by some overarching rule of conduct that dictated when violence towards hostages was justified or necessary, but the general rule still seems to have been not to injure them. The defenders of Heilsberg notably blinded the boys only after fleeing the castle, although Dusburg describes how they were reduced to eating the hides of horses (a common literary device in the chronicle,⁸⁷ but one that speaks of famine nevertheless) to survive the siege. Thus, the garrison must have shared with their hostages whatever meagre resources they had, despite starving themselves.

The vast majority of Livonian and Prussian hostages, therefore, most likely survived their captivity. Their execution would not have smothered revolts, but while the boys were alive, those who possessed them had leverage over their fathers (which may be why the garrison of Bartenstein spared the boys for so long), as well as some capital for negotiations. Hostages could also be made use of even when they were later released. This probably usually happened after about ten years in confinement.⁸⁸

The life after

Regardless of whether most hostages were later in life primarily engaged in missionary work or assumed their fathers' positions in the military nobility, it is apparent from the fact alone that they were demanded as pledges for political and religious surrender, that they were (the sons of) influential people. Hostages therefore commanded authority to shape the native communities after captivity. The old rulers of Livonian and Prussian pagan societies were more often than not vehemently hostile

⁸⁶ *PDC*, Teil III, Kap. 119, S. 236–239.

⁸⁷ Dusburg also mentions it in descriptions of other dramatic events: *PDC*, Teil III, Kap. 95, S. 216–217; Teil III, Kap. 121, S. 238–241.

⁸⁸ This seems to have been a common period for captivity, at least: PARKS, A. Op. cit., pp. 143, 184.

towards Christianisation, and opposed the rule of foreigners,⁸⁹ but their sons were largely *tabula rasa*, more susceptible to acculturation and conversion by the conquerors.

This means that, on a wider scale, hostages would enable the new rulers to dismantle the power relations on which pagan societies were based. Torben Kjerstgaard Nielsen has pointed out that abducting the women and children of indigenous elites would have effectively put an end to existing local dynasties, since their political power was largely based on kinship ties.⁹⁰ Prohibiting former marriage practices⁹¹ and declaring certain unions void served the same purpose. In a way, hostages could similarly be used to sever noble bloodlines. Even if the boys returned to claim their fathers' places in their childhood homes, the connections they had with their kin had eroded, and they had already been brought under Catholic cultural influences⁹² and integrated into new 'European' power structures, instead of the traditional networks of alliances and marriages that were established in Livonia and Prussia prior to the Crusades.

It has been emphasised that the bonds created by hostageship somewhat resembled those of godparenthood,⁹³ a sort of artificial kinship. In missionary areas, Catholic lords often acted as the godfathers of converted native rulers,⁹⁴ and those who held hostages captive could also act as the boys' godparents at their baptism, and hence create a new structure of interwoven personal, political and religious relationships that replaced the previous social ties that the hostage had. Since the godparents influenced the giving of Christian names, this may, for example, have been the case with a certain Berthold, son of the prominent Livish chieftain and earnest Catholic convert Caupo,⁹⁵ who was the namesake of both an early Livonian bishop and a mas-

⁸⁹ On the responses of native societies to Christianization and conquest, see: BLOMKVIST, Nils. Culture clash or compromise? The medieval Europeanisation process of the Baltic Rim region (1100–1400 AD). Problems for an international study. In *Culture Clash or Compromise? The Europeanisation of the Baltic Sea Area 1100–1400 AD. Papers of the XIth Visby Symposium held at Gotland Centre for Baltic Studies, Gotland University College, Visby, October 4th–9th, 1996*. Ed. by Nils BLOMKVIST. Visby, 1998, pp. 25–26.

⁹⁰ NIELSEN, Torben K. Mission and Submission. Societal Change in the Baltic in the Thirteenth Century. In *Medieval History Writing and Crusading Ideology* (Studia Fennica. Historica, 9). Ed. by Tuomas M.S. LEHTONEN, Kurt Villads JENSEN, Janne MALKKI, Katja RITARI. Helsinki, 2005, p. 222.

⁹¹ Regarding pagan and Christian marriage in Livonia, see: BRUNDAGE, James A. Christian Marriage in Thirteenth-Century Livonia. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 1973, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 313–320.

⁹² On cultural influences, see also: KOSTO, A. *Hostages in the Middles Ages...*, pp. 67–68.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 72–73.

⁹⁴ ANGENENDT, Arnold. Taufe und Politik im frühen Mittelalter. *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 1973, Bd. 7, Hf. 1, S. 145–148, 152, 156–157.

⁹⁵ *HCL*, cap. XIV, § 8, p. 78–81. Nils Blomkvist provides an interesting analysis of Caupo's conversion and compromise with the Catholic conquerors: BLOMKVIST, Nils. *The Discovery of the Baltic. The Reception of a Catholic World-System in the European North (AD 1075–1225)* (The Northern World. North Europe and the Baltic c. 400–1700 AD. Peoples, Economies and Cultures, vol. 15). Leiden, Boston, MA, 2005, pp. 551–558.

ter of the Order of the Brothers of the Sword. This Berthold is thought to have been one of the aforementioned 30 Livish boys who were rendered as hostages in 1200.⁹⁶

Hostages who came from rather archaic societies were perhaps impressed by, or maybe even in awe of, the world of stone cathedrals, knightly armies, and books of knowledge, that the Catholic conquerors acquainted them with. Hence, the idea that the new faith and culture were superior to the customs and way of life of their fathers could easily have been ingrained in them. Just as the converted nobleman Caupo was convinced of the superiority of the German missionaries after his journey to Rome and a meeting with the Pope himself,⁹⁷ many hostages may have felt a similar way. Therefore, the boys perhaps functioned as indigenous 'agents of Christianisation',⁹⁸ promoting the Catholic faith and a more 'European' way of life on the east Baltic frontier. This acculturation was never guaranteed to be absolute, of course, as the example of Henry Monte demonstrates.

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We should not view the hostages as simple pawns in the plans of Catholic lords, however. The boys themselves certainly understood the vast changes transpiring around them, and were, in a sense, given first-row seats to the show. When they witnessed the workings of the new feudal and ecclesiastical structures established by the foreign conquerors in Livonia and Prussia, hostages could have recognised that the political and social hierarchies characteristic of Medieval Europe were considerably more stable than the rule of their fathers, while also offering broader opportunities. It is often emphasised how the authority of the leaders of east Baltic societies, especially in Livonia, and particularly in Estonia, was largely dependent on tribal consent, and the power of individual chieftains was restricted (to a greater or lesser extent, in the views of different scholars).⁹⁹ Cooperation with the conquerors therefore offered new prospects for young hostages.

Among the elites of east Baltic society, there were always introducers of new ways, as well as those who led the resistance. 'Survival strategies' in the face of a foreign, expanding culture were manifold. But, as Nils Blomkvist points out, if 'innovations appeared to be useful they were probably welcomed with open arms – *given that they fitted into the social order and culture of the receivers*'.¹⁰⁰ In the case of young hostages, who were usually less influenced by established traditions, and could observe the clash of cultures from the other side as well, this general reluctance was prob-

⁹⁶ Caupo, mentioned by name in this case, was certainly one of the nobles who gave hostages: *HCL*, cap. IV, § 4, p. 14.

⁹⁷ *HCL*, cap. VII, § 3, p. 20–21.

⁹⁸ On indigenous 'agents of Christianisation', see: NILSEN, T. K. *Op. cit.*, p. 218.

⁹⁹ See, for example: ŠNĒ, Andris. *The Emergence of Livonia: The Transformations of Social and Political Structures in the Territory of Latvia during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*. In *The Clash of Cultures...*, pp. 53–72; MÄGI, M. *Op. cit.* pp. 186–190; ŠČAVINSKAS, M. *Op. cit.*, pp. 98–99.

¹⁰⁰ BLOMKVIST, N. *Culture clash or compromise...*, pp. 25–26. Blomkvist's emphasis.

ably weaker. For them, accepting the Catholic faith, assimilating into newly founded Christian political units, as well as *Christianitas* in general, and adapting to the altered realities of post-Crusade Livonia and Prussia, may have seemed like a good opportunity for personal success.

Conclusions

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The Catholic conquerors' practice of demanding hostages during the Livonian and Prussian Crusades was widespread, not only because of the need to strengthen power relations on the chaotic frontier of Christendom, but also due to the various opportunities to further the acculturation of local societies that hostageship offered. The offspring of the local nobility, who were brought up in the monasteries, courts and households of the new foreign rulers, whether in Livonia and Prussia or abroad, probably acquired an identity where their indigenous origins blended with the Catholic world-view. As the sons of local elites, hostages later commanded authority at home, which could be put to the service of spreading the new faith, but also enforcing political structures and institutions that strengthened the conquerors' power, as well as the hostages' own position. Hostages were among the first people to breach the cultural barriers between native east Baltic peoples and foreign lords, and, as a symbol of the crusading era in Livonia and Prussia, they stood with one foot in the pagan past and the other in the Christian future.

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ĮKAITŲ GYVENIMAS IR JŲ POVEIKIS LIVONIJOS IR PRŪSIJOS KONVERSIJAI BEI AKULTŪRACIJAI KRYŽIAUS ŽYGIŲ METU BALTIJOS REGIONE XIII ŠIMTMETYJE

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Santrauka

Aprašymų, kaip krikščionių užkariautojai ir misionieriai ėmė įkaitus iš vietinio elito atstovų Livonijoje ir Prūsijoje XIII a. kryžiaus žygių į rytinę Baltijos pakrantę metu, yra pateikiama to meto kronikose ir kituose dokumentuose. Pagrindinis tokių įkaitų ėmimo tikslas – užtikrinti ir konsoliduoti naujųjų krašto valdytojų – katalikų – valdžią vietinių bendruomenių atžvilgiu, palaikant užkariautų žmonių lojalumą. Kita vertus, įkaitai buvo gyvi žmonės, todėl jų asmeninis gyvenimas, kaip aiškėja, darė įtaką vietinių gyventojų bendruomenėms. Vienas iš tokių įtakos vietos bendruomenėms pavyzdžių būtų įkaitų vaidmuo vietos karienei aristokratijai: įkaitų berniukų tėvai buvo vietos aristokratijos atstovai dar iki krikščionybės. Jie, nepaisant nemažų materialinių nuostolių vykstant šventajam karui, vis dėlto sugebėjo išsaugoti vietinę galią, o krikštydamiesi ir įsitraukdami į kryžiaus žygių judėjimą prieš kitas, priešiškas, vietos bendruomenes ir perleisdami įkaitus, įgijo reikiamą prestižą ir užkariautojų akyse.

Įkaitų reikalavimas ir jų (neprievartinis) ėmimas buvo to meto „diplomatinio protokolo“ dalis – jų reikėdavo tam tikriems susitarimams laiduoti. Paprastai įkaitai būdavo imami iš vietos kilmingųjų sūnų, o atiduotų įkaitų skaičius neretai siekdavo po kelias dešimtis. Tai gi įkaitai sudarė gana ženklią žmonių grupę, kilusią iš vietinės Rytų Baltijos pakrantės visuomenės. Pradinio christianizacijos etapo metu, t. y. XIII a. pr. Livonijoje ir 1230–1240 m. Prūsijoje, daugelis įkaitų buvo siunčiami į užsienį, tačiau vėliau nemaža įkaitų Livonijoje ir Prūsijoje buvo laikomi arčiau jų gimtųjų namų. Skirtingos užkariautojų grupės – karienių ordinų atstovai, vyskupai, Danijos karaliaus vietininkai bei vasalai (XIII a. – šiaurinėje Estijos dalyje) ir pirkliai, – valdžiusios užimtas teritorijas, organizavo ir ėmė įkaitus remdamosios sava kompetencija ir pagal savo poreikius, atsižvelgdamos ir į imamų įkaitų tėvų užimamą padėtį bei svarbą visuomenėje. Kiekviena išvardyta katalikų grupė su įkaitais tvarkėsi greičiausiai skirtingai.

Neretai manoma, kad pirminėje christianizacijos fazėje įkaitai buvo siunčiami į Vokietijos (ir, livoniškosios Estijos atveju, – Danijos) centrus mokytis ir rengtis misijų veiklai, tačiau apčiuopiamų įrodymų tokiam teiginiui pagrįsti nėra daug. Iš įkaitų buvo tikimasi, kad atėjęs laikui jie pakeis savo tėvus – vietos karinius ir politinius lyderius, viliantis, kad tokiu būdu bus suformuota naujoji karinė akultūracijos paveikta, vietos bendruomenės atstovaujanti valdančioji grupė. Tie įkaitai berniukai, kurie ankstyvojoje christianizacijos fazėje buvo siunčiami į užsienį rengtis misijų darbui gimtuosiuose kraštuose, turėjo didesnę galimybę įgyti geresnį išsilavinimą nei tie, kurie buvo laikomi Livonijoje ir Prūsijoje, kur krikščioniško išsilavinimo galimybės buvo ribotos. Vieno garsiausių įkaitų Herkaus Manto pavyzdys, atrodo, patvirtina šią hipotezę: jis buvo daugiau išmokęs karybos nei pamokslavimo meno.

Kaip vyko pasidalijimas įkaitais ir jų išlaikymo išlaidomis, charakteringai rodo vienas 1232 m. dokumentas. Dokumente, kalbančiame apie užkariautojų darbų ir teisių pasidalijimą Livonijoje, teigiama, kad neseniai pajungtoje Žiemgalos Mežuotnės srityje vokiečių pirkliai neturintys prisiimti įkaitų išlaikymo išlaidų. Tačiau čia pat pabrėžiama, kad jeigu asmenys, įsigiję tam tikrą dalį pilies, nuspręstų pilį palikti, tuomet jie turėtų apmokėti trečdalį įkaitų išlaikymo išlaidų, nes trečdalis Žiemgalos žemių buvo patikėtos valdyti ne Livonijos ordinui ir vyskupui, o kitiems suinteresuotiems asmenims.

Šaltiniai rodo, kad tik nedidelė įkaitų dalis buvo nužudyta, atsižvelgiant į jų tėvų rodomą neloyalumą užkariautojams (dažniausiai tėvams sukylant). Per visą XIII a. žinomi tik du epizodai, kai imtasi fizinės prievartos prieš įkaitus: vieną kartą įkaitai buvo apakinti, o kitą kartą, kai kilo 1260 m. Didysis prūsų sukilimas, – pakarti. Retorika, su kuria buvo aprašomi šie įvykiai, ir vaizdiniai, su kuriais buvo siejami sukilę vietiniai gyventojai, vaizduojant juos apostatais, palengvina šių incidentų suvokimą.

Su įkaitais visuomet buvo elgiamasi kaip su svečiais, nes užkariautojai juos suvokė kaip intelektualinį „placdarmą“, nuo kurio atsispyrus buvo galima skleisti užkariautojų kultūrą ir krikščionių tikėjimą pagoniškose visuomenėse. Net jeigu berniukai ir netapdavo misionieriais, gimtąja kalba skleidusiais tikėjimo pagrindus savo tėvynainiams, užkariautojai iš tokių įkaitų visada tikėjosi sudaryti vietinių vasalų ir ištikimų pavaldinių grupę, nes užmegzti draugiški santykiai tarp įkaitų ir juos nelaisvėje globojusių valdžios atstovų išlikdavo ir buvo plėtojami toliau. Įkaitai, atėję iš kitokios, sakytume, archajiškos, visuomenės ir pakliuvę į jiems kitonišką erdvę, patirdavo psichologinį sukrėtimą, matydami akmenines bažnyčias ir katedras, per knygas susipažindami su krikščioniška kultūra, kurią propagavo jų globėjai krikščionys. Tai aplink save matant, įkaitų širdyse įsitvirtindavo idėja, kad užkariautojų kultūra, karinis potencialas ir religija yra pranašesni už jų tėvų ir kitų tėvynainių religiją bei kultūrą. Daugelis įkaitų greičiausiai jautėsi taip, kaip lyvių konvertitas kilmingasis Kaupas, kartu su vokiečių dvasininkais vykęs į Romą, kurioje akis į akį susitiko su pačiu Romos popiežiumi, ir matęs didingas krikščionių šventoves pačioje Romoje bei pakeliui į ją.

Pakliuvus įkaitu į užkariautojų visuomenę, buvo suardomi ligtoliniai ryšiai su berniukų tėvais ir juos supančia aplinka, taigi įkaitams nebelikdavo galimybės plėtoti savo visuomenės tradicijų ir kultūros. Įkaitai būdavo integruojami į naująją katalikišką politinę ir visuomeninę tvarką. Buvę įkaitai, priėmę krikščionių tikėjimą ir gyvenimo būdą nelaisvėje, išsaugodavo savo statusą, paveldėtą iš tėvų, ir tapdavo tarpininkais tarp senosios

visuomenės atstovų ir europeizaciją bei christianizaciją įtvirtinančių naujųjų struktūrų Livonijoje ir Prūsijoje. Patys berniukai buvo atviri naujovėms, nes jos leido jiems įtvirtinti savo socialinį statusą naujoje krikščioniškoje visuomenėje.

Rytinės Baltijos pakrantės visuomenėse visada buvo vietinio elito narių, suinteresuotų susipažinti su naujuoju krikščionišku gyvenimo būdu, tačiau visada buvo ir tų, kurie vadovavo pasipriešinimui. „Išlikimo strategija“, atsigręžianti į įvairialypę kultūrinę užsienio patirtį, tokiems žmonėms buvo išgyvenimo klausimas, bet, kaip teigė Nilsas Blomkvistas, naujovių priėmimas priklausė nuo to, kiek jos buvo naudingos. Įkaitai, patirdami mažesnę vietos visuomenės įtaką ir atsiverdami užkariautojų gyvenimo būdai bei kultūrai, kultūrų susidūrimą stebėjo iš kitos nei jų tėvai pusės. Todėl įkaitų grįžimas prie senosios tvarkos buvo kur kas mažiau tikėtinas nei pačių tėvų ir jų aplinkos. Jie, perėmę krikščionių tikėjimą ir kultūrą, įsisavinę naująją politinę krašto struktūrą bei *Christianitas* idėją, buvo lengviau prisitaikę prie pasikeitusių realijų jau baigiantis kryžiaus žygiams Livonijoje bei Prūsijoje, o tai sudarė didesnes galimybes sėkmingai vykdyti tolesnę veiklą.