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## Henry of Livonia and the Christianisation of the Eastern Baltic Lands (Twelfth-Thirteenth Centuries)

**Abstract:** The *Chronicon Livoniae* written by the priest now generally known as Henry of Livonia has long been recognised by historians as the most important written source for the history of the early Catholic mission and crusades in the lands along the eastern Baltic coast in the years between c. 1185 and 1227, when the territories known as Livonia and Estonia were incorporated within Latin Christendom. After setting out the geographical and ethnographic background to the Danish and German missions in the Baltic regions, this essay discusses Henry's theological understanding of Livonian history, and highlights the importance of the chronicle as a source for the establishment of the Church of Livonia as an ecclesiastical and secular power, for military aspects of the early Baltic Crusades, and for knowledge of the society and customs of the native peoples of the region.

**Keywords:** Catholic Mission; Baltic Crusades; Chronicles; Livonia; Estonia

### Introduction

By the late twelfth century, the lands situated between the Baltic Sea and the principalities of Russia constituted the greatest single expanse of Europe which remained outside the fold of Christendom. These territories, stretching from the Gulf of Finland down to what is now the north-eastern part of Poland, were inhabited by a large number of ethnicities belonging to the Baltic and Finnic language groups, whose distribution showed large similarities but also significant differences from later periods. The Finnic language group included the Estonian tribes of the mainland and the islands of Ösel (mod. Saaremaa), Dagö (mod. Hiiumaa) and Moon (mod. Muhu), as well as the Livs around the eastern and southern shores of the Gulf of Riga, who in modern times have dwindled to the point of extinction as a separate ethnicity. The areas to the east and south

of the Livs were inhabited by Semgallians, Lettgallians, Selonians and Curonians, who were regarded as separate peoples at the times of the conquest, but who coalesced into a wider Lettish (Latvian) identity during the later Middle Ages. Further to the south and east were the various Prussian and Lithuanian tribes<sup>1</sup>.

Within these wider linguistic groupings there was no political unity greater than the tribal level, and all of the territories concerned lacked any form of higher state organisation, such as that which characterised the kingdoms and bishoprics of Germany and Poland to the west, or the Rus' principalities to the east. The most significant characteristic which distinguished the region from the lands beyond the Baltic Sea and to the east, however, was one of religious belief. Scandinavia, Poland and most of northern Germany had long accepted the Catholic faith, and the Rus' principalities belonged to the Orthodox world, but the Baltic and Finnic peoples living between these two religious blocs continued to adhere to their ancestral animist and polytheistic beliefs, revering a variety of deities, spirits and sacred sites<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Andris Šnē, '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 on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, ed. Alan V. Murray (Farnham, 2009), pp. 53–72; Marek Tamm, 'A New World into Old Words: The Eastern Baltic Region and the Cultural Geography of Medieval Europe', in *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, pp. 11–36. Placenames mentioned in the discussion below are given according to the historical forms prevalent in the Middle Ages, with their modern equivalents (in Latvia and Estonia) given in parentheses. References to secondary works in the footnotes are not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to provide a survey of the main trends in research on Henry and his chronicle over the last thirty years.

<sup>2</sup> This rough outline of the ethnic map of the region could be refined by consideration of further complexities which have not always been resolved by historians, linguists or ethnologists. The Curonians may well have included a Finnic element alongside the Baltic one, while the inhabitants of the province of Idumea seem to have had a mixed Livish and Lettish heritage: Paul Johansen, 'Kurlands Bewohner zu Anfang der historischen Zeit', in *Baltische Lande 1: Ostbaltische Frühzeit*, ed. Albert Brackmann and Carl Engel (Leipzig, 1939), pp. 263–306. Other Finnic peoples living beyond the boundaries of Estonia and Livonia proper were the Izhorians (also known as Ingrians) and the Votians inhabiting the areas to the east and south of the Gulf of Finland. See Evgeniya L. Nazarova, 'The Crusades against Votians and Izhorians in the Thirteenth Century', in *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier, 1150–1500*, ed. Alan V. Murray (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 177–79. The small population known as the Wends of Livonia, who inhabited the area around Wenden (mod. Cēsis) have been identified by scholars variously as Finnic or Slavic; they retained an identity which was distinctive from their neighbours up to the late thirteenth century. See Heinrich Laakmann, 'Estland und Livland in frühgeschichtlicher Zeit', in *Baltische Lande, 1*, 204–62 (here 207); Wolfgang Laur, 'Die sogenannten Wenden im Baltikum', *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung* 21 (1964), 431–38; Sergei S. Gadzatskii, 'Водская и Ижорская земли Новгородского государства', *Исторические записки* 6 (1940), 100–48; Vadim B. Vilinbakhov, *Славяне в Ливонии (некоторые соображения о Вендах Генриха*

From the late twelfth century up to around 1230 those territories corresponding to present-day Latvia and Estonia were incorporated within Latin Christendom through the efforts of the archbishoprics of northern Germany and the Danish and Swedish monarchies, aided by monastic and military orders, and crusaders from northern Germany<sup>3</sup>. The chronicle of the priest and missionary Henry of Livonia is the most detailed narrative source for these events; while this work has been known to historians since the eighteenth century, it has been the subject of renewed and more intensive scholarly interest over the last three decades. In this respect it is noticeable that chronicle has not only been used to substantiate events and dates, but has become the subject of intensive study in its own right, with a view to understanding the mentality and the religious and cultural climate of the Livonian mission<sup>4</sup>.

## The Beginnings of Mission and Crusade

Up to the later twelfth century Western knowledge of the eastern Baltic countries was limited. The first known close contacts came about through merchants from northern Germany and Scandinavia who regularly sailed to the mouth of the River Dūna (mod. Daugava/Dvina) to trade with

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Латвийского)’, *Acta Balto-Slavica* 8 (1973) 53–67; Alan V. Murray, ‘Henry of Livonia and the Wends of the Eastern Baltic: Ethnography and Biography in the Thirteenth-Century Livonian Mission’, *Studi Medievali* 54 (2013), 807–33.

<sup>3</sup> On the wider historical background, see: Eric Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades: The Baltic and the Catholic Frontier, 1100–1525* (London, 1980); William Urban, *The Livonian Crusade* (Washington, D.C., 1981); *Gli Inizi del cristianesimo in Livonia-Lettonia: Atti del colloquio internazionale di storia ecclesiastica in occasione dell’VIII centenario della Chiesa in Livonia (1186–1986), Roma, 24–25 giugno 1986*, ed. Michele Maccarrone (Città del Vaticano, 1989); *Studien über die Anfänge der Mission in Livland*, ed. Manfred Hellmann (Sigmaringen, 1989); *Inflanty w średniowieczu: Władztwa zakonu krzyżackiego i biskupów*, ed. Marian Biskup (Toruń, 2002); Nils Blomkvist, *The Discovery of the Baltic: The Reception of a Catholic World-System in the European North (AD 1075–1225)* (Leiden, 2004); Barbara Bombi, *Novella plantatio fidei: Missione e crociata nel Nord Europa tra XII e XIII secolo* (Roma, 2007); *The North-Eastern Frontiers of Medieval Europe: The Expansion of Latin Christendom in the Baltic Lands*, ed. Alan V. Murray (Farnham, 2014). Surveys of research on the wider Baltic Crusades are given by Sven Ekdahl, ‘Crusades and Colonisation in the Baltic: A Historiographic Analysis’, in *XIX Rocznik Instytutu Polsko-Skandynawskiego 2003/2004*, ed. Eugeniusz S. Kruszewski (Kopenhaga, 2004), pp. 1–42, and Ekdahl, ‘Crusades and Colonisation in the Baltic’, in *Palgrave Advances in the Crusades*, ed. Helen J. Nicholson (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 172–203.

<sup>4</sup> For a bibliography of Henry’s chronicle (especially of editions, translations and older studies), see the volume *Crusading and Chronicle Writing: A Companion to the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, ed. Marek Tamm, Linda Kaljundi and Carsten Selch Jensen (Farnham, 2011), pp. 457–72. A considerable number of relevant publications have appeared since then, most of which are cited in the present essay.

the local inhabitants. The Baltic countries produced some important goods, such as grain, hemp, timber, amber, honey and beeswax, but the real importance of the region for Western trade was the access it offered to routes to the cities of north-western Rus', which supplied furs from Siberia (a commodity which commanded high prices in the West) as well as luxury goods which arrived from the Black Sea region along the Russian river system. It was merchant ships from Lübeck and Gotland that conveyed the earliest missionaries to Livonia and Estonia<sup>5</sup>.

The first known mission to the region was an initiative of Eskil, archbishop of Lund and head of the Danish church, who in 1167 consecrated a monk named Fulco as bishop of Estonia. By this time the Danish monarchy, which commanded extensive military and naval resources, was in the process of establishing control over the coasts and islands of the southern Baltic Sea, and undoubtedly hoped to extend its control to the more distant eastern shore. Fulco probably travelled to Estonia in 1171–1172, but evidently met with no success and returned to Denmark. He was still alive in 1180 and presumably died soon afterwards, but no immediate successor was appointed by the Danish church. The Danes retained an interest in the region, but were unable to gain a permanent foothold there until around 1219<sup>6</sup>.

Largely thanks to the chronicle of Henry of Livonia, we are much better informed about the more successful and enduring German mission which was initiated in the 1180s by Hartwig II, archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen. As its leader Hartwig chose Meinhard, an Augustinian canon from the monastery of Segeberg in Holstein, who took ship with German merchants and began preaching to the Livish population which inhabited the lower reaches of the River Düna. At Üxküll (mod. Ikšķile), some 30 km upstream from the river mouth, Meinhard established a missionary centre with a church and castle, and built another fortress on Kirchholm, a small island in the river. These were the first stone buildings in Livonia, constructed by

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<sup>5</sup> Mark R. Munzinger, 'The Profits of the Cross: Merchant Involvement in the Baltic Crusade (c. 1180–1230)', *Journal of Medieval History* 32 (2006), 163–85.

<sup>6</sup> John H. Lind, Carsten Selch Jensen, Kurt Villads Jensen and Ane L. Bysted, *Jerusalem in the North: Denmark and the Baltic Crusades, 1100–1522* (Turnhout, 2012); Jens E. Olsen, 'A Danish Medieval "Empire" in the Baltic (1168–1227)?', in *The Norwegian Domination and the Norse World c. 1100 – c. 1400*, ed. Steinmar Imsen (Trondheim, 2010), pp. 263–89; Oliver Auge, 'The Conquest of the Island of Rugia, 1168/1169: A Danish Crusade?', in *The Expansion of the Faith: Crusading on the Frontiers of Latin Christendom in the High Middle Ages*, ed. Paul Srodecki and Norbert Kersken (Turnhout, 2022), pp. 197–208; P. Peter Rebane, 'From Fulco to Theoderic: The Changing Face of the Livonian Mission', in *Muinasaja loojangust omariikluse läveni: Pühendusteos Sulev Vahre 75. sünnipäevaks*, ed. Andres Andresen (Tartu, 2001), pp. 37–68.

masons brought in from Gotland<sup>7</sup>. In 1186 Meinhard was consecrated as bishop of Üxküll, yet he and his small band of fellow missionaries made relatively few converts, and often those who initially accepted baptism subsequently apostatised. While the mission possessed its fortified centres, it was at this point still a largely peaceful enterprise, relying solely on preaching as a means to conversion; the missionaries and the small population of Livish neophytes suffered repeated attacks from pagan Letts, Semgallians and Lithuanians. Meinhard realised that the mission needed military support if it was to succeed, and sent his comrade the Cistercian Theoderic to lobby Pope Celestine III for assistance, but in 1196 the bishop died before this initiative produced any results<sup>8</sup>.

As successor to Meinhard, Archbishop Hartwig appointed the Cistercian Berthold, abbot of Loccum. Berthold had extensive connections among the church and nobility of Saxony, and both he and Theoderic continued to make appeals for papal support. Fairly quickly the pope granted an indulgence to those who were prepared to take the cross and fight in support of the mission in Livonia. This was an important development, since it meant that the privileges granted to crusaders going to Livonia – the remission of sins – were comparable to those granted to crusaders to the Holy Land, thus providing a significant spiritual incentive to take the cross. In 1198 Berthold raised an army in Saxony, an event which can be regarded as the true beginning of the crusades to Livonia. However, the appearance of heavily armed crusaders aroused resistance on the part of the mostly pagan Livs, and Berthold was killed in battle in July 1198. When the crusaders returned home the following year, the pagans seized the missionary centres and church property, and most of the remaining Germans fled from the country<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Tomasz Borowski, *Miasta, zamki i klasztory państwa krzyżowego Zakonu Szpitala Najświętszej Marii Panny Domu Niemieckiego w Jerozolimie nad Bałtykiem: Inflanty* (Warszawa, 2010), pp. 289–92.

<sup>8</sup> Carsten Selch Jensen, 'The Nature of the Early Missionary Activities and Crusades in Livonia, 1185–1201', in *Medieval Spirituality in Scandinavia and Europe*, ed. Lars Bisgaard, Carsten Selch Jensen, Kurt Villads Jensen and John Lind (Odense, 2001), pp. 121–38; Jensen, 'The Early Stage of Christianisation in Livonia in Modern Historical Writings and Contemporary Chronicles', in *Medieval History Writing and Crusading Ideology*, ed. Tuomas M.S. Lehtonen and Kurt Villads Jensen (Helsinki, 2005), pp. 207–15; Raoul Zühlke, 'Zerschlagung, Verlagerung und Neuschaffung zentraler Orte im Zuge der Eroberung Livlands', in *Leonid Arbusow (1882–1952) und die Erforschung des mittelalterlichen Livland*, ed. Ilgvars Misāns and Klaus Neitmann (Köln, 2014), pp. 165–85.

<sup>9</sup> Bernd Ulrich Hucker, 'Der Zisterzienserabt Bertold, Bischof von Livland, und der erste Livlandkreuzzug', in *Studien über die Anfänge der Mission in Livland*, pp. 39–64; Rebane, 'From Fulco to Theoderic', pp. 50–55.

Hartwig now appointed his own nephew Albert of Buxhövden, a canon of the church of Bremen, as third bishop of Livonia. Albert was effectively confronted with the task of starting the mission from scratch, despite having almost no assets or reliable allies in Livonia itself. Nevertheless, he proved to be much more ambitious and energetic than both of his predecessors. Deciding that the inland site of Üxküll was too vulnerable to attack, he moved the seat of the bishopric downriver to a new location at Riga, which could be reached by large merchant ships from Germany. Here he began the construction of a new, fortified town, which was populated with burghesses who had migrated from Germany. He established a Cistercian monastery at Dünamünde (as its name indicates, situated at the river estuary) and installed his fellow-missionary Theoderic as its first abbot. Albert was also conscious of the need to maintain papal support. The pontificate of Innocent III (1198–1216) was the most intensive period of crusading activity since Urban II had called for an armed pilgrimage to free the Holy Land from Turkish domination in 1095, with crusades being launched against the Muslims in Palestine and the Moors in Spain as well as pagans, schismatics and heretics on the continent of Europe. However, the overthrow of the kingdom of Jerusalem by Saladin in 1187 meant that the liberation of the Holy Land remained the main priority of the papacy<sup>10</sup>.

Albert never tired of reminding the curia of the importance of the Livonian mission, and regularly used papal privileges to recruit crusaders in northern Germany who could be employed to support the work of the mission<sup>11</sup>. However, the crusaders brought only temporary military assistance, since they normally returned home after a single campaigning season. Albert therefore tried to develop permanent military support for the mission. He induced German noblemen from Saxony to settle in Livonia as vassals of the church, granting them fiefs and fortifications. He founded a new organisation on the model of the Order of Templars: this was the Brothers of the Knighthood of Christ in Livonia (*Fratres Militiae Christi de Livonia*), popularly known as the Sword Brethren after the insignia they wore on their surcoats. This new organisation was a significant innovation,

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<sup>10</sup> Helmut Röscher, *Papst Innocenz III. und die Kreuzzüge* (Göttingen, 1969), pp. 170–259; Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades, 1147–1254* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 79–131; Alan V. Murray, ‘Adding to the Multitude of Fish: Pope Innocent III, Bishop Albert of Riga and the Conversion of the Indigenous Peoples of Livonia’, in *The Fourth Lateran Council and the Crusade Movement: The Impact of the Council of 1215 on Latin Christendom and the East*, ed. Jessalynn L. Bird and Damian J. Smith (Turnhout, 2018), pp. 153–70.

<sup>11</sup> Marek Tamm, ‘Mission and Mobility: The Travels and Networking of Bishop Albert of Riga (c. 1165–1229)’, in *Making Livonia: Actors and Networks in the Medieval and Early Modern Baltic Sea Region*, ed. Anu Mänd and Marek Tamm (London: Routledge, 2020), pp. 17–47.

since it was the first military order to be established specifically for service out with the Holy Land or the Iberian frontier with Islam. The core of the new order consisted of the elite knight brethren, who were recruited from ministerial families from Saxony. At this time it is unlikely that the knight brethren numbered more than sixty individuals. They were supported in battle by a much larger number of so-called sergeants who were of lower birth than the knights and had less elaborate equipment. The order also included a number of priests to provide spiritual care to its members. Along with the crusaders and the episcopal vassals, the Sword Brethren served as the principal motor for the conquest of Livonia and Estonia until they were absorbed by the Teutonic Order in 1236 after suffering a major defeat at the hands of the pagan Lithuanians. Thus in the years after 1202 we find the military command of Christian forces in Livonia being exercised by the masters of the Order, Winno (1203–1209) and Volkwin (1209–1236), and also by other officers such as Berthold, commander of Wenden, and Rudolf von Kassel, commander of Segewold (mod. Sigula). However, the Order was eventually able to make itself independent of the rule of the bishop, and Albert was obliged to grant it a third of the territory under Christian control as well as a further third of any future conquests<sup>12</sup>.

From this time the process of Christianisation proceeded by both peaceful and military means. Missionaries went forth from Riga (often working in pairs) into the countryside to preach to the population, with varying degrees of success. Henry's chronicle gives us the names of some thirty of these men. Most of them appear to have been Cistercian monks or members of the secular clergy, but some were priests of the Sword Brethren; the majority were Germans, but they also included Finns, Estonians and others of indigenous origin, who had probably received training in monasteries in northern Germany; their facility with the native languages of the region made them highly valuable in communicating with the neophyte population<sup>13</sup>. Gradually a network of parishes was established in the countryside

<sup>12</sup> Friedrich Benninghoven, *Der Orden der Schwertbrüder: Fratres Milicie Christi de Livonia* (Köln, 1965); Barbara Bombi, 'Innocent III and the Origins of the Order of the Sword Brothers', in *The Military Orders, 3: History and Heritage*, ed. Victor Mallia-Milanes (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 147–55; Evalds Mugurēvics, 'Die militärische Tätigkeit des Schwertbrüderordens (1201–1236)', in *Das Kriegswesen der Ritterorden im Mittelalter*, ed. Zenon Hubert Nowak (Toruń, 1991), pp. 125–32; Alan V. Murray, 'The Sword Brothers at War: Observations on the Military Activity of the Knighthood of Christ in the Conquest of Livonia and Estonia (1203–1227)', *Ordines Militares: Yearbook for the Study of the Military Orders* 18 (2013), 27–38.

<sup>13</sup> Christian Krötzel, 'Die Cistercienser und die Mission *ad paganos*, ca. 1150–1250', *Analecta Cisterciensia* 61 (2011), 278–98; Kaspar Elm, 'Christi cultores et novelle ecclesie

beyond Riga, and eventually Albert consecrated bishops for Semgallia (Bernard zur Lippe) and Estonia (the Cistercian Theoderic); he evidently aspired to make the church of Livonia into a metropolitan see which would be independent of the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen<sup>14</sup>.

The work of the missionaries and parish priests was dangerous, and many fell victim to attacks by hostile pagans or apostates. The greatest progress in Christianisation, however, was achieved by a process of military coercion. Armies made up of crusaders, the Sword Brethren, and episcopal vassals and retainers regularly raided the country districts inhabited by pagans, seizing livestock and taking captives to serve as hostages or slaves; if necessary, the Christian forces would besiege the hillforts of pagan chieftains, where the populace had often taken refuge. This was a war of attrition designed to wear down resistance to the point where the pagan leaders agreed to accept baptism along with the government of the church of Riga. It can thus be seen that the acceptance of the Christian faith was often a political decision, in which baptism was imposed on a tribal group by its leaders in a top-down fashion. Historians have rightly questioned how far such conversions (if they can be so called) represented true changes of faith; certainly Henry relates several cases in which revolts against Christian rule were linked with a resumption of heathen customs and practices<sup>15</sup>.

As each pagan tribe accepted the Christian faith, it was obliged to accept rule of the church of Riga or of the Sword Brethren. As part of their new obligations they had to provide military service to the Catholic authorities, a duty known in Latin by the Livish word *malewa*. This strategy vastly increased the military forces available to the Christian powers. According to Henry of Livonia, in the years before 1220 the allied Christian Livs and Letts provided troops roughly equal to the number of the combined

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*plantatores*. Der Anteil der Mönche, Kanoniker und Mendikanten an der Christianisierung der Liven und dem Aufbau der Kirche von Livland', in *Gli Inizi del cristianesimo in Livonia-Lettonia*, pp. 127–70; Alan V. Murray, 'Catholic Missionaries in the Evangelization of Livonia, 1185–1227', in *Quis est qui ligno pugnat? Missionari ed evangelizzazione nell'Europa tardoantica e medievale (secc. IV–XIII) / Missionaries and Evangelization in Late Antique and Medieval Europe (4th–13th Centuries)*, ed. Emanuele Piazza (Verona, 2016), pp. 353–66; Murray, 'Priests in the Order of the Sword Brethren (1202–1237)', in *Studies on the Military Orders, Prussia, and Urban History: Essays in Honour of Roman Czaja on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday / Beiträge zur Ritterordens-, Preußen- und Städteforschung. Festschrift für Roman Czaja zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Jürgen Sarnowsky, Krzysztof Kwiatkowski, Hubert Hohen, László Pósn, and Attila Bárány (Debrecen, 2020), pp. 57–64.

<sup>14</sup> On the church organisation, see Andrzej Radziemiński, 'Podział kościelne Inflant z Estonią', in *Inflanty w średniowieczu*, pp. 17–42.

<sup>15</sup> Tiina Kala, 'Rural Society and Religious Innovation: Acceptance and Rejection of Catholicism among the Native Inhabitants of Medieval Livonia', in *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, pp. 169–90.



German-Livonian and crusader forces, that is around 4,000 soldiers. The number of native troops increased significantly as the various Estonian tribes were incorporated into the Christian polity. Thus the first converted Livs were employed to subdue the pagan Livs; Livs and Wends were employed to subdue the Letts; then Livs, Wends and Letts together were employed to subdue the southern Estonians; and all of these groups were employed to subdue the Estonians of the northern and maritime provinces and the islands<sup>16</sup>.

Despite these successes, the German mission was confronted by new opponents. Around the middle of the twelfth century the Swedes had been able to establish control over the southern and south-western coasts of Finland. Around 1220 King John of Sweden built a fort on the Estonian coast at Leal (mod. Lihula) and sent out missionaries into the surrounding areas. However, the Swedish fort was destroyed by the Estonians of Ösel in 1220 and thereafter the Swedes concentrated on expanding their possessions in Finland and Karelia<sup>17</sup>. The Danes, who had been steadily extending their control of the southern Baltic shore since the middle of the twelfth century, proved more resilient. In 1219 King Valdemar II of Denmark landed with an army in northern Estonia and built a fort at Reval (mod. Tallinn) which became the main Danish base in the eastern Baltic region<sup>18</sup>. The Danes had attacked Ösel in 1206 and made another, unsuccessful invasion in 1222. It was Ösel that offered the longest and fiercest resistance to Christian rule, and its inhabitants aided a rebellion by the Estonians of the mainland against Danes and Germans in 1223. It was not until 1227

<sup>16</sup> Marian Biskup, 'Uformowanie się duchownych władztw terytorialnych w średniowiecznych Inflantach i ich granice państwowe', in *Inflanty w średniowieczu*, pp. 9–16; Murray, 'The Sword Brothers at War'; Kaspars Kļaviņš, 'The Significance of the Local Baltic Peoples in the Defence of Livonia (Late Thirteenth-Sixteenth Centuries)', in *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, pp. 321–40; Mart Lätte, 'Die militärischen Verpflichtungen der Landbevölkerung im mittelalterlichen Livland', in *Estnisches Mittelalter: Sprache – Gesellschaft – Kirche*, ed. Kadri-Rutt Hahn, Matthias Thumser and Eberhard Winkler (Berlin, 2015), pp. 117–43.

<sup>17</sup> Philip Line, 'Sweden's Conquest of Finland: A Clash of Cultures?', in *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, pp. 73–102; *När kom svenskarna till Finland?*, ed. Ann-Marie Ivars and Lena Huldén (Helsingfors, 2002).

<sup>18</sup> P. Peter Rebane, 'Denmark, the Papacy and the Christianization of Estonia', in *Gli Inizi del cristianesimo in Livonia-Lettonia*, pp. 171–201; Anti Selart, 'Die Kreuzzüge in Livland Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts und das dänische Königshaus', in *Narva und die Ostseeregion / Narva and the Baltic Sea Region*, ed. Karsten Brüggemann (Narva, 2004), pp. 125–37; Torben Kjersgaard Nielsen, 'The Missionary Man: Archbishop Anders Sunesen and the Baltic Crusade, 1206–21', in *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier*, pp. 95–117; Kersti Markus, *Visual Culture and Politics in the Baltic Sea Region, 1100–1250* (Leiden, 2020).

that the Germans were finally able to subdue the island, an event which Henry described as the conclusion to his chronicle<sup>19</sup>.

It is perhaps surprising that the initiative for the Christianisation of the eastern Baltic region proceeded from Germany and Scandinavia, rather than from the Rus' lands. To the east of Estonia and Livonia lay the principalities of Novgorod, Pskov, Izborsk and Polotsk. The Orthodox form of Christianity was well established there, and each of these principalities was more powerful than most of the originally pagan tribes. Novgorod had established a loose control over the lands inhabited by the Izhorians and Votians living on the south-east coast of the Gulf of Finland, while according to Henry, the princes of Polotsk had imposed tribute payments on the Livish and Lettgallian tribes. At least two of the rulers of territories lying along the Dūna, Vsevolod (*Wissewaldus*) of Gerzika and Vjačko (*Vetsecke*) of Koknese, seem to have belonged to a wider Russian cultural sphere, which included adherence to Orthodox Christianity<sup>20</sup>. Yet, while there was evidently some penetration of Orthodox priests into these areas, there seems to have been little systematic attempt to convert wider pagan populations. A possible explanation for this may be that most of the intellectual life of the Orthodox Church was concentrated in individual monasteries which were largely autonomous, and thus to some extent restricted in their activities and potential. By contrast, the Catholic church had produced well-organised orders of monks who saw their purpose in an active rather than a contemplative life, and who could be deployed in the work of mission outside their monasteries. The bishoprics of northern Germany and Denmark had long been active proponents of the conversion of the Slavic peoples between the River Elbe and the Baltic Sea<sup>21</sup>.

As both Germans and Danes moved into central and northern Estonia in the years 1217–1219 the rulers of Novgorod and Pskov began to offer a more active resistance against them, but while several expeditions caused much devastation to Livonian territory the Rus' rulers proved unable to dislodge the Western Christians from their new possessions. By 1222 the Mongols had begun their invasions of the Rus' lands, whose rulers now sought peace with the Germans and Danes in order to deal with this new and far more dangerous enemy. Thus by the time that Henry completed

<sup>19</sup> Marika Mägi, 'Ösel and the Danish Kingdom: Revisiting Henry's Chronicle and the Archaeological Evidence', in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing*, pp. 317–41.

<sup>20</sup> Nazarova, 'The Crusades against Votians and Izhorians in the Thirteenth Century'; Anti Selart, *Livonia, Rus' and the Baltic Crusades in the Thirteenth Century* (Leiden, 2015); Selart, 'Gab es eine altrussische Herrschaft in Estland (10.–12. Jahrhundert)?', *Forschungen zur baltischen Geschichte* 10 (2015), 11–30.

<sup>21</sup> Christian Krötzel, 'Die Cistercienser und die Mission *ad paganos*, ca. 1150–1250', *Analecta Cisterciensia* 61 (2011), 278–98.

his chronicle, the entire region between the Gulf of Finland and Curonia had been incorporated within the Catholic world. Livonia, southern Estonia and the islands were jointly ruled by the bishop of Riga and the Sword Brethren, while northern Estonia was held by the Danish crown. The Danish stronghold of Reval thus formed an alternative source of power to Riga, with its bishop recognising the authority of the archbishopric of Lund rather than the German church of Livonia<sup>22</sup>.

## Henry's Origins and Career

Henry's chronicle survived in only a handful of manuscripts, and remained practically unknown until it was published in 1740 by the German historian Johann Daniel Gruber (c. 1686–1748). Since then, however, it has occupied a central place in research on the earliest period of Christianisation of the Baltic region<sup>23</sup>. Its Latin text has now been translated into German, Estonian, Latvian, Russian, English, Lithuanian, Finnish and Italian<sup>24</sup>.

There are two independent testimonies to Henry's later life in the form of documents dating from 1234 and 1259, which reveal that one *Henricus plebanus de Papendorpe* had at some point previously occupied a parish in western Estonia<sup>25</sup>. Everything else that is known about Henry himself derives from the evidence of the chronicle itself. Even though the text contains much valuable information about his activity, in the two centuries after the first publication of the chronicle interest in the person of Henry himself was greatly concerned with the issue of his nationality. Scholarly

<sup>22</sup> Carsten Selch Jensen, *Holy War in the Baltic and the Battle of Lyndanise 1219* (Leeds, 2024); Niels Skyum-Nielsen, 'Estonia under Danish Rule', in *Danish Medieval History: New Currents*, ed. Niels Skyum-Nielsen and Niels Lund (Copenhagen, 1981), pp. 112–35.

<sup>23</sup> The standard edition of the chronicle is *Heinrichs Livländische Chronik (Heinrici Chronicon Livoniae)*, 2nd edn, ed. Leonid Arbusow and Albert Bauer, MGH *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarium separatim editi*, 31 (Hannover, 1955) [cited henceforth as HCL, with citations given to both pages and chapters in order to facilitate comparison with the various published translations]. English translations of passages from the Latin text given below are taken from *The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia. Henricus Lettus*, trans. James A. Brundage, new edn (New York, 2003).

<sup>24</sup> Stefan Donecker, 'The *Chronicon Livoniae* in Early Modern Scholarship: From Humanist Receptions to the Gruber Edition of 1740', in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing*, pp. 363–84; Tiina Kala, 'Henry's Chronicle in the Service of Historical Thought: Editors and Editions', in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing*, pp. 385–407.

<sup>25</sup> Hermann Hildebrand, *Livonica, vornämlich aus dem 13. Jahrhundert im Vaticanischen Archiv* (Riga, 1887), p. 49; Max Perlbach, 'Urkunden des rigaschen Capitel-Archives in der Fürstlich Czartoryskischen Bibliothek zu Krakau', *Mittheilungen aus dem Gebiete der Geschichte Liv-, Est- und Kurlands* 13 (1886), 1–23.

opinion during this period was divided as to whether Henry was of German or Lettish origin. For Baltic Germans, who were the dominant social group in the western provinces of the Russian empire up to 1917, Henry could only have been a German immigrant, but nationalist Latvian historians argued that he was a Lett<sup>26</sup>. It was only in the years between the two world wars that Robert Holtzmann and Leonid Arbusow, Jr. demonstrated with near certainty that Henry originated from Saxony, and most probably from the area around Magdeburg<sup>27</sup>.

The most comprehensive attempt at a reconstruction of Henry's biography was made by the Estonian historian Paul Johansen (1901–1965). Even though some of Johansen's assumptions probably go too far, we can be reasonably certain of the main stations in Henry's life and career<sup>28</sup>. The future chronicler was probably born in the late 1180s in the vicinity of the city of Magdeburg; his native language was Low German. He received a clerical education, learning to read and write Latin and studying the Bible and the liturgy of the Christian church; the most likely place for this was the monastery of Segeberg in Holstein, although this is by no means certain. It is often assumed that he received specific training as a missionary, which would have included learning something of the native languages of the eastern Baltic region. Around the year 1205 Henry travelled to Riga, where he entered the service of Bishop Albert; at various points the chronicle describes him as a scholar (*scolaris*), interpreter (*interpres*) and priest (*sacerdos, minister*) between his arrival and 1212. These descriptions suggest that his training was still continuing well after his arrival in Livonia<sup>29</sup>. By his own testimony he was only ordained as a priest in 1208, when he was assigned a parish in Lettish territory where he built a church and vicarage; this place was later known in Low German as Papendorp (mod. Rubene).

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<sup>26</sup> For these debates, see Linda Kaljundi and Kaspars Kļaviņš, 'The Chronicler and the Modern World: Henry of Livonia and the Baltic Crusades in the Enlightenment and National Traditions', in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing*, pp. 409–56, and Sergejs Coja, 'Die Frage der Herkunft des Chronisten Heinrich von Lettland in der russischen Historiographie', *Forschungen zur baltischen Geschichte* 9 (2014), 11–24.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Holtzmann, 'Studien zu Heinrich von Lettland', *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 43 (1920), 161–232; Leonid Arbusow, 'Die mittelalterliche Schriftüberlieferung als Quelle für die Frühgeschichte der ostbaltischen Völker', in *Baltische Lande*, 1, pp. 167–203; Arbusow, 'Das entlehnte Sprachgut in Heinrichs *Chronicon Livoniae*: Ein Beitrag zur Sprache mittelalterlicher Chronistik', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 8 (1951), 100–53 (here 145–51).

<sup>28</sup> Paul Johansen, 'Die Chronik als Biographie: Heinrich von Lettlands Lebensgang und Weltanschauung', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* n.s. 1 (1953), 1–24.

<sup>29</sup> HCL XI.7, p. 62, XVI.3, p.107, XVII.6, p.114, XXIV.1, p.169.

Henry's chronicle reveals that he was far more than a simple parish priest; many of the episodes described in it show that he was active as a missionary, interpreter and diplomat on numerous preaching tours and military expeditions. While the church of Riga tended to make use of missionaries of native origin in order to preach the Christian faith to the indigenous peoples, Henry evidently acted as an interpreter on numerous occasions in connection with high-level political negotiations. His knowledge of native languages can be deduced not only from his description of himself as an interpreter, but also from some two dozen words and phrases of Livish, Lettish and Estonian origin which he quotes at various points in the chronicle. It is possible that he may already have been familiar with the West Slavic (Polabian) dialect that was spoken along the River Elbe until the eighteenth century; if so, this ability may have greatly assisted his acquisition of further linguistic knowledge in Livonia<sup>30</sup>.

## The *Chronicon Livoniae* and Its Significance

Most historians have accepted that Henry's chronicle was written in two stages between 1225 and 1227 at the instigation of William, bishop of Modena, whom he had served as interpreter during the latter's visit to Livonia as papal legate in 1225–1228. It was intended to demonstrate to the papacy the success of the Livonian mission and to provide justification for the claims of the church of Riga against those of the Danish church<sup>31</sup>. However, it is entirely possible that Henry had been compiling written information from the time that he first arrived in Riga, and that he used such notes as the basis for the final version of the chronicle. Certainly many of the themes which emerge from the chronicle correspond closely to the political and ecclesiastical agenda which Bishop Albert put forward in his correspondence with the Roman Curia.

The chronicle is divided into thirty chapters, organised chronologically. Chapters I and II deal with the activities of the first two bishops, Meinhard and Berthold of Loccum. From Chapter III, dealing with 1199, each chapter is devoted to a single year of the episcopate of Albert von Buxhövdén up to 1227. The chronicle was probably intended to finish with Chapter

<sup>30</sup> Arbusow, 'Das entlehnte Sprachgut in Heinrichs *Chronicon Livoniae*', pp. 145–51; Alan V. Murray, 'Henry the Interpreter: Language, Orality and Communication in the Thirteenth-Century Livonian Mission', in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing*, pp. 107–34.

<sup>31</sup> Johansen, 'Die Chronik als Biographie', pp. 9–18; James A. Brundage, 'The Thirteenth-Century Livonian Crusade: Henricus de Lettis and the First Legatine Mission of William of Modena', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* n.s. 20 (1972), 1–9.

XXIX, which describes in detail the political settlement which William of Modena brokered between the church of Riga and the Danes in 1225: its final section reads very much like a conclusion to the entire work. However, the political situation was changing rapidly, and Henry evidently felt impelled to add another chapter (ch. XXX) to describe the conquest and subjugation of the islands of Ösel and Moon in 1226–1227, which he clearly regarded as having completed the conversion of Estonia<sup>32</sup>.

The overarching theme of the chronicle is the establishment of a church of Livonia bringing together immigrant German clerics and secular settlers as indigenous neophytes, and how it overcame a wide range of opponents: pagans and apostates, pirates, rival Catholic missions and the Orthodox powers of Rus'. In doing so it gives highly valuable information on work of the missionaries and conversion of the pagans; the activities of the bishops and their relations with the Sword Brethren, the Danes, the Russian princes, and above all, with the popes in Rome; the arrival and departure of crusaders, their many military campaigns and the invasions of Christian-held territory by pagan Letts, Estonians and Lithuanians and Orthodox Russians; and the many political negotiations between the German Christians and the other Christian and pagan powers<sup>33</sup>. A particular

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<sup>32</sup> Anti Selart, 'Iam tunc ... The Political Context of the First Part of the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia', in *The Medieval Chronicle*, V, ed. Erik Kooper (Amsterdam, 2008), pp. 197–209.

<sup>33</sup> Simon Gerber, 'Heinrich von Lettland – ein Theologe des Friedens: "Nichts Bessers weiß ich mir an Sonn- und Feiertagen, als ein Gespräch von Krieg und Kriegsgeschrei"', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 115 (2004), 1–18; Maja Gašowska, 'Kronika Heinricha von Lettland o podboju i chrystianizacji Inflant', in *Causa creandi: O pragmatyce źródła historycznego*, ed. Stanisław Rosik and Przemysław Wiszewski (Wrocław, 2005), pp. 121–33; Christopher Tyerman, 'Henry of Livonia and the Ideology of Crusading', in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing*, pp. 23–44; Marek Tamm, 'Martyrs and Miracles: Depicting Death in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia', in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing*, pp. 135–56; Carsten Selch Jensen, 'How to Convert a Landscape: Henry of Livonia and the *Chronicon Livoniae*', in *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, pp. 151–68; Jensen, 'Verbis non verbis: The Representation of Sermons in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia', in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing*, pp. 179–206; Jensen, 'History Made Sacred: Martyrdom and the Making of a Sanctified Beginning in Early Thirteenth-Century Livonia', in *Saints and Sainthood around the Baltic Sea*, ed. Carsten Selch Jensen, Tracy R. Sands, Nils Holger Petersen, Kurt Villads Jensen and Tuomas Lehtonen (Kalamazoo, Mich., 2018), pp. 145–72; Shami Ghosh, 'Conquest, Conversion, and Heathen Customs in Henry of Livonia's *Chronicon Livoniae* and the *Livländische Reimchronik*', *Crusades* 11 (2012), 87–108; Jüri Kivimäe, 'Servi beatae Marie virginis: Christians and Pagans in Henry's *Chronicle of Livonia*', in *Church and Belief in the Middle Ages: Popes, Saints, and Crusaders*, ed. Kirsi Salonen and Sari Katalaja-Pelto-maa (Amsterdam, 2016), pp. 201–26; Iben Fønnesberg-Schmidt, 'Riga and Rome: Henry of Livonia and the Papal Curia', in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing*, pp. 209–27; Linda Kaljundi, 'Henry of Livonia on the Making of a Christian Colony, Early Thirteenth Century', in *Imagined Communities on the Baltic Rim, from the Eleventh to Fifteenth Centuries*,

and unique facet is his testimony on the use of a play (*magnus ludus*) employed in Riga in 1205 as a means to instruct both neophytes and pagans in the tenets of the Christian faith<sup>34</sup>.

For the period from around 1205 onwards, Henry's account frequently gives the impression of personal experience, and on several occasions he mentions himself by name as an actor in the events he described. His accounts of political negotiations and military campaigns probably derive from his personal presence in them, which was bound up with his status as interpreter. This circumstance probably explains why Henry, most unusually for a cleric, had a great interest in warfare, as well as a familiarity with its conduct and the technical language used to describe it. While he tends to see the hand of God at work in victories and defeats, he nevertheless has a very clear grasp of weaponry, armour and tactics, as well as the conduct of sieges and of naval warfare. It is largely thanks to Henry's testimony that we have a clear appreciation of the technological advantages which gave the Germans the edge over their pagan and Rus' opponents, notably the use of crossbows, warhorses, mail armour and machinery such as siege towers and counterweight trebuchets<sup>35</sup>.

Like other medieval chroniclers, Henry gave accounts of speeches which are not to be understood as literal renderings of the speakers' words (which

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ed. Wojtek Jezierski and Lars Hermanson (Amsterdam, 2016), pp. 191–21; Kaljundi, 'Livonia as a Mariological Periphery: A Comparative Look at Henry of Livonia's Representations of the Mother of God', in *Livland – eine Region am Ende der Welt? Forschungen zum Verhältnis zwischen Zentrum und Peripherie im späten Mittelalter*, ed. Anti Selart and Matthias Thumser (Köln, 2017), pp. 431–60; Kaljundi, 'Neophytes as Actors in the Livonian Crusades', in *Making Livonia*, pp. 93–112. Henry normally describes the crusaders (most of whom came from northern Germany) as *peregrini* (pilgrims), although Livonia did not contain any pilgrimage sites. Henry's usage is an indication of how the concept of crusading had been extended from its original meaning of liberating or defending the Holy Land to take in the idea of a war of conversion against pagan peoples.

<sup>34</sup> Reinhard Schneider, 'Straßentheater im Missionseinsatz: Zu Heinrichs von Lettland Bericht über ein großes Spiel in Riga 1205', in *Studien über die Anfänge der Mission in Livland*, pp. 107–21; Regula Meyer Evitt, 'Undoing the Dramatic History of the Riga *Ludus Prophetarum*', *Comparative Drama* 25 (1991), 242–56; Nils Holger Petersen, 'The Notion of a Missionary Theatre: The *ludus magnus* of Henry of Livonia's Chronicle', in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing*, pp. 229–43.

<sup>35</sup> Stephen Turnbull, 'Crossbows or Catapults? The Identification of Siege Weaponry and Techniques in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia', in *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, pp. 307–20; Kurt Villads Jensen, 'Bigger and Better: Arms Race and Change in War Technology in the Baltic in the Early Thirteenth Century', in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing*, pp. 245–64; Ain Mäesalu, 'Mechanical Artillery and Warfare in the Chronicle of Henry', in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing*, pp. 265–90; Silvio Melani, 'Guerra navale e anfibia sul Baltico nella cronaca duecentesca di Enrico di Lettonia', *Itineraria* 2 (2003), 107–35; John Gillingham, 'A Strategy of Total War? Henry of Livonia and the Conquest of Estonia, 1208–1227', *Journal of Medieval Military History* 8 (2017), 186–213.

of course were originally given in vernacular languages); rather, they were constructions intended to give the general sense of what was said, often with the purpose of conveying an underlying deeper truth. Thus Henry purports to quote a speech made by Dabrel, a leader of the Livish pagans fighting against the Germans of Riga and their local convert allies. Dabrel encouraged his men to defend his fort, in words that are directly derived from the First Book of Samuel:

Dobrel, their elder, comforted and encouraged them, saying, as the Philistines once did: ‘Take courage and fight, ye Philistines, lest you come to be servants to the Hebrews’<sup>36</sup>.

It is of course impossible that a Baltic heathen could have quoted the Bible in this way, not least because he could not have spoken Latin, and even less likely that it could have had any meaning for his followers. This speech is part of an extended metaphor in which Henry uses references to the books of Kings, Samuel and the Maccabees to depict the German crusaders and their allies as new Israelites, while their pagan opponents are identified with the Philistines of the Old Testament. Since knowledge of the Bible and the liturgy were the main components of clerical education, it is scarcely surprising that the chronicle contains hundreds of biblical quotations and allusions. Many of these are commonplace uses of the type of language that all educated writers of the time employed<sup>37</sup>.

However, it is clear that biblical history occupies a more fundamental place in Henry’s work<sup>38</sup>. His understanding of God’s purpose for human history is the central principle of the chronicle, especially in numerous allusions to the newly Christianised Livonia as ‘God’s vineyard’ (*vinea Dei*), in which the Catholic bishops and missionaries were workers. For him, it is the German bishops, priests and missionaries who are the ‘true workers in the vineyard’<sup>39</sup>. In the course of the chronicle Henry shows an

<sup>36</sup> HCL X.10, p. 40: *Confortabat enim eos Dabrelus ... et animabat, quemadmodum Philistei quondam dicentes: ‘Confortamini, Philistiim, et pugnate, ne serviatis Hebreis’.*

<sup>37</sup> Jaan Undusk, ‘Sacred History, Profane History: Uses of the Bible in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia’, in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing*, pp. 45–76; Alan V. Murray, ‘The Use of the Vulgate Bible by Chroniclers of the High Middle Ages: Conscious Quotation or Formulaic Language?’, in *Fraseologia e Paremiologia: Passato, presente, future*, ed. Cosimo De Giovanni (Milano, 2017), pp. 635–46.

<sup>38</sup> The most thorough study of the theological issues in Henry’s chronicle is Carsten Selch Jensen, *Med ord og ikke med slag: Teologi og historieskrivning i Henrik af Letlands Krønike* (København, 2019), English translation as *Through Words, Not Wounds: History and Theology in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia* (Turnhout, 2024).

<sup>39</sup> Linda Kaljundi, ‘Noor kirik Issanda uuel viinamäel. Kasvu ja viljakuse motiivid Henriku Liivimaa kroonikas’, *Keel ja Kirjandus* 47 (2004) 161–83; Torben Kjersgaard



increasing hostility to the Russians and the Orthodox church, which he calls a 'false mother, always sterile and barren' which 'attempted to subject lands to herself, not with the hope of regeneration in the faith of Jesus Christ, but with the hope of loot and tribute'<sup>40</sup>. Similarly, despite showing respect for Anders Sunesen, the archbishop of Lund, Henry is sceptical of the Danes' intervention in northern Estonia, criticising their supposedly half-hearted efforts to convert the native population<sup>41</sup>. These views should not surprise us; all medieval writers had biases of some sort, and Henry's standpoints can be easily understood as reflections of his loyalty to the church of Riga.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the chronicle is its wealth of information on the Baltic lands and their inhabitants. Henry has a real interest in the indigenous population, giving important information on the areas occupied by each group, and their customs and religious beliefs, although, like most Christians of the time, he regards pagan deities as illusions or manifestations of the Devil. He is the first source to give the names of many individual pagans and converts, such as Caupo, one of the first Livish chieftains to convert to Christianity, and the martyrs Kyrian and Layan. The precise degree of Henry's fluency in indigenous languages has long been a matter of debate, but he clearly had a reasonable understanding of some of them, since he often explains the meaning of words, phrases and place-names in Livish, Lettish and Estonian<sup>42</sup>. This almost ethnographical perspective also means that he had a keen awareness of some of the wider cultural differences between the native pagans and the more developed Western

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Nielsen, 'Sterile Monsters? Russians and the Orthodox Church in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia', in *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, pp. 227–52; Carsten Selch Jensen, 'The Lord's Vineyard – Henry of Livonia and the Danish Conquest of Estonia', in *Denmark and Estonia 1219-2019: Selected Studies on Common Relations*, ed. Jens E. Olsen (Greifswald, 2019), pp. 41–56.

<sup>40</sup> HCL XXVIII.4, p. 202: ... *mater Ruthenica sterilis semper et infecunda, que non spe regenerationis in fide Iesu Christi, sed spe tributorum et spoliorum terras sibi subiugare conatur.*

<sup>41</sup> HCL XXIV, pp. 169–77.

<sup>42</sup> Thierry Canava, 'Les peuples fenniques dans la Chronique d'Henri le Letton', *Études finno-ougriennes* 26 (1994), 99–119; Christoph Schmidt, 'Das Bild der "Rutheni" bei Heinrich von Lettland', *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 44 (1995), 509–20; Linda Kaljundi, 'Waiting for the Barbarians: Reconstruction of Otherness in the Saxon Missionary and Crusading Chronicles, 11th-13th Centuries', in *The Medieval Chronicle*, V, pp. 113–27; Andris Šnē, 'The Image of the Other or the Own: Representation of Local Societies in *Heinrici Chronicon*', in *The Medieval Chronicle*, VI, ed. Erik S. Kooper (Amsterdam, 2009), pp. 247–60; Torben Kjersgaard Nielsen, 'Henry of Livonia on Woods and Wildererness', in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing*, pp. 157–78; Jüri Kivimäe, 'Henricus the Ethnographer: Reflections on Ethnicity in the Chronicle of Livonia', in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing*, pp. 77–106; Murray, 'Henry the Interpreter'; Murray, 'Eesti keel Henriku kroonikas: Suulilus ja suhtlus XIII sajandi Liivimaa misjonis', *Keel ja Kirjandus* 8–9 (2009), 559–72.

immigrants, such as when he describes how pagans besieging a Christian-held fort were stopped in their tracks when a priest (who may have been Henry himself) mounted the ramparts to sing and play on a musical instrument, the like of which had never been heard by them before<sup>43</sup>.

Henry's chronicle is thus not only important not only because he was a witness to so many of the events he describes, but also because of the sheer variety and richness of the evidence he conveys. It is thus a unique treasury of information on the history of the countries and peoples around the Baltic Sea at the point that they were incorporated into Western Christendom. It is not only the narration of events which is important, but the sheer wealth of detail, for example, in the many names given of individual crusaders and missionaries, which could only have derived from personal knowledge. In this respect, it is fitting to end this survey with a programmatic statement made by Henry in what was probably intended as the original conclusion to the chronicle:

Many and glorious things happened in Livonia at the time when the heathen were converted to the faith of Jesus Christ, which cannot all be written down or recalled to the memory, lest it be wearisome to the readers. But these few little things have been written in praise of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who wishes His faith and His name to be carried to all nations [...] Nothing has been put in this account except what we have seen almost entirely with our own eyes. What we have not seen with our own eyes, we have learned from those who saw it and who were there<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> HCL XII.6, pp. 63–64. For this episode, see Alan V. Murray, 'Music and Cultural Conflict in the Christianization of Livonia, 1190–1290', in *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, pp. 293–306.

<sup>44</sup> HCL, XXIX.9, p. 215: *Multa quidem et gloriosa contigerunt in Lyvonia tempore conversionis ad fidem Iesu Christi, que cuncta conscribi vel ad memoriam reduci non possunt, ne legentibus existeret eciam tediosum. Sed hec paucula conscripta sunt ad laudem eiusdem domini nostri Iesu Christi, qui fidem et nomen suum portari vult ad omnes gentes [...] Nichil autem hic aliud superadditum est, nisi ea, que vidimus oculis nostris fere cuncta, et que non vidimus propriis oculis, ab illis intelleximus, qui viderunt et infuerunt*; Johansen, 'Die Chronik als Biographie', p. 3.