

## FROM RUS' TRADE TO CRUSADE: ST OLAF'S CHURCHES IN THE EASTERN BALTIC SEA REGION

Kersti MARKUS

Institute of History, Archaeology and Art History, School of Humanities, Tallinn University, 25 Narva Road, 10120 Tallinn, Estonia; markus@tlu.ee

This article discusses the use of the cult of the Holy King in the context of the Baltic Crusades at the end of the 12th century and in the early 13th century. The analysis is based on the account of the miracle of St Olaf performed in Estonia, the story of the King's visit to the island of Gotland reflected by Gutasagan and the spatial relation of St Olaf's churches to the landscape. It also discusses three Danish sources which have previously not received attention from historians dealing with the Baltic Crusades, but which actually can change our understanding of the history of the Baltic Sea region and the foundation of the town Reval as well. Particular focus will be placed on the commercial interest of the Danes in communication with the Rus' and its reflections in the building of St Olaf's churches.

The choice of a patron saint for a church founded at the time of the Baltic Crusades can be an excellent source revealing the owner's identity, but may also provide a perfect pretext for over-interpretation. The churches dedicated to St Olaf are considered to be the churches of the Scandinavian merchants and the location by the harbour or near the important trade route seems to confirm this understanding.<sup>1</sup> However, the political situation and the hierarchy of the high-medieval society do not support this theory. The merchants need a ruler's protection; they may finance the construction work, but they cannot found a church in a foreign land. One of the best examples is St Mary's Church in Visby, which according to the extant sources was built by Germans<sup>2</sup> and with finances collected from German ships<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, it is very easy to draw the conclusion that St Mary's Church was the church of merchants.<sup>4</sup> But if we take the visual sources into consideration

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<sup>1</sup> **Friedland, K.** Sankt Olav als Schutzpatron nordeuropäischer Kaufleute. – In: St. Olav, seine Zeit und sein Kult. Ed. G. Svahnström. (Acta Visbyensia, VI.) Museum Gotlands Fornsal, Visby, 1981, 17–26.

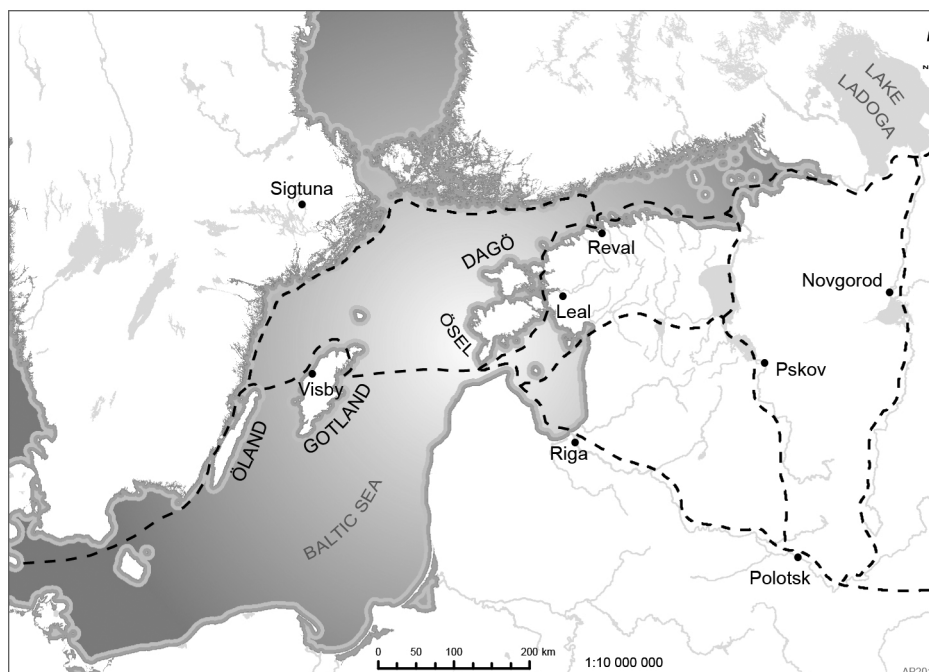
<sup>2</sup> Riksarkivet. SDHK (Medeltidsbrev) No. 434. 26 July 1225. <https://sok.riksarkivet.se/sdhk>

<sup>3</sup> **Yrwing, H.** De s.k. köpmannskyrkorna. – Fornvännen, 1980, 75.

<sup>4</sup> **Svahnström, G.** Visby domkyrka. Kyrkobyggnaden. Sveriges kyrkor. Vol. 175. Almqvist & Wiksell, Stockholm, 1978, 9; see also the critic of Hugo Yrwing: **Yrwing, H.** De s.k. köpmannskyrkorna, 49–53.

some new aspects come to light. The construction of the stone church began in 1170s and the master builder came from Saxony. This opinion is confirmed by the block capitals of the northern portal, the closest parallels to which are to be found in Lower Saxony. The layout of the chancel, reconstructed on the basis of archaeological excavations, resembles the eastern part of the cathedrals in Brunswick, Lübeck and Ratzeburg, all of them financed by the Duke Henry the Lion of Saxony (1142–1180).<sup>5</sup>As Henry had ambitions for domination of the Gotland trade since 1161, when the Artlenburg Privilege was signed, offering generous rights to the Germans on Gotland and allowing the nomination of his representative as *nuncius Theutonicorum* to the island<sup>6</sup>, we may assume that he was involved in the building of the Visby church. Henceforth it became the parochial church of the Germans inhabiting and visiting the island.<sup>7</sup>

Trading routes may thus have played an important role in the building of the churches, but the initiative for foundation of a Christian shrine in a foreign harbour still required an agreement with the local authorities conducted as a result of peaceful negotiations or conquest (Fig. 1). Therefore, the widely used



**Fig. 1.** The main shipping routes between Scandinavia and Rus'. Drawing by Anu Printsman.

<sup>5</sup> Svahnström, G. Visby domkyrka, 122, 134; Die Chronik Arnolds von Lübeck: Nach der Ausgabe der Monumenta Germaniae. Trans. J. C. M. Laurent. Besser, Berlin, 1853, ch. 12–13.

<sup>6</sup> Kattinger, D. Die Gotländische Genossenschaft: Der frühhansisch-gotländische Handel in Nord- und Westeuropa. Böhlau, Köln, 1999, 96–97.

<sup>7</sup> SDHK No. 434; Yrwing, H. Visby – Hansestad på Gotland. Gidlunds, Stockholm, 1986, 104.

term *Ecclesiae Mercatorum*<sup>8</sup> can be misleading, reflecting rather the ownership relations of the later periods than the situation of the foundation period.<sup>9</sup> The purpose of this article is to analyse the advent of the cult of St Olaf in Estonia and the neighbouring areas at the time of the Baltic Crusades and to discuss the factors, which could have affected the choice of the Norwegian Saint as the patron of the churches located in the most strategic places.

### THE FIRST SIGN OF ST OLAF'S CULT IN ESTONIA

The oldest known instance of the cult of the Holy King in Estonia is a miracle mentioned in the Oxford version of the *Passio et miracula beati Olavi*. This is a collection of legends about the Norwegian King Olaf II Haraldsson (995–1030), which was extended and updated by the archbishop of Nidaros Eysteinn Erlendsson (1161–1188) and his team around 1180. The so-called Estonian miracle was supposed to have happened during the archbishop's lifetime.<sup>10</sup> The story describes how two young Estonian men, quite recently converted from paganism to Christianity, were visiting the St Olaf's church in Nidaros. They told about amazing wonders, performed by Olaf in the still pagan land, and the most memorable of them concerned the father of one of the boys. When the Christian army invaded the land the pagan temples were defiled and destroyed. The ruler himself stood for the conversion, exploiting people's fear of the Christians. The boy was converted, his father desisted; even a serious illness could not change his mind. But his son insisted on taking him to pray to St Olaf, whose memory was renowned due to the abundance of miracles in the neighbouring provinces. The father yielded and made a promise: if he receives the grace of God, he will let himself be baptized and visit the church of the Saint. The disease disappeared and the newly baptized man proceeded with the promised sacrifices to the Martyr's Shrine. There he saw the adoration of God in shining glory, and that strengthened his resolve to stay with the new religion. On his way home he also promised to ransom the Christian prisoners and to protect those fleeing from slavery.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> **Johansen, P.** Die Kaufmannskirche. – In: Die Zeit der Stadtgründung im Ostseeraum. Ed. M. Stenberger. (Acta Visbyensia, I.) Gotlands Fornsal, Visby, 1965, 85–134.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example **Mänd, A.** Saints's Cults in Medieval Livonia. – In: The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier. Ed. A. V. Murray. Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot, 2009, 205–209.

<sup>10</sup> **Mortensen, L. B.** Writing and Speaking of St Olaf: National and Social Integration. – In: Saints and their Lives on the Periphery. Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c. 1000–1200). Ed. H. Antosson, I. H. Garipzanov. Brepols, Turnhout, 2010, 211; **Jiroušková, L.** Textual Evidence for the Transmission of the Passio Olavi Prior to 1200 and its Later Literary Transformations. – In: Saints and their Lives on the Periphery. Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c. 1000–1200). Ed. H. Antosson, I. H. Garipzanov. Brepols, Turnhout, 2010, 235–237.

<sup>11</sup> *Passio et Miracula Beati Olavi*. Edited from a twelfth-century manuscript in the library of Corpus Christi college, Oxford. Ed. F. Metcalfe. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1881, 109–111.

This story presents information you cannot find in any other sources; for example the fact that a foreign king had invaded Estonian territory sometime between 1160 and 1180. We do not know of any actions against Estonia from this period, which may indicate that we are dealing with a piece of hagiographic propaganda. But as such it may still give some impressions about the veneration of the saint in the region. Above all it concerns the phrase “in the neighbouring provinces” (in Latin *in vicinis provintiis*), which could supposedly refer to both Novgorod and Scandinavia. St Olaf’s church in Holmgard – i.e. in Novgorod – is mentioned in a runic inscription from central Sweden (U 687) dated to the latter half of the eleventh century.<sup>12</sup> The written sources present the church first as being a church of the Varangians (i.e. Scandinavians), and from the late twelfth century as the church of the Gotlanders.<sup>13</sup>

Now, if the Gotlanders had a St Olaf’s Church in Novgorod, the cult of the Holy King must have spread to the island, which is also the province closest to Estonia and actually the first place that comes to mind in connection with the words *in vicinis provintiis*.

## ST OLAF’S CHURCHES ON THE ISLAND OF GOTLAND

According to the history of the Gotlanders, called Gutasagan, the island was already Christianized when King Olaf the Holy arrived there with his ships on his way from Norway to Novgorod. They landed in the harbour of Akergarn and stayed there a long time. Ormica of Hejnum and many other important men came to him with gifts, including twelve rams. In return, King Olaf gave Ormica two round drinking vessels and a battle-axe. Then Ormica received Christianity according to the teaching of Saint Olaf, and built an oratory at the same location where the Akergarn church now stands.<sup>14</sup>

Carl Fredrik Hallencreutz has pointed out two different levels in this story.<sup>15</sup> The first one concerns the time when Gutasagan was written – i.e. in the 1220s<sup>16</sup> –

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<sup>12</sup> **Zilmer, K.** ‘He drowned in Holmer’s sea – his cargo ship drifted to the sea-bottom, only three came out alive’: Records and Representations of Baltic Traffic in the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages in Early Nordic Sources. (Nordistica Tartuensia, 12.) Tartu University Press, 2005, 161–162.

<sup>13</sup> **Jackson, T. N.** The Cult of St Olaf and Early Novgorod. – In: Saints and their Lives on the Periphery. Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c. 1000–1200). Ed. H. Antosson, I. H. Garipzanov. Brepols, Turnhout, 2010, 157–159.

<sup>14</sup> Guta Saga. The History of the Gotlanders. Ed. C. Peel. Viking Society for Northern Research Text Series. Vol. XII. Univeristy College London, 1999, 9.

<sup>15</sup> **Hallencreutz, C. F.** Der Heiligen König und die Christianisierung Gotlands. – In: St. Olav, seine Zeit und sein Kult. Ed. G. Svahnström. (Acta Visbyensia, VI.) Museum Gotlands Fornsal, Visby, 1981, 90–94.

<sup>16</sup> The recent research see **Stobaеus, P.** Gotlands kristnande enligt Gutasagan. – Kyrka och tro på medeltidens Gotland. Till minne av Gunnar Svahnström (1915–2012). – Gotländskt Arkiv, 2013, 85, 25–26.

and shows a clear theological intention. Ormica gives the King twelve rams, which actually represents the tradition of the Old Testament, not the Old Nordic practice, where the horse was the main sacrificial animal; and receives from the king two bowls and a battle-axe, which are Olaf's attributes symbolizing the death of the Martyr and his likeness to Christ. The double bowl may refer to brotherhood in arms, well corresponding to the mentality of the early 13th century chivalry. As Gutasagan was an appendix to the Law of the Gotlanders, which regulated a society of farmers still rooted in the pagan tradition, the author of the saga wanted to highlight the Christian rituals using the example of St Olaf, whose cult gained increasing popularity at the same rate with Baltic crusades and who had actually visited Gotland at least twice in his lifetime. Thus, the historical reality is entangled with the theological purposes. There are indeed two levels in this story.

By the time of the creation of Gutasagan the church of Akergarn had become an important pilgrimage site, but the question is whether it had existed earlier. Could the father of the boy have visited that church? Historians have been very sceptical about the existence of an earlier chapel at this site, until the archaeological excavations in 2013 revealed the foundations of two churches.<sup>17</sup> The older one was a wooden building, dated to 1050 or somewhat earlier, the younger one a stone construction, which could have been the church mentioned in the Gutasagan. Both of them had considerable dimensions compared with the other Romanesque churches on the island of Gotland.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the story in the Gutasagan could actually be true, but the question is why it was so important to emphasize that Ormica received Christianity after the teaching of Saint Olaf. What if the Gotlanders received Christianity from the Eastern Church?<sup>19</sup> The research of art historian Svetlana Vasilyeva has shown that the Byzantine art tradition on 12th century Gotland was not an isolated phenomenon, but rather the result of a long development.<sup>20</sup> The archaeologist Mats Roslund has pointed out the strong presence of the Russian population in Visby since the beginning of the 12th century<sup>21</sup>, and another

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<sup>17</sup> Carlsson, D., Björk, N., Hillberg, J. Rapport från den arkeologiska undersökningen på St Olofsholm 2013. – Arendus Rapport, 2014, 7; Carlsson, D., Björk, N., Hillberg, J. Hellvi, S:t Olofsholm. Arkeologisk undersökning. – Arendus Rapport, 2014, 39.

<sup>18</sup> Carlsson, D., Björk, N., Hillberg, J. Hellvi, S:t Olofsholm, 77–78.

<sup>19</sup> Several researchers have considered the possibility whether Christianity had partly reached the island from eastern way, but towards the end of the 12th century, when the wooden churches were replaced with the stone churches, the Catholic Church architecture was dominant (Lagerlöf, E. Gotland och Bysans. Byzantiskt inflytande på den gotländska kyrkokonsten under medeltiden. Ödins Förlag AB, Visby, 1999, 36; Ros, J. Sigtuna: staden, kyrkorna och den kyrkliga organisationen. Uppsala universitet, 2001, 171).

<sup>20</sup> Vasilyeva, S. Bysantinska traditioner i Gotlands konst under 1100-talet. – Fornvännen, 2009, 104, 97–111.

<sup>21</sup> Roslund, M. Gutar, främlingar och den förblindande vikingatiden – om staden Visbys tidigaste datering. – In: Från stad till land. En medeltids arkeologisk resa till ägnad Hans Andersson. Eds A. Andrén, L. Ersgård, J. Wienberg. Almqvist & Wiksell, Stockholm, 2001, 247.

archaeologist, Jörn Staecker, had shown the strong eastern influence on the island based on his studies of the cross- and crucifix-pendants.<sup>22</sup>

Until the middle of the 12th century we can observe different kinds of interactions between Christianity in East and West, among them the veneration of the same saints (for ex Nicholas, Olaf, Clement and the adoption of Christianity according to the Greek rite by Scandinavians and vice versa. Then the Cluny-inspired reform popes took over the Latin Church with the aim to centralize and standardize the Catholic rites, eradicating all the influence from the Orthodox Church. If during the Early Middle Ages the term Varangians referred to the Scandinavians of both the Greek and the Latin rite, already by the middle of the 12th century it became synonymous with Scandinavians of the Latin rite.<sup>23</sup> From this point of view the rapid expansion of the cult of St Olaf in Akergarn is particularly interesting. A majority of the 2000 coins found during the excavations were related to the new church and dated, except from two coins from Viking age, to the end of the 12th century at the earliest.<sup>24</sup> If we think about the possibility that the Law and History of Gotland might have been written at the instigation of archbishop Anders Sunesen (1201–1228), as many researchers have suggested<sup>25</sup>, the theological level of the story of Saint Olaf and his role as a teacher begins to acquire significance. The archbishop of Lund was a strong supporter of the Church reform and also the main architect of the Danish Crusades to Estonia.

The site called Akergarn (now S:t Olofsholm) is a peninsula in the north-east coast of Gotland, while in the Middle Ages it was an island with an excellent harbour. You cannot find a better place for waiting for suitable weather conditions before sailing across the Baltic Sea (Fig. 2). Therefore, those who used long ships at the end of the 12th century might have acted in the same way as the King Olaf. We are used to thinking about Visby as the harbour of the crusaders, but this information comes from the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia and reflects the view of the German merchants and crusaders<sup>26</sup>, who used cogs and had their church there. But we do not know which harbours the Scandinavians visited. Visby could have been only one of them, and there was a church dedicated to the Holy King also in Visby.

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<sup>22</sup> **Staecker, J.** Bremen – Canterbury – Kiev – Konstantinopel? Auf Spurensuche nach Missionierenden und Missionierten in Altdänemark und Schweden. – In: Rom und Byzanz im Norden. Mission und Glaubenswechsel im Ostseeraum während des 8.–14. Jahrhunderts. Band 1. Ed. M. Müller-Wille. Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 1997, 74.

<sup>23</sup> **Lind, J. H.** Darkness in the East? Scandinavian scholars on the question of Eastern influence in Scandinavia during the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages. – In: From Goths to Varangians. Communication and Cultural Exchange between the Baltic and the Black Sea. Eds L. Bjerg, J. H. Lind, S. M. Sindbæk. Aarhus University Press, 2013, 355–359.

<sup>24</sup> **Carlsson, D., Björk, N., Hillberg, J.** Hellvi, S:t Olofsholm, 71–75.

<sup>25</sup> Guta Saga. The History of the Gotlanders, liii.

<sup>26</sup> The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia. Trans. J. A. Brundage. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1961; repr. with a new introduction, notes and bibliography, Columbia University Press, New York, 2003.

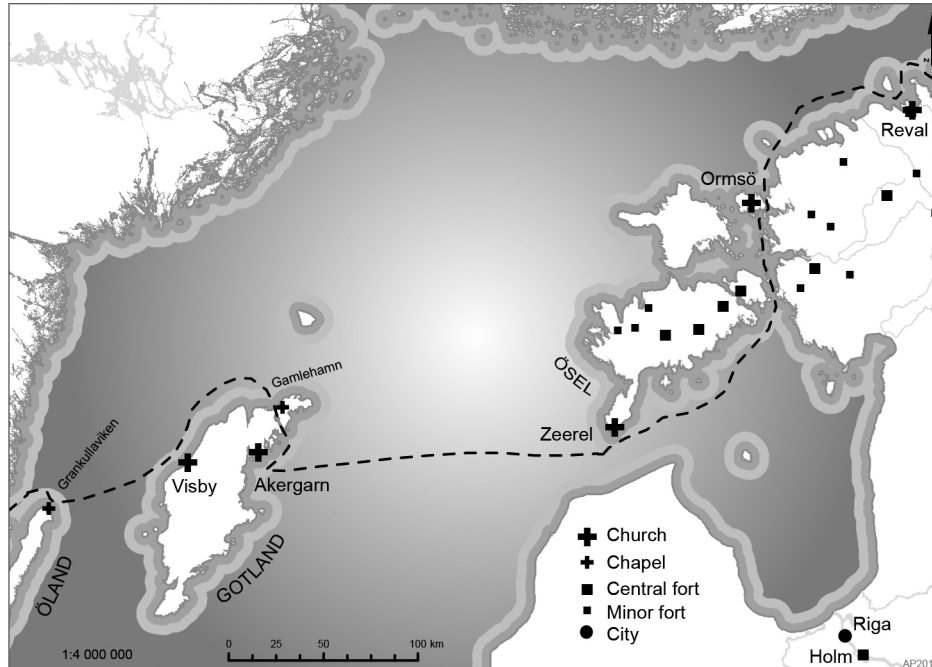
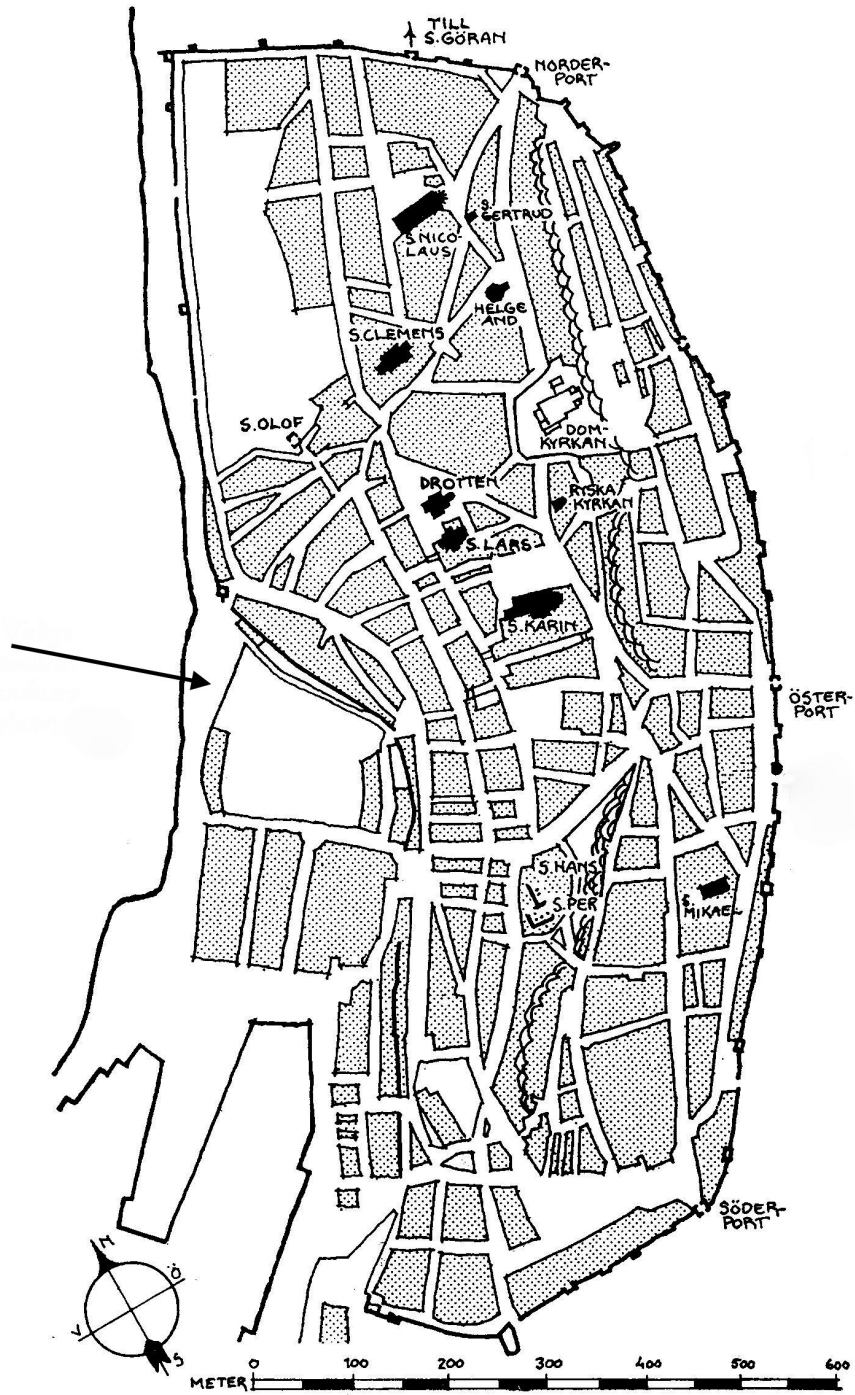


Fig. 2. The shipping route between Öland, Gotland and Reval. Drawing by Anu Printsman.

St Olaf's church was situated in the northern part of the town near the old port, which means that this church may have been one of the earliest in Visby<sup>27</sup> (Fig. 3). This assumption is supported by the foundation year named in the chronicle of Hans Nielssøn Strelow, where it is said that in 1097 King Erik the Good (Danish King Erik Ejegod, 1095–1103) had had St Olaf's church built there.<sup>28</sup> Although the current historiography has its misgivings about this fact, his actions speak in favour of it. Erik is known as the Danish ruler who succeeded in gaining the Scandinavian church independence from Archbishop of Bremen, but his earlier life as a jarl of Zealand has mostly been overlooked. He was an eager supporter of his half-brother King Canute the Holy (1180–1186) who was murdered in St Alban's church in Odense. As the new elected King Olaf I (1086–1095) was the spokesman of the rebels and therefore arrested and sent to Flanders by Canute, jarl Erik had to go into exile in Sweden for nine years. According to *Knyttlinga saga* he spent most of the time in the *Austrvegr* fighting against the pagans, while protecting the Christians and the merchants. He travelled a long way east up to Novgorod, visiting the local chiefs and getting plenty of attention for his successful military campaigns. This glory had also reached Denmark and helped him get

<sup>27</sup> Yrwing, H. *Visby – Hansestad på Gotland*, 308.

<sup>28</sup> Strelow, H. N. *Cronica Guthilandorum*. Martzan, Kjøbinghaffn, 1633, 140.



**Fig. 3.** The medieval churches of the town Visby. Reproduced from Lagerlöf, E., Svahnström, G. *Gotlandskyrkor*, 44.



elected after the death of his brother Olaf.<sup>29</sup> Actually, Erik the Good was the first Danish ruler whose fame and deeds in the eastern Baltic Sea area are comparable to those of Olaf Haraldsson – dreaded by the heathens and glorified by the Christians. Therefore, the foundation of St Olaf’s church in Visby may indicate the start of the Rus’ trade of the Danish merchants. So far the Norwegians and the Swedes dominated the dense network of ties between the Rus’ and Scandinavia. As this was the time when Russian merchants appeared on the island, the actions of King Erik may denote that Visby was becoming the centre of overseas trade with Russian territories, and that St Olaf’s Church with its trading enclave might have performed the same function as St Olaf’s Church of the Varangians in Novgorod.

While there are no traces left of the first church on the site, the next one was a three-nave Romanesque basilica, with a layout that according to archaeological investigations resembled to a great extent St Mary’s Church of the German merchants.<sup>30</sup> Even this church is almost completely destroyed, presenting the art historians with no more than a half-preserved tower and some details from the nave. Those pieces include a capital and a base of the column initially supporting the arcades of the nave. The base is decorated with a frieze of round arches and flat leaves in the corners. The decor of the capital follows the traditional Saxon model with the lying half-circles and a half-palmette motif beneath them (Fig. 4).



**Fig. 4.** The capital of the column initially supporting the arcades of the nave of St Olaf’s church in Visby. Photo by Kersti Markus.

<sup>29</sup> **Rafn, C. C.** Kongesagaer. Oldnordiske Sagaer. Bind 11. Knytlinga Saga. København, 1829, 70. [http://heimskringla.no/wiki/Knytlinga\\_Saga\\_\(C.C.Rafn\)](http://heimskringla.no/wiki/Knytlinga_Saga_(C.C.Rafn))

<sup>30</sup> **Lagerlöf, E., Svahnström, G.** Gotlandskyrkor. Rabén & Sjögren, Uddevalla, 1991, 75–77. Actually, the whole area of the current botanical garden where the trading enclave might have situated is not investigated, and the modest archaeological investigations from 1962 are not sufficient to argue that there has never been an earlier church on the site.

These details are also represented in St Mary's Church, but the quality there is much higher, which means that the rebuilding of St Olaf's Church may have been started after the completion of St Mary's Church in 1190<sup>31</sup>, and the local masters were used. But there are also some basic differences between these two objects. Above all it concerns the shape of the pillars, which in the church of St Mary are rectangular, but in the church of St Olaf were round and octagonal. The use of columns was characteristic of the Danish churches in the late 12th century, but the combination with the octagonal pillars rather refers to the architectural style of the early 13th century; for example the gallery of the royal church of Store Heddinge in Zealand. However, the most important fact is that in the first decade of the 13th century these two churches may have been the biggest in the town, which speaks of the ambitions of their owners.

If we combine these architectural parallels with political and mercantile history, we can find obvious connections. Close matrimonial ties between the Russian and Danish royal families, manifest in the marriage of King Erik's son Knud Lavard to the daughter of Grand Prince Mstislav I of Kiev and in the naming of their son Valdemar (later King Valdemar the Great, 1157–1182) in honour of his great-grandfather Grand Prince Vladimir Monomakh, broke down in the last quarter of the 12th century.<sup>32</sup> The son of Valdemar, King Knud VI (1182–1202), was married to the daughter of Duke Henry the Lion, and strong Saxon influences occurred in the Danish art and architecture. But that did not mean a decrease of Danish interests in the Rus' trade. The Danish merchants gathered together in the Confraternities of St Knud, which had in 1169 canonized Knud Lavard as their patron saint and King Valdemar as their protector. It has been suggested that in addition to their commercial purposes they also had a military function.<sup>33</sup> The Confraternities of St Knud are first mentioned in a letter of King Valdemar from 1170s, which was sent to Gotland's Confraternity.<sup>34</sup> According to Anti Selart it is possible that the members of this Confraternity took part in the trade with the Rus'. His opinion is based on Denmark's attempts to gain power in the centres situated along the trade routes – the island of Ösel, Reval, and the strategic sites on the Daugava River.<sup>35</sup> From the end of the 9th century the Scandinavians and the Russians had made several attempts to seize control over the lower Daugava, but the local inhabitants preserved the intermediary role in trade between west and east.<sup>36</sup> The situation changed at the end of the 12th century when the traders from

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<sup>31</sup> **Strelow, H. N.** *Cronica Guthilandorum*, 142.

<sup>32</sup> See more about dynastic connections in **Lind, J.** *De russiske ægteskaber. Dynasti- og alliancepolitik i 1130'ernes Danske borgerkrig.* – *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 1992, 92/2, 262–263.

<sup>33</sup> **Bysted, A. L. et al.** *Jerusalem in the North. Denmark and the Baltic Crusades, 1100–1522.* Brepols, Turnhout, 2012, 121–123.

<sup>34</sup> *Diplomatarium Danicum*, Række 1, bind 3, No. 63; **Bysted, A. L. et al.** *Jerusalem in the North*, 122.

<sup>35</sup> **Selart, A.** *Livonia, Rus' and the Baltic Crusades in the Thirteenth Century.* *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450.* Vol. 29. Brill, Leiden, 2015, 52.

<sup>36</sup> **Radiņš, A.** *Some notes on the Daugava Way. The end of 12th – beginning of 13th century.* – In: *Culture Clash or Compromise? The Europeanisation of the Baltic Sea Area 1100–1400 AD.* Gotland Centre for Baltic Studies, Gotland University Collage, Visby, 1998, 188.

Germany appeared. It has been suggested that the first treaty between Novgorod and the German merchants was conducted during the reign of Henry the Lion, but this step should have been followed by the establishment of the Germans' trading enclave in Novgorod. However, St Peter's church with its yard was built first at the end of the 12th century, apparently immediately after the extant treaty between Novgorod and the "Germans, the Goths (Gotlanders) and entire Latin people" dated to 1191/1192.<sup>37</sup> The Varangians are not mentioned in the treaty and St Olaf's church in Novgorod is thenceforth known as the church of Gotlanders.

Thus, the competition between the Germans and the Danes for the Rus' market seems to have intensified in the late 12th century, but initially there was no reason to speak about confrontation. The best example is the situation on the lower Daugava where the two stone castles were built at places from where it was easy to block the most important commercial centre in the Baltic region – Daugmale – from both sides. The castle of Üxküll was built by the German missionary Meinhard with the help of masons from Gotland and the castle of Holme by Danes.<sup>38</sup> It is interesting to notice that precisely at the same time the cult of Saint Olaf in Akergarn was gaining a foothold and the new church was built. The king saint who was venerated both by the Orthodox and the Catholics was going to be transformed into the patron saint for Latin crusaders. Therefore, the promotion of the Holy King at a place where the Danish crusaders may have gathered can shed some light on the construction of St Olaf's churches in Estonia. It is quite remarkable that there are only two medieval churches in Estonia dedicated to the Holy King and both of them are connected to the Danes. And the third one, which also may have been a St Olaf's church, had a perfect location in relation to the pilgrim's site in Akergarn.<sup>39</sup>

### ST OLAF'S CHURCHES AND THE COLONIZATION OF ÖSEL-WIEK

The church of Zerel (in Estonian *Sääre*), which was located in the southern tip of the Sworwe peninsula (in Estonian *Sõrve*), was in ruins already in the 18th

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<sup>37</sup> See more in **Eile, G., Blomkvist, N.** Första Novgorodkrönikan. Gotlands Museum, Fornsalsensförlag, Visby, 2016, 65–66.

<sup>38</sup> **Markus, K.** Die Christianisierung Livlands aus der Perspektive visueller Quellen. – Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung, 2015, 64, H. 4, 477–497; **Radiņš, A.** Some notes on the Daugava Way, 188; **Radiņš, A.** Daugmale, Jersika, Riga. The Development of Economic and Political Centres along the Lower Reaches of the Daugava. – In: Lübeck Style? Novgorod Style? Baltic Rim Central Places as Arenas for Cultural Encounters and Urbanisation 1100–1400 AD. Ed. M. Auns. Nordic, Riga, 2001, 89–94; **Zemītis, G.** 10th–12th Century Daugmale. The Earliest Urban Settlement along the Lower Daugava and Forerunner of Riga. – In: Cultural Interaction between East and West. Archaeology, Artefacts and Human Contacts in Northern Europe. Eds U. Fransson, M. Svedin, S. Bergerbrant, F. Androshchuk. Stockholm University, 2007, 279–284.

<sup>39</sup> There are also some St Olaf's chapels, which may have been founded by the Swedish settlers in the medieval or early modern times (Suur- ja Väike-Pakri, Nõva, Sastama, Ruhnu, Kärkla).

century.<sup>40</sup> Nowadays there is one big island Ösel (in Estonian Saaremaa), but in the 13th century this coastal region looked like an archipelago and even Sworwe was an island. We do not know the patron of the church, but as the building was situated near the harbour, which was surrounded on the western side by a long shoal, called in Swedish *Olofsgrund*<sup>41</sup> and in Estonian *Olavimadalik*, it is very likely that Zerel's church was dedicated to St Olaf. The foundation of the church is connected to the family Korever, the owners of the manor of Zerel since 1390<sup>42</sup>, but one of the gravestones preserved until the 19th century had an inscription which commemorated the owner of the manor Kargi, deceased in 1365.<sup>43</sup> This manor is situated on the western side of the peninsula, near the parochial church of Jamma (in Estonian Jämaja). The question is why the owner of Kargi was buried in Zerel's church instead of his own parochial church. The church of Zerel became a parochial church first in the 16th century.<sup>44</sup> May this fact indicate the importance of the church in some earlier period? Unfortunately, archaeological investigations have never been conducted there. But if we take a closer look at the harbour itself, it is obvious that this had to be the place where the long ships waited for the right wind to sail to Gotland. All trade routes over Gotland to the East and back passed the southern tip of the island<sup>45</sup> (Fig. 2).

We can find an exact parallel in the northern tip of the island of Öland, where Grankullaviken was the safe harbour for those who were planning to take a leap over the open sea towards the Karlsö islands and Gotland. St Olaf's chapel was erected on a holm in the estuary of the bay. Since no excavations have been conducted, nothing can be said about its foundation time, but an altar crucifix of Limoge enamel dated to the 12th or 13th century may have belonged to the chapel. There were two similar crucifixes in the parochial church of Böda, which may suggest that one of them came from St Olaf's chapel. The building was deserted at the beginning of the 16th century.<sup>46</sup> And if you follow the sea route from Visby to Ösel you have to pass the strait between Gotland and the island of Fårö, where

<sup>40</sup> **Alttoa, K., Kurisoo, M.** Materialien zur Kirche in Sääre (Zerel) auf Saaremaa (Ösel). – *Baltic Journal of Art History*, 2012, 4, 171.

<sup>41</sup> **Johansen, P.** Nordische Mission, Revals Gründung und die Schwedensiedlung in Estland. Wahlström & Widstrand, Stockholm, 1951, 300.

<sup>42</sup> **Alttoa, K., Kurisoo, M.** Materialien zur Kirche in Sääre, 178–179.

<sup>43</sup> Johann Christoph Brotze, *Estonica*. Eds A. Hein, I. Leimus, R. Pullat, A. Viires. Estopol, Tallinn, 2006, 526–527.

<sup>44</sup> **Johansen, P.** Nordische Mission, 302; The baptismal font is from the Late-Middle ages (**Tuulse, A.** Mittelalterliche Taufsteine in Estland. (Apophoreta Tartuensia.) Eesti Teaduslik Selts Rootsis, Stockholm, 1949, 160; **Kurisoo, M.** Ristimise läte. Eesti kirikute sisustus, II. Muinsuskaitseamet, Tallinn, 2009, 73–74).

<sup>45</sup> **Mägi, M.** Ösel and the Danish Kingdom: Revisiting Henry's Chronicle and the Archaeological Evidence. – In: *Crusading and Chronicle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier. A Companion to the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*. Ed. M. Tamm, L. Kaljundi, C. S. Jensen. Ashgate, Burlington, 2011, 317–322.

<sup>46</sup> **Boström, R.** Böda och S:t Olof. Åkerbo härad, Öland 1:2. Sveriges kyrkor. Vol. 116. Almqvist & Wiksell, Stockholm, 1968, 166–170.

an old port Gamlehamn with St Olaf's chapel was situated. In the Late Middle ages the whole settlement disappeared. Most likely, it was the massive storms of the 14th century that filled the entrance of the harbour with sand, isolating the port from the sea.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the church of Zerel may have belonged to the chain of St Olaf's churches along the coast of the Baltic Sea islands marking the harbours used by Scandinavians.

Even the seats of the other of Estonian St Olaf's churches may have been chosen from this strategic point of view (Fig. 2). According to the legend, the Danish King Valdemar II built St Olaf's church on the island of Ormsö (in Estonian Vormsi). This tradition dates back to the 16th century. But the same tradition says that the first colonists on the island of Ormsö were the Danes.<sup>48</sup> Otherwise, we only know of the Swedish colonists in the western part of Estonia.<sup>49</sup> The Swedish archaeologist Jonathan Lindström, whose father was born on Ormsö, has recently written a book about Anders Sunesen and his crusade to Estonia, where he depicts the Archbishop as one of the colonizers of the island.<sup>50</sup> He relies on a transcript from Cornelius Hamsfort from the end of the 16th century, which says that Anders with his brothers brought the colonists to Livonia in 1206.<sup>51</sup> Another strong argument in favour of his theory is the structure of the villages and the unit of land measure on Ormsö, which according to Lindström has an exact parallel on the island of Öland<sup>52</sup>, where the households of our villages in the Böda parish and one in the Högby parish in the northern part of the island were abandoned about 1200. As the medieval households of the island had a long history dating back to the Iron Age and there was no free land available to displace inhabitants, such abandoning of villages seems noteworthy. Especially in a situation where four of those villages were situated near the abovementioned harbour Grankullaviken with its St Olof's chapel. But the problem is that the dating of the desertion of the villages relies on circumstantial evidence, not on the results of archaeological research.<sup>53</sup> These villages probably belonged to the Swedish King and the Cistercian abbey in Roma on the island of Gotland.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> **Munthe, H.** Om Gamlehamn på Fårö. – Gotländskt arkiv, 1942, 14, 1–11; **Munthe, H.** Om Gamlehamn på Fårö. Tillägg. – Gotländskt arkiv, 1943, 15, 67.

<sup>48</sup> **Russwurm, C.** Eibofolke oder die Schwedenanden Küsten Ehstlands und auf Runö. Vol. 1. Kelchen, Reval, 1855, 38, 100.

<sup>49</sup> **Jakobsson, S.** Osilia-Maritima 1227–1346. Studier kring tillkomsten av svenska bosättningar i Balticum, i synnerhet inom biskopsstiftet Ösel-Wiek. (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Historica Upsaliensia, 112.) Uppsala, 1980.

<sup>50</sup> **Lindström, J.** Biskopen och korståget 1206 – Om krig, kolonisation och Guds man i Norden. Norstedts, Stockholm, 2015.

<sup>51</sup> *Scriptores rerum Daniacarum medii aevi.* Ed. J. Langebek. Tomus I. Godiche, Hafniae, 1772, 284.

<sup>52</sup> About Ormsö's *hake* and the *attung* of Öland see more in **Blumfeldt, E.** Estlandssvenskarnas historia. (En bok om Estlandssvenskar, I.) Kulturföreningen svenska odlingens vänner, Stockholm, 1961, 95–96; **Tarvel, E.** Adramaa. Eesti talurahva maakasutuse ja maksustuse alused 13.–19. sajandil. Eesti Raamat, Tallinn, 1972, 64.

<sup>53</sup> **Lindström, J.** Biskopen och korståget 1206, 199–204, 212.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

Even here the evidence is circumstantial. But one must admit that the largest estates of the Roma Abbey were in Estonia, acquired from the Danish King in the 1220s<sup>55</sup>, and also that the King Sverker the Younger (1195–1208) was through his mother a member of the Danish Hvide-family and therefore related to Anders Sunesen. We habitually think about Öland as a Swedish island, but at the end of the 12th century and at the beginning of the 13th century there was a very strong Danish impact.<sup>56</sup> As the expedition to Estonia in 1206 seems to be central to this issue we need to take a closer look at the written sources.

According to Henry of Livonia, it was King Valdemar II, accompanied by Archbishop Anders, who attacked the Estonian island of Ösel in 1206.<sup>57</sup> However, the Danish annals mention only Archbishop Anders Sunesen and his brothers as having led the expedition against Estonia.<sup>58</sup> Since the chronicle of the Sorø Abbey says that the Danes also undertook a raid along the River Elbe in the same year<sup>59</sup>, according to the Danish historians it is more likely that this was where the king actually was.<sup>60</sup> And the chronicle of Arrild Huitfeldt confirms it by arguing that the king ordered to send a major army to Estonia under the command of Anders and his brothers.<sup>61</sup> But one of the annals – the chronicle of the Essenbæk Abbey – says that Archbishop Anders led an army to Reval; and the chronicle of the Ryd Abbey adds that he did it together with his brothers.<sup>62</sup> The abovementioned transcript from Cornelius Hamsfort not only mentions the colonists brought to Livonia but also the fact that the archbishop and his brothers founded Reval.<sup>63</sup> We have three sources suggesting that Archbishop Anders was in Reval in 1206, but surprisingly, the current historiography keeps quiet about it. Lindström was the first to draw attention to this fact after a long silence since 1925, when historian Paul Johansen used the transcript to demonstrate the Swedish colonization in the

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<sup>55</sup> **Markus, K.** Misjonär või mõisnik? Tsistertslaste roll 13. sajandi Eestis. – Acta Historica Tallinnensia, 2009, 14, 17.

<sup>56</sup> **Anglert, M.** Landskap, bebyggelse och makt under yngre järnålder och medeltid. – In: Möre – historien om ett småland. Ed. G. Magnusson. Kalmar länsmuseum, Kalmar, 2001, 513; **Boström, R.** Is Resmo Church the earliest Stone Church in medieval Sweden? – In: Europeans or Not? Local Level Strategies on the Baltic Rim 1100–1400 AD. Eds N. Blomkvist, S.-O. Lindquist. Centre for Baltic Studies, Gotland University College, 1999, 79–90; **Axelsson, R.** Från Gråborg till Borgholm – danskt och svenskt på Öland 1150–1300. – In: Fragment ur arkiven. Festskrift till Jan Brunius. Eds M. Lennersand, Å. Karlsson, H. Klackenborg. (Skrifter utgivna av Riksarkivet, 37.) Riksarkivet, Stockholm, 2013, 319–335.

<sup>57</sup> The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia, Ch. 10.13.

<sup>58</sup> Danmarks middelalderlige annaler. Ed. E. Kroman. Selskabet for Udgivelse af Kilder til Dansk Historie, København, 1980, 61, 103, 110, 200, 259, 278.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>60</sup> **Bysted, A. L. et al.** Jerusalem in the North, 196.

<sup>61</sup> **Huitfeldt, A.** Danmarkis Rigis Krønike. Moltkens, Kiøbenhaffn, 1652, 175.

<sup>62</sup> Danmarks middelalderlige annaler, 200, 278. The Latin text of the chronicle of the Ryd Abbey has been preserved in the manuscript from about 1300.

<sup>63</sup> *Andreas et fratres colonias in Livoniam ducunt et Revaliam condunt* (Scriptores rerum Daniacarum medii aevi, 284).

western part of Estonia<sup>64</sup>, but he never mentioned it again in his later books in the context of the foundation of the town Reval.<sup>65</sup>

All in all, there are several indications to believe that the destination of the expedition in 1206 was Reval and the army passed the West-Estonian archipelago. Therefore, it is hard to understand what is meant with the colonization of Livonia. In the early 13th century the term Livonia was probably used to cover the territory under the rule of the Bishop of Riga.<sup>66</sup> One possibility is that Cornelius Hamsfort used the name of the land, which reflected his own time.

We do not know anything about the older settlements on the island of Ormsö, however, the nearby island (nowadays peninsula) of Nuckö might have had a settlement with long-term cultural contacts with Sweden.<sup>67</sup> The sailing route passed the strait between the islands. The trade centre was in Lihula and most of the hillforts were located on the island of Ösel.

If we compare the location of the island of Ormsö with that on the River Daugava where castrum Holme was constructed, striking similarities stand out. Both of them provided an opportunity for controlling the traffic on the main trade roads to the East. As we know from the written sources the island next to Holme (nowadays Dole island) was called the King's Island. In 1211 this island was divided between the bishop of Riga and the Brothers of the Sword.<sup>68</sup> This can only mean that the Danes had by that time left the lower reach of the Daugava River. Consequently the warfare in 1206 can be considered as a turning point in the history of Estonia and if we read the chronicle of Livonia from this point of view, some things become clearer.

According to Henry this expedition was the first campaign of the Danes to Ösel, but actually no battle is described. The only fact he lets us know is that the fortress was built, but nobody dared to stay there. Therefore, it was burned down and the army returned to Denmark whilst Anders with his brother Peder, who was the royal chancellor, travelled on board two heavily laden ships to Riga, spending the entire winter there.<sup>69</sup> How was it possible that the greatest power of the Baltic

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<sup>64</sup> **Lindström, J.** Biskopen och korståget 1206, 385–386; **Johansen, P.** Siedlung und Agrarwesen der Esten im Mittelalter. Ein Beitrag zur estnischen Kulturgeschichte. Mattiesen, Dorpat, 1925, 98–99.

<sup>65</sup> **Johansen, P.** Nordische Mission; **Johansen, P., Mühlen, H. von zur.** Deutsch und undeutsch im mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Reval. Böhlau, Wien, 1973.

<sup>66</sup> **Koski, M.** Mis on Liivimaa erinevatel aegadel olnud? – In: Liivlased. Ajalugu, keel ja kultuur. Eds R. Blumberga, T. Mäkeläinen, K. Pajusalu. Eesti Keele Sihtasutus, Tallinn, 2011, 57–61.

<sup>67</sup> Felicia Markus argues about the Swedish settlement on Nuckö, Marika Mägi advocates rather for the concept of colonialism within shared cultural milieu, which means that the inhabitants of the island of Nuckö could have been the locals with long-term contacts with the Swedes (**Markus, F.** Living on another shore: Early Scandinavian Settlement on the North-Western Estonian Coast. (Occasional Papers in Archaeology, 36.) Uppsala, 2004, 155–160; **Mägi, M.** Viikingiaegne Eesti. Argo, Tallinn, 2017, 134–137).

<sup>68</sup> Liv-, Est- und Kurländisches Urkundenbuch nebst Regesten. Vol. 1/1. Ed. Fr. G. von Bunge. Kluge und Ströhm, Reval, 1853, No. 18, 84.

<sup>69</sup> The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia, Ch. 10.13-11.1; **Bysted, A. L. et al.** Jerusalem in the North, 196–197.

Sea region could not conquer Ösel and one of the most powerful Church leaders in Europe was not ashamed to sail to Riga afterwards and, moreover, was greeted there with appreciation? If we consider this warfare as an action with the aim to mark the trade route to Reval, all the events will acquire reasonable meaning. The reciprocal agreements and colonization could have provided a better solution in the region, which according to archaeological finds seems to have had long-term cultural contacts with Scandinavia.<sup>70</sup> Maybe the first intention was to build a fortress on the island of Ösel, probably somewhere in the vicinity of the strait between the islands of Ösel and Mohn (in Estonian Muhu), which was the best strategic place considering the trade route, and where even the coins from the Rheinland and Westphalia have been found, marking the presence of the German merchants in the region in 1190s.<sup>71</sup> But it is also clear that the Ösilians would never have accepted the construction of a fortress there.<sup>72</sup> If the target was not a conquest, but colonization, they had to reckon with the Ösilians. This is the fact that Marika Mägi has always emphasized in her studies.<sup>73</sup> In this context the colonization of Ormsö – a peripheral island, but still along the trade route – becomes meaningful. There are no traces left from the first church on the site, but during the archaeological excavations the foundations of an earlier wooden building were revealed. The current chancel was built in the Late-Middle ages, the nave in 1632.<sup>74</sup>

Although in the summer of 1206 the Danes were engaged in securing their positions along the trade route in the region of Ösel-Wiek, the actual goal was still Reval.

## ST OLAF'S CHURCH AND THE FOUNDATION OF REVAL

The only story about the conquest of Reval comes from the chronicle of Henry and concerns the year 1219. Combined with the Danish annals the brief summary of events may be submitted as follows. According to the four Danish sources King Waldemar II landed in Reval with a fleet consisting 1500 longships, which would have comprised approximately 45 000 men. Even if the number of ships was overestimated, the actual number would still have been very high. A large number of Danish prelates, among them Archbishop Anders Sunesen, had joined the expedition and the army also included German and Wendish crusaders. They made camp close to an old Estonian fortification called Lyndanise, which was destroyed, and a new fortification, called *Castrum Danorum* according to Henry, was built in its place. It proved difficult to make peace with the Estonians and on

<sup>70</sup> **Jets, I.** Lahingumaod. Skandinaavia 9.–11. sajandi kunstistiilid Eesti arheoloogilistel leidudel. Doktoritöö. Tallinna Ülikool, Ajaloo Instituut, 2013; **Mägi, M.** Viikingiaegne Eesti, 133–145.

<sup>71</sup> **Leimus, I.** Wann und woher ist der deutsche Kaufmann nach Livland gekommen: Eine numismatische Studie. – In: Delectat et docet: Festschrift zum 100 jährigen Bestehendes Vereins der Münzenfreunde in Hamburg. Ed. M. Mehl. Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte, Hamburg, 2004, 318–324.

<sup>72</sup> The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia, Ch. 10.13, 26.2-4.

<sup>73</sup> See more in **Mägi, M.** Ösel and the Danish Kingdom, 317–341.

<sup>74</sup> **Raam, V.** Vormsi Olevi kirik. – In: Eesti arhitektuur, 2. Ed. V. Raam. Valgus, Tallinn, 1996, 41–42.



15 June, the exact anniversary of the conquest of the Wendish stronghold of Arkona in the island of Rügen in 1168, the battle between the Estonians and the crusaders erupted. More than a thousand were left dead on the battlefield and the crusaders praised God for their victory over the pagans. The king then returned to Denmark, leaving behind the archbishop who took up residence in the reconstructed fortification on the hill called Dome Hill (in Estonian Toompea), which was now manned by a Danish garrison and a governor.<sup>75</sup>

If one takes a look at Tallinn's sacral topography, one may notice the close connection between the Danish castle and St Nicholas Church at the foot of the hill. St Olaf's church stands farther away closer to the port. The Cathedral of St Mary is located on the hill and the church of the Holy Spirit, which was the hospital church, near the market (Fig. 5). According to Paul Johansen, St Olaf's church belonged to the Scandinavian merchants and was built already in the 12th century<sup>76</sup>, but the later historiography has not supported this theory. St Olaf's church has been seen as the church of the Danish King.<sup>77</sup> In 1267 the Queen Dowager Margaret Sambiria (d. 1282) who was married to Christopher (d. 1259) – the youngest son of Waldemar II – delivered *ius patronatus* of St Olaf's church to the Cistercian nunnery, which means that it had first belonged to the Danish royal house.<sup>78</sup> Was it erected in 1219 after the victorious battle by the Danish king? Or did the Archbishop with his brothers mark the place with a Christian shrine in 1206? The original relief of the old centre of Reval is open to various interpretations.

Estonian architect Rein Zobel has made a reconstruction of the city centre based on the data of geological and archaeological bores and excavations made in the 1980s<sup>79</sup>, but the archaeologists have updated his data in recent decades. As a result quite different reconstructions of the relief of the landscape around Tallinn in the 11th–12th centuries were composed.<sup>80</sup> The geographer Anu Printsmann has tried to sum up the previous research results into a map presented in this publication (Fig. 6). The 40 m high Dome Hill exists even now, but the lower sandstone bank near the sea has totally disappeared. In the 13th century the sea had not yet retreated from the shore. It has been suggested that the old port of the Estonians was situated in the estuary of the Härjapea River<sup>81</sup>, but the harbour where the Danish

<sup>75</sup> The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia, Ch. 22.9-23.2; **Bysted, A. L. et al.** Jerusalem in the North, 203–210.

<sup>76</sup> **Johansen, P.** Die Kaufmanns kirche, 505–507; **Johansen, P.** Nordische mission, 135.

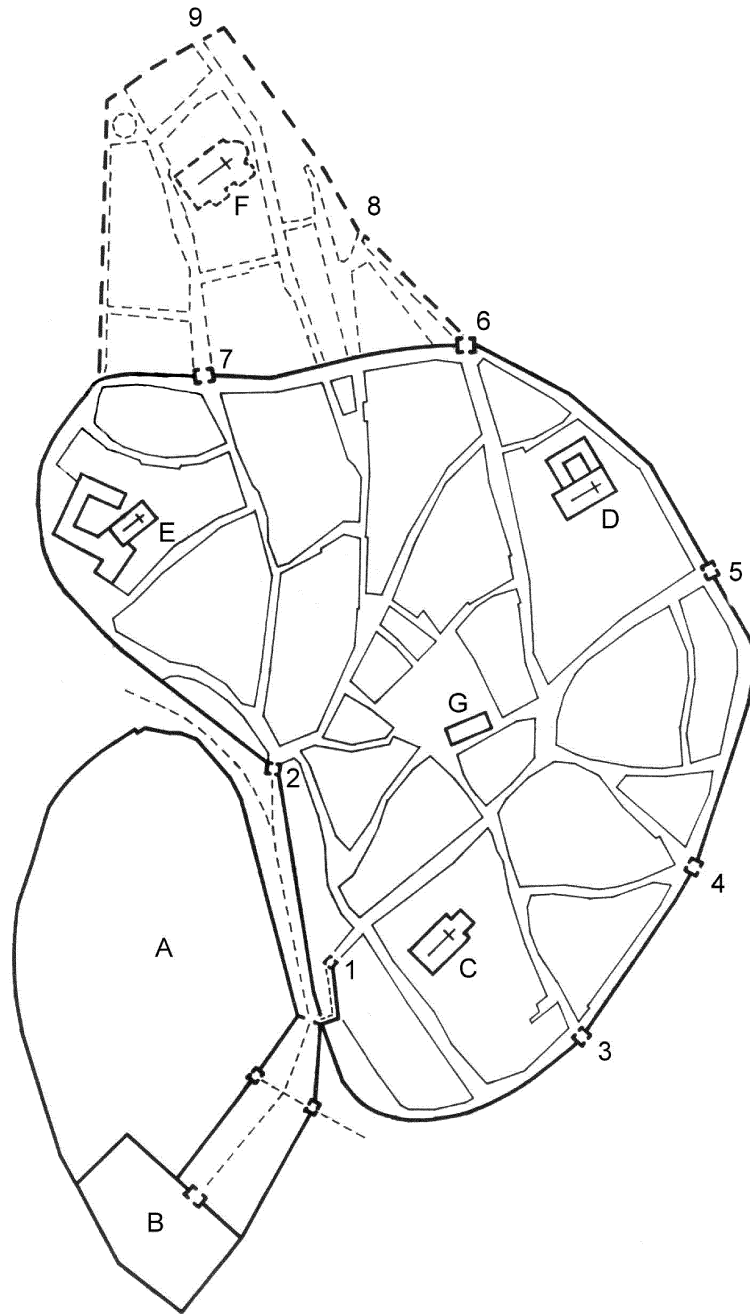
<sup>77</sup> **Kala, T.** Ludeke Karwel, kogudusevaimulik. – In: Kümme keskaegset tallinlast. Eds T. Kala, J. Kreem, A. Mänd. Varrak, Tallinn, 2006, 155; **Mänd, A.** Saints's Cults in Medieval Livonia, 206.

<sup>78</sup> Liv-, Est- und Kurländisches Urkundenbuchnebst Regesten. Vol. 1/1, No. 404.

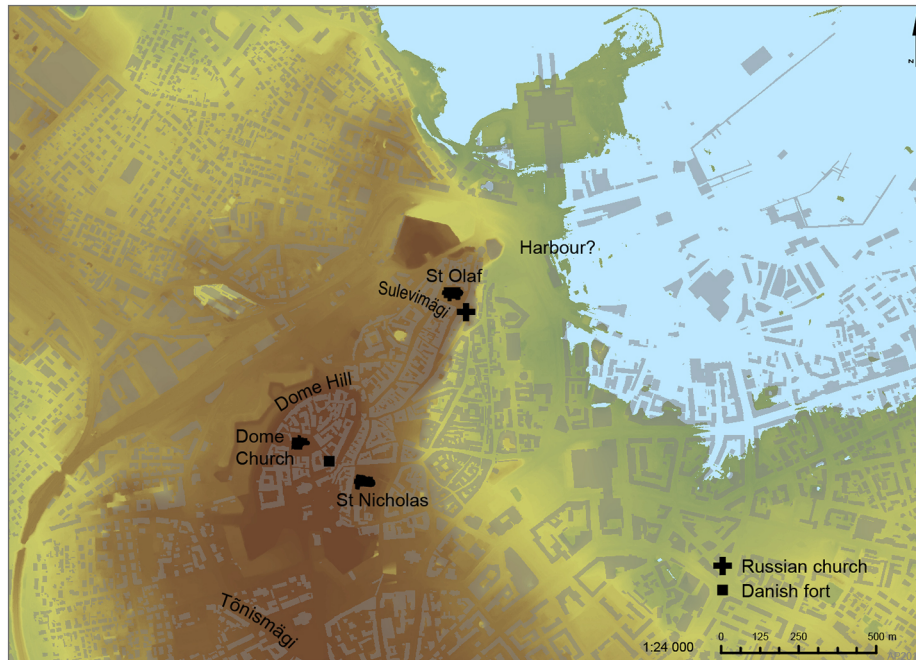
<sup>79</sup> **Zobel, R.** Tallinn (Reval) keskajal. Linnaehitus 13.–14. sajandil. Eesti Entsüklopeediakirjastus, Tallinn, 2001, 19–31.

<sup>80</sup> **Tamm, J.** Muinas-Tallinna loodusoludest ja maastikust kui eeldustest püüasustuse tekkeks. – In: Kui vana on Tallinn? Ed. T. Kala. (Tallinna Linnaarhiivi Toimetised, 8.) Tallinn, 2004, 34–35; **Mägi, M.** Rafala. Ideedest ja Tallinna algusest. Argo, Tallinn, 2015, 42; **Tamla, T.** Lyndanise lahingust (1219) ja Tallinna varasest asustusest. – Vana Tallinn, 2016, 27 (31), 21.

<sup>81</sup> **Tamm, J.** Muinas-Tallinna loodusoludest, 41; **Mägi, M.** Rafala. Ideedest ja Tallinna algusest, 112–113. A more critical approach in **Lõugas, L., Kadakas, V., Kadakas, U.** Fishery in pre-historic and medieval Tallinn, Estonia. – Environmental Archaeology: The Journal of Human Palaeoecology, 2016, 21, 4, 364.



**Fig. 5.** Town Reval about 1270 and the later extension towards the sea. A Great Castle of Domberg, B Small or the later Danish Castle, C St Nicholas' church, D the Dominican St Catherine's monastery, E the Cistercian St Michael's convent, F St Olaf's church, G the Town Hall, 1–9 the gates of the town. Drawing by Jaak Mäll.



**Fig. 6.** The map of Reval at the beginning of the 13th century. Modern Digital Elevation Model is based on Estonian Land Board LIDAR data, 2017. Modern buildings from Tallinn City Planning Department, 2015. Drawing by Anu Printsman.

army landed must have been on the sandy western shore of the bay, since the steep cliff offered shelter from the storms that mainly came from the West and North-West. There have been arguments about where the first trading place could have been situated<sup>82</sup>, but the most likely area to consider is Harju Street south of St Nicholas' Church with the highest concentration of early radiocarbon dates falling into the period before the Danish conquest.<sup>83</sup> Considering the location of the castle and the probable settlement of the Estonians near Tõnismägi, the strongest argument in favour of this theory is the site of St Nicholas' Church.<sup>84</sup> In fact, this church could have been a parochial church under the protection of the Danish garrison. Some burials found in the graveyard have been dated to the 13th century and considered to be the remains of native inhabitants.<sup>85</sup> The myth about St Nicholas' Church as the church of German merchants is still viable in

<sup>82</sup> See more in **Russow, E.** *Origines Revaliae: Die ersten hundert Jahre.* – In: *Lübecker Kolloquium zur Stadtarchäologie im Hanseraum. Vol. 10.* Eds M. Gläser, M. Schneider, Schmidt-Römhild, Lübeck, 2016, 552–553.

<sup>83</sup> **Mäll, J.** *Arheoloogilise kultuurikihi spetsiifikast Tallinna vanalinna territooriumil.* – In: *Linnusest ja linnast. Uurimusi Vilma Trummali auks.* Eds A. Haak, E. Russow, A. Tvaari. (Muinasaja teadus, 14.) Tartu Ülikool, Ajaloo Instituut, Tallinn, 2004, 257–259.

<sup>84</sup> **Mägi, M.** *Rafala. Ideedest ja Tallinna algusest,* 113; **Russow, E.** *Origines Revaliae,* 546.

<sup>85</sup> **Mägi, M.** *Rafala. Ideedest ja Tallinna algusest,* 90.

the historiography<sup>86</sup>, although both the written sources and architecture contest this opinion.<sup>87</sup> Even the fact that St Nicholas' Church was the only parochial church within the city walls in the 13th century makes it clear that this was the only shrine for the citizens during the foundation period, and it is very likely that the church was built next to the market place. In line with the development of the city, the market place was shifted<sup>88</sup>, most likely after 1248 when Reval received the city rights and community buildings were needed. As to the dedication to St Nicholas, who is supposed to have been the saint of the German merchants<sup>89</sup>, the recent research has shown that at the turn of the 12th century the cult of St Nicholas spread in Scandinavia and the northern Rus' due to royal patronage and dynastic contacts, but from the mid-12th century mostly due to trading elites in the Baltic Sea region, regardless of their confessional affiliation.<sup>90</sup> And as we know, even the Orthodox Church in Reval was dedicated to St Nicholas.<sup>91</sup>

However, the church of St Olaf was a royal foundation erected on the cliff above the harbour, highly visible to everyone who approached the gulf of Reval. If we compare the location of St Olaf's Church with that of the Holy Cross church in Bremerhaven, striking similarities can be noticed. This was a church of the merchants under the protection of the local overlord, standing outside the town near the harbour.<sup>92</sup> Thus, St Olaf's Church could indeed have been meant for the long-distance traders, and as such have been erected before the conquests in 1219. But the foundation of a church in the still pagan land required an agreement between the locals and the overlord of the merchants. If we consider the location of the St Olaf's church, far enough from the settlement of the local inhabitants whilst rising above the harbour, a better place for a Christian shrine erected after the negotiations with the local rulers would have been hard to find.

What are then the main arguments to support the theory of the foundation of St Olaf's Church in 1206? Firstly we have to admit the importance of the Rus' trade in the first period of the Baltic crusade, which also led to the construction of the fortified outposts like the Holme castle. The Danes would not have abandoned their position on the lower Daugava if the northern way of Rus' trade had not been secured. Secondly the expedition led to Reval under the command of the archbishop, which might indicate the intention to preach the Roman Catholic faith in a place where the Russians already had settled or were expected to settle. The

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<sup>86</sup> **Johansen, P.** Die Kaufmannskirche, 505–507; **Johansen, P., Mühlen, H. von zur.** Deutsch und undeutsch, 40–41.

<sup>87</sup> *Kui vana on Tallinn?* Ed. T. Kala. (Tallinna Linnaarhiivi Toimetised, 8.) Tallinn, 2004, 109–110; **Lumiste, M., Kangroopool, R.** Niguliste kirik. Kunst, Tallinn, 1990, 12.

<sup>88</sup> **Russow, E.** *Origines Revaliae*, 553.

<sup>89</sup> See more about saints' cults in the Hanseatic cities in **Mänd, A.** *Saints's Cults in Medieval Livonia*, 205–209.

<sup>90</sup> **Garipzanov, I. H.** The cult of St Nicholas in the Early Christian North (c. 1000–1150). – *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 2010, **35**, 3, 239–240.

<sup>91</sup> **Selart, A.** *Orthodox Churches in Medieval Livonia*. – In: *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*. Ed. A. V. Murray. Ashgate, Burlington, 2009, 281.

<sup>92</sup> **Ellmers, D.** *Der mittelalterliche Hafen von Lehe*. (Jahrbuch der Männer vom Morgenstern, 62.) Ditzen, Bremerhaven, 1983, 49–52, 68–69.

Russian trade enclave was situated on the lower plateau between the harbour and St Olaf's church, where the road went down to the beach. This choice of location could point to the fact that the Russian merchants were already present. The archaeological excavations on the site revealed the remains of a medieval settlement and part of a cemetery, which dates back to the 13th century.<sup>93</sup> In the written sources their presence is noted in a letter from 1230s.<sup>94</sup>

In this context it would be interesting to discuss what exactly Cornelius Hamsfort might have meant with the words – *founded Reval*. The easiest way is to ignore this source considering it as an arbitrary compilation of the original material by an amateur historian. But at the same time we do believe what Henry writes about the Danes in his chronicle, although it cannot be true.<sup>95</sup> Supposing the summary of the original text is correct, it could actually indicate the foundation of a Christian outpost in Reval to support the trade. That would explain why Henry is silent about the expedition to Reval, why the Germans and the Danes cooperate in the warfare of 1208, and why the Danes disappear from the chronicle for almost ten years. It would even explain the prelude of the events in 1219, when the Danes freely acted in Reval and negotiated with Estonians. The situation changed when the locals realized that this time the aim was to conquer the whole territory.

## CONCLUSION

The cult of saints can indeed indicate the mentality and the ambitions of the church patrons, but we also have to recognize that the intentions of the patrons were changing over time and so even the saints were given new meanings. The Holy King of Norway was venerated both by the Orthodox and the Catholics in time when the dynastic contacts between the royal houses in Scandinavia and the Rus' were the most frequent, whilst in the dawn of the crusade area the king saint fallen in battle was transformed into the patron saint for the Latin crusaders.

The miracle of St Olaf performed in Estonia may reflect events in Ösel-Wiek. This was the only region under the strong influence of the cult of the Holy King due to close contacts with the island of Gotland and Scandinavia. As the archaeological findings contain cross-shaped pendants, the story of the miracle tells us that Christianity may have been prevalent in certain regions in Estonia in the late 12th century.

The story about St Olaf in the history of Gotlanders with its two different levels in the plot shows a clear theological intention to highlight the Christian rites, which were different from the practice implemented on the island at the time when the Gutasagan was created. In this context the question of the potential

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<sup>93</sup> The archaeological excavations were carried out by Villu Kadakas, but the results have not been published yet. See more in **Naum, M.** Multi-Ethnicity and Material Exchanges in Late Medieval Tallinn. – *European Journal of Archaeology*, 2014, 14/4, 666; **Russow, E.** *Origines Revaliae*, 553.

<sup>94</sup> *Danmarks Riges Breve* 1:6. Ed. N. Skym-Nielsen. Reizel, Copenhagen, 1979, No. 199, § 16.

<sup>95</sup> **Mägi, M.** Ösel and the Danish Kingdom; **Markus, K.** *Die Christianisierung Livlands*.

authorship of the sagan acquires much wider significance than it has as part of the history of Scandinavian legislation or the local history of the island of Gotland. It seems clear that the story of St Olaf had connections with the cult site in Akergarn, which gained increasing popularity at the same rate with Baltic crusades. If the Law and History of Gotland was written at the instigation of Archbishop Anders Sunesen, the use of Saint Olaf during the warfare against Estonians becomes more understandable. It seems that the Holy King was the archbishop's most powerful weapon both against the Orthodox and the heathen.

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### VENEMAA KAUBANDUSEST RISTISÕJANI: PÜHA OLAVI KIRIKUD LÄÄNEMERE IDAKALDAL

Kersti MARKUS

Artiklis on käsitletud Püha Olavi kultust Läänemere ristsõdade kontekstis 12. sajandi lõpul ja 13. sajandi algul. Analüüsi aluseks on kaks kirjalikku allikat: Püha Olavi imetegu, mis toimus Eestimaal, ja Gotlandi saaga, millest võib leida infot nii kuningas Olav Haraldssoni eluajast kui ka saaga kirjutamise perioodist. Saaga autoriks peetakse Lundi peapiiskoppi Anders Suneseni, kes oli ka taanlaste ristsõja üks initsiaatoreid. Eelnevale lisaks on toodud uuesti käibe kolm Taani keskaegset allikat, millest senine Läänemere ristsõdade historiograafia on mööda vaadanud. Nende allikate valgusel oli 1206. aasta taanlaste sõjakäik suunatud Tallinna. Eesmärgiks oli saavutada kontroll Lääne-Eesti saarestikku ja Põhja-Eesti rannikut läbiva Novgorodi suunduva kaubatee üle.

Kirjalike allikate kõrval on tähelepanu keskmes Püha Olavi kirikud, mis jäid Ölandi ja Gotlandi saare ning Lääne-Eesti saarestiku kaudu kulgeva veeteede äärde. Esimene kirik rajati Gotlandi saarel Akergarni kuningas Olavi eluajal ja 1200. aasta paiku asendati puukirik kivikirikuga, millest sai kogu regiooni olulisemaid kultuspaiku. See oli koht, kus viikingilaevad võisid oodata soodsat tuult, et purjetada üle Läänemere. Tõenäoliselt oli sama funktsiooniga sadam Sääre kiriku juures Sørve säärel. Kuna madalik seal lähedal kannab Olavi nime, siis võis Sääre kirik Norra kuningale pühitsetud olla. Säärele analoogsed kirikud paiknesid Ölandi põhja-tüüp Grankullavikis ja Fårö saarel Gamlehamnis. Visby Püha Olavi kiriku rajas Hans Nielsson Strelowi kroonika järgi 1097. aastal Taani kuningas Erik Ejegod

(1095–1103). Kuningas Erik oli üheksa aastat Rootsis eksiilis ja sõdis Knytlinga saaga andmetel Idateel, olles hirmuks paganatele ning ülistusobjektiks kristlastele. Ühtlasi oli ta sage külaline Novgorodis. Olavi kiriku ehitamise aeg langeb kokku venelaste asunduse tekkimisega Visbys, mistõttu võiks selle rajamisel näha seost vene kaubandusega. Kui Novgorodi Olavi kiriku ja kaubahoovi asutasid norrakad, siis kuningas Eriku ajal näib Taani muutuvat vene kaubanduses Rootsi ning Norra kõrval oluliseks tegijaks. Kivikirik valmis Visbys tõenäoliselt 13. sajandi algul ja oli koos sakslaste Visby Maarja kirikuga linna üks suurimaid, mis näitab ka nende patroonide ambitsioone.

Eestis on taanlastega seotud kaks Olavi kirikut: Vormsil ja Tallinnas. Rootsi ajaloolane Jonathan Lindström toetub taani ajaloolase Cornelius Hamsforti 16. sajandi lõpul tehtud transkriptsioonile varasemast allikast, kus on öeldud, et peapiiskop Anders koos vendadega koloniseeris Liivimaad ja rajas Revali. Tallinnas käiku kinnitavad ka kaks teist Taani allikat. Liivimaa all võis Hamsfort silmas pidada territooriumi, mille puhul kasutati tema eluajal seda nime. Seega võis see hõlmata ka Lääne-Eesti saarestikku. Lindströmi arvates toimus Vormsi koloniseerimine Ölandi talupoegadega. Selle kinnituseks oleks nii samasugune maakasutusühik kui ka külade struktuur. 1200. aasta paiku kadusid Grankullaviki juurest neli küla, mis võisid kuuluda Rootsi kuningale Sverker nooremale (1195–1208), kes oli ema poolt Hvidede suguvõsast. Sellesse klanni kuulus ka Anders Sunesen. Kalmari väin ja Ölandi saar olid sel perioodil tugeva Taani kontrolli all. Oma osa võis olla ka Gotlandi saare Roma tsistertlaste kloostri, mis sai Taani kuningalt suuri maavaldusi Eestis. Neile kuulus piirkond Põhja-Ölandil, kus paiknes üks küla, mis samuti kadus sel perioodil. Kuna Noarootsi saarel oli teadaolevalt kas varasem rootslaste asustus või rootslastega väga tihedates sidemetes olnud eestlaste asustus, võiks Vormsi koloniseerimist näha Taani ja Rootsi Hvidede ühisaktsioonina. Veetee kulges Vormsi ja Noarootsi vahelt.

Tallinna asutamise all võidi mõelda teatud tugipunkti rajamist Novgorodi kulgeva veetee kontrollimiseks. See sai toimuda ainult kokkuleppel eestlastega. Tugipunkt eeldab aga mingit nähtavat visuaalset objekti, milleks kindlasti ei saanud olla linnus, mis rajati Henriku kroonika järgi 1219. aastal vana eestlaste linnuse asemele. Küll aga eeldaks sellisel juhul Püha Olavi kiriku ja kaubahoovi rajamist, nagu see oli juba olemas Novgorodis ning Visbys. Kuna kohal oli ka Lundi peapiiskop isiklikult, siis oleks raske uskuda, et ühtki sakraalhoonet ei püsitatud. Olemasolevate arheoloogiliste andmete põhjal ei saa väita, et vene kaubahoov ja kirik on taanlaste omast varasemad, kuid asend platoo madalamas osas Sulevimäel, sadamasse viiva tee kõrval võiks sellele osutada.

Eelmainitud allikate põhjal võiks oletada, et Läänemere saari ja Lääne-Eesti saarestikku läbiva veetee äärde rajatud Olavi kirikud markeerivad taanlaste kaubateed Novgorodi. Kui 11. sajandil oli Püha Olav austatud pühak nii ortodokssete kui ka katoliiklaste seas, siis gregoriaanliku kirikureformi tulemusel suurenes lõhe kreeka- ja roomakatoliku kiriku vahel, mistõttu transformeerus ka Püha Olavi kultus. Lahingus hukkunud Norra kuningas sobis hästi Läänemere ristsõdijate pühakuks, mistõttu tema kultus kasvas plahvatuslikult 13. sajandi algul.