

## Preface

The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia was written by a missionary priest to record the history of the crusades to Livonia and Estonia (that is, present day Latvia and Estonia) in around 1186–1227. Produced in the late 1220s in ‘the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ who wishes His faith and His name to be carried to all nations’ and with the goal to record ‘the many and glorious things [that] happened in Livonia at the time the heathen were converted to the faith of Jesus Christ’,<sup>1</sup> the chronicle offers one of the most vivid examples of the crusading ideology in practice in the early thirteenth century, a period when it became tightly integrated in the political and religious culture of Europe. This period saw a new rise and consolidation of the crusading ideology and institutions, a revival in campaigning in the Holy Land and the Iberian Peninsula, as well as the movement’s significant territorial expansion. Now it was also appropriated for the conquest and conversion of the northern frontiers of Europe or for the persecution of the heretics at the heart of the continent.

Henry’s chronicle is designed as a founding narrative of the new bishopric, Riga, aiming at establishing its legitimacy and identity. The narrative begins with the arrival of Meinhard, an Augustinian monk, from Saxony to Livonia in the 1180s. The chronicle presents Meinhard’s debated ‘peaceful mission’ and his emergence as the first bishop of Üxküll (Latv. Ikšķīle) (r. 1186–96), establishing a suffrage of the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen. Then it records the first crusade to Livonia in 1198, led by the next bishop of Üxküll, Berthold (r. 1196–98), and his martyrdom during the same expedition. Henry goes on to report the conquest and conversion of the Livs and Lettgallians during the early years of the reign of Bishop Albert (r. 1199–1229), the founding of Riga (which became the new see and a base for the Christians in this region), and the start of regular crusading. The chronicle continues with the campaigns and missions to Estonia that started in around 1208 and that take up more than two thirds of the text. The narrative ends with the victorious campaign to the islands of Moon (Est. Muhu) and Ösel (Est. Saaremaa) in 1227, after which the whole Estonian territory was subjugated under the Church of Riga, the Order of the Sword Brethren and the Danish king.

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<sup>1</sup> HCL XXIX.9, p. 215; Brundage, p. 237.

The chronicle seems to have been written between 1224 and 1227 and its author was likely a parish and missionary priest, Henry (*Henricus* or *Heinricus*), who had arrived from Saxony to Livonia around 1205 and who is mentioned several times in the text.<sup>2</sup> In any case, the author of the chronicle does not belong to the circles of highly educated and high-ranking clergymen. If Henry was indeed the author of the chronicle, then he had been an active partaker in the events described: he had lived close to the mission and warfare in the lands of the Livs and Lettgallians, had been on missions to Estonia and taken part in crusading as a chaplain. This has led some scholars even to treat the chronicle as an autobiography.<sup>3</sup> Next to his own experiences, Henry could also have used the testimonies of fellow missionaries and crusaders; it is rhetoric, but not only mere rhetoric, when he claims ‘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 eyes, we have learned from those who saw it and who were there.’<sup>4</sup> Thus, on the one hand, the chronicle presents the partial perspective of a committed participant. On the other hand, it offers a rare opportunity to gain insight into the crusading and missionary activities, as well as the symbolic universe of conquest, conversion and cultural (ex)change – aspects of the chronicle that have been emphasized, especially recently, and that have elevated Henry’s text to a rather keen level of interest amongst crusading scholars.

Step by step, it has become one of the most widely read and acknowledged frontier crusading and missionary chronicles. Although it was printed as early as 1740, a scholarly edition of the chronicle appeared only in 1954. Thus, it has only been during the recent decades that the chronicle has come into the focus of historians, archaeologists, linguists, theologians, anthropologists, and so on. In addition, the number of its translations has been growing steadily, by now also making it one of the most translated medieval crusading chronicles, that has been published in eight languages in total. (For details, see the Bibliography at the end of this volume.)

<sup>2</sup> See HCL XI.7, p. 55; XII.6, p. 62; XVI.3, p. 107; XVII.6, p. 114; XXIV.1–2, pp. 169–71. In addition, scholars have suggested that Henry also took part in the Lateran Council (1215), in Bishop Albert’s voyage to Germany in 1222–24, and acted as an interpreter for the papal legate to the region, William of Modena, in 1225–26. It has also been supposed that Henry was born in around 1187–88 in Saxony, near Magdeburg, educated at the monastery school at Segeberg and that he thereafter, in around 1205, came to Riga with Bishop Albert and was ordained a parish priest in 1208. It is known that a priest of that name died some time after the year 1259. For an overview, see Albert Bauer, ‘Einleitung’, in *Heinrici Chronicon Livoniae. Editio altera*, ed. Leonid Arbusow and Albert Bauer (Hanover, 1955), pp. V–LIV.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Johansen, ‘Die Chronik als Biographie: Heinrich von Lettlands Lebensgang und Weltanschauung’, *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, n.s. 1 (1953), 1–24.

<sup>4</sup> HCL XXIX.9, p. 215; Brundage, pp. 237–8.

As a crusading chronicle from the European frontier, Henry's chronicle offers many opportunities to test and broaden the new approaches and key concepts brought along by recent developments in medieval studies. Presenting a fairly coherent case where crusading practices and ideology were applied for around 30 years campaigning in a peripheral region, it offers illuminating material for studying the new pluralist definition of crusading,<sup>5</sup> as well as the relationship between the frontier and core areas of Europe. On a broader scale, the chronicle, which is dominated by the theme of 'the enlargement of faith among the pagans',<sup>6</sup> is well suited for discussing the formation of new medieval European identities.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, even today its legacy is especially visible among the young nations in Eastern and Eastern-Central Europe. Writers like Henry, who were constructing their histories at the edges of the known world, had to integrate local historiography into the universal schemes and local geography into the universal Christian space.<sup>8</sup> This task also included the construction of the 'otherness' of indigenous 'pagan peoples' which has become yet another prominent object of study. Considering the range and topicality of these issues, it is no surprise that the past ten years has produced a significant amount of new international research into the chronicle, which has also been enlivened by the bringing together of the previously separated Eastern and Western European academic traditions, and the general rise of interest in the medieval Baltic region.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See, for instance, Norman Housley, *Contesting the Crusades* (Oxford, 2006); *Palgrave Advances in the Crusades*, ed. Helen Nicholson (Houndmills, 2005); Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (London, 2006); Jonathan Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?*, 4th edn (Houndmills, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> See Leonid 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 127–9).

<sup>7</sup> See, for instance, *Medieval Frontier Societies*, ed. Robert Bartlett and Angus Mackay (Oxford, 1989); Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950–1350* (London, 1993); Patrick Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Nations* (Princeton, 2002); *Medieval Frontiers: Concepts and Practices*, ed. David Abulafia and Nora Berend (Aldershot, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *The Making of Christian Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom*, ed. Lars Boje Mortensen (Copenhagen, 2006).

<sup>9</sup> See first of all the two volumes edited by Alan V. Murray: *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier, 1150–1500*, ed. Alan V. Murray (Aldershot, 2001); *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, ed. Alan V. Murray (Farnham, 2009); as well as the publications of the 'Culture Clash or Compromise' (1996–2005) project that was led by Nils Blomkvist at the Gotland University College.

However, as the studies have been scattered around various national historiographical traditions, smaller publications and languages, this has created a need to synthesize and coherently present the current state of research on Henry of Livonia in English for an international professional audience. Inspired by this necessity, the Centre for Medieval Studies of Tallinn University initiated and hosted a conference specifically devoted to the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia. Sixteen papers presented there on 22–24 May 2008 are included in this volume, as well as two additional ones. The conference, entitled ‘Crusading and Chronicle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier: The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia’, was organized jointly by the Centre for Medieval Studies of Tallinn University, the Nordic Centre for Medieval Studies (with branches in Bergen, Odense, Gothenburg and Helsinki) and the Department of Church History of the University of Copenhagen.

Based on the rich materials of the conference, the present volume was designed to provide a multi-sided and multi-disciplinary companion to the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia, without pretending, nevertheless, to be a comprehensive study of all aspects of the chronicle. The volume is divided into three parts. They are preceded by a general introduction to the life and work of Henry by James Brundage, who is not only an eminent medievalist, but also the English translator of Henry’s chronicle. As Brundage points out, this is not an easy task, due to the fact that ‘virtually everything we know (or think we know) about Henry of Livonia, comes from his chronicle’. He also addresses the paradoxes of the frontier mission, such as the problems related to forced conversion and the depictions according to which Henry and other priests quite a few times also joined in the combat.

The first part of the volume, ‘Representations’, brings into focus the imaginary sphere of the chronicle – the various images brought into existence by the amalgamation of crusading and missionary ideology and the frontier experience: the representations of the environment, nations, languages, religious confrontations, and so on. Often they are also closely bound to the conceptualization of ‘otherness’. A good introduction into this topic is Jüri Kivimäe’s analysis of Henry’s constructions of peoples. Departing from the observation that the chronicle contains hundreds of names for different peoples and tribes, Kivimäe discusses Henry’s terminology for and representation of different Baltic peoples (the Livs, Lettgallians, Estonians, and others) and the Germans, their allies and rivals (the Scandinavians, Russians, Lithuanians). While Kivimäe (and other contributors) briefly discusses Henry’s own language skills, Alan V. Murray focuses entirely on the role of orality and indigenous languages in this text. By examining Henry’s linguistic knowledge and his activity as an interpreter, Murray aims at a better understanding of how the process of

conversion functioned on the linguistic level. Torben K. Nielsen's chapter adds another important aspect to this picture, namely the conceptualization of space. Focusing on Henry's representation of woods and wilderness, Nielsen examines how the chronicle stages the wilderness of the local space in ways that would underline the 'otherness' of this non-Christian landscape. As one can expect from a missionary and crusading chronicle, embodiment and verbalization also have a crucial role in Henry's representational universe. Marek Tamm analyses Henry's poetics of death, arguing that it has a key rhetorical and ideological function in the narrative and the chronicle's justification of crusading. Tamm also offers a typology of the ways of dying and mortuary rituals in the chronicle, and examines the two extremes of dying: miraculous death and martyrdom. Carsten Selch Jensen's chapter, in turn, looks at the staging of religious rivalry through the representations of sermons. Jensen treats them as verbal confrontations between the missionary preachers of the Church of Riga (that is, the central protagonists of the chronicle), the indigenous people and the rival Danish missionaries, showing how they develop into key elements of the chronicle.

This section of the volume also discusses the tools of representation, such as narrative techniques and rhetorical devices used in the chronicle. We believe it is especially important to take into consideration the representational character of the chronicle and to stress the difference between crusading as a lived experience and crusading as a written representation. Marcus Bull has recently pointed out that: '[t]he relationship between the doing of crusading and the writing of crusades, the dynamic between lived sequential experience and the narrativizing (sometimes near-simultaneous) of that experience, is something that scholars perhaps need to investigate more fully.'<sup>10</sup> There is one representational feature of Henry's chronicle that has gained a lot of attention, namely the extraordinary abundance of citations from the Bible and other religious books (around 1,100 loans in total). The chapter by Jaan Undusk challenges the earlier view that Henry cites unintentionally and due to his lack of linguistic competence. In Undusk's view, it is the constant contact with the Holy Scripture that is of primary importance for Henry. Moreover, the analysis of the semantics and the syntax of citations shows that Henry is also brilliant in typology; that is, in finding correspondences between the profane events taking place in Livonia and the eternal types of the Sacred History. He also links Henry's use of the Bible to the eager appropriation of biblical citations (especially from the First Book of the Maccabees) in the crusading discourse. Christopher Tyerman examines Henry's relationship to contemporary crusading ideology and the

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<sup>10</sup> Marcus Bull, 'Views of Muslims and of Jerusalem in Miracle Stories, c. 1000–c. 1200: Reflections on the Study of First Crusaders' Motivations', in *The Experience of Crusading*, ed. Marcus Bull et al., 2 vols (Cambridge, 2003), vol. 2, pp. 13–38 (here 15).

ways in which he fashions it to suit his local purposes in detail. This chapter also helps to contextualize Henry's novelty in the Nordic chronicle tradition: unlike Saxo Grammaticus (c. 1150–1220) or Helmold of Bosau (c. 1120–after 1177) (whose chronicles recorded the conquest and conversion of the Western Slavs) and much more than Arnold of Lübeck (c. 1150–1211/14) (a chapter from his work is, next to Henry, the only narrative source about the Livonian crusade), Henry's chronicle is shot through with elements of crusade ideology (his use of remission of sins, canon law, pilgrimage language, papal authority, references to the Holy Land and the cult of the Virgin, and so on).

The first part of the volume is followed by studies into the 'Practices', which examine the chronicle's reflections of the diplomatic, religious and military practices of the Christianization and colonization processes in medieval Livonia. In this part, Henry's testimony of crusading practices is discussed in comparison with other textual reports, as well as with the archaeological evidence. Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt analyses the relations between Riga and Rome. The intensive use of the papal curia is also something that is typical of the times – it became customary for missionary ventures only around the early thirteenth century. Henry wished to present the relations between Riga and Rome as strong and symbiotic, and epistolary evidence supports his description of the close interaction. However, it was only Pope Honorius III (r. 1216–27) who fully embraced the Baltic crusades, while Innocent III (r. 1198–1216) considered it first of all as a missionary enterprise. Next to the authorization from Rome, there were also other ways of granting meaning to the crusading and mission in faraway lands, and one of the best and also oft-analysed examples of this is Henry's presentation of the *ludus magnus* in Riga in 1204, which reminds us of the role of performative practices in activating the dialogue with the sacred past. Nils Holger Petersen offers a new perspective on this event, which has been treated as 'liturgical drama', in the light of recent scholarship on medieval performances. The *ludus magnus* may have been anything from a large-scale enactment of biblical wars to a more traditional Latin liturgical sung play text, but in any case it relates to Henry's justifying the violent conversion of the pagans by using Old Testament models.

In this section, special attention is paid to Henry's depictions of military practices, which take up a large portion of the chronicle. For analysing them, the help of archaeological research is particularly relevant. The topic is introduced by Kurt Villads Jensen's overview of military revolution around 1200 that helps to contextualize the chronicle's depictions of warfare. Villads Jensen also stresses that we should distinguish between different levels: between the direct and psychological uses of violence and the ideological and theological framing of warfare. Only then can we combine the elements into a coherent

narrative about warfare. His chapter is followed by more concrete analyses. As put by Ain Mäesalu, Henry provides valuable information for studying the military events, weapons and military technology, the tactics of field battles and the siege and defence of hillforts. Mäesalu focuses on mechanical artillery (crossbows and stone-throwing machines), about which Henry seems to have been especially fascinated, and compares the chronicle's depictions to the data gleaned from archaeological excavations and the experiments carried out with reconstructed machines. In broad terms, Henry's information on these weapons corresponds fairly well with the archaeological evidence. Valter Lang and Heiki Valk give the archaeological reading of Henry's chronicle a methodological slant, analysing how the text can be used in archaeological research at different levels. This chapter also offers selected examples based on recent case studies. For example, Henry's information about the strongholds correlates closely with the archaeological record – most of the finds of crossbow bolts come from strongholds, the besieging or use of which were mentioned by him. But the authors also give examples of cases where Henry's report about the course of campaigning cannot be trusted. Marika Mägi, in turn, offers a provoking reinterpretation of one Estonian tribe, the Öselians' role by comparing Henry's text with archaeological data. Indeed, as she points out, since other written sources about thirteenth-century Livonia and Estonia are scarce, archaeology provides the almost only alternative contemporary source. Henry represents the Öselians as an underdeveloped society of 'others' that relies on looting raids and has weak or no central power. Mägi presents several contrasting hypotheses: the Öselians' military actions suggest ambitions to control international trade, their social stratification resembled that of Viking-Age Scandinavia and they played an active role in early thirteenth-century politics.

The volume concludes with a section on the 'Appropriations', which maps the reception history and the impact of the chronicle: the dynamics of the medieval, early modern and modern national uses and abuses of the text. Henry's text, as it is known today, is a modern reconstruction – neither an original of the chronicle nor any direct copy of it survives today. A total of 16 manuscript copies of Henry's text from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries are known, but not all of them contain the whole text of the chronicle. It is also important to note that, during the Middle Ages, there are just a few signs of reading and utilization of the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia, and also only one medieval copy of the work has been preserved. The *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle* (written around the 1290s), a vernacular chivalric narrative about Livonian history representing the tradition of the Teutonic Order, was in the Middle Ages more influential in creating the image of the past than Henry's chronicle (that focuses on the priority of the bishop of Riga). The reasons behind the meagre

popularity of Henry in the Middle Ages are analysed by Anti Selart. From the second half of the thirteenth century onwards, the history of Livonia was shaped by the conflict over hegemony between the Teutonic Order and the archbishop of Riga. In the rivals 'struggle for history', however, Henry's chronicle appears to have been unusable – for the Order, it was too strong an apology for the Church of Riga, and for the bishopric, it still retouched the contradictions of the bishop and the Sword Brethren. In addition, the question of who held priority during the conquest of the land appears to have been chiefly a legal conflict in which charters were of greater significance than chronicles. The knowledge and utilization of Henry's work only emerged in the sixteenth century, a time of new political tensions in Northern and Eastern Europe. However, then too Henry and his crusading ethos quickly became outdated; competing chronicles made the Livonian history older and charters provided a more secure support in legal discussions. Stefan Donecker discusses the faint reception of Henry's chronicle in early modern scholarship from humanists to the Gruber edition of 1740. Even though most manuscripts of the chronicle were written during this period, thereby indicating that scholars knew Henry, they made hardly any use of the chronicle or used it scantily. In seeking explanations to this paradox, Donecker points to several aspects: his text may have been unavailable, the early modern chroniclers were preoccupied with the Livonian War and its aftermath, and the work of a medieval Catholic priest (that presents an apology for a medieval Catholic bishop) was not attractive for Protestant humanists. Donecker also discusses the background of the Gruber edition, but it is the chapter by Tiina Kala that focuses on the chronicle's printed editions from Gruber to the present, and also gives an overview of the 16 manuscript copies of the chronicle. As she points out, although Henry's chronicle is the oldest narrative source for Livonian history, it is relatively young in a historiographical sense. Since the rise of source criticism in the mid-nineteenth-century, the supposedly 'correct' text of the chronicle (that is, as close as possible to the lost original) has been the goal of scientific editions and has resulted in the canonization of a certain form of the reconstruction, pushing aside everything that does not conform to it. In addition to looking at how general tendencies in the historical discipline are reflected in different editions, Kala also relates the printed editions' history to the political and ideological uses of Henry's chronicle: for instance, by linking the nineteenth-century translations to the rise of nationalisms. Indeed, since the late nineteenth century, the chronicle has been turned into a cornerstone of Estonian and Latvian national historiography and become a never-ending source for fiction writing and various cultural performances. Linda Kaljundi, with the collaboration of Kaspars Kļaviņš, analyses the dialogue between Henry's chronicle and national cultural memories, focusing on the Estonian and

Latvian, and to a lesser extent the Baltic German, tradition. The chapter also considers the cultural roots of nationalism, briefly discussing the Enlightenment view of the Livonian Middle Ages. The Estonian and Latvian appropriations of Henry are vivid examples of hybrid cultural traditions: nationalist readings of the chronicle have included both acceptance of and resistance to this text; the result is full of anxiety, negation and displacement. The same holds for the relationship to its author: on the one hand, 'the father' of Latvian and Estonian history, on the other hand, a tyrant and a stranger, whose language and ways they do not understand, but whom their young and fragile national ego has to accept and adapt, as well as continuously fight against and falsify.

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