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The Apostles of medieval Livonia (until the beginning of 13th Century)

The term 'barbarian Europe' referred in late antiquity to areas north of the Roman 'limes', but with the progress of Christianization, its territorial reach shrank. Towards the end of the 12th century, the heathen parts of Europe were confined exclusively to the lands situated on the east coast of the Baltic Sea, inhabited by the Baltic and Finnish peoples – from the Vistula estuary to Finland. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, only the Lithuanian tribes remained outside the western Christian world, since the 13th century ended the process of conquest and Christianization both among the Prussian tribes and the inhabitants of Livonia, living north of them.

I will be using the term Livonia to collectively describe the area of modern Latvia and Estonia. In German historiography there is an analogous term 'Alt-Livland'¹ to describe a loose federation of areas under the

1. Compare such titles as: R. Guleke, *Alt Livland. Mittelalterliche Baudenkmäler Liv-, Est-, Kurlands und Ösels*, Leipzig 1896; E. O. Kuujo, *Die rechtliche und wirtschaftliche Stellung der Pfarrkirchen in Alt-Livland*, Helsinki 1953 *Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae*, B, 79–2; M. Hellmann, *Altlivland und das Reich*, in: *Felder und Vorfelder russischer Geschichte. Studien zur Ehren von Peter Schreiber*, Hg. I. Auerbach, A. Hillgruber, G. Schramm, Bd. 1, Freiburg 1985, pp. 61–75; F. Benninghoven, *Zur Rolle des Schwertbrüderordens und des Deutschen Ordens im politischen Gefüge Altlivlands*, „*Zeitschrift für Ostforschung*“ (41) 1992 H. 2, pp. 161–185; *Aus der Geschichte Alt-Livlands. Festschrift für Heinz von zur Mühlen zum 90. Geburtstag*, Hg. B. Jähnig, K. Militzer, Münster 2004 (Schriften der Baltischen Historischen Kommission, 12); The translation of the term into “old Livonian land” was used by G. Manteuffel, *Zarysy z dziejów krain dawnych inflanckich, czyli Inflant właściwych (tak szwedzkich jako i polskich), Estonii z Ozylią, Kurlandii i Ziemi Piltyńskiej* [1879], red. i opr. K. Zajas, Kraków 2007, pp. 11–12; J. Kostrzak, *Narodziny*

bishops' rule — existing from the 13th century until 1561 — comprising the archbishopric of Riga and the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order. 'Alt-Livland's' end is marked by the first Livonian War (1558) and secularization of the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order (1561).²

The area discussed is ca. 110 000 km² and spreads out today from the Baltic Sea shore, starting in Klaipėda (German: Memel) to the mouth of the Narva River, flowing into the Gulf of Finland. In the Middle Ages this river marked the border between western Christianity and the farthest western stronghold of eastern Christianity — Novgorod the Great duchy (later republic). This relatively small area (ca. 1/3 of today's Poland) was inhabited by a mosaic of Baltic peoples (Latgalian, Semigallian, Selonian), Finno-Ugrian Livonians and ancestors of Estonians as well as inhabitants of Courland with disputable ethnogenesis.³ None of these ethnic groups managed to found their own state before the beginning of the 13th century, only small local communities — ruled by so-called 'seniores', i.e. local influential persons⁴ — existed. That fact was of significant importance once Christianizing missions had started as it was necessary to convert individual communities one by one, since no local early-state level structures existed which were able to force people to convert on conquered territories, acting supra regionally. In addition, the land was quite loosely dependent from neighbouring Ruthenian principalities — Duchy of Polotsk, Duchy of Pskov and Duchy of Novgorod⁵ as their tribute dependencies. Their rulers, however,

ogólno inflanckich zgrupadzeń stanowych od XIII do połowy XV wieku, Warszawa—Poznań—Toruń 1985, pp. 19ff.

2. L. Arbusow, *Grundriß der Geschichte Liv-, Est- und Kurlands*, Riga 1918, pp. 15—193; G. Manteuffel, *Zarysy z dziejów...*, op. cit., pp. 11—113; H. von zur Mühlen, *Livland von der Christianisierung bis zum Ende seiner Selbstständigkeit (etwa 1180—1561)*, in: *Baltische Länder*, Hg. G. von Pistohlkors, Berlin 1994, pp. 25—172 (Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas); *Inflanty w średniowieczu. Władztwa zakonu krzyżackiego i biskupów*, red. M. Biskup, Toruń 2002.
3. L. Arbusow, *Grundriß...*, op. cit., pp. 1ff; H. von zur Mühlen, *Livland von der Christianisierung...*, op. cit., pp. 27ff; M. Biskup, *Uformowanie się duchownych władztw terytorialnych w średniowiecznych Inflantach i ich granice państwowe*, in: *Inflanty w średniowieczu. Władztwa zakonu krzyżackiego i biskupów*, red. M. Biskup, Toruń 2002, p. 9; P. Johansen, *Kurlands Bewohner zu Anfang der historischen Zeit*, in: *Baltische Lande*, Hrsg. A. Brackmann, C. Engel, Bd. 1, *Ostbaltische Frühzeit*, Leipzig 1939, pp. 263—306; H. Laakmann, *Estland und Livland in frühgeschichtlichen Zeit*, in: *Baltische Lande*, op. cit., pp. 204ff.
4. Cf. J. Kostrzak, *Narodziny...*, op. cit., pp. 20ff.
5. F. von Keußler, *Das livische und lettische Dünagebiet und die Fürsten von Polozk, Gerzike und Kokenhusen am Ausgang des 12. und zu Beginn des 13. Jahrhunderts*,

did not engage in missions. For them it was enough to gain profit from tribute payments.

Another important issue concerned the communication possibilities between Livonia and Christian Europe. The Baltic Sea – until the second foundation of the town of Lübeck (1158) – was practically used only by the peoples inhabiting its coast. Until almost mid-13th century Lübeck was the only German port to serve long-range navigation on the Baltic Sea,⁶ which facilitated the blockades of naval connections in political crises.⁷ Moreover, the Baltic Sea – and Livonia as a result – was practically inaccessible for sailors for six months, as in winter time the Gulf of Riga and the territories to its north, were frozen. The naval season in the Middle Ages traditionally started after Easter (usually in April) and lasted until the end of September (Saint Michael's Day – 29 September). Similar dates were sanctioned by Hanseatic regulations⁸ in the 15th century. With Hanseatic merchants the purpose was to prevent the acquisition of too much wealth by those who undertook risky voyages overseas in the full-winter season when only

„Mitteilungen aus der livländischen Geschichte“ 15 (1893), pp. 1–51; F. von Keußler, *Die Tributpflichtigkeit der Landschaft Tolowa an die Pleskau*, „Mitteilungen aus der livländischen Geschichte“ 14 (1890), pp. 81–110; M. von Taube, *Russische und litauische Fürsten an der Düna zur Zeit der deutschen Eroberung Livlands*, „Jahrbücher für Kultur und Geschichte der Slawen“, NF.11 (1935) H. 3–4, pp. 373–502; J. Strzelczyk, *Z kupcami nad Dźwiņę. Meinhard – apostoł Liwów*, in: J. Strzelczyk, *Apostołowie Europy*, Poznań 1997, pp. 275 ff.

6. At the time Lübeck was the only port of departure for crusaders travelling to Livonia. Only in the first thirty years of the 13th century Wendish towns of Rostock, Wismar and Stralsund were founded and maintained active contacts with Livonia in the second half of the 13th century as members of the Hansa.
7. For example, Danish king Valdemar II closed the port in Lübeck in 1220 in an attempt to prevent the new Estonian bishop ordained by the archbishop of Magdeburg from entering Livonia – *Heinrici Chronicon Livoniae*, Hrsg. L. Arbusow, A. Bauer, Hannover 1955 (Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum ex Monumentis Germaniae Historicis separatim editi, 31), (further on: HCL), cap. XXIII, 11 – “[...] Quo audito rex Dacie iter ipsius in Lyvoniam ad aliquot annos impedivit [...]”; HCL, cap. XXIV, 4 – “Episcopus vero Lyvoniensis mare transiens venit in Lubek et cognitis insidiis regis Dacie fidelium suorum amicorum auxilio clam exivit de civitate [...]”; HCL, cap. XXVIII, 1 – “[...] venerabilis Hermannus episcopus [...] qui fuerat a rege Dacie ab episcopatu suo iam pluribus annis impeditus [...]”. See: T.K. Nielsen, *The Missionary Man: Archbishop Anders Sunesen and the Baltic Crusade, 1206–21*, in: *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier (1150–1500)*, ed. by A. V. Murray, Aldershot 2001, p. 115.
8. E. Cieślak, *Z zagadnień historii prawa morskiego na Bałtyku i Morzu Północnym w żegludze morskiej w okresie późnej jesieni i zimy według postanowień Związku Hanzeatyckiego z XIV i XV wieku*, „Przegląd Zachodni” 7 (1951), t. 1–2, pp. 89–101.

coastal sailing was permitted. The dates of safe sea sailing were certainly set on the basis of many ages of observations and experience of both Scandinavian Vikings and Gotland merchants who had been the first to set the naval routes to Novgorod the Great, long before German merchants arrived at the Baltic Sea.⁹ Moreover, even in the months when sailing was deemed safe, there were often ship disasters, ships were carried out of their course during storms or it was necessary to wait at the roadstead for many weeks for favourable weather.¹⁰ In this respect Livonia was more like an island than mainland as it was unlikely that Europeans would travel west through unknown lands of Kievan Rus', not only due to the fact that travellers had no knowledge of this land but also because it was dangerous. There are only single confirmed cases – caused by extreme circumstances – of using the land route along the Baltic Sea coast including the pagan territories of Courland, Lithuania and Prussia in the first half of the 13th century.¹¹

Until mid-12th century (second foundation of 'Lübeck' mentioned above) credible and verified information about the inhabitants of Livonia did not reach the elites of Christian Europe – both secular and the clergy. Of course, the Scandinavians and Slavic tribes inhabiting the Baltic Sea

9. T. Nyberg, *Deutsche, dänische und schwedische Christianisierungsversuche östlich der Ostsee im Geiste des 2. und 3. Kreuzzuges*, in: *Die Rolle der Ritterorden in der Christianisierung und Kolonisierung des Ostseegebiets*, Hg. H. Z. Nowak, Toruń 1983 (*Ordines militares. Colloquia Torunensia Historica*, 1), pp. 96ff.
10. The chronicle of Henry of Latvia provides the following examples: in 1197 Swedish earl Birger Brosa undertook an expedition to Courland but storms carried his ship out of its course to the province of Virland in northern Estonia – HCL, cap. I, 13; in 1204 a ship carrying the crusaders to Germany got lost for over two months in the Baltic Sea before it reached Visby in Gotland at the end of November. Its passengers almost starved to death and for the final part of their journey they had to walk to Denmark on the frozen sea – HCL, cap. VIII, 2–3; in 1215 a fleet of crusaders in nine cogs was carried out of its course to shoals near the Estonian island Osilia which could have ended with death of all crusaders aboard if killed by the pagans of Estonia – HCL, cap. XIX, 5–6; a ship on which the papal legate William of Modena travelled back from Livonia in 1226 stayed for the whole month at roadstead in Dünamünde waiting for a weather improvement – HCL, cap. XXX, 1.
11. Chronicler Henry of Latvia mentions only three examples of expeditions by land – Cistercian monk Theoderich travelled to Rome in 1195/1196 – HCL, cap. I, 12 (although the publisher of the chronicle believed that Theoderich found German merchant ships in Estonia as he deemed the land route through pagan Courland and Prussia impassable) – HCL, p. 6, footnote 7. In 1211 bishop Albert sent confirmed papal privileges to Livonia via Prussia – HCL, cap. XIV, 13. And the third one in 1219 when bishop Albert sent messengers to his brother Hermann in Germany “[...] mittens nuncios per Curoniam et Samlandiam [...]” – HCL, cap. XXIII, 11.

coastal areas maintained various contacts with them, trading and fighting, but for many long centuries this did not impact Christianization attempts. Only when the first Christianizing missions had reached Denmark and Sweden in the first half of the 9th century, was there an opportunity to disseminate the knowledge about even more tribes living in sinful paganism. The participation of Saint Ansgar, the first archbishop of Hamburg and the apostle of Scandinavia, in a few weeks Swedish expedition to Courland in 853,¹² did not contribute, however, to building of permanent strongholds enabling Christianity to spread. The long period of Christianization of Scandinavia from early 9th century to the end of 11th century – interrupted for long decades – did not facilitate the dissemination of knowledge about even further tribes in need of evangelization.

Even though the German chronicler Adam of Bremen did write about a Danish merchant founding a chapel in the land of 'Chori' (usually identified as Courland¹³) with the financial support and upon requests of the Danish king Sweyn Estridsson (1047–1074/76), we do not know anything about the later existence of the said chapel. More important here is the first case (confirmed by sources) of the Danish royals' interest in expanding politically in this direction in cooperation with the Danish Church. With the foundation of its archbishopric in Lund (1103 or 1104) the Danish Church had become a competitor of the German archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen, which for many years did not cease in its attempts to deprive Scandinavia of its metropolitan archdiocese and turn it again into Bremen's suffragan diocese. Around 1120 there were mentions of names 'Findia' and 'Hestia'¹⁴ – identified as Finland and Estonia – in the area of Scandinavian islands

12. *Vita Anskarii*, in: *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts zur Geschichte der Hamburgischen Kirche und des Reiches*, Bearb. W. Trillmich, Hg. R. Buchner, Berlin 1961 (Ausgewählte Quellen zur Deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters, 11), c. 30.
13. *Magistri Adami Bremensis Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae Pontificum*, in: *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts...* op. cit., lib. IV, 16.
14. K. Kumlien, *Sveriges kristnande i slutskedet – spörmål om vittnesbörd och verklighet*, "Historisk Tidskrift" (25) 1962 H. 3, p. 265; E. Anderson, *Early Danish Missionaries in the Baltic Countries*, in: *Gli inizi del cristianesimo in Livonia-Lettonia. Atti del colloquio internazionale di storia ecclesiastica in occasione dell'VIII centenario della chiesa in Livonia (1186–1986)*, Roma, 24–25 Giugno 1986, Città del Vaticano 1989, p. 258; J. Strzelczyk, *Z kupcami nad Dźwinę...*, op. cit., p. 277; T. Nyberg, *The Danish Church and Mission in Estonia*, "Nordeuropaforum. Zeitschrift für Politik, Wirtschaft und Kultur" 1 (1998), pp. 49–72 (<http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/nordeuropaforum/1998-1/nyberg-tore-49/XML/> (28.09.2016)).

but there is no information of any missionary work by Danish and Swedish monarchies – remaining each in the state of civil war – taking place there in the first half of the 12th century.

It changed at the end of 1160s: Eskil,¹⁵ the second archbishop of Lund, who remained in exile in France and at the papal court between 1161 and 1167, ordained a Cistercian monk Fulco¹⁶ from La Celle monastery in northern France as the bishop of Estonians ('Estonum episcopus').¹⁷ After several years of trying, the newly ordained bishop received the 'ministerium praedicationis' from Pope Alexander III with an added bull of indulgence addressed to the rulers of Denmark, Norway and Sweden and their subjects.¹⁸ The bull granted one-year indulgence to all who 'adversus saepedictos paganos potenter et magnanimiter decertaverint'.¹⁹ Those who would lose their lives while at it, were to be granted plenary indulgence similar to those who 'sepulcrum Dominicum visitant'. In consequence, Fulco's mission obtained the same status as the crusades to the Holy Land. Another bull of Alexander III, addressed to all Christian believers in Denmark, urged them to give material aid to Bishop Fulco in his work.²⁰ As there was the awareness that

15. E. Jørgensen, *Eskil*, in: *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon*, Bd. 6, Kjøbenhavn 1935, pp. 436–441; M. Hellmann, *Die Anfänge christlicher Mission in den baltischen Ländern*, in: *Studien über die Anfänge der Mission in Livland*, Hg. M. Hellmann, Sigmaringen 1989 (Vorträge und Forschungen, Sonderband 37), pp. 11ff; P. Rebane, *Denmark, the Papacy and the Christianization of Estonia*, in: *Gli inizi del cristianesimo...*, op. cit., pp. 176ff; E. Christiansen, *Krucjaty północne*, przekł. J. Szczepański, Poznań 2009, pp. 96ff.
16. *Liv-, Esth- und Curländisches Urkundenbuch nebst Regesten*, 1. Abteilung, Bd. 1 (1093–1300), Hg. F. G. von Bunge, Reval 1853, (further on: LECUB), no 3; P. Rebane, *Denmark, the Papacy...*, op. cit., p. 177; I. Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *Papieże i krucjaty bałtyckie 1147–1254*, przekł. B. Solecki, Warszawa 2009, pp. 56ff; T. Nyberg, *Deutsche, dänische und schwedische...*, op. cit., pp. 101ff; J. Strzelczyk, *Z kupcami nad Dźwinę...* op. cit., pp. 277ff; T. Kala, *The Incorporation of the Northern Baltic Lands into the Western Christian World*, in: *Crusade and Conversion...* op. cit., p. 7; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio fidei. Missione e crociata nel Nord Europa tra la fine del XII e i primi decenni del XIII secolo*, Roma 2007 (nuovi studi storici, 74), pp. 51ff; J. Nikodem, *Chryścianizacja wschodnich pbrzeży Bałtyku*, in: *Chryścianizacja „Młodszej Europy”*, red. J. Dobosz, J. Strzelczyk, M. Matla, Poznań 2016, p. 179.
17. LECUB, no 4; L. Arbusow, *Grundriß...*, op. cit., p. 9; P. Johansen, *Nordische Mission, Revals Gründung und die Schwedensiedlung in Estland*, Stockholm 1951 (Kungliga Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademiens Handlingar, 74), pp. 90ff.
18. LECUB, no 5.
19. LECUB, no 5; I. Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *Papieże i krucjaty...*, op. cit., pp. 61ff.
20. LECUB no 6 – "[...] qualiter [...] Fulco, Estonum episcopus, inopia et paupertate prematur, et ad convertendum gentem illam sui episcopatus, quae Christianae fidei ignara est [...] monemus [...] quatinus de bonis, a Deo vobis collatis, praedicti

the tribe to be converted spoke a completely distinct language, a translator was found — monk Nicholas from a Norwegian monastery in Stavanger who was originally from Estonia²¹ according to the hierarchs' knowledge.

It is not known how the new bishop intended to travel to the territories of his mission. He should certainly have travelled to the bishop Eskil in Denmark first and then he probably wanted to travel with the Danish crusaders to Sweden where he would have been joined by Swedes willing to participate in the expedition. It is quite unlikely that he could count on the support of the Danish king Valdemar I who had been in conflict with archbishop Eskil not long before. We also need to remember about Denmark's great military effort in connection with the conquest of the island Rügen (1169). The issue of the bull of indulgence to recruit participants for the mission also suggests that they did not hope for the king's support. It is likely that in such circumstances a merchant ship was rented — something German crusaders did later on their expedition to Riga, only in this case the ship would have been probably rented in Visby, Gotland instead of Lübeck.

We have no information about the first Livonian mission supported by papal authority (we may even doubt whether it took place at all). Beside three undated bulls of pope Alexander III²² and two thanks letters to the subsequent Danish archbishop Absalon²³ for unspecified support granted to the bishop of Estonians, there is no data to make any conclusions about the course of the mission. If we assume, however, that the mission did take place, the sea voyage could have happened in 1172 at the earliest — provided enough participants had been recruited by Easter. The 'ante quem' date is 1177 when archbishop Eskil resigned and moved to Clairvaux where he lived until the end of his days as a simple monk.²⁴ It is unlikely that Fulco — even if he had made it to Estonia — decided upon a single stay lasting longer than one sailing season (spring-early autumn). The papal bull guaranteed only a year of indulgence for participation in the crusade and only death resulted in plenary indulgence. It is unlikely he had decided to spend the

episcopi inopiam sublevantes, ei manum auxilii porrigatis et caritatis solatia divini amoris intuitu ministretis [...]".

21. LECUB, no 4.

22. LECUB, nos 4–6 — displayed in Tusculum with dates limited to day and month (9, 11 and 17 September), therefore the estimated dates are rather 1171 than 1172; I. Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *Papieże i krucjaty...*, op. cit., pp. 60ff.

23. LECUB, nos 7–8.

24. E. Jørgensen, *Eskil*, op. cit., p. 441.

winter and even less so that he stayed for several years in a pagan country without any military protection. Not long before the discussed mission, the expedition of Saint Henry, the bishop of Uppsala, to Finland ended tragically for him after he decided to stay there once King Eric had left for Sweden.²⁵ We know that Fulco did not die a martyr as he had dreamed²⁶ because he stayed in Denmark in 1180. His name appears in the bull of Alexander III, confirming the island of Rügen as belonging to the Danish diocese of Roskilde.²⁷ It can be assumed that Fulco intended to conduct a peaceful mission, attempting to convert Estonian pagans, using the translator accompanying his expedition. The presence of possibly armed crusaders was necessary due to the danger of encountering pirates at sea, and after reaching Estonia they could serve as personal guards of bishop and other clerics. It would have been madness to try to make the natives convert to Christianity by force, for it could have ended with the cruel death of all the members of the mission — both lay and clergy — because of lack of acquaintance with the local social and geographical circumstances and their relative small number. The memory of his mission did not make it to any Danish chronicles or annals²⁸ written in that period. More Danish missions in the form of crusades targeting Estonia and organized this time by kings with a large

25. Cf. J. Strzelczyk, *Z kupcami nad Dźwinę...* op. cit., p. 277; T. Lindkvist, *Crusades and Crusading Ideology in the Political History of Sweden, 1140–1500*, in: *Crusade and Conversion...*, op. cit., pp. 122ff, A. Waško, *Crusades in Finland and the Crusade Ideology in Sweden from the 12th to 14th Centuries*, "Quaestiones Mediaevi Novae" 18 (2013), pp. 261ff; Heinrich, in: *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, Bd. 4, München–Zürich 1989, col. 2087; A. Maliniemi, *Henrik*, in: *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder fra vikingetid til reformationstid*, bd. 6, København 1961, col. 451ff.
26. LECUB, no 3 — "[...] quam duram provinciam sortitus sit [...] potius mortem semper expectans quam longam vitam [...]".
27. *Repertorium diplomaticum Regni danici mediævalis: Fortegnelse over Danmarks breve fra middelalderen*, Bd. 1 (1085–1350), udg. K. Erslev, København 1894, no 36; A. Brackmann, *Papsturkunden des Nordens, Nord- und Mittel-Deutschlands. Zweiter Bericht der Wedekindschen Preisstiftung für Deutsche Geschichte*, „Nachrichten von der königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse“, (1904), no 14.
28. L. Arbusow, *Grundriß...*, op. cit., p. 9, believes Fulco organized three missions but the claim is not supported by any sources; P. Johansen, *Nordische Mission*, op. cit., p. 92, believes that Fulco could have been in the vicinity of Reval (currently Tallin) and the proof of his stay would be the patrocinium of Saint Olaf's parish church, possibly serving earlier as merchants' chapel. Danish annals mention the expeditions to Finland (1191) and Estonia (1197) — *Ex Annalibus Waldemarianis* —, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores*, Bd. 29, Hg. G. Waitz, Leipzig 1925, p. 178, but there is only one sentence about it.

fleet at their disposal and supported by another archbishop of Lund Anders Sunesen did not happen until early 13th century.²⁹

The beginning of 1180s marks the start of activity of missionaries from northern Germany at the mouth of Daugava River. The first to arrive was Meinhard, an Augustinian monk from Segeberg monastery in Holstein, who had arrived at the Daugava River as a man of advanced age accompanying the merchants, probably as their chaplain providing spiritual care in the pagan country and later he decided to stay there for good ca. 1184.³⁰ Meinhard obtained permission from the duke of Polotsk to pursue his mission. At the time the land was dependent from Polotsk as its tribute dependency. He ordered the construction of the first church in Livonia in a Livonian village Uexküll.³¹ A while later he brought in the masons from Gotland³² and built – partly from his own funds – two stone shelter castles for his Livonian neighbours from Uexküll and nearby Holm in exchange for their promise of being baptized, the one which the majority of them never fulfilled.³³ In 1186 Meinhard was ordained in Bremen as the bishop of Uexküll³⁴ and until his death in 1196 he was trying to ensure that 'perfidious' Livonians fulfilled the promise to become baptized – to no avail. He was aware that he needed local recruits to effectively evangelize and for that reason he bought boys out of slavery and sent them away to Germany – probably to his home monastery in Segeberg – to train them as bilingual priests who

29. Cf. T.K. Nielsen, *The Missionary Man...*, op. cit., pp. 103ff.

30. Meinhard and his activities are the main subject of the first part of Henry of Latvia's chronicle – HCL, cap. I, 1–14 and a part of *Arnoldi chronica Slavorum*, Hg. G.H. Pertz, Hannover 1868 (*Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum*, 16), (hereinafter referred to as: ACS) pp. 212ff (lib. V, 30); L. Arbusow, *Grundriß...*, op. cit., pp. 13ff; H. von zur Mühlen, *Livland...*, op. cit., pp. 31ff; M. Hellmann, *Bischof Meinhard und die Eigenart der kirchlichen Organisation in den baltischen Ländern*, in: *Gli inizi del cristianesimo...*, op. cit., pp. 19ff; M. Hellmann, *Die Anfänge christlicher...*, op. cit., pp. 19ff; M. Hellmann, *Meinhard*, in: *Neue deutsche Biographie*, Bd. 16, Berlin 1990, pp. 665ff; G. Manteuffel, *Zarysy z dziejów...*, op. cit., pp. 15ff; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio...*, op. cit., pp. 57ff; I. Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *Papieże i krucjaty...*, op. cit., pp. 65ff; J. Strzelczyk, *Z kupcami nad Dźwinę...*, op. cit., pp. 279ff; M. Biskup, *M. Biskup, Uformowanie...*, op. cit., p. 10; T. Kala, *The Incorporation...*, op. cit., pp. 8ff; J. Nikodem, *Chryścianizacja...*, op. cit., p. 179.

31. HCL, cap. I, 3.

32. HCL, cap. I, 6

33. HCL, cap. I, 5–9.

34. HCL, cap. I, 8; 1193 Pope Celestine III called Meinhard *Livoniae gentis episcopus* – LECUB, no 11, which implies he probably was like Fulco the people's (*natio*) bishop and not the diocese's.

would be able to explain to neophytes the principles of the Christian faith in their own language.³⁵ The number of people who accompanied Meinhard is not known, only his general 'familiae'³⁶ is mentioned. His associates included 'clerici'³⁷ and even soldiers. The chronicler Henry of Latvia who was – according to 'Arnoldi chronica Slavorum'³⁸ – the only source of information about Meinhard's service, mentioned crossbowmen ('ballistari') once.³⁹ It is certain that already in Meinhard's time single Cistercians had arrived in Livonia. Among them was Theodorich, later bishop of Estonia⁴⁰ who carried out – without much success – a mission in the area of Treyden castle while maintaining close contact with bishop Meinhard. We do not know the date of the post's foundation (it most likely happened after Meinhard had been ordained as bishop in 1186 during his stay in Bremen where he had a chance to recruit volunteers to travel to unknown lands).⁴¹ Toward the end of his life disappointed Meinhard even considered going back to Germany as he had not been very successful and it was difficult for him to withstand harassment from Livonians. He was also worried about his personal security as Livonians had threatened to kill him.⁴² Such threats could be fulfilled and almost go unpunished once seasonal merchants had left for Gotland. Only then did the bishop decide to try to obtain the bull of indulgence⁴³ as a tool to recruit volunteers in Germany and in the all Scandinavian countries to go on a crusade to the Daugava River territories. The mission was carried out by the monk Theoderich⁴⁴ mentioned before. The

35. HCL, cap. X, 7; HCL, cap. XV, 9.

36. HCL, cap. I, 9.

37. HCL, cap. I, 11 – probably the members of Üexküll Cathedral chapter and clericals (Cistercians) arriving at the Daugava River since he had the Pope's permission to take them in – LECUB, no 11; I. Fönnesberg-Schmidt, *Papieże i krucjaty...*, op. cit., p. 66.

38. ACS, pp. 212ff (lib. V, 30).

39. HCL, cap. I, 6.

40. HCL, cap. I, 10; F. G. von Bunge, *Livland, die Wiege der deutschen Weihbischöfe*, Leipzig 1875, pp. 15ff; P. Johansen, *Nordische Mission*, op. cit., pp. 94ff; F. Benninghoven, *Der Orden der Schwertbrüder. Fratres Militiae Christi de Livonia*, Köln 1965 (Ostmitteleuropa in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart, 9), pp. 20ff; M. Hellmann, *Die Anfänge christlicher...*, op. cit., p. 29; I. Fönnesberg-Schmidt, *Papieże i krucjaty...*, op. cit., p. 66; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio...*, op. cit., pp. 64ff.

41. M. Hellmann, *Bischof Meinhard und die Eigenart...*, op. cit., p. 24.

42. HCL, cap. I, 11; M. Hellmann, *Die Anfänge christlicher...*, op. cit., p. 30.

43. HCL, cap. I, 12; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio fidei...*, op. cit., pp. 75ff.

44. HCL, cap. I, 12; F. Benninghoven, *Der Orden der Schwertbrüder...*, op. cit., p. 2; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio fidei...*, op. cit., pp. 76ff.

bishop himself did not live long enough to see reinforcements arrive as he passed away from an illness in 1196.⁴⁵

His successor, a Cistercian monk Berthold, the abbot of Loccum⁴⁶ monastery, ordained in Bremen, quickly gave up on peaceful missionary methods of his predecessor. When he arrived at the location of his bishop's service and realized that Livonians were neither willing to be baptized nor to keep the faith, he quickly travelled back to Germany and then on to Rome to obtain another bull of the crusade.⁴⁷ Once he had recruited a unit of crusaders, he returned to the Daugava River in early summer of 1198.⁴⁸ The Livonians, however, refused to give him up their sons as hostages, which was supposed to guarantee their keeping the faith. They believed that Berthold ought to send the soldiers back to Germany and try to convert those interested in the new faith only using the power of his own example instead of using force to make anyone promise to be baptized.⁴⁹ Soon a battle took place and the bishop was killed in the first fight with the natives.⁵⁰ He was buried next to Meinhard in the church in Üexküll.⁵¹ Livonians from the area wanted to convince the crusaders to leave Livonia as soon as possible and so they promised to be baptized and requested a new bishop.⁵² When the

45. HCL, cap. I, 14; M. Hellmann, *Die Anfänge christlicher...*, op. cit., pp. 33ff.
46. HCL, cap. II, 1; ACS, p. 214 (lib. V, 30); F.G.von Bunge, *Livland, die Wiege...*, op. cit., pp. 12ff; F. Benninghoven, *Der Orden der Schwertbrüder...*, op. cit., pp. 26ff; B.U.Hucker, *Der Zisterzienserabt Bertold, Bischof von Livland, und der erste Livlandkreuzzug*, in: *Studien über die Anfänge der Mission in Livland*, Hg. M. Hellmann, Sigmaringen 1989 (Vorträge und Forschungen, Sonderband 37), pp. 39ff; G. Gnegel-Waitschies, *Bischof Albert von Riga. Ein Bremer Domherr als Kirchenfürst im Osten (1199–1229)*, Hamburg 1958, pp. 42ff; J. Nikodem, *Chrystianizacja...*, op. cit., pp. 180ff.
47. HCL, cap. II, 2–3; B. U. Hucker, *Der Zisterzienserabt Bertold...*, op. cit., pp. 46ff; I. Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *Papieže i krucjaty...*, op. cit., pp. 67ff; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio fidei...*, op. cit., pp. 79ff
48. HCL, cap. II, 4; ACS, pp. 214ff (lib. V, 30).
49. HCL, cap. II, 4–5; M. Dygo, *Mission und Kreuzzug in den Anfängen der Christianisierung Livlands*, in: *Kryžiaus karų epocha Baltijos regiono tautų istorinėje sąmonėje: mokslinių straipsnių rinkinys*, sudarė R. R. Trimonienė, R. Jurgaitis, Šiauliai 2007, pp. 69ff; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio fidei...*, op. cit., pp. 83ff.
50. HCL, cap. II, 6; ACS, p. 215 (lib. V, 30).
51. HCL, cap. XXIX, 5; H. von Bruiningk, *Die Frage der Verehrung der ersten livländischen Bischöfe als Heilige*, „Sitzungsberichte der Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Alterthumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands“ 1902, pp. 10ff; L. Arbusew, *Grundriß...*, op. cit., p. 35; B. U. Hucker, *Der Zisterzienserabt Bertold...*, op. cit., pp. 51ff.
52. HCL, cap. II, 8.

fleet had left – sensing their advantage over the few remaining priests – they decided to force them to leave under the threat of death⁵³ once the new sailing season started.

It is not surprising in this context that the next bishop, Albert – a canon of the Bremen chapter, ordained in early 1199 – implemented another tactic.⁵⁴ Prior to his arrival in Livonia he visited the king of Denmark and the archbishop of Lund to obtain their acceptance or at least neutrality towards his future actions.⁵⁵ In Magdeburg he won the support of the king Philip of Swabia and successfully called for a crusade to Livonia. The crusade gained the same status as the crusades in defence of the Holy Land (the wealth of Livonian pilgrims was to have special protection and they were to be granted plenary indulgence).⁵⁶ Bishop Albert arrived in the land of his service for the first time after the opening of the sailing season in 1200 alongside the fleet of 23 merchant ships.⁵⁷

This event marked the beginning of his pontificate lasting almost 30 years. The bishop became the founder of a German colony at the Daugava River – in 1201 he founded the town of Riga⁵⁸ so as to meet the canon law requirements for metropolitan dioceses to be seated in towns and not villages such as Üexküll.

He initiated the construction of his bishop's cathedral⁵⁹ and the town itself which he had founded according to the law of Gotland's Visby.⁶⁰ He introduced a policy of feudal investiture, laying ground for his territorial

53. HCL, cap. II, 9–10.

54. HCL, cap. III, 1; ASC, pp. 215ff (lib. V, 30); I. Fannesberg-Schmidt, *Papieże i krucjaty...*, op. cit., pp. 91ff; F. G. von Bunge, *Livland, die Wiege...*, op. cit., pp. 13ff; L. Arbusow, *Grundriß...*, op. cit., pp. 15ff; E. Christiansen, *Krucjaty...*, op. cit., pp. 135ff; J. Nikodem, *Chrystianizacja...*, op. cit., pp. 181ff.

55. HCL, cap. III, 2; ASC, pp. 215ff (lib. V, 30); G. Gnegel-Waitschies, *Bischof Albert...*, op. cit., pp. 50ff; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio...*, op. cit., pp. 92ff.

56. HCL, cap. III, 2; LECUB, no 12; G. Gnegel-Waitschies, *Bischof Albert...*, op. cit., pp. 54ff; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio...*, op. cit., pp. 98ff.

57. HCL, cap. IV, 1; G. Gnegel-Waitschies, *Bischof Albert...*, op. cit., pp. 50ff; E. Christiansen, *Krucjaty...*, op. cit., p. 140.

58. HCL, cap. IV, 5; HCL, V, 1; I. Fannesberg-Schmidt, *Papieże i krucjaty...*, op. cit., p. 92; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio...*, op. cit., p. 123.

59. HCL, cap. VI, 3. L. Arbusow, *Grundriß...*, op. cit., p. 17.

60. LECUB, no 20; L. Arbusow, *Grundriß...*, op. cit., p. 18; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio...*, op. cit., pp. 204ff.

rule as well as for the future bishops and archbishops of Riga.⁶¹ He led to the foundation of the first Cistercian monastery in Livonia (Dünamünde), which became a local source of recruits for evangelization work.⁶² Contrary to Meinhard he was reluctant to ask the Duke of Polotsk for permission to conduct his mission.⁶³ He paid homage of Livonia — formally christianized in 1206 — to the German king Philip of Swabia which made him into the duke of the Reich.⁶⁴ This unambiguously proved his state-founding ambitions.

Bishop Albert travelled to Germany almost every year and stayed there longer than in his diocese. Twice he did not go back to the Daugava River at all.⁶⁵ In that period he crossed Germany giving his crusade sermons⁶⁶ to recruit new crusaders. A few times he managed to convince wealthy laymen to undertake the crusade: Albert the Duke of Saxony,⁶⁷ count Albert of Orlamünde, nephew of the Danish king Valdemar II⁶⁸ or Duke Henry Bořivoj of Meklenburg.⁶⁹ In 1218 he succeeded — at a price of

61. HCL, cap. V, 1; G. Gnegel-Waitschies, *Bischof Albert...*, op. cit., pp. 48ff; I. Fannesberg-Schmidt, *Papieże i krucjaty...*, op. cit., p. 92; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio...*, op. cit., p. 153.
62. HCL, cap. VI, 3; HCL, IX, 7; L. Poelchau, *Die Geschichte des Zisterzienserklosters Dünamünde bei Riga (1205–1305)*, „Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktiner-Ordens und seiner Zweige“ 115 2004, pp. 72ff; M. Gaśowska, *Pierwotne uposażenie i gospodarka opactwa cystersów z Mons Sancti Nicolai w Inflantach w XIII w.*, in: *Klasztor w gospodarce średniowiecznej i nowożytnej*, red. M. Derwich, Wrocław 2013 (Opera ad historiam monasticam spectantia, Series I, Colloquia 9), pp. 348ff; L. Arbusow, *Grundriß...*, op. cit., p. 20; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio...*, op. cit., p. 153.
63. HCL, cap. X, 1; ASC, pp. 216ff (lib. V, 30); G. Gnegel-Waitschies, *Bischof Albert...*, op. cit., pp. 164ff.
64. HCL, cap. X, 17; G. Gnegel-Waitschies, *Bischof Albert...*, op. cit., pp. 79ff; L. Arbusow, *Grundriß...*, op. cit., pp. 22; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio...*, op. cit., pp. 159ff.
65. He did not manage to come in 1215 as he had to be in Rome for the Fourth Council of the Lateran — HCL, cap. XIX, 5, 7; in 1218 he remained in Germany to recruit a larger army of crusaders for the following year — HCL, cap. XXII, 1. See: the itinerary of bishop Albert — G. Gnegel-Waitschies, *Bischof Albert...*, op. cit., pp. 168ff; L. Arbusow, *Grundriß...*, op. cit., p. 16.
66. F. G. von Bunge, *Livland, die Wiege...*, op. cit., pp. 13ff.
67. HCL, cap. XXIII, 1; F. Benninghoven, *Der Orden der Schwertbrüder...*, op. cit., pp. 156ff.
68. HCL, cap. XXI, 1; F. W. Schirmacher, *Albrecht (Graf von Orlamünde)*, in: *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, Bd. 1, Leipzig 1875, pp. 292ff.
69. HCL, cap. XXII, 1; L. Fromm, *Heinrich Borwin I*, in: *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, Bd. 3, Leipzig 1876, p. 183; F. Amelungher, *Die Pilgerschaften zweier Herzöge*

political concessions – to convince the king of Denmark Valdemar II himself. Owing to that the king managed to conquer northern Estonia⁷⁰ founding the Danish Duchy of Estonia and incorporating it ecclesiastically into the archbishopric of Lund.⁷¹

Bishop Albert was aware that in order to achieve his aim of converting the land of Livonia, he needed to ensure constant – preferably the all year – stay of crusaders in Livonia and to threaten to use force or even actually use it if need be – if not towards the pagans and apostates themselves then at least by destroying their possessions – burning crops in the fields and robbing their goods. The crusaders had not only taken part in fighting but also helped build the city.⁷² In addition, Albert introduced the unfulfilled plan of his predecessor, that is forcing the local chieftains to give him up their sons as hostages.⁷³ It became the best guarantee of loyalty and keeping the faith by local elites, especially since it was probably long remembered that the bishop sent the first 30 hostages to Germany.⁷⁴ We can suspect that they had been raised in the Christian faith there and upon their return they were used as translators. Moreover, the bishop tried to provide recruits for his mission not only by sending boys to Germany to be educated (it is likely they included not only the hostages but also boys bought out of slavery) but also by founding the first Cistercian monastery in Dünamünde, as mentioned before. Additionally he and Theoderich von Treyden led to the foundation of the order of Livonian Brothers of the Sword (1202).⁷⁵ He rightly believed that long-term plans could not be based solely on seasonal forces of incoming crusaders, as it was uncertain how many people would decide to go on a voyage overseas or whether the political situation would

von Mecklenburg, in: F. Amelungher, *Baltische Culturstudien aus den vier Jahrhunderten (1184–1561)*, Bd. 1, Dorpat 1884, pp. 89 ff.

70. HCL, cap. XXII, 1; L. Arbusow, *Grundriß...*, op. cit., p. 31; F. Benninghoven, *Der Orden der Schwertbrüder...*, op. cit., pp. 156 ff; T. Kala, *The Incorporation...*, op. cit., pp. 9 ff; T. K. Nielsen, *The Missionary Man...*, op. cit., pp. 114 ff.
71. It finally happened in 1240 with the establishment of Reval bishopric by Valdemar II – LECUB, no 166; T. Kala, *The Incorporation...*, op. cit., p. 11.
72. HCL, cap. V, 1; HCL, cap. XI, 2.
73. HCL, cap. IV, 4; HCL, cap. IX, 2; HCL, cap. IX, 9; HCL, cap. X, 14.
74. HCL, cap. V, 1; T. K. Nielsen, *The Missionary Man...*, op. cit., p. 107, footnote 42.
75. HCL, cap. VI, 4; ASC, p. 216 (lib. V, 30); F. Benninghoven, *Der Orden der Schwertbrüder...*, op. cit., pp. 62 ff; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio...*, op. cit., pp. 120 ff.

not change or whether the port in Lübeck would not be blocked.⁷⁶ The foundation of a military order was theoretically a good idea to ensure constant military support but the bishop did not anticipate one thing – that the brothers would have their own political ambitions and strive for independence. Refusing to be passive executants of the bishop's orders already in 1207 they made him pass on to them $\frac{1}{3}$ of conquered territories where they started building their own territorial state.⁷⁷

Theoderich – the Cistercian monk mentioned before – became bishop Albert's associate. It seems he had been the most versatile participant of the Baltic missions, taking active part in them since bishop Meihard's⁷⁸ time. He went through a phase of living among the pagans in Treyden area and trying to convert them, serving as a messenger to Rome regarding bulls of indulgence⁷⁹ and in other missions ordered by Bishop Albert.⁸⁰ He participated in the foundation of the order of Brothers of the Sword,⁸¹ was the first abbot of the Cistercian monastery in Dünamünde⁸² and he took part in armed expeditions against pagans.⁸³ Finally he was ordained as bishop of Estonia with a seat in Leal.⁸⁴ He was killed by Estonians in the battle of Reval.⁸⁵ As his burial place is unknown, not even a local cult developed around him – contrary to Meinhard and Berthold.

76. HCL, cap. XXIII, 11; HCL, cap. XXIV, 4; HCL, cap. XXVIII, 1; C.S.Jensen, *Urban Life and the Crusades*, in: *Crusade and Conversion...*, op. cit., pp. 77ff.
77. HCL, cap. XI, 3; L.Arbusow, *Grundriß...*, op. cit., pp. 22ff; E.Christiansen, *Krucjaty...*, op. cit., pp. 119ff; F. Benninghoven, *Der Orden der Schwertbrüder...*, op. cit., pp. 75ff; I.Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *Papieże i krucjaty...*, op. cit., p. 92; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio...*, op. cit., pp. 162ff.
78. HCL, cap. I, 10; F.G.von Bunge, *Livland, die Wiege...*, op. cit., pp. 15ff; L.Arbusow, *Grundriß...*, op. cit., pp. 18ff; G.Gnegel-Waitschies, *Bischof Albert...*, op. cit., pp. 58ff; B.U.Hucker, *Der Zisterzienserabt Bertold...*, op. cit., pp. 48ff.
79. HCL, cap. I, 12; HCL, cap. IV, 6; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio...*, op. cit., pp. 117ff.
80. HCL, cap. VII 3; HCL, cap. X, 1–3; G. Gnegel-Waitschies, *Bischof Albert...*, op. cit., p. 66; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio...*, op. cit., pp. 135ff.
81. HCL, cap. VI, 4; F. Benninghoven, *Der Orden der Schwertbrüder...*, op. cit., pp. 39ff; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio...*, op. cit., pp. 120ff.
82. HCL, cap. VI, 3; HCL, cap. IX, 7; L. Poelchau, *Die Geschichte...*, op. cit., pp. 73ff.
83. HCL, cap. XI, 6; HCL, cap. XV, 7; HCL, cap. XX, 2; HCL, cap. XXIII, 2.
84. HCL, cap. XV, 4; LECUB, no 23; P. Johansen, *Nordische Mission...*, op. cit., pp. 102ff; T. K. Nielsen, *The Missionary Man...*, op. cit., pp. 112ff; B. Bombi, *Novella plantatio...*, op. cit., pp. 206ff.
85. HCL, cap. XXIII, 2, 11; L. Arbusow, *Grundriß...*, op. cit., pp. 31ff.

It seems that bishop Albert deserves not so much the name of the apostle but more of the statesman,⁸⁶ since – contrary to Meinhard and Theoderich von Treyden – his day-to-day evangelization efforts had been on a modest local scale whereas his diplomatic activities had a European dimension. He did not succeed, however, in elevating the status of the bishopric of Riga to archbishopric. It finally happened almost fifteen years after his death.⁸⁷ His greatest achievement was the inclusion of Livonia into the Latin European civilization – the success neither destroyed by the victory of Lutheran Reformation in the first half of the 16th century nor by Livonia's incorporation into the Tsardom of Russia after the Great Northern War in early 18th century. It needs to be stressed, however, that native people, who still had been called 'rustici' or 'neophytes' in the final period of the Middle Ages, remained hermetic with their language differences and stayed indifferent to the apostles' efforts for centuries.

86. G. Gnegel-Waitschies, *Bischof Albert...*, op. cit., pp. 162ff.

87. LECUB, no 188; L. Arbusow, *Grundriß...*, op. cit., p. 43.

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Abstract

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The Apostles of medieval Livonia

(until the beginning of 13th Century)

Keywords:

Livonia, Baltic
crusades,
missionary bishop,
christianization,
conversion,
Daugava.

Livonia, encompassing the area of today's Latvia and Estonia, was one of the last regions of Northern Europe to be incorporated into the Christian/Latin civilization. Its direct neighbourhood with Ruthenian duchies, which observed the Eastern Christian rite, did not contribute to the earlier conversion. It was only after late 12th century missions, organized independently of each other by the Danish Church in the form of a venture by Cistercian friar Fulco, consecrated as the Estonian bishop ca 1171–1180, as well as a grassroots – at least in its initial phase – initiative of Augustine friar Meinhard of the Segeberg monastery in Holstein (ca 1184–1196), first bishop of Üxküll, and Cistercian friar Theodoric, active in the vicinity of Treiden (ca 1186–1202), the first abbot of Dünamünde monastery (1205–1211) and finally bishop of Estonia (1211–1219) and their successors – Cistercian friar Berthold (1197–1198), the second bishop of Üxküll and most importantly Albert, canon of the Bremen Chapter, founder of Riga and its first bishop (1199–1229) culminated with the conquest and subsequent christianisation of Livonia. They can undoubtedly be called apostles of the Barbarian Europe, although in the case of Fulco it not clearly confirmed whether his quest took place in reality. In the case of others we may speak of an initially peace mission, as attempted conversions were undertaken by setting an example to follow and doing favours to local population, in exchange for which the beneficiaries were obliged to undergo baptism. When such tactics failed to deliver significant effects, armed crusades were organized, as a result of which the entire Livonia was formally converted to Christianity by the end of the 13th century.

Abstrakt

Maja Gąssowska

Apostołowie średniowiecznych Inflant

(do początku XIII w.)

Inflanty obejmujące tereny obecnej Łotwy i Estonii zostały włączone w krąg chrześcijańskiej cywilizacji łacińskiej jako jedno z ostatnich obszarów północnej Europy. Ich bezpośrednie sąsiedztwo z ruskimi księstwami, wyznaczającymi chrześcijaństwo w obrządku wschodnim nie przyczyniło się do ich wcześniejszej konwersji. Dopiero rozpoczęte w drugiej połowie XII w. misje, organizowane niezależnie od siebie przez Kościół duński w postaci przedsięwzięcia francuskiego cystersa Fulco, wyświęconego na biskupa Estończyków (ok. 1171–1180), jak również oddolnej – przynajmniej w początkowej fazie – inicjatywy augustiańskiego mnicha Meinharda z klasztoru w Segeberg w Holszynie (1211–1219), pierwszego biskupa Üxküll, i cystersa Teodoryka, działającego w okolicach Treiden (ok. 1186–1202), pierwszego opata klasztoru w Dünamünde (1205–1211) i późniejszego biskupa Estonii (1211–1219) oraz ich następców – cystersa Bertholda (1197–1198), drugiego biskupa Üxküll oraz przede wszystkim Alberta, kanonika kapituły bremeńskiej, założyciela miasta Rygi i pierwszego biskupa Rygi (1199–1229) zakończyły się podbojem i formalną chrystianizacją Inflant. Bez wątplenia wszystkich ich można nazwać apostołami barbarzyńskiej Europy, chociaż w przypadku Fulco brak jest jednoznacznego potwierdzenia, że jego wyprawa faktycznie doszła do skutku. W przypadku pozostałych początkowo mamy do czynienia z misją pokojową. Starano się nawracać mocą przykładu i czynienia przysług miejscowej ludności, w zamian za co zobowiązano obdarowywanych do przyjęcia chrztu. Gdy taktyka ta przez ponad dekadę nie odniosła większych efektów, przystąpiono do organizowania zbrojnych krucjat, dzięki którym cały obszar został formalnie schryścianizowany do końca XIII w.

Słowa kluczowe:

Inflanty, krucjaty bałtyckie, biskup misyjny, chrystianizacja, konwersja, Dźwina.

