

Inventing Livonia: The Name and Fame of a New Christian Colony on the Medieval Baltic Frontier

von
Marek Tamm

“No natural phenomenon has ‘meaning’,
only signs (including words) have meaning.”
Mikhail M. Bakhtin¹

Introduction: what does the “invention of Livonia” mean?

The thirteenth century witnessed the emergence of a new region – Livonia – on the mental map of Latin Christendom.² Even though the earliest written reports of a region called Livonia come from the last decade of the twelfth century, it wasn’t until the mid-thirteenth century, when the first more comprehensive surveys of the new Christian colony were completed in Western Europe, that the territory located on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea acquired a tentative shape and character. Livonia is a classic example of the performative power of an act of naming: although geographically, the place had of course existed and been inhabited for ages untold by various peoples who did not lack contact with their neighbours across the sea, it became a region with its own externally defined identity only after the first Christian missionaries and conquerors had given it a name.³

“Inventing” is a term belonging to the vocabulary of social constructionism. Social constructionists emphasise the historically and culturally specific

¹ MIKHAIL M. BAKHTIN: The Problem of the Text in Linguistics, Philology, and the Human Sciences, in: DEM: Speech Genres and Other Late Essays, Austin 1986 (University of Texas Press Slavic Series, 8), pp. 103-130, here p. 113.

² This article was written under the auspices of the ESF EuroCORECODE programme’s grant “Cuius Regio”, supported by the Estonian Science Foundation. The research was also supported by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory) and grant no. 7129 awarded by the Estonian Science Foundation. All translations from Latin, Finnish and German are mine unless otherwise noted.

³ The performative power of naming was first highlighted by JOHN LANGSHAW AUSTIN: How to do Things with Words, Oxford 1962 (The William James Lectures, 1955). On a more general plane, the works of the Tartu-Moscow school of semiotics have been path-breaking in the field of name semiotics; see for example JURI LOTMAN, BORIS USPENSKIJ: Myth – Name – Culture, in: Semiotica 22 (1978), pp. 211-233. The semiotics’ research convincingly shows that naming not only describes reality but creates it – it is not so much a semantic as a pragmatic phenomenon.

nature of categories and concepts applied to the world, defending the position that no name or description of anything can ever be natural or essential.⁴ However, the term “invention” must not be understood here as referring to the creation of something *ex nihilo* but rather to the rethinking of something already extant, providing it with a new meaning. As John Howe and Michael Wolfe have aptly pointed out recently, “[i]n Latin the original sense of ‘invent’, from *invenire*, to come upon, was discovery more than devising.”⁵ The constructionist approach to problem posing places the present paper in line with a whole number of earlier works analysing the construction of a certain concept of a given geographical region at a given period of time. Without any pretence at exhaustiveness, one could name studies about inventing America, Australia, Canada, Eastern Europe, Europe, India, Ireland, Japan, New England, and Siberia, the overwhelming majority of which have been made over the last couple of decades.⁶ Essentially, these studies are linked by nothing but the conviction that all the examined regions have, at some point or other, gone through important shifts of meaning that can be studied historically, either through travel books, history writing, fiction, or other sources. The methodological aim of both these studies and the present article is aptly summed up by Larry Wolff: “Obviously, the lands of Eastern Europe were not in themselves invented or fictitious [...]. The project of invention was not merely a matter of endowing those real lands with invented or mythological attributes, though such endowment certainly flourished in the eighteenth century.

⁴ Probably the best critical introduction into the theory of social constructionism is IAN HACKING: *The Social Construction of What?*, Cambridge/Mass. – London 1999. But see also VIVIEN BURR: *Social Constructionism*, London – New York 2003; ANDY LOCK, TOM STRONG: *Social Constructionism: Sources and Stirrings in Theory and Practice*, Cambridge 2010.

⁵ JOHN HOWE, MICHAEL WOLFE: Introduction, in: *Inventing Medieval Landscapes*, ed. by IDEM, Gainesvilles et al. 2002, pp. 1-10, here p. 2.

⁶ JOSÉ RABASA: *Inventing America. Spanish Historiography and the Formation of Eurocentrism*, Norman et al. 1993 (Oklahoma Project for Discourse and Theory, 11); RICHARD WHITE: *Inventing Australia. Images and Identity 1688-1980*, Sydney 1981 (The Australian Experience, 3); SUZANNE ZELLER: *Inventing Canada. Early Victorian Science and the Idea of a Transcontinental Nation*, Toronto 1987; LARRY WOLFF: *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of Enlightenment*, Stanford 1994; GERARD DELANTY: *Inventing Europe. Idea, Identity, Reality*, London 1995; RALPH J. CRANE: *Inventing India. A History of India in English-Language Fiction*, New York 1992; DECLAN KIBERD: *Inventing Ireland. The Literature of the Modern Nation*, London 1995; WILLIAM CHAPMAN: *Inventing Japan. The Making of a Postwar Civilization*, New York 1991; IAN BURUMA: *Inventing Japan, 1853-1964*, New York 2003 (A Modern Library Chronicles Book, 12); DONA BROWN: *Inventing New England. Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century*, Washington 1995; MARK BASSIN: *Inventing Siberia: Visions of the Russian East in the Early Nineteenth Century*, in: *American Historical Review* 96 (1991), pp. 763-794.

[...] The work of invention lies in the synthetic association of lands, which drew upon fact and fiction, to produce the general rubric of Eastern Europe.”⁷

Thus, when speaking in this article about the invention of Livonia, it is not meant that the Latin authors of the first half of the thirteenth century actually dreamt up a new region on the eastern coasts of the Baltic, but rather that in the Latin writing of the period a new image of this region evolved, which needed to be integrated into Christian discourse. There are three aspects to this image-making process that I am especially interested in: (1) How did the name of the new region, Livonia, come about; (2) How is this new region described in early Latin texts; and (3) How was information concerning Livonia integrated into the religious and geographical notions held previously. Throughout the study, the processual nature of inventing Livonia – i.e., the fact that it is not only the results of the construction that matter, but also its course and character – should emphatically be kept in mind.⁸

Having said that, I want immediately to specify that the inventing of Livonia was by no means completed by the middle of the thirteenth century; this temporal limit is set only to this article. Rather, the inventing of Livonia went on at full swing up to at least the sixteenth century, when it becomes possible to speak about the region being distinctly consolidated on maps and in history books, as well as – if it is permissible to draw this conclusion so casually – in the heads of the learned elite.⁹ This is why I call the first half of the thirteenth century the “formative moment” in the process of inventing Livonia – the moment when the first reports were written in the *lingua franca* of Christendom, reports that often lingered on and continued to characterise the region in later times. The term “formative moment” is borrowed from Erik Ringmar, who defines these moments as follows: “Moments when old identities break down and new ones are created in their places; times when

⁷ WOLFF, *Inventing Eastern Europe* (as in footnote 6), p. 356.

⁸ It must also be noted that I am not interested here in how various power structures, administrative order, political divisions, etc. – that is, all the things that could tentatively be called ‘the making of Livonia’ – took shape in the conquered territory. On these issues, see most recently, for instance, ANDRIS ŠNĒ: *The Emergence of Livonia: The Transformations of Social and Political Structures in the Territory of Latvia During the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, in: *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, ed. by ALAN V. MURRAY, Farnham et al. 2009, pp. 53-71 (true, some of Šnē’s views are disputable).

⁹ On the character and reception of the image of Livonia in early modern ages, see JUHAN KREEM: *The Image of Livonia by Humanists: Ruling Motives and Developments in General Literature from Aeneas Silvius to Sebastian Münster*, unpublished MA-dissertation, Central European University in Budapest, 1994. See also IDEM: *Sebastian Münster and “Livonia illustrata”. Information, Sources and Editing*, in: *Festschrift für Vello Helk zum 75. Geburtstag. Beiträge zur Verwaltungs-, Kirchen- und Bildungsgeschichte des Ostseeraumes*, ed. by ENN KÜNG and HELINA TAMMAN, Tartu 1998, pp. 149-169.

new stories are being told, submitted to audiences, and new demands for recognition presented.”¹⁰

Likewise, it was certainly not a unified image of Livonia that took shape in the thirteenth century; rather, we witness here the construction of multiple, contingent, and conflicting “Livonias”, each geared toward the respective needs of different audiences and social groups. Recognising this, however, does not preclude the making of certain generalisations, particularly if we regard these notions as mediating specific cultural codes and transmitting textual traditions, without forgetting the particular circumstances of the context in which they were written. The nature of, and coding used in, the presentation of information about Livonia’s history, environment, inhabitants, and their customs, are of equal interest for me as the information itself.¹¹

Naming Livonia

Robert Rees Davies, who has thoroughly studied the ethnonyms of the peoples of the British Isles in medieval times, has made an important observation: “Peoples are artificial creations; they assume a particular shape and definition according to time and circumstance. There is no single formula that adequately covers their relationship with political structures and territorial area. In the process of identification – both self-identification and identification by others – the acquiring of an accepted name and the definition of that name is one important phase.”¹² Seen in this light, the emergence and consoli-

¹⁰ ERIK RINGMAR: *Identity, Interest, and Action. A Cultural Explanation of Sweden’s Intervention in the Thirty Years’ War*, Cambridge 1996 (Cambridge Cultural Social Studies, 68), p. 83.

¹¹ Jeffrey J. Cohen, who has studied the twelfth-thirteenth century descriptions of the inhabitants of the British Isles, characterizes his methodological position exactly as I understand it here: “I do not mean to imply that these manifold elements composed some unified or uniform discourse. Rather, in identifying the particles from which collectivity was typically assembled, and in sketching the general parameters within which community could be constructed, I am very much aware that individual writers often displayed a great deal of creativity. [...] Nonetheless it seems to me useful to examine what many conceptualizations of group commonality broadly shared, what acts of separation such categorizations were built upon, and what recalcitrant impurities such taxonomies denied.” JEFFREY JEROME COHEN: *Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain: On Difficult Middles*, New York – Houndmills 2006 (The New Middle Ages, 67), p. 13. Cf. also LUIGI DE ANNA: *Conoscenza e immagine della Finlandia e del Settentrione nella cultura classico-medievale*, Turku 1988 (Turun Yliopiston julkaisuja, Sarja B, 180). De Anna has also tried to theoretically reflect on his empirical research, see IDEM: *Vieraiden kansojen kirjallisesta kuvasta [On the Written Image of Foreign Peoples]*, in: *Mediaevalia Fennica*, ed. by CHRISTIAN KRÖTZL, Helsinki 1991 (Historiallinen arkisto, 96), pp. 21-33.

¹² R. R. DAVIES: *The Peoples of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400: II. Names, Boundaries and Regnal Solidarities*, in: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series, 5 (1995), pp. 1-21, here p. 20. See also JEFFREY JEROME COHEN: *Introduction: Infinite*

dition of the name "Livonia" is of key importance in the invention process of the new Christian colony. Nowadays it is generally known that Livonia derived its name from the Livs – the first ethnic group the newcomers came across there.¹³ It may be recalled here that the first Christian missions were established at Uexküll (Latv. Ikšķile), Holme (Latv. Mārtiņsala), and Riga, all located within the region inhabited by the Livs.¹⁴ Thus it would seem that as a name, Livonia is a synecdoche: one ethnos was made to represent all the ethnic groups inhabiting the region.

The origin of the name "Livs" has long been discussed, but even today it cannot conclusively be said to have been the autonym of the Livs, or to significantly predate the Christian conquest. The most inventive hypotheses as to the antiquity of the name were, in accord with the *Zeitgeist*, made in the nineteenth century. In 1816, for example, Woldemar von Ditmar (1794-1826) published in Heidelberg a Latin inquiry into the origins of the name Livonia, in which he interprets the name *Leuonoi* mentioned by Ptolemy as a reference

Realms, in: *Cultural Diversity in the British Middle Ages: Archipelago, Island, England*, ed. by IDEM, New York 2008 (The New Middle Ages, 16), pp. 1-16, here pp. 4-6.

¹³ This view has been known in historiography at least since the second edition of Balthasar Russow's "Chronicle of Livonia" (1584): "Lifflandt hesst den Namen averkamen von dem Liven, welchere olde Völcker unde Invaner disses Landes allewege gewesen unde och noch sint." (BALTHASAR RUSSOW: *Chronica der Prouintz Lyfflandt*, in: *Scriptores rerum Livonicarum*, vol. 2, Riga – Leipzig 1848, pp. 1-157, here p. 9). This view was immediately accepted both by Dionysius Fabricius in his "Brief Surveys of the History of Livonia" (c. 1610), and by Christian Kelch in his "Livonian History" (1695). See DIONYSIUS FABRICIUS: *Livonicae historiae compendiosa series*, in: *Scriptores rerum Livonicarum*, vol. 2, pp. 428-510, here p. 439; CHRISTIAN KELCH: *Liefländische Historia, Oder Kurtze Beschreibung der Denckwürdigsten Kriegs- und Friedens-Geschichte Esth- Lief- und Lettlandes*, Reval 1695, pp. 1-3. By the eighteenth century, that view seems to have become a platitude, see for example FRIEDRICH KONRAD GADEBUSCH: *Livländische Bibliothek nach alphabetischer Ordnung, erster Theil*, Riga 1777, pp. 4-5: "Die Deutschen, welche im zwölften Jahrhundert hierher kamen, funden zuerst die Liven. Sie nenneten dieses Land daher natürlicher Weise das Land der Liven oder Livland."

¹⁴ On the early missionary activities in Livonia, see most recently CARSTEN SELCH JENSEN: *The Nature of the Early Missionary Activities and Crusades in Livonia, 1185-1201*, in: *Medieval Spirituality in Scandinavia and Europe: A Collection of Essays in Honour of Tore Nyberg*, ed. by LARS BISGAARD et al., Odense 2001 (Odense University Studies in History and Social Sciences, 234), pp. 121-137; PEEP P. REBANE: *From Fulco to Theoderic. The Changing Face of the Livonian Mission*, in: *Muinasaja loojangust omariikluse läveni. Pühendusteos Sulev Vahtre 75. sünnipäevaks*, ed. by ANDRES ANDRESEN, Tartu 2001, pp. 37-67; NICOLAS BOURGEOIS: *Les Cisterciens et la croisade de Livonie*, in: *Revue historique* 129 (2005), pp. 521-559; MARIAN DYGO: *Mission und Kreuzzug in den Anfängen der Christianisierung Livlands*, in: *Kryžiaus karų epocha Baltijos regiono tautų istorinėje sąmonėje. Mokslinių straipsnių rinkinys*, ed. by RITA REGINA et al., Šiauliai 2007, pp. 66-84; MAJA GAŚSOWSKA: *Christianisierung und Eroberung Estlands (1150-1250)*, in: *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae* 14 (2009), pp. 249-285.

to the Livs.¹⁵ His idea was approved by one of the first more systematic students of the Livs, Friedrich Kruse (1790-1866), professor of history at Dorpat (Est. Tartu) University, while the Finnish scholar Georg Zacharias Forsman (known under the pen-name of Yrjö Koskinen, 1830-1903) quickly rejected this assumption.¹⁶ Yet, even if we cannot be quite sure whether the ethnonym “Livs” was invented by Christian immigrants in the second half of the twelfth century, or if it nevertheless has a local origin¹⁷, either way there can be no doubt that only at the beginning of the thirteenth century did the name “Livs” (as well as “Livonia”) come into wider circulation.¹⁸

¹⁵ WOLDEMAR VON DITMAR: *Disquisitio de origine nominis Livoniae*, Heidelberg 1816, pp. 61-62. The same author offers a good survey of all kinds of earlier hypotheses as to the etymology of the word “Livs”, himself supporting its derivation from the Estonian and Livonian word *liiv* (sand) as the most plausible; see esp. pp. 89-104. Ditmar was not, however, the first author to link the Livs (or Livonia) to Ptolemy’s *Leuonoi*, but this idea emerged in late sixteenth century. See for instance DOMINICUS MARIUS NIGER: *Geographiae Commentariorum libri XI*, Basileae 1557, p. 240: “terra nunc Liuania dicitur cui nomen facile dedisse Leuoniorum gens magna.” Caspar Peucer’s *Chronicon Carionis* made the theory popular a few years later, see PHILIPPUS MELANTHON, CASPARUS PEUCERUS: *Chronicon Carionis expositum et auctum* [...] ab exordio mundi usque ad Carolum V. Imperatorem, Witebergae 1580, p. 304: “A Lemouijs Liuoniense sunt, quos Effluos vocant hodie. Colonos hoc esse puto Leuonarum, quos in Scandia ponit Ptolomaeus.” I am grateful to Dr. Stefan Donecker for his comments on this point. The last two quotations are taken from his PhD dissertation: STEFAN DONECKER: *Origenes Livonorum. Frühneuzeitliche Hypothesen zu Herkunft und Ursprung der “undeutschen” Livländer*, unpublished PhD dissertation, European University Institute in Florence, 2010, pp. 93 and 162.

¹⁶ FRIEDRICH KRUSE: *Ur-Geschichte des Esthnischen Volksstammes und der Königlich Russischen Ostseeprovinzen Liv-, Esth- und Curland überhaupt, bis zur Einführung der christlichen Religion*, Moskau 1846, p. 95. YRJÖ KOSKINEN: *Sur l’antiquité des Lives en Livonie*, Helsingfors 1866 (Tiré des Actes de la Société des Sciences de Finlande), p. 4. A brief historiographic survey of the study of the Livs’ history is provided by EVALD TÕNISSON: *Die Gauja-Liven und ihre materielle Kultur* (11. Jh. – Anfang 13. Jhs.), Tallinn 1974, pp. 15-28.

¹⁷ For a summary of the possible etymologies for the name Livs, see RIHO GRÜNTAL: *Livvistä liiviin. Itämeresuomalaiset etnonymit* [From Liv to Livish: Baltic-Finnish Ethnonyms], Helsinki 1997, pp. 241-253; MAUNO KOSKI: *Liivinmaan nimi* [The Name of Livonia], in: *Virittäjä* 105 (2001), pp. 530-560. On the medieval names of the Eastern Baltic region, in general, see REINHARD WITTRAM: *Baltische Lande – Schicksal und Name. Umriss der äußeren geschichtlichen Wandlungen seit dem 13. Jahrhundert im Spiegel des Landesnamens*, in: *Baltische Lande*, vol. 1: *Ostbaltische Frühzeit*, ed. by ALBERT BRACKMANN and CARL ENGEL, Leipzig 1939, pp. 480-496, here pp. 480-483.

¹⁸ Since the present article focuses on the invention of Livonia in Latin texts, I shall not discuss the scarce Slavic sources, although it must be considered likely that the *ljub*’ mentioned in Nestor’s *Chronicle* of the beginning of the twelfth century should be taken to signify the Livs. See *Povest’ vremennych let*, vol. 1, Moskva – Leningrad 1950, p. 10. As an introduction (with bibliography), see ANTI SELART: *Livland und die Rus’ im 13. Jahrhundert*, Köln et al. 2007 (*Quellen und Studien zur baltischen Geschichte*, 21), pp. 55-60. Nor do I encompass the possible interpretations as to the name of Livonia in the Scandinavian runic inscriptions and other texts; see KRISTEL ZILMER:

To the best of our present knowledge, the Livs (*Liui*) are first mentioned in narrative Latin prose by Saxo Grammaticus (c. 1150-1220) in his *Gesta Danorum*, completed around the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth centuries¹⁹; nevertheless, it is only with the “Chronicle of Henry of Livonia” (c. 1224-1227) that they gain a permanent place in history.²⁰

A first-hand witness of the conquest and Christianisation of the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea, Henry of Livonia is the first to offer a thorough-going written survey of the local peoples and their names.²¹ In most cases, particularly in the first half of his chronicle, Henry uses the name “Livs” (Lat. *Lyvones*) only for such peoples as spoke Livonian. But as Jüri Kivimäe has recently, and justly, pointed out, in the later chapters of his chronicle Henry makes increasing use of the term *Lyvonenses*, referring not specifically to the Livs as a Finno-Ugric tribe but to all the Christian inhabitants of the new colony. Describing the battle fought against the Russians at the village of Puide, in August 1219, Henry uses both the phrase *exercitus Lyvonensis* and the general term *Lyvonenses*, which should in this context be understood as a common name signifying the Rigans, the Latvians, and the Livs.²² The same meaning should be given to the phrase frequently employed in the chronicle, *episcopi Lyvonensibus* – not the bishops of the Livs, but the bishops of Livonia.²³

He Drowned in Holmr’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, Tartu 2005 (Dissertationes philologiae Scandinavicae Universitatis Tartuensia, 1; Nordistica Tartuensia, 12), pp. 172-175; TATJANA N. JACKSON: The Relations of the Eastern Baltic Lands with Scandinavia in the Light of Place-Name Study, in: Riga und der Ostseeraum. Von der Gründung 1201 bis in die Frühe Neuzeit, ed. by ILGVARS MISĀNS and HORST WERNICKE, Marburg 2005 (Tagungen zur Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung, 22), pp. 1-9. Yet at the same time the possibility cannot be excluded that an analysis of the Scandinavian sources might allow scholars to formulate some hypotheses about the spread of information recorded in Old Norse into the Latin sources.

¹⁹ SAXO GRAMMATICUS: *Gesta danorum* / *Danmarkshistorien*, vol. 1, ed. by KARSTEN FRIIS-JENSEN, København 2005, p. 518, VIII.4.1 (“Nam Sclai ac Liui Saxonumque septem milia classem auxerant”); p. 550, VIII.10.8 (“Post hec Liurum regis filius Bico captiuitate, quam sub memoratis fratribus ducebat, elapsus Iarmericum, a quo olim fratribus spolia fuerat, inurie haud oblitus accessit”).

²⁰ *Henrici Chronicon Livoniae* [later abbreviated as HCL], ed. by LEONID ARBUSOW and ALBERT BAUER, Hannover 1955 (*Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum ex MGH separatim editi*).

²¹ See most recently, JÜRI KIVIMÄE: *Henricus the Ethnographer. Reflections on Ethnicity in the Chronicle of Livonia*, in: *Crusading and Chronicle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier. A Companion to the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, ed. by MAREK TAMM et al., Farnham 2011, pp. 77-106.

²² HCL XXII.2, p. 148.

²³ HCL XXIII.10, p. 167.

Thus, Henry's chronicle offers a glimpse into the germinal stages of the transformation of the "Livonians" from the name of an ethnic group and the land it inhabited to a general name signifying the new Christian colony and its inhabitants. While using the term *Lyvones* or *gens Lyvonum*²⁴ in order to refer to the Livs, Henry employs the terms *Lyvonenses* or *gens Lyvoniensis*²⁵ to signify the Livonians (that is, all the Christians of the new colony). Still it is true that by the place name Livonia (*Lyvonia*), Henry as a rule means the habitat of only the Livs, distinguishing it clearly from the neighbouring regions of Lettgallia and Estonia.²⁶

In written documents, the name Livonia first comes up in the correspondence of the papal curia, where it very quickly became, from the viewpoint of Rome, a general term signifying the eastern coast of the Baltic.²⁷ True, the very earliest bulls display some uncertainty as to the naming and geographical placing of the new territory subjected to the Church. Tellingly, when the pope Clement III (r. 1187-1191) confirms in 1188, in a letter to the Archbishop of Bremen, the appointment of the latter's subordinate Meinhard as bishop of Uexküll, he places the new bishopric in *Ruthenia*.²⁸ But only a couple of years later, Clement III writes directly to Bishop Meinhard, now addressing him explicitly as "the Bishop of the Livonians" (resp. "of Livonia") (*episcopus Livoniensis*).²⁹ Pope Innocent III (r. 1198-1216) employs in his early letters both the terms "province of the Livonians" (*provincia Livonensis*)³⁰ and

²⁴ E.g. HCL X.15, p. 46.

²⁵ E.g. HCL XXI.1, p. 140; XXII.2, p. 148. Cf. ALAN V. MURRAY: Henry the Interpreter: Language, Orality and Communication in the Thirteenth-Century Livonian Mission, in: *Crusading and Chronicle Writing* (as in footnote 21), pp. 107-134.

²⁶ E.g. HCL X.15, p. 46.

²⁷ On the general context of the papal letters, see IBEN FONNESBERG-SCHMIDT: The Popes and the Baltic Crusades, 1147-1254, Leiden – Boston 2007 (The Northern World, 26); BARBARA BOMBI: Novella Plantatio Fidei. Missione e crociata del Nord Europa tra la fine del XII e i primi decenni del XIII secolo, Roma 2007 (Nuovi studi storici, 74).

²⁸ Liv-, Esth- und Curländisches Urkundenbuch [later abbreviated as LUB], 12 volumes in 2 series, ed. by FRIEDRICH GEORG VON BUNGE et al., Reval et al. 1853-1914, vol. 1/1, no. 10, col. 11: "Clemens episcopus, servus servorum Dei, venerabili fratri, Bremensi archiepiscopo [...]. Eapropter, venerabilis in Christo frater, tuis iustis postulationibus clementer annuimus et Ixscolanensem episcopatum, quem tu et clerus tue cure commissus, per ministerium Meynardi sacerdotis, religiosi et discreti viri, in Ruthenia, sancti Spiritus gratia donante, acquivisse dicimini". One can agree with Anti Selart's view that such a geographical reference reflects rather the Bremenian idea that Uexküll was situated in Russia, than the papal notion of the geography of the Eastern Baltic. See SELART, *Livland und die Rus'* (as in footnote 18), p. 75.

²⁹ LUB 1/1, no. 11, col. 12 (April 1190).

³⁰ Thus Innocent III, writing about Meinhard in October 1199 and describing his new see as "the province of the Livonians" (*provincia Livonensis*): "Accepimus enim, quod cum bone memorie M[einardus], episcopus Livonensis, fuisset provinciam Livonensem ingressus". LUB 1/1, no. 12, col. 14.

“church of the Livonians” (*Livonensis ecclesia*),³¹ as well as simply “Livonia” (*in partibus Livonie*).³² But the further the conquest is carried, the more frequently do the names of the other regions of the Eastern Baltic appear in the pope’s letters, and the general picture becomes more complicated, even if Livonia does, as a rule, remain the general name applied to the new Christian colony throughout the further correspondence of the curia.³³

In narrative writing, the name “Livonia” can first be encountered in a letter written by Sido, provost of the Augustinian house of Neumünster, to Gozwinus, priest of Haseldorf, in 1195/96:

“Behold, how the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts flourished in the bishopric of Lübeck and bore its fruit, how it stretched its tendril as far as the sea and how its branches reach beyond the sea into Livonia. Indeed, it was planted in Oldenburg by Vicelinus, the first bishop, and it extended its branches to Mecklenburg, through Bishop Emerhardus, contemporary of Vicelinus, and then expanded as far as Ratzeburg through Bishop Evermondus; now it has been transplanted to Livonia by Meinhard and grows to the greater honour of God.”³⁴

It is worth noting here that in this Latin text, the name of Livonia is represented in its German form, *Liflandia*. That this is not accidental, would seem to be proved by the fact that the statutes of the General Chapter of the Cistercian Order, of the year 1209, speak of Albert Bishop of Livonia (r. 1199-1229) as *episcopus Liflandren*, a title also pointing to a German form of the name.³⁵ Thus we must take it into account that even though written docu-

³¹ Ibidem.

³² *Fontes Historiae Latviae Medii Aevi*, 2 volumes, ed. by ARVEDS ŠVĀBE, Riga 1937-1940, vol. 1, no. 31, p. 21 (April 1200).

³³ A good example is provided by a letter from Pope Honorius III to Bishop Albert, of 1219: “Specialiter aitem Estoniam, Seloniam et Semigalliam, terras de novo in Livonia acquisitas”. LUB 1/1, no. 45, col. 50.

³⁴ *Epistola Sidonis ad Gozbertum plebanum de Haseldorpe*, in: *Helmoldi presbyteri Bozoviensis Cronica Slavorum*, ed. by BERNHARD SCHMEIDLER, Hannover 1937 (*Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum ex Monumentis Germaniae Historicis separatim editi*, 64), p. 245: “Ecce vinea Domini Sabaoth, quomodo in episcopatu Lubicensi effloruit et fructus faciens quomodo palmites suos extendit usque ad mare et ultra mare in Liflandiam propagines eius! Per Vicelinum quippe episcopum primum plantari in Antiquipolim cepit, deinde per Emehardum episcopum, contemporaneum suum, in Magnopolim ramos primum extendit, per Evermodum episcopum in Raceburgh dilatari cepit et nunc per Meinhardum episcopum in Liflandiam transplantata crescit in augmentum honoris Dei.” Translation BARBARA BOMBI: *Celestine III and the Conversion of the Heathen on the Baltic Frontier*, in: *Pope Celestine III (1191-1198): Diplomat and Pastor*, ed. by JOHN DORAN and DAMIAN J. SMITH, Aldershot 2008 (*Church, Faith and Culture in the Medieval West*, 5), pp. 145-158, here p. 145.

³⁵ *Statuta Capitulum Generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis*. Vol. 1: Ab anno 1116 ad annum 1220, ed. by MARIE JOSEPH CANIVEZ, Louvain 1933, p. 364 (1209/35): “Committitur abbati Fossae novae ut suggerat Domino Papae de abbate de Luena qui, occasione litterarum Domini Papae, praedicationi et vagationi intendit et domus suae providentiam omittit. Item scribat de episcopo Liflandren qui dicit se tali auctoritate Domini

ments have handed down the name of Livonia to us in its Latin form, the German form would have been concurrent parallelly in oral communication, too.

The first brief survey of missionary and military activities in the new region of Christendom is given by Arnold of Lübeck, in his “Chronicle of the Slavs”, around the year 1210.³⁶ Arnold uses just one name, Livonia, to refer to the region, which suggests that the new general term had already been more or less established. Arnold describes how, “In the year 1186 of the incarnation the venerable Meinhard founded the Episcopal see in Livonia”, optimistically summing up the situation as of the beginning of the thirteenth century: “Thus the church of God grew in Livonia through the venerable man Albert, well endowed with provosts, parishes, and monasteries.”³⁷ Examining the works of Caesarius of Heisterbach (see below for more detail), who wrote several reports about missionary work on the eastern coast of the Baltic, we see that he, too, employs only one name, Livonia, to refer to the whole region, calling all its inhabitants Livonians (*Livonenses*).³⁸

Papae fungi, quia monachos vel conversos nostros sibi liceat sine licentia abbatum assumere et secum adducere.” It is not without interest to note that the editor of the Statutes, Canivez, read *Lismorensis*, that is the bishopric of Lismore, in Ireland (IDEM, p. 364), instead of *Liflandren*. Six years later, Livonia is already spelt in the Statutes in its customary form – *Livonia*; see IDEM, p. 468 (1217/14): “De abbatibus quae sunt in Graecia, Livonia et Norvegia provideant patres abates ut ad minus in anno tertio visitentur.”

³⁶ But one should also mention an intriguing reference in the *Gesta Innocentii III* (composed around 1204-1209), the anonymous author of which asserts that the archbishop of Denmark, Anders Sunesen (d. 1228), had in the autumn of 1207, after a winter spent in Riga, sent to Pope Innocent III a detailed account of the triumphs of the Livonian Christian mission in which he optimistically claimed “that whole of Livonia had been converted to the Christian faith and no one remained there who had not accepted the sacrament of baptism, and the neighbouring peoples were, for the most part, ready for this” (“quod tota Livonia erat ad fidem Christi conversa, nullusque in ipsa remanserat qui non recepisset sacramentum baptismatis, vicinis gentibus ad hoc ipsum ex magna parte paratis”). See *Gesta Innocentii III: The Gesta Innocentii III. Text, Introduction and Commentary*, ed. by DAVID GRESS-WRIGHT, unpublished PhD dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, 1981, ch. VIII, p. 315. For the English translation, cf. JAMES M. POWELL: *The Deeds of Pope Innocent III by an Anonymous Author*, Washington, D.C. 2004, p. 235. Unfortunately, Sunesen’s account has not been preserved, but it is not impossible that Sunesen’s letter was a main source for Arnold of Lübeck’s description of Livonia. See KASPAR KOLK: Lüübeki Arnold: Liivimaa pööramisest [Arnold of Lübeck: On the Conversion of Livonia], in: Tuna. Ajalookultuuri ajakiri 2 (2004), pp. 50-57.

³⁷ ARNOLD OF LÜBECK: *Chronica Slavorum*, ed. by GEORGIUS HEINRICUS PERTZ, Hannover 1868 (*Scriptores rerum germanicarum in usum scholarum ex MGH*, 14), ch. V.30, pp. 213-214: “Anno igitur incarnati 1186. fundata est sedes episcopalis in Livonia a venerabili viro Meinardo [...]. Crevit igitur ecclesia Dei in Livonia per venerabilem virum Albertum, bene disposita prepositis, parrochiis, cenobiis.”

³⁸ See LORE WIRTH-POELCHAU: Caesarius von Heisterbach über Livland, in: *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 31 (1982), pp. 481-498; BARBARA BOMBI: The Authority of Miracles:

Thus we can say that at least for the authors writing at some distance from the region, Livonia became the general name applied in the first decades of the thirteenth century to the new Christian colony which covered broadly the territories of modern Estonia and Latvia and was inhabited by diverse ethnic groups. Yet the name Livonia did not remain static in the thirteenth century but was in constant flux according to the position of the writer, the expansion of the conquest, and the growth of knowledge, taking on a clearer outline only during the centuries to follow.³⁹ Thus, in the thirteenth century “Livonia” constituted a kind of “flowing signifier” which may, in retrospect, afford of an interpretation, but not of a definition.

Describing Livonia

Reading the very earliest descriptions of the Eastern Baltic region in medieval Latin texts, we do not yet meet Livonia in them.⁴⁰ Adam of Bremen devotes the fourth part of his “Deeds of Bishops of the Hamburg Church”

Caesarius of Heisterbach and the Livonian Crusade, in: *Aspects of Power and Authority in the Middle Ages*, ed. by BRENDA BOLTON and CHRISTINE MEEK, Turnhout 2007 (International Medieval Research, 14), pp. 305-325; MAREK TAMM: Communicating Crusade: Livonian Mission and the Cistercian Network in the Thirteenth Century, in: *Ajalooline Ajakiri* (2009), 3/4, pp. 341-372; IDEM: Narrating Crusade: Livonian Mission in Cistercian Stories of Early Thirteenth Century, in: *A Storm Against the Infidels. Crusading in the Iberian Peninsula and the Baltic Region in the Central Middle Ages*, ed. by IBEN FONNESBERG-SCHMIDT and TORBEN K. NIELSEN, Turnhout 2012 (forthcoming).

³⁹ A good example of the relative vagueness of the term “Livonia” even at the end of the thirteenth century is provided by the “Livonian Rhyme Chronicle”, lines 8923-8928: “Kûren und Nieflant/ die sint uber ein genant/ in vremen landen, daz ist wâr./ wer mochte daz geschrîben gar./ wie ieclich gegende ist genant?/ man heizet ez allez Nieflant.” *Livländische Reimchronik*, ed. by LEO MEYER, Paderborn 1876, p. 204. English translation by JERRY C. SMITH, WILLIAM URBAN: *The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, Bloomington 1977, p. 109: “Now Kurland and Livonia are spoken of as one in foreign lands, for who wants to write down the name of each and every region? The entire area is referred to as Livonia.” On *Nieflant* as one of the medieval German names for Livonia, see VICTOR DIEDERICH: *Niflant*, in: *Mittheilungen aus dem Gebiete der Geschichte Liv-, Ehst- und Kurland’s* 12 (1880), pp. 381-385.

⁴⁰ It is not my aim here to list all the early references to the regions lying on the eastern coasts of the Baltic Sea. These have been collected with dedication by several earlier generations of researchers, even if they often interpreted the collected material rather uncritically or too imaginatively. As a rule, when dealing with materials predating the last decades of the twelfth century, it is practically impossible to decide which of the Eastern Baltic regions has precisely been kept in mind by one or another of the writers whose horizon encompassed the Baltic Sea. In the main part, these descriptions fall into the category of the so-called geographical *mirabilia* essentially unconnected to the region described. So far the best brief overview of the early reports is given by: LEONID ARBUSOW: *Die mittelalterliche Schriftüberlieferung als Quelle für die Frühgeschichte der ostbaltischen Völker*, in: *Baltische Lande*, vol. 1: *Ostbaltische Frühzeit*, ed. by CARL ENGEL, Leipzig 1939, pp. 167-203.

(c. 1075-1076) to the “Description of the Islands of the North” (*Descriptio insularum aquilonis*), picturing the region as consisting mainly of solitary islands in the middle of the Baltic or “Barbarian” Sea (*mare barbarum*).⁴¹ In somewhat greater detail, Adam dwells on three regions of the Eastern Baltic: Curonia (*Churland*), Estonia (*Aestland*) and Sambia (*Semland*)⁴², complementing these descriptions with reports about the “Land of Women” (*terra feminarum*) inhabited by Amazons and Cynocephali. Nor is any distinct region called by the name of Livonia yet known to Saxo Grammaticus in his *Gesta Danorum* (c. 1208), even though he does mention the Livs on a couple of occasions.⁴³

A qualitative change in the way Livonia is described took place in connection with the expansion of the crusading movement to the eastern coasts of the Baltic Sea, at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Contemporaneously with the conquest of the region, there took place its textual defining, mapping, and integration into the Christian cultural geography. The will to know went hand in hand with the will to power. Following Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, we could characterise this process with the term “worlding”, referring to the way in which writing in general, or textuality, has provided a rhetorical structure to justify colonial expansion. It is based on “the assumption that when the colonisers come to a world, they encounter it as uninscribed earth upon which they write their inscriptions”.⁴⁴

The fact that the earliest descriptions of Livonia, in the early thirteenth century, represent the new region in the rhetorical key of the “promised land”

⁴¹ ADAM OF BREMEN: *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*, ed. by BERNHARD SCHMEIDLER, Hannover 1917 (*Scriptores rerum germanicarum in usum scholarum ex MGH*, 2), ch. I.62, p. 58. Cf. WOLFGANG SCHLÜTER: *Die Ostsee und die Ostseeländer in der Hamburgischen Kirchengeschichte des Adams von Bremen*, in: *Sitzungsberichte der Gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft* 1902, Dorpat 1903, pp. 1-28; OLAF SILD: *Breemeni Adam ja tema teated “Aestland’ist” ja “Churland’ist”* [Adam of Bremen and His Information about “Aestland” and “Churland”], in: *Usuteadusline ajakiri* 2 (1930), pp. 66-74; VOLKER SCIOR: *Das Eigene und das Fremde. Identität und Fremdheit in den Chroniken Adams von Bremen, Helmolds von Bosau und Arnolds von Lübeck*, Berlin 2002 (*Orbis mediaevalis*, 4), pp. 29-137; TORSTEIN JØRGENSEN: “The Land of the Norwegians is the Last in the World”: A Mid-eleventh-century Description of the Nordic Countries from the Pen of Adam of Bremen, in: *The Edges of the Medieval World*, ed. by GERHARD JARITZ and JUHAN KREEM, Budapest 2009 (*CEU Medievalia*, 11), pp. 46-54.

⁴² ADAM OF BREMEN (as in footnote 41), ch. IV.16-18, pp. 244-246.

⁴³ Cf. footnote 19 and PAUL JOHANSEN: *Saxo Grammaticus und das Ostbaltikum*, in: *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 23 (1974), pp. 623-639; TOMAS BARANAUSKAS: *Saxo Grammaticus on the Balts*, in: *Saxo and the Baltic Region. A Symposium*, ed. by TORE NYBERG, Odense 2004 (*University of Southern Denmark Studies in History and Social Sciences*, 275), pp. 63-79.

⁴⁴ GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK: *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. by SARAH HARASYM, New York – London 1990, p. 129. Cf. STEPHEN MORTON: *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*, London – New York 2003, pp. 16-20.

is highly eloquent. These descriptions are dominated by allusions to the fertility and favorable natural conditions of the region.⁴⁵ The key note is given already in the very first description of Livonia known to us, namely “The Chronicle of the Slavs” by Arnold of Lübeck:

“In the year 1186 of the incarnation the venerable Meinhard founded the Episcopal see in Livonia that was placed under the patronage of Mary, Blessed Mother of God, in a place that was called Riga. And since because of the goodness of the earth this place is abundant in many riches, it has never been lacking in servants of Christ and planters of the new church. For this land is fertile in fields, plentiful in pastures, irrigated by rivers, also sufficiently rich in fish and forested with trees.”⁴⁶

It is worth noting that emphatic accounts of the fertility of Livonia remained characteristic of the descriptions of this region in medieval, as well as early modern ages; they became one of the *Leitmotive* of the invention of Livonia. In his influential “Cosmography” (1544), Sebastian Münster writes that Livonia “is a good land, sufficiently fertile: plenty of forest, fields, waters rich in fish and many large lakes”.⁴⁷ Even as late as the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Polish Catholic priest Dionysius Fabricius, writing in Fellin (Est. Viljandi), asserts in the same vein:

“The harvests, too, are very abundant in this province [Livonia – M.T.], so that it gives all kinds of grain, and though the land is tilled with less care and lies towards the north, in the vicinity of Sweden, the crops planted in spring still ripen in three months. The province is a generous nourishing mother to cattle and herds, offering sufficient feed to them. It is rich in forests and wastelands alternating with swamps; the pastures and meadows are fecund, hay is copious. [...] The fields are so fertile that most of the peasants may rejoice as they harvest the crop from their seed.”⁴⁸

⁴⁵ For more detail, see MAREK TAMM: A New World into Old Words: Eastern Baltic Region and the Cultural Geography of Medieval Europe, in: *The Clash of Cultures* (as in footnote 8), pp. 11-35, especially pp. 20-25. Cf. ROBERT BARTLETT: *The Making of Europe. Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350*, London – New York 1993, pp. 133-138.

⁴⁶ ARNOLD OF LÜBECK (as in footnote 37), ch. V.30, pp. 213-214: “Anno igitur incarnati 1186. fundata est sedes episcopalis in Livonia a venerabili viro Meinardo, intitulata patrocinio beate Dei genitricis Marie, in loco qui Riga dicitur. Et quia idem locus beneficio terre multis bonis exuberat, nunquam ibi defuerunt Christi cultores, et novelle ecclesie plantatores. Est enim eadem terra fertilis agris, abundans pascuis, irrigua fluviiis, satis etiam piscosa et arboribus nemorosa.”

⁴⁷ SEBASTIAN MÜNSTER: *Cosmographie*, Basel 1544, fol. 502: “Est is gut land, hat frucht gnug, vil wäid, weld, fischreich wässer, und vil grosser seen.” In the new Latin edition of *Cosmography* published in 1550 there is a description of Livonia written in the same vein: “Liuonia terra est palustris, nemorosa, arenosa, plana & sine montibus, irrigua fluuijs & perinde satis piscosa, pro maiori parte inculta, fertilis tamen agris & pascuis abundans.” SEBASTIAN MÜNSTER: *Cosmographia Universalis*, Basel 1550, fol. 787.

⁴⁸ DIONYSIUS FABRICIUS (as in footnote 13), pp. 440-441: “Estque haec provincia etiam frugum fertilitate vberima, quippe quae omnis generis frumenta producit, et quamvis

The rhetoric of the “promised land” emphasizing on the one hand the fecundity of the new region, yet on the other hand the paganism of its inhabitants, creates perfect premises for the politics of conversion and colonialism or, as Jeffrey J. Cohen writes in connection with the early Christian descriptions of the British Isles: “Divine favor also meant that these latter day Hebrews had license to treat other peoples as if they were Canaanite Anakim, perilous and perhaps not fully human peoples whose lands of milk and honey might be unapologetically colonized.”⁴⁹

As far as the sources that have come down to our days allow us to presume, information about the Lord’s new vineyard on the Baltic Sea spread to the core areas of Christendom at a relatively sluggish pace. Searching for accounts of the conquest and conversion of Livonia in European historiography of the first half of the thirteenth century, we find only a few short references in, for instance, Oliver of Paderborn’s “History of the Reign of the Holy Land” (c. 1220)⁵⁰, Bartholomew of Lucca’s “Annals” (c. 1236)⁵¹, or Alexander the Minorite’s “Commentary on the Apocalypse” (1235-1249)⁵²; only slightly more attention is paid to events in Livonia in Arnold of Lübeck’s “Chronicle of the Slavs”⁵³ mentioned earlier, as well as in Albert of Stade’s “Annals” (c. 1240-1260)⁵⁴, and in Alberic of Trois-Fontaines’ “Chronicle” (c. 1220-1252).⁵⁵

Medieval cartography may not necessarily reflect the actual geographical knowledge of the time; however, it does strike the eye that Livonia makes its

minori cum molestia terra excolatur, et versus septentrionem sita sit et finitima Sveciae, tamen intra tres menses frumenta aestivalia maturescunt. Armentorum et pecudum mater et nutrix est optima, sufficiens praebendo alimentum. Sylvis et eremis ditissima, quibus paludes sunt intermistae, pascua et prata pingua, faeni copia. [...] Agri fertiles adeo, ut plerique denario fructu gaudent agricolae ex seminibus.”

⁴⁹ COHEN, Hybridity (as in footnote 11), p. 38.

⁵⁰ OLIVER OF PADERBORN: *Historia regum Terre Sancte*, in: *Die Schriften des Kölner Domscholasters, späteren Bischofs von Paderborn und Kardinal-Bischofs von S. Sabina Oliverus*, ed. by HERMANN HOOGEWEG, Tübingen 1894 (Bibliothek des Literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, 202), pp. 156-157.

⁵¹ BARTHOLOMEW OF LUCCA: *Annales*, ed. by BERNHARD SCHMEIDLER, Hannover 1930 (MGH *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum*, Nova series, 8), p. 94.

⁵² ALEXANDER MINORITA: *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, ed. by ALOIS WACHTEL, Weimar 1955 (*Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters*, 1), pp. 435, 439.

⁵³ ARNOLD OF LÜBECK (as in footnote 37), pp. 213-214.

⁵⁴ ALBERT OF STADE: *Annales Stadenses*, ed. by JOHANN MARTIN LAPPENBERG, Hannover 1859 (MGH *Scriptores*, 16), pp. 352-354, 357-358, 360-361, 363. Cf. GERDA MAECK: *Die Weltchronik des Albert von Stade. Ein Zeitzeugnis des Mittelalters. Studien zur Geschichtsschreibung Alberts von Stade*, Lehrte 2001.

⁵⁵ ALBERIC OF TROIS-FONTAINES: *Chronica*, a monacho Novi Monasterii Hoiensis interpolata, ed. by PAUL SCHEFFER-BOICHORST, Hannover 1874 (MGH *Scriptores*, 23), pp. 872, 879, 887, 902, 912, 916, 925, 930. Cf. MIREILLE SCHMIDT-CHAZAN: *Aubri de Trois-Fontaines, un historien entre la France et l’Empire*, in: *Annales de l’Est* 36 (1985), pp. 163-192.

appearance on the maps of Europe relatively late.⁵⁶ The only thirteenth-century map depicting the eastern coast of the Baltic that is known to have survived (as a copy) till our days is the so-called Ebstorf map of the world, which probably dates from the last years of the century.⁵⁷ Although that largest known medieval *mappa mundi* (12,74 m²) perished in World War II, a relatively faithful copy of it made at the end of the nineteenth century remains at our disposal. In the Eastern Baltic region, the map is acquainted with *Cur-lant* (Curonia), *Semigallia* (Semgallia), *Prucia* (Prussia), and *Sanelant* (Sambia). But it also makes special mention of and depicts the town of Riga in Livonia (*Riga Livonie civitas*).⁵⁸ Next, we encounter the Eastern Baltic region on a few portolan charts from the fourteenth century, but it is only on fifteenth-century maps that Livonia finally gains a clearer outline.

In my view, a key role in the initial stages of the invention of Livonia was played by religious orders that settled in the new region early on, yet remained at the same time tightly linked into the orders' communication networks. In the first half of the thirteenth century, it was primarily thanks to the Cistercian and mendicant international networks that information about the new Christian corner of the world on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea reached the scholarly public in the West. While in the first decades of the century information was communicated mainly by the Cistercian network, from the 1240s onward the Franciscan and Dominican orders assumed the role of the main communication channels.

The first Cistercians arrived in Livonia very early, beginning in 1187 when the first Bishop of Livonia Meinhard (d. 1198), who had been consecrated the

⁵⁶ On the representation of Livonia on medieval and early modern maps, see LEONID ARBUSOW: Vorläufige Übersicht über die Kartographie Alt-Livlands bis 1595, in: Sitzungsberichte der Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde zu Riga, Riga 1935, pp. 33-119; ARNOLDS SPEKKE: The Baltic Sea in Ancient Maps, Stockholm 1961; JUHAN KREEM: ... *ultima germanorum & christianorum prouintia* ... Outlines of the Image of Livonia in Maps from the Thirteenth to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century, in: Quotidianum Estonicum. Aspects of Daily Life in Medieval Estonia, ed. by JÜRI KIVIMÄE and IDEM, Krems 1996 (Medium aevum quotidianum, Sonderband, 5), pp. 14-25; RENÉ TEBEL: Could Maps from the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period Provide Information about the "Baltic Frontier"?, in: The "Baltic Frontier" Revisited. Power Structures and Cross-Cultural Interactions in the Baltic Sea Region, ed. by IMBI SOOMAN and STEFAN DONECKER, Vienna 2009, pp. 89-105.

⁵⁷ Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte. Kommentierte Neuausgabe in zwei Bänden, ed. by HARTMUT KUGLER with SONJA GLAUCH and ANTJE WILLING, Berlin 2007. Cf. LEONID S. CHEKIN: Northern Eurasia in Medieval Cartography: Inventory, Text, Translation, and Commentary, Turnhout 2006 (Terrarum Orbis, 4), pp. 146-161.

⁵⁸ See KLAUS FRIEDLAND: Ostsee und Osteuropa im Weltbild des 13. Jahrhunderts, in: Zwischen Christianisierung und Europäisierung: Beiträge zur Geschichte Osteuropas in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit. Festschrift für Peter Nitsche zum 65. Geburtstag, ed. by ECKHARD HÜBNER et al., Stuttgart 1998 (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des östlichen Europa, 51), pp. 17-21; TEBEL (as in footnote 56), pp. 90-94.

year before, invited the Cistercian Theoderic (d. 1219) to his aid.⁵⁹ The Cistercians permanently settled in Livonia at the beginning of the thirteenth century, when around 1205 the first Cistercian monastery in the new colony was established at Dünamünde (Latv. Daugavgrīva), near Riga.⁶⁰ Probably around the year 1230, work started on establishing a second Cistercian house in Livonia, this time in Falkenau (Est. Kärkna) in the bishopric of Dorpat.⁶¹ The importance of the Cistercians in Livonia is clearly evidenced by the fact that a significant number of the first bishops of the new Christian colony came from among the White Monks: Bertold, the second Bishop of Livonia (1196-1198), Theoderic, the first Bishop of Estonia (1211-1219), Bernard the first Bishop of Semgallia (1218-1224), as well as Gottfried, the first Bishop of Ösel (Est. Saaremaa) (1227-1234), and Wesselin (1219-1227[?]), who was appointed by the Danes as the new Bishop of Estonia in Reval (Est. Tallinn) after the death of Theoderic. From our present viewpoint, however, it is important that all the Cistercian high clerics were relatively well integrated into their Order's communication networks and it was primarily via them that information about the new region called Livonia reached Western Europe.⁶²

It is mainly thanks to the former Abbot of Dünamünde and later Bishop of Semgallia, Bernard of Lippe, that news about Livonia found its way into the works of the popular Cistercian author Caesarius of Heisterbach. All in all, Caesarius mentions Livonia on thirteen occasions in his various books, giving three longer accounts of the events that had come to pass in the new missionary region both in his *Dialogus miraculorum* (1219-1223) and in the unfinished *Libri VIII miraculorum* (1225-1227).⁶³ In view of the great popularity of Caesarius's works, especially of his *Dialogus miraculorum*, in the Middle

⁵⁹ HCL I.10, pp. 4-5.

⁶⁰ Cf. LORE POELCHAU: Die Geschichte des Zisterzienserklosters Dünamünde bei Riga, St. Ottilien 2004 (Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens und seiner Zweige, Sonderdruck); WOLFGANG SCHMIDT: Die Zisterzienser im Baltikum und in Finnland, in: Suomen Kirkkohistoriallisen Seuran Vuosikirja 29-30 (1939-1940), pp. 32-68.

⁶¹ Cf. SCHMIDT (as in footnote 60), pp. 131-151; HEINZ VON ZUR MÜHLEN: Falkenau, in: Lexikon des Mittelalters, vol. 4, München 2003, columnnes 239-240; HOLGER KUNDE: Das Zisterzienserkloster Pforte. Die Urkundenfälschungen und die frühe Geschichte bis 1236, Köln 2003 (Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte Sachsen-Anhalts, 4), pp. 240-246; KERSTI MARKUS: Misjonär või mõisnik. Tsistertsilaste roll 13. sajandi Eestis [Missionary or Landlord. The Cistercians' Role in Thirteenth-Century Estonia], in: Acta Historica Tallinnensia 14 (2009), pp. 3-30.

⁶² For a more detailed analysis, see TAMM, Communicating Crusade (as in footnote 38), passim.

⁶³ CAESARIUS VON HEISTERBACH: *Dialogus miraculorum*, vol. 2, ed. by JOSEPH STRANGE, Köln 1851, ch. IX, 37, p. 193; Die beiden ersten Bücher der *Libri VIII miraculorum* des Caesarius von Heisterbach, in: Die Wundergeschichten des Caesarius von Heisterbach, vol. 3, ed. by ALFONS HILKA, Bonn 1937, pp. 1-222, here ch. I, 31, pp. 56-58; ch. II, 18, pp. 98-99. See also footnote 38.

Ages, his texts must be regarded as a significant contribution into the invention of Livonia.

Another documented instance of the circulation of information concerning Livonia in the Cistercian network is provided by the “Chronicle” of Alberic of Trois-Fontaine. This voluminous Cistercian history of the world contains nine entries on events in Livonia for the years 1194-1232⁶⁴, most of them concerning the activities of the Cistercians and the handovers of spiritual power. Alberic probably derives his information from two Cistercian sources: Theoderic Bishop of Estonia, and the papal legate Baldwin of Aulne. Although Alberic’s chronicle attracted but scant attention in the Middle Ages, it nevertheless offers valid proof of the circulation of information concerning Livonia in the Cistercians’ oral network of communication.

As noted above, sources appear to indicate that from the 1240s onwards, the mendicant orders – the Dominicans and the Franciscans – supplanted the Cistercians as the main shapers of the image of Livonia. Representatives of both these orders settled in Livonia at a pretty early date – the Dominicans established their first monastery in Reval in 1229 or, more likely, 1239; in Riga, in 1234, and in Tartu before the end of the thirteenth century.⁶⁵ The Franciscans’ centre in Livonia was their first, and, for a long time, only monastery in Riga, established around the middle of the thirteenth century.⁶⁶ The members of the mendicant orders had an important role to play in the political and religious life of mid-thirteenth century Livonia.⁶⁷ Their contacts with the broader network of mendicant orders are evidenced by the first two geographical surveys of the Eastern Baltic region, both authored by mendicant friars. First, there is the encyclopaedia of Bartholomaeus Anglicus, completed around 1245, *De proprietatibus rerum* (“On the properties of things”); and second, the anonymous geographical treatise *Descriptiones terrarum* (“Descriptions of the lands”), dating from about 1255. Book 15 of the English Franciscan’s hugely popular encyclopaedia gives in its 175 alphabetically ordered chapters a survey of the world’s various regions, and for the first time, the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea also deserves some attention in Latin geographical writing: separate entries are dedicated to Livonia (*Liunia*), Lithua-

⁶⁴ See footnote 55.

⁶⁵ Cf. G. VON WALTHER-WITTENHEIM: *Die Dominikaner in Livland im Mittelalter. Die Natio Livoniae*, Rom 1939 (Institutum Historicum FF. Praedicatorum Romae ad. S. Sabinae. Dissertationes Historicae, 9); JARL GALLÉN: *La Province de Dacie de l’Ordre des Frères Prêcheurs. I. Histoire générale jusqu’au Grande Schisme*, Helsingfors 1946 (Institutum Historicum FF. Praedicatorum Romae ad. S. Sabinae. Dissertationes Historicae, 12); MAREK TAMM: *When did the Dominicans Arrive in Tallinn?*, in: Tuna. Special Issue on the History of Estonia (2009), pp. 35-45.

⁶⁶ Cf. HANS NIEDERMEIER: *Die Franziskaner in Preußen, Livland und Litauen im Mittelalter*, in: *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 27 (1978), pp. 1-31.

⁶⁷ Cf. ANTI SELART: *Die Bettelmönche im Ostseeraum zur Zeit des Erzbischofs Albert Suerbeer von Riga (Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts)*, in: *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 56 (2007), pp. 475-499.

nia (*Lectonia*), Samland (*Sambia*), Semgallia (*Semigallia*), Revalia (*Riualia*), and Vironia (*Vironia*).⁶⁸ *Descriptiones terrarum* is presumably just a fragment of a more extensive work, either lost or never written down, which was supposed to describe the origins and customs of the Mongols. The text – whose author has not been conclusively established yet – was in all likelihood written by some mendicant friar standing close to the Archbishop of Riga, Albert Suerbeer (d. 1273).⁶⁹ In its present form, this unique manuscript, discovered in Dublin only in 1979, constitutes a brief overview of the regions of East and North Europe, including, among other things, reports of about ten Eastern Baltic regions (Livonia, Lithuania, Samland, Curonia, etc.).⁷⁰

At somewhat greater length, the anonymous author of the *Descriptiones terrarum* dwells on the beginnings of the Christian mission in Livonia, communicating to more distantly placed readers the story of the German merchants reaching the River Dūna (Latv. Daugava) and their clashes with the lo-

⁶⁸ For a more detailed analysis, see MAREK TAMM: Signes d'altérité. La représentation de la Baltique orientale dans le *De proprietatibus rerum* de Barthélemy l'Anglais (vers 1245), in: *Frontiers in the Middle Ages. Proceedings of the Third European Congress of the FIDEM* (Jyväskylä, June 2003), ed. by OUTI MERISALO, Louvain-la-Neuve 2006 (Textes et études du Moyen Age, 35), pp. 147-170. No critical edition has been prepared of Bartholomaeus' encyclopaedia, to date. In the following, I use one of the oldest surviving manuscripts of the encyclopaedia (dating from the end of the thirteenth century) held in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* (later abbreviated as BN) in Paris (MS lat. 16098); a transcription of the chapters of this manuscript that discuss the Eastern Baltics has been presented in my article quoted above.

⁶⁹ MARVIN L. COLKER: America Rediscovered in the Thirteenth Century?, in: *Speculum* 54 (1979), pp. 712-726. For a discussion of the authorship of *Descriptiones terrarum*, see KAROL GÓRSKI: The Author of the *Descriptiones Terrarum*: A New Source for the History of Eastern Europe, in: *The Slavonic and East European Review* 61 (1983), pp. 254-258; JERZY OCHMAŃSKI: Nieznany autor "Opisu krajów" z drugiej połowy XIII w. i jego wiadomości o Bałtach [Unknown Author of the "Descriptions of the Lands" from the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century and his Information about the Balts], in: *Lituanio-Slavica Posnaniensia. Studia Historica* 1 (1985), pp. 107-114; GUNAR FREIBERGS: The *Descriptiones Terrarum*: Its Date, Sources, Author and Purpose, in: *Christianity in East Central Europe. Late Middle Ages. Proceedings of the Commission Internationale d'Histoire Ecclesiastique Comparée*, Lublin 1996, vol. 2, ed. by JERZY KŁOCZOWSKI, Lublin 1999, pp. 180-201; JAROSŁAW WENTA: Zu Gog und Magog. Einige Bemerkungen über die Verfasserschaft der "Descriptiones Terrarum", in: *Etudes Médiévales* 7 (2006), pp. 331-339.

⁷⁰ See EVALD MUGUREVICS: Geographische Beschreibung "Descriptiones terrarum" und deren Informationsquellen über ostbaltische Völker in der Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts, in: *Słowiańszczyzna w Europie Średniowiecznej*, vol. 1, ed. by ZOFIA KURNATOWSKA, Wrocław 1996, pp. 125-130; MAREK TAMM: Uus allikas Liivimaa ristiusustamisest. Ida-Baltikumi kirjeldus *Descriptiones terrarum*'is [A New Source on the Christianisation of Livonia. Description of the Eastern Baltics in *Descriptiones terrarum*], in: *Keel ja Kirjandus* 12 (2001), pp. 872-884.

cal inhabitants, which by the middle of the thirteenth century would probably have been well known within the region itself⁷¹:

“To the north of Curonia, there lies Livonia; there is one Archbishop and seven suffragans there, four of them in Prussia and three in Livonia. This land first received salvation from merchants. Pushed by a storm, they found themselves in a broad river called Dūna that flows out of Russia. And they saw a people simple and unarmed. Cautiously and without hurry they negotiated their consent to raise a stone wall around a small fortress on an island⁷² in the said river, lest wolves and robbers come at night to pester themselves and the cattle they had procured there. And having mixed some mortar, they set out on [building] a pretty strong castle. But as the local people saw it, they said among themselves: “Let’s allow these people to raise the stones, but when they are finished, let’s circle [these walls], yoke numerous strong oxen and horses to them and pull them all down at once.” As they came up with the said instruments and saw many of their number fall to the arrows of the enemy, they took counsel together and made eternal peace with the merchants. And that is how Christians began to disperse there.”⁷³

It is worth noting here that the story about hauling away a castle (or building) is a folktale motif with international dispersal⁷⁴, cropping up in the Livonian context also, for instance, in Franz Nyenstädt’s “Chronicle of Livonia” (1604), where it is associated with the men of Ösel attempting to haul into the

⁷¹ Various versions of this story are also related both in the “Chronicle of Henry of Livonia” and in the “Livonian Rhymed Chronicle”, see HCL I.2-6, pp. 2-3; *Livländische Reimchronik* (as in footnote 39), lines 127-228.

⁷² Probably the Isle of Holme, see ĒVALDS MUGURĒVIČS: *Ģeografiskais traktāts “Descriptiones terrarum” un tā informācija avoti par Austrumbaltijas tautām 13. gadsimta vidū* [A Geographical Treatise “Descriptiones terrarum” and Its Sources of Information on the Eastern Baltic Peoples from the Middle of the Thirteenth Century], in: *Latvijas Zinātņu Akadēmijas Vēstis* (1995), 7/8, pp. 23-30, here p. 28.

⁷³ COLKER, *America Rediscovered* (as in footnote 69), p. 723: “[C]urlandiam sequitur Liuania ad aquilonem habens archiepiscopum cum vii suffraganeis, quorum quatuor sunt in Pruscia et tres in Livonia. Hec initium sue salutis per mercatores habuit. Qui pulsi tempestate in magnum flumen quod Duna dicitur decedens de Ruscie partibus deueniunt. Et uiderunt populum simplicem et inermem. Caute ab eisdem et paulatim optinuerunt ut sepem de lapidibus pro parua curia in insula dicti fluuii erigerent ne lupi uel latrunculi nocte ipsos aut peccora que ibidem adquisierant perturbarent. Et facto cemento castellum ceperunt satis firmum. Quod cernentes idigeni sic dicebant: ‘Permittamus hos homines lapides erigere et consumpmato opere circumdantes funibus fortissimis ligatisque ad ipsos bobus et equis plurimis uno momento ad terram omnia prosternemus.’ Cumque cum dictis instrumentis aduenissent et sagittis repugnancium uidissent ex suis plurimos interfectos, habito consilio pacem cum mercatoribus perpetuam inierunt. Et sic ceperunt Christiani ibi dilatari.”

⁷⁴ ANTTI AARNE, STITH THOMPSON: *The Types of the Folktale. A Classification and Bibliography*, 2nd rev. edition, Helsinki 1987, no. 1046 (Threat to haul away the Warehouse), cf. no. 1325B-D (attested only in Irish folklore).

sea the fortress of Söneburg, erected on their island.⁷⁵ It is not impossible that what we have here is an example of the imposition of a universal narrative structure on the description of a given reality.

Integrating Livonia

The above example brings us to our last important point: the significance of the dominant cultural codes and earlier textual traditions in the invention of Livonia. Jeffrey J. Cohen has cogently emphasized the conservative nature of medieval classifications: “Collective identities in the Middle Ages tended to be conservative categories. ‘New’ peoples were typically slotted into pre-existent taxonomies and did not necessarily force classificatory systems to expand.”⁷⁶ The descriptions of Livonia originating in the first half of the thirteenth century reflect not so much the character of the region and its inhabitants as the political and sociocultural convictions of the medieval Christian authors. Even if the majority of the reports come from authors who had either visited the region themselves or been in contact with eyewitnesses, these reports are nevertheless coded in a manner that does not allow us to proffer any very certain statements about the actual practices, natural environment, or world picture of the inhabitants of the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea. I have called this kind of integration of new regions into an earlier cultural tradition “intertextual integration”, meaning by it a method of interpreting new geographical and religious information in the light of old authoritative texts.⁷⁷ Having said that, it should be specified that the cultural coding and high intertextuality of the texts does not mean that they necessarily distort reality. Rather, the difference between the denotational and connotational levels of the texts should be kept in mind: while on the first of these levels, the texts aim at a mere description of reality, on the second level that description is provided with a certain meaning. My foremost aim here is precisely to draw attention to the connotational meanings – that is, the culturally coded nature – of these descriptions of the eastern coasts of the Baltic Sea.

Discussing the geographical descriptions of Livonia, I have already pointed out how, from the very first texts on, Livonia was often portrayed in the biblical colours of the promised land, as it were, with emphasis on the fertility and lushness of the region.⁷⁸ This is the rhetorical pattern that enabled the

⁷⁵ FRANZ NYENSTÄDT: *Livländische Chronik, nebst dessen Handbuch*, ed. by GOTTHARD TOBIAS TIELEMANN, in: *Monumenta Livoniae antiquae*, vol. 2, Riga – Leipzig 1839, ch. II, pp. 1-166, here p. 9.

⁷⁶ COHEN, *Hybridity* (as in footnote 11), p. 81.

⁷⁷ TAMM, *A New World* (as in footnote 45), p. 27. In this article I have taken a more detailed look at the cultural coding applied to the descriptions of the Eastern Baltic region.

⁷⁸ The notion of the “promised land” (Lat. *terra promissionis*) in association with Livonia occurs already in the *Chronica Slavorum* of Arnold of Lübeck. See ARNOLD OF LÜBECK (as in footnote 37), ch. V.30, p. 214: “Nec defuerunt sacerdotes et litterati, suis

new region to be depicted as “familiar” and “foreign” at once – a place enticingly exotic. What also strikes the eye in the early depictions of Livonia, both in *De proprietatibus rerum* and in *Descriptiones terrarum*, is that no mention is made of any fortified places, towns or other settlements of the urban type in the region, even though we know from archaeological evidence that there were several strongholds and fortified settlements there.⁷⁹ In connection with the early descriptions of the Eastern Baltics, Sébastien Rossignol has justly drawn attention to the fact that the absence of any mention of towns and strongholds implies a clear message: “But towns have an identity not only for their inhabitants, but also for the representation of regions as seen from outside. Describing a region would seem almost impossible without mentioning its urban centres. Towns participate in the image constructed for a region, its culture, and society.”⁸⁰ Livonia, noted in the geographical accounts of the first half of the thirteenth century only for its abundant forests, numerous waterways, and fertile soil, is clearly classified among “pagan” landscapes in the medieval cultural geography.

An analogous pattern of interpretation is symptomatic also of the accounts of religious life in Livonia, which are characterized by an emphasis on outward ritual: primarily on nature worship and idolatry, divination practices, and cremation of the dead. Medieval descriptions of Livonia clearly show that while geographically, the new region was domesticated relatively quickly, it took much longer for its inhabitants to be accepted religiously, so that throughout the Middle Ages we encounter remonstrations over the cultivation of paganism or religious obtuseness there.⁸¹

A good example of the culturally coded representation of the Livonians religious practices is offered by the entry on Livonia by Bartholomaeus Anglicus, in his encyclopaedia *De proprietatibus rerum*. Livonians, he writes,

“had peculiar religious rites, before the Germans forced them from serving demons to the faith and worship of one God. For they honoured many gods with

exhortationibus eos [i.e. crusaders – M.T.] confortantes et ad terram promissionis felici perseverantia eos pertingere promittentes.”

⁷⁹ See most recently, EVALD TÕNISSE: Eesti muinaslinnad [Prehistoric Strongholds of Estonia], ed. by AIN MÄESALU and HEIKI VALK, Tartu – Tallinn 2008 (Muinasaja teadus, 20).

⁸⁰ SÉBASTIEN ROSSIGNOL: Early Towns and Regional Identities on the Eastern Coast of the Baltic Sea and in the Land of Rus’ as Perceived in Western and Central European Sources (9th – early 13th Centuries), in: Ethnic Images and Stereotypes – Where is the Border Line? (Russian-Baltic Cross-Cultural Relations), ed. by JELENA NÕMM, Narva 2007 (Studia humaniora et paedagogica collegii Narovenssis, 2), pp. 241-249, here p. 241. See also PETER BILLER: The Measure of Multitude. Population in Medieval Thought, Oxford 2000, pp. 223-225.

⁸¹ Cf. TIINA KALA: Rural Society and Religious Innovation: Acceptance and Rejection of Catholicism Among the Native Inhabitants of Medieval Livonia, in: The Clash of Cultures (as in footnote 8), pp. 169-190.

impure and sacrilegious sacrifices, asked demons for prophecies, made use of auguries and divinations.”⁸²

The Livonians are shown here within the classical pagan scheme, as implied already by the vocabulary Bartholomaeus uses – *responsum*, *auguratio* and *divinatio*. This is the lexicon that had been used ever since the early Middle Ages to mark pagan customs.⁸³ In a similar key traditionally used for depicting paganism, Bartholomaeus describes the Livonians’ burial customs as opposed in every detail to those practised by the Christians:

“[Livonians] did not bury the bodies of the dead but built a very large pyre and burnt them to ashes. After death they clothed their friends in new garments and gave them sheep and cattle and other animals for their journey. They also consigned slaves and maidservants with other things, and these were burned with the deceased and the rest, in the belief that people so cremated would happily reach some realm of living creatures and there, with the numerous cattle and slaves burnt for the good of their master, find a happy homeland for afterlife.”⁸⁴

The research of modern archaeologists does not precisely confirm the kind of burial described by Bartholomaeus, material evidence indicating that already from the late twelfth century onwards, the inhabitants of the Eastern Baltics practised inhumation burial as well as cremation. Nor does the archaeological evidence support the common graves and grave goods described by Bartholomaeus.⁸⁵ But as noted above, the early descriptions of Livonia

⁸² BN MS lat. 16098, fol. 146^v: “quorum ritus fuit mirabilis antequam a cultura demonum ad vnus Dei fidem et cultum per Germanicos cogerentur. Nam deos plures adorabant prophanis et sacrilegis sacrificiis, responsa a demonibus exquirebant, auguriis et diuinationibus seruiebant.”

⁸³ Cf. RICHARD KIECKHEFER: *Magic in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge 1990 (Cambridge Medieval Textbooks, 66), pp. 57-63, 85-90; BERT ROEST: *Divination, Visions and Prophecy According to Albert the Great*, in: *Media Latinitas. A Collection of Essays to Mark the Occasion of the Retirement of L. J. Engels*, ed. by R. I. A. NIP et al., Turnhout 1996 (Instrumenta Patristica, 28), pp. 323-328; JAN R. VEENSTRA: *Cataloguing Superstition: A Paradigmatic Shift in the Art of Knowing the Future*, in: *Pre-modern Encyclopedic Texts. Proceedings of the Second COMERS Congress*, Groningen, 1-4 July 1996, ed. by PETER BINKLEY, Leiden 1997, pp. 169-180.

⁸⁴ BN MS lat. 16098, fol. 146^v-147^r: “Mortuorum cadauera tumulo non tradebant, sed pocius facto rogo maximo vsque ad cineres comburebant. Post mortem autem suos amicos nouis vestibus vestiebant et eis pro viatico eius oues et boues et alia animantia exhibebant. Seruos etiam et ancillas cum rebus aliis ipsis assignantes vna cum mortuo et rebus aliis incendebant, credentes sic incensos ad quandam viuorum regionem feliciter pertingere et ibidem cum pecorum et seruorum sic ob gratiam domini combustorum multitudine felicitatis et vite temporalis patriam inuenire.”

⁸⁵ For an overview see HEIKI VALK: *About the Transitional Period in the Burial Customs in the Region of the Baltic Sea*, in: *Culture Clash or Compromise? The Europeanisation of the Baltic Area 1100-1400 AD*, ed. by NILS BLOMKVIST, Visby 1998 (Acta Visbyensia, 11), pp. 237-250; IDEM: *The Christianisation of Estonia and Changes in Burial Customs*, in: *Offa. Berichte und Mitteilungen zur Urgeschichte, Frühgeschichte und Mittelalterarchäologie* 58 (2001), pp. 215-222; IDEM: *Christianisation in Estonia: A Process of Dual-Faith and Syncretism*, in: *The Cross Goes North. Processes of Conver-*

should be read not so much as ethnographic or geographical accounts but rather as attempts at integrating the scanty new data about the new Christian region into the existing system of knowledge. And on quite a few occasions the Christian authors optimistically add that as a result of conquest and conversion, the customs they described are on the retreat in Livonia and that thus the area had been successfully integrated. Thus, too, Bartholomaeus Anglicus, right at the end of his description of the Livonian burial traditions: “It is to be presumed that this province, formerly in the clutches of the heresy of demons, has now in large part, with many subordinate or accessory regions, under the guidance of [divine] grace and in co-operation with the German forces been freed from the aforementioned errors.”⁸⁶

Conclusions

At the end of the fifteenth century, only one region on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea – Livonia – was known to the European learned public. A vivid example is provided by the *Cosmographia* of Ptolemy, published in Ulm in 1482, which groups five regions under the name of Livonia and designates Riga as their *metropolis*.⁸⁷ Aware of the evolution of Livonia as a distinct region at the end of the fifteenth century, this article undertook to discuss the very earliest Latin reports of the Eastern Baltics, reports which in my judgement laid the foundations for the emergence of a new Christian region – Livonia – in the consciousness of the learned public of Western Europe. I term this process “the invention of Livonia”, since these early accounts from the first half of the thirteenth century consolidated the name and outline of Livonia on the mental map of Latin Christendom, exercising a significant influence on the concept of Livonia in the minds of the scholars of later generations (the clearest and most decisive doubtlessly being the influence of Bartholomaeus Anglicus). Naturally these early texts created no unified image of the new Christian colony on the medieval Baltic frontier; yet comparative analysis allows us to suggest that as early as the first decades of the thirteenth century, several motifs (such as fertility and paganism) that also

sion in Northern Europe, AD 300-1300, ed. by MARTIN CARVER, Woodbridge 2003, pp. 571-579.

⁸⁶ BN MS lat. 16098, fol. 147^r: “Hec prouincia tali errore demonum antiquissimo tempore fascinata modo in parte magna cum multis regionibus subditis vel adnexis precedente gratia et cooperante Germanorum potentia iam creditur a predictis esse erroribus liberata.” See also Bartholomaeus’ description of Vironia, fol. 155^v [150^v]: “Nunc vero Danorum regibus pariter et legibus est subiecta. Terra vero tota est a Germanis et Danis pariter habitata.”

⁸⁷ CLAUDIUS PTOLEMAEUS: *Cosmographia*, ed. by NICOLAUS GERMANUS, Ulm 1482; repr. Amsterdam 1963, liber III: “Roderim Reualia Nirona Nugardia, Riga metropolis.” Quoted by KREEM, *The Image of Livonia* (as in footnote 9), pp. 44-45. On the success and semantic field of the name “Livonia” in the fifteenth through sixteenth centuries, see *ibidem*, especially pp. 44-48, and DONECKER, *Origenes Livonorum* (as in footnote 15), pp. 87-225.

continue to occur frequently in later texts, became established in the descriptions of Livonia.

It is noteworthy that even after the Livonian War – which broke out in 1558 and ended in 1583 – had ruptured the centuries-old political organisation of the region, the name of Livonia lived on in the texts and on the maps of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As Mauno Koski writes pointedly, “[t]he name was still used as of old memory, changes of government had no effect on it, because *Livland* was no longer an administrative, but a humanistic geographical name of the country”.⁸⁸ Thus, the medieval invention of Livonia had been so successful that the name “Livonia” remained current into the modern age, even when the reality it once referred to had been significantly transformed.

Zusammenfassung

Livland erfinden: Die Bezeichnung und das Ansehen einer neuen christlichen Kolonie an der mittelalterlichen Ostseegrenze

Das 13. Jahrhundert wurde Zeuge, wie eine neue Region – Livland – auf der geistigen Landkarte des lateinischen Christentums entstand. Wenn auch die frühesten schriftlichen Berichte über eine Region namens Livland aus dem letzten Jahrzehnt des 12. Jahrhunderts stammen, erhielt das Gebiet an der Ostküste der Ostsee, mit den ersten umfassenden Untersuchungen, die in Westeuropa über die neue christliche Kolonie entstanden, doch erst Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts seine vorläufigen Ausprägungen und Charakteristika.

In dem vorliegenden Artikel werden alle diese frühesten lateinischen Zeugnisse (Chroniken, Papstbriefe, Enzyklopädien, geografische Abhandlungen) aus dem späten 12. und frühen 13. Jahrhundert analysiert, um aufzuzeigen, wie die neue christliche Kolonie von christlichen Autoren des 13. Jahrhunderts „erfunden“ wurde. Zweifelsohne entwarfen diese frühen Texte kein einheitliches Bild der neuen christlichen Kolonie an der mittelalterlichen Ostseegrenze, jedoch lassen sich mittels einer vergleichenden Analyse einige zentrale Motive (wie beispielsweise Fruchtbarkeit und Heidentum) herauskristallisieren, die sich schrittweise in den Livland betreffenden Schriften der ersten Jahrzehnte des 13. Jahrhunderts etablierten. Der vorliegende Artikel nimmt diesen Prozess in den Blick, da die frühen Abhandlungen den Namen und die Umrisse von Livland auf der geistigen Landkarte des lateinischen Christentums fest verankerten und das Livland-Konzept in den Köpfen der Gelehrten späterer Generationen maßgeblich beeinflussten. Die Erfindung Livlands bezeichnet jedoch keine von den lateinischen Autoren erträumte neue Region an der Ostküste der Ostsee, sondern vielmehr ein neues Bild, das sich in den Schriften dieser Zeit entwickelt hat und in den christlichen Diskurs integriert werden musste. Der vorliegende Artikel konzentriert sich auf drei Aspekte dieses Entwicklungsprozesses, die das Bild Livlands maßgeblich prägten: Wie entstand die neue Bezeichnung der Region Livland? Wie wurde die Region in frühen lateinischen Texten beschrieben? Wie wurden Livland betreffende Informationen in die bereits bestehende religiöse und geografische Gedankenwelt integriert?

⁸⁸ KOSKI, Liivinmaan nimi (as in footnote 17), p. 544.