Saints and Sainthood around the Baltic Sea
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Identity, Literacy, and Communication in the Middle Ages

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Chapter Six

The Cult and Visual Representation of Scandinavian Saints in Medieval Livonia

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MEDIEVAL LIVONIA, A HISTORICAL region corresponding approximately to present-day Estonia and Latvia, was incorporated into Latin Christendom comparatively late, during the German and Danish conquest of the late twelfth and the early thirteenth century. Livonia was Christianized at a time when the cult of universal saints dominated Europe. It is therefore not surprising that the majority of the churches built in the region from the thirteenth century until the Reformation were dedicated to well-known, generic saints: above all, to the Virgin Mary, the patroness of the land, but also to SS. John the Baptist, Peter, Nicholas, Martin, Michael, George, James the Greater, and so forth.¹

The church dedications certainly provide rather limited information on the cult of the saints in the region. However, our knowledge of the subject increases considerably when we include other types of textual and pictorial sources, such as calendars; information on the dedications of chapels, side altars, and chantries; records of guilds and confraternities; the visual representation of saints in art and artifacts, and so on. Unfortunately, the number of medieval works of art from Livonia is rather small (e.g., only about ten altarpieces survive, some of them in fragments), and there are also very few extant hagiographic or liturgical texts.² On the other hand, there are excellent archival sources for Tallinn (Ger. Reval), one of the three large Hanseatic cities in Livonia, which provide information on the side altars and chantries in the major churches of the city; on the church furnishings and utensils; on the religious practices of guilds and confraternities; and on the testamentary bequests to altars, masses, and saints’ statues. Similar records on Riga are considerably fewer in number and the medieval archives of Tartu (Dorpat) have been largely destroyed.³ From the rural parish churches, there is comparatively good information.
on the altars and other furnishings of those in the Saare-Lääne (Ösel-Wiek) bishopric, thanks to the visitation protocols from 1519 to 1522, and on the Keila (Kegel) church in north Estonia, thanks to the account book from 1472 to 1553. In addition, there exist occasional references to side altars, chapels, and religious confraternities in some smaller towns. On the whole, however, information on the cult of the saints is extremely scarce and uneven, spatially as well as temporally (most of the data originates from the second half of the fifteenth and the first quarter of the sixteenth century).

Considering the geographical closeness of Livonia to Scandinavia and Finland, the intense trade connections and diplomatic contacts, and the fact that from 1219 (1238) to 1346 the northern part of Estonia belonged to the Danish Crown, it is not surprising that the cults of some of the Nordic saints reached Livonia and that the main center of these cults was the city of Tallinn. In the early fifteenth century, a Birgittine convent was founded in Pärnu (Mariendal) in the vicinity of Tallinn, where the cult of Nordic saints was also likely to flourish. From Tallinn and/or the Birgittine convent, there is information on the veneration of St. Knud (Canute) of Denmark, St. Olaf of Norway, St. Henry of Finland, St. Eric of Sweden, St. Birgitta of Vadstena, St. Eskil of Strängnäs, St. David of Munktorp, and possibly of St. Magnus of Orkney. The amount and diversity of the information varies greatly: in the case of some saints (such as St. Olaf and St. Knud), their cult can be traced through the centuries and there also exist visual representations of them, whereas in the case of some others, nothing else is known besides the occurrence of their feast in a calendar. In the following, I will explore the textual and pictorial evidence for the veneration of the named saints, survey the associations or social groups who venerated them, and, if possible, indicate the changes and developments over time.

The Cult of St. Olaf in Tallinn

Olaf II Haraldsson, king of Norway from 1015 to 1028, who fell in the Battle of Stiklestad on July 29, 1030, became in the course of the following centuries the most well-known Scandinavian saint. His cult spread widely in the late medieval Baltic Sea region and beyond: churches were dedicated to him from Novgorod in the East to Amsterdam in the West and to Constantinople in the South. Hanseatic merchants, particularly those trading with Bergen and Scania, played an important role in spreading
his cult. There were guilds dedicated to St. Olaf not only in Scandinavia but also in Prussia (Danzig, Elbing, Königsberg), in northern Germany (Lübeck, Rostock), in the Low Countries (Deventer, Maastricht), and also in Tallinn.9 In the Baltic Sea region, St. Olaf became one of the patron saints of merchants and seafarers. However, he was also venerated by other social groups, including noblemen, craftsmen, and peasants.

The cult of St. Olaf probably reached Estonia soon after the Danish conquest in 1219, although one cannot rule out the possibility that he was also known there prior to that, due to the trading connections, in particular with Gotland. St. Olaf’s Church in Tallinn is first referred to in sources in 1267; the exact date of its foundation is unknown.10 In earlier scholarship, particularly in the writings of Paul Johansen in the 1950s, it was suggested that St. Olaf’s Church was erected by Scandinavian (Swedish) tradesmen and that it might have stood near the harbor as early as the twelfth century, prior to the foundation of the city.11 However, there is no textual or archaeological data to support this opinion. It is more likely that the church was erected around the mid-thirteenth century on the initiative of the Danish royal house, since its right of patronage belonged first to the Danish kings and, from 1267, to the Cistercian convent in Tallinn.12 Over time, the church came to be one of the two parish churches of the city (the other was that of St. Nicholas), and it was thoroughly rebuilt in the fifteenth century.13 Because of its high tower and the location near the harbor, it also functioned as an important landmark for seafarers.

However, as mentioned above, it cannot be excluded that St. Olaf was already known in Livonia prior to the Danish conquest. The Passio et miracula beati Olavi, a manuscript in the library of Corpus Christi College of the University of Oxford, includes a legend about two youths from Estonia (duo iuuenes de finibus Estonum), who had recently been converted and made a pilgrimage to the church of the blessed martyr Olaf at Nidaros.14 There, they reported about the growing cult of St. Olaf among the pagan nation and told a story about the father of one of the pilgrims who had been struck by a grave illness but was miraculously cured after praying to the saint. The father then underwent baptism and visited the Church of St. Olaf to make votive offerings. The whereabouts of the church are not mentioned in the text. The Passio et miracula beati Olavi was composed in various phases. This particular legend, found in no other version of the Passio, belongs to additions recorded in about 1180 by Archbishop Eystein Erlendsson and his team.15 The miracle collection was composed at the time of the institutionalization of the cult of St. Olaf.
It is not clear if this legend (or any other legend in the collection) mirrors any “historical truth”; rather, the primary aim of the compilers has been hagiographic propaganda—to promote the growing cult at Nidaros (Trondheim) and to suggest that it had spread broadly in the neighboring countries and beyond.

Regardless of whether the cult of St. Olaf reached Tallinn prior to or after the conquest of 1219, the date of the first mention of the church in 1267 is the earliest firm evidence for the veneration of the saint in Livonia. Together with the churches in Visby and Novgorod, it is among the earliest churches dedicated to St. Olaf in the Baltic Sea region. With certain reservations it can be claimed that St. Olaf’s Church developed into the main center of veneration of Nordic saints in the city: from at least the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, there were four side altars dedicated to St. Olaf, St. Knud, St. Henry of Finland, and St. Magnus (for details, see below).

Images of St. Olaf Connected to St. Olaf’s Church in Tallinn

St. Olaf’s Church has been seriously damaged several times over the course of the centuries, most notably in the iconoclastic riots in September 1524 and in the devastating fires of 1625 and 1820; therefore, no medieval altarpieces, statues of saints, pews, or other furnishings have been preserved. However, there is still one medieval image of St. Olaf in the church—on the boss decorating the stellar vaults of the easternmost bay of the chancel ambulatory (figure 6.1). The boss is carved of limestone and it has a rectangular shape. The saint is depicted in frontal position, seated, dressed in royal attire, wearing a crown and holding his well-known attributes—a battle-ax and an orb. Under his feet is a dragon with a human head—a symbol of the Antichrist. Different opinions exist about the dating and the original function of the relief. Some scholars have pointed out that the figure of St. Olaf looks somewhat rustic and that it must be older than the fifteenth-century vaults of the chancel, originating from about 1330 (the dating is based on a scroll inscribed with that year, held by an angel—the symbol of the Evangelist Matthew—on another boss). These scholars also assume that, due to its rectangular shape, it was initially not meant to be a boss but rather a decorative tablet above a portal or a niche. According to others, it was a boss made for the vaults of the earlier, fourteenth-
century chancel, and it was moved to its current position after the reconstruc-
tion of the chancel in about 1420–1425. Finally, according to a third
opinion, which is based on the iconographic type of the saint and the dra-
gon, the relief originates from about the same time as the new chancel.
Thus, it is likely that the boss with St. Olaf was especially commissioned to
decorate the innovative and therefore prestigious stellar vaults and instal-
led in the easternmost bay, which is liturgically one of the most significant
places in the church. It is likely that the altar of St. Olaf, which will be
discussed below, was located in this bay and that the vaults with the boss
“crowned” it.

Figure 6.1 The boss with the figure of St. Olaf in St. Olaf’s Church of Tallinn,
ca. 1425. Photo: Stanislav Stepashko.
Another piece of art is the silver seal of the church, dated by scholars to the second half of the fifteenth century and naturally featuring the patron saint (figure 6.2). St. Olaf is depicted in semi-profile, standing, wearing a crown surrounded by a halo and holding a battle-ax and

Figure 6.2 The silver seal (a) and the seal impression (b) of St. Olaf’s Church, second half of the fifteenth century. Photos: (a) Stanislav Stepashko, (b) Estonian History Museum.
an orb. The legend of the seal reads: *Sigillum sancti olaui ecclesiæ reiualiensis*. The seal was an object with a great symbolic, material, and legal value and was regarded as a part of the identity of the congregation. The medieval silver seal was in use until the nineteenth century, when the church acquired a new one, also decorated with the figure of its patron saint.²²

A third depiction of St. Olaf in connection with this church is found on a charter issued by twelve cardinals in Rome on May 3, 1509, promising a hundred days of indulgence to all Christians who visit the chapel of the Virgin Mary in St. Olaf’s Church on the feasts of the Assumption and the Presentation of the Virgin, of St. Lawrence and St. Olaf and on the dedication day of the church, and who make donations to the chapel.²³ It is likely that the document was issued at the request of the church wardens who wished to promote the construction and decoration of the new chapel. The charter is illuminated with the images of St. Olaf, the Virgin Mary, and St. Lawrence (figure 6.3). The last-mentioned saint was prob-

Figure 6.3 The image of St. Olaf in the indulgence charter from 1509. Photo: Stanislav Stepashko.
ably depicted and included in the list because he was the patron of another chapel in St. Olaf’s Church. Because of the popularity of St. Lawrence in the Archdioceses of Lund and Uppsala, the dedication of a chapel to him at St. Olaf’s Church can be another indication of the Scandinavian influence.

St. Olaf and the Tallinn Guilds

The cult of Scandinavian saints was also strongly promoted by Tallinn guilds. The oldest guilds in the city were those of St. Canute (Knud) and St. Olaf, mentioned in 1326 and 1341, respectively. In these records, both associations are referred to as house owners, meaning that they had to be comparatively wealthy. Scholars generally agree that the history of these guilds dates back to the thirteenth century, but due to the lack of documents from that time it is impossible to ascertain the exact time of their foundation or to investigate their initial membership. It is likely that in their earlier stage of development, St. Canute’s and St. Olaf’s guilds united people of different social status and occupation, offering mutual protection and also organizing social life and religious practices. Later, in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in the context of the sharpening of social and ethnic divisions, the membership of the guilds became more specialized. In about the mid-fourteenth century, the merchants decided to establish their own association, left the older guilds and founded the Great Guild (until the late fifteenth century known as the Kindergilde). After that, the guilds of St. Canute and St. Olaf developed into umbrella organizations for craftsmen. St. Olaf’s guild became the less prestigious of the two, uniting mainly occupations which involved as much muscle as skill, such as masons, carpenters, rope makers and various carriers, but also butchers, furriers, coopers, and others. The ethnic factor should be mentioned as well, especially because it was closely intertwined with social status. The upper social layers, including the merchants of the Great Guild, were almost exclusively of German origin, whereas among the craftsmen there were also Scandinavians (mainly Swedes) and Estonians. The non-German element in St. Olaf’s guild was probably much larger than in St. Canute’s guild, which united more prestigious crafts. In the statutes of St. Canute’s guild, there is a mid-fifteenth-century stipulation which draws a boundary between their membership and that of St. Olaf’s guild and reflects the superiority of the former over the latter: at the time of the drinking feasts, it was forbidden to invite members of St. Olaf’s
guild as guests, punishable by a fine of five pounds of wax.\(^{28}\) In 1508, St.
Canute’s guild decided that non-Germans would no longer be admitted
as members\(^{29}\) (which probably increased the admission of Estonians into
St. Olaf’s guild). It is difficult to ascertain how strictly these norms were
actually followed, but in practice, the demarcation line between the two
associations was not as rigid, at least not prior to the aggravation of social
tensions in the sixteenth century.\(^{30}\)

St. Olaf’s guild was dissolved at the end of the seventeenth cen-
tury, and most of its members were admitted to St. Canute’s guild, which
then became the sole representative of the craftsmen in the lower city. Unfortu-
nately, the archives of St. Olaf’s guild have not been preserved
and thus there is not much information on the guild activities during the
Middle Ages, including religious practices. However, as is characteristic of
medieval guilds in general, this guild’s patron saint was depicted on various
symbolic objects, such as the guild seal, of which several impressions have
survived. The seal, dated to the first half of the fourteenth century, depicts
St. Olaf seated on a throne, holding a battle-ax and a cylindrical host pyx
topped with a cross. Under his feet lies a defeated warrior with a helmet,
who, similarly to the human-headed dragon, represents the Antichrist.\(^{31}\)

The halls of all three major guilds were situated on the same
street—the Long Street (\textit{lange strate}, present-day Pikk)—a major traffic
route from the harbor to the city center. The guildhalls were not only the
centers of social life for their members, but were used for other purposes
as well (e.g., for weddings and assemblies and for the storage of goods).
The appearance and location of the building was an indicator of the rank
and wealth of an association and it formed a part of its social and religious
identity. Therefore, the guilds paid great attention to the maintenance and
decoration of their halls; the façade in particular was loaded with vari-
ous symbols. For the St. Canute’s and St. Olaf’s guilds, it was natural to
express their identity and to manifest their ownership through the visual
representation of their patron saint. Indeed, on the gable of the façade of
the ante-hall (\textit{vorhus}) of St. Olaf’s Guildhall (Pikk St. 24), one can still see
a sixteenth-century rectangular limestone relief of St. Olaf, which reminds
the viewers of the former owner of the house (figure 6.4).\(^{32}\) The king is
depicted in front view, holding a battle-ax in his right hand and a scepter
in his left, and standing on a human-headed dragon. The representation
of St. Olaf had multiple functions: to demonstrate the ownership of the
guild, to manifest the saint’s protection over the building and the guild
members, and to evoke prayers.
The veneration of St. Olaf in Tallinn was certainly not limited to the members of this guild and to the congregation and supporters of St. Olaf’s Church; the cult had a much larger basis. The wealthiest and most powerful guild in the city, the Great Guild of the merchants, had four altars altogether, two in each of the parish churches, and one of these was the altar of St. Olaf in St. Olaf’s Church. However, the guild was not the founder of the altar, which is first referred to in a charter of 1346, according to which Johannes de Bremen, a city councilor of Tallinn, held a right of patronage over a chantry at the altar of St. Olaf, founded by another
city councilor, the late Johannes Masche. It is possible that the altar was already established in about 1325 when Masche donated sixty silver marks to St. Olaf’s Church for a mass to be held for his soul and the souls of his parents. Masche apparently had no sons and therefore the right of patronage passed to his colleague, Johannes de Bremen, and later on (it is not known exactly when) to the merchants’ guild, which had very close connections to the city council.

In the medieval account book (1425–1532) of the aldermen of the Great Guild, records on St. Olaf’s altar occur from 1440 onwards. It turns out the guild had new candles made for the altar at least four times a year: for St. Olaf’s day, All Saints, Christmas, and Easter. According to the decision from 1457, the Great Guild began to keep three identical account books for its charitable suborganization, the Table Guild, in which the rents for the poor table and for three guild altars, including that of St. Olaf, had to be written down.

The Great Guild was not the only association supporting and maintaining this altar—the city council also contributed. However, since the city council regularly paid for the morning mass, in various city books, the altar is occasionally also referred to as that of the morning mass (fromisson altar) or as the altar of the morning mass of St. Olaf, which has sometimes made it difficult to recognize the connection between them. The altar is mentioned for the last time in the register of the income from the side altars of Tallinn, compiled by the order of the city council in 1525 soon after the Reformation. According to the list, as many as four priests used to serve at this altar, and the annual salary of each of them had reached twelve marks of Riga. This indicates that the altar was among the wealthiest in St. Olaf’s Church. One of the reasons for the strong veneration of St. Olaf among the mercantile elite of Tallinn was probably the fact that in the late medieval Baltic Sea region (or, even more broadly, the Hanseatic region), the saint had developed into one of the beloved protectors of merchants and seafarers, and he was widely venerated as such.

It is not known if the guild of St. Olaf was also among the benefactors of the altar discussed above. On the one hand, it is likely that the guild had its own altar (if not two, as in the case of St. Canute’s guild; see below) and the one dedicated to its patron saint would be the most logical choice. However, since the archives of St. Olaf’s guild have not been preserved and information on the guild altar(s) is not revealed in any of the city books, it is not possible to find out whether or not the guild indeed
supported St. Olaf’s altar. There was also no other side altar dedicated to St. Olaf in the churches of Tallinn. The only known connection between St. Olaf’s guild and a side altar is contained in the register from 1525, according to which the guild used to pay eighteen marks a year to the altar of St. Anne, located in front of the Sacrament. In St. Nicholas’ Church, the guild is known to have supported the Corpus Christi Mass. St. Olaf’s guild also had connections to the Dominican friary’s church, which was dedicated to St. Catherine, but records of their financial support never mention an altar or a chantry. But even if the guild did not have an altar dedicated to its patron saint, the visual sources discussed above prove that the guild held St. Olaf in high esteem and that he was an important identity marker for the association.

No medieval inventory lists survive from St. Olaf’s Church; thus it is not known how this particular side altar was decorated (with an altar-piece, a single statue, or a reliquary?) or whether there were any statues of saints placed at the walls and pillars. The earliest surviving inventory list was composed some years after the Reformation, in 1527, by order of the city council. This inventory mentions a silver statue of St. Olaf, weighing twenty marks minus three Lot (ca. 4120 grams). There is no indication of whether this statue had in Catholic times stood on the high altar, on St. Olaf’s altar, or perhaps in a special niche in the wall, and whether it had contained any relics.

The position of St. Olaf as a highly venerated and popular saint in Tallinn is also confirmed by calendars. The best source for studying the different degrees of liturgical feasts in the city is a Martyrology of Belinus de Padua, printed in Venice in 1509, that most probably originates from the Tallinn Dominican friary. The handwritten remarks added to this Martyrology enable us to reconstruct the local degrees of feasts. One of these additions is the feast of St. Olaf on July 29, which is marked with duplex, i.e., the second highest degree. Since this feast is typically not found in Dominican calendars or in those of the Germans dioceses, its presence here indicates the significance of the saint in the local context, which in its turn comes to influence the local Dominican liturgy. It is also worth remembering that the Dominican convent in Turku (Åbo), which had links to Tallinn, was dedicated to St. Olaf.

There is also another calendar that most likely originates from late medieval Tallinn: it is contained in a medical-astrological manuscript from the first half of the sixteenth century, written in Middle Low German and kept in the National Library of Latvia in Riga. In this calendar, the feasts
are differentiated simply by black and red ink: among the thirty-six feasts written in red, there is also the feast of Olaf konynck on July 29.\textsuperscript{50}

For today’s researchers, the best-known (and the most frequently reproduced) visual representation of St. Olaf in Tallinn is the carved figure of the saint standing in the wing of the high altarpiece of the Church of the Holy Spirit (figure 6.5). This altarpiece, completed in 1483, is, above all, famous for the fact that it is one of the three documented masterpieces produced in the workshop of Bernt Notke in Lübeck.\textsuperscript{51} There can be at least two explanations for the inclusion of the figure of St. Olaf

Figure 6.5  Figure of St. Olaf in the altarpiece of the Church of the Holy Spirit in Tallinn, 1483. Photo: Stanislav Stepashko.
in its iconographic program: first, the altarpiece was commissioned by the city council, who actively promoted the cult of St. Olaf; and second, the hospital church of the Holy Spirit was located in the parish of St. Olaf. For the other parish—that of St. Nicholas—St. Olaf was seen as a rival, and this is probably the reason why one cannot find the figure of this otherwise popular saint in the magnificent high altarpiece of St. Nicholas’ Church.52

Thus far, I have studied the cult of St. Olaf on the level of social groups (such as merchants and craftsmen) and associations (such as the guilds and the city council). However, the sources also allow us to study the religious preferences of some private individuals. In 1516, the knight Hennink Passow (also Parssow) made his will in Tallinn. He was a Danish vassal, formerly in the service of the Teutonic Order, the lord of the Lagedi and Kolga manors in northern Estonia, and he also owned real estate in Tallinn, including a house on Pikk Street. He was one of the very few noblemen who became a member of the Great Guild. In his will, Passow expressed the wish to be buried in St. Olaf’s Church and bequeathed fifty marks, his horse, armor, sword, and saddle to the new (i.e., St. Mary’s) chapel of the church, so that “the holy lord St. Olaf would pray to God for me” (dat de hilghe her sunte Olaf ghot vor my bidden mach).53 Of course, it cannot be ascertained if his affection toward the saint was influenced by his Scandinavian origin or by the general popularity of the saint in the city, including among his fellow guildsmen. However, this example, as well as the evidence presented above, indicates that St. Olaf was venerated by various social layers and ethnic groups: by noblemen, merchants, artisans, and clerics, by people of German, Scandinavian, and Estonian origin.

The Cult of St. Olaf in Rural Parishes

The cult of St. Olaf was not limited to Tallinn, but can also be traced in coastal Livonia and on the islands (figure 6.6), that is, in the areas where the population included Swedes and/or where there were strong trade connections with Scandinavia, most notably with Gotland.54

The only other church dedicated to St. Olaf in addition to that in Tallinn is the church on the island of Vormsi (Swed. Ormsö). The oldest part of the church is the chancel, which has been dated by scholars to about 1400. The present nave was built in 1632. It is not known if the church of 1400 was the first one at that place or if there had also existed an earlier one, perhaps of wood.55
On the island of Saaremaa (Ger. Ösel), in the westernmost parish, Kihelkonna, there was an altar of St. Olaf in the parish church, referred to in a visitation protocol from 1522. The same record also mentions a chapel, where the chest of a guild was kept, to which the peasants had a key. The Kihelkonna parish church was dedicated to St. Michael, but the record can perhaps be interpreted such that not only a side altar but also the chapel, as well as the guild, bore the name of St. Olaf. The people of Saaremaa had close trade connections to Gotland, and it is known that there was a harbor in Kihelkonna in the Middle Ages. Thus, it cannot be excluded that there existed a guild of St. Olaf uniting local peasants and seafarers.

The medieval visual evidence likewise originates from the islands. A small wooden figure of St. Olaf (figure 6.7), most likely produced in Lübeck in about 1490, has been preserved from the church on the island of Ruhnu (Swed. Runö). The hands of the king have been lost, so that it is not known what he was holding, but there is a fragmentary dragon at
his feet. If the king is wearing armor, it is well hidden by a large red cloak. Thus, the sculpture emphasizes the royalty of the saint and not his image as a warrior. The present wooden church in Ruhnu was built in the 1640s; thus, the sculpture must have originated from an earlier chapel or have been brought to the island from somewhere else. From medieval times until 1944, the island was inhabited mainly by Swedes; thus it is not surprising that the church possessed a representation of St. Olaf.

Figure 6.7 Figure of St. Olaf from the island of Ruhnu, ca. 1490. National History Museum of Latvia. Photo: Merike Kurisoo.
In the Saaremaa Museum in the town of Kuressaare (Arensburg) there are two wooden figures from about the 1420s that represent holy kings. One of them, wearing a hat, has lost both of his arms; the other wears a crown and holds a round object (an orb or a ciborium?) in his left hand (the right arm is missing and the feet are damaged). It is not known from which church and altarpiece they originate. The damage and the lack of attributes have not enabled scholars to identify the holy kings with certainty; it has been suggested that they belonged to a group of the Three Magi. However, one should also consider the possibility that the figure with the crown and the round object represents St. Olaf. He is not looking downwards like a Magi admiring the infant Jesus. This naturally raises the question about the identity of the first king. Are we dealing here with the only known case in Estonia in which the two (or even three) Scandinavian holy kings have been represented together? An argument against this interpretation is that it seems unlikely that St. Knud (or St. Eric) would have been depicted without a crown, simply wearing a hat. The problem remains to be solved by future studies.

In post-medieval written sources, mainly from the seventeenth century, some chapels of St. Olaf have been recorded in the coastal parishes of western and northwestern Estonia and on the islands. It is probable that the history of at least some of them reaches back to the Middle Ages. One of these was St. Olaf’s chapel on the lands of the Saastna manor in Karuse parish. A visitation protocol from 1593 reports about the “idolatry” that was going on there, attracting people from Gotland, Saaremaa, and Kurland. In 1647 the chapel is described as one of the places where the heathen practices are most vigorous in Estonia. In 1692, the pastor of Karuse writes about an old devotional site—a statue that had previously stood at the seaside, erected by “the papists” for the protection of travelers. He complains that although the pillar with the statue was torn down after the Reformation, the peasants still make pilgrimage to its site, and bring offerings on St. Olaf’s eve.

From 1644 a record survives of a chapel in Väike-Lähtru in the parish of Martna, where the peasants used to gather annually on St. Olaf’s day to “practice idolatry.” The custom is reported to have continued even after the Great Northern War (1700–1721).

The present wooden chapel of St. Olaf at Nõva most probably originates from the eighteenth century, but it had an earlier predecessor, mentioned at the end of the seventeenth century. It has been assumed that the history of the Swedish population in this area reaches back to the Catholic
period. Until 1653 Nõva belonged to the Lääne-Nigula parish, but in that year it became part of the parish of Risti in Harjumaa. In 1627, a wooden chapel of St. Olaf is mentioned at Kärdla, on the island of Hiiumaa (Swed. Dagö). This chapel (and another one at Kõpu, patron saint not mentioned) belonged to the Reigi church. It is not known how far back its history reached.

On the islands of Suur-Pakri and Väike-Pakri (Swed. Rågöarna), located near the northwestern coast, there were wooden chapels, dedicated to St. Olaf, which were replaced with stone ones in the nineteenth century. It is not known when the first chapels were erected on the islands.

Finally, at the top of the Sõrve peninsula in the southwestern Saaremaa, a shoal in the sea not far from the Saare chapel has been called by the name of the saint—Olafgrund. The patron saint of this medieval chapel is not mentioned in the sources, but there is a possibility that it was St. Olaf.

Thus, it seems that some of the chapels listed in this section could have originated from the Middle Ages, while others were erected in the early modern era, mainly in the seventeenth century. Some chapels, even if in ruins, continued to be held as holy places by local peasants, who are reported in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to perform “idolatry” there, that is, to continue the folk practices of Catholic times.

The Cult of St. Olaf in Riga

In the Middle Ages, the saint was also known in Riga, the largest Livonian city, although his cult there was not nearly as strong as in Tallinn: no church, chapel, altar, or chantry was dedicated to him. The feast of St. Olaf (or in fact any other Scandinavian saint) can be found neither in the early fifteenth-century calendar, which is included in the missal of the Cathedral of Riga, nor in the breviary of the Riga diocese from 1513. However, one of the smaller guilds of Riga, probably of devotional character, bore the name of St. Olaf. The documentary evidence for this guild is quite scarce, as is generally the case with the minor guilds and confraternities. The references originate from the years 1441–1470, and are contained in the account book of the treasurer of the Brotherhood of the Black Heads. According to these laconic and rather uniform entries, St. Olaf’s guild rented the New House (i.e., the Black Heads’ house) for their annual festive gathering, the drinking feast (drunke), which took place on the feast of St. Olaf. Unfortunately, these records do not
reveal anything about the nature and membership of this guild. Thus, it cannot be ascertained whether the guild in Riga had any connection to merchants and seafarers like the guilds of St. Olaf in Prussian towns. The Black Heads’ house was also rented for similar purposes by other minor guilds and confraternities, for instance, by those of the Holy Blood and St. Mary Magdalene, by the company of the beer carriers, and some others. The annual rent paid by these associations was two to three marks, whereas St. Olaf’s guild usually paid no more than six or seven ferdings. This indicates that the guild was either a poorer or a smaller association than the others. There are no payments of this kind after the 1470s, when the Black Heads’ house was reconstructed. This does not mean that St. Olaf’s guild and the other minor guilds mentioned in the treasurer’s account book ceased to exist; more likely, they simply had to find another place for their annual gatherings. According to the new statutes of the Black Heads’ house (also called King Arthur’s Court) from 1477, the house was open to city councilors, burghers, all common merchants, and seafarers.72 This declaration probably indicates that the Black Heads wanted to draw a stricter boundary between the mercantile elite of the city and the “others,” and that the guild members of St. Olaf fell in the latter category. However, there could also be other reasons for the discontinuation of the rental payments in the account book. All the minor guilds and confraternities were dissolved during the Reformation.

The Cult of St. Knud (Canute) in Tallinn

In contrast to St. Olaf, whose cult spread widely in the late-medieval Baltic Sea region, the cult of St. Knud in Livonia seems to have been limited to Tallinn only. The main promoter of this cult was the guild of St. Canute, which, as noted above, was first mentioned in the sources in 1326.

In the territories of medieval Denmark and Sweden, there were over fifty guilds of St. Canute, for example in Visby, Ringsted, Malmö, Lund, and elsewhere. Initially, that is in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, they were most probably merchants’ guilds (or, as suggested by Kurt Villads Jensen, crusaders’ guilds73), but, as recent research has shown, their later history varied greatly not only over time but also from town to town.74 The guild in Tallinn differed from those in Denmark and Sweden in the sense that it developed into an umbrella association for craftsmen.

Very likely, St. Canute’s guild in Tallinn originally united people of different social strata and only later developed into a composite guild for
craftsmen. As mentioned above, in the late Middle Ages, St. Canute’s guild became the more prestigious one of the two craft guilds, uniting the more highly regarded craftsmen, such as the goldsmiths, coppersmiths, blacksmiths, bakers, tailors, shoemakers, and so on. However, even in the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth century, it was not solely an association for craftsmen: some stipulations in its statutes also mention merchants and shippers. In the early sixteenth century, a society of merchants (koplude lach) turns up in the guild documents. Most probably it united retail traders who, from 1423, were no longer admitted to the Great Guild of the merchants. During the drinking feast at Christmas of 1508–1509, a nobleman and local authority—the commander of the Teutonic Order in Tallinn—was admitted to the guild. Thus, it is important to bear in mind that the membership and the nature of the guild underwent constant development. Only after the Reformation did the guilds of St. Canute and St. Olaf transform into purely occupational associations.

St. Canute’s guild was dissolved as late as 1920. Thanks to its long and continuous activity its archives have to a great extent been preserved. The main sources for the study of the medieval history of the guild are its statutes and the account book from 1437 to 1596.

The first question of interest is naturally the identity of the patron saint of the guild—King Knud the Holy, who was killed in Odense in 1086, or Duke Knud Lavard, who was murdered in the woods of Haraldsted in 1131. This question has also turned out to be rather complicated to answer in the case of some Danish guilds of St. Canute. Without going into detail, it is sufficient to note here that the cult of Knud Lavard was strongly promoted by his son, King Valdemar I, and the earliest guilds of St. Canute were dedicated to the duke. However, in the second half of the thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth century, due to the changing political and religious circumstances, the cult of King Knud overshadowed the cult of Knud Lavard, and the guilds, too, began to venerate the king, thus replacing their patron saint, and founding altars and masses in his honor.

The written sources from Tallinn do not provide an answer to the question about the patron saint, because all the surviving documents mention simply Knud, not specifying whether it was the king or the duke. The identity of the patron saint is closely connected to the date of foundation of the guild, which, however, is not known. The boldest suggestion was made by a Baltic German scholar Heinz von zur Mühlen, who proposed that the guild was founded some time between 1238 and 1241, i.e., dur-
In the last years of King Valdemar II, the grandson of Knud Lavard, 79
In this case, the original patron saint of the guild could have been Duke
Knud. However, nowadays scholars doubt that St. Canute’s guild (or any
other guild) in Tallinn existed that early. It is more likely that the guild
was founded in the late thirteenth century, in which case it is possible that
the patron saint was, from the very beginning, King Knud. 80

This opinion is above all supported by visual evidence. There exist
several symbolic objects and artworks that belonged to the guild, and all
of them depict King Knud. The oldest of these is the guild seal, known to
us from seal impressions, and dated by scholars to the first half of the four-
teenth century (figure 6.8). 81 There, the king is seated on a throne whose
sides are decorated with lion’s heads, holding royal insignia—a scepter and
an orb. The legend reads: SIGILLVM CONFRATERNITATIS SANTI
KANVTI DE REVALIA. The second piece of evidence is a colored pen-
and-ink drawing from about 1486 on the title page of the guild statutes
(figure 6.9). There, the king holds a scepter in his right hand and in his left
a shield with the coat of arms of Denmark—three blue lions on a yellow
background. This drawing most probably became a visual model for the

Figure 6.8 Seal impression of St. Canute’s guild in Tallinn, first half of the
fourteenth century. Photo: Estonian History Museum.
later representations, because a similar type of crowned king with a scepter and a shield with three lions was followed in almost all the known depictions of King Knud in Tallinn until the dissolution of the guild in 1920.

Perhaps the only exception to this pattern is a rectangular limestone relief from 1516 (figure 6.10), which was placed in a gabled niche above the portal of the St. Canute’s Guildhall and stood there until the reconstruction of the building in the 1860s. There, the king holds an orb in his right hand but his shield is not decorated with three lions, but with a white cross on a red background, i.e., with the lesser coat of arms of Tallinn. Analysis of the multiple paint layers indicates that the earliest surviving layer can be dated to the first half or the middle of the eighteenth century and that the current one was applied after 1830. It has also been suggested that the relief could have initially been monochrome, but that the smooth surface of the shield indicates that it was more probably meant to be painted. In this case, the shield would most likely have been decorated with the three lions. In 1754, the Danish antiquary Søren Abildgaard visited Tallinn and made color drawings of several stone reliefs and other architectural details, including those around the portal of the St. Canute’s

Figure 6.9 Image of King Knud in the statutes of St. Canute’s guild, ca. 1486. Photo: Tallinn City Archives.
In his drawing, the king is polychromic (some of the colors differ from the current ones) and his shield is already decorated with the cross. It is likely that Abildgaard happened to document the earliest traceable paint layer, which has survived under the later ones. However, despite the lack of paint layers from the sixteenth century, there is documentary evidence which indicates that the relief was indeed originally polychromic: in 1520, the guild paid sixteen marks to the artist Michel Sittow for the painting of the decorative disks on the gable (i.e., on the façade) of the guildhall, and two marks to Reinolt for the painting of Knud. The context leaves no doubt that “Knud” refers to the limestone relief under discussion.

In about the mid-sixteenth century, two door-side stones were placed at the entrance of the guildhall. The circular plate at the top of one of them is incised with the coat of arms of the city, the other with the coat of arms of the guild (figure 6.11a). The latter is dominated by the
king’s shield with three lions. Above the shield, almost in the manner of the “helm” or “coronet,” one can see the bust of King Knud with a crown and a scepter. His feet and the lower end of his robe are visible below the shield. The king is seated on a throne whose sides form an architectural frame to the shield. The door-side stones of limestone remained in place until the reconstruction of the guildhall in the 1860s (figure 6.12); at this time their circular upper parts were moved to the back side of the house, where they can still be seen. Nowadays, there are no visible traces of polychromy on the reliefs; however, from Abildgaard’s drawing of 1754 one can conclude that at that time, they were decorated in color (figure 6.11b).

Finally, there survives a wooden sculpture of King Knud from about 1540, i.e., from the post-Reformation period (figure 6.13). It represents the king in fashionable Renaissance clothing. The figure holds a scepter (the upper part of which was lost in World War II) and a shield with three lions. Originally, the sculpture stood in the guildhall; nowadays it belongs to the Art Museum of Estonia and is displayed in the Niguliste Museum.

In addition to the extant works of art, the guild has also possessed other images of St. Knud, mentioned in the medieval account book. Although the entries there are very brief and generally non-descriptive, certain conclusions about the identity of the saint can still be made. In
1467, the guild paid six marks for (the making of?) a lion “below St. Knud.” The lion can undoubtedly be associated with the king. Even earlier than that, a silver-gilt statue of St. Knud turns up in the account book, first mentioned in 1446. The statue was kept in the guildhall and it was one of the valuable objects to be delivered to a new alderman. In 1495, the guild had a new silver-gilt statue of St. Knud made: it cost sixty marks and weighed six marks and three and a half Lot (1293.5 grams) together with the throne. The throne indicates that the figure was that of the king.

Thus, the extant artworks and also the reference to the silver Knud, seated on a throne, support the idea that the patron saint of the Tallinn guild was King Knud. Of course, it cannot be excluded that a similar process took place in Tallinn as in Malmö and some other Scandinavian towns:

Figure 6.12 Façade of the St. Canute’s Guildhall prior to the reconstruction in the 1860s. Drawing by Georg Friedrich Geist, first half of the nineteenth century. Photo: Tallinn City Archives.
the original patron saint of Canute’s guild was Knud Lavard, but in about 1300, he was replaced with King Knud. However, since the foundation date of the guild is not known, it remains a matter of dispute. It is also relevant to keep in mind that in the late Middle Ages, the cult of the two Knuds often became conflated, and some Scandinavian guilds simply used the name Knud. 91

In the late Middle Ages, St. Canute’s guild was a wealthy organization that had its own altar in both parish churches. The foundation of these altars cannot be dated precisely. The altar of St. Knud in St. Olaf’s Church is first mentioned in 1449, that in St. Nicholas’ Church in 1471. 92
The latter was occasionally also referred to as the Virgin Mary’s altar, probably because it was decorated with a statue of the Virgin. According to the list of side altars from 1525, the guild used to support the altar of St. Knud in St. Olaf’s Church with twelve marks a year. At least from the fifteenth century, but probably also earlier, the guild regularly paid for the masses in honor of St. Knud in both parish churches, and for the intercessory prayers for the living and the dead. It is not known on which date the masses were celebrated. The payments for the masses ceased after the Reformation, which culminated in the iconoclastic riots of September 1524.

Although the liturgical veneration of St. Knud in Tallinn was brought to an abrupt end after the Reformation, the king remained an important symbol for the guild. The medieval seal continued to be used, the relief with the image of King Knud remained in place above the portal, and the guild commissioned a new statue of the king in about 1540. In the 1670s, the guild had a new seal engraved, again with the image of the king. In the mid-1860s when the guildhall was rebuilt, its new façade was decorated with two large sculptures of cast iron—Martin Luther and King Knud. Both of these were essential for the guild’s identity and self-representation. At that time, Estonia was already part of the Russian Empire, thus the figure of Luther was a visual testimony of the religious identity of the guildsmen. King Knud was an emblematic figure, symbolizing the long and continuous history of the guild. As the guild’s emblem, he continued to be depicted on various representational and prestige objects. In the silver collection that formerly belonged to the guild, there survive two nineteenth-century standing cups (from 1848 and 1860), engraved with the figure of King Knud, as well as a pendant shield from 1913, which was made for the 500th anniversary of the tailors of St. Canute’s guild and decorated with the king’s image in relief. In all these three silver objects, the king’s iconography follows the same pattern as the previously mentioned artworks: he holds a scepter (and in two cases an orb), but his most distinctive attribute is the shield with three lions. This pictorial tradition is characteristic of Tallinn: in the painting and sculpture of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Denmark, King Knud does not carry such a shield.

The Cult of Other Nordic Saints

St. Henry (Fin. Henrik) was, according to a legend, a bishop in Uppsala, who accompanied King Eric of Sweden on his crusade to Finland in the
mid-twelfth century and was martyred there. The centers of his cult were Nousiainen and Turku, where he became the second patron saint of the cathedral, after the Virgin Mary. Until the late fourteenth century, his veneration was mainly concentrated in the dioceses of Turku and Uppsala, but by the end of the Catholic era, he was also known in other Scandinavian dioceses. Considering the geographical closeness between Tallinn and Finland, the economic relations, and the presence of Swedish and Finnish craftsmen and other inhabitants in the city, it is not surprising that the cult of St. Henry reached the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland.

In the parish church of St. Olaf in Tallinn, there was an altar dedicated to St. Henry. It is not known when or by whom it was founded: the earliest known record of it survives from 1405 in a book of the city’s rents. The record indicates that the city council either had the right of patronage over the altar or that the financing of the altar was organized through the council.

In 1442, when the merchant Gert van der Linden made his will, he bequeathed a capital of 300 marks to support a chantry in St. Olaf’s Church, the annual interest of which (18 marks) had to cover the running costs. From the later documents it becomes apparent that the chantry was connected to St. Henry’s altar and that the right of patronage over it stayed in the family. In 1449, the executors of Gert’s will, among them his nephew and heir Evert van der Linden, confirm that the annual interest for the chantry at St. Henry’s altar is 24 marks, and that Evert donated a missal for it, and the chantry priest (her Hinrick Ispinckrode) a chalice and a paten. In his will in 1455, Evert bequeathed his veroneken (veil of Veronica) to St. Henry’s altar. The last mention of the right of patronage in connection with the heirs of van der Linden occurs in the 1470s.

There is no hint in the sources of why the family decided to support St. Henry’s altar. Both Gert and Evert van der Linden were burghers of Tallinn and members of the Great Guild. Gert van der Linden originated from Westphalia, most likely from Dortmund. Evert was a son of his brother, the Lübeck merchant Herbord van der Linden. Evert had business partners in Lübeck, Danzig, and Narva.

In the municipal account books, there are regular entries about St. Henry’s altar until the first decades of the sixteenth century. Like several other side altars, it is mentioned for the last time in 1525–1527, when the city council made a list of the side altars and their income in preparation for its confiscation for the benefit of the Gemeine Kasten, established after the Reformation.
The only other piece of evidence for the cult of St. Henry in Tallinn is a reference from 1518 to a silver statue of the saint, which was given as a security to goldsmiths for a loan of 100 marks. The statue weighed about 1.35 kilograms and it was kept by the alderman in the guild’s chest. The owner of the statue is not mentioned in the source, and it is thus not known if it belonged to a private individual or an institution. As in the case of St. Knud, there is no trace of the veneration of St. Henry anywhere else in Livonia.

In the subchapter about St. Olaf’s cult in Tallinn, it was briefly noted that the Great Guild had four altars, two in each parish church. The second altar that belonged to them in St. Olaf’s Church (in addition to St. Olaf’s altar) was dedicated to St. Magnus. The altar and the chantry are first referred to in connection with the guild in 1426, but the time of foundation and the precise location in the church are again unknown. The account book of the Great Guild includes remarks about some valuables that were donated to the altar of St. Magnus, such as the silver foot of a cross, a chain with the Agnus Dei pendant and prayer beads. The altar is last recorded in the list from 1525, where it is falsely indicated that it had also been called the altar of St. Henry (i.e., confused with the altar discussed above).

In none of the written records about this altar is it indicated to which of the several saints called Magnus was it dedicated. In the two calendars that can be connected to Tallinn there are no feast days for Magnus. The calendar in the Missal of Riga includes the feast of St. Magnus of Anagni on August 19, but it was among the feasts of low degree. In the context of Tallinn, the cult of two other saints seems much more plausible: St. Magnus of Füssen, who was occasionally regarded as a fifteenth member among the Fourteen Holy Helpers and enjoyed popularity in the German territories, or St. Magnus of Orkney (Earl Magnus Erlendsson), who suffered martyrdom in about 1115, who was venerated in Scandinavia, and whose visual representations can be found in Swedish churches. Considering the fact that the altar was located in St. Olaf’s Church and that the right of patronage belonged to the Great Guild who strongly supported the cult of St. Olaf, it cannot be excluded that the guild also promoted another Nordic saint. However, because of the lack of firm evidence, the question of which St. Magnus was the patron saint of this altar remains unanswered.

The cult of St. Birgitta of Vadstena (1303–1373) in the northern part of Livonia is, above all, connected to the foundation of the Birgittine
The convent in Mariendal (Lat. Vallis Mariae), in the vicinity of Tallinn, in the early fifteenth century. In the vernacular, the convent was known as the *sunte Birgitten kloster*, and the Estonian place name Pirita was derived from Birgitta’s name. The Birgittine houses were all dedicated to the Virgin Mary, but St. Birgitta was regarded as a copatron. This is expressed, for example, in a document from 1420 and in the inscription of the fifteenth-century seal impressions of the convent. The iconography of the seals is inspired by a Nativity vision of St. Birgitta (Revelations 7:21): the Virgin Mary and Birgitta are worshiping the Child, who is lying on the ground, naked and glowing. There is also a lighted candle, an ox and an ass, and the Virgin’s mantle and shoes, which she had taken off before giving birth.

The convent was founded on the lands of the Teutonic Order and was strongly supported by the nobility in northern Estonia (Harju-Viru). However, the new ecclesiastical institution also gained popularity among the city-dwellers, who actively made donations to the convent in their wills. A visual testimony of St. Birgitta’s veneration in Tallinn is her depiction in the reredos of the high altar of St. Nicholas’ Church (the figure of Birgitta is visible when the altarpiece is fully open), which was commissioned from the workshop of Hermen Rode in Lübeck and completed in 1478–1481. The figure of St. Birgitta is standing in the same row as St. Mary Magdalene, St. Gertrude of Nivelles, and St. Elizabeth of Thuringia. She is easily recognizable by her attributes—an open book and an inkpot (figure 6.14).

A fragmentary calendar survives from the Birgittine convent; only the months of May and June remain. The calendar was in use from about 1474 to 1544, but was composed even earlier, perhaps prior to the 1450s. The fragment appears to be similar to the calendar followed at the motherhouse in Vadstena in the Diocese of Linköping. The feast of the translation of St. Birgitta on May 28 is marked there as *totum duplex*, i.e., with the highest degree.

The veneration of St. Birgitta reached other towns in the coastal areas of Livonia, too. In Riga, in the parish church of St. Peter, there was a chapel and a chantry in her honor, mentioned in 1495. In the Cathedral of Haapsalu (Ger. Hapsal)—the center of the Saare-Lääne bishopric—a canon founded a chantry of St. Birgitta at the altar of the same saint in 1521.

In the fragmentary calendar from the Pirita convent, three more feast days of Swedish saints can be found: the feast of King Eric on May
Figure 6.14  Figure of St. Birgitta in the altarpiece of St. Nicholas’ Church in Tallinn, 1478–1481. Niguliste Museum. Photo: Stanislav Stepashko.
18, marked with *totum duplex*, the feast of bishop and martyr St. Eskil (of Strängnäs) on June 12 (*festum simplex*), and the feast of confessor St. David (of Munktorp) on June 25 (*memoria*). For the last two, this is the only trace of their feast days being celebrated in Livonia. It is questionable if they were at all known outside of the Pirita convent.

St. Eric of Sweden, on the other hand, could have been more broadly venerated, particularly if one considers the Swedish population in the coastal areas of Livonia. The cult of St. Eric, which in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries remained largely within the Archdiocese of Uppsala, began from the 1430s to spread throughout Sweden and also elsewhere in the Baltic Sea region; in Danzig, for instance, there existed a chapel and a confraternity in his name. The latter can be explained by the fact that Danzig was, along with Lübeck, among the most important trading partners of Stockholm (as well as of Turku). The chapel of St. Eric in the Carmelite Church was erected at the initiative of the confraternity, which consisted predominantly of merchants of Swedish origin and those trading with Stockholm. The foundation charter from 1438 has survived in two copies, and one of these names St. Henry of Finland as a copatron. The altarpiece of the chapel also depicted both St. Eric and St. Henry.

Somewhat surprisingly, no information survives on chapels, altars, or chantries dedicated to St. Eric in Livonia. His feast can be found in the calendar from the first half of the sixteenth century, which most probably originates from Tallinn, but there it is not marked with red, that is, it was not a feast of high degree. In spite of the scarcity of sources, it can be assumed that St. Eric was known in Tallinn and perhaps also elsewhere in the coastal areas, at least among the Swedish population, although his popularity cannot be compared to that of St. Olaf.

**Concluding Remarks**

Although the territory of Livonia was rather small, it is possible to trace certain regional differences in the saints’ cults. These can be seen in the different dioceses with their individual liturgical calendars, the North versus the South, and particularly the islands and coastal areas versus the continental Southeast. With the exception of St. Olaf and St. Birgitta, the veneration of Scandinavian saints seems to have been limited mainly to Tallinn and the Birgittine convent in Pirita. Thus, the geographical factor, the commercial networks, and the presence of Scandinavian population
in Tallinn, in the coastal areas and the islands, must have played a decisive role in the spreading and promoting of these cults.

However, it should not be assumed that the veneration of Nordic saints reached Livonia only from the Scandinavian countries, Gotland and Finland. Especially in the case of Riga, there is a possibility that the cults spread there from several directions, including the important Hanseatic cities in Prussia, particular Danzig.

St. Olaf was undoubtedly the best known of the Scandinavian royal saints, and his veneration spread widely in the countries around the Baltic and Nordic seas. It is noteworthy that in Livonia he was popular in the major harbor towns (Tallinn and Riga) and in the coastal areas. This suggests that his cult was above all promoted by people dealing with seafaring and long-distance trade. However, by the late Middle Ages, Olaf had acquired the status of a universal saint and was venerated by various social groups: merchants and craftsmen, knights and peasants.

The veneration of some Scandinavian saints, particularly St. Olaf, could have been even more widespread in the northern and western coastal areas than is known so far, and presumably he was not unfamiliar in inland Livonia as well. It should not be forgotten that information on the patron saints of the side altars and chantries or on the religious guilds simply has not survived from most of the rural parishes and small towns. It is likely that especially in the Duchy of Estonia, which until 1346 belonged to the Danish Crown, dedications to St. Olaf and perhaps to some other Scandinavian saints were more frequent than surmised.

The main centers of the cult of Nordic saints in Tallinn were the Church of St. Olaf, the guilds of St. Olaf and St. Canute, and also the Great Guild of the merchants. For the guildsmen, their patron saints were important identity markers: the masses in the church and the rituals in the guildhall helped to create social cohesion and to strengthen common values. The images of St. Olaf and St. Knud were not only found in the sacred space but also on the façades of and inside the guildhalls and on the symbolic objects, such as the seals and silverware. The decoration of the gables and portals of the guildhalls shaped and influenced the local urban environment. The guildhalls, as important public buildings, were part of the symbolic communication of the time. They expressed the identity, social status, and religious beliefs of the owners. After the Reformation, when the liturgical veneration of the saints was brought to an end, St. Olaf and King Knud, as patrons of the guilds, retained their function as historical symbols, and their images continued to be displayed on the façades and representational objects.
NOTES

1 This article was written under the auspices of the research project no. IUT18-8, financed by the Estonian Research Council, and of the ESF EUROCORECODE programme’s grant “Symbols that Bind and Break Communities” (CULTSYMBOLS). For a general overview of the veneration of saints in the region, see Anu Mänd, “Saints’ Cults in Medieval Livonia,” in The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier, ed. Alan V. Murray (Farnham, 2009), pp. 191–223.


3 Information on the saints venerated in Riga can be found in: Hermann von Bruiningk, Messe und kanonisches Stundengebet nach dem Brauche der Rigaschen Kirche im späteren Mittelalter (Riga, 1904).


6 I use “Scandinavian” and “Nordic” as synonyms in order to include Finland, which during the medieval period was part of Sweden.

7 For a brief overview, see Mänd, “Saints’ Cults in Medieval Livonia,” pp. 209–11.


9 Ekroll, “The Cult of St. Olav,” pp. 58–61. It is noteworthy that, in several towns, the guild of St. Olaf united merchants and seafarers trading with a certain
Scandinavian district or town, e.g., the Schonenfahrer (travellers to Scania) in Maastricht, the Wiekfahrer in Rostock, and the Bergenfahrer in Lübeck.


16 See the list of the side altars in: Tiina Kala, “Tallinna raad ja katoliku kirik reformatsiooni algastail” [Tallinn city council and the Catholic church in the early years of the Reformation], in Muinasaja loojangust omariikluse läveni: pühendusteos Sulev Vahbre 75. Sännipäevaks, ed. Andres Andresen (Tartu, 2001), p. 156. For the altars, their location and the right of patronage, see Anu Mänd, “Oleviste kirikut keskaegset sisustusest ja annetajate ringist” [On the medieval furnishings and the circle of donors of St. Olaf’s Church], Acta Historica Tallinnensia, 20 (2014): pp. 5–29. Maja Gąssowska has ignored unpublished archival sources, therefore her list is incomplete: Gąssowska, “Kościół św. Olafa w Rewalu
(Tallinie) w XIII i XIV wieku” [St. Olaf’s Church in Tallinn in the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries], in Ecclesia et civitas: Kościół i życie religijne w mieście średniowiecznym [Ecclesia et civitas: Church and religious life in medieval cities], ed. Halina Manikowska (Warsaw, 2002), pp. 192–93.

17 Anne Lidén, Olav den helige i medeltida bildkonst: Legendmotiv och attribut [St. Olaf in medieval pictorial art: Narrative motifs and attributes] (Stockholm, 1999), pp. 239–40. For different types of the figure under Olaf’s feet, see ibid., pp. 220–30.


20 According to Lidén, the boss can be dated to ca. 1430. Lidén, Olav den helige, p. 347.


24 The chapel is first mentioned in the mid-fourteenth century. Libri de diversis articulis 1333–1374, ed. Paul Johansen (Tallinn, 1935), no. 393 (between 1350 and 1360). According to a register of the side altars from 1525, the chapel had housed two altars. TLA, coll. 230, inv. 1, no. Aa 15a, fol. 7v.

25 St. Lawrence was the main patron of the cathedrals in Lund and in Uppsala.

26 Das älteste Wittschopbuch der Stadt Reval (1312–1360), ed. Leonid Arbusow (Reval, 1888), nos. 322, 526.


29 Margus, Katalog des Stadtarchivs Tallinn IV, p. LXXXI, § 75.

30 For example, the two guilds celebrated the annual festival of the popinjay shooting in common. Mänd, Urban Carnival, pp. 128, 133, 140. For the changing relations in the sixteenth century, see Aleksander Margus, “Rahvus- ja sotsiaal-vahekordade teravnemine Tallinnas XVI sajandi esimesel poolel” [The accentuation of national and social divisions in Tallinn in the first half of the sixteenth century], Vana Tallinn, o.s. 4 (1939): 83–104.


32 In 1806, the house was bought by the Brotherhood of the Black Heads and connected to the Black Heads’ house on Pikk Street 26.


34 LEKUB 2, Reg. 1002, no. 843. See also Mänd, “Oleviste kiriku keskaegsest sisustusest,” pp. 7–8.

35 LEKUB 2, Reg. 844, no. 716.

36 TLA, coll. 191, inv. 2, no. 16, p. 41.


39 TLA, coll. 230, inv. 1, no. Ad 32, fol. 106r (1518): “Botaldt Hinrick Dellinghuzen to der fromisßen altar to sunte Olaf, is 3½ mr.” Most frequently, the city accounts mention simply the payment for the morning mass and omit the word “altar.”


41 For example, they are listed as two different altars by Kala, “Tallinna raad ja katoliku kirik,” p. 156.


There was also another altar of St. Anne in the church, in front of the chapel of the Virgin Mary (Ibid., fol. 4v).


49 For the Turku convent and the other dedications to St. Olaf in Finland, see Jyrki Knuttila, *Soturi, kuningas, pyhimys. Pyhan Olavin kultti osana kristillisyyttä Suomessa 1200-luvun alkupuolelta 1500-luvun puoliväliin* [Warrior, king, saint. The cult of St. Olaf as part of the Christianization of Finland from the early thirteenth to the mid-sixteenth century] (Helsinki, 2010), pp. 61, 65–66.


59 Raam, *Gooti puuskulptuur Eestis*, pp. 24–25; Karling, *Medeltida träskulptur i Estland*, p. 73, fig. 64, 75–76, 262–63, no. 8. They are still known as the “Holy king with a crown” (oak, h. 98 cm, inv. no. SM-295/K-77) and the “Holy king with a hat” (oak, h. 102.5 cm, inv. no. SM-299/K-78).

60 Karling, *Medeltida träskulptur i Estland*, pp. 73, 75.


63 EAA, coll. 1187, inv. 2, no. 5165, fol. 61r.


71 DSHI, coll. 120, no. 5, pp. 72, 85, 113; Mettig, “Über die St. Olavsgilde in Riga,” pp. 18–19.


76 Mänd, Geselligkeit und soziale Karriere in den Revaler Gilden, p. 65.
77 TLA, coll. 190, inv. 1, no. 46 and no. 60. The statutes have been published: Margus, Der alte Schragen der St. Kanutigilde, pp. LXX–LXXXIV.
82 Nowadays, the relief belongs to the Art Museum of Estonia (inv. no. EKM S 298, measurements 61.5×38.5×14.5 cm).
83 A white cross in the red background was the only coat of arms of Tallinn until 1564: in that year, by orders of King Erik XIV of Sweden, three lions began to be used, first on the coins and then on other representational objects. Thus, from the second half of the sixteenth century onwards, Tallinn had two coats of arms, the greater with the three lions and the lesser with the cross. For details, see Ivar Leimus, “Einige Anmerkungen zur Geschichte der Revaler (Tallinner) Wappen und Siegel,” Steinbrücke: Estnische Historische Zeitschrift 1 (1998): 55–61.
85 Kurisoo and Aaso-Zahradnikova, “The Stone King Canute,” p. 182.
86 Poul Grinder-Hansen, Søren Abildgaard (1718–1791): Fortiden på tegnebrættet (Copenhagen, Nationalmuseet, 2010), pp. 61, 63.
88 TLA, coll. 190, inv. 1, no. 60, fol. 31r: “It. noch an den papegoen bome gebuwet—6 mr. vnd den louwen vnder sunte Klute (!) de steit 6 mr.” It is not clear
from the context if the figure of St. Knud with the lion had anything to do with the pole for the annual shooting of the popinjay competition or if the two expenditures just happened to be listed in one sentence.

89 TLA, coll. 190, inv. 1, no. 60, fol. 8v. See also fol. 9v, 51v, 53r, 54r. In 1492, it was recorded that the silver statue weighed slightly over two marks and four Lot (ca. 470 grams), whereas in 1495, it was only twelve Lot (156 grams), i.e., no larger than a badge (fol. 53r, 58r).


92 LEKUB 10, no. 582 (“sunte Kanutes altare to sunte Oleve”); TLA, coll. 190, inv. 1, no. 2 (“to der vicarien S. Kanutes altar yn S. Nicolaus kercken”).

93 TLA, coll. 230, inv. 1, no. Aa 15a, fol. 8r: “Sunthe Knuthes althar bolangende de broder des Knuthen gyldestauen—12 mrck des yrs.”

94 The dedication of the masses to St. Knud is specified from the 1480s (TLA, coll. 190, inv. 1, no. 60, fol. 53r, 54v, 61v, 63r, etc.), the masses without naming the patron saints are recorded also earlier. See also Mänd, Geselligkeit und soziale Karriere in den Revaler Gilden, pp. 62–64.

95 Soom, Die Zunft Handwerker in Reval, p. 83, fig. 3; Margus, ed., Archiv der St. Kanutigilde, fig. 3.

96 Margus, ed., Archiv der St. Kanutigilde, fig. 5.


98 For St. Henry and his Vita, see Tuomas Heikkilä, Sankt Henrikslegenden (Helsinki, 2009).

99 Das Revaler Pergament Rentenbuch, no. 410: “Desse mark geldes horet to sunte Hinricks altaer to sunte Oleue.”

100 See also Das Revaler Pergament Rentenbuch, no. 574 (1418), 735 (1428), 740 (1428).

101 LEKUB 9, no. 911, p. 615.

102 TLA, coll. 230, inv. 1, no. Bl 1, fol. 1r, published in LEKUB 10, no. 566. See also Das Revaler Pergament Rentenbuch, no. 1007 (1453): “Dit gelt hort to ener vicarie to sunte Hinrikes altare in sunte Olaues kerken, dar uan de leenware tohoret Euerde van der Linden vnd sinen rechten eruen.”

103 LEKUB 11, no. 385. In his will the altar is anomalously called her Hinrikes altar, perhaps because of the first name of the chantry priest.

104 Das Revaler Pergament Rentenbuch, no. 1092 (1472): “[...] vnd dit vorgescr. gelt denet vnd horet to eyner vicarie in sunte Olaus kerken by namen sunte Hinriks altare, dat wandages salige Gerd van Lynden dar to gegeuen hefft. [...] vnd de lenwar hijr van horet tho Euerde van der Linden vnd synen rechten eruen.”

106 *Kämmereibuch der Stadt Reval 1463–1507*, ed. R. Vogelsang (Cologne, 1983), no. 2514, 2522, 2644, 2677, 2710; TLA, coll. 230, inv. 1, no. Ad 32 (1507–1533), fol. 10r, 17r, 21r, 29r, 36r, 42r, 52r.


109 *Das Revaler Pergament Rentenbuch*, no. 554.

110 TLA, coll. 191, inv. 2, no. 16, pp. 149 (1502), 163 (1508); Mänd, “Suurgildi ajalugu kuni Liivi söjani,” p. 90.

111 TLA, coll. 230, inv. 1, no. Aa 15a, fol. 11r.


116 E.g., LEKUB 5, no. 911; LEKUB 10, no. 334, 582; LEKUB 11, no. 385, 395, 397, 442.


120 Mänd, Symbols that bind communities, p. 131, see also p. 259, fig. 25–26. As a sketch of the attributes behind the sculpture indicates, there has originally also been a quill in the ink-pot.

121 Paul Johansen, “Kalendrikatkend Pirita kloostrist” [Fragment of a calendar from the Pirita convent], Vana Tallinn, o.s. 3 (1938): 24–27 at 27.

122 Johansen, “Kalendrikatkend Pirita kloostrist,” p. 26, fig. 1 and 3.

123 Bruiningk, Messe und kanonisches Stundengebet, p. 375: 6 marks “to ener viccarie, bolegen in st. Peters kerken an der suder side an der kapellen, gefunderet unde upgerichtet in de ere st. Birgitte.”

124 The National Archives (Rigsarkivet) in Copenhagen, coll. Øsel stift, Registrant 2B (1520–1538), fol. 6r.

125 Johansen, Kalendrikatkend Pirita kloostrist, p. 26, fig. 1 and 3 (St. Eric), fig. 2 and 4 (St. Eskil and St. David).


127 Gąssowska, Der Kult des heiligen Erich, pp. 295, 298.

128 Mänd, Ootamatu leid Riiast, pp. 72, 74, 80.