

# The Danish Church and Mission in Estonia

*Tore Nyberg*

## **Sammanfattning**

### **Dansk kyrka och mission i Estland**

I detta bidrag uppställs och besvaras fem frågor som beror kristendomens utbredning i Estland och Estlands betydelse för dansk utrikespolitik och mission intill 1219.

1. Blev kristendomen så stabiliserad i Danmark under perioden 1074-1134 att man kan tala om en samlande dansk mission i Estland denna tid?
2. Fick inbördeskrigen 1134–1157 någon betydning för dansk mission i Estland?
3. Hur stod ärkebiskop Eskil, påven Alexander III, cistercienserna och kung Valdemar den Store till varandra fram till sistnämndes död 1182, vad förhållandet till Estland och Baltikum beträffar?
4. På vad sätt påverkades danska intressen i Baltikum av grannmakternas expansion i Baltikum intill Estlands erövring 1219?
5. Slutligen argumenteras för att ärkebiskop Andreas Sunesen av Lund (1201–1223) till långt fram på 1210-talet med stöd hos påven Innocentius III såg sig själv i sin ämbetsställning som överordnad styresman för den baltiska missionen, men att han bland annat på grund av konfrontationen med den tyska kyrkan under biskop Albert av Riga såg sig tvungen att följa det politiska koncept för Estland som representerades av kung Valdemar II och Estlands erövring 1219.

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*Dr. Tore Nyberg ist Dozent am Institut für Geschichte der Universität Odense.*

The Christian Church in Denmark came into being through the conversion of King Harald in the 960's. It was finally organized in its eight dioceses by 1060 under King Svend Estridsen. During the next 160 years (1060–1220) the German, later the Danish Archbishops collaborated with the Danish Kings in the efforts to disseminate Christian faith to those areas east of the Baltic which had long been familiar to the Scandinavian peoples.<sup>1</sup>

Some important questions arise in this connection:

*1. Did Christianity become stabilized enough in Denmark during the reigns of the five sons and successors of Svend Estridsen (1074–1134) to allow for a concerted missionary action towards Estonia?*

Adam of Bremen (#SYMBOL#1072) is the first witness to inform European listeners about the wonders which were about to take place in the northernmost region of the civilized world: how the message of Christ was victorious among Europe's northernmost peoples, which were, at close sight, not as barbarian as they were said to be.<sup>2</sup> Adam was invited by King Svend (1047–74/75) to see Denmark and in fact seems to have sailed around most of its islands.<sup>3</sup> He says the king personally gave him valuable information about Danes and Swedes. The Danes are good Christians, he says, but they have a lot of weaknesses. Men don't stick to one wife but tend to have several at the same time. Swedes are open and hospitable but they also indulge in sexual excesses. Norwegians are inclined to magic but being Christians they are extremely generous in giving gifts and offerings to the church. He reports pagan cult and sacrifices especially among the Swedes, and he makes clear that in his days, Christian faith is much more dominant in Denmark than in Sweden. The royal residence of Roskilde and the great city of Lund in Scania are Christian centers founded by Danish kings, he says.

In Adam's writings we get the first insight into missionary planning of the 1060's. Adam reports that the German abbot of Goseck on the river Saale – this abbey was founded by

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<sup>1</sup> Jørgensen, A.D.: *Den nordiske Kirkes Grundlæggelse og første Udvikling*. København 1874–78. See also Koch; Hal: "Den ældre Middelalder indtil 1241". In: Koch, Hal; I. Kornerup (ed.): *Den danskes Kirkes Historie*. København 1950.

<sup>2</sup> Adam of Bremen in English: Adam of Bremen: *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, transl. by F. J. Tschan. New York 1959. In German: *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts zur Geschichte der Hamburgischen Kirche und des Reiches* Darmstadt 1961/1978. In Swedish: Adam av Bremen. *Historien om Hamburgstiftet och dess biskopar*, transl. by Emanuel Svenberg. Stockholm 1984.

<sup>3</sup> Jørgensen, Ove; Tore Nyberg: *Sejlruter i Adam af Bremens danske øverden* (Sea Routes in the Danish Archipelago in Adam of Bremen's Gesta). Stockholm 1992 (= Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, Antikvariskt arkiv 74).

archbishop Adalbert's relatives<sup>4</sup> – was made a bishop of Birca,<sup>5</sup> a place taken as a basis or maybe only a symbol for extended maritime connections over the Baltic. While Denmark was already subdivided into eight bishoprics, mainland Sweden had only three,<sup>6</sup> Birka being the fourth one, charged with the task of christianizing the “islands of the Baltic Sea”,<sup>7</sup> one of which Adam called Aestland.<sup>8</sup> Church authorities made no distinction yet between bishops of the Danes, the Swedes, and the Norwegians. Since all were equally subordinate to the archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen, the four Swedish dioceses were administered on equal footing with the Danish ones, and missionary activity in Sweden for the “islands” in the Baltic Sea was being planned in Bremen, from where German missionaries were sent out. English preachers also arrived. They came via Norway and Denmark to Sweden and participated in the spread of the Christian faith. To what extent they joined in the missionary pattern of the Germans is not known, but English missionaries are not yet reported to have held any offices in exposed places towards the East. It is also not known, however, if German missionaries like Abbot Hiltin ever had any success among the hostile peoples of the Baltic area. Perhaps he was given the office of a bishop on the basis of an old friendship, as he is said to have spent just two years in the missionary field in the place called Birca. There is evidence that later he was in Germany again. Like a bishop of Skara called Tadico<sup>9</sup> he may have stayed away from the field, thereby blocking the nomination of a successor to the bishopric until he died. The death of King Knud of Denmark in 1086 and the papal permission to have him canonized changed the situation. There may have been some criticism of the German missionaries working in Scandinavia. Since the archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen was involved on the German side in the investiture conflict, the Scandinavian delegates returning from Rome in 1100 could tell the authorities at home that the new pope Paschal II was inclined to give the Scandinavians an archbishop of their own instead of the German one. In 1101 the three Scandinavian kings met in Kungahälla (Konghelle) with

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<sup>4</sup> Adam III, 9: *Octava est abbatia Gozzicana iuxta Salam flumen, quae fundata est a parentibus archiepiscopi*, consecrated 1048, handed over to the archbishop 1061, Trillmich, 337, note 42.

<sup>5</sup> Adam IV, 20.

<sup>6</sup> Adam IV, 25: *Skara, Sigtuna, and „Halsingland“*, cf. Nyberg, Tore: “Adam av Bremen och Florenslistan”. In: *Scandia*. 57 (1991), 156.

<sup>7</sup> Adam III, scholion 94: *Iohannes ad insulas Baltici maris destinatus est*.

<sup>8</sup> Adam IV, 17.

<sup>9</sup> Adam IV, 30.

their councillors, who were normally their bishops, which means that they must have discussed the plans for diocesan centers of the coming Scandinavian church province.<sup>10</sup> We know about these discussions from the so-called “Florence Provinciale”.<sup>11</sup> No fewer than six places along the eastern coast of Sweden were planned as diocesan centers, while only one, Skara, was an inland bishopric of West Sweden. Such an amassing of ecclesiastical centers to the east cannot be explained without postulating an underlying purpose, at least as part of the project, of creating a platform for the spread of Christianity across the Baltic. After Skara the list mentions first Ljung, a predecessor of Linköping, then a Köping (“kaupang”, merchant settlement) – there are several Köpings on the eastern coast of Sweden –, followed by Tuna, Strängnäs, Sigtuna, and Aros. At least five of the six places after Skara are accessible from the waters east of Sweden,<sup>12</sup> the possible exception being Tuna, since this locality has not yet been identified beyond doubt.<sup>13</sup> On the basis of this plan, the archbishopric of Lund was established for all Scandinavia in 1104.<sup>14</sup>

The “Florence Provinciale” in its earliest known copy from ca. 1120 also transmits a concluding list called *Nomina insularum de regno Sueuorum*, “Names of the islands of the reign of the Swedes”. This list, taken as a sequence to accompany the list of dioceses and their corresponding Swedish provinces,<sup>15</sup> may have originally started with Gotland, followed, after enumerating Varend and Finnveden – two outer districts of the diocese of Linköping –, by *Hestia*, which can hardly mean anything else but Estonia. The assignment of these “islands” as peripheral “spheres of interest” to the dioceses of Ljung and of Köping may soon have been inherited by Linköping. The possibility is not to be ruled out that already in the concept from 1101 and 1104, Estonia was meant to be the first missionary country to be taken care of from the Götaland dioceses.<sup>16</sup> Since

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<sup>10</sup> On the meeting see Andersen, Per Sveaas: *Samlingen av Norge og kristningen av landet. 800–1130* (= Handbok i Norges historie 2). Oslo 1977, 175. On diocesan matters at the meeting see Breengaard, Carsten: *Muren om Israels hus. Regnum og sacerdotium i Danmark 1050–1170*. København 1982, 170–173.

<sup>11</sup> Nyberg, Tore in: *Scandia* (1991) as note 6.

<sup>12</sup> Nyberg, Tore in: *Scandia* (1991) as note 6, with English summary: “Adam of Bremen and the Florence Provinciale“, *ibid.*, 347–348.

<sup>13</sup> Nyberg, Tore in: *Scandia* (1991) as note 6, 179–180

<sup>14</sup> Seegrün, Wolfgang: *Das Papsttum und Skandinavien bis zur Vollendung der nordischen Kirchenorganisation (1164)*. Neumünster 1967, 108–122 (= Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins 51).

<sup>15</sup> Nyberg, Tore in: *Scandia* (1991) as note 6, 176–177.

<sup>16</sup> See the English summary of Nyberg, Tore in: *Scandia* (1991) as note 6, 347

Adam of Bremen assigned *Birca* to such a task, one may assume that the Birka diocese in fact lived on in the Linköping diocese.<sup>17</sup>

But Christianity in the three Scandinavian kingdoms still had so many internal problems in the beginning of the 12th century that it was not really able to cope with such a task. In Norway and Sweden, Christ finally replaced the old gods, and the hierarchy of the Church became integrated into society, though not without tension. For some of the seven Swedish dioceses enumerated 1101/1104 no evidence can be found that they ever went into effect. There was no strong royal power in either of the two northernmost kingdoms. In Sweden and Denmark there were royal marriage links with Russian dynasties.<sup>18</sup> Denmark's King Niels tried to integrate church and kingdom according to continental patterns, inaugurated already under the holy King Knud,<sup>19</sup> but the first Scandinavian archbishop, Asser of Lund, had difficulties in finding his proper role.<sup>20</sup> There followed murder (Knud Lavard 1131), civil war (Fotevig 1134), and finally regicide (Niels 1134). In this situation, there was little energy to be spared for eastward missionary activity.

The answer to the first question, then, is certainly: No. After Adam's time there are no signs of a Danish or Scandinavian spread of the Christian faith to Estonia or other coastal areas east of the Baltic Sea during this first period of internal consolidation of Christianity in the three Northern kingdoms. The investiture contest, settled only in 1122, kept the Scandinavian governments busy. It was their first confrontation with a universal political conflict in the framework of Christianity, but they generally stuck to the papacy in spite of traditional adherence to German imperial politics.

2. *This leads to the next question: Did the civil wars during the period 1134–57 and the papal and internal Danish schism (1161–68) influence the attitudes towards expansion of the Christian faith from Denmark to the Baltic countries?*

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<sup>17</sup> Nyberg, Tore in: *Scandia* (1991) as note 6, 176–177.

<sup>18</sup> A daughter of king Inge of Sweden (after 1100) married Mstislav of Kiev (1132), and Rikissa, the wife of Magnus Nilsson, the heir to Denmark (killed in 1134), afterwards married Volodar of Minsk. See Gillingstam, Hans: "Utomnordiskt och nordiskt i de äldsta svenska dynastiska förbindelserna". In: *Personhistorisk tidskrift*. 77 (1981), 17–28. – For evidence of the spread of the Danish cult of royal saints to Russian courtly circles in the 1130ies see Lind, John H.: "The Martyria of Odense and a Twelfth-Century Russian Prayer. The Question of Bohemian Influence on Russian Religious Literature". In: *The Slavonic and East European Review*. 68 (1990), 1–21.

<sup>19</sup> On the payment of St. Peter's pence see Nyberg, Tore: "König Knut der Heilige. Teuzo und der Peterspfennig aus Dänemark". In: *Archivum historiae pontificiae*. 23 (1985), 359–365.

<sup>20</sup> Brengaard, Carsten 1982 as note 10, 216–223.

The violent reign of King Erik Emune in Denmark (1134–37), which coincided with the last years of Archbishop Asser (#SYMBOL#1137), hardened party divisions but also evoked new impulses in different layers of society. Two important Benedictine abbeys were founded in Zealand<sup>21</sup> and Austin Canons were introduced in Denmark and Norway.<sup>22</sup> Scandinavian impulses in Russia – the spread of the names of some of the Scandindavian saints – may be traced back to Erik Emune’s reign.<sup>23</sup>

In the 1140’s the Cistercians came to Denmark and Sweden through the intervention of the new Archbishop Eskil (1137–77), who also apparently made it possible for Canons from Prémontré to settle in Lund.<sup>24</sup> The successor of Erik Emune, Erik *Agnus* – Erik Lam – was the only Danish king who ended his life in the classical way of entering a monastery when feeling death approaching: he became a Benedictine monk in Odense (#SYMBOL#1146). Scattered references indicate that good connections to Poland may have prevailed during his reign.<sup>25</sup>

Eskil proved to be a man of outstanding ability but also a stubborn defender of ecclesiastical rights. After a first provincial council in 1139 and the solemn consecration of the new Cathedral of Lund in 1145, the Cathedral chapter was prepared to enter into an expansive period in collaboration with the archbishop.<sup>26</sup> The peak of this development was the visit of the papal legate Nicolaus Brakespeare in Scandinavia (1152–53), which led to Norway’s farewell to the Scandinavian church province in 1153/54, when the

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<sup>21</sup> Ringsted, to become the burial church of the royal family, and Næstved, a foundation of the family of the Hvide, both in 1135.

<sup>22</sup> Nyberg, Tore: “Monastische Regionen und Zentren Skandinaviens im Mittelalter“. In: Annino, Rémy (ed.): *Naissance et fonctionnement des réseaux monastiques et canoniaux*. Saint-Etienne 1991, 235–257 (= C.E.R.C.O.R. Travaux et Recherches 1).

<sup>23</sup> Lind, John H. *The Slavonic and East European Review* (1990) as note 18.

<sup>24</sup> Nyberg, Tore: “De nordiske premonstratenserklostrens ställning i Ordensorganisationen“. In: Wallin, Curt: *Tommars Urkundsbok 1085–1600, II*. Tomelilla 1975–1976, 7–22. idem: “Die skandinavische Zirkarie der Prämonstratenserchorherren“. In: Melville, Gert (ed.): *Secundum regulam vivere. Festschrift für P. Norbert Backmund*. Windberg 1978, 275.

<sup>25</sup> Nyberg, Tore: “Skandinavien und die Christianisierung des südöstlichen Baltikums“. In: *La christianizzazione della Lithuania*. Città del Vaticano 1989, 240–241 (= Pontificio comitato di scienze storiche, Atti e documenti 2).

<sup>26</sup> For the intellectual level in Lund see Kristensen, Anne K.G.: *Danmarks ældste annalistisk. Studier over lundensisk Annalskrivning i 12. og li. Århundrede*. København 1969 (= Skrifter udgivet af det Historiske Institut ved Københavns Universitet 3).

country got its own archbishop in Trondheim (Nidaros).<sup>27</sup> The strong involvement of Norway in Western affairs – the islands around Scotland as far south as the Isle of Man, where Norwegians had settled, became part of the new church province, later joined by Iceland, the Færø islands, and Greenland,<sup>28</sup> – contributed to removing Baltic events from the daily horizon of the Norwegians.

In Götaland in Sweden, however, two royal families emerged in mutual competition, so that no unanimous solution for a Swedish church province could be reached. Both families were heavily dependent upon Danish developments and support. The Sverker family in the east established close links to the diocese of Linköping, where the old missionary drive to reach out to the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea had its strongest foothold, and to the Cistercians. The family was linked to Denmark's royal house through marriage bonds and seems to have wanted Linköping as the see of a Swedish archbishop. However, the Erik family, apparently originating in the western province covered by the inland Skara diocese,<sup>29</sup> had succeeded around 1150 in launching Uppsala as a stronghold, to which place the former bishopric of Aros had been moved.<sup>30</sup> After Sverker was murdered (1155) the Erik family replaced the Sverker family in royal power. Erik apparently founded a Benedictine chapter at his episcopal see,<sup>31</sup> before he was killed in Aros and venerated as a martyr.

The development of the two Swedish dynasties constitutes a background to the party landscape of Denmark. The political groups were intertwined in many ways. Tentatively, one might postulate an interest from the side of Eskil in making Uppsala the ecclesiastical center of Sweden,<sup>32</sup> although not before he had secured for himself, in 1157, the title

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<sup>27</sup> Johnsen, Arne Odd: *Studier vedrørende kardinal Nicolaus Brekespears legasjon til Norden*. Oslo 1945.

<sup>28</sup> Nyberg, Tore: *Die Kirche in Skandinavien. Mitteleuropäischer und englischer Einfluß im 11. und 12. Jahrhundert*. Sigmaringen 1986, 67–73 (= Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters 10).

<sup>29</sup> Westman, Knut B.: „Erik den helige och hans tid“. In: Thordeman, Bengt (ed.): *Erik den helige. Historia – kult – relikier*. Stockholm 1954, 21–31.

<sup>30</sup> Ubsola had been made famous through Adam of Bremen's description IV,26 of the alleged pagan temple there, cf. Nyberg in *Scandia* 1991) as note 6.

<sup>31</sup> Gallén, Jarl: “De engelska munkarna i Uppsala – ett katedralkloster på 1100-talet”. In: *Historisk tidskrift för Finland*. 61 (1976), 1–21.

<sup>32</sup> Nyberg, Tore: “Eskil av Lund och Erik den helige“. In: Grönvall, Anders: *Historia och samhälle: studier tillägnade Jerker Rosén*. Lund 1975, 5–21.

of *primas Sueciae*.<sup>33</sup> It is evident that Eskil in the 1150's, in full possession of his personal strength, authority, and good relations to Clairvaux and the Cistercians, suspiciously followed the Danish civil war and probably interpreted it in the light of continental events, which he was himself personally involved in, such as the conflict, in 1157, between Pope Hadrian IV, the former papal legate Nicolaus Brakespeare, and Frederik Barbarossa.<sup>34</sup> When Valdemar I, in 1157, won the decisive victory over his competitors, Eskil foresaw trouble, which broke out into conflict in connection with the papal schism of 1159, when Alexander III was pushed aside by Frederic Barbarossa in favor of Pope Victor. Valdemar adhered for a while to pope Victor, but other matters seem to have weighed more heavily in the outbreak of conflict between king and archbishop, leading to the latter's going into exile in 1161.<sup>35</sup>

Eskil's exile in the 1160's was most decisive for events on the Eastern shore of the Baltic Sea. First it led to Eskil spending a long period in the immediate vicinity of Pope Alexander III in France, where this pope took up his residence during 1161–65, the first years of schism. He was in close touch with Peter from La Celle, a Benedictine who took keen interest in Danish affairs, and who was able to use his contacts still better after he had been nominated abbot of St.-Rémi in Reims in 1162.<sup>36</sup> The plan to make Sweden a church province of its own was conceived in France and led, in 1164, to the establishment of Uppsala as an archbishop's see, to which, in Sens, the Cistercian Stephen, who was already bishop of Uppsala, was nominated. He now received his pallium and was committed to obedience towards his consecrator and archbishop Eskil as his *primas*.<sup>37</sup> King Erik's reputation for being a saintly martyr for the Christian faith may possibly have influenced these events in one way or another; without doubt, however,

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<sup>33</sup> Papal bull of 15 January 1157. See Skyum-Nielsen, Niels: "Das dänische Erzbistum vor 1250". In: Ekdahl, Sven (ed.): *Kirche und Gesellschaft im Ostseeraum und im Norden vor der Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts*. Göteborg 1969, 119 Acta Visbyensia 3).

<sup>34</sup> Diplomatarium Danicum 1,2 nr. 118, 20 September 1157, and nr. 119, dated to the same year.

<sup>35</sup> Riis, Thomas: "Bruddet mellem Valdemar den Store og Eskil 1161. Søborg, diplomerne og Saxo". In: Boserup, Ivan *Saxostudier*. København 1975, 156–163. The papal schism was not the reason for Eskil to go into exile, as Saxo tends to formulate it, cf. criticism of Saxo: [Gyldendals] *Danmarks historie 1: Tiden indtil 1340*. København 1977, 331–333.

<sup>36</sup> Diplomatarium Danicum 1,2 nr. 142, 148, 149, 150, 151, 186, *ibid.* 1,3 nr. 21, 22, 23, 29, 34, 57, 60, 65, 73, 81, 88, 151. See also Johansen, Paul: *Nordische Mission. Revels Gründung und die Schwedensiedlung in Estland*. Stockholm 1951, 90 (= Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademiens Handlingar 74).

<sup>37</sup> Strömberg, Bengt: *Uppsala ärkesäte 800 år*. Uppsala 1964.

it must have given Erik's son Knud the courage to attack his rival Karl, the son of king Sverker, who had succeeded Erik in 1160. Karl was killed in battle in 1167, which paved the way for Knud's access to the kingship and to a general acceptance of the sanctity of his father, King Erik.<sup>38</sup>

The erection, in 1164, of a separate Swedish church province is probably to be understood as a reasonable agreement between the pope and Eskil, since it permitted Eskil to keep hold of the Swedish church by means of his title of primas and his office as an apostolic legate. His authority from the last-mentioned office was valid for the archdiocese of Uppsala and thereby for all the Swedish church province,<sup>39</sup> since it must have been notoriously well known that the personal resources of the Swedish church were not yet developed enough to enable a fully independent ecclesiastical government there. On the other hand, Eskil could claim that he, from Lund, administered a purely Danish church province, although his papal commission gave him decisive influence in Sweden as well. This improved his position towards King Valdemar I, who maintained close links to the rival dynasty of the Sverkers, which took the form of marriage connections and of property acquired or inherited.<sup>40</sup> Saxo demonstratively keeps silent about St. Erik of Uppsala, a fact which has bewildered Swedish scholars and contributed to concealing the real events.<sup>41</sup>

Eskil's visit to Jerusalem, probably also in 1164, was the next important event for Danish attitudes towards Baltic affairs. He had good opportunities there to become acquainted with the Hospitallers of St. John, and the foundation of Antvorskov Hospital before 1170 ought to be seen against this background. The military task of the Knight Hospitallers was in its period of early growth, and they were already deeply involved in the defence of the Kingdom of Jerusalem by being in charge of a number of crusader castles. Eskil met a mentally and physically well-equipped knightly Order with a strong affinity to Cistercian spirituality. Such a meeting cannot have been without effect for initiatives

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<sup>38</sup> Nyberg, Tore in: *Historia och samhälle* 1975) as note 32, and idem: "Les royautés Scandinaves entre sainteté et sacralité". In Boureau, Alain, Claudio Sergio Ingerflom *La royauté sacrée dans le monde chrétien*. Paris 1992, 63–69. idem: „Autour de la Sacralité Royale en Scandinavie“. In: *Annuaire historiae conciliorum*. 27–28 (1995/96), 177–192.

<sup>39</sup> As this office was described by Skyum-Nielsen, Niels 1969 as note 33.

<sup>40</sup> Wallin Curt: *Knutsgillena i det medeltida Sverige. Kring kulten av de nordiska helgonkungarna*. Lund 1975, 83–83 (= Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, Historiskt arkiv 16).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. the search for St. Erik's origin and relatives, Gallén, Jarl: "Knut den helige och Adela av Flandern. Europeiska kontakter och genealogiska konsekvenser". In: Sandberg, Robert: *Studier i äldre historia: tillägnade Herman Schück*. Stockholm 1985, 49–66.

taken by Eskil during his remaining years in office, especially after his return to Denmark in 1168 and after he was reconciled to Valdemar in 1170.<sup>42</sup>

There are, then, signs of a change of mentality among Danes during these decennia concerning the role of the Christian faith. At each one of the episcopal sees there was a growing consciousness of governing a separate church, each with its own traditions. Each cathedral tried to secure a saint of its own: Trondheim St. Olav,<sup>43</sup> Odense St. Knud,<sup>44</sup> Uppsala St. Erik,<sup>45</sup> Ringsted St. Knud Lavard, and Lund the Roman deacon St. Lawrence. In the course of missionary history, also saintly preachers like St. Ansgar, the first archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen (#SYMBOL#865), were discovered afresh.<sup>46</sup> Chronicles and historical works were the first expression of this new horizon,<sup>47</sup> and philosophical and theological school training under the supervision of bishops who often had studied abroad became noteworthy.

Due to the investiture contest, the peace of Worms 1122, and the continuing tensions between church reformers and adherents of German imperial policy, European polarization also reached Denmark. It was no longer self-evident that the Church should merely accept the role of a Scandinavian king as protector of his national church. The outlines were laid for independent Christian efforts under the guidance of the secular power, in contrast to the strivings of the ecclesiastic spiritual and purified reform church with its monastic background.

The first experience of the effect of the civil wars during 1134–57 and schism in 1161–68, however, was that competition weakened both parties. Therefore the manifestation

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<sup>42</sup> Reitzel-Nielsen, Erik: *Johanniterordenens historie med særligt henblik på de nordiske lande 1*. København 1984, 146–48. See also Nyberg, Tore: „Zur Rolle der Johanniter in Skandinavien. Erstes Auftreten und Aufbau der Institutionen“. In: Nowak, Zenon Hubert: *Die Rolle der Ritterorden in der mittelalterlichen Kultur*. Torun 1985, 130–131 (= *Ordines Militares, Colloquia Torunensia Historica* 3).

<sup>43</sup> Svahnström, Gunnar (ed.): *St. Olav, seine Zeit und sein Kult*. Uddevalla 1981, esp. contribution by Erich Hoffmann (= *Acta Visbyensia* 6).

<sup>44</sup> Nyberg, Tore e.a.: *Knuds-Bogen 1986. Studier over Knud den Hellige*. Odense 1986 (= *Fynske Studier* 15).

<sup>45</sup> Erik den Helige 1954 as note 29, esp. contributions by Toni Schmid and Bengt Thordeman.

<sup>46</sup> Helander, Sven: *Ansgarskulden i Norden*. Göteborg 1989, 78, 270 (= *Bibliotheca theologiae practicae* 45).

<sup>47</sup> „From Lund, Ribe, Roskilde etc.” Collected in Gertz, Martin Clarentius (ed.): *Scriptores minores historiae Danicae medii aevi, 1–2* København 1917–18, reprint 1970.

of unity was scheduled to come sooner or later, to mark the different cultural situation in Scandinavia from the German and continental one.<sup>48</sup>

This new consciousness of what it meant to represent European Christian culture must be counted as an essential part of the background for later efforts in expanding the Christian faith into the Baltic area.

The answer to our second question, then, must certainly be: there was a change of mentality, favourable for an increase in a Christian missionary activity that emanated from the new centers of Christian faith and church organization: the cathedral chapters, the monasteries of monks and canons, and the programmatic confession of Christian values in court circles around the king. This new mentality presupposed the experience of divided power and of the consequences of a struggle for power between church and kingdom but was part of the process to overcome it. From now on, the experience of concord in spite of tensions between ecclesiastical and secular power was part of the general Christian outlook. The unitive spiritual powers produced political agreements between representatives of the two sides, not considering that they found a home in the silence of monasteries and convents.

*3. We thus approach our third question: What were the roles of Archbishop Eskil (1137–77) and Pope Alexander III (1159–81), of the Cistercian monks, and of King Valdemar I the Great (1157–82), respectively, in launching the first missionary initiative towards Estonia from 1170 onwards?*

### **Eskil**

The year 1170 is remarkable because of the manifest agreement between King Valdemar I and Archbishop Eskil on the topic of succession to the throne: the infant royal heir was crowned by Eskil, who at the same time fulfilled the papal mandate to canonize the king's murdered father Knud Lavard (#SYMBOL#1131). The event was preceded by the Danish capture of Rügen, the last resort of Slavic paganism in the Baltic area, in 1169, jointly carried out by the king and Bishop Absalon of Roskilde. One might reasonably ask if the capture of Rügen was not the precondition for the celebration of 1170, in the same way as Otto I's victory over the Hungarians in 955 is the key to understanding Otto's journey to Rome to renew the empire in his own person in 962. However valid such a parallel may be, a joint manifestation like Ringsted 1170 would always be a signal to stimulate joint efforts in other fields where kingdom and church could work together. This, then, is the background for understanding the initiatives concerning Estonia that were taken in these years. Next to Eskil and his friend, the above-mentioned Peter, from

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<sup>48</sup> Brengaard, Carsten 1982 as note 10, 224–245, uses the categories of royal centralization in contrast to ecclesiastical decentralization of episcopal centres and points out that ecclesiastical authorities welcomed even a harsh royal power in face of threats of dissolution.

1162 abbot of St.-Rémi in Reims, a certain monk Fulco is a crucial figure in this story. He is among the persons dealt with in some of the papal letters issued in September 1171 (or possibly 1172) concerning the Scandinavian Christian mission.<sup>49</sup>

We have no direct knowledge about who Fulco was, so we cannot say why he was chosen for the mission in Estonia. It is generally assumed that he was French, perhaps a relative of Abbot Peter. Paul Johansen tried to retrace his character from remaining sources<sup>50</sup> but hardly reaches further than to a vague statement that Fulco was a weak character, although Fulco declares he is ready to die the death of a martyr on the mission field, and although he gets ample praise after his return to France. Johansen postulates that Fulco was active in Estonia in the period 1172–77 and then returned to France in 1178, after Eskil, in 1177, had resigned his office in Denmark and retired to Clairvaux.<sup>51</sup> This might suggest that Fulco's existence on the mission field depended heavily upon Eskil's authority, which is of course possible. However, since Fulco was used as an expert in 1180 in dealing with Rügen's incorporation in the diocese of Roskilde, he must have stayed in the mission long enough to know it well and be regarded in papal circles as an expert in the field.<sup>52</sup>

One might ask how a monk could be ordained bishop of a country without mastering its language. But apparently, this was not a contradiction in the Latin middle ages. The project included letting Fulco be accompanied by an Estonian, Nicolaus, who was a *monachus*, a “monk”, in Norway. This is what the papal bull, directed to the Norwegian archbishop and the bishop of Stavanger, tells us.<sup>53</sup> If an Estonian was a monk in Norway in 1171, and Eskil knew about him, he must already have been living a monastic life for a number of years. How did he get to Norway? Was he taken prisoner as a young boy and given a Christian education, with the future prospect of being sent to Estonia as a

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<sup>49</sup> Weibull, Lauritz: “Påven Alexander III:s septemberbrev till Norden”. In: *Scandia*. 13 (1940), 90–98

<sup>50</sup> Diplomatarium Danicum 1,3 nr. 21, 22 (recommendations for Fulco from abbot Peter to the pope), 26–28 (papal letters in support of Fulco), 29, 34 (further letters from Abbot Peter in favour of Fulco on his way to Scandinavia), 81, 88 (from Abbot Peter to Eskil's successor, Absalon, to tell him about Fulco's work in the mission field).

<sup>51</sup> Johansen, Paul 1951 as note 36, 90–94.

<sup>52</sup> Papal bull, Diplomatarium Danicum 1,3 nr. 91, quoted in Nyberg, Tore: “Deutsche, dänische und schwedische Christianisierungsversuche östlich der Ostsee im Geiste des 2. und 3. Kreuzzuges”. In: Nowak, Zenon H.: *Die Rolle der Ritterorden in der Christianisierung und Kolonisierung des Ostseegebietes*. Torun 1983, 102 (Ordines militares, Colloquia Torunensia Historica 1).

<sup>53</sup> Diplomatarium Danicum 1,3 nr. 26

missionary? Paul Johansen believes that the church of St. Olai in Tallinn was already in existence at this time, that Nicolaus' conversion had to do with this church, and that the tomb of St. Olav in Trondheim was the uniting link in the story.<sup>54</sup> But since we do not know why the former bishop of Stavanger, Amund, was involved in the matter, it is just a conjecture to assume that Nicolaus was a Benedictine monk on the island of Nidarholm outside Trondheim. In Benedictine circles there were connections to France, however: we know of undated letters of fraternity, issued by Abbot Peter on behalf of his abbey St.-Rémi, with All Saints' Benedictine abbey outside Lund, and with a monk from the Benedictine abbey of Glenstrup in Jutland.<sup>55</sup> Similar letters may have been issued for other Benedictine abbeys in Scandinavia, including Nidarholm.

What came out of the papal bull to Trondheim we do not know, and we have no further sources concerning this first known Estonian monk. Evidently, however, the matter was settled between the Pope, Archbishop Eskil, and the newly consecrated Archbishop of Trondheim. There can be no doubt about Eskil's role: he was searching for the right men to take up effective missionary work in Estonia. Since in this case he was assisted by a Benedictine abbot, it is reasonable to assume that Nicolaus belonged to the same Order. But Eskil was also active in introducing new religious Orders, especially the Cistercians, in Scandinavia. In 1143, two Cistercian abbeys were founded in the diocese of Linköping directly from Clairvaux: Alvastra under the protection of King Sverker, and Nydala in Småland further south under the protection of Bishop Gisle of Linköping, the diocese which, as we saw – still subject to the archbishops of Lund –, was charged with the mission east of the Baltic Sea. Whereas Alvastra and its daughter abbeys dominated the later development of the Order in Sweden, Nydala gave birth to one daughter foundation only: *Beatae Mariae de Gutnalia* in Roma on the island of Gotland, in 1164, while Bishop Gisle apparently was still alive and active. Gotland was politically independent, even if it nominally belonged to Sweden, and the foundation of Roma abbey may have been a decisive step towards incorporation of the island into the diocese of Linköping.<sup>56</sup> A certain Peter, originating from Clairvaux and thus apparently French, is said to have been the first abbot of Nydala and then the first abbot of Roma.<sup>57</sup>

Thus, in spite of an extremely sparse source material, it is possible to trace here a continuous plan to entrust the mission towards the east to a bishopric on the east coast of

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<sup>54</sup> Johansen, Paul 1951 as note 36, 92.

<sup>55</sup> *Diplomatarium Danicum* 1,2 nr. 150, 149.

<sup>56</sup> Pernler, Sven-Erik: *Gotland's medeltida kyrkoliv – biskop och prostar. En kyrkorättslig studie*. Visby 1977,61–65.

<sup>57</sup> Swartling, Ingrid; Gunnar Svahnström: *Roma kloster och kungsgård*. Stockholm 1964 (= Svenska Fornminnesplatser 47). See also Swartling, Ingrid: *Roma abbey church in the middle ages*. Stockholm 1967 (= Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, Antikvariskt arkiv 32).

Sweden, first called Birca, then living on in the bishopric of Linköping. It is also possible to see the incorporation of Gotland in this diocese and the foundation of the abbey of Gutnalia as first steps in the fulfilment of this task. The next logical step, then, would be to establish and strengthen the links with Estonia, which apparently was part of the project from the beginning. This was done under the supervision of the Danish church and its archbishop Eskil, who was so far the only prelate capable of carrying out such a plan.

### **The Cistercians**

Contrary to the case of Fulco, which we know about from written sources only, the effects of the Cistercian move for the Christian mission in Estonia will have to be deduced in other ways. No Cistercian chronicles throw light upon the efforts of the monks of Roma to preach the Christian faith in Estonia. Paul Johansen has argued that between 1164 and 1219 a number of Estonian Christians must have entered the Roma abbey, since after the Danish conquest of 1219 such monks could start preaching in Estonia at once.<sup>58</sup> During the last years of Archbishop Eskil (1164–77) and under the archbishops Absalon (1177–1201) and Andreas Sunesen (1201–23), the Swedish church province was rather dependent upon these mighty prelates, not primarily because of the *primas* -title to the Swedish church, but because they were nominated papal legates for the Swedish church province, which apparently was valid also for the missionary areas beyond the Baltic Sea.<sup>59</sup> One must assume, therefore, as Paul Johansen does, that Christian connections between the Roma abbey in Gotland and Estonia started already in the 1170's in the wake of the September letters of 1171. If it cannot be proved that Eskil's successors or anyone else had an interest in interrupting such missionary contacts between the Cistercians in Gotland and Estonia, one must assume that they continued undisturbed.

In the footsteps of the Cistercians came the Hospitallers of St. John. Their main house on Zealand, Antvorskov, was soon followed by a Swedish hospital in Eskilstuna and a Norwegian one in Værne.<sup>60</sup> It has not been possible to state with any degree of certainty whether these Hospitallers of St. John also had any Danish and Swedish knights in their ranks, or if their personnel consisted only of sergeants and priests. Mentally and spiritually, they were close to the Cistercian monks, and they opened their first houses in areas where the Cistercians already were at home.

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<sup>58</sup> Johansen, Paul 1951 as note 36, 104. With reference to his own edition: Johansen, Paul: *Die Estlandliste des liber Census Daniae*. Kopenhagen/Reval 1933.

<sup>59</sup> See below for Andreas Sunesen.

<sup>60</sup> Nyberg, Tore 1985 as note 42, 130–133.

## Valdemar I

It remains, however, to try to identify the role of Valdemar I in this connection. All historians agree that Valdemar I was involved in a conflict with Archbishop Eskil of a type which he did not have with Eskil's successor Absalon (1178–1201), bishop of Roskilde after 1158. Therefore he also needed a solemn reconciliation with Eskil: the meeting at Ringsted in 1170. Even the Hospitallers' foundation may have been part of such a deal.<sup>61</sup> Absalon, on the other hand, together with most Danish bishops, stayed loyal to the king after 1161, when the papal schism broke out in the open and Valdemar I pronounced his oath of loyalty to Frederik Barbarossa, thereby accepting his champion Pope Victor IV. Absalon's adherence to the king, the German emperor and Pope Victor IV was afterwards concealed by Saxo but it can be retraced clearly, since Saxo's later reasons for hiding his archbishop's German sympathies were clear enough.<sup>62</sup> Only Archbishop Eskil and Bishop Simon of Odense preferred loyalty towards Pope Alexander III.<sup>63</sup>

Two characteristic events signal the king's independence as well as his need for a reconciliation with Pope Alexander: the expedition together with Absalon to crush the last Slav pagan center on Rügen (1169), and the celebration in Ringsted 1170. While Eskil slowly lost influence, however, Absalon led the diocese of Roskilde, comprising all Zealand, which he kept for 14 years after he had become archbishop – not until 1192 did he give way to a successor in Roskilde.<sup>64</sup> Absalon, being the bishop of all Eastern Denmark for 14 years, was, in a much higher degree than Eskil could ever be, an important guarantee for the loyalty of the national church to the strong royal authority of Valdemar I.

Since Absalon was an extremely influential benefactor to the Zealand Cistercians of Sorø and Esrom,<sup>65</sup> his participation in the Rügen expedition and his support for a

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<sup>61</sup> Nyberg, Tore 1985 as note 42, 131.

<sup>62</sup> Skovgaard-Petersen, Inge: *Da Tidernes Herre var nær. Studier i Saxos historiesyn*. København 1987, 96–136, esp. 112, and German summary 329–332.

<sup>63</sup> Nyberg, Tore: *Die Kirche in Skandinavien* 1986 142–149 Gelting, Michael H.: “Kansleren Radulfs to bispevielser”. In: *Historisk Tidsskrift*. 80 (1980), 325–336.

<sup>64</sup> Rübner Jørgensen, Kaare Engels, Odilo, Stefan Weinfurter: *Series episcoporum ecclesiae catholicae occidentalis ab initio usque ad annum MCXCVII, 6,2: Archiepiscopatus Lundensis*. Stuttgart 1992, 28–32.

<sup>65</sup> McGuire, Brian Patrick: *The Cistercians in Denmark. Their Attitudes, Roles, and Functions in Medieval Society*. Kalamazoo 1982, 60–63, 89, 108–111 (= Cistercian Studies Series 35).

Cistercian expansion from Zealand into the Slav countries in the years after 1170<sup>66</sup> and later on in the Halland area<sup>67</sup> points to the main direction of King Valdemar's interests. It is true that in 1177, the king joined *Knudsgildet*,<sup>68</sup> the guild named after his father St. Knud Lavard, by the help of which he could protect his interests around the Baltic – the document especially mentions the house which the guild is about to build in Gotland, and other “Guilds of St. Knud” were founded in Swedish merchant settlements.<sup>69</sup> But contrary to the archbishops of Lund, who exerted a legal ecclesiastical authority in the Baltic area, Valdemar first of all had to protect Denmark from Slav (Vendic) piracy, so his activity had to be concentrated towards the southern, not the eastern parts of the Baltic.<sup>70</sup> It has been alleged that the king undertook a maritime expedition to Finland in the early 1170's;<sup>71</sup> this, however, has turned out to be a misinterpretation of a source telling about an expedition King Valdemar undertook to “Vendland”, the lands of the Vends on the southern shore of the Baltic, in the interest of his wife, Queen Sophie, who came from Minsk and not from Novgorod as previously believed.<sup>72</sup> So even this source does not change the picture of Valdemar's interest being mainly concentrated around the southern part of the Baltic Sea.

Since Nicolaus Brekespeare's visit in the 1150's, the Roman pontiffs were kept well informed about Denmark, and Pope Alexander III in several respects seems to have taken the lead in person. His death in 1181 after the resignation of Eskil in 1177, the take-over of king Knud VI in 1182, a sequence of popes allowed only a short time in office after the death of Lucius III in 1185, and, finally, the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin in 1187, turned direct papal attention away from the North for a while. The Swedish archbishop, the Cistercian Stephen, died in 1185, his successor John was killed when pirates devastated

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<sup>66</sup> Szacherska, Stella Maria: “The political role of the Danish monasteries in Pomerania 1171–1223“. In: *Mediaeval Scandinavia*. 10 (1977), 122–155. See also Petersohn, Jürgen: *Der südliche Ostseeraum im kirchlich-politischen Kräftespiel des Reichs, Polens und Dänemarks vom 10. bis 13. Jahrhundert. Mission, Kirchenorganisation, Kultpolitik*. Köln 1979, 437–455, esp. 445–451 (= Ostmitteleuropa in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart 17).

<sup>67</sup> McGuire, Brian Patrick 1982 as note 65, 79–87.

<sup>68</sup> *Diplomatarium Danicum* 1,3 nr. 63.

<sup>69</sup> Wallin, Curt 1975 as note 40, 76–83.

<sup>70</sup> Skyum-Nielsen, Niels: *Kvinde og Slave. Danmarkshistorie uden Retouche*. København 1971, 184–186.

<sup>71</sup> Skyum-Nielsen, Niels 1971 as note 70, 184 with notes 38 and 39

<sup>72</sup> Gallén, Jarl: “Vem var Valdemar den stores drottning Sofia?” In: *Historisk Tidskrift för Finland*. 61 (1976), 273–288.

his fortress and the merchant settlement of Sigtuna in 1187,<sup>73</sup> and direct Danish influence on the Swedish church through Absalon was at its peak in the following years.<sup>74</sup> The theory that the pirates in Sigtuna in 1187 were Estonians is controversial; since conflicts between Russian and Swedish merchants are being reported for 1188, the pirates may equally well have been Karelians under Novgorod supremacy.<sup>75</sup>

To sum up the considerations concerning the third question, one might characterize Archbishop Eskil and Pope Alexander III as the architects of the Baltic mission under Danish auspices. They were able to engage Cistercian monks and the Swedish Erik-dynasty in this undertaking, utilizing the fact that the Danish king had to focus his attention elsewhere. Paul Johansen's conclusion that, as a result of this planning, Gotland and the Abbey of Roma from now on became centers for the future education of Estonian missionaries, is worth consideration.

*4. To understand how Denmark came to focus on Estonia and not on other areas east of the Baltic Sea, we have to put a further question: How did neighbouring countries – Sweden, Norway, Germany, Poland –, and Christian activities emanating from them, influence Danish attitudes and decisions leading up to the campaign of 1219?*

The broad and bold project involving the Danish church, its king and archbishop, which can be deduced from the papal letters of September 1171, underwent considerable modifications as a result of events in Sweden, Norway, and Germany.

In Sweden Knut, the son of St. Erik, the competitor of Sverker's family and therefore not well favoured by the Danish kings, demonstrated his ability to remain in power for several decades – he died in 1196. He succeeded in taking up contacts independently with the Roman pontiffs and also favoured the Cistercians.<sup>76</sup> In Swedish history he is known to be the first king to build stone fortresses on Danish models on strategic places

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<sup>73</sup> Mentioned in several Swedish annals, cf. Paulsson, Göte *Annales Suecici medii aevi*. Lund 1974 (= Bibliotheca historica Lundensis 32).

<sup>74</sup> Skyum-Nielsen, Niels 1969 as note 33, 126–127

<sup>75</sup> Skyum-Nielsen, Niels 1971 as note 70, 221. See Lind, John: "Varæger, nemcer og novgoroder år 1188. Hvor var Chorzek og Novotorzcek?" In: *Historisk Tidskrift för Finland*. 66 (1981), 145–177, ekskurs 2, 174–177. See also Latvakangas, Arto: *Riksgrundarna. Vardagproblemet i Sverige från runinskrifter till enhetlig historisk tolkning*. Turku 1995, 85 with note 4 (= *Annales Universitatis Turkuensis* B:211). Against Tarvel, Enn: "Sigtunan tuhoaminen vuonna 1187". In: *Suomen varhaishistoria. Tornion kongressi 14.–16.6.1991*. Rovaniemi 1992, 587–594 (= *Studia historica septentrionalia* 21), who argues that the pirates were Estonians.

<sup>76</sup> The view of Westman, Knut B. 1954 as note 29 on King Knut's adherence to an antipapal national church cannot be maintained.

along the Swedish east coast and on Öland.<sup>77</sup> Defense against sea pirates was in this situation more important to the king than the spread of the Christian faith east of the Baltic Sea, and the confrontation policy may have stimulated further discrimination of “pagans”.<sup>78</sup> But Knut got approval from Pope Celestin III for his support of missionary activities.<sup>79</sup> Swedish influence expanded in Finland from the North and met with older missionary impulses from the south ultimately said to have originated in the archdiocese of Magdeburg.<sup>80</sup>

The Norwegian dynasty was ousted by king Sverre, a usurper from the Færø islands, who worked in good agreement with Knut Eriksson and the memory of St. Erik in Uppsala. More radical than Knut, Sverre tried to demonstrate that the national church was perfectly able to administer itself and proceed to missionary and pastoral tasks without immediate directives from a subordinate hierarchy.<sup>81</sup> When we consider that Sverre had a Benedictine abbot from Iceland to assist him in writing his biography *Sverres saga* in open conflict with the pope and his own archbishop,<sup>82</sup> we have some background to evaluate what it might have meant that the helper of Bishop Fulco, the Estonian Nicolaus, apparently was a Benedictine monk in Norway. At the same time, Knut Eriksson had his Benedictine cathedral chapter, instituted by his father St. Erik, as his sanctuary in Uppsala.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Tuulse, Armin: „Kastell i nordisk borgarkitektur“. In: *Fornvännen*. 42 (1947), 7–38, 85–108. Idem: “Borg“. In: *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder* 2. o.O. 1957, 119–122. See Lundberg, Erik B.: „Kastal“. In: *ibid.* 8. o.O. 1963, 323–328. See Stiesdal, Hans: „Voldsted“. In: *ibid.* 20. o.O. 1976, 232–235. See also Molaug, P.B.: „Burg: Skandinavien“. In: *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 2. o.O. 1983, 991–994.

<sup>78</sup> Skyum-Nielsen, Niels 1971 as note 70, 221. Already in 1171, Scandinavians had reported to the pope that the Estonians were a wild and aggressive people, *Diplomatarium Danicum* 1,3 nr. 27, but this was to get crusading indulgences applied to the expeditions against them, so the use of contemporary rhetoric cannot be excluded.

<sup>79</sup> Koudelka, W.J.: *Neu aufgefundene Papsturkunden des 12. Jahrhunderts*. Köln/Graz 1960, 125–127 (= *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 3).

<sup>80</sup> Klinge, Matti: *Östersjövärlden*. Borgå 1985, 7–47.

<sup>81</sup> Gunnes, Erik: *Kongens ære. Kongemakt og kirke i ,En tale mot biskopene’*. Oslo 1971, esp. 226–229, 357–366.

<sup>82</sup> Nygaard Brekke, Egil: *Sverre-sagaens opphav. Tiden og forfatteren*. Oslo 1958, 109–117 (= *Skrifter utgitt av Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo II. Hist.-Filos. Klasse* 1958:1).

<sup>83</sup> Gallén, Jarl 1976 as note 31. Cf. Thordeman, Bengt: „Erik den heiiges kungakrona“. In: *idem* 1954 269–288.

In Germany, a local feudal prince like Henry the Lion of Saxonia faced ruin, when Emperor Frederik Barbarossa after his reconciliation with Pope Alexander III in 1177 was able to have Henry condemned by a feudal court for being faithless and had him driven into a three year exile. Barbarossa thereby succeeded in gaining direct influence in Northern German affairs, which among other things led to an imperial concern for the new harbour settlement of Lübeck, from where commerce expanded in the Baltic area.<sup>84</sup> The immediate consequences this had for the Baltic mission are well known: from Lübeck, the German “armed pilgrims” started their regular crusader expeditions to the Eastern shore of the Baltic Sea, where the area around the mouth of the Düna became a main center, and where the bishops Meinhard, Bertold, and Albert followed each other as spiritual leaders of the missionary work after the end of the 1180’s.<sup>85</sup> This, again, forced the Danish king to secure his interests in Pomerania,<sup>86</sup> Mecklenburg, and Holstein,<sup>87</sup> so that finally, in 1202, Valdemar II could claim supremacy over Lübeck. Since Albert already had asked Knud VI to enter into collaboration, Valdemar probably hoped to be able to influence German activities in the Baltic by his being feudal lord of Lübeck.<sup>88</sup> From Poland, in spite of many internal problems, efforts were made in the 1160’s and again in 1192 to conquer Prussia and convert its pagan population to the Christian faith.<sup>89</sup> In Prussia, Polish and German interests clashed with the Danish Cistercian expansion upon the foundation of the abbey of Oliva close by Gdansk, recorded by Dlugosz under the year 1178 but actually belonging to the 1180’s.<sup>90</sup> We see here the contours of a North European “scramble for the Baltic”. With Germans and Danes in Pomerania, Germans and Poles in Prussia, Germans in Livonia, and Swedes

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<sup>84</sup> Hoffmann, Erich in: Graßmann, Antjekathrin *Lübeckische Geschichte*. Lübeck 1988, 103–107.

<sup>85</sup> This is the main subject of Henry of Lettland. See: *Henrici Chronicon Livoniae – Heinrich von Lettland, Livländische Chronik*. Darmstadt 1959.

<sup>86</sup> Petersohn, Jürgen: „Pommerns staatsrechtliches Verhältnis zu den Nachbarmächten im Mittelalter“. In: *Die Rolle Schlesiens und Pommerns in der Geschichte der deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen im Mittelalter*. o.O. 1981, 98–115.

<sup>87</sup> Skyum-Nielsen, Niels 1971 as note 70, 213–219.

<sup>88</sup> Hoffmann, Erich as note 84, 109–113.

<sup>89</sup> See Ioannis Dlugossii *Annales seu cronicae incliti regni Poloniae liber 5, 6*. Varsaviae 1973, 76–84, 152–153.

<sup>90</sup> See Lingenberg, Heinz: *Die Anfänge des Klosters Oliva und die Entstehung der deutschen Stadt Danzig. Die frühe Geschichte der beiden Gemeinwesen bis 1308/10*. Stuttgart 1982, 173–188 (= Kieler Historische Studien 30). See also Szacherska, Stella Maria: „Valdemar II's expedition to Pruthenia and the mission of Bishop Christian“. In: *Mediaeval Scandinavia*. 12 (1988), 45–49.

in Finland, there would be little room left for the Danes alone. The Danish kings had to be active also in the Northern and Eastern parts of the Baltic, in order not to be pushed out. A Danish fleet expedition against Finland was recorded in several Scandinavian annals under 1191.<sup>91</sup> Shortly afterwards – generally under 1197 – the annals explicitly state that the king sent an expedition to Estonia.<sup>92</sup>

At the same time we observe an inner consolidation of the Danish church, visible above all by the efforts of Archbishop Absalon, at a provincial council in 1187, to unify the liturgical traditions of the Danish dioceses.<sup>93</sup>

With Lund acting in this way to achieve greater unity in the Danish church, and with the spread of this tendency to Sweden's nearby southern dioceses which were – as we saw – traditionally in charge of the Eastern mission, the prospects for real missionary work from the Danish church, to replace any politics of confrontation, might have looked brighter than before. On the other hand, there was more competition in the Eastern areas now, as well as signs of each party concentrating upon certain regions while leaving others to competitors. Thus, neighbouring influence threatened to introduce another alternative for the mission of the Danish church in the Baltic area, i.e. to think in terms of territorial mission, limiting itself to regions which were already under the political control of the Danish king, and leaving other regions to other missionaries.

*This brings us to the last question:*

*5. What was the role of Andreas Sunesen (1201–1223), the third and last one of the Danish archbishops who fulfilled the office of a permanent apostolic delegate for all the northern countries, regarding Christianity in Estonia?*

The preceding survey has brought to light some important trends in the development of the Christian church in Denmark and Sweden until about 1200. Archbishop Absalon died in 1201 and King Knud VI in 1202. Knut Eriksson in Sweden had died in 1196 and was followed by the younger Sverker from the rival family. This was obviously favourable to royal Danish influence in Sweden. Andreas Sunesen was the son of Absalon's cousin, Sune Ebbesen. Under Archbishop Andreas and King Valdemar II, important decisions were taken, which ultimately led to the Danish expedition to Estonia in 1219. Some of the highlights of the two decades will be brought forth here.

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<sup>91</sup> Kerkkonen, Gunvor: „De danska korstågens hamnar i Finland”. In: *Kring korstågen till Finland. Ett urval uppsatser tillägnat Jarl Gallén*. Borgå 1968, 111–145.

<sup>92</sup> Kroman, Erik (ed.): *Danmarks middelalderlige annaler*. København 1980. I.a. 60, 77, 84, 147, 168, 258, 278, 309 in Latin, 199 in Danish: *Kuning bøth leding til Estland*.

<sup>93</sup> Skyum-Nielsen, Niels (#SYMBOL#): „En nyfundne kilde til Absalons historie“. In: *Historie Jyske Samlinger. Ny række*. 19 (1991–92), 244–264.

First, in November 1204, the Archbishop's emissary in Rome procured papal renewal of Andreas' office as a papal legate and received a new pallium from the Pope for the archbishop of Sweden, who had lost his in a fire, so that the Danish archbishop's title of *primas Swecie* was also activated again.<sup>94</sup>

Next, in January 1206, another emissary procured papal permission for Andreas to carry out visitations and fulfil other special duties normally falling under the pope's authority; to call all Benedictine monks of Denmark to a general chapter; and – last but not least – to consecrate a bishop in a place which “with the help of Christ, after having eliminated the atrocities of paganism, you are able to turn over to the cult of the Christian faith”.<sup>95</sup> The information at the bottom of the papal letter had apparently dealt with a city or a society, *civitas*. We may guess that the petitioners had a certain locality in mind and one might then ask if they meant a place on the southern shore of the Baltic, or in Livonia or Estonia, or possibly in Finland.<sup>96</sup>

Furthermore, in October 1207, a new Danish emissary in Rome asked permission for Andreas to dispensate one of King Sverker's chaplains, who was apparently the son of a priest, so that he could become archbishop of Uppsala and receive the pallium from Andreas.<sup>97</sup> After that question was settled, we know from another permission of the same kind of October 1209 for a clergyman, who was apparently also the son of a priest, that a bishopric already existed in Finland. Andreas was authorized by the Pope to dispensate him and install him as bishop there.<sup>98</sup> There may have been problems in ensuring that the new bishops of Uppsala and Finland remained loyal to the missionary work of Archbishop Andreas, for in April 1212 the Pope reacted to complaints and informed all bishops of Sweden and Denmark to support Andreas in his efforts to “convert the pagans living all around”.<sup>99</sup>

What had happened? This is not the right place to retell the political events of the first decade of Valdemar II's reign. One Danish royal expedition to the eastern Baltic during this first decade has been recorded in the annals: in 1206 the king went with the archbishop and many warriors against Øsel-Saremaa in retaliation for Osilian pirate

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<sup>94</sup> Diplomatarium Danicum 1,4 nr. 96, 97.

<sup>95</sup> Diplomatarium Danicum 1,4 nr. 111, 110, 109: ut in ciuitate, quam paganorum eliminata spurcicia Christo iuuante poteris ad cultum fidei Christiane redigere, catholicum ualeas episcopum ordinare.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Aubert, R.: “Estonie“. In: *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques* 15. o.O. 1963, 1068–1074.

<sup>97</sup> Diplomatarium Danicum 1,4 nr. 126.

<sup>98</sup> Diplomatarium Danicum 1,4 nr. 161.

<sup>99</sup> Diplomatarium Danicum 1,5 nr. 13: ad convertendum circumstantes paganos.

attacks in Blekinge in 1203.<sup>100</sup> From Øsel, the king returned home, while the archbishop went to Riga and stayed there for the winter while “reading”, i.e., giving lectures in theology.<sup>101</sup> Doubtlessly this shows his decision to demonstrate that as a papal legate he was the central church dignitary in the Baltic next to the pope, and that Albert, the bishop of Riga, would have to recognize him as such.

Albert, however, now started his carrier of trying to secure the Christian settlement in Livonia for the German empire,<sup>102</sup> while Riga itself grew as a merchant settlement<sup>103</sup> and the Order of the Knights of the Sword was established with the Cistercian abbey of Dünamünde as its spiritual background.<sup>104</sup> The abbot of Dünamünde, the Danish-trained Theodericus, was ordained bishop of the Estonians by Albert in 1211,<sup>105</sup> but the amassing of German “pilgrims” and merchants in Livonia weakened Danish influence.

At the same time, at least two Danish expeditions were directed against the southern shore of the Baltic: 1205 to Pomerania, 1210 to Prussia,<sup>106</sup> but they were counteracted from the German side. So even here, there was little room left for a Danish Christian mission.

Furthermore the defeat, in two battles in 1208 and 1210, of the Swedish Sverker family, who were supported by the Danish king, forced King Valdemar to find other ways to influence events in the northern Baltic than by relying upon a Swedish dynasty. The day

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<sup>100</sup> Skyum-Nielsen, Niels 1971 as note 70, 282.

<sup>101</sup> Nyberg, Tore: “Kreuzzug und Handel in der Ostsee zur dänischen Zeit Lübecks“. In: *Lübeck 1226. Reichsfreiheit und frühe Stadt*. Lübeck 1976, 185–186.

<sup>102</sup> Hellmann, Manfred: *Das Lettenland im Mittelalter*. Münster 1954, 112–138. See also Gnegel-Waitschies, Gisela: *Bischof Albert von Riga. Ein Bremer Domherr als Kirchenfürst im Osten (1199–1229)*. Hamburg 1958 (= Nord- und Osteuropäische Geschichtsstudien 2).

<sup>103</sup> Benninghoven, Friedrich: *Rigas Entstehung und der frühhansische Kaufmann*. Hamburg 1961 (= Nord- und Osteuropäische Geschichtsstudien 3).

<sup>104</sup> idem: *Der Orden der Schwertbrüder. Fratres milicie Christi de Livonia*. Köln 1965 (= Ostmitteleuropa in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart 9).

<sup>105</sup> For detailed biography see Johansen, Paul 1951 as note 36, 94–106.

<sup>106</sup> Skyum-Nielsen, Niels 1971 as note 70, 283. See also Szacherska, Stella Maria 1988 as note 90.

was celebrated as a national victory by St. Erik's grandson, Erik Knutsson, who took power. His coronation was the first in Sweden's history.<sup>107</sup>

In such a situation, when only the assistance of the Danish king could guarantee the undisturbed missionary activity of the Danish church, the church had to go where the Danish weapons could make room for her. With Sweden active in Finland and the Germans arriving in great numbers in Livonia and along the southern shore of the Baltic, Estonia was left to the Danes. In collaboration with Innocent III, Archbishop Andreas must have seen the task awaiting him in Estonia already since 1210, while being content with the role of an advisor and supervisor for the neighbouring powers and their missionary activities. The papal permission Andreas got in October 1213 to establish an episcopal see in the Estonian provinces of Sakkala and Hugenhusen<sup>108</sup> is clear evidence for the general trend of Danish efforts during these years. The event is to be understood against the background of the papal approval of Theodericus in the same year as exempt bishop of *Hestia*.<sup>109</sup> The trend had its peak after the Lateran Council of 1215 in several papal bulls granting crusading indulgences for participants in expeditions to the eastern shores of the Baltic.<sup>110</sup>

There was a slight change of attitude when in 1216 Pope Innocent III was followed by Honorius III. Honorius started to collect 1/20 of all ecclesiastical incomes for the costs of a crusade,<sup>111</sup> and in May and June 1218 he tried to make Scandinavians support bishop Christian in his mission in Prussia.<sup>112</sup> Just around those months, however, at the diet in Slesvig on June 25, 1218, final plans for the expedition to Estonia next year were made, as the young Valdemar was crowned king and successor.<sup>113</sup>

The role of Archbishop Andreas during these two decades was certainly that of the learned and inspiring spiritual leader. His great learning is evident from the versified

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<sup>107</sup> Swedish annals, cf. Paulsson, Göte 1974 as note 73, 255, 258, 267, 295, 315–316, say that Erik was coronatus 1210, but Thordeman, Bengt: „Kungakröning och kungakrona i medeltidens Sverige”. In: *Arkeologiska forskningar och fynd tillägnade Konung Gustaf VI Adolf 11.11.1952*. Stockholm 1952, 305–321, points out, that it may have been just an anointing of the new king.

<sup>108</sup> Diplomatarium Danicum 1,5 nr. 38.

<sup>109</sup> Johansen, Paul 1951 as note 36, 102.

<sup>110</sup> Diplomatarium Danicum 1,5 nr. 29–31 from April–May 1213. Also the Swedish archbishop Valerius is among the recipients.

<sup>111</sup> Diplomatarium Danicum 1,5 nr. 94.

<sup>112</sup> Diplomatarium Danicum 1,5 nr. 135, 139, 142.

<sup>113</sup> Nyberg, Tore 1976 as note 101, 192.

theological tract he wrote under the title of *Hexaëmeron*.<sup>114</sup> Surrounded by politicians, he embodies peaceful striving and cultural maturity, imbued as he was with the heritage of the Old Church and Greek and Roman philosophy as it was taught in Paris towards the end of the 12th century. Strong influences from St. Augustine and Hugo of St. Victor can be traced. For Estonia, the issues of German prelates, knights, and merchants were well balanced by the personality of Andreas Sunesen. How much he was able to put his mark on further developments after the conquest of Estonia in 1219 belongs to another story. It is, however, certain, that his personality gave the Danish conquest a human profile, of a kind which not always speaks to us through the written documents.

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<sup>114</sup> Gertz, M.Cl. (ed.): *Andrae Sunonis filii ... Hexaëmeron*. København 1892. Anders Suneen: *Hexaëmeron* København 1985.