

The Church Calendar and Yearly Cycle in the Life of Medieval Reval

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The following contribution is not meant to give a systematic picture of the mental structures, deriving from the organisation of life in medieval town, but rather to present some problematic points using the example of medieval Reval that could make a connection with different fields of the history of the mentalities of medieval society.

In the case of a medieval merchant town it can be discussed whether the principal organising power was religion or economy. If one presumes that the main characteristics of an average medieval city's life [the observing of religious habits and the clerical time schedule, public assistance, connected with religious structures and their activities, the uniting structures of citizens (corporations) and the observation of religious habits] were mainly under the control of the clergy, one can name religion as the main organising power, but without denying the organisational power of the clergy, one cannot identify the clergy and the church with religion. In addition the relations between trade and religion and their interdependence must be specially considered.

One starting point for describing the life of a pre-Reformation citizen of Reval could be the time schedule, the habits arising from that time schedule, the influence of the time-schedule on the organisation of life and vice versa.

Until now the number of modern research contributions to the history of the medieval mentality of Livonia has been rather small. The literature concerning medieval culture in Old Livonia dates mostly back to the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.¹ Due to the great self-interest characteristic to the works of the Baltic German historians, comparisons, even with Germany, leave alone other European countries, are rare.

¹ Fr.Amelung, *Baltische Culturstudien aus den vier Jahrhunderten der Ordenszeit (1184-1362)*. Dorpat, 1884; L.Arbusow, *Die Einführung der Reformation in Liv-, Est- und Kurland*. Leipzig, 1921; G.v.Hansen, *Die Kirche und ehemaligen Kloster Revels*. Reval, 1885; M.Lipp, *Kodumaa kiriku ja hariduse lugu* [The History of Estonian Church and Education]. Jurjev, 1895; O.Pohrt, *Zur Frömmigkeitsgeschichte Livlands*. Sonderabdruck v. Abhandlungen des Herder-Instituts zu Riga I. 4. Riga, 1925; O.Sild, *Kirikuvistatsoonid eestilaste maal vanemast ajast kuni olevikuni* [Church Visitations in the Land of Estonians From Earliest Times to the Present Day] Tartu, 1937; O.Sild, *Eesti kirikulugu vanimast ajast olevikuni* [History of the Estonian Church From Earliest Times to the Present Day]. Tartu, 1938.

Among the first Baltic German authors to deal with cultural topics of Old Livonia were Fr. Amelung and L. Arbusow sen., the latter being one of the key figures among his generation of Baltic historians. Fr. Amelung was not a professional historian, and many of his works suffer from exaggerated *Kulturträger*-ideas. The works by E. v. Nottbeck and W. Neumann, Ed. Pabst and Fr. Koehler² are usually devoted to specific matters. The following first period of Estonian independence (1920–1940) remained too short to fill this gap.

After the Second World War the emphasis has mostly been on economic and art history with quite a narrow interpretation of sources, although during recent years some new trends can be observed in the diploma-theses of the graduates of Tartu University.

The possibilities for approaching the everyday religiousness through everyday sources are quite wide and the range of the sources in case of medieval Reval - as compared to the literature - is relatively wide.

There is no doubt that the church was the most influential organiser of an official time-schedule for the medieval citizen. Nevertheless, it is difficult to say, whether this schedule should be qualified as religious or not - the solution could lie in the attitude, according to which there was no strict line between the religious and the secular from the modern point of view. The different approach to time-schedule according to the time of the year and to economic activities form a special field for research.

There are many problems in representing a pre-Reformational calendar of a Revalian as no written precise calendars have been fully preserved (like in Riga³), therefore one can make only presumptions, especially concerning the gradation of the feasts according to the system of the church. The religious texts preserved were originally written down mostly in France or Germany and give no evidence as to the local peculiarities.

One way to present a medieval time schedule without using any official calendar is to observe the dating system, consisting of the feast days of saints and other church-feasts in the sources where records have been made during a longer period - different town magistrate register-books etc. In the case of Reval these sources are quite revealing. Every single source of this kind enables us to form a separate calendar which need not be the same as that one of some other source. The list of the feasts named and their occurrence could be different but there are certain touching points. Nevertheless, some very important feasts could be left out, so one cannot fully rely on this kind of calendar.

In the sources covering a longer period the amount of entries differ from month to month and from year to year. In the book of burghers (1426–1525)⁴ the calculated mean value of entries per month would be 35-45. Summing up the number of entries in a particular month during this period, there are 71 inscriptions in March compared to 41 in February, 44 in April, 25 in June, 43 in May, July and September, 42 in August, 67 in October, 57 in November, 51 in December and again only 35 in January.

² E.v.Nottbeck, W.Neumann, *Geschichte und Kunstdenkmäler der Stadt Reval*. Reval. 1899, Fr.Koehler, *Ehstländische Klosterlektüre*. Reval. 1892, Ed.Pabst, *Der Maigraf und seine Feste*. Reval. 1864.

³ H.v.Bruiningk, *Messe und kanonisches Stundengebet nach dem Brauche der Rigaschen Kirche im späteren Mittelalter*. Riga. 1904.

⁴ *Das Revaler Bürgerbuch 1409-1624*. Hrsg. v. O.Greifenhagen. Tallinna Linnaarhiivi väljaanded nr. 6. Tallinn. 1932.

In the book of burghers Easter is never used in dating, although in the other sources it is quite usual. There are no entries from the weeks before and after Easter (again the other sources do not show cessation of activities during that period).

The largest number of entries in the account-books of the town magistrate from 1432-1507⁵ one can find in August and October (the sum of entries for each month is 286). The decrease in September (248) cannot be fully explained. The least active time of the year (122 entries) is February.

In the inheritance-books from 1312-1458⁶ the largest number of entries have been made in March (211), during midsummer and at the turn of the year considerably less (105 in July, 108 in August, 109 in December, 115 in January). For the parchment rent-roll from 1382-1518 the most active month was April (229 entries), the least active one was January (60 entries).

Thus, according to the sources observed, the least active time of the year is approximately from December to January, the most active from March to April. Whether there is any reason to connect these figures with the rise and fall of religious tension or whether they should be analysed only as an expression of the intensity of economic activities, can be left a matter of dispute, although according to V. Turner the first point of view should be seriously considered, as the rise of economic tension in society has always been connected with the rise of religious tension, starting from mystical cults in agrarian societies.⁷

The characteristics of feasts and feasting periods appear different in different sources. Some sources have "concentrated" on some kind of feast, like the account-book of the magistrate on Christmas, Shrove Tuesday, Pentecost and All Souls' Day. These trends are mostly connected to the significance of one or another feast to the group of people whose activities this source represents. If the role of this group of people and its connections with clerical and secular institutions could be estimated, one could also comprehend the importance of the feast.

Religiously active periods were also the time for the fulfilling of many economic obligations (paying taxes, rents etc.). In all the sources taken into consideration one can find a great number of records near Palm Sunday throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This is presumably the result of the role of Easter which was one of the most popular dates for fulfilling obligations. If a time was set, it was usually Easter, if two or more, Easter often was one of them. The obligations that had to be fulfilled twice a year were usually fulfilled by Easter and Michaelmas, which corresponds to similar data concerning Western Europe.

After Easter the tension fell for a short time only to rise again during Pentecost but it remained lower than during Easter period. After Pentecost there was a decrease again, although smaller than the previous one, because the tension remained high throughout the summer to become still higher and almost reach its peak at Michaelmas — the main time for

⁵ *Kämmereibuch der Stadt Reval*. Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte, bearb. v. R. Vogelsang. Bd. 22/1 u. 22/2. Köln Wien 1976. Bd. 27/1. u. 27/2. Köln Wien 1983.

⁶ L. Arbusow, *Das älteste Witschopbuch der Stadt Reval (1312-1360)*. *Revaler Stadtbücher I*. Archiv für die Geschichte Liv-, Est- und Curlands. III. Folge, I. Bd. Reval. 1888. E.v. Nottbeck, *Das drüdtälteste Erbebuch der Stadt Reval (1383-1458)*. Archiv für die Geschichte Liv-, Est- und Curlands. III. Folge. III. Bd. Reval, 1892.

⁷ V. Turner, *Symbol in ritual*. Moscow, 1983.

fulfilling obligations in autumn. The number of inscriptions show the lessening of tension during December, although the Christmas cycle should have made this period active.

Moving from the general time-schedule itself to the habits of the institutions regulating the calendar, several illuminating details can be added concerning single feasts and week days. In St. Brigit's monastery near Reval each year before All Saints' Day the needs of the monastery were calculated and the remaining goods were given to the needy.⁸ In the wills of the fifteenth century it was quite usual to leave some money (usually 1 farthing) to every poor man or woman in every church and churchyard in Reval seven successive Saturdays in the memory of the seven sorrows of Virgin Mary.

These actions were closely connected with the commemoration of the dead, which was often officially organised. The decree of the town magistrate from January 1425 ordered the remembrance of the deceased twice a year in the parish church of the deceased person.⁹ In practice this regulation would have left the other churches without the possible income from those proceedings.

The commemoration of the dead formed usually a part of some bigger feast period, contributing in some way to the tension of the general atmosphere. On the fourteenth of June 1457, the priest of the Holy Ghost church in Reval, Ludeke Karwel, gave the rent of 200 Riga marks for several religious purposes, for example for holding a mass for the sake of the souls of the sisters and brothers of the Great Guild on Easter, Pentecost and Christmas¹⁰. By comparison, it can be pointed out that the statutes (*schrage*) of the *Tafelgilde* in Riga prescribed the commemoration of the deceased brothers and sisters and the supporters of the guild with vigils and masses on a Monday once a year¹¹.

The statutes of Virgin Mary's guild¹² in Reval from the end of the fifteenth century ordered the reading of thirty Pater Nosters and thirty Ave Marias in the memory of every deceased sister or brother. The same guild also took responsibility for holding a mass three times a week in the Cathedral Church of Reval and paid on *assumptio Marie* for each priest six Riga marks a year. At the funerals the members of the guild had to carry the catafalque covered with a canopy that was believed to have belonged to Virgin Mary (*bodecke dat wijsen leuen vrouwen to horet*). At the end of the fifteenth century the guild possessed quite an expensive Virgin Mary's canopy which could also be hired for the funerals of those who were not members of the guild.

⁸ G.v. Hansen. *Die Kirche und ehemaligen Klöster Revels*, p. 172.

⁹ LECUB. Bd. VII., Nr. 237.

¹⁰ LECUB. Bd. XI. Nr. 524. The brother of Ludeke Karwel was probably the abbot of the Dominican monastery in Reval. their father could have possibly been a tailor from Reval Claus Carwelen. and grandfather Hinko Karweleyn from the village Karla near Reval (see. P.Johansen, "Eestikeelsed märkmed kahes dominiiklaste kloostri raamatus Tallinnas" [Estonian Notes in Two Books of the Dominicans in Reval]. In: *Eesti Keel* 1929 Nr. 5-6. lk. 95-96).

¹¹ H.v.Bruiningk, *Messe und kanonisches Stundengebet*, p. 335.

¹² The Virgin Mary's guild was initially founded as a purely religious institution in the beginning of the fifteenth century by the canons Diderick Todwin and Diderick Toyß. In the middle of the fifteenth century the activities of the guild probably died out and it must have been re-established in 1496, when mentioned as *frotermitas sancte Marie viriginis, que noviter in summo Revaliensi auctoritate apostolica instituta et fundata est* (LECUB. Zweite Abt., Bd. I., Nr. 335). After the Reformation the guild became an organisation of the craftsmen of the Dome hill and its suburbs.

The major festival in the guild was *assumptio* (in the statutes "*vnßer leuen vrouwen dage Kruthewinge*"), which was celebrated with a procession where the sisters carried an icon with a depiction of Virgin Mary, and the brothers followed them with candles. Such processions were also organised in the guild on *Corporis Christi* and on the Friday before St. John's Day. Before *assumptio* an obligatory drinking feast (*Drunke*) was held which was followed by a yearly obligatory session of the guild on the next day.¹³

The statutes of the blacksmith journeymen from the first half of the fifteenth century prescribed the commemoration of the dead with vigils on the Tuesday after Pentecost and Christmas. The participation of all the brothers and sisters was obligatory, those who were absent were fined 1 pound of wax.¹⁴

The Great Guild ordered three masses for every deceased member at the Blasius' and Christophorus' altar in St. Nicholas' Church.¹⁵

The Blackheads (the fraternity of young unmarried merchants) who patronised St. Catherine's Church of the Dominican monastery paid for one silent mass a day in St. Catherine's Church. The bigger festivities of the corporation ended with an obligatory high mass (the absentees were fined). The participation in the mass was obligatory also during Christmas and Easter, *assumptio* and St. Catherine's Day.

For the daily silent mass the Blackheads usually gave the Dominicans a tun of meat, a tun of cod and a tun of peas by Advent. After the reform of the Dominican order which was carried through in Reval during 1475-1476 by Nicolaus Lundensis, and later by Albertus Petri, the friars were prohibited to eat meat, and got instead of meat more fish (two tuns of cod) and money instead of food for Trinity Day.¹⁶

The Christmas drinking-feast in the corporation of the Blackheads began on the Friday before St. Lucia's Day (the thirteenth of December) and ended on the tenth of January with an obligatory session.¹⁷ The chronicler Balthasar Russow describes with great disgust the revelry that took place on Shrove Tuesday and during the fast, as well as the drinking during Christmas and Shrove Tuesday when people used to dance and enjoy themselves around a fir tree set up in the market-place.¹⁸ To a large extent his disgust must have been the effect of Lutheran strictness, because the people of those times need not have considered such kind of activities irreligious at all (comp. *risus paschalis* or the burning of a doll - a symbol of fasting - in the Netherlands).

As it was usual for a guild or corporation to take care of the altar of their own patron saint in some church and to celebrate the saint's day, the feast calendar could differ in details in different corporations. The St. Antonius corporation had to give two marks a year for bread

¹³ Fr.Sillmark. "Der älteste Schragen der Dom- oder Manengilde zu Reval." In: *Beiträge zur Kunde Estlands*, Bd. XVIII. Heft 1-5, Reval. 1932-34. pp 25-46.

¹⁴ "Alter Schragen der Bruderschaft der Schmiedegesellen zu Reval." In: *Beiträge zur Kunde Ehist-, Liv- und Kurlands*. Bd I Reval. 1868-72. p 390.

¹⁵ L.Arbusov. *Die Einführung der Reformation*, p. 109.

¹⁶ Fr.Amelung. *Geschichte von Revaler Schwarzenhäupter von ihrem Ursprung bis auf die Gegenwart*. Reval, 1885. p. 35-39.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁸ Balthasar Russow's *Chronica der Prouintz Lyfflandt*. Reval. 1857. p. 46.

and wine to St. Antonius' altar in St. Nicholas' Church,¹⁹ the stone-masons who regarded St. Reynold as their patron saint gave one mark every year to celebrate St. Reynold's Day in the same church. The shoemakers took care of the *Crispini* and *Crispiani* altar in St. Nicholas' Church. St. Victor's corporation of the town servants celebrated St. Victor's Day on the tenth of October.

The obligatory drinking-feasts took usually place twice a year mostly at Christmas and on Shrove Tuesday or at Christmas and at Easter.

Although the data concerning religious donations should express the degree of religiousness of the general atmosphere, it is difficult to estimate it in reality. There are several citizens during the second half of the fifteenth century (Heise Patiner, Hans Lippe, Hans Potgeter, Ludeke Karwel, Reynold Korner) whose names appear very often among the religious donors, but as they belonged to the wealthy upper class of the city or were clergymen, one can not really judge their devoutness as religious donations were obligatory to keep a high reputation²⁰

The religious habits of the citizens had naturally a direct impact on the economic welfare of the clergy. For example according to the records of the parchment rent-roll (1382-1518) the priest in The Holy Ghost Church could have the donations offered before the mass. The donations offered after the mass (during *offertorium*) were meant to support the Holy Ghost workhouse²¹

The misunderstandings between the mendicants and the town clergy were generally similar to the circumstances of western Europe: people preferred the masses and sermons of the Dominicans to the masses in their parish churches and accordingly brought their donations to the monastery.²²

In the supplementary part of the resolutions of the provincial church council of Riga (1428) by Henning Scharpenberg, the archbishop of Riga²³ from the year 1437²⁴ the Dominicans and other mendicants were ordered to start the singing of their canonical hours on the sixth hour to finish the proceedings before the beginning of the high mass in parish

¹⁹ TLA (Tallinn City Archives), f 31, n 1, s 216 (Rechnungsbuch der St.-Nikolaus Kirchenvormünder 1465-1535), fol. 13a.

²⁰ As an example of a genuinely religious person one can name the widow of the above mentioned Hans Potgeter. After the death of her husband, Catharina Potgeter donated 150 marks for mass to be held in St. Barbara's chapel on Mondays for the sake of the soul of her late husband (LECUB, Zweite Abt., Bd. III., Nr. 302). Later, during the stormy events of the iconoclasm and the Reformation at the end of the year 1524 and the beginning of 1525, she took some of the books from the dissolved Dominican monastery to keep them in her cellar, although it was forbidden by the reformatory regulations of the town magistratic (TLA, f 230, n 1, s Bk 3).

²¹ L. Arbusow, *Das älteste Wirtschopbuch der Stadt Reval (1312-1360)*, p. 73.

²² TLA, f 230, n 1-1, p. 577.

²³ Henning Scharpenberg (1424-1448), before becoming an archbishop, was the provost of Riga, a relative of the bishop of Ösel-Wick Christian Kubandi, who, in turn, had been the father confessor of Martin V (*Eesti ajalugu II* [History of Estonia], toim. H. Kruus, Tartu, 1937, lk. 176-177).

²⁴ LECUB, Bd. IX, Nr. 131.

churches (this was not obligatory on the feast-day of the patrons of the order - the fourth of February - according to the additions to the martyrologium of 1509)²⁵

As an example of a regulation setting the terms for fulfilling religious obligations one can refer to one of the indulgence letters, given by twelve cardinals of Rome on the sixth of September 1363²⁶, according to which the religious activities from the visitors of St. John's leprosarium were requested on the following days:

Natalis Domini, Circumcisio, Dies Cinerum, in festo Rames Palmarum, Parasceves, Pasche, Ascensionis, Pentecostes, Trinitatis, Corporis Christi, Inventionis et Exaltationis sancte Crucis, Nativitatis et Decollationis beati Johannis Baptiste, beatorum Petri et Pauli apostolorum et omnium apostolorum et evangelistarum, in festo omnium sanctorum et in commemoratione mortuorum ac in dicti hospitalis dedicatioe et per octavas omnium festivitatum predictarum octavas habentium sanctorumque Stephani, Laurentii, Vincenii, Blasii, Martini, Nicolai, Antonii, Georgii, Clemenis, Gregorii, Ambrosii, Augustini, Ieronimi, sanctorumque Marie Magdalene, Marthe, Margarethe, Anne, Agnetis, Agathe, Katherine, Cecile, Lucie et Brigide, singulisque diebus Dominicis et sabbatis.

All these days usually occur in secular sources also. Although Virgin Mary's days are not mentioned here, they are added (*in omnibus festivitibus beatissime virginis Marie*) together with the days of Barbara and Dorothea in the indulgence letter given to St. John's leprosarium by bishop Heinrich of Reval from the seventeenth of August of 1449²⁷ which repeats almost word for word the one from 1363. As one can see, here hardly any local peculiarities which deviate from western catholic tradition can be observed.

If one looks at some other sources, there is one particularity that concerns All Souls' Day. This day is usually not very prominent in official church calendars and is of little use in dating. Nevertheless, one can find it on the longer lists of the indulgence letters. In German cultural traditions the habits of All Souls' Day are similar to the habits of All Saints' Day²⁸. The fixing of the date on the second of November comes of course from the Catholic tradition but the habits of the day itself are largely of local pre-Christian origin. This can be also the reason for the consequent use of the Estonian name of the day (*Hinkepeve, Henkepeve*) in Middle Low German texts, produced in Reval. For example, in the account-books from the years 1432-1507, this day is never used in dating. Nevertheless, the text itself often shows, how much was spent by the town magistrate to celebrate this day (usually three-four pounds of candle wax and about thirty geese). According to German popular customs, the geese were eaten during Michaelmas and St. Martin's Day, the same custom is not known in connection with All Souls' Day.

Besides Christmas, Shrove Tuesday, Easter and St. Martin's Day, the All Souls' Day is the only one which was mentioned in the account-books in connection with the celebrations organised by the town magistrate.

²⁵ TL.A. f230, n 1. Inc 21. fol. 12.

²⁶ LECUB. Bd. II. Nr. 997.

²⁷ LECUB. Bd. X. Nr. 649.

²⁸ *Handwörterbuch der Sage*, Hrsg. v. Peuckert, W.-E., I. Göttingen, 1962, p. 354.

As for the local peculiarities in the habits of the Church itself in Reval, there are very few sources which enable us to identify them. The only possibility for compiling a list of the church festivities of the highest rank (*Totum Duplex*) is in the handmade inscriptions in the above-mentioned *Martyrologium* of Belinus de Padua (printed in Venice in 1509). These inscriptions have a certain Dominican and Scandinavian influence. According to them one can speak of 55 days of *Totum Duplex* in the beginning of the sixteenth century in Reval:

Circumcisio (Jan. 1), *Epyphanie* (Jan. 6), *Anthonii* (Jan. 17), *Vincentii* (Jan. 22), *Translatio Thome de Aquino* (Jan. 29), *Hypopanti domini* (Feb. 2), *Dorothee* (Feb. 6), *Mathie ap.* (Feb. 24), *Thome de Aquino* (March 7), *Annunciatio dominica* (March 25), *Depositio Ambrosii* (Apr. 4), *Marci ev.* (Apr. 25), *Petri de ordine predicatorum* (Apr. 29), *Philippi et Jacobi* (May 1), *Joannis ante portam latinam* (May 6), *Translatio Petri* (May 7), *Apparatio Michaelis archangeli* (May 8), *Translatio Dominici* (May 24), *Barnabe ap.* (June 11), *Decemmilium milium* (June 22), *Joannis baptiste* (June 24), *Petri et Pauli* (June 29), *Commemoratio Pauli* (June 30), *Visitatio Marie ad Elisabeth* (July 2), *Divisio apostolorum* (July 15), *Marie Magdalene* (July 22), *Jacobi ap.* (July 25), *Anne* (July 26), *Dominici* (Aug. 5), *Transfiguratio domini nostri* (Aug. 6), *Assumptio Marie* (Aug. 15), *Bartholomei ap.* (Aug. 24), *Augustini* (Aug. 28), *Nativitas Marie* (Sept. 8), *Michaelis* (Sept. 29), *Depositio Hieronymi* (Sept. 30), *Dionysii* (Oct. 9), *Luce ev.* (Oct. 18), *Undecim milium virginum* (Oct. 21), *Simonis et Thadei* (Oct. 28), *Omnium sanctorum* (Nov. 1), *Martini* (Nov. 11), *Elisabeth* (Nov. 19), *Presentatio Marie in templo* (Oct. 21), *Catherine* (Nov. 25), *Andree* (Nov. 30), *Barbare* (Dec. 4), *Conceptio Marie* (Dec. 8), *Thome* (Dec. 21), *Nativitas Christi* (Dec. 25), *Stephani* (Dec. 26), *Joannis ap.* (Dec. 27).

In comparison to the other Dominican calendars and those of the other religious orders,²⁹ it is a relatively big number. Thus, adding to the movable feasts and Sundays, the calendar of the medieval citizen of Reval appears to have been quite elaborate in spite of the late christianisation of the territory.

The expression of religiousness, which can be observed in this connection, faded away gradually during Lutheran times. In the case of Old Livonia the shift towards early modern mentalities starts to be formed by Lutheran ideology, which introduced a whole complex of new economical, politic and cultural structures.

²⁹ H.Grotefend. *Zeitrechnung des deutschen Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*. Zweiten Bandes zweite Abtheilung. Hannover und Leipzig. 1898.

QUOTIDIANUM ESTONICUM

MEDIUM AEVUM QUOTIDIANUM

HERAUSGEGEBEN VON GERHARD JARITZ

SONDERBAND V

QUOTIDIANUM ESTONICUM
ASPECTS OF DAILY LIFE IN MEDIEVAL
ESTONIA

EDITED BY

JÜRI KIVIMÄE

AND

JUHAN KREEM

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GEDRUCKT MIT UNTERSTÜTZUNG DER
KULTURABTEILUNG DES AMTES
DER NIEDERÖSTERREICHISCHEN LANDESREGIERUNG

Cover Illustration: Compilation from sketches in the margins of account books
of the Town Magistrate of Reval (TLA. Ad. 26 and 32)

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Inhaltsverzeichnis/Table of Contents/Sommaire

Preface.....	7
Jüri Kivimäe, Medieval Estonia. An Introduction.....	8
Juhan Kreem, „ultima germanorum & christianorum prouintia“. Outlines of the Image of Livonia on Maps from the Thirteenth to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century ...	14
Marek Tamm, Les miracles en Livonie et en Estonie à l'époque de la christianisation (fin XIIème - début XIIIème siècles).....	29
Erik Somelar, <i>Van des keisserlichen Lübischen Rechtes wegen</i> . Circumstances of Criminality in Medieval Reval.....	79
Tiina Kala, The Church Calendar and Yearly Cycle in the Life of Medieval Reval.....	103
Mihkel Tammet, Some Aspects of Herbal Medical Treatment on the Example of Medieval Reval.....	111
Inna Pöltsam, Essen und Trinken in den livländischen Städten im Spätmittelalter.....	118
Katrin Kukke, Les lois somptuaires de Reval.....	128

Preface

The idea to publish a special Estonian or Baltic issue of *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* has been discussed already for a couple of years with Gerhard Jaritz and Christian Krötzl. Initially the idea was based on the first experience of studying medieval everyday life and mentalities in a small seminar-group at Tartu University. This optimistic curiosity of discovering a new history or actually a history forgotten long ago, has been carried on. The research topics of Katrin Kukke, Inna Põltsam and Erik Somelar originate from this seminar. However, all contributions of *Quotidianum Estonicum* were written especially for this issue.

Besides that, this collection of articles needs some comments. First, it must be admitted that the selection of aspects of everyday life published here is casual and represents only marginally the modern situation of historical research and history-writing in Estonia. The older Baltic German and Estonian national scholarship has occasionally referred to the aspects of everyday life. Yet the ideology of '*histoire nouvelle*' has won popularity among the younger generation of Estonian historians only in recent years. These ideas are uniting a small informal circle of historians and archivists around Tallinn City Archives, represented not only by the above mentioned authors but also by the contributions of Tiina Kala, Juhan Kreem, Marek Tamm and Mihkel Tammet. Secondly, we must confess the disputable aspects of the title *Quotidianum Estonicum*. Medieval Europe knew Livonia but not Estonia and Latvia which territories it covered over 350 years. There may be even reproaches towards the actual contents that it is too much centralised on Tallinn/Reval, but it can be explained with the rich late medieval collections available at Tallinn City Archives.

We wish above all to thank Eva Toulouse, Monique von Wistinghausen, Hugo de Chassiron, Tarmo Kotilaine and Urmas Oolup for the editorial assistance. Our greatest debt of gratitude is to Gerhard Jaritz, without whose encouragement and support this issue could not have been completed.

Jüri Kivimäe, Juhan Kreem, editors