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Preparing for death and being ready to live. A Lübeck burgher's
testamentary bequests to religious institutions in Turku

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Preparing for death and being ready to live. A Lübeck burgher's testamentary bequests to religious institutions in Turku

ANNA-STINA HÄGGLUND

On 4th July 1454, on the feast day of St Ulrich of Augsburg, Hinrik Hoveman, a burgher of Lübeck, made his final will in the presence of the councillors Werner Grambeke and Kord Moller.¹ The Lübeck City Archives house thousands of similar documents, comprising the most well-preserved collection of medieval wills in the Baltic Sea region.² This article has two objectives: firstly, to analyse the bequests in the will and their connection to common practices of the time, revealing insights about the testator's identity. Secondly, to prepare an edition of the will. The source edition is provided as an appendix to the article.

Introduction: the document

The will that contains valuable information about the town of Turku (Swe. Åbo) in the 15th century has been known to Finnish historians since the early 20th century, but not in its entirety. The archivist Reinhold Hausen included the will in his source edition series called *Finlands Medeltidsurkunder* (cited as FMU), compiled 1910–1935. This edition includes medieval documents pertaining to the diocese of Turku (which roughly corresponds to present-day Finland). Hausen gathered various documents mentioning or involving individuals, institutions, and locations associated with the diocese. Consequently, he included Hinrik Hoveman's will as entry #2960 in the fourth volume of FMU issued in 1924.³ The entries from FMU have been consolidated into the database *Diplomatarium Fennicum* (cited as DF), maintained by the Finnish National Archives, where they retain the same numbering as in FMU but include modern editions and links to other archival databases.⁴ However, it is important to note that FMU/DF does not provide a complete edition of the original document containing Hoveman's last will; instead, it includes only an excerpt from an 19th-century journal article that merely cites a small part of the original document. This article was originally published in *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Lübekische Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 1889–1890. The FMU entry is structured as follows:

¹ Hinrik Hoveman 04.07.1454, Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck (AHL).

² Gunnar Meyer, "Besitzende Bürger" und "elende Sieche": Lübeck's Gesellschaft im Spiegel ihrer Testamente 1400–1449 (Veröffentlichungen zur Geschichte der Hansestadt Lübeck. Reihe B / 48), Lübeck: Schmidt Römhild 2010, 10–17.

³ FMU IV 2960; For Hausens editorial work see Taina Saarenpää, *Turun Tuomiokirkon Musta kirja ja lähteiden julkaisemisen jatkumo Suomessa varhaismodernista digitaaliseen aikaan* (Annales Universitatis Turkuensis C 484), doctoral dissertation, Turku: 2019.

⁴ DF 2960 <<http://df.narc.fi/document/2960>> 11.4.2023.

2960.

Hinrik Hoveman i Lübeck testamenterar 1454 till Nådendals kloster och Åbo domkyrka hvar sin altartafla.

Se Mittheilungen des Vereins für Lübeckische Geschichte und Alterthumskunde 1889, sid. 76.

----- »Item noch so geue ik in dat Brigittenkloster to Nudendal by Abo 1 altar tafelen, de my mester Johanne vamme Hagen maket by sunte Jakobo, dar steyt yne de hilge drewaldicheyt. Item so geue ik in den dom to Abo 1 tafelen von 10 mark, dar schal ynne stan sunte Fabianus vnde Sebastianus vnde sunte Antonius, de scholen myne testamentarien laten maken ».⁵

The cited article was written by W. Brehmer and it compiles excerpts from Lübeck wills specifically mentioning bequests of altarpieces. Among these excerpts is Hinrik Hoveman's will, where he gifted one altarpiece to the Birgittine abbey in Nådendal (Fin. *Naantali*, located near Turku)⁶ and another to the Cathedral in Turku.⁷ Evidently, Reinhold Hausen did not edit the original document and had probably not received a transcription of it, apart from the article excerpt. From a linguistic point of view, the FMU excerpt contains several inaccuracies and is not faithful to the original. The person who has transcribed it has added and omitted words as well as made several misspellings.⁸ Furthermore, the complete document includes additional bequests that would have captured Hausen's interest had he seen the original. The will includes four additional items to beneficiaries within the Turku diocese that would have been of relevance to the FMU. These contain a missal intended for the Birgittines in Nådendal and financial contributions to St George's Hospital, the Holy Spirit Hospital, and St Erasmus' Confraternity, of which Hinrik himself was a member. Therefore, it holds great significance for researchers studying the medieval Turku diocese to have complete access to the entire document.

The religious, cultural and social context of the will

We cannot delve into the minds of people in the 15th century, but nonetheless, a comprehension of their actions within personal networks, civic religious practices, and individual beliefs can be attained through the study of wills, including that of Hinrik Hoveman. Hinrik and other testators were part of a wider social and religious context and the late medieval wills originating from trading towns offer a valuable resource for investigating material culture, personal networks, familial

⁵ FMU/DF 2960.

⁶ Here I use the Swedish name Nådendal for the monastery, which also was used in the sources. When referring to the modern-day town I use the Finnish name Naantali.

⁷ Dr. W. Brehmer, 'Zur Geschichte der Lübecker Malerei', *Mittheilungen des Vereins für Lübeckische Geschichte und Alterthumskunde* 4. heft. (1889–1890), 74–77.

⁸ The correct transcription is: "Item noch so geue ik in dat sulue kloster j altar tafelen de my mester Johan vamme Hagen maket by sunte Jacobe, dar steyt ynne de hilge dreualdicheyt. Item so geue ik in den dom to Abo j tafelen van x mark dar schal ynne stan sunte Fabianus vnde Sebestianus vnde sunte Anthonius, de scholen myne testamentarij laten maken." Hinrik Hoveman 04.07.1454, Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck (AHL).

ties, and religious customs.⁹ My primary question when analysing Hinrik's will is the following: what can a close reading of a medieval will tell about the general testamentary practices and the life of the testator? Aspects such as fear of purgatorial torment and the hope of salvation have long been subjects of discussion within medieval testamentary research, exploring the myriad ways in which testators sought to aid their own souls and those of others. Accordingly, my objective is to scrutinise Hinrik's will, examining how his bequests to individuals and churches reflect contemporary conventions, but also what they disclose about his state in life when he made the will.

Apprehension towards the fate of the soul in the afterlife permeates the devout bequests found in the wills. In the 15th century, purgatorial atonement formed an integral part of eschatological beliefs, requiring that the soul must undergo a period of purification before it could ascend to God. According to the Christian doctrine, all individuals carried the burden of sin, yet through virtuous acts and devotion, it was possible to aid the soul's journey and abbreviate its cleansing time, ultimately leading to salvation.¹⁰ Drafting a final will was a part of the preparations for death, serving as a means to alleviate the soul's burdens through gifts to pious causes. In this way, the testator sought to free their soul from worldly attachments.¹¹

Wills also display the bonds of family and friendship, as evidenced by the inclusion of personal belongings such as clothing, furniture, and utensils within the testamentary bequests.¹² Hinrik's will reflects this pattern through his gifts to family members and other acquaintances. While monetary gifts were predominantly bestowed upon them, Hinrik also allocated personal garments and provided instructions for objects they would commission using the funds received. For example, a customary practice observed in Lübeck wills can be found in Hinrik's bequest to his uncle, Johan Kleyhorst¹³. In a gesture of friendly remembrance ("to ener frundliken dechnisse"), Hinrik gifted his uncle a silver mark and instructed him to fashion a table decoration (Ger. *Klenode*) from it. Additionally, his wife would commission a ring from the golden noble that Hinrik granted to the couple.¹⁴ The fact that Johan Kleyhorst, held the role of one of the four executors of the will, likely

⁹ For studies on wills and social practices in medieval Lübeck see Rafael Ehrhardt, *Familie und Memoria in der Stadt. Eine Fallstudie zu Lübeck im Spätmittelalter*, doctoral dissertation, Göttingen: Georg-August-Universität 2001, 211–383; Meyer 2010, 115–206.

¹⁰ Brian Patrick McGuire, 'Purgatory, the Communion of Saints and Medieval Change', *Viator* 20 1989, 61–84; Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, transl. by Arthur Goldhammer, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1989; Megan McLaughlin, *Consorting with Saints. Prayer for the Dead in Early Medieval France*, Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press 1994; Bruce Gordon & Peter Marshall (eds), *The Place of the Dead. Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2000; Joel T. Rosenthal, *The Purchase of Paradise. The Social Function of Aristocratic Benevolence, 1307–1485*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1972.

¹¹ Stephen Bates, 'Preparations for a Christian Death: The Later Middle Ages', in Philip Booth & Elizabeth Tingle (eds), *A companion to Death, Burial and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe, c. 1300–1700* (Brill Companions to the Christian Tradition 94), Leiden: Brill 2020, 72–105.

¹² Birgit Noodt, *Religion und Familie in der Hansestadt Lübeck anhand der Bürgertestamente des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Lübeck: Schmidt-Römhild 2000; Birgitte Klosterberg, *Zur Ehre Gottes und zum Wohl der Familie: Kölner Testamente von Laien und Klerikern im Spätmittelalter*, Köln: Janus 1995.

¹³ Referred to as his "ôm" (maternal uncle). Karl Schiller & August Lübber, 'Ôm', *Mittelniederdeutsches Wörterbuch. Dritter band M–R*, Bremen 1877: Verlag von J. Kührtmann's Buchhandlung, 227.

¹⁴ The exact value of the currencies mentioned in the article is not possible to assess. Depending on time and location, the amount of silver and value fluctuated. The value of local variations (here the Lübeck and the Riga mark) of the mark commonly used in the Hansa towns also varied. Other currencies mentioned in the will are Rhine guilders and the English noble (a gold coin) that was quite common in Turku. See Rolf Sprandel, *Das Mittelalterliche Zahlungssystem nach Hansisch-Nordischen Quellen des 15.–16.*

prompted Hinrik to give the couple such gifts. According to Gunnar Meyer, it was customary for Lübeck testators to allocate table decorations to their testamentary executors.¹⁵ The purpose behind such gestures was to elicit fond recollections of the recipients when viewing or using these objects, perhaps even praying to aid the soul of the deceased testator by praying for him.

Hence, when Hinrik apportioned his bequests among family members, business associates, friends, charitable organisations, and religious institutions, his intentions extended beyond personal considerations; he did not only care for himself but he also sought to do good to others. Consequently, the will harmoniously intertwines the individual aspiration for salvation after death with the practice of performing charitable deeds while alive. In this regard, wills epitomise both spiritual concepts concerning the salvation of the soul and temporal acts of piety through bequests aimed at meeting the basic needs of the impoverished and infirm.¹⁶

In recent decades, extensive scholarly attention has been devoted to the concept of *memoria*, or remembrance, within late medieval culture. The pioneering works by Otto Gerhard Oexle and Michael Borgolte have highlighted the transformation of *memoria* over time, as well as its profound social and religious significance within medieval societies. This memorial culture fulfilled a crucial socio-religious function, underscoring the intrinsic role of remembrance in people's acts of donation and the funding of masses. The act of remembering and avoiding being forgotten carried great importance to aid the journey of the soul towards salvation. Simultaneously, memorial foundations served as tangible demonstrations of social standing and influence within the contemporary world.¹⁷

The act of remembrance held significant importance within wills. The pious bequests directed towards individuals, religious causes, and charitable endeavours not only aimed to secure the salvation of the soul but also served to perpetuate the memory of the testator.¹⁸ Friends and family were encouraged to uphold the remembrance of their departed loved one, implicitly by performing prayers on their behalf.¹⁹ Crafting one's will served as a means to ensure that the soul would not be forgotten or abandoned in the afterlife, with the assurance of perpetual prayers offered by the religious who had devoted their life to the service of God, such as clerics and members of religious orders.²⁰

¹⁵ Meyer 2010, 132.

¹⁶ Cindy Wood, 'William Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester (1366–1404) and His Preparations for Death', in Mia Korpiola & Anu Lahtinen, *Dying Prepared in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (The Northern World vol. 82), Leiden & Boston: Brill 2017, 44–64, here 44–45.

¹⁷ Otto Gerhard Oexle, 'Memoria und Memorialbild', in Karl Schmid & Joachim Wollasch eds, *Memoria. Der geschichtliche Zeugniswert des liturgischen Gedenkens im Mittelalter* (Societas et Fraternitas), München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag 1984, 384–440; Otto Gerhard Oexle, 'Die Gegenwart der Toten', in Herman Braet and Werner Verbeke eds, *Death in the Middle Ages* (Mediaevalia Lovaniensia Series I/Studia IX), Leuven: Leuven University Press 1983, 19–77; Michael Borgolte, 'Stiftungen des Mittelalters im Spannungsfeld von Herrschaft und Genossenschaft', in Dieter Geuenich & Otto Gerhard Oexle eds, *Memoria in der Gesellschaft des Mittelalters*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck-Ruprecht 1994, 267–85.

¹⁸ Gustavs Strenga, *Remembering the Dead. Collective Memory and Commemoration in Late Medieval Livonia*, Turnhout: Brepols 2023, particularly 151–198.

¹⁹ Kerstin Seidel, *Freunde und Verwandte: Soziale Beziehungen in einer spätmittelalterlichen Stadt*, Frankfurt am Main & New York: Campus Verlag 2009, 56–121.

²⁰ Bijsterveld, Arnoud-Jan A., *Do ur des. Gift Giving, Memoria, and Conflict Management in the Medieval Low Countries*, Hilversum: Verloren 2007; For a historiographical overview over research on remembrance in the Middle Ages, see: Truus van Bueren, Kim Ragetli & Arnoud-Jan Bijsterveld, 'Researching Medieval Memoria: Prospects and Possibilities. With an Introduction to Medieval Memoria Online (MeMO)*', *Jaarboek voor Middeleeuwse Geschiedenis* 14 (2011), 183–234.

Last but not least, the wills were legal instruments, as the process of creating a will was governed by the urban laws. Lübeck possessed its own law code known as the Lübeck Law (Ger. *Lübisches Recht*), which also found application in other towns affiliated with the Hanseatic trading network.²¹ As a legal document, the will adhered to a prescribed formula and was bound by the stipulations outlined in the Lübeck law code.²²

When crafting their wills, testators like Hinrik Hoveman were compelled to consider the interests of multiple parties involved. Legal practices, family ties, social hierarchies, personal wealth and customs established the parameters within which they operated. The purpose of the will extended beyond preparing for death; it also served to safeguard the interests of the family.²³ According to the Lübeck law, burghers were required to create their wills in the presence of either a Burgomaster or two members of the city council, a requirement that Hinrik adhered to. Failure to notify the town administration of the intent to create a will ran the risk of rendering the bequests legally invalid. The law also prescribed the allocation of property to spouses and children, as well as the appointment of a sufficient number of testamentary executors responsible for managing the estate and implementing the bequests.²⁴

Furthermore, the law mandated a compulsory contribution for the improvement of roads, a recurring feature in almost every will from the Hanseatic region during the medieval era.²⁵ In accordance with the Lübeck law, the testator was required to allocate four pennies and eight schillings for road improvement, in addition to giving their soul to God.²⁶ Hinrik allocated one Lübeck mark for road improvement, an amount exceeding the minimum requirement but not as substantial as the contributions made by the wealthiest testators.²⁷

While it is crucial to consider the legal aspects when examining wills, it is important to note that the constraints imposed by the law and societal norms did not completely hinder the testator from personalising his bequests.²⁸ To a certain degree, the selection of beneficiaries reflected personal choices, making wills a valuable source of information that has long captivated researchers. In the subsequent analysis, I will delve into the insights provided by Hinrik's bequests concerning his life and aspirations for the hereafter.

Who was Hinrik Hoveman? Family relations and social network

Hinrik's will aligns with the typical patterns observed in the wills of merchants in the Hanseatic

²¹ Albrecht Cordes, 'The Language of the Law: The Lübeck Law Codes (ca. 1224–1642)', in Stefania Gialdroni et al. eds, *Migrating Words, Migrating Merchants, Migrating Law. Trading Routes and the Development of Commercial Law* (Legal History Library 34), Leiden & Boston: Brill 2019, 137–162.

²² Meyer 2010, 18–25; Nataljia Ganina, Albrecht Cordes & Jan Lokers (eds), *Der Bardewiksche Codex des Lübischen Rechts von 1294*, Band 1–2, Oppenheim am Rhein: 2021.

²³ Helle Vogt, 'Protecting the individual, the kin, and the soul. Donation regulations in Danish and Norwegian medieval legislation', in Ole-Albert Rønning & Helle Møller Sigh eds, *Donations, Inheritance and Property in the Nordic and Western World from Late Antiquity until Today* (Routledge Studies in Cultural History), London & New York: Brill 2017, 130–45.

²⁴ Johann Friedrich Hach, *Das alte Lübische Recht*, Lübeck: Rohden'sche Buchhandlung 1839, 297–300.

²⁵ Cf. Hahn, 2015, 333–36.

²⁶ Hach 1839, 298.

²⁷ Meyer 2010, 71–76.

²⁸ Meyer 2010, 33–48; Wood 2012, 49–50.

region, where beneficiaries typically were endowed across multiple locations. Given the mobile nature of the merchants' lifestyle as they traversed various towns within the region, recent research has revealed the significance of arranging memorial services in all the places where a merchant had familial and business connections. By commissioning prayers and memorial masses in these diverse locations, the testator could establish a network of remembrance.²⁹ Although it is impossible to trace Hinrik's origin and identity with absolute certainty, his will nonetheless contains information that gives some clues to his personal network and state in life.

Hinrik directed his bequests towards charities, monasteries, and churches in different locations, including his hometown Lübeck and the towns Mölln (situated near Lübeck), Turku, Tallinn (Ger. Reval), and Münster. Following the concise formula of the genre, he does not elaborate on the reasons behind his choice of locations and beneficiaries. His connection to Turku is, however, documented in the Lübeck register *Niederstadtbuch* where it is mentioned that he resided in Turku at least towards the end of the 1440s.³⁰ In an entry from 1448, he is referred to as "Hinrik Houeman van Abo" (Hinrik Houeman from Turku).³¹ Consequently, the religious and charitable institutions in Turku that hold a prominent position in the will suggest that Hinrik had significant business connections in the area. This assumption is supported by the fact that he exclusively targeted pious institutions in Turku, without making personal gifts to individuals residing there, indicating that his relationship with the town was primarily professional.

Aside from Turku, another significant location in Hinrik's will is Lübeck. He bestows both charitable gifts and bequests to individuals in the city, which mirror his more personal bond to this location. The question is though whether Hinrik originated from Lübeck or if his family had a different origin? The surname Hoveman appears in Lübeck's records as early as the 14th century. In the mid-15th century, there was a councillor in the city named Johan Hoveman, who may possibly be the same person who Hinrik addresses as his uncle and gives 10 Lübeck marks in the will. Furthermore, the testament includes gifts "in friendly remembrance" to an individual who shares the name Hinrik Hoveman, but whose connection to the testator is not further explained in the document. He was awarded a sum of 20 marks and garments (the testator's grey overcoat with green lining, a little black hood, a doublet and a black cloak). These personal valuable items suggest that the testator and his namesake were closely related.³²

The third notable location in Hinrik's will is the town of Münster in Westphalia. Hinrik made bequests to individuals residing there, as well as to an orphanage and to the town's beguinage Hofring. It appears that Hinrik had a personal connection with the beguines in Münster, as he gave a sister named Katrine there a personal monetary bequest of five Rhine guilders and the other ten

²⁹ Carsten Jahnke, 'Hansische Kaufleute und deren Religiosität ausserhalb ihrer Heimat', *Zapiski Historyczne* LXXXIV No. 1 (2019), 7–41; Gustavs Strenga, 'Distance, presence, absence and memoria. Commemoration of deceased Livonian merchants outside their native cities during the Late Middle Ages', *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 136 (2018), 65–94.

³⁰ In 1444 he is mentioned as procurator (Ger. *Schaffer*) of the *Schonenfahrerschütting* (house of the merchants trading with Scania) in Lübeck. Thus, he must have moved to Turku sometime between 1444 and 1448. AHL, Schonenfahrer Nr. 700, f. 21r–22r.

³¹ DF 2768.

³² "Item geue ik Hinrik Houemanne xx mark lubisch. Noch geue ik eme mynen grawen rok myt gronen geuodert vnde j klene swarte koghelen vnde j wamboys vnde j swarten hoyken, to ener frundliken dechnisse."

sisters (unnamed) at the beguinage one guilder each. Possibly, Hinrik had family ties to Münster, as the name Hoveman also appears in sources from this region.³³ It was common practice that people moved between towns, so it is possible that either Hinrik himself or his parents originated from the Münster region and had settled in Lübeck. This suggests a potential familial link and provides another perspective on Hinrik's connection to this location.³⁴

A fourth location that is mentioned in the will is Tallinn where Hinrik endowed the Birgittine monastery Mariendal (Est. *Pirita*), situated nearby. Roughly ten years after he made his will, in 1465, he is mentioned among the merchants who lost goods in a ship that sunk in the Gulf of Finland on its way from Lübeck to Tallinn. From this document it becomes evident that Hinrik traded in cloth of various qualities as such items were listed among his lost goods. This is probably also the reason why Hinrik's will list many personal gifts of fine clothing. Assumably, the cloth trade is the reason for his connections to both Turku and Tallinn and his inclusion of recipients of testamentary bequests on both locations.³⁵

It seems yet fairly reasonable to conclude that Hinrik had family connections to both Lübeck and Münster. This explains why he made endowments to individuals and institutions in these specific locations. However, it is notable that he did not provide personal gifts to individuals residing in Turku or Tallinn, indicating that his relationship with the towns was primarily professional. Nevertheless, he made significant contributions to the Cathedral and hospitals in Turku, and to the Birgittines in Nådendal and Mariendal.

Possible reasons why Hinrik made his will

Another factor to take into consideration is why Hinrik saw it necessary to make a will? When examining the document, neither old age nor infirmity seem having been the underlying motives behind it. Previous research has observed diverse motivations behind the creation of wills. While the primary motivation was the desire to secure the salvation of one's soul and distribute personal belongings among friends and family, there were also other factors at play. For example, the prevalence of epidemics, the impending departure on long journeys, participation in military campaigns, or making a pilgrimage, etc.³⁶ As a result, testators were not necessarily infirm or facing imminent death when drafting their last wills.

The information in Hinrik's will suggest that he was reasonably young and was not infirm. His marital status is not explicitly stated in the will, but since no wife or children are included among the beneficiaries, this suggests that he was unmarried. The assumption that he was of a young age can further be deduced from the fact that both his parents were alive and he bequeathed them among other relatives.

A specific reason behind the drafting of the will is not explicitly stated, other than the custom-

³³ Landesarchiv Nordrhein Westfalen <<https://www.archive.nrw.de/archivsuche>> 5.6.2023.

³⁴ Maija Ojala-Fulwood, 'Mobility of goldsmiths in the Baltic Sea Region 1470–1620', Maija Ojala-Fulwood (ed.) *Migration and Multiethnic Communities. Mobile People from the Late Middle Ages to the Present*, Oldenbourg: De Gruyter 2018, 29–52.

³⁵ *Hansisches Urkundenbuch*, Bd IX: 1463–1470 (Verein für hansische Geschichte), Leipzig: Verlag von Duncker & Humbolt 1903, nr 558 & 440.

³⁶ Jakub Wyszynski, *History of Wills, Testators and Their Families in Late Medieval Krakow. Tools of Power (Later Medieval Europe 23)*, Leiden: Brill 2021, 112–14, 238–325.

ary acknowledgment of preparing for the afterlife because death is imminent. Taking this factor into consideration, it appears likely that Hinrik was not in a state of infirmity or on his deathbed, as such circumstances would typically be mentioned in the *arenga* of the will.³⁷ Consequently, the will could serve as a precautionary measure in case of unexpected events.

Moreover, there is no indication that Hinrik died shortly after making his will, as records from Lübeck mention a burgher named Hinrik Hoveman in the subsequent decades.³⁸ The identification of these later mentions as the Hinrik who issued the will or a namesake is though difficult. Nevertheless, the last mentions of a burgher named Hinrik Hoveman in Lübeck dates back to the end of the 15th century. In 1475, a Hinrik Hoveman established a *consolatio* (a consolatory service at funerals) at the church of St Peter³⁹ in the city and in 1498, the testamentary executors of Hinrik Hoveman's will received a quittance for pawning part of the estate.⁴⁰ If these later mentions refer to the same person, who made his will in 1454, the records suggest that he likely made updates to it later on.

Gunnar Meyer, who has studied the Lübeck wills of the first half of the 15th century, demonstrates that many of the merchants who were engaged in the far distance trade with the Hanseatic *Kontor* in the Norwegian town Bergen, known as the *Bergenfahrer*, did not cite illness as a reason for creating their last wills, and most of them were young and unmarried. Just like the *Bergenfahrer*, Hinrik was actively involved in long-distance trade and travelled throughout the Baltic Sea region. Such a lifestyle, with frequent voyages at sea, can be considered high-risk, necessitating the creation of a will.⁴¹

Drawing up a will was thus not only a means of preparing for death and the afterlife but, when seen from a different perspective, it can also be seen as a way to prepare for life. Jyrki Nissi's research underscores that death and dying in the late medieval period was a communal process that involved both the individual and their immediate family. While the family had the responsibility of caring for the deceased, it was the individual's responsibility to make the necessary preparations while still alive.⁴² The will served not only as a part of the process of preparing for death but also to ensure that the testator could continue living his life, knowing that he had taken the necessary steps in the event of an untimely death.

Hinrik's bequests to the Holy Spirit hospital in Turku and its socioreligious context

The late medieval testators held prayers of remembrance performed by the poor in high regard. The destitute played a central role in the Christian faith and were considered to have a closer connection to Christ. Consequently, assisting the impoverished aligned with the Christian ideal of showing

³⁷ Meyer 2010, 19, 84–86.

³⁸ See for example, in 1470, Hinrik Hoveman was named procurator of a property in Lübeck when a widow in Turku issued a document regarding an inheritance. DF 3428.

³⁹ AHL, St. Petri (Sacra2), 11.11.1475.

⁴⁰ AHL, Kämmerei, 23.8.1498.

⁴¹ Meyer 2010, 172–75.

⁴² Jyrki Nissi, *The Communalism of Death and Dying in 15th Century Europe. Evidence of Miracle Narratives and ars moriendi Guidebooks* (Tampereen Yliopiston väitöskirjat 439), doctoral dissertation, Tampere 2021, 40–47.

neighbourly love by helping those in need, which is reflected in the charitable bequests of wills.⁴³ Hinrik also expressed his gratitude for the prayers of the poor and infirm in his will.⁴⁴ He allocated his charitable bequests among the towns of Lübeck, Turku, and Münster. In Lübeck and Turku, he provided assistance to poor people in general and donated to the infirmaries of the Holy Spirit and St George in both towns.

As noted by Cindy Wood, in the example of the English Bishop William Wykeham's will, many of the bequests found in wills can be linked to the acts of spiritual⁴⁵ and temporal⁴⁶ mercy. Many of these acts are reflected in the medieval wills in the bequests for pious purposes.⁴⁷ The charitable bequests to the poor also served as a foundation for their support within the community. Accordingly, the religious motivations behind the testators' charitable bequests were part of a social system where alms formed the basis for caring for the most vulnerable members of society.

The types of charitable bequests varied greatly, and different testators selected their preferred beneficiaries among a range of charitable institutions. This demonstrates that these bequests held significant meaning for them, aligning with social norms and common practices of the time.⁴⁸ Hinrik's will is no exception as he lists several bequests that fall into the category of temporal mercy. But instead of directly providing specific items such as food or baths to the poor, he chose to give money that could be used for purchasing meals or other necessities. Additionally, he instructed his testamentary executors to purchase wool cloth to be fashioned into garments and distributed to those in need. He explicitly stated that these gifts were intended for the salvation of his soul.⁴⁹ Therefore, the monetary gifts to the poor served a vital purpose in caring for his spiritual well-being.

In comparison to some other urban wills, Hinrik's will is not excessively extravagant, and it lacks the most intricate instructions and requests regarding remembrance services that can be found in some merchant wills. This suggests that while he was wealthy, he may not have been extraordinarily rich. His pious bequests were relatively moderate, as he did not specify eternal memorial masses, vigils on the day of death, or elaborate details for the burial ceremony. The absence of mass foundations in his will could be attributed to his age, indicating that he made the will as a precautionary measure rather than in anticipation of immediate death. Alternatively, it may indicate that his wealth was not sufficient to establish a mass foundation, or perhaps a combination of both factors. Previous studies have shown that certain forms of spiritual services, such as funding

⁴³ Matt 25:35–36, 40.

⁴⁴ Corine Schleif, 'Mapping the Social Topography of Memorials. Barbara and Kunz Horn Seek the Prayers of the Poor and the Respect of the Rich', in Rolf de Weijert et al. *Living Memoria. Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Memorial Culture in Honour of Truus van Bueren* (Middelzeeuwse studies en Bronnen 137), Hilversum: Verloren 2011, 97–110.

⁴⁵ Instructing the ignorant, counselling the doubtful, admonishing sinners, bearing patience, forgiving offenders, comforting the afflicted and praying for the dead.

⁴⁶ Feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, offering shelter to strangers, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, visiting the imprisoned, and burying the deceased.

⁴⁷ Wood 2017, 47–49; See also Adam J. Davis, 'The Social and Religious Meanings of Charity in Medieval Europe', *History Compass* 12/12 (2014), 935–50, here 936.

⁴⁸ Ralf Lusiardi, *Stiftung und städtische Gesellschaft: religiöse und soziale Aspekte des Stiftungsverhaltens im spätmittelalterlichen Stralsund* (Stiftungsgeschichten Bd. 2), Berlin: Akademie Verlag 2000.

Johannes Schildhauer, *Hansestädtischer Alltag: Untersuchungen auf der Grundlage der Stralsunder Bürgertestamente vom Anfang des 14. bis zum Ausgang des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Abhandlungen zur Handels- und Sozialgeschichte 28), Weimar: Vlg Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger 1992.

⁴⁹ 'to zalicheyt mynen zelen', Hinrik Hoveman 04.07.1454, AHL.

memorial masses, were a highly expensive undertaking, affordable only to the wealthiest individuals.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Hinrik made moderately valuable bequests to religious purposes, particularly towards charitable causes.

Hinrik did not allocate any bequests to churches for prayers and masses to preserve his memory or the *memoria* of his family. Instead, he focused on charitable organizations and provided specific instructions to ensure that each impoverished and infirm individual received their gift “directly in hand” so that they faithfully would pray to God on his behalf (“*iuwelkeme syn deel in de hande to donde vp dat se vnsen leuen heren god truwelken vor myne sele bidden*”). This approach allowed him to maximize the number of people who would pray for him. As demonstrated by Carsten Selch Jensen, such a practice was common in wills, where testators like Hinrik either requested their family members or designated testamentary executors to distribute coins, food, and clothing directly to those in need.⁵¹ Hinrik entrusted his chosen testamentary executors to purchase cloth and distribute any surplus wealth to charities “where they deemed the need to be greatest”, in addition to the specific charities he had already chosen.

The direct distribution of gifts to the poor established a connection between the two parties, even though the testator may not have known the identities of the recipients.⁵² This direct reception of the gift can further be regarded as a way to encourage and remind the poor to sincerely offer prayers on behalf of the deceased testator rather than receiving their bequest as a gift administered by the hospital manager.⁵³ This practice fostered a personal connection, bridging the gap between the infirm at the Holy Spirit hospital in Turku and Hinrik, residing far away in Lübeck across the Baltic Sea. In exchange for his gift, Hinrik requested their prayers for the salvation of his soul. This request sets the Holy Spirit hospital in Turku apart from the other hospitals mentioned in the will, as he did not explicitly make the plea of prayers to the others, although it can be assumed that he expected such prayers from them as well.

Hinrik’s generous bequests to the hospitals of St George and the Holy Spirit in Turku held a prominent position in his will, following the obligatory provision for road improvements. These hospitals were frequently mentioned by local residents in their wills, but Hinrik’s contributions highlighted the significant support provided by foreign merchants associated with the town. Hinrik appeared to hold a particular affinity for the Holy Spirit hospital, as evidenced by his more substantial bequest to this institution compared to that he allocated St George’s hospital. He assigned five marks to assist the impoverished infirm at the former, ensuring that each individual received their share directly.

Charitable donations held a prevalent position in the wills of Lübeck’s citizens, as observed by Raphael Ehrhardt. Lübeck burghers exhibited a tendency to allocate a greater portion of their wills to charitable bequests compared to their counterparts in other Hansa towns. Hinrik’s will thus aligns with this practice, featuring numerous bequests to hospitals, leproseries in various locations,

⁵⁰ Jensen 2004, 42–3; Gustavs Strenga, “‘Bidden vor myner sele’ The Dominicans as intercessors between townspeople and God in late medieval Tallinn”, *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 13 (2007), 111–32.

⁵¹ Jensen 2004, 44–50.

⁵² Jensen 2004, 44–50.

⁵³ Ehrhardt 2001, 386–396.

and an orphanage. This testamentary pattern reflects the prevailing norms in Lübeck.⁵⁴

The responsibility of distributing the gifts was entrusted to Hinrik's chosen testamentary executors, who would oversee the management of his estate after his passing. These four men were Hans Kleyhorst, Hinrik van Detten, Albert Bisschop, and Hans Krutzeman. In addition to the spiritual reward that they would receive from God for their service ("*vnde nemen dat lon van gode*"), Hinrik also provided them with personal items or money as compensation, as discussed above. The testamentary executors played a crucial role in fulfilling Hinrik's wishes after his death. Their task was thus not viewed as a mundane duty of simply distributing the deceased person's possessions, but rather as a way to honour his final request and ensure that the spiritual aspects outlined in the will were carried out accordingly.⁵⁵

The passing of an individual was thus a collective event, involving the participation of family and friends who had important responsibilities. They took on the duty of caring for the deceased, expressing their grief, offering prayers. Jyrki Nissi has convincingly termed this collective activity as a communal process of death.⁵⁶ The testamentary executors actively participated in the communal process of death by overseeing the administration of the deceased person's estate, a process that could extend for years following their passing.⁵⁷ In the event that any of the chosen executors were to die during this period, Hinrik, as was customary, instructed the remaining executors to select another trustworthy individual to fulfil the role, as stated in the concluding part of his will. The executors' role was pivotal in ensuring the fulfilment of the spiritual obligations outlined by the testator's wishes.

The Testamentary executors formed a vital part of Hinrik's business network and at least Hans Krutzemann had also business connections to Turku. Naturally, Hinrik would choose persons as executors who were acquainted with locations where he distributed gifts. Krutzemann himself included recipients among the charitable institutions in Turku in his will of 1449. Accordingly, the hospital of Holy Spirit and the hospital of St George, although almost no medieval sources of them survive, can be studied through the hanseatic wills as partaking in the pious provision and practices of the time.⁵⁸

Hinrik as a member of St Erasmus confraternity in Turku

Hinrik's will features two notable donations of altarpieces: one to the Birgittines in Nådendal and another to the cathedral in Turku. These gifts have acquired attention among Finnish art historians due to their inclusion in Hausen's excerpt of FMU #2960. The altarpiece destined for the Cathedral in Turku is distinct from the one given to the Birgittines, as it was not yet completed at the time of Hinrik's will. Instead, he instructed his testamentary executors to have it crafted after his death, allocating a sum of ten Lübeck marks for this purpose. While the executors were given

⁵⁴ Ehrhardt 2001, 397–96. See also Samuel Cohn's observations concerning the growing importance on civic religion and charity in Italian wills during the renaissance. Samuel K. Cohn, *The Cult of Remembrance and the Black Death. Six Renaissance Cities in Central Italy*, Baltimore & London: John Hopkins University Press 1992, 31–71.

⁵⁵ Cf. Möller 2010, 133.

⁵⁶ Nissi 2021, 71–84.

⁵⁷ Möller 2010, 120–29.

⁵⁸ Gunnar Meyer, *Lübecker Testamente 1400–1449*, Teil II. Kiel 2009, 1449/No 62.

the freedom to choose the workshop responsible for its creation, the altarpiece had to depict the three saints: Anthony, Fabian, and Sebastian. Hinrik, however, did not state the specific reason for choosing these particular saints for the altarpiece (“*Item so geue ik in den dom to Abo j tafelen van x mark dar schal ynne stan sunte Fabianus vnde Sebestianus vnde sunte Anthonius, de scholen myne testamentarij laten maken.*”).

The Cathedral Museum in Turku currently houses a sculpture of St Anthony the Hermit (c. 468–c. 520 in its collection and the art historian C. A. Nordman speculated whether it might be a surviving part of the altarpiece donated by Hinrik. However, it is also plausible that this sculpture stood independently and had its own shrine, considering its height of 142 cm. Nordman stylistically associates the sculpture with Lübeck, although its exact origin remains unknown.⁵⁹

Furthermore, one can speculate whether Hinrik intended the altarpiece for the same chapel where the members of the St Erasmus confraternity worshipped. Among the most significant pious bequests in the will is the donation of one English noble to the St Erasmus confraternity in Turku:

And so I give to Saint Erasmus confraternity in Turku, wherein I am a brother, one English noble as good as four Lübeck marks. So that they in the cathedral will inscribe me in their memory book and pray for my soul.⁶⁰

This bequest is particularly notable as it represents one of a few mentions of an individual claiming membership in the St Erasmus confraternity in Turku. The mentions of its members only survive in wills by hanseatic merchants and another person who also claimed being a member was the aforementioned Hans Krutzemann, one of Hinrik’s testamentary executors, who gave 20 Lübeck marks to the confraternity in 1449.⁶¹ The wills of Lübeck merchants in the period 1440–1449 have been edited by Gunnar Meyer. Only Hans Krutzemann endowed the St Erasmus confraternity in this period.⁶² Nonetheless, an additional survey of Lübeck wills from the second half of the 15th century could reveal further members of this confraternity. Likewise, the network of Hinrik and his testamentary executors should be further investigated in a future study.

Apart from the Lübeck wills, the existence of the St Erasmus confraternity has been documented in a single reference found in a document, which is a court sentence from 1466 and it exists through a 17th century copy of the original. It describes how the knight and judge Erik Axelsson (Tott) had assembled the provincial court (Swe. *landsrätten*) “in Saint Erasmus’ guild house” in Turku.⁶³ This mention of the guild house led archaeologist Juhani Rinne in 1948 to make speculative assumptions regarding its establishment and the confraternity’s members. He also posited the existence of an altar dedicated to the saint in the cathedral.⁶⁴ Evidently, the St Erasmus confraternity has not been further investigated as the knowledge of mentions of it in Lübeck merchant wills has been lacking among Finnish researchers.

⁵⁹ Nordman 1964, 373–88.

⁶⁰ [...] *Item so geue ik in sunte Erasmus broderschop to abo dar ik broder ynne byn j engelsche nobelen zo gud also iij mark lubisch in deme dome dat se my nemen in ere denke boek vnde god vor myne zele büden[...]* AHL 04.07.1454.

⁶¹ Meyer 2009, Teil II, 1449/No 62.

⁶² Meyer 2009, Teil I– II.

⁶³ “ j sancti Erasmi gillestuffwe”, DF 3301.

⁶⁴ Juhani Rinne, *Turun tuomiokirkko keskiaikana II. Altarit ja kirkolliset toimitukset*, Turku: 1948,

It is uncertain whether the St Erasmus confraternity had its own dedicated altar in the cathedral or if it shared its place of worship with other religious confraternities. Rinne speculated that the confraternity might have been established during the tenure of Bishop Magnus Tavast (1412–1450) due to the bishop’s involvement in creating new foundations within the cathedral.⁶⁵ However, there are no sources to substantiate this assumption. Hinrik’s and Hans Krutzemann’s wills, on the other hand, provide evidence of the confraternity’s existence and its membership among the German merchants active in the town. By Hinrik expressing his desire to be recorded in the confraternity’s memory book alongside deceased members, we now know that the confraternity maintained membership records and had a designated place of worship in the cathedral. Nevertheless, there is no specific mention of an altar dedicated to St Erasmus, although it is plausible that the confraternity possessed its own altar. The altarpiece that Hinrik instructed his testamentary executors to create might have been intended for placement in the chapel where the members of the St Erasmus confraternity gathered.

Guilds and confraternities served as organisations that safeguarded business interests of their members while also tending to the care of their souls. They provided communal spaces, such as guild houses and chapels within churches, where members could come together for both social and religious purposes. One crucial aspect of these guilds was their collective responsibility for the spiritual well-being of their members in the name of God and their chosen patron saint. It was expected that guild members actively participated in funerals, vigils, and memorial services held in the guild’s designated place of worship. Typically, guilds or confraternities maintained an altar or chapel within a local church, which served as a focal point for their religious activities and was maintained by the members themselves.⁶⁶

In medieval Turku, the sources use the terms “confraternity” (Swe. *brödraskap*) and “guild” (Swe. *gille*) interchangeably. Therefore, the exact organizational structure of these associations remains unclear, but they undoubtedly served as significant venues for business, social gatherings, and religious activities.⁶⁷

Some guilds and confraternities were intended for certain groups of merchants or craftsmen, whereas others had an inclusive membership policy, welcoming individuals from diverse social backgrounds and professions. As a result, these organisations became platforms for people from different social backgrounds. Gustavs Strenga’s research on the Porters’ and Beer Carters’ guilds in Riga demonstrates how these guilds, through generous donations of their members, established places of worship and utilised their religious practices to foster a shared identity and the maintenance of internal hierarchies.⁶⁸ The creation of a sense of belonging and facilitating social connec-

⁶⁵ Rinne 1948, 86–87.

⁶⁶ Maija Ojala-Fulwood, *Perhe ja Verstas. Itämeren kaupunkien käsityöläiselämää keskiajalla ja uuden ajan alussa*, Helsinki: Gaudeamus 2021, 74–80; Tiina Kala, ‘The Religious Practices of Minor Corporations in Late Medieval Tallinn: Institutional and Legal Frameworks’, in Lars Bisgaard, Lars Boje Mortensen & Tom Pettitt eds, *Guilds, Towns, and Cultural Transmission in the North, 1300–1500*, Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark 2013, 251–76.

⁶⁷ REA 160, 370, 477, 542, 543, 552, 714; DF 3042, 3301.

⁶⁸ Gustavs Strenga, ‘Donations, discipline and commemoration. Creating group identity in the transport workers guilds of mid fifteenth-century Riga’, *Journal of Medieval History* 48 nr 1 (2020), 103–28; Anu Mänd, ‘Membership and Social Carrier in Tallinn Merchants’ Guilds’, in Lars Bisgaard, Lars Boje Mortensen & Tom Pettitt eds, *Guilds, Towns, and Cultural Transmission in the North, 1300–1500*, Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark 2013, 229–50.

tions through membership in guilds and confraternities held particular significance for foreign merchants like Hinrik, who had established themselves far away from their hometowns.

The references to the St Erasmus confraternity in Turku do not provide conclusive evidence regarding its purpose. Possibly, it was intended for the German merchants active in there. Medieval Turku was home to six known guilds or religious confraternities dedicated to saints: Nicholas, Gertrude of Nivelles, Anne, Erasmus, Three Kings, and Ursula. According to Mika Kallioinen, the confraternities of St Nicholas and Gertrude were likely founded by German merchants, as these saints were highly venerated in German towns.⁶⁹ The mention of Hinrik's affiliation with the St Erasmus confraternity implies several organisations for German merchants active in the town. Turku housed a population ranging from 1,500 to 2,000 in the late medieval period and, as demonstrated by Carsten Jahnke, Turku was a town that had many connections to Tallinn (Reval), Gdańsk (Danzig) and Lübeck. Merchants from these towns visited and resided in Turku and the domestic merchants were welcome in trading towns across the region.⁷⁰ Thus, the religious confraternities in Turku could serve as meeting places where foreign merchants like Hinrik could forge new business connections with local individuals.

The confraternities dedicated to St Erasmus of Formia (died 303) are not particularly well-known. While there was a confraternity devoted to him in Lübeck, situated at the church of St Catherine, its earliest documented mention is only from 1472.⁷¹ This lack of earlier references makes it difficult to determine any potential connection between the St Erasmus confraternities in Turku and Lübeck, or whether the former was established by Lübeck merchants who were active in Turku. Lübeck was the largest city in the Baltic Sea region with 20,000–25,000 inhabitants and 70 confraternities.⁷² Thus, it seems likely that its merchants had an influence on the establishment of guilds in other towns across the region as a means to establish connections and expand their professional networks abroad.

Hinrik evidently valued his membership in the St Erasmus confraternity, as he wished that his soul would be remembered by its members. This is the only explicit mention in his will of remembrance services to be performed in a religious institution. The fact that he also designated the commissioning of an altarpiece for the cathedral further emphasises its significance as a place of worship for Hinrik at the point in life when he made the will. By making generous donations, merchants sought not only to secure the well-being of their souls in the afterlife but also to cultivate a positive reputation while alive. Furthermore, these charitable acts facilitated the establishment

⁶⁹ Liisa Seppänen, 'Turun kaupunkikuva ja reformaation jäljet', in Marika Räsänen & Meri Heinonen (eds.), *Pohjoisen Reformaatio* (Turun Historiallinen Arkisto 68), Turku: Turun Historiallinen Yhdistys 2017, 181, 188–9.

⁷⁰ Carsten Jahnke, 'Das Verhältnis der skandinavischen Städte zur Hanse', in Jochen Burgdorf, Christian Hoffarth & Sebastian Kubon eds, *Von Hamburg nach Java. Studien zur mittelalterlichen, neuen und digitalen Geschichte. Festschrift zu Ehren von Jürgen Sarnowsky* (Nova Mediaevalia Quellen und Studien zum europäischen Mittelalter, Vol. 18), Göttingen: V&R unipress 2020, 115–133.

⁷¹ Monika Zmyslony, *Die Geistlichen Bruderschaften in Lübeck bis zur Reformation*, doctoral dissertation, Kiel: 1974, 30.

⁷² Carsten Jahnke 2019, 'Lübeck's confraternities', in Carsten Jahnke ed., *A Companion to Medieval Lübeck* (Brill's Companions to European History 18), Leiden & Boston: Brill 372–97; Carsten Jahnke 2013, 'The Corpus Christi Guild in Lübeck', in Lars Bisgaard, Lars Boje Mortensen & Tom Pettitt eds, *Guilds, Towns, and Cultural Transmission in the North, 1300–1500*, Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark 2013, 203–4.

of valuable contacts that could prove beneficial to them in various ways. When merchants like Hinrik relocated to new cities, they actively engaged with the local religious practices by offering contributions to the local churches. These donations served to support liturgical services, finance the construction and restoration of sacred edifices, contribute to poor relief, and actively participate in local confraternities.⁷³ In doing so, these merchants embraced the pious customs and traditions of their adopted hometowns, solidifying their integration within the local communities.⁷⁴

Hinrik's bequests to the Birgittines in Nådendal, Mariendal and Marienwohlde

Hinrik's will reflects his religious devotion through the manner in which he allocated his gifts, the expectations he had for the beneficiaries, and the specific recipients he chose to bestow his generosity upon. Hinrik directed substantial endowments towards female religious communities in three Birgittine monasteries and two Beguine houses. Interestingly, although Hinrik did not specify any particular form of remembrance from the Birgittines, he still bestowed them with significant and valuable gifts. As discussed above, the Birgittine communities that he endowed were Marienwohlde in Mölln, Nådendal near Turku and Mariendal near Tallinn. Notably, the Birgittines, also known as the Order of the Most Holy Saviour (Lat. *Ordo Sanctissimi Salvatoris*), were a relatively new religious order founded in 1370, less than a century prior to Hinrik's testament.⁷⁵

The founder of the Birgittine order, St Birgitta was a renowned Swedish saint and mystic, widely recognised across Northern Europe. The doctrine of Purgatorial torment was prevalent Birgitta's revelations and serve as an excellent illustration of the cultural environment in which Hinrik and other testators operated when formulating their wills. Her revelations contain many descriptions of Purgatory and how it is the duty of the living to help the souls of the deceased.⁷⁶ Thus, the inclusion of her monasteries in wills can also be viewed against this context.

The presence and influence of St Birgitta and the Birgittine order were widely recognised among the denizens of Lübeck. The city emerged as a central hub for the printing and dissemination of Birgittine texts towards the latter part of the 15th century. Notably, a German edition of Birgitta's works was published, specifically targeting readers from the patrician families of Lübeck.⁷⁷ Marienwohlde, which was almost a local monastery to the inhabitants of the city, located a mere 30 kilometres to the south, was established in the year 1413. As demonstrated by Heinrich Dormeier, Lübeck's burghers frequently included the Birgittines of Marienwohlde in their wills, and some, like Hinrik, also extended their contributions to other Birgittine monasteries in Northern

⁷³ Carsten Jahnke, 'Zu Ehren Gottes und zum Wohle der Kasse. Religiöse und Soziale Netzwerke in den spätmittelalterlichen Hansestädten und deren Funktionen', *Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters* Beihefte 23 (2012), 165–82.

⁷⁴ Antjekatrin Graßman, 'Kirchliches Leben in den hansischen Niederlassungen des Auslandes', in idem ed. *Der Kaufmann und der Liebe Gott* (Hansische Studien XVIII), Trier: Porta Alba 2009, 113–146.

⁷⁵ Tore Nyberg, *Birgittinische Klostergründungen des Mittelalters* (Bibliotheca Historica Lundensis XV), Lund: Gleerups 1965.

⁷⁶ See for example, St Birgitta of Sweden, *Revelationes Celestes*, book 7, ed by Hans Aili, English translation: < [http://www.saintsbooks.net/books/St.%20Bridget%20\(Birgitta\)%20of%20Sweden%20-%20Prophecies%20and%20Revelations.html](http://www.saintsbooks.net/books/St.%20Bridget%20(Birgitta)%20of%20Sweden%20-%20Prophecies%20and%20Revelations.html)> See also Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars. Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press 1992, 2nd ed. 2005, 301–76.

⁷⁷ Andersen 2014, 205–30.

Europe.⁷⁸ Hence, Hinrik's particular interest in supporting St Birgitta's monasteries aligns well with the prevailing religious interests of the Lübeck burghers. However, it is noteworthy that Hinrik chose to endow the Birgittines near Turku rather than the local convent located south of Lübeck.

Hinrik allocated a sum of 5 marks to the Birgittines in Marienwohlde, which appears to be a rather generic gift and the lowest amount among his contributions to the Birgittine foundations. This sum was intended to support the maintenance of the monastery buildings. One might have expected him to grant the most substantial bequest to the monastery closest to his hometown, but instead, he bestowed larger sums upon the other two monasteries. The second largest bequest, amounting to 20 Riga marks, was given to the Birgittines outside Tallinn. Although this sum was relatively substantial, it was still not a personalised bequest. As discussed above, Hinrik was involved in the trade to the town, which also is the probable reason why he included the Birgittines there in the will.⁷⁹ Although Hinrik did not explicitly request any specific remembrance services from the Birgittines in Northern Estonia, it can be assumed that such services were implied and expected.

Among Hinrik's most distinguished gifts, it was the Birgittines in Nådendal who received the most personalised bequests. As already mentioned, he gave the monastery an altarpiece, which was crafted by a master named Johan vamme Hagen, but he also gave it a missal produced by a Hermannus Coesveldia. It is noteworthy that Hinrik's provision of altarpieces and a book are rare in the Finnish context, as such gifts are seldom mentioned in available sources.⁸⁰

Unfortunately, neither of the two altarpieces that Hinrik endowed in the will have survived, leaving uncertainty as to whether they were ever delivered to their intended recipients. Typically, gifts specified in wills would be given to beneficiaries after the testator's death. As mentioned earlier, it is highly likely that Hinrik lived on for several decades after creating this will, which raises the possibility that these gifts may have become outdated. Furthermore, it is uncertain if Hinrik later created a second, updated will. Based on the formulation of the gifts, it appears that the altarpiece promised to Nådendal was already completed.⁸¹ Therefore, it seems more plausible that the altarpiece allocated to the Birgittines in Nådendal was indeed delivered, while the realisation of the gift to the cathedral remains uncertain.

Some testators would explicitly state in their wills that their gifts had already been handed over to the receiving institution. For example, the Stralsund burgher Heinrich Blome, in his 1472 will, bequeathed a psalter to the Birgittines at Marienkronen and explicitly mentioned that the book had already been delivered to the monastery.⁸² Although this is not explicitly stated, it is possible that Hinrik also delivered the gifts to Nådendal around the time of creating the will, as both items were

⁷⁸ Heinrich Dormeier, 'Neue Ordensniederlassungen im Hanseraum: Lübecker Stiftungen zugunsten des Birgittenklosters Marienwohlde bei Mölln (1413–1534)', in Oliver Auge & Katja Hillebrand, *Klöster, Stifte und Konvente nördlich der Elbe. Zum gegenwärtigen Stand der Klosterforschung in Schleswig-Holstein, Nordschleswig, sowie den Hansestädten Lübeck und Hamburg* (Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte Schleswig-Holstein 120), Kiel: Wachholtz 2013, 261–365.

⁷⁹ HUB IX nr 558; For the religious bequests by merchants far from home see: Jahnke 2019, 7–41.

⁸⁰ FMU IV 2960; Juhani Rinne, *Turun Tuomiokirkko keskiaikana II: Altarit ja kirkolliset toimitukset*, Turku: Turun Tuomiokirkon Isännistö Julkaisema 1948; Carl Axel Nordman, 'Medeltida skulptur i Finland', *Suomen Muinaismuistoyhdistyksen Aikakauskirja / Finska Fornminnesföreningens Tidskrift* 62 Helsinki: 1964, 373–88; Tuhkanen 2005, 43.

⁸¹ Hans van Hagen: LUB VI nr 87, 185, 235; Hans von dem Hagen LUB VIII nr 602, 568; Hans vamme Hagen LUB X nr 7, 373.

⁸² Archiv der Hansestadt Stralsund, Testamente 1, nr. 689, Heinrich Blome 28.03.1472.

already completed.

Hinrik described that the motive of the altarpiece given to Nådendal was the Holy Trinity, which would have been well-aligned with Birgittine iconography. This suggests that Hinrik may have specifically commissioned the altarpiece for the Birgittine community. Prayers and psalms dedicated to the Trinity held significant importance in Birgittine liturgy, and the Trinity was a central theme in Birgittine iconography in Vadstena, as explored by art historian Eva Lindqvist-Sandgren.⁸³

Vadstena was the leading monastery of the Order and Nådendal was a daughter monastery to it, founded in 1438. Since Hinrik must have been active in Turku in the 1440s, when Nådendal was still new, it is plausible that he recognized the monastery's need for furnishings and therefore commissioned the altarpiece. Maybe he was familiar with the liturgical significance of the Trinity within the Birgittine context or had discussed the motive with the monastery on beforehand and deemed it a fitting theme for their church. St Birgitta herself stipulated that the Birgittine church should be modestly adorned, featuring only depictions of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and select saints. Thus, the iconographic options acceptable to the Birgittines were limited, making it highly likely that Hinrik deliberately chose a motif that aligned perfectly with their devotional practices.⁸⁴

Regarding Hinrik's bequest of the missal to Nådendal, this gift was also highly suitable for the monastery. It is unlikely that Hinrik would have used the missal personally as it was intended for liturgical use. Therefore, it is more plausible that he commissioned it specifically to donate to Nådendal, which likely had a need for liturgical books. Book donations can be considered as gifts that established a close bond between the donor and the recipient. Such donations of devotional literature to religious institutions are common in wills and can be seen as manifestations of a shared devotional culture, as the donors shared a sacred item with a religious community.⁸⁵ However, in Hinrik's case, the book that he donated was not an item that he had personally used, but rather a custom-made item intended for the beneficiary.

It is therefore possible that both the altarpiece and the missal were indeed given, regardless of whether the will came into effect. However, it is interesting to note that while Hinrik showed his devotional interest in the Birgittines in Nådendal through these gifts, he did not explicitly request any specific remembrance services from this monastery. One would expect that someone who gave such valuable and customised items would also make personalised prayer requests. It is possible that the prayers of remembrance were implied, but the absence of an explicit reference to memorial services is somewhat peculiar, as testators usually provided specific instructions for remembrance. However, by donating items that the new monastery needed, Hinrik took part in its foundation process. The monastery's church was inaugurated in 1462 and was under construction at the time

⁸³ Eva Lindqvist Sandgren, *Birgittinerna och deras bilder. En studie av bild, rum och betraktare i Vadstena klosterkyrka omkring år 1500* (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis Arcus Sacri Nr 5), Uppsala: AAU 2021, 85, 230.

⁸⁴ St Birgitta, *Regola Salvatoris* §18; St Birgitta, *Reuelaciones Extravagantes*, § 28, 29, 30, 31; Nyberg 2016, 179–95; Fritz 2019, 132–58.

⁸⁵ Johanneke Uphoff, "'Dit boec heft gegeven'" Book Donation as an Indicator of a Shared Culture of Devotion in the Late Medieval Low Countries', in Suzan Folkerts ed., *Religious Connectivity in Urban Communities (1400–1550). Reading, Worshipping, and Connecting through the Continuum of Sacred and Secular* (New Communities of Interpretation. Contexts, Strategies, and Processes of Religious Transformation in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe 1), Turnhout: Brepols 2021, 99–124.

Hinrik made his will.⁸⁶ Therefore, the gifts to Nådendal probably held even greater significance than they may initially appear. By endowing this Birgittine community, Hinrik participated in the circle of founders who made monastic life possible. This was a position that he could not achieve by donating to the older Birgittine foundations in Mölln and Tallinn.

In 1926, Rudolf Struck, a local historian from Lübeck, put forward a hypothesis that the reredos (an altarpiece) that still is displayed in the present church in the town Naantali (the former church of the monastery) could be the same work that Hinrik donated.⁸⁷ However, the central motif of the reredos is the coronation of the Virgin Mary surrounded by the Holy Trinity. Above the Virgin Mary is a white dove symbolising the Holy Spirit, and on either side of Mary are Christ and God. Due to the presence of the Trinity on the reredos, Struck speculated that it could be the same object mentioned in Hinrik's will. However, this hypothesis has been rejected by art historians, as the reredos in the church cannot be the same one referred to in the will. It has been dated to the late 15th or early 16th century and was likely commissioned directly by Nådendal from a workshop in Gdansk.⁸⁸

The origin of the master Johan vamme Hagen has also been debated in previous research. Hinrik mentioned that the artist of the altarpiece given to Nådendal was active at the church of St. James the Great, without specifying where this church was situated. Hagen is also the name of a town near Münster. Given that Hinrik's family originated from there, the altarpiece could possibly have been crafted by a master active at St James' church in Münster, but this is mere speculation. The assumptions in previous research that master Johan vamme Hagen was active in Lübeck and Hinrik's altarpiece was produced there is also the more likely scenario since the workshops creating altarpieces in Lübeck were widely renowned and their products were exported across the entire Baltic Sea region.⁸⁹

Conclusions

A thorough examination of Hinrik Hoveman's last will reveals that his bequests, when considered in a broader context, provide insights into his social status and religious devotion. The selection of religious institutions to receive endowments in the will reflects a combination of social conventions and personal preferences. Typically, burghers would allocate resources to the most prominent churches, convents, chapels, and charitable organizations in their wills, while family traditions played a significant role in decisions regarding burial places and the establishment of masses.

Hinrik's last will serves as an example of the valuable insights that extensive wills can provide about towns in the Hanseatic region. By including St George's Hospital, the Hospital of the Holy Spirit, and the St Erasmus fraternity in his bequests, Hinrik sheds light on the religious life in Turku

⁸⁶ DF 3185; Birgit Klockars, *I nådens dal. Klosterfolk och andra c. 1440–1590* (Kungliga vitterhets-, historie- och antikvitetsakademien, historiska serien 21), Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell 1979, 76–7.

⁸⁷ Rudolf Struck, 'Materialien zur Lübeckischen Kunstgeschichte', *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Lübeckische Geschichte und Altertumskunde* XXIII (1926), 207–289, here 239–40; Nordman 1964, 388; Karl Konrad Meinander, *Medeltida altarskåp och träsniderier i Finlands kyrkor*, Finska fornminnesföreningen 1908, 254–61.

⁸⁸ Nordman 1964, 388; Meinander 1908, 254–61; Jan von Bonsdorf, *Kunstproduktion und Kunstverbreitung im Ostseeraum des Spätmittelalters* (Finska Fornminnesföreningens tidskrift 99), Helsinki 1991, 121.

⁸⁹ von Bonsdorf 1991, 121; Miriam J. Hoffman, *Studien zur Lübecker Tafelmalerei von 1450 bis 1520* (Schleswig-Holsteinische Schriften zur Kunstgeschichte 22), Kiel: Ludwig 2015.

during the late 15th century, offering new knowledge in the absence of comprehensive sources. The donation of the altarpiece to the cathedral can be understood within the context of Hinrik's affiliation with St Erasmus confraternity that had its place of worship there. It can be seen as a contribution to the sacred space where his fellow confraternity members would remember him and other departed members, assuming that the bequest was eventually fulfilled.

A contextualized examination of Hinrik's bequests to Nådendal further suggest that he desired to be involved in the monastery's foundation. Given that the motif of the altarpiece and the missal align well with the religious practices of the Birgittines, it is highly probable that these items were indeed bestowed upon the new monastery. In this way, Hinrik participated in the foundation process, which carried significant social and religious prestige. His gifts in the will could thus have been utilised to enhance his social and professional standing.

Hinrik's bequest to Turku demonstrates the significance of the town in his trading activities. Furthermore, his charitable donations to the poor and infirm in Lübeck, Turku, and Münster emphasise the importance of prayers as a religious connection to all the places where Hinrik had business and family ties. By directly giving gifts to the individuals in need, he established an immediate link between the recipients and himself. Even if the bequests specified in the will were never realised, the indication of his intentions regarding the distribution of bequests among individuals in his network could potentially have conferred certain social advantages to the testator.

The quantity and recipients of Hinrik's pious bequests provide information on his wealth and social standing. He chose to allocate his resources to charitable causes rather than commission private prayers, vigils, and masses. This further aligns with the prevailing late medieval practice; wherein temporal acts of piety held a central role. It is possible that at this stage in his life, Hinrik was less concerned with establishing long-term intercession and instead focused on supporting charitable endeavours, including the prayers of the poor and his companions in the St Erasmus fraternity in Turku. It is likely that the will served as a precautionary measure, outlining the disposition of his property in the event of a premature death. Thus, the will can be seen as a prudent preparation for the future, allowing Hinrik to continue living his life.

Editorial principles

The aim of publishing the edited text is to make it available to researchers and completing the entry #2960 of the document in *Finlands Medeltidsurkunder IV* by Reinhold Hausen issued in 1924. The following edition of Henrik Hoveman's will has been edited from Middle-low German so that it follows the original text and language as much as possible. The variations of *u* and *v*, *u* and *w*, *ey* and *ei*, *i* and *y*, or *j* and *i* of the original text have been saved in the edition. To ease the reading of the text, interpunctuation has been added and modern capitalisation in the beginning of sentences and of personal names has been applied. As few alterations as possible of the original text have been made. Abbreviations of the scribe have been opened and marked in *italics*. The original division of lines in the document has not been kept. The special characters of Middle-low German *ȝ* and *ȝ* have been kept as in the original.

Edition

(Lübeck) 4.7.1454

Hinrik Hoveman issues his last will in the presence of the Lübeck aldermen Werner Grambeke and Kord Moller. Hinrik divides his wealth and belongings between pious causes, family members and business associates. He especially addresses recipients in the Turku diocese where he allocates a missal and an altarpiece to the Birgittines in Nådendal abbey and one altarpiece to the Cathedral. Furthermore, he gives bequests to the infirm at St George's hospital and at the hospital of the Holy Spirit in the same town. He wishes that the poor infirm will pray for him. He also bequeaths St Erasmus confraternity in Turku, of which he is a member, and he wishes to be inscribed into the confraternity's memory book and that its members will pray for him.

In godes namen amen. Ik Hinrik Houeman, by wolmacht mynes liues synne, danken vnde redelicheyte. Ifft ik vamme dode vorwumen werde, so sette vnde make ik myn testamente van myneme wolwumnenen gude to der ere godes na myneme dode to entrichtende vormiddelst mynen vormunderen aldus. Interste to betterende wege vnde stege geue ik j *mark lubisch*. Item den elenden zeken to sunte Yurgen by Abo geue ik ij *mark lubisch*, eneme iuwelken syn deel in de hande to rekende. Item so geue ik to deme Hilgen Geeste, den armen to Abo, v *mark lubisch*, iuwelkeme syn deel in de hande to donde vp dat se vnsen leuen heren god truwelken vor myne sele bidden. Item so geue ik in sunte Erasmus broderschop to Abo, dar ik broder ynne byn, j engelsche nobelen zo gud also iij *mark lubisch* in deme dome, dat se my nemen in ere denke boek vnde god vor myne zele bûden. Item so geue ik to sunte Birgitten clostere to Nadendal by Abo dat klene myssal dat my Herma~~m~~us Cosueldia geschreuen hefft dat ik eme latest vordingede. Item noch so geue ik in dat sulue kloster j altar tafelen de my mester Johan vamme Hagen maket by sunte Jacobe, dar steyt yme de hilge dreualdicheyte. Item so geue ik in den dom to Abo j tafelen van x *mark* dar schal yme stan sunte Fabianus vnde Sebestianus vnde sunte Anthonius, de scholen myne testamentarij laten maken. Item so geue ik to Reual in sunte Birgitten kloster xx *mark rigisch*. Item so geue ik den elenden seken to sunte Yurgen vor Lubeke v *mark*, eneme iuwelkem syn deel in de hande to rekende. Item den kranken to dem Hilgen Geeste to Lubeck vp den bedden liggende geue ik v *mark*, eneme iuwelkem syn deel in de hande to donde. Item so geue ik to sunte Birgitten by Mollen v *mark lubisch*, to deme buwe. Item wil ik dat myne vormundere scholen kopen v gra rensche lakene dar mede to kledende arme lude war mynen vormunderen des dunket best behoff wesen, to zalicheyt mynen zelen. Item so geue ik tho Munster to der kinder hus Bernde Benholt j rinschen gulden vnde den anderen zeken j *rinschen* gulden, samentliken iuwelkem syn deel in de hande to donde. Item so geue ik mynem vadere vnde myner moder samentliken C vnde xxx rinsche guldene. Noch so geue ick myneme vader mynen besten swarten hoyken vnde myn beste wamboys vnde j par nyer hosen vnde j swarte kogelen myt enem tympen vnde enem grawen roek myt wuluen geuodert. Item geue ik myner zuster Elsen lx rinsche gulden vnde ereme kinde geue ik ok lx rinsche gulden. Item geue ik myner suster, der baginen, lxxx rinsche gulden. Vnde wil dat myn vader myn moder vnde beyden myne zustere myt dessen vorschreuenen giften scholen scheden wesen van alle mynen anderen nalaten gude. Item so geue ik iuncvrouw Katrinen to Hoffruggink v rinsche gulden vnde den anderen x iuncvrouwen iuwelker j rinschen gulden. Item geue ik myns vader broder Johan Houemame x *mark lubisch*. Item geue ik Hinrik Houemame xx *mark lubisch*. Noch geue ik eme

mynen grawen rok myt gronen geuodert vnde j klene swarte koghelen vnde j wamboys vnde j swarten hoyken, to ener frundliken dechtnisse. *Item* geue ik her Albert Hert xx mark lubisch. *Item* so geue ik Elsen Hohuses, Druden dochter, x rinsche gulden. *Item* so geue ik der Wynnekeschen grotesten dochter x rinsche ghulden, to hulpe ze mede to brode to bringende. *Item* geue ick Druden Hoehuses v mark vnde erem twen sone geue ik iualken v mark lubisch. *Item* geue ik Bernde Greininge mynen swarten roek vnde myne vlamesche kogelen. Dar to geue ik eme xxx mark lubisch. *Item* geue ik Hans Krutzemanne mynen dustenen gronen rok vnde mynen vlameschen hoet. *Item* so geue ik mynen ome Johan Kleyhorste ene lodege mark sulueres, dar van to makende en clenode vp sine tafelen vnde siner werdynnen enen rynek van ener nobelen, en beyden to ener frundliken dechtnisse. *Item* geue ik Albert Bisschoppe enen suluern leppel. *Item* geue ik der Volkerdingesse⁹⁰ j rink van ener nobelen. *Item* so geue ik Hinrik van Detten j nobelen. *Item* so geue ik Hillen Wynters to Munster x mark vnde erem broder Hinrik Kokenbeker x mark. *Item* geue ik Hinrik Mummens x mark lubisch. *Item*, ifft dar anders yemand qweme vnde vullenbrechte myn rechte erue to wesende, wil ik dat eme myne vormundere geuen j mark lubisch vnde dar schal he mede scheden wesen van alle mynen anderen guderen. *Item* ifft ik wes mer vorgeuen wolde dat myne vormundere in mynem rekenboke edder in enem poppire myt myner egen hant vinden beschreuen, so wil ik sodane giffte vnde schriffte in vuller macht entrichtet vnde gehalten hebben, also ifft se in dessem myneme testamente beschreuen weren. *Item* alle myne anderen gudere, bewegelik vnde vnbewegelik, de na entrichtinge mynes testamentes vnde latesten willen ouerbliuen, zee syn welkerleye se syn wyl ik dat myne vormundere geuen vnde keren scholen in de hande der armen, war en des best dunket noet vnde behoff wesen, to salicheyt myner selen. Werd auer dat, got vorbede, dat myn gud nicht tor hant en qweme, dat id bleue tor zee wart edder doch van anuåls wegen, so schal men enen ysliken van syner giffte affbreken na partale, sunder mynen olderen den schal men ere giffte vorbeteren vnde nicht affbreken. Mine vormundere kese ik Hans Kleyhorst, mynen oem, Hinrik van Detten, Albert Bisschop vnde Hans Krutzeman vnde will wan erer welk steruet, dat danne de anderen leuendigen enen beddernen man wedder in des doden steden kesen, zo vaken als des behoff wert vp dat se mynen lesten willen mit den ersten to der ere godes in sodaner truwe vorderen vorvullen vnde entrichten als ik des to beloue⁹¹ vnde nemen dat lon van gode. Alle desse vorschreuen stücke wil ik stede vnde vast holden wente dat ik se wýtliken wedder rope. Dat gegeuen vnde geschreuen is na godesbort verteynhundert yar dar na in deme vervndeviffzigsten Jare, am dage Odalrici des werden Bisschopes. Tuge synt her Werner Grambeke vnde her Kord Moller Radmanne tho Lubeke.

⁹⁰ The correct opening of this abbreviation is uncertain.

⁹¹ Could also read *belone*. See ‘belonen’ & ‘belouen’ in Schiller & Lübben, *Mittelniederdeutsches Wörterbuch*. Erster Band, Bremen: Verlag von J. Kühtmann’s Buchhandlung 1875, 226–227.