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References to Children in Henry's Livonian Chronicle

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References to Children in Henry's *Livonian Chronicle*[1]

Sini Kangas

In his *Chronicon Livoniae*, Henry of Livonia frequently mentions the presence of Estonian and Latvian children defeated by the crusaders. Typical of crusader chronicles, his references to children are brief and sporadic, often appearing as part of lists of non-combatant victims of atrocities. The examples can be roughly divided into three groups: children baptized with their parents, peasant children slaughtered or enslaved with their mothers either by crusaders or pagans, and highborn children who were taken hostage into German-speaking areas to restrain their relatives from attacking the crusaders. The last two groups in particular reflect the conventional associations with the roles of children in the histories of the crusades.

Introduction

This article discusses the mentions of children in Henry of Livonian's *Chronicon Livoniae*, the main source concerning the crusader conquest of Livonia (Latvia and Southern Estonia) and Estonia and the conversion of the native inhabitants of these regions.

Henry was a missionary priest who began to write the *Chronicon* in the late twelfth century and completed his work by c. 1227.[2] His personal background is not clear. He was born around 1187 or 1188 either in Germany or Livonia and was educated in Latin and German in Germany.[3]

Henry joined the household of Albert of Buxhoeveden, the first bishop of Riga (d. 1229), as a young adult in 1205 and was ordained priest in 1208.[4] He visited the Fourth Lateran Council with Bishop Albert in 1215 and participated in the crusading campaigns in Estonia in 1216–1220.[5] In

[1] I am grateful to Philip Line, who has corrected and improved the English language of this article.

[2] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae: Heinrichs Livländische Chronik*, Leonid Arbusow & Albert Bauer eds (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum 31), Hahn: Hannover 1955; Henry of Livonia, *Heinrici Chronicon Livoniae: Heinrich von Lettland – Livländische Chronik*, Albert Bauer ed. and trans., Holzner: Würzburg 1959; Arbusow's Latin edition complemented with Bugiani's footnotes and references to the Bible: Henry of Livonia, *Enrico di Lettonia: Chronicon Livoniae, La crociata del nord (1184–1227)*, Piero Bugiani ed., B & C: Livorno 2005; Henry of Livonia, *Henrikin Liivinmaan kronikka*, Maijastina Kahlos & Raija Sarasti-Wilenius trans., Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura: Helsinki 2003.

[3] The majority of researchers, as well as the editors of Henry's chronicle, Bauer and Arbusow, agree on the probability of Henry having been of German origin. He may have been born in Magdeburg. Kahlos 2003, 30–1.

[4] For the years before 1205 Henry's main informant was Teoderich, missionary priest of Turaida and later Bishop of Estonia. He may also have had access to German annals.

[5] Henry states that what he did not witness with his own eyes, he learned from those who had participated in the events he has written about. Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., XXIX.9, 215.

1222–1224 he may have accompanied Bishop Albert on his journeys to Germany. His knowledge of Latvian and Estonian was probably very good, since he worked as an interpreter for the papal legate William of Modena. In 1225–1227, William was sent to Livonia to mediate the dispute between the bishops of Livonia and the Sword Brothers, a military order originally founded by Bishop Albert. Because the *Chronicon Livoniae* ends in these years, it is possible that the first version of it was written as a report for the legate – there is no dedication in the *Chronicon*. After that Henry was assigned to a parish in the Imera region. He died in Rubene in 1259. In later documents he is referred to as *dominus Hinricus plebanus de Papendorpe*.[6]

The Baltic Crusades have been recently studied from many important new angles. Kurt Villads Jensen, John Lind, Carsten Selch Jensen and Ane Bysted have shed new light on the rise of Denmark as a crusading power since the thirteenth century, while Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt and Torben Kjersgaard Nielsen have examined the development of papal politics and the role of papal legates in crusading campaigns in the Baltic region and north-eastern Europe. Marek Tamm has studied the use of rhetorical strategies to justify the crusades in Livonia, while Anti Selart has investigated how the conquest and colonisation of the Northeastern Baltic fringe shaped the religious and ethnic identities of the local populations. Linda Kaljundi's doctoral thesis explored the remembrance and development of historical representations of the Crusades in the Baltic region. Among the many important studies on the military activities and cultural impact of the Teutonic Knights in the Baltic region and Prussia are the works of Krzysztof Kwiatkowski, Gregory Leighton and Aleksander Pluskowski.

Despite the variety of new openings, the impact of crusading on minors in the area has not been examined. Whereas the fictional story of the so-called Children's Crusade, most recently inspected by Gary Dickson, became popular already in the Middle Ages, the significant number of real children whose childhoods were influenced in one way or another by the crusades have remained under-researched.[7] Nevertheless, children appear frequently in Latin and vernacular chronicles, in the *chansons* of the crusades, in letters and charters written or dictated by crusaders, as well as various legal and theological documents.

The protagonists of twelfth and thirteenth-century crusader chronicles from different parts of Europe and the Latin East consist of aristocratic males who usually fought on horseback and aristocratic clergymen. In the sources, these champions are accompanied by 'our men', commoner foot soldiers indispensable to harrying campaigns and sieges and on the field of battle. Remarks about non-combatants, women and children, are brief and occur sporadically. References to commoner children link them to groups comprising mothers and their offspring. As in the case of adults, children depicted with personal attributes belong, with few exceptions, to noble families. Their principal role at the sources was to contribute to their family's crusading efforts.

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[6] Marek Tamm, Linda Kaljundi & Carsten Selch Jensen eds, *Crusading and Chronicle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier: A Companion to the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, Ashgate: Farnham 2011, introduction; Kahlos 2003, 30–5. On Henry of Livonia, see also Alan V. Murray, 'Henry of Livonia and the Wends of the Eastern Baltic', *Studi Medievali* 54 (2013), 807–33; Anti Selart, *Livonia Rus and the Baltic Crusades in the Thirteenth Century*, Brill: Leiden 2015, 2.

[7] For the studies on children on the crusades, see Sini Kangas, 'Slaughter of the Innocents and Depiction of Children in the Twelfth-Century Sources of the Crusades', in Elizabeth Lapina & Nicholas Morton eds, *The Uses of the Bible in Crusading Sources*, Brill: Leiden 2017, 74–101; Sini Kangas, 'Growing up to Become a Crusader: The Next Generation', in Susan Edgington & Luis García-Guijarro eds, *Jerusalem the Golden: The Origin and Impact of the First Crusade*, Brepols: Turnhout 2014 (Outremer 3), 255–72.

Children were present in various crusading contexts from the beginning. Some were drawn into contact with foreign crusaders or were attacked by them in their domestic environs, and some were born during the expeditions. In the Latin East, they also participated in the campaigns with their relatives and guardians. In all these groups, experience of the Holy War might be fatal. Children died during the hostilities, or because of conflict-inflected malnutrition and infectious diseases that reaped a grim harvest among the youngest. Noble children acting as hostages were more likely to survive, since it was often the best interest of their captors to ensure their wellbeing.

After conquests, surviving inhabitants of the captured cities or villages were often able to preserve their personal freedom by paying a ransom. If no ransom was forthcoming, captives could be sold into slavery. Canon Law forbade enslaving Christian brothers and sisters, but did not prohibit the trade of non-Christians outside Christian kingdoms. During the twelfth century, the slave trade was practiced both in the eastern rim of the Baltic Sea region and in the Middle East.

The main difference between the Baltic Sea region and the Latin East is the attitude towards mission. Whereas in the Latin East mission was not included in the original aims of crusading, in the Baltic Crusade the case was the reverse. Children are mentioned as baptized with their relatives, and Henry includes two cases in which a native child taken to Germany had been educated there as a priest. As an adult, they returned to their native regions as missionaries.

Henry's treatment of children is conventional in relation to the chronicles of the Latin East. The references fall into three major categories: noble children taken as hostages, commoner children taken into captivity and massacre of Estonian and Latvian children during sieges and raids.

Perspectives on Childhood

Medieval ideas concerning transition between the stages of growth were not explicit, but in principle minority was understood as conditional upon legal competence and economic independence. In addition to the underaged, many groups of adults could not meet these requirements, including women,[8] servants, ministeriales and household knights and people of servile status. According to Canon Law, the legal marrying age was twelve for girls and fourteen for boys. Regional laws and Canon Law often demanded higher ages for specific legal transactions, such as oath-giving, which was, in principle, a prerequisite for taking up the cross and becoming a crusader in the legal sense of the term.[9]

In practice, most children left for crusades with their relatives or guardians without taking any oath at all, but young age could also form sufficient grounds for dispensation. The *Annales Marbacenses* (c. after 1230) mentions the remnants of the crowd consisting of young men and women from the German speaking areas, France and Burgundy who arrived in Rome in 1212 on their way to the Holy Land. There many of them realised that without the protection of any author-

[8] Bonnie G. Smith ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History*, Oxford University Press: London 2008, 428–9; Jennifer Ward, *Women in England in the Middle Ages*, Hambledon Continuum: London 2006, 62–3.

[9] Shulamith Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages*, Routledge: London & New York 1990, 230–1, 247–8; Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children*, Yale University Press: New Haven & London 2001, 321–2; Nicholas Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry. The Education of the English Kings and Aristocracy 1066–1530*, 2nd edn, Abindgton: Routledge 2018, 7. In medieval English, for example, common law tradition the age of majority for both sexes was twenty-one. In Champagne, majority was reached at the age of twenty. Orme 2018, 6.

ity they could not reach Jerusalem. They appealed to the pope, who agreed to exempt minors and the very elderly from the oath of the cross.[10]

The view of childhood as a discernible stage of life was inherited from Antiquity. According to Aristotle, childhood was the lowest of the ages of man, and a child, even if naturally not evil, lacked both reason and competence. Since children were not able to tell right from wrong, they were easily inclined to vice. It was thus the responsibility of adults to protect the child, support its good nature and keep it safe from corruption.[11]

The Church Fathers – and medieval thinkers in their footsteps – soon split into two schools concerning their reading of Aristotle's concept. For Augustine, children were stained by original sin, corrupt and vile creatures. Physical incapacity and mental weakness prohibited them from implementing a variety of sins, but this relative innocence would be lost as soon as the child grew older.[12] Among the major developers of the crusading ideology, Pope Innocent III (r. 1198−1216) held this view. For him, a newborn baby did not essentially differ from wild beasts; it was a creation of dust, contaminated by the sin of Adam and nurtured in the womb by the menstrual blood of the mother. A child was not only temporarily weak: it would remain permanently incomplete if it were not baptized and taught Christian virtues.[13]

Without refuting these ideas, the great majority of the theologians of the crusades stressed the alternative, positive views of children found in the works of by Jerome (347−420) and Isidore of Seville (560−636), who based their theory on a child's natural goodness as stated by Christ in the Bible.[14] According to Jerome, children were truthful and chaste, they did not persist in anger or bear grudges.[15] Both Jerome and Isidore emphasized childhood as an age of purity conditional on sexual inexperience.[16]

Medieval monastic texts repeatedly emphasize innocence and purity as the virtues of children.[17] Among the authors writing about and for the crusaders, Benedictine Guibert of Nogent (c. 1055−1124) praised children for their innocence and ability to strengthen the adults' commitment

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[10] *Annales Marbacenses*, H. Bloch ed. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum 9), Hahn: Hannover 1907, VII, 82–3.

[11] Aristotle, 'Nicomachean Ethics', in Richard McKeon ed., *The basic works of Aristotle*, Random House: New York 1968, 10.9, 110; 3.2, 967–8; 3.11, 983−4; Shahar 1990, 19.

[12] The body was thus innocent, whereas the soul was corrupted. Augustine, 'De civitate Dei', in B. Dombart & A. Kalb eds, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini De civitate Dei*, Libri XI–XXII (Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 48), Brepols: Turnhout 1955, Lib.22, cap.24, 846–8, 851–2; Augustine, 'Confessiones', in L. Verheijen ed., *Sancti Augustini opera* (Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 27), Brepols: Turnhout 1981, Lib. I, cap. VII.11, rows 19–20, p. 6; Innocent III, *De contemptu mundi* (Patrologia Latina 200), cols. 703–7.

[13] Innocent III, *De contemptu mundi*, cols. 703–7; Shahar 1990, 14–5.

[14] Matt. 18:3–5.

[15] Jerome, S. *Hieronymi presbyteri opera, Pars I, Opera exegetica 7, Commentarium in Matheum*, D. Hurst & M. Adriaen eds (Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 76), Brepols: Turnhout 1969, IV, III, 157.

[16] Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, Oliver Berghof with the collaboration of Muriel Hall eds, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2006, XI,ii, cap. 10, 241; Isidore of Seville, *Quaestiones* (Patrologia Latina 83), XL, 54, col. 207.

[17] Danièle Alexandre-Bidon & Didier Lett, *Children in the Middle Ages*, University of Notre Dame Press: Notre Dame, Ind. 1999, 21; Pierre Riché, *Education et culture dans l'Occident barbare, Vie, VIIIe siècles*, Éditions de Seuil: Paris 1962, 505.

to waging holy war,[18] while Cistercian Bernard of Clairvaux (1090−1153) explained that children through their humility (a consequence of their lowly social position) set an example of what adults might become through inner conversion. Accepting one's insignificance was virtuous in the eyes of God, and indeed an advantage facilitating entry into the Kingdom of Heaven.[19] Similar notions could be found in the vernacular chansons of the crusades. In the *Chanson d'Antioche*, howling infants left behind by their dead mothers will live in the Reign of the Holy Innocents in heaven.[20]

The medieval belief that prepubescent children possessed spiritual gifts and were able to act as protectors and guides for adults[21] can also be found in Jacques de Vitry's (1160/1170−1240) model sermon referring to children's prayer shielding the less innocent adults from harm.[22] According to Alberic of Trois-Fontaines (d. c. 1252), who penned the most famous account of the so-called Children's Crusade, pious children attempted to march to Jerusalem. Once there, the plan was to soften the Saracen hearts by the ardent prayer of the innocents, so that they would wish to return the Holy City to Christian possession, which the adults had failed to achieve. As the children were betrayed by fellow Christians, this plan was never tested.[23]

Henry of Livonia does not include such theological or mystic concepts of children in the *Chronicon Livoniae*. The children mentioned in his case belong to the people defeated by the crusaders, the native Estonians and Latvians, who had been or would be baptized by the conquerors. Basically, they appear with the members of their families and kin and share their faith in life or death.

Crusader chronicle and chanson descriptions of major conquests and failures, massacre and slavery often contain formulaic lists of those who perished. These lists typically refer to either or both ends of the human life span; no one is spared, neither the suckling babies nor the grey-haired elderly, the sick or the feeble. Albert of Aachen recounts how old women and babies at the breast were put to the sword in the massacre of the followers of Peter the Hermit at Civetot in 1096 and gives a similar account of the slaughter of the Rhineland Jews at the hands of Count Emicho of Flonheim and the crusaders during the summer of the same year.[24] Guibert of Nogent mentions

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[18] 'Felix etiam ignorantia parvulorum quia dum impassibilitatis moenibis circumdatur, angelica securitate laetatur.' Guibert of Nogent, *Tractatus de incarnatione contra Judaeos* (Patrologia Latina 156), col. 497; Guibert of Nogent, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, R. B. C. Huygens ed. (Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 127A), Brepols: Turnhout 1986, 308–10.

[19] 'Nisi conversi fueritis, et efficiamini sicut parvulus iste, non intrabitis in regnum coelorum (Matt. 18:3). Forte enim seipsum dicebat. Nimirum ipse magnus Dominus et laudabilis nimis, ipse parvulus qui datus est nobis; nec tamen magnus interim, sed parvulus exhibetur, ut seipsum faciat gratum et efficax necessariae parvitatis exemplum. Ad parvulum ergo sit conversio tua, ut discas parvulus esse: tu quoque cum converteris, parvulus fias. Enimvero audi, quam evidenter ipsum tibi, in quo constituit formam conversionis, parvulum manifestat, signanter ea quae sunt parvuli, in seipso imitanda proponens.' Bernard of Clairvaux, *In conversione S. Pauli sermo II* (Patrologia Latina 183), col. 365A–B.

[20] *La Chanson d'Antioche*, Suzanne Duparc-Quioc ed., Paul Geuthner: Paris 1976, lines 2037–40, 115.

[21] André Vauchez, *La sainteté en occident aux derniers siècles du moyen âge d'après les procès de canonisation et les documents hagiographiques*, Ecole française de Rome: Rome 1981, 269–70; Shahar 1990, 17–20.

[22] Jacques de Vitry, 'Sermo 73 ad pueros et adolescentes', in Jean-Baptiste Bitra ed. *Analecta novissima spicilegii Solesmensis: Altera continuatio* 2, Typis Tusculanis: Paris 1888, reprinted in 1967, 439–42; Jacques de Vitry, *The Exempla of Jacques de Vitry*, Thomas Crane, trans. (Publications of the Folk-Lore Society 26), Folk-Lore Society: London 1890, 120–1.

[23] Peter Raedts, 'The Children's Crusade of 1212', *Journal of Medieval History* 3 (1977), 279–323, at 281, 288, 293–4; Gary Dickson, *The Children's Crusade: Medieval History, Modern Mythistory*, Palgrave Macmillan: Houndmills 2008, 143–7.

[24] Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, Susan Edgington ed. and trans. (Oxford Medieval Texts), Clarendon: Oxford 2008, 42, 52.

that during the crusader conquest of Antioch young children and those weak because of their old age were killed and that in Jerusalem crusaders spared no-one because of tender years.[25] Similar statements recur in later chronicles. The young age of those who perished functions in the texts as a marker of the totality and cruelty of the slaughter.

Henry, too, includes similar lists following the literary convention of the crusader chronicles, which habitually list the deaths of women, children and the elderly. Apart from one mention referring to Rachel weeping for her children, the mentions of dead children in the *Chronicon Livoniae* do not explicitly allude to cruelty. This is hardly surprising, since unlike the authors who discuss the deaths of crusader children on their way to Jerusalem (and only sporadically the young victims of the crusaders), Henry deals with the crusaders' military actions from the perspective of the victor. In the case of the slain pagans, their children perished because of the infidelity practiced by their tribe. When newly converted children were slain by pagans, their fate testified to the barbarity of the heathen enemies. The possibility of Christian children being killed by Christians is not addressed at all.

Unlike many other medieval authors, Henry is remarkably consistent in his use of terminology. While speaking of children either killed or imprisoned by the crusaders or pagans, he prefers to use the terms *parvuli* and *puellae*, young children and girls, whereas young Estonia or Latvian hostages are invariably referred to as *pueri*, boys.

Most often (over 45 occurrences), indeed almost monotonously, Henry uses the term *parvulus* to describe the death or imprisonment of mothers and their offspring. This seems an important choice of word, because in reality there must have been variation in the young captives' age range and Henry must have been aware of this. He thereby choses to treat children as one group, regardless of gender or specific age.

Didier Lett in his important study of medieval hagiographies concluded that the term *parvulus* usually referred to children aged two or three years, and sometimes up to seven years. The term used for children younger than that was often *infans* (infant).[26] Etymologically, the Latin term *parvulus* indicates young age, feebleness and small size. It also refers to a person who is insignificant and of lowly status. Henry's choice of word may thus have been based on his understanding of the poor social status of the (unbaptized) village children he mostly writes about. Such children could hardly serve as examples of Christian humility or commitment. When Henry treats the children of the chieftains, held hostage to guarantee peace treaties made by their families, he does not use the term *parvulus* but *puer* that in medieval texts usually refers to the later phase of childhood, *pueritia* (c. 7−12 years).

The caveat remains that Henry – or other authors of the crusades, do not normally mention exact ages of people in their texts and that the vocabulary they use can be ambiguous. The terminology of the first age of childhood (up to seven years) becomes less problematic, if the terms used are complemented with the participles *lactans* or *sugens*, meaning that the person in question is still being nursed.[27] The references to *pueritia* are even more vague, because here the concept of minority, as already mentioned, was correlated not only with chronological age but also with social or sometimes

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[25] Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta per Francos*, R. B. C. Huygens ed. (Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 127A), Brepols: Turnhout 1996, 207, 281.

[26] Didier Lett, *L'enfant des miracles: Enfance et société au Moyen Âge (XIIe–XIIIe siècle)*, Aubier: Paris 1997, 44–47.

[27] See e.g. Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 35, 52, 124, 130, 138, 140, 336, 432, 442.

also religious subordination. *Puer*, basically 'a boy', may thereby indicate hierarchical position rather than the real age of a person. In plural, *pueri* relates to groups comprising both males and females.[28]

Although Henry does not discuss the nature of childhood or include anecdotes of children in his text, the *Chronicon Livoniae* contains many references to children. With few exceptions, these refer to them as victims of violence. Unambiguously peaceful encounters between children and adults are missing from the narrative.

The examples can be roughly divided into three groups: 1) children baptized with their parents,[29] 2) slaughter or captivity of villagers in the hands of either crusaders or pagans or 3) noble children taken into German speaking areas as hostages to make their relatives refrain from attacking the crusaders. The last two clusters in particular mirror the conventional contexts of the roles of children in the histories of the crusades.

Captivity and Hostage

The Christianization of Estonia was a complicated process involving not only violent encounters between the crusaders and pagans but also different Christian factions eager to establish their power in the area. Henry chooses not to discuss the rivalries between crusaders from the German speaking areas or Denmark or Sweden, but he is hostile towards the Orthodox princes of Rus. By convention, the Eastern Orthodox Church had not been actively missionizing among the Baltic tribes, but the princes' habitual collection of tributes in the areas the western crusaders wished to conquer and convert provoked clashes between the groups. As in the Near-Eastern case, native children occur in the narrative either as captives of various competing parties, hostages in place of their fathers or avengers of the familial losses.

Typically, the paragraphs involving children concern raids and counter raids by the crusaders and their various enemies. During these events villages are burned, men killed and women and children taken by the attackers as spoils of war. In 1207 Lithuanians, whom Henry claims were more brutal than other nations – although in another setting he accuses Estonians and Latvians of the same vice – took women, children (*parvulos*) and many other spoils of war from the village of the chieftain Anno, an ally of the crusaders. Crusaders released baptized women and children (*parvulos*) from chains and sent them back home.[30]

Crusaders are described as taking captives in similar terms. In Koknese, the Germans spared the women and children (*parvulis*) and took many of them as prisoners. They were on a campaign against the prince of Gerzike, whose wife was brought before the bishop with her wards, ladies in waiting, female servants and all her possessions (*cum puellis et mulieribus*). The prince managed to escape by ship. The Germans divided the spoils of war, apparently including the prisoners, among themselves and returned to their country, probably meaning here the region of Riga. After successful peace negotiations, the princess and her companions were returned. The prince submitted to the Church of St Mary.[31]

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[28] Shahar 1990, 21–8; Orme 2001, 6–8.

[29] In the cases of baptism, children are usually listed after their father and mother. Henry does not mention their first names or give any details of the ceremony in their case.

[30] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., XI.5, 52–3.

[31] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., XIII.4, 70–1.

In 1209, during a campaign in Ugandi, the crusaders found people in villages who had not yet fled to the castle. They killed many and took others prisoner, and with them a remarkable quantity of spoils of war, including women and girls (*puellas*). The villages were left deserted, and after 'killing and burning' the crusaders returned to their base. Similarly, while converting Järvamaa, the crusaders are depicted as proceeding from village to village, burning and laying waste the land, killing men and forcing *mulieres et parvulos* into captivity.[32]

Henry remains reticent about what became of the nameless women and children. Some of them perished soon after they had been imprisoned, either trying to escape from their captors or while trying to avoid the initial imprisonment. Henry mentions the large number of women and children taken prisoners by the Germans and their Livonian and Latvian allies in Estonia: many of those who escaped into the forests and onto the ice of the sea died, mainly from the cold.[33] In 1215 or 1216 Count Burchard and the crusaders set off across the sea ice towards Estonia. They split the army, chasing the Estonians through villages and along roads, killing men and seizing women, children (*mulieres et parvulos*) and livestock. After besieging the castle of Soontagana they proceeded to loot Saaremaa and Harjumaa.[34] Others may have been sold into slavery, but lack of evidence limits this line of enquiry. Henry does not hint at slavery, nor does he mention ransoms paid in the case of commoner captives.

It is worth noticing that Henry does not discuss rape. Rape would certainly have occurred in the Latvian/Lithuanian/Estonian retaliatory raids in which young women and girls were taken prisoner. Violation of respectable and chaste or young women was a topos in chronicle accounts of enemy action against women of the chroniclers' own people, but of course, there were not many German women in the Baltic in Henry's time. This does not mean that the crusaders did not rape native women, but rather that Henry ignored the possibility. A pious crusader was not expected to commit sexual crimes. Henry uses the Latin term *rapina* on several occasions, but apparently only in its basic meaning of taking booty.

The *Chronicon Livoniae* frequently lists women, children and maidens as groups spared by the attackers, whereas men were put to the sword. Even though Henry invariably speaks of older boys, *pueri*, when discussing hostages, he does not use the term in his narrations of war parties harrying commoners. It is not clear what happened to older male children. They may have perished with their fathers.

The sources of the First and Third Crusade comprise detailed descriptions of highborn Muslim and Greek children taken as hostages or prisoners. In Henry's accounts, comparable detail is missing.[35] They could have been included in the *Chronicon*, since Henry mentions several instances in which sons of the Livonian and Estonian leaders were sent to German-speaking areas as hostages. He clearly indicates that the boys did not remain with the party that initially negotiated the peace

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[32] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., XIII.5, 72.

[33] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., XIV.10, 120. In wintertime the possibilities for survival were thin if there was no shelter, but in the summer the Baltic forest is quite a friendly place. Wild beasts hunt their natural prey rather than human beings if they have a choice, and there are hardly any poisonous plants or insects in the northern forests.

[34] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., XIX.9, 134; XX.2–3, 167–9. See also XI.6, 54; XX.6, 138.

[35] The only more individual description of a child concerns a boy, *puer*, from the castle of Rastijärvi, who guided the crusaders to the destination. Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., XX.6., 139.

treaty with the hostage's father. The reference to the boys travelling to the West are so numerous that Henry appears to be describing an established and habitual practice.

Bishop Albert demanded that his newly converted allies, Anno of Väinäjoki and Kaupo of Turaida, hand over their sons, *pueros suos*, into his custody to be sent away. In another setting the bishop was mentioned as taking Livonian hostages to Germany, after which he returned to Livonia with a new group of crusaders.[36] The bishop's yearly journeys to the West took place so routinely that the chronology of the *Chronicon* has been structured according to the annual episcopal travelling cycle. In 1206 Albert's brother, the dean of the Cathedral of Riga, is reported to have taken the sons of the most important people in Livonia, *meliorum pueris*, as hostages.[37] After accepting baptism with their family and kin and turning over their sons, Anno, Kaupo, Lembitu and other chieftains were allowed to return to their lands.[38]

What happened to the boys in Germany is not clear. At least some of them were raised in religious institutions as good Catholics. While depicting the people of Holm cutting off the head of their missionary priest Johannes in 1206, Henry tells us that this Johannes was a native to Virumaa. He had been abducted by pagans as a child (*in pueritia captus*) and later freed by Bishop Meinhard, who placed him in the monastery of Segeburg to study the Scriptures. Johannes made excellent progress and returned to Livonia with Bishop Albert. He was ordained priest and was sent to missionize in Holm. After his martyrdom at the hands of his parishioners, Johannes was buried in the Cathedral of Saint Mary in Riga.[39]

The anecdote seems to indicate that some of the hostages were trained in theology and returned home as crusaders. Though Henry himself is likely to have been born in the west, his ability to speak several Baltic languages could imply familial ties to the area.

Henry admits that the Estonians did not like to part with their children. In 1212, the people from Turaida complained to Bishop Albert about Rudolf, the master of the Sword Brothers, who had plundered their fields, meadows and cattle. The bishop sent with them a priest, Alebrand, who had baptised them, to investigate the case. When the matter was not resolved, the bishop went with Philip of Ratzeburg to Turaida and summoned the knights to answer to the charges. During the mediation that followed the bishop promised to return the unjustly stolen goods and sent Philip, Johannes, the priest of Sakala, Bishop Theoderic and Kaupo, the leader of Turaida, to negotiate a peace with the Livonians. During the negotiations the Livonians made it clear that they did not want to place their children in the custody of the bishop.[40] Of the aforementioned men Philip was a Livonian who had been raised in Bishop Albert's court. Like Henry, he served as an interpreter between the crusaders and Letts. According to Henry, Philip, Johannes and Theoderich were killed by the treacherous chieftain Lembitu, who was baptized three years later.[41]

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[36] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., IV.4, 14; V.1, 57.
[37] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., X.14, 44; XX.6, 138.
[38] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., XVIII.7, 121.
[39] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., X.7, 37.
[40] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., XVI.3, 106–7.
[41] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., XV.9, 99; XVIII.7, 120.

Vengeance

Raids provoked reprisals. In communities practicing blood vengeance, it was the duty of grown-up children to seek vengeance for their slain fathers and other members of the family. In a typical case, Latvians took revenge on Estonians in Sakala, killing men, women and children from dawn till dusk, leaving only young girls and cattle alive.[42] Estonians seized the women, girls and children of Ridala in retaliation in 1211. Estonian leaders Lembitu and Meme from Sakala burned and looted the villages around Lake Asti, killing women and their children and taking girls captives. To avenge their expedition, the crusader ally, Livonian chief Kaupo, attacked the area around Sakala.[43] The pattern is repeated throughout Henry's chronicle, slackening only towards its end in about 1227.

Religion is not necessarily mentioned, although victorious crusaders exult in their vengeance on the pagan nations and the spoil taken from the enemy as a just prize from God.[44] Pagans and Christians are both motivated by revenge, but pagan actions are also explained as a mockery of Christianity. When the pagans sacrifice dogs and rams to their gods, this is interpreted as done to ridicule Christians, not to placate native gods.[45] The killing of Orthodox Russians does not seem to require any explanation at all, as when Bishop Meinhard's men find Russians in the forest and dispatch them.

Usually retaliation for family and kin justifies the action. Talibald, having refused to tell where he has hidden his valuables, is burned in a fire 'like a fish' and martyred at the hands of pagans. His sons Rameko and Drivinalde take vengeance by destroying and burning all the villages and male villagers, whenever possible, in Ugandi. On their way back home they meet other Latvians, who similarly wish to avenge their fathers and relatives, previously killed by the Estonians. The band returns to Ugandi, more burning and killing follows, as well as torture of unhappy Estonians who have to give away their hidden money and reveal their hideaways, turning over their women and children to captivity.

In 1213 Lithuanians made a reprisal raid in the Lielvärde area. They captured the chief (*seniorem ipsius provincie*) Uldewene, whose ransom included the head of a slain Lithuanian prince. According to Henry, the family wanted the head back to arrange a proper pagan funeral with drinks in honour of the deceased.[46]

The *Chronicon Livoniae* does not accuse crusaders of cruelty, a vice reserved to the pagans in Henry's narrative. Deceitful and wild pagan Estonians and Latvians deserve to be slain, if they refuse to be baptized,[47] and crusader spoil taken is interpreted as a sign of benediction by God justi-

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[42] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., XII.2, 58–60.

[43] A year later Bishop Theoderich attacked Ugandi and Tarto, where he captured women and children, who were taken with crusaders to Livonia. Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., XIV.12, 86; XV.7, 94.

[44] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., XII.6, 65: 'Gaudete, omnes unanimiter cum gaudio Deum benedicebant, eo quod [per] noviter conversos Dominus tanta fecerit vindictam eciam ceteris in nationibus, XVIII.5, 119: 'Tunc tandem quarto die convenerunt simul omnes in unum locum cum omni rapina sua et compellentes equos et pecora multa et mulieres et parvulos et puellas ducentes secum et spolia multa cum gaudio magno reversi sunt in Lyvoniam, benedicentes Dominum pro vindicta facta in nationibus.'

[45] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., XVI.4, 108–9.

[46] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., XVII.5, 114.

[47] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., X.12, 42; IX.13, 32.

fying the crusaders' methods. The ferocity of the pagans was underlined by their refusal to spare anyone. During a raid on Ridala, the Livonians and Latvians, who according to Henry were more cruel than other people, slaughtered a great number of commoners, not sparing women, children or anyone they found in the fields and villages.[48]

Henry continues to depict the counter raid organized by the crusaders and their allies, who captured a remarkable booty including women and children of various ages and sexes. In this setting, however, Henry makes an interesting allusion to the Bible. Quoting the paragraph of Matthew (2:18) about Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more, Henry replaces Rachel with Estonia in the role of a desperate mother crying for her lost children, both those who had already perished and those who would still be put to the sword.[49]

This is a rare example of Henry sympathizing with native Estonians caught between various war parties devastating the country. The chosen metaphor of Rachel is noteworthy, because its biblical context is the massacre of the Holy Innocents, the innocent child martyrs who died in place of Christ at the hands of the soldiers of Herod, an epitome of a cruel tyrant in medieval literature and art.[50] Henry does not explain the reference to the Holy Innocents and changes the topic after the allusion. Since the crusaders were here depicted as sparing the little children of the Estonians, whereas the Livonians and Latvians had not, Henry seems to point an accusing finger at the native groups. The notion of Rachel and the dead babies has been interpolated to add a further cadence on the reputed cruelty of the enemy.

Conclusions

In Henry's *Chronicon Livoniae* children are discussed in contexts that are typical for the crusader chronicles: captivity, hostage, slaughter of non-combatants, infidel conversion. Children occur in the company of their mothers, fathers or relatives and often share their fate.

With one possible exception, Henry does not convey any emotional response to the hardships suffered by children. In this case, the violent end of the children was probably added to accentuate the savagery of the heathen enemy. His laconic attitude towards the killing and enslavement of minors is due to the fact that many of these children were pagans. Crusading in the Baltic Sea region involved an insignificant number of female or young crusaders in comparison to the great crusade pilgrimages to the Holy Land and crusader armies in the Baltic region mostly consisted of males able to carry arms. For Henry, pagans deserved to be slain if they refused to be baptized. The

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[48] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., XVIII.5, 119: 'Sed et Lyvones et Letti, qui sunt crudeliores aliis gentibur, nescientes tamquam servus ewangelicus conservi sui miserere, populum innumerabilem interfecerunt et nonnullos ex mulieribus et parvulis trucidantes per campos et villa nemini parcere voluerunt. […].'

[49] Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae*, Arbusow ed., XVIII.5, 119: 'Mulieres et parvulos et puellas ducentes secum et spolia multa cum gaudio magno reversi sunt in Lyvoniam, benedicentes Dominum pro vindicta facta in nationibus. Et confuse sunt gentes et fecerunt ploratum et ululatum magnum. Estonia quoque plorans filios suos consolari non potuit, quia et hic perditi sunt et in futura vita, et maxime pre multitudine interfectorum, quorum non erat numerus.'

[50] Orme 2001, 95; Didier Lett, *L'enfant et les miracles. Enfance et société au Moyen Âge (XIIe-XIIIe siècle)*, Aubier: Paris 1997, 87; Sini Kangas, 'The Slaughter of the Innocents and the Depiction of Children in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Sources of the Crusades', in Elizabeth Lapina & Nicholas Morton eds., *The Uses of the Bible in Crusader Sources* (Commentaria: Sacred Texts and Their Commentaries, Jewish, Christian and Islamic 7), Brill: Leiden 2017, 74–101.

same applied to their children who, unlike the child victims of the crusader armies, could hardly be regarded as innocent examples of Christian submission to the divine will. Henry does not discuss the possibility of Christian children being killed by fellow Christians.

It is difficult to determine Henry's personal attitudes towards children. In general, he does not seem to be very interested in them; anecdotes of children are missing from the *Chronicon* and the references to minors most often occur in rather formulaic lists of booty taken by various war parties. The references to non-combatant victims seem to follow the literary convention of the crusader chronicles, habitually listing women, children and the elderly among the slaughtered.

In comparison with the chroniclers documenting the series of events in the Latin East, Henry includes few remarks about identifiable children. The people mentioned by given name in the *Chronicon* are all adults. On the other hand, Henry mentions the presence of children frequently as a distinct sub-group of natives, important enough to be listed with others suffering the consequences of endemic warfare.

Even though the number of references to children is relatively high, they are repetitive and their vocabulary monotonous. Children (*parvuli*) appear as objects of slaughter or captivity, girls (*puellae*) as spoils of war and high-ranking boys (*pueri*) as hostages sent away from their families. In all cases, they represent native Livonians or Estonians, not German crusaders. It is noteworthy that the term *parvulus*, which refers not only to young age up to about seven years but also to low social status, dominates the killing and imprisonment of peasant children, regardless of the actual variation in the age of the victims. Peace treaties between the crusaders and native leaders included handing over sons to crusaders. In two cases, Johannes of Holm and Philip of Ratzeburg, Henry explains that these men were natives who had been raised and educated by the crusaders or in institutions supporting crusading, Philip by Bishop Albert and Johannes in a German monastery. Henry probably knew much more about Estonian or Livonian boys taken from their families and raised elsewhere, but Philip and Johannes were exemplars, educated and well-indoctrinated priests who were unyielding partisans of the crusader cause and martyrs of the Holy War. Their great dedication may not have been shared by others. Henry admits that the Estonians objected to giving their children as hostages.

Henry's own career was not unlike Philip's. Like Philip, he was disciple of Bishop Albert and working as an interpreter in negotiations between opposing groups because of his fluency in native languages. As tempting as it would be to suggest that Henry himself was one of the *pueri* taken from Livonia to be trained in Germany, there is no evidence for such a theory; his language skills could have been acquired during long years of fieldwork.