Krzysztof Zajas

Absent Culture

The Case of Polish Livonia

Polish Studies - Transdisciplinary Perspectives

Edited by Krzysztof Zajas / Jaroslaw Fazan

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1. Theses on Absence

This book must start with a simple and troubling statement: Polish Livonia does not exist. In Polish writing and scholarship spanning over four and a half centuries, a stubborn seeker will find only a few volumes containing the term "Livonia" in the title (and the referent will not always be Polish Livonia). Reading these volumes will offer our reader a vague concept of their subject—one filled with hidden tensions, obstinate omissions and local patriots' appeals which summon the world to notice this exotic land, located in the borderlands of the borderlands. Our seeker will not find a separate chapter called "Polish Livonia"[1] in any of the major contemporary scholarly works on Polish history, and he will notice that the Livonian Wars described in textbooks apparently take place in an unspecified region between Vilnius, Riga and Tartu. Gustaw Manteuffel, the most eminent historian of the Livonian lands, and author of countless historical, ethnographic, travel-related, and cultural publications, does not figure in the contemporary *Leksykon historii Polski* [Lexicon of Polish History] at all,[2] and none of his works have been reprinted in the last hundred years. Some fundamentally important works concerning the history and culture of Livonia have remained in manuscript form, and the possibility of their publication appears increasingly remote.[3] One could keep multiplying such examples, but instead it should suffice to mention that even very erudite scholars

1 Among significant exceptions here there are works like Andrzej Chwalba's *Historia Polski 1795–1918* [The History of Poland, 1795–1918] (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2000), in which an entire chapter is dedicated to the Polish episode in the history of old Latvia; it is, however, marked by a certain conceptual confusion.

2 See Michał Czajka, Marcin Kamler, and Witold Sienkiewicz, *Leksykon historii Polski* [Lexicon of Polish History] (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1995).

3 See, for example, Kazimierz Konstanty Broel-Plater, "Dzieje Królestwa Polskiego za Stanisława Augusta" [The History of the Polish Kingdom under the Reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski], n.d. (this work, which seems to have been lost, consisted of 16 manuscript volumes!); Michał Świerzbiński, "Martyrologia Inflant Polskich" [The Martyrology of Polish Livonia] (Warsaw, 1937), 57, PAN Archive.

tend to associate Livonia exclusively with an anecdote from Henryk Sienkiewicz's *Trylogia* [Trilogy]; indeed, a fusion of two separate anecdotes often takes place, and in the geo-historical imagination of some humanities scholars there is an inclination to locate Livonia in the Netherlands.[4] Its enigmatic existence is well-illustrated by toponomastic variations, since—depending on the time period, political configuration, and cultural orientation of the author—this region has been given a wide variety of designations: Liwonia, Livonia australis, Southern Livonia, Liflandia (Lyfflandya), the Voivodeship (Duchy) of Livonia, Vitebsk Governorate, Daugava Land, Western Baltic Colony, Livonian Borderlands, Latgale, and Eastern Latvia. And these are only the terms that appear in Polish-language texts. Vagueness of concepts blurs the contours of being.

Our second statement is a consequence of the first, and it is simultaneously an attempt to deny it: Polish Livonia has been attempting to come into existence. The most easily perceptible common feature, the link which connects Livonian writings which are otherwise very diverse, is the intention to represent Livonia as a self-subsistent and a politically, historically, and culturally autonomous land whose "otherness" derives from the specific pedigree of the local aristocracy (Polonized German knights) and the privileges granted to Livonians in the so-called *Pacta Subjectionis*, and, above all, in the *Privilegium Sigismundi Augusti* of King Sigismundus II Augustus. It is also said to derive from fervent defense of the Catholic faith, and from adamant patriotism, which went hand in hand with sentimental admiration of local landscapes. The obstinate process of differentiation observable in these texts takes on truly dramatic proportions when contrasted with the tendency to simply omit Livonia as an inconvenient and somewhat embarrassing chapter of Polish history. This tendency includes not only certain selection biases among historians who could be seen as

4 The saying about "selling Livonia" has two sources. In the third volume of Sienkiewicz's *Potop* [The Deluge], when the Swedish army lays siege to Zamość, Sir Zagłoba proposes that the town's prefect should, in return for the Lublin Voivodeship which had already been returned to him (and where he already ruled), offer Carl Gustav the Netherlands, which Sweden fought for in vain during the Thirty Years' War (Henryk Sienkiewicz, *Potop* [The Deluge], vol. 3, chap. 3). In another place the same Zagłoba demands Livonia and money from the Swedes, this time in exchange for peace: "Let them give up Livonia and give us their fortunes, and we shall leave them in peace." (Ibid., chap. 7). In both cases Livonia is an object of bargaining, a commodity to be exchanged; it does not have a specified value, and the transaction itself has suspect and caricature-like character.

submissive to various political interests,[5] but also the attitude commonly encountered among politically-inclined gentry—deputies to the *sejm* [parliament] of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 17th and 18th centuries—who clearly demonstrated their *desinteressement* regarding the Livonians. Ignorance in this matter existed among both external observers, and inhabitants of the region themselves, as Jan August Hylzen put it in emphatic and charmingly flowery words:

> It is not on account of the rashness of fleeting private considerations, from which my mind and my condition remain far removed, but specifically for the sake of the public good, for the honor of the Livonian Nation, for the proof and confirmation of the laws and prerogatives which serve the Citizens who live there, that as a Livonian, I present Livonia before the Poles in Polish, in a comprehensive characterization. Because I have observed that in political conversations, diverse as they happen to be, when Livonia's revolutions and its form of government and laws are brought up—both the old form from the Teutonic era and the mediocre one from after the Union with the Commonwealth—not only otherwise good men from among the Commonwealth's Citizenry, but even native Livonians themselves often stumble, or fall altogether silent.[6]

Gustaw Manteuffel fought for the existence of this land in a similar spirit when he accused Poles that they knew less about Livonia than about Sumatra or Borneo. It is worth listening to his grievances because they illustrate the power of the complexes of the local intelligentsia—complexes which fed on a profound sense of injustice and rejection:

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5 This is how one should understand, for example, Warsaw historians' resistance against Gustaw Manteuffel's *Zarysy z dziejów krain dawnych inflanckich* [Sketches from the History of Old Livonian Lands]; for a contemporary edition see Gustaw Manteuffel, *Zarysy z dziejów krain dawnych Inflanckich* [Sketches from the History of Old Livonian Lands], ed. Krzysztof Zajas (Krakow: Universitas, 2007). This work was accused of excessive bias and it was initially prevented from being published in its entirety. I discuss this more extensively in Chapter 4: "Project Livonia."

6 Jan August Hylzen, *Inflanty w dawnych swych i wielorakich aż do naszego wieku dziejach i rewolucjach; z wywodem godności i starożytności Szlachty tamecznej, tudzież praw i wolności z dawna i teraz jej służących zebrane i Polskiemu światu do wiadomości w Ojczystym języku podane* [Livonia in its old and diverse history and revolutions, extending up to our own era; with proofs of the dignity and immemorial history of the local Aristocracy, and with laws which served the gentry of old and still serve them today, collected and presented to the Polish world in its Native language] (Vilnius: Drukarnia Akademicka, 1750), A2. To make reading easier, I use contemporary transcriptions of this and other citations from older Polish literature; I respect, however, the authors' intentions in their use of small and capital letters. Contemporary English is used in the translated version of the titles.

> It would seem that these borderlands, initially hidden under the protective wings of the Commonwealth, stained with much Polish blood and blood of their own sons who turned the tide of victory in our favor, or themselves routed our enemies at Kirchholm, Goldynga, etc.—that these lands which, at least in small part, have been inhabited by Poles, should interest us greatly. Yet one must confess that we have always sinned by a more particular kind of indifference which is difficult to explain when talking about the fate of the inhabitants of the eastern shores of the Baltic; we thereby continue, in a sense, the traditional politics of our forefathers who, having started a war with their northern neighbor, conducted it with unforgivable slothfulness, and in the end left the Livonians, who were exhausted by the struggle that lasted many years, to the mercy of the happy and vital invaders.[7]

According to the author, the political mistake of his contemporaries consists in making it possible for the partitioning powers to fight over Livonia, as the Commonwealth had done three centuries earlier, when it had turned its attention away from the Baltic countries to the south—an action diligently exploited by Sweden and Moscow. Besides tones of lament, in this fragment one can easily discern traces of the split identity of the Livonians, who admittedly place themselves under the "wings of the Commonwealth" but whose blood is not Polish but "their own" (that is "local," knightly-Teutonic as one could surmise, but essentially also heeding from elsewhere). Manteuffel, who came from the aristocracy, which settled in Livonia in the 18th century, speaks of them in the third person, that is, in the company of "his own," he is the spokesman of "others." These others are not, however, foreigners since they are fighting in their own land. Regional identity is thus subjected to turbulence in the encounter with national identity. Manteuffel's "we" stands against the Baltic "they," and contains a clear declaration of identification with Polishness—even though the historian belonged to the "native sons" of medieval Livonia, and spoke to the citizens of Lithuania and the Polish Crown in their name.

To this day, among the last descendants of Livonian families there lingers a conviction that they come from an unknown and forgotten region, a *nowhereland*, which must be described historically and geographically, at least in its broad outlines, before any personal recollections can begin.[8] One should

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7 Gustaw Manteuffel, *O starodawnej szlachcie krzyżacko-rycerskiej na kresach inflanckich* [On Ancient Teutonic Knightly Aristocracy in the Livonian Borderlands] (Lviv: Księgarnia Gubrynowicza, 1910), 5.

8 See Józef Weyssenhoff, *Kronika Rodziny Weyssów Weyssenhoffów zestawiona podług dokumentów przez Józefa Weyssenhoffa* [The Chronicle of the Weyss Weyssenhoff Family, Constructed by Józef Weyssenhoff on the Basis of Documentary Evidence], ed. Waldemar Weyssenhoff (Vilnius: Drukarnia Artystyczna, 1935), from which I refer to the introduction by Waldemar Weyssenhoff; Leon Broel-Plater, *Krasław* [Kraslava] (London: Broel-Plater, 1975), 5; Ryszard Manteuffel-Szoege, *Inflanty, Inflanty...*

thus see it as a particular local phenomenon that the sense of disappearance and incomplete existence of this territory in the general imagination has accompanied its inhabitants from the very beginning. The simple consequences of this included an obstinately constructed myth of separateness, meticulous patriotism and ceaselessly proclaimed loyalty to the king, fervent Catholicism, ostentatious aversion against Germans (Protestants) and Russians (barbarians), and finally a knightly aristocratic sense of injured pride, which went hand in hand with disregard for the common gentry and the peasants.

Historical and political nonexistence

Problems with coming into existence attended Polish Livonia from the very beginning of its formation, and this process has never come to an end. Local gentry took pride in the fact that Livonia was united with the Polish-Lithuanian state not as a result of conquests, but through voluntary submission to the Polish Crown, which meant, in a sense, that the union took place on the basis of an agreeable choice.[9] The long process of specifying the political, legal, and administrative status of these lands began with the annexation of the territory by the Commonwealth in 1561. According to the incorporation pact, the king himself was in charge of Livonia, negotiations were conducted by Lithuanian deputies who planned to attach the new voivodeship to the Grand Duchy, while the Livonians themselves needed only the military commitment of Poland, which, for its part, kept a skeptical distance.[10] And so already at the moment of

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[Livonia, Livonia…], ed. Zbigniew Szopiński (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1991), 7–11.

9 One can see pride in this statement both in Hylzen's *Inflanty w dawnych swych dziejach [Livonia in its Ancient History]*, A6, and in most of Manteuffel's historical works: e.g., Gustaw Manteuffel, "Inflanty Polskie poprzedzone ogólnym rzutem oka na siedmiowiekową przeszłość całych Inflant" [Polish Livonia, with a Brief Overview of the 700-year History of all of Livonia], in Manteuffel, *Pisma Wybrane* [Selected Writings], ed. Krzysztof Zajas, vol. 1 (Krakow: Universitas, 2009), 6; also Manteuffel's *O starodawnej szlachcie krzyżacko-rycerskiej* [On the Historic Knightly-Teutonic Aristocracy].

10 I discuss this further in the chapter entitled "The Polish History of Livonia." Here, I would like to refer the reader to the following studies: Edward Kuntze, "Organizacja Inflant w Czasach Polskich" [The Organization of Livonia during the Polish Period], in *Polska a Inflanty* [Poland and Livonia], vol. 39 of Pamiętnik Instytutu Bałtyckiego (Gdynia: Instytut Bałtycki w Gdyni, 1939); Jürgen Heyde, "Kość niezgody – Inflanty w polityce wewnętrznej Rzeczypospolitej w XVI–XVII wieku" [Bone of Contention: Livonia in the Domestic Politics of the Commonwealth between the 16th and 17th

its formation, Polish Livonia was an arena of conflicting and mutually exclusive interests. Their character was eminently instrumental, and the local citizens' oft-repeated declarations about a voluntary union with the Polish Crown should be treated as an unsuccessful attempt at blackmail, which only later gained the status of virtue in the works of chroniclers.[11]

Livonia's problems with historical existence were reinforced by the historiographical politics of its closest neighbors, whose writings minimized and eliminated Polish participation in the history and culture of old Latvia. The most advanced German-Baltic historiography saw its mission in terms of struggle for dominance and for monopoly of knowledge; it mentioned Polish influences reluctantly and with difficulty.[12] Nationalist tendencies which blossomed in the historical sciences in the second half of the 19th century played a part in this, but the tension reaches back to the time of the struggles between Protestants and Catholics in Riga in the 16th and 17th centuries. In the elimination of the Polish presence on the banks of the Daugava River one can also see traces of the struggle for existence, since Baltic Germans also wrestled with nonexistence in the history of Germany, and they share some of their dilemmas with the Poles.[13]

Centuries], in *Prusy i Inflanty między średniowieczem a nowożytnością: państwo – społeczeństwo – kultura* [Prussia and Livonia between the Middle Ages and Modernity: State, Society, Culture], ed. Bogusław Dybaś and Dariusz Makiłła (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2003), 159–168; Enn Tarvel, "Stosunek prawnopaństwowy Inflant do Rzeczypospolitej oraz ich ustrój administracyjny w latach 1561–1621" [Livonia's State and Legal Relations with the Commonwealth, and its Administrative Structures between 1561 and 1621], *Zapiski Historyczne* 34, no. 1 (1969): 49–77.

11 See Heyde, "Kość Niezgody – Inflanty w Polityce Wewnętrznej Rzeczypospolitej w XVI–XVII wieku" [Bone of Contention: Livonia in the Domestic Politics of the Commonwealth between the 16th and 17th Centuries], 165.

12 It is impossible to find Gustaw Manteuffel's name in most German scholarly works, even though he published much in German; for example, he began his passionate work as an historian with the book *Polnisch Livland* [Polish Livonia], published in Dresden in 1869. One can find a peculiar example of this in Arnold Feuereisen's *Livländische Geschichtsliteratur* [Livonian Historical Literature], Riga, 1908—a work which discusses the entire historical literature concerning Livonia, but which does not include Manteuffel, who was Feuereisen's contemporary and author of *Inflanty Polskie* [Polish Livonia], but which does include Teresa Wodzicka née Potocki's marginal work "Z ostatnich dni Polski i Kurlandii: Pamiętniki barona Karola Henryka Heykinga 1752 do 1796" [The Final Days of Poland and Courland: Baron Karol Henryk Heyking's Memoirs, 1752–1796], *Przegląd Polski* 1 (1905). Exceptions like August Bielenstein or the 20th-century researcher Herta von Ramm-Helmsing only prove this rule.

13 The most exhaustive analysis of this tendency has been provided recently by Armin von Ungern-Sternberg in his impressive work entitled *"Erzählregionen": Überlegungen zu*

In turn, in the period immediately after the partitions, tsarist censorship prohibited the use of the name "Polish Livonia" in printed publications (it was for this reason that Manfeuffel published his foundational work in Poznan); with time, Russification-related repressions were transformed into physical annihilation of Livonian Polishness, and its replacement by the Russian and Belarusian population.

The leveling factor had a somewhat different character in the framework of Latvian historiography. During the interwar period, this historiography sought to describe, or rather create anew, Latvian history in opposition to the writings of all the colonizers; it drew a wide arc between the pre-Christian medieval era and 19th-century aspirations to independence, ignoring the seven-hundred-year presence of other cultures on Latvian lands.[14] From this perspective, Gustaw Manteuffel—who in his youth was an avid collector of Latgallian songs and an author of calendars written in the local language—appears not as a local historian, but as one of the fathers of the Latvian language and literature. It is only in recent years that a new generation of historians has emerged; historians who explore Polish writings in search of materials for a multicultural history of Latvia.[15] For decades, the problem of Latvian historiography consisted in the narrow-minded conviction that it should develop independently from the influences and pressures of the literatures of its former invaders (which is right), and that it should therefore minimize and reduce the themes introduced by these literatures (which is erroneous). In the eyes of its creators, the history of Latvia was thus to confirm Latvia's existence, much as the existence of Polish, German, Swedish, or Russian Livonia needed confirmation in earlier times. The history of the lands which interest us is thus a theater of competing national historiographical perspectives.

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literarischen Räumen mit Blick auf die deutsche Literatur des Baltikums, das Baltikum und die deutsche Literatur ["Regions of Narration": Reflections about Literary Spaces with a Glance at the German Literature of the Baltic Countries, at the Baltic Countries, and at German Literature] (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2003), and especially the chapter "Selbstdarstellung des baltischen Raumes" [Self-representation of the Baltic Space].

14 The historical work of a native Latgallian, Bolesław Brežgo, who writes in Latvian, Russian, and Polish, is a commendable exception here.

15 The many years of work carried out by the Rigan historian Ēriks Jēkabsons are invaluable in this respect; he scrupulously examined the Polish materials available in the Latvian State Historical Archive in Riga, and published the results in "Polak na Łotwie" [A Pole in Latvia]. In his monograph about "Polish Latvia," however, the name "Polish Livonia" does not appear at all, and in its place there appear such interesting terms as "the Polish period" or "Transdaugava" [Transdźwińsk]—see Ēriks Jēkabsons, *Poļi Latvijā* [Polish Latvia] (Riga: Etnisko pētījumu centrs, 1996), 9–11 and 136.

Sociological nonexistence

The fact that Livonian gentry descended from medieval Teutonic knights made it foreign in the eyes of the Polish gentry from the very beginning. The Livonians—who were suspect because of their foreign language (many of the Polonized families began speaking Polish only in the 19th century), who aroused hostility as descendants of the hated Teutonic knights, and who adhered to strict genealogical hierarchies and guarded the distinctiveness of their aristocratic blood—were, to a certain extent, ignored in the negotiations carried out between the various social classes of the Commonwealth. Lithuanians sought to incorporate the lands around the Daugava into their territory. This would bring benefits in the form of new offices to be filled, and they therefore wanted the formal incorporation of Livonia into Lithuania. Livonians were thus forced to emphasize their separateness and to remind others about it, which made them vulnerable to accusations of a lack of patriotism, of dual Polish–German loyalty, of being "hidden Teutonic knights," and so on. In this case, the dual local and national identity, which is natural in all small regions, was an almost insurmountable obstacle, and it led to paradoxical declarations, such as the one we saw in the above-cited passage from Manfeuffel. The astounding persistence of this "Polish" suspiciousness has outlived Livonia itself. One can see it in Michał Świerzbiński's interpretations which appear in a story about Livonian martyrology, and which are marked by nationalism and xenophobia:

> Particularism shrouded in Teutonic traditions was the characteristic quality of the pre-partitions era in Polish Livonia. Magnates with German ancestry (…) saw themselves as the only legitimate masters and rulers of Livonia. They were, it is true, loyal to the Commonwealth and they served it loyally, so long as it guaranteed their prosperity, freedoms, and privileges. (…). The knightly-German families, although they formed affiliations with Polish gentry, were never Polish in spirit. They did not know Polish traditions, attachments, and national feelings—they had their own Teutonic ones. (…). It was only the loss of the Fatherland (…) which awakened patriotism and a sense of national affiliation in Polish Livonians. In this trial by fire, the Korffs and Borchs broke with Polishness forever, others became honest Poles, and still others (…)—who knows what they are." [16]

This text is from 1937, and it was motivated by the pressing need to delimit the boundaries of nationally-understood "Polishness," but it nonetheless reveals the

16 Świerzbiński, "Martyrologia Inflant Polskich" [The Martyrology of Polish Livonia], 43 (as cited by Juliusz Bardach, "Piśmiennictwo Polskie w Inflantach (do 1918 Roku)" [Polish Writing in Livonia (until 1918)], in *Między Wschodem a Zachodem* [Between East and West], no. 2*, Piśmiennictwo pogranicza* [Borderland Writing], ed. Ryszard Łużny and Stefan Nieznanowski, Dzieje Lubelszczyzny 6 (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1991), 251.

distrust which interwar scholars felt toward Livonians. Here, the category "Livonian Pole" serves the purpose of differentiating and undermining loyalty, which is shown as unreliable and a function of private interests. At the same time, the author brings out and emphasizes the internal fracture within a society divided into "old" aristocracy and "new" citizens who arrived in the middle of the 16th century as colonizers and officials, and who were given local land and aristocratic titles by the king. In Świerzbiński's understanding, patriotism was born here only with the arrival of the Polish gentry (that is, those other than Livonian Poles) and theirs was a "true" patriotism, to be distinguished from the pretend patriotism of the "Teutonic knights."

Livonian aristocracy loyally took part in the Polish national uprising of 1830, and this is why Polish martyrology includes, among other figures, Emilia Plater, who was the daughter of one of the most eminent German-Teutonic families of the Baltic region. The hero of the November Uprising made her way into Polish textbooks, but it would be futile to examine the biographies of this female colonel with the aim of finding an analysis of the Livonian sources of her patriotic bravado.[17] Another Livonian, Gustaw Manteuffel's brother Richard, took part in the January Uprising of 1863, and was exiled to Siberia while the possessions of the family were sequestered, which effectively meant that the Manteuffels lost them. And on Muravyov's command, the young Leon Plater was executed by a firing squad for his participation in the January revolt. The Livonians' devotion did not, however, change the general state of knowledge about their lands, and, while writing his foundational work in 1879, Manteuffel felt that he needed to form rather than to reconstruct the historical-social-cultural existence of the region, with a large dose of post-factual creation:

> The rarely encountered information about this part of the country, which at one time belonged to the Teutonic state, even when found in more extensive works that deal with the Baltic provinces, not only does not allow for the resolution of many of the important questions, but it also repeats a number of coarse mistakes that concern

17 Donata Ciepieńko-Zielińska came close to tackling this problem, but she saw it mainly as an argument in favor of the attractiveness of Polish culture: "Emilia Plater did not come from a Polish family. It is yet another example of the attractiveness and the power of influence of our native culture in our history, thanks to which so many families of foreign descent became fully Polonized." Donata Ciepieńko-Zielińska, *Emilia Plater* [Emilia Plater] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Książka i Wiedza, 1966), 41. NB, in his poem *Śmierć pułkownika* [The Death of the Colonel] Mickiewicz prematurely gave Plater a military promotion—she actually had the rank of a captain—see Józef Bachórz, "O Emilii Plater i Śmierci Pułkownika: narodziny i dzieje legendy" [About Emilia Platter and "The Death of the Colonel"] in *Jak pachnie na Litwie Mickiewicza* [The Scents of Mickiewicz's Lithuania] (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Słowo/Obraz Terytoria, 2003), 7–60.

> geography, statistics, ethnography, and the history of local intellectual development. Such works do not allow the confused reader to learn where this country lies, what political system it has, or who inhabits it.[18]

The country was inhabited mostly by Polish Livonia's peasants—they were the object of German-Teutonic, Polish, Swedish, and Russian colonization. As the "tutejsi" [locals] they were in essence Latvians; a small percentage were Belarusian and Lithuanian, and after these lands were added to the Commonwealth, Polish peasants also appeared among them. They primarily spoke Latvian, or rather an East-Latvian dialect, the so-called Latgallian, as a result of which they constituted a separate linguistic and identificational formation within the larger "Pribaltika" region. This particularity has persisted into the present time, and in today's Latvian state, Latgalia constitutes a region which is separate economically (it is the poorest part of the country), culturally, religiously (Catholics dominate), and, as a result of intensive Russification—also nationally.

Cultural nonexistence

The "Livonophiles" were also unsuccessful in their attempts to clearly differentiate the culture of Polish Livonia. If by culture we understand a set of regularities in the inward and outward behaviors of the members of a specific society,[19] then—despite the efforts of chroniclers, poets, historiographers, and publishers—a Polish-Livonian identity was never formed. The exceptional sociological attribute of this region—its multiculturalism—constituted a significant obstacle. Specific groups and classes which comprised the society of the former Livonian Voivodeship, were a cluster of subcultures which were so distant from one another that it seemed impossible to call them by the single name of the "culture of Polish Livonia." Because of their ancestry, the aristocracy used either French or German until the 19th century; they fiercely defended their privileges and emphasized their somewhat haughty otherness

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18 Gustaw Manteuffel, *Inflanty Polskie poprzedzone ogólnym rzutem oka na siedmiowiekową przeszłość całych Inflant* [Polish Livonia, with a Brief Overview of the 700-year History of all of Livonia] (Poznań: Księgarnia Jana Konstantego Żupańskiego, 1879), 19. The author's use of a capital letter in the adjective "Baltic" indicates semantic underscoring, an intensification of meaning through emphasis. Manteuffel frequently uses this tactic of "calling into existence" by means of repeating a name.

19 See Philip Bagby, "The Concept of Culture," in *Culture and History: Prolegomena to the Comparative Study of Civilizations* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959).

rather than their participation in a shared culture. The aristocrats tended to point to their cultural connections with Courland, with the ethos of European knights, or sometimes also with Hanseatic traditions, rather than to emphasize kinship with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth or the indigenous inhabitants of the region. In contrast, the newly arriving gentry spoke and wrote in Polish or Latin, they identified with Sarmatian traditions, and they readily saw Polish Livonia as part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, rather than as an autonomous land; they considered Polonization of the country as their fundamental cultural duty. Peasants used the Latgallian dialect, sometimes speaking in Russian or Belarusian, and as objects and victims of various colonizations, they did not feel a sense of belonging to any of the cultures imposed on them.[20] In the 19th century there also appeared, extraterritorially as it were, elements of Polish bourgeois culture in Riga, Tartu, and (on a smaller scale) in other Baltic cities—they were only loosely connected with the life of Latgallian provinces, and they introduced yet another cultural discourse into the Livonian space. To this, one should add the Jewish community which had a strong presence in the region, and Russian-speaking, Belarusian, Lithuanian, and other subcultures.

The only work that puts Polish Livonia back on the humanities research agenda is also a paradoxical example of the difficulties inherent in the attempts to differentiate this region as a separate entity. In his *Pozytywizm na Litwie* [Positivism in Lithuania] Andrzej Romanowski uses an impressive range of archival sources to provide an extensive sketch of Polish cultural life in the so-called northern borderlands (yet another name of this land)—yet he places Polish Livonia in a chapter entitled "A Lithuanian Province."[21] If the term "Lithuanian-Belarusian-Livonian lands" (used in the work's subtitle) constitutes—as the author himself suggests—a contemporary variation of the notion of the "Grand Duchy of Lithuania," then we are back in the realm of 16th-century arguments about incorporation, when the Livonian Voivodeship simultaneously belonged and did not belong to historic Lithuania. Romanowski

20 The peasants were most frequently identified as Catholic, and they felt a certain connection with the Catholic faith. The intense—and often brutal—Christianization of the Latvians created, however, a specific religious dualism: ostentatious Catholicism on the one hand, and an illicitly-practiced paganism on the other, the signs of which Manteuffel observed even at the end of the 19th century. The role of religion and the church in the history of Livonia is fundamentally important, and it will receive much attention in subsequent chapters.

21 Andrzej Romanowski, *Pozytywizm na Litwie: polskie życie kulturalne na ziemiach litewsko-białorusko-inflanckich w latach 1864–1904* [Positivism in Lithuania: Polish Cultural Life in the Lithuanian-Belarusian-Livonian Lands between 1864 and 1904] (Krakow: Universitas, 2003).

insightfully realizes that this identification is not at all obvious, and he therefore calls it obvious and indispensable:

> The inclusion of Polish Livonia (i.e., the former Livonian Voivodeship and contemporary southeastern Latvia/Latgale) in the region which interests us seemed obvious and indispensable, since shared political fortunes and Catholic faith linked this region to Lithuania incomparably more strongly than to lands located to the west of it – lands inhabited by Protestant Latvians and Germans.[22]

While the indispensability of this step seems understandable in light of the need to keep the designated object of investigation unified, the step is far from obvious. Immediate geographic proximity, similarity of the colonization and Christianization processes carried out by Poland, along with the corresponding experiences under Russian rule—all these organize the historical material to an extent, but this organization excludes phenomena that characterize Livonian regionalism. The Polish-Lithuanian identity discourse seems to be of little use for these lands, while their specificity is attested to by what Juliusz Bardach referred to as "complicated relations," which

> ... created certain configurations in the awareness of the inhabitants of this land, where the sense of national identity, and the patriotism which was related to it, did not arise automatically from ethnicity, but resulted from such factors as historical and state traditions, or as the cultural milieu, which was often associated with one's professed religion, and which often came from a conscious choice dictated by many motives that are sometimes difficult to capture. This resulted in a variety of identity options, also within the bosom of a single family. Even in the life of a single individual, one could sometimes differentiate various phases in this regard.[23]

Because these factors were difficult to capture, cultural activity in the region that interests us was often largely reduced to incessant calling attention to itself, and to providing proof of an existence which was, in a sense*, ex definitione* problematic, because it did not fit into any of the previously designated frameworks.

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22 Ibid., 17; In *Młoda Polska Wileńska* [Young Poland in Vilnius] (Krakow: Universitas, 1999) Andrzej Romanowski provides information about Polish Livonia in a chapter devoted to Polish culture in the Vitebsk province, which is in agreement with the administrative nomenclature of the early 20th century, but which, again, has the effect of fusing our land with another, larger region (the Vitebsk province consisted of the Vitebsk, Polotsk, and Livonian Voivodeships), see ibid., 408–411.

23 Juliusz Bardach, "Piśmiennictwo Polskie w Inflantach (do 1918 Roku)" [Polish Writing in Livonia (until 1918)], 247.

2. Pretexts for Coming into Existence

The traditionally understood beginning of Livonian history, established on the basis of the initial mentions of it in European texts, is linked with the landing of merchants from Lübeck at the mouth of the Daugava River in the second half of the 12th century; the merchants were soon followed by missionaries, Teutonic knights, and other explorers, who desired bounty and adventure. During the Middle Ages, this land was under German influence, which from then on was burdened by the difficult inheritance of the colonial ventures of the archbishops and grand masters of the Teutonic Order. The establishment of settlements and cities, as well as the erection of countless castles, laid the foundation for the strong presence of the knights for many centuries; it later supported the presence of the Baltic-German bourgeoisie in the region, a presence which lasted until the 20th century. After World War II, many summaries of the history of Baltic Germans appeared, but one cannot say that their presence in the region came to an end—today, there are a number of associations and periodicals, which not only investigate the past, but also seek ways of inscribing German culture into the multicultural landscape of the Baltic states.[24] For this reason, it seems justifiable to begin our analysis of Livonia with German-language historiography, which provides certain clues for reading the Polish phenomena which took place here.

German historiography represents the Poles' participation in the history of these lands in a variety of ways; mostly, however, mentions of Poles are scarce and superficial. Unfortunately, this scarcity of references is also confirmed by contemporary Polish historians.[25] The comparison of Polish and German histories of this region seems justified because both cultures share a similar status there today: each appears as a difficult and foreign legacy, which influenced the history of this land extensively, and the influence of each is difficult to acknowledge unambiguously. One can turn to the capital of Latvia for an example. In the Municipal Museum in Riga, the main historical exhibit contains detailed information about prehistory, paganism, and peasant culture, and there is a plethora of artifacts from the interwar Latvian state. Between the two parts of the exhibit there are unspecified (and unmarked) pieces of armor, model castles, gothic sculptures of unclear provenance, and then, all of a

24 Here, I am thinking about organizations like the Carl-Schirren-Gesellschaft in Lüneburg and its publication, the "Jahrbuch des baltischen Deutschtums," or the Institut Nordostdeutsches Kulturwerk Lüneburg, which publishes the "Nordost-Archiv."

25 See Marian Biskup's introduction in *Inflanty w średniowieczu: władztwa zakonu krzyżackiego i biskupów* [Livonia in the Middle Ages: The Rule of the Bishops and the Teutonic Order] (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2002), 6.

sudden, one sees Danzig and Biedermeyer furniture. Several hundred years of "foreign" history created an insurmountable difficulty for the hosts. Methodological helplessness peeks out from behind the immense amount of historical material.

In Polish historical scholarship, Gustaw Manteuffel has decisively played the greatest role in establishing the Polish-Livonian identity, and this is why he occupies a central position in this book. This aficionado and propagator of Polish culture throughout Liviona, this collector of folk songs, historian, ethnographer, and member of the "Kurländische Gesellschaft für Literatur und Kunst" [Courlandish Literary and Cultural Society] was an avid supporter of distinguishing Polish Livonia as a separate land, which has the right to its own history, and thereby also to its own research as well. He came from one of the oldest Teutonic families—his ancestors belonged to Polish aristocracy since the 16th century but his family converted to Catholicism only at the beginning of the 19th century, and it was also then that they began to use the Polish language. His publishing activities best illustrate one of the theses of this book: there is not a single objective history of Livonia; we have clashing tendencies, ideological narrations and syntheses made to answer the needs of particular national, cultural, state-building, and other orientations. Gustaw Manteuffel, acting like a great precursor of 20th-century cultural studies, knew perfectly well that one cannot write the history of Livonia—and especially of Polish Livonia—from a single perspective. Though he was inclined toward compromise, with time he sharpened his attitude toward German historians and opposed their tendentiousness with his own exaggerations, as if to confirm Nietzsche's words: "every man and every nation requires, in accordance with its goals, energies and needs, a certain kind of knowledge of the past, now in the form of monumental, now of antiquarian, now of critical history…"[26] The broad range of Manteuffel's interests also resulted in something which would be called an interdisciplinary perspective today: he combined historiography with studies of folklore, numismatics with the history of commerce, genealogy with heraldry (he was an absolute expert in Livonian genealogy!), art history with military history and the history of religion. The specificity of his personality was anchored in charming contradictions. He combined incredible meticulousness and precision of documentation with the passion of an ideologue, and local chauvinism with loyal Polish patriotism; his aristocratic conceit was accompanied by an authentic

26 Friedrich W. Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," in *Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazeale, trans. Reginald J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 77.

and sympathetic interest in Latgallian peasants, for whom he helped invent a written language.

Literature was a pretext with the help of which Livonian culture could come into existence. In the history of Polish scholarship, there is not a single separate chapter devoted to Polish-Livonian writers, even though many texts bear traces characteristic of Livonia. Reading these texts poses difficulties for the literary scholar who has to confront an unknown cultural milieu. Kazimierz Bujnicki's novels or Olga Daukszuta's poems become readable through interpretation only after the conditions in which they were created are designated. What is important here is not the network of social or political determinants, but those factors which form the mentality of a writer whose life is inscribed into various communal perspectives. On the declarative level, local multiculturalism is expressed in a series of discourses which show a tendency to express identity; these discourses, moreover, constitute a dynamic system which is not necessarily harmonious. In Chapter 5, an example set of discourses is applied to the Livonian case, but these discourses seem to be fairly typical of cultural borderlands more generally considered.

What interests us, however, is not only that which the writer consciously puts into the framework of discourse, but also all the unconscious operations of exclusion and denial. Polish-Livonian literature constitutes an extreme example of local writing, which underwent subjective disintegration in the process of establishing its identity. If we say that Polish Livonia did not exist as a separate culture and literature, then one should see the main cause of this in the fragmentation of the subject into a variety of identificatory aims, which are contradictory to one another, and which cannot be reconciled. The multicultural situation, characteristic of certain types of borderlands, forces the local-foreign opposition into individual existential experience, and this leads to the constantly revived question about identity. Discourse suggests a ready-made solution, but it simultaneously denies specificity. Polish-Livonian literature consists of a mosaic of incongruous discourses and of refuse, trimmings, and points of experience which remain beyond discursive expression. Livonian culture did not come into existence because it could not fully fit into any of the communal discourses which were imposed on it from without.

Historiography has been included in Polish-Livonian literature as an essential component, which constitutes local identity, and also as a strong representation of a re-creating ideology. From the beginning of the coming into existence of a historical fact called "Polish Livonia," historians have tried to introduce it into general awareness. As a result, their writing carries clear marks of tendentious and constituting literature, which inscribes itself into diachronic rules of reference, and which at the same time consists of a series of literary and

rhetorical devices. Historical narration, especially in the case of multicultural local milieus, is subject to fictionalization which is carried out on the level of conscious ideology, and to unconscious tendencies in the existential experience. Here, one can see especially clearly the connection between the specification of a place, its naming and establishment, and the search for a distinctive identificatory form, on both the individual and collective levels. In a certain sense, Polish-Livonian literature is an excellent example of the incompatibility between individual experience and the general language of discourse.

3. Toponymy as a Realm of Conflict

If, following the nominalists, we assume that only that which has a name has existence, Polish-Livonia should exist with a manifold intensity. Each locality there has several names, and the whole territory has more than a dozen designations. The problem lies in the fact that most of them, even though they still appear in literature about the subject, do not mean anything to a contemporary Polish reader; and so we have here a certain form of the crisis of reference.[27] One could solve this problem by following the example of Norman Davies' solution in *Microcosm*, and alternate between all known names of a given place to signal the problem and multiply perspectives, but this would dim the already vague contours of this land even more.[28] It is difficult to deny the correctness of the Welsh historian's claim that names "do much more than merely identify people and places. They reveal the viewpoint and the prejudices of those who use them"—but for centuries Livonia has been a battlefield in this

27 A recently published *Pascal* tourist guide to the Baltic states is an excellent illustration of this problem; some of the Latgallian names are provided in Polish and some in Latvian. And thus next to the Polish Rzeżyca [Rēzekne] and Krasław [Kraslava] there is Ludza (Polish: Lucyn), which, in the section on bus connections is given as… Lucyna! [a common female name in Polish] and Preiļi (Polish Prele). A famous center of Catholic worship also has its Polish name—Agłona (instead of Aglona). See Medard Masłowski et al., *Litwa, Łotwa, Estonia oraz Obwód Kaliningradzki* [Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and the Kaliningrad Oblast] (Bielsko-Biała: Pascal, 2002), 242–244.

28 In the case of Wrocław, historical changes played an important role; as a result the city had different names during different periods in its history, and the change of name signaled a change of socio-historical context. This approach is fruitless in the case of Polish Livonia because various names functioned at the same time for various ethnic groups! What is more, the same group often simultaneously used various names, as for example, the Poles' use of Dyneburg and Dźwińsk. See Norman Davies and Roger Moorhouse, *Microcosm: Portrait of a Central European City* (London: Pimlico, 2002), xvi.

regard as well.[29] A name was a demonstration of national affiliation and political sympathies, a declaration of loyalty to colonizers or defense against the destruction of national identity. This last issue is particularly poignant in the case of the Latgallians, who were able to preserve names from the 12th century in spoken language for seven hundred years, thanks to which, for example, a village called Maryenhauz (German: Marienhausen) in Polish and German historical writing, today bears its ancient name Viļaka.[30] To facilitate communication, I chose to use Polish names, i.e., those encountered in Polish-language literature. When I use a name for the first time, I also provide the contemporary Latvian name in parenthesis. In the case of names which have several variations, I use those which appear in the literature more frequently.[31] By doing this, I expose myself, of course, to the accusation of "Polonocentrism." Yet, first of all, this is one of the ways of bringing Polish Livonia back to our scholarship, and secondly, it is a way of bringing it to Latvian, Latgallian, German, and Russian scholarly literatures, where its presence is overwhelmingly deficient. And thirdly: disappearing names, like disappearing lands, also deserve to be rescued.

In the introduction to his *Listy znad Bałtyku* [Letters from the Baltic] Gustaw Manteuffel was frustrated that correspondence addressed to him gets sent to "Riga en Courlande" or "Riga in Courland," while a critic from "Kurier

29 Ibid.

30 The problem of terminology can still arouse emotional responses today, and one should be tactful when using the names Dyneburg (Latvian: Daugavpils), Rzeżyca (Latvian: Rēzekne) or Warklany (Latvian: Varakļāni) in today's Latgalia. Father Józef Łapkowski, who is now deceased and who was a prelate in Krasław, was a Polish patriot and knew the history of the region very well, but in a brochure about the city and the church, which appeared several years ago (*Kościół w Krasławie)* [The Church in Kraslava], he used the Latvian-Russian name Krasława. In Polish historical writing, it was always Krasław.

31 A relatively exhaustive comparison of the Polish, German and Latvian geographic names (though it includes mainly locations that once had castles) is included in the "Indeks Nazw Geograficznych i Etnicznych" [Index of Geographical and Ethnic Terms], edited by Paweł A. Jeziorski, in Biskup, *Inflanty w średniowieczu: władztwa zakonu krzyżackiego i biskupów* [Livonia in the Middle Ages: The Rule of the Bishops and the Teutonic Order], 139–146. One can also always reach for Manteuffel's *Inflanty Polskie* [Polish Livonia], where in the appendix the author included an exact list of all the estates of the old Livonian Voivodeship, together with their (19th-century) Latgallian names. Manteuffel might have made up some of the Polish names, since they do not appear anywhere else. One can also consult the index of geographic locations, which I constructed and included in Manteuffel's *Zarysy z dziejów krain dawnych inflanckich* [Sketches from the History of Old Livonian Lands], 309–314.

Poznański" [The Poznan Courier] wrote a review of *Inflanty Polskie* [Polish Livonia] without noticing the difference between Swedish Livonia, "Livonia proper," Estonia, and Courland.[32] Regardless of the high standards which Manteuffel expected his newspaper reviewers to meet, let us try to specify our terminology for the purposes of our analysis.

The Polish term **Inflanty** [Livonia] (Latvian: Vidzeme) comes from the Finnish-German linguistic cluster **Livland**, or "land of the Livs," and refers to the territory that stretches from the mouth of the Daugava River (Polish: Dźwina) all the way to southern Estonia—a territory which includes today's northern and central Latvia, including Riga.[33] Since 1660 this land, like most of Estonia, was ruled by Swedes and hence it was sometimes called **Swedish Livonia**. The name **Courland** (Latvian: Kurzeme)[34] comes from the Baltic Kur (or Kursz) tribe and refers to western Latvia and the Baltic coast stretching almost to the Lentava River (Latvian: Lielupe). Sometimes (rarely), these territories were referred to as "German Livonia." Further east, on the left bank of the Daugava, stretching from Mitawa (Latvian: Jelgava) to Dyneburg there is **Semigallia** (Latvian: Zemgale; in old Latvian *semgale* meant "low country"), which also includes the historic **Zelonia** (Latvian: Selija).[35] Between the 16th and 18th centuries, Courland and Semigallia, together with Zelonia formed the **Duchy of Courland**, and the three are therefore often jointly referred to as Courland. In German literature, one can frequently find the cluster "Liv-, Est- und Kurland" [Liv-, Est-, and Courland], which refers to all the lands, which were at one time under direct influence of the Baltic Germans, and which correspond to today's Estonia and Latvia without Latgale/Latgalia (Latvian:

32 See Gustaw Manteuffel, *Listy z nad Bałtyku* [Letters from the Baltic] (Krakow: Anczyc i Spółka, 1886), 3–4. Manteuffel repeated these accusations almost literally in his *Tum ryski i jego ciekawsze zabytki* [The Rigan Cathedral and its More Interesting Artifacts] (Krakow: Spółka Wydawnicza Polska, 1904), 5–7.

33 The etymology of the word "Inflanty" [Livonia], and its semantic range is explained in an accessible way by Mieczysław Buczyński in "Recepcja łotewskich nazw geograficznych w języku polskim" [The Reception of Latvian Geographic Terms in the Polish Language], in *Polacy na Łotwie* [Poles in Latvia], ed. Edward Walewander (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1993), 103–112; Henryk Wisner is less precise in his essay "Rzeczpospolita i kwestia inflancka" [The Commonwealth and the Livonian Question], in *Łotwa–Polska: materiały z międzynarodowej sesji naukowej* [Latvia–Poland: Materials from an International Conference], ed. Jarosław Sozański (Riga: Ambasada Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej, 1995), 7.

34 The term "Courland" appeared for the first time in 1231.

35 Recently, a native Latgallian who was walking with me along the right bank of the Daugava River in Dyneburg, pointed to the other side of the river and said: "Zels live there." The division has survived eight centuries of colonization.

Letgale).[36] Latgale overlaps almost exactly with the borders of our lands, i.e., with old **Polish Livonia,** with a capital in Dyneburg.[37] Polish Livonia is thus not just part of Livonia; on the contrary, it is that which is left over once Livonia is delineated from the perspective of the Germans, Latvians, Swedes, and Estonians.

It is important to emphasize that the term "Polish Livonia" practically does not exist in Latvian scholarship (where the name Latgale is typically used), and it appears only sporadically in German historiography. Paradoxically, it is only in the administrative papers of tsarist Russia that one can find the expression "Polskaja Liflandija."[38] Since the 1660s, we can also talk about the **Livonian Voivodeship**, and, starting in 1677, about the **Livonian Duchy**. What Manteuffel probably meant then, is that neither Estonia nor Courland is located in Swedish Livonia, and Riga lies not in Courland but in Livonia. The general term "Livonia" refers to the so-called Swedish Livonia and Polish Livonia—excluding Courland and Estonia.[39]

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36 See Reinhard Wittram, *Baltische Geschichte: Die Ostseelande Livland, Estland, Kurland 1180–1918* [Baltic History: The Eastern Districts of Livland, Estland, and Courland, 1180–1918] (Münich: Verlag Oldenbourg, 1954), 7–9. Livs and Ests belonged to Ugrofinnish tribes, while Cours (also Kurons) belonged to Baltic tribes. Analogously to Estonia, in the Middle Ages all of Livonia was also called Livonia, and Courland was called Kuronia.

37 The term "Polish Livonia" is written in a variety of ways. I follow G. Manteuffel and use capital letters for both words. Parts of the historic Livonian Duchy today belong to Semigallia, and a small part is in Belarus.

38 In "Complete Collection of the Laws of the Russian Empire" (*Полное собрание законов Российской Империи*), vol. XIX, 1796, on page 553, "Polskaja Liflandya" [Polish Livonia] is listed first among the lands taken from Poland; see also vol. XXIV, pages 229 nn., and 259. As cited by Gustaw Manteuffel, *Bibliografia inflancko-polska (Obejmuje dzieła traktujące o Inflantach Polskich, a wydane w ciągu ostatnich 5-ciu stuleci, mianowicie od roku 1567 do 1905-go.)* [Polish-Livonian Bibliography (including works which deal with Polish Livonia, and which have been published during the last 500 years, namely between 1567 and 1905)] (Poznań: Drukarnia "Dziennika Poznańskiego", 1906), 13; and Gustaw Manteuffel, *Krasław* [Kraslava] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo "Kroniki Rodzinnej", 1901), 7, footnote 1.

39 Andrzej Chwalba's above-mentioned *Historia Polski 1795–1918* [History of Poland 1795–1918] testifies to the fact that Manteuffel's protests and corrections did not amount to much; in the "Index of Geographic and Administrative Terms" Livonia is described in parenthesis as Latgalia, while Polish Livonia—as is usually the case—does not appear at all, even though it appears in the text several times. See ibid., pages 20, 152, 217, 391 and 643. Even the contemporary editor of Kazimierz Bujnicki's *Pamiętniki* [Memoirs] took the liberty of being imprecise, and located Livlandia, i.e., Livonia, to the south of the Daugava's mouth, and Courland in southern Livonia. In

Today, the inhabitants of our region are called the **Latgallians**; they are also referred to as "Latvians of Polish Livonia" when a distinction needs to be made between them and other inhabitants of Latvia. **Latgale** enjoys a separate identity, marked not only by its own dialect, but also by folk culture, religion (mostly Catholic), ethnic composition, and—above all—its own history. The gentry and the aristocracy of the region are often referred to as **Livonians**, to distinguish them from Courlandish knights and Lithuanian gentry. Practically since the Middle Ages, one can talk about the presence of the Baltic Germans (German: Baltdeutschen or Deutschbalten—the second term is more contemporary and more neutral) in Livonia; in German (but not Polish!) historiography they were also referred to by the shorthand term "Balts."[40] Following the example of the Latvians, one could use the term "Balt-Russians" to designate the Russian-speaking minority in the region; this is problematic because this term actually refers to Belarusians (Latvian: Baltkrevija), and it was sometimes also used to refer to Latgallian Poles, which did not help clarify the ethnic puzzle. It seems more straightforward to use the universal terms **Polish-speaking minority** and **Russian-speaking minority**, with the awareness that the latter term also sometimes refers to segments of the Belarusian and Ukrainian minorities.

4. Where is Polish Livonia?

In the Middle Ages, this territory belonged to the state ruled by the Teutonic-Livonian order, and it was called *Livonia australis* [Southern Livonia]. The Livonian Voivodeship, later Polish Livonia, took shape after the 1617 Stolbovo

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reality, the Livonian province was situated to the north of the Daugava, and the Courlandish province was to the south, while Courland itself had never been a part of Livonia since the very beginning of its existence. See Kazimierz Bujnicki, *Pamiętniki (1795–1875)* [Memoirs (1795–1875)], ed. Paweł Bukowiec (Krakow: Collegium Columbinum, 2001), 189, notes 137, 138.

40 German: die Balten. See Max H. Boehm and Helmuth Weiss, *Wir Balten: Heimat im Herzen* [We, the Balts: Homeland in our Hearts] (Salzburg; Münich: Akademischer Gemeinschaftsverlag, 1951); see also note 26. In Polish historical writing the word "Bałtowie" has come to designate the citizens of the Baltic states: Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians, as Czesław Miłosz did by devoting the final chapter of the *Captive Mind* to the Ugrofinnish and Baltic peoples, who were dying out in the shadow of 20th-century totalitarianism. I see the mechanical repetition of German onomastic habits—as evidenced, for example, in Piotr Łossowski, *Kraje bałtyckie w latach przełomu 1934–1944* [Baltic States during the Watershed Years 1934–1944] (Warsaw; Sejny: Instytut Historii PAN; Fundacja Pogranicze, 2005), 100—as distinct lack of precision.

Peace Treaty, and it was fully established by the Oliva Peace Treaty of 1660; its area constituted approximately a quarter of the Polish lands, possessed by the Commonwealth after the 1561 Treaty of Vilnius. Its southern boundary ran along the middle portions of the Daugava River (Semigallia was located on the other side); in the east it neighbored Russia (Vitebsk Oblast and Pskov Oblast), more or less along the rivers Saria (Russian and Latvian: Sarjanka), Sina (Russian: Siniaja, Latvian: Zilupe), Indryca (Latvian: Indrica), Issa (Latvian: Issa), Łudza (Latvian: Ludza), Kukwa (Latvian: Kūkova), and Niedrupia (Latvian: Niedrupīte); in the north and northwest it bordered the so-called Swedish Livonia, or the Walk (Latvian: Valka) and Kieś (Latvian: Cēsis, then German: Wenden) districts, and the border was marked by the Pedeść (Latvian: Pededze) and Ewikszta (Latvian: Aiviekste) rivers. Within the voivodeship's borders in the west, there was also Lake Łubań (Latvian: Lubāns), the region's largest lake. As this description makes clear, the borders of these regions were formed largely by natural barriers (river watersheds and lakes, and wooded swamps to the north and east); one can still sense their distinctiveness today when crossing the Daugava toward the south and toward the west, or when crossing the swampy marshlands which separate this region from Belarus in the east. After crossing the northern boundary of old Polish Livonia, one leaves the zone of deciduous and mixed forests, and enters abundant evergreen forests, characteristic of Estonia. The abundance of rivers and lakes had great economic significance during a time when river transport dominated commerce with the East, and floating goods down the Daugava to Riga brought substantial profits, including those from the so-called customs chambers and secondary customs houses. Thick and wild forests were a rich source of building materials and animal hides (whose apparently exceptional softness and fluffiness made them valuable), on which the locals made profits in regional markets.[41] In the 19th century, two railroad tracks crossed Polish Livonia: the Warsaw–St. Petersburg line, and the Riga–Vitebsk line; they intersected in Dyneburg.

Dyneburg (Latvian: Daugavpils, Russian: Dvinsk, German: Dünaburg—all these names mean "a city on the Daugava River") was the capital and Polish Livonia's largest city. It was located on the right bank, midway along the Daugava, approximately 200 kilometers northeast of Vilnius. Further north (about 300 km) there was Dorpat (Estonian: Tartu), and going west along the

41 See "Opisanie miasteczek w Księstwie Inflanckim Roku 1765" [Description of Towns in the Livonian Duchy in 1765], quoted from no. 3811, fol. 72–73 of *Archiwum akt dawnych b. litewskiej skarbowej komisji* [Archive of the Historical Documents of the Former Lithuanian Treasury Commission], vol. 6984, file 1, doc. 7/2, Latvijas Valsts Vēstures Arhivs.

Daugava, there was a 200-kilometer-long picturesque road to Riga. Since the end of the 16th century, i.e., since its founding, [42] Dyneburg was the site of municipal and country courts and the treasury chamber; until the end of the 18th century, the municipal *sejmiki* [local assemblies] met here and elected deputies to the countrywide *sejms* [parliament meetings] in Warsaw. The city was famously multiethnic—it was inhabited by Latgallians, Russians, Belarusians, Poles, Jews, Lithuanians, Germans, and Ukrainians, to mention just the most numerous groups. At the beginning of the 20th century, the city was inhabited mostly by the Jewish minority (though this "minority" in fact represented a majority of the city's population at the time), which gave it the character of a rather wealthy merchant province. Because two important international railway lines crossed there, Dyneburg became a large communications nexus, and with time it gained the features of an industrial center. It was destroyed almost entirely during the two World Wars, and after the post-1945 restoration it looks like most Soviet cities, with wide avenues, which intersect at right angles, and which are lined by low-rise buildings made of concrete. In the center of town, however, and especially around the Rigas and Saules streets, a stubborn seeker will find some old buildings which hint at the erstwhile commercial greatness of the native "The Town of N" of Leonid Dobychin.[43]

In addition to Dyneburg, one should count Krasław (Latvian: Krāslava), Dagda (Latvian: Dagda), Lucyn (Latvian: Ludza), Rzeżyca (Latvian: Rēzekne), Prele (Latvian: Preiļi), Warklany (Latvian: Varaklāni), and Wielony (Latvian: Vilāni) among the most important urban centers of Polish Livonia—most of them were also home to Polish-Livonian, Lithuanian, and Polish aristocratic families, which took over castles built during the Teutonic times, or built grand palaces, which still exist today (their number is incredibly large and their condition pitiful).[44] Furthest north was Marienhauz (Latvian: Viļaka), furthest

42 The city of Dyneburg was created almost from the ground up at the end of the 16th century; it was founded on the basis of Magdeburg Rights, which it received in 1582; see Bolesław Brežgo, *Przywilej miasta Dyneburga* [The Rights of the City of Dyneburg] (Dyneburg: Wydawnictwo "Naszego Głosu", 1932). About 18 km upstream along the Daugava there was a 13th-century castle and a Teutonic settlement (referred to as Dźwińsk, Dynaburg, Duneborch in the chronicles); all that remains of it today are picturesque ruins on an overhang over the river, in the vicinity of the village called Židina.

43 See Leonid Dobychin, *The Town of N*, trans. Richard C. Borden and Natalia Belova (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998).

44 See Roman Aftanazy, *Województwo trockie, Księstwo Żmudzkie, Inflanty Polskie, Księstwo Kurlandzkie* [The Trakai Voivodeship, the Duchy of Samogitia, Polish Livonia, and the Duchy of Courland], vol. 3 of *Dzieje rezydencji na dawnych kresach*

east—Posiń (Latvian: Pasiene); in the west, at the intersection of the borders of Polish Livonia, the so-called Swedish Livonia, and the Duchy of Courland, there was Kryzbork (Latvian: Krustpils, today Jēkabpils). These fascinating places will receive more attention in the chapter devoted to the Polish history of Livonia.

Today's Latgale is an eastern province of Latvia. It is inhabited by a Russian-speaking majority, and it borders on Lithuania, Belarus, and Russia; Latvians from Riga therefore treat it like a poor cousin.[45] One can immediately see that it is one of the poorest regions of unified Europe, with only weakly developed industrial and agricultural production, and high unemployment. On the other hand, Latgale's beautiful landscapes are its undeniable asset; they are characterized by gently rolling wooded and meadow areas, punctuated by lakes, and they are strikingly empty, with only an occasional family farm. When it comes to sightseeing and tourism, one should note the value of the centrally located Latgallian Lakes; they cover a large territory with great recreational potential, which, unfortunately, lacks the necessary infrastructure. This lack, however, brings back the charm of a virgin state of nature to Latgale. Former Polish Livonia—the object of imperial bargains and wars that lasted for several centuries—is now abandoned, a no-man's-land.

In his *Zbiór rozmaitych pomników inflanckich* [A Collection of Various Livonian Artifacts], written at the end of the 18th century, Johann Christoph Brotze draws and describes German, Russian, Lithuanian, Latvian and other traditional dress of the many inhabitants of Riga; there are even images of Siberian Samoyeds with reindeer pulling their sleds—but there are no Poles! The only Pole is "Ein wohlhabender Polnischer Jude" [a well-to-do Polish Jew], even though the Jews who lived in Riga at the time were Russian.[46] To a certain extent, Brotze's choices were a result of an already active censorship, and the need to use political correctness when referring to the Russians, who are represented in the album with dignity and in a variety of ways. Noblemen are

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Rzeczypospolitej [The History of the Residences in the Historic Borderlands of the Commonwealth] (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1992).

45 In the center of Riga, near the Brīvības bulvaris [Freedom Boulevard], there is a Freedom Monument from the 1920s: mother Latvia (the so-called Milda) stands there with three stars in her crown, each of which symbolizes one of the three lands: Livland, Courland, and Semigallia. There is no Latgalia. I owe this observation to Erik Jekabson, whom I would like to sincerely thank here—and not just for Milda.

46 See Johann Ch. Brotze, "Sammlung verschiedener Livländischer Monumente" [A Collection of Various Livonian Artifacts], in *Zimejumi un apraksti* (parallel title: Aufzeichnungen und deren Beschreibungen) [Drawings and their Descriptions], (Riga: Zinātne, 1992), 55, pic. 24/III.

Ruthene or Lithuanian, merchants are German or Russian, there are Ukrainians, Cossacks, and Bashkirs—but only the Jews are Polish. As if the very word "Pole" was either frowned upon or outright prohibited. Brotze was an excellent ethnographer and a very scrupulous graphic artist, educated in the Enlightenment cult of encyclopedic precision. Such omissions were therefore a result of a conscious choice, not an oversight. On the other hand, his cultural and social horizons suggest that he was able to go far beyond nationalist divisions into Germans, Russians, and Latvian peasants. He realized that the specificity of these lands consisted in their multicultural character, and that this very differentiation is already an interesting object of scientific research. Against this general principle, Poles do not exist as a sociological and cultural group; they have been pushed out of Livonia, removed from its historiography, geography, and ethnography. Livonia was, in a sense, taken away from them.[47] That is why the Livonian mosaic should be supplemented with the historical and cultural fact of the nearly 350-year Polish presence in the lands of today's Latvia. Let us therefore try to diagnose and overcome the paradoxes of the absent presence of Polish Livonia, keeping in mind Fernand Braudel's statement that history progresses only when our conclusions are examined, discussed, and replaced by new ones.[48]

47 There are many examples of such statements. Let me cite one, given by a Polish historian at an international forum: "… in 1900, German historians announced the publication of the *Baltisches historisches Ortslexikon* [The Baltic Historical Lexicon of Locations] for Latvia, but more specifically only for Courland and central Latvia (Vidzeme) with Riga, without consciously including Latgalia (Polish Livonia)"; see Marian Biskup, "Niektóre potrzeby historiografii do dziejów Polskich Inflant (Łatgalii) i Kurlandii w 16.–18. wiekach" [Some Gaps in the Historiography of the History of Polish Livonia (Latgalia) and Courland between the 16th and 18th Centuries], in Sozański, *Łotwa–Polska: materiały z międzynarodowej sesji naukowej* [Latvia–Poland: Materials from an International Scholarly Conference], 15. Similar examples will accompany our reflections throughout the book.

48 Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 18.

Chapter 1
German History of Livonia: The Conquistador Complex

Sibirien beginnt auf dem Stettiner Bahnhof
[Siberia starts at the Stettiner Bahnhof]

Christine Brückner, *Jauche und Levkojen*

In writing about the culture, past, and society of the Baltic region, it is all too easy to undermine, negate, or erase the full semantic range of key terms; it is therefore necessary to define these before they are put to use. This problem concerns terms like nation, heritage, colonization, minority, autochthon, partition, and even words like Baltic, Balts, and so on. When I speak about the German history of Livonia, I mean the history of the Baltic Germans who are also referred to as Baltic Germans, Balts, or German-Balts.[49] German-language historiography most often uses the term "Deutschbalten," which should be translated as "German Balts" or "German-Balts." Less frequently, one encounters the version "Baltdeutschen"—the exact translation of which is "Baltic Germans"—a term that has become common in Polish historical scholarship. This may be because it emphasizes that it refers to Germans in the Baltic countries; it points to the colonizers who wandered far beyond their rightful place in Europe in the course of their conquests. In the word "Deutschbalten," in contrast, we encounter Balts, who admittedly have some connections with German culture, but whose fundamental sense of territorial belonging is connected with the Baltic lands—like that of other indigenous

49 Using the term "Balts" to refer to Baltic Germans, as Piotr Łossowski does, for example, is a vast and probably illegitimate simplification, even though Germans themselves would probably happily agree to this solution. The term Balts is typically used to refer to the indigenous inhabitants of these lands (Baltic peoples, Baltic languages, etc.), precisely to distinguish them from those who arrived later. This word is connected with the fundamental right to self-determination, to independent statehood, culture, and finally to sheer physical survival, which was recently threatened by Stalin who attempted to annihilate the Balts. See Piotr Łossowski, "Przesiedlenie Niemców z państw bałtyckich w 1939/1941 roku," [The Expulsion of Germans from the Baltic States, 1939–41] in Łossowski, *Kraje bałtyckie w latach przełomu 1934–1944* [Baltic States during the Watershed Years 1934–1944], 100.

inhabitants of the region. The name itself thus already intimates fundamental complications in the history of Germans who both were and were not Balts.

The Germans' relationship to their own Baltic past has, from the start, been marked by contradictions and objections implicit in the very fact of colonization. On the one hand, over the course of nearly 800 years, the German minority left genuine traces of European civilization in the territories of present-day Latvia and Estonia, and it is difficult not to notice them when visiting Riga or Tallinn. On the other hand, however, this history is bracketed (by a parenthesis as it were) by the bloody conquests of the Middle Ages and the cruelty of the Second World War, in which Hitlerism became entangled in local Latvian and Estonian nationalisms. Over the course of seven centuries, a series of tendencies, faults, atonements, elevations, and humiliations emerged, and these have sentenced German historiographers and cultural scholars to endless digressions about something they tend to designate by the term *Baltisches Erbe* (the Baltic inheritance).[50] It is difficult not to agree with Michael Garleff who pointed to the ambiguities of German presence in Livonia in his aptly titled lecture *Die Deutschen im Baltikum – Leistung und Schicksal* [Germans in the Baltic Region: Accomplishments and Fate]. German presence in this region was a bridge between the East and West, it guaranteed progress and civilization, and it could be seen as an undeniable success of the German *Kulturträger* (bearers of culture). It was, however, the result and tangible evidence of aggression perpetrated against local nations, and it functioned more as a bastion of Protestant superiority and protector of merchant property, than a universal cultural matrix. When this problem is transposed onto the wider canvas of European history, it often becomes an attempt to make generalizations and thereby relieve the pangs of one's own conscience; the transposition cannot, however, overcome the historical splitting of identity:

> The history of the Baltic region largely reflected European life in general: the coexistence and antagonism of peoples, the constant exchange, constant giving and taking back. In this nexus of various interdependencies, from the very beginning, the role of the Baltic Germans was marked by two opposing tendencies: to be a bastion and protection while simultaneously being a bridge and an intermediary; sometimes these tendencies succeeded each other, and sometimes they appeared almost

50 Here, I am referring to the title of a two-volume work edited by Erik Thomson: *Baltisches Erbe: Fünfundsechzig Beiträge in Berichten und Selbstzeugnissen* [Baltic Heritage: Sixty-five Articles and Testimonies], vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: W. Weidlich, 1964), and *Baltisches Erbe: Beiträge und Zeugnisse über Balten* [Baltic Heritage: Articles and Testimonies about Balts], vol. 2 (Frankfurt am Main: W. Weidlich, 1968).

> simultaneously. One can find historical achievements in both, depending on which aspects of each of the two directions are brought out and accentuated.[51]

The uncomfortable dilemma of medieval expansion was resolved by clearly dividing the 800-year-long German presence in the region into two parts. Bloody Christianization and colonization organized by German archbishops and the Teutonic-Livonian Order (which was, however, referred to as the German Order) belonged to the realm of the Crusades, and constituted only one of many possible variants of Western civilization in the Middle Ages. In contrast, later eras could be evaluated entirely differently since one could emphasize the aristocracy's and the bourgeoisie's meticulous work, which sought to uplift the region economically and culturally—work which required many sacrifices and compromises. Continuity between these two periods of Baltic-German history does not have to be obvious, and thus German scholars are able to evade the problem:

> The extent to which these "Livonian states" [monastic and episcopal states—K.Z.] were incorporated into the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation remains open to dispute; they nonetheless remained strictly bound to the "motherland," both through cities founded primarily on the basis of Lübeck laws, and through membership in the Hanseatic League.[52]

German historiographers view German cultural activities as commendable, especially when they set them against the actions of the other colonizers in the region. The Livonian Wars of the 16th and 17th centuries, which ended the medieval rule of the Teutonic Order and led to the division of old Livonia among neighboring states, became a convenient starting point in the process of asserting distance from the newly arriving colonizers. For decades, the Baltic

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51 Michael Garleff, "Die Deutschen Im Baltikum – Leistung Und Schicksal" [Germans in the Baltic Region: Accomplishments and Fate], in *Die Deutschen im Baltikum: Geschichte und Kultur* [Germans in the Baltic Region: History and Culture], ed. Horst Kühnel (Münich: Haus des Deutschen Ostens, 1991), 45–46. The title of the article can be translated as "Germans in the Baltic Countries: Achievements and Difficult Fate." The subtitle could be rendered more neutrally as "Accomplishments and Fate"; the context makes it clear, however, that the author meant to provide a juxtaposition of positive and negative elements, where *Schicksal* is equivalent to being exposed (Ausgesetzsein) to the action of great historical forces. Incidentally, copyright to the title "Leistung und Schicksal" belongs to Eberhard Schulz, editor of the collected volume *Leistung und Schicksal: Abhandlungen und Berichte über den Deutschen im Osten* [Accomplishments and Fate: Essays and Reports about Germans in the East] (Cologne; Graz, 1967). Whenever I cite foreign sources without giving the name of the translator (unless the citation is from an English original or from an existing English translation), the translation is my own – K.Z.

52 Ungern-Sternberg, *"Erzählregionen,"* 133.

countries were a great battlefield, an arena of long and bloody struggles between various invaders—struggles paid for by great sacrifices, also on the part of the local population. Germans did not take part in these wars as belligerents, and assumed the role of observers (best-case scenario), of an oppressed social group, or even of spokesmen and defenders of the independence and religion of the indigenous inhabitants:

> When the combined Swedish and Polish-Lithuanian forces succeeded in halting Moscow's advance into the region of the Baltic Sea, and forced Ivan IV to give up Livonia (in the 1582 Treaty of Jam Zapolski), the country which was already extremely weary from the war soon became the object of contention in the Polish–Swedish War of Succession (1597–1629). It was thereby drawn into the historic conflict between Protestantism and the Catholic Counterreformation. In this war, which in the end was settled by the victory of Gustav Adolphus Magnus, it was not insignificant that the German population of Livonia, and especially the Rigan bourgeoisie, staunchly defended its Lutheranism against re-Catholicization and Polonization; and that the aristocracy, with their bitter experience of Poles' violation of the Vilnius Treaty, believed that they had the right to resist and, for the most part, they voluntarily joined the side of the religiously kindred Sweden.[53]

Here the Germans, as colonizers who were already firmly established in the conquered territory, speak on behalf of the local population's right to self-determination, guaranteed by treaties written by the new invaders. The fact that Latvians and Ests did not take part in this discussion, as they had no opportunity to join in, did not stand in the way of generalizations which asserted that it was the determined attitude of the Baltic Germans, which brought about a situation where "in addition to having its Evangelical religion, the country received the guarantee of enjoying German laws, German administration, and the German language."[54] Poland and its program of intensive re-Catholicization play the role of the main adversary here. Incidentally, these attitudes of German historiographers make for an interesting contrast with the later identity-related inclinations of Polish Livonians, who wished to preserve the last remaining traces of their "Germanness"—and thus exposed themselves to accusations of double loyalty.

From the perspective of their own understanding of their identity, Baltic Germans found themselves (and probably still find themselves) in an interesting

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53 Arved Freiherr von Taube, *Die Deutschbalten—Schicksal und Erbe einer eigenständigen Gemeinschaft* [German Balts: Fate and the Inheritance of an Autonomous Community] (Lüneburg: Carl-Schirren-Gesellschaft, 1973), 26. Reprint of a new and changed edition: Wilfried Schlau, *Die Deutsch-Balten* [German Balts] (Munich: Langen-Müller, 1995).

54 Garleff, "Die Deutschen im Baltikum – Leistung und Schicksal," 48.

situation, since, in contrast to Latvians and Ests, they were not Balts; and when the Latvian and Estonian national movements began to take shape in the 19th century, this criterion constituted one of the key differentiating factors. But they were also not Germans, they never formally belonged to the German state, their "ethnic roots" faded in the Dark Ages (which, in this case, were especially dark). Only twice, in the face of dramatic threats from the East—in the middle of the 16th century and during World War I—did the idea of a political union with the German states arise among the Baltic Germans; in both cases, it did not come to anything, mostly because of the unclear position of the "center." It was only during World War II that the three Baltic states were incorporated into the German Reich.

1. "Aufsegelung Livlands" ("The Discovery of Livonia")

The German historical narrative about Livonia typically begins with the landing of the merchants from Lübeck at the mouth of the Daugava River around 1158–59 (various dates are provided); the merchants got lost on their way to the island of Osilia (German: Oesel, Estonian: Saaremaa) or to Visba in Gotland; they were either carried off by the storm, or they simply decided to depart from their planned route in order to look for new trade possibilities. Trading contacts between Germans and Novgorod had been established much earlier, and already in the first half of the 12th century transactions between merchants and trading exchange took place along the Neva River. The arrival of merchant ships at the mouth of the Daugava should therefore be treated not so much as an accident around which legends were subsequently constructed, but rather as an attempt to find a new trade route, which would lead inland and to the East.[55] To this day, in the town hall in Bremen one can see an 1839 painting by Ludwig von Meydell, showing German merchants trading with the local Livs on the banks of the Daugava; the painting thus perpetuates the myth of a peaceful, partner-like coexistence of the visitors and the locals. In German historiography, this fragment of history has come to be designated by the term "Aufsegelung Livlands," which roughly means "the Discovery of Livonia"— on the model of the sea voyages of Magellan or Columbus.[56] This expression is characterized by

55 Philippe Dollinger, *The German Hansa*, trans. Dennis S. Adult and Sigfrid H. Steinberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970), 3–30. The author clearly connects the conquest of the eastern shore of the Baltic with the presence of merchants in Gotland.

56 The word "Aufsegelung" comes from the Low German "upsegeln" and means "reaching the shore," or "sailing" to a new place. It is actually a neologism used only in

a comfortable neutrality, and it points to civilizational contacts, which were friendly and full of mutual benefits—as displayed in the painting. It also signals a watershed moment for each of the parties in this historic meeting, symbolically establishing, as it were, a turning point in history. As Paul Johansen has shown, however, the myth itself was created much later, and it was probably an invention of one of the scribes who, in the 16th century, copied a 13th-century chronicle written by Henry of Latvia, and simply added the passage about merchants from Bremen. A Polish theme, by the way, was also present in exposing the legend which stifled German historiography for centuries:

> Meanwhile in 1862, the Polish librarian August Bielowski found the oldest manuscript of Henry's chronicle from around 1300 in Count Zamoyski's Warsaw library; in 1865 Carl Schirren compared the manuscript with previously-existing editions and discovered many mistakes, additions, and oversights, and, above all, the fact that an unknown 16th-century scribe added a sentence about the arrival of Bremen merchants at the Livonian port.[57]

As is typically the case, however, the power of legend easily overwhelms scientific arguments, and "Aufsegelung Livlands" continues to function as a descriptive historical category to this day[58]—despite the fact that archaeological excavations and notes in Scandinavian chronicles point to much earlier contacts between Western Europe and Livland.

An undoubtedly important element of the merchant landings, however, was the arrival of Mejnard (German: Meinhard), the first Augustinian missionary whose name has been recorded; he arrived on one of the ships in approximately 1180, and soon founded the first churches in Uexküll (Latvian: Ikškile) and Kirchholm (Latvian: Salaspils), about 20–25 kilometers upstream from the mouth of the Daugava. Mejnard probably came from Segeberg in Holstein, and his life can be a satisfying subject for historians since, according to the chronicles, he established excellent contacts with the Livs whom he converted en masse, and who gave him permission to build fortified stone-walled castles in the inland territories. In 1184, he was appointed the bishop of Livonia; he peacefully propagated Christianity with great diplomatic skill and eagerness

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this context—the conquest of the Baltic countries. See Paul Johansen, "Die Legende von der Aufsegelung Livlands durch Bremer Kaufleute," in *Europa und Übersee: festschrift für Egmont Zechlin* ["The Legend about the Discovery of Latvia by Merchants from Bremen," in Europe and Overseas: Festschrift for Egmont Zechlin], ed. Otto Brunner (Hamburg: Verlag Hans Bredov-Institut, 1961), 42–68. Today, German historians tend to agree that the merchants were from Lübeck and not from Bremen.

57 Ibid., 44.

58 This term was last used by Gero von Wilpert, *Deutschbaltische Literaturgeschichte* [History of Baltic-German Literature] (Münich: Beck, 2005).

until his death in 1196. For this reason—according to Manteuffel—he rightly deserves the title of the "Apostle of Livonia."[59] The situation changed significantly with the accession of the second bishop, Bertold, who decided to undertake an armed crusade against the Livs and came to Bremen with a powerful Teutonic regiment; he reached Üxküll, attacked, and met his unlucky end in battle (in July 1198), when he was carried by his horse into the ranks of the enemy who supposedly tore him to pieces while he was still alive. Relations between the locals and the invaders worsened to the point, however, where the next Livonian bishop, Albert de Bekeshovede (contemporary spelling: Albert von Buxhoeveden), saw no other way of claiming authority over his diocese than by heading an armed expedition. His considerable diplomatic talents aided him in this endeavor (he gained the favor of several important Low-German princes), as did the favor of Pope Innocent III, who called the faithful to "defend the Livonian Church" in a bull from October 1199, and announced that the expedition to Livonia was equivalent to a pilgrimage to Rome. He also made Albert the commander of the newly organized crusade.

Albert arrived in Livonia in the spring of 1200, heading a fleet of 23 ships and 1500 people, driven by a strong determination to strengthen the Christian mission along the eastern Baltic, primarily through building a separate bishopric there. He knew his two predecessors personally, and was perfectly aware of the complex cultural mosaic which already existed in these lands—a place where interests of local Liv leaders clashed with those of Ruthene princes (from Polotsk, Pskov, and Novgorod), with Kievan Rus, and with Dutchmen, who managed to establish their own colony in the territory of today's Estonia. In order to assert his position in this difficult situation, Albert had to take decisive action. During his first meeting with the Lithuanian leaders from Turaida (German: Treiden, Treyden), he imprisoned them and forced them to give up their sons so that they would be brought up in Germany and prepared for priesthood. He used the sons as hostages, and unscrupulously resorted to extortion against the fathers. Even though available information suggests that he was simply a brutal and ruthless ruler, German historiography tends to emphasize his far-sightedness, effectiveness in realizing his plans, determination in action, and great diplomatic skill.[60]

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59 Gustaw Manteuffel, "Inflanty Polskie poprzedzone ogólnym rzutem oka na siedmiowiekową przeszłość całych Inflant" [Polish Livonia, with a Brief Overview of the 700-year History of all of Livonia], in Manteuffel, *Pisma Wybrane* [Selected Writings], ed. Krzysztof Zajas, vol. 1 (Krakow: Universitas, 2009), 1.

60 Volker baron von Buxhoeveden and Christina von Buxhoeveden-Reuter describe Bishop Albert's personality in an interesting manner—though not without a certain tendency to whitewash his image—in "Bischof Albert: Historische Gestalt und

Albert earned a permanent place in Livonian history as a double founder: of the city of Riga and of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword. In 1201, he marked the place where the future capital of Latvia would be, with the intention of creating a trading port and an authentic merchant city on the right bank of the mouth of the Daugava. For this purpose, while building the city and the castle where he later moved the episcopal capital from Üxküll, he introduced special customs and tax exemptions for merchants and issued guarantees, which protected their wares from pirate robberies. He was able to enlist the participation of German merchants from Gotland, thanks to which the port quickly expanded its trading activity and helped the city develop rapidly. In order to emphasize the spiritual dimension of his conquests, he entrusted the new lands to the care of the Virgin Mary, and introduced the term *Terra Mariana* to refer to them. While planning to create an autonomous ecclesiastical state on the shores of the Baltic Sea, Albert had not only to win political and economic support from Germany, but also organize a military force capable of defending the new state's borders. He satisfied the first requirement by means of an extensive propaganda campaign, focused especially on northern Germany, from where German warriors and civilian settlers came to populate Riga. To meet the second requirement he needed to create a permanent military contingent. This is how the idea of the Brotherhood of the Sword first arose.

2. The Livonian Brothers of the Sword

Allegedly, the idea that a knightly monastic order modeled on Knights Templar should be brought to Livonia came from Albert's advisor Theodoric, a Cistercian abbot from Diament (German: Dünamünde, Latvian: Daugavgrīva), who obtained the Pope's permission to found the order in 1202. Albert himself was more inclined to bring German gentry to the region and let them settle there, so that once they felt at home they could become a reservoir of recruits for the

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Persönlichkeit" [Bishop Albert: Historical Profile and Personality], *Jahrbuch des baltischen Deutschtums* 50 (2003): 18–28. See also the monograph by Gisela von Gnegel-Waitschies, *Bischof Albert von Riga: ein Bremer Domherr als Kirchenfürst im Osten 1199–1229* [Bishop Albert from Riga: The Bremen Priest as a Church Official in the East, 1199–1229] (Hamburg: Velmede, 1958). An excellent introduction to the history of medieval Livonia is provided by the extensive collected volume *Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas: Baltische Länder* [History of the Germans in the East of Europe: The Baltic Countries], ed. Gert von Pistohlkors (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1994). Heinz von zur Mühlen is the author of the chapter "Livland von der Christianisierung bis zum Ende seiner Selbstständigkeit" [Livonia between Christianization and the End of Independence].