

## PRELUDE TO THE BIRTH OF THE “KINGDOM OF LIVONIA”

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The article provides an overview of the international situation and the situation in Livonia prior to the emergence of the project of the vassal kingdom of Livonia, and the developments and motives that pushed Duke Magnus of Holstein to overt collaboration with Tsar Ivan the Terrible. It is shown that the creation of the vassal kingdom was predominantly determined by external circumstances, primarily by Muscovy's hope to achieve a division of Poland-Lithuania between Russia and the Habsburgs, following a normalisation of relations with the Holy Roman Empire and the imperial court after the eclipse of the male line of the Jagiellon dynasty, without relinquishing its conquests and claims of domination in Livonia. The material is presented in the form of a narrative, in view of the failure of previous historiography to effectively focus on the timeline of the events under discussion, the relevant documents, and the general background.

By the end of 1568, the Livonian War had come to a standstill. In fact, at that time the Baltic Sea region was a scene of not one but three closely intertwined wars. The Northern Seven Years' War (1563–1570) between Sweden and the coalition of Denmark, Poland-Lithuania and Lübeck had been virtually brought to a halt by the complete exhaustion and economic bankruptcy of the principal adversaries – Denmark and Sweden. The main battlefield in Central Sweden had borne witness to Danish attacks, failures as they were, to which the Swedes responded with devastating raids; the naval war was more successful for the Swedes; in Livonia the Swedes, meeting very little resistance, had already in 1563 conquered the territories held by Duke Magnus of Holstein in Läänemaa (Wiek), and transferred hostilities to the islands. Although formally the winner, Denmark was in dire need of the peace, much more so than Sweden.<sup>1</sup>

The *rapprochement* of Sweden and Russia had in 1567 led to a short-lived alliance. In exchange for the alliance agreement, King Erik XIV agreed to surrender

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Denmark's expenses in this war were, according to the calculations of Georg Forstén, 4,762,380 thalers, or an average of 680,340 thalers per year; before the war the annual expenditures had barely amounted to 230,330 thalers, rising to 223,700 thalers a year during the post-war period; however, the annual income in post-war years was a mere 100,320 thalers (Фортен Г. Балтийский вопрос в XVI и XVII столетиях. Т. I. Тип. В.С. Балашева и Ко, Санкт-Петербург, 1893, 551–552).

to Tsar Ivan the Terrible the city of Tallinn and other Swedish possessions in Livonia, and deliver his sister-in-law Catherine Jagiellon (Katarzyna Jagiellonka), whom Ivan the Terrible had once wooed only to be rejected in a most insulting manner. According to a later account by Ivan the Terrible himself, he had believed Duke Johan of Finland to be dead, and wished to force Sigismund II Augustus to exchange his sister Catherine for the Polish-Lithuanian territories in Livonia.<sup>2</sup> However, it so happened that before the coalition treaty could be enforced, Sweden was confronted by a *coup d'état*. The King's half-brothers, to a general approval deposed the obviously deranged Erik, and imprisoned him on September 29, 1568, while Catherine's husband ascended to the throne as Johan III. The coup meant immediate cessation of hostilities between Sweden and Poland-Lithuania, yet also a disruption of Sweden's alliance with the disillusioned Ivan the Terrible, which was now replaced with a very real possibility of war. It would still be incorrect to state that the war was unavoidable, and indeed, Johan III soon dispatched to Muscovy a mission led by the Bishop of Turku Paavali Juusten in order to endorse the existing peace – at the cost of concessions, if need be. However, since the Russian embassy whose mission in Sweden (they had come to pick up Catherine Jagiellon) coincided with the coup, had had to endure mistreatment and even mugging, some sort of counter-action was inevitable from the part of Ivan the Terrible, who was particularly sensitive about his personal honour.

The second war was being waged by Muscovy and Poland-Lithuania, or, to be more precise, by Lithuania with an episodic support from Poland. This conflict had been brewing ever since Russians' invasion into Livonia in 1558, until open war finally broke out in 1562. In the 1560s the battles mostly raged in the territory of the modern Belarus. This war, too, had been brought to a standstill, and both sides were prepared to seek a truce – not just because of the stalemate in war. Russia and Poland-Lithuania alike were threatened by the Crimean Khanate and its suzerain, the Ottoman Empire living its heyday at that exact time. In 1568 Sultan Selim II agreed to an eight-year truce with Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I, which allowed the Turks to set sights on the north and north-east, even though their hostilities with the Spanish continued in the Mediterranean area. Both Muscovy and Poland-Lithuania were also plagued by domestic troubles. Russia was living the *oprichnina*-period, during which the Tsar who had subjected half of the state to his direct despotic rule, had his henchmen (of mostly Tatar and Northern Caucasian descent) terrorise and plunder the so-called *zemshchina* regions. In 1567 the plot against Tsar was revealed, after which he launched an even bloodier domestic terror campaign. Poland and Lithuania, meanwhile, were going through the process of closer integration. The Lublin *Sejm*, which worked from January 1567 until July 1569, eventually approved of the Union and created the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, or Rzeczpospolita, in which the Grand Duchy of Lithuania maintained its laws, taxes, treasury, government, frontiers, army, etc. The Union of Lublin was established against the will of the Lithuanian magnates, who were

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<sup>2</sup> Иоанн Грозный. Антология. Эксмо, Москва, 2004, 218.

faced with the fact, plain and simple; whereas Ukrainian areas, by the will of their *szlachta* (lesser nobility), voluntarily swapped the “aristocratic” Lithuanian rule for more “democratic” Polish. At any rate, the establishment of Rzeczpospolita meant that instead of just Lithuania, Muscovy was now facing a much stronger adversary. True, at first Moscow did not pay much attention to the building of the Commonwealth, outwardly at least. For Russian diplomacy, the possible truce had more relevant reasons, like the imminent eclipse of the Jagiellon dynasty, the death of Sigismund II Augustus without a direct heir, and the *interregnum* which should follow and present the Russians with an opportunity to influence the election of the King to their own ends and gain concessions, probably even partial or full annexation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; whereas participation in the election process entailed a suspension of hostilities. The impending war with Sweden was an additional motive for a truce with Poland-Lithuania.

The third war being waged in the region was a privateering campaign conducted on the Baltic Sea, which easily made enemies of allies. Denmark blocked Sweden’s ports, including Tallinn, but was unable to disrupt trade with Russia through Narva. In 1562 Denmark and Russia had entered into an agreement to regulate the military conflict ravaging Livonia in 1560. However, this was not an alliance pact, as it has often been interpreted, but a friendly neutrality agreement. Russians sabotaged the agreement during the Northern Seven Years’ War, thus enabling Sweden to beat Denmark’s blockade and purchase war materials and other commodities from Western Europe through Narva, then held by Russians. The Polish-Lithuanian privateers, in their turn, were fighting against the Narva trade, whereas Lübeck championed unhindered trade via Narva. The privateering war had various other participants, like the Hanseatic city of Danzig, and naturally Muscovy, which was also recruiting corsairs while Denmark was passively looking on. Denmark may have, understandably, experienced some confused feelings about the whole affair, seeing as it collected custom clearance tax (Sound tolls) from each merchant ship passing through the Straits of Sound, to be able to finance the war against Sweden. Safety of marine trade used to play a much bigger role in international politics (and especially in the Baltic Sea space) than could be expected.

Denmark’s relations with Poland-Lithuania inspired similarly confused feelings. In 1563 King Frederick II and King Sigismund II Augustus entered into an alliance agreement against Sweden. In reality the agreement was of little use to the Danes. The forays of the Polish-Lithuanian troops into Läänemaa in 1565 and 1567 only resulted in the devastation of land, in no way contributing towards the restitution of Duke Magnus’ possessions. Additional friction was caused by the arguments over Pärnu and Riga.

The last Master of the Livonian Order, Gotthard Kettler, was now the first hereditary Duke of Courland and Semigallia under the Polish-Lithuanian rule, and the royal governor in Livonia proper in 1562–1566, before he was forced to resign from office on suspicion of attempting to create new alliances and pursue independent policies, and lost his influence. Kettler’s removal was initiated by nobles of the Archbishopric of Riga, whereas gentry in his very own duchy also

strongly restricted his authority, forcing him to spend his later life in seclusion, mostly in Riga. The nobles of the Archbishopric and the city of Riga, however, soon fell out with the new, iron-fisted administrator Jan Chodkiewicz, the animosity setting its stamp upon their disposition towards the subsequent attempt to create a vassal Kingdom of Livonia. Upon Kettler's resignation the Pärnu household troops<sup>3</sup>, earlier associated with him (and even earlier with Magnus and Denmark), remained semi-independent for the period of 1565–1575 and continued sporadic acts of warfare against the Swedes. They also engaged in friction and clashes with the Russian troops of Viljandi on their borders and, in the autumn of 1568, staged a raid on the Muscovy-controlled Virumaa, and burned down the market town of Rakvere. An open defection of the Pärnu household troops to the side of Denmark and Magnus was prevented by the failure to hand Pärnu over to Denmark as envisaged by the Danish-Polish alliance pact, as well as by Magnus' insolvency during the period.

### **BIRTH OF THE PROJECT OF THE VASSAL STATE IN LIVONIA**

As a matter of course, the situation in Livonia was not the sole inspiration for the project of creating a vassal state of Livonia. The main reason was probably the fact that the Livonian problem, the anti-Russian sentiments and attitudes among the public in Germany, bred by the Livonian War, inhibited Russia's *rapprochement* to the imperial House of Habsburg and necessitated a compromise acceptable for all the partners, including residents of Livonia. Such a compromise, as well as any further conquests in Livonia, but without the application of the main forces of Muscovy which were needed elsewhere, were only possible in case of cooperation with Livonians (the local landed gentry and upper classes in towns, rather than the remains of the Order and the Catholic Church). The latter overwhelmingly detested the idea of being reduced to vassals of the Tsar of Muscovy, so a go-between or a marionette was needed to, knowingly or not, become an instrument in subjugating the whole of Livonia. One part, or maybe even the majority, of the Livonian elite, taking care of their own interests, were ready to adjust within certain limits. No doubt there were enough Livonians who disapproved of the dismemberment of the Livonian Confederation by the neighbouring nations, and sought the restoration of independent statehood either as a renewed confederation (e.g. as a union of three or four duchies) or a single state, in either case inevitably under the protectorate of a stronger neighbour (Denmark, Poland-Lithuania, Sweden or Muscovy). Some of the circles thus oriented saw an agreement, rather than war, with Muscovy as a way to escape the atrocities of war and dismemberment of Livonia. It was not a matter of harbouring pro-Russian sentiments

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<sup>3</sup> In German: *Havelude, Hofleute*. A closer scrutiny of the composition of these units reveals that they essentially functioned as the local gentry militia. See f. e. **Adamson, A.** Liivimaa mõisamehed Liivi sõja perioodil. – Acta Historica Tallinnensia, 2006, **10**, 2–47.

or pursuing trade interests, but rather an acceptance of the incapability of holding off the Muscovites alone, and reluctance to turn Livonia into a battleground for neighbouring states. It was their aim to save what could be saved, and at least avoid direct supremacy of Muscovy. For natural reasons, the German-speaking Livonians preferred the solution that would formally keep Livonia in the fold of the Holy Roman Empire and leave intact the political, social, economic, cultural and religious ties that had evolved over the centuries. That is why Duke Magnus who represented Denmark, a state that had traditionally maintained peaceful (albeit episodic) relations with Russia, notwithstanding his personal contribution and individual traits, was the most suitable person to take the role of the figurehead of these circles. Schleswig-Holstein of Oldenburgs provided an example of how to remain part the Holy Roman Empire, while being ruled by Denmark. True, by the end of 1568, any illusions about Denmark's military might were already dispersing. The other candidates considered, at different times and not necessarily in all Livonia, were Kettler, Duke Johan of Finland, Duke Karl of Södermanland, and the Riga Coadjutor Duke Christoph von Mecklenburg. All of them possessed (or had possessed in the past) autonomous fiefs in Livonia, which in their turn could offer an example how to solve the problem. In the already partitioned Livonia, the choice of any side would, unfortunately, lead to a conflict and possible hostilities with all the rest. In reality it was only Russia that could afford such a conflict; however the Russians had to find a suitable collaborator first.

The principal question with all these combinations was Moscow's attempt to regulate its relationship with the Empire, an act aimed at an agreement at the expense of Poland-Lithuania; and this in its turn required assuaging of the German princes, estates, Hanseatic towns and public opinion by putting an end to the hostilities between Russia and the Holy Roman Empire in the Livonian territory, and by a (seeming or actual) compromise in this respect. As later events demonstrated, however, Ivan the Terrible had no intention to surrender even a tiny bit of his conquests; instead he was determined to further expand his authority in Livonia through the creation of a vassal state, which proves that the compromise was to be but illusory. Indeed, the attempts to create a vassal state of Livonia, and its subsequent formal establishment, will probably have to be viewed in relation to the grand political ambitions of Muscovy – the intended foreign political isolation of Poland-Lithuania in the 1560s, and the struggle for the inheritance of Sigismund Augustus and for the division of Poland-Lithuania that was launched in the 1570s.

The timing seemed right and the other side appeared to be ready, or at least the ground prepared for an agreement. Grand Master of the Teutonic Order Wolfgang Schutzbar zu Milchlingen twice proposed to Ivan the Terrible a restoration of the Livonian statehood under the rule of the Teutonic Order.<sup>4</sup> The Tsar seemingly agreed, yet only on (unrealisable) condition that the supremacy of the Order be restored also in Eastern Prussia, and the latter be freed from vassalage to Poland-

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<sup>4</sup> Доннерт Э. Россия и Балтийский вопрос в политике Германии 1558–1583 гг. (Исторические Записки, 76.) Наука, Москва, 1965, 206–207.

Lithuania. Indeed the Grand Master already in December 1562 dispatched Dr. Johann Wagner, sometime servant to the former Master of the Livonian Order Wilhelm von Fürstenberg, to Muscovy to plead for the freedom of the imprisoned Master of the Order. In 1563 Emperor Ferdinand I sent a letter to Ivan the Terrible with the same request. Referring to a letter by Duke Albrecht von Hohenzollern of Prussia, Anna Khoroshkevich claims that Fürstenberg was, allegedly, appointed Livonian “governor” by the Tsar in 1564, and dispatched to Tartu with a company of 300 selected cavalymen, only to face a failure despite the support given to him by residents of Tartu.<sup>5</sup> This information, however, is hardly credible for several reasons: this is not mentioned in Livonian or Russian sources; this fact would contradict Fürstenberg’s comments when rejecting a similar offer some time later (see below); Albrecht of Prussia would have liked to see the plan of reviving the Order state thwarted and those involved discredited.<sup>6</sup> In 1563–1564 the restoration of the Order state was seriously discussed; with certain variations it was a tempting project for Muscovy, depriving the rivals of an excuse to interfere with the affairs of Livonia.<sup>7</sup> On the condition, of course, that the restituted Livonia should become Moscow’s vassal state. Besides, the involvement of another party (Teutonic Order, the House of Oldenburg, etc.) lent the conquests international credibility. Excessive focus on the centralisation policy of Ivan the Terrible often overshadows the fact that like its neighbours, Muscovy was a conglomerate state comprised of territories with different histories, conditions, nations, languagies, religions and forms of government, and it could comfortably accommodate yet another constituent state. Under the Russian rule, Livonia had its own coat of arms as early as in 1564, and the governor used a seal, which is indicative of certain autonomy aspirations.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> **Хорошкевич А.** Россия в системе международных отношений середины XVI века. Москва, 2003, 407.

<sup>6</sup> The imprisoned Fürstenberg, brought to Moscow on September 8, 1560, was indeed treated as an appanage prince in disfavour with the Tsar. On December 6 the same year, the Tsar’s deaf and feeble-minded brother Yuri ritually pleaded for pardon to the former Master of the Order, and it was indeed granted a day later: Ivan the Terrible ordered Fürstenberg to be taken to the palace, granted him an audience and invited him to his table. In June 1561, Fürstenberg and the former Bishop of Tartu Hermann were granted the town of Lyubim for sustenance (**Филюшкин А. И.** Андрей Михайлович Курбский. Просопографическое исследование и герменевтический комментарий к посланиям Андрея Курбского Ивану Грозному. Издательство Санкт-Петербургского университета, Санкт-Петербург, 2007, 57–58). A. Filyushkin mentions this fact and Duke Magnus’ later vassalage to the Tsar in order to back his postulate that such transitions (into the Tsar’s service, if not the other way round), were treated by the Muscovites as natural and legitimate. However, it would probably be wrong to view Fürstenberg and Hermann as newly-minted vassals of the Tsar, or presume that Moscow took the gesture too seriously and treated them as foreign potentates who voluntarily entered the Tsar’s service. At the same time it was only to be expected that Moscow deliberately played on this impression, as it truly helped legitimise (at home and abroad) Muscovy’s conquests in Livonia.

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. **Taube, M. v.** Die Uxkull. Genealogische Geschichte der Gesamtfamilie von Uxkull (1229–1954). III Teil. Kluge & Ström, München, 1955, 252–264.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 261; **Хорошкевич А.** Россия в системе международных отношений середины XVI века, 407. The coat of arms featured a two-headed eagle with the coat of arms of the Livonian Master of the Order at its right foot, and the seal of the Tartu Bishop at its left foot.

Westphalian native Heinrich Staden<sup>9</sup>, who served as an interpreter in Moscow during these years, writes that Ivan the Terrible's first choice for the ruler of the vassal state of Livonia was Fürstenberg. Staden, however, fails to provide a concrete year, dating the bid through preceding and subsequent events, but the year 1567 is mentioned elsewhere by the chronicler Franz Nyenstede.<sup>10</sup> The timing was most opportune, seeing that preparations for a massive military campaign into Livonia and Belarus (which failed later without any major collision of the main armies of Muscovy and Poland-Lithuania) were under way, the nobles of Livonia proper had only recently fallen out with Lithuanians, Chodkiewicz was laying siege to Riga, and some prospects had opened up to acquire Tallinn and the rest of Sweden's possessions in Livonia from the Swedish Crown through diplomatic means. Staden's story runs as follows:

.../ the Grand Prince then sent for Wilhelm Fürstenberg. The Grand Prince, dressed in his [regal] robes was sitting beside his eldest son. The *oprichniks* were standing on the Grand Prince's right hand, and the *zemshchina* on his left hand. Wilhelm Fürstenberg appeared before the Grand Prince, wearing his ordinary attire. I was standing close to Wilhelm Fürstenberg and the interpreter Kaspar Wittenberg, listening carefully whether the interpreter provided correct translation. And behold, the Grand Prince began to talk and said, "Former Master of Livonia! We want to show you our generosity and raise you to power in Livonia again. But you have to solemnly promise and swear that you will also have in your possession all of the rest: Tallinn, Riga and Finland [!], all that belonged to your former homeland. After you, the hereditary possessions of our forefathers, stretching all the way to the shores of the Baltic Sea, will be governed by the young Master Gotthard Kettler." Wilhelm Fürstenberg then told the Grand Prince, "I have never known or heard of Livonia, all the way to the Baltic Sea, being the hereditary possession of your forefathers." The Grand Prince demurred, "But you did see the fire and the sword, murders and executions. You saw how people, yourself and many others, were taken away from Livonia as prisoners. So answer me now: what do you want to do?" Wilhelm Fürstenberg retorted, "I swore allegiance to the Holy Roman Emperor: in this I am prepared to live and die." The Grand Prince then flew into a rage, and Wilhelm Fürstenberg was sent back to Lyubim. Had he consented, he would have headed out to Riga in the Grand Prince's company, while all the Germans [staying in Moscow] would have been showered with gifts of money and clothes; alas, it did not come to pass.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> H. Staden's writings, as several researchers have convincingly indicated (primarily – Альшиц Д. Начало самодержавия в России. Наука, Ленинград, 1988, 159–176), are not thoroughly reliable as he tends to lie about his own career. For example, he claims to have served in the *oprichnina*, yet presents facts that disprove the statement. He served in the *zemshchina*. Most certainly he did not participate in the 1569/70 punitive expedition to Novgorod, the colourful description of which has been extensively used in historiography, nor did he lead troops in a battle against Tatars in 1572. However, he was very well informed, and the facts cited in this article are credible enough. By the way, Staden wrote under the guidance of Count Palatine and Duke Georg Johann I von Pfalz-Veldenz-Lützelstein (1543–1592), an international fortune-seeker who took sincere interest in Russia and was married to the Swedish Princess Anna Maria.

<sup>10</sup> Franz Nyenstädt's, weiland rigischen Bürgermeisters und königlichen Burggrafen, Livländische Chronik, nebst desssen Handbuch, erstere nach ältern und neuern Abschriften, letzteres nach dessen Originalhandschrift herausgegeben von G. Tielemann. (Monumenta Livoniae antiquae: Sammlung von Chroniken, Berichten, Urkunden und anderen schriftlichen Denkmalen und Aufsätzen, welche zur Erläuterung der Geschichte Liv-, Ehst- und Kurlands dienen. Bd. II.) Verlag von Eduard Frantzen's Buchhandlung (in Riga: Druck von W. F. Häcker), Riga, 1839, 68.

<sup>11</sup> Штаден Г. О Москве Ивана Грозного. Пер. И. И. Полосина. М. и С. Сабашниковы, 1925, 88–89.

The retelling of Nyenstede, who probably relied on the account of his friend Elert Kruse, gives similar facts. The Tsar demanded that Fürstenberg, in the name of all Livonian estates and towns, renounced his allegiance to the Holy Roman Emperor, and swore an oath to him and his successors; in exchange the Tsar would restore Fürstenberg to his former position in Livonia on very favourable terms. After some deliberation, the former Master of the Order thanked the Tsar for supporting him in full accordance with his status and earlier promises, expressed hope for continuing support in the future, yet refused to break the oath.<sup>12</sup> Livonians Johann Taube and Elert Kruse, both in attendance, in their turn thanked the Tsar for the mercy shown to the poor oppressed Livonians and suggested that, even though the old Master of the Order, mostly because of his advanced age, was reluctant to accept the Tsar's generosity, they were allowed to write to the Duke of Courland and coadjutors<sup>13</sup>, and if Kettler should refuse, then to Duke Magnus. The latter will certainly accept the offer, provided he is awarded with the fiefdom of Livonia, and all the estates and towns will gladly surrender to the Duke.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Monumenta Livoniae antiquae, II, 68–69.

<sup>13</sup> At that time there were no other coadjutors in Livonia except Magnus. In June 1558 Tartu Bishop Hermann II had decided to place his diocese under the Danish protectorate, naming Duke Magnus as his coadjutor. The Cathedral Chapter, the *Stift* Council led by Bailiff Elert Kruse, and the Tartu town council agreed, and the Bishop signed the decree on July 5. Since the town was captured by the Muscovites on July 18, the decision was never implemented. Coadjutor of the Courland Bishopric Ulrich Behr in 1560 waived his rights to Magnus in exchange for material compensation, and left for Germany in 1562. The former dean of the Tartu Bishopric and coadjutor of the Tallinn Bishop, Moritz Wrangel(I), held the position of the Tallinn Bishop from March 1558 to June 1560, remaining but an *electus* without the Pope's confirmation. On June 29, 1560 he voluntarily waived his rights to Magnus and was later given a fief in Audru. Coadjutor of the Riga Archbishop, Duke Christoph von Mecklenburg entered into an alliance with Erik XIV and became engaged to his half-sister Princess Elisabet. In 1563, after the death of Archbishop Wilhelm von Hohenzollern, he attempted to forcibly, and with the Swedes' help, take over the archbishopric that had surrendered to Poland-Lithuania. After the failure, Christoph surrendered to Kettler and spent six years (until 1569) in a Polish prison, after which he relinquished all his claims to Livonia and went back to Mecklenburg.

<sup>14</sup> Taube and Kruse were men of great renown representing the highest ranks of the Livonian nobility. Elert Kruse had been the Tartu Dean and *Stift* Bailiff, Johann Taube – a judge (*Mannrichter*) and the Bishop's counsellor. Both had been taken prisoner by Russians during the Livonian War (Taube was taken to Moscow in the company of Bishop Hermann in 1558, Kruse was imprisoned at the end of 1560). After release both joined the *oprichnina* and Taube was said to have belonged to the Boyars' Duma of Moscow's *oprichnina* part. According to Kruse, he received from the Tsar two estates with 100 peasants, a house in Moscow, cloth of silk and velvet, gold, etc. (Elert Kruse's, Freiherrn zu Kells und Treiden, Dörptschen Stiftsvogts, Warhafftiger Gegenbericht auff die Ao 1578 ausgangene Liefflendische Chronica Balthasar Russow's. Gedruckt bei W. J. Häcker, Riga, 1861, 39–40). New documents have been recently introduced concerning the fate of E. Kruse and J. Taube in Russia, including their letters from Muscovy – see Herzog Albrecht von Preussen und Livland (1560–1564). Regesten aus dem Herzoglichen Briefarchiv und den Ostpreussischen Folianten. Bearbeitet von S. Hartmann. Böhlau, Köln, 2008, Nos. 3249, 3249/1, 3252/1, 3277, 3277/1–3277/4. (Veröffentlichungen aus den Archiven Preussischer Kulturbesitz. Hrsg. von J. Kloorhuis, D. Heckmann. Bd. 61.) Apart from other favours, the Tsar bestowed the title of Baron upon Kruse and Taube. This

The Tsar allegedly liked Taube and Kruse's proposal and told them to do whatever it takes to accomplish this task, counting on Moscow's assistance.<sup>15</sup> In fact, though, they were established as diplomatic agents with broad authority rather than representatives of the executive branch. In Nyenstede's narration this episode is immediately followed by Taube and Kruse's plea that they be allowed to depart for Livonia, which the Tsar allegedly granted, whereas in reality they did not arrive in Tartu until the end of 1568. The failure of the 1567 campaign probably delayed all the subsequent moves – until the news came at the end of 1568 of a low-intensity civil war in Sweden, and the dethronement of Erik XIV. In Tartu Taube and Kruse reclaimed ownership of their estates; the German citizens who had been deported to Russia were given permission to return to Tartu; and the town council resumed work upon arrival of its members.

### KRUSE AND TAUBE'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE LIVONIANS

During the 1569 Lent, Kruse and Taube, who had entered into correspondence with Tallinn somewhat earlier, at the start of the year, suggested that the town council sent a couple of members to attend negotiations in Rakvere. At the parley held on April 5–6, Kruse and Taube announced that they had been assigned by the Tsar to raise a German prince of their choice to power in the Tartu Bishopric. In case of voluntary surrender, Tallinn shall retain all its privileges and staple rights in trade with Muscovy and the status of a free city, and can have authority over Toompea. As occasion requires, Tallinn residents may designate a German prince or nobleman as a ruler, who then has to become vassal to the Tsar. Taube and Kruse insisted they had the approval of the Tsar who, so they said, is of German descent himself and wants freedom for the Germans, whereas he considers Russians “coarse and uneducated” and unfit to rule over Germans.<sup>16</sup> It is plausible that Kruse and Taube actually believed, partly at least, what they were saying,

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could be seen as an indirect confirmation of their Duma membership – most probably as Duma nobles. The rank of Baron was then unknown in Russia, while the title of a Duma noble said nothing to Western Europeans. Russian sources even identify Taube as *князь* (prince). Upon entering the service of King Sigismund II Augustus in 1571/2, they were indeed created barons and given fiefs in Livonia as well as Lithuania. Kruse, then ambassador of the King of Poland-Lithuania to Prussia, died in 1586 or 1587 (Eesti biograafiline leksikon. Akadeemilise Ajaloo-Seltsi Toimetised, II. Peatoim A. R. Cederberg. Tartu, 1926–1929, 239), Taube passed away a little earlier (Eesti biograafiline leksikon, 514). Taube later acted as a Polish-Lithuanian (though most probably just Lithuanian) diplomat. Historiography traditionally depicts Taube and Kruse as adventurers, and without doubt they did have some adventurous leaning. However, it would be equally appropriate to say that they were also patriots of Livonia. It was in this vein that they themselves justified their actions. Most probably a partial rehabilitation of these two men – or at least a more detailed analysis of their activities – would be in order.

<sup>15</sup> Monumenta Livoniae antiquae, 69.

<sup>16</sup> For a detailed account of the negotiations see **Чумиков А.** Осада Ревеля (1570–1571 гг.) герцогом Магнусом, королем ливонским, голдовником царя Ивана Грозного. – In: Чтения в Императорском обществе истории и древностей российских при Московском университете. 1892. Кн. 2, 11–15.

and were convinced that they were doing a favour to their country: creating a vassal state would relieve Moscow's tyranny, even if only for a short spell. Tallinn's deputies thanked them for their "loyalty to homeland and the good city of Tallinn" yet refused to take any decisions independently and asked for a written protocol for the city council. On April 6th they indeed received the required document along with an advice to consult Riga (!?). It remains obscure what sort of discussions took place in Tallinn after the return of the mission, yet the city council, characteristically, delayed their reaction until April 21st, when they sent a report to King Johan III, apologising for not having rejected Taube and Kruse's proposals point blank.<sup>17</sup> Such procrastination is made particularly ambiguous by the fact that the mission sent to Rakvere had included secret agents of the Swedish administration, and the King had consequently been informed of the events by his local representative. It is also worth mentioning that no letters from Taube and Kruse to the city council, or the council's answers during the period starting with the Rakvere negotiations until January 1570, i.e. during nearly ten months, are preserved in the Tallinn City Archive, although some correspondence between them must have taken place. True, in October Taube and Kruse left for Russia in the company of Duke Magnus' ambassadors, and did not return until the end of January; yet even six months is a long enough period. In Tallinn the Tsar's counsellors had considerable backing, predominantly from Kruse's kinsman, the head of the local household troops and then commander-in-chief of the Swedish troops in Livonia, Klaus Kursell and his men. Relying on the information received from Taube and Kruse, Duke Magnus later claimed in his dispatches written during the siege of Tallinn, that Tallinn's delegates attending the Rakvere negotiations (Konrad Dellingshausen, Friedrich Sandstede, Dietrich Kawer and former captain of the household troops, Heinrich Rut(h)e) had given hope for the city's surrender.<sup>18</sup>

Taube and Kruse next negotiated with Kettler, nobles of Livonia proper and Courland, etc. To Kettler they offered the throne of Livonia, yet the Duke who had been subjected to the supervision of Poland-Lithuania did not even bother to respond (according to his chancellor-chronicler Salomon Henning), and forwarded the letters to King Sigismund II Augustus instead.<sup>19</sup> Taube and Kruse had better luck with the gentry. The Nobility Corporation of the Riga Archbishopric initially promised to dispatch a deputation to Moscow, but later empowered Taube and Kruse to represent them before the Tsar – against the will of and unbeknownst to their sovereign, the King of Poland-Lithuania.<sup>20</sup> No information is available of talks with the city of Riga, yet judging by what was intimated to the representatives of Tallinn at the Rakvere conference, they may have taken place before negotiations with the Tallinn city council.

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<sup>17</sup> For a detailed account of the negotiations see **Чумиков А.** Осада Ревеля (1570–1571 гг.) герцогом Магнусом, королем ливонским, голдовником царя Ивана Грозного, 15–16.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 29, 52.

<sup>19</sup> **Henning, S.** *Livländische Churländische Chronica.* (Scriptores rerum Livonicarum, II.) Eduard Frantzen's Verlags-Comtoir, Riga, 1848, 51a.

<sup>20</sup> *Eesti biograafiline leksikon*, 238.

## NEGOTIATIONS WITH DUKE MAGNUS

As could be expected, Taube and Kruse next entered into negotiations with Duke Magnus. It is impossible to establish to what extent Magnus was aware of Taube and Kruse's mission when he took the first step. Magnus' letters from this period now kept in the National Archives of Denmark and partly published by Yuri Shcherbachev<sup>21</sup>, and his later self-justification attempts<sup>22</sup> suggest the following.

On April 3, 1569, while Taube and Kruse were waiting for the Tallinn delegation to arrive at Rakvere, Duke Magnus sent his servant Hans Saxssen to Tartu with a letter to either Kruse (who had kinship or other relations with several of his advisors) or to both Kruse and Taube, with claims of an imminent Swedish invasion of Saaremaa, and a plea to influence the Tsar to order an incursion into Harjumaa as a ploy to distract the Swedes. The letter has not been preserved but Taube's answer gives an idea of its contents. On April 25th, Taube responded that Magnus' message had reached Tartu on April 22nd, and that he had opened it in Kruse's absence. Taube assured Magnus that the latter was in favour with Ivan the Terrible; that a courier had been sent to the Tsar, and letters dispatched to the Pskov chief voivode Prince Yuri Tokmakov and all voivodes of the border forts, urging them to be prepared. Additionally, Taube entrusted Saxssen to tell Magnus how he could be useful for Livonia and the whole Christendom and put an end to bloodshed, pillaging, murders, arson, etc. Taube advised the Duke to send his confidants to Tartu, Viljandi or some other place to hold consultations on the issue.<sup>23</sup>

Thus there is no direct evidence of Magnus suggesting himself as the ruler of the vassal state to be created in Livonia. Interestingly, however, in a longer self-justification probably written at the beginning of 1579 Magnus takes credit for proposing further negotiations:

Seeing now, disconsolate and forsaken by the people as we are, how we may fall into the hands of the enemy, or how Livonia can bring shame upon us and our kin, and since it greatly worries us, we were musing how we could blend into the eternal peace pledged between the Danish Crown and the Muscovites, and we decided to designate Johann Taube and Elert Kruse, both of whom were staying in Tartu, for that purpose. And so the Grand Prince had appointed them Governor and Regent of Livonia, when we were seeking salvation from our enemies in this menace, albeit not in uttermost menace, and sent them a letter. We received an answer from

<sup>21</sup> Копенгагенские акты, относящиеся к русской истории. – In: Чтения в Императорском обществе истории и древностей российских при Московском университете. Т. I–II. Москва, 1915–1916.

<sup>22</sup> See: Hertug Magnus af Holstens forsvarsskrift af 1579 om hans forhold til tsar Ivan den Grusomme. Med F. P. Jensen – Danske Magazin. Ottende Række, Femte Bind (1975). The various fonds of the National Archives of Denmark have a wealth of Magnus' letters and their copies, response letters and other related documents (even a dossier dating from 1570 about Magnus' relations with J. Taube, E. Kruse and Ivan the Terrible, containing original letters as well as copies – TKUA. Livland A II: 9. Politiske Forhold 1566–1571); to a lesser extent they can be found in the National Archives of Sweden, mostly in the fund: Livonica, I. Ordenmästarens arkiv 37: Hertig Magnus av Ösel papper.

<sup>23</sup> Копенгагенские акты, I, No. 146.

them, in which they justly pondered the circumstances for the eternal peace pledged, and we suggested that two of our counsellors be sent to them for more thoroughgoing negotiations, to which they agreed after moderate deliberation and exchange of letters.<sup>24</sup>

It is meanwhile obvious from Taube's above-cited letter that this proposal was conveyed to Magnus by Hans Saxssen in the first days of May 1569. Magnus' letters sent from Piltene to Denmark on May 4th, which are kept in the National Archives of Denmark, give no hint of him having received Taube's dispatch; however, he expresses concern that the hostilities with the Swedes may break out again and put Kuressaare in danger. Perhaps it was below the Duke's dignity to admit his dependence on the Tsar's counsellors? Of course it is possible and even likely that more letters were exchanged (as Magnus seems to hint in the above excerpt) before the actual negotiations were launched, yet in all probability these have not been preserved. Later correspondence indicates that Magnus did not immediately inform King Frederick about the proposal and, having consulted his Livonian advisors and his special confidant, pastor of his court Christian Schrapfer, made an independent decision to accept the negotiations.

On June 7th Taube and Kruse met Magnus' representatives, Livonians Dietrich Farensbach and Klaus Aderkas in Tartu. According to a report drawn up by the latter two, Taube and Kruse announced that Ivan the Terrible was not going to tolerate the presence of Swedes and Poles in Livonia, and to avoid the ensuing bloodshed the Tsar was proposing the enfeoffment of the Tartu Bishopric to Magnus, the Danish Crown designated as the beneficiary after Magnus' death; the Duke would also be granted possession of other territories conquered by Russians, over which the Tsar would retain his hereditary rights and the prerogative to offer protection. In case the Duke refuses, the Tsar will proffer these territories to some other potentate. Regarding the castles bestowed upon the Danish Crown by the 1562 Danish-Russian agreement but *de facto* held by the Swedes (i.e. Haapsalu, Koluvere and Lihula), Russia threatened to no more recognise Denmark's legal ownership, if the Danes failed to recapture them.<sup>25</sup> Even though there is no mention of Pärnu in the report of Farensbach and Aderkas, it was probably on the agenda as well. Magnus asserts that his counsellors brought the following message from Tartu:

The Grand Prince was said to be a Christian ruler and most powerful lord, who has held the Danish Crown in very high esteem, and it was also said that we should send our emissaries with a trusted company, which they demanded of us, to the Emperor-Grand Prince, so we shall be accorded not just protection against our enemy at all times, but anything that we ask for. Indeed, they knew that the Grand Duke in his great mercy would turn towards Livonia that was seized from us.<sup>26</sup>

On June 9th Taube and Kruse wrote to Magnus in the context of the negotiations that the Tsar had decided to conquer Tallinn and the surrounding territories, for better or for worse, yet had postponed the campaign at the request of the new

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<sup>24</sup> Hertug Magnus, 60–61.

<sup>25</sup> Копенгагенские акты, I, No. 147.

<sup>26</sup> Hertug Magnus, 61.

King of Sweden, agreeing to a truce until the arrival of the Swedish envoys. In case talks with the latter failed to reach any conclusion (i.e. the surrender of Tallinn), the Tsar would help Magnus pursuant to the agreement with the King of Denmark (which actually did not envision such assistance). As regards Pärnu, Taube and Kruse would take it upon themselves to explain to the Tsar the issue of returning the town to Magnus, even though the Pärnu household troops had provided him with a good excuse (by raiding Virumaa and burning down Rakvere in the autumn of 1568) to punish them.<sup>27</sup>

In their letter dated June 21st, probably after receiving instructions from Moscow, Taube and Kruse divulged that “certain persons” had a favourable disposition towards Magnus in the “matter at hand”, wherefore they were about to leave for Moscow “on his business” on June 27th, and were impelling him to hurry to join them, in person or by proxy, without wasting time on correspondence with King Frederick. Considering the benefits for the Danish Crown and the whole Christendom, tardiness would be much likelier to incur the King’s displeasure. Should Magnus travel through Narva, they recommended to him their local trustee Hansz Diener.<sup>28</sup>

On June 30th Magnus sent a letter of thanks from Piltene, but said he did not deem it possible to act without the King’s consent, so he would send a messenger to the court. Magnus, on his part, is prepared to travel to Moscow as soon as the Tsar explains to him – in writing – why his presence is requested, and what he can expect to have in Livonia. Magnus wanted confirmation that he would be given control of the Tartu *Stift*, that the residents of Livonia would be able to practise the Augsburg Confession, retain their former privileges, freedoms, etc. Referring to the shortage of interpreters Magnus also asked for a formal German translation to be added to the Tsar’s answer. He would be heading from Courland to Kuressaare to wait for the answer there. He also wanted a large enough escort to meet him on the Varbla beach; the Tsar to request the King of Sweden to grant him safe conduct; and Taube and Kruse to join him in Tartu or Pskov.<sup>29</sup> This and the previous letters allow for a reconstruction of the path of the correspondence between Magnus and Taube and Kruse: from Piltene to Saaremaa, then through the territory of the Pärnu household troops to Viljandi, and further on to Tartu. Such a detour explains the relatively lengthy intervals between the dates of letters and responses.

However, Magnus did not send his report, along with the copies of Taube and Kruse’s letters, to King Frederick until July 6th. He presented the exchange as the Tsar’s proposal communicated by Taube and Kruse, and asked for his brother’s advice. In the postscriptum Magnus asked the King not to forget Livonia at the ongoing peace negotiations with Sweden, and to defend it should the war continue.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Копенгагенские акты, I, No. 148.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., No. 149.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., No. 150.

<sup>30</sup> Датский архив. Материалы по истории древней России, хранящиеся в Копенгагене. Университетская типография, Москва, 1893, No. 197.

On August 4th the King signed his response to Magnus, in which he refrained from expressing an opinion, and advised to wait until a confirmation from the Tsar.<sup>31</sup> Seeing that the exchange of letters took place during the summer navigation season, the interval between the two dates is rather lengthy, giving evidence of serious discussions in King Frederick's inner circle. The King's claim that he did not receive his brother's letter until August 2nd is not credible. The drawn-out and financially exhausting Northern Seven Years' War had exacerbated relations between the King and the State Council, and the councillors' majority opposed any new complications. On August 24th the King sent another letter from Helsingör, which is probably lost, but whose contents can be gleaned from Magnus' answer (see below).

According to Duke Magnus, he also gave an overview of the events to his other blood relatives – probably his mother the Dowager Queen Dorothea, his brother Duke Johann (Hans) the Younger of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Plön, his uncle Duke Johann (Hans) the Elder of Schleswig-Holstein-Hadersleben, his uncle Duke Adolf of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp, his brother-in-law Augustus, Elector of Saxony and his sister Anna, another brother-in-law Duke Wilhelm of Braunschweig-Lüneburg, Duke Ulrich of Mecklenburg-Güstrow, etc.:

We wrote a detailed account of this whole situation, which we then urgently dispatched, complete with the copies of letters from Taube and Kruse, to all our blood relatives, most dutifully asking their advice, in order to thoroughly ponder the matter before we receive a message [from Moscow], so that no misfortune should befall us from the Grand Prince being a barbaric and unknown to us overlord living a long way off. Let those in the highest seats be placed in our position, where the negotiations, judging by the letters from Taube and Kruse, promised furtherance of our country and nation, and most importantly, salvation for the troubled land. Then may they not expostulate with us about the circumstances. Our blessed Mother, especially, has written that we should not procrastinate, or avoid the issue altogether.<sup>32</sup>

We only have Magnus' word to confirm that Dowager Queen Dorothea approved of the plan. However, Dorothea's earlier support for Magnus and her repeated mediation attempts between Magnus and Frederick II, as well as Magnus and Erik XIV, lend some credibility to his claim.

In July the political situation in Estonia narrowly escaped taking a drastic turn. Danish Admiral and state councillor Peder Munk sailed to Tallinn with a Danish-Lübeck fleet of more than thirty ships, dropped anchor in dense fog, raided the port and all the ships making berth there, and would have taken the city as well, had he known it was not expecting an attack. The fog concealed the fleet's arrival from the view of Tallinn residents, and the city's defenceless walls from Munk. Munk stayed in the roads for 13 days, during which time he commandeered more than thirty merchant ships in the port and numerous others at sea, he also towed a host of Finnish boats from the port to the bay and burned them. Danish sources mention up to 150 hijacked or burnt ships (probably counting the Finnish boats as

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<sup>31</sup> Датский архив. Материалы по истории древней России, хранящиеся в Копенгагене. Университетская типография, Москва, 1893, No. 199.

<sup>32</sup> Hertug Magnus, 61.

well). This demonstration of force must have boosted the value of the Danish King's brother in the eyes of the Russians. Even though Munk's foray was a blatant breach of the local truce in Livonia, which, true enough, did not have the royal endorsement, no retaliation followed from Sweden's part. Magnus, however, was probably still apprehensive because he did not arrive at Kuressaare until November 30th.

On August 20th Taube and Kruse were back to Tartu, from where they informed Magnus that they had tried to most dutifully champion his cause before the Tsar, who was still showing benevolence and good will towards Magnus. However, since the Tsar is expecting a visit from the delegations of Poland-Lithuania and Sweden in September, the Duke should postpone his trip to Moscow. The Tsar first wants to see the Duke's envoys who have to arrive at Tartu by September 10th, and after that, "with the first winter road", Magnus himself. The Tsar does not want to decline Magnus and has therefore sent him a safe conduct under the great seal complete with the German translation, although it is not required according to the Danish-Russian treaty. So the Duke should not waste time on waiting for a response from the King of Denmark. Taube and Kruse did not reveal whether the Tsar had agreed to the terms stipulated in Magnus' latest letter. However, reading between the lines it appears that he had not, because they mention having received Magnus' last letter upon their return to Tartu. Consequently Taube and Kruse could not have discussed the terms with the Tsar – or else they simply wanted to cover up the lack of positive response. Magnus, however, can expect to be blessed with "the highest prosperity", they claimed.<sup>33</sup> The letter could be interpreted as a proof that the creation of the Kingdom of Livonia had not yet received the conclusive stamp of approval from the Tsar (why else wait for negotiations with the embassies of Poland-Lithuania and Sweden?) but had, for the time being at least, merely remained an initiative of the Livonian nationals Taube and Kruse, who took risks while promoting the project, and exceeded their authority by handing out big promises in the name of the Tsar.

Dundaga, September 8th. Magnus wrote to Frederick that he interpreted the King's letter from August 24th as acquiescence to the proposals made by the Tsar's counsellors, and would forward to him their latest dispatch. He had decided to first send his counsellors to Moscow to probe the situation, and then follow them, weather and road conditions permitting. Magnus requested a royal delegation to accompany him to Moscow; complained about his financial distress and anticipated large expenditures; implored the King to persuade Kettler to pay back the 20,000 thalers he owed to Magnus (this was the debt of the former Master of the Order to the late King Christian III, which Frederick II had transferred to Magnus); requested ships and troops to protect Kuressaare against the Swedes; asked Frederick to remind the Polish King of Poland's alliance treaty with Denmark and seek his approval for Pärnu's passing into the hands of Magnus.<sup>34</sup> The same day,

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<sup>33</sup> Копенгагенские акты, I, No. 151.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., No. 152.

Magnus wrote to the Danish Steward of the Realm Peder Oxe, asking for a 10,000 thaler loan from the King, and a valuable gift for the Tsar. The Duke also sent Oxe two hunting dogs.<sup>35</sup>

Indeed, Frederick II had meanwhile decided to take advantage of the situation and send a delegation to Muscovy. The documents written by his own hand and signed in Copenhagen on September 10th (an instruction, a secret instruction, a letter of proxy, a letter to Taube and Kruse, a covering letter to Russian voivodes<sup>36</sup>), addressed to the envoys Christoffer Valkendorf and Elias Eysenberg, reveal the motives and purposes behind this decision. The instruction provides four main points of negotiation: 1. Russians have built a convent a fair distance from their border in the common taxation area of Lappland, putting a pressure on Danish subjects there as well as in Narva, and causing them major damage, an act which is in conflict with the Danish-Russian treaty; 2. the Tsar's possible invasion of Livonia must not involve the possessions of Denmark and Duke Magnus in Livonia; 3. according to the anti-Sweden alliance agreement between Denmark and Poland-Lithuania the King of Poland has surrendered Pärnu and Padise to the Danish Crown; Pärnu was not counted among the Danish possessions in the Danish-Russian treaty, but this has to change; 4. despite the Emperor's mediation efforts and the 1568 Treaty of Roskilde, the Swedes haven't ceased hostilities; therefore Frederick has decided to carry on with the war, and the Tsar has to be persuaded to suspend trade with Sweden and stop providing any other assistance. In the secret instruction the King informed the envoys that their sole mission was to incite Muscovy into war against Sweden, wherefore the negotiations were to be started from the last provision of the instruction. They were also advised to impart that the Swedes were pressuring Denmark to end all trade with Russia, only to meet with Frederick's refusal, who instead ordered the hanging of several Polish and Swedish corsairs found guilty of obstructing free trade between Denmark and Russia. The next in importance was the Russians' land seizure in Lappland, the third was Pärnu, and the last – the plea that the Tsar did not touch the possessions of Denmark and Magnus in Livonia (Läänemaa was held by the Swedes anyway and any raids by Russians would have harmed Sweden in the first place, while Saaremaa and the Piltene region were not directly threatened). All the proposals put to Magnus were to be heard out, yet no binding promises were to be made.

It is not quite clear why Frederick II never dispatched the delegation. Or, in fact, there were several reasons like, for example, conflicts with the State Council, fear of further deterioration of relations with Poland-Lithuania, hopes for a breakthrough at peace negotiations with Sweden, etc.<sup>37</sup> It was not until December 14th

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<sup>35</sup> Датский архив, No. 202.

<sup>36</sup> Копенгагенские акты, I, No. 153–157.

<sup>37</sup> It was only in December 1569 – January 1570 that the disagreements of Frederick II and his State Council erupted into a crisis. On January 1st the King in an unusually personal and emotional letter informed the State Council, which had demanded immediate peace with Sweden at all costs, while also speaking against new taxes, about his intention to step down rather than accept an actual defeat from Sweden despite all the sacrifices and costs. On January 15th Frederick II

that the King, then staying at Fredriksborg, finally informed Magnus of his decision not to send his envoys to Russia, as in his opinion it would do more harm than good and breed suspicion and distrust among neighbouring monarchs, the King of Poland in particular. Frederick left it up to Magnus to decide whether to travel to Moscow, or continue contacts with Ivan the Terrible through Taube and Kruse. The King also refused to send gifts to the Tsar. However, it is obvious from the above that Frederick did not discourage communication between his brother and the Tsar. On the contrary – Magnus had free hand. Also it has to be stressed that for Magnus, despite all the difficulties an agreement with Ivan the Terrible was not the only alternative to ward off the Swedish threat. Allies were being sought elsewhere as well. Thus records have been preserved of the same period (August 30, 1569 to be more exact) concerning the negotiations of Johann Zoege and Christian Schrapfer with Danzig over joint action against the Swedes.<sup>38</sup>

### MAGNUS' DELEGATION IN MUSCOVY

Sometime in September the authorised representatives of Duke Magnus – Chancellor Konrad Burmeister, Court Marshal Toennis Wrangel, and *Stift* Bailiff of Läänemaa Klaus Aderkas with a 34- or 39-strong entourage – set out for Moscow. The mission thus included two of Magnus' highest-ranking courtiers and a close confidant, who had already attended negotiations with Taube and Kruse. On October 3rd the deputation reached Tartu where Taube and Kruse were waiting impatiently, but the journey was not resumed until October 12th.<sup>39</sup> They arrived in Novgorod on October 20th, and continued on October 23rd.<sup>40</sup> The envoys were taken to one of the Tsar's favourite residences, the Alexandrovskaya *sloboda*. The lengthy duration of the journey can perhaps be explained with the seasonal poor road conditions, but other possible factors may have been the Tsar's hesitancy, complications during the talks, etc. It was not until November 27th (the actual negotiations between the ambassadors and Russian diplomats were conducted prior to this date, as a matter of course) that the Tsar personally received the envoys and handed over a document sanctioning the terms of the agreement.<sup>41</sup> These terms were the following. The Tsar would donate to Magnus, his children and heirs Riga, Tallinn, and the whole of Livonia. The Duke was to appear in person before the Tsar and pledge to loyally serve him against Lithuania, Poland and

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left Copenhagen. On January 18 the state councillors, scared by the prospect of an *interregnum* and civil war, caved in, asked the King to return and agreed to new taxes to finance the war. See **Lockhart, P. D.** *Frederik II and the Protestant Cause: Denmark's Role in the Wars of Religion, 1559–1596.* Brill, Leiden, 2004, 43–44; **Jensen, F. P.** *Danmarks konflikt med Sverige 1563–1570.* (Skrifter utgivet af Det historiske institut ved Københavns universitet. Bind XII.) København, 1982, 289.

<sup>38</sup> **Schiemann, T.** Magnus, König von Livland. – In: **Schiemann, T.** *Characterköpfe und Sittenbilder aus der baltischen Geschichte des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts.* E. Behre's Verlag, Mitau, 1877, 98.

<sup>39</sup> Копенгагенские акты, I, No. 158.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 159.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 160.

Sweden. Of Livonia, which was controlled by the Muscovites, the Tsar would grant the Duke, upon his arrival, what is appropriate to his position, yet the King of Denmark was to have no rights to the possessions bestowed upon Magnus. The Tsar agreed that, should Magnus abdicate or die heirless, a member of the Danish royal house would be elected new ruler, but only on condition that he take a similar oath of loyalty, and that the King of Denmark enter into permanent alliance with the Tsar against the said countries. (This precondition rendered the agreement unacceptable for Denmark in a longer perspective.) In case the sole inheritor was the King of Denmark, the situation was to be discussed further with the Tsar. Livonia's tribute was to remain insignificant: Riga was to pay "a gift" of no more than 100 Hungarian guldens (i.e. no more than 150 thalers), the other towns "according to the situation". Duke Magnus was to come to the Tsar's assistance, when occasion required, with 1,500 cavalrymen and 1,500 infantrymen, but this obligation could be replaced by a payment of 3 thalers per cavalryman, and 1½ thalers per infantryman. Besides, the Tsar would not request this assistance from Magnus until the whole of Livonia was under his control. However, the Tsar would pay for the upkeep of the army assembled by the Duke. During military campaigns Magnus would act as a commander of his own troops, considered to be higher in rank than the Tsar's voivodes and princes. In case the Tsar did not personally attend the campaign, Magnus' presence was not required either. If the Tsar provided reinforcements to Magnus' troops in his battles against the Tsar's enemies, Magnus would retain the position of commander-in-chief. When occasion required, Magnus was to hire German arquebusiers for the Tsar's army – at the Tsar's expense. In case of local insurgency in Livonia the Tsar would send help to Magnus. Livonia was to retain the Augsburg Confession, old laws, rights and freedoms, but the Tsar was to serve as the final court of appeals. Livonians were allowed to freely travel and engage in trade activities in the whole of Muscovy without having to pay taxes. Russia's transit trade through Livonia was not to be impeded by any means. Upon the arrival of Duke Magnus the Tsar would hand him the relevant document endorsed with the gold seal. In all likelihood, the discussion was not restricted to these issues alone, as shown below.

Information about the audience with the Tsar and the contents of the letter of confirmation reached Magnus probably sometime in December, even though his envoys did not return to Kuressaare until January 27, 1570. (Again an incomprehensibly long interval of two months, which could be explained by the envoys' travelling in the company of the *oprichnina* punitive troops advancing towards Novgorod, led by the Tsar in person, and with Taube and Kruse in attendance – or by some other reason.) It is hard to believe that, despite the secrecy of the whole project (which could not have been maintained anyway; the departure of three influential members of the Duke's inner circle must have been rather conspicuous<sup>42</sup>), no courier was sent in advance, seeing that the matter was of

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<sup>42</sup> Indeed it was. The Administrator of Livonia proper Jan Chodkiewicz on November 5, 1570 wrote to Gotthard Kettler about Magnus' embassy sent to Moscow (**Schiemann, T.** Magnus, König von Livland, 98).

paramount importance. The postal service in Muscovy was exemplary in the period context (it was under Ivan IV that a network of post stations was established in Russia patterned after the earlier Tatar example), and express couriers travelled at least 8–10 km per hour a day – slower at nighttime, faster by day. In winter conditions the progress was considerably quicker, meaning that it must have taken urgent messages less than a week to cover the distance between Moscow and Tartu, even considering glitches along the way. Further passage may have been more complicated, but if there was postal service between Tartu and Kuressaare at all (and there was, as we have seen), it could not have been too time-consuming. A letter from Magnus to Frederick II signed in Kuressaare on January 3, 1570, in which the Duke writes that he has sent his envoys to Muscovy, and they have already travelled on from Tartu in the company of Taube and Kruse, probably signifies that Magnus had received the message.<sup>43</sup> This news, which was over three months late, was probably intended to prepare the brother for accepting the terms offered by the Tsar.

The other lieges in Livonia were aware of the course of events, which was hardly surprising for them. After all, the Swedish authorities had received information about the plans of Ivan the Terrible to put a German prince to power in Livonia from first-hand sources as early as in April 1569; Kettler was notified at about the same time, and Sigismund Augustus just a little later. The list of candidates could not have been very long, and Magnus was certainly near the top of it. Kettler even sent his envoys to Saaremaa to urge Magnus not to put any trust in the promises of the blood-thirsty tyrant.<sup>44</sup> Magnus' long-time secretary and trusted man Friedrich Gross was detained by Polish authorities in Warsaw in the spring of 1570 and eventually, on October 10th, gave a testimony in which he admitted his participation in negotiating the agreement between Magnus and Ivan the Terrible, and provided a detailed description of the contents of the Tsar's letter of confirmation.<sup>45</sup>

### KLAUS KURSELL'S MUTINY

On January 7, 1570 the situation took yet another turn. The Swedish Crown had become insolvent during the lengthy war, and owed several years' payment to its three banners of Livonian household troops stationed in Tallinn, making no effort to guarantee the soldiers' living. Repeated petitions for money from Gabriel Kristiernsson Oxenstierna (Tallinn Governor from November 1568 to October 1570) as well as Kursell were virtually dismissed. Attempts were made to patch the debt with revenues from Finland which were, however, chronically inadequate. Johan III incited Oxenstierna to secretly arrest the leaders of mutiny and send them to Finland. He also declared that the household troops eager to receive their paycheck must return from their homeland to the Swedish battlefield, where they

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<sup>43</sup> Копенгагенские акты, II, No. 162.

<sup>44</sup> **Henning, S.** *Livländische Churländische Chronica*, 51a.

<sup>45</sup> Копенгагенские акты, II, No. 194.

had already fought in 1564–1566. Kursell with one headlong charge now seized the castle of Toompea – albeit not the whole of Toompea but just the Small Fortress, the former Order castle – and took Oxenstierna prisoner. As a possible reason for the mutiny, this act could be described as Kursell’s last resort. His men were already extremely discontented, and up to their necks in debt. The Toompea castle was taken as a warrant of eventual payment. Until then Kursell, at least ostensibly, had demonstrated his undivided loyalty to the Crown, although he probably cherished the hope of the fourth and youngest son of Gustav Vasa, Duke Karl of Södermanland, becoming the overlord of Estonia. Such a project did exist indeed, and some territories taken from Duke Magnus – Muhu, Maasilinn, Kihelkonna, maybe also Hiiumaa – had been incorporated in Karl’s duchy. This project also emerged later on, during the Russo-Swedish war. So it is probably not too far-fetched to suggest that Kursell was against the Sweden exercising direct control over Estonia. Kursell’s patron and friend, Duke Karl, was later seriously displeased with his execution, achieving a discharge of his brother Heinrich and the “captains” Uexküll and Vitinghoff. The Duke was, then and later also, suspected – though probably unfairly – of having something to do with Kursell’s mutiny.<sup>46</sup>

The alarmed town council hurriedly mediated an agreement, pursuant to which Oxenstierna was released, while the Toompea castle was to stay in Kursell’s hands until next Whitsuntide, by which time King Johan was expected to produce the sum due, or any other competent decision. The only solution Johan III saw was, however, an urgent dispatch of additional troops and commanders from Finland to Tallinn, and an order to reclaim the castle at all costs.

Now the questions. Were the arrears in payments (or in other words – the ensuing disappointment in the Swedish Crown) the only motive for the mutiny, or was there something else behind it? The payment debacle has always been viewed as the principal reason; however, Erik XIV has granted Kursell, as a compensation and for his services, monetary bonuses (a record was made of 4,000 thalers donated to him and his brother Heinrich) as well as the estates of Tamba and Varbla (that once belonged to the Farensbach family) and Virtsu (property of the Uexküll family) in Läänemaa, and the Lihula castle in October 1567. Was Kursell conspiring with Taube, Kruse and maybe also Magnus? Like Kruse and Taube, Kursell came from the Tartu *Stift*. Is it plausible that the two men, while corresponding with various and sundry people over a long period, ignored the chief of the household troops Kursell, who was, furthermore, Elert Kruse’s kinsman? Klaus Kursell’s brother Christoph was a canon of Saare-Lääne Bishopric and counsellor to Duke Magnus. Several of his family and next of kin (like the Farensbach family) had feudal holdings in Läänemaa and Hiiumaa, legally in Magnus’ possession. Kursell had conducted negotiations leading to a truce with Magnus’ advisors in Saaremaa. Had the Duke been in contact with him after the launch of his Moscow-project? The speed at which the subsequent events

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<sup>46</sup> **Tawaststjerna, W.** Pohjoismaiden viisikolmattavuotinen sota: Vuosien 1570 ja 1590 välinen aika. Suomen Historiallinen Seura, Helsinki, 1918–1920, 18–19.

proceeded, however, seems to indicate that Kursell had no previous arrangement with Magnus. Had there been conspiracy, Duke Magnus would have learned about the exploits in Tallinn and reacted around January 9–10; in reality it was not until after nearly four weeks that he took any actual steps to avail himself of the situation. However, it is also possible that he simply preferred to await the return of his embassy from Russia along with the documents procured and the sensitive information not trusted with any couriers before taking any radical steps. (Indeed he reacted immediately after the return of his envoys.) Kursell may have timed his coup for the start of January because of some opportune moment, or because of his fear of being exposed. According to Nyenstede, it was Kruse and Taube who tried to play the Tallinn castle into Magnus' hands. According to Alexander Chumikov, however, Kursell's acts can be put down to his desire to cooperate with Magnus.<sup>47</sup> The general backdrop and chronology of the events appear to back this theory.

During Kursell's mutiny the Tallinn councillors received a letter (dated February 7, 1570) from their Tartu counterparts, urging Tallinn residents to turn their backs on Sweden – and it goes without saying that Taube and Kruse were the masterminds behind the message.<sup>48</sup> Among other things the Tartu city councillors wrote:

*.../ it is high time that you should think about your future; can anyone wish any better fate for Tallinn than life in peace and love with the mighty Tsar of Russia and under the German rule? You will get a chance to resume trade with the Hanseatic and Vendic towns and on the Baltic Sea. Duke Magnus will liberate you from eternal servitude and will protect you against any calamity.<sup>49</sup>*

In a letter sent some time in February and in their own name, Taube and Kruse congratulated the Tallinn city council on the “liberation” of the Toompea castle, and asked the council and aldermen to keep in mind that it was only thanks to trade with Russia that Tallinn had been able to accumulate its wealth, might and freedom; now, however, the Russian trade has left and they are suffering under foreign (read: Swedish) rule.

*Under a German ruler, on the other hand, you can again gain peace and wealth, you will be allied to all the states in the Holy Roman Empire, Denmark and Hansa, and pursue custom-free trade with Germany, Russia, in Hyrcania, Media, Armenia and Persia. .../ If you accept our terms, we are prepared to persuade the Tsar to open up all the trade routes to you again, or else you will be facing a terrible calamity.<sup>50</sup>*

On February 26th the Tallinn city council sent a polite refusal, while expressing hope to continue living in peace with Tartu.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Monumenta Livoniae antiquae, II, 70; **Чумиков А.** Осада Ревеля (1570–1571 гг.) герцогом Магнусом, королем ливонским, голдовником царя Ивана Грозного, 17.

<sup>48</sup> **Чумиков А.** Осада Ревеля (1570–1571 гг.) герцогом Магнусом, королем ливонским, голдовником царя Ивана Грозного, 16–17.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 17–18.

On February 4th the letters of Duke Magnus to the city council as well as to Kursell, in which he sought safe conduct for his envoys, finally reached Tallinn. These letters were written on January 28th, or the day after Magnus' delegation returned from Muscovy. The city council declined Magnus' request, but Kursell immediately sent not only the letter of safe conduct, but also an escort of one hundred men to meet the delegation at Lihula. Lihula was manned with a team loyal to Kursell. In a letter dated February 23, 1570 Magnus instructed his envoys Jürgen Villigken (Georg Wilcken), Stephan Klingsporen and Johann Farensbach<sup>52</sup> to tell the Swedes in Tallinn that the Duchy of Estonia (Tallinn, Harjumaa and Virumaa) belonged to Denmark, and that the Tsar was proffering these territories under the "German" rule and Danish Crown, promising to terminate hostilities against the said territories if his offer were accepted. Since the Tallinn city council barred the envoys from entering the city, the negotiations were held three German miles from Tallinn. This is when Kursell resorted to flagrant treachery. An agreement was reached with the representatives of Duke Magnus that two hundred musketeers would be sent from Kuressaare to reinforce the Toompea castle garrison. Magnus could not have possibly spared any more men anyway, even if he wanted to. Fearing a Swedish attack along the road, Kursell ordered his captains – Heinrich Boismann and Johann Maydel – with two banners of household troops to meet the musketeers. Toompea was thus left virtually defenceless, although the castle would have probably been unable to accommodate all three banners anyway.

However, the night before Holy Saturday (March 24, 1570), the Swedes recaptured the Toompea fortress with cunning. According to a letter from Oxenstierna to Kettler, the Swedish side lost only one man, while "many" of Kursell's men were killed, and about 100 were taken prisoner, including Klaus Kursell himself.<sup>53</sup> Kursell was soon sentenced to death and executed along with a few companions, whereas most of his accomplices, including his brother Heinrich, were later pardoned thanks to the interference of Duke Karl. The only option left for the two surviving banners waiting for the musketeers in the villages of Harjumaa and Läänemaa was to join forces, head for Russia's domain and enter the Tsar's service. In June the Swedes seized Lihula again. The same two banners of household troops and a host of Russians came to Lihula's rescue (thus openly launching hostilities between Muscovy and Sweden), but arrived too late. In the purges and exfiltration that followed the suppression of Kursell's revolt, Magnus lost plenty of supporters in Tallinn, which, among other reasons, accounts for the failure of the 1570–1571 siege of Tallinn.

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<sup>52</sup> Копенгагенские акты, II, No. 163. The instruction came with a note according to which it was found on Kursell who was imprisoned on March 24, 1570, and sent by Erik XIV to Sigismund II Augustus, who in turn must have forwarded it to Frederick II.

<sup>53</sup> Herzog Albrecht von Preussen und Livland (1565–1570). Regesten aus dem Herzoglichen Briefarchiv und den Ostpreussischen Folianten. Bearbeitet von S. Hartmann. Böhlau, Köln, 2008, No. 3699/1, letter from March 24, 1570. (Veröffentlichungen aus den Archiven Preussischer Kulturbesitz. Hrsg. von J. Kloorhuis, D. Heckmann. Bd. 63.)

However, in April, Taube and Kruse once more sent to the Tallinn city council their terms offered in Rakvere in the name of “the mightiest and invincible Tsar and Grand Duke”, along with a safe conduct for any possible delegation of the city council (the letter arrived on April 14th).<sup>54</sup>

## HESITATIONS

It was time to set out for Moscow, but Magnus was in no hurry. He had several reasons for hesitation: Frederick II had failed to unequivocally commit to the project; the whole undertaking was costly; the Toompea castle takeover was still under way; in 1569–1570 Magnus had been receiving messages from Kettler (from Sigismund II Augustus in a roundabout way, in fact), admonishing him to avoid making any deals with Ivan the Terrible; also Sigismund II Augustus sent him a letter in similar vein on December 3, 1569<sup>55</sup>; the administrator of Livonia proper Chodkiewicz threatened him with military intervention, and was indeed preparing for an occupation of the Courland Bishopric; alarming news came from Russia about the horrifying acts of violence committed by the massive punitive expedition of the *oprichnina* in the Novgorod and Pskov regions. An army several thousands in strength under the command of Ivan the Terrible in person had first wreaked havoc in towns and villages between Moscow and Novgorod, but mostly in Tver. What happened in Novgorod, however, was far beyond anything anyone had ever heard.<sup>56</sup> In February the punitive troops moved on to Pskov, which but a few months earlier had suffered massive executions and deportations of hundreds of families (in the wake of the conquest of Izborsk by Lithuanians and Russian deserters, and the subsequent recapture of the fortress), and was therefore spared the worst this time around, and also to Narva and the Pechory Monastery, i.e.

<sup>54</sup> **Чумиков А.** Осада Ревеля (1570–1571 гг.) герцогом Магнусом, королем ливонским, голдовником царя Ивана Грозного, 18.

<sup>55</sup> **Arnell, S.** Bidrag till belysning av den baltiska fronten under det nordiska sjuårskriget 1563–1570. Almqvist & Wiksell International, Stockholm, 1977, 191.

<sup>56</sup> Contemporaries placed the number of victims of the Novgorod punitive expedition at 27,000 (Послание Иоганна Таубе и Элерта Крузе. – Русский исторический журнал, 1922, книга 8, 50), 29,000, 40,000, 60,000, even up to 300,000. Later researchers suggested 40,000, 20,000, 10,000... The closer to the present day, the smaller the numbers. The eminent Russian historian Ruslan Skrynnikov, who has researched the problem in great detail, believes the correct number of executed persons to have been about 2,800. (The whole region of Novgorod at that time had a population of not more than 1.5 million, of these 25,000–30,000 lived in Greater Novgorod. The population of the whole of Muscovy halfway into the reign of Ivan the Terrible was 6–8 million, towards its end about 4–5 million, although much smaller figures have been suggested, too.) It is a matter apart that the devastation was followed by famine and plague, which claimed considerably more lives. Neither, however, was an aftermath of the punitive expedition. Plague had spread to Russia in 1569 at once from the west and from the south; the years 1569 and 1570 were also lean years. The estimated number of plague victims in Muscovy between 1569 and 1571 has been put at about 300,000. The epidemic as well as the famine also hit Livonia (crop failure in 1566–1567, plague in 1569–1570).

the territory of ethnic Estonians. Although there is no mention in primary written sources<sup>57</sup> of Ivan the Terrible going beyond Pskov, a Pechory local legend and an inscription (probably from a later date) on the gravestone of the monastery's Igumen, Archimandrite Cornelius claim that on February 20, 1570 the Tsar in a fit of rage beheaded the Cornelius, abbot of the monastery in 1529–1570, in front of the Holy Gate. He immediately regretted his rash deed, took the martyr's headless body in his arms and carried it to the Uspenski (Dormition of Our Lady) Church, the dripping blood outlining the so-called Bloody Path. Thus, even though Ivan the Terrible was within reach of the Livonian border at the end of February 1570 (and, as far as is known, Taube and Kruse were also in attendance in Pskov), he did not hurry to arrange a meeting with Magnus, for reasons of his own. Heading towards Moscow was a very large Polish-Lithuanian delegation (718 people with 900 horses, and 643 merchants along with servants and caravans), which arrived on March 3, 1570 with a truce in mind. It is unclear how much Duke Magnus knew of the delegation (without doubt he was aware of this long-prepared mission, though, as also Taube and Kruse had mentioned it) or what he thought of this prospect. If he wanted to get the whole of Livonia under his control, he needed an enduring state of war between Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy, and rekindled hostilities between Muscovy and Sweden. On March 10, 1570 Magnus wrote a letter to Taube and Kruse in Tartu, which has not been preserved, but their answer signed on March 15th and Magnus' latter self-justification give some hints of its contents.

Now, beside the Grand Prince's message, also Taube and Kruse have written to us, advising against a delay, and have told us to travel to the Grand Prince and seek his great mercy, and with this they gave us to understand that should we cancel or postpone the trip, the Count Palatine<sup>58</sup> and Duke Adolf of Holstein and other German princes had sent their envoys to Russia, all of whom held negotiations over the expropriated lands, then we felt sorry for the Heavenly Father and our blood relatives. But we still had a personal opinion of one of these foul letters urging us to travel to a faraway and obscure place, and we wrote to Taube and Kruse, saying that one of their dispatches to us was quite abstruse and did in no way express why it should be so important for the Grand Prince that we travel to a distant, strange and barbaric place that no German prince has ever seen fit to visit, and therefore we asked for a written declaration, or else the trip would be cancelled altogether. We have dispatched this letter with our secretary Heinrich Leutholdt.<sup>59</sup>

Taube and Kruse answered that Chodkiewicz wanted to intimidate Magnus, but the Tsar had firmly decided to protect him against the King of Poland and his allies, and respective orders had been given to the Pskov voivode Prince Yuri Tokmakov. Regarding the Duke's incertitude about what exactly the Tsar is ready

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<sup>57</sup> See Псковские летописи. Вып. 1. Издательство Академии наук СССР, Москва, 1941, 115–116. According to this document, the Igumen Cornelius greeted the Tsar in front of the Pskov gates, and was not killed. Instead, the years 1575 and 1577 have been suggested for the death or murder of Cornelius.

<sup>58</sup> Count Palatine and Duke Georg Johann I von Pfalz-Veldenz-Lützelstein.

<sup>59</sup> Hertug Magnus, 62. Leutholdt's status as a secretary suggests that F. Gross had already been sent off on his doomed mission.

to bestow upon him, Taube and Kruse want to make sure that the settlement be extended to the whole of Livonia. So the Duke had better not linger but act speedily, in order to arrive in due time, by May 9th. The actual reason why Chodkiewicz, allegedly, has 3,000 Poles and 200 Germans to the north of Riga (these figures were most likely gleaned from Magnus' letter; Chodkiewicz probably wrote to him in a thinly veiled threat that he had assembled these forces "in defence" of the Duke) is that the Swedes have asked for his support "against Tallinn" (Kursell's mutiny had not yet been suppressed). Taube and Kruse also referred to the conflict between Chodkiewicz and Kettler.<sup>60</sup>

Magnus' version:

Thereupon they sent with him [Leutholdt] a letter written in Johann Taube's hand, and assured us that we should not have any misgivings, since we would be doing the Grand Prince a great honour by visiting him in person and speaking about the appropriated lands, and that all our wishes would be granted; that the Grand Prince does not express this in his letter is because he is too high a lord to break his word, and he wants to personally pay a tribute to us. With this explanation we travelled from Saaremaa to Tartu, arriving on Thursday before Easter *Anno 70*; in this very same letter Johann Taube stands by his opinion.<sup>61</sup>

## THE MISSION OF ADERKAS AND BURMEISTER

Magnus' envoys Klaus Aderkas and Konrad Burmeister had meanwhile reached Denmark, carrying the Tsar's letter of confirmation for Magnus, and apologies for the Duke's decision to travel to Russia without awaiting his brother's counsel. In mid-April the Dowager Queen received them at the Palace of Kolding (Koldinghus) in Jutland. The location suggests that the deputies had arrived by land – from Kuressaare through Courland, Prussia and Northern Germany. This route seems to make sense also because of the early season. Steward of the Realm Peder Oxe, who was present at the hearing with the Dowager Queen, later drew up a memorandum (providing no date or place of writing, however) for King Frederick. Having read Oxe's report the King deemed it necessary to meet the envoys in person at Kolding. The fact that the King, who was staying at the Skanderborg Palace not very far from Kolding, came to meet the envoys (perhaps on the pretext of visiting his old and ailing mother), and not the other way round, can be explained by an attempt at secrecy, which in turn was inspired by the increasingly complicated foreign political situation. Frederick had received a letter from Sigismund II Augustus earlier in March ultimately demanding to know whether the actions of Duke Magnus were in line with the King's will. On March 17th Frederick answered evasively that he had advised his brother to abide by Denmark's treaties with Poland-Lithuania and Russia.<sup>62</sup> Now what was so important about the tidings brought by Aderkas and Burmeister?

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<sup>60</sup> Копенгагенские акты, II, No. 164.

<sup>61</sup> Hertug Magnus, 62.

<sup>62</sup> Jensen, F. P. Danmarks konflikt med Sverige 1563–1570, 306–307.

According to Peder Oxe's report, the conversation, in a nutshell, proceeded as follows:

Most probably all sorts of rumours about Duke Magnus will be flying around at the impending peace negotiations in Stettin, and the Holy Roman Emperor will be hearing whispers that on the Livonia issue the Tsar is first and foremost catering to his own interests and needs, and desires to subject Duke Magnus to his authority, in order to sever Livonia from the Holy Roman Empire. In fact, neither Magnus nor the Tsar harbours such intentions; on the contrary, this will be to the Empire's great advantage. According to confidential information imparted by Taube and Kruse, the Tsar is attempting to recapture the parts of Livonia currently under the control of the Polish and Swedish Crowns, to hand them over to Magnus. The King of Poland, however, has dispossessed the Empire of the whole of Prussia and a large part of Livonia, and is now trying to acquire Riga, and has concluded a peace treaty and a secret pact with the Turkish Sultan, pursuant to which, should the King die heirless, the Holy Roman Empire and the German people will have an undesirable neighbour in Poland – the Sultan. As for the Tsar, [after the death of Sigismund II Augustus] he will leave the whole of the Polish Kingdom together with Prussia to the Holy Roman Empire, and would not have any other neighbour [except for the Emperor]; and he is ready to enter into an alliance [with the Emperor] against the common enemy, the Turk. Thus it is to the Empire's advantage that Livonia should be controlled by Duke Magnus, whom the Empire can trust to provide help against its implacable enemy, rather than be left in the hands of the Poles and the Swedes. It shall be up to the King [i.e. Frederick II] to decide whether the Elector of Saxony should be made privy to this information so it can be forwarded to [the Emperor and the estates of] the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>63</sup>

After this major political announcement – the proposal to divide Poland-Lithuania – the envoys asked that fifty arquebusiers be sent to Kuressaare, which had been left almost defenceless. (This could mean that Duke Magnus had taken at least some of the troops stationed in Kuressaare with him as an escort, and that the envoys had not received the Duke's letter with the plea to the King to recruit two thousand arquebusiers and send them to Livonia – or else they considered this request inappropriate.) The memorandum by the Steward of the Realm Oxe does not reveal his personal stance, but at least he did not voice any disapproval either.

Frederick II attached such great importance to this news that he indeed forwarded the information, along with copies of the more relevant letters, to his brother-in-law Augustus, Elector of Saxony, and his would-be father-in-law, Duke Ulrich of Mecklenburg-Güstrow, entreating them not to abandon the interests of the Danish Crown, while explaining the circumstances at the imperial court and the German Diet.<sup>64</sup> In this case, and in the context of the documents provided, the interests of the Danish Crown meant securing the expansion of the Livonian territories of the Oldenburgs. In other words – he gave the project his cautious blessing. It is thus

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<sup>63</sup> Копенгагенские акты, II, No. 169.

<sup>64</sup> The letters of Frederick II to Prince Elector Augustus and Duke Ulrich from April 27 and 30, 1570, sent from Kolding. Located in the National Archives of Denmark. TKUA. Ausl. Reg. 1569–1571, folios 240p–241p, 242p–244. The letter to Duke Ulrich has been published: *Mittheilungen aus dem Gebiete der Geschichte Liv-, Ehst- und Kurlands*. Ed. Frantzen's Buchh (Riga: W. F. Häcker), Riga, 1855–1856, Bd. VIII, 255f.

obvious that the Tsar's proposal was taken seriously not just by Magnus, but also by King Frederick. Aderkas and Burmeister were, presumably, not the only agents of Magnus charged with the task of mediating the partitioning plan. Friedrich Gross was at about the same time arrested in Warsaw (then capital of the province of Masovia, voivodeship of Poland) – indicating he was not on his way to Denmark, but probably to the imperial court in Vienna, or to the Elector of Saxony in Dresden or Leipzig.

However, was this scheme meant to be taken seriously, or was it only a smoke screen? Did it reflect Muscovy's actual foreign policy, or was it Taube and Kruse's self-initiative? Although these questions can never be answered with full certainty, it is not impossible that the idea originated from the Tsar himself. After all, the proposal was mediated by the very same men who had visited the Tsar's court as Magnus' envoys. Besides, the offer was perfectly in line with Muscovy's foreign policy goals and objectives (the most important of which was Moscow's authority over the Grand Duchy of Lithuania within its pre-Union of Lublin borders, or at least over its Orthodox parts). In another memorandum, erroneously dated 1573, Taube and Kruse asked Magnus' former agent, the merchant Magnus Pauli (or Paul Magnus), now in the service of the imperial court, to forward the same proposition to Vienna. The details were the following:

The main provision must stipulate that the Tsar would take control of Livonia, Lithuania and Podolia [probably denoting Ukraine]. The Holy Roman Empire would keep Greater Poland and the whole of Prussia. This would put an end to all disputes and disagreements. It is much more advantageous for the Empire, on condition of eternal peace with the sworn enemy, to cede Livonia to Russia, thus binding this mighty nation, and to have several thousands of armed men prepared at all times to tackle the enemy than to appoint, at great costs, a [separate] ruler for Livonia. And can we compare the mighty Russia to Livonia, in the sense of assistance? With that, we have to ponder the consequences for the Holy Roman Empire and the whole Christendom of the Tsar's possible alliance with the Turkish Sultan, eagerly sought by the latter anyway, should the Empire act against Russia. Before taking forceful action, actual negotiations should be opened with the Tsar, in order for Lithuania and Livonia to maintain the Augsburg Confession and former liberties, etc. If the Emperor is reluctant to take the matter into his own hands, the estates, electors and princes of the Empire will have to seek friendship and alliance with the Tsar. An ambassador of princely rank must be appointed and dispatched [to Russia] with a well-supplied entourage of 200 men on horses. Any gift-bestowing must follow the previous practices, which are truly lavish and extravagant here. Within Russia's borders, on the way to the Tsar and back, the legation's costs will be covered [by the Tsar]. The answer to the Tsar must not be delayed.<sup>65</sup>

But why should Taube and Kruse have proposed something like that (repeating, by the way, the proposals brought by Aderkas and Burmeister in the minutest of details), using the word "here" in 1573, by which time they had been residing in the territory governed by Poland-Lithuania for almost two years? In all likelihood, the document was actually drawn up in the summer of 1571, a period following the Peace of Stettin, when Taube and Kruse had not yet changed

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<sup>65</sup> Копенгагенские акты, II, No. 223.

sides and were holding negotiations with the Danish envoy to the Tsar, Elias Eysenberg, who may have been accompanied by Pauli. Eysenberg, who had arrived with Duke Magnus' letter of credence on July 19, 1571, met Ivan the Terrible in the Alexandrovskaya *sloboda*<sup>66</sup>; also Taube and Kruse<sup>67</sup> who may have arrived with Eysenberg (or because of Eysenberg's visit) were there at least on June 26th. (Eysenberg was seeking safe conduct for the Tsar's envoys and the endorsement of the Russian-Danish agreement as of 1562; the Tsar told him he understood and agreed.) Magnus Pauli was later employed in the imperial diplomatic service. In June 1573 he arrived in Novgorod to court the Tsar's support for the candidacy of Archduke Ernst to the throne of Poland-Lithuania that had been vacant since 1572.<sup>68</sup> It is not quite clear whether any position on the issue of dividing Rzeczpospolita was taken in this context.<sup>69</sup> At any rate, in the Polish royal elections in 1573 and 1576 Ivan the Terrible supported the Habsburg candidates – who lost on both occasions – and it is likely that Russia had been promised some sort of compensation for its support at the expense of Lithuania and Livonia. The claims of Ivan the Terrible or his sons to the throne of Poland-Lithuania – a subject of extensive and serious discussions – were probably just meant to drive a wedge between the Orthodox (i.e. the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Ukraine, which had been separated from the Grand Duchy at the Lublin *Sejm*) and Catholic parts of the Commonwealth. It also seems credible that Muscovy may have sought an anti-Turkish alliance with the Holy Roman Empire (actually with the Habsburgs). In 1569 Russia for the first time collided with the Ottoman Empire, rather than its insubordinate vassal the Crimean Khanate. A large Turkish army had marched to the River Volga in order to build a Volga-Don canal and conquer Astrakhan. The expedition failed because of sabotage by the Tatars unnerved by the massive presence of Turks, yet the threat of a great war with Porta was maintained. The Emperor had concluded an eight-year truce with the Sultan in 1568, but for decades the Habsburgs had been attempting to pull Russia into a war against Turkey. Reportedly, after the failure of the Astrakhan campaign, it was probably for the first time in history that pro-Russian writings were published in Germany.<sup>70</sup> In 1569–1570 even Prince Andrey Kurbsky, former close advisor of the Tsar and Tartu voivode, at that time in political emigration in Lithuania, submitted through the imperial agent, the Abbot Johann Cyrus, a project of his own detailing an alliance of the Empire, Muscovy and Persia against the Ottomans.<sup>71</sup> The Emperor

<sup>66</sup> **Donnert, E.** Der livländische Ordenritterstaat und Russland: der Livländische Krieg und die baltische Frage in der europäischen Politik 1558–1583. Rütten & Loening, Berlin, 1963, 194.

<sup>67</sup> Послание Иоганна Таубе и Элерта Крузе, 55.

<sup>68</sup> **Доннерт Э.** Россия и Балтийский вопрос в политике Германии 1558–1583 гг., 193.

<sup>69</sup> In the interpretation of Sergei Solovyov and Erich Donnert it was the Emperor who suggested the partition of Poland-Lithuania (**Соловьев С.** История России с древнейших времен. Кн. III. Соцэкономиздат, Москва, 1960, 634; **Donnert, E.** Der livländische Ordenritterstaat und Russland, 131).

<sup>70</sup> See **Форстен Г.** Балтийский вопрос в XVI и XVII столетиях, I, 465–477.

<sup>71</sup> Донесения агента императора Максимилиана II аббата Цира о переговорах с А. М. Курбским в 1569 году. – In: Археографический ежегодник за 1957 г. Москва, 1958.

was pushed away from the “official” Poland by the certain *rapprochement* of Poland-Lithuania to Turkey in 1569–1571. The manifest defection of Sigismund II Augustus’ nephew and potential heir, the popular János II Zsigmond Zapolya<sup>72</sup> into the Sultan’s camp further aggravated the rift. However, the proposal for a joint military action against Muscovy put forward by a Turkish delegation at the 1569 Lublin *Sejm* received no formal response. The Lithuanian magnates, meanwhile, were deeply discontent with the terms of the Union of Lublin and were looking for ways and means for their reversal; these circles could be expected to support the *rapprochement* of Moscow and Vienna, though neither unanimously nor overwhelmingly. The surviving documents of the Muscovy’s Foreign Affairs Office (*Посольский приказ*) unfortunately have a gap for the years 1519–1574 as regards correspondence with the Emperor, while the author has no information about (possible) documents in the Viennese archives reflecting the proposals mediated by Duke Magnus.

A cautious guess would thus be that the mission of Aderkas and Burmeister triggered developments leading to if not an alliance between the Holy Roman Emperor and the Russian Tsar, then at least to certain mutual understanding. However, there were no immediate results – at the Stettin Peace Congress convened to terminate the Northern Seven Years’ War the imperial delegation adopted a hostile attitude towards Russia, possibly evoked by some or all of these factors: the diplomatic legacy of earlier attempts to solve the Livonia problem; the shock caused by the appearance of Muscovy-sponsored corsairs on the Baltic Sea; pressure from Poland-Lithuania; the fact that Sigismund II Augustus, who had married two Habsburg princesses, was still alive, and after his death the imperial house would be claiming the right to the whole of Poland-Lithuania, etc.

King Frederick responded to Aderkas and Burmeister on May 15, 1570, expressing his disapproval of Duke Magnus’ hasty departure to Moscow, yet advising him to demand certain territorial concessions in Livonia from the Tsar.<sup>73</sup> On May 20 the envoys submitted to the crown officials a list of territories in Livonia which should rightfully belong to Duke Magnus. Additionally they asked permission for Friedrich Gross to retain his position in Magnus’ service, asked for supplies of bacon, butter, gunpowder, and also soldiers to be sent to Kuressaare, and a confirmation of their personal enfeoffments.<sup>74</sup> Most probably the envoys then travelled to Livonia, and at least Burmeister took part in the siege of Tallinn, which started in the summer of 1570, and in which the Livonian household troops led by Magnus joined forces with the Russians. It is, however, obvious that they were not carrying a direct injunction from the King forbidding Magnus to continue his policy of *rapprochement* to Moscow.

By the time Aderkas and Burmeister reached Denmark, however, Duke Magnus had already left Saaremaa. According to the information provided by a reputed

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<sup>72</sup> Dates 1540–1571. A rival to the Habsburgs from his birth as the titular King of Hungary; in 1570–1571 the Sultan’s vassal as the Prince of Transylvania.

<sup>73</sup> Датский архив, No. 222.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., No. 223–224.

Swedish spy, the Duke crossed the Suur Strait “not far from Lihula” and, accompanied by 150 cavalymen, continued to Muscovy’s part of Livonia.<sup>75</sup> Once Duke Magnus had crossed the border of Muscovy’s territories, there was no more turning back for him, no abandoning of the project. The die – Magnus’ open collaboration with Ivan the Terrible, and the imminent proclamation of the “Kingdom of Livonia” – was cast.

## CONCLUSION

1. For Muscovy, the principal incentives for the attempts to establish the vassal kingdom of Livonia were associated with a targeted division of Poland-Lithuania between Russia and the Habsburgs, following a normalisation of relations with the Holy Roman Empire and the imperial court after the eclipse of the male line of the Jagiellon dynasty, without relinquishing its conquests and claims of domination in Livonia.
2. To this end, Muscovy was forced to seek compromise with at least part of Livonia. For various reasons, the hopes of a substantial number of Livonians were personified in Duke Magnus. The Livonian mediators in the service of the Tsar and Duke Magnus were hoping for an impending termination of hostilities and removal of the direct eastern threat as a result of the ensuing agreement.
3. The simultaneous crisis in Swedish-Russian relations with a potentially eventuating war paved the way for a *rapprochement* between Duke Magnus (prospectively Denmark) and Moscow. King Frederick II did not prevent Magnus’ contacts with Muscovy but rather lent his covert support owing to the lack of confidence in the end of the Danish-Swedish war.
4. The suggestion for dividing Poland-Lithuania, which is usually attributed to the imperial court, was initiated by Russia already in 1569–1570 and was initially made through the mediation of Livonian representatives and Denmark.

## “LIIVIMAA KUNINGRIIGI” EELLUGU

Andres ADAMSON

On antud ülevaade rahvusvahelisest ja Liivimaa-sisesest olukorrast Liivimaa vasallkuningriigi projekti tõstatumise eel ning arengutest ja põhjustest, mis viisid hertsog Magnus von Holsteini avalikule koostööle tsaar Ivan Julmaga. Moskoovia jaoks olid peamised vasallkuningriigi loomiskatse põhjused seotud lootustega suhete normaliseerimise järel Saksa-Rooma riigi ja keisrikojaga saavutada Poola-Leedu riigi jagamine Venemaa ning Habsburgide vahel pärast Jagelloonide dünastia

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<sup>75</sup> Копенгагенские акты, II, No. 166.

meesliini hääbumist. Selleks tuli esmalt otsida kompromissi vähemalt osaga liivimaalastest. Samal ajal lõi Rootsi-Vene suhetes puhkenud kriis tõenäoliselt järgneva sõjaga pinnase hertsog Magnuse (perspektiivis Taani) ja Moskva lähenemisele. Mitmel põhjusel personifitseerusid Magnuses ka suure osa liivimaalaste lootused. Tsaari ja Magnuse liivimaalastest vahendajad lootsid sõjategevuse ja otsese idaohu peatset lõppemist tehtava kokkuleppe tulemusena. Esitades esmakordselt üheskoos olulisemad neid sündmusi peegeldavad dokumendid, on näidatud nii “Liivimaa kuningriigi” diplomaatilis-poliitilist eellugu kui ka asjaolusid, et Taani kuningas Frederik II ei takistanud Magnuse kontakte Moskooviaga, vaid pigem toetas neid salaja, ja et tavaliselt keisrikoja arvele kantud ettepanek Poola-Leedu jagamiseks lähtus Venemaalt ning tehti algselt liivimaalaste ja Taani vahendusel.