

BARBARIANS SPEAKING – THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL THEATER AND ITS EFFECT IN HENRY OF LATVIA'S *CHRONICON LIVONIAE*

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Abstract. *Since the times of Herodotus, historiographic accounts have been written employing dramatic narration, thus granting historical figures immediate appearance through direct speech. This kind of historiographical theater, considered to be fictive and unreliable by modern historiographical critique, has a tradition and function in medieval historical accounts. The present paper analyses the purpose and the effect of dramatic narration in medieval texts, focusing on examples in Henry of Latvia's Chronicon Livoniae. In examining the utterances in direct speech in more detail, it aims to disclose the image of the native peoples in the Baltic, the Barbarians, the way it is constructed by the author, and to determine the significance of dramatic narration in a historical account.*

Keywords: *Medieval historiography, drama, Henry of Latvia, Chronicon Livoniae, dramatic narration, Baltic Crusades, the Barbarians.*

The way in which the audience reacted during the film premiere of *L'Arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat* by the Lumière brothers could be seen as one of the most famous moments in cinematic history. The spectators began to feel uneasy about the train at the platform of the La Ciotat station heading right towards them. Some could not take the tension and, in a state of panic, fought their way out of the first rows. Regardless of whether this episode, as it has been told and retold, is merely exaggerated or completely fabricated, it illustrates a particular potential of the cinematic to uproot our sense of reality. In the words of German film critic Hellmuth Karasek: "Thanks to the suggestive power

of the camera cinema knows to charge the spectator's phantasy with a sense of reality. With a reality of horror and danger as well as with a reality of feelings."¹ However, this particular power through which our sense of reality can be upended is not only given to cinematography. Reactions similar to those caused by the scene of the Lumière locomotive have always been part and parcel of the performing arts. The play *The Capture of Miletus* by the Greek tragedian Phrynichos, for example, had lead the

¹ "Das Kino [...] versteht es, dank der Suggestivkraft der Kamera, die Phantasie des Publikums mit Realität zu besetzen. Mit der Realität des Schreckens und der Gefahr wie mit der Realität der Gefühle." [Translations, if not indicated differently, are mine, R. M.]. Karasek 1994.

audience to such an emotional outburst, that the topic was forbidden offhand and the poet was fined 1000 drachma for having reminded the Greeks of their fatherland's disaster (Hdt. *Hist.* VI, 21). A similar story can be found in a chronicle about the beginnings of the Baltic Crusades in the late 12th and 13th century, the *Chronicon Livoniae* written by Henry of Latvia.

The chronicle is mainly written in a mode of non-dramatic narration², but Henry varies his text in making his actors speak, thus giving a voice not only to his German comrades, but also to the native people of the Baltic – the Barbarians. In the most remarkable episodes, the pagans' speech is filled with quotations from biblical actors and refers thereby to a typological equivalence between the actor in the chronicle and an actor in the Bible. In the present article, I shall discuss the purpose and the effect of dramatic narration, that is, such utterances in direct speech in medieval historiographical texts. In addition, I want to raise the question of how the fictive³ character of the most part of

these utterances can be reconciled with a historiographer's claim for truth. Further, I wish to focus on the dramatic episodes in the *Chronicon Livoniae* in order to discuss the image of the Barbarian in the way the chronicle constructs it and to determine the significance of Henry's historiographical theater.

According to Henry, the winter of 1205 saw a lavishly arranged play, *ludus prophetarum ordinatissimus*, which was staged in the middle of Riga for the Christian parishioners and, above all, for the Livish and Latvian neophytes (*Chron. Liv.* IX, 14). As the play was performed in Latin, the plot had been explained to them in advance by a translator (most probably Henry himself)⁴, but the immediate performance, however, made an enormous impression on the minds of the indigenous people: "*Ubi enim armati Gedeonis cum Philisteis pugnabant, pagani timentes occidi fugere ceperunt, sed caute sunt revocati.*" (IX, 14)⁵. This is the manifestation of the same "reality of horror and danger" that is able to urge upon the audience an

² By the term 'mode of dramatic narration', I mean a kind of narration that represents events dramatically, using direct speech for the characters, with possible remarks regarding posture, expression and context. A non-dramatic mode is characterised by the absence of direct speech, whereas reactions or utterances of an actor are expressed in indirect speech, which can even be completely absent in a factual report. In this sense, the mode of dramatic narration corresponds to Genette's concept of reported speech, whereas the mode of non-dramatic narration comprises his concepts of narrated as well as transposed speech; cf. Genette 1980, 161-211.

³ In the German language and in literary theory, there is a fine differentiation between the terms "fiktiv" and "fiktional". While the former indicates facts or objects that do not correspond to the real world, the latter refers to a text or speech that produces these facts or objects. Although in English practice this specific distinction is not always made clear, I will try to employ it in this text, using the terms "fictional" as referring to the

German "fiktional" and "fictive", referring to "fiktiv". For the distinction of these terms in German practice cf. e. g. Zipfel 2001, 14-19.

⁴ The performance in its relation to liturgical drama as well as its probable setup are discussed in: Petersen 2011, 229-243.

⁵ "When, however, the army of Gideon fought the Philistines, the pagans began to take flight, fearing lest they be killed, but they were quietly called back." [All translations of the *Chronicon Livoniae* are taken from Brundage, 1961]. Actually, Gideon did not fight against the Philistine,s but against the Midianites (Judges 6-8). As Henry mentions other episodes of the Bible being shown during the play, David's, Gideon's and Herod's fights (*Chron. Liv.* IX, 14), and David is the one fighting against the Philistines, it is likely that Henry simply makes a mistake attributing in this particular scene the wrong name to the actors that most probably would have played both Philistines and Midianites during the play.

instinctive panic-like reaction against all better knowledge.

It should not be surprising at all to find an account such as Henry's so far away from the cultural centers of medieval Europe, since in missionary practice, theater was a catechetical means which also German missionary priests employed in the Livonian mission. Indeed, it is the missionary work from which medieval theater derives its origin, as it makes available the performative means necessary to communicate the Christian doctrines to the ignorant, not to speak of the neophytes who, for the most part, faced difficulties understanding them, since the mass was celebrated in Latin. Thus, the celebration of the liturgical service (which, in its iterative restaging of the Last Supper, is itself theatrical) provided the first plays, beginning with the scenes of the discovery of the empty tomb to the more and more complex plays such as the Christmas, Passion and Mary plays (Kindermann 1980, 9 ff).

In what is probably the best-known passage of Aristotle's *Poetics*, drama, in contrast to an account in form of a report, is said to have a cathartic effect aroused by pity and fear (Arist. *Poet.* 1449b25), which is followed by a comment on what a great impression the performance in a theater leaves on the human mind (Arist. *Poet.* 1450b15). But it is not only on the emotional level that drama unfolds its effect. In order to further define poetry, Aristotle makes a comparison with historiography, which is different from poetic genres not only because of the use of the meter, but because of the fact "that the one relates actual events, the other the kinds of things that might occur. Consequently, poetry is more philosophical and more elevated

than history, since poetry relates more of the universal, while history relates particulars." (Arist. *Poet.* 1451b5)⁶. Through this philosophical aspect, epistemological content is added to drama aside from a strong emotional effect which is the reason why historiographers have been moved to embed dramatic elements in their accounts since antiquity, as is the case in Herodotus' *Histories*⁷. By portraying certain characters and their acts, Herodotus abandons the report as a mode of narration and follows the Aristotelian criteria of tragic poetry to stage individual human fate as tragic historiography⁸. Similarly, medieval historians, since the times of Bede Venerabilis, could describe events using the mode of dramatic narration, which was employed differently from author to author. The *Gesta Caroli Magni* of Notker of Saint Gall, for instance, is a collection of anecdotal accounts about Emperor Charlemagne, employing almost exclusively the mode of dramatic narration to render the witty and pointed remarks of the Emperor. Otto of Freising, in his *Gesta Friderici*, uses elaborate monologues or speeches only moderately to portray Emperor Frederick I. On the other end of the spectrum are the chronicles of Berthold of Reichenau and Bernold of Saint Blasien or the *Annals* of Lampert of Hersfeld, which lack almost any dramatic staging. However, in historiographical texts, dialogues or speeches could be regarded as fictive in

⁶ "ἀλλὰ τούτω διαφέρει, τῷ τὸν μὲν τὰ γενόμενα λέγειν, τὸν δὲ οἷα ἂν γένοιτο. διὸ καὶ φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον ποιησὶς ἱστορίας ἐστίν· ἢ μὲν γὰρ ποιησὶς μᾶλλον τὰ καθόλου, ἢ δ' ἱστορία τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον λέγει." Translation taken from Halliwell 1995.

⁷ For the relation of tragedy and history and the notion of 'tragic history' in Greek historiographical thought see Juchnevičienė 2015.

⁸ Cf. Schulte-Altendorneburg 2001, 125-200.

the broadest modern sense, naturally leading to the question of historical truth⁹.

In order to distinguish between poetry and historiography, Aristotle emphasizes that a poet's task does not lie in telling what really happened, but what could have happened in all probability and necessity (Arist. *Poet.* 1450a35). This, according to the philosopher, becomes most manifest in comedy, which, unlike iambic poetry, does not refer to a historical person but uses a fictive cast (Arist. *Poet.* 1451b10). In tragedy, on the other hand, it is usual to employ historical persons and depict real events for the sake of greater credibility (Arist. *Poet.* 1451b20), but it is common enough that a tragedy's plot and its characters are completely fictive, which does not make it less pleasurable: "So adherence to the traditional plots of tragedy should not be sought at all costs." (Arist. *Poet.* 1451b20)¹⁰. In other words, Aristotle claims that the fictivity of a plot has influence neither on the delectation we are experiencing through the emotional effect nor on the understanding of the universal as long as the plot follows the logical structure of the probable and the necessary.

According to medieval thought, an account about events that did not really happen but could have happened is defined under the term *argumentum* and is therefore different from *historia*, which deals with events that really did happen, and *fabula* as a story about things that neither happened nor could ever happen. This distinction, which originates from Cicero's

concept of the three kinds of entertaining speech¹¹, is also mentioned by Isidore of Seville with the aim to distinguish *historia*, which is chiefly defined as an account of real events in the past, from other types of narration (*Etym.* I, 44). Therefore, how is it possible that medieval historiography, for which the truth claim was regarded as a genre-distinguishing feature (Goetz 1999, 146-159), could tolerate the insertion of, as we would call it, fictive episodes in the historical account?

Especially in the case of medieval hagiography, one can see that contemporaries did not seem to be bothered by highly typified accounts of saints' lives which were at times entirely invented. Notker's *Gesta Caroli* consist almost exclusively of episodes in the mode of dramatic narration, none of which would be likely to be handled uncritically in the light of the conventions of modern historiography. Otto of Freising in the *Gesta Fiderici* puts speeches of such polished rhetorical refinement into the mouth of the Emperor that the German editor of the *Gesta*, Franz-Josef Schmale, praises the work for its literary qualities rather than its allegiance to historical truth¹². Equally constructed seems Arnold of Lübeck's description of Duke Henry the

¹¹ "Tertium genus est remotum a civilibus causis, quod delectationis causa non inutili cum exercitatione dicitur et scribitur. eius partes sunt duae, quarum altera in negotiis, altera in personis maxime versatur. ea, quae in negotiorum expositione posita est, tres habet partes: fabulam, historiam, argumentum." Cic. *Inv.* I, 27.

¹² "It is more the coherent tendency, the literary quality and detail than the conscious will for completeness and for truth in the whole as well as in the peculiar, that grant the work a special rank among historiography of that time." ("Mehr durch die einheitliche Tendenz, die literarische Qualität und Ausführlichkeit im einzelnen erhält das Werk seinen besonderen Rang innerhalb der Geschichtsschreibung der Zeit als durch den bewußten Willen zur Vollständigkeit und zur Wahrheit im Ganzen wie in den Einzelheiten."), Schmale 1965, 26.

⁹ For rhetorical arrangement and its relation to verisimilitude in the historical account see Morse 1991.

¹⁰ "ὥστ' οὐ πάντως εἶναι ζητητέον τῶν παραδεδομένων μύθων, περὶ οὓς αἱ τραγωδίαί εἰσιν, ἀντέχεσθαι." Translation taken from Halliwell 1955.

Lion's pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the incidents that occurred on this journey as described in the *Chronica Slavorum*. Vincent Scior identified some of these as historiographical *topoi*, such as the reference to woods as a threatening space or the overcoming of the storm at sea (Scior 2002, 297 ff). These literary portrayals all serve a common function: the use of a certain scenario transmits a message about the acting persons, whereas the importance lies not in a "truthful" rendition of the historical circumstances in detail, for example, the exact time, the exact space, the exact surrounding or the exact words, but rather in the credible staging of a paradigmatic portrayal and its rhetorical furnishing. Duke Henry the Lion may have been caught in a storm during his pilgrimage indeed, and it is highly likely that Abbot Henry would have prayed for rescue in a situation such as this. Yet the dramatic staging, as for instance Henry's dream about the Holy Virgin and the subsequent rescue, is no more (and no less) than a literary means to express "the truth", namely the deep piety of the Duke and Abbot Henry, in an effective and memorable way, while it could have, of course, been expressed more soberly in the form of a report. It is the paradox of modern historiographical critique that the first form of historical depiction would be regarded as fictive and unreliable, whereas the latter would not arouse suspicion regarding its truthfulness – even if the content and message of both are the same.

Hayden White describes the process of history writing to be more topological than logical in nature, as every representation of events ultimately underlies a discursive act. According to White, any figuration of "factual content" necessitates the choice

of a form of speech. Hence, the claim that historical events could or should be rendered in a more or less neutral speech loses ground. White questions the common view that figurative speech automatically points towards fictionality. Simultaneously, he doubts that a representation of mere facts is possible at all: "If there is no such thing as raw facts but only events under different descriptions, then factuality becomes a matter of the descriptive protocols used to transform events into facts. Figurative description of real events is not less factual than literalist descriptions; they are factual – or as I would put it, 'factological' – only in a different way." (White 1999, 18). To the pre-modern mind, dramatic or poetic accounts of events present no interference with their factuality; if it were otherwise, medieval historiographers' claims of truth would have to be regarded as mere clichés. The content of a message conveyed by a historical account is of higher importance than the detail of the historical circumstances.

Meeting the demand for probability of an event, dramatic narration in medieval historiography is consistent with Aristotelian principles of poetical representation of human acts. Both Aristotelian poetry as well as dramatic narration in medieval historical texts function through the involvement of universality, however they do so in a chiasmic way: if poetic representation, on the one hand, points to the universal through the depiction of individual acts, historiography, on the other hand, makes use of a universal, paradigmatic plotline to attribute certain qualities to individuals. These qualities can be both good and bad ones, as different plotlines exist for the depiction of one type as well as the other.

Thus, by incorporating dramatic elements in the historical account, a historiographer takes his text to a level of universality, which, in Aristotle's view, renders poetry more philosophical compared to historiography as a description of particular facts – which, following White, is somewhat problematic in any case. Tragedy depicts universal principles through the individual, historiographical theater integrates the individual in universal principles. On the one hand, this universal level can have a didactic purpose, as, in fact, it is not uncommon that medieval historiographers express the wish to teach their readers. In this sense, the *Gesta Caroli* could be considered as a compendium to what features constitute a good emperor or an honourable person in general. On the other hand, universal plotlines help create a recognizable setting, which makes it easier to locate and evaluate the portrayed characters.

Portraying high officials, who are central in every chronicle, account of deeds or hagiography, the historiographer is highly dependent on his relation towards the portrayed person, towards his own political or social position and his surroundings. In Henry's case, there were witnesses to the deeds of most of the protagonists in the *Chronicon Livoniae* who were either still alive or only recently deceased while the work was being written down. Considering the fact that Henry was writing at the behest of his masters and comrades, one of whom was Bishop Albert¹³, it is most likely that

¹³ “*rogatu dominorum et sociorum*”, *Chron. Liv.* XXIX, 9. This only dedication, which is found in the text, is somewhat obscure, as it does not indicate any concrete person who might have requested an account of the Livonian mission. Albert Bauer, who wrote the introduction to the German edition of the chronicle, doubted not only that it was the bishop who request-

the portrayal of particular persons had to be accomplished with a certain care, giving an adequate representation of the Livonian mission and its main protagonists, especially as legal claims had to be defended not least before the papal legate William of Modena, who came to visit Livonia in the year 1225¹⁴. This can be considered as reason why appearances of German protagonists are bound to stricter plot structures, more formulaic verses and stereotypic roles compared to the representations of pagans, who get an equal chance to speak: precisely half of all utterances in direct speech belong to non-Germans expressing themselves in a great variety of situations, whereas a substantial amount of phrases uttered by German protagonists, especially those concerning the question about a pagan's willingness to convert, are frequently reiterated throughout the text¹⁵. Henry had much greater flexibility when it came to the portrayal of pagans and non-Germans, as they would not have been subjected to a potential legal (or even divine) evaluation.

ed the work, but that he had read it at all, Bauer 1959, XVIII f. It is unlikely however, that Albert, who had serious political and personal goals in the Livonian campaign, would have trusted its representation to anyone not loyal to his position. See Tyerman, Henry 2011, 23 f.

¹⁴ There is common consent about the visit of the papal legate being one of the main reasons for writing down the chronicle. As Bishop Albert was the one to request the visit, it would be implausible for him not to have known about Henry's work. Cf. Brundage 1972, 6.

¹⁵ An example could be the following sentence, which is found throughout the text in different variations: “*Si volueritis veram pacem, oportebit vos veri pacifici, qui est Christus, filios fieri, ut ipsius baptisate suscepto nostram possitis fraternitatem perpetuam adipisci.*”, “If you wish peace, it will be necessary that you be made sons of the true Peacemaker, who is Christ, so that, after receiving His baptism, you may attain our eternal friendship.” (*Chron. Liv.* XX, 6).

Further, they were not the target audience of the chronicle and therefore not able to verify the written account in any way or express claims of any kind. Equipped with the same *licentia* as the medieval painter or sculptor running wild in the depiction of infernal scenarios, diabolic orgies and sufferings in hell, Henry thus was entirely free to create his own portrayal of the Barbarian. How did he use this freedom?

Given Henry's emphasis on the fierce combats between German newcomers and the natives, his reports of the multiple times that the already baptized pagans renounced the new confession, as well as the references to regular conspiracies and revolts against the Germans, one might expect him to paint a rather grim portrait of a ferocious and perfidious Barbarian. In a call to the Wendish Crusade in 1108, ascribed to Archbishop Adelgot of Magdeburg, addressed to Saxon, Lorraine and Rhenish rulers, potential participants were alerted: "*Gentiles isti pessimi sunt, sed terra eorum optima carne, melle, farina...*"¹⁶. Reports about disastrous pagan attacks on the Christian ecumene and the permanent threat to the peaceful commercial intercourse were meant to provide arguments for the irrefutable war against the peoples of the Baltic (Tyerman 2011, 26). In her study about the use of direct speech in Peter of Duisburg's *Cronica terrae Prussiae* and other chronicles of the Baltic region¹⁷, Rasa Mažeika describes an interesting tendency in Peter's chronicle: the indigenous people are conspicuously alienated through

their representation in direct speech, which is largely reserved for apostates, criminals, supernatural creatures and characters transgressing the realm of reality. According to Mažeika, there is not a single passage where demons or divine creatures are not uttering direct speech except for a few instances where dramatic narration is also used to represent honest Christians. With this technique, she claims, the Barbarian is shifted into the sphere of the Other, the incomprehensible and extralegal. Mažeika claims to detect this same tendency of alienation also in Henry¹⁸. However, her result regarding Henry's chronicle is based on a wrong calculation and therefore loses ground, as we have seen that utterances of direct speech in the *Chronicon Livoniae* are shared equally between German and non-German speakers¹⁹.

Statistic can also shed some light on the roles Henry typically assigns to his protagonists beginning with the Germans. As one might expect in a missionary chronicle, the majority of phrases uttered by the newcomers refers to the role of the missionary, asking the pagan to finally renounce idolatry in order to be accepted into Christ's

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 281.

¹⁹ Mažeika bases her assertion regarding the *Chronicon Livoniae* on Alan Murray's counting, which he had carried out in order to reconstruct situations of communication and translation in the chronicle (Murray 2011, 107-134.). Murray holds that out of 54 cases of communication in direct speech, 44 involve barbarians, including utterances by German speakers, which are addressed to pagans. He adds nevertheless that in general, direct speech is distributed more or less equally amongst pagans and Germans (whereas a slightly greater part, according to his calculations, belongs to German speakers). Without considering this second statistic, Mažeika refers to the first one, which is supposedly confirming her hypothesis. According with my own count, there are 61 cases of direct speech, of which 31 belong to German and 30 to non-German speakers.

¹⁶ "The peoples there are the worst, but their land is very rich in meat, honey and flour...", *Urkundenbuch d. Erzstifts Magdeburg Teil I (937-1192)*, 193.

¹⁷ Mažeika 2014, 271-288.

community²⁰. It is equally unsurprising in a text which reports annual military expeditions, sieges and combats, that the second most frequent role is that of the commander who encourages his comrades to fight. In the portrayal of this archetype, Henry undertakes an interesting differentiation depending on the outcome of the battle: In the year 1208, the Germans, together with the Semigallians, prepare for a war against the Lithuanians (*Chron. Liv.* XII, 2), when the pagan Semigallians wish to consult their oracles about the goodwill of the gods. But as the auspices turn out to be bad and the Lithuanians are already geared up for battle, the Semigallians try to convince the Germans to withdraw. The latter counter: “*Absit rem hanc facere, ut fugiamus ab eis et inferamus crimen gentis nostre. Sed eamus ad adversarios nostros, si poterimus pugnare cum eis.*”²¹. In the First Book of Maccabees (1 Macc. 9:1-22) these are the words of Judas Maccabeus, who, during the revolt against the Seleucid king Antiochus IV, was forced to lead his army against the much stronger forces of Bacchides and subsequently fell in that same battle. Similarly, Henry writes that the Germans suffered heavy losses in the battle against the Lithuanians, as well as in another battle against the Estonians in 1210, which is again marked by the same words of Judas Maccabeus, this time uttered by Arnold, Brother of the Order (*Chron. Liv.* XIV, 8).²² The bibli-

cal allusions were certainly recognised by a great part of Henry’s audience, thus the knowledge about Judas’ mournful fate and the outcome of the heroic battle, where the weaker meet the stronger, contributes a tragic component to the described scenes. In contrast, the depiction of a call to a successful battle lacks biblical imagery and the tragic tone turns to a comic atmosphere. In this spirit, Albert, Duke of Saxony, shouts to his comrades, pressed by Oselians in the year 1220: “‘*Numquid nam ipsi sunt hostes Christi?*’ *Et ait quispiam: ‘Ipsi sunt’. Et ait: ‘Nunc ergo accedamus ad eos.’*”²³ (*Chron. Liv.* XXIII, 9).

Other episodes of the *Chronicon Livoniae* stage Germans as pious clerics (this role is performed primarily by Bishop Philipp of Ratzeburg in the scene of overcoming the storm at sea and the following prayer of thanks, XIX, 5 and 6), ardent missionary preachers (XVI, 4) and brave martyrs (XIX, 3). In the historiographical theater of the *Livonian Chronicle*, Henry assigns certain roles to his actors, which he gathers from the *topoi* of historiography on the one hand, and from the historiographical model *par excellence*, the Bible, on the other hand. Thus, Henry’s characters, like actors in a liturgical drama, recite texts of the Old and New Testament and take part in the ever-present plotlines of human activity as individuals. For a moment, the historiographer becomes a poet and hence a philosopher too, as he is using the persuasive power and the emotional effect of the dramatic description to refer to the universal principles that are manifestations of the particular, to the extent to which the particular is contributing to them. For me-

²⁰ See footnote 14.

²¹ **Italicised** font refers to passages from the Bible. “Let us shun to do this thing, for to flee from them would be to bring reproach upon our people. Let us rather go to meet our adversaries and see if we may fight them.”

²² Jaan Undusk reveals Maccabean imagery to be used in the 13th century for justification of military failure, Undusk 2011, 56.

²³ “‘Are these Christ’s enemies?’ Someone said: ‘They are.’ And he said: ‘Now let us attack them.’”

dieval historiography, this means to be integrated in the course of the *historia sacra*, an expression of typological perception of history. Is this procedure so fundamentally different from Herodotus' approach?

When a historical person is granted immediate appearance through a speech act, the indirect flow of speech is interrupted by the dramatic staging, while the reader inevitably memorizes the words spoken, especially if their wit contrasts with the style of the report, and characterizes the speaker. This shift to the mode of dramatic narration often marks special circumstances in the historiographical text which are thus emphasized. In the theater of the *Chronicon Livoniae*, the Barbarians take up certain roles, as it is the case with the Lithuanian Duke Žvelgaitis. On their way to a raid in Estonia in the year 1205,²⁴ the Lithuanian forces, moving along the river Daugava, pass by the city of Riga, which Žvelgaitis then enters with some of his confidantes. After having been offered to drink a cup of mead by a citizen, the Duke says to his companions: “*Nonne Theutonorum nobis medonem prebencium trepidantium manus vidistis? Adventum quidem nostrum fama volante cognoverant et ideo timore concussi adhuc trepidare non cessant. Ad presens ergo excidium civitatis ipsius differemus. Sed si partes, ad quas tendimus, vicerimus, hominibus captis et occisis villam ipsorum evertemus. Vix enim pulvis civitatis illius pugillo populi*

²⁴ Such raids were undertaken in order to maintain and expand an army, which provided the basis for the establishment of monarchical power. In the 12th century, they became a usual part of the Lithuanian expansionism, which, after the consolidation of German hegemony in Latvian terrain, was mainly concentrated on widening control in the territory of the Rus', Dubonis 2011, 400.

nostris sufficiet.”²⁵ (*Chron. Liv. IX, 1*). The model for Žvelgaitis' despicable arrogance is Ben-Hadad, the frequently drunken king of Aram from the First Book of Kings, who threatened king Ahab of Israel to destroy the city of Samaria, confiding in his exceedingly great army, whereupon he was admonished by the farsighted words of king Ahab: “Let not him who straps on his armor boast of himself as he who takes it off.” (1 Kings, 20:10-12). In fact, Ben-Hadad lost all the battles against Israel despite his superior forces and was finally constrained to beg humbly for the king's mercy (1 Kings, 20:30-40). The bitter fate of the boastful aggressor befell the Lithuanian Duke Žvelgaitis as well, when he and his army, with all the booty, consisting of Estonian prisoners of war was attacked on his way back from Estonia by the allied forces of Semigallians and Germans and killed in a macabre scene: “*Inveniens autem quidam de familia episcopi, Theodericus Scilling, Suellegaten, qui se civitatem Dei subversurum dixerat, quem in vehiculo sedentem videns lancea latera sua perforat. Hunc Semigallorum quidam palpitare videntes, caput eius absidunt et vehiculis suis imponentes, que solis capitibus Lethonum oneraverant, in Semigalliam ducunt.*”²⁶ (*Chron. Liv. IX, 4*). One

²⁵ “Did you not see the Germans offering us mead with a trembling hand? They had known of our arrival from rumor and the fear which then struck them still causes them to shake. At the moment, however, let us defer the overthrow of this city, but if we conquer the places to which we are going, let us destroy this town and capture and kill its men. For the dust of this city will scarcely satisfy the fist of our people.”

²⁶ “A certain member of the bishop's household, Theodoric Scilling, came upon Svelgate, who had said the he would overthrow the city of God, saw him sitting in a cart, and pierced his side with a lance. Certain of the Semigalls saw him quivering, cut off his head, and put it on one of their wagons which they had loaded only with the heads of Lithuanians, and went into Semgallia.”

could one could think of this scene as an illustration of pride meeting its just punishment if it were not for the fact that the German attack on the calmly proceeding army of the Lithuanians (*paulatim de villa ad villam gradientes*, *Chron. Liv.* IX, 3), with whom they had made a peace contract and a friendly alliance in year 1202 (*Chron. Liv.* V, 3), offended all legal and moral principles. The representation of Žvelgaitis as of a Lithuanian Ben-Hadad, to which Henry is compelled to refer even in the moment of his death two chapters later (*qui se civitatem Dei subversurum dixerat*, IX, 3), can be interpreted as an attempt to legitimate the unjust attack, for whose depiction as a victory against the enemies of Christianity the author is frantically struggling for²⁷. The far-reaching consequences of the caused bloodbath seem to have left Henry not entirely unaffected, as he refers, maybe in a twinge of

²⁷ It is important to Henry to portray the Semigallians, in contrast to the hesitant Germans, as the actual initiators of the attack (*Chron. Liv.* IX, 2) and also to legitimate the assassination of the Estonian prisoners of war, part of the Lithuanian booty, who fell by the sword of the allied Germans and Semigallians, describing them as Christ's enemies (IX, 4). It is unlikely however that Žvelgaitis' heavily loaded army, on its retreat from Estonia, would have carried out an attack on the city of Riga, which additionally is made clear by Henry's depiction of a slowly forward moving army. However, it cannot be denied that the Lithuanians strived to keep their hegemony in the parts below the river Daugava, inhabited by Latgalian, Semigallians and Livs, undertaking regular raids and exacting tribute payments by force. Thus, the widening of the Lithuanian control area up to the course of the river Daugava, the gold vein of north-eastern European commerce, on whose bank laid the city of Riga, posed an actual danger to the Livonian heartland, which the Livonians tried to liquidate, supporting Latgalian, Semigallian and Livish attacks on Lithuanians, who had become hated for their expansion. But when these peoples realized that this would lead to a subjection of their territories by Riga in the long term, they made allies with Lithuania again, without however being able to stop this process, Dubonis 2011, 400.

horror, astonishment or even pity, the story of 50 Lithuanian wives of the killed warriors, who hang themselves after their husbands' deaths in order to reunite with them in the afterlife (*Chron. Liv.* IX, 5). In this context, the words of the new Lithuanian commander who led an army to a revenge campaign against Livonia and addressed the eldest of the German-held fort Lennewarde two years after Žvelgaitis' assassination could be read as a slight reproach on the part of Henry to those who were responsible for the peace breaking attack on the Lithuanians: "*Vade, nuncia christianis, qui ante duos annos exercitum meum ab Estonia redeuntem quasi dormientem interfecerunt, nunc me et omnes meos vigilantes invenient.*"²⁸ (*Chron. Liv.* XI, 5). Even if these words gave the Germans cause to begin the fight, one cannot help but sense a moral reproach in the statement of the Lithuanian commander saying that the army had been insidiously assaulted and slaughtered while asleep. The reader may perceive the portrait of a Barbarian, not morally superior, but at least honorable and dauntless, especially since he is talking in his own, not borrowed words.

It is not unusual at all that Henry displays a certain sympathy for the strangers. The surprising attack on the fortress of Jersika on the shores of the Daugava in year 1209 was not utterly indisputable, as its ruler Vsevolod was of Russian origin and thus an Orthodox Christian, who had become enemy of the Livonian church by proving himself a loyal ally of the Lithu-

²⁸ "Go, tell the Christians who, two years ago, killed my army as if it were asleep, as it returned from Estonia, that now they will find me and all my men awake." For the preference of medieval historiography for the portrayal of characters, exhibiting a certain repartee or even slyness see Althoff 2003, 1-24.

anians and being married to the daughter of a Lithuanian Duke. The military intervention against Vsevolod, as an assault conducted by Christians against Christians, was somewhat precarious because of the relentless proceeding of the Germans: several inmates were killed, the Duke was compelled to flee, while his wife was taken hostage, and the lavishly furnished castle was pillaged and finally set on fire (*Chron. Liv.* XIII, 4). Duke Vsevolod had to witness the utter destruction of his city from the other side of the river Daugava, while Henry expressed the Duke's pain and despair in one of the most seizing and touching scenes of the *Chronicon Livoniae*: "*Et viso incendio rex ex altera parte Duce suspiria magna trahendo et gemitibus magnis ululando exclamavit dicens: 'O Gercike civitas dilecta! o hereditas patrum meorum! o inopinatum excidium gentis mee! Ve michi! Ut quid natus sum videre incendium civitatis mee, videre contritionem populi mei!'*"²⁹ (*Chron. Liv.*, XIII, 4). It is striking that Henry makes the Russian Duke – a designated enemy of the church of Riga – speak the words of Matthew, father of Judas Maccabee, who laments in the First Book of Maccabees the devastation and defilement of his homeland by Antiochus IV (1. Macc. 2: 6-14), especially as Vsevolod still remained loyal to the Lithuanian side, even after having been officially subjected to Bishop Albert.

Naturally, pagans in the *Chronicon Livoniae* are also assigned roles of lesser benevolence, when it comes to their loy-

²⁹ "The king saw the burning from the other side of the Dvina, heaved a great sigh, bewailed with huge groans, and exclaimed: 'O Gerzika beloved city! O inheritance of my fathers! O unexpected downfall of my people! O woe is me! Why was I born to see the burning of my city and the sorrow of my people!'"

alty to the new supremacy or the Christian faith: the first Livonian Bishop Meinhard was preparing for his departure to Germany to gather a greater military force for the mission, which was being hindered by the native peoples' obstinacy when he was recalled by his Livish neophytes, shedding false tears over the fact that he was abandoning them in order to prevent the arrival of new forces. Believing in the honesty of their plea, the Bishop turned back, whereupon he was given the traitorous greeting: "*Ave rabbi*" (*Chron. Liv.* I, 11). Likewise, the second Livonian Bishop Bertold had to struggle throughout his missionary work as the neophytes repeatedly washed off the newly assumed faith. In one case, the Livs are shown speaking a kind of ritual formula, while they wash themselves in a river in order to remove the Christian faith and send it back to Germany: "*Hic iam baptismatis aquam cum ipsa christianitate removemus aqua fluminis et fidem suspectam exfestucantes post Saxones recedentes transmittimus.*"³⁰ (*Chron. Liv.* II, 7). The Barbarian cruelty is embodied by some Estonians in the scene of martyrdom of a priest named Friedrich, whose skull and back they batter, mocking him in Estonian language, which in this case expresses the incomprehensibility of violence: "*Laula! Laula! Pappi*" ("Sing, sing, parson!", *Chron. Liv.* XVIII, 8). Despite these episodes, which, however, do not represent the greater part of the scenes involving Barbarians, Henry portrays the natives also as allies in the battle for Christianity, renouncing to plot with other pagans against

³⁰ "We now remove the water of baptism and Christianity itself with the water of the river. Scrubbing off the faith we have received, we send it after the withdrawing Saxons."

the Germans (*Chron. Liv.* XII, 6). In a particularly likeable episode, Henry describes the Jerwen women who had been taken as hostages by Oeselians. When these were attacked by German forces, the women fought alongside the Germans, battering the adversary with clubs and shouting: “*Te percutiat Deus christianorum!*”³¹ (*Chron. Liv.* XXIII, 9).

The staging of the Barbarian shows that the theater of the *Chronicon Livoniae* does not represent the Baltic pagans as alien or abhorrent, as one might expect of a work meant to legitimize the Christian expansion in these regions. The example of the ambiguous representation of the Lithuanian commander unveils a tendency of Henry to critically reflect upon the actions of his compatriots and to always find a grain of humanness within the ranks of the harshest opponents of the Livonian church and a grain of compassion within himself. Doubtlessly, the author’s attitude is related to his own participation in the daily life of the Latvians, for whose souls he was responsible

³¹ “May the God of the Christians smite you!”

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as their priest, as well as to his domination of the local languages, through which the otherness appeared less strange. Dramatic narration thus provides Henry with the possibility to express his own attitude, without being constrained to get explicit, as a report in the mode of undramatic narration would require. In fact, it can be observed that Henry’s report follows or must follow much of the discourse, legitimizing the crusading ideology, when pagans are named *inimici nominis Christi* and their deeds are marked by such words as *infidelitas* and *perfidia* (Tyerman 2011, 37). A direct utterance in contrast does not necessarily require a valuation, as it stands for its own, free for interpretation, just like the speaking character. Historiographical theater, therefore, represents a means for the expression of a contrary discourse within a tendentious text. On the other hand, it touches the universal level of every event, which, in case of the *Chronicon Livoniae*, stages the repeated battle between clashing cultures, comprehensible even in an entirely different cultural context almost 800 years later.

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KALBA BARBARAI: „ISTORIOGRAFINIS TEATRAS“ IR JO POVEIKIS HENRIKO LATVIO *LIVONIJOS KRONIKOJE*

Ramunė Markevičiūtė

S a n t r a u k a

Straipsnyje aptariami draminio pasakojimo, t. y. pasisakymų tiesiogine kalba, paskirtis ir poveikis viduramžių istoriografijoje, ypatingą dėmesį skiriant draminių epizodų pavyzdžiams Henriko Latvio *Livonijos kronikoje*.

Šioje kronikoje minimas Rygos miesto centre surengtas „pranašų spektaklis“ (*ludus prophetarum*), skirtas miesto krikščioniškajai bendruomenei, taip pat lyvių ir latvių naujakrikštams. Misionieriai teatrą pasitelkdavo katechetiniams tikslams, kai prireikdavo įtaigiai paaiškinti krikščioniškąsias doktrinas neišmanantiems ir naujai pakrikštytiems bendruomenės nariams. Dramos keliamas stiprus emocinis poveikis nuo pat Antikos laikų skatino ir istorikus savo tekstuose įterpti draminių pasakojimų.

Remiantis Aristotelio *Poetika* straipsnyje siekiama parodyti, kad draminis pasakojimas viduramžių istoriografijoje atitinka aristoteliškuosius poetinio žmogaus veiksmų vaidavimo reikalavimus. Skirdamas poeziją nuo istoriografijos, Aristotelis pabrėžia,

kad poetas turi vaizduoti ne tai, kas iš tiesų įvyko tikrovėje, o tai, kas tikėtina ar būtinai *galėjo* įvykti. Todėl istoriografinių tekstų dialogai ir kalbos *per se* kelia istorinės tiesos klausimą. Straipsnyje siekiama parodyti, kad viduramžių istoriografijos prieiga prie istorinės tiesos skiriasi nuo modernųjų istoriografijos standartų, reikalaujančių nuosaikaus istorinių įvykių aprašymo. Ikimodernistinės minties požiūriu, draminis ar net poetinis įvykių vaidavimas jų faktiškumui neprieštarauja: pasitelkiant tam tikrą, nors ir fiktyvų scenarijų, apie pavaizduotą asmenį perteikiama žinutė, kurios turinys yra svarbesnis už istorinių aplinkybių detales.

Draminio istorinių veikėjų vaidavimo prasmė ir paskirtis iliustruojama pavyzdžiais iš *Livonijos kronikos*, kurios autorius, norėdamas išreikšti tam tikras vaizduojamų asmenų savybes, priskiria jiems paradigminius vaidmenis. Pagrindiniai šio teksto, siekiančio pateisinti karinę krikščionių ekspansiją Baltijos kraštuose, veikėjai yra vokiečių kryžiaus

kariai ir vietinės tautos, arba barbarai. Skaitant autoriaus aprašomas žiaurias kovas tarp vokiečių ir vietos gyventojų, galima būtų tikėtis ir atitinkamai niūriomis spalvomis tapomo žiauraus ir klastingo barbaro paveikslo; tačiau įdėmiau išanalizavus pa-

gonis vaizduojančius draminius epizodus pasirodo, kad barbaro vaizdavimas nėra toks vienareikšmis. Daroma išvada, kad kronikos autorius naudojo draminiį pasakojimą, kad tendencingame tekste išreikštų kitokį požiūrį.

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