# **DANNEBROG 800**

# THE STORY OF DENMARK AND ESTONIA

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Christian August Lorentzen (1746 – 1828). **The Dannebrog Falls from the Sky During the "Valdemar Battle" at Lyndanisse 15 June 1219**. 1809. Oil. National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen.

# **INTRODUCTION**

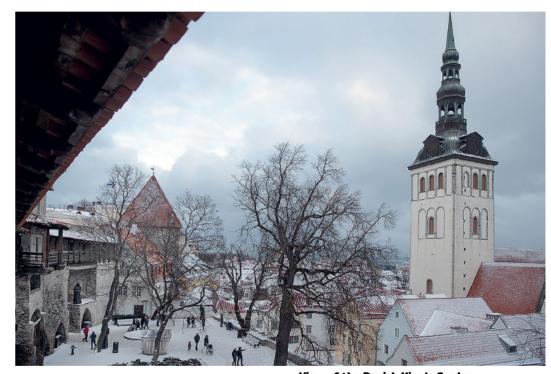
METTE SKOUGAARD, Director of The Museum of National History, Frederiksborg Castle

According to legend, the "Dannebrog" fell from the sky during the battle of Lyndanise in 1219, 800 years ago. The battle was the starting point of a period of 127 years, where Estonia and Denmark had the same kings. Though 800 years may seem like a long time ago, the relations established then have shown a strong impact on both nations.

Estonia and Denmark share important symbols with roots stemming from this period – the Dannebrog and the three lions. The Christian church, which the Danes brought with them, has also connected the two nations in the same cultural sphere.

The turbulent beginning of the relation between the two nations have long since been replaced with friendship, and in 2019 we can join in the celebration of the anniversary of the Dannebrog.

It is our hope that that through our joint projects specialists as well as the general public, will enhance our mutual knowledge of our history and thus strengthen the bonds between Estonia and Denmark.



**View of the Danish King's Garden.** Photo: Meeli Küttim / Tallinn City Museum

# DENMARK AND ESTONIA TODAY

THE ESTONIAN INSTITUTE & THE UNIVERSITY OF TARTU



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Street art pieces of the Estonian artist Edward von Lõngus in Copenhagen, capital of Denmark. Photo: Ruudu Rahumaru



The shared history of Denmark and Estonia has reached the 21st century, a time when we can proudly raise the Dannebrog and the Estonian tricolour side by side. These are symbols which differ only in the year of birth: Danes consider 1219 as the birth of their flag, for Estonians it is 1884. Tallinn and Dannebrog celebrate their 800th

anniversary in 2019 because it was in 1219 that the Estonian capital of Tallinn was first mentioned, its name denoted 'Danish stronghold' back then. Let us begin unfolding the Estonia-Denmark story from the last one hundred years and then have an 800-year leap into the past.

# A Road of Official Relations in the 20th Century

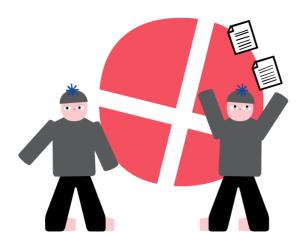
On the 24th of February 1918, when Estonia declared her independence as a republic, it took three years before Denmark recognised Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as independent states in 1921. The young state of Estonia had to pull through hard ordeals and gain victory over

Russian troops in the Estonian War of Independence (1918–1920), in which Danish volunteers fought side by side with Estonians and other allied forces for Estonia's freedom.

In 1945–1991 Denmark did not acknowledge, similar to most Western states, the Soviet occupation in Estonia, during this period official relations between Denmark and Estonia were minimal.

On August 26, 1991 four ministers of foreign affairs - Lennart Meri from Estonia. Jānis Jurkāns from Latvia, Algirdas Saudargas from Lithuania and Uffe Ellemann-Jensen from Denmark, signed documents in Fredensborg Palace which restored diplomatic relations between Denmark and the Baltic states. Since then we find more and more common stories, cultural exchanges, and business relations. A key phrase in Estonian-Danish relations today is defence cooperation. Since 2004. Denmark and Estonia work together under the NATO umbrella. Estonia has supported Danish soldiers in the Balkans and Irag, and Danish soldiers have provided the Balts with support and defence in the air and on land.

In the 1990s when greater opportunities opened up for travel, studies and cultural communication, many young Estonians went to Danish universities, people's universities and summer courses. A Danish language degree programme was launched in the University of Tartu

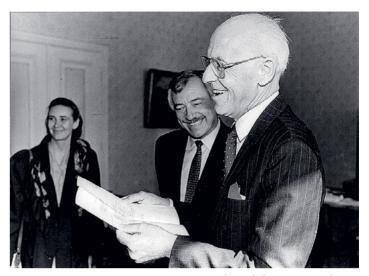


in 1994. Young Estonians are still going to Denmark, for example to study design and art, or agriculture.

### Sander's story

While considering Scandinavian universities he sifted out Denmark which had a wider selection of programmes in English. Living in Denmark was made possible thanks to a study grant and as an EU citizen, Sander can apply for an allowance allowing him to focus on studies and removing the fear of how to manage everyday costs.

He was interested in something bordering art and mathematics and now studies multimedia design. In Copenhagen, blending in is not complicated for someone from Tallinn, there is a lot in common between the two cities – similar architecture, climate and traditions.



Danish minister of foreign affairs Uffe Ellemann-Jensen and Estonian minister of foreign affairs Lennart Meri in Tallinn in September 1991. Photo: Albert Truuväärt / National Archives of Estonia



The Queen of Denmark visits Estonia. 27.-28.07.1992. From the left: Arnold Rüütel, Margrethe II, Prince Henrik, Ingrid Rüütel. Photo: Ain Protsin/Postimees



The average Dane takes life in a more relaxed manner compared to Estonians and finds more time for himself. Locals know how to enjoy the fruits of their public services and social welfare system, and have an enjoyable lifestyle.

### Mads's story

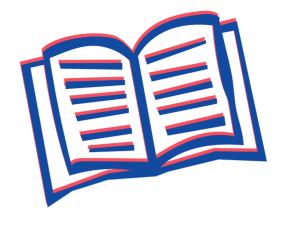
Mads took an interest in Estonia during his secondary education, the chance gift of a study book of the Estonian language increased his interest even further."... living in a country which recently regained independence, where building the country is in full swing seemed more interesting than life in the "completed" Denmark." Mads has now lived in Estonia for many years and fulfilled another wish - in the country's centenary year (2018) he published a comprehensive book on Estonia in the Danish language.

### **In Cultural Fields**

The Danish Cultural Institute was one of the first foreign cultural institutes to open an office in Estonia. Anybody who has ever come into contact with Danish culture has heard of Silvi Teesalu who was the head of the Estonian office of Danish Cultural Institute from 1990 to 2014.

Probably because so many young Estonians visited Denmark in the 1990s and the Danish language was taught in Estonian universities, a new generation of translators emerged who eagerly started translating Danish literature into Estonian. Besides H. C. Andersen, K. Blixen, M.A. Nexø and some other Danish authors they gave Estonians a rich selection of literature including historical novels, crime stories, poetry, modern novels, plays, children's, books etc.

Around two dozen titles have been translated from Estonian into Danish, among them is the Estonian national epic "Kalevipoeg", published as early as in 1878, and over ten titles since the 1990s. Ilt is rather striking that most translations were either published in the 1990s or after 2010 with a long gap between them. Translators from Estonian into Danish can be literally counted on the fingers of one hand and then we should use both hands to give them some well-deserved applause.



Birgita Bonde Hansen has been translating Estonian and Finnish modern classics into Danish, altogether about 50 books, of them about ten from Estonian authors. The authors translated include Andrus Kivirähk, Jaan Kross, Rein Raud, Ilmar Taska, Meelis Friedenthal, Mihkel Mutt and Paavo Matsin. In 2018 Hansen was awarded Kield Elfelts Mindelegat of the Blixen Literary Award and she has been nominated three times for an annual Cultural Endowment of Estonia award in the category of translating literature from Estonian into a foreign language.

Interest in Danish plays has been boosted through films, several film scripts by the authors related to the Dogma 95 manifesto have been brought to stage successfully. For example "The Celebration" (written by Mogens Rukov and Thomas

Vinterberg) at Rakvere Theatre in 2004, Lars von Trier's "The Idiots" at Von Krahl Theatre in 2010, "Adam's Apples" by Kinoteater and Nargen Festival in 2016 and "Breaking the Waves" (written by Lars von Trier, David Pirie, Peter Asmussen and Vivian Nielsen) at the Vanemuine Theatre in Tartu in 2017.

In 1996, works by the Skagen Painters arrived in Tallinn: P.S. Krøyer, Anna and Michael Ancher, Carl Locher and Holger Drachmann. Since then, our cooperation in art is characterised by exhibitions and joint projects, and seminars are arranged and visited mutually. In 2019 the Estonian Art Museum is displaying Danish paintings again, for the first time the crème de la crème of the Danish Golden Age is exhibited in Estonia.

Talking about musical contacts we must note that Danish pop musicians have been visiting Estonia since 1992. Danish music has been performed at Estonia's Rock Summer festivals, and more recently in concert halls, festival stages and clubs. For example NHØP trio. Volbeat, Get Your Gun, Efterklang, singer MØ and many other artists have performed in Estonia. The Viru Folk music festival, held at Käsmu village on the northern coast of Estonia, was dedicated to Danish music and culture in 2015. Among the many bands playing at the festival were the best Danish folk metal band Svartsot and romantic folktronic band Sorten Muld.



An Estonia-born composer and saxophone player Maria Faust has won high level awards in both Denmark and Estonia. For Maria, Estonia is a mystical place for drawing inspiration. She now lives in Denmark but comes to play in Estonia a few times every year. It is also interesting to note that one of the most famous Estonian conductors Eri Klas, was the chief conductor of Aarhus Symphony

Orchestra from 1991 to 1996. Athletes of the two countries have competed in various events, particularly frequently in ball games: football, handball, volleyball, beach ball. The top Estonian badminton player, Raul Must was 16 when he settled in Denmark to learn from the world's best players. He has attended the Olympic Games in Beijing, London and Rio de Janeiro. Our countries have also competed in tennis where Kaia Kanepi and Anett Kontaveit have played against Caroline Wozniacki.

In all fields of life we have learned from each other and maintained good relations. What the Estonian-Danish relations were like centuries ago, you will find out in the following chapters.



# Revala Tarvanpää Virumaa Loone Ageline **E**Varbola Harju S Järva Alempois Vaiga Soontagan Nurmekund Mõhu Leole 🔙 Tartu Viljandi 🖢 Ugandi 🔙 Otepää Map of Estonian counties and major strongholds in the year 1200

# ESTONIA BEFORE 1219

AIN MÄESALU archaeologist, University of Tartu

### **Administrative Distribution**

Estonia had about 150,000 inhabitants in the early 13th century. They primarily lived on farms which, when located close to each other, formed villages. Parishes were made up from villages established in close proximity. At the beginning of the 13th century, there were about 45 parishes which formed counties. Altogether there were 8 larger counties, but in central Estonia which had less external threat, 6 independent parishes or small counties were preserved. During the crusades starting in the early 13th century several counties arranged war campaigns together which indicates the

initial stages in the development of statehood.

Towards the final centuries of prehistory around 50 strongholds were in use. Well-fortified strongholds with permanent habitation were centres of power in which noblemen lived with their families. Some strongholds were only used in times of war as refuges.

### **Agriculture and Handicraft**

The main activities for Estonian inhabitants were growing crops and raising animals, closely linked to each other, as animal manure was probably already used used to fertilise fields. They mostly grew

winter rye and barley, but also wheat, oat, peas and broad beans. Domestic animals included cattle, sheep, pigs, horses and chickens.

Estonians lived in rectangular wooden cross-beam houses which measured on average 20–30 m<sup>2</sup>.

Many essential tools and utensils as well as buildings, clothes and footwear were made by members of the farm family. In certain handicraft areas specialised masters were at work.

Smelting iron from local bog iron ore was very important. By the end of prehistory there were a few centres for producing iron, achieving on average 10-15 tons of iron a year. Blacksmiths made over 50 different types of items for various purposes: weapons, tools and household items.

Also by the end of prehistory, masters of bronze jewellery appeared, making pins, brooches, neck rings, bracelets and rings. Silversmith items had achieved a high level of craftsmanship. Local types of silver jewellery developed, such as breast plates, wide bracelets, horseshoe-shaped brooches and plaited curved neck rings.

### **Trade**

Local merchants were well involved in international trade by the end of prehistory. Estonian traders could be met in Pskov and Novgorod, and even in Visby, which had become the trading centre of the Baltic Sea, and probably even further out.

Imported goods mostly comprised of silver, bronze, salt, good weapons, fine textiles and other luxuries. For example fragments of silk clothes decorated in brocade and sections of brocade ribbons have been found in Estonia.

Raw iron manufactured from bog iron was exported and in quantities possibly reaching several tons. In addition, furs and wax were exported, eagerly sought after in Western Europe. Written records have shown that Estonians were also involved in re-selling goods and slaves gained in war campaigns.

Trading places developed near harbours and the junctions of major roads which also featured a central stronghold and settlement. These places had more artisans who sold their products. Tallinn was developing into a major harbour in Northern Estonia. There were no true towns with the special rights of towns in Estonia at the end of prehistory.

### Religion

Estonians' religious views consisted of belief in souls and spirits. The soul was considered a carrier of a person's individuality and an



**Lime tree in the llumäe sacred grove** Photo: Ella Kari

essential element in keeping the body alive. People thought that during sleeping the soul could temporarily leave the body, travel around and sometimes even enter another creature. In the case of death, the soul permanently left the body and may have transferred to a new "home" - a sacred grove or cemetery.

Burial rituals testify that they believed in the afterlife. The deceased were given jewellery, tools, utensils, arms and food in their graves. Food and drink were taken to graves even some time after a person had passed when commemoration meals were held there. It was believed that the dead souls kept influencing a family's life in the future. People thought that in late autumn – the time of souls – the souls of the dead travelled and visited their homes. Food was left out on the table for them at night.

It was believed that animals, birds, fish, insects, plants and trees as well as water bodies, rocks, the sun and moon, etc., also possessed a soul and that nature featured certain spirits, who guarded and protected nature. Of Estonian deities only the god "Tarapitha", mentioned in the Livonian Chronicle of Henry, is known, who, according to the chronicler, was born in Virumaa and flew to Saaremaa island from there.

Souls, spirits and god(s) had to be gotten along well with, therefore

offerings were made for them. For this purpose certain cult or sacrificial places existed – sacred groves or individual trees, springs, boulders, less frequently hills, lakes and rivers.

By the end of the period, Christianity was not entirely unknown in Estonia because people communicated and traded with Christianised neighbours – Sweden, Denmark and Russia. Influences of Christian faith can be seen in the evolution of some habits. For example, the burial of people instead of cremation on a funeral pyre and jewellery finds show cross-shaped pendants.

Western sources describe the first evidence of an attempt to Christianise Estonians in the 11th century. The Archbishop of Lund started a Danish mission in about 1165, when monk Fulco, originally from France, was consecrated a bishop of Estonia. Thereafter the Pope issued a bull appointing Nicolaus, an Estonian monk living in a monastery in Stavanger, Norway, as Fulco's assistant. Fulco and Nicolaus may have visited Estonia but there is no record of their activity.

### **Relations with Neighbours**

Relations with neighbours were predominantly peaceful. Every now and then conflicts occurred and mutual looting raids and warring campaigns took place. Relations with neighbouring nations, close



A Late Iron Age village. Drawing: Jaana Ratas.

linguistically, such as Livonians, Curonians, Finns and Votians were probably good. With Baltic nations living to the south – Latvians and Lithuanians quarrels and armed conflicts occurred more frequently according to Henry of Livonia.

From time to time armed conflicts broke out with the eastern neighbours, Russians. Russian chronicles mention war campaigns organised by dukes of Pskov and Novgorod primarily to eastern Estonia. These sources also describe counter-campaigns made by Estonians, though.

Similarly, Danish and Swedish state and clerical authorities arranged campaigns to Estonian territories, which were probably mainly related to Christianisation. According to Danish sources, King Canute VI organised a campaign to Estonia in 1196 or 1197. In 1206 Danish King Valdemar II made a massive crusading campaign with bishops and a large number of troops to Saaremaa island where they may have also started building a stronghold. Saaremaa inhabitants vigorously fought back and made the intruders leave.

At the same time Estonians also made looting raids and war campaigns across the Baltic Sea. In 1170, soldiers of the Danish king's fleet defeated, after a two-day battle, Estonian and Curonian troops who had arrived on the coast of Öland for looting. It was probably

Estonians who conquered and burnt down the town of Sigtuna in Sweden in 1187. In 1203 troops from Saaremaa carried out a looting raid to Listerby, located in Blekinge, nowadays Swedish, but part of Denmark until 1658.

### **Germans Commence a Crusade**

In the third quarter of the 12th century German merchants became active and set up foothold offices in Gotland and Novgorod. On their way to Russia they met Livonians at the mouth of the Daugava River. German missionaries reached the area through the go-betweening of merchants. Some Livonians refused to accept the Christian faith and bitterly fought back. Bishop Albert arrived from Germany in 1200 with a sizeable army of crusaders, established Riga as the bridgehead and set up the Order of the Brothers of the Sword.

In 1208, after defeating Livonians and Latvians, the German crusaders launched a campaign against the Estonians, being supported by additional troops of Latvians and Livonians. Initially the war only concerned Ugandi and Sakala counties. Mostly looting raids to each other's territories were carried out and some strongholds were besieged. Estonians achieved their first major victory in the Battle of Ümera in 1210 which was a great encouragement.

In the summer of 1211 the Estonians were planning to take a larger joint army gathered from several counties against the Livonian stronghold of Toreida, and after its defeat also attack Riga. However, the Estonian army was crushed at Toreida. The dukes of Novgorod and Pskov competed with the German conquests and also organised campaigns into Estonia in 1210 and 1212. The Estonians. who were exhausted by war and plague, concluded a truce for three years with Germans, Livonians and Latvians in 1212.

In the winter of 1215 crusaders attacked Läänemaa county in the west and North-Sakala county. In the spring the Estonians gathered troops from four counties and made a sea and land campaign against Riga which was unsuccessful. Constant raids in summer 1215 forced Ugandi people to surrender and accept Christianity, Sakala county then followed suit. When the Duke of Pskov attacked Ugandi in 1216, the locals requested and indeed received military help from the Germans. Together they strengthened the Otepää stronghold and carried out a successful raid into Russia. In February 1217 a large army of Russians with Saaremaa, Sakala and Ugandi troops besieged Otepää stronghold. Following their victory the Germans were forced to give up the conquered territory of Estonia.

Thereafter Lembitu, elder of Sakala, gathered 6,000 troops from six counties. They also invited Russian troops in order to attack Riga together. A crusaders' army however attempted to forestall the arrival of the Russians and marched from Riga to Sakala. The Battle of St Matthew's Day saw the Estonians defeated and southern counties of Estonia had to capitulate to Germans again, in 1218 Läänemaa county also surrendered to Christianisation.

Although German crusaders made another raid into the western part of Rävala county in February 1219, people in Saaremaa and northern Estonian counties were still independent. They apparently did not know that Albert, Bishop of Riga had met King Valdemar II at the Danish Diet in Schleswig on 24 June 1218, who had made a promise to sail a fleet to Estonia the following year.



Bishop Absalon expels the Wendish fleet from the Danish coasts, 1184. Painter: Carl Rasmussen, 1879.

# WARRING FOR GOD – THE BALTIC CRUSADES

METTE SKOUGAARD, Director of The Museum of National History, Frederiksborg Castle

The shared history of Denmark and Estonia is inextricably linked to the formidable European crusade movement, in which the kings of Denmark became actively involved at a very early stage. The crusades resulted from the Council of Clermont in 1095, a synod at which Pope Urban II gained backing for a mission to the Holy Land. The intention was to win back lerusalem and Bethlehem for the Christians. According to tradition, the Danish prince, Sweyn the Crusader (c. 1050-1097), son of Sweyn Estridsen, took part in this first crusade.

Following the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099, the crusades targeted two other areas: Spain and the Baltic. Estonia and the

remainder of the Baltic region were iust about two of the last areas in Northern Europe that were not Christian. The papal bull, Divini dispensatione (The Divine Dispensation) issued by Pope Eugenius III in 1147 represented the Pope's approval for the Christians in Northern Europe to crusade in the Baltic region instead of the Mediterranean area. So, in the name of crusading, a number of campaigns first targeted the Wends and then the peoples of the Baltic, Finland and Russia. For the Danish crown these campaigns against areas along the Baltic Sea constituted an important strategic opportunity for the expansion and consolidation of the power and security of both the King and the nation.

From 1146 to 1157 Denmark was split up between several kings. This internal division weakened the country, and Danish coastal areas were ravaged and colonised by the Wends. But, after Valdemar the Great had become the sole King of Denmark in 1157, the Danes could finally fight back and conduct campaigns against the heathen Wends south of the Baltic Sea. Valdemar's efforts culminated in the conquest of the Wends' sacred capital of Arkona on the island of Rügen, together with the destruction of their sacred statue of the god Svantevit.

Following the fall of Arkona, Pope Alexander issued a series of letters instructing Christians in the Scandinavian countries to fight heathens in such faraway countries as Estonia and Finland, endorsing these campaigns as crusades with his apostolic authority.

### From the Wends to the Estonians

Valdemar was succeeded by his son, Canute, who continued the crusades against the Wends with huge success. As a result, around 1187 he could assume the title of 'King of the Wends': a title that was borne by Danish monarchs until 1972. Following the victory over the Wends, the Danish crusades could now extend further east, and King Canute personally took part in a crusade to Finland in 1191.

The Danish crusaders sailed from Blekinge along the Swedish archipelago coast on to the Åland Islands and along the Finnish coast to Estonia. In the longer term, it was the Swedish crusaders who settled permanently in Finland, while the Danish crusades then concentrated on Estonia.

In 1202, when Valdemar the Victorious succeeded his brother. Canute VI as king, he immediately started to make preparations for a crusade. According to the chronicler, Henry of Livonia, this was because the heathens on the island of Saaremaa off the coast of Estonia had attacked the Danish possessions in Blekinge and plundered Gotland on their way home. Accordingly, Valdemar was compelled to defend his countries by preparing an attack. However, there was also another explanation. The Baltic crusades were actively supported by Pope Innocent III, and could be linked directly to the strange case of Valdemar's sister. Ingeborg of Denmark. In 1193 she had married the French king, Philip II Augustus, who dismissed her the day after their wedding. She lived in virtual captivity. The Pope exploited Ingeborg to promote his crusading goals. Each time Valdemar promised to go on a crusade, Innocent attempted to pressure the French king into taking Ingeborg back. In other words, Valdemar's preparations for a crusade in 1202 were part of a larger political game.

In 1206, a crusade fleet sailed to Saaremaa led by Archbishop Anders (Andreas) Sunesen, a friend of Innocent's from their student days. In 1204 Sunesen had been appointed papal nuncio for the entire Nordic region with special responsibility for mission and crusade. The Danes landed and defeated the Estonian resistance. They managed to build a wooden fortress, but it had to be abandoned and burned down as the winter approached, and the Estonians made it far too unsafe to stav on Saaremaa. Anders Sunesen sailed to Riga, where he spent the winter making plans for future crusades. Some were immediately initiated in Livonia. Missionaries were sent there and churches were built in the area around Riga.

In 1213, Pope Innocent III decided to concentrate all forces on lerusalem and revoked his indulgence for all other crusades, including those in the Baltic. However, Bishop Albert of Riga and Anders Sunesen succeeded in gaining permission to recruit new crusaders for Livonia and to promise them indulgences, and Innocent issued a new papal crusader bull for the Danes. After the ecumenical council in Rome in 1215, only two important areas of crusade had equal status: the Holy Land; and Livonia on the Baltic Sea. The crusades in the Baltic were resumed and strengthened, Estonia became the major target in the north and was attacked by Swedish, Danish and German crusaders

from Riga. One of the reasons for Sweden's participation was the fact that for generations the Estonians had sailed across the Baltic Sea to attack Swedish territory.

King Valdemar arrived in Estonia with a vast Danish fleet of 1.500 ships. Even if the figure is only slightly realistic, he mobilised all the warriors he could get his hands on, employing both the lething (a system that divided Denmark into a number of districts with naval responsibilities) and noblemen and their private armies. Archbishop Anders Sunesen and several other bishops took part. The Danes began to build a new fortress near Lyndanise: Danskeborgen. This eventually became the Estonian capital, Tallinn. The Estonians met Valdemar, surrendered and agreed to convert to Christianity. However this was just a ploy and three days later during dinner they suddenly attacked the Danish army from five different sides. The Danes, on the point of losing, fled. It was only thanks to Vistlav of Rügen that they were saved. He had hidden under the cliff with his knights and now galloped directly against the Estonians, just as they were certain that they had won the battle. The fortunes of war changed. The Danes now rallied around the king together with the German vassals and fought hard against the Estonians until they forced them to retreat. So Valdemar was rescued by a vassal from Rügen, which just

fifty years earlier had formed the setting for his father's major Baltic crusade.

Around 1500, Danish historians described how the Dannebrog flag had dropped from the sky during this battle as a sign, precisely when the Danes found themselves in the most critical situation, and how with this new Christian banner they were able to prevail. The event took place on the 15th of June, which is national flag day in Denmark.

### The Mission in Estonia

Following the Battle of Lyndanise, the Danes established a fortress, which, though besieged by the Estonians in 1220 and 1223, managed to resist attack. In the years that followed, the entire northern part of the Estonian territory came under Danish control and led to the establishment of the Duchy of Estonia.

During the 1320s and 30s the revenues of the Danish kings, and with that the power over the whole country, had been turned over to foreign, in particular Holstein, counts. So in 1340, when Valdemar Atterdag became king, he immediately embarked on the task of redeeming and reunifying the Danish kingdom. Repeated in a sentence as a paragraph. Probably best to delete from here. In 1346 he sold Estonia, where he had been

having trouble maintaining control, to the Teutonic Order.

The payment that Valdemar received helped to make it possible for him to retrieve his mortgaged kingdom.

The last Danish king to seek the Pope's indulgence for the participants of a mission was Christian II (king 1513–1523). He wanted to recapture Greenland and convert it to Christianity, and to open up an entirely new crusade route to the Holy Land via Asia. A few years later the Lutheran Reformation put an end to all plans for pan-European crusades, when the Pope lost his role as a unifying authority.



**The Battle of Lyndanise**. Study for a history painting for the Museum of National History at Frederikborg which was never realized. Painted by Henrik Olrik, 1885.



**Christoffer II** (1319-1326 and again 1329-1332). Tapestry by Hans Knieper, ca. 1581-1585. The National Museum of Denmark

# ESTONIA UNDER DANISH RULE 1219–1346

PER SEESKO, Curator and Collection Manager, The Museum of National History, Frederiksborg Castle

From 1219–1346 a number of Danish kings and royals held the title of Duke of Estonia (dux Estoniae). The Danish conquest of northern Estonia was not followed by a large Danish settlement, but the successive Danish rulers issued laws and regulations that were of great importance for their subjects in Estonia.

### Valdemar II and His Sons

After the victory at Lyndanise in 1219, King Valdemar II consolidated his power in the area by constructing a new castle on the site, and appointed one of his sons, Canute, Duke of Estonia. But this did not yet secure Danish rule in

Estonia. The decades that followed were marked by competition for the supremacy of the Estonian territories between King Valdemar and other crusaders and missionaries active in the region. What's more, in May 1223 King Valdemar was taken prisoner by one of his vassals in Northern Germany.

The king's protracted captivity and subsequent struggle to recapture his lost dominions in Northern Germany resulted in a decisive defeat in 1227, obviously hampering any effective efforts in Estonia. Here, the Sword Brethren, a religious military order founded in Livonia in 1202, took control of the Danish possessions. However, it was roundly defeated

at the hands of the pagan Lithuanians, and in the so-called Treaty of Stensby from 1238, Tallinn and the three Northern Estonian provinces of Harrien, Virland and Jerven were confirmed as Danish possessions. Jerven, however, was ceded to the Teutonic Order, another religious military order, originally founded in the Holy Land, which replaced the Sword Brethren as a new and important factor in the Baltic countries around this time.

Thus, when Valdemar II died in 1241, the boundaries of the Danish possessions in Estonia had been established. The senior representative of the Danish Crown was the king's vice-regent (capitaneus) at the castle in Tallinn. Royal castles were also built in Rakvere (Wesenberg) and later Narva. Vassals, who received their possessions as fiefdoms from the Danish king, to whom they pledged allegiance, managed the rural areas. In return, they were entitled to certain revenues and were in charge of local judicial administration. Judging from King Valdemar's Census Book, a manuscript dating from around 1230-1240, the vassals at this time numbered both Danes and Estonians. The very fact that the Census Book, which lists the revenues of the king, contains extensive records of estates in Estonia, serves to emphasise the country's importance to the kings of Denmark at this time.

In ecclesiastical matters, the bishopric of Tallinn was subject to the Danish archbishopric in Lund. Like the vice-regents at the castle in Tallinn, the bishops were often Danish by birth and, as a rule. appointed by the king. In the Danish era, several monasteries were also founded both in and outside Tallinn. Just like the ecclesiastical institutions and the king's vassals in Estonia, the city of Tallinn also sought to have its rights and privileges confirmed or even expanded under the successive Danish rulers. In 1248, Valdemar II's son, Erik IV. granted the city permission to function under the law of the leading Hanseatic city, Lübeck. The population of Tallinn included Estonians, Scandinavians and Germans, and in 1285 the city was admitted into the Hanseatic League. The city's merchants and artisans were organised in guilds, and names such as the Saint Canute's Guild and Saint Olay's Guild are evidence of the links to Scandinavia. The Saint Canute's guilds, which existed in many Danish market towns, were named after the canonized Canute Lavard, who was the great-grandfather of Valdemar II, and from whom all the Danish kings, who also ruled Estonia, were descended. Denmark was plagued by conflict during the reign of Erik IV and his two brothers, Abel and Christoffer I, who vied for power and succeeded each other on the throne. King Erik never seems to have visited Estonia himself, but he certainly planned expeditions

there, as one source expresses it: to protect the new converts there against "pagans and barbarians". Some sources also mention Danish participation in the crusades against the Russian principalities east of Estonia in the years around 1240.

# From Margaret Sambiria to Erik VI

When Christoffer I died in 1259, his son, Erik V Klipping was still a minor. So for a time a regency under the auspices of his mother, the Queen Dowager Margaret Sambiria, ruled the possessions of the Crown of Denmark, including Estonia. In 1266, when King Erik had assumed his regal powers, he gave his mother Estonia and Virland as a special administrative area. Bearing the title 'Lady of Estonia' (domina Estoniae), she ruled it from Nykøbing Falster in southern Denmark. Among other initiatives, she sought to secure the defence of Tallinn. In 1265 she ordered the counsellors and citizens of Tallinn to fortify the city, also encouraging the Estonian vassals to contribute. A Russian attack across the River Narva in 1268 must have also underlined the continued necessity of taking the defence of Estonia into consideration. According to a brief entry in a medieval Danish yearbook, a drost (a senior official) and other Danes fell in Estonia around this time. Arild Huitfeldt, who wrote a comprehensive history of Denmark around

1600, also recounted how, in 1270, Drost Matthias was sent to Livonia to come to the rescue of the king's garrison in Tallinn, which was under siege by Russians, Semigallians and Lithuanians.

Margaret Sambiria died in 1282, and in 1286 her son, Erik V Klipping, who had retained the formal supremacy in Estonia, was murdered at home in Denmark, His son, Erik VI Menved. had not yet come of age, but when he assumed control, it was with the ambition to re-establish Danish domination in the Baltic Sea. Among other initiatives, he sought to promote trade in his Estonian possessions. In 1294 he promised to protect the overland trade routes of the Hanseatic merchants to Novgorod. The many regulations regarding Estonia issued during his reign underline the general interest he showed in the duchy. However, in 1303, when Erik Menved appointed his brother Christoffer Duke of Estonia for a period of six years, he encountered opposition from his Estonian vassals. They made it quite clear that the king had no right to separate the vassals from the Danish crown. They seem to have had no interest in replacing the Danish king with another master. Around this time, the royal vassals in Estonia had asserted themselves more strongly. In 1259, for the first time, the vassals are seen to act as a unified group or corporation. Some time prior to 1282, an assembly of 12 men,

elected from among the vassals, constituted a kind of royal council, taking part in the government of the duchy together with the king's vice-regent in Tallinn.

# The End of Danish Rule in Estonia

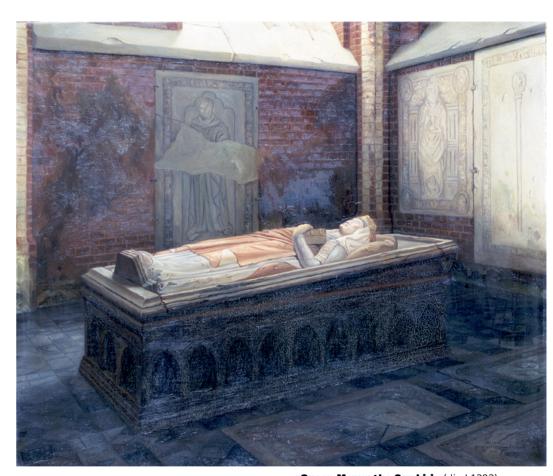
Christoffer II followed his brother on the throne in 1319. However, he soon lost control of much of Denmark, and from 1326-1329 he was even replaced by the young Duke of Schleswig, Valdemar (III). After regaining the throne in 1329, he promised that Estonia would never be separated from the Danish crown. As a testament to his difficult position, he nevertheless endowed one of his former opponents with Estonia as a hereditary fiefdom shortly afterwards, though this was never realised.

Christoffer II's death in 1332 was followed by eight years without a king. His sons, Otto and Valdemar sought to win back their Danish kingdom. Otto, the elder of the two, held the title "junker of the Danes, Duke of Estonia and Lolland", and Estonia was one of the few possessions he could still command in his efforts to win the Danish crown. Christoffer II left behind an unpaid dowry after his daughter Margrete's marriage to Margrave Louis of Brandenburg in 1324, and in 1333 Otto promised Estonia to his brother-in-law, the Margrave. Otto

intended to confirm this transfer as soon as he became king, but in 1334 he suffered defeat at the hands of the counts of Holstein and was imprisoned until 1340.

That same year, his brother, Valdemar IV Atterdag was elected king. Bit by bit, he won Denmark back through conquests or redemption of the mortgaged parts of the kingdom. However, he would also be the last Danish king to rule Estonia. In 1340 and 1341 plans for a sale of the duchy were resumed. but they could not be concluded at the time. Instead, the decisive event was the great peasant uprising that broke out in 1343. The Estonian peasants initiated a siege of Tallinn, but the besieging army was defeated by a rescue army commanded by the Livonian Master of the Teutonic Order, whom the royal vassals and counsellors then entrusted with the country's defence, though stressing that it was a temporary arrangement. Once the rebellion was suppressed, King Valdemar sent the nobleman Stig Andersen from Denmark to Estonia, to establish royal authority on his behalf. However, in reality the royal castles remained in the possession of the Order.

In 1346 Valdemar sold his Estonian possessions to the Order. In an open letter, the king explained that his brother Otto now wished to enter the Teutonic Order and would bring the duchy of Estonia with him



**Queen Margrethe Sambiria** (died 1282). Sculpted tomb in the monastery church of Doberan in Mecklenburg. Pictured by the painter Chr. Tilemann Petersen, 1914. – Oil on canvas. The Museum of National History at Frederiksborg Castle

upon his entry. The king, therefore, released his subjects in Estonia from their allegiance and directed them to the Teutonic Order as their new masters. The payment of 19,000 marks that Valdemar nevertheless received enabled him to pay what he owed Brandenburg. Funds were even left over, which Valdemar could use in his efforts to become king of the whole of Denmark. The sale must be viewed in the light of the king's endeavour to win back his mortgaged kingdom.

We know that Otto was dressed in the habit of the Teutonic Order and placed in a position of command. But that is the last we hear of him. Almost 130 years after the conquest of Valdemar the Victorious, this also marked the end of the story of Danish rule in Estonia.

### **List of Kings**

**1202–1241 Valdemar II "The Victorious"** (1170–1241)

**1241–1250** Erik IV "Plovpenning" (1216–1250)

**1250–1252 Abel** (1218–1252)

**1252–1259 Christoffer I** (1219–1259)

1248 married **Margaret Sambiria** (died 1282)

**1259–1286** Erik V "Klipping" (1249–1286)

**1286–1319** Erik VI "Menved" (1274–1319)

**1319–1326** and again **1329–1332 Christoffer II** (1276–1332)

**1326–1329 Valdemar III** (1315–1364)

**1332–1340** Period without a king

**1340–1375 Valdemar IV "Atterdag"** (1320–1375)



The letter by which King Valdemar IV "Atterdag" on 29 August 1346 sold Estonia to the Teutonic Order. Original in Riksarkivet, Stockholm, Sweden.



The High Altar of the Church of the Holy Spirit in Tallinn. Bernt Notke's workshop, 1483. The external moving wing depicting St Elisabeth and the medieval coat of arms of Tallinn (lin modern times this developed into the Lesser coat of arms of Tallinn).

Photo: Stanislav Stepaško

# ESTONIA DURING THE RULE OF DANISH KINGS

IVAR LEIMUS, Historian, Curator and Researcher Estonian History Museum

Although Danish kings ruled Estonia for over a century, their rule was not without interruption. King Valdemar II and the Archbishop of Lund, Andreas Sunesen, led a campaign in which Northern Estonia - Rävala, Hariumaa, Virumaa and lärvamaa counties were conquered and Christianised in 1219-1220. Bishop Modena Wilhelm (William of Modena), legate of Pope Honorius II, and Wilhelm's vice-legate magister Johannes, however, managed to push the Danes out from Estonia between 1225 and 1227. The Brothers of the Sword then settled in Tallinn. The politics of the following Pope, Gregorius IX forced the Germans to return the conquered territories, except for Järvamaa in 1238. Denmark then

ruled Estonia until 1346, when Valdemar IV sold his Estonian lands to the German Order.

Estonia's status in Denmark was not exactly clear. Danish kings were usually also dukes of Estonia but it was not mentioned in their official titles. The Danish crown was far away and was represented by a regent (capitaneus) who resided on Toompea in Tallinn.

During and after the conquest indigenous people were baptised and their lands were handed over to vassals. In terms of nationality, most Danish vassals were German but initially some liegemen were of Danish or Estonian origin. Fairly soon following the conquest

Northern Estonian vassals set up the Harju-Viru Knighthood, first mentioned in writing in 1252. It is considered that by 1282 at the latest, the Land Council, usually consisting of 12 representatives of local nobility had started meeting at the Danish regent's residence, the council was the supreme administrative and judicial body of Harju and Viru counties.

In church matters, Denmark's Estonian lands came under the Bishop of Tallinn's diocese. The bishop had no land estates, except for Kiviloo and Porkuni strongholds. Early plans for setting up a Virumaa bishopric were soon abandoned, the Bishop of Tallinn was subordinated to the Danish Archbishopric of Lund (since 1658 Sweden).

Tallinn became the centre of Estonia when ruled by Denmark. First, building works commenced on Toompea Hill, where the Danish started constructing a stone castle. The first wooden church may have been erected on Toompea soon after the 1219 conquest. The episcopal church made of stone was completed around 1240. In the 1220s the so called Small and Great castles were constructed on Toompea for the Brothers of the Sword and vassals but other people may have already resided in them as well. It was in 1227 or 1233 when the Brothers were reported to have robbed "goods of lots of merchants, all household belongings of citizens and women's clothes". It is also the first time when written sources mention citizens (cives) of Tallinn, however, where they actually lived is not known.

Archaeological evidence points to the fact that life went on beneath the castles not only in the early decades of the 13th century but also, in its latter decades and was particularly apparent in the second half of the century. The first edifices in town were made of timber but towards the end of the 13th century stone dwellings and outhouses were being built. The street network as we know it, developed in broad terms by the early 14th century. At about the same time the centre of town life focused around the marketplace in today's Town Hall Square, where people from neighbouring villages came to sell their farm produce and take home town goods.

Tallinn's economy was strongly founded on international trade. As early as in the 1250s the people of Tallinn showed support to Lübeck town council because of the injustice which fell upon German merchants in Novgorod, stating that both towns belonged together like the two arms of crucified Jesus. In 1285, Norwegian king Erik II Magnusson mentioned Tallinn among members of the emerging Hanseatic movement. In the early 14th century the people of Tallinn concluded trading deals with bayliffs of Finland.

The most important activity for Tallinn certainly was intermediate trade. Between the 1270s and 1290s Danish kings issued a number of decrees in order to safeguard German and Gotland cargo ships in Estonian waters on their trips to Novgorod. Russian furs and wax were the main export articles sold to the west, in return, fine textiles, salt and silver were offered. A major proportion of this trade went through Tallinn, with its merchants making a handsome income and this wealth being expressed in ever larger public buildings and dwellings. A favourable location between the west and east secured Tallinn an important place in the Hanseatic League which was forming at the time.

Although lots of immigrants from Germany, Scandinavia and elsewhere settled in Tallinn for its trading position, Estonians always accounted for the largest nationality group. Among town dwellers we need to distinguish citizens who were independent in terms of property and paid citizen tax. During the Danish rule no nationality-based restrictions were imposed on becoming a citizen, therefore in the early period, many Estonians became citizens. Wealthier citizens of Tallinn joined the Saint Canute and Saint Olaf's guilds. Written sources mention them in 1326 and 1341 respectively but the guilds may have existed in the previous century. The Danish-period guilds brought together not only artisans



**The earliest coin minted on the territory of Estonia**, a bracteate of Valdemar II. Minted in Tallinn in 1219/1220 by the Danish, one-sided, nominal value one penny.



Fragment of the seal of Tallinn's Bishop Thorkill (1238?–1260). Collection of the Institute of History and Archaeology, University of Tartu.



**Tallinn codex of Lübeck law.** 1282. Detail. Tallinn City Archives

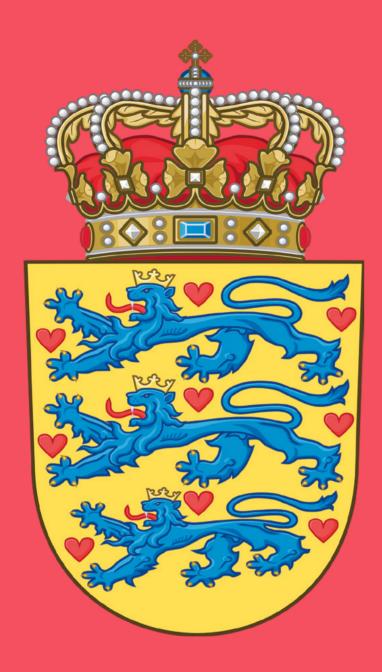
as in later centuries, but also merchants and perhaps people from other walks of life.

With the expansion of the number of inhabitants in town, relations required more regulation. In 1248 King Eric IV of Denmark (Eric Ploughpenny) issued a document, in which he allowed citizens of Tallinn to use "all the rights that citizens of Lübeck have". Lübeck Law was fully enforced in Tallinn slightly later, in 1257 by King Christoffer I. In the 1248 document members of Tallinn town council are first mentioned, who received iudicial powers in Tallinn beside the Danish regent. During the Danish rule the 24-member council operated in two shifts, the first being the acting council, and the second being the previous council. The jurisdiction of magistrates grew incrementally. In 1284 the Bishop of Tallinn transferred clerical rights in the Lower Town to the town council. The construction of Tallinn Town Hall may have started around that time too, initially the building had one floor and a cellar. It is first found in written records in 1322

In religious life, the people of Tallinn belonged to two congregations - Niguliste and Oleviste (St Nicholas and St Olaf). The building of both churches began in the 13th century but no records have survived as to when they were established. St Olaf's church is first mentioned in 1267, St Nicholas only in 1315. St

Michael Cistercian nunnery was also located in the town, it was probably set up by the Danish court in the late 1240s. Even earlier, during the rule of the Order of the Brothers of the Sword. Dominican friars may have arrived in Tallinn but they did not succeed in establishing their convent then. A new attempt was made in 1248. The convent was at first on Toompea and Dominicans moved it to Vene Street in the Lower Town in the late 13th century. The "house" of Holy Spirit. later almshouse of Holy Spirit is first recorded in 1319. Perhaps at first it was not only intended to become a refuge but also an accommodation for travellers. Outside the town, the St John's almshouse for lepers was established, first recorded in a document by Modena Wilhelm in 1237.

The developing town also needed defences. In 1265 Queen Margaret issued an order to the town council and vassals to secure the town with walls and ramparts. Construction of fortifications may have been given a boost in 1310, when the king's representative, Knight Johannes Canne formulated the town's rights and obligations in building and extending the town's defensive structures. By the end of the Danish rule the first wall, much lower than today, was almost complete. Thus it can be said that it was during the slightly more than 100 years of Danish rule that both the institutions and historical milieu of Tallinn were established.





The coat of arms of Denmark

The coat of arms of Estonia



Valdemar IV's coat of arms and standard, as depicted in Wabenboek Gelre (c. 1370-86). This is the oldest-known coloured illustration of the Danish flag. Bibliothèque Royale Albert 1er (The Royal Library of Belgium).

# DANNEBROG. RELIGION, KINGDOM, NATION AND DEMOCRACY

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### Dannebrog as a Sign of the Assistance Granted by God and the Clergy to the King of Denmark

At the beginning of the 16th century, Danish historians were aware of miraculous events, which occurred during the crusade of Valdemar II the Conqueror (king in 1202-1241) in Estonia 300 years earlier. Around 1527, the Franciscan monk, Peder Olsen (c. 1490-1570) cited older sources and made a case for a story that was to become part of the Danes' collective consciousness.

One of Olsen's sources recounts how, in the year of our Lord 1208, and during the reign of Valdemar

II. Christian Danes were in battle against the heathen Livonians in a place called Fellin. On the point of defeat, they humbly beseeched God for assistance. Their prayer was immediately answered with a banner falling from the sky in the form of a white cross imprinted on a lambskin. A celestial voice informed them that simply by holding the banner high up in the air, they would immediately crush their enemies and achieve outright victory. This is exactly what happened. While Peder Olsen took this flag to be the Dannebrog, he believed that the event must be linked to a major battle, which Valdemar the Conqueror fought when he landed in Estonia in 1219: the Battle of Lyndanise.

In Peder Olsen's day, the Dannebrog was the main standard of the army, so a well-established legend was linked to its genesis. The oldest extant source, in which a coloured Dannebrog is associated with the Danish crown, is the Dutch Wapenboek Gelre, which features the coats of arms of secular and clerical princes and their vassals. It was compiled c. 1370-86. For the Danish king Valdemar IV. who also ruled Estonia until 1346, it depicts a shield with a vellow background and three blue, crowned lions surrounded by fringed water lilies. Here, as in other early representations, the lions are portrayed as what in heraldry are referred to as 'leopards'. In other words, the cats are depicted with their heads turned to full face. In the early days, sometimes the coat of arms appears to have featured fringed water lilies; at other times hearts. Today, hearts are used, and during the 16th century the number of them was fixed at nine. A helmet above Valdemar IV's shield features ermine-covered bullhorns (horns from the European bison). On each horn there are two peacock feather fans, and sticking through one of these fans is the oldest-known image of a Dannebrog flag.

The association between the coat of arms with the three lions and the Danish king certainly dates back to the 12th century. The oldest-known example is a seal used by King Canute VI around

1194. At this time, the lions were used by princes of various countries, who claimed their sovereignty and did not recognize the Holy Roman Emperor as their overlord. One of these was Canute VI, King of Denmark. The lions seem to have been regarded as symbolic protection against the eagle that was used by the Emperor. The fact that, at least since 1277, Tallinn's seal impression has included three heraldic leopards is directly connected to Danish rule.

So it appears that Valdemar the Conqueror brought the lions to Estonia. However, what is less certain is whether he took the Dannebrog back with him. Medieval Christians believed that the world and natural phenomena were governed by God. A miracle such as the one described in the legend of the Dannebrog was not impossible. During crusades the Christian knights had been assisted by celestial troops, led by saints. Glowing crosses could appear in the sky or standards with crosses on them could flutter down from above as a sign from God to those who were fighting for the just cause. Two years prior to the Battle of Lyndanise, the Christians had gained victory over the Saracens at Alcácer do Sal in Portugal. A subsequent letter to Pope Honorius III described how a flag featuring a cross had appeared in the sky before the battle. Danish knights also took part in Christian

battles against Muslims on the Iberian peninsula, and Valdemar the Conqueror's queen, Bengerd (c. 1197-1221) was a Portuguese princess. That means that people in Denmark may also have heard about the miracle in Portugal.

19th-century Danish historians sought an explanation of the myth that could be maintained within the context of a world governed by natural laws and politics. In 1873, Caspar Paludan-Müller came up with the hypothesis that, prior to the crusade, the Pope had sent the king the standard as a sign of support and sanction. Two years later, the similarity of the Dannebrog to the standard of the Order of Saint John led A.D. Jørgensen to conclude that Danish Saint John knights, who took part in the expedition had played a crucial role. In 1934, the ecclesiastical historian, L.P. Fabricius suggested that the flag might have been the sacred church banner of Archbishop Anders Sunesen. What these interpretations have in common is the fact that the standard with the cross is associated with the involvement of clerical institutions in the king's mission.

Other historians have been more receptive of the descriptions of contemporary miraculous events and have indicated that light phenomena – so-called halos – can appear in the form of columns and crosses. In an age, whose models

of explanation were not scientific, these phenomena might very well have been interpreted as divine intervention in crucial events. Is it possible that the design of the Dannebrog originated in a real light phenomenon prior to, or during the Battle of Lyndanise? It is a fascinating notion, but one that is never likely to be proved or disproved.

# The Flag of the King, the Army and the Navy

There is no secure evidence of Danish kings' use of the actual Dannebrog until the aforementioned Wapenboek Gelre, dating from the late 14th century. The guestion is: did Valdemar IV perpetuate the use of an existing standard of the realm, or was it he who introduced the flag? Valdemar IV himself was on a crusade to the Holy Land, and in 1347 he was knighted in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Historians have conjectured as to whether the standard with the cross was a reference to the fact that Valdemar was a knight of God. The resurrected Jesus was often depicted with a red banner with a white cross. Another claim is that Valdemar IV probably adopted the new flag on loan from the Holy Roman Empire, where a similar flag was used. Regardless of whence the inspiration for the Dannebrog may have come, it is not unlikely that the legend of the standard with

the cross that fell from the sky above Estonia was already familiar during the reign of Valdemar IV, and if it was him who adopted the flag. he maybe deliberately played on this myth. However, it is remarkable that the insignia of the Dannebrog in an almost contemporary book of arms. Codex Bellenville, is inserted in a shield and termed "Denenbrock." So it would seem that in the late 14th century the white cross on the red background already had a name that designated it as "the flag of the Danes." Already at that time the Dannebrog was an established sign of the king and his country.

In the 15th century the Danish army actually used the Dannebrog as the main standard, when the king fought to keep Sweden within the Kalmar Union. We also know for certain that, from the 16th century, Danish naval vessels flew the Dannebrog. From the end of the century, so did merchant ships. Thus from around 1600 the split swallowtail flag became the flag that indicated the fact that the vessel belonged to the navy. Christian IV claimed privileged use of the split flag when in 1630 and 1635 he issued regulations that banned merchant ships from using this type of flag. From 1625 the many different divisions of the army were given standards with a Dannebrog insignia in the upper inner corner, while the most distinguished used an actual Dannebrog.

# From a Royal Favour to a Symbol of National Solidarity and a Sign of Simple Joie de Vivre

In 1671, King Christian V of Denmark created a new chivalric order, the Order of the Dannebrog, to supplement the existing Elephant Order. The knights of the Order of the Elephant were still the most distinguished, but the king was given the opportunity to favour a larger, vet still exclusive group with the new mark of dignity. In order to bolster the prestige and significance of the Order, it was stated that it was not new at all, but that Christian V had revived an ancient royal chivalric order. The historian, Thomas Bartholin substantiated this argument in a work from 1676, in which he attempted to prove that Valdemar the Conqueror had instituted an order of knights on the day of the Battle of Lyndanise on 15 June 1219. The Order of Dannebrog helped expand the legend for dealing with royal grace and favour and for enforcing loyalty to the crown and the state.

During the 19th century, with the emergence of renewed nationalism both in the Realm of the Danish king and in the rest of Europe, people began to use the Dannebrog in more private contexts and as a political symbol. However, the absolute monarchy was not keen on this trend, and in 1833 King Frederik VI banned private citizens from flying the Dannebrog. It goes

without saying that this was linked to several factors. The Duchy of Holstein (and the small Duchy of Lauenburg) was ruled by the Danish king, but was part of the German Confederation. In addition, the Duchy of Schleswig, which belonged to Denmark, had a large number of German-speaking inhabitants. The national tendencies led to conflict between the king's Danish and German subjects. In addition, many of the more nationally minded citizens were also politically liberal and wanted to abolish absolutism and replace it with democracy.

Around 1815-1845 The Dannebrog slowly changed from primarily being a symbol of the Danish king and the unified state, of which he was head, to becoming a symbol of the Danish nation, which identified particularly with the language and other cultural markers. In the propagation of this national consciousness, poetry and historical novels played an equally important role. In 1826, B.S. Ingemann published the novel, Valdemar Seir (Valdemar the Conqueror), which featured a re-telling of the legend of the Dannebrog and the Battle of Lyndanise. The novel was hugely popular and was one of the most widely read books in Denmark well into the 20th century.

The absolute monarchy and state had attempted to monopolise the use of the Dannebrog, but failed. The popular Danish national rallies

in the 1840s would involve flying the Dannebrog, while those who wanted to see the separation of Schleswig and Holstein from Denmark and have it allied to the German Confederation used their own flag when they held meetings. 1848 saw the end of absolute monarchy and the tensions in the duchies culminated in a civil war that lasted from 1848 to 1851.

Dannebrog as a symbol of Danish nationalism found expression in the wartime poetry. Historical consciousness and national feeling merged in the retelling of the old legend and the concrete use of the Dannebrog during war at the time. The use of the Dannebrog could no longer be regulated and it found its way right into people's living rooms when they decorated their Christmas trees. In 1854, the ban on the private flying of the Dannebrog was formally repealed. Anyone could now hoist a flag as long as it was not a split one.

Today the widespread use of the Dannebrog is one of Denmark's defining features and highly noticeable to anyone visiting the country. Totally private and individual celebrations such as birthdays are frequently accompanied by Dannebrog flags of every conceivable size. The flag has become a sign of Denmark's very own, special joie de vivre.



President of the Republic of Estonia, Kersti Kaljulaid giving a speech at the Estonia 100 reception in 2018. Photo: Margus Ansu / Eesti Meedia

# DANNEBROG AND THE HISTORY OF THREE LIONS IN ESTONIA

IVAR LEIMUS, Historian, Curator and Researcher, Estonian History Museum

During Danish rule Tallinn probably had no coat of arms. According to our current state of knowledge the earliest written, and still circumstantial, evidence of the colours of Tallinn's coat of arms - red and white - is from 1471. However, during the period of 1478– 1481 Bernt Notke painted Tallinn's red shield, decorated with a white cross, on the altarpiece of the Church of the Holy Spirit. In the 16th century such a coat of arms was widely used in Tallinn, as it was imprinted into coins and precious items, depicted in textiles and ashlars. Today we call this the Lesser coat of arms of Tallinn. An exactly similar coat of arms was used by the Great Guild of merchants in Tallinn, Herman Rode

painted it on the altarpiece of St Nicholas (Niguliste) church in 1483. This coat of arms with a cross, cut into an ornamental limestone panel in 1551, decorates the entry portal of the excise chamber in the Great Guild to this day.

There is no documentary evidence for the origin of the coat of arms with a red shield and white cross but evident similarity or even sameness with the Danish national flag Dannebrog suggests that the people of Tallinn borrowed it from their rulers. The Dannebrog flag may have flown as a symbol of Danish rule until 1346 from a tower of the Toompea castle and thus been remembered by the townspeople.

As for the current (Greater) coat of arms of Tallinn depicting three lions or leopards, its evolutionary path is more complicated. The first time we see it is in the seal of the town, the earliest known use of which goes back to 1277. However, this image of the seal, showing a king's head looking out from behind a shield bearing three lions, has been created by fusing the obverse and reverse sides of the royal seal of Denmark and merely represents the Danish rule in Tallinn. The Town Council used a more or less similar seal to confirm its letters until the end of the Livonian Order period. The lion-bearing coat of arms is not evident in the art of medieval Tallinn, whereas known examples are related to the St Canute Guild. The guild was named after Canute Lavard, Duke of South Jutland, whose cult was later merged with that of King Canute the Holy.

Somewhat paradoxically it was only in 1564 when King Erik XIV of Sweden ordered that the three (Danish) lions must be used on coins in Tallinn. The background to such a strange decision lies in a dispute between Denmark and Sweden, which became even fiercer when the Northern Seven Years' War broke out in 1563. The dispute over the coat of arms saw both parties attempting to show their supremacy over the other by also displaying the enemy's coat of arms on their own.

Once they found their way onto coins the three lions soon found a home in Tallinn, moreover, because of the town seal they had never been entirely forgotten anyway.

As early as the 1580s the lions/leopards stepped onto the coat of arms of the Duchy of Estonia, later, the Province of Estonia, and in 1925 the Republic of Estonia.





The Lesser coat of arms of Tallinn. Mid- 17th century and The Greater coat of arms of Tallinn, 1652, Tallinn Town Hall.



View of the end of the town wall from the Danish King's Garden. The lower wall section with arched niches was built in the 14th century during Danish rule. Photo: Meeli Küttim / Tallinn City Museum



The sculpture "Tuli lipp" (The Flag Descended) in the Danish King's Garden, inspired by the Dannebrog legend, authors Mari Rass and Liina Stratskas, 2012. Photo: Meeli Küttim / Tallinn City Museum



Tallinn town wall with the Kuldjala tower built in the early 14th century. Photo: Meeli Küttim / Tallinn City Museum



Façade of St Canute Guild building in the 19th century, displaying both Greater and Lesser coats of arms of Tallinn. Photo: Meeli Küttim / Tallinn City Museum

