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GIRLS ON THE MOVE

LATE MEDIEVAL SOCIAL NETWORKS, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS
AND PEASANT GEOGRAPHIC MOBILITY BETWEEN SOUTHERN FINLAND
AND REVAL (TALLINN), c. 1350–1560

Abstract

The article discusses the emigration of peasants from the province of Nyland in Finland to the town of Reval (Est. Tallinn) between c. 1350 and 1560. The analysis is based on the surviving source material, especially letters of *tovorsichte* issued by lay and ecclesiastic authorities in Finland as certificates for the deceased's family on inheritance in Reval. As the source material indicates, a noticeable shift, in both the areas of origin and the gender of the migrants from Nyland, occurred between the two analysed periods. The first ranged from the 1350s/1410s to 1519, and the other period coincided with the final boom in Reval's medieval transit trade before the Livonian War (1520–1560). During the first period, some two-thirds of the deceased originated from the bailiwick of Raseborg in western Nyland, half of them being men, while in 1520–1560, half of the deceased had been born in the bailiwick of Borgå in eastern Nyland, and more than 83 per cent were women. The large number of female emigrants to Reval between c. 1410 and 1560 is also noticeable in the geographical distribution of their parishes of origin. The number of female emigrants was especially high in areas on the northern side of the Gulf of Finland, just opposite Reval, between Ingå and Borgå parishes. The issue of the migrants' origin is further investigated through a case study of Helsinga parish, covering roughly the area of the present-day cities of Helsinki and Vantaa. As the study demonstrates, most of the identified migrants who passed away in Reval were women, apparently younger daughters from the middle and upper layers of the rural society, who were able to utilise their experience in peasant merchant households and found assignments and permanent employment in the new urban surroundings. Their motivation to emigrate may have been driven by both the growing population of their old home villages in Nyland and the demands of the labour market in Reval.

Keywords: Middle Ages, early modern period, Finland, Estonia, demography, migration, peasantry, women, urban history, rural history

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BROTHER PEDER MÅNSSON
AND HIS WORRIES OVER FINNISH GIRLS

Sometime between 1512 and 1525 doctor of canon law and the guardian of the House of St Bridget in Rome, Peder Månsson, wrote a series of treatises on the subjects he considered important for the welfare of the Swedish realm. Among them was a handbook in Swedish on the *Art of Farming* (Swe. *Bondakost*). In the book, Peder focused on techniques, practices, and innovations necessary for successful agriculture and animal husbandry in Sweden but also made comments on developments he considered detrimental to rural communities and the general wealth of the realm. One of these was the migration of Finnish peasant children to Riga and Reval (Est. Tallinn) at a time when the Finnish women were considered 'the most fertile in the whole of Sweden', and many farms had been abandoned after excessive warfare and plagues. To turn the tide, he suggested that young Finns should move to Stockholm and Gävle instead, and the king should strongly ban all migration of young people to German lands for the greater benefit of the realm and Finland¹.

Peder Månsson's early sixteenth-century contemplations on issues which today are central to demography, geographic mobility, and migration policy reveal an intriguing set of questions for the late medieval and early modern northern Baltic Rim area. What was the actual role of permanent transregional migration for the personal survival and means of livelihood of the peasants in the area? Who were those who migrated and why? How big a phenomenon the migration was? What sources are available to study it in a wider political and socio-economic context of the region?

¹ '[Nw liggia j swärkie mang gotz ödhe / som fordom waro vptakin mädh storo mödhe / Stor stenröör bewisa thet nogh / affwer hwilken är växin willande skogh.] Somme säya the gotzen lagdos ödhe / aff myklo örlogh oc swarthom dödhe / Fattas nw folk thet maa väl foresees / mädh almoghanom tärfwa höffwe mees / Frwkthsammasta ärw swärikis finna / thy ganskans mangh barn födher hwar qwinna / Sidhan föra the barnen til righa och räffa / hwilken skwillo föras til stokhlm och gäffa / Wm konwngen thär pa strängh förbodh giorde / til tyska land jngen barnen föra tordhe / thet waare swärike och finland stor nytta / [mädh finnom brwkas selff och kopar hytta]'; *Peder Månssons Bondakost jämte parallelltexter*, utg. John GRANLUND (Samlingar utgivna av Svenska fornskriftssällskapet, ser. 1: Svenska skrifter, vol. 254), Uppsala 1983, p. 20. Born in the town of Jönköping in Småland, Peder joined the Bridgettine Order's monastery in Vadstena as a priest in 1499. Apparently, he knew some basic Finnish, as he used a Finnish phrase 'tärfwa höffwe mees'. He may have learnt some Finnish either through close contacts between Vadstena Abbey and Nädendal (Fin. Naantali) Abbey, Finland, or during his stay in Rome, where the House of St Bridget also hosted pilgrims from Finland. The phrase 'terve hyvä mies' can be literally translated to 'healthy good man' or it could be a late medieval Finnish greeting 'Wishing you health, my good man!'. For Peder Månsson and his work, see Anders PILTZ, *Peder Månsson*, [in:] *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, <https://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/artikel/8088> [accessed online 12 December 2023].

In the historiography of the Nordic countries, the geographic mobility of medieval and early modern rural populations has long been researched in the context of land colonisation and desertion. This brought about a line of studies focusing on the demographic and economic consequences of the late medieval European agrarian crisis promoted by the International Congress of Historians in Paris in 1950². Combined with an older late nineteenth-century tradition idealistically emphasising the freedom of Nordic peasants, until the 1980s, the core of medieval and early modern rural population was often depicted as a rather homogenous socio-economic group of freeholding farmers with recognised political status, who defended their interests against other social groups. As a manifestation of Romantic Nationalist views of the past, the medieval and early modern freedom of peasants was particularly celebrated by the twentieth-century Finnish historiography, which estimated that freeholding peasant taxpayers owned 96 per cent of all farms in Finland during the 1540s³. In Estonia and Latvia, instead, the geographical movements of the peasant population in and out of the territories emerging from the thirteenth-century conquest gained more interest throughout the twentieth century in the context of re-evaluating older Baltic-German, national and Soviet historical studies on medieval ethnic divisions in the region⁴.

² *Desertion and Land Colonization in the Nordic Countries c. 1300–1600: Comparative Report from the Scandinavian Research Project on Deserted Farms and Villages*, ed. Svend GISSEL (Scandinavian Research Project on Deserted Farms and Villages, vol. 11), Stockholm 1981; Janken MYRDAL, *Det svenska jordbrukets historia*, Bd. 2: *Jordbruket under feodalismen 1000–1700*, Stockholm 1999, p. 120; idem, *Farming and feudalism, 1000–1700*, [in:] *The Agrarian History of Sweden: From 4000 BC to AD 2000*, ed. Janken MYRDAL, Mats MORELL, Lund 2011, pp. 72–117; Eljas ORRMAN, *Talonpoikainen maalaisyhteiskunta*, [in:] *Suomen maatalouden historia*, vol. 1: *Perinteisen maatalouden aika, esihistoriasta 1870-luvulle*, toim. Viljo RASILA, Eino JUTIKKALA, Anneli MÄKELÄ-ALITALO (Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran Toimituksia, vol. 914/1), Helsinki 2003, pp. 127–129; Hans ANTONSSON, *The Extent of Farm Desertion in Central Sweden during the Late Medieval Agrarian Crisis: Landscape as a Source*, *Journal of Historical Geography*, vol. 35: 2009, no. 4, pp. 619–641.

³ Eino JUTIKKALA, *Suomen talonpojan historia. Sekä katsaus talonpoikien asemaan Euroopan muissa maissa*, Porvoo 1942; John GRANLUND, *Bonde, Sverige*, [in:] *Kulturhistorisk lexikon för nordisk medeltid från vikingatid till reformationstid*, vol. 2, red. idem, København 1981–1982, pp. 97–99; Aulis OJA, *Bonde, Finland*, [in:] *ibid.*, pp. 99–101; Yrjö KAUKIAINEN, *Suomen asuttaminen*, [in:] *Suomen taloushistoria*, vol. 1: *Agraarinen Suomi*, toim. Eino JUTIKKALA, Yrjö KAUKIAINEN, Sven-Erik ÅSTRÖM, Helsinki 1980, p. 129.

⁴ Paul JOHANSEN, *Die Estlandliste des Liber Census Daniae*, Kopenhagen–Reval 1933; idem, *Nordische Mission, Revals Gründung und die Schwedensiedlung in Estland* (Kungl. Vitterhets-, historie- och antikvitetsakademiens handlingar, D. 74), Stockholm 1951; idem, Heinz VON ZUR MÜHLEN, *Deutsch und Undeutsch im mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Reval* (Ostmitteleuropa in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart, Bd. 15), Köln 1973; Toomas PÜVI, *Invandrare från Finland i norra Estland på 1700-talet*, *Historisk tidskrift för Finland*, vol. 67: 1982, nr 2, pp. 214–233; Aleksander LOTT, *Invandringen från Finland till Baltikum under 1600-talet*, *Historisk tidskrift*

In the research on late medieval and early modern demography of the Baltic Rim, two major paradigm shifts have occurred since the 1970s. The first of these was the change of the overall focus of the studies from Malthusian and Marxist conceptualisations of overpopulation, means of production, surplus rent, and land ownership to a more dynamic view on the role of cores and hinterlands, transaction costs, infrastructure, state-building, and politics of transregional coercive authorities over local societies in their geographical, climatological and other contexts. All this also applies to Finland, Sweden and the Baltic States, where the role of centre and periphery and that of the hinterlands have had an articulated place in the research since the 1970s, and where macro-economic historical research and geopolitics of the 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, further boosted interest in the historical development of transregional contacts in the region⁵.

The second important shift in the study of late medieval geographic mobility and local communities in the Baltic Sea region has been the transition from macro-approach to micro-orientated socio-economic research of individuals, groups and communities, as discernible from networks of kin, trade and social exchange. Here, prosopography, a form of study employing various sources to reconstruct common characteristics in the lifespans of groups of people, has been an important area of research since the 2010s. In the northern Baltic Rim, micro-historical research over wider layers of population has been done not only on landed nobility and merchant elites, but also on craftsmen and other townspeople, often originating from the peasantry of the hinterlands. An important dimension of this kind of research has been onomastics – personal

för Finland, vol. 67: 1982, nr 2, pp. 193–207; Anti SELART, Heiki VALK, Inna PÖLTSAM-JÜRJO, Ivar LEIMUS, *Rahvastik*, [in:] *Eesti ajalugu*, vol. 2: *Eesti keskaeg*, koost. Anti SELART, Tartu 2012, pp. 174–178.

⁵ GUNVOR KERKKONEN, *Finnland – natürliches nördliches Hinterland Revels durch Jahrhunderte*, [in:] *Wirtschaftliche und soziale Strukturen im säkularen Wandel. Festschrift für Wilhelm Abel zum 70. Geburtstag*, hrsg. v. Staffan HELMFRID, Ingomar BOG (Schriftenreihe für ländliche Sozialfragen, Nr. 70), Hannover 1974, pp. 518–543; eadem, *Borgare och bondeseclare. Handels-sjöfart på Reval genom och i SV-Finlands skärgård under tidigt 1500-tal. Kring tvenne skuldböckers notismaterial, detaljutredningar och reflexioner*, Helsingfors 1977; Wilhelm ABEL, *Agricultural Fluctuations in Europe: From the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Centuries*, trans. Olive ORDISH, London 1980; Nils FRIBERG, *Stockholm i bottniska farvatten. Stockholms bottniska handelsfält under senmedeltiden och Gustav Vasa. En historisk-geografisk studie*, Stockholm 1983; *The Brenner Debate: Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-industrial Europe*, ed. Trevor H. ASTON, Charles H.E. PHILPIN, Cambridge 1985; *Rural History in the North Sea Area: An Overview of Recent Research (Middle Ages – Beginning Twentieth Century)*, ed. Erik THOEN, Leen VAN MOLLE (Comparative Rural History of the North Sea Area, vol. 1), Turnhout 2006.

names and toponyms used for mapping the linguistic, geographic and ethnic identity of individuals⁶.

In an era of historical research when the migration of craftsmen and artisans has had a recognised position in the study of transregional interactions of late medieval urban communities, it is nowadays easy to agree with recent Swedish research that the geographic mobility of peasants was for a long time either downplayed or simply rejected by labelling the medieval European peasant society as a static entity stuck with traditional ways of agricultural production, 'feudalism' and patriarchy⁷. Even if important studies on late medieval Finnish peasantry were published already in the latter half of the twentieth century, and the new millennium has witnessed a profound change in our understanding of late medieval and early modern geographic mobility in Europe, peasant migration in Finland and the northern Baltic Sea region remains little investigated and understood despite the vast bulk of surviving written sources and other materials relevant to its history⁸.

⁶ For Finland and Reval, see, e.g., Anu MÄND, Tapio SALMINEN, *Michel Sittow's Maternal Grandfather and His Identification in Medieval Sources*, *Acta Historica Tallinnensia*, vol. 27: 2021, no. 2, pp. 247–274; Ilkka LESKELÄ, *The "Hanseatic" Trade of the Finnish Skalm Family in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries*, [in:] *Making Livonia: Actors and Networks in the Medieval and Early Modern Baltic Sea Region*, ed. Anu MÄND, Marek TAMM, Abingdon 2020, pp. 251–278.

⁷ Maija OJALA, *Protection, Continuity and Gender: Craft Trade Culture in the Baltic Sea Region (14th–16th Centuries)* (*Acta Universitatis Tamperensis*, vol. 1974), Tampere 2014; Margareta NAUM, *Migration, Identity and Material Culture: Hanseatic Translocality in the Medieval Baltic Sea*, [in:] *Comparative Perspectives on Past Colonisation, Maritime Interaction and Cultural Integration*, ed. Lene MELHEIM, Håkon GLØRSTAD, Zanette TSGARIDAS GLØRSTAD, Sheffield 2016, pp. 129–148; Martin ANDERSSON, *Rural Migration in Premodern Europe: Sweden, 1613–1618*, *Journal of Migration History*, vol. 8: 2022, no. 2, pp. 156–172; Jonas LINDSTRÖM, *Understanding the Peasant Economy Through the Lens of Mobility: A Swedish Parish in the Early Modern Period*, *Journal of Migration History*, vol. 8: 2022, no. 2, pp. 173–190; Martin ANDERSSON, *One Does Not Simply Walk Out of Sweden: Early Modern Regulations and Conceptualizations of Migration*, [in:] *Managing Mobility in Early Modern Europe and its Empires: Invited, Banished, Tolerated*, ed. Katja TIKKA, Lauri UUSITALO, Mateusz WYŻGA (*Palgrave Studies in Migration History*), Cham 2023, pp. 169–184.

⁸ Gunvor KERKKONEN, *Bondesegel på finska viken. Kustbors handel och sjöfart under medeltid och äldsta Wasatid*, Helsingfors 1959; eadem, *Borgare och bondeseglare*, passim; Steve HOCHSTADT, *Migration in Preindustrial Germany*, *Central European History*, vol. 16: 1983, no. 3, pp. 195–224; Seppo SUVANTO, *Knaapista populiin. Tutkimuksia erilaistumisesta Satakunnan talonpojistossa vuosina 1390–1571* (*Historiallisia tutkimuksia*, vol. 142), Helsinki 1987; idem, *Yksilö myöhäiskeskiajan talonpoikaisyhteiskunnassa. Sääksmäen kihlakunta 1400-luvun alusta 1570-luvulle* (*Historiallisia tutkimuksia*, vol. 193), Helsinki 1995; Richard BROBERG, *Finsk invandring till mellersta Sverige. En översikt från medeltiden till 1600-talets slut* (*Svenska landsmål och svenskt folkliv*, ser. B, H. 68), Uppsala 1988; Kari TARKIAINEN, *Finnarnas historia i Sverige*, Bd. 1: *Inflyttarna från Finland under det gemensamma rikets tid* (*Nordiska museets handlingar*, vol. 109), Stockholm 1990; *Rural History in the North Sea Area*, passim; *The Rural History of*

In this article, I will first give a short introduction to the historiography and sources of the late medieval peasant migration in the northern Baltic Sea region (Finland, Sweden and Livonia), and then focus on the role of young peasant women in it as witnessed by the contacts between late medieval Reval and its Finnish hinterland in the north. My focus will be on the province of Nyland (Fin. Uusimaa) and the parish of Helsinga from the early fifteenth century up to the beginning of the Livonian War in 1558–1560 (see Map 1). I will concentrate on the *permanent* migration of landowning peasant offspring, not the seasonal fluctuations of the workforce and other people involved in the transregional economy and trade, an important part of the annual rotation of all medieval and early modern societies in Europe.



Map 1. The administrative division of Nyland into two bailiwicks and 13 parishes since the early fifteenth century
 Map by Tapio Salminen and Mikael Manninen. Source: Tapio SALMINEN, *Vantaan ja Helsingan pitäjän keskiaika*, Vantaa 2013, p. 50.

Medieval European Societies: Trends and Perspectives, ed. Isabel ALFONSO (The Medieval Countryside, vol. 1), Turnhout 2007. On the concept of migration and emigration in early modern Sweden, see M. ANDERSSON, *One Does Not Simply Walk Out of Sweden*, pp. 169–184.

LATE MEDIEVAL PEASANT MIGRATION FROM FINLAND
TO NORTHERN LIVONIA: SOURCES AND PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

In the scholarship, one of the traditional arguments for downplaying the possibilities of demographic research over the late medieval peasantry in the northern Baltic Sea region has been the lack of medieval source material such as registers, cadastres, and other surveys of rural households essential for the study of population. Even though the Finnish historian Väinö Voionmaa already in 1912 demonstrated that cadastres and cameral registers of the Swedish Crown provide essential information on the size, structure and economic sustention of the rural population not only from the time of their introduction to the royal administration of bailiwicks in 1539 but also in retrospect of the fifteenth century, proper demographic studies on the peasantry have often been considered possible only after c. 1540⁹. The same applies, at least to some extent, to northern Estonia where cadastres, except for *Liber Census Daniae* of c. 1240, emerged only after the Swedish annexation of 1558–1561. Whatever the case, the alleged lack of sources has not prevented the study of the social structure, mobility and judicial status of the rural populations in Finland, Sweden or Estonia, where medieval charters and other materials along with the sixteenth-century registers have provided a good foundation for investigations¹⁰. At the same time, the surviving urban economic and judicial registers have produced in-depth studies on the socio-economic layers and origins of late medieval urban population not only in Reval and Stockholm but also in smaller towns of the region, such as Åbo (Fin. Turku)¹¹. Recent excavations of villages and farmsteads in Nyland have shown that the local elite of peasant merchant shippers, craftsmen and innkeepers entertained a rich translocal material culture imitating that of urban merchant households in towns.

⁹ Väinö VOIONMAA, *Suomalaisia keskiajan tutkimuksia. Veroja, laitoksia, virkamiehiä*, Porvoossa 1912. For cameral records and the organisation of royal administration, see Mats HALLENBERG, *Kungen, fogdarna och riket. Lokalförvaltning och statsbyggande under tidig Vasatid*, Eslöv 2001; Seppo ESKOLA, *Archives, Accounting, and Accountability: Cameral Bookkeeping in Mid-Sixteenth-Century Sweden and the Duchy of Johan (1556–1563)* (Historical Studies from the University of Helsinki, vol. 46), Helsinki 2020.

¹⁰ P. JOHANSEN, *Die Estlandliste des Liber Census Daniae*, passim; idem, *Nordische Mission*, passim; Eric ANTHONI, *Finlands medeltida frälse och 1500-talsadel* (Skrifter utgivna av Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, Bd. 442), Helsingfors 1970; S. SUVANTO, *Knaapista populiin*, passim; idem, *Yksilö myöhäiskeskiajan talonpoikaisyhteiskunnassa*, passim.

¹¹ P. JOHANSEN, H. VON ZUR MÜHLEN, op.cit., passim; Mika KALLIOINEN, *Kauppias, kaupunki, kruunu. Turun porvareiyhteisö ja talouden organisaatio varhaiskeskiajalta 1570-luvulle* (Bibliotheca Historica, nr 59), Helsinki 2000; Marko LAMBERG, *Dannemännen i stadens råd. Rådmanskretsen i nordiska köpstäder under senmedeltiden* (Monografier utgivna av Stockholms stad, vol. 155), Stockholm 2001; M. NAUM, op.cit., pp. 129–148; Tiina KALA, *Rahvastik*, [in:] *Tallinna ajalugu*, kd. 1: 1561. aastani, koost. eadem, Tallinn 2019, pp. 131–140.

Archaeological surveys also confirm the wide variation of occupations and socio-economic standings of villagers stipulated by the earlier historical research¹².

Considering the economic and social conditions of the peasantry of the northern Baltic Rim in the early sixteenth century, Peder Månsson's woes over the emigration of young Finns and especially women out of the Swedish realm may be studied with the help of a variety of sources, all related to demography, migration and availability of workforce of the period. The migration of Swedish- and Finnish-speaking peasant offspring to Reval in the early fifteenth and at the turn of the sixteenth century is well documented through letters of inheritance (so-called letters of *tovorsichte*) issued for their relatives in Nyland. As discussed in more detail in the third section of this article, more than two-thirds of those who migrated permanently were women, apparently younger daughters of wealthy peasant families, who found positions as maids in burgher households and eventually married burghers, dockers and other townspeople of a similar background in the town¹³.

In the Gulf of Finland region, the transgenerational contacts between the Swedish- and Finnish-speaking population of the Finnish coast and the Estonian- and Swedish-speaking inhabitants of the Estonian coast were furthered by shared Scandinavian and Baltic-Finnish linguistic spaces. The overwhelming majority of the medieval geographic mobility of peasants living alongside the Gulf of Finland focused in Reval, where 'Swedes', i.e. the emigrant Swedish- and Finnish-speaking workforce from Finland has been estimated to be around 11–12 per cent of the total population in the 1530s¹⁴. With c. 740 documented house owners liable to ground tax in 1372 and c. 810 in 1527/1538, the population of Reval was estimated to be c. 4,500 in the 1370s and approximately 6,700 in the 1530s, of which c. 5,000 resided in the merchant town, c. 1,000 on the Cathedral Hill (Est. Toompea, Ger. Domberg) and c. 700 in the suburbs. As 25–33 per cent or even higher proportion of them were children under 15 years of age and the immigrants arriving in the town from Finland were predominantly adults, the proportional amount of people with 'Swedish'

¹² Tuuli HEINONEN, *The Social and Material World of Medieval and Early Modern (c. 1200–1650) Villages in Southern Finland* (Archaeologia Medii Aevi Finlandiae, vol. 28), Helsinki 2021.

¹³ Tapio SALMINEN, *Vantaan ja Helsingin pitäjän keskiaika*, Vantaa 2013, pp. 354–358.

¹⁴ P. JOHANSEN, H. VON ZUR MÜHLEN, op.cit., pp. 90–93, Gunvor KERKKONEN, *De nyländska Revalsarven under 1500-talet*, Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland. Historiska och litteraturhistoriska studier, vol. 24: 1948, pp. 150–153; Tapio SALMINEN, *Uusmaalaisen Tallinnanperinnöt 1350–1560 / Uusimalaste Tallinna-pärandused 1350.–1560. aastal*, [in:] *Keskiaja sild Padise ja Vantaa vahel / Keskiajan silta Padisen ja Vantaan välillä*, toim. Erki Russow, Padise 2012, p. 184; idem, *Obscure Hands – Trusted Men: Textualization, the Office of the City Scribe and the Written Management of Information and Communication of the Council of Reval (Tallinn) before 1460*, Tampere 2016, pp. 52–54, 184–185, 580.

origin must have been higher than 11–12 per cent, possibly one-fifth of the adult population in both 1370s and 1530s. In both periods, the total number of burgher households in the merchant town was c. 435–465 (around 65 per cent of the total number), of which some 180 belonged to the ruling town council elite (around 25 per cent of all households, 16 per cent of the population and a quarter of all burghers)¹⁵.

Unlike in Reval and its Estonian hinterland, the distribution of Finnish peasant migrants in central Sweden and the Lake Malar (Swe. Mälaren) region followed a much wider pattern. In Stockholm, the amount of late medieval population originating from various areas, mainly in western Finland and the Gulf of Bothnia region, was estimated to be 10–20 per cent of all the 5,000–6,000 people living in the town. However, considering the overall possibilities afforded by the Finnish peasant offspring in Sweden, their situation there was significantly different from that in Livonia. Because of the common jurisdiction of the Swedish realm, Swedish- and Finnish-speaking immigrants from Finland had the possibility to settle not only in the urban surroundings of Stockholm and smaller Swedish towns but also in the countryside, where many people of Finnish origin ended up as workforce and tenants of the large and geographically scattered holdings of the nobility and the Church. Because of their judicial status as born subjects of the Crown, the Finnish immigrants, irrespective of their native language, already in the early fourteenth century found their way to the towns and countryside of the Lake Malar region. Since the late fourteenth century, many ended up as colonists in the fringes of the late medieval settlement area in Uppland and Dalarna, a viable strategy of sustention, also for the inhabitants of late medieval Nyland and other regions of Finland¹⁶. Similar to northern Livonia, an important dimension of the trans-regional contacts in the Gulf of Finland and the Lake Malar region was the interaction in linguistic spaces, contact zones and manifestations of ethnicity among the socio-economic layers of the rural and urban population, which constitutes another recent area of interest in the historical and linguistic studies¹⁷.

¹⁵ P. JOHANSEN, H. VON ZUR MÜHLEN, op.cit., pp. 90–93; T. SALMINEN, *Obscure Hands – Trusted Men*, pp. 52–54, 184–185, 580; T. KALA, *Rahvastik*, pp. 131–140; Lennart ANDERSSON PALM, *Estimating Sweden's Population in the Early Modern Period: Methods and Numbers*, *Bebyggelsehistorisk tidskrift*, Nr. 80: 2021, p. 83.

¹⁶ R. BROBERG, op.cit., pp. 9–10; K. TARKIAINEN, op.cit., pp. 21–48.

¹⁷ Tapio SALMINEN, *Aspects on Multilinguality in Late Medieval Livonia and Finland*, [in:] *Einfluss, Vorbilder, Zweifel. Studien zu den finnisch-deutschen Beziehungen vom Mittelalter bis zum Kalten Krieg*, hrsg. v. Vesa VARES, Tampere 2006, pp. 15–22; idem, "Suomalaisuus" ja "muukalaisuus" kokemuksena keskiajalla, [in:] *Satunnaisesti Suomessa*, toim. Marko LAMBERG, Ulla PIELA, Hanna SNELLMAN (Kalevalaseuran vuosikirja, no. 97), Helsinki 2018, pp. 17–36; *Multilingualism in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Communication and Miscommunication*

An important feature in the context of the last major waves of emigration from Finland to Reval in the early sixteenth century is their concurrence with the escalation of the conflict between the landholding vassals of Harrien and Wierland (Est. Harjumaa and Virumaa), i.e. the two medieval regions adjacent to the town, and the town council of Reval over manorial workforce consisting almost entirely of local Estonian peasants not yet fully bound to the land¹⁸. At the same time, the increasing importance of Reval in the shipping of grain from the region and the town's resumption of its essential role in the Russian transit trade during the first two decades of the sixteenth century created alternative strategies for the peasants to consider¹⁹. In 1515, the town council of Reval complained to the town's lord, the Livonian Master of the Teutonic Order, that the local vassals had accused them of shipping peasants to foreign lands, which they never had permitted. Instead, the town council queried: 'What fate would await the town of Reval if more non-German men would be called into our town when we already have too many [of them – T.S.] and more than one in three of all our male servants and maids are born as Swedes or Danes'²⁰.

In the Baltic-German and later Estonian and Latvian historiography, the conflict between the vassals and the towns has traditionally been studied in the context of the ethnic and judicial division of the Germans (Ger. *Deutsch*) and non-Germans (Ger. *Undeutsch*) in Livonia. The discussion has since the nineteenth century focused on judicial divisions within the urban communities, that is, between merchant elites and artisans participating in long-distance trade with translocal 'German' identity, and craftsmen and retailers of various local ethnicities living in the towns and their hinterlands. The exclusion of the

in the Premodern World, ed. Albrecht CLASSEN (Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, vol. 17), Berlin 2016.

¹⁸ Vilho NIITEMAA, *Die undeutsche Frage in der Politik der livländischen Städte im Mittelalter* (Annales Academiae scientiarum Fennicae, ser. B, t. 64), Helsinki 1949; P. JOHANSEN, H. VON ZUR MÜHLEN, op.cit., pp. 19–27; Tiina KALA, *Gab es eine „nationale Frage“ im mittelalterlichen Reval?*, *Forschungen zur baltischen Geschichte*, Bd. 7: 2012, pp. 11–34; eadem, *Rahvastik*, pp. 131–140; Inna PÖLTSA-M-JÜRJO, *Die autochthone Bevölkerung*, [in:] *Das Baltikum. Geschichte einer europäischen Region*, Bd. 1: *Von der Vor- und Frühgeschichte bis zum Ende des Mittelalters*, hrsg. v. Karsten BRÜGGEMANN, Detlef HENNING, Konrad MAIER, Ralph TUCHTENHAGEN, Stuttgart 2018, pp. 341–377.

¹⁹ T. SALMINEN, *Vantaan ja Helsingan*, pp. 324–325; P. JOHANSEN, H. VON ZUR MÜHLEN, op.cit., pp. 49–50.

²⁰ 'Item jnn wath valicheit derwegenn der stadt vann Reuel ghezattet wurde wurdenn also-denne ghedrenghet fromede vndudessche mannen tho entholdinghe vnnser stadt jnn to ropende der wy alrede manck vnsser mher wenn tho vele hebbenn anghzenn ghemenlick alle vnnse knechte vnnd megede bokandt bauen denn drudden mensche ghebarene Swedenn vnnd Dennen'; Tallinna linnaarhiiv (hereinafter cited as TLA), fond 230, nim. 1: Tallinna Magistraat (hereinafter cited as 230.1), A.a. 14, Register von Sendebriefe an Herren, Fürsten und fürstliche Amtleute deutscher und undeutscher Lande 1514–29, fol. 26a.

Undeutsch from the crafts is known from the statutes of various guilds both in Riga and Reval since the late fourteenth century. Another important question has been the judicial and actual status of the indigenous rural population. Even if the new millennium has brought a more nuanced understanding of the complex developments contributing to the late fifteenth-century ethnic terminology in Livonia, not much focus has been put on the possible transregional economic and social background of the phenomenon²¹. No modern comparative study on the judicial and *de facto* status of peasantry under different princely authorities of the Baltic Sea region exists, and neither have there been attempts to analyse the transregional networks and self-identification of various layers of peasantry in a wider geographical context than a single area or dominion.

Even if the rise of the late medieval judicial terminology on German and other ethnicities in Livonia remains out of the scope of this article, the somewhat grumpy comment of Reval's town council on the policy of the local vassals shows that at least some of it should be understood in the context of the overheated late medieval labour market of the region, where control over workforce and society was searched from the domains of jurisprudence. Here of special interest is the role of possible surplus peasant population in the wider agricultural space of the region, which in certain periods of the late Middle Ages materialised as intense bursts of migration causing issues for the town of Reval and landed elites in northern Livonia. As discussed at the end of the third section, this could be verified by mid-sixteenth-century cameral sources from Nyland.

As already stated above, one of the most fascinating sources for the study of peasant mobility in the late medieval Gulf of Finland is the letters of inheritances issued by authorities in Finland, nowadays still stored as a part of the medieval archives of the town council of Reval in the Tallinn City Archives. Composed in the form of a letter of *tovorsichte*, these missives emerged in the judicial correspondence of Hanseatic towns and cities already in the late thirteenth century and gained popularity in the latter half of the fourteenth century, when paper replaced parchment and vernacular languages substituted Latin as the prevalent form of missives. In the judicial communication of town councils, letters of *tovorsichte* replaced the older legal practice of taking a personal oath with compurgators in front of the councillors in matters of inheritances and property disputes. According to the Lübeck Law and Reval's ordinances, all the house owners had to report deaths that occurred on their property without any delay to the magistrates, after which the belongings of individuals who died in the town while having no heirs were put in the council's

²¹ P. JOHANSEN, H. VON ZUR MÜHLEN, *op.cit.*, pp. 19–27; A. SELART, H. VALK, I. PÖLTSAM-JÜRJO, I. LEIMUS, *op.cit.*, pp. 181–184; T. KALA, *Rahvastik*, pp. 131–140.

custody. If no one stepped up to claim the inheritance within a year and a day, the property was left in the care of selected councillors. Importantly, according to the Lübeck Law, the right to claim proprietorship over inheritance was extended to people living outside of the town's jurisdiction, i.e. any living next of kin of the deceased, regardless of their residence, could claim the inheritance. As the populations of medieval merchant towns of the Baltic region consisted of people originating from a wide range of places all over the Hanseatic sphere of influence, the *tovorsichte* letters provided an excellent tool to avoid the expenses connected with travelling to distant places and gathering witnesses.

A sealed and corroborated document of what had been sworn in front of a legal body (town council, parish court, etc.) or another agent of judicial status (judge, castellan, rector of a parish, etc.), letter of *tovorsichte* was technically a description of the act of oath-taking, i.e. an oath to testify to what is the truth. Since the corroborator could not know whether the oath taken was the genuine and whole truth in the matter, he asked the recipient to consider this, as the term *tovorsichte* (Middle Low German *to-vorsicht*, meaning both a wish and a certificate) implies. Considering the prospographical and demographic research over late medieval Finnish peasantry, the paramount historical value of the letters lies in their content: the name and social status of those entitled to the inheritance through their kinship with the deceased, and those of their compurgators, reveal networks of trust within the local population. Moreover, the name of the individual who was to appear before the council as a representative of the heirs is also given. For such an envoy, usually male and occasionally female, the letter represented a warrant required to claim the inheritance, for the council it was a document confirming the property transfer which took place. The fact that a great number of medieval and sixteenth-century letters of *tovorsichte* issued in Finland have survived in the old archives of the town council of Reval illustrates that, despite the short geographical distance, peasants from the town's northern hinterland preferred written documents instead of personal oaths taken in front of the council to safeguard their inheritance interests already in the first half of the fifteenth century. This, however, does not mean that personal oaths with compurgators taken in front of the councillors fell out of practice, but the few such acts documented in the town's official registers (Ger. *Denkelbuch*) before 1560 suggest that they were rare and the council itself favoured written and sealed documents when ceding property to people outside their jurisdiction²². The two oldest surviving letters

²² On the letters of *tovorsichte*, see *Toversichtsbriefe für Soest 1325–1639*, bearb. v. Emil Dösel (Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission Westfalens, Bd. 31), Münster 1969, pp. 10–18; Wilhelm Ebels, *Lübisches Recht*, Bd. 1, Lübeck 1971, pp. 408–411; T. Salminen, *Uusmaalaisen Tallinnanperinnöt 1350–1560*, pp. 198–199; idem, *Vantaan ja Helsingin*, pp. 357–359; idem, *Obscure Hands – Trusted Men*, pp. 132–136, 139, 171–172, 490. The *Denkelbücher* in late

of *tovorsichte* concerning inheritance preserved in the old archives of the town council date back to the year 1324, one issued by the urban authorities of the town of Enköping and the archbishop of Uppsala, and the other by the count of Bentheim in Lower Saxony. The oldest surviving letter of *tovorsichte* from Finland was issued by the rector of the Karis (Fin. Karjaa) parish, together with the episcopal tax collector in Nyland, on 26 March 1326, as a warrant for two men who were to appear before the council of Reval to settle a dispute over a shipwreck²³.

In late medieval Finland, the area covered by the surviving letters of *tovorsichte* regarding inheritance cases in Reval consists of the coastline area from Viborg (Fin. Viipuri) in Karelia to Finland Proper and Åland Islands, and also the region of Tavastland, reaching as far inland as the parish of Pälkäne located some 215 km from Reval²⁴. As evident from the preserved town books kept by the town council since 1312, the letters only covered part of the people who migrated permanently or seasonally to Reval from Finland and Nyland and died there, whereas additional information can be reached through other sources from the old archives of the council. Of these the most important ones are the various registers containing pieces of information about people residing in or visiting the town, such as the registers of property transactions (Ger. *Erbebuch*), rents and mortgages (Ger. *Rentenbuch*), fees paid over petty crimes in trade (Ger. *Wedde*), temporary safe conduct (Ger. *Geleite*), sworn burghers (Ger. *Burgherbuch*), and the town's main account books (Ger. *Kämmereibuch*), all of which provide a huge amount of information on people active in the town. However, it is extremely difficult to identify people who migrated to the town or visited it using those sources. It is possible to acquire more precise information on those who moved into the town but did not become established members of its community through the registers of the town bailiff (Ger. *Gerichtsvogt*), of which the only surviving quire dates back to the

medieval Reval and elsewhere were official registers of memoranda over various resolutions and promulgations of the town council. In Reval, such records survived in fragments from the period between 1380 and 1455, uninterrupted for 1471–1523, and again fragmented between 1541/1542 and 1545/1555. On the *Denkelbücher*, see idem, *Vantaan ja Helsingan*, pp. 356–358, endnote 72.

²³ T. SALMINEN, *Vantaan ja Helsingan*, pp. 357–358; TLA, 230.1-I.69 (see also Riksarkivet, Svenskt Diplomatariums huvudkartotek över medeltidsbreven, <http://sok.riksarkivet.se/sdhk> [accessed online 12 December 2023], no. 3279); TLA, 230.1-I.71 (see also *Liv-, Esth- und Curländisches Urkundenbuch nebst Regesten*, Abt. 1, Bd. 2: 1301–1367, hrsg. v. Friedrich G. von BUNGE, Reval 1855, no. 714); TLA, 230.1-I.82 (see also *Diplomatarium Fennicum*, <http://df.narc.fi> [accessed online 12 December 2023], no. 346).

²⁴ T. SALMINEN, *Vantaan ja Helsingan*, p. 361.

late 1430s, whereas everything else is lost, apart from extracts over crimes of major interest and death warrants issued in the town between 1457 and the 1550s, and compiled in 1575. Among those, there is an entry on the death sentence of a certain Catherine, a maid servant in the household of Henrik Rust, who was first imprisoned and then burned at the stake on the Monday before Whitsunday (5 May) 1516, because she killed her newborn baby and hid the body in a privy. According to this entry, Catherine was born in Sweden (i.e. very likely in Nyland) where she had two sisters living in wedlock at the time of her execution²⁵. As the entry demonstrates, not all emigrants succeeded in building their life in the town and many may have returned or continued their journey further. The surviving letters of *tovorsichte* tell only about the fate of those who managed to join – permanently or temporarily – the urban community of Reval.

THE MIGRATION OF PEASANTS FROM NYLAND AND HELSINGA TO REVAL BEFORE 1560

As evident from its name, the medieval region of Nyland consisted of a lengthy section of the northern coast of the Gulf of Finland colonised by the Kingdom of Sweden at the turn of the fourteenth century with older Finnish settlements scattered on the eastern coast and especially in the western inland. After a period of different administrative arrangements, in the 1370s, the province was divided into two royal bailiwicks, one in the west under the castellan of Raseborg, and the bailiwick of Borgå (Fin. Porvoo) with a homonymic town under the castellan of Viborg in the east. After the stabilisation of the cameral administration, both the bailiwicks consisted of a handful of tax parishes, the boundaries of which were not always matched to their older ecclesiastical counterparts of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century. A typical example is the medieval parish of Helsinga (today approximately the area of Helsinki and Vantaa cities with parts of Nurmijärvi, Tuusula and Sipoo townships), where the tax parish was divided into four quarters (Church, Hoplax, Klementsskog and Vik) since the early fifteenth century, but the church parish covered two quarters of the neighbouring tax parish of Sibbo (Fin. Sipoo) and parts of Vichtis (Fin. Vihti) in Tavastland (Fin. Häme)²⁶. Much of the significance of Reval in the region's economy arose from a short distance between

²⁵ On the preserved registers of inheritance (urban properties), *Wedde*, ground tax (Ger. *Schoss*) and *Geleite* before 1460, see T. SALMINEN, *Obscure Hands – Trusted Men*, pp. 261–290, 384, 486, 650–651. On the registers of the town bailiff, see Eugen von Nottbeck, *Der Herbersche Auszug aus dem alten Gerichtsbuch*, [in:] idem, *Die alte Criminalchronik Revels*, Reval 1884, p. 81; T. SALMINEN, *Obscure Hands – Trusted Men*, pp. 279–280.

²⁶ T. SALMINEN, *Vantaan ja Helsingan*, pp. 35–56.

the town and the main administrative and economic hubs of Nyland: 87 km from Reval's town square to Raseborg, 95 km to Helsinga parish church, and 118 km to the town square in Borgå. The shortest distance between Reval and medieval villages in the Finnish mainland in Porkkala was only 63 km.

What do the letters of *tovorsichte* from Nyland tell us about those who migrated to Reval before 1560? The following conclusions and graphs are based on my research on medieval and early modern Nyland published as a monograph on Helsinga parish and peer-reviewed scholarly articles in Finnish. Since the monograph and the articles include a full analysis of all the sources concerning the inheritance cases, I will not repeat them here but only refer to relevant sections of my former research in the footnotes²⁷.

All in all, there are available pieces of information from 170 inheritance cases regarding people from Nyland who died in Reval in 1350–1560. Since some of them dealt with multiple deceased belonging to single families, and several letters of *tovorsichte* could be given during disputes over one piece of property, the total number of deceased in all these cases is 185 with 186 preserved letters of *tovorsichte* and no less than 338 named heirs living in Nyland. In the Finnish material kept in the Tallinn City Archives, possible *lacunae* exist between 1450 and 1460 and from c. 1480 to the late 1490s, from which periods only a few missives sent from Finland survived. A copy of a letter of *tovorsichte* issued sometime in 1554–1560 by the town council of Reval and addressed to the council of Danzig (Pol. Gdańsk) informs that a certain Peder Witte, who died in Danzig, was the full brother of Margaret, a resident in Reval, and Bartel Fritze, a Reval burgher, all of whom were born in Helsinga, as sworn by two prominent shippers from the parish²⁸.

Even if information about people of Finnish- and Swedish-speaking origins that resided in Reval appear already in the first two preserved books of

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 351–378; idem, *Uusmaalaisten Tallinnanperinnöt 1350–1560*, pp. 183–257; idem, *Obscure Hands – Trusted Men*, pp. 132, 636–649; idem, *Keskiajan ja 1500-luvun alun vantaalaiset ja Helsingan pitäjän asukkaat Tallinnassa I*, [in:] *Helsingin pitäjä – Vantaa 2022. Ruotsin vallan aika / Helsinge – Vanda 2022. Det svenska väldets tid*, toim. Andreas KOIVISTO (Vantaa-Seuran vuosikirja), Vantaa 2022, pp. 10–28; idem, *Keskiajan ja 1500-luvun alun vantaalaiset ja Helsingan pitäjän asukkaat Tallinnassa II*, [in:] *Helsingin pitäjä – Vantaa 2023. Elävä kulttuuriperintö / Helsinge – Vanda 2023. Ett levande kulturarv*, toim. Andreas KOIVISTO (Vantaa-Seuran vuosikirja), Vantaa 2023, pp. 143–160.

²⁸ T. SALMINEN, *Vantaan ja Helsingan*, p. 358; idem, *Keskiajan ja 1500-luvun alun vantaalaiset ja Helsingan pitäjän asukkaat Tallinnassa I*, p. 15. For the history of the Old Archives of the Town Council (Ger. *Altes Ratsarchiv*) at the Tallinn City Archives, see idem, *Obscure Hands – Trusted Men*, pp. 91–108; idem, *Witte – Fritze. Pieni lisä Helsingan pitäjän ja Tallinnan väliin yhteyksiin 1530-luvulla*, [in:] *Helsingin pitäjä – Vantaa 2017 / Helsinge – Vanda 2017*, toim. Andreas KOIVISTO (Vantaa-Seuran vuosikirja), Vantaa 2016, pp. 28–33.

the town council starting from 1312 and 1333, almost nothing is known about the inheritance cases of people from Nyland before the first quarter of the fifteenth century. The only surviving exception is a letter of *tovorsichte* written on parchment, issued and sealed by the rector of the parish of Kyrkslätt (Fin. Kirkkonummi) and two other persons, on 28 December 1350, for a certain Rörík, a parishioner of Kyrkslätt and canonically wed husband of a certain Ingeborg, sister of Margaret, Nicholas the Founder's wife. Nicholas was a burgher of Reval and passed away in the town. Corroborated by the parish, the letter was a warrant for Rörík to claim Ingeborg's share of the property left by her brother-in-law in Reval²⁹.

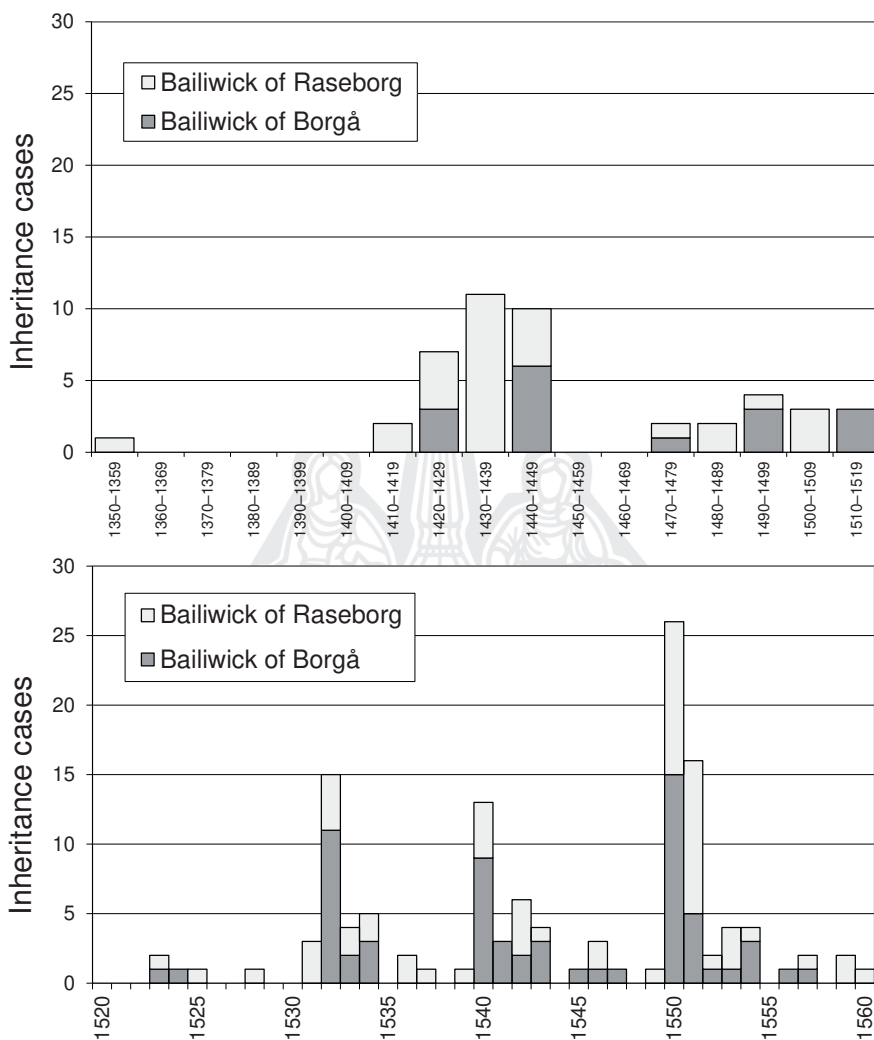
The chronological distribution of the known inheritance cases of people originating from the two bailiwicks in Nyland and proceeded in Reval is presented in Graphs 1A–B. The first graph lists cases by decades between 1350–1359 and 1510–1519, and the second one – annually between 1520 and 1560. The chronological arrangement of the graphs depends on the dating of the letters as well as the *lacunae* in the source material. Over a third of the cases (10 of 28) known from the bailiwick of Raseborg between c. 1410 and 1506 and three of the 16 cases registered between c. 1420 and 1513 from the bailiwick of Borgå cannot be dated to a particular year, but often only to a period of two to three years or even a decade³⁰.

As evident from the chronology of the letters and other sources, the deaths follow the period of known outbreaks of plague and other epidemics in Reval and Livonia. Since some of the letters were issued close to the time limit of one year and one day required by the Lübeck Law for claiming the inheritance, several peaks in the mortality, such as 1537, 1540 and 1550–1551, often occurred already in the previous year and the exact dating of deaths is seldom clear. According to other sources, the town experienced one of the worst periods of excess mortality in 1549–1550. The total of 43 letters of *tovorischte* issued by authorities in Nyland for 42 individual inheritance cases in Reval in 1550–1551 reaffirms this observation. Among the earlier mortality peaks of

²⁹ T. SALMINEN, *Obscure Hands – Trusted Men*, p. 180; TLA, 230.1-I.194 (see also *Diplomatarium Fennicum*, <http://df.narc.fi> [accessed online 12 December 2023], no. 572). Nicholas the Founder (Lat. *fusor*) could be the same person as Nicholas the Potfounder (*Nicles ollifusor*), who owned a house located next to the graveyard of St Olaf's Church in 1346–1347. However, he was not the same as the late Nicholas of Perno (*Nicolaus Perno*, i.e. Pernå/Pernaja in eastern Nyland), whose widow Ingeborg and their son are cited in the context of an inheritance case in March 1353, see *Revaler Stadtbücher*, Bd. 1: *Das älteste Wittschobuch der Stadt Reval (1312–1360)*, hrsg. v. Leonid ARBUSOW (Archiv für die Geschichte Liv-, Est- und Curlands, Folge 3, Bd. 1), Reval 1888, no. 646, 852.

³⁰ T. SALMINEN, *Obscure Hands – Trusted Men*, pp. 358–359; idem, *Keskiajan ja 1500-luvun alun vantaalaiset ja Helsingan pitäjän asukkaat Tallinnassa I*, p. 15.

the fifteenth century, 21 inheritance cases of the 1430s and 1440s related to the great fire in the town in 1431, and the instances of exceptionally harsh winters and crop failures in Livonia in 1430–1431 and 1433–1437³¹.



Graphs 1A–B. The known inheritance cases of people originating from Nyland who died in Reval by decades (1350–1519) and years (1520–1560)

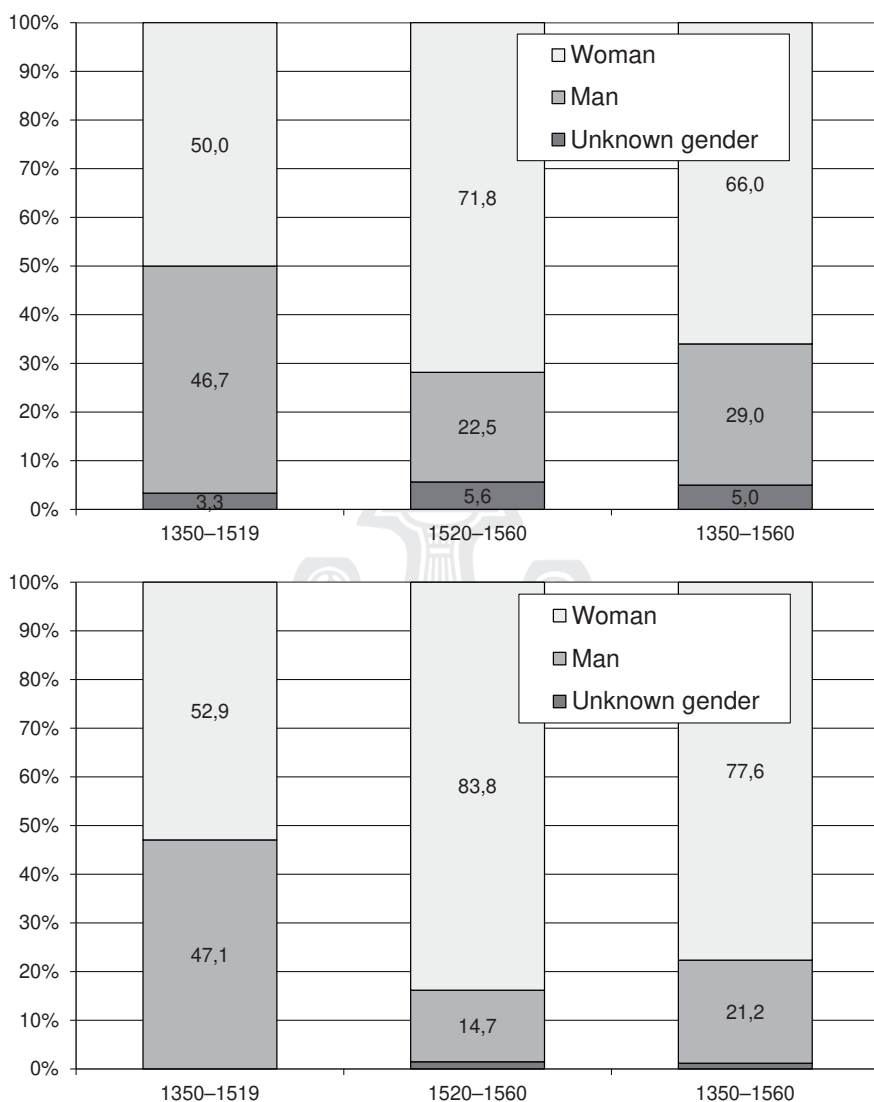
Source: Tapio SALMINEN, *Uusmaalaisen Tallinnanperinnöt 1350–1560 / Uusimaa-laste Tallinna-pärandused 1350.–1560. aastal*, [in:] *Keskaja sild Padise ja Vantaa vahel / Keskiajan silta Padisen ja Vantaan välillä*, toim. Erki Russow, Padise 2012, Appendix A and B; idem, *Vantaan ja Helsingin pitäjän keskiaika*, Vantaa 2013, pp. 358–360.

³¹ T. SALMINEN, *Vantaan ja Helsingin*, p. 360; idem, *Keskiajan ja 1500-luvun alun vantaalaiset ja Helsingin pitäjän asukkaat Tallinnassa I*, p. 15.

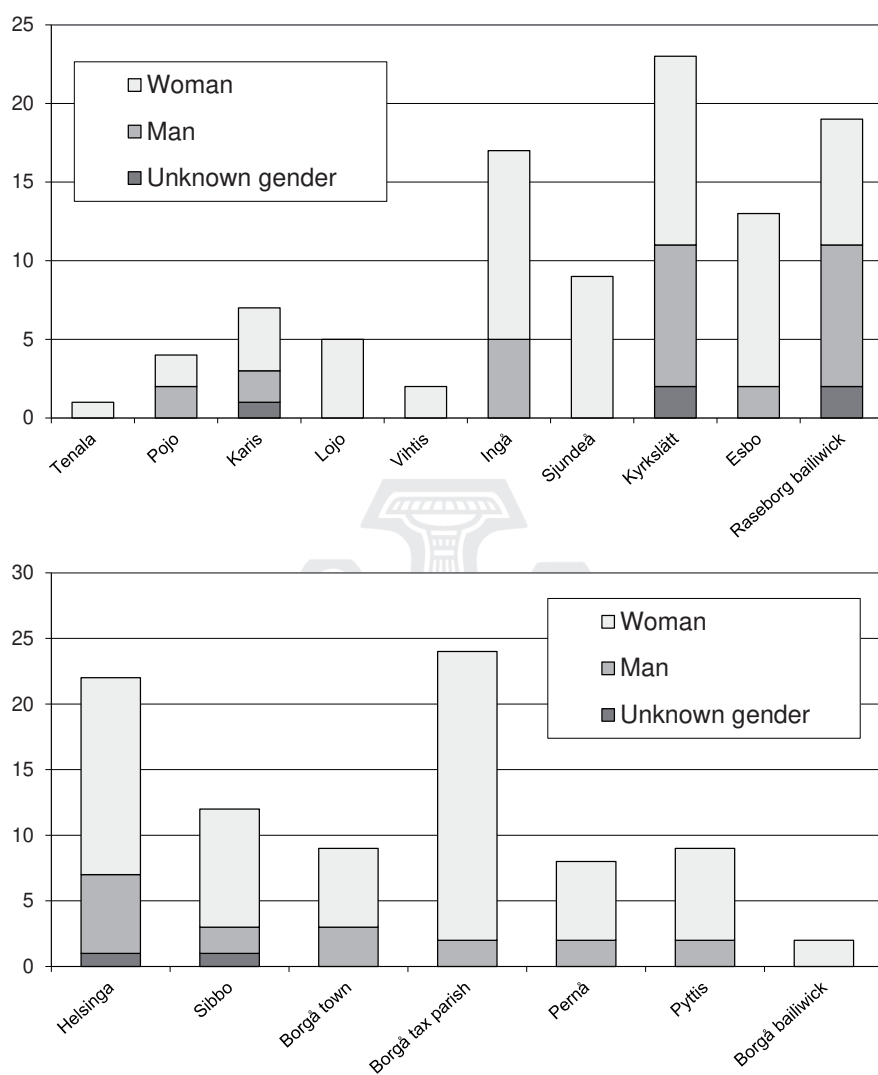
What was the origin and gender of people known to have migrated to Reval? The share of known men and women originating from Nyland who met their end in the town before 1560 is presented in Graphs 2A–B. By looking at plain numbers, there is a clear shift among the migrants in both their areas of origin and gender between two periods: the first one covering roughly the fifteenth century between the 1350s/1410s and 1519, and the second period of the final bloom of Reval's medieval transit trade before the Livonian War (1520–1560). During the first period, some two-thirds (29 of 45) of the deceased individuals originated from the bailiwick of Raseborg and half of them were men, while in 1520–1560, half of the deceased were born in the bailiwick of Borgå (68 of 139) and more than 83 per cent (57 of 68) were women. The large number of women migrating from Nyland to Reval in c. 1410–1560 is also noticeable in the geographical distribution of their parishes of origin (see Graphs 3A–B). The number of those who migrated was especially high in areas situated on the northern side of the Gulf of Finland just opposite Reval between Ingå and Borgå parishes.

Who were those who migrated and why? In the following, I will discuss the matter with the help of my previous research on Helsinga, the westernmost administrative and ecclesiastical parish of the Borgå bailiwick from the late fourteenth century onwards. Helsinga was located in the coastal area at the mouth of the Vantaanjoki River and at the crossroads of the main routes between Åbo and Viborg and from Tavastland to the seashore. The population of the administrative parish was some 2,500 inhabitants in the 1540s, and approximately 3,500 for its ecclesiastical counterpart, of which roughly one-third were children. As everywhere in Nyland, the parish consisted of areas with variable means of sustention: fishing and field cultivation along with small animal husbandry on the coast, and a more prominent role of cattle and forestry in the inland area. Another characteristic of the lands situated between the coastal road and the sea was merchant sailing practised by peasants specialised in shipping, innkeeping and crafts, who chiefly focused on trade with Reval. The main exports of the parish consisted of forestry products, beams, planks, bark, bast, tar and firewood, along with hides of cattle and small livestock, horses, butter and some fish. The imports consisted of salt, grain, malt, osemund iron, ironware, ship riggings and anchors, and luxury items, such as cloth, glass and stoneware. The majority of the parish's population were Swedish-speaking peasants living in the area reaching approximately 20 km inland from the coastline, whereas local nobility consisted of a handful of families with only a few manors varying in the quality of their landholdings³².

³² T. SALMINEN, *Vantaan ja Helsingan*, pp. 313–351.



Graphs 2A–B. The share of identified men and women originating from the bailiwick of Raseborg (above) and the bailiwick of Borgå (below) who died in Reval in 1350–1560
 Source: Tapio SALMINEN, *Uusmaalaisen Tallinnanperinnöt 1350–1560 / Uusimallaste Tallinna-pärandused 1350.–1560. aastal*, [in:] *Keskaja sild Padise ja Vantaa vahel / Keskiajan silta Padisen ja Vantaan välillä*, toim. Erki Russow, Padise 2012, Appendix A and B; idem, *Vantaan ja Helsingan pitäjän keskiaika*, Vantaa 2013, pp. 362–363.



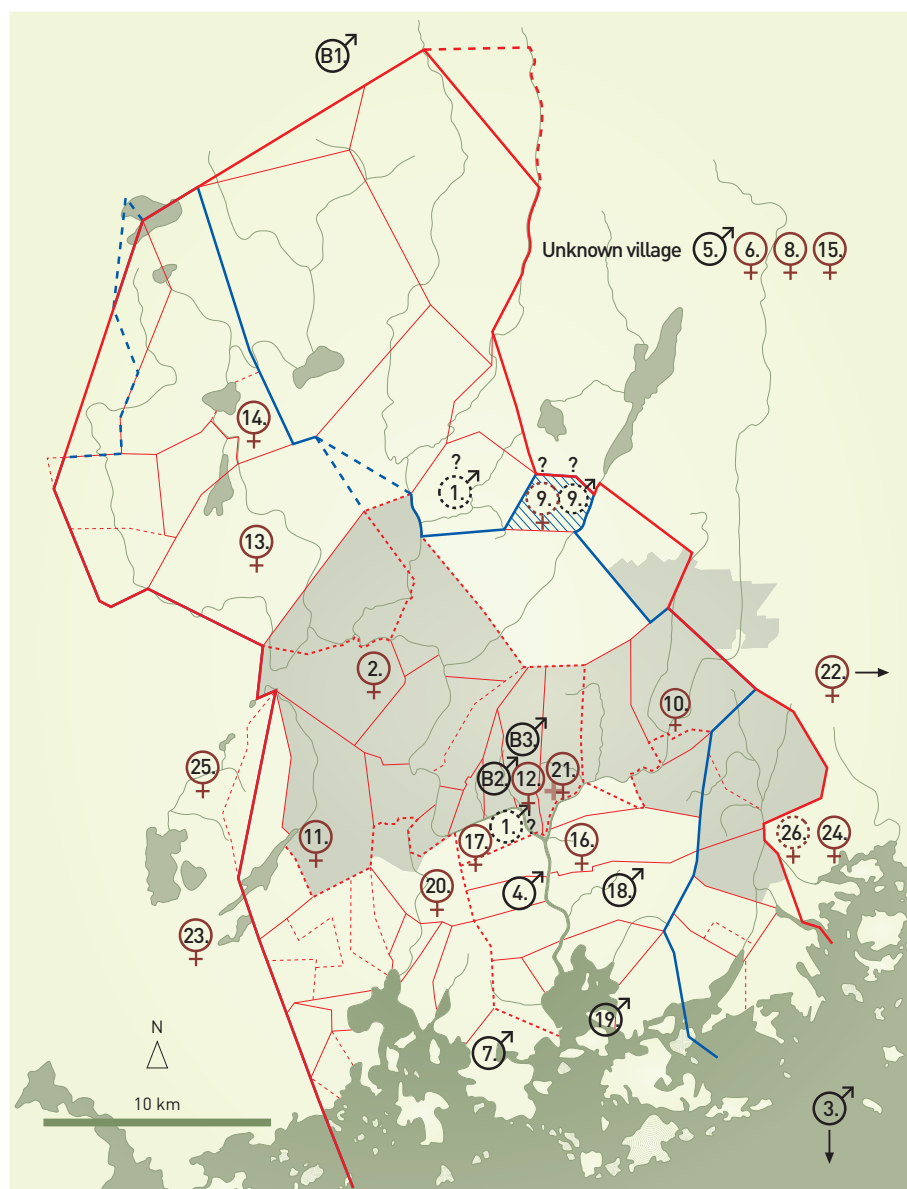
Graphs 3A–B. The parishes of origin of Nyland migrants who died in Reval in 1350–1560
 Source: Tapio SALMINEN, *Uusmaalasten Tallinnanperinnöt 1350–1560 / Uusimalaste Tallinna-pärandused 1350.–1560. aastal*, [in:] *Keskaja sild Padise ja Vantaa vahel / Keskiajan silta Padisen ja Vantaan välillä*, toim. Erki Russow, Padise 2012, Appendix A and B;
 idem, *Vantaa ja Helsingan pitäjän keskiaika*, Vantaa 2013, pp. 360–361.

Altogether 22 people whose origins can be traced back to the parish have been identified through the preserved letters of *tovorsichte* to die in Reval before 1560 (see Map 2). Six of them were men, of which (♂18 Matts Hendersson and ♂19 Jöns Persson) perished in the epidemics of 1549–1550. Matts Hendersson's occupation is unknown, but his brothers who stayed back in Helsinga had relatives among craftsmen and burghers in the town of Borgå, and Jöns Persson was a docker's hand (Middle Low German *munderckes knecht*)³³ working in the Reval harbour. A child of unknown gender (marked as ♂9 on Map 2) died in 1511 in the household of their aunt, Elin Laurensdotter, sometime after the child's mother, ♀9 Kirstin Laurensdotter, had passed away in Reval. Peder Naghepauelsson (♂1), who died in 1421, originated somewhere in the area under Viborg Castle, possibly in Helsinga. At least three of the deceased had an occupation in shipping and trade: ♂5 shipper Inge (Olafsson) and two sworn burghers of Reval – ♂4 Olaf Magnusson and ♂6 Olaf Laurensen. Inge and Olaf Magnusson died in the mid-1440s, and Olaf Laurensen in 1476. Inge's village of origin in Helsinga is not known, but the two Olafs came from villages where shipping had a long tradition. An exceptional document illustrating the late fifteenth-century social networks connecting people across the Gulf of Finland – the last will of Olaf Laurensen – has been preserved as both a draft and a final sealed document issued in Reval on 26 March 1476. In it, Olaf bequeathed to his wife Barbara his part of their stone house in Reval along with all the movables and storage goods inside it, to his sister Margaret 10 Riga marks and his share of their patrimonial land in Helsinga, to his nephew Laurens half of his ship and some Flemish cloth, and to his half-brother Peter, a maritime pilot and peasant shipper in Helsinga, his silver-plated dagger, belt and grain worth 20 Riga marks. He also bequeathed a new chalice worth 18 Riga marks to the Parish Church of St Lawrence in Helsinga and donated money to several other churches and chapels in Reval. Map 2 also includes three men who perished in Sweden: ♂B1 Laurens Olsson in Söderköping in 1484 and two sworn burghers of Stockholm – ♂B2 Magnus Martisson who died before 1476 and ♂B3 Hans Laurensen departed in 1507. The sources also contain information about people living in Reval's countryside and married to women from the opposite side of the Gulf of Finland. In the mid-1440s, shipper Henrik, a resident of Helsinga parish and a brother-in-law to the late blacksmith Niclis Swrenpää (♂3), received a letter of *tovorsichte* from the castellan of Viborg Castle to claim the money that Niclis deposited in the custody of a Reval burgher³⁴.

Of all the departed men at least four, Niclis Swrenpää, Inge the Shipper, and the two Reval burghers, Olaf Magnusson and Olaf Laurensen, were married, whereas

³³ TLA, 230.1, BC 12, no. 2.

³⁴ T. SALMINEN, *Keskiajan ja 1500-luvun alun vantaalaiset ja Helsingan pitäjän asukkaat Tallinnassa I*, pp. 19–26.



Map 2. Men and women who originated from Helsinga parish and were documented as deceased in Reval in the letters of *tovorsichte* before 1560. The red line outlines the area of the ecclesiastical parish. The border of the tax parish is marked with a blue line in the northeast and east. The grey area is the city of Vantaa in 2013

Map by Tapio Salminen and Mikael Manninen. Source: Tapio SALMINEN, *Vantaan ja Helsingan pitäjän keskiaika*, Vantaa 2013, p. 365.

two, Matts Hendersson and Jöns Persson, were young unmarried men working in the town. Considering the number of women originating from the same parish and deceased in Reval before 1560, the share of unmarried and married women appears to be more or less the same: six unmarried women against 15 married.

Three of the six unmarried women, an independent elderly woman ♀16 Kors-Margit (Cross-Margaret) living in Fischermay (Est. Kalamaja), a suburb of Reval, and two maids staying in merchant elites' households – ♀17 Greta Larsdotter and ♀20 Anna Michelsdotter – passed away during the epidemics of 1549–1550. The inheritance left by Kors-Margit, who possibly was a trinket-maker living outside the town, was claimed by her three nephews and three nieces, of which Kadrin (Catherin) lived with her aunt in Fischermay and the others in the family's farmstead in Helsinga. A descendant of a wealthy peasant family with a wealth of her own, Margit's inheritance was claimed through two successive letters of *tovorsichte*: one issued by the urban authorities of Borgå and witnessed by three wealthy peasant shippers from Helsinga in June 1550, and the other issued by the bailiff of Raseborg and Helsingfors (Fin. Helsinki) in August 1551. The elderly maid Greta Larsdotter was employed in three different households in the town, two of which belonged to the members of the highest merchant elites: Cord Mustermann, the churchwarden of St Olaf's Church, in the late 1520s and early 1530s, and Henrik Boismann the Younger, the alderman of the Great Guild and later a councillor, in the 1530s and 1540s. Anna Michelsdotter served the household of Martin Hersevelt who had a trading company jointly with another Reval burgher and a Stralsund burgher and owned a quarter of a large merchant ship in the 1540s. Anna's inheritance was claimed by her mother living in Helsinga with a letter of *tovorsichte* issued for Anna's brother, Inge the Boatsman, and their sister, Karin, a resident of a stonemason's house, both of whom lived in Reval. All three maids, Margit, Greta and Anna, as well as Anna's two siblings, Inge and Karin, came from villages that had a long tradition of shipping and were conveniently situated next to the Vantaanjoki River and the main summer and winter transport routes traversing the parish. The same applies to two other unmarried women from Helsinga: ♀10 Birgitta Matsdotter (d. 1532), whose father had a large peasant farm located north of the parish centre alongside the roads leading inland, and ♀13 Valborg Eriksdotter (d. 1542), whose father, Erik Klocke, was among the wealthiest peasant shippers and traders in the whole parish. They were both maids serving in merchant households in Reval, but it is unknown which merchant families exactly employed them. In the case of ♀15 Elin Persdotter (d. 1543), both her village of origin and social status are unclear³⁵.

³⁵ T. SALMINEN, *Keskiajan ja 1500-luvun alun vantaalaiset ja Helsingan pitäjän asukkaat Tallinnassa II*, pp. 147–152.

The socio-economic diversity of immigrant women from Helsinga who got married in late medieval Reval is revealed by the occupation of their husbands. In the case of ♀2 Kristin, the wife of a certain Armkas, who died in the 1440s, the occupation of the husband remains unknown. ♀6 Birgit Vingersche (d. 1474) could have been the wife or widow of a ring- or trinket-maker. As Birgitta's inheritance was claimed by her cousin, a Reval burgher Laurens Jonsson, the family established contacts with the town in the mid-fifteenth century at the latest. Furthermore, ♀12 Birgitta Wikmans (d. 1540) and ♀14 Margareta Breuens (Bruns, d. 1542) were apparently wives of retailers or merchants. Birgitta's husband, Lasse, had an occupation-derived surname 'Wikman' connected with trade, whereas Margareta's husband could have been a certain Klaus Bruns, a house owner and possibly a burgher of Reval in the 1520s and 1530s. Again, the family relations of both women with individuals living in Helsinga were testified by several prominent merchant shippers residing in the parish. In the case of Margareta, one of the witnesses was Erik Klocke, whose daughter died in Reval the same year. Among the remaining four women, ♀11 Anna Mortensdotter (d. 1540), wife of a blubberer Jöns (Old Swedish *lönss siel packars*, Middle Low German *Anna Seelpackersche*)³⁶ working in the harbour originated from a small farm in a large hamlet on the coastal road traversing the parish, whereas Simon the Cartmaker's wife, ♀21 Gertrud Olofsdotter (d. 1550), came from the parish centre, where two main roads of the region crossed next to the local parish church. Another married woman originating from a village upstream from the parish centre and alongside an old transport route was ♀8 Elzebe Jaspersdotter (d. 1511), widow of Michel, a bagmaker (Ger. *Budeler*). Lastly, ♀26 Karin Tafelmakerska was the wife or widow of a tablemaker, a carpenter making furniture, panelling and fitted cupboards for urban houses, churches and manors³⁷.

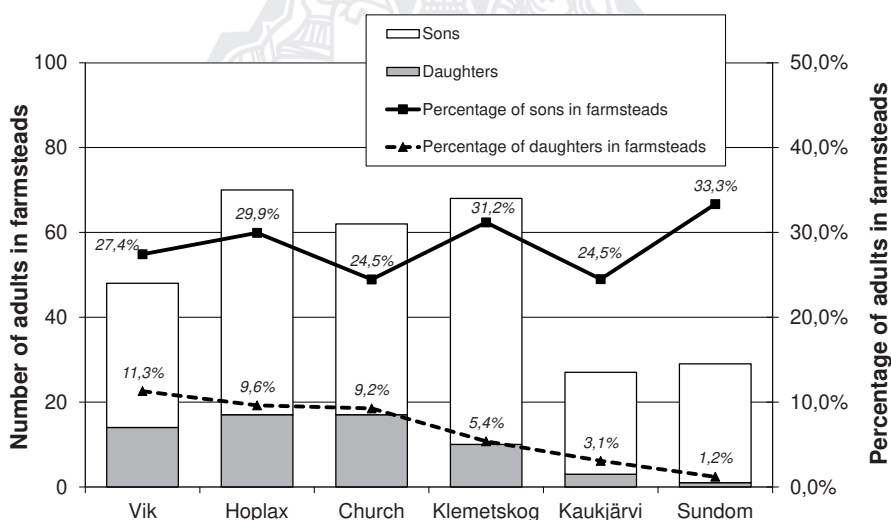
As evident from the analysed sources, the great majority of people, especially women, emigrating from Helsinga to Reval between the beginning of the fifteenth and the mid-sixteenth century came from the central areas of the parish in the valley of the Vantaanjoki River and villages alongside the two long-distance summer and winter roads in the region. When compared to the preserved cadastres and other registers of the Swedish Crown of the period, new interpretations can be put forward in an attempt to explain the observed migration. An important source for assessing the parish's population was produced in 1556 when a survey on the number of all adults, i.e. men and women over the age of 15, living in all the parish's villages and farmsteads was

³⁶ TLA, 230.1, BC 6, no. 4, 3.

³⁷ T. SALMINEN, *Keskiajan ja 1500-luvun alun vantaalaiset ja Helsingan pitäjän asukkaat Tallinnassa II*, pp. 152–158.

conducted. The resulting register covers not only the peasant farmers and their wives liable to the land tax but also their adult brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, sons-in-law and sharecroppers living in the farmstead³⁸.

Based on this register, the number of adult sons and daughters living in the farmsteads in the four quarters of the tax parish of Helsinga (i.e. Vik and Hoplax located on the coast, and Church and Klemetskog in the inland area) and the two quarters of the tax parish of Sibbo, which simultaneously belonged to the ecclesiastical parish of Helsinga (i.e. Sundom situated on the coast and Kaukjärvi located more inland), is presented in Graph 4. As the figures clearly indicate, the share of adult sons living in the farmsteads was rather similar everywhere, ranging from 25 to 33 per cent of all adults living in households, but proportionally larger in areas where the economy was focused on animal husbandry. The number of adult daughters, who accounted for 9–11 per cent of adults, was highest in old villages located in the central areas between the coastline and the great coastal road traversing the parish. In terms of demography, this suggests the excessive population of old parishes, where opportunities to establish new farms could only be afforded inland with the help of tax exemptions and animal husbandry. In the early sixteenth century, this appears



Graph 4. In 1556, the number of adult sons and unmarried adult daughters in peasant households in the medieval parish of Helsinga was at its highest in the coastal areas and lowest in the east and north, where the founding of new farms with animal husbandry and small-scale field cultivation in exchange for the ten-year tax exemption was still possible

Source: Tapio SALMINEN, *Vantaan ja Helsingan pitäjän keskiaika*, Vantaa 2013, p. 266, Appendix 7.

³⁸ T. SALMINEN, *Vantaan ja Helsingan*, pp. 259–269 and Appendix 7.

to have caused a situation, where many younger peasant sons from old villages in Helsinga and elsewhere in Nyland may have chosen the life path of new colonists and founded new farms in the inland meadowlands together with their wives originating from the same region, whom they had married. On the other hand, dozens of young girls, instead of serving as cattle maids for their older siblings, emigrated to Reval. Especially for those brought up in the quasi-urban households of wealthy peasant shippers, craftsmen and innkeepers, the possibility of migrating to Reval and the support of established social networks spanning the Gulf of Finland appears to have proved greatly advantageous. Familiar with the merchant way of living, the young women served as maids in burgher households, then married men from the middle and lower layers of the urban community, many of whom shared their economic and linguistic background coming from Nyland. Finally, if they were lucky, they could end up as wealthy widows living in the town and their sons and daughters, regardless of their gender, inherited the same share of their property, whereas, in rural Finland and elsewhere in the Swedish realm, a daughter could only inherit half the share of a son.

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, the role of the town of Reval as a major geographical destination of peasant migration from Nyland during the period between the mid-fourteenth century and 1560 has been discussed. At that time, a journey from Nyland to Reval over the Gulf of Finland could take one day in both summer and winter, when permanent ice covered the sea. Like today, the late medieval and early modern migrations were caused by a combination of push and pull factors: the growing population of old villages in Nyland, and the increasing need for manpower on the labour market at the time of economic upswing in Reval and Livonia, especially in the second quarter of the fifteenth and at the beginning of the sixteenth centuries.

The preserved letters of *tovorsichte* and cameral registers from Nyland support Peder Månsson's worries over the rising volume of emigration from Finland to large towns of the Baltic region at the beginning of the sixteenth century. As the letters show, the majority of the migrants consisted of peasant offspring, apparently younger daughters and, possibly, sons from the middle and upper layers of the local society, who were able to utilise their previous experience in different trades gained at peasant merchant households to find occupation and permanent employment in the new urban surrounding. In the case of Nyland as a whole, there is a rather clear shift from the slight dominance of male migrants in the fifteenth century towards the two-thirds share of female migrants from central and eastern Nyland in the first half of the sixteenth century. Since the surviving letters of *tovorsichte* frequently focus

on the migrants who lived in Reval for longer and established their personal networks in the town, their demise during the epidemics of the early 1530s, 1540s and 1550s indicates possible waves of migration some 10–30 years prior, of which the first occurred during the times of Brother Peder Månsson and the re-emergence of Reval as an important hub for the Russian transit trade during the first two decades of the sixteenth century.

Considering the preserved sources on the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century migrations from Nyland to Reval, it appears that geographic mobility was for peasants more of a norm rather than an exception caused by short-time hazards and temporarily deteriorating economic situation. As demonstrated by migration prohibitions issued by Swedish kings after 1551³⁹, and sharpening of legal ethnic divisions and the clash of interests between local Livonian vassals and the town council of Reval half a century earlier, the shortage of labour force in farms and landed estates, towns, merchant households, harbours, trade and mining was a growing problem in several areas of local and transregional economy already at the turn of the sixteenth century. In this context, the active role of peasants migrating in and out of realms and other territorial governances has been an understudied issue. The personal strategies of sustention available to late medieval and early modern peasants in the northern Baltic Sea region depended on the demography and economic infrastructure of their imminent surroundings, and the particular administrative and institutional structure of their societies. With this in mind, more attention needs to be given to peasants' proactive stance, their transgenerational and transregional contacts, and the wide variety of available strategies to sustain their offspring involving inheritance, social mobility, colonisation, and permanent and seasonal geographic mobility.

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³⁹ M. ANDERSSON, *One Does Not Simply Walk Out of Sweden*, pp. 164–184.

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