

A castle and a town in Livonia, 13th-16th century: example of Straupe

Mg. hist. Edgars Plētiens

“Every Straupe citizen and inhabitant
with Jurgen von Rosen’s approved old latin
stamp and feud letter which is given and approved by
all citizens and Straupe castle inhabitants.”¹

When centuries pass, events get forgotten and disappear from people’s memories. Quite often also documents have been lost in earlier or more recent fires and places where important trading and political transactions, and also everyday life used to happen, are being forgotten. The earlier importance of these places and events that used to happen there has been forgotten and there is no evidence left. The only evidence is a little bit run down castle that has been rebuilt several times, grown over fortification mounds and the surrounding terrain. The story is about Lielstraupe castle and the inhabited place next to it (Picture 1 and 2.). In Medieval times, this was a town called Straupe (*Rope*). So now also, to make things easier, we’ll call it Straupe. The written historical sources show that an inhabited place started to form here since 13th century.² In 14th century a castle was built and the place next to it had reached town quality. Due to continuous warfare in the second part of the 16th century, Straupe withered away and wasn’t restored. There are many questions related to the history of this place. However, we shall focus only on one: what were the relations between Straupe castle and the town? In order to find an answer to this question, other issues need to be examined as well.

The place by the spring and highway

The road which is the fastest and most convenient way to get from Riga to Valmiera has still remained as important as before. In Medieval times it connected the major Baltic region port in Riga with one of the biggest provincial towns of Vidzeme - Valmiera. It was one of the three highways (*hellewech*)³ that connected Riga and North Vidzeme. This road used to be one of the most key structural elements of the town. Within borders of the town, which were marked by fortifications, this

road was more like the main street. The fact that one part of the highway became a town element and used to be called in the name of the town to which it led, wasn't surprising. Similar practices can be seen in Limbaži,⁴ Cēsis⁵ or Aizpute⁶.



*Picture 1. View of Lielstraupe Castle from the northwest.
Postcard from 20th century*



*Picture 2. View of Lielstraupe Castle from the southwest
Postcard from 20th century*

The significance of river Brasla in development of Straupe as a populated place is still not entirely clear, even though this river, that used to be called *Rop* in Livonia, gave the name to the castle and the town. In documentation⁷ it has been deemed a spring and used as a geographical term to indicate the location or to mark the border plot in feudal documents. A spring right next to the town was beneficial for building a mill⁸ and most likely, for flooding the moats.⁹ However, there are no reports that it has been used for sailing. Having in mind, that the width of Brasla currently is 4–6 m, even though it might have been fuller with water, in Medieval times only barges might have been able to sail here (with trouble),¹⁰. Such barges used to be one of the ways to transport household goods in Livonia.

The place before the castle and the town

It is impossible to reconstruct what Straupe looked like in the 13th century. However, it is possible to say that this place was populated and in the earlier political-administrative system singled out as a separate entity called Idumea. There used to be three hillforts in the vicinity and several burial grounds that were used from 11th to 13th century.¹¹ Local inhabitants of Idumea area used to live in several separately located villages¹².

At the beginning of the 13th century (in the autumn of 1206 and winter of 1207), as a part of preaching Christianity priest Daniel settled to live in Straupe area. He made his farmstead and build a church by river Brasla (*ecclesiam super Ropam*).¹³ It is impossible to determine where exactly was the church built. However, there is a chance that it was built in current Baukalns area, where at the end of the 19th century some artefacts were found. This place has also been mentioned as “the place where and old church used to be” in legends.¹⁴ In the map of 1683 the church had been marked little bit South of Baukalns.¹⁵ Not far from Baukalns a 16th century burials were found, although some individual artefacts date back to even earlier.¹⁶ In general, the reports are inconclusive. Further on it is mentioned as an isolate area, for example, in 1554, Baukalns farmsteads are mentioned there,¹⁷ but in a map of 1683¹⁸, it has been marked as a small, singled out populated area. Chronicle of Henry mentions that by the river Brasla (supposedly, in Baukalns area) during Crusades in 1211, there used to be a gathering place for the military forces.¹⁹ This is not coincidental as in 13th century it was demolished by Estonians (*estones*)²⁰ and Russians (*ruthenorum*) multiple times.²¹ Therefore, the church was burned and restored several times. At the end of the 13th century a trader Tiderihs Azgalis²² from Straupe participated in some trading actions - he borrowed money and flax. This person is from Rīga archbishop’s vassal family Azgaļi. Later, in 14th and 15th century they served for archbishop in the military as varlets²³. The trader (as indicated by nickname) came from Aizgale village,²⁴ but later settled in Straupe due to various

reasons. This possibly was related to the rise of importance of Rīga–Valmiera road, which was also the reason of Straupe's development.

At the beginning of 14th century Straupe was surrounded by Lithuanian (*letovie*)²⁵ army. However, it is not known if the place was destroyed. If there was a surrounding, it could be an indication that the place might have been more than just a church and a yard. Most likely, the fortification, guarded by warriors, was surrounded. One of the warriors might have been Riga canon, a knight named Johan from Straupe.²⁶

According to the above mentioned events, at the end of the 13th century the castle was most likely ready and a village started to form near it.²⁷

Was Straupe a town?

In Livonia, one of the preconditions for a larger population to develop in a place, was building of a castle. First of all, a castle meant guaranteed security, which was important for people living in the area, especially for those who had a non-agrarian trade (crafting, trading). Security was very important for traders and a significant precondition for traders to go to this place. Secondly, the castle was also a consumer because the people living in the castle needed food and simple artisan products. These conditions defined forming of population, and they were tightly connected to the castle.

Often you look at a town the perspective of it's rights or a specific set of privileges, namely, a populated place could be considered a town, if it had various rights and freedom privileges, which were called 'town rights' by historians. The territory of Livonia in all medieval period had 19 town. Only some of them retained privileges by which the populated place legally acquired town status. Mostly, the privileges have remained in a reworked ²⁸ state or only parts of them have remained, In worst cases the legal status can be learned through the context of other written documents. Straupe is such a case.

There are no knowledge regarding Straupe population in 13th century, and, as mentioned above, there is a possibility that the original place of the church by river Brasla is not the place of Straupe castle. It is known that in the second half of 13th century (until Lithuanian attach in 1310) the population of Straupe started to form in the location where it is today. The reasons for this are unknown. In 14th century 20ies, the trading between Riga vogt and his relatives in Straupe is a process which shows that Straupe in these times was more than just a castle. One could safely assume that by Straupe castle in 14th century 20ies-30ies there was a town which is certainly recognizable in 1352.²⁹ This is the moment when due to these trading relations Straupe as a town was directly attached to Hansa trading system, because it is likely that these traders from Straupe were a part of a foreign trading community or hansa. This is also indicated by rather big amounts of money that they had at their disposal, and that is a common factor which indicates a trader that is a participant of Hansa.³⁰

When generations changed, traders of such level weren't in touch with Straupe inhabitants, therefore the connection with Hanseatic trading system diminished and in the future it was oriented on servicing inner trade. These, of course, are only assumptions, and they can't be verified.

Some attention should be paid to terminology that is used in the written documents regarding the populated place Straupe. This might be the hardest issue to solve, simultaneously being one of or the most significant issue in the research of populated places. In order to discuss something, it needs to be defined clearly with words that we use to describe specific things or phenomena. In the case of Straupe, this makes things more complicated.

To label a populated place in Livonia such Latin words as *vicus*, *villa*, *locus*, *suburbio*, *oppido* and *civita* were used. Whereas, in Middle Low German language they were *palthe*, *fleck*, *hakelwerk*, *vyksbilde*, *stedeken*, *städtlein* and *stad* (*stat*). Until now, it is believed that these labels differ by status, prosperity and size of the populated place's territory. For example, if 'stad' was used to describe a full-fledged town, populated places called *fleck*, *hakelwerk* and *vyksbilde* weren't considered towns but rather small populated places or villages.³¹

A small insight into breakdown of populated places is given by the list of Livonia castles (year 1555) in Latin. This document features populated places divided as follows: towns with stone walls (*muratae Civitates*), towns without stone walls (*non muratis oppidis*) and villages or settlements (*vicis*).³² In 1690, this list was translated into German by *Casparis von Ceumern*. Here populated places were categorized as follows: towns with stone walls (*gemaurten Städten*), towns without stone walls (*ohne – die offenen Städtlein*) and villages or settlements (*Flecken*).³³ Straupe in this list in Latin was indicated as *oppidum*, but in German - *städtlein*, hence, a town without stone walls.

From 14th till 16th century (including), as shown in the table, Straupe has been labelled using seven different words in Latin and Middle Low German language. Moreover, different descriptions were used in different times, which means that there is no observation of decrease of Straupe status in 16th century, compared to 14th century. Also, in one document two different descriptions were used.³⁴ This won't be further analysed. However, the different and sometimes inconsistent mentions of Straupe populated place indicate several things. Firstly, usage of such words as town, settlement, village etc. should be reviewed, but then a full and detailed research regarding Livonian towns is necessary. That would give many answers about terms used in written historical sources and what is meant by them - their content. Secondly, the mentions confirm the town activities of Straupe, starting from the first part of 14th century till second half of 16th century at least.

All in all, it is safe to state that from 14th century till 16th century Straupe, most likely, was a legal town, but in relation to other small towns further research is necessary as to what did these

different labels mean for the town status, what was the people's understanding of Straupe back then and what do these labels tell about Straupe factual population, size and prosperity?

Table. Mentions of Straupe populated place using a specific label in 14th 16th century written historical sources

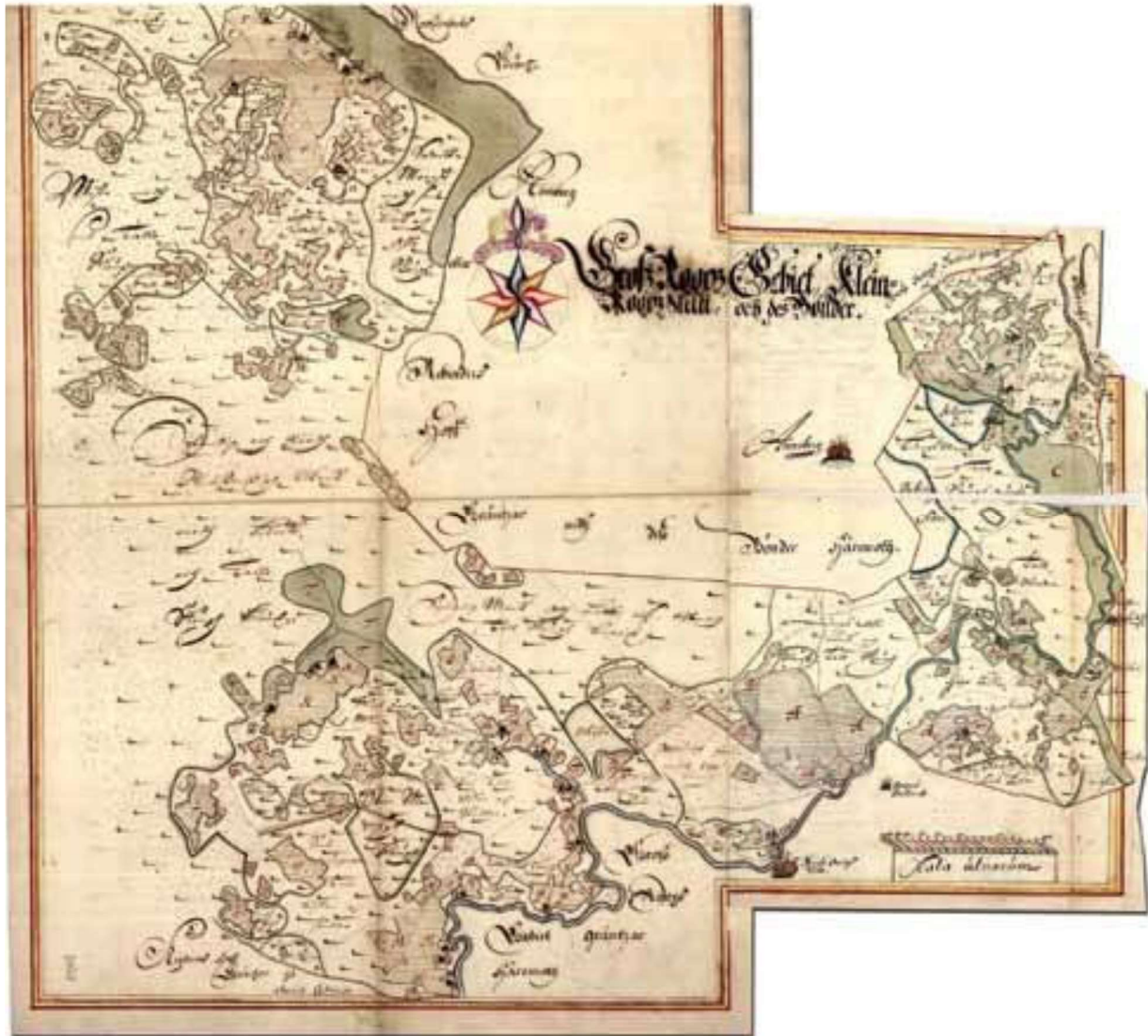
Year/name	stat/stadt	stedeken	hakelwerk	vickbeld	fleck	oppidum	Städtlein
1356	x						
1378	x						
1430	x						
1458	x						
1495				x			
1518	x						
1529	x						
1531			x				
1532					x		
1533					x		
1535	x	x					
1536					x		
1548	x	x					
1555						x	x
1569					x		

The owners of the castle and region

Straupe castle and the attached villages and parishes were part of Riga archbishopric territory. Part of it was divided between vassals, who served in archbishop's military, but part belonged to archbishop as so called archbishop's table farmsteads (*gudere tho kercken tafel*), which covered archbishop administration's military, economic and administrative expenses and other costs.³⁵ At the end of 13th century Straupe castle was managed by archbishop's vassals, for example, the knight Johan of Straupe,³⁶ but at the beginning of 14th century the managers of the castle were Riga vogts. One of them was Verner of Straupe,³⁷ and his multiple trading transactions in Riga with relatives from Straupe and with other traders are worth noting due to the comparably big amounts that were circulating in these transactions. Accordingly, it was, for example, 77, 25 or 20 Riga marks. Additionally, his cooperation which is a typical characteristic of 13th and 14th century, was based on relationship. Therefore, his trading partners were relatives *Goschalcus* of Straupe and underage relative *Gyselero* of Straupe.³⁸ In the second part of 14th century, Voldemar von Rosen³⁹ became Riga vogt and in 1374 he was the manager of Straupe castle and town.⁴⁰ In 1378 another member of the Rosen family *Henneke* von Rosen exchanged his plots by Koknese with land plots by Straupe. This might be due to the fact that around this time he was appointed as Straupe castle manager.⁴¹ Starting from this time, Rosen family as Riga archbishop's vassals remained in Straupe until 17th century, when they lost it. In the middle of 19th century Rosens regained ownership of Straupe and remained there until 20th century, end of 30ies.⁴² Rosens settled in this area at least in the beginning of 14th century, because the knights *Wolmar* and *Henneke* in 1350 got their father's *Otto* land plots and fortified residence called Rosen house (*husz tho Rosen*).⁴³ According to villages mentioned in the feudal document, historian V. Pavulane⁴⁴ identifies this Rosen house with Augstroze stone wall castle, which during 15th and 16th centuries had different owners.⁴⁵ Other historians, for example, H. Bruining⁴⁶ and I. Stern⁴⁷ identifies this Rosen house with Straupe castle, and these villages weren't under the authority of it.

Lands owned by Rosens in this area until the first half of 15th century were owned by different Riga archbishop's vassal families, for example, ~~von~~ Koskulls, ~~von~~ Tiesenhausens⁴⁸ and ~~von~~ Uexkulls,⁴⁹ but later on a focused land purchase strategy is observed on the ~~von~~ Rosen side. For example, in 1425 Riga archbishop gave a village to one of his vassals (*Everd Resen*) together with lands in Straupe and Rubene congregations. So, the village was in both congregations. Five years later the village was bought by *Otte* von Rosen for an unknown amount.⁵⁰ In 1491, Kersten von Rosen bought the village from *Brant Kosszkull*.⁵¹ Although the family context for this issue still could be researched, it is clear that four castles were under the authority of Rosen family during these times. First was Augstroze stone wall castle, later Straupe stone wall castle, then Rozula or Rozbeķi stone wall castle and later - Mujānu stone wall castle. Even though the castle and town economic cooperation will be discussed

later in this document, it is utterly important to understand the total approximate acreage of lands that were under the authority of these three castles. This can be reconstructed using the feudal documents, 17th century revisions⁵² and map materials⁵³ (pictures 3 and 4).



Picture 3. Lielstraupe Castle County and Mazstraupe Palace in 1683
Place with a part of the castle-owned countries distributed in villages and parishes (LVVA, 7404-1-1909)

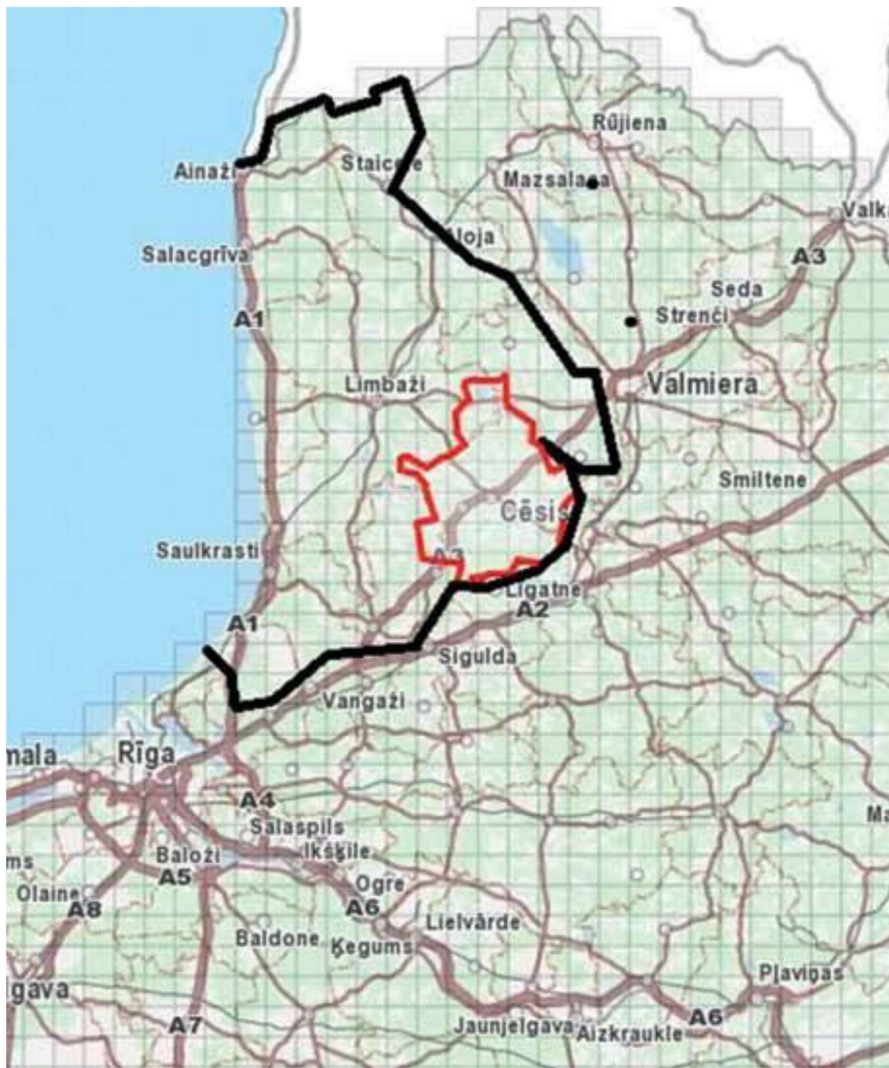
Overall, the total of lands owned by Rosens were 562 km² and, as shown by the red line outlining the area on map (picture 5), they took up approximately a fifth of archbishopric lands located on the right bank of Gauja or from the so called Livonian end. However, it is important to remember that lands adherent to castles weren't permanent because they could change due to inheritance,⁵⁴ exchange,⁵⁵ purchase and selling⁵⁶ or marital transactions.⁵⁷ Individual villages or bigger areas that belonged to one castle in a given period, could belong to another after some transactions. Therefore, the allocation of lands is approximate and to be reconstructed only for a given period of time.



Picture 4 Liestruapes Castle (Groß RoopsSlätt) and the Mazstraupe Palace (KleinRoops Slott). Map of 1683. Part of the picture 3.

How did the fact that Straupe was under the authority of Rosen family affect the development of Straupe town? When the town started to form, the close communication with Riga vogt and being part of archbishopric property and under management of the judges leads to thinking that it had both positive and negative effect. The connections and the status were unmistakable benefits. In 1438 there was an archbishopric-level meeting held in Straupe,⁵⁸ so the representatives could agree on the general position before provincial assembly in Valka. Additionally, for unknown reasons Riga's envoys were given 5 shillings for purchase of wine that was supposed to be delivered to Straupe burgomaster.⁵⁹ At the same time the development of Straupe wasn't happening due to practically being owned by Rosen family who had the administration rights of the town as well.⁶⁰ For a medieval town to develop successfully it had to become free of senior

dominance. This was not in Straupe's power. Therefore, Straupe until 16th century existed as a small Livonian town with an explicit senior dominance.



*Picture 5. Size of the Rozen family owned by the 14th-16th (with a red line) and the Archbishopric of Riga in the ultimate boundaries of the Livonia (with a black line).
Map from www.kurtuesi.lv, author's marked borders*

The layout of the castle and the town

Most often, the layout and inner topography of the town in Livonia was defined by castle structure, as mostly the towns in Livonia closely clung to the fortifications of the castle. Straupe is not an exception. First, let's look at the general topography of the area.

Seems that the choice of spot where to construct the castle wasn't random. It is in a spot where a small river flows into Brasla. This small river comes from the surrounding swamp. This ensures that the castle was secured from two sides. It is not known which of the buildings - the castle or the church - was built first and if they originally were wooden or stone. Possibly, they were built together.

At the same time, the aforementioned documents indicate that the castle was built at the end of 13th or beginning of 14th century. The current terrain brings attention to a hollow on the North and East side of the castle. It seems that this hollow was formed naturally, but deepened later and made into a moat. Another significant element for the general topography was the direction of the road which we named above as Riga-Valmiera highway. The hillforts and burial grounds in Straupe vicinity indicate that road systems were present before Straupe castle was built, because it was necessary to get to and from these places even before. The significance of the road when choosing this place was important because Straupe was also the end destination of the road that lead from Limbaži.⁶¹ Moreover, through Stalbe which was located close to Straupe, it was also possible to travel to Cēsis.⁶² Essentially, from Straupe one could quickly get to Valmiera, Limbaži, Cēsis and Riga.

Straupe castle was rebuilt many times. Therefore, it is not possible to reconstruct the appearance of the castle in 13th-16th century without major archaeological and all-inclusive architectonic research. Previous limited research led to individual evidence, for example, the typically medieval construction type and used materials show that castle originally might had four fortification walls and in one corner there used to be a rectangle-shaped tower. Additionally, the walls around the castle, contrary to the current state, weren't attached to the church and ended 3 m from it.⁶³ So there is a possibility that in middle ages Straupe castle and church were two independent structures, although, most likely, surrounded by a wall. It is possible that originally household buildings were close to the Straupe castle walls. There is no evidence regarding the formation of castle block and other elements, for example, castle-front or the outer yard. Therefore, right now it is not possible to determine the oldest entrance. However, the written historical sources mention that the castle had a gate faced in the direction of the town.⁶⁴

As mentioned, it is possible that Straupe church originally wasn't connected to the castle walls, so it's West wall might had windows and a portal with an entrance to the church. Straupe church was a three-sphere building with two entrances - in the West and North walls. It has been found that at least since the middle of 14th century there were traditional burials carried out inside the church.⁶⁵ Also, at least two vivariums existed,⁶⁶ that were dedicated to the holy body⁶⁷ and Saint Anne.⁶⁸ It is worth mentioning that the church also owned building plots and houses in Straupe,⁶⁹ and the Saint Anne vivarium that occupied the church had received an unspecified place with a big garden (as a donation) that also belonged to the church.⁷⁰ From one side the church faced inner courtyard of the castle, but from the other - the cemetery and town. In connection with the church and the castle a 1512 dispute settlement document⁷¹ mentions that a passage that lead from the castle door, along it's fortification and to the church, was closed and there was a request to restore it.⁷² So this was a passage that lead out of walls of the castle, outside of castle and to the church. It possibly indicates that there was an

empty plot of land between the castle and the church and a wall, along which you could enter. Straupe church as the part of Straupe owned by Riga archbishopric judges Rosens was used to solve individual issues regarding Riga, for example, in 1515, by Riga Cathedral and Straupe church door a notification was put up regarding Livonian land marshal.⁷³

Typical to the Medieval religious space, there used to be a cemetery by the church.⁷⁴ The



*Picture 6. Straupes Church crucifix of the North on the side of the former cemetery territory.
Author's photo in 2015*

burials there were marked with stone (**picture 6**) and wooden crosses.⁷⁵ The area of burial place is not known. It is believed that the church cemetery was separated from the public space of the town using wooden or stone fence because in Middle ages the holy space was separated from the secular space. The spiritual needs of local people were taken care of by the priest⁷⁶ and vicars⁷⁷ of Straupe church.

The previously mentioned Riga-Valmiera highway in Straupe church used to be called in the name of the town to which it lead. It used to be similar with other towns as well. Even though Straupe was quite small (by area), it might have had several streets. It is not verified if this is true and if yes, what were the names of those streets. Straupe also had a bridge which was significant in size because in 1531, it was called the high bridge.⁷⁸ It was located by the castle and lead

over the moat. Straupe also had the big bridge,⁷⁹ that was located on the side of the town where there used to be a gate on the road to Valmiera, and it crossed the town's protection system: two moats and a rampart.

The houses of Straupe inhabitants were distributed in a comparably small area - approximately 19 000 m² or almost two hectares. As seen in other town, for example, Kuldīga, Cēsis or Riga older building materials, it is possible that Straupe mostly had wooden buildings. That lead to fires breaking out in the town, and the fire in 1531 is mentioned in documentation.⁸⁰ As the town was occupied by members of other families and not only the influential archbishop's vassals,⁸¹ it is assumable that the town also had stone buildings because this social stratum used to be wealthier. The buildings also had small gardens,⁸² however in general the structure of buildings was close,⁸³ because there wasn't much space. There used to be a watermill in the town.⁸⁴ Straupe also had three chapels that were located close to one another,⁸⁵ not far from river Brasla. This might be an indication that the wealthy families had their own burial grounds. The town also had Saint George's⁸⁶ chapel, which including the church was the second prayer building in Straupe. The founder of the chapel is unknown, but can be assumed

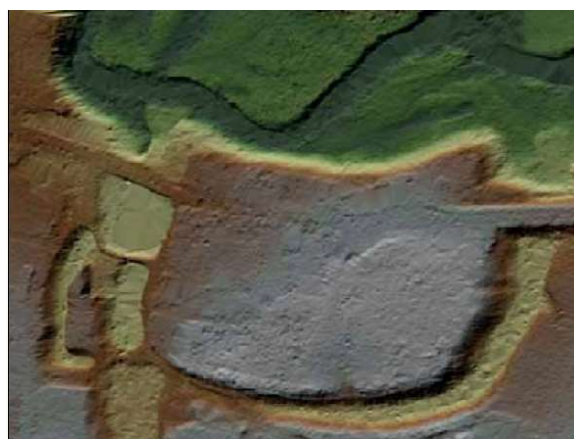
that Hans and Anna von Rosen were responsible for this when their son Jurgen was born.⁸⁷ The fact that the religious space of the town was dominant is not a surprise, because, for example, in Cēsis and it's vicinity there used to be six religious buildings which was an unusually big number for such a small town.⁸⁸ Comparatively Tallinn in Middle Ages had seven churches and two monasteries, Riga - six churches and three monasteries, but Tartu - four churches. Small towns, for example, Koknese had three, Limbaži – two churches.⁸⁹

Traditionally, the market square was one of the key elements of town. It is unknown where it was located in Straupe, but most likely somewhere in the middle of the town by the main road. The market square also had buildings around it - the owner of one of the houses was Stalbe manager *Jurgen Stalbyter*,⁹⁰ but the owner of another house which had a threshing barn - Rosen vassal *Otto Ritzen*.⁹¹ There used to be another house which belonged to *Hans Melcher* and a garden for a person named *Krabben*.⁹² Traditionally, next to the market square there used to be town hall and a place of worship, usually - a church. It is possible that Straupe St. George chapel and town hall might have been located by the market square.



Picture 7. A fragment of road map of Lielstraupe and Mazstraupe in 1695.
The inscription "Groß Rops Schloß" depicts a castle and a city,
which runs through the palisade (LVVA, 7404-1-2195)

The town's fortification system that was located right by the castle protection system might be the most characteristic trait during medieval times. There are no evidence regarding the defensive wall of the town. However, the terrain shows two lines of ravines, and there used to be a rampart between them which flattened over time. This verifies that the town was encircled by a palisade – similar to the one that is marked in the map of 1695 (**picture 7**).⁹³ It is unknown if the palisade was located on the rampart or on the inner side of the moat. These kinds of fortifications definitely weren't the best choice for long term protection, and they needed regular maintenance. Most likely it defended the inhabitants against wild animals and wandering marauders. The protection system would stop the army temporarily, possibly buying time to only take refuge in the castle. The fortifications on one side were close to river Brasla, and on the other side connected with the castle's moats which were connected with Brasla on the other end. Therefore, the town and castle were contained by moats, and the town even with two moats and a rampart between them. The water from the small watercourse that came from the nearby swamp partially was collected in the reservoir located by the castle. It connected to the town and castle moats and might have been controlled with a water gate. This is the place where the watermill might have been located. When necessary, the flooded area could quickly provide a lot of water. Currently, it is not possible to reconstruct the depth of the moats and the height of the rampart without archaeological excavations anymore. However, Straupe town and castle is visible in aero laser scans, where the difference of this fortification complex is clearly distinguished from the surrounding countryside area.⁹⁴ Additionally, the terrain marks the protective elements of the castle and town as well as roads (**picture 8**).



Picture 8. Straupe site land surface model:

*1 - Brasla, 2 - pond, 3-dug, 4-Riga-Valmiera road, 5-place of Lielstraupe castle,
6 - the former territory of the city. The north direction is towards the bottom right corner of the image
(Available at: <http://www.videsinstituts.lv/en/projects/examples/cultures>)*

Overall, there are no conclusive facts regarding Straupe topography in medieval times. However, at the same time there is enough information about what existed in this area where the castle and the town used to be. It is possible that because of this reason Straupe situational plans used to be redrawn. For example, in the first part of 19th century the plan which documented architecture monuments in Vidzeme, was drawn by *Wilhelm Tusch*, depicting the placement of buildings, castle moats and roads.⁹⁵ In 1922, researcher of castles *Karl von Löwis of Menar* in his monograph about Livonian castles added the reconstruction of former Straupes plan, where very approximately castle and town borders, moats and the road system were marked.⁹⁶ The depiction of Straupe castle is visible also in a road map of 1695, where the castle is mapped out as a complex of several bigger and smaller buildings surrounded by walls (picture 7). Next to it, both in North and South directions a territory is marked that is surrounded by a palisade but is not covered with buildings.⁹⁷ The accuracy of this depiction is not verifiable, but it differs from visualisations of other places in other 17th century maps of Vidzeme. It means that the author who made the map of Straupe area, had reasons to depict it in such manner.

Inhabitants of Straupe

Straupe town was inhabited by citizens and inhabitants (*borgeren und inwonderen*).⁹⁸ As Straupe life was governed by Riga rights,⁹⁹ the citizens of Straupe could only be those that were able to pay a certain amount of money.¹⁰⁰ So, citizens were the population from which town councillors and burgomaster (*borgermeyster unde ratdh der statdt Roppe*) were chosen.¹⁰¹ Whereas, the inhabitants were those that for various reasons couldn't afford to become citizens or might have resided in the town only temporarily. Also, they couldn't be elected to be members of the town council. These seem to be the only differences between these groups.¹⁰²

Large part of the people living in the town were craftsmen, for example, farriers, wood carvers, tailors, brewers.¹⁰³ These people played a significant role in the development of the castle and the town. Their trade is mostly indicated by the tools they used every day. For example, one of Johan von Rosen's vassals, who was a craftsman, had the following movables: 22 dowers¹⁰⁴ of barley, 2 dowers of rye - wheat mixture, 2 dowers of rye, two dowers of malt¹⁰⁵ and two dowers of oats. He also had two bulls, two cows, two calves, four goats (big and small), three sheep and one lamb, four pigs (big and small), one mare and one foal. Household items were two ladles, two handles, one pot, one small pot, two small bowls one handle of a bowl, one half-last¹⁰⁶ barrel, two pairs of ploughshares, two tables and one rectangular box. The bedspread he owned was three blankets, three textiles, three cloths (or scarves), three pillows and two thin textiles.¹⁰⁷ The property of vassal indicates that he was a farmer and a brewer.

The second part of the townspeople were people who were on military duty and were the security of both places.¹⁰⁸ Johan von Rosen's vassal, who served in the military (his father did the same thing¹⁰⁹), had the following movables: a house and a yard with all attached land plots and threshing barns, gardens and places, also ladles and half a thousand of handles (both big and small), half a tub of plates, good cans (big and small)), one Livonian pot,¹¹⁰ a brewing pot, bathhouse pot, half-barrel pot, a brass pot, two small pots, two bowls, a mortar and a pan. He had 8 bulls, 8 young stock animals, 6 horses, 12 sheep, 20 pigs and 12 goats. It is obvious that the property of this vassal was larger than the previous one.

A more uncommon group is traders, so that leads to thinking that they weren't a significant part of the town.¹¹¹ There is a possibility that more active trading used to happen in 14th century, but as specific traders didn't visit the town for various reasons, the role of trading decreased. However, that doesn't mean there was no trading in Straupe in 15th and 16th century. The nearby road attracted considerably intensive local scale trade to Straupe and ~~means~~ that inhabitants only benefited from this.

The biggest part of Straupe congregation in Middle Ages spoke German. These people were called Germans (*dudschen, duitzschen*),¹¹² even though Livonian towns were inhabited also by locals (non-Germans),¹¹³ mostly Latgalians and Livonians - in Straupe area.¹¹⁴

The inhabitants of the town were Christians. The church, its yard and cemetery formed the religious space of Straupe. The inhabitants had established the two afore mentioned vivariums. Vivarium of the Holy Body was well provided with the necessary maintenance funds, as Kersten von Rosen could borrow from it or else owed 40 Riga marks.¹¹⁵ The other vivarium, Saint Anne's, was established later - in the second part of 15th century. Besides, for its maintenance property, instead of money, was allocated. It was a large garden and a place that wasn't specified more precisely. Vivarium was earning from renting out this place. Straupe's religious environment was enriched by the Kalands Bretheren (*Calande to Rope*),¹¹⁶ which practiced donations to the poor and remembrance of the dead. It is known that such brotherhood in Livonia used to exist also in Aizpute,¹¹⁷ Rīga,¹¹⁸ where they owned a house, and Rēvele, where the stamp used by brotherhood has been preserved.¹¹⁹ The Kalands Bretheren even had their own chapel at the cathedral in Riga.¹²⁰

The relationship between castle and the town

The afore mentioned events and processes let us take a more detailed look at how the castle and town got on in Straupe.

The relationship between the castle and town in Europe and in Livonia usually were mutually beneficial. The castle as a consumer structure on big part relied on the prosperity of the surrounding region, as the land workers of the region had certain fees that needed to be submitted in a certain

period.¹²¹ The same can be said regarding a populated place near the castle. The big part of the inhabitant's time was taken by their trade which wasn't agrarian - either craftsmanship or trading. For this the castle had to protect the people that were living next to it. Moreover, the town next to the castle had a market where locals could sell their farming goods.¹²² The townspeople also benefited from trading, by selling the purchased goods for more in bigger towns, where traders were doing long-distance trading. Often, the traders of the small town or their relatives in a bigger town did long-distance trading. The castle also needed crafts for everyday use, for example, tools and clothing, as well as services, for example repairs of the same tools or clothing. Therefore, a mutually beneficial unwritten coexistence of the town and the castle persisted. However, formally according to the medieval senior-vassal or feudal rights each place had a legal senior. His power could have been formal or actual and present. Straupe was the second case.

It is obvious that relationship can exist between people, not buildings. And such people in Straupe were the manager of the castle who resided there, and the townspeople, who lived in the town and who were legally represented by the town council. Relatively, there were two sides - the castle and the town. With the afore mentioned in mind, let's look what were the legal, economic, military and social relations and obligations of these people.

A. Legal relationships

In the first part of the 14th century due to trading activities after Crusades, Straupe experienced a development and in the middle of 14th century had definitely reached town quality.¹²³ Initially, the town territory and adherent lands outside of it belonged to the managers of the castle - Rosens. This changed soon. In 1374, Voldemar von Rosen gave to citizens 51 parts of the joint estate in Straupe. This wasn't or free, as during five years the citizens had to pay 100 Riga marks for this transaction.¹²⁴ So, in the second part of 14th century Straupe citizens obtained ownership of the most of Straupe's joint estates. However, citizens also had private property, legal affiliation of which is unknown. What did owning a property mean in Middle Ages? It certainly wasn't the same private property rights as we understand them today. In the big cities, for example, in Riga or Rēvele, freedom of self-determination developed quite rapidly in connection to properties, but in small towns the property ownership was restricted to typical feudal ownership, which meant that the property legally belonged to the senior. In Straupe this was a member of the Rosen family.¹²⁵ It is possible that based on analogy with Riga, there were lands or building plots that belonged to individuals who had obtained them when the populated place was still forming and wasn't a town yet. We do not know this.

The citizen status in the town didn't guarantee acquisition of independent property. All the people who became Straupe citizens or inhabitants in the second part of 14th century, rented the land

from a Rosen family representative. It was a senior-vassal relationship. The senior, Rosen family, who owned a part of Straupes town properties and who had power in the town,¹²⁶ on certain conditions rented the building plots in town or land outside of it to those interested to obtain it. Such people thus, became Rosen vassals. The conditions differed. There were usually two common legal conditions. One established that the vassal won't sell the land and won't leave it empty, also, when using it, won't harm senior power and economic state.¹²⁷ The second one established that if the vassal violates this condition or he/she doesn't have any heirs, or they are not able to provide the annual payment,¹²⁸ the land is reclaimed by the Rosen family.¹²⁹ There were several other conditions which will be discussed in detail when looking at the economic, social and military relationship between the castle and the town.



Picture 9. Coat of arms of Straupe town used in 1548 document stamping (from Klaus von Rozen (Claus von Rosen's personal archive)

The agreements were usually made between the representative of Rosen family and inhabitant of Straupe. It seems that Straupe town hall was more present in testimony giving¹³⁰ and division of inheritances¹³¹. The town hall usually confirmed it's decisions with a town stamp (*stades segell*¹³²) (**picture 9**), and the Rosen family representative also used their stamp. A third confirmation with stamp was possible from the third party mentioned in the document.¹³³ This kind of institution didn't have any real decision power and it most likely was acting as a simplified executive power.

Besides, it is important to remember that Rosens were the vassals of archbishop. Until the issuing of 'Sylvestersche Gnade' in 1457, that defined wider and more specific inheritance rights for vassals of Riga archbishop,¹³⁴ vassals didn't own the territories they were managing. Moreover only the male members of the given family could inherit these territories. Thus, properties of individual vassals didn't remain at their disposal. This didn't seem to be relevant to the Rosen family. After this privilege came into effect the inheritance rights became more ambiguous and increased the independence of archbishop's vassals. This concerned the Rosens, who after 1457 became the actual owners not only of big areas that belonged to Straupe castle, but also to Straupe town. The archbishop's power over these territories in second part of the 15th century had become formal and poor.

B. Economic relations

The giving and receiving process of feuds were beneficiary to both sides. The vassal received land in town, but senior was provided a service in the castle. This resulted in several gains, including economic benefits. Let's look at the formation of economic relations between these two sides.

When receiving farming land or property, where could have been buildings, vassal gave two kinds of money payments to the senior. First, it was a general payment, where the amount different in each case, 70 Riga marks, which in 1536, vassal *Otto Ritz* paid to the senior Johan von Rosen.¹³⁵ Secondly, it was a regular annual payment, due for the amount of time the property was used. For example, in case of Straupe those were 14 Riga marks that in 1556, vassal *Peter Kalw* paid to the senior Johan von Rosen.¹³⁶ If the annual payment wasn't set, it was substituted with labour. For example, in 1495, shoemaker *Mattysz Lyndenbecke* had to provide services for the castle¹³⁷, or in 1533, farriers *Hanss Nitter* and *Otte Reitzssen* and wood carver *Dirick Dennenberch* had to provide their services, accordingly.¹³⁸ It was possible not to have a fee for property use, but instead takers of the land had to provide transportation or brew beer for the castle for free and provide it on special occasions. Such special occasions, for example, were baptism, as shown by a feudal document in 1533.¹³⁹ This feudal document also had other payments set out which weren't further described.¹⁴⁰

Besides having the right to use the land for personal needs, the vassal also obtained some sort of economic safety. In case of an accident (ex., fire that destroyed the house), senior could lend crops for living and for sowing. This is indicated by witness questioning document in 1531. Although the vassal had to return it, it was important economic help at the time.¹⁴¹

C. Social relations

The social relations between both sides can't be separated from their economic and legal relations. We'll try to explore the social relations, by analysing what requirements Rosens had set out for the citizens. And based on that, what was their communication with the citizens.

Both sides had strict conditions regarding the order of inheritance. Heirs could be members of both genders, and the property was supposed to be used in a way that wouldn't harm any of the parties. Loyalty was a very important for both sides, as the vassal had to serve the senior also by giving advice and that was supposed to be done in their best interest.¹⁴² Based on previous rights and freedoms that were included in some old Latin letter, citizens of Straupe could keep all properties that were inside and outside of Straupe town with the condition that they wouldn't be pledged or encumbered otherwise. Citizens of Straupe could trade with local farmers and sell everything they had

made at their home or workshop. The only thing to be considered was that by doing this the citizens shouldn't bring harm to the Rosen family or their farmers in any way.¹⁴³

These relationships weren't just for flat-out benefits. This was a sign of loyalty, where the senior guaranteed use rights of the land, but the vassal promised until Christmas notify the senior regarding vacating the land in case they didn't want to use it anymore.¹⁴⁴ The deadline for such notification six months prior to leaving the property.¹⁴⁵ This relationship could be considered such that was based on mutual understanding and respect.

D. Military relations

Alongside economic relations, military conditions also existed. As the Rosens were an influential Riga archbishop's vassals and had a lot of properties, they could maintain their own local military service. In the Straupes town and area several Rosen vassals lived.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, those citizens and inhabitants of Straupe who owned property, had to serve in the Rosen military. First of all, they had to provide all costs that were mandatory for a vassal, to perform this service, for example, provide appropriate clothing or purchase weapons. Also, each vassal had to provide a horse and body armour,¹⁴⁷ which made up significant costs from the vassal's funds. It is not known how often actually vassals had to serve in the military.

Conclusion

What are the characteristics of the relationship between Straupe provincial town and the castle?

The formation of the relationship between to separate places - the castle and the town - was affected by several factors. Firstly, it was important who managed the castle and who owned the land in the town next to it and in the surrounding castle region. Secondly, the populated place that formed next to the castle had significant development possibilities: connections with the trader groups that were participating in long-distance trading and the advantage of the geographical location. It was a set of circumstances, where several conditions interacted. Initially, Straupe had all the potential to become a middle-sized Livonian town: an important trading road and connections to Riga which since 13th century was involved in European level trading systems. However, something went wrong in the development process. This might be related to Livonian *landesherren* increasing differences in 14th-16th century, when nearby towns, for example, Limbaži, Cēsis and Valmiera, developed. There is a possibility that this condition provided that Straupe in 15th-16th century didn't have eminent cooperation with Riga, and therefore, no involvement in local or long-distance trading is observed. It is

possible that Straupe seniors from the Rosen family didn't choose to keep this populated place for some reasons and didn't prevent the increase of citizen independence, which started to form in 14th century when joint estates were available for purchase. All these circumstances affected the development of Straupe castle and town relationship. If any of the mentioned circumstances changed, the result might have been different.

Straupe castle became dominant in this relationship in 15th-16th century, and Riga Archbishop's vassals, the Rosen family, defined all processes in the town. Even the representative structure of the town community, the town hall, didn't have permanent decision-making rights, and it only had insignificant executive power. The citizens and inhabitants of Straupe had a typical senior-vassal relationships with the Rosen family, who fulfilled their duty regarding allocation of land. The inhabitants of the town were 'countryside citizens', because significant part of their activities were farming. Even the people living in the town had gardens.

At the same time, it can be observed that the citizens recognized themselves as a particular social and economic group. The participation of town hall in managing processes and the town stamp, however, reminded and indicated Straupe citizens that they had special rights (compared to farmers of the region).

With the aforementioned in mind, Straupe case cannot be applied to Livonia as a typical relationship model between a town and a castle. Based on the area and importance of the populated place, Straupe can be considered a Livonian town with a set of legal rights. Besides, people were willing to settle in Straupe and participate in such relationship model. This indicates that living in Straupe was advantageous regardless of the obligations. At the same time, the freedom of self-determination in the town was so small that one could say - the town existed only to serve the castle and to provide it with local crafts. The castle and the town might have been perceived as a unified population. This explicit subordination was established by the Rosen family being present. In other Livonian towns seniors didn't act like this. Straupe was significantly different from other towns such as Limbaži, Valmiera, Cēsis, Kuldīga and Ventspils by territorial, economic and legal means. These towns in 14th–16th century each in their own way became relevant Livonian towns.

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- ⁶⁸ *Ibid*, No. 637.
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- ⁸⁰ Ibid, No. 539.
- ⁸¹ Ibid, No. 130 and No. 539.
- ⁸² Ibid, No. 295, No. 549, No. 692.
- ⁸³ Ibid, No. 295.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid, No. 52.
- ⁸⁵ *Grufft* – dead house, tomb. Švābe. *Vidzemes tiesību vēstures avoti 1336.- 1551.*, No. 229.
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- ⁹¹ Ibid, No. 692.
- ⁹² Ibid, No. 295.
- ⁹³ Palisade (Latin *palus* – a pole; Middle Low German *pal* – a pole) – a protective wall constructed out of vertical logs. One end of the logs was sharpened, but the other - dug into ground. This kind of wall was made together with ramparts and moats.
- ⁹⁴ Research of Straupe historical centre. Available here: <http://www.videsinstituts.lv/lv/projekti/mantojums/kulturas-mantojums/straupes-vesturiska-centra-izpete.html> (Viewed on 04.17.2015.).
- ⁹⁵ *Livonijas piļu attēli no markīza Pauluči albuma* (2008). Prepared for publishing, translated and commented by Ieva Ose. Riga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, p. 181.
- ⁹⁶ Karl von Löwis von Menar (1922). *Burgenlexikon für Alt-Livland*. Riga: Walters und Rapa, Abb. 58.
- ⁹⁷ Lielstraupes un Mazstraupes ceļu karte, 1695. gads. LVVA, 7404- 1- 2195.
- ⁹⁸ LG 1501 - 1545, No. 591.
- ⁹⁹ LG 1207 - 1500, No. 636.
- ¹⁰⁰ Jakob Gottlieb Leonhard Napiersky (Hg.) (1867). *Die Quellen des Rigischen Stadtrechts bis zum Jahr 1693*. Riga: J.Deubner, S. 151.

- ¹⁰¹ LG 1500 - 1545, No. 637.; Švābe. *Vidzemes tiesību vēstures avoti 1336.- 1551.*, No. 234.
- ¹⁰² Švābe. *Vidzemes tiesību vēstures avoti 1336.- 1551.*, No. 229.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid, No. 110,184; LG 1501 – 1545., No. 549; LG 1207 – 1500, No. 636.
- ¹⁰⁴ One dower was approximately 48 kg. More: Jānis Zemzaris (1981). *Mērs un svars Latvijā 13.- 19. gs.* Rīga: Zinātne, p. 111.
- ¹⁰⁵ Malt is like ground grains, that's why it used to be measured using dowers
- ¹⁰⁶ Last – approximately 2300 kg, assuming that it consisted of 48 dowers and that one dower was approximately 48 kg. More: Zemzaris. *Mērs un svars Latvijā 13.- 19. gs.*, p. 111.
- ¹⁰⁷ Švābe. *Vidzemes tiesību vēstures avoti 1336.- 1551.*, No. 184.
- ¹⁰⁸ LG 1501 - 1545., No. 692.
- ¹⁰⁹ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁰ *Lispunt* – unit of measure, that was called a Liv pot and that consisted 20 pounds. One pound – approximately 8,3 kg. More: Zemzaris. *Mērs un svars Latvijā 13.- 19. gs.*, p. 145.
- ¹¹¹ *Das Rigische Schuldbuch (1286 - 1352) (1872)*, S. 104.
- ¹¹² Švābe. *Vidzemes tiesību vēstures avoti 1336. - 1551.*, No. 56, 229.
- ¹¹³ Local (non-German) inhabitants resided in Livonian cities, for example, in Riga, and in smaller towns, for example, Cēsis. More: Caune. *Cēsis 14. - 18. gadsimtā*, p. 157.
- ¹¹⁴ *Indriķa hronika*, X, 15, p. 99.
- ¹¹⁵ LG 1207 - 1500, No. 387.
- ¹¹⁶ Kalands Bretheren (*Fratres Calendarii*) – a brotherhood in medieval times, that included priests, lay people (both men and women). The brotherhood consisted of 6-12 clericals and lay people. They were popular in central and Northern parts of German lands but also operated in current regions of France, Hungary, Denmark and Norway. Kalands Bretheren flourished in 14th and 15th century, after that the popularity decreased rapidly. In 16th century, in relation to reformation processes the brotherhood was eliminated. The brotherhood specifically emphasized charity and praying for the dead. Brotherhood meetings were held on the first day of the month, which according to Roman traditions was called *kalandae*. As with all medieval brotherhoods, Kalands Bretheren also had it's statutes, that regulated the operation of the community, assembly principles, distribution of funds for charity etc. The brotherhood had a separate altar in the church where it was operating. The oldest known Kalands Bretheren in 1226 was in Otbergen (*Ottbergen, Höxter*), currently - Westfalen. For example, in German town *Schwerte* a man named *Dietrich Mankorn* and his wife *Belecke* make a big donation for the Kalands brotherhood, that gives them a place in brotherhood remembrance of the dead. The brotherhood describes itself as the brothers of the Holy Spirit and Kalands brotherhood in Swerte' (*gebrodere des hilges gestes und kaland broderscap to Swerte*). More on the Kalands Brethren: Gerhard Krause, Gerhard Müller (Hg.) (1981). *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, Bd. 7. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, S. 198- 199.
- ¹¹⁷ *Kurländische Güterurkunden*, Nr. Bauer 248.
- Available here: <http://www.herder-institut.de/bestaende-digitale-angebote/datenbanken/kurlaendische-gueterurkunden/urkundentext.html?nr=475&varianten=ein> (Viewed on 04.17.2015.).
- ¹¹⁸ LUB, Lief. 1. Bd. 9. No. 403
- ¹¹⁹ Robert von Toll, Johannes Sachssendahl (1887). *Est- und Livländische Brieflade*, Theil 4.: Siegel und Münzen der weltlichen und geistlichen Gebietiger über Liv-, Est- und Curland bis zum Jahre 1561. Reval, Kluge&Ströhm, S. 82.
- ¹²⁰ On December 3, 1424 mentioned "in des kalandes capellen in der domkerken" – LUB, Lief. 1. Bd. 7, No. 216.
- ¹²¹ LUB, Lief. 1, Bd. 9, No. 1004; LG 1501 - 1545, No. 201; LG 1207 - 1500, No. 399.
- ¹²² Švābe. *Vidzemes tiesību vēstures avoti 1336.- 1551.*, No. 229.
- ¹²³ *Akten und Rezesse der livländischen Ständetage*, Bd. 1. Lief. 1, No. 61.
- ¹²⁴ Translation of the document from: Hermann Hildebrand (1886). *Auszüge aus einem verlorenen rigischen Missivbuche*, S. 106. Immense thanks to Dr. hist. A. Levāns, who was kind enough to help with the making the translated text more accurate and giving his own version of translation.
- ¹²⁵ Švābe. *Vidzemes tiesību vēstures avoti 1336.- 1551.*, No. 110.
- ¹²⁶ LG 1501 - 1545, No. 487.
- ¹²⁷ Švābe. *Vidzemes tiesību vēstures avoti 1336.- 1551.*, No. 229.; LG, Bd. 2. No. 669.
- ¹²⁸ It was possible that the property is given back voluntarily by it's holder. This happened tailor *Peter Kalw's* widow Anne, as she after the death of her husband wasn't able to pay the annual fees of the property (14 Riga marks). For more, see here: Astaf von Transehe-Roseneck (1901). *Stadtbürger als Lehnleute des livländischen Adels*. In: *Jahrbuch für Genealogie, Heraldik und Sphragistik 1899*. Mitau: J.F. Steffenhagen und Sohn, S. 15- 17.
- ¹²⁹ Švābe. *Vidzemes tiesību vēstures avoti 1336.- 1551.*, No. 110; LG, Bd. 2, No. 539.

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- ¹³⁰ LG 1501 - 1545, No. 637.
¹³¹ Švābe. *Vidzemes tiesību vēstures avoti 1336.- 1551.*, No. 234.
¹³² Toll, Sachssendahl. *Est- und Livländische Brieflade*, S. 92.
¹³³ Švābe. *Vidzemes tiesību vēstures avoti 1336.- 1551.*, No. 234.
¹³⁴ LG 1207 - 1500, No. 377.
¹³⁵ LG 1501 - 1545, No. 692.
¹³⁶ LG 1501 - 1545, No. 692; Transehe. Stadtbürger als Lehnsleute des livländischen Adels, S. 15- 17.
¹³⁷ LG 1207 - 1500, No. 636.
¹³⁸ Švābe. *Vidzemes tiesību vēstures avoti 1336.- 1551.*, No. 110.
¹³⁹ *Kindelbier* – beer consumed during baptism. Švābe. *Vidzemes tiesību vēstures avoti 1336.- 1551.*, No. 110.
¹⁴⁰ Ibid.
¹⁴¹ LG 1501 - 1545, No. 539.
¹⁴² Transehe. Stadtbürger als Lehnsleute des livländischen Adels, S. 15 - 16.
¹⁴³ Švābe. *Vidzemes tiesību vēstures avoti 1336.- 1551.*, No. 229.
¹⁴⁴ Transehe. Stadtbürger als Lehnsleute des livländischen Adels, S. 15 - 16.
¹⁴⁵ Ibid, S. 15 - 17.
¹⁴⁶ LG 1501 - 1545, No. 539, No. 692.
¹⁴⁷ LG 1207 - 1500, No. 636, No. 692; Švābe. *Vidzemes tiesību vēstures avoti 1336.- 1551.*, No. 110.

Research has been developed within the framework of Central Baltic Programme's 2014-2020 project No. CB110 "Hanseatic Approach to New Sustainable Alliances - HANSA".

Straupe, 2016

