

“EN ESTE AFF ÖSEL” IN VISBY.  
ÖSEL AND ESTLAND IN THE GOTLANDIC  
ACCOUNT BOOKS OF IVAR AXELSSON TOTT  
1485–87 AND SÖREN NORBY 1524–25

Jan-Christian Schlüter

“[E]n este kom aff ~~este-land~~ øsell paa slottet for hans frakt”<sup>1</sup>  
– A skipper from Estland<sup>2</sup> comes to the castle for his goods.

The scene is set at Visborg castle on Gotland<sup>3</sup> and the incident is mentioned in Ivar Axelsson Tott’s account book for the years 1485–87, or 29 August 1486 to be precise. The writer crossed out Estland, writing Ösel in its place. Somebody was bringing goods from Ösel to Gotland in a merchant’s vessel or even a smaller boat. But what was remarkable about this? Old Oseleans used to say that the trip to Gotland on a sailing vessel took as long as it took for hot porridge to cool and that Gotland was a good place to get sandstone-hones and women. Even today there is a village called Kottlandi and two small peninsulas called Suur-Rootsi and Väike-Rootsi – Big Sweden and Small Sweden in southern Ösel.

It is no secret that there have been strong ties between Gotland and Ösel throughout history. The geological and geographical parallels between Gotland and Ösel are significant. Their landscape, flora and fauna are

<sup>1</sup> *Ivar Axelsson Totts räkenskapsbok för Gotland 1485–1487*, ed. by Evert Melefors (Visby: Gotlands fornsal, 1991) (henceforth IAR), 82.

<sup>2</sup> The term *Estland* refers to the northern part of present day Estonia, its counties Harrien, Wierland, Jerwen, Wiek and Dagö made up Danish and later also Swedish Estonia. It is used in the account books and as the Nordic term will be used in this article too. Accordingly, Nordic names are used for other places as well, e.g. Ösel for the island Saaremaa. For persons the more neutral term Estonian is used, as the Germanic term *estländisch* is used for ethnic Germans in Estland.

<sup>3</sup> Visborg was the powerful castle south of Visby. In the Middle Ages the castle was the military and administrative centre of the island and seat of the Danish liege lord.

very similar. This fact is reflected in their households, architecture, and way of life.<sup>4</sup> Archaeological findings from the *Völkerwanderung* and the Viking age point to active trans-Baltic contact at this time already. Signs of trade, parallels in cult and burial traditions can be traced too.<sup>5</sup> Gotland has repeatedly served as a stepping stone to the east.<sup>6</sup> It has been a way station to Marienland first for Gotlandic peasant-traders of the Viking-era<sup>7</sup>, later for the Danish and German long-distance merchants and the crusaders of the twelfth and thirteenth century.<sup>8</sup>

The political and military ties between Scandinavia and Livonia<sup>9</sup> in the fifteenth century have been analysed thoroughly by Gustav Adolf Lögberg<sup>10</sup> and Hain Rebas.<sup>11</sup> Gunnar Mickwitz has studied Reval's overseas trade relations at the beginning of the sixteenth century.<sup>12</sup> But there is a wide gap in the historiography here. Although fifteenth-century political contacts between Visby and Gotland<sup>13</sup> on one side of the Baltic Sea and

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Edgar Kant, *Bevölkerung und Lebensraum Estlands: ein anthropoökologischer Beitrag zur Kunde Baltoskandias* (Tartu: Akadeemiline Kooperatiiv, 1935).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Marika Mägi, *At the crossroads of space and time. Graves, changing society and ideology on Saaremaa (Ösel), 9<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD*, CCC papers, 6 (Tartu: University of Tartu, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Hugo Yrwing, *Gotlands medeltid* (Visby: Gotlandskonst, 1978), 146 ff.

<sup>7</sup> In his *Chronicon Livoniae* Henricus de Lettis describes the particularly good relations between Gotlandics and Oseleans, who seem to have tolerated and supported each other. In their Gotenhof, the Gotlandics had an early base in Novgorod as in Reval. The Gotenhof in these towns have a lot of parallels with the early Visby before the Danish age.

<sup>8</sup> In 1230 the Brethren of the Sword invited merchants of Visby to Reval, and a number of the merchants were given land in Estland. Cf. Paul Johansen, *Nordische Mission, Revals Gründung und die Schwedensiedlung in Estland* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1951). The close relationship also left traces in the city institutions like German, Swedish and Russian merchants guilds and the typical St. Nicolas and St. Olaf churches, many place names, Middle Low German as the *lingua franca* of the Middle Ages, the architectural style with many buildings in limestone and a distinct activity of the Gotlandic Cistercians in Estland. The Gotlandic monastery of Roma had huge estates in Estland as late as 1519.

<sup>9</sup> Livonia in the fifteenth century (roughly today's Estonia and Latvia) was divided into the lands of the Teutonic Order, the Archbishop of Riga and the Bishops of Dorpat (Tartu), Ösel-Wiek and Kurland.

<sup>10</sup> Gustaf Adolf Lögberg, *De nordiska konungarna och tyska orden, 1441–1457* (Uppsala: Appelberg, 1935).

<sup>11</sup> Hain Rebas, *Infiltration och handel: studier i senmedeltida nordisk baltikumspolitik i tiden omkring 1440–1479* (Göteborg: Historiska Institutet, 1976).

<sup>12</sup> Gunnar Mickwitz, *Aus Revaler Handelsbüchern. Zur Technik des Ostseehandels in der ersten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Helsingfors: Akademische Buchhandlung, 1938).

<sup>13</sup> In the Middle Ages Gotland was divided into two parts. In the Early Middle Ages the peasant merchants dominated trade in the whole island. From the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> cen-

Estland, Livland and Ösel on the other have been abundantly analysed on a political level, trade relations in this earlier period remain virtually unexplored. Lack of interest is partly responsible. But lack of sources is important as well. Everyday contact and encounters are especially hard to trace and to prove. Two Gotlandic account books provide clues to contacts across the Baltic Sea around the year 1500.

Ivar Axelsson Tott and admiral Sören Norby were captains at Visborg castle 1464–87 and 1514–25 respectively. Their account books offer an outstanding opportunity to examine contacts between Visby and Estland between 1480 and 1525. The account books detail circumstances at Visborg Castle; Estland's appearance here is naturally incidental. Estland is named as point of origin for ships, seamen and goods and as a sobriquet for different persons. For the purposes of this study, what matters is not the quantity of evidence but the possibility of analyzing forms of contact between Visborg and Estland in order to get an impression of the castle's economy. The aim of this paper is to show the extent to which trans-Baltic contacts, which belong to a longstanding tradition, seemed natural to contemporaries. The two account books permit insight into contacts beyond the relatively well-researched political level. More than that, they provide a window upon everyday business as usual.

### *The account books' background*

The history prior to the account books in the fifteenth century points to a number of contacts between Livonia and the inter-Nordic Kalmar Union. The Teutonic Order occupied Gotland in the first decade of the century. Furthermore, the Union kings Erik of Pomerania (1396–1439), Christopher of Bavaria (1440–48), Christian I (1448–81) as well as the Swedish rival king Karl Knutsson (1448–57, 1464–65, 1467–70) – tried to gain control of Gotland, viewing the possession of the island as an important factor in strengthening their position. After the retreat of Erik of Pomerania to Visby in 1439, the island was a constant source of military and political contention. The Teutonic Order, especially the Grand Masters Konrad and Ludwig von Erlichshausen (1441–49, 1450–67), often mediated these conflicts. Through internal tension in the Order and the outbreak of the Thir-

---

tury onwards foreign merchants, mostly Germans but also some Danes and Russians, took over and monopolized the trade in the city of Visby. The Hanseatic Visby cut itself off from the rest of Gotland and this affected the peasants' trade seriously. The peasants were defeated in a bloody civil war in 1288.

teen Years' War of 1453–66 in Prussia, the situation culminated in conflict. The Union's king and the Swedish opposition, the Teutonic Order and the cities and bishops fought and intrigued against each other in various constellations of alliances.<sup>14</sup>

### *The protagonists*

Ivar Axelsson Tott belonged to an influential Danish noble family. The Tott brothers played an especially important role on the Scandinavian side of the trans-Baltic contacts. They were the executors of Christian I's Baltic policy, but since their breakup with the king in 1467 they used every chance to exercise and to extend their own influence in the eastern Baltic Sea area.<sup>15</sup> The sponsorship of small oppositional groups or even individuals in order to justify the intervention in political questions on a higher level was a repeated factor in these conflicts. The focus of the initiatives lay on Ösel and in Harrien (*Harria*) and Wierland (*Vironia*). These areas were the old Danish possessions in Estland, which were especially attractive due to enduring political and economic ties.<sup>16</sup> Ivar Axelsson was captain on Gotland from 1464–87. From this base he kept up the family tradition of independence, mostly by privateering and through military and political exploits.<sup>17</sup>

Born into a Danish gentry family at Fyn, Sören Norby made an impressive career in the Danish fleet and became soon Christian II's most important admiral. The king entrusted him with numerous important tasks. For example, he was appointed lord of Iceland in 1514. In 1517 Christian II appointed him high commander of the Danish Baltic-Sea fleet and lord of Visborg castle. Enfeoffed with many lands around the Baltic Sea from 1523 on, he provided the only remaining support for his king in the north. From his base in Gotland he opposed the pretender to the Swedish crown Gustav Eriksson Vasa and the Danish rival king Frederik I. Besides extensive privateering he hired and outfitted mercenaries via the Prussian

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Lögdberg, *De nordiska konungarna*.

<sup>15</sup> Some examples for this development are described in Rebas, *Infiltration och handel*: the conflict between the families Stamer and Vrorip and the hanseatic town of Dorpat (1454–76), the conflict about the Gotenhof in Reval and the Neva-trade (1453–61), the conflict between the brothers Wolthusen and the Teutonic Order (1471–76) and the conflict about the Narva-trade (1468–78).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Hain Rebas, "Axelssönerna och det gamla Livland", *Gotländsk Arkiv*, 63 (1991), 177–186.

<sup>17</sup> Together with his brothers Ivar Axelsson established family-ties with Arvid Trolle, Karl Knutsson and Sten Sture. In their most successful time he dominated Sweden from his office as regent with extensive rights.



Fig. 1. Portrait of Ivar Axelsson.

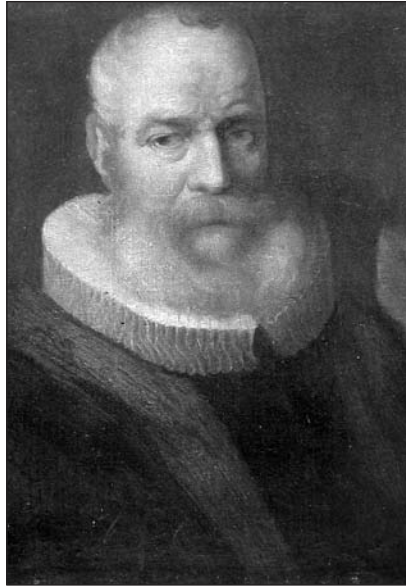


Fig. 2. Portrait of Sören Norby.

towns and Livonia. Finally Sören Norby was forced to accept a compromise with the new Danish king, Frederik I, and exchanged Gotland for the liege land of Blekinge. He did not, however, stop agitating for Christian II. In 1526 he had to flee from his lands, after a failed uprising against Frederik I. After a long journey via Livonia and Muscovy he reached his king's place of exile in the Netherlands. In 1530 he was killed in an attack on Florence in the service of the German emperor.

### *The sources*

The account books were commissioned by the lord of Gotland and captain of the Visborg, a liege lord of the Danish king.<sup>18</sup> The volumes cover only a short period of one to two years. However they are unique sources.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Ivar Axelsson Tott's account book for the years 1485–87 is preserved in the Swedish *Riksarkiv*, Sören Norby's account book for the years 1524–25 in the Danish *Rigsarkiv*.

<sup>19</sup> There is no comparable book of the rule of a liegeman from so early a period preserved either from Gotland or any comparable area. Of the town Visby there are no sources from the Middle Ages preserved either, neither from the town itself nor from merchants.



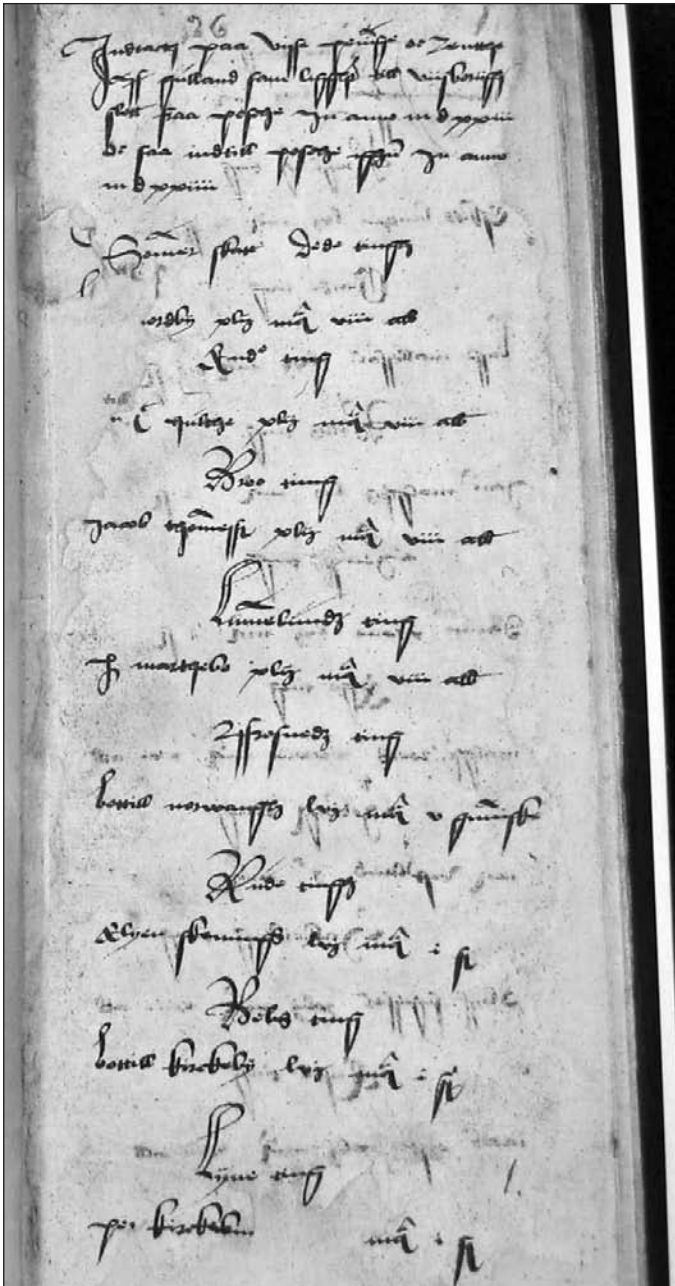


Fig. 4. Facsimile of the first page of Sören Norby's account book.

Unfortunately they have been neglected by modern historiography,<sup>20</sup> although they are available in modern editions, including a register and a thorough introduction.<sup>21</sup>

The account books provide insights into the inner workings of the households of Gotlandic liege lords. They are written on expensive paper and bound in leather. It is possible that they were edited at a later point. They were written by one main scribe assisted by a number of helpers at the Visborg's *scriptorium*.

Ivar Axelsson's account book covers the period from "Anno dominij mcdlxxx quinto festum beati gregorij",<sup>22</sup> 9 May 1485, until "Anno dominij mcdlxxx septimo festum sancte crucis",<sup>23</sup> 5 May 1487, almost exactly two years. Sören Norby's book covers the time from "posche Jn anno mdxx-iii oc saa indtill posche ighen In anno mdxxiiii",<sup>24</sup> Easter 1523 to Easter 1524.

The books comprise lists of revenues and expenditures of Visborg castle. Clues in the books and accounting records from 1600 onwards suggest that there were up to four different account books at the same time. This explains the differences between the content of Ivar Axelsson's and Sören Norby's books.

Records of revenues constitute the bulk of both account books. Ivar Axelsson's book consists predominantly of sums of taxes, whereas Sören Norby's book lists taxes paid in kind. More interesting are the expenditures. Ivar Axelsson's book contains pay rolls and extensive lists of miscellaneous items – *Småplocks* – mostly directly related to the lord himself. In Sören Norby's book one can find provision-lists for the castle and the fleet.

<sup>20</sup> The only exceptions are two quite old articles by Knud Fabricius: "En nordisk lensmands liv i det 15de århundrede", *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 24 (1904), 199–154, 273–30; "Gotlandske forhold under Ivar Akselsön Tot", *Antikvarisk Tidsskrift för Sverige* 17:5 (1905), 1–83. Also two newer works partly use Sören Norby's book: Lars J. Larsson, *Sören Norby och Östersjöpolitiken 1523–1525* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1986); Michael H. Mortensen, "Early Danish naval artillery c. 1500–1523", *Maritime Warfare in Northern Europe* (Copenhagen: National Museum, 2002).

<sup>21</sup> IAR; *Sören Norbys räkenskapsbok för Gotland 1523–1524*, ed. by Evert Melefors (Visby: Gotlands fornsal, 2003) (henceforth SNR).

<sup>22</sup> IAR, 1.

<sup>23</sup> IAR, 110.

<sup>24</sup> SNR, 1r.



*Contacts between Estland and Gotland in the account books*

The main purpose of the books was to document and to account for the household of the island and the revenue and expenditures of Visborg. There are not many hints at contacts with the outer world in the account books. Among these rare hints, however, contacts with Estland are among the most significant, as can be gleaned from the number of mentions, their context and their tone. Indeed, from the tone of these mentions we can see that relations with Estland are not treated as exceptional encounters with an exotic unknown, but rather as an everyday occurrence or “business-as-usual”.

In order to be able to classify the contacts mentioned between Gotland and Estland first an examination of the number of mentions is necessary. The account books offer two ways of doing so, analyzing the direct mention of geographical places and indirect references to the names of individual people.

In Ivar Axelsson’s account book the place name Estland is mentioned four times.<sup>25</sup> It is interesting that Estland is written out explicitly only once,<sup>26</sup> and here the name was crossed out and replaced with Ösel, as in other references to the place. There are many fewer mentions of Estland or Ösel than other place names. Stegeborg, Ivar Axelsson’s second major castle, is mentioned 13 times, Sweden 18 times, Denmark 13 times. The town of Lübeck appears six times, Danzig seven times, Riga only once.

In Sören Norby’s account book there are fewer direct references to places, since the content is different. Ösel is the only place name that appears twice in the course of the book.<sup>27</sup> Other places, including Bornholm, Copenhagen, Denmark, Kalmar, Danzig, Memel or Kurland appear only once.

Ship and place names significantly enlarge the material for a quantitative analysis. On the other hand, the interpretation of this data is more difficult.

A number of Sören Norby’s ships bear names that refer to their point of origin. These ships were predominantly prizes, e.g. a “Griipisswoldz Kreyer”<sup>28</sup>, from Greifswald, a “Lybeske Kreyer”<sup>29</sup>, from Lübeck, a “Dan-

<sup>25</sup> IAR, 54, 82, 85v.

<sup>26</sup> IAR, 82.

<sup>27</sup> SNR, 28r, 97v.

<sup>28</sup> SNR, 89v.

<sup>29</sup> SNR, 90r, 90v.

sker iacth”<sup>30</sup>, from Danzig, a “Suenske priitz”<sup>31</sup>, from Schweden, and a “Hollender”<sup>32</sup>, from the Netherlands. There is no ship from the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea among the ships mentioned. The appearance of the “Kneffuelus” is interesting. This ship, escorting the admiral himself, was arrested by a Reval flotilla in 1526 and Sören Norby was thus forced to flee to Muscovy.

Visborg castle’s pay rolls offer a detailed perspective on Ivar Axelson’s men. A huge number of the servants bear a surname which allows us to draw conclusions about their origin. Many come from other parts of the Danish realm, from Sweden, but also from the Netherlands, Prussia and Finland. Men in other entries bear surnames too, and their origin can often be discovered. Interestingly a number of men bear the surname “Este”.

Seven people with the name “Este” or “Eÿste” figure in Ivar Axelson’s account book alone: Anders, Hans, Jacop, Laurens, Niels, Matthis und Pedher. The Christian names of all these men are of Scandinavian origin. There is more than one explanation for this. Perhaps the writers wrote the names of foreigners according to Scandinavian conventions. Another explanation is tied to the question of what *Este* actually means. Even if one assumes they came from Estland, they could have been German-speaking city-burgers with Scandinavian names, they could have belonged to the Swedish minority along the coastline, or they could have been ethnic Estonians.<sup>33</sup>

Another explanation can be found in Gotlandic names. Even today the parish “Eksta” exists in Gotland. In the account book several farms, one parish and one trade-item bore the name “Eksta”, “Eÿsta” or “Eÿste”. The Thing-judge<sup>34</sup> of Eksta had the name Jacop Eÿste both in 1485–87 and in 1524–25. He appears 12 times in Ivar Axelsson’s and 9 times in Sören Norby’s account book, paying taxes or delivering different goods to Visborg for his Thing. Among the people called “Este” are a farmer delivering coal and some craftsmen who were paid for their work. These men were more

<sup>30</sup> SNR, 99v, 100r, 103v.

<sup>31</sup> SNR, 96v.

<sup>32</sup> SNR, 79v, 101v.

<sup>33</sup> These assumptions coincide with Paul Johansen’s considerations in his attempt to identify the nationality of the population of Reval. Cf. Paul Johansen, Heinz von zur Mühlen, *Deutsch und Undeutsch im mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Reval, Ostmitteleuropa in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, 15 (Köln: Böhlau, 1973), 123.

<sup>34</sup> The Thing was the Gotlandic administrative unit for the matters of jurisdiction and taxation.

likely to be born on the island of Gotland. However, one may presume an oblique connection of these persons to Estland.

On the other hand, there were a number of other persons with the personal name “Este” whose descent was more likely to be Estland. There are several examples in the pay rolls of Ivar Axelsson, which are directly associated with Visborg castle. None of these men bear the typical Gotlandic form of name with the family farm’s name in the middle. In one pay roll Mattis, Nicholas, Jacop and Anders Este appear one after the other, only interrupted by Oloff Swenske.<sup>35</sup> Niels Este worked in the castle’s smithy, Hans Este in the Slucop tower.<sup>36</sup> This points to the fact that Ivar Axelsson had some Estonian servants. They were either specialists like the blacksmith, or they served as ordinary soldiers or workers. Another entry mentions two Estonian workers on the castle’s estate.<sup>37</sup> These two seem to have been brought to Gotland from Ösel on a ship – guest workers of the fifteenth century: “Jtem en skipper aff øsell fore j este och hans hostrv i ladegorden for them bade til frakt”.<sup>38</sup> This couple obviously joined other Estonians who already worked on the estate. At a later point Ivar Axelsson gave a gift to his Estonians, “estherne j ladegorden till offerpenge”.<sup>39</sup> These Estonians must be regarded as workers from Estland, probably from Ösel.

In other cases Estonian skippers or merchants appear in the account books. One example is the following entry: “ij ester komne hid paa slottet fore there frakt”.<sup>40</sup> Another entry mentions a group of Estonians workers in the harbour. They can be either part of a ship’s crew or simply deckhands. The entry says that they got a barrel of beer for having discharged baye-salt: “Jtem Som myn herre gaff esterne till en tynne øl fore the kaste bayesalt aff kraffwellen”.<sup>41</sup>

The examination of the name “Este” in the account books reveals two main facts. For one, Estonians were no strangers to Gotland: they even left traces in place names and figured among powerful peasant aristocrats. Even more significant may be the fact that these sources show Estonians coming to Gotland on a regular basis.

<sup>35</sup> IAR, 105v.

<sup>36</sup> IAR, 52, 53v.

<sup>37</sup> Today’s Kungs Ladugård, south of Visby.

<sup>38</sup> IAR, 85v.

<sup>39</sup> IAR, 105.

<sup>40</sup> IAR, 84.

<sup>41</sup> IAR, 107 v.

Ivar Axelsson's account book mentions the journey of a number of his men to Ösel. Two men got money for following captain Pedher Lillegård: "Jtem jacop ryngwede for the folle pedher lillegords till osell och niels jenssøn paa regenskap...vj fj."<sup>42</sup> In other entries the same captain sails to Öland<sup>43</sup> and is paid as a skipper.<sup>44</sup>

In Sören Norby's account book the provision of Severin Brun's party to Ösel is noted.<sup>45</sup> Severin Brun, a former captain of Christian I in Stockholm, was one of Sören Norby's most important men. Melefors speculates about the connection of Brun's journey, which can not be dated, with a Muscovite mission. A Muscovite delegation came to Sören Norby's Visborg castle on their way back from the Netherlands to Muscovy. After a short stop they continued their journey, and the account book notes that generous provisions were handed out. It is known that Severin Brun travelled to Muscovy with a diplomatic mission and did not come back before the summer of 1525. A journey together with the Muscovites seems likely.<sup>46</sup>

The account books also contain references to trading with the eastern side of the Baltic. Occasionally fish was bought from outside Gotland, e.g. smelt from Livonia. The Estonian herring or "este strömlingh" is one of the few explicitly named export goods from Estland to Gotland in Ivar Axelsson's account book, where the purchase of 10,000 herring is noted on 11 of September 1486. The fish were sold by Laurens Este and were specifically identified as being Estonian: "Jtem laurens este for x m este strömligh m j fj. Suma...ii-j mark".<sup>47</sup> The unit of measurement for the herring differs from the normal one. The Estonian herring was simply counted while other supplies of herring were measured as bulk cargo in "val" or "tyner". At the same time, the autumn of 1486, herring was bought on different occasions.<sup>48</sup> The average price for this ordinary, not specified herring, was one alb,<sup>49</sup> the same price as for Estonian herring. The combination of different measurements with the same price suggest that this purchase of herring was not an unusual occurrence, but rather a normal supplement

<sup>42</sup> IAR, 54.

<sup>43</sup> IAR, 53.

<sup>44</sup> IAR, 97.

<sup>45</sup> SNR, 28r.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Melefors's introduction to SNR, 21.

<sup>47</sup> IAR, 84 v.

<sup>48</sup> IAR, 87v, 89v.

<sup>49</sup> "Alb" was a unit of the Lübeckian coinage used in the whole Baltic Sea area, one mark was equivalent to 48 albi.

to the purchase of local fish. The seller, Laurens Este, was very likely from Estland. This would support the thesis that foreign personal names were as a rule noted in a Scandinavian manner and due to Scandinavian conventions in the account books.

In a few other entries unfortunately not further specified goods are brought to Gotland by Estonians. One example is the entry from August 1486: “en este kom aff (este lan) øsell paa slottet for hans frakt”.<sup>50</sup> This is the entry where the originally written “este lan” was crossed out and substituted by “øsell”. This points to regular contacts between Gotland and Ösel. The writer apparently regarded it more appropriate and better fitting to write Ösel instead of land of the Estonians or Estland. Generally noticeable is the accumulation of entries with relation to Estland in August and September 1486. To a certain extent late summer seems to be the usual season for transactions between Gotland and Estland, in any case more than other times of the year. In 1485 there are two entries with relation to Estland,<sup>51</sup> however these cannot be identified as connected to trade.

Sören Norby’s account book mentions a ship coming from Ösel to Gotland. The ship was led by captain “rauell skomager”<sup>52</sup> and carried a series of different victuals on board. Among these fish and meat were especially prominent: lamb, beef, herring, cod and dried fish and a small amount of bread, butter and beer. In the account book the ship is named “then rug skibb till øtzell”<sup>53</sup> – the rye ship to Ösel. The different cargo suggests that the ship transported rye from Ösel to Gotland and sailed back with Gotlandic foodstuff – a trading or barter deal.<sup>54</sup> At the time of the entry, late summer 1523, the supply situation of Gotland was precarious, corn was in especially short supply, while meat, on the contrary, was abundantly available.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>50</sup> IAR, 82.

<sup>51</sup> IAR 27, 107v

<sup>52</sup> The same skipper is mentioned getting provisioned for a trip to Memel, he seems to have sailed regularly from Gotland to the eastern Baltic Sea area.

<sup>53</sup> SNR, 97v.

<sup>54</sup> In the Middle Ages rye was one of the most important export goods of Livonia. Cf. Jorma Ahvenainen, *Der Getreidehandel Livlands im Mittelalter* (Helsinki: Soc. Scientiarum Fennica, 1963).

<sup>55</sup> This constellation is proved by a comparison of the account books’ lists with other contemporary lists and a number of mentions in other sources, see Larsson, *Sören Norby och Östersjöpolitiken*, 68 ff.

Another example for the import of corn to Gotland from the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea is a rye transport from Kurland, “Jtem kam till Slottet xii tønner rug sam hørde skipper ffrantz till aff curlandt”.<sup>56</sup>

### *Conclusions and perspectives*

The analysis of contacts between Gotland and Estland in account books suggests that they had a rather close social and economic relationship in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The number of mentions of Estland or Ösel is not as frequent as references to Denmark or some Hanseatic towns, but nonetheless recurring mentions of Estland and especially Ösel reveals that regular and relatively close contacts existed in the fifteenth century already.

This result is further supported by the examination of names in the account books. Place and person names, which comprise the component “Este” as a sobriquet are widespread on Gotland. Persons that bear the affix “Este” to indicate their origin appear regularly in the account books. This points to an certain influx of Estonian specialists and workers to Gotland.

The account books also give evidence of trips by Ivar Axelsson’s and Sören Norby’s men to the east, be it for diplomatic reasons or for gathering provisions. Analysis of the goods traded offers interesting results in two different cases: the herring in Ivar Axelsson’s book and the trade of meat against corn documented in Sören Norby’s book. Both point to contact on a regular basis.

The account books show that trans-Baltic contacts persisted in the period under investigation, not only on a political level but also on the level of trade and every-day life. In Sören Norby’s time contacts with towns in the lands of the Teutonic Order deepened: new ones were forged and old ones revived.

Unfortunately the nature of the source material considered only allows an impressionistic perspective. With help of the missing volumes of accounting records one surely could have drawn a much more detailed and colourful picture of the trans-Baltic neighbourhood formed by Gotland and Estland. However, even these sparse results are encouraging. An examination taking account of more sources (account books,

---

<sup>56</sup> SNR, 12v.

regests, letters et al.) and a more complete selection of secondary works, would prove very valuable.

JAN-CHRISTIAN SCHLÜTER (b. 1979) is a teacher at Domschule Schleswig and a Ph.D. student at the University of Kiel.

**KOKKUVÕTE:** *"en este aff ösel" Visbys. Saaremaa ja Eesti Ivar Axelsson Totti ja Sören Norby Ojamaa arveraamatutes (1485–87 ja 1524–25)*

Ojamaa ja Saaremaa tihedate ajalooliste sidemete kohta võib tuua rohkesti näiteid. Samas on mitmed ajajärgud selles osas põhjalikumalt läbi uurimata. Iseäranis vähe on ülemere kontaktide kohta teada Gotlandi ajaloo sündmusterohkel perioodil Saksa ordu ja Rootsi kuningate valitsemisaja vahel. Osalt võib historiograafilise lünga tekkimise põhjuseks olla selle ajastu keerulisus, osalt allikate puudus. Siiski on sellest ajast säilinud kaks väga põnevat allikat: aadlimehe Ivar Axelsson Totti arveraamat aastatest 1485–1487 ning admiral Sören Nörby arveraamat aastatest 1524–1525. Mõlemad olid Ojamaa kaptenid, kes valitsesid võimsa Visborgi linnuse ning hansalinna Visby üle. Meeste arveraamatud annavad võimaluse uurida, millist rolli mängisid Saaremaa ja Põhja-Eesti Ojamaa igapäevaelus. Kaptenite majapidamist kajastavate allikate eripära tõttu on tõendid juhuslikku laadi, ent siiski on see väärtuslik allikmaterjal perioodi kohta, millest on säilinud väga vähe teisi allikaid.

Artikli esimene osa annab arveraamatutest üldise ülevaate. Mõlemad on hiljuti publitseeritud transkribeeritud kujul ning varustatud indeksiga, kuid leidnud sellegipoolest üsna vähe kasutamist. Artikli järgmises osas uuritakse Eesti alade kajastumist arveraamatutes. Kohanimede seas, mida raamatutes mainitakse, on Eestiga seotud nimedel suhteliselt suur osa. Nimi "Este" on üsna laialt levinud, eriti maksunimekirjades loendatud Ojamaa talurahvaaristokraatia seas. Teine oluline leid puudutab Eestist pärit spetsialistide ja tööliste nimesid kaptenite palgaarvetel. Mitmed kaptenite laevnikud tegid reise Eestisse, kust osteti kõige sagedamini räime,

ent Sören Norby arveraamatus on viiteid ka Saaremaa vilja vahetamisele Ojamaa liha vastu.

Arveraamatute leiud ei ole ei iseäranis ulatuslikud ega üksikuna muljetavaldavad, ent tegemist võib olla jäämäe veepealse osaga. Sedalaadi uued tõendid Ojamaa ja Eesti kontaktidest viitavad vajadusele teemat edaspidi põhjalikumalt uurida. On teada, et ülemere kontaktid jätkusid ka hilisemal perioodil – nii poliitilise suhtluse kui ka igapäevaelu tasandil. Tulevased uurimused, mis kasutaksid rohkem niisuguseid allikaid nagu arveraamatud, regestid, kirjavahetus jne, võiksid anda Ojamaa ja Eesti naabrussuhetest detailsema ja rikkalikuma pildi.