

BALTHASAR RUSSOW'S LIVONIAN CHRONICLE

“When a bishop’s secret woman became old or no longer fit for him, he gave her to a free peasant for a wife, donating a mill or a piece of land along with her, and then took in a new girl and lied with her, doing so a few times in a row. So did all the canons and abbots.”

“And when Canon Johannes Blankenberg brought his wife to Tallinn from Germany, he dared not admit in front of the Bishop and the other Canons that it was his married wife, and so said it was his secret woman and pamperer. And when one man found out otherwise, Johannes Blankenberg gave him a fattened pig so that he would not reveal that the Canon had a wife from marriage; that was namely a great shame and sin for these holy Catholic people.”

“Now that all the lords, bishops, and canons as superiors, caretakers, and shepherds of sheep lived such a life, and cast dice themselves, the subjects, noble and ignoble, were free to play, too; so then it was allowed for the old and the young, without any fear. And all these shameful creatures were not called whores; they were called matrons, and entertainers, by everyman. It was so common at last that many people no longer considered it sinful or shameful, and that some high-ranking gentlemen brought new matrons and entertainers into the house immediately after the death of their wives, without any long mourning, and lived with them until they took up a wife again. And some of them were much more fond of their matrons than some men were of their wedded wives, which was highly troubling for many at the time.”