

Chapter 2

LITERARY THEMES AND LANDSCAPE SACRALIZATION IN THE WRITTEN EVIDENCE FOR THE BALTIC CRUSADES

"This is the tender vineyard chosen by the Lord Zeboath, which you, Christ, sweet Lord, founded and chose to lead. You pruned it and planted its roots. Now it has joyously spread across the world. Afterwards, you carried it into the land of Prussia and to Livonia, where you drove out many heathens and planted it once more." — Nicolaus of Jeroschin.¹

NICOLAUS OF JEROSCHIN, one of the most important chroniclers in the history of the Teutonic Order, described the nature of the Teutonic Order's Prussian crusades with the above quotation in 1341. Nearly a century elapsed since the beginning of the conquest of the Prussians in the late 1220s by the Order, but the imagery with which Nicolaus framed the expeditions reveals his perception of the Christianization of the region. This chapter focuses on the imagery concerning landscape present in a variety of other sources, highlighting the spread of this imagery and its role in the crusading ideology of the Baltic region.

It first discusses the religious imagery surrounding "landscape" in the chronicles, particularly its association with paganism (i.e., the descriptions of forests and groves as centres of non-Christian worship). It then leads into a consideration of specific themes, namely the *locus amoenus*, the *locus horribilis*, and the propagation of the image of *vinea Domini* as strategies used among the chroniclers to depict the pagan and Christian landscapes that existed alongside one another, in a physical and ideological way, throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.² The use of biblical citations with respect to the landscape in which the wars took place frame the wars that they describe within the context of place and sacred landscape: the emergence of the construct of the vineyard represents the transformation from pagan to Christian, and from profane to sacred.

The chroniclers of the Baltic crusades created a sense of place in their texts by employing a specific language that emphasized the divide between *sacrum* and *profanum*. This has a long tradition in anthropological studies of landscape, in addition to analyses of the relationship between Christianity and the landscape.³ The connection of the land to paganism in the Baltic and the subsequent victories of the crusaders gave way to a new, sacralized landscape, which was communicated to a variety of audiences. While the chronicles emphasize the need to convert peoples, the literary themes employed also indicate a distinct concept of the Baltic region as a whole and the need

¹ Fischer, ed., and trans., *Chronicle of Prussia*, 32. For the original, see Kvp, 310 (lines 585–600).

² Vaitkevičius, *Sacred Places*, 58–60; Vaitkevičius, "Sacred Groves," 81–94; Laime, "Koniņi," 67–80.

³ Ko and Barrett, "Phenomenology," 275–94; Johnson, "Approaches," 273; Markus, "How on Earth," 257–71.

to convert the landscape. This is because it possessed neither the physical qualities (in terms of Christian cities) nor the spiritual qualities (in terms of an established sacred tradition in those places) as the Holy Land. Sacred trees, rivers, and fields replaced places connected to the life of Christ. As the crusades proceeded, they became Christian ones, thus offering a parallel to the phenomenon of *interpretatio Christiana*, the process through which non-Christian elements or practices were absorbed into Christianity.⁴

One major problem, however, is that our knowledge of pre-Christian religious practices comes only from the chroniclers. This results in a heavily-biased understanding of those religious rites and their connections to the landscape. Some early sources point to the animistic qualities of pre-Christian religion in the Baltic. The Treaty of Christburg (February 7, 1249), outlines the religious rites of the Prussians and their “priests,” describing them as “men who were like priests of the gentiles” (*homines...quasi gentiliū sacerdotes*).⁵ A further example of this can be seen in how chroniclers created an inverted sense of holy places in the Baltic. Peter of Dusburg’s description of the Prussian Rome, “Romowe,” was presented as a pagan Rome, reflecting an attempt on the author’s part to quantify the pagan landscape in understandable terms to his readers.⁶

Chroniclers used the religion of the inhabitants to shape perceptions of the landscape from an early period. John Canaparius’ *Vita sancti Adalberti* (ca. 999) explicitly connects the region of Prussia with idolatry, when Adalbert “turned himself toward the fearful barbarians, and evil idolaters.”⁷ Prussia was “a dire land” (*adversus diram barbariem*), and Adalbert sought to go against “the gods and idolaters of Prussia” (*Pruz-ziae dei et idolatra*).⁸ The idolatry refers to the figures that were worshipped among the pre-Christian peoples of Prussia and the region east of the Elbe, commented on by Thietmar of Merseburg, Helmold of Bosau, and others.⁹ A closer example might be the “Baba” stones in West Prussia, which were tied to pre-Christian cult sites and possibly incorporated into the built environment of the Teutonic Order, one example being the Order’s church at Christburg (Pol. Dzierzgoń).¹⁰ In fact, this may be the idol (*ydolo*) referred to in the Treaty of Christburg.¹¹

⁴ Weiss, “Mythologie,” 81–96; Laime, “*Ḳoninī*,” 77–8. For Prussian sacred places, see Vaitkevičius, *Sacred Places*, 58–60. Also see Kahl, *Heidenfrage*, 79. For a more recent analysis, see Rosik, *Slavic Religion*, 10–38.

⁵ *PrUB* 1.1: 158–65 (no. 218), here 161: “Promiserunt eciam, quod inter se non habebunt de cetero Tulusones et Ligaschones, *homines videlicet mendacissimos histriones, qui quasi gentiliū sacerdotes*.”

⁶ *PDC*, 102 (3.5): “Fuit autem in medio nacionis hujus perverse, scilicet in Nadrowia, locus quidam dictus Romowe, trahens nomen suum a Roma, in quo habitat quidam, dictus Criwe, quem colebant pro papa.” See Pluskowski, *Archaeology*, 67–8; Sarnowsky, “Bild,” 224–52, here 229–30.

⁷ John Canaparius, 593.

⁸ John Canaparius, 593.

⁹ See Kahl, *Heidenfrage*, 65.

¹⁰ Szczepański, “‘Baba’ Stones,” 313–65, here 323–5.

¹¹ *PrUB* 1.1: 161 (no. 218): “Ydolo, quod semel in anno, collectis frugibus, consueverunt confingere et pro deo colere, cui nomen Curche imposuerunt...” Lilienthal, *Erleutertes* 2: 125–26, also referred

Canaparius' description of Adalbert of Prague's arrival in Prussia highlights the negative connotations applied to the landscape, which framed the positive element of the arrival of Christian missionaries. While moving further to the interior of Prussia, he and his company approached "a dark and evil forest" (*nemora et feralia adierunt*). The connection of this strange place is reinforced by the text's description of the Prussians and the land, for Adalbert and his company went "to the lands of those who do not know God" (*Deum nescientibus illabuntur Pruzzorum terris*).¹² Within roughly a century, the connection between paganism in the Baltic and the physicality of the landscape was a clearly developing element of how contemporaries described the region. Describing Adalbert's mission, Adam of Bremen (fl. 1075) noted the religious qualities applied to the landscape in his account of the Prussians, who "consecrated woods and groves in the name of their gods."¹³

This continued into the twelfth century. Herbord's *vita* of St Otto of Bamberg (ca. 1139) notes the "vast and horrible forest" (*nemus horrendum et vastum*) separating Poland from Pomerania crossed by the missionary party.¹⁴ He also describes the strange beasts and animals encountered in the forest, including cranes (*grues*), which served as literary symbols for strange, remote, alien places.¹⁵ The region in which the Pomeranians live is described as the horrible wilderness (*horror solitudinis*) from Deuteronomy 32:10, notable for its dense forests, and "barbarous men [who are] cruel to look at" (*homines barbari crudeli aspectus*).¹⁶ Helmold of Bosau's (ca. 1172) account of the Wendish Crusade points out that the inhabitants of the region (in this case, the Obodrite Slavs east of the Elbe), named many woods or sacred groves (*silvae vel luci*) after their gods, thus connecting the religion of the region directly to the landscape.¹⁷ Clearly, by the end of the twelfth century, there emerged a specific connection between religion and landscape which predated the crusading movement in the Baltic Sea region. The natural features of the landscape, such as forests, are a common theme to denote the non-Christian elements of the landscape with respect to place and the understanding of that landscape as not sacred. As opposed to being devoid of any Christian holiness, these places were scenes of incorrect worship. It was through the missionary work of priests (or, as we will now see, crusaders) that they became understood as holy ones.

The worship of nature as a feature of paganism remained common in the descriptions of Livonian crusades in the thirteenth century. In addition to highlighting the sites at which pagan worship occurred, the biblical citations used by chroniclers are central to how they created a sacred landscape. This focus on the perception of region's geography

to an oak associated with Curche, though observed that "Where and on which place this oak stood, whether inside the city walls or outside the city walls, is not possible to determine."

12 John Canaparius, 594.

13 *ABGH*, 8: "lucos ac nemora consecrantes deorumque nominibus appellantes..." This describes the worshipping practices of the Saxons and the Obodrite Slavs.

14 "Herbordi vita Ottonis," *SS* 12, 779.

15 See Jensen, "Physical Extermination," 87–99, at 91–4.

16 "Herbordi vita Ottonis," 780.

17 Helmold of Bosau, *Chronica*, 160.

allows us to consider some examples that demonstrate the importance of landscape sacralization as a defining factor of the crusading movement. Henry of Livonia mentions groves (*nemora; luci*) and woods (*silvae*) in his accounts of specific campaigns in 1220 and 1227. In one account, the crusader army (referred to as “Germans” (*Theutonici*)), chased a group of Livs through a field “up to their sacred grove, and polluted it with the blood of the pagans (*sanctam silvam...sanguine maculaverunt*).”¹⁸ Henry invoked here the imagery from Jeremiah 9:22, 2 Maccabees 5:12, Acts 23:3, and 1 Samuel 7:11, citations which, as section 2 below demonstrates, were important for relating the landscape in the Baltic to the geography of the Holy Land, as opposed to that focused on the destruction and rebuilding of holy places.¹⁹

The relationship between pagan religion and physical monuments in the landscape, namely Henry’s description of the home of Tharapita, a god of the Oselians, further solidifies this concept and its use by chroniclers of the early crusading movement. Telling us of two priests baptizing some villages near Ymera (Lat. Rubene), Henry states “in the region of Veronia...there was a mountain and most beautiful wood (*pulcherrima silva*), in which the natives said the great god of the Oselians, called Tharapita, was born.”²⁰ Leonid Arbusow, Jr., and Albert Bauer, editors of Henry’s text, identify this grove and mountain as the region near present-day Väike Maarja (formerly known as Klein-Marien), in northwestern Estonia, which still retains a hill called Ebavere. In describing one of the last encounters between the crusaders and the Oselians, Henry states that the two armies, as they met for battle, called upon their respective gods. The crusaders, of course, call on Jesus (*Iesum invocant*), but the cry of the Oselians, to their sacred grove (*nemus*), points to a close association of the landscape itself with the paganism that the crusaders sought to remove.²¹ This incident was the attack of the hill fort at Muhu, still visible today and in close proximity to the church of St. Katherine, constructed in the thirteenth century, and one of the oldest churches in the region.²² As we will see by the end of this chapter, the conversion of this landscape to a new sacral one was essential to the literary depictions of the Baltic crusades.

The worship of specific elements of the landscape also applied to Prussia and this appears to have been noted relatively contemporarily to Henry’s *Livonian Chronicle*. The *Descriptiones terrarum* (ca. 1260), an anonymous record of the geography of northern Europe most likely connected with a history of the Tatars, records that the Prussians

18 *HCL*, 166 (23.9): “Theutonici...occidentes eos per campos usque ad lucum ipsorum, et ipsam sanctam silvam...sanguine maculaverunt.” Brundage, ed. and trans., *Chronicle*, 182–6 (23.9). This grove was near the stronghold of Gerwen (present-day Järva, central Estonia).

19 Barton and Muddiman, eds., *Commentary*, 204, 497, 740, 1056.

20 *HCL*, 175 (24.4): “...sacerdotes...ad alias villas festinantes in confinio Veronie tres villas baptizaverunt, ubi erat mons et *silva pulcherrima*, in qua dicebant indigene magnum deum Osiliensium natum, qui Tharapita dicuntur.” Brundage, ed., *Chronicle*, 193–4 (24.5). Vironia is the present-day region of Virumaa, in northwestern Estonia.

21 Brundage, ed., *Chronicle*, 218 (30.4): “Gaudet exercitus christianorum, exclamant, Deum exorant. Clamant et illi, gaudentes Tarapitha suo. Illi nemus, isti Iesum invocant.”

22 Tuulse, “Wehrkirchen,” 148.

“tended special woods as gods,” as does the Treaty of Christburg, mentioned above.²³ Peter of Dusburg, too, described the Prussian religion as centred on nature worship, writing that “they hold as sacred groves, fields, and waters” (*habuerunt lucos, campos et aquas sacras*).²⁴ In fact, he also notes some key cities that are discussed below which emerged as main sacral centres in the landscape that existed in close proximity to such groves. For example, the city of Elbing, which held one of the most important sacralizing objects in Prussia, a piece of the True Cross, was located near a grove (*nemus*).²⁵ Peter wrote that this grove, following an attack of the Pogesanians in 1273, marked the spot where so many Christians were killed, that the river near Elbing “appeared to flow red with the colour of blood,” thus providing a parallel to the example in Henry of Livonia’s chronicle, where pagan blood polluted the pagan grove.²⁶ The texts documenting the crusades thus offer a different approach to describing the landscape, namely in the direct relation of the wars in ridding the physical remains of paganism, in addition to using a rich variety of biblical symbolism to frame the place in which the events occurred as continuations of the wars of the Old Testament. Some texts are more informative, noting that indeed, there were physical markers in the landscape such as groves and hills, while others, especially Henry of Livonia and Peter of Dusburg, note the relationship of warfare (namely in the killing of pagans or Christians) to these places: the formerly pagan grove served as a scene where the sacred events of the crusade took place. Thus, they became newly sacred.

These depictions of pagan landscape were developed by the chroniclers into a characteristic of the “barbarian peoples” (*populi barbari*) against which the faithful should engage in combat and should be seen in the framework of the creation of a distinct Other.²⁷ One of the earliest examples coming from a letter of Innocent III dated to October 5, 1199, to the Christians in Saxony and Westphalia. The landscape of Livonia here was a “land of the barbarians” (*terra barbarorum*), further symbolized in their worship of animals, plants, and other things.²⁸ Before Christianization, such places were “horrible” ones (*loca horrida*), where the “new plantation of the Christian faith” was at constant risk of attack. This imagery would appear in charters concerning the Livonian crusade throughout the thirteenth century, particularly in the context of the Holy Roman

23 *DT*, 722: “Hii quemadmodum Prutheni speciales siluas pro diis colebant.” For context, see Górski, “*Descriptiones*,” 254–8.

24 *PDC*, 102 (3.5).

25 *PDC*, 288 (3.170). For the sacred grove near Elbing (Elbląg), see Max Töppen, *Geographie*, 187–8, for mention of a grove that was near the castle, perhaps a remnant of this grove spoken of by Peter. For a more modern analysis of sacred groves, see Vaitkevičius, *Sacred Places*, 16–20.

26 *PDC*, 290 (3. 170): “Tantus ibi sanguis Christianorum fusus fuit, quod fluvius vicinus amisso colore naturalis sanguineus apparebat.”

27 Feistner, “Vom Kampf,” 282; Mažeika, “Women Warriors,” 253–59; Mažeika, “Granting Power,” 153–71.

28 *LUB* 1: col. 14 (no. 12): “...inter *populos barbaros*, qui honorem Deo debitum animalibus brutis, arboribus frondosis, aquis limpidis, virentibus herbis, et spiritibus immundis impendunt.” My italics. One can also see this aspect of nature worship in the text of the Treaty of Christburg (1249), *PrUB* 1.1: 158–65 (no. 218), here 161.

Emperors, where Christianization in Livonia was linked to the expansion of the empire.²⁹ As shown in Chapters 3 and 4, chroniclers placed miraculous events and martyrdoms at these locations to transform them into *loci amoeni*, developing a physical component to the Baltic's emerging sacral landscape.

The suffering of the Christian peoples in both Livonia and Prussia was also employed to emphasize the sacralization of this landscape to the Latin Christian world. Various letters calling for the preaching of the crusades in Prussia highlighted the suffering and the valour of the Teutonic Order in their fight against the pagans and their role in landscape sacralization. In 1230, the papal bull *Cum misericors*, issued by Gregory IX, described how the brothers "miraculously" (*mirabiliter*) fought in God's name against the Prussians.³⁰ In 1231, the brothers were described by him as "defending both physically and spiritually the new plantation of the Christian faith."³¹ They also show the suffering of the Christian population in the region and the process of landscape sacralization *via* martyrdom, discussed at greater length in Chapter 3. For example, in 1232, Gregory IX took care to note "more than 20,000 Christians cut down by the sword and condemned to a disgraceful death." He also described the brothers as acting on God's behalf, "repaying the attack by the savage barbarians."³² Innocent IV issued several bulls and letters that highlighted the suffering of crusaders and brothers in the military orders in the region; an early example can be seen in his letter to William of Modena dated February 5, 1245, instructing him to take care for the Order and the Bishop of Curland, Henry of Lützelburg.³³ In 1252, Innocent IV highlighted how "the brothers... aided with the support of other Christians, suffered many labours and innumerable expenses, with much constant bloodshed for a long time" in his call to crusaders to support the Order in Prussia.³⁴

This emphasis in the sources did not stop in the early conquest period.³⁵ In 1260, Alexander IV continued the imagery of the suffering brothers and the necessity of the crusaders helping them "in Livonia and in Prussia."³⁶ Urban IV, in 1261, highlighted the suffering of the neophytes at the hands of the Prussians and the role of the knights in

29 *LUB* 1: cols. 18–20 (no. 14), 32 (no. 24), 69 (no. 64), 71 (no. 67), 72 (no. 68), 77 (no. 72), 167 (no. 129), 216 (no. 167), 239–40 (no. 183), 242 (no. 185).

30 *PrUB* 1.1: 62 (no. 81).

31 *PrUB* 1.1: 65–6 (no. 85): "...dil. fil...preceptoris et fratrum hos. Marie Theuton...assumerunt in patribus Pruscie negotium fidei ex animo prosequendum, plantationem novella fidei Christiane tam spiritualibus quam materialibus defensuri."

32 *PrUB*, 1.1: 67 (no. 87): "...cum quibus [the brothers] deus misericorditer operatur, reprimendo per eos impetum barbare feritatis."

33 *LUB* 1: cols. 236–7 (no. 180).

34 *PrUB* 1.1: 195 (no. 255): "fratres...adiuti subsidiis aliorum Christi fidelium, labores plurimos et expensas innumeras cum multa effusione propria sanguinis a longis temporibus constantissime pertulerunt."

35 *PrUB* 1.2: 88–9 (no. 103); 117–20 (nos. 141–2); 130–3 (no. 158); 137–8 (no. 167); 155–6 (no. 201). Also see ch. 2 (2.2.1).

36 *PrUB* 1.2: 88–9 (no. 103).

extending the borders of Christendom, to encourage more participation in the crusades to Livonia, Prussia, and Curonia.³⁷ In 1284, the bishop of Pomesania, Albert, remembered the early days of Christianization, “when the Christian faith existed in great instability in the surrounding areas” of Marienwerder.³⁸ This frequency shows a distinct tradition that came to characterize crusading in the Baltic, namely in the way of describing the history of the missions and their relation to the sacralization of the landscape. The nature of the mission transformed the landscape, in that the suffering and valour of those engaged in warfare in that region was the defining factor that shaped how contemporaries wrote about it. As the chapters below demonstrate, the spaces and structures used by pilgrims (and knights in the Teutonic Order) were spaces in which these early days were commemorated and remembered, thus creating a distinct bond between people and the landscape over time.

Preachers and chroniclers created a perception of the Baltic as a landscape associated with holy war, but since it was on the fringe of Christendom and lacked Christian holy places, they needed to frame the campaigns as a means of legitimizing it as a new sacral landscape. One way of examining this development is through the lens of the literary theory of the *locus amoenus* and *locus horribilis*. Before the emergence of the *locus amoenus* there had to be a *locus horribilis*.³⁹ Torben K. Nielsen points out that in the chronicles of the Baltic crusades, this concept was an inversion of the traditional method for describing landscapes in the Middle Ages. Where some recognized forests as delightful retreats, Henry instead saw an unknown and hostile landscape. His depictions of forests, which were not just dangerous from a military perspective, but also associated with the paganism against which crusading armies battled, reflects this.⁴⁰ This inversion was a product of his status as an eyewitness, and his position in an unknown part of the world, but especially because of the close association of landscape with paganism in the Baltic region.⁴¹ We see the need to create “pleasant places” (*loci amoeni*), namely through converting the hostile landscapes the crusaders encountered in the regions of Prussia and Livonia.⁴²

Two ways they accomplished this were by incorporating biblical language to frame events and describing the landscape in terms that focused on its paganism. There is an early allusion to this in a letter from Innocent IV to Erik IV Ploughpenny, King of Denmark, in which the king was granted the same privileges for a crusade to Livonia as those who went to the Holy Land. Specifically, Erik is compared to Moses in Exodus 32:27, rallying the faithful to God against the worship of the golden calf, an event that set apart God’s chosen people from idolators. Thus, the imagery of Moses in the desert here is

37 *PrUB* 1.2: 117–20 (nos. 141–2).

38 *PrUB* 1.2: 280 (no. 439).

39 Curtius, *Literature*, 183–202.

40 Nielsen, “Woods and Wilderness,” 170–1.

41 Nielsen, 170. Also see *HCL*, 215 (29.9). Brundage, ed. and trans., *Chronicle*, 237–8 (29.9).

42 *LUB* 1: cols. 441–2 (no. 366), for example, which describes “the places, which through Divine help were ripped from the hands of the pagans by the armies of Christians” in 1260.

applied to the Danish king in Livonia. Religious historian John Howe notes that the *locus horribilis* does not appear in Classical literature, but plays a key role in the genesis of medieval literary landscapes.⁴³ The work of Veronica della Dora considers how the *loca horrida* functions in later medieval pilgrimage accounts to the Holy Land, specifically to Mount Sinai and the hermitages of the Desert Fathers. Their struggle in the wilderness reflects the spiritual nature of their mission, regardless of the harshness presented by the desert landscape.⁴⁴ We also see that the chronicles for the Baltic region apply this theme in a distinct way with respect to the crusades there.

The *locus horribilis* is very much a part of what Keith Lilley calls the “imagined geography” of the Baltic in the Middle Ages.⁴⁵ The *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*’s account of an expedition in 1289 made by the knights to the castle of Sydobrin, in which they went through swamps and “through many wicked woods,” reflects both a practical understanding of the military hazards of the landscape, but also notes the connotations of paganism and serves as an example of the *locus horribilis*. Woods are the place where the pagan enemy lurks.⁴⁶ Later examples demonstrate the impact of this theme in the Teutonic Order’s historical writing. The chronicles of Hermann of Wartberge and Wigand of Marburg frequently reference “the land of the pagans” (*terra paganorum*). This indeed is a descriptive feature of a specific region where pagans live. However, their importance becomes clearer with respect to the continued sacralization of the landscape and the contrast between *sacrum* and *profanum*, especially when viewed in the context of the earlier texts for the crusading movement.

On the other hand, in giving the landscape pleasant qualities and commemorating the wars as holy causes, chroniclers began the first process in the creation of a sacral landscape.⁴⁷ Several events in the *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle* reflect the continuity that came after the arrival of the crusade movement and developed over the course of centuries with respect to how contemporaries expressed concepts of place and communicated the impact of crusading. The chronicle also shows the role of conversion and of landscape by the military orders, institutions only marginally present in the chronicles from the earlier decades of the thirteenth century. Within the first one hundred lines of the text, the author tells us that there were still lands unknown to Christianity, and it is to these that God would send his apostles (i.e., the brothers of the Teutonic Order). Thus, Christianity, described as God’s love (*sîn lob*) appeared in many lands where hitherto it had not been. To quote the author of the chronicle: “I will have more to say on how God’s servants were sent to many lands, where no apostle had come before.”⁴⁸

43 Howe, “Symbolic Landscapes,” 212.

44 della Dora, “Gardens,” 271–300, here 279–80.

45 Lilley, “Cities,” 302; Kowzan, “Heavenly Jerusalem,” 179–90.

46 LR, 257 (lines 11,233–11,240): “Das ander her [the pagan army – GL], dâ ich von sprach, / lât ûch sagen, waz dem geschach. / Sydobren, daz ich hân genant, / lac in Semegallen lant. / kein der burge stunt ir sin, / dâ wart ez gevûret hin / durch brûch und manchen bösen walt; / die wege wâren so gestalt.”

47 HCL, 201 (28.4); Brundage, ed. and trans., *Chronicle*, 222 (28.4); PDC, 46 (1.1).

48 LR, 2 (lines 57–59; 90–94).



Figure 3. a: Põide Church (taken from the nearby hillfort); b: Exterior of Põide Church. Photographs by author.

The conversion of these people was a product of divine intervention on the part of God's "messengers" (*sîne boten*), namely the Teutonic Order, and the transformation from profane to sacred was a direct product of their presence.⁴⁹ We can use the example of the churches as physical markers of the landscape sacralization process that took place in the thirteenth century, one example being the church of Põide, on the island of Saaremaa (Figure 3). This makes it visible from high points such as hill forts, which functioned as important religious and economic centres.⁵⁰ The prominence of the churches in the landscape is reflected in the photo of the Teutonic Order church of St. Mary at Põide. The church occupies a powerful vantage point in the landscape. Its tower rises from above the trees (visible in the image), serving as a landmark against the horizon. The photograph was taken from the nearby hillfort, illustrating the competing elements between pagan and Christian geography on the island.⁵¹

⁴⁹ *LR*, 3 (lines 120–124). "nû wil ich manchen ûch bekant, / wie der cristentûm ist komen / zû Nieflant, als ich hân vernomen / von allen wîsen lûten."

⁵⁰ *HCL*, 220 (20.5). Brundage, ed. and trans., *Chronicle*, 222–5 (20.5).

⁵¹ The church dates to the 1260s and was fortified throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. See Tuulse, "Wehrkirchen," 151.

Peter of Dusburg described the arrival of the Teutonic Knights in the Kulmerland in 1230 as follows: “they abandoned the sweet comforts of their homeland and entered an alien land...one of horror and vast wilderness.”⁵² This possessed a dual meaning, for the environment of crusading in this region was often fierce and depended entirely upon favourable weather conditions. Winters had to be cold and hard, and knights had to be prepared to spend days, even weeks, in the frozen marshes.⁵³ Hermann of Wartberge records that, in 1371, for example, an expedition of the brothers into Lithuania had to be cancelled because of severe winds.⁵⁴ The weather was also connected to Divine favour, as evidenced in a 1394 letter from Conrad of Jungingen to Philip II, the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, describing an upcoming *Reise*. The letter also highlights the “vast wildernesses and waters” of the region.⁵⁵ The celebration of the liturgy of the churches in the *Ordensland* centred on weather and reflects the quite literal application of the term “wilderness” or “desert” to the region. Prayers were regularly ordered by the Grand Masters of the Order to the Christians of Prussia for fair weather and favourable winds. They were also said for crusaders suffering “in the vineyard of the Lord,” highlighting the symbolic communication of the landscape to the local population.⁵⁶

Likewise, the sources for this period show a clear delineation between pagan and Christian landscapes, giving a deeper meaning to the land “of horrors and vast wilderness” that Peter described. He quotes Deuteronomy 32:10, a poem of Moses that refers to God delivering the Israelites in the vast wilderness and desert. Wigand of Marburg mentions on several occasions the campaigns of the Order into the Great Wilderness against the Lithuanians, many beginning with entering “the land of the pagans” (*terra paganorum*). He also refers to the encounters between the Teutonic Order and Lithuania in “the desert” (*desertum*).⁵⁷ Again, Hermann describes a campaign of Andreas of Sternberg in 1372, in which he entered “the lands of the infidels with force.”⁵⁸

How can these later texts inform the development of a literary tradition concerning landscape in these texts? The concept of infidel lands (*terrae infidelium*) and pagan lands (*terrae paganorum*) emerges in Hermann and Wigand’s texts quite regularly, indicating a sense of “pagan” lands separate from the “sacred” (Christianized) lands. Both chroniclers emphasize the wars taking place in the “Great Wilderness,” a stretch of virtually uninhabitable land separating the Order’s territories in Prussia and Livonia, from Königsberg to Memel (Lit. Klaipėda). In addition to the descriptions of landscape in the later chronicles of the fourteenth century, we have some other examples that help to

52 *PDC*, 92 (2.10). “Reliquerant enim dulce solum natalis patrie sue et intraverant terram alienam... Exierunt eciam terram fructiferam, pacificam et quietam et intraverunt terram horroris et vaste solitudinis et bello durissimo plena.”

53 Paravicini, *PR* 2: 52.

54 *HWC*, 97 “Presenti anno (1371) estate fratres in Livonia propter aëris intemperiem et inundacionem himbrium nullum facere potuerunt expeditionem.”

55 *CDP* 5: 70 (no. 57).

56 Biskup, ed., *Formularz*, 194–5 (no. 261). For the reference to the vinea Domini, see 252 (no. 322).

57 Wigand, 548, 551, 559, 577, 638.

58 *HWC*, 101.

further illustrate the awareness of a pagan landscape. The *Littauischen Wegeberichte* (ca. 1384–1402), a collection of reports compiled by scouts in the Order's service, refer to roads to be taken on the annual campaigns into Lithuania in the winter (*Winterreise*) and summer (*Sommerreise*).⁵⁹ Their contents demonstrate the role of the pagan landscape of the Baltic with respect to navigating the *desertum*.

One example comes from a report of 1388, through Samogitia and to Kaunas, taken in the winter. It mentions, specifically, a "sacred grove called Asywiote (Lit. Užventis)" (*heilgin walde der heist Asswyote*). The report notes that there are sufficient stores of water and grass for horses there, indicating that the areas were not believed to be sacred to those who happened to pass through them. However, that same report refers to an oak grove near Cosleykin (Lit. Kelmė), "through which one must not ride" (*eyne rume damerow, do darff man nicht rumen*).⁶⁰ A report listing routes from Ragnit (Rus. Neman) to Poszyli (Lit. Pašilė) also states that in that region, "there lay a sacred wood and a river, there the army should make camp on the first night."⁶¹ Of the nearly one hundred reports, almost each time that a sacred grove comes up, it is in terms of a place to be used for food and water supplies, indicating the role of these places in the *desertum* as well as an awareness of pagan and Christian separations in the landscape.⁶² And yet, the chronicles documenting these campaigns are not nearly as rich or as varied as those from the thirteenth century. In what ways can we analyze the literary landscape that came to define the medieval Baltic region in these chronicles?

Torben K. Nielsen points out that important features of the Christian landscape in the Baltic, at least in Henry of Livonia's chronicle, were roadways. In Henry's chronicle, the crusaders stick to the roads while the pagans use secret pathways in the woods, thus representing a sharp split between pagan and Christian, not only in terms of society, but also of landscape.⁶³ This dichotomy carries over into the Teutonic Order's chronicles from the later part of the thirteenth century.⁶⁴ Roads symbolized Christianization, serving as the ways through which the sacred landscape of the Baltic spread out, exemplified in a letter of Pope John XXII to the master of the Livonian branch of the Order, Gerhard

⁵⁹ Päsler, *Sachliteratur*, 327–38.

⁶⁰ *LW*, 668 (no. 6): "Eykind, his brother, and Mase, rode from Jenstilte up to a sacred grove [*bys czum heilgin walde*], called Assywiote, a journey of 2 miles... The same group went from Stabuncaln to Cosleykin, a 2 mile journey. There is along this route an oak grove (!), where one must not ride." Hirsch, who edited the *Wegeberichte*, identified the word *damerow* with the Polish word *Dąbrowa* ("oak tree grove").

⁶¹ *LW*, 675: "do lyt eyn heilig wald und eyn vlys, do sal das heer die erste nacht legen."

⁶² *LW*, 677, records a route "from the sacred grove of Rumbyn in the land of Medeniken" (*Von deme heyligen walde von Rambyn in das lant czu Medeniken*), in which there are good food and water supplies. See also 687–88: "From Milsowe is 2 miles up to Säuten to the sacred wood. The army should camp here, there is sufficient supplies for an army" (*von Milsowe ij mile bis czü Säuten czü deme heiligenwalde do müs man das heer legen, do ist czü herende genük*).

⁶³ Nielsen, "Woods and Wilderness," 167–69.

⁶⁴ See *LR*, 21 (lines 883–90) and Urban and Smith, eds. and trans., *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, 12. Henry of Livonia's record for the expedition can be found in *HCL*, 148 (22.2); Brundage, ed. and trans., *Chronicle*, 166–8 (22.2).

of Jork, dated to February 23, 1318.⁶⁵ They also established a means for another important aspect of landscape sacralization: pilgrimage. This is a crucial focus in the coming chapters, but for the time being it is important to highlight that the literary themes were effectively propagated to participants in the crusades.

The lack of religious themes in the chronicles documenting the *Reisen* reflects a change in the understanding of holy war. By the fourteenth century, crusading in the Baltic changed from more traditional manifestations of holy war to reflections of individual piety and chivalric prowess.⁶⁶ Scholars have studied the *Reisen* as reflections of traditional, and new, perceptions of crusade, but one cannot deny the secular characters that they came to possess. This obstacle has done little to hamper the amount of recent work on the perception of the Baltic region by crusaders in terms of its association with paganism, notably the paganism of its inhabitants, by participants on the *Reisen*.⁶⁷ As Alan Murray has noted, the shift in describing the Lithuanian enemies as a product of the crusaders' "existing mental horizon," namely calling them "Saracens," one also wonders to what extent the landscape and contemporary descriptions of it experienced a similar shift. In what way did they adapt a concept like crusading, which was so centred on sacred landscapes, to the pagan region of the Baltic?⁶⁸

Literary representations of the Baltic as a landscape linked with crusading were altered because of this shift in mentality.⁶⁹ The exotic nature of *heathenesse* can be seen in the works of Chaucer, the accounts of French noblemen who journeyed to Lithuania, and as demonstrated in the works of Loïc Chollet, who has articulated the transformation in contemporaries' perceptions of Lithuania at the end of the fourteenth century.⁷⁰ The association of idolatry with the region remained until the fifteenth, one example being the work of Philippe de Mézières.⁷¹ Communications between the Grand Masters and the leaders of Christendom applied this to both the Lithuanians and the Kingdom of Poland.⁷² Treating these accusations as literary symbols allows us to understand how this shift affected contemporary perceptions of the landscape in the late fourteenth-century Baltic. Forests held profoundly symbolic meanings within medieval literature, which would have been familiar to many knights participating on the *Reisen*.⁷³ For example, King Arthur adorned the walls of Lochstedt castle (Rus. Pawlowo), as did the other Nine Worthies, chivalric heroes who epitomized adventure and piety. The Table of Honour (*Ehrentisch*), a key feature of the later crusades in Lithuania thought to derive from

65 LUB 2: col. 105 (no. 661).

66 Chollet, "Voyages," 55–6.

67 Chollet, "Voyages," 58; Chollet and Mažeika, "Familiar Marvels?" 41–62; Murray, "Heathens," 205–11.

68 Murray, "Heathens," 218–21.

69 Pluskowski, *Archaeology*, 162. Also see Paravicini, PR 2: 52.

70 Chollet, "Voyages," 54–5; Chollet, *Sarrasins*, 141–52, for example.

71 Chollet, "Voyages," 55–60.

72 Particularly in the fifteenth century. See Leighton and Kwiatkowski, "Great War" (forthcoming).

73 Classen, *Forest*, 9–11.

chivalric legends surrounding Arthur, was a popular element of crusading in the late fourteenth century.⁷⁴ The table was set up on campaign, often in the same “wilderness” described in Wigand of Marburg’s chronicle. This was the case in his account of a *Reise* in 1391, in which the Grand Master of the Order “decreed that the table of honour be prepared before Old Kaunas.”⁷⁵ Later, in 1392, the Grand Marshal of the Order, Engelhard Rabe, prepared the table at the castle of Johannisburg (Pol. Pisz).⁷⁶ Therefore, the literary elements associated with chivalric culture would be easily applicable by contemporaries to the pagan landscape in Lithuania, specifically those associating forests with adventure but also piety.⁷⁷ With respect to crusading in the Baltic, the *desertum* was a unique phenomenon that attracted nobles to the north. It came to be one of the defining features of the experience of crusaders in Prussia, as pointed out in the seminal work of Paravicini.⁷⁸

However, the chronicle evidence remains fragmented for the period of the *Reisen*. More enlightening for our understanding of Prussia and Livonia as sacred landscapes in this period is the correspondence between the Grand Masters of the Teutonic Order in Prussia and Livonia, the bishops of Prussia and Livonia, and the rulers of Christendom. By the end of the fourteenth century, the expeditions against the pagans were done as part of the defense of *Christianitas*. Following the conversion of Lithuania in 1386, the Teutonic Order needed to stress the importance of its existence to Christendom and developed a foreign policy in its diplomacy that helped accomplish this. As demonstrated convincingly in the work of Sebastian Kubon, the territorial expansion of the Order at this time was not due to military engagements, but the diplomatic strategy of the Teutonic Order and the expansion of Christianity that was responsible for this.⁷⁹

These letters provide ample evidence of the earlier materials’ role in creating distinct ways in which the region was described and communicated, specifically the roles of the Teutonic Order and the Church in its defense. As such, these descriptors in the correspondence reveal a variety of individual and collective agendas.⁸⁰ A letter to the Holy Roman Emperor, dated to ca. 1400, highlights the martial prowess of the Order “on this end of holy Christendom,” indicating the sense that the landscape in which these wars occurred was indeed incorporated into Christianity at this time. The register of Conrad of Jungingen repeats this message, indicating its importance to the Order’s foreign correspondence. Regularly, the themes of defending Christendom, as well as the brothers in

74 See Steinbrecht, *Lochstedt*, 14–22. For the Ehrentisch, see Voigt, GP 5, 712–8, at 712; Paravicini, PR 1: 316–34; Paravicini, PR 2; Paravicini, PR 3: 598–604.

75 Wigand, 645: “Ynsterburgenses...intrantr terram in locum, ubi quondam antiquum Cawen stetit; in quo loco magister mensam honoris prepararari mandavit.” *ÄH*, 620, identifies this knight as Conrad of Richardszдорff. The Grand Master was Conrad of Wallenrode.

76 *ÄH*, 649.

77 Sandidge, “Forest,” 537–65.

78 Paravicini, PR 1: 52–66; PR 2: 94.

79 Kubon, *Außenpolitik*, 77–8.

80 Kubon, *Außenpolitik*; Srodecki, “*Schilt*,” 147–63; Kubon, “Frontier Identities,” 97–120.

the Order shedding their blood for God and the Christian faith, were communicated in these letters.⁸¹ A clearer concept emerges of a spatial aspect of *Christianitas* in the Baltic and the still-pagan regions. Even treaties between the Order and Witold, Grand Duke of Lithuania, were done “for the protection of Christendom.”⁸² As we will see, there also developed a unique rhetoric concerning holy war in the Baltic, both in Prussia and Livonia, that reflects even more clearly the relationship between holy war and perceptions of landscape among contemporaries.

Given the importance of the pagan elements of the landscape just discussed, we now turn to the sources’ descriptions of the conversion of this landscape. To do so, we consider the specific manifestations of this through various lenses. The discussion begins with examining the placement of biblical events and models into the pagan landscape of the Baltic to frame the crusades. Moving from this, I discuss the propagation of the specific literary theme of the “Lord’s vineyard” (*vinea Domini*), and “new plantation of the Christian faith” (*nova plantatio christianae fidei*). I conclude by noting the unique role of the Virgin Mary in the texts as direct literary creations of a new sacral landscape. In doing so, we see the ways in which the representation and perception of the new sacral landscape in the Baltic formed over time and through a variety of strategies. Moreover, this discussion demonstrates a clearer picture concerning the mentality of crusading and holy war in this region, in that it addresses these themes in texts aimed at crusaders, in addition to Christendom in general.

The first lines of the chronicle of Henry of Livonia, who attributes the very nature of the crusades in that region to divine providence (*divina providencia*), pertain to the sacralization of the landscape, namely that Henry expresses how divine providence removed idolatry from Livonia.⁸³ A parallel emerges in the introductory remarks of Peter of Dusburg’s chronicle. Peter framed the entire mentality of the wars against the Prussians in biblical terms, namely the “signs and wonders” (*signa et mirabilia*) carried out by the Lord expressed in the Book of Daniel (3:99), which narrates the second dream of Nebuchadnezzar. Peter connects these signs and wonders to the region of Prussia directly. He writes that he sees and hears of such great signs and wonders “miraculously carried out by the brothers of the Teutonic Knights in the land of Prussia through God on high.”⁸⁴ The entire region becomes the stage through which the landscape transforms

81 GStA PK, XX. HA, OF Nr. 3, Bl. 19: “hear now, how our brothers, namely on this end of Christendom, suffered great misery and imprisonment at the hands of the unbelievers, and shed their blood for the honour of God, and for the Christian faith” (*allezeit gar horet, nemlichin an desen enden der heilig(en) Cristenheit uns(er)s ordens brude(rn) geschach von den ungloubige(n) grose not und gefenknisse, und vorissunge eres blutes umbe die ere got(is) und des heilige(n) cristengloubens*).

82 GStA PK, XX. HA, OF Nr. 3, Bl. 27: “Your grace, we wish to make known to you, how Witold, Grand Duke of Lithuania, has made a truce with us, to defend holy Christendom.” (*Euwir grosmechtik(eit) begere(n) wir tzu wissen, wie das Witowt grosforste tzu littowen, mit deme wir yn guten truwen tzu meru(n)ge der heiligen cristenheit hatten gemacht und achbarlich vorschreiben eynen ewigen frede*).

83 HCL, 1 (1.1); Brundage, ed. and trans., *Chronicle*, 1 (1.1); LR, 1–4 (lines 1–126); PDC, 44–6 (1.1) and 66–90 (2.6–2.9). For the link between war and Christianization in Henry’s chronicle, see Gerber, “Heinrich,” 1–18.

84 PDC, 28 (*Prologue*): “Competunt tamen hec verba auctori huius libri...postquam vidit et audivit

from pagan to Christian. Peter notes shortly after the invocation of Daniel that it was nothing short of miraculous, that so few brothers were able to subdue the people of the land of Prussia to the Christian faith, building many fortifications, cities, and castles.⁸⁵ As demonstrated in the work of Grischa Vercamer, the *signa et mirabilia* frame the entire conception of time and world view in Peter's chronicle.⁸⁶ In this vein, the imagery also applies to his perception of the landscape and how he represented it.

The concept of history in Peter's chronicle is framed in the context of crusade, and draws heavily upon the *Prologue* to the Order's monastic rule.⁸⁷ This relationship becomes more concrete in the prologue to the text, when Peter writes: "Listen in what ways the brothers, like Judas Maccabeus, cleansed the holy places of the land of Prussia, which the pagans had earlier polluted through idolatry, and made sacrifices daily to the praise and honor of God."⁸⁸ Peter here adapts the concept of the *loca sancta* from 1 Maccabees 4:36: the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem by Judas.⁸⁹ He saw the wars against the pagans as commemorative, successors to the wars of the Maccabees.⁹⁰ Employing the imagery of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, Peter's chronicle sought to legitimize the Order's campaigns and situate them within the crusading tradition. He understood the mission of the Order in Prussia as a replication of the Maccabees cleansing the Temple. Peter extended this beyond the imagery of the acts of biblical warriors repeating themselves in the pagan landscape of Prussia. His use of this imagery and its presence in one of the main historical texts of the Baltic crusades thus highlights the role of crusading in adding a new layer to spiritual geographies on the frontier of Christendom.

The analogies continue throughout Peter's chronicle. For example, chapter seven, book two, concerns "the new war of the brothers of the Teutonic house against the pagans of Prussia" (*de novo bello fratrum domus Theutonice contra gentem Pruthenorum*).⁹¹ It begins by noting how these "new wars, chosen by the Lord" were brought to Prussia by the Teutonic Knights and how they were different from previous military encounters. The wars of the Order were not "new" so much as the concept of the crusade was, with

tot magna signa et tam mirabilia facta insolita et a seculo inaudita, que per dictos fratres in terra Prussie Deus excelsus misericorditer operari dignatus est."

85 Ibid.

86 Vercamer, "Zeit," 7–23.

87 See 1 Maccabees 4: 43: "et mundaverunt [the Maccabees – GL] sancta et tulerunt lapides contaminationis in locum inmundum." Also see *PDC*, 32 (*Prologue*). For the memory of Jerusalem in Peter's chronicle: Lotan, "Querimonia," 47–55; Fischer, "Heroes," 250. Manion, "Loss," 65–90, addresses the loss of Jerusalem in a broader context.

88 *PDC*, 32–3 (*Prologue*): "Attende, qualiter fratres ut Iudas Machabeus loca sancta terre Prussie, que gentes per idolatriam polluerunt, mundaverunt, et sacrificatur in eis quotidie Deo sacrificium laudis et honoris."

89 1 Maccabees. 4: 36: "Ecce contriti sunt inimici nostri: ascendamus nunc mundare sancta, et renovare." *SDO*, 25 (*Prologue*, 3): "Dei suffulti iuvamine adeo contriverunt, ut sancta iterato mundaverunt, arcem Syon reciperent et redderent pacem terre."

90 Morton, "Defence," 275–93. For their role in the identity of the Teutonic Order, see Helm and Ziesemer, *Literatur*, 95–100; Fischer, "Maccabees," 59–71.

91 *PDC*, 66–8 (2.7).

Peter noting that it was accomplished through “a new way of fighting, because it was not only by means of materials, but by spiritual weapons, namely prayer, that the enemies were conquered.”⁹² Peter then proceeds to use the example of Moses in Exodus 17:11 to demonstrate this, which narrates how the Israelites fought Amalech at the battle of Rephidim. When Moses held his hands to the sky in prayer, Israel was victorious. In this way, Peter cements the relationship of the wars against the Prussians and prayer, highlighting how the brothers’ early history in the region mimics that of the Old Testament, a foundational element of crusading liturgies of warfare.⁹³

This is a superb example of how biblical *topoi* came to play a large role in portraying a new sacred landscape in the Baltic. Following this, Peter recounts the predecessors of the Order in the Old Testament figures, particularly the Maccabees.⁹⁴ These new wars of the Order find their roots in its earliest pieces of historical writing, namely the Prologue to its *Rule* (ca. 1264).⁹⁵ Peter draws on this early text and applies its biblical imagery to the Baltic landscape. For example, one should note that in Exodus 17, Moses leads the Israelites through the wilderness (*desertum*), and after the victory at Rephidim, he constructs an altar to commemorate the victory, naming it “the Lord is my banner.”⁹⁶ In the midst of this desert, then, Moses’ altar became a sacred point in which God’s assistance was present. This would become a key feature of battles in the Baltic region, evidenced in formularies used for preaching to the local Christian population and guest crusaders. One example can be seen in a prayer formula dated to around 1382 and appended to the formulary book of Arnold of Protzan (d. 1342).⁹⁷ The text speaks of “the Knights of Christ proceeding against the Lithuanians” (*Cristi Militum ad Reisam procedencium contra Litwanos*), likening them to the Israelites at Rephidim, thus demonstrating the power of this imagery in the Baltic region well after the composition of Peter’s chronicle.

98

Following the example of Moses at Rephidim, Peter outlines the physical and spiritual weapons of the Teutonic Order, the new weapons through which the new wars were fought. After elaborating on the dual meanings of ten weapons, the most significant example concerning the wars of the Order and a new sacred landscape in Prussia can be seen in Peter’s statement outlining how the weapons should be used. He lists six reasons for doing so: 1) to carry out war according to God’s will; 2) on account of the ambushes of the enemy; 3) on account of open attacks of the enemy; 4) to ensure the Order’s properties can be held in peace; 5) to regain lost properties; and 6) to instill fear into the

92 *PDC*, 66 (2.7): “Nec tantum est novitas in bello, sed eciam in novo genere bellandi, quia non solum materialibus, sed armis spiritualibus vincitur hostis, sicut oracione.”

93 Gaposchkin, *Invisible Weapons*, 41–2.

94 *SDO*, 23–5. For Judith, see *PDC*, 68 (2.8): “Sed quia Iudith non in armorum potencia, sed in virtute laudatur, eo quod occidit Holofernem, quis in arcu suo soeravit et gladius eius salvavit eum?” Also see Morton, “Defence of the Holy Land,” 275–93, at 283.

95 *SDO*, 24–5. For context, see Arnold, “Anfänge,” 177–96.

96 Exodus 17:15: “Aedificavitque Moyses altare: et vocavit nomen ejus, Domunis exaltatio mea.”

97 Wattenbach, ed., *Formelbuch*, 307.

98 Wattenbach, ed., *Formelbuch*, xix–xxii.

enemy upon seeing the brothers.⁹⁹ Most significant here is the fifth cause, which would appear as an attempt to legitimize crusading in a land with no shrines: to recover lost properties (*bona*). The scriptural grounding for this in Peter's treatise is the imagery of the Israelites entering the Promised Land: "just as the Israelites armed themselves and entered the Promised Land, which God had given to their fathers, and recovered it from their enemies," so the Order entered Prussia, which had been lost to Christendom on account of collective sin.¹⁰⁰ Here, Matthew 11:12, in which the Kingdom of Heaven is taken by force, is alluded to. This citation reflects Peter placing the conquest of Prussia into Salvation History, when the Church would be under attack by violent men. Therefore, the knights' battles here were placed in such a framework, legitimizing the violence against the attackers of the Church (i.e., the Prussians).¹⁰¹

Peter, of course, is not the only example to solidify the importance of transplanting biblical themes directly to the non-Christian landscape, though he was the only chronicler of the Teutonic Order to use them with significant frequency. We must look to earlier sources to study the ways in which contemporary views of the Bible commentary shaped perception of the landscape in Livonia. Henry of Livonia applied biblical language and scenarios to the scenes he witnessed, which in effect led to the creation of a sacralized geography, a place in which the events of the Old Testament were re-created. His chronicle incorporates over 1,000 direct (and indirect) citations of the Bible, more than many chronicles documenting the crusades to the Holy Land.¹⁰² The first line of the text invokes Old Testament imagery of Raab and Babylon, framed in Psalm 86 by their connection to God and Zion. It is this reason that the crusade came to Livonia, namely to purify the people (and the landscape) of idolatry.¹⁰³ The first line of Psalm 86, too, states that God "founded his sanctuary in the holy mountains," thus making the point that the new cities of the crusades in Livonia were replications, mentally, of this imagery.¹⁰⁴ This can also apply to the religious functions of cities founded by the crusaders, many of which became sites of pilgrimage, as is analyzed in Chapter 3.¹⁰⁵ The Old Testament played a key role in Henry's chronicle, particularly the Maccabees, Books of Kings, Samuel, and Judges, for legitimizing and sacralizing the conflicts between Christians and non-Christians in Livonia.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ PDC, 84–90 (2.9).

¹⁰⁰ PDC, 88 (2.9): "Sic filii Israel armis armati in terram promissionis ascenderunt, quam Deus dederat patribus eorum, et occupatam de manibus hostium recuperaverunt. Ita per virtutum arma regnum celorum, quod per peccata amisimus, vim patimur et violenti rapiunt illud et possident in eternum."

¹⁰¹ Barton and Muddiman, eds., *Oxford Bible Commentary*, 860.

¹⁰² Undusk, "Sacred History," 47–9.

¹⁰³ For the connection of places mentioned in the Bible to the landscape, see Westrem, "Gog and Magog," 54–75. For the connection to Babylon, see HCL, 1–2 (1.1); Brundage, ed. and trans., *Chronicle*, 1 (1.1).

¹⁰⁴ Psalm 86: 1: "Fundamentum eius in montibus sanctuarii."

¹⁰⁵ Levāns, "Riga," 53–81, at 53–8.

¹⁰⁶ Undusk, "Sacred History," 54.

The Battle of Gerwen described above is a clear example of Henry's exegetical skills with respect to linking the sacralization of landscape to the crusade experience. The chronicler invokes a total of five biblical citations with respect to the battle: Jeremiah 9:22, 2 Maccabees 5:12; 1 Maccabees 5:51; Acts 23:3; and 1 Samuel 7:11. Aside from Acts, all of Henry's citations evoke *exempla* of God's chosen people fighting a divine battle. Specifically, the imagery of 1 Samuel 7:11 recounts the battle between the Israelites and the Philistines at Mispah. Following the victory of the Israelites, Samuel founded Ebenezer, to commemorate that God fought on the side of the men of Israel. Indeed, in Henry's example of this battle near Gerwen, he emphasizes that the crusader army celebrated a mass. While they did not erect a monument to commemorate the victory, the example highlights the ways in which Henry used the Bible as a tool for understanding the sacralization of landscape. Frequently, he also favours the mission of Paul and the Apostles in Acts 27:40. Leonid Arbusow, Jr., identifies at least nine allusions to this theme. This reference to the shipwreck of St. Paul on his way to Rome appears frequently in Henry's text, often used to frame the missions of the Bishop of Riga, Albert, to Germany to collect pilgrims for the Livonian crusades, reflecting a division between the Christian and pagan worlds. One particularly unique example is the depiction of a priest killed in Cubbesele (Lat. Krimulda), in which his death occurs at the hands of pagans hiding in the woods. Just as the Romans holding Paul commit themselves to the sea, so do those hiding in the woods commit themselves to kill the parish priest.¹⁰⁷

Moving on from the chronicles of Peter and Henry, the remaining texts are not so clear in their use of the Bible. The *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, for example, begins with a brief salvation history, noting how it was through God, Christ, and the Virgin that Christianity spread and eventually came to Livonia.¹⁰⁸ This is one of the rare accounts in the text to incorporate the landscape of Livonia within that of Christianity. Marcus Wüst has argued that the speech of Berthold, the second bishop of Livonia (d. 1198), reminding the crusaders before his martyrdom that they are in Livonia because of God's blood, can be read in the context of John 15: 14–16, which considers the role of friendship and service to God through the allegory of Christ as the true vine (*vitis vera*).¹⁰⁹ This appears to be the only biblical connections present in the author's text. Moreover, Berthold's exhortation to an army of crusaders in July of 1198 speaks to the author's perception of Livonia as a sacred landscape. The short speech (only 31 lines) reveals a strong awareness of the concepts of martyrdom, memory, and the Divine presence, as motivating elements for the audience. While Berthold's martyrdom is discussed at greater length in Chapter 3, it is important here that he says in the text, "Remember, good heroes, how

107 HCL, 51 (11.5); Brundage, ed. and trans., *Chronicle*, 70–1 (11.5).

108 LR, 3 (lines 113–123): "Now I have told you / of God's son and his mother / Mary, my lady, / the heavenly queen, / and how the Christian law, / here and there spread out / in many lands. / Now I will tell you, / how Christianity came to Livonia / as I have heard from many wise people." (*Nû hân ich ûch gesaget / von gotes sune und der maget / Marien, der vrouwen mîn, / der himelischen kunigîn, / und wie sîn gotlicher rât, / hin und her geteilet hât / dem cristentûm in manich lant. / nû wil ich machen ûch bekant, / wie der cristentûm ist komen / zû Nieflant, als ich hân vernomen / von allen wîsen lûten.*).

109 Wüst, *Selbstverständnis*, 62–4.

Jesus Christ shed his holy blood for us on the cross...we are here [in Livonia] on account of God on high, who does not abandon his friends in battle."¹¹⁰ The call to the army to remember Christ's suffering, and the role played by God in their presence, reflects an understanding of the landscape as a space in which holy war takes place, as opposed to the suggestions of Lazda-Cazers that it instead represents repressed sexual desires and threatens the brothers' idea of corporate masculinity.¹¹¹ The reference to Livonia as the land of God's mother (*sîner lieben mûter lant*), the preference for female saints within the Order's liturgical calendar, and the praise of women in the chronicle (such as Morta, the wife of Mindaugas of Lithuania) suggests that the author of the *Reimchronik* understood Livonia primarily in religious terms.¹¹²

There are more direct occurrences and applications of biblical themes to the geography of the Baltic, where chroniclers transplant actual places mentioned in the Bible to the landscape. Hermann of Wartberge, for example, writes of a mountain near the city of Riga called "mons zabuli," the term "zabuli" referring to the Old Testament figure of Zebulun. Zebulun was a son of Jacob and Leah, whose people "shall settle at the shore of the sea and be a haven for ships." In the Gospel of Matthew, the land of Zebulun is by the sea, giving light to people in darkness. Given the sparse biblical imagery in the Order's later chronicles, the connection of the tribe of Zebulun by Hermann to the vicinity of Riga, known as a haven for ships and founded due to its harbour, is a high point in Hermann's text.¹¹³ Henry of Livonia, describing the arrival of Albert of Riga and a group of pilgrims in 1200, frames the event in the context of Judges 4:10, when Barak summoned ten thousand Israelites on Mt. Tabor, one of whom is Zebulun.¹¹⁴ The people of Riga maintain a tradition surrounding the place into the early modern period, where a chronicler for the Riga cathedral notes the sacred hill (*Heilberg*) outside Riga where the martyrdom of Berthold occurred. Henry of Livonia uses the River Jordan to highlight the struggles of the mission in Estonia during the thirteenth century.¹¹⁵ A survey of the early books of Henry's chronicle also reveals a pattern of specific citations to frame events, one example being the use of Acts 27:40 to describe the arrival of Meinhard in Livonia, and subsequent arrivals of crusaders. This refers to Paul's mission to Rome, specifically his shipwreck on the way. The "land they did not recognize" (*terram non agnoscebant*) thus represents the pagan landscape of Livonia.¹¹⁶

110 *LR*, 13 (lines 523–554): "gedenket helde gût, / daz Jhêsus Crist sîn reinez blût / vor unz an dem crûze gôz / ... / wir sîn durch got von himele hie, / der sîne vrûnd nie vorlie / in diekeiner slachte nôt."

111 Lazda-Cazers, "Landscape as Other," 198–206.

112 *LR*, 75 (lines 3257–3263), at line 3263; Wüst, *Selbstverständnis*, 65. For veneration of female saints, see Rozynekowski, *Omnes Sancti*, 25–46; Arnold, "Maria als Patronin," 29–56; K. Kwiatkowski, "corporatio militaris," 273–5.

113 See Genesis 49:13; Matthew 4:15–16.

114 *HCL*, 13 (4.1); Brundage, ed. and trans., *Chronicle*, 36 (4.1). Judges 4:10.

115 *HCL*, 201 (28.4); Brundage, ed. and trans., *Chronicle*, 222 (28.4).

116 Acts 27: 40. The citation appears throughout Henry of Livonia's *Chronicle*, see *HCL*, 3 (1.5); 5 (1.10); 8 (2.2); 11 (2.9); 14 (4.4); 19 (7.1); 30 (9.8); 41 (10.11).

The application of biblical themes to various events in the chronicles for both Livonia and Prussia demonstrate that their authors were keenly aware of the place of Livonia and Prussia within the broader framework of salvation history. However, there emerges from the vast corpus of texts for the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries a distinct theme for both the regions that highlights the conversion of the landscape. This is the concept of “the Lord’s new vineyard,” which emerges early in the history of the conversion of the Baltic to frame the crusade expeditions there and the landscape in which they take place.¹¹⁷

Most of the vineyard terminology can be found in correspondence, especially papal letters. It was applied to the Baltic as early as the 1170s, when Alexander III referred to the “cultivators of the faith” (*fidei cultores*) in Estonia and equated the crusade in Livonia with that of Jerusalem.¹¹⁸ The theme and its connection to the military orders was present in Livonia from the same period, when Innocent III wrote in 1203 that the Sword Brothers, vested with the habit of the Templars, “resist strongly and courageously the barbarian invasions there in the new plantation of Christianity” (*qui...barbaris infestantibus ibi novella plantationem fidei Christianae resistant viriliter et potenter*).¹¹⁹ Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the theme was applied in a variety of circumstances, from land donations to the preaching of crusades. In 1218, Honorius III refers to Livonia and Prussia as “the new plantation of the Christian faith” (*novella plantatio fidei Christianae*) in his exhortation to the faithful in Mainz, Cologne, Salzburg, Poland, and Pomerania.¹²⁰ He uses this same imagery in a letter to the faithful there, to whom he writes of the barbarian practices of the pagans and put those who went to Prussia, in “the new plantation of the faith,” on the same level as those who went to the Holy Land.¹²¹ This was also used to motivate potential crusaders, such as those in Gotland, a major hub for crusaders going to Livonia since the twelfth century.¹²² A series of letters sent to the Dominicans and Franciscans, in particular, reveal the enthusiasm of popes for using the theme to inspire increased preaching duties in Germany, Poland, and Bohemia. These were issued by Innocent IV and Alexander IV in 1248, and 1257–1260.¹²³ Indeed, in the latter group, these exhortations to defend the new plantation of the faith

117 PDC, 42–4 (1.1). “Sicque institutis et confirmatus et multis privilegiis dotatus est venerandus ille militaris ordo fratrum hospitalis sancte Marie domus Theutonicorum Ierosolimitani. *Hec est vinea Domini Sabaoth electa, quam tu, Iesu Criste, intituisti fuistique dux itineris in conspectus eius. Plantasti radices eius et implevit terram.*” My italics.

118 LUB, 1: col. 5 (no. 5): “...regibus et principibus et aliis Christi fidelibus per regna Danorum, Norwegensium, Guetomorum et Gothorum constitutis...cum feritate Estonum et aliorum paganorum illarum partium adversus Dei fideles, *et Christianae fidei cultores* gravis insurgere, et immaniter debacchari audimus, et Christiani nominis impugnare virtutem.”

119 LUB 1: 19 (no. 14). “Qui sub templariorum habitu, barbaris infestantibus *ibi novella plantationem fidei Christianae resistant viriliter et potenter.*”

120 PrUB 1.1: 15 (no. 20)

121 PrUB 1.1: 21 (no. 29).

122 LUB 1: col. 228 (no. 174)

123 LUB 1: col. 228 (no. 174). For the remaining letters, see LUB 1: col. 398 (no. 311); PrUB 1.2: 17 (no. 23); LUB 1: col. 402 (no. 314); PrUB 1.2: 22 (no. 28); PrUB 1.2: 55 (no. 61); LUB 1: col. 431 (no. 341); LUB 1: col. 445 (no. 350); LUB 1: col. 448 (no. 353).

coincided with the Great Prussian Uprising of 1260–1274. Thus, throughout the thirteenth century, the imagery was used as a motivator for potential crusaders, particularly in how the letters of Alexander IV depicted the suffering of the Teutonic Knights. The employment of such language reflects a concerted effort to muster support for the crusade by appealing to emotions, especially in the correspondence between Alexander IV and the Dominicans. We see this in the use of language associated with suffering, martyrdom, and the irrigation of *novella plantacio* with the blood of brothers in the Order and crusaders, explored in Chapter 3. However, with respect to this chapter, the invocation of such emotional language with respect to the landscapes of Livonia and Prussia as intertwined with Christian suffering serves as a portal through which to view how language aided in their perception as new sacred places, and how this was communicated. In doing so, it also adds to the multilayered experience of holy war on this frontier region in the thirteenth century.

Chroniclers of the crusade to the Baltic use this language from the time of Henry of Livonia, and it was a popular phrase in the foreign policies of Innocent III.¹²⁴ Teutonic Order chroniclers writing around the end of the fourteenth century adopted the metaphor of the vine and of fertility, too, indicating a continuity of tradition. It was an appropriate theme to show the conversion process and frame the wars in the Baltic as divinely sanctioned. The chroniclers in the Baltic used the vine as a metaphor for Christianity and conversion, which drove out the pagan religion from the land. It was used by Peter of Dusburg,¹²⁵ Henry of Livonia,¹²⁶ and remained in use until the early fifteenth century. Hermann of Wartberge, for example, records a meeting with the archbishop of Riga and the master of the Order, Winrich of Kniprode, which refers to Livonia as “the plantation of the Christian faith” (*plantacione christianitatis in Livonia*) in this discussion between bishop and Master.¹²⁷ Perhaps most indicative of this rhetorical element in the sources of the Teutonic Order, however, can be seen in the letters of Grand Master, Conrad of Jungingen. For example, in 1403, he uses it in his appeal to Pope Urban VI to continue crusades against the Lithuanians. He describes the Order as fighting “for the expansion of the vineyard of the Lord Sabaoth...waging in good faith the wars of the Lord against the resistance of the infidels and tyranny of the Schismatics.”¹²⁸ Given the long history of the imagery of the vineyard and the *novella plantatio*, it would seem that it had come full turn in this exchange, demonstrating its resonance to the members of the Teutonic Order, but also to audiences who were not associated with it in Prussia.

124 Bolton, “Philip Augustus,” 113–34.

125 *PDC*, 44 (1.1): “Transtulisti eam postea et eiecisti gentes de terra Prussie et Lyvonie et plantasti eam ibi et sic extendit palmites suos usque ad mare et usque ad flumen propagines eius.”

126 *HCL*, 29 (9.7); Brundage, ed. and trans., *Chronicle*, 50–1 (9.7). For other examples, see *HCL*, 46 (10.14), 158 (23.4), 170 (24.1), 176 (24.5), 208 (29.2).

127 *HWC*, 86–7.

128 *CDP* 5: 188–9 (no. 137): “Quinvero super erogantes nos et nostra *ad dilatandum vineam domini Sabaoth...prelia domini contra occursum infidelium et Scismaticorum tyranidem gessimus bona fide.*” “Schismatics” here refers to the Russians.

The military order chroniclers brought a distinct literary tradition centred on place and landscape to the Baltic region. The themes of the *vinea Domini* and *novella plantatio* serve to describe the conversion-oriented nature of the crusades, whilst also continuing the tradition of placing the Holy Land in the Baltic region. This language emerged in the legal evidence in the twelfth century, but by the fourteenth it was commonplace and shows the continuity of this imagery in developing a sense of “place.” In this way, the northeastern frontiers of Christendom become landscapes associated directly with crusading, and therefore, sacralized, through the development and deployment of specific language.

The fourteenth century coincides with the peak of the visual expression of the Order’s crusading ideology in the region. Centres at Marienburg, Elbing, Kulm, and Königsberg were all important stops for those visiting Prussia on the relic pilgrimages in the later fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.¹²⁹ Given that crusading cemented itself in the Baltic by the end of the fourteenth century, with the conquest of the Prussians and the impending start of the *Reisen*, it could be the emergence of these traditional shrines that ended the necessity to portray the landscape as the earlier sources did. The sacrality of the region, the possibility of martyrdom, and the propagation of its connection to the Virgin could, in other words, have been cemented as well and therefore such elaborations were not needed. This final section discusses the physical expression of the pagan landscape during the Baltic crusades, namely through major works of art in the Teutonic Order’s castles and churches in Livonia and Prussia from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It highlights a broader alignment of word and image with respect to the development of a new sacred landscape, particularly in the depictions of vineyard imagery.

Vineyard themes in the art of Prussia can be traced to the thirteenth century in the Order’s castles at Elbing, the episcopal castle of Frauenburg, Lochstedt, and, most importantly, the Order’s headquarters at Marienburg. The examples of medieval art in Livonia from the crusade period are scant at best, though the recent work of Kersti Markus has shown the important ways that crusading ideology was visually expressed in the eastern Baltic in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.¹³⁰ One of the only remaining examples are the churches on the island of Ösel (Est. Saaremaa), constructed in the mid-thirteenth century. These churches served as important markers in the landscape, and while it is not certain the extent to which crusaders on subsequent campaigns visited them, the visual evidence within them does speak to a link between text and image in the thirteenth-century Eastern Baltic. Janusz Trupinda has highlighted convincingly the relationship between the written word of the Order chronicles and the visual culture of the Chapel of the Virgin in Marienburg, as has Juliusz Raczkowski in the cathedral of Königsberg, and Monika Jakubek-Raczkowska in the spaces used by the local population.¹³¹

129 Zacharias, “Wallfahrtsstätte,” 49; Zacharias, “Reliquienwallfahrt,” 11–36.

130 Arsyński, “Fortified Architecture,” 202; Markus, “Christianisierung,” 477–8.

131 Trupinda, “Peter von Dusburg,” 513–28; Boesten-Stengel, “Schlosskirche,” 81–100; Raczkowski, “Marien-Aussage,” 119–36, at 124–5; Jakubek-Raczkowska, *Tu ergo*.



Figure 4. a: Karja Church, thirteenth century; b, c, d: Leaf and floral sculptures, Karja Church. Photographs by author.



Figure 5. Vine sculptures, Kaarma Church (fifteenth century?). Photographs by author.

Scholars have connected the Livonian churches to those constructed in Westphalia, a region from which many crusaders who journeyed to Livonia originated.¹³² In this sense, there might be a link between the recipients of the language of the many papal bulls proclaiming the Baltic crusades and patrons of art in the region. These church interiors preserve some of the best sculptural examples of crusading art in the northeastern Baltic from the thirteenth century, demonstrating a parallel in vineyard imagery in both Livonia and Prussia. At Karja, and Kaarma, the imagery of these floral sculptures is well preserved. (Figure 4, Figure 5). We only know of a few crusaders who patronized and supported the construction of churches in Livonia, perhaps the most famous being Bernard of Lippe. Moreover, a variety of studies concerning the nature and function of medieval churches in Estonia, particularly those of Kaur Altkoa, have analyzed the spatial and artistic nature of these buildings.¹³³

In Livonia, there are few remains of other examples to discuss the visual depictions of landscape themes, but the imagery in chronicles as early as Arnold of Lübeck with respect to the vineyard, and the relationship of the vineyard to the spread of Christianity

132 Kjellin, *Karris*, 23–38; Tuulse, “Wehrkirchen,” 137–92. Also see Altkoa, “Zwikelkolonette,” 7–41, for the links between the churches to those of Westphalia. For the origins of crusaders to Livonia, see von Transehe-Roseneck, *Livlandfahrer*, 1–20.

133 Altkoa, “Fortified Churches,” 124–38.

Figure 6. Sculpted baptismal font, Church of St. Nicholas, Elbing (ca. 1270). Photograph © Bildarchiv Foto Marburg, reproduced with permission.



(via crusading), are an important element in the art of the eastern Baltic from an early period. As recently demonstrated with respect to church architecture of the eastern Baltic, there are still more questions than answers with respect to crusading iconography in the region.¹³⁴ However, the clear alignment of the message in the texts with the visual culture of the region reflects a distinct sense of place shaped by the written culture. More solid examples, spanning both the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, can be found in the material of the southern Baltic, thanks to the work of Kersti Markus, which are discussed at greater length below.

The main examples of art in Prussia can be found in the Teutonic Order's churches and castles. They reflect on larger and smaller scales the visibility of the landscape reflected in the examples discussed in this chapter. The examples discussed here, in chronological order, include a baptismal font from Elbing (ca. 1270), the Golden Gate at Marienburg (ca. 1280), the cathedral portal at Frauenburg (ca. 1300), decorations in the churches of Juditten and Arnau (1380–1390), and frescoes at Lochstedt (ca. 1400). Throughout a period of nearly two centuries, the symbolism of the landscape became a significant element in the art of the region, thus speaking to its impact on a variety of different groups, from brothers in the Order, to visiting crusaders and the local Christian population.

At Elbing, a baptismal font from c. 1270 (Figure 6) from the cathedral church of St. Nicholas bears relief carvings of what appears to be a dragon, and some sculpted oak and vine leaves surrounding it. This is a visual expression of the pagan elements of the landscape that came to frame the crusades as a conflict between good and evil.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Harjula *et al.*, *Sacred Monuments*, 2–32.

¹³⁵ Dygo, "Kultur," 58.

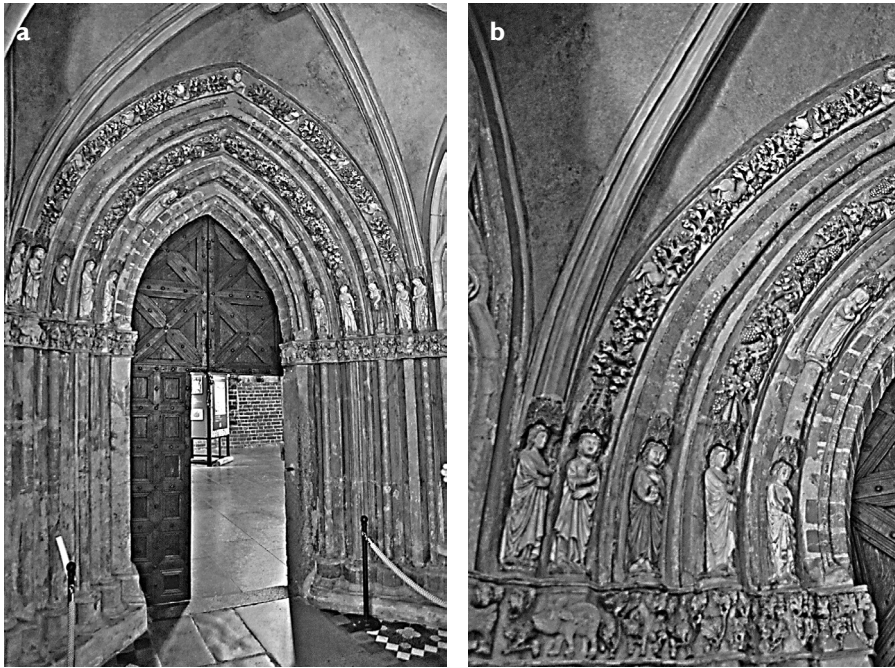


Figure 7. a: Golden Gate, Marienburg (ca. 1280); b: detail of the Golden Gate, showing the Wise Virgins. Photographs by author.

By far, one of the most important examples of the language of the chronicles is the Golden Gate at Marienburg (ca. 1280, Figures 7a and 7b). It is the first example of the Order's art that one would encounter when entering the main chapel at Marienburg. The artwork in the Golden Gate provides a visual connection to how crusading led to a distinct sense of "place," for the entrance into the sacred space of the chapel necessitates a confrontation with a visual program depicting Prussia's pre-Christian landscape. The imagery of the vineyard and the pagan landscape of Prussia visually demonstrate to those using the space the history of the Order's wars in converting the landscape and its people.

The Golden Gate also displays important themes reflecting the Order's understanding of its crusades and how they reflect a sacral geography in Prussia. In the second and fourth archivolts (Figure 7b) are sculpted vines and oak leaves, painted over in gold. The image of the (Christian) vineyard and (pagan) hybrid animals represent the Christianization of Prussia's pagan landscape. Hybrid animals such as strange birds and a centaur figure are also present in the portal, many of which have parallels at other important commanderies of the Order that I will discuss shortly. The use of hybrids and other animals in medieval art had many functions, ranging from spiritual to political, as noted in the work of Kirk Ambrose.¹³⁶ In light of the earlier analysis of the "wild" nature of Prussia's landscape represented in the sources, these themes portray contemporary under-

¹³⁶ Ambrose, *Marvelous*, 14.

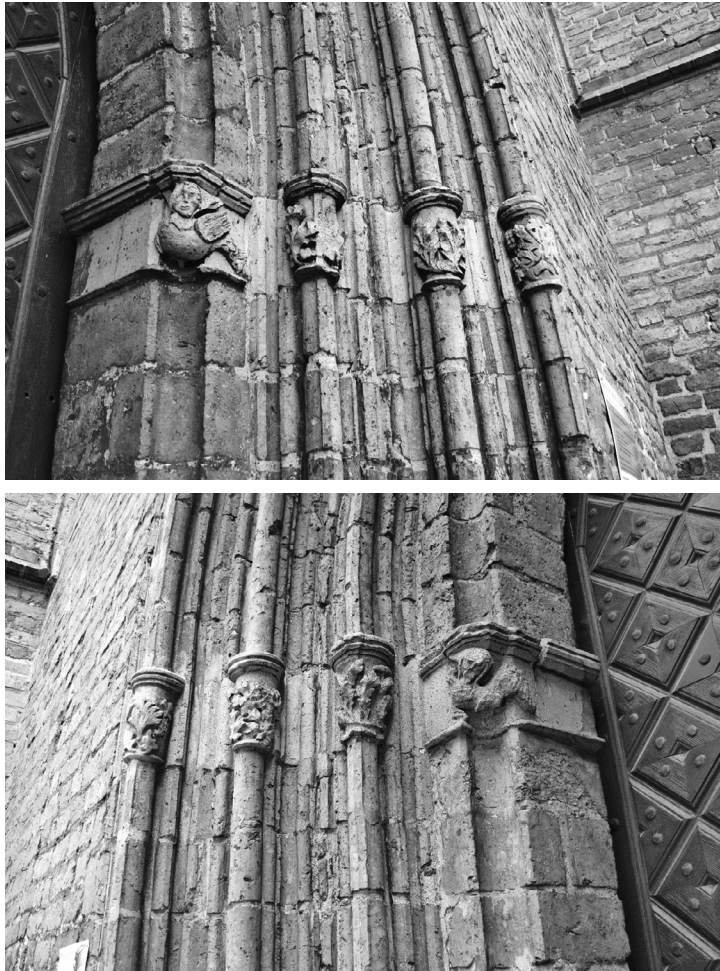


Figure 8. Sculpted friezes at Kulm Cathedral. Photographs by author.

standings of landscape in the Order's artistic program. The beasts and vines highlight the dichotomy between the pagan and newly Christian landscape presented in the texts.

Aleksander Pluskowski considers the Golden Gate's sculpted depictions of monsters and hybrid creatures as didactic tools for those using the chapel, namely brothers in the Teutonic Order. The figures show the ultimate purpose of the Teutonic Order and its wars against the pagans as a symbol of good triumphing over evil, the earthly struggle of the knights (and crusaders) against the pagan Prussians.¹³⁷ The hybrids are in the outer archivolts on both sides of the portal, and both sides have what appears to be an equal distribution of hybrid creatures, though on the left side of the portal (Figure 7b), depicting the Wise Virgins, there is a figure representing a lamb. The vine and oak imagery, in

137 Pluskowski, *Archaeology*, 158.

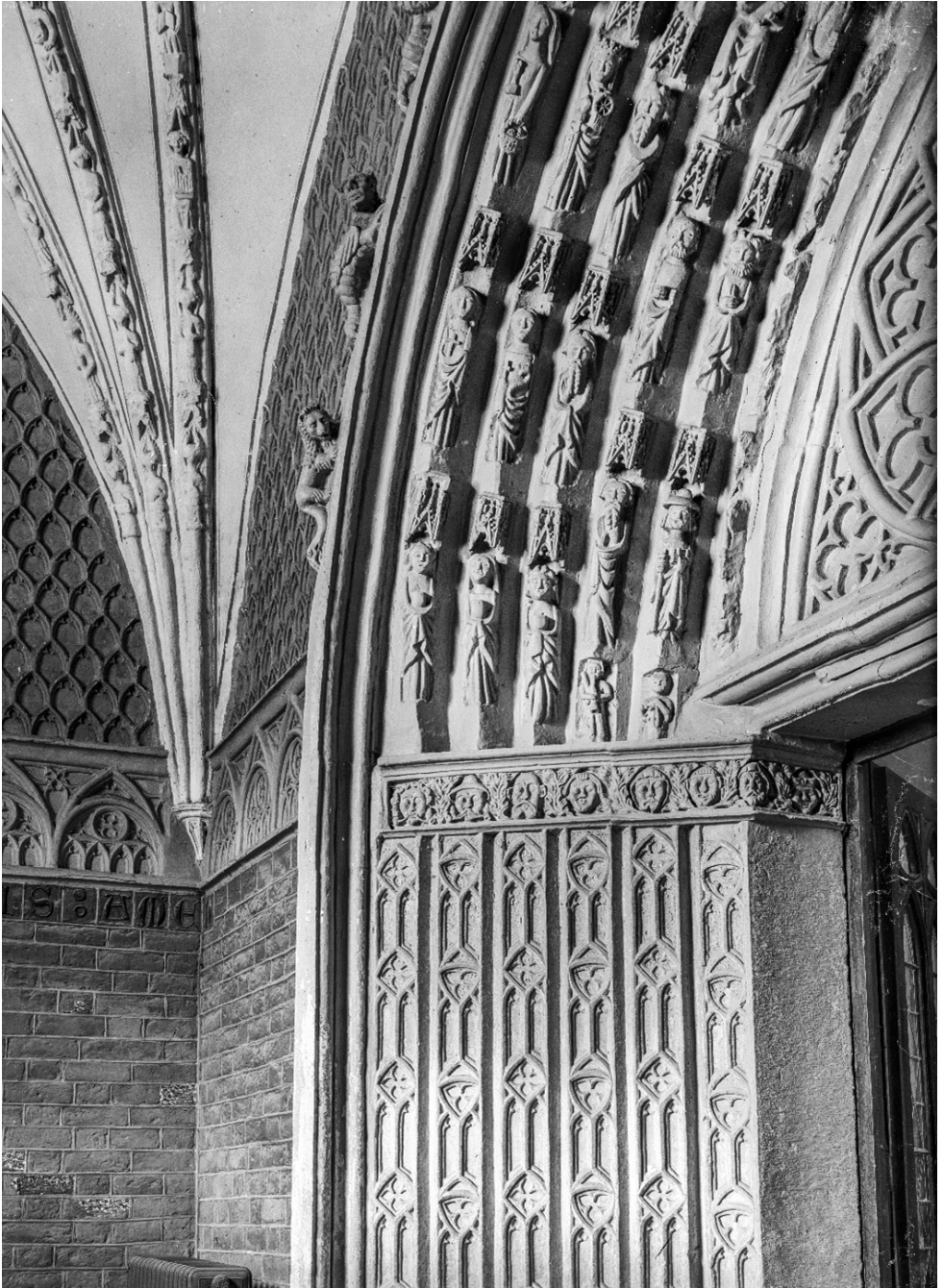


Figure 9. Cathedral portal, Frauenburg (ca. 1290).
Photograph © Bildindex Foto Marburg, reproduced with permission.

which some of these creatures are intertwined, reflects the intermingling elements of the Prussian landscape.

The Virgins show the triumph of the church in their ascension toward Christ, who is at the top of the portal. Given their didactic function, the themes also express the Order's understanding of its history and identity, and its projection of these to its patrons and members. The early conquests not only gained land for the Order to control, but through constructing their convents and expressing these artistic themes to brethren in the Order who used the castle, the imagery of landscape played a role in shaping the Order's perception of itself. This pattern was not unique to Marienburg, showing the importance of these didactic tools and landscape imagery to the Order's art.¹³⁸ Other parallels include examples at Frauenburg, Brandenburg, Mewe (Pol. Gniew), Kulm, Elbing, Rehden, and Lochstedt, the last of which I will return to shortly. Unfortunately, few of these artistic works survive *in situ*.¹³⁹ We can see examples of the Golden Gate motif at Kulm (Figure 8), in addition to Frauenburg (Figure 9).

The above examples concern art primarily aimed at the members of the Teutonic Order and local Christians who lived in the cities of Thorn, Elbing, and others. However, a group of churches were also used primarily by crusaders on the *Reisen* in the fourteenth century: these were the small churches in the surrounding area of Königsberg, Juditten (Rus. Mendeleyevo) and Arnau (Rus. Rodniki). Throughout the 1340s and into the fifteenth century, these churches were visited on a regular basis by prominent crusaders, who painted their coats of arms on the walls to commemorate their pilgrimages.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, they were constructed on previous sites of non-Christian worship.¹⁴¹ The visual programs of these churches reflect key themes from the Bible discussed above, reinforcing the sacralization of the landscape through communicating the extensive themes heard in the literary sources for the crusades in Prussia. In Juditten, a fresco on the eastern wall of the church depicts the Flight from Egypt, in addition to a knight of the Order kneeling before the Virgin Mary, reinforcing the imagery of the Order's land as the Land of the Virgin Mary. Here, if we consider the population of the *Speculum humanae Salvationis* as a visual program in Prussia, the imagery is meant to show a link between the wandering of Moses in the desert (*desertum*), in which he also founded the altar at Rephidim. The coat of arms of the Grand Master, too, adorns the walls in a border intertwined with exotic animals and vines, thus serving as a link to the other centres of the Order at Marienburg (discussed above, as well as in Chapter 5).

At Arnau, we can be more certain of the visual program. Scenes from the *Speculum humanae Salvationis* adorn the walls, linking the Old Testament narratives which grounded and placed the Order's holy wars within Salvation History. This was repeated on a larger scale at Königsberg cathedral, the main gathering point for crusaders arriv-

138 Pospieszny, "Cegielka," 33.

139 Sarnowsky, *Deutsche Orden*, 82.

140 See Paravicini, PR 1: 305–9.

141 Herrmann, *Architektur*, 128.



Figure 10. a: Stork fresco, Lochstedt; b: Chapel interior, Lochstedt. Photographs © Bildarchiv Foto Marburg, reproduced with permission.

ing in Prussia.¹⁴² In the beginning of the chapter, the other elements of the landscape, namely the strange beasts and barbarous men inhabiting it, were used to show the pagan element of the Baltic region before the crusades. One sees the maintenance of this concept in the late fourteenth century, namely in the castle at Lochstedt (Rus. Pawlowo), pictured in Figure 10. The frescoes of the castle were subject to significant investigation by German conservator, Conrad Steinbrecht, in the early twentieth century, before being destroyed by the Red Army in 1945. The castle was built to “curb the wickedness of the Sambians” around 1270, but by the turn of the century, it served as the main office for the Amber Master. Lochstedt was a smaller, localized example of the Teutonic Order’s visual culture in Prussia that demonstrates the importance of landscape to the present study.

As a commandery castle, Lochstedt possessed a chapel within which the brethren were able to perform their monastic duties. The chapel portal and interior, photographed by Karl Heinz Clasen in the 1920s, reflect further parallels to the specific imagery analyzed in this chapter concerning the Christianization of landscape.¹⁴³ Most notable are the terracotta friezes on the inside, depicting oak and vine leaves, dated to around 1280.¹⁴⁴ These would have covered the entire space of the chapel, serving as a

¹⁴² Seydel, *Wandmalereien*; Paravicini, PR 1: 339.

¹⁴³ See Winnig, *Deutsche Ritterorden*, 55–63; Clasen, *Kunst*, 45–56.

¹⁴⁴ Herrmann, *Architektur*, 95, shows virtually identical terracotta plates in Elbing, Marienburg, and Lochstedt; also see 572–3 for the dating of the castle’s building periods.

type of border between the upper and lower portions of the walls. It remains unclear what the frescoes beneath white plaster would have been, but it was common for the Order's chapels to be heavily decorated, particularly with frescoes of the apostles and figures from the Old Testament (as was the case in the Chapel of the Virgin at Marienburg). These were examined by Janusz Trupinda as a visualization of Peter of Dusburg's chronicle, namely the role of the Teutonic Order in bringing the "new wars" (*nova bella*) to Prussia and the significance of the "signs and wonders" (*signa et mirabilia*).¹⁴⁵

The presence of this motif in both regions has a practical explanation. In both Livonia and Prussia, research concentrates on studying parallels between the architectural styles in northern Germany (particularly the Rhineland and Westphalia) and the lands under the Order's (or bishopric's) rule. In Livonia, it was the influence of political forces such as the king of Denmark, and noble families like the lords of Lippe, who brought about this style of building. Particularly in the latter case, these buildings were direct products of pilgrimage to Livonia since at least the thirteenth century. The *Lippiflorium* of Magister Justinian (ca. 1260) records the deeds of Bernard II of Lippe, who became the abbot of Dünamünde in Livonia, noting how he built fortresses and "constructed churches, which he consecrated, and he appointed clergy there, who completed (*peragat*) the holy duties to God."¹⁴⁶ Kersti Markus' recent study concerning the influence of crusading on church architecture in Livonia uses the political situations in northern Germany, Denmark, and Livonia to reconceptualize this unique period of crusade art.¹⁴⁷ She ultimately concludes, convincingly, that even for a brief glimpse in time, the presence of the newest architectural motifs in the frontier region that was Livonia showed that "the centre became the periphery."¹⁴⁸ Her investigations on the locations of St. Olaf churches in Livonia highlight the transformative role that these buildings played in sacralizing landscapes.¹⁴⁹ Churches dedicated to the saint were founded with both political and economic interests in mind, and a desire to reflect piety and convert Livonia's physical landscape.

The importation of architectural techniques and the visual reflection of crusading, in the form of constructing churches, begs the question to what extent the effects of crusading ideology transformed Livonia and Prussia. Moreover, the perception of the conquest in the visual sources places the sculptured elements common in Livonia and Prussia into a broader context of mission and landscape sacralization. As visible structures linked to the conquest of the region, their thematic elements (such as sculpted vines) represent ideological and conceptual elements of the Christianization process

145 Trupinda, "Peter von Dusburg," 522–6.

146 Bernard II of Lippe, for example, was renowned as a builder of churches and cities: *Lippiflorium*, 86 (lines 855–858): "Oppida, castra strui quasi propugnacula contra / Idolatras, armis, milite munit ea; / Construit ecclesias, quas consecrat; ordinat illic / Clerum, qui peragat munia sacra deo." Also see Sauer, "Bernhardus," 185–96.

147 Markus, "Borderland," 365–90.

148 Markus, 390.

149 Markus, "Trade," 3–25.

that those commissioning the churches wished to express.¹⁵⁰ The biblical connections of the mission and the importance of landscape present in the sources, alongside the motivating image of the *terra promissionis*, have a stronger connection to concepts of centre and periphery in this light.

Reinforcing this message strengthened understanding of how those wars shaped Prussia as a sacral landscape. This confirms a deeper level of meaning to contemporaries concerning how crusading was not only responsible for converting Prussia, but also played a role in sacralizing its landscape. The continual expeditions and presence in sacral centres such as churches were reinforced by this ideology and gave a distinct sense of the landscape's sacral qualities. The literary themes of the Lord's vineyard in the Prologue to Peter of Dusburg's *Chronicle of Prussia* play a significant role in the Order's early architecture in Prussia, visually reflecting the Order's understanding of the space in which its holy wars played out.¹⁵¹ The imagery with which Peter (and the other sources for the crusade to the north) described the landscape, a fertile, lush, and pleasant place for conversion, but also a space defined by its connection to paganism, had an impact in the visual arts in the Baltic.

These themes reflect a continued presence of landscape imagery not just in the written culture of the Order, but in the visual culture of Prussia. The presence of this iconography in other centres of the Order, particularly those visited on various occasions by pilgrims or guests on the *Reisen*, points to a deeper meaning within the Order's textual tradition concerning this imagery and, as a result, our understanding of the function of landscape and place in the crusades to the Baltic region. Indeed, the "holy places of Prussia" cleansed by the brothers, as "new Maccabees," had a physical and visual role in the Order's self-understanding, evinced in the art of the Golden Gate. With respect to Peter's quote and the *loca sancta terre Prussie*, Sarnowsky notes this imagery of the holy places was essential to the writing of history within the Teutonic Order.¹⁵² In Prussia, the Teutonic Order imported builders and masons who aided in the formation of its distinct architectural style. While most masons and workers came from Germany, it has been suggested that the international crusaders, such as Ottokar II, had an influence on castle design in the region.¹⁵³ Moreover, the presence of a broader body of nobles on the *Reisen* suggests that this continued into the later period of crusading. There are other parallels to specific workshop guilds in Germany, one being Magdeburg, as demonstrated in the motifs present at Marienburg at the Golden Gate.¹⁵⁴

Little work addresses, however, the specific elements of Peter of Dusburg's chronicle and the communal understanding of the region's history and its reflection in the visual culture of Prussia. This is also true for the extensive themes present throughout the written record for crusading in the Baltic in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries,

150 Markus, "Christianisierung," 478.

151 *PDC*, 44 (1.1). Also see the work of Pospieszny, "Architektur," 229.

152 See Sarnowsky, "Identität," 111

153 Pluskowski, *Archaeology*, 152.

154 Pluskowski, *Archaeology*, 157.

namely those that indicate how the region was perceived in relation to crusading. The ideological and artistic elements conform with the rest of Europe at the time, where art and architecture performed a didactic role and visually reflected elements of Scripture to its viewers. However, Pluskowski notes that there was a unique component involved in the Order's use of these common elements to express its own ideology with respect to Prussia. The art reflected not just the Order's political and physical control of the landscape, but also the divine favour placed upon its crusades, which created a new sacral geography.¹⁵⁵ The importation of stonemasons from the crusaders' regions influenced a distinct style of architecture in Prussia and Livonia, which explains the parallels from a visual and architectural perspective. Crusaders replicated their spiritual centres in places such as the Rhineland and Westphalia by imitating the popular building styles in Livonia and, to some degree, Prussia. However, its presence in sacral buildings shows that there was a continuity in places of origin with this new frontier and, most importantly, the key elements in the written evidence for the crusades reflecting landscape were emphasized in the visual culture encountered by crusader pilgrims.

The written evidence for the crusades to the Baltic region in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries provides clear evidence of a distinct association of the landscape itself with paganism. It also highlights the applicability of literary themes to examining how contemporaries perceived landscape, namely in the ways that they tended to write about it. From the pre-crusade missions, notably those of St. Adalbert of Prague and St. Otto of Bamberg, the connection of the landscape to the pagan religion was a clear element in the way that contemporaries came into contact with the region. Dark forests, and the barbarous peoples who worshipped their gods in them, were key to framing the pre-crusade missions.

This chapter demonstrates that the crusading movement also brought about a distinct ideology and language with respect to the landscape. The themes of spreading the faith through conversion, namely embodied in the themes of the vineyard, was a distinct element of the crusade texts that came to have a significant impact on the perception of the Baltic region. The paganism of the landscape remained constant, but it was through the mission of the crusaders, and their re-enactment of biblical events within that landscape, that served to cement the sacralization process in the text. As the expeditions progressed into the fourteenth century, reflections of the landscape changed. While the religious imagery of the texts sharply declines in the later fourteenth-century material, there was a peak in the visual culture of the medieval Baltic that parallels the ideological message in the texts. The theme of the vineyard, and the "new plantation of the Christian faith" particularly evident in the Teutonic Order's castles and churches in Prussia, but also in Livonia, was far more than a play on words: it was a visible reality and therefore vital to the experience of crusading in the region.

155 Pluskowski, *Archaeology*, 156–8.

