

## Military Order Castles in the Holy Land and Prussia: A Case for Cultural History

Gregory Leighton

In 1992 William Urban, the American scholar of the Baltic crusades, wrote a positive review of Alan Forey's *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Centuries*. He praised the work's comparative approach, noting correctly that scholars of the crusades and the military orders would appreciate the work's topical organization. However, Urban also observed that the work, 'has little space for cultural history', and that art, architecture and literature receive less priority 'except in passing references which are largely confined to the activities of the Teutonic Order'.<sup>1</sup> This comment originated the primary question of this paper: Can Alan Forey's approach serve as a model for comparative work on the cultural history of crusading in the Baltic and in the Holy Land? I intend to demonstrate that it can, specifically through comparing the castles of the military orders in each region. After outlining some immediate links between military order castles in the Levant and those of the Teutonic Order in the Baltic, this paper suggests stronger connections on spatial and artistic grounds. The conclusion is that future comparisons arise instead from the perspective of crusading ideology and its relation to the military orders.

The Teutonic Order finds its ancestry in a group of 'certain men, zealous in their faith in God, from the cities of Bremen and Lübeck' (*quidam viri de civitatibus Brema et Lubecke zelum Dei habentes*) that provided medical aid to those wounded at the siege of Acre in 1190.<sup>2</sup> According to its literary tradition, the Order's first base was outside of the city walls in a field hospital hastily erected under the sail of a ship, specifically that of a cog.<sup>3</sup> In 1192, Guy de Lusignan, king of Jerusalem, granted the small hospital land within the city of Acre, near the St Nicholas Gate.<sup>4</sup> Henry II, count of Champagne, gave the Order a segment of the city walls formerly belonging to the Hospital, including a barbican, in 1193.<sup>5</sup> The year 1198

marked the official militarization of the knights, with Innocent III granting them a rule modelled on those of the Templars and Hospitallers. In religious and soldierly affairs, they followed a model based on that of the Temple, and in the care for the poor and for sick that of the Hospital.<sup>6</sup> The Order entered a world dominated by its predecessors. Montfort castle, its headquarters in the Levant, reflects the considerable influence garnered by the knights in a short period.<sup>7</sup> In 1230 two years after the Order received the castle, Gregory IX encouraged Christians to help in its refortification, describing the act as 'so holy and pious a labor' (*tam sanctum et pium opus*) and granted a remission of sins for those who participated.<sup>8</sup> According to contemporary authors, Montfort was one of the region's stronger fortresses.<sup>9</sup>

The Order reached its zenith, however, in Prussia. In 1226, Frederick II's Golden Bull of Rimini turned the knights into princes of the Empire, and bequeathed to the Order the rights to the Culmerland region.<sup>10</sup> Frederick based this on Conrad of Masovia's 1222 donation of the same land to Christian of Oliva, Prussia's first bishop. Christian eventually founded the Order of Dobrin.<sup>11</sup> In 1228, Conrad sold the same territory to the Teutonic Order.<sup>12</sup> By the mid-1230s, the Teutonic Knights became the dominant order in the Baltic, remaining so until the Reformation.<sup>13</sup> The knights began receiving land donations and constructing forts alongside their conquest of the Prussians.<sup>14</sup> Scholars suggest a range of influences to explain the origin of the Order's castles, ranging from Saxon monasteries, Danish forts, and Bohemian castles to English Gothic cathedrals.<sup>15</sup>

Research on the castles and their history is primarily the work of German and Polish academics. The earliest synthesis of the Prussian castles was that of Karl Heinz Clasen, who in 1927 proposed a relationship between the Order's military architecture in the Holy Land with that of Prussia and even of northern Germany.<sup>16</sup> Clasen's book remained the only synthesis of the Order's castles until the work of Tomasz Torbus in 1998, which dismissed the possibility of such connections as dated and coincidental.<sup>17</sup> The recent publication of

Christofer Herrmann has focused on the exclusivity of the Order's Prussian castles and churches, dismissing potential links with the Holy Land and instead pointing to influences from eastern Europe.<sup>18</sup> The immediate physical similarities between the castles are indeed difficult to establish based on building material and architectural style. Ideological trends that emerged in the nineteenth century, mainly nationalistic sentiments on the part of German and Baltic-German scholars, added difficulty when attempting comparative research between the Baltic castles and those in the Holy Land. As Alan Forey notes in his work, however, we ought to take such arguments concerning political and national motivations on the part of the Order as hypotheses reflecting modern, as opposed to medieval, modes of thinking.<sup>19</sup>

These sentiments did factor, nonetheless, into scholarship on the castles. Baltic-German academics in the nineteenth century referred to the knights as 'culture bearers' (*Kulturtäger*), and viewed the Order as a vehicle for legitimizing their presence in the area.<sup>20</sup> Works of the twentieth century continued this trajectory. They aimed to identify a purely German form of architecture that came to civilize the pagan peoples of the Baltic, portraying the 'German spirit' that scholars searched for within the Order's architecture.<sup>21</sup> Clasen emphasized the complete grasp of the Gothic style that the German knights possessed, surpassing even those who invented it.<sup>22</sup> Torbus calls this 'a major and problematic theme for scholars' today.<sup>23</sup> These theories are not just limited to crusader castles in the Baltic, though. Scholars applied similar perspectives to the crusader castles of the Levant in the twentieth century. One example particularly centered on the origin of castle design and construction, and to what degree the Frankish crusaders influenced these developments.<sup>24</sup> Lawrence's work demonstrated a viewpoint of the crusader castles, and the military orders, as directly introducing the western model of the castle to the eastern Mediterranean, overtaking the 'mystical' eastern styles that preceded them.<sup>25</sup> Until recently, scholars have focused strictly

on the question of architectural links between the orders in Europe and the Holy Land, limiting possibilities of comparative research.

Aleksander Pluksowski points to the fact that the Order's Prussian castles 'had existent prototypes in the Culmerland', and mimicked them in function.<sup>26</sup> There is little reason to doubt this on face value: the military orders in the Baltic received donations of lands and castles from Polish dukes from the 1220s onward. For example, Conrad of Masovia's sale of the Culmerland to the Order in 1228 included a village called Orlau.<sup>27</sup> The Order of Dobrin, mentioned above, received lands and villages in the area of Dobrin castle around the same time.<sup>28</sup> Dobrin likely had fortifications at this point, based on its description in the succeeding charter, which refers to the knights receiving 'the castle of Dobrin, with the surrounding land' (*castrum Dobrin cum spacio terrarum*).<sup>29</sup> It serves to reason that these donations served as bases for fortresses built as the frontier expanded. Local influences and lack of material evidence presents a significant hurdle in linking castles from both regions. Recent excavation evidence shows that Montfort castle underwent considerable alterations between its purchase in 1220 and its fall in 1271, indicating that the Order did play a role in altering the site.<sup>30</sup> As illustrated below, this is particularly true for the Orders early castles in Prussia.

Comparing the military orders on the frontiers in Iberia and the Baltic with their origins in the Holy Land, however, does provide initial links between castles that are lacking in architecturally focused studies. A shared factor between the military orders on all fronts is that they protected and established routes for future campaigns. They also employed the geographical surroundings to their advantage. Castles in the Baltic controlled strategic waterways, those in Spain organized the frontier lines, while in the Holy Land the orders received important administrative and frontier-oriented castles.<sup>31</sup> These castles owned by the military orders were of pivotal military importance in keeping enemies at bay. Only when a fortress fell could control of an area become a reality. Until then the majority of attacks were

restricted to raiding activities.<sup>32</sup> Similarities between the castles therefore emerge first in the military and strategic significance of the orders' strongholds in the Holy Land, Spain and, of course, in the Baltic.

In the Holy Land, the Templars and the Hospitallers began receiving fortresses as donations beginning in the twelfth century. The Hospital, for example, received Bethgibelin in 1136 from King Fulk of Jerusalem, and this event marked the beginning of its status as landholders in the Kingdom.<sup>33</sup> In addition to securing the newly established frontier, both orders built and staffed towers guarding pilgrimage routes, and providing shelter for those travelling to Jerusalem.<sup>34</sup> Some orders built more along the frontier, one example being the Hospitallers, who built their castles in the twelfth century in more isolated locations than those of the Templars.<sup>35</sup> Denys Pringle researched three castles along the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem: Yazur, Latrun, and Yalu.<sup>36</sup> These were all Templar possessions by the middle of the twelfth century, and their positions indicate a strong sense of duty within the Order to protect those travelling the roads.<sup>37</sup> This also reflects an aspect of the order's self-image, to which I will return.

While little information about castle building on the Iberian Peninsula is available, the military orders did garrison strategic points along the frontier between Christianity and Islam. Alan Forey's work on the Spanish Crown's donations to the Templars and the Order of Santiago in the twelfth century presents a connection between the building and donation of castles in Spain to the situation of the Teutonic Order in the Baltic.<sup>38</sup> Castles under the ownership of military orders garrisoned frontiers in each region. In fact, the military activities of the orders on the Iberian Peninsula began immediately after their foundation, a further parallel with unfolding scenario in Prussia under the control of Teutonic Order. In both cases, the orders constructed castles as the conquests advanced.

A series of programs thus unified the castles built by the military orders. The two first two, and most immediately identifiable, are those of military strategy and defense. These provide more solid ground for identifying similarities between castles in the Holy Land and the Baltic. These similarities occur on all frontiers of crusading. The third program, however, concerns the religious obligations of the orders, namely their duty to fight non-Christian enemies. There are examples, such as Italy, the Morea, and even the Baltic where the orders fought against Christian enemies.<sup>39</sup> However, the present paper focuses on the original purpose of the orders, which was to combat non-Christians. All three of these components played an important part in medieval society since the advent of the crusading movement, both in the Latin East and on frontiers in Europe. It is important at this time to explore the shortcomings of linking the Holy Land castles with those of the Baltic, particularly concerning design influences. In doing so, the necessity for factors such as spatial analysis and considerations of crusade ideology emerges as avenues for future studies.

An immediate issue is the structural form of these castles, which makes comparisons difficult. The initial stone and brick castles of the Teutonic Order in Prussia built in the 1230s – 1250s were not the square structures known as ‘convent castles’ (*Konventsburgen*) that characterized the Order’s buildings by the fourteenth century.<sup>40</sup> These castles include Toruń (Thorn), Elbląg (Elbing), and Bałga (Balga).<sup>41</sup> Aptly termed the ‘first generation’ of the Order’s castles, this group aligns with those built in the Holy Land strictly on chronological grounds in the sense that the Order was fighting on two fronts. The knights erected the early castles along the banks of the Vistula River, the first frontier against the Prussians, and built these first castles quickly and efficiently out of wood and earth. This has lead scholars to cast doubt as to whether or not they employed a communal lifestyle.<sup>42</sup> Narrative sources produced by the Order do state that the early brothers lived devout lives, however they were writing almost a century after the conquest.<sup>43</sup> By the middle of the thirteenth century, however, the

knights began to refortify these structures more permanent materials. Toruń is one of the finer reflections of this.

Toruń is the first castle that the Order built, or at least the earliest one that the archaeological record can substantiate. Peter of Dusburg records the construction of a castle called 'Vogelsang' sometime before 1230, the election of Hermann Balk as master of the Order's Prussian branch. Pluskowski dates the building of Vogelsang to either 1226 or 1228, however there are no remains of the thirteenth-century structure.<sup>44</sup> The northern wall at Toruń contains the remnants of the earliest stone foundation of the castle, dated to sometime between 1236 and 1240. The use of local fieldstone (*Feldstein*) to construct the castle made it a new style of building to a region where, until that time, the primary medium of construction was wood and earth.<sup>45</sup> Workable deposits of stone were not common in Prussia, but they were in Livonia. Henry of Livonia writes of German merchants using stone as building material to build Meinhard of Livonia's church-castle complex at Üxküll in 1186.<sup>46</sup> The Prussian frontier offered a different situation, resulting in the use of redbrick becoming a favored building material. The earliest redbrick fragments at Toruń date from around 1250, bearing close resemblance to structures built by the Order between 1237 and 1247.<sup>47</sup>

Toruń's irregular plan indicates that the knights built their first castle on a pre-existing site. Peter of Dusburg's record for 1231 reveals that the knights changed the castle's (and the city's) location due to flooding.<sup>48</sup> A connection with the fortresses in the Holy Land emerges in the practice of the Order to build castles on existing structures, given the region's long history of habitation. The deliberate location of Toruń on the banks of the Vistula parallels the building of castles in the Holy Land, too. In this region, the orders both came into possession of their castles and constructed them at strategic points within the landscape. Montfort employed its natural surroundings as a means of defense, which included a narrow ridge surrounded by deep valleys on each side.<sup>49</sup> Gregory IX exhorted Christians to help in

the refortification of the castle, which was 'situated on the border of the pagans' (*positum in confinio paganorum*) in 1230, though the castle eventually became an administrative center.<sup>50</sup>

Marienburg, the Order's Prussian headquarters, likewise became administrative rather than offensive castle by the thirteenth century.<sup>51</sup> After the subduing of the Prussian tribes in the 1270s and the continued 'war of conquest' that commenced in 1283, the Order increasingly turned its attentions to the Baltic region.<sup>52</sup> As the crusade progressed, then, a pattern serves to link the castles of the Order in both regions in terms of how their functions changed.

The early Prussian castles, particularly Toruń, were anomalies in comparison to later fortresses. The knights' castle at Montfort, too, was an irregularity of castles in the Holy Land. Scholars have argued for a German influence behind the castle, particularly in the keep. Boas argues the opposite, namely that the castle influenced the design of other fortresses in the region and even in Europe.<sup>53</sup> Hugh Kennedy points the D-Shaped keep of the castle to the *bergfried* common in Germany.<sup>54</sup> Folda also linked the castle to western influences, possibly German ones.<sup>55</sup> Adrian J. Boas, however, has also suggested the tower at Montfort may have been a fortified church (*église donjon*) similar to those at the Templar castles of Sidon and Chastel Blanc, and possibly the Teutonic Order's Armenian castle of Harunia.<sup>56</sup> Scholars also identify *bergfried* in the fourteenth-century castles of the Teutonic Order, such as Schwetz (present-day Świecie, Poland).<sup>57</sup> This does indeed suggest possible exchanges in architecture between the Order, namely among castles both in the Holy Land and Western Europe, in addition to the incorporation of local styles. However, some would argue that these links are superficial in nature, as outlined above. Architectural links and origins of design will likely continue to spark debate as to how similar the castles are to one another. However, there is a better avenue for linking castles in the two regions, one example being a consideration of the use of space.

As Henri Lefebvre proposed, we define space not only with respect to social relationships among people, but as a product of them.<sup>58</sup> This serves as a point to compare the military orders and their castles in the Levant and the Baltic, when one considers their lifestyles. Rules for the military orders indicate that they planned castles to accommodate monastic obligations. For example, the Teutonic Order's statutes contain a clause outlining the office of *nonas* and *vespers*, which brethren carried out in the castles.<sup>59</sup> The *Konventsburgen* of Prussia, particularly those of the fourteenth century, incorporate the spatial aspects of both castle and monastery. Castles functioning as commanderies (*Komtureien*) contained a castle church, a refectory, a dormitory, infirmary and a chapter house.<sup>60</sup> The same holds true for castles in the Levant belonging to the military orders. At Montfort there is evidence of a dormitory, refectory, and perhaps a chapter house on the upper level of the castle's central wing.<sup>61</sup> Likewise, the Templar castle of 'Atlit and the Hospitaller castle of Belvoir possess similar structures in their spatial layout, as I will now elaborate.

Although Kennedy noted the similarities between the military orders' castles and those of lay nobility in the region, the orders' castles required a layout which would enable the brothers stationed there to perform their monastic obligations. Castles built by the orders employed a conventual layout from the twelfth century. A notable example is Belvoir, whose layout, reflecting a 'castle within a castle', demonstrates the monastic influence on the orders' architecture in the Levant.<sup>62</sup> The Teutonic Order's castle at Mi'ilya (*castellum Regis*), sold to the Order in 1228, also has a square layout. The castle served as an important administrative center for the knights.<sup>63</sup> However, while scholars argue that the likeness of structures in Prussia to those in the eastern Mediterranean is coincidental, a consideration of the spatial layout of the Prussian castles suggests otherwise.

The *Konventsburgen* in Prussia with a standardized plan began to first emerge in the 1260s, in the region of the Vistula Lagoon.<sup>64</sup> These castles possessed three wings initially,

but from the outset incorporated monastic spaces.<sup>65</sup> For example, the ruins of Brandenburg castle (also known as *Frisches Haff*), erected in 1266, possess evidence for the emergence of a style already present in the military order castles of the Levant in terms of decoration and iconology.<sup>66</sup> These early castles soon emerged into the classic four-winged style, further combining castle with cloister in the region. These buildings came to characterize the castle architecture of the Teutonic Order in the Baltic. In comparison to the twelfth-century castles discussed above, particularly Belvoir, a spatial relationship does emerge. From the perspective of the central duties of the military orders as an institution, geographical boundaries do not appear to affect the possibility for comparing the castles. The self-image of the Teutonic Order and the use of space in their Baltic castles may serve to compare them with those built by the military orders in the Holy Land.

The military orders, not just in the Levant but also in the Baltic, were depicted in various ways within medieval society. People reacted to these depictions in favor or disapproval of the orders as institutions, which ultimately led to the emergence of a self-image within the orders. A popular expression of devotion by those who could afford it was a donation to support the military orders. Patrons did so for a variety of reasons, but a strong influence was the idea of crusading itself.<sup>67</sup> The Teutonic Knights received a variety of donations in Prussia for the spiritual salvation of individuals, an example being Conrad of Masovia's sale of Nessau castle in 1230.<sup>68</sup> The Order also received praise for its duties as strong fighters of the pagans, according to charter evidence from Prussia.<sup>69</sup> Negative criticisms of the orders could have been as much an expression of individual biases, expressing personal agendas, rather than the reality of the situation. For example, the orders received criticism for failing to protect the Holy Land and being guilty of the sin of pride.<sup>70</sup> However, with the Teutonic Order we also see an important focus on self-image. The Order needed to justify its continued existence after the loss of Acre in 1291, which in part explains the large body of literature,

Accepted version to appear in a forthcoming *Festschrift* in honor of Dr. Alan Forey. Not to be used without Author's permission.

both historical and devotional, produced near the end of the thirteenth and throughout the fourteenth centuries.<sup>71</sup> The creation of this body of literature coincided with the erection of more permanent fortresses and the movement of the Order's attention to Prussia.

The chronicles of Peter von Dusburg and his translator, Nicolaus von Jeroschin, both aid in the assessment of the Order's self-image.<sup>72</sup> Both authors were priests within the Order (*Priesterbrüdere*), and carried out a different set of duties than the knight brothers did.<sup>73</sup> For example, they were expected to carry out the administration of the sacraments and to have 'religious fervor and zealous regular observance' (*fervor religionis et zelus observancie regularis*).<sup>74</sup> These chroniclers were not unaware of the origins of the Teutonic Order in the Holy Land, often alluding to its pious foundation and the devotion of the brethren in Prussia. These descriptions served a goal, however, one being the increasing need to justify the Order's crusades in Prussia.<sup>75</sup> The chronicles offer significant laments on the loss of the Holy Land in 1291, highlighting the connection felt by the Order in Prussia even after it had established its 'monastic state' in the region.<sup>76</sup> Both also reflect upon the architecture and the spirituality of the knights, and offer a further way of comparing the castles in Prussia with those of the Holy Land. What emerges is a blending of themes adopted from the biblical tradition and applied to the Order's ideological program in the Baltic.

A specific example is their reference to the Tower of David, located in the city's Old Quarter and at one point the palace of the kings of Jerusalem.<sup>77</sup> The imagery comes from the Song of Songs, though the Order's chroniclers refer to it within the context of crusading in Prussia. Peter uses the biblical the Tower of David in a treatise on physical and spiritual weaponry, both of which the brethren of the Teutonic Order are expected to use. The knights function as Solomon's guards, 'the forty men of Israel's strongest, all holding their swords' (*LX fortes et fortissimis Israel, omnes tenentes gladios*).<sup>78</sup> These weapons, the shields and spears that the knights use, hang on the tower itself.<sup>79</sup> The Order thus carries on a tradition

not just limited to crusading in the Holy Land, but one related to the very figures who established the sanctity of that geography: the warriors of the Old Testament who accompanied Solomon. Likewise, the brothers are 'the guardians of the head of Christ' and, as a result, are obliged to carry weapons to defend him.<sup>80</sup> What becomes clear is that the Teutonic Order was well aware of creating an image founded in the biblical tradition. The literary motif itself goes back to the meagre origins outside of Acre in its agenda to justify its wars on Christendom's northeastern frontier.<sup>81</sup>

Peter, moreover, connected the Order's Prussian castles to the house of Wisdom, as represented in Proverbs. Peter links the Order's seven provincial commanderies, namely Livonia, Prussia, Germany, Austria, Apulia, Romania and Armenia, with the seven pillars that hold support Wisdom's house.<sup>82</sup> This reflects an effort on the part of the chroniclers to connect the Order's status in Prussia to illustrious ancestry: the wars fought by the knights, according to Peter, descend from those of Abraham and continue through to Moses, Joshua and the Maccabees.<sup>83</sup> Indeed, Honorius III also referred to the brothers as 'new Maccabees during a time of grace' (*novi sub tempore gracie Machabei*) in 1221.<sup>84</sup> Just as the Jews in the Book of Nehemiah reconstructed the walls of Jerusalem, so did the Teutonic Knights refortify their castles after the Second Prussian Revolt, which lasted fourteen years.<sup>85</sup> The castles serve as a spiritual symbol of the brothers' campaigns, embodying biblical concepts and allegorical relationships to biblical warriors.

Approaching the study of the Order's castles in this way is not an entirely new field. Scholars have traditionally focused on the art-historical aspects only. For example, Pospieszny asserted that in the last century, research on the Order's castles primarily focused on two factors: the question of origins of the castles' designs and the analysis of the iconology within the broader context of the building activity of the knights.<sup>86</sup> Recently, however, research has advanced to connecting the castles with literary, ideological aspects of

Accepted version to appear in a forthcoming *Festschrift* in honor of Dr. Alan Forey. Not to be used without Author's permission.

crusading. The Polish scholar, Szczęśny Skibiński connected the iconology of the Order's headquarters at Marienburg to more than just an expression of its sovereignty in Prussia: the castle also reflected a connection to Jerusalem in its depiction of Old and New Testament imagery.<sup>87</sup> Other scholars have linked the Baltic castles to the Holy Land through the study of an apocalyptic text produced by a thirteenth-century priest of the Order, Heinrich von Hesler.<sup>88</sup> Heinrich made allegorical comparisons to the Order's castles and the Heavenly Jerusalem. He mentions 'a high, great castle, the richest of them all, to me like a New Jerusalem, so well was it fortified'.<sup>89</sup> Though the castles did not have any established sacred sites to guard or protect, as those in the Holy Land did, authors nonetheless used them as religious symbols. This offers some parallels with the descriptions of castles owned by the military orders in the Levant.

Saphet, owned by the Order of the Temple since c.1163, when King Amaury of Jerusalem donated it to the Order, was one of the most important fortresses in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.<sup>90</sup> It was a massive holding for the Templars, although the site is now in a ruined state. An anonymous account recording its refortification in 1240 by the Templars is the best surviving text describing the construction of a castle in the Holy Land during the crusades. The document also demonstrates how the military orders, and their castles, occupied spiritual roles. Medieval authors used the castles of the military orders to reinforce ideological components of crusading.<sup>91</sup> A particularly relevant passage of the treatise concerns the castle's placement within the Holy Land's religious geography.

The author praises how harmful the castle is to the infidels, and how useful it was to the entire land of the Christians, a comment on its strength and imposing nature.<sup>92</sup> Gregory IX similarly emphasized how helpful the refortification of Montfort would be to the Christians living in those parts.<sup>93</sup> The location of Saphet freed locations central to Christ's life and teachings. According to the text, Saphet guarded a total of ten places sacred to the Christian

faith. One of these places was a church at the *Mensa Domini*, 'a place for solemn pilgrimage'.<sup>94</sup> Given the original function of the Templars, and the military orders in general, to protect pilgrims, this is not surprising. In addition to physically guarding pilgrimage routes, as mentioned above, ideologically castles served to reinforce the necessity of the military orders to Christendom. The Teutonic Knights, too, received praise by Gregory IX as 'those who are not afraid to lay down their lives for their brothers, and struggle hard to protect pilgrims going to and returning from the holy places from pagan incursions'.<sup>95</sup> Saphet clearly had strategic and military functions, protecting the route to Damascus and thus making the land between there and the Jordan a Christian territory. This depiction of Saphet, its placement in the Holy Land's religious geography and its use as a symbol of Christian strength, is similar to the depiction of castles within the chronicles of Peter and Nicolaus.

Remains excavated and restored at these castles provide further avenues for comparison. As mentioned above, extensive research by Polish scholars has focused on the iconology of the Teutonic Order's castles, particularly the Order's headquarters: Marienburg (Malbork). In the Latin East, the castles of Saphet, Montfort, Toron des Chevaliers, and Sidon all possess fine examples of religious architecture and sculpture, particularly from the early 1240s.<sup>96</sup> At Saphet, for example, there are remnants of a thirteenth-century sculpture of what is probably a monk. The possible remains of a round chapel at the site, a link to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, suggest that the Templar castle at 'Atlit (Pilgrim's Castle) was not the only castle with such a structure inside its walls.<sup>97</sup> The Teutonic Order's castles in the Baltic do not possess round churches, but they do provide examples that reflect the Order's ideological agenda. Pluskowski provides a survey of the finds from the Order's castles. One particular example is at the Marienburg: a statue of the Virgin that 'would have been visible from some distance to anyone approaching the castle from the east'.<sup>98</sup> In the interior of the castle, particularly the Knight's Hall, survive scenes of the coronation of the Virgin.<sup>99</sup> The Golden

Gate, leading into the main chapel of the castle, possesses Marian imagery to honor the Order's patron saint.

Frescoes and sculptures in both regions may have played important roles in educating brethren of their illustrious past and duties as a religious order of knights.<sup>100</sup> Recent studies on space and architecture in the medieval world, although focused on the Gothic cathedral, suggest that the visual elements in architecture did play a didactic role.<sup>101</sup> Such studies increase the potential for future comparative works on military order castles. The military orders used art to express their devotion to specific saints, particularly martyr saints such as St George.<sup>102</sup> The Teutonic Order in particular devoted itself to the Virgin, among other saints, and used her patronage to justify its crusades in Prussia. Winnig's synthesis of the Order's castles, produced in 1940, demonstrates the quality of frescoes that these castles possessed. One example is the frescoes at the castle of Lochstädt, which included an image of St George, a saint who also appears on the walls of Crac des Chevaliers and Marqab.<sup>103</sup> Such finds show that the Order took to expressing its ideological program visually, in addition to the textual traditions that it developed over time. This was not limited to the Teutonic Order, however. The frescoes in the Hospitaller castle of Crac des Chevaliers included one depicting the Presentation at the Temple.<sup>104</sup> While it has been argued that the precise function of these frescoes cannot be determined completely, a visual program of expressing devotion manifested itself among the military orders as institutions.

A majority of previous studies on the castles of the orders, particularly that of the Teutonic Order, limited themselves to finding parallels on architectural grounds alone. The above suggests alternative grounds for comparison. Castles in both places did function the same way in the sense that they protected frontiers, provided safety to pilgrims, and served as administrative centers. In addition, the orders constructed them with their religious duties and obligations in mind. New research into the military orders and the spirituality of their lifestyle

Accepted version to appear in a forthcoming *Festschrift* in honor of Dr. Alan Forey. Not to be used without Author's permission.

is providing further avenues to explore.<sup>105</sup> With respect to the Teutonic Order and its domination of the crusade against the pagans of northeastern Europe, this research aids in lifting further the barriers in scholarship raised throughout the last two centuries.<sup>106</sup> Applying this trajectory to the spatial layout of the Order's fortresses, as well as to the artistic material and documentary evidence, indicates that further links remain to be explored between military orders' castles in the Baltic and in the Holy Land. To conclude, there is plenty of scope for Alan Forey's comparative approach to research to be applied to the cultural history of the military orders.

---

<sup>1</sup> W. Urban, review of A. Forey, *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the Fourteenth Centuries*, *American Historical Review*, 97.5 (Dec., 1992), 1502.

<sup>2</sup> *Petri de Dusburg Chronica terre Prussie*, ed. K. Scholz and D. Wojtecki (Darmstadt, 1984) (hereafter cited as *PDC*), 1.1, pp. 38–40; see also the *Narracio de primordiis ordinis Theutonici* in *Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens nach den Ältesten Handschriften*, ed. M. Perlbach (Halle, 1890) (hereafter cited as *SDO*), p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* The *Narracio* records: ‘hospitale quoddam ex velo navis, que cocka vocatur’. Likewise, Peter of Dusburg writes that ‘quidam devoti homines de Bremensi et Lubicensi...fundaverunt hospitale in tentorio suo facto de velo cuiusdam navis dicte cocka Theutonice’.

<sup>4</sup> See *Tabulae Ordinis Theutonici*, ed. E. Strehlke (Toronto, 1975) (hereafter cited as *TOT*), no. 27, pp. 23–4. The St Nicholas Gate is on the eastern end of the old city of Acre.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 28, pp. 24–5. Henry gave the Order ‘totam barbacanam, turres quoque et muros et fossatum a meta propriis, quam in ipsa barbacana domui hospitalis sancti Iohannis et fratribus dedi, usque portam sancti Nicholay’; see also no. 29, p. 25, where Henry gives to the Order ‘quandam voutam in Ackon iuxta portam, que dicitur porta sancti Nicolai, sitam, que videlicet vouta est continua muris civitatis Acconensis’.

<sup>6</sup> Papal confirmation at *ibid.*, no. 297, p. 266. The knights were to be ‘iuxta modum Templariorum in clericis et militibus, et ad exemplum Hospitaliorum in pauperibus et infirmis’.

<sup>7</sup> *TOT*, no. 63, p. 52, records the donation of the castle by Jacques de Mandelée in 1228.

<sup>8</sup> *TOT*, no. 72, pp. 56–7. For the remission of sins, see p. 57.

<sup>9</sup> See N. Morton, *The Teutonic Knights in the Holy Land: 1190–1291* (London, 2009), pp. 155–7: examines the strength of the fortress and its very quick fall to the Mamluks in 1271. Montfort is located in the western Galilee region of Israel.

<sup>10</sup> *Preußisches Urkundenbuch. Politische Abtheilung*, ed. R. Philippi, A. Seraphim *et al*, 6 vols (Königsberg and Marburg, 1882–1986) (hereafter cited as *PrUB*), vol. 1, 1.56, pp. 41–3. Culmerland is present-day north-central Poland.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 1.41, pp. 27–31 (treaty between Christian and Conrad), 1.67, p. 49 (the Order comes into possession of the castle and surrounding lands of Dobrin); and 1.68, p. 50 (Gregory IX places the Order of Dobrin under papal protection). For the history of this regional order, see A. Forey, *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the Fourteenth Centuries* (London, 1992), p. 33. Christian modelled the Knights of Dobrin on the first military order established to fight the non-Christian peoples of the Baltic: the Livonian Order of the Sword Brothers, founded in 1202 by Albert, Bishop of Riga.

<sup>12</sup> *PrUB*, 1, 1.64, p. 47.

<sup>13</sup> The Order's absorption of the Sword Brothers in 1236 occurred after the latter's defeat at Saule, in which the Order's master, Volkwin, died at the hands of the Samogitians: see K. Militzer, 'Entstehung und Ausbreitung des Deutschen Ordens im 13. Jahrhundert', in K. Militzer, *Die Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens* (Berlin, 2005), pp. 77–80.

<sup>14</sup> Forey, *The Military Orders*, p. 67.

<sup>15</sup> L. Kaszjer and P.A. Nowakowski, 'Remarks on the Architecture of the Teutonic Order's Castles in Prussia', in *The Crusades and the Military Orders: Expanding the Frontiers of Medieval Latin Christianity*, ed. Z. Hunyadi and J. Laszloszky (Budapest, 2001), pp. 451–2, suggest an origin in the 'mid European' castles of the Czech region. Also see A. Pluskowski, *The Archaeology of the Prussian Crusade: Holy War and Colonisation* (London, 2012), pp. 152–3.

<sup>16</sup> K.H. Clasen, *Die Mittelalterliche Kunst im Gebiete des Deutschordensstaates Preußen I: Die Burgbauten* (Frankfurt am Main, 1979), pp. 6–7. See also K. Pospieszny, 'Die Architektur des Deutschordenshauses in Preußen als Ausdruck- und Herstellungsmittel der Ordensmission und Herrscherpolitik', *Ordines Militares: Colloquia Torunensia Historica XIII: Selbstbild und Selbstbildverständnis der geistlichen Ritterorden*, ed. R. Czaja and J. Sarnowsky (Toruń, 2005), p. 227.

<sup>17</sup> T. Torbus, *Die Konventsburgen in Deutschordensland Preussen* (Munich, 1998), pp. 38–9; see also Torbus, 'The Architecture of the Castles in the Prussian State of the Teutonic Order', in *Archaeology and Architecture of the Military Orders: New Studies*, ed. M. Piana and C. Carlsson (Farnham, 2014), pp. 220–1.

<sup>18</sup> C. Herrmann, *Mittelalterliche Architektur in Preußenland: Untersuchungen zur Frage der Kunstlandschaft und -geographie* (Petersberg, 2007), pp. 242–46; Idem, *Der Hochmeisterpalast auf der Marienburg: Konzeption, Bau und Nutzung der modernsten europäischen Fürstenresidenz um 1400* (Petersberg, 2019), pp. 19–30.

<sup>19</sup> Forey, *The Military Orders*, p. 11.

<sup>20</sup> For example, see E. Russow, H. Valk, A. Haak, A. Pärn, and Ain Mäesalu, 'Medieval Archaeology of the European Context: Towns, Churches, Monasteries and Castles', in *Estonian Archaeology I: Archaeological Research in Estonia, 1865–2005*, ed. V. Land and M. Lanneman (Tartu, 2006), p. 181.

<sup>21</sup> Kaszjer and Nowakowski, p. 449.

<sup>22</sup> Clasen, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Torbus, 'Castles in the Prussian State of the Teutonic Order', p. 224.

<sup>24</sup> See R. Ellenblum, *Crusader Castles and Modern Histories* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 62–72.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>26</sup> Pluskowski, pp. 100–1.

<sup>27</sup> *PrUB*, 1, 1.64, p. 47.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, no. 66, pp. 48–9. Gunther, bishop of Płock, and a deacon, William, made the donation in July of 1228. Dobrin is present-day Dobrzyń, in north-central Poland.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, no. 67, p. 49.

<sup>30</sup> See A.J. Boas, 'Renewed Research at Montfort Castle', in *Archaeology and Architecture of the Military Orders*, ed. Piana and Carlsson, pp. 175–92, here pp. 181–2.

<sup>31</sup> Pluskowski, pp. 97–101.

<sup>32</sup> Forey, *The Military Orders*, p. 58.

<sup>33</sup> See H. Kennedy, *Crusader Castles* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 31.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 21–61.

<sup>35</sup> See D. Nicolle, *Crusader Castles in the Holy Land, 1097–1192* (Oxford, 2004), p. 40.

<sup>36</sup> D. Pringle, 'Templar Castles between Jaffa and Jerusalem', in *MO* 2, pp. 89–109. Yazur had different names in the Latin sources, namely *Casale Balneorum*, *Casel des Plains*, and *Casellem de Templo* (p. 92); Latrun is the Frankish *Toron des Chevaliers* (p. 95); and Yalu the *Chastel Arnoul* (p. 103).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>38</sup> Forey, 'The Military Orders and the Spanish Reconquest in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', *Traditio*, 40 (1984), 197–234; Forey, *The Military Orders*, pp. 64–7, specifically examines the regional distribution between military orders and their castles on the peninsula.

<sup>39</sup> For examples, see Forey, *The Military Orders*, pp. 38–43; J. Riley-Smith, *What were the Crusades?* (London: 2002), pp. 18–22; N. Housley, *Contesting the Crusades* (Oxford, 2006), p. 99; and N. Morton, *The Medieval Military Orders, 1120–1314* (Harlow, 2013), pp. 121–4.

<sup>40</sup> This style of castle was widespread throughout the Baltic region, not just Prussia. For Livonian examples. A. Tuulse, *Die Burgen in Estland und Lettland* (Dorpat, 1942), offers one

of the best syntheses of the Livonian castles. For Tuulse's analysis of the convent castles and the military orders in Livonia, see pp. 124–62.

<sup>41</sup> Kaszjer and Nowakowski, pp. 453–54 outlines the scholarship on this generation.

<sup>42</sup> Torbus, 'Castles in the Prussian State of the Teutonic Order', pp. 226–8.

<sup>43</sup> For example, see *PDC*, 2.11 (pp. 92–4); and 3.12 (pp. 112–14). Peter does indicate that brethren lived a religious lifestyle in his description of the construction of Rheden castle in the year 1234.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 90–2. Also see Pluskowski, p. 112.

<sup>45</sup> Forey, *The Military Orders*, p.67. Also see S. Turnbull, *Crusader Castles of the Teutonic Knights (1): The Red-Brick Castles of Prussia, 1230–1466* (Oxford, 2003), p. 17.

<sup>46</sup> *Heinrici chronicon Lyvoniae*, ed. L. Arbusow and A. Bauer, in *MGH rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarium separatim editi*, 31 (Hanover, 1955), 1.6, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Torbus, *Konventsburgen*, p. 56.

<sup>48</sup> *PDC*, 3.1, p. 96. The text reads: 'In successu vero temporis instituerunt circa dictum castrum civitatem, que postea manente castro translata fuit propter continuam aquarum inundanciam ad eum locum, ubi nunc sita sunt et castrum et civitatis Throunensis'. Schulz's and Wojtecki's edition of the text suggests the year 1236 as the date for the moving of the castle and city, see n. 50.

<sup>49</sup> See Forey, *The Military Orders*, pp. 63–4.

<sup>50</sup> *TOT*, no. 72, p. 57. Also see Forey, *The Military Orders*, p. 63, for the administrative function of the castle.

<sup>51</sup> See *PDC*, 3.208, p. 324. The castle that would become Marienburg, according to Peter, was originally known as Zantir and was a Prussian stronghold.

<sup>52</sup> This marked a series of campaigns that continued throughout the fourteenth and into the early fifteenth century known as the *Reisen*. For a comprehensive study of the chronology of

these wars, see W. Paravicini, *Die Preussenreisen des Europäischen Adels*, 5 vols to date (Sigmaringen, 1985 –). For the dating of the *Reisen*, see vol. 1, p. 23.

<sup>53</sup> Boas, p. 182.

<sup>54</sup> Kennedy, p. 131.

<sup>55</sup> J. Folda, *Crusader Art: The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1099–1291* (Aldershot, 2008), p. 94.

<sup>56</sup> Boas, p. 184.

<sup>57</sup> See Torbus, 'Castles in the Prussian State of the Teutonic Order', p. 234.

<sup>58</sup> H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, 1991).

<sup>59</sup> *SDO*, no. 63, p. 117.

<sup>60</sup> Torbus, 'Castles in the Prussian State of the Teutonic Order', pp. 225–6.

<sup>61</sup> Boas, p. 186. Boas states such buildings and their layouts were 'the usual arrangement in monastic and military order houses'.

<sup>62</sup> Forey, *The Military Orders*, p. 64.

<sup>63</sup> See *TOT*, no. 62, p. 50. The charter, issued by Jacob of Amigdala, gives over his possessions to the knights.

<sup>64</sup> Forey, *The Military Orders*, p.67, outlines these early castles in the Vistula Lagoon.

<sup>65</sup> Torbus, 'Castles in the Prussian State of the Teutonic Order', p. 228.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 228–30.

<sup>67</sup> H. Nicholson, *Templars, Hospitallers and Teutonic Knights: Images of the Military Orders, 1128–1291* (London, 1995), p. 60.

<sup>68</sup> *PrUB*, 1, 1.76, p. 56.

<sup>69</sup> For example, see *PrUB*, 1, 1.77, p. 57 and 1.78, pp. 58–9.

<sup>70</sup> Nicholson, *Images of the Military Orders*, pp. 45–6.

<sup>71</sup> See K. Helm and W. Ziesemer, *Die Literatur des Deutschen Ritterordens* (Giessen, 1951) for an overview of the genre. Also see M. Fischer, 'Winning Hearts and Minds: the role of the written word in the Crusades in northeastern Europe in the fourteenth century', in *The Book in Germany*, ed. M.C. Fischer and W.A. Kelly (Edinburgh, 2010), pp. 1–16.

<sup>72</sup> The texts emerged in the fourteenth century, specifically 1326–31 for Peter's chronicle and 1331–41 for that of Nicolaus.

<sup>73</sup> *SDO*, p. 64, and Forey, *The Military Orders*, pp. 164, 178.

<sup>74</sup> *SDO*, p. 64. The Middle High German text also emphasizes this: 'die dâ minnere sint des ordens unde geistliches lebenes unde gerne vuderende sint Gotes êre'.

<sup>75</sup> See M. Fischer, 'Introduction', in *The Chronicle of Prussia: A History of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia, 1190–1331* (Farnham, 2010), p. 6.

<sup>76</sup> See S. Lotan, 'Querimonia desolacionis terre sancte – The Fall of Acre and the Holy Land in 1291 as an emotional element in the Tradition of the Teutonic Order', *Mirabilia*, 15.2 (2012), 47–55; and Lotan, 'Peter of Dusburg's attitude toward the Holy Land in the Crusades Period', *Revista Internacional d'Humanitats* 28 (2013), 95–104.

<sup>77</sup> See C.N. Johns, *Pilgrims' castle ('Atlit), David's Tower (Jerusalem), and Qal'atar-Rabad ('Ajlun): three Middle Eastern castles from the time of the crusades*, ed. D. Pringle (Aldershot, 1997), article VII, p. 121.

<sup>78</sup> *PDC*, 2.8, p. 68; *Di Kronike von Pruzinlant des Nicolaus von Jeroschin*, ed. E. Strehlke, in *Scriptores rerum Prussicarum: Die Geschichtsquellen der Preussischen Vorzeit bis zum Untergange der Ordensherrschaft*, ed. Th. Hirsch, M. Töppen, E. Strehlke, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1861), pp. 303–624: lines 2274–2229, p. 329.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* Peter goes on to describe ten weapons, and their spiritual functions: pp. 70–84.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* The brothers are 'custodes capitis Iesu Cristi debent habere arma'.

<sup>81</sup> See Militzer, pp. 12–15.

<sup>82</sup> *PDC*, 1.1, pp. 36–7. ‘Romania’ refers here to Greece.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, 1.1, p. 44.

<sup>84</sup> *TOT*, no. 321, p. 290. Gregory IX used the same phrasing in his call to refortify Montfort castle in 1230, see no. 72, p. 57. Also see N. Morton, ‘The defence of the Maccabees and the memory of the Holy Land’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 36.3 (2010), 290.

<sup>85</sup> *PDC*, 3.172, pp. 290–1. Peter writes: ‘Et ut verum fatear, in eis fuit impletum, quod de Judeis, volentibus civitatem sanctam Jerusalem reedificare, gentibus ex adverso renitentibus, dicitur, quod media pars eorum faciebat opus, et altera tenebat lanceas ab ascensu aurore, donec egrederentur astra; una manu faciebant opus, et altera tenebant gladium’. For the biblical context, see Nehemiah 4:16–18; 21 (Vulgate).

<sup>86</sup> Pospieszny, p. 228.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, citing Skibiński, *Kaplica na Zamku Wysokim w Malborku* [‘The chapel in Marienburg’s High Castle’] (Poznań, 1982), pp. 187–203.

<sup>88</sup> Pospieszny, p. 229.

<sup>89</sup> *Die Apokalypse Heinrichs von Hesler aus der Danziger Handschrift*, ed. K. Helm (Berlin, 1907), lines 20800–20804, p. 305. The passage reads: ‘Do vurte der meiste / Mich in deme geiste, / Zu schowene sine werk, / Uf einen hoen grozen berk, / Daz niekein im wart gliche gat, / Und wisete mir die grozen stat / Jherusalem, die nuwen, / Di so wol was irbuwen’.

<sup>90</sup> See Forey, *The Military Orders*, p. 59.

<sup>91</sup> Scholars favor a date somewhere in the 1260s of for the account. See Kennedy, pp. 138–40, which suggests a date of 1264. R.B.C. Huygens, *De constructione castri Saphet: Construction et fonctions d’un château fort franc en Terre Sainte* (Amsterdam, 1981), p. 11, proposes a date of composition between 1261–66.

<sup>92</sup> *De constructione*, lines 243–4, p. 42. The segment, titled *De utilitate castr et de locis devotis circa positus*, reads: ‘Quantum autem necessarium et utile sit castrum Saphet toti terre christianorum et infidelibus quantum nocivum’.

<sup>93</sup> *TOT*, no. 72, p. 57: ‘castrum Montfort iuxta territorium Acconense...positum in confinio paganorum, per quod christianis in partibus illis immense dinoscitur utilitas provenire’.

<sup>94</sup> *De constructione*, lines 270–89, pp. 43–4. The text reads: ‘ille locus dicitur vulgariter Mensa Domini, ubi est ecclesia et peregrination solempnis’.

<sup>95</sup> *TOT*, no. 72, p. 57: ‘Ipsi pro fratribus animos ponere non formidant et peregrinos ad sancta loca proficiscentes tam eundo quam redeundo ab incursibus paganorum defensare conantur’.

<sup>96</sup> Folda, p. 94.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Pluskowski, p. 159. According to Pluskowski, the statue was decorated in mosaic around 1380.

<sup>99</sup> See ‘Malbork Castle – Poland’, *The Castle Studies Group Journal*, 21 (2007), 146. This fresco is the only one to survive in the Knights’ Hall.

<sup>100</sup> Nicholson, ‘Saints venerated in the Military Orders’, p. 93.

<sup>101</sup> S. Van Liefferinge, ‘The Geometry of Rib Vaulting at Notre-Dame of Paris: Architectural or Exegetical Space?’ in *Space in the Medieval West: Places, Territories, and Imagined Geographies*, ed. M. Cohen and F. Madeline (Farnham, 2014), pp. 39–41.

<sup>102</sup> Nicholson, ‘Saints venerated in the Military Orders’, p. 106.

<sup>103</sup> A. Winnig, *Der Deutsche Ritterorden und Seine Burgen* (Leipzig, 1943), pp. 56–61. The finds also include sculpture fragments and capitals of columns. Also see H. Nicholson, ‘Saints venerated in the Military Orders’, *Ordines Militares XIII*, ed. Czaja and Sarnowsky, p. 93.

<sup>104</sup> J. Folda, P. French, and P. Coupel, 'Crusader Frescoes at Crac des Chevaliers and Marqab Castle', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 36 (1982), 181, 183. These frescoes represent a unique example of crusader art preserved in a military order castle of the Holy Land.

<sup>105</sup> J.H. Vennesbuch, 'Zentrale Facetten der Spiritualität des Deutschen Ordens im Spiegel der "Älteren Hochmeisterchronik"', *Ordines Militares: Colloquia Torunensia Historica, Yearbook for the Study of the Military Orders*, 18, (2013), pp. 243–65.

<sup>106</sup> For an outline of the historiographical trends and negative influences on the study of the Teutonic Order and the crusade to the Baltic, see S. Ekdhal, 'Crusades and Colonisation on the Medieval Baltic Frontier: A Historiographic Analysis', in *The North-Eastern Frontiers of Medieval Europe: The Expansion of Latin Christendom in the Baltic Lands*, ed. A.V. Murray (Farnham, 2014), pp. 1–42.