

Baltic Ambitions: The Diplomatic Role of the Teutonic Order in the Conflict
between Emperor Frederick II, and the Papacy, 1220-1250

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Abstract

In my thesis I examine the way in which the Teutonic Order was able to navigate the conflict between the Emperor Frederick II and the Papacy during the first half of the thirteenth century in such a way that they were able to secure the benefits and privileges which allowed them to establish an *Ordensland* in the state of Prussia. Traditionally, this conflict has been viewed as encompassing all aspects of papal-imperial politics during Frederick's reign however, this thesis argues that in support of the Teutonic Order and their conquests in the Baltic Crusades these conflicting institutions were willing and able to find a degree of cooperation. This study is a post-nationalist examination of the Baltic Crusades within the larger context of western European politics, a topic that has largely been avoided by scholars due to the use of the Baltic Crusades to further nationalist agendas during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

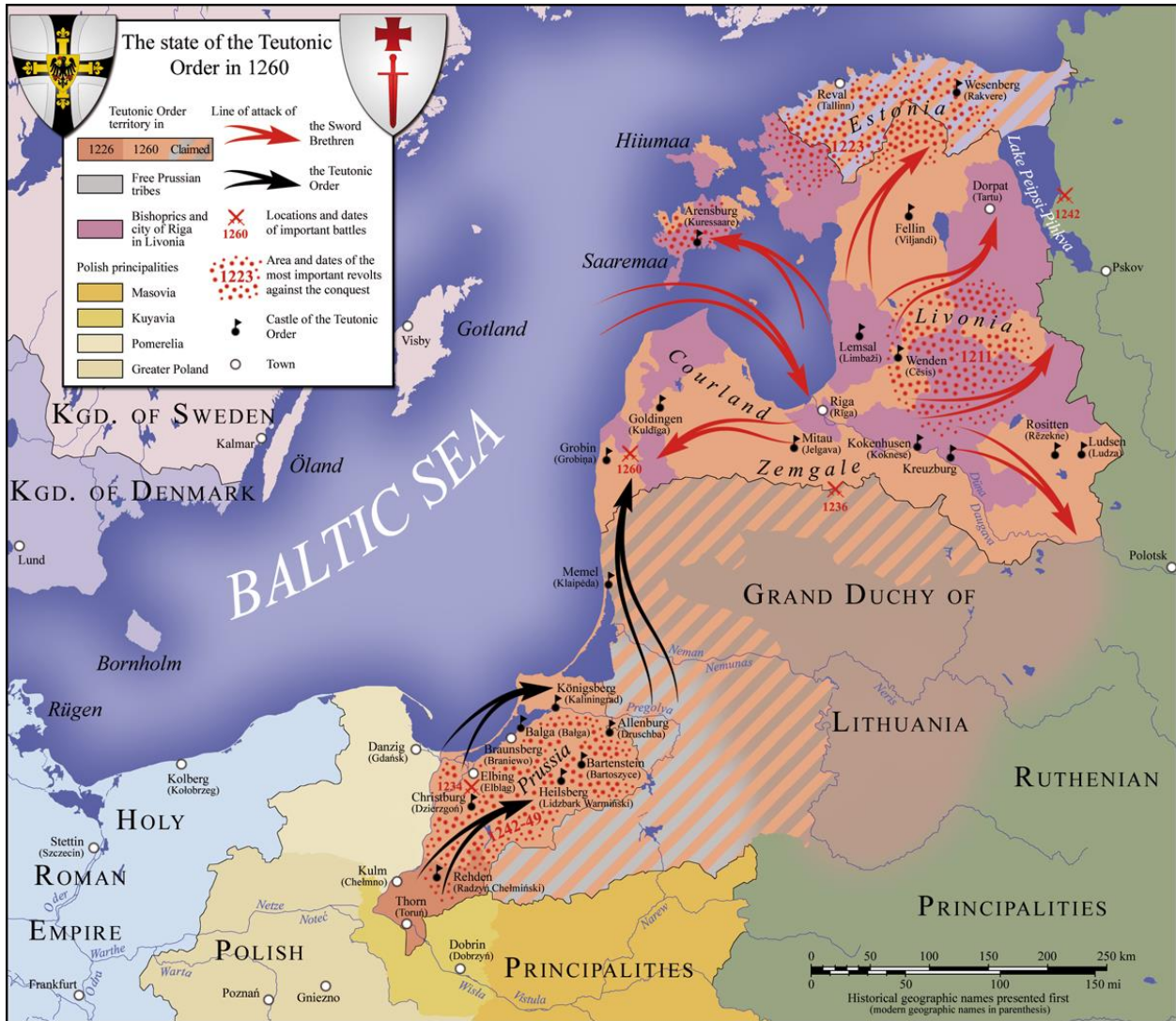
This thesis builds on the work of Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt's recent examination of papal policy and the Baltic Crusades which uses primary source materials to determine how the Christian conquests in the Baltic changed in nature and increased in importance during the pontificates of Honorius III, Gregory IX, and Innocent IV. Using primary source materials, I then examine the role of preaching the Baltic Crusades as well as the relationship between the Teutonic Order's Grandmaster, Hermann von Salza, and Frederick II to argue that while the rhetoric used by the papacy calls upon all Christians to abandon the Emperor, the Teutonic Order was able to maintain a mediating role between Frederick and the papacy which enabled them to secure the benefits and privileges which allowed them to establish the *Ordensland* of Prussia.

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S. Bollmann – Dieter Zimmerling: *Der Deutsche Ritterorden*. 2. Auflage 1991. Econ Verlag. Düsseldorf, Wien, New York, 1989.

Introduction

Introduction

The historical narrative of the first half of the thirteenth century is commonly dominated by the papal-imperial conflict which raged between Emperor Frederick II and the papacy. This conflict has often been portrayed in polarized terms with Frederick representing a new ‘modern’ emperor who ruled in accordance with the diverse Mediterranean culture of Sicily and the papacy as the traditional medieval authority. While Frederick is often viewed as a forbearer of Victorian and Liberal ideals, such as religious tolerance and a natural inclination to strong but fair governance, the papacy is commonly depicted as an outdated institution synonymous with nepotism, corruption, and a flawed sense of self-serving justice.¹ In the background of this polarized narrative and caught in the middle of this episode of the larger papal-imperial conflict was the Teutonic Order.

Founded as a military order during the Crusades to the Holy Land and favoured by Frederick to help him with the governance of his northern lands, the Teutonic Knights naturally found themselves in a difficult position when these two institutions openly opposed each other. Rather than siding with one side or the other, the Order was able to maintain a mediating role in the conflict and with the help of their Grandmaster, Hermann von Salza, the Teutonic Knights were able to benefit greatly during this period by securing privileges from both institutions while also using the context of the Baltic Crusades to carve out a crusader state for themselves in Prussia.

¹ For the best example of this polarized narrative between Frederick II and the papacy during the thirteenth century see Ernst Kantorowicz, *Frederick the Second, 1194-1250*, Trans. E. O. Lorimer (London: Constable & Co. 1931).

Stupor Mundi, Marvel of the World, this is the title given to Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick II von Hohenstaufen (1194-1250), by a contemporary chronicler and often still used to capture the dynamic figure he represents. The son of Henry VI (1165-1197) and Constance of Sicily (1154-1198), Frederick was the only heir to a Hohenstaufen dynasty that had reached new heights under the reigns of Frederick's grandfather, Frederick I 'Barbarossa' and Henry VI. The nickname, *Stupor Mundi*, is a reference to Frederick's diverse cultural background. Being born and raised in Sicily, Frederick had much more contact with the Mediterranean and its cultural diversity than most emperors during this period, the majority of which were German. Frederick is known for his linguistic capabilities. Due to a diverse education and a personal intellectual thirst, Frederick took an interest, at least to a minimal degree, in learning Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, Sicilian, and Arabic. His apparent tolerance for Jewish and Arabic populations, his patronage of Sicilian arts, and his lifelong hobby of falconry all add credence to the notion that Frederick truly was a medieval monarch ahead of his time, an exception to the rule, a *Stupor Mundi*.²

However, titles and a culturally diverse background were not the only things Frederick inherited from his father. The long and bitter rivalry between the house of Hohenstaufen and the house of Welf (aka Guelph), which dominated the reign of Henry VI, would also occupy the majority of Frederick's attention during the first ten years of his own reign. After the defeat and excommunication of the only Welf Emperor, Otto IV (1175-1218), in 1212, Frederick was able to inherit the title of King of the Germans before being formally elected Emperor in 1220. With

² David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 251-290.

Frederick's election on November 22, 1220, four days before his twenty sixth birthday, Frederick had finally unified the Hohenstaufen dynasty as it had been under his father's rule.³

Frederick's reign is remembered as a relatively 'successful' one in which he strengthened the Hohenstaufen claim to his Sicilian Empire.⁴ Through diplomacy he captured and became the King of Jerusalem as an excommunicated crusader⁵ and he made considerable contributions to the legal tradition in Sicily.⁶ Despite these achievements, the most remembered element of Frederick's reign is his conflict with the Papacy. Frederick's reign in the thirteenth century follows the Investiture Controversy of the eleventh and twelfth centuries which pitted the Holy Roman Emperors against the Papacy over the issue of investiture (the process of investing a bishop with the symbols of office, effectively giving the institution, either the empire or the papacy, the ability to appoint bishops). While studies on the Investiture Controversy use the Concordat of Worms in 1122 as the end of the debate over investiture, the conflict between Emperor and Papacy over supreme authority continued, reaching a climax during the reign of Frederick II.

This conflict between Emperor and Pope had far reaching consequences across the Christian world; one institution that was caught directly in the middle of this conflict was the Teutonic Order. Originally founded in 1198 as the Teutonic Knights of the Hospital of St. Mary of Jerusalem and confirmed by Pope Innocent III in 1198, the Teutonic Order was similar in structure to the other holy orders, the Templars and Hospitallers. However, it was unique from

³ Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor*, pp. 89-131.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 132-163.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 164-201.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 202-225

the other Orders in that it was an ethnically German institution.⁷ As a military order, the Teutonic Knight's legitimacy relied on their papal confirmation. Furthermore, the Order was founded with the purpose of protecting Christian interests in the context of the crusades. In theory, if the Order sided with the Emperor in his conflict with the Papacy, they risked undermining their legitimacy as a military order. This placed the Teutonic Knights in a difficult position because they also had a strong allegiance with the Emperor, Frederick II.

Frederick's focus on securing Hohenstaufen claims in his Sicilian kingdoms resulted in the increasing autonomy of his northern German subjects. It had become clear to the northern German princes that Frederick had little concern for issues in his German holdings and that he viewed the Empire as little more than a reservoir of men and money.⁸ In order to limit the increasing autonomy of the northern German princes, Frederick used the Teutonic Knights to uphold imperial authority in his northern lands. To this end, Frederick confirmed the privileges of the Teutonic Order, largely increasing their endowment, as well as declaring the Teutonic Master, Hermann von Salza, as a *Reichsfürst*, an independent imperial prince.⁹

Despite such marked imperial favour, the Teutonic Order was able to maintain a mediating role between the emperor and the papacy during their conflict. Christopher Tyerman argues that through the *Golden Bull of Rieti* of 1234, issued by Pope Gregory IX, Hermann von Salza was able to "exploit this conflict between the Papacy and Emperor in order to obtain papal designation of the order's lands in Prussia as a papal fief, under the protection of St. Peter, but

⁷ Jill N. Claster, *Sacred Violence: The European Crusades to the Middle East, 1095-1395* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), pp. 240-241.

⁸ William Urban, *The Baltic Crusade* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1975), 151.

⁹ Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: The Belknap press of Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 699-700.

held by the Teutonic Knights.”¹⁰ This Bull was issued despite the Order’s open support for the Hohenstaufen emperor who had been excommunicated by Gregory in 1227, highlighting the complex diplomatic situation the Teutonic Order found itself in during the papal-imperial conflict of the first half of the thirteenth century.¹¹

In the chapters that follow I will explore the ways in which the Teutonic Order was able to use the conflict between Frederick II and the Papacy to further their own agenda in the Baltic. The Order had designs on carving out a crusader state, or an *Ordensland*, as early as 1211, however, it was not until the 1230s and 1240s that they were able to secure the necessary endowments and privileges from both the empire and papacy, which allowed them to establish an *Ordensland* in Prussia. These privileges and endowments were granted to the Order following the Order’s Grandmaster, Hermann von Salza’s, involvement in the peace negotiations between Frederick II and the papacy which resulted in the peace agreements of San Germano and Ceprano in the summer of 1230, continued papal-imperial negotiations in the summer of 1234 and December of 1235, as well as representing Frederick II in negotiations with the Lombard league who had papal support in their opposition of the Emperor in 1237.

Hermann’s involvement in these conferences comes as a bit of a surprise considering Frederick’s reliance on the Teutonic Order to uphold imperial aims in his northern holdings and the Order’s open support for Frederick’s controversial crusade to Jerusalem in 1227. The Order’s support for the Emperor was in direct contradiction of the ban of excommunication placed on the Hohenstaufen emperor by Gregory IX earlier that year. Bans of excommunication were papal declarations which expelled the target from the Christian community while also requiring other

¹⁰ Tyerman, *God’s War*, 700.

¹¹ Eric Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades: The Baltic and the Catholic Frontier, 1100-1525* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 104.

Christian institutions to shun the subject of the ban.¹² Given Hermann's close personal relationship with Frederick, his involvement in papal-imperial negotiations that did not directly involve the Teutonic Order, and the benefits and privileges which were bestowed on the Order as a result of these negotiations by both the papacy and the emperor suggests that Hermann, and by extension the Teutonic Order, played a mediating role in the papal-imperial conflict of the first half of the thirteenth century and as a result they were granted the benefits and privileges which allowed them to establish an *Ordensland* in Prussia.

Throughout this thesis I will repeatedly refer to the mediating role played by Herman von Salza and the Teutonic Order in the papal-imperial conflict of the thirteenth century. To clarify, by using this terminology I do not mean to imply that the Order or their grandmaster was responsible for bringing the two conflicting institutions into negotiations. But rather, in the Teutonic Knights, and more specifically in the figure of Hermann von Salza, the Emperor and the Papacy were able to find a somewhat neutral institution which both sides trusted enough to arbitrate the negotiations. The Order had a history of acting as the imperial representatives in northern Europe and Hermann von Salza had a close personal relationship with Frederick II which is explored in length in the third chapter. In addition, the papacy was willing to overlook this public support for the emperor, particularly during the pontificates of Gregory IX and Innocent IV when divisive rhetoric and bans of excommunication were issued by the papacy with the intention of removing the support of any Christian institutions from the troublesome emperor. This resulted in the Teutonic Order and Hermann von Salza in the unique position of having the support of both institutions allowing them to mediate in negotiations that did not

¹² For an example of the divisive rhetoric used in bans of excommunication and the way they threatened any institution who continued to support the target of the excommunication see Innocent IV's excommunication of Frederick II in 1248 which states "Frederick and all who aid him by counsel, succor, or favor, in person or property, openly or secretly, are excommunicated by us;" *Innocent IV's Call for a Crusade, 1248* in *The Crusades: A Reader*, Ed. S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt, No. 74, p. 285 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

directly concern the Teutonic Order while also securing the benefits and privileges needed to establish their long desired *Ordensland* in the Baltic from the two conflicting parties.

This thesis will examine the Baltic crusades in the larger context of the papal-imperial conflict of the thirteenth century to determine how, and to what degree, the conflict between Frederick II and the papal curia affected the conquest and conversion of the Baltic frontier and how the Teutonic Order was able to maintain a mediating role between the two institutions during their conflict in such a way that allowed them to secure the benefits and privileges which ultimately allowed them to establish an *Ordensland* in Prussia.

The Baltic Crusades

Often relegated to the periphery of crusades studies and labelled as ‘frontier crusades,’ the Baltic crusades have traditionally been treated as an insignificant flare-up of crusading rhetoric in support of Germanic imperial expansion.¹³ Because of the Baltic crusades unique elements, such as not being directed towards the Holy Land, not pitting Christians against Muslims, and the difficulty in developing a legal justification for these campaigns of conversion, it is often reserved for abstract and theoretical discussions within the context of crusade studies or only briefly described to acknowledge their existence.¹⁴

The content of this topic is fiercely debated and highly politicised. The narrative of the Baltic crusades has historically been presented through the lens of German superiority with these

¹³ Tyerman, *God’s War*, pp. 674-712.

¹⁴ Steven Runciman’s famous work on the crusades ignores the Baltic crusades completely while the comprehensive work by Christopher Tyerman treats these campaigns along with the crusades to Spain in a section titled ‘Frontier Crusades’ see; Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, Vols. I-III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954) and; Tyerman, *God’s War*, pp. 650-712.

interpretations reaching their zenith under the National Socialist regime of the twentieth century.¹⁵ Since the Second World War, German accounts strive to give a less biased interpretation, but Anglo-literate accounts of the Baltic crusades have largely avoided viewing the topic in the context of European politics, favouring instead to contextualise it within the fields of crusades studies, Scandinavian history, the Holy Roman Empire, or in the scholarship on the Teutonic Order. By examining the Baltic crusades in the context of the western European conflict between the Papacy and Empire, this thesis broadens the context of the Baltic crusades in the Anglo-literate scholarship while also examining the papal-imperial conflict through a lense which has largely been ignored by Anglo-literate studies.¹⁶

Historiography

In 1995 historian; Edward Peters; brought light to a gap in the Anglo-literate scholarship regarding the topic of medieval German history. Peters argued that the topic of medieval Germany had an initial appeal in the Victorian Anglo-literate scholarship, which was followed by a subsequent fading in interest. This resulted in a period between the First World War and the

¹⁵ For examples see; *Treitschke's Origins of Prussianism (The Teutonic Knights)*. Trans. Eden & Cedar Paul (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1942). Or; Ernst Kantorowicz, *Frederick the Second*, Trans. E. O. Lorimer.

¹⁶ The examination of the papal-imperial conflict during the first half of the thirteenth century through the context of the Baltic Crusades was the topic of a debate in the German scholarship between Erich Caspar, Herman Kluger, and Ernst Pitz during the twentieth century regarding the imperial letter of March 1224. This letter, the so called *Kaisermanifest*, guaranteed the freedom of the newly converted in Livonia, Estonia, Sambia, Prussia, and Semigalia, and was interpreted by Caspar as being evidence for competition between Frederick and the papacy. However, Kluger disagrees with this interpretation and instead argues that during this time Frederick was avoiding conflict with the papacy and therefore doubts this letter was issued in opposition to papal aims in the region. Pitz refutes the idea of imperial-papal opposition entirely and argues that this letter was not a *Manifest* but rather a *Reskript*, likely issued at the request of the papal legate, William of Modena. See; Erich Caspar, *Hermann von Salza und die Gründung des Deutschordensstaats in Preussen* (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr, 1924), 24; Helmuth Kluger, *Hochmeister Hermann von Salza und Kaiser Friedrich II: Ein Beitrag zur Frühgeschichte des Deutschen Ordens [Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens 37]* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert Verlag, 1987), 44; and Ernst Pitz, *Papstreskript und Kaiserreskript im Mittelalter* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1971), 133. For a brief account of this debate in English see; Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades, 1147-1254* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 203-204.

1960s in which the topic of medieval Germany had a “peculiar and limited influence” on the Anglo-literate scholarship. Although the topic still lacks the prominence in Anglo-literate scholarship that it once held, since the 1970s there has been an increase of interest in medieval Germany in comparison to the first half of the twentieth century.¹⁷ In an attempt to continue to fill this gap in the literature, this study draws on three principle avenues of historiography. These avenues are; crusades history, biographical accounts of Frederick II, and studies on papal policy in the Baltic.

The historiography of the scholarship on the crusades has a long and rich history stretching back to the period of the earliest crusades. The first accounts of the crusades come from the crusaders themselves and contemporary chroniclers of the First Crusade. These accounts are compiled from oral traditions, personal experiences, and other written sources available. These earliest accounts are presented as *Gesta*’s focusing on either an individual’s experiences or the experiences of a peoples. One of the most influential, and possibly the earliest surviving account of the First Crusade is the anonymous *Gesta Francorum (Deeds of the Franks)*. Dated sometime before 1104, this *Gesta*, which focuses on the Frankish experiences during the First Crusade, is a prime example of the tradition that early texts had of borrowing from each other in order to try and make sense of the First Crusade.¹⁸ Immediately following the First Crusade, and likely sharing material with the *Gesta Francorum*, veterans of the campaign as well as western scholars began to present the history of the First Crusade through the use of chronicles. The accounts of Fulcher of Chartres (c. 1059-1128),¹⁹ William of Tyre (1130-

¹⁷ Edward Peters, “More Trouble with Henry: The Historiography of Medieval Germany in the Angloliterate World, 1888-1995,” in *Central European History*, 28, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 47.

¹⁸ Christopher Tyerman, *The Debate on the Crusades* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), pp. 8-9.

¹⁹ Fulcher of Chartres. *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem, 1095-1127*. Trans. Frances Rila Ryan, Ed. Harold S. Fink (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1969).

1186),²⁰ and Roger of Wendover (d. 1236),²¹ who continued the work of Matthew of Paris, are all examples of western contemporary chronicles of the First Crusade which appeared within a couple generations after the first campaign to Jerusalem. This study draws on the early chronicles of Henry of Livonia (1190s-1220s),²² Nicolaus von Jeroschin (1330-1341),²³ and the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle²⁴ which all focus on the Baltic crusades and draw from personal experiences. Henry recounts the conversion of Livonia as well as other Baltic regions, such as, Estonia, Lithuania, and Semigallia focusing on the missionary work done in these regions while downplaying the military aspects of the conquests.

The chronicles of Nicolaus von Jeroschin and the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle represent some of the earliest examples of a group of literature known as *Tischbuchen*, or table books. These are accounts commissioned by the Teutonic Order whose purpose was to recount the achievements of the Order. They were commonly read out loud during communal gatherings of Knights, such as at meal times - hence the name *Tischbuchen* - and they are generally more concerned with glorifying and legitimizing the achievements of the Teutonic Order than in portraying objective accounts of the past. With this in mind, while these sources provide an invaluable insight into the contemporary views the Order held of themselves and the way in which they viewed their conquests in the Baltic, they are rife with inaccuracy and outright propaganda and therefore have a limited value when conducting an analytical study such as this thesis.

²⁰ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*. Trans. Emily Atwater Babcock and A.C. Krey (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943).

²¹ Roger of Wendover, *Flowers of History*. Formerly ascribed to Matthew of Paris, Trans. J.A. Giles, D.C.L. (New York: AMS Press, 1968).

²² *The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*. Trans. James A. Brundage (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1961).

²³ *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin: A History of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia, 1190-1331*. Trans. Mary Fischer (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2010).

²⁴ *The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, Trans. Jerry C. Smith and William L. Urban (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1977).

The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin was a German chronicle written by the Teutonic Order chaplain, Nicolaus von Jeroschin sometime between 1331 and 1341. This work was a translation and a continuation of the earlier Latin Chronicle, the *Chronicon Terrae Prussiae*, which was written by another priest of the Teutonic Order, Peter von Dusburg between 1326 and 1331.²⁵

The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle is dated to the last decade of the thirteenth century and is the oldest known work belonging to the *Deutschordens-literature*, that is literature commissioned by, and written by, the Teutonic Order. While the author of this work is unknown, based on his use of specialized military terminology, his disparaging remarks towards monks and priests, and his in-depth knowledge of many of the battles depicted in detail in this work, scholars have concluded that he was likely a non-clerical member of the Teutonic Order who experienced some of these battles first hand.²⁶

Although outside the scope of this project, it should also be noted that there is a sizable strand of Islamic scholarship which begins with the First Crusade. As one would expect, this scholarship focuses mainly on the crusades to the Levant with little acknowledgment of the campaigns into other regions. ‘Ali Ibn Tahir Al-Sulami’s (d. 1106)²⁷ and Abu l-Muzaffar Al-Abiwardi’s (c. 1064-1113)²⁸ works are two such primary accounts from the First Crusade which are often included in Anglo-literate source collections in translation.

²⁵ *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin*, Trans. Jerry C. Smith and William L. Urban, pp. 4-5.

²⁶ *The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, Trans. Jerry C. Smith and William L. Urban, pp. xxi-xxii

²⁷ *Ali Ibn Tahir Al-Sulami’s The Book of the Jihad* in *The Crusades: A Reader*. Ed. S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt, No. 22, 72-73 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

²⁸ *Abu l-Muzaffar Al-Abiwardi on the Fall of Jerusalem* in *The Crusades: A Reader*. Ed. S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt, No. 23, 78-79 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

While the earliest accounts of crusading portrayed the First Crusade as a theological undertaking, unique in nature and divinely legitimated, as the medieval period progressed so too did the nature of the concept of crusades. With the extension of Holy War into the Iberian Peninsula and the Baltic, as well as repeated failures leading up to the eventual loss of Jerusalem in 1187, there was a need to legally define crusading more specifically than simply as God's will. In the canon law collection known as Gratian's *Decretum*, compiled at Bologna in 1139-40, there is an entire section devoted to waging just war against heresy, however, there is no mention of waging crusades in this legal collection.²⁹ The beginnings of a legal and just war interpretation of the crusades can be seen as early as the work of William of Tyre in the later quarter of the twelfth century,³⁰ but it is not until Honoré Bouvet's (1340-1410) *Tree of Battles* (1387) that it really becomes evident that the legal justification was a serious consideration of scholars and a pressing issue for canon law. Bouvet argues that Christians had no divine right to wage war against infidels unless it was to remedy offenses against nature.³¹ This argument clearly shows that the purely theological justification of Holy War, which was adequate for the First Crusade, was no longer sufficient by itself to justify crusades, even against those outside of Christendom.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, these medieval accounts were less interested in recording factual information than they were in furthering contemporary agendas, a theme which is consistent throughout the entire historiography of crusading history. As Christopher Tyerman explains, "Medieval crusade historiography, like other historical writing of the period, was less concerned to recite information than in illustrating didactic lessons conjured from an invented universe of

²⁹ Tyerman, *The Debate on the Crusades*, pp. 23-24.

³⁰ *William of Tyre's History in The Crusades: A Reader*. Ed. S. J. Allen and Emilie Amt, No. 24, 82-84 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

³¹ Tyerman, *The Debate on the Crusades*, 24.

optimism, virtue, evil, punishment for sin, reward for goodness; a world defined by memories of past glory.”³²

During the Reformation period the idea of religious, or just, war was just as prominent in the scholarship as it had been prior to the sixteenth century. Only now religious warfare, which was previously directed against those seen to fall outside the realm of orthodox Christianity, was used to justify campaigns against theological opponents within the Christian world. As historian Fernand Braudel explains, there was “a transition from a period of ‘external’ wars of faith, such as crusades, to one of ‘internal’ wars of faith, such as the wars of religion and, later, the Thirty Years’ War.”³³ As mentioned previously, there is a long tradition in the scholarship on the crusades of the topic being re-appropriated to further contemporary agendas. The 1566 work of English Protestant, John Foxe (c. 1516-1587), *History of the Turks*, which blames a corrupt religion (referring to Roman Catholicism) for the failures of previous crusades,³⁴ makes clear how this tradition was continued in the context of the Reformation period.

During the Enlightenment, crusades scholarship was continued by such intellectuals as Voltaire (1694-1778)³⁵, David Hume (1711-1776)³⁶, and Edward Gibbon (1737-1794).³⁷ The *Philosophes* of this period tended to accuse their predecessors of being ignorant, judgemental, and biased in their treatment of crusades scholarship, however, rather ironically, the *Philosophes* themselves contributed little original material to the scholarship on the crusades. As Tyerman describes, this lack of original contribution is largely due to the *Philosophes* tendency to use the

³² Tyerman, *The Debate on the Crusades*, 32.

³³ *Ibid.*, 37.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

³⁵ M. de Voltaire, *The Universal History & State of All Nations: From the Time of Charlemain to Lewis XIV*, Trans. *Essai sur les mours* (Edinburgh: Sands, Donaldson, Murray & Cochran, 1758).

³⁶ David Hume, *History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688* (London: 1754-61).

³⁷ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Ed. W. Smith (London: 1862).

crusades “not as a historical study in its own right but as a tool in conceptual arguments about religion and the progress of civilization and manners.”³⁸ The *Philosophes* were not the only enlightenment scholars to use the crusades. Contemporary scholars, such as, Claude Fleury (1640-1723)³⁹ and Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716), depicted the crusades as a necessary stage in human development, building on the same theme of chivalry that was largely rejected by their *Philosophe* contemporaries. Despite sharing the same condemnation of earlier crusades scholarship as the *Philosophes*, these other enlightenment scholars fell victim to the same trap as those they criticised, they allowed their contemporary environment to influence their accounts of the crusades.⁴⁰

Post-Enlightenment scholars of the crusades tended to be either complementary or contradictory of the judgmental accounts of the *Philosophes*. As noted by contemporary historian, Heinrich von Sybel (1817-95), the most striking feature of this period was a willingness to combine crusade scholarship with contemporary experiences (in similar fashion to Reformation scholars). To this end, the French Revolution (1789), the Industrial Revolution (1760-1840), as well as German Unification (1871) were all justified and legitimated with the use of crusading history and rhetoric.⁴¹ This trend in the scholarship was exemplified by a competition held by the French Institut of Paris in 1806 with a prize being awarded for a monograph on “the influence of the crusades on the civil liberty of the people of Europe, on their civilization, on the progress of learning, commerce and industry.”⁴²

³⁸ Tyerman, *The Debate on the Crusades*, 67.

³⁹ Claude Fleury, *Discours au l'histoire ecclésiastique*, Vol. VI (Paris: 1763)

⁴⁰ Tyerman, *The Debate on the Crusades*, pp. 67-68.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

⁴² Tyerman, *The Debate on the Crusades*, 98.

This period also saw a ‘golden age’ of crusading scholarship with the creation of *La Societe de l’Orient Latin* in 1875 by gentleman scholar, Paul Riant (1835-88). This institute, which published twelve volumes of the short-lived *Revue de l’Orient Latin* (1893-1911) and a two volume collection of documents in the *Archives de l’Orient Latin* (1881 and 1884), attracted scholars from all over Europe and from all political ideologies.⁴³ Despite, greatly increasing the volume, scope, and methodological nuances of crusading scholarship, the *Societe de l’Orient Latin* brought little change to the conceptual framework established in earlier periods. Themes which had been established in earlier periods, such as viewing the crusades as colonial undertakings of cultural and material exchange, were still being used by Post-Enlightenment scholars.⁴⁴ Falling into this tradition is the work of American historian, Dana C. Munro, *The Kingdom of the Crusaders* (1935), who, according to Tyerman, “concluded by essentially parroting the materialist functionalism of [Arnold Hermann Ludwig] Heeren [1760-1842] and [William] Robertson [1721-1793].”⁴⁵

During the late nineteenth century crusades scholarship became politicized and divided along national divisions. Relevant to this project is the German tradition that emerged during this period. Represented by the German scholars, Friedrich Wilken (1777-1840), Heinrich Von Sybel (1817-1895), and Hans Prutz (1843-1929), this strand of scholarship was built on the Rankean tradition of textual analysis which brought a closer analysis of primary source materials and helped solidify crusading scholarship as a legitimate scholarly pursuit.⁴⁶ An effect of this politicisation of crusades scholarship was the removal of ideological and confessional concerns in favour of contextualising the campaigns as expressions of western social developments.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 125-126.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 126.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 126.

⁴⁶ Tyerman, *The Debate on the Crusades*, pp. 127-141.

According to Tyerman, this allowed scholars to examine the crusades as material causes and consequences resulting in a “consensus of materialism, racial supremacy, colonialism, and progress.”⁴⁷

The modern period of crusading historiography can loosely be thought of as the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. During the first half of the twentieth century, the socio-political climate disrupted the study of the crusades and, like previous periods, scholars re-appropriated the topic to further contemporary agendas. In the German tradition, the search for, and emergence of, the ‘Spirit of German Nationalism’ was a theme which dominated the contemporary scholarship. Representative of this scholarship is the controversial work of H.G. von Treitschke (1834-1896), *Das deutsche Ordensland Preussen* (1862),⁴⁸ which goes so far out of its way to further an agenda of German superiority that it is best described as historical fiction, and also the work of Ernst Kantorowicz’s (1895-1963), *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (1927).⁴⁹ Both Treitschke’s, and Kantorowicz’s work were picked up by German nationalists following the rise of National Socialism in 1933 and used to legitimate the *Drang Nach Osten* (*Spread to the East*) manifesto which originated during the Baltic Crusade and was re-appropriated by the Nazis during the Second World War.⁵⁰

The notable exception to this strand of scholarship is the influential work of Carl Erdmann (1898-1945), *Die Entstehung des Kreuzzugsgedankens* (*The Origins of the Idea of Crusading*) (1935). A German scholar who abhorred the Nazis and had little interest in furthering the nationalist agenda of his contemporaries, Erdmann focused on the emergence of

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 151-152.

⁴⁸ *Treitschke’s Origins of Prussianism*, Trans. Eden & Cedar Paul.

⁴⁹ Ernst Kantorowicz, *Frederick the Second*, Trans. E.O. Lorimer.

⁵⁰ David Abulafia, “Kantorowicz and Frederick II” in *History*, Vol. 62, 205 (June 1977), pp. 201-204.

the idea of crusading and how it influenced the Roman Catholic Church, in other words, he focused on the ‘Christianisation’ of war.⁵¹

Often held up as the other great work from this period, and the polar opposite of Erdmann in every sense, is the multi-volume work of Steven Runciman (1903-2000), *A History of the Crusades* (1951-54). As summarized by Tyerman, while “Erdmann reopened investigation into the nature and origins of the phenomenon, largely ignored or assumed by the functional materialist focus on the crusaders’ conquests. Runciman perpetuated the epic grand narrative, a drama of good and evil, heroism and villainy, civilisation and barbarism.”⁵²

The second half of the twentieth century also saw the Baltic Crusades emerge as a topic of scholarly study in and of itself. With the influential works of William Urban (1975)⁵³ and Eric Christiansen (1980)⁵⁴ scholarship on the Baltic Crusade shifted from being contextualised as a frontier endeavor on the periphery of the crusades to the Levant, to being viewed as a political and religious undertaking far removed from the campaigns to the Holy Land, connected only through their shared use of crusading privileges and rhetoric. These scholars place a heightened emphasis on Scandinavian and Slavic experiences during the Baltic Crusade while also looking at the material and cultural consequences these campaigns had on the region.

Beginning in the 1960s, and perhaps inspired by the emergence of the two polar opposite approaches by Erdmann and Runciman, scholars made a conscious effort to try and define what a crusade was, and therefore, what the scope of the topic truly was.⁵⁵ Throughout the second half

⁵¹ Tyerman, *The Debate on the Crusades*, pp. 183-192.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 182.

⁵³ Urban, *The Baltic Crusade*.

⁵⁴ Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades*.

⁵⁵ Tyerman, *The Debate on the Crusades*, 218.

of the twentieth century and continuing today, historians have debated over a consensual definition of a crusade. For the sake of clarity, in 2001 Giles Constable divided the scholarly debate into four schools:

“(1) traditionalists, ‘who ask where a crusade was going’ and ‘hold that a true crusade must be directed towards the east’; (2) pluralists, who ‘ask how a crusade was initiated and organized’; (3) [populists], who look for ‘a spiritual or psychological definition that emphasizes the inner spirit and motives of the crusaders and their leaders’ and regard crusading as a popular movement rather than institution-led; and (4) the ‘generalists, who broadly identify the crusades with holy war and the justification of fighting in defense of the faith’, emphasizing the importance of the concept of just war.”⁵⁶

Although beneficial to introducing and familiarising scholars with the recent debates within the topic, the reality of crusade scholarship is much too complex and convoluted to be neatly defined with four basic categories. Most scholars adopt techniques from multiple schools or use their own theoretical model of crusading which cannot be categorized into a particular school.⁵⁷ With this in mind, I will resist attempts to define this study by any particular school, however, I will be building off the theoretical framework used by Christopher Tyerman, that is, to view the Baltic Crusade as an “ethnic cleansing, commercial exploitation and political aggrandizement with a religious gloss, a potent, lasting and, for some, sincerely believed justification for the cruel process of land-grabbing, Christianization and Germanization” of the Baltic.⁵⁸

The second strand of historiography that this study will draw upon is that of the biographical histories of Frederick II von Hohenstaufen. Revolving around the three major biographical works by Ernst Kantorowicz (1927),⁵⁹ Thomas Curtis Van Cleve (1972),⁶⁰ and

⁵⁶ *Palgrave Advances in the Crusades*, Ed. Helen J. Nicholson (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 7.

⁵⁷ Tyerman, *The Debate on the Crusades*, pp. 226-227.

⁵⁸ Tyerman, *God's War*, 674.

⁵⁹ Kantorowicz, *Frederick the Second*.

David Abulafia (1988),⁶¹ Frederick as a historical figure has been subject to a fair deal of historical myth making and, as a result, these three biographical accounts produce differing interpretations of who Frederick truly was.

The period piece, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite*, by Ernst Kantorowicz (1895-1963) was the first biographical approach to Frederick II and it includes a political and ethnic bias that one might expect from the politically charged environment that was 1920s Germany. After serving four years as an officer in the German military during the First World War, Kantorowicz was involved in the *Freikorps* movement of the 1920s before joining the *Georgekreis* (an intellectual circle revolving around the German poet Stefan George and interested in identifying the ‘Spirit of German Nationalism’).⁶² It was under the influence of the *Georgekreis* that *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* was produced, which explains Kantorowicz’s willingness to stretch the truth in order to maintain his themes of German exceptionalism. For Kantorowicz, Frederick was a ‘secret German,’ (a point made clear by Kantorowicz with a prefatory note quoting “*Seinen Kaisern und Helden, Das Geheime Deutschland*” (An Emperor and hero, the secret Germany) the living embodiment of the German capacity for governance, piety, and the last true emperor of the Romans.⁶³ Claims which are undoubtedly undermined by the fact that Frederick was Sicilian, not German, and one of the main characteristics of his relationship with his German subjects was his general absence, and seeming lack of interest, in his German lands.⁶⁴

The first attempt to put together a biography of Frederick II after Kantorowicz’s highly contested account was T. C. Van Cleve (1888-1976) with his work, *The Emperor Frederick II of*

⁶⁰ Thomas Curtis Van Cleve, *The Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen: Immutator Mundi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972).

⁶¹ Abulafia, *Frederick II*.

⁶² Abulafia, “Kantorowicz and Frederick II,” pp. 193-195.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 196-201.

⁶⁴ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 226-228.

Hohenstaufen: Immutator Mundi (1972). As the name implies, Van Cleve was interested in examining Frederick in the context of a ‘transformer of the world,’ and to this end, had a tendency to draw broad, and over-generalised conclusions. Although Van Cleve succeeded in divorcing Frederick from the ‘secret German’ that Kantorowicz presented, according to fellow Frederick II historian David Abulafia, his insistence to view Frederick in the sense of a ‘transformer of the world’ resulted in an account “where the interpretation is simply wrong on large and small points, but where the course of events is explained soberly and clearly.”⁶⁵

The latest attempt to examine Frederick II in a biographical account is the work of David Abulafia (b. 1949), *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (1988). While far from the latest study of Frederick II,⁶⁶ Abulafia’s comprehensive account is still considered the foremost authority on the topic of Frederick II in general. In contrast to Kantorowicz and Van Cleve, Abulafia strives to place Frederick in a more humble context than previous accounts. This leads to a biography which focuses on Frederick as a Sicilian ruler first and foremost (the majority of Frederick’s reign was spent dealing with securing Hohenstaufen claims in Sicily), and saw in his governance a continuation of Norman imperial traditions, as opposed to the German and Roman traditions that previous accounts were so insistent in connecting him with.⁶⁷

The third strand of historiography that this study draws on is that of papal policy in the Baltic. For the period under examination (1220-1250), this strand of historiography is largely a

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶⁶ While there have been no attempts at a pan-Frederick account since Abulafia (1988), Frederick II continues to be a topic of scholarly study in relation to Medieval cultural studies; such as Karla Mallette, “Medieval Sicilian lyric poetry: Poets at the courts of Roger II and Frederick II” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1998), and in relation to Frederick’s favourite hobby, falconry; such as Amelia Caiola, “An exploration of falconry and hunting in the Middle Ages based on the work of emperor Frederick II “De arte venandi cum avibus” and its links to science, natural philosophy and literature” (PhD diss., New York University, 2009).

⁶⁷ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 202-225.

gap in the scholarship, solely addressed by the recent work of Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades, 1147-1254* (2007). As Fonnesberg-Schmidt points out,

“The studies that have been made on papal policy on the Baltic crusades from the middle of the twelfth century to the middle of the thirteenth have thus focused mainly on Eugenius III’s policy for the crusade of 1147 or on the pontificate of Innocent III [1198-1216] and have not attempted to analyse papal policy in the intervening period of after Innocent III’s pontificate.”⁶⁸

Important works on papal policy outside the chronological period of this study are the works of Helmut Roscher and Ernst Pitz (1928-2009). Roscher’s, *Papst Innozenz III. Und die Krezzüge* (1969), is mainly interested in papal policy on the crusades to the east but does devote one short chapter to Innocent III and his impact on papal policy in the Baltic. The examination of *Reskript* by Ernst Pitz with his book *Papstrescript und Kaiserrescript im Mittelalter* (1971) uses the Baltic mission in the period 1188-1227 as its case study. Pitz’s work uses a detailed examination of papal letters concerning the mission during that period, making the study immensely useful for examining papal policy on the Baltic Crusade.⁶⁹

For primary source material I have taken advantage of a fairly sizable collection of correspondence documents, the *Regista Imperii*, the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, and early crusader chronicles. While not lacking primary source material in relation to other medieval topics, the difficulty with the Baltic Crusade as a topic of scholarly study is the linguistic complexity of the region. To do a comprehensive account of the Baltic Crusade, one would need to work with German, Latin, Danish, Polish, Finnish, Lithuanian, and Latvian source material. For the scope of this project and my linguistic abilities, this thesis relies primarily on the German and Latin sources.

⁶⁸ Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 21.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

Fortunately for modern scholars, the Teutonic Order kept organized accounts of the diplomatic correspondences of their Baltic holdings in the form of *Urkundenbuchen* (Document Books). Between the University of Saskatchewan collections and google archives online I have access to the *Preussisches Urkundenbuch* (Prussia), the *Hansisches Urkundenbuch* (Hanse, or Hanseatic League), and the *Liv-, Est-, und Kurlandische Urkundenbuch* (Livonia, Estonia, and Courland). These collections contain papal and imperial letters in Latin transcriptions with German commentary and marginalia. These sources, which primarily consist of papal letters with a few Imperial letters, are the best collection of primary source material relating to the Baltic crusades as they indicate actual papal and imperial policy and declarations while avoiding the inaccurate information included in the chronicles from the period. These letters only exist in the *Urkundenbuchen* format, that is transcribed Latin with German commentary, and the English scholarship tends to use only a handful of these letters deemed to be the most important such as the so-called *Golden Bull of Rimini* issued by Frederick in 1226 and the *Golden Bull of Rieti* of 1234.⁷⁰ The exception to this trend is the recent work of Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt whose work on papal policy in the Baltic is available in English and relies heavily on these letters.

Methodology

Like most medieval studies, the methodology for this thesis has been dictated by the available primary source materials and their contents. The first chapter follows in the methodological footsteps of Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt's study on papal policy in the Baltic during the pontificates of Honorius III, Gregory IX, and Innocent IV. By studying the papal

⁷⁰ Letter of March 1226, *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 56 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 41-43; and Letter of 3. August 1234 *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 108 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 83-84.

letters, we can track the evolution of the indulgences granted for the Baltic crusades which allows us to determine how papal policy in the Baltic developed during the first half of the thirteenth century. By tracking the development of papal policy in the Baltic we can then determine how the ongoing papal-imperial conflict impacted the Baltic crusades while also examining the increasingly important role the Teutonic Order played in the Baltic theatre following their formal arrival in the region in 1229.

The second chapter focuses on the development of the preaching and recruitment strategies used for the Baltic crusades. When reading the papal letters, it becomes apparent that the preaching and recruitment for these campaigns was of crucial importance since the letters which authorize and promote crusades to the region consistently refer to the individuals who are tasked with the responsibility of recruiting and organizing these campaigns. During the pontificate of Gregory IX, it becomes clear that the Dominicans, who appear as the *predigensordens* (the Preaching Order) in the German commentary, became the main institution tasked with preaching the campaigns in Prussia as many of the letters contain specific instructions for the Dominicans to preach the Teutonic Order's crusades while also encouraging the faithful in the region to pay obedience to the Knights. By examining the preaching and recruitment strategies used in the Baltic we can determine the papal aims for the Baltic crusades while also examining the relationship between the papacy and the Teutonic Order.

The third chapter focuses on the historical figure of Hermann von Salza, the Grandmaster of the Teutonic Order, and his ability to maintain a mediating role in the papal-imperial conflict between Frederick II and the papacy in the thirteenth century. Along with the papal legate to the Baltic, William of Modena, Hermann von Salza is continuously mentioned in both the early chronicles and the collections of letters outlined above. This chapter also discusses the Empire

and Hermann's close relationship with Frederick which is well documented. This imperial focus provides a balanced perspective to the first two chapters which tend to focus on the papal approach to the Baltic crusades.

To date there is no in-depth English examination of Hermann von Salza outside of the scholarship on the Teutonic Order and Frederick II. It was Hermann who personally mediated between Frederick II and the popes, Gregory IX and Innocent IV while at the same time securing extensive benefits and privileges from the two conflicting institutions which allowed the Teutonic Order to establish an *Ordensland* in Prussia. By examining the historical figure of Hermann von Salza and following his relationship with Frederick II it becomes clear that when the papacy gave full papal support to the Teutonic Order's conquests in the Baltic, Gregory IX and Innocent IV were backing an order who openly supported the Hohenstaufen emperor despite his bans of excommunication and papal condemnation. The willingness of both, the papacy and the emperor, to embrace Hermann von Salza, and by extension the Teutonic Order, in the Baltic theatre calls into question the traditional interpretation that the papal-imperial conflict during the first half of the thirteenth century encompassed all aspects of papal-imperial politics. Instead, it suggests that in the Baltic theatre the two warring institutions were willing to pursue a degree of cooperation in both supporting the Teutonic Order as the principle institution tasked with the conquest and conversion of the Baltic frontier.

Chapter 1 – The Indulgence and the Baltic Crusades

Introduction

In the larger context of the Anglo-scholarship on the crusades, the Baltic Crusades are often regarded as an event of secondary importance to the more the famous campaigns aimed at recapturing the Holy Land, that is as a symptom of the crusading rhetoric and mentality of the period which was applied to the more localised political conquests in north-eastern Europe. To this end, the Baltic Crusades are commonly categorized as a ‘frontier,’ or ‘other,’ crusades and are often treated in conjunction with the crusades launched in Spain, southern France, Germany, and the ‘popular’ crusades which are generally regarded as lacking Papal authorization and therefore do not qualify as legitimate crusades.⁷¹ Works that focus solely on the Baltic Crusades, such as William Urban’s *The Baltic Crusade* or Eric Christiansen’s *The Northern Crusades: The Baltic and the Catholic Frontier, 1100-1525*, are more likely to be associated with the scholarship on the Teutonic Order, Scandinavian history, or the Holy Roman Empire than those that treat the broad topic of the Crusades in general.⁷² This approach, however, fails to recognize the important role the Baltic Crusades played in developing the theological and legal aspects of the crusades. The fact that the pagan held lands in the Baltic were never owned by Christians presented unique legal challenges to contemporary canon lawyers who were tasked with

⁷¹ For an example of how the Baltic Crusades are treated as ‘frontier’ crusades see; Christopher Tyerman, *God’s War: A New History of the Crusades*, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 650-712.

⁷² The famous work by Steven Runciman fails to address the Baltic Crusades at all despite dedicating a section to the ‘misguided crusades’ in which he discusses Frederick II and his relationship with the Teutonic Order; Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, vol. III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), pp. 171-205.

legitimizing the campaigns as being in defence of the church and not merely an excuse for Germanic conquests into the Baltic accompanied by conversion by the sword.⁷³

This chapter will examine the increasingly important role the Baltic Crusades would play in developing papal policy on the crusades in general during the thirteenth century. While the first crusade to the region was authorized by Pope Eugenius III in 1147, it was during the pontificates of Honorius III, Gregory IX, and Innocent IV in the first half of the thirteenth century that would see the Baltic Crusades develop in importance in papal policy. Spurred on by the formal arrival of the Teutonic Order in the Baltic in 1229 and the increase in hostilities between the Papacy and the Emperor Frederick II, papal policy in the Baltic shifted from a reactive approach to a more hands-on approach akin to the crusades launched towards the Holy Land. This shift in papal policy with respect to the Baltic is reflected in the elevated status of the indulgences issued in support of the northern crusades. The partial indulgence issued under Pope Eugenius III in the middle of the twelfth century shifted to the plenary indulgences issued by the popes Honorius III, Gregory IX, and Innocent IV during the thirteenth century.

In addition to playing an integral role in the development of crusading theology, the Baltic Crusades also provide a unique lense through which to view the conflict between Frederick II and the papacy during the thirteenth century. While this conflict has regularly been interpreted as effecting all elements of papal and imperial politics during the period, the Baltic Crusades stand in stark contrast to this interpretation. While the conflict revolved around the Imperial holdings in Italy and spread to the Holy Land during Frederick's highly controversial crusade to Jerusalem in 1227, in the Baltic this conflict appears to have been regarded as being of

⁷³ While theologians paid lip service to the notion that conversion should be voluntary, in the Baltic some theologians accepted and even praised the wars of conversion see; Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades, 1147-1254* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 24; and Palmer A. Throop, *Criticism of the Crusade: A Study of Public Opinion and Crusade Propaganda* (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1975), pp. 110-113.

secondary importance to the larger issue of bringing the Baltic lands into the fold of Christendom. After their formal arrival to the Baltic in 1229, the Teutonic Order's open support for Frederick II appears to be disregarded by the papacy since Gregory IX and Innocent IV had no hesitation in giving complete support to the Order's conquest of Prussia. At the same time as the conflict between Frederick II and the papacy raged on in the Italian peninsula with the Teutonic Order openly supporting the emperor, the papacy endowed numerous benefits and privileges to the Order in the Baltic, effectively giving papal authorization for the establishment of the *Ordensland* in Prussia - a benefit that even the mighty Knights Templars never received from the papacy.

The Indulgence

Due to the character and scarcity of source material, some of the more traditional methods of studying crusades and their participants are simply not possible with the campaigns to the Baltic. For example, the available source material does not allow us to determine whether all participants in the Baltic crusades took a vow, although some certainly did, or even what form such a vow would take. Some of the letters in the *Preußisches Urkundenbuch* shed light on the preaching of these campaigns, but not until the middle of the thirteenth century after the Teutonic Order was leading the crusades in the Baltic and the responsibility for preaching the crusades was given to the Dominicans. To determine who was charged with preaching the Baltic campaigns from the period of the middle of the twelfth century to the middle of the thirteenth century we must rely on the various chronicles related to the period. All these chronicles are

more concerned with furthering contemporary political agendas and often contradict each other regarding who had authority over the early campaigns.⁷⁴

The best available representation of papal policy on the crusades to the Baltic is the granting of indulgences to those who accepted the cross and contributed to the campaigns. Because popes did not simply copy the formula for indulgences from their predecessors, we can compare the terminology used and the actual granting of indulgences to participants in the Baltic crusades with the indulgences granted to participants in other crusades, such as those launched to reclaim the Holy Land as well as the campaigns in Spain and southern France, to determine papal policy on the Baltic crusades. This comparison between indulgences granted to the multiple theatres of penitential war allows us to determine the extent of the papacy's involvement in organizing the campaigns and to what degree it exercised control over the Baltic crusades.⁷⁵

Indulgences were penitential privileges, sometimes referred to as simply 'crusading privileges,' which were granted to those who took a holy vow to contribute to a crusade. Catholic theology argues that "after confession, absolution and the performance of the works that earn [the indulgence], a sinner is granted by the Church on God's behalf remission of all or part of the penalties that are the inevitable consequence of sin."⁷⁶ When an indulgence remits all sins from a person it is known as a plenary indulgence. These plenary, or full, indulgences also included other benefits bestowed by the Church. The most important of these benefits in addition to the remission of one's sins was papal protection over the family and possessions of the crusaders.

⁷⁴ Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 8-9. For further discussion on the scarcity of source material relating to the Baltic crusades see, J. A. Brundage, "A Note on the Attestation of Crusader's Vows," *The Catholic Historical Review* 52 (1966). Reprinted with original pagination in his *The Crusades, Holy War and Canon Law* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1991).

⁷⁵ Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 9.

⁷⁶ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* 3rd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 60.

Most crusaders were from the landholding nobility, and papal protection over their lands allowed them to campaign without fear of their lands being targeted by rivals. Both, partial and plenary indulgences, were granted to crusaders in the Baltic.

Indulgences also evolved over time and did not reach their final form until the pontificate of Innocent III (1198-1216). When the First Crusade was being preached in the late tenth century, the Catholic Church was experiencing an alteration in its approach to penitence. By the end of the eleventh century there were two main attitudes towards penitence that coexisted in Roman Catholicism. The first was the more traditional view that by performing severe enough penance one could earn absolution of their sins. The second approach believed that no penance was ever severe enough. Therefore, the sinner had to rely on God's mercy to accept a devout performance or meritorious work as sufficient, in which case, God would intercede and absolve them of their sins.⁷⁷ The first indulgence granted under Urban II in 1095 included a remission of all sins and expressed the first view on penitence. The second view, which was becoming increasingly popular since the pontificate of Urban II (p.1088-1099), is the approach expressed in the indulgences granted under the pontificate of Eugenius III (p.1145-1153).⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* pp.60-61.

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 60-62; For an example of an indulgence issued under Eugenius III see the Golden Bull, "*Quantum praedecessores* of 1. Dec. 1145," in preparation for the Second Crusade; Doeberl, *Monumenta Germaniae Selecta*, Vol. 4, 40. Trans. in Ernest F. Henderson, *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages*, (London: George Bell and Sons, 1910), pp. 333-336.

The Origins of the Baltic Crusades

The first papal authorized crusade into the Baltic occurred during the pontificate of Eugenius III when a crusade against the pagan Slavs was proclaimed in 1147. As a response to the fall of the crusader state of Edessa on 24 December 1144 and after a brief spat with the French king, Louis VII, Eugenius III issued the crusade encyclical *Quantum praedecessores* on 1 December 1145 and dispatched preachers across Europe to promote the Second Crusade. One of the preachers, and one of the most influential men in the Church at the time, was Abbot Bernard of Clairvaux. Bernard's preaching tour led him through France and eventually to the Holy Roman Empire, where a Cistercian monk named Radulf had been preaching sermons which had caused violent attacks on local Jewish populations in the region. At a meeting in Frankfurt on 13 March 1147, a large group of mainly Saxon crusaders approached Bernard and requested that they be allowed to campaign against the pagan Slavs instead of travelling to the Holy Land while still receiving the crusading privileges. Bernard agreed and based on a letter issued by him after the meeting, he approved of the crusade against the Slavs, going as far as declaring it on par with the Second Crusade.⁷⁹ This was done without consulting the pope and thus without papal authorization. In early April 1147, Bernard convinced Eugenius to support the idea of a crusade against the pagan Slavs and it was formally authorized in the papal letter *Divini dispensation*, issued at Troyes on 11 April 1147.⁸⁰

The crusades to the Baltic during the pontificate of Eugenius are unique in that they are a startling departure from canon law which was rigorously followed for the crusades to the Holy Land and Spain. As stated by Eugenius, and supported by Bernard, the purpose of the campaigns

⁷⁹ "Letter of [after 13. March] 1147," *S Bernardi Opera*, Vol. 8, No. 457; translation in *The Letters of St Bernard of Clairvaux*, Trans. B. S. James, 1st edition, No. 394 (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), pp. 466-468.

⁸⁰ Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 27-31.

to the Baltic was to subject the pagans to Christianity.⁸¹ This approach contradicts the common interpretation of canon law on justified holy war during this period which seems to have favoured the view of St. Augustine (354-430). This view holds that a holy war is only justified when defending the unity of the church against heretics and schismatics.⁸² To this end, the campaigns to the Holy Land and Spain were framed as defensive wars which aimed to bring previously held Christian lands back under the protection of the papacy and into Christendom. Although there have been debates among historians regarding whether Bernard was calling for ‘baptism or death’ or he was metaphorically saying that those who did not convert would be politically subjected to Christianity; there was little effort from within the Church to justify the crusades to the Baltic as wars for the defense of the faith.⁸³

The indulgences which Eugenius granted to the crusaders to the Baltic promised the same remission of sin as those granted to the crusaders to the Holy Land, although it lacked the temporal privileges included in the privileges for the campaigns to the east. Those who took the vow to go to the Holy Land were granted papal protection over their wives and children, they were protected from legal suits while on crusade, they were exempted from paying usury on past loans, and restrictions on lending money were eased. None of these temporal privileges were extended to the crusaders to the Baltic and in addition, both Eugenius and Bernard, emphasised that only those who had not already taken a vow to go to the Holy Land could join the crusades to the Baltic.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 32.

⁸² For a discussion on the interpretation of canon law regarding justified holy war during this period see; John Gilchrist, *The Erdmann Thesis and the Canon Law, 1083-1141* in *Crusade and Settlement*, Ed. Peter W. Edbury (Cardiff: University College Cardiff Press, 1985) pp. 37-45.

⁸³ Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 32-33.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

In the papal letter, *Non parum Animus*, which was issued in September of 1171 or 1172, Pope Alexander III (p.1159-1181) granted a plenary indulgence to those who campaigned against the pagans in the eastern Baltic, probably the Estonians. This letter was addressed to the kings, princes, and the faithful of the Scandinavian kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Nothing seems to have come from this letter as the first Scandinavian crusade into the eastern Baltic did not occur until the early part of the thirteenth century under the Danish king, Valdemar II, and culminated in the attack on Osel in 1206. Although this indulgence granted a complete remission of all confessed sins, it lacked a vow, the taking of the cross, and provided fewer spiritual privileges than those granted to crusaders to the Holy Land.⁸⁵

Alexander's indulgence for the Baltic campaigns differed from those he granted in the papal bulls for campaigns to the Holy Land; *Quantum predecessores* of July 1165, *In quantis pressuris* of June 1166, *Inter omnia* of July 1169, and *Cor nostrum* of January 1181. The bulls of 1165 and 1166 follow the view on penitence used by Eugenius III, that penitence required God's interjection. The bulls of 1169 and 1181 reverted to the more traditional view used by Urban II, that the act of penitence itself was satisfactory. Despite this shift on penitence, the indulgence granted for the campaigns to the Holy Land were always partial under Alexander. In the papal letter of 1175, *Memore partier*, he grants a similar indulgence for the campaigns in Spain as was granted to the Baltic crusaders in *Non parum animus*. This suggests that he used the indulgence to frame the different theatres of penitential war in a hierarchy with the campaigns to the Holy Land being the most important.⁸⁶

In 1197, Pope Celestine III (p.1191-1198) proclaimed another crusade to the Baltic, this time directed at Livonia. Not much is known about this campaign, apart from what is included in

⁸⁵ Tyerman, *God's War*, 695; and Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 59-60.

⁸⁶ Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 61-65.

the *Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*. The only surviving letter from Celestine III regarding the Livonian mission is a letter issued on 27 April 1193, in which a report from Bishop Meinhard of Livonia was given an “enthusiastic” reply by the college of cardinals. The nature of the surviving source material makes it impossible to determine the content of Celestine’s letters preaching the crusade in 1197, the purpose of the crusade, the form of the indulgence given, and the temporal privileges included.⁸⁷ In the *Chronicle of Henry of Livonia* we are told that Celestine granted “the remission of all sins to all those who would take the cross and go to restore that newly founded church [of Livonia].”⁸⁸ The rhetoric used by Henry suggests that the indulgence granted by Celestine in 1197 was similar to those granted to the Baltic campaigns by Alexander III in 1171 or 1172. That is, those who took the cross received a full remission of sins, but unlike the crusaders to the Holy Land, they did not receive the temporal privileges included in a plenary indulgence.

The Pontificate of Innocent III, 1198-1216

It was during the pontificate of Innocent III (p.1198-1216), specifically in the 1198 letter, *Post miserabile*, that the indulgence developed into its final, and most recognized, form.⁸⁹ Elected as pope in 1198, at only thirty-seven or thirty-eight years of age, Lothario dei Signi, who would take the name Pope Innocent III, was a break with the contemporary tradition of electing older, conservative, and reactive cardinals to the chair of supreme pontiff. Trained in theology, and known for being exceptionally well versed in canon law, Innocent came from the Paris

⁸⁷ Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 67-75.

⁸⁸ *The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, Trans. J. A. Brundage (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1961), 30.

⁸⁹ Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* pp. 64-65.

ecclesiastical tradition which stressed practical and social applications of theology.⁹⁰ During his pontificate, canon law went through numerous major reforms which brought about a new interpretation of the Church as a political institution and the theology behind the crusades. With the development of the theory of papal monarchy, that is the legal position that the pope has responsibility for the spiritual and political welfare of all mankind, under Innocent III, and continued by his successors, the curia exercised much more control over the proclaiming and waging of crusades. This resulted in the papacy becoming increasingly concerned about the campaigns in the Baltic, and papal intervention in the local politics of the Baltic missions became much more common.⁹¹

Despite the development of a new formula for plenary indulgences in 1198, Innocent continued to grant only partial indulgences for the campaigns in the Baltic. In *Sicut ecclesiastice religionis* of October 1199, participants in the Baltic campaigns were granted a remission of sins and those who had taken a vow to visit Rome were allowed to commute this vow to go to Livonia instead. In *Etsi verba evangelizantium* of October 1204, priests who had taken a vow to go to the Holy Land and laymen who could not fulfill their vows to go to the Holy Land due to poor health or poverty were permitted to go to Livonia instead, presumably with a full indulgence. In December 1215, the letter *Alto diuine* urged those who had not yet taken a vow to go to the Holy Land due to poor health or poverty to go to Livonia instead and offered a remission of sins to defend the newly converted there.

⁹⁰ Tyerman, *God's War*, pp. 479-488.

⁹¹ Eric Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades: The Baltic and the Catholic Frontier, 1100-1525* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), pp. 118-119; for further discussion on the development of the theory of papal monarchy see; John A. Watt, *The Theory of Papal Monarchy in the Thirteenth Century: The Contributions of the Canonists* (London: Burns & Oates, 1965); and Peter Partner, *The Lands of St Peter: The Papal State in the Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1972), pp. 229-243.

Innocent also expanded the scope of who would be granted indulgences for the campaigns in Baltic. Prior to the pontificate of Innocent III, indulgences had only been granted to those who personally took the cross and vowed to campaign in the Baltic. In his letter of 1215, Innocent extended the indulgence to include those who contributed financially to the Baltic missions for the first time.⁹² Like his predecessors, Alexander III and Celestine III, Innocent III used the indulgence as both a tool for recruitment and to maintain a hierarchy between the different theatres of penitential war. Despite the final development of the plenary indulgence and the decree of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, *Ad liberandam*, which lays out the final formula and the list of recipients of the indulgence, Innocent never issued a plenary indulgence for the Baltic Crusades.⁹³

Another development during Innocent's pontificate, which would have revolutionary consequences for the Baltic Crusades, was the confirmation of the Teutonic Order as a military order in 1198. Originally founded at Acre in 1190, although some traditions hold it was founded in Jerusalem in 1127, the Teutonic Order was originally intended to be active primarily in the Holy Land.⁹⁴ After experiencing a period of rapid growth in the Holy Land and a failed attempt

⁹² Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 94-96.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

⁹⁴ Desmond Seward, *The Monks of War: The Military Orders* (London: The Folio Society, 2000), 63; and *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin: A History of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia, 1190-1331*, Trans. Mary Fischer (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2010), 31 however this chronicle conflates the founding of the hospital in 1190 and the confirmation of the military order in 1198 into the same event. The Teutonic Order consisted of three arms; the military arm of the order which consisted of Knights from the upper nobility of German society, the ordained brothers of the order who served as priests, and the sergeant brothers who also served in a military capacity but came from lower social strata than the knights as made evident by their use of lighter armor and their common role as light cavalry. The Order also took in laymen, usually from the local region who assisted the Order in administrative duties and the governance of their conquests in the Baltic. The Rule of the Teutonic Order was based on the Rule of St. Augustine with amendments to reflect their militaristic role such as allowing the Knight brothers to possess their own armor and weapons. For a translation of their Rule see; *The Rule of the Teutonic Knights in The Crusades: A Reader*. Ed. S.J. Allen and Emilie Amit, No. 70, 267-269 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

at territorial expansion in Burzenland,⁹⁵ the order received support for their conquest of Prussia in the *Golden Bull of Rimini*, issued by Emperor Frederick II in March 1226.⁹⁶ In 1234 Pope Gregory IX gave papal confirmation to these agreements, making the Teutonic Order the vanguard for further campaigns into the Baltic with the backing of two of the most powerful institutions in Europe, the Church and the Holy Roman Empire.⁹⁷

The Pontificate of Honorius III, 1216-1227

The pontificate of Honorius III (p.1216-1227) saw the Church continue with the reforms of Innocent III, citing the theory of papal monarchy, the papacy took an increasing interest in the localised politics of the Baltic missions, and in St. Peter's on 22 November 1220, he crowned a young Frederick II (1194-1250) as Holy Roman Emperor. Unknown at the time, but this coronation of Frederick II marked the beginning of a fierce conflict between the Emperor and the papacy which would last for three decades and impact all aspects of papal and imperial politics.⁹⁸

Following the tradition of Innocent III, the first indulgence granted for the Baltic by Honorius was a commutation of vows to the Holy Land. In the letter *Litteras tam episcoporum*, issued in February 1217, Honorius allowed those who had taken vows to go to the Holy Land to campaign in the Baltic instead while retaining their plenary indulgence. The second letter issued by Honorius concerning the Baltic campaigns was *Compatientes augustiis* of March 1217. This

⁹⁵ South-eastern Transylvania, now part of Romania. In the 13th century this region was under the control of the Kingdom of Hungary.

⁹⁶ "Letter of March 1226," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 56 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 41-43.

⁹⁷ For a concise account of the Teutonic Order's origins and early development see Mary Fischer's introduction in *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin*, Trans. Mary Fischer.

⁹⁸ For a biographical account of Frederick II and his conflict with the papacy see; David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

letter marks a break in papal policy from the pontificate of Innocent III as it granted a plenary indulgence, like those granted to crusaders to the Holy Land, for those who agreed to campaign in Prussia. In addition to granting the first plenary indulgence for campaigns in the Baltic, Honorius also extended the indulgence in the Baltic campaigns to those who sent others in their place.⁹⁹

Using the final formula and terminology of the indulgence found in Innocent's *Ad liberandam*, as decreed by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, Honorius developed a similar plenary indulgence for the Baltic crusades. This formula was used to promote the Baltic crusades by Honorius in the two letters of 5 May 1218 and 15 June 1218.¹⁰⁰ The letter issued on 5 May 1218 was a reissue of Innocent III's letter of December 1215, *Alto diuine*, with a few changes. First, the destination of the campaign was changed from Livonia to Prussia. Second, Honorius replaced the partial indulgence offered by Innocent with his new formula for a plenary indulgence which was to be granted to those who took the cross, those who contributed financially to the campaign, and those who sent others in their place.¹⁰¹ Throughout his pontificate, Honorius continually granted crusaders to the Baltic a plenary indulgence. This marks a clear change in papal policy on the Baltic Crusades from the previous pontificates, especially those of Eugenius III, Alexander III, and Innocent III, in which the partial indulgence granted for the Baltic campaigns was a clear indication that the crusades to the Baltic were less important than those launched to reclaim the Holy Land.

⁹⁹ Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 138-139.

¹⁰⁰ "Letter of 5. May 1218," *Codex Diplomaticus Prussicus, Urkunden-Sammlung zur ältern Geschichte Preussens aus dem königlichen Geheimen Archiv zu Königsberg nebst Regesten*, Ed. Voigt et al. 6 vols. Vol. 1, No. 2 (Königsberg, 1836-61); and "Letter of 15. June 1218," *Diplomatarium Danicum*, Ed. A. Afzelius et al. (Copenhagen, 1938ff.).

¹⁰¹ Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 140.

Honorius himself confirmed that the plenary indulgence formula he used for the Baltic campaigns in his letter *Si pro varietate* of 1221 was an intentional move to reflect the increasing importance papal policy placed on the Baltic conquests. In this letter he explains how he initially granted a plenary indulgence for the crusades to the Baltic, a reference to a series of letters issued in 1217 and 1218. Then, in the letter *Venerabilis frater noster* of November 1220, he revoked the plenary indulgence for the Baltic campaigns when participants in the Fifth Crusade requested more manpower be gathered for the cause in the Holy Land. He then goes on to claim that now, as a response to being warned that the mission in Prussia was lacking support, he was reissuing the plenary indulgence for the Baltic crusades.¹⁰² At the end of this letter, Honorius makes a point of explaining that the changes in his policy on the Baltic were not a reflection of inconsistency, instead they were made with careful consideration, “*Si pro varietate negotiorum vel temporum consilia provide variamus, non est imputandum inconstantie levitati, sed maturitati potius ascribendum*” (if, for the sake of a range of issues or of time, we carefully change our councils, it ought not be reckoned as feckless inconstancy, but rather ascribed to maturity.)¹⁰³

Despite granting a plenary indulgence for the Baltic crusades on par with those granted for campaigns to the east, Honorius still gave priority to the Fifth Crusade as being of more immediate importance for the curia than the campaigns in the Baltic. With priority being given to the Fifth Crusade, this meant that papal policy on the Baltic campaigns was directly influenced by developments in the east.¹⁰⁴ Preparations for the Fifth Crusade began during the final year of Innocent III’s pontificate and it is usually seen as the last great attempt by the papacy to organize

¹⁰² Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 142.

¹⁰³ “Letter of 20. April 1221,” *Vetera Monumenta Poloniae et Lithuaniae*, Vol. 1, No. 27; This quote can also be found in Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 142.

¹⁰⁴ Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 144.

and wage a holy war through its own leadership. At the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 it was decided that this campaign would target Egypt and attempt to remove the Ayyubid threat there before moving on the Levant.¹⁰⁵ By the early months of 1218 the city of Damietta had been decided as the principle target of the crusaders to Egypt. Regarded at the time as the ‘key to Egypt,’ Damietta held a strategic position, guarding one of the main access routes to Cairo, and being smaller than both Cairo and Alexandria, it was thought that it would be an easier city to capture.¹⁰⁶ As summarised by historian Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt, “the siege of [Damietta] started in May 1218. Damietta was taken in November 1219, but the crusaders failed to take advantage of their new position, and on 30 August 1221 their army was defeated by the Muslim army at al-Mansura.”¹⁰⁷ These events in Egypt are likely the reason why Honorius revoked the plenary indulgence granted to the Baltic crusades in *Venerabilis frater noster* of November 1220. Although, as mentioned previously, this proved to be a temporary measure as he reinstated the plenary indulgence for the Baltic campaigns in *Si pro varietate* of 1221.¹⁰⁸

Honorius’ prioritizing of the Fifth Crusade over the Baltic campaigns can also be seen in his approach to the organization and control of the holy wars. Following the approach of his predecessors, Honorius maintained a reactive policy on authorizing the campaigns in the Baltic. In contrast to the Fifth Crusade, which was organized and waged under the direct control of the curia, Honorius did very little to influence the organization of the Baltic crusades. Instead of instigating the campaigns to the Baltic, Honorius merely authorized plans for campaigns which were organized and controlled by parties already active in the Baltic. The papal letters of May and June of 1218, which authorize a new crusade to Prussia, are a response to the requests of the

¹⁰⁵ Tyerman, *God’s War*, pp. 606-607.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 628-649.

¹⁰⁷ Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 144; For another account of the Fifth Crusade see Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A Short History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987) pp. 145-149.

¹⁰⁸ Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 144-145.

Bishop of Prussia. When he reissued the plenary indulgence in *Si pro varietate* of 1221, he was reacting to a warning that the Church in Prussia was being endangered by a lack of support from the west. The letter of January 1222, which authorized a crusade to Livonia, was likely a response to the request of Bishop Albert of Livonia who was having problems with recruitment.¹⁰⁹

It is also clear that these reactive authorizations of crusades to the Baltic were not made without careful consideration. While Honorius saw the financial, spiritual, and political benefits of the Baltic crusades he was also willing to ignore requests for help from the institutions in the Baltic when it benefited his curia. This stance is reflected in his handling of the conflict between the Livonian church and the Danish king in 1220 and 1221. According to Henry of Livonia, upon learning of the plots of the Danish king to bring Livonia under Danish control in 1220, Bishop Albert of Livonia secretly went to Rome to seek aid and council from Honorius over ‘grievous disturbances’ by the Danish king, the Russians, and the pagans in the region. Honorius paid the requests of the bishop little interest. Henry claims that Danish emissaries in Rome “disturbed the business of the Livonian church at the Roman court,”¹¹⁰ causing Bishop Albert to take his requests to the newly elected emperor, Frederick II, who also gave Albert no sympathy or support against the Danish crown and only offered his advice.¹¹¹

At the end of Honorius’ pontificate, external powers started to stir which would revolutionize the character of the Baltic crusades. As a response to uprisings by the Prussian

¹⁰⁹ Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 146-149. The letter of January 1222 and authorization of the Crusade to Livonia is also referred to by Henry of Livonia; *The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, Trans. James A. Brundage, pp. 196-197.

¹¹⁰ *The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, Trans. J. A. Brundage, 192.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 191-192.

tribes in the lower Vistula,¹¹² in 1225 Duke Conrad of Mazovia sent an invitation to the Teutonic Order to come and help secure the region allowing him to focus on his ambitions in Poland. The Order's desire to establish a crusader state (*Ordensland*) was well known since their failed attempt at annexing territory in the 'Burzenland' in the kingdom of Hungary a decade earlier. In 1211 King Andrew of Hungary hired the Order to defend his kingdom's eastern border from the Cumans.¹¹³ When it became apparent to Andrew that the Order intended to carve out a state for themselves in Hungary, they were chased out of the region by the local Christian population.¹¹⁴ In March 1226, Frederick II issued the so called *Golden Bull of Rimini*, which authorized the Teutonic Order to conquer Prussia under imperial authority. Furthermore, the Order's grandmaster, Hermann von Salza, was to rule the conquests in Kulm and Prussia as a *Reichsfürst*, an independent prince of the Holy Roman Empire.¹¹⁵

This document marks the beginning of the Teutonic Order's involvement in the Baltic crusades. Despite the obvious pro-Hohenstaufen sentiments of the German Order, as indicated by the endowments granted to the Knights in the *Golden Bull of Rimini*, Honorius and his successors were willing to throw the curia's support behind the Order as the vanguard of the Baltic campaigns. In the final years of Honorius' pontificate, Frederick's delays in fulfilling his vow to go on crusade started to raise tensions between the emperor and the papacy. Originally, Frederick was supposed to be one of the leaders of the Fifth Crusade which stalled in Damietta in 1221, however, Frederick was preoccupied with affairs in his Sicilian kingdom and was unable

¹¹² These 'old' Prussian tribes in the northern Vistula were located along the northern border of Mazovia

¹¹³ Tyerman, *God's War*, 699; The region known as the Burzenland is located in modern day north-eastern Transylvania, currently part of Romania. During the 13th century, this region had already been converted to Catholicism, with the nomadic Cumans being the exception, and was controlled by the Kingdom of Hungary under King Andrew

¹¹⁴ Seward, *The Monks of War*, pp. 64-65.

¹¹⁵ "Letter of March 1226," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 56 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 41-43.

to fulfill his vow. In March of 1223, Frederick met with Honorius at Ferentino where he reiterated his crusading vow and an expedition was planned for 1225. In 1225, at another conference between Frederick and Honorius, this time in San Germano, it was agreed that a departure that same year was not feasible and 15 August 1227 was decided on as the new date of departure. When agreeing on the new departure date of 1227 at San Germano, Honorius made it clear that any further delays by Frederick made him liable to be excommunicated. This threat of excommunication should not be interpreted as a papal assault on Frederick's position as emperor, the conflict would not reach that level of animosity until the pontificate of Honorius' successor, Gregory IX. Instead, it should be viewed as an attempt by Honorius to secure an absolute guarantee on Frederick's departure in 1227.¹¹⁶ Despite their differences, Honorius took a conciliatory approach to Frederick as reflected in his acceptance of the emperor's postponements of his departure to the east. During these discussions, the Order's grandmaster, Hermann von Salza acted as an intermediary between the emperor and the pope, an arrangement which reflects the curia's willingness of overlook the obvious pro-Hohenstaufen sentiment of the Order.¹¹⁷

The Pontificate of Gregory IX, 1227-1241

The character of the Baltic crusades experienced a major shift during the pontificate of Gregory IX (p.1227-1241). With the arrival of the Teutonic Order to the campaigns following the *Golden Bull of Rimini* in 1226 and a recovery of Danish influence in Estonia, the campaigns were now being organized and waged by militant institutions.¹¹⁸ This stands in contrast to the campaigns under previous pontificates which, with the exception of the early Danish crusades to

¹¹⁶ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 148-152.

¹¹⁷ *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin*, Trans. Mary Fischer, 36.

¹¹⁸ Fönnberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 187.

the eastern Baltic, were campaigns authorized by the papacy in response to requests from local leaders, but had very little, if any, institutional organization or input.

Continuing in the tradition of the theory of papal monarchy of Innocent III and Honorius III, the pontificate of Gregory IX also saw an increase in papal involvement in the organization of the Baltic crusades. The two letters issued by Gregory on 12 September and 17 September of 1230, both titled *Cum misericors*, marked the beginning of the Teutonic Order's invasion of Prussia. These letters confirmed the donation of Kulmerland to the Order while also giving the Knights papal authorization for their conquests of Prussia, the same conquests for which they had received imperial authorization from Frederick in the *Golden Bull of Rimini* in 1226.¹¹⁹ From this point on, the Teutonic Order was able to repeatedly secure papal support for their campaign in Prussia with clusters of letter being issued by Gregory in October of 1233¹²⁰ and in August-September of 1234,¹²¹ all of which reinforce the idea that the Order was to play the

¹¹⁹ "Letter 12. September 1230," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 80 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 61; and "Letter of 17. September 1230," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 81 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 61-63.

¹²⁰ "Letter of 6. October 1233," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 98 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 73; "Letter of 6. October 1233" *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 99 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 73-74; "Letter of 7. October 1233," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 100 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 74-75; "Letter of 7. October 1233," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 101 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 75; "Letter of 7. October 1233," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 102 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 76; and "Letter of 12. October 1233," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 103 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 76-77.

¹²¹ "Letter of 3. August 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 108 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 83-84; "Letter of 5. September 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 109 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 84-85; "Letter of 9. September 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 110 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 85; "Letter of 9. September 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 111 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 86; "Letter of 9. September 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 112 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 86-87; "Letter of 9. September 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 113 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 87; "Letter of 9. September 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 114 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 88; "Letter of 9. September 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 115 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 88-89; and "Letter of 9. September 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 116 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 89.

leading role in the conquest of Prussia and that the local nobility and participants in the campaign were called upon to be obedient to and to provide material support for the Teutonic Knights.

Gregory's indulgence formula first appears in the nearly identical letters titled, *Cum misericors*, of September 1230. In these letters, he offered a plenary indulgence, equal to that offered for the crusades to the Holy Land, to those who served at least a year in Prussia, regardless of whether they funded themselves or were receiving funding from others. These indulgences were also to be granted to those who financially supported the campaigns and to those who died in a state of penitence prior to fulfilling their commitment of serving for a whole year. Notably absent from these letters is any mention regarding the commutation of vows taken to campaign to the Holy Land which could not be fulfilled due to poverty or poor health.¹²² In the letter *Cum lux illa* of 18 July 1231, Gregory used a different formula to grant a plenary indulgence, again equal to those granted for the campaigns to the Holy Land, to those who went to Prussia themselves, those who sent others in their place, and to those who contributed financially to the campaigns.¹²³

In his letter of 23 January 1232, Gregory reverted back to the formula used in *Cum misericors* of September 1230, with the only omission being the reference to those who had died while in a state of penitence, for those who took the cross against the Prussians.¹²⁴ Unlike the letters of September 1230, the letters of 18 July 1231 and 23 January 1232 allowed the Dominican preachers in Bohemia, Pomerania, and Gotland to commute the vows of those who

¹²² "Letter of 12. September 1230," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 80 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 61; and "Letter of 17. September 1230," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 81 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 61-63; and Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 194.

¹²³ "Letter of 18. July 1231," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 85 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 65-66; and Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 194-195.

¹²⁴ "Letter of 23. January 1232," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 87 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 66-67; and Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 194.

could not fulfill their vow to campaign to the Holy Land due to ill health or poverty to campaign in Prussia instead.¹²⁵ While all of these letters were very clear that the plenary indulgence granted in them was equal to those granted to crusaders to the Holy Land, none of them mention any temporal privileges being granted to the crusaders in Prussia.¹²⁶

In contrast to Honorius' conciliatory approach to the emperor, Gregory IX refused to entertain Frederick's delays in fulfilling his vow to go on crusade and sought to exercise the theory of papal monarchy in the tradition of Innocent III. David Abulafia summarizes Gregory's approach to papal-imperial relations, claiming, "Gregory was keen to indicate from the start [of his pontificate] the absolute primacy of his office over that of the emperor. He did not see himself as an ordinary mediator, resolving the embarrassment generated by the imperial ban on the one hand, and the Lombard refusal to negotiate with the emperor on the other. For Gregory IX, mediation represented the fulfilment of the papacy's highest task, as supreme judge on earth. With his election, cooperation between pope and emperor gave way to the idea of the subordination of emperor to pope."¹²⁷

This approach by Gregory led to the excommunication of Frederick II in 1227 after failing to uphold his promise to campaign to the Holy Land, citing sickness as the reason why he was unable to travel. In 1228, despite being excommunicated, Frederick undertook his crusade to the Holy Land. Much to the chagrin of the papacy and the church of Jerusalem, Frederick was able to secure Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth, as well as safe passage for Christians

¹²⁵ "Letter of 18. July 1231," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 85 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 65-66; "Letter of 23. January 1232," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 87 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 66-67; and Fonesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 195.

¹²⁶ Fonesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 195. The indulgences granted in the letters of September 1230 and 23 January 1232 are also referenced in the chronicle of Nicolaus von Jeroschin see; *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin*, Trans. Mary Fischer, 65.

¹²⁷ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, 164.

between these sites, through negotiations with the Egyptian sultan, al-Kamil, and with the support of Hermann von Salza and the Teutonic Order. Frederick's journey to the east culminated with him entering the city of Jerusalem on 17 March 1229 and, after leading his followers to the Holy Sepulcher, he took the crown from the high altar and placed it on his own head declaring himself 'King of Jerusalem.'¹²⁸

After being absent for a year, Frederick returned to a Sicilian kingdom in disarray when he reached the port of Brindisi on 10 June 1229. While he had been on crusade, Gregory used the opportunity to try and separate the Kingdom of Sicily from the Holy Roman Empire, a long-held desire of the papacy. To this end, the pope had launched a scathing propaganda campaign against the emperor claiming that, as an excommunicate, Frederick had forfeited his claim to both the imperial and Sicilian crowns. In Germany, Gregory attempted to encourage local nobles to spearhead a movement to elect a new dynasty in opposition to the Swabian Hohenstaufens. However, Gregory's attempts at rallying support against Frederick in Germany were met with very little success and eventually the pope was forced to abandon the idea of having a new election for the German crown. Gregory's attempts at fomenting rebellion against the excommunicated emperor found more success among the Lombard cities and towns of northern and central Italy than he had in Germany, but the support he did find was uncoordinated and for the most part, ineffective.¹²⁹

In the summer of 1230, Gregory and Frederick were forced to come to a peace agreement at a conference in Ceprano. Following the Teutonic Order's support of Frederick in Outremer despite the emperor's excommunication, Hermann von Salza, once again, took part in these

¹²⁸ For a full account of Frederick II's crusade to the Holy Land in 1228-1229 see; Tyerman, *God's War*, pp. 739-755; and Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 164-194.

¹²⁹ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 194-200.

negotiations.¹³⁰ By this time, Gregory's failed attempts at fomenting revolt against the emperor in Germany and Italy made it clear that Frederick still had considerable support in the courts of Europe and, despite his excommunication, Gregory was also forced to acknowledge that Frederick had fulfilled his vow to go on crusade. In the peace agreement of 1230, Gregory agreed to lift the excommunication of Frederick and to stop fomenting rebellion against the Emperor.¹³¹ Traditionally, Frederick has often been criticized for not forcing Gregory to come to terms more beneficial for the empire in this peace agreement. However, these criticisms often fail to account for the actions of Frederick's son, Henry (VII), who had been crowned as 'King of the Germans' by Frederick in 1220, while he was preparing to go on crusade to the Holy Land. During the summer of 1230, Henry was attempting to rally support amongst the German nobles in an attempt to overthrow his father and be elected as Holy Roman Emperor. With the Treaty of Ceprano between Frederick and the papacy in 1230, Henry no longer had papal backing in his attempts to rally the German nobility and Frederick could now dedicate his full attention to putting an end to his Henry's actions in Germany, which he formally did at Worms in July 1235.¹³²

The Teutonic Order's support for Frederick's crusade to Jerusalem and the role played by Hermann von Salza in the negotiations of the Treaty of Ceprano in 1230 must have made it obviously clear to Gregory that the Order held pro-Hohenstaufen sympathies. The military Orders most active in Jerusalem, the Knights Templars and the Hospitallers, had both sided with the papacy against the emperor and refused to acknowledge Frederick's coronation as 'King of Jerusalem,' recognizing instead his status of excommunication. The Templars went as far as to

¹³⁰ Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 205.

¹³¹ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 200-201.

¹³² For a full account of the attempted insurrection of Frederick's son, Henry (VII) see Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 226-244.

plan a coup with Patriarch Gerold to overthrow Frederick's control of Jerusalem and to wrest control of the city away from imperial agents in 1229.¹³³ While the military Orders who sided with the Papacy found themselves in direct confrontation with the Emperor, so much so that in the Treaty of Ceprano of 1230 Frederick agreed to return the southern Italian holdings of the Knights Templars and the Hospitallers that he had confiscated from the orders in response to their behaviour towards him during his crusade to the east, the Papacy seems to have held no ill will towards the Teutonic Order or Hermann von Salza for ignoring Gregory's ban of excommunication and for supporting Frederick's campaign to Jerusalem. Indeed, according to Abulafia, the final act in securing the Treaty of Ceprano in September of 1230 was a private affair at Agnani, where Gregory, Frederick, and Hermann von Salza dined together.¹³⁴

On 3 August 1234, Gregory made it clear that the Teutonic Order's conquests in Prussia had the Church's support when he issued the *Golden Bull of Rieti*. This document brought the Order's possession of Kulmerland and their conquests in Prussia under the protection of the apostolic chair, it conferred the establishment and endowment of past bishoprics in Prussia, and gave formal recognition to the Order's holdings as a papal fief. In exchange, the Church received an annual interest rate from the Order for this recognition.¹³⁵ The formula of this document draws a direct comparison to the *Golden Bull of Rimini*, issued by Frederick for the Order in March 1226. In the original document, Frederick granted to the Order the donation of Kulmerland and all future conquests of Prussia, the same holdings that the *Golden Bull of Rieti* would later recognize as a papal fief. However, there is no indication that Frederick had any rejection to the *Golden Bull of Rieti*, instead, this seems to be a continuation of the relatively

¹³³ Tyerman, *God's War*, 754.

¹³⁴ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 200-201.

¹³⁵ "Letter of 3. August 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 108 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 83-84.

positive papal-imperial relations that resulted in the Treaty of Ceprano of September 1230. Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt goes so far as to suggest that the *Golden Bull of Rieti* was an agreement reached between Gregory and Frederick, with Hermann von Salza present once again, to address the pope's need for support against a rebellious Roman population and the emperor's need for support against his rebellious son, Henry (VII).¹³⁶

Although the majority of Gregory's papal policy focused on the Teutonic Order's campaigns in Prussia, he did not entirely ignore the other campaigns in the region. On 15 February 1236 he issued *Ne terra vastae*, his only known letter authorizing a crusade to Livonia. This letter was addressed to the papal legate, William of Modena, and granted him the ability to recruit crusaders from those who had not yet taken crusading vows yet and to commute the vows of those who, due to poverty, were unable to campaign to the Holy Land. Following in the tradition of his predecessor Honorius III, in *Ne terra vastae*, Gregory granted a plenary indulgence, the same as those granted for campaigns to the Holy Land, to all who served for a year in this crusade, whether they funded themselves or not, and to those who financed the campaigns.¹³⁷

Gregory also gave papal support to Scandinavian campaigns into the eastern Baltic. In 1240, he allowed the Danish church to preach a crusade to protect the newly converted in Estonia. Although the initiative for this campaign most likely came from the Danish church, Gregory granted a plenary indulgence, the same as those granted for campaigns to the Holy Land, to anyone who served for a year in the Danish crusade. He also allowed the Danish church to commute the vows of those who had already taken the cross without restrictions. Unlike previous letters concerning the commutation of vows in the Baltic crusades, there is no

¹³⁶ Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusade*, 205.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 206-208.

indication that the Danish church was only allowed to commute the vows of those who were unable to fulfil their previous vows due to ill health or poverty. In addition to the lack of restrictions on the commutation of vows, the indulgences granted for this campaign were not expanded to include those who had contributed financially and no temporal privileges were granted marking a clear break from what had been Honorius' and Gregory's policy on the Baltic campaigns.¹³⁸

Throughout his pontificate Gregory also supported the Swedish mission in Finland, but only one surviving letter authorizes a crusade in the region. As a response to a request from the archbishop of Uppsala, in December 1237, he issued a letter authorizing a crusade to be preached against the Tavastians. Using the same formula as would appear in the authorization of the Danish crusade to Estonia three years later in 1240, Gregory granted a plenary indulgence, the same as those granted for campaigns to the Holy Land, to those who participated in the Swedish campaign and the indulgence was not to be extended to those who contributed financially to the campaign. Unlike the letter issued for the Danish crusade to Estonia, there is no stipulation in this letter about crusaders serving at least a year or any mention of the commutation of vows.¹³⁹

Papal policy on the Baltic during the pontificate of Innocent IV was dominated by two major elements. The first was the continued hostilities between the papacy and Frederick II. Although Frederick and Gregory had managed to maintain relatively peaceful relation in the first half of the 1230s, by the end of the decade, the conflict was back in full force and Frederick had a new tactic to bring the curia to heel. In the summer of 1239, the emperor described his new approach in a letter to the archbishop of Messina. As summarized by David Abulafia, "its two central points were the threat of force rather than negotiation as a means to end the conflict; and

¹³⁸ Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 208-209.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 209-210.

the assertion of imperial rights in central Italy, in the duchy of Spoleto and the march of Ancona.”¹⁴⁰ During the late winter of 1239-40, the Emperor’s plan was successful in isolating Gregory from many of the Papal States around Rome that the papacy had relied on for support against the emperor since the pontificate of Innocent III. Sticking to his plan, Frederick had no interest in marching on Rome itself, instead he used his recent conquests to try and force Gregory to the negotiating table. Gregory refused, and on 22 February 1240 he formally excommunicated the Emperor for a second time in a public appeal to the people of Rome.¹⁴¹

The Pontificate of Innocent IV, 1243-1254

When Innocent IV was elected on 25 June 1243, the curia was in an ominous position. Frederick’s attempts to undermine Gregory by appealing directly to the College of Cardinals had sown divisions in the upper clergy. In 1241, these divisions resulted in the college electing Celestine IV as the successor of Gregory IX. Celestine was an old and frail cardinal who had been held captive by the Emperor prior to his election and was viewed as an acceptable compromise by the two main factions in the College of Cardinals. Celestine died just three weeks after his election and the curia remained divided until Innocent IV’s election in 1243.¹⁴²

The second element that dominated Innocent IV’s pontificate was the arrival of a new threat, the rapidly expanding Mongol Empire, which was threatening the Christian west on two fronts, in Outremer and in Eastern Europe. Gregory had authorized the first crusade to be preached against the Mongols in 1229, but it was not until the second half of the 1230s that they

¹⁴⁰ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, 341.

¹⁴¹ For a full account of the conflict between Gregory IX and Frederick II between 1239-1241 see Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 340-350.

¹⁴² For an account of the circumstances surrounding the election of Celestin IV see Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 350-354. and Partner, *The Lands of St. Peter*, pp. 254-255.

became a real threat to the Christian nations of Eastern Europe. In December 1240 Kiev fell and the Mongols continued west, raiding into parts of Poland and Hungary, before withdrawing from the region in 1242. Although the Mongols would not return to Eastern Europe until the late 1250s, the threat of another incursion impacted papal policy on the Baltic throughout the 1240s. In 1243, Innocent confirmed the crusade against the Mongols which was called by Gregory in 1229 and in 1249 he allowed the commutation of vows for those who would campaign against the Mongols instead of the other theatres of penitential war.¹⁴³

During the pontificate of Innocent IV, the Teutonic Order continued to receive papal support for their holdings and conquests in the Baltic. Shortly after the election of Innocent in the summer of 1243, the Teutonic Order secured papal support for their continued Baltic campaigns and confirmation of their holdings in a letter issued on 30 July 1243.¹⁴⁴ Shortly afterwards the Order requested a papal bull authorizing their new campaigns in Prussia and Livonia. Innocent's response was to issue *Qui iustis causis* on 23 September 1243, which would be reissued repeatedly with minor alterations by Innocent and his successor.¹⁴⁵

In *Qui iustis causis*, Innocent granted a plenary indulgence, the same as those granted for the campaigns to the East, for those who served a year in the Baltic regardless of whether they financed themselves or were funded by others. Innocent also expanded the indulgence to include those who contributed financially to the campaigns and to those who sent others in their place. For the first time in the Baltic crusades, the families of the crusaders and their property was taken

¹⁴³ Fönnestberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 224-225.

¹⁴⁴ "Letter of 30. July 1243," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 144 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 109-110.

¹⁴⁵ "Letter of 23. September 1243," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 146 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 111-112; and Fönnestberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 225; For an example of a reissue of this letter with minor alterations see "Letter of 7. October 1243," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 151 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 151.

under papal protection. Those who could not fulfil their vow in these crusades due to poverty or ill health could redeem their vows by paying a compensation ‘according to their ability.’ As the leaders of these campaigns, the Teutonic Order was granted any income from these redemptions to be used in support of their crusades.¹⁴⁶

In response to more petitions by the Order for papal support in 1245, Innocent issued two important letters regarding the Teutonic Order’s ability to recruit for their campaigns. On 7 May Innocent granted the Order the ability to recruit one hundred German knights without the need to publicly preach the campaigns.¹⁴⁷ In a letter issued on 13 August, he allowed the Order to recruit crusaders from Germany without public preaching with no time limit.¹⁴⁸ This allowed the Order to recruit crusaders at their own behest and without papal authorization for the specific crusade. Despite Innocent’s emphasis that the Order did not have permission to grant indulgences, that was to be the responsibility of the archbishop of Mainz, the letter of 13 August 1245 relinquished papal control over the organization of the crusades in Prussia to the Teutonic Order. As summarised by Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt, “now Innocent gave the Teutonic Order a free rein to organize crusades as it wished and he thus allowed for a perpetual crusade in Prussia, a remarkable concession in light of his usual emphasis on his prerogative with respect to indulgences.”¹⁴⁹ In a letter issued in early 1248, Innocent continued this trend of increasingly granting the Order more control over the Baltic Crusades when he gave the Order permission to grant plenary indulgences to any crusaders participating in the fight against the Mongols, further intensifying the ‘perpetual crusade’ in Prussia.

¹⁴⁶ Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 226-227.

¹⁴⁷ “Letter of 7. May 1245,” *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 167 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 124.

¹⁴⁸ “Letter of 13. August 1245,” *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 168 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 124-125.

¹⁴⁹ Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 227-228.

Like his predecessor, Gregory IX, Innocent also continued to support the Scandinavian campaigns in the Baltic. Out of the Scandinavian nations and the Baltic missions, only the Danes continued to launch campaigns into the Baltic during Innocent's pontificate following a brief conflict with the Teutonic Order over the division of lands in the eastern Baltic which resulted in the Treaty of Stensby in 1238. After aborting plans for a new crusade to Estonia in 1242 and then again in 1244, the Danish king, Erik IV (r.1241-50), received a series of papal letters in February and March of 1245 which supported a new Danish campaign to the eastern Baltic. In a letter issued on 20 February 1245, Innocent authorized Erik's crusade and granted the same plenary indulgence that was offered for crusades to the Holy Land to those who served a year in the Danish campaign. This crusade is unique in that a new method of financing the campaign was agreed upon at the request of Erik. For the first time in any theatre of penitential war, in a letter issued on 2 March 1245, Innocent granted the Danish king a third of the ecclesiastical tithes from the church province of Lund for three years. In 1247, Innocent extended the period for this permission from three years to six, but King Erik was constantly complaining that there had been disputes between himself and the Danish archbishop regarding what amount the Danish crown should actually receive.¹⁵⁰

Conclusions

While the first crusade to the Baltic was officially authorized by Eugenius III in 1147, it was during the first half of the thirteenth century that the Baltic Crusades shifted from a periphery event to being of fundamental importance to the papacy. Viewed as the hallmark of papal authority during the middle ages, the pontificate of Innocent III saw the development of the

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 235-239.

final formula of the crusades as well as the full development of the plenary indulgence.

However, Innocent never applied his newly developed plenary indulgence to the campaigns in the Baltic, instead it was his successor, Honorius III, who expanded on Innocent's developments to crusading theology and issued the first plenary indulgence for the crusades to north-eastern Europe. This would mark the beginning of a period which would see the Baltic crusades evolve from being a periphery event in the eyes of the papacy to being of principle importance regarding papal policy and crusading in general. This is reflected in the evolution of the indulgences which were granted for the campaigns in the Baltic which gradually shifted from a partial indulgence to a plenary indulgence and the scope of who was eligible to receive these indulgences was expanded to include those who contributed financially to the campaigns and those who sent others in their place.

With the formal arrival of the Teutonic Order in the Baltic in 1229, the papacy now had an institution in the region whose aims more closely aligned with the papacies and whose legitimacy and supremacy in the region, relied on their papal authorization. This provided the papacy with a better network for communication with the Baltic frontier while also allowing the papacy to exercise more control over the organization and execution of the crusades in the region than had previously been possible. Furthermore, the popes during the first half of the thirteenth century were willing to overlook the Teutonic Order's public support for the Emperor Frederick II and bestow benefits and privileges on the Order which allowed the Knight to establish an *Ordensland* in Prussia. This calls into question the commonly held interpretation that the papal-imperial conflict which dominated European politics during the first half of the thirteenth century encompassed all aspects of papal-imperial politics during the period. Instead, it suggests that in the Baltic theatre there was in fact a degree of cooperation between Frederick II and the papacy

as both were willing to support the Teutonic Order's conquest and conversion of the pagan populations in north-eastern Europe.

Chapter 2 – Preaching the Baltic Crusades

Introduction

As the crusades progressed, the popes developed a formula to ensure that they were organized and controlled in accordance with the aims of the papal curia. As eluded to in the previous chapter, the preaching of crusades was an increasingly integral element to organizing the campaigns and ensured, at least in theory, that the crusader armies would pursue the same aims as the papacy.¹⁵¹ Ensuring that the papal goals for the crusades had been accurately conveyed by those preaching the campaigns had always been problematic for the popes. While preaching and directing the First Crusade in 1096, the charismatic preacher, Peter the Hermit, in an event commonly known as the Peasant's Crusade, ignored papal directives by launching attacks on Jewish communities in France and the Holy Roman Empire before the contingent of crusaders following him were massacred in their first major encounter with the Turks in the autumn of 1096.¹⁵² Another example of the preaching of crusades veering off course from the papal directives can be seen in the preaching of Bernard of Clairvaux during the preparations for the Second Crusade. Initially appointed by Eugenius III on 1 March 1146 to preach the Second Crusade in France, Bernard was soon instructed to expand his preaching to northern France and into the Holy Roman Empire to regain control over the preaching of the crusade there which had

¹⁵¹ This approach of organizing and controlling the crusades by carefully selecting who was allowed to preach the campaigns was met with mixed results. The most infamous example of this policy failing miserably is the disaster that was the Fourth Crusade from 1198 to 1204 which resulted in the entire crusader army being excommunicated by Innocent III after it sacked the Christian city of Zara in Dalmatia (off the west coast of modern day Croatia) in 1202, at the behest of the Venetians, before carrying on to sack the city of Constantinople in 1204; Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 2006) pp. 501-560.

¹⁵² Tyerman, *God's War*, pp. 59-61.

fallen out of papal control through the preaching of the Cistercian monk, Radulf, whose sermons had resulted in more violent attacks on the local Jewish populations.¹⁵³

Following the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 during the pontificate of Innocent III, the papacy placed a new emphasis on preaching and mission among non-Christian populations. At the forefront of this new emphasis was the mendicant orders of the Dominicans and Franciscans. This development correlates with the period in which the Baltic Crusades became increasingly important to papal policy so it was only natural that these new ideas would be applied to the conquest and conversion of the pagan populations in north-eastern Europe. Innocent III applied this new approach to the preaching and recruitment for the crusades to the Holy Land, but he continued to use the traditional method of relying on local clergy with clearly defined tasks and authority to recruit and organize the campaigns in the Baltic. Honorius III expanded on Innocent's use of mendicant friars to preach crusades to the external missions in North Africa and the appointment of William of Modena as the papal legate to the Baltic in 1224 reflects the increasing importance the Baltic frontier was having on papal policy and crusading in general. Despite the appointment of a papal legate to the Baltic, Honorius continued to rely mainly on the local clergy and a few select missionary bishops to recruit and organize the campaigns in the Baltic. This stands in stark contrast to his approach to preaching and recruiting for the crusades to the Holy Land which was the responsibility of the mendicant orders.

Gregory IX used both models for preaching and recruiting the crusades in the Baltic. It was during his pontificate that the mendicant orders were increasingly relied upon for the recruitment of the Baltic Crusades. This was especially true for the crusades in Prussia which were now under the authority of the Teutonic Order who formally arrived in the region in 1229.

¹⁵³ Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades 1147-1254* (Brill: Leiden, 2007) pp. 27-28

While the Order was given the responsibility of conquering Prussia, the Dominicans were tasked with preaching these crusades and were exhorted by Gregory to encourage all Christians in the region to pay obedience to the Teutonic Order. Outside of the crusades to Prussia, which were now firmly under the control of the Teutonic Order and the Dominicans, Gregory was still willing to rely on the traditional approach of using specifically appointed local clergy to preach and recruit for the campaigns into the Baltic regions which fell outside the scope of the Teutonic Order's conquest of Prussia.

By the pontificate of Innocent IV, the Teutonic Order and the Scandinavian crowns were the only institutions who were still launching crusades in the Baltic. The arrival of new threats in the region, most notably the Russian principalities and the Mongols, resulted in the Baltic frontier becoming a bulwark against external threats to Catholic Europe and as a result, the Teutonic Order's conquests in Prussia shifted from focusing on the conversion of the pagan populations in the region to defending the north-eastern borders of Christendom. During the pontificate of Innocent IV, the Teutonic Order were granted the ability to declare and recruit their own crusades without public preaching allowing them to wage a perpetual crusade in the Baltic. This is a shocking relinquishment of papal control over the recruitment and organization of crusades in the Baltic. Considering the conflict between Frederick II and Innocent IV had reached a new level of hostility following the collapse of the peace agreement of San Germano and Ceprano by 1235 it is also surprising that Innocent had no concerns about granting the Teutonic Knights such authority, despite their open support for the 'Anti-Christ' emperor.

The Origins of Preaching the Baltic Crusades

The development of preaching the crusades in the Baltic began in a similar way to the distribution of indulgences as examined in the previous chapter. At the meeting between Bernard of Clairvaux and the collection of German nobles in Frankfurt in March 1147, he encouraged the preaching of the Baltic campaign claiming, “It has pleased all those who were gathered at Frankfurt to decree that a copy of this letter should be carried everywhere and that the bishops should proclaim it to the people of God.”¹⁵⁴ This means that the first instance of preaching the crusades on the Baltic frontier occurred without papal approval and Eugenius was not made aware of this development until he met with Bernard in early April 1147. This declaration was formally granted papal approval in the letter *Divini dispensation*, issued at Troyes on 11 April 1147.¹⁵⁵ The papal ignorance in the early developments of the Baltic crusades hints at an unwillingness by the papacy to fully embrace the Baltic campaigns in the same capacity as they would in other theatres of penitential warfare and also a reluctance to move beyond a reactive approach to the organizing and directing the expeditions. This would become a common characteristic of papal policy in the Baltic, and the evolution in the preaching of these campaigns will highlight this pattern.

¹⁵⁴ “Letter of [after 13. March] 1147,” *S. Bernardi Opera*, Vol. 8 No. 457; translation in *The Letters of St. Bernard of Clairvaux*, Trans. B. S. James, 1st edition, No. 394 (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), pp. 466-468. For further analysis on Bernard of Clairvaux’s role at the meeting in Frankfurt in 1147 See; Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁵⁵ “Letter of 11. April 1147,” *Patrologiae cursus completes: Series Latina*, Ed. J. P. Migne. Vol. 180, Cols. 1203-4; Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 31; It is debated whether this letter should be dated to 11 or 13 April 1147.

Pontificate of Innocent III, 1198-1216

The pontificate of Innocent III was a transitional period for the papacy due to his many reforms to papal policy, particularly regarding penitential warfare. When considering that it was under the reforms of Innocent III that the formula for crusades evolved into its final form, it should come as little surprise that the preaching of penitential campaigns also evolved in such a way that would ensure the expeditions would be organized and controlled by the papacy. This development to the preaching of crusades allowed the papacy to wield penitential warfare as a diplomatic weapon against those deemed to be ‘enemies’ of the church, while also minimizing the risk of campaigns being diverted by local authorities to settle political rivalries outside the scope of papal politics. Innocent’s formula for preaching crusades was a combination of the systems previously used which relied on the use of special agents as well as local clergy by appointing local prelates whose tasks and authority were clearly defined and well regulated. According to historian, Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt, these local prelates “were to preach the cross, receive vows and donations, and they held legatine powers over these matters and could appoint deputies.”¹⁵⁶

This system of preaching crusades was employed throughout most of Latin Christian Europe for campaigns against both, external and internal enemies of the Church with the launching of the Albigensian Crusade in 1209. During the proclamation of the Fourth Crusade in 1198, Innocent appointed two local men of the higher clergy in each province to preach the campaign as well as one member from each, the Templars and the Hospitallers. In 1208, this formula was repeated in an unsuccessful attempt to promote a new crusade in France, Lombardy,

¹⁵⁶ Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 100-101; for further discussion of the roles and responsibilities of these selected papal legates see; Jonathan Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* 3rd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 39-41.

and the March of Ancona.¹⁵⁷ Following the murder of the papal legate, Cistercian Peter of Castelnau on 14 January 1208, Innocent officially declared a crusade against the heretics in southern France and appointed three legates, Abbott Arnald-Amalrich of Cîteaux and the bishops of Riez and Conserans to organize and lead the preaching of the campaign.¹⁵⁸ With the launch of the Fifth Crusade in 1213, Innocent continued to develop his system for the preaching crusades by appointing small groups of men, mainly local bishops, in each church province who were to preach the campaigns while still adhering to the duties and regulations set forth for the papal legates during the preaching of crusades in 1198 and 1208.¹⁵⁹ These examples suggest that developments to the system used to preach crusades were an integral part of maintaining papal control over the organization and execution of Innocent III's reformed crusades.

The notable exception to these developments on the preaching of crusades during Innocent's pontificate was in the Baltic frontier where, in contrast to his policy on crusades to the Holy Land and to southern France, he continued to take a reactionary approach preferring to leave the preaching and recruitment for the campaigns to the local authorities in limited geographical areas. In his letter of October 1204, Innocent agreed to a request by Bishop Albert of Livonia to have his campaigns preached in the churches of Hamburg-Bremen effectively relinquishing papal control over the planning and recruiting for the Livonian campaigns.¹⁶⁰ In letters issued in 1209 and 1210 in support of the Danish king, Valdemar II's, planned campaign against the pagans there were no instructions concerning the preaching of these expeditions suggesting Innocent left the responsibility of preaching and organizing the crusade in the hands

¹⁵⁷ Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 100.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 108.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 100-101.

¹⁶⁰ "Letter of 12. October [1204]," *Die Register Innocenz' III*, Vol. 7, No. 139; Ernst Pitz, *Papstreskript und Kaiserreskript im Mittelalter* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1971), pp. 27-29; Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A Short History* (London: Athlone Press, 1997), 131; Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 101.

of the Danish king.¹⁶¹ In fact, the only time Innocent shows any interest in the organization of preaching crusades in the Baltic is in *Alto diuine* of 29 December 1215 which calls on the faithful in Denmark to support the Livonian mission and asks the local clergy to preach the letter to their congregations.¹⁶² The letters of 1209 and 1210 exhorted only the Danes to support Valdemar's expedition while the letter of 1215 was also addressed to the Danes specifically although this was likely issued at the request of Bishop Albert who, as I have already shown, had been in control of the organization of the Livonian campaigns since 1204.¹⁶³ There is no indication that there was any attempt to expand the preaching for these Baltic campaigns outside of the geographical regions indicated in the letters. The campaigns in Livonia were limited to recruiting participants from the German provinces of Hamburg-Bremen, Saxony, and Westphalia while also receiving Danish support in 1215, however, only the Danes were exhorted to join Valdemar's expeditions.¹⁶⁴ The limited geographical region in which local authorities were allowed to preach their crusades suggests that while Innocent was willing to relinquish papal control of the preaching for these campaigns, he was very deliberate in ensuring the crusades to the Holy Land took precedence throughout Europe and only the local communities were encouraged to support the Baltic crusades.

¹⁶¹ "Letter of 31. October 1209," *Diplomatarium Danicum*, Ed. A. Afzelius et al. in progress. Vol. 1:4, No. 163, (Copenhagen, 1938ff.); Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 102.

¹⁶² "Letter of 29. December 1215," *Diplomatarium Danicum*, Ed. A. Afzelius et al. in progress. Vol. 1:5, No. 61 (Copenhagen, 1938ff.); Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 101-102.

¹⁶³ Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 102.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 102.

Pontificate of Honorius III, 1216-1227

The pontificate of Honorius III is possibly the most important period of papal policy regarding developments to the system of preaching the crusades on the Baltic frontier. While often portrayed as a ‘caretaker’ for Innocent III’s policies, it was actually Honorius who took an increased interest in initiating external missions among non-Christians. His increased interest towards the conversion of non-Christians reflected a series of developments and ideas that developed in the Church during the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. As Fannesberg-Schmidt explains, the policies of Honorius reflected “the ideas of imitating the *vita apostolica*, the importance ascribed to preaching and evangelizing, and the emphasis in religious orders on living an active rather than a contemplative life.”¹⁶⁵

These new ideas also had an impact on the mendicant orders whose members now saw preaching and mission as their prime duties, and external missions were developed as a means to this end.¹⁶⁶ Mendicant involvement pre-dated Honorius as Cistercians had set up missions in Poland and Livonia in the twelfth century and had received backing from Clement III, Celestine III, and Innocent III, but under Honorius preaching and evangelizing would be given a new emphasis in the conversion of the Baltic and the mendicant orders would be the vanguards of this new approach. In 1221, Honorius attempted to put his new policy into action with a large scale missionary campaign directed at Egypt in support of the Fifth Crusade which had become bogged down at Damietta as early as 1219 into a diplomatic stalemate characterized by Fannesberg-Schmidt as “cautious waiting while attempts were made to build up the crusader

¹⁶⁵ Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 183.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 183.

army.”¹⁶⁷ Perhaps due to the contemporary situation in Egypt, this call for a large scale missionary campaign by Honorius seems to have been met mainly with disinterest as it does not appear to have developed.

In the bull *Vineae Domini custodes* of June 1225, Honorius granted his approval for two Dominican friars, Dominic of Segovia and Martin, to establish a mission to Morocco. In this bull, the friars were tasked with preaching the mission, baptising Muslims, imposing penance and absolving excommunicates. As Fonnesberg-Schmidt explains, “the friars were thus to combine the task of pastoral care among the Christians in the region with that of mission. This was in complete accord with the programme of the Dominican Order and Honorius’s support for the friars’ proposal confirms that he shared the Order’s ideas of evangelizing and mission.”¹⁶⁸ By aligning papal policy with the programme of the mendicant orders, Honorius developed the orders into the missionary organizations that they would become known as in the following centuries.¹⁶⁹

While Honorius was developing the mendicant orders into the favoured leaders of external missions in northern Africa, he was also adopting a papal policy in the Baltic which reflected an increasing papal interest with the campaigns in north-eastern Europe. In December 1224, seven months before he issued *Vineae Domini custodes*, Honorius appointed Bishop William of Modena as papal legate to the Baltic region in response to a request by Bishop Albert of Riga.¹⁷⁰ As mentioned previously, the appointing of papal legates to oversee the organizing and recruitment of crusades to specific regions was the approach adopted by Innocent III and

¹⁶⁷ Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 167-168; for further information on the Fifth Crusade during this period see Tyerman, *God’s War*, pp. 628-643.

¹⁶⁸ Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 168-169.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 184-185.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 170-171.

was used for campaigns to Outremer and southern France. However, Innocent never appointed a papal legate for the Baltic region, instead leaving that responsibility for the local clergy and secular authorities. Honorius' appointment of a papal legate was not a new development of papal policy, rather it was the expansion of papal policy that had previously not been applied in the Baltic reflecting the increased importance Honorius placed on the Baltic theatre compared to his predecessors.

The exact duties that William was to carry out as papal legate to the Baltic is still a debated topic. Ernst Pitz argues that William's main duties were to be missionary work and preaching with no administration duties. Fannesberg-Schmidt disagrees with this interpretation concluding that, "the role allocated to William by the curia was that of preacher and supervisor of mission,"¹⁷¹ meaning he would have held administrative duties pertaining to missions in the Baltic as well. Prior to William's appointment, Honorius' policy on the Baltic crusades followed a similar reactionary approach used by his predecessor, Innocent III. Between 1216 and 1224, Honorius issued numerous letters in support of the crusades in Livonia and Prussia, however, he was very careful to frame these crusades as defensive missions aimed to protect the newly converted in those regions. In a letter issued on 6 May 1218 he states that the purpose of the Prussian crusade was to defend the Christians from the pagans, "*ad defendum fideles predictos contra barbaras nationes*" (for defending the aforementioned faithful against barbarous nations).¹⁷² Honorius' letters supporting the crusades in the Baltic between 1216 and 1224 do not contain specific instructions regarding the organizing of these campaigns. While some of these letters exhort the local clergy to preach the crusades, the organization of preaching and

¹⁷¹ Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 172; For Ernst Pitz's interpretation of the duties of William of Modena as papal legate to the Baltic see; Pitz, *Papstreskript und Kaiserreskript*, pp. 136-142.

¹⁷² "Letter of 6. May 1218," *Codex Diplomaticus Prussicus. Urkunden-Sammlung zur ältern Geschichte Preussens aus dem königlichen Geheimen Archiv zu Königsberg nebst Regesten*, Ed. Voigt et al. 6 vols. Vol. 1, No. 3 (Königsberg, 1836-61).

recruitment for these campaigns was left to the missionary bishops and local clergy. This approach stands in stark contrast to Honorius' policy on preaching and recruitment for the Fifth Crusade between 1218 and 1221 in which the papacy instigated and closely coordinated a preaching campaign across Europe.¹⁷³ While Honorius was clearly willing to defend the Baltic campaigns when requests were made of him to do so, prior to the appointment of William as papal legate to the region, Honorius made no attempt to influence the organization of the Baltic campaigns or in carrying them out.¹⁷⁴

With the appointment of William of Modena as papal legate to the Baltic in December 1224, the papacy now had a representative in the region. This allowed Honorius to exercise more authority over the organization and development of the campaigns in the Baltic while also ensuring that at least one member of the higher clergy in the region could be relied on to pursue papal interests and keep the curia informed of local developments. As papal legate, William undertook three legatine missions: to Livonia and Estonia in 1225-1226, to Prussia in 1228-1230, and to the wider Baltic region in 1234-1242. In these missions he focused on the conversion of the pagans through peaceful means, preaching, and the conclusion of treaties in the region. His emphasis on preaching and peaceful mission resembles the programme being used by the mendicant orders in this period. However, unlike the mendicants, William was not opposed to using force against pagans when he saw fit, as evident in his calling of a campaign against the Osilians in 1226 as well as his role in organizing and supporting a crusade by the Teutonic Order in the spring of 1236.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 148.

¹⁷⁴ For a discussion on Honorius III's policy towards the Baltic crusades prior to William of Modena's appointment as papal legate to the region in 1224 see Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 136-149.

¹⁷⁵ Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 175-176.

In addition to appointing William of Modena as the first papal legate to the Baltic, Honorius consistently granted plenary indulgences to the participants in the Baltic campaigns while also extending privileges to those who contributed to the undertakings financially and he continued to support the crusades in Livonia while also authorizing crusades to Prussia. While still maintaining that the Fifth Crusade took higher priority, it was during the pontificate of Honorius III that the Baltic campaigns were elevated to a level on par with the other theatres of penitential war and the development of ideas concerning external missions and the use of preaching to peacefully convert non-Christians and manage the newly converted was aligned with the programme of the mendicant orders.¹⁷⁶ Honorius' successors would use these developments as a foundation for future efforts of conversion in the Baltic, and the mendicant orders began to be used *en masse* to preach crusades, first in the Baltic and then across all theatres of penitential war.

Pontificate of Gregory IX, 1227-1241

The pontificate of Gregory IX was a period of transformation in the papal approach the Baltic crusades. In 1229 the Teutonic Order arrived in earnest at the request of the Polish Duke, Conrad of Mazovia and with the *Golden Bull of Rimini* giving imperial recognition of their future conquests in Prussia.¹⁷⁷ Under Gregory, the Order would quickly become the dominant institution involved in the Baltic crusades while the already existing missions and other militia orders, such as the Swordbrothers of Livonia and the Swordbrothers of Riga, would be absorbed

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 185-186.

¹⁷⁷ The *Golden Bull of Rimini* granted imperial recognition of the Teutonic Order's state in Prussia in 1226. This bull overlooked the fact that the Order had not conquered the region yet, a process that was not started until 1229 "Letter of March 1226," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 56 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 41-43; Tyerman, *God's War*, pp. 698-705.

into the Teutonic Order or would have their authority on the frontier usurped by the Knights who had the ear of St. Peter's representative in Rome. Only the rulers of the Scandinavian kingdoms would continue to play an active role in the conquests in the Baltic while still maintaining their sovereignty from the Teutonic Order. Gregory's pontificate would also mark a watershed moment in Papal-Imperial relations. While Honorius III made repeated concessions regarding the fulfillment of Emperor Frederick II's vow to go on crusade, Gregory pursued a much more confrontational approach in handling the uncooperative Emperor resulting in his official excommunication in 1228.¹⁷⁸ This decision would end the fragile conciliatory relationship between the Papacy and the Emperor that Honorius strove to maintain and the final twenty two years of Frederick's reign as Emperor would see him in direct confrontation with the Papacy with only periodic and temporary peace agreements. The third major impact that the Baltic crusades would experience under the pontificate of Gregory was the large-scale use of the mendicant orders to handle the missions as well as to preach the crusades. While Honorius was the first pope to embrace the mendicant orders in this capacity in North Africa with his bull, *Vineae Domini custodes* of June 1225, it would be Gregory who oversaw the mendicant takeover of the missionary activity in the Baltic while using these same orders, particularly the Dominicans, to preach the crusades in the region *en masse*.¹⁷⁹

Gregory had experience with the organizing and preaching of crusades well before he was elected to the chair of supreme pontiff. A letter from January 1217 indicated that Honorius had intended to send Cardinal Ugolino of Ostia, the future Pope Gregory IX, to undertake the preaching of the Fifth Crusade in Tuscany and Lombardy as well as travelling to the court of

¹⁷⁸ David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 164-170.

¹⁷⁹ For an account of Honorius granting the Dominican's the right to establish their first external mission in North Africa in 1225 see Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 168-169.

King Andrew II of Hungary and discussing his involvement in the expedition. This tour is thought to have taken Cardinal Ugolino two and a half years to complete, starting in late January 1217 and extending until late summer of 1219.¹⁸⁰ With his past experiences as a papal appointed preacher, it is perhaps not surprising that Gregory made a conscious effort to further develop the systems used for preaching the crusades in the Baltic by his predecessors.

Under Gregory IX, the papacy used two models for preaching crusades. The first model was the traditional use of local bishops to preach the campaigns. This model was first approved by Bernard of Clairvaux in 1147 and was the approach used by both, Innocent III and Honorius III regarding the Baltic campaigns. The second, or ‘new,’ model was the further development of Honorius’ approach of aligning the mendicant aims with papal policy. This made the mendicant orders an obvious choice to handle the responsibilities of organizing and preaching crusades and while Honorius only experimented with this approach in North Africa, Gregory was willing to implement this model on the Baltic frontier.¹⁸¹

Examples of Gregory using the ‘traditional’ model can be seen in his letter issued on 9 September 1234, in which he commands the local archbishops and bishops to preach the cross against the Prussians in their provinces and dioceses. In addition to calling on the local bishops to preach this campaign, the letter also demands the higher clergy provide support and donations to the Teutonic Order to fund their conversion work in the region, reflecting the way in which Gregory promoted the Order as the main institution involved in the conquest and conversion of Prussia after their arrival in the region in 1229.¹⁸² In *Ne terra vastae*, issued on 15 February

¹⁸⁰ “Letter of 30. January 1217,” *Codex Diplomaticus Hungariae Ecclesiasticus ac Civilis*, Ed. G. Fejér, 11 vols. Vol. 3 (Budapest, 1829-44), pp. 187-188; Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 158-159.

¹⁸¹ Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 246-247.

¹⁸² “Letter of 9. September 1234,” *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 114 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 88.

1236, Gregory ordered William of Modena, the papal legate in the Baltic, to preach campaigns to Livonia, Seme-gallia, Kurland and Estonia in the province of Hamburg-Bremen and the dioceses of Magdeburg, Havelberg, Verden, Minden, Paderborn, Gotland, and part of Brandenburg. This letter follows the formula used by Innocent III and Honorius III, that is, it appoints a papal representative to preach the campaigns with specific geographic limits.¹⁸³ In response to a request for the Archbishop of Upsalla in December of 1237, Gregory permitted the Archbishop and his *suffragan bishops* – meaning bishops which are subordinate to a diocesan bishop and who are usually assigned to an area which does not have a cathedral of its own - to preach a crusade in Sweden against the Tavastians, a group in Finland who had previously been converted to Christianity but were reported to have fallen back into paganism due to the influence of neighbouring peoples.¹⁸⁴ Finally, in a letter issued 14 December 1240 he authorized the Danish archbishop and his *suffragans* to preach a crusade to Estonia to protect the newly converted there.¹⁸⁵

During the 1230s, the Dominicans quickly replaced the Cistercian Order as the most influential monastic order in the Baltic. The Cistercian Order had played a role in the Baltic crusades since the beginning of papal involvement during the pontificate of Eugenius III in the middle of the twelfth century. In fact it was the Cistercian, Bernard of Clairvaux, who originally agreed to the requests of the German nobles in Frankfurt in 1146 to launch the first crusade in the Baltic without papal authorization.¹⁸⁶ In the early 1230s, the Cistercians became involved in a local political quarrel in Livonia between Baldwin of Alna, a Cistercian monk who had

¹⁸³ For an account of how this letter is a continuation of the formula used by Honorius III, including parts of it being copied verbatim, see Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 206-207.

¹⁸⁴ Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 209-210.

¹⁸⁵ "Letter of 14. December 1240," *Diplomatarium Danicum*, Ed. A. Afzelius et al. in progress. Vol. 1:7, No. 62 (Copenhagen, 1938ff.); Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 208-209.

¹⁸⁶ Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 39-43.

ambitions to unite Livonia under the Cistercian Order, the Swordbrothers of Livonia, and the local bishops. Baldwin had originally been appointed to Livonia as a papal legate at the recommendation of William of Modena in May 1230, however, Baldwin's ambitions quickly drew suspicion from the papal curia with respect to the nature of his true intentions. As William Urban explains, "petitions from Livonia and information supplied by William of Modena had convinced [Pope Gregory] that Baldwin's ambitions were immoral and impractical, and [Gregory] granted William's request to be sent back to Livonia as papal legate."¹⁸⁷ By the summer of 1234, William of Modena was returning to Livonia as the papal legate, the Cistercians, who had supported their ambitious brother, fell out of favour with the papacy, and the Dominican Order was turned to as the preferred monastic order to preach crusades in the Baltic on behalf of the curia.¹⁸⁸

Dominican interest in the Baltic may have started as early as 1206 when the bishop Diego of Osma and Dominic returned from a trip to Denmark and the bishop requested that Innocent III allow him to resign from his bishopric and dedicate his life to missionary work. This request was refused by the pope, but Dominic appears to have found a renewed interest in performing missionary work in the Baltic in 1217, after numerous meetings over the previous two years with Cardinal Ugolino, the future Pope Gregory IX. As described by Fønnesberg-Schmidt, "During [Dominic's] stay in Rome in December 1216 and January 1217, he met Cardinal Ugolino who had become his main contact at the curia when in autumn of 1215 he had travelled there to obtain papal confirmation of his new Order and his request had been referred to Ugolino for examination. When Dominic returned to Rome in December 1216, he once again made use of his

¹⁸⁷ William Urban, *The Baltic Crusade* (Northern Illinois University Press: DeKalb, 1975), 145.

¹⁸⁸ For a full account of the political situation in Livonia between 1230 and 1234, see Urban, *The Baltic Crusade*, pp. 138-146.

contacts with Ugolino. During this stay in 1216-17 he met a young cleric, William of Montferrat, at Ugolino's house. William was later to report, as part of the canonization process relating to Dominic, that Dominic had talked to him about his desire to work for the salvation of others and his longing to take part in the mission amongst the pagans."¹⁸⁹

Despite the Cistercians still maintaining a level of influence in the Baltic until 1234, Gregory had planned to use the Dominicans to support the Teutonic Order's conquests in Prussia as early as 1230. The decision to use the Dominicans *en masse* for the Prussian campaigns was the result of a meeting in 1230 between Hermann von Salza, William of Modena, and Pope Gregory and it was made official in *Cum misericors* of September 1230, which exhorts the Dominicans to preach the crusade against the Prussians in the church provinces of Magdeburg and Bremen as well as in Poland, Pomerania, Moravia, Suravia, Holstein, and Gotland.¹⁹⁰ The use of the Dominicans to preach crusades continued through the decade. In a letter issued 18 July 1231, Gregory exhorted the Dominicans in Pomerania and Gotland to preach the Teutonic Order's crusade against the Prussians.¹⁹¹ On 23 January 1232 Gregory issued a letter exhorting the Dominicans in Bohemia to preach in support of the Knight's campaign and allowed for the commutation of vows taken to travel to the Holy Land to take up the cross in Prussia instead, expanding the region and population from which the crusades in the Baltic could recruit from.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusade*, 161.

¹⁹⁰ "Letter of 17. September 1230," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 81 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 61-63; Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 196-197; Eric Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades: The Baltic and the Catholic Frontier, 1100-1525* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 80.

¹⁹¹ "Letter 18. July 1231," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 85 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 65-66.

¹⁹² "Letter of 23. January 1232," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 87 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 66-67.

February of 1232 saw a unique addition to the arsenal of the Dominican preachers when Gregory granted a temporary indulgence for attending Dominican recruiting sermons.¹⁹³ Fonnesberg-Schmidt concludes that “the granting of indulgences for attending recruitment sermons given by the Dominicans in February 1232 was a novel feature in the Baltic crusades and was of course devised to secure the preachers the largest possible audience.”¹⁹⁴ This innovation indicates that unlike his predecessors, Gregory was willing to take a proactive approach to the organization and recruitment of the campaigns in the Baltic rather than merely authorizing requests for crusades from the local authorities. This was undoubtedly much easier for Gregory to do as the appointment of William of Modena as papal legate in 1226 and the arrival of the Dominicans and the Teutonic Order in the following years to the region gave Gregory a much better network of communication and intelligence in the Baltic than Innocent III or Honorius III had allowing Gregory to exercise more control over the organization and recruitment of the campaigns.

In October of 1233 Gregory issued a collection of letters which addressed the Dominican Order and their role in preaching the crusade in Prussia. On 6 October 1233 Gregory instructed the Dominican, Magister Jordan, to preach the Prussian crusade in Germany and other provinces, further expanding the region of recruitment for the Baltic campaigns.¹⁹⁵ In a second letter issued on 6 October 1233, Gregory charged the Dominicans in Prussia with the responsibility of getting the secular crusaders to help the Teutonic Order construct fortifications.¹⁹⁶ The following day, 7 October 1233, he issued two more letters concerning the Dominicans in Prussia. The first of

¹⁹³ “Letter of 3. February 1232,” *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 89 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 68.

¹⁹⁴ Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 199.

¹⁹⁵ “Letter of 6. October 1233,” *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 98 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 73.

¹⁹⁶ “Letter of 6. October 1233,” *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 99 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 73-74.

these letters, as they are arranged in the *Preußisches Urkundenbuch*, instructs the Dominicans to accept those Prussians who wish to receive the sacraments and to call on the secular crusaders in the region to obey the Teutonic Order.¹⁹⁷ The second letter exhorts the Dominicans to call on the local believers, Christians in the region who have not taken a crusading vow, to continuously assist the crusade in Prussia.¹⁹⁸ Finally, in 1237 the Dominicans arrived in Finland and joined Archbishop Upsalla and his *suffragans*, who had also received papal authorization to preach, in promoting Gregory's crusade against the Tavastians.¹⁹⁹

A similar arrangement of the Dominicans 'sharing' the preaching responsibilities can be seen in the suppression of a peasant uprising in Stedingen, a region just north of Bremen, which began in 1229. The uprising was a response to Archbishop Gerhard of Hamburg-Bremen imposing illegal taxes on the peasants of Stedingen and when the peasants revolted on Christmas Day of 1229, Gerhard appointed a provincial synod which formally condemned the peasants as rebel and heretics. Using the Albighensian Crusade as a model, Gregory issued crusading bulls against the peasants of Stedingen in 1231, 1232, 1233, and 1234.²⁰⁰ Gregory authorized the bishops of Lübeck, Minden, and Ratzeburg, all *suffragans* of Hamburg-Bremen, to preach these crusades. According to Fonnesberg-Schmidt, these bishops were permitted to recruit individual Dominicans to assist them, however the responsibility for organizing and recruiting for these campaigns belonged to the Bishops.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ "Letter of 7. October 1233," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 100 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 74-75.

¹⁹⁸ "Letter of 7. October 1233," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 101 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 75.

¹⁹⁹ Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades*, 112.

²⁰⁰ Urban, *The Baltic Crusade*, pp. 152-153.

²⁰¹ Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 198-199.

While it is quite clear that throughout his pontificate, Gregory developed his 'new' model for preaching crusades and increasingly relied upon the Dominican Order to handle the preaching duties for the expeditions, he was still willing to exercise a level of flexibility in what approach he took when dealing with the Baltic crusades. In the letters issued on 9 September 1234, 15 February 1236, and 14 December 1240 he resorts to the old model of appointing local prelates with papal authority to preach the campaigns in Prussia. For the crusades launched yearly against the peasants of Stedingen from 1231 to 1234 and for the crusade declared against the Tavastians in Finland in 1237, Gregory used a hybrid of the two models by approving the local prelates to preach the campaigns along with the Dominican friars. This flexibility and willingness to take a proactive approach to the Baltic campaigns reflects a shift in papal policy on the Baltic crusades that occurred during the pontificate of Gregory IX. The appointment of a papal legate to the Baltic by Honorius III was a start, but it was the arrival of the Teutonic and Dominican Orders to the Baltic in 1229 and 1230 which allowed for the papacy to exercise more control over the organization and preaching of the crusades in the region.

There is also evidence that Gregory tried to expand his 'new' model of using the mendicants to preach crusades in other theatres of penitential war. In anticipation of the truce between Emperor Frederick II and the sultan of Egypt ending in 1239, in September of 1234 Gregory issued the bull *Rachel suum videns* which called for a crusade to the Holy Land and commissioned the Dominicans and Franciscans as preachers for this campaign. In July 1235 he sent letters to the Franciscans in Ireland, Austria, and possibly other provinces appointing them to preach the same crusade to the east. Like the Dominicans in the Baltic, these friars were allowed to offer a temporary indulgence to those who attended their recruitment sermons and they were also granted the ability to absolve those who had been excommunicated for arson or

violence against clerics if they vowed to go on crusade.²⁰² This evidence has led Fønnesberg-Schmidt to conclude, “it looks, therefore, as if the approach taken in the Baltic of using the mendicant orders in crusade preaching was transferred, with the same privileges, to other theatres of war. It cannot be conclusively determined whether Pope Gregory had already decided in September 1230 to employ the mendicant order *en bloc* as preachers for crusades in various theatres of war when such crusades were proclaimed, or whether it was the success of the Dominicans’ recruitment campaigns for the Prussian crusades which inspired him to use this system elsewhere. The case of the Stedinger crusade may suggest that the latter possibility is most likely.”²⁰³

Pontificate of Innocent IV, 1243-1254

The pontificate of Innocent IV saw new threats emerge to the crusades in the Baltic in the form of the neighbouring Russian nations of Novgorod and Pskov and the appearance of the Mongols in the region. While the development of these threats appeared on the periphery of the Baltic frontier, and therefore outside the scope of this thesis, in order to understand Innocent IV’s policy on the Baltic we need to take these new developments into consideration. The establishment and eastward expansion of the missions in the eastern Baltic regions of Finland, Estonia, and Livonia, brought the crusaders into confrontation with the Russian populations of Novgorod and Pskov as early as the early thirteenth century. Beginning in 1237, a series of new crusades were launched into the far eastern regions of the Baltic resulting in the Swedes being defeated by Prince Alexander at the Battle of Neva in July 1240. The conflicts between crusaders

²⁰² Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 197-198.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 198.

and Russians continued throughout the 1240s with multiple campaigns launched by the Scandinavian kingdoms and the Teutonic Order. It should be noted that while these crusades often resulted in military encounters with the Russians, they were always framed as defensive crusades which were launched to defend the newly converted in the eastern Baltic against pagan threats. At no point did Innocent IV, or any other pope, launch a crusade targeted at Orthodox Russians.²⁰⁴

As described in the previous chapter, the Mongols first appeared in the Baltic in the late 1220s which resulted in Gregory IX proclaiming a crusade against them in 1229. By 1240, the Mongols had taken numerous towns and territories held by the Russian principalities, including the city of Kiev, and in April 1241 they had defeated two large Christian armies in Poland and Hungary. The Mongols would retreat from Eastern Europe the following year, and not return to the region until the late 1250s, but the fear of another Mongol invasion influenced papal policy in the Baltic during their two-decade absence. In 1243, Innocent confirmed the crusade launched against them by Gregory in 1229 and in 1249 he allowed those who had taken vows to go to the Holy Land to commute their vows and fulfill them against the Mongols.²⁰⁵

During the pontificate of Innocent IV, the only institutions who were still driving the crusades in the region were the Scandinavian crowns and the Teutonic Order. In February and March of 1245, Innocent issued a series of letters supporting the campaign to Estonia led by the Danish king, Erik IV. In a letter issued on 20 February 1245, Innocent officially authorized the

²⁰⁴ For a detailed account of the relationship between the curia and the Russians during the first half of the thirteenth century see Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 215-224. These conflicts in the easternmost Baltic are described by both sides in *The Chronicle of Novgorod and The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle* see; *The Chronicle of Novgorod 1016-1471*, Ed. and Trans. by R. Michell and N. Forbes (London: Camden Third Series, 1914) and *The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, Trans. Jerry C. Smith and William L. Urban (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1977).

²⁰⁵ Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 224-225.

crusade and exhorted the Danish archbishop and his *suffragans* to preach the campaign to their local communities.²⁰⁶ Following the policies of his predecessors, Innocent continued to use the ‘traditional’ model for crusade preaching when authorizing crusades at the request of the Scandinavian kingdoms. Instead of employing the Dominicans, the curia preferred to rely on local clergy for the organization and promotion of these campaigns. It is also worth noting that the Scandinavian crusades were usually restricted to preaching and recruiting from the local region only. This may have played a role in the curia’s decisions to rely on local prelates instead of sending mendicant friars to the region to preach these campaigns.

Regarding the organisation and support of the crusades in the Baltic, Innocent IV continued the policies of his predecessor in giving the Teutonic Order papal support for their conquests in Prussia. Innocent also continued to rely heavily on the mendicant orders, although their focus was shifted primarily to their work in external missions and they were relied on less for preaching crusades. In the summer of 1243, shortly after Innocent’s election, the Teutonic Order received confirmation of its possessions in the Baltic.²⁰⁷ A few months later the Teutonic Order received the papal bull *Qui iustis causis* on 23 September 1243. This bull authorized new crusades in Livonia and Prussia as well as ordering the Dominicans to preach these campaigns in the provinces of Germany, Dacia and Poland.²⁰⁸ *Qui iustis causis* marks another expansion to the region in which the Baltic crusades were permitted to recruit from, while still limiting them to a defined geographic area. As Fønnesberg-Schmidt summarizes, “Innocent wished crusaders to be recruited from the church provinces of Magdeburg and Hamburg-Bremen, the dioceses of

²⁰⁶ “Letter of 20. February 1245,” *Diplomatarium Danicum*, Ed. A. Afzelius et al. in progress. Vol. 1:7, No. 165 (Copenhagen, 1938ff.); Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 235-239.

²⁰⁷ “Letter of 30. July 1243,” *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 144 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 109-119.

²⁰⁸ “Letter of 23. September 1243,” *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 146 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 111-112.

Regensburg, Passau, Halberstadt, Hildsheim, and Verden, as well as the kingdoms of Bohemia, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Poland, and from Gotland and Pomerania.”²⁰⁹ Using a model which reflected that employed by Gregory IX, the Teutonic Order was to be in charge of the crusade and the Dominicans would be responsible for preaching. In addition, the Dominicans were also allowed to continue granting a temporary indulgence to those who attended their recruitment sermons.²¹⁰

The biggest change to the organizing and recruitment for crusades under Innocent IV occurred in the summer of 1245. In a letter issued on 7 May 1245, Innocent granted the Teutonic Order permission to recruit one hundred German Knights for their campaign in Prussia.²¹¹ This letter allowed the Order to recruit their own crusaders without relying on public preaching. Later that summer, on 13 August 1245, Innocent issued another letter permitting the Order to recruit crusaders from Germany without public preaching.²¹² Unlike the letter issued on 7 May, this letter had no time limits or any restriction on the number of crusaders who could be recruited, granting the Teutonic Order the ability to recruit for their own crusades. This is a drastic shift in papal policy considering that Innocent’s predecessor had made a point of using the Dominicans to handle the preaching responsibilities for the Teutonic Order’s conquests in Prussia. With the letter of 13 August 1245 Innocent removed the need for the Dominicans in preaching any crusades that the Teutonic Order was involved with. The reasons for this sharp deviation in papal policy is unknown, perhaps the decision was made to allow the Dominicans to focus exclusively on their missions in Prussia, maybe it was an attempt by Innocent to remove limitations on the

²⁰⁹ Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 227.

²¹⁰ “Letter of 23. September 1243,” *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 146 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 111-112.

²¹¹ “Letter of 7. May 1245,” *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 167 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 124.

²¹² “Letter of 13. August 1245,” *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 168 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 124-125.

Teutonic Order so they could be more effective against the threats posed by the Russians and the Mongols in the eastern Baltic, or perhaps it was done for other reasons entirely. When considering that negotiations between Innocent IV and Frederick II had broken down in 1244, resulting in Innocent proclaiming an anti-imperial crusade against Frederick in 1246, what is clear is that Innocent had no reservations about supporting the Teutonic Order in their Baltic conquests, despite their well-known Hohenstaufen sympathies and the renewal of Papal-Imperial hostilities.

Conclusions

As early as the First Crusade at the end of the eleventh century, it became apparent to the papacy that the curia had to very clearly define who was to be charged with the responsibility of preaching and recruiting for Crusades. The importance placed on the preaching and recruiting for crusades in the Baltic is reflected in the Papal letters issued to the region which repeatedly focus on the issue. This was particularly important for the campaigns to the Baltic because the popes, up to and including Innocent IV, continued to rely on local clergy to preach and recruit for the campaigns in the region. The papacy had to be sure that these campaigns stayed true to papal aims and were not hijacked by local political agendas. With the Church's new emphasis placed on preaching and external mission following the Fourth Lateran Council, the mendicant orders became an obvious selection for the papacy to rely on for the preaching and recruitment of crusades. Starting with Innocent III, the papacy used the mendicants to preach the crusades to the Holy Land, however, Innocent continued to use the traditional approach of relying on specifically appointed local clergy to preach and recruit for the crusades in the Baltic.

Honorius III expanded on Innocent's use of the mendicants and appointed them as the principal institution to handle the external missions in North Africa. In December 1224, Honorius III appointed William of Modena as papal legate to the Baltic reflecting the increasing importance the papacy placed on the Baltic frontier, however, Honorius still relied on specifically appointed local clergy to handle the preaching and recruitment for the crusades in the Baltic. It was Gregory IX who brought the new model of relying on the mendicant orders for the preaching and recruitment of crusades to the Baltic theatre. With the formal arrival of the Teutonic Order in the region in 1229, Gregory tasked the Dominicans with the responsibility of preaching the Order's campaigns in Prussia while also exhorting them to encourage the local Christian population to pay obedience to the Teutonic Knights, effectively making the Order the principle institution in charge of the Baltic Crusades. Considering that between 1227 and 1229 the Teutonic Order openly supported the excommunicated Frederick II's controversial crusade to Jerusalem, it is telling that Gregory had no hesitations about giving full papal support to the Order's conquest of Prussia and the benefits he granted the Order allowed them to establish an *Ordensland* in Prussia.

The pontificate of Innocent IV brought the Baltic frontier a new level of importance in papal policy as the emergence of new external threats in the Russian principalities and the Mongols made the region an important bulwark for Catholic Europe. To this end, Innocent IV granted the Teutonic Order the ability to declare and recruit their own campaigns allowing the Order to wage a perpetual crusade in north eastern Europe while also relinquishing papal control over crusades in the Baltic to an institution that was openly supportive of the Emperor Frederick II. By 1235, the peace agreement of San Germano and Ceprano of 1230 had collapsed and the imperial-papal conflict raged again in Italy. Innocent's willingness to hand over control of the

Baltic crusades to the Teutonic Order calls into question the long held interpretation that the papal-imperial conflict of the thirteenth century encompassed all aspects as papal-imperial politics as in the Baltic theatre it appears that Innocent was willing to overlook the Order's support for Frederick II for the broader agenda of converting the pagan populations of north-eastern Europe while also protecting the borders of Latin Christendom from external threats.

Chapter 3 – Grandmaster Hermann von Salza

Introduction

Originally founded as a field hospital in Acre in 1190 by merchants from Bremen and Lübeck during the Third Crusade, the Teutonic Order received official papal confirmation as a military order by Pope Innocent III in 1198. Under the guidance of their Grandmaster, Hermann von Salza, the Order would not only navigate the papal-imperial conflict during the first half of the thirteenth century, but they would manage to secure both papal and imperial support during this period which made them the principal institution charged with conquering the Baltic region after their formal arrival to the region in 1229. The benefits and privileges bestowed upon the Order resulted in the establishment of their own crusader state, an *Ordensland*, in Prussia during the following decade.

The Order's interest in establishing their own state started as early as 1211 when, following a request by King Andrew of Hungary to come subdue the Cumans who threatened Hungarian possessions in the region known as the 'Burzenland.' After subduing the Cumans, the Order attempted to annex the region from Hungary resulting in King Andrew evicting the Order forcing the Knights to turn their attention back to supporting crusades aimed at recovering the Holy Land. From 1217-1219, the Teutonic Order travelled to Egypt in support of the Fifth Crusade led by King John de Brienne of Jerusalem which eventually resulted in Grandmaster Hermann von Salza and John de Brienne negotiating with the Ayyubid Sultan, Al-Kamil, over the fate of the Ayyubid city of Damietta. In 1225 the Order received an invitation from Duke Conrad of Mazovia to come to the Baltic and subdue the pagan Prussians who were launching raids against the Catholic converts in north-eastern Europe. Seeing this as another opportunity for the Order to establish an *Ordensland*, Hermann used this invitation to secure imperial

recognition of their future conquests in the Baltic by the Hohenstaufen emperor, and close personal friend of Hermann, Frederick II von Hohenstaufen. The resulting declaration, the so-called *Golden Bull of Rimini*, recognized the future Teutonic conquests of Prussia while also making Hermann von Salza an independent imperial prince, or *Reichfürst*. This document would mark the beginning of the relationship between the Teutonic Order and the Emperor which would persist for the next twenty-five years and would bring the Order into the middle of a fierce papal-imperial conflict which they would manage to navigate in such a way that they would secure benefits and privileges from both, Frederick II and the papacy, which would ultimately result in the establishment of the *Ordensland* of Prussia.

The best example of the way in which papal-imperial conflict influenced the Baltic crusades during the first half of the thirteenth century is in the Teutonic Order's ability to maintain a mediating role in the conflict. This relationship between the three institutions was reflective of their relationship at the individual level with the Grandmaster of the Teutonic Order, Hermann von Salza, maintaining a mediating role between Emperor Frederick II and the Popes, Honorius III, Gregory IX, and Innocent IV. While the papal-imperial conflict of the first half of the thirteenth century has traditionally been interpreted as encompassing all aspects of papal-imperial politics, the mediating role played by the Teutonic Order and their Grandmaster, Hermann von Salza, calls into question this interpretation as they were able to secure support for their conquests in the Baltic from both the Curia and the Empire. This suggests that while the papal-imperial conflict raged on in the Italian peninsula and even spread to the Holy Land during Frederick's controversial crusade between 1227 and 1229, the two warring institutions were willing to strike a conciliatory tone regarding the conquest and conversion of the Baltic frontier.

Hermann von Salza and the Teutonic Order

Hermann von Salza was born around 1170 to a dynasty of Thuringian *ministerialis*. During his youth, Hermann became familiar with European politics by regularly attending the court of the dukes of Thuringia. According to Desmond Seward, it was during this time that he acquired “distinguished manners” and developed the skills of medieval diplomacy that would later allow him to navigate the diplomatic battlefield that was early thirteenth century papal-imperial politics.²¹³ In 1209, at roughly thirty-nine years of age and ten years after the Teutonic Order’s founding, he became the Order’s grand master.²¹⁴ It would be under Hermann’s watch that the Teutonic Order would see their greatest growth. When he was appointed grand master in 1209, the Teutonic Order was only active in the Holy Land where their activities were largely overshadowed by the other two major military orders active in the region, the Knights Templars and the Hospitallers. By Hermann’s death in 1240, his role in mediating the conflict between the papacy and Frederick II had brought the Order vast grants of land and other benefits from both, the papacy and the empire, the authorisation to declare and preach their own crusades, and the Order was successful in carving out their own recognized state in Prussia, known as the *Ordensland*, a benefit that even the infamous Knights Templars were never granted.

Hermann’s personal role in securing these benefits for the Teutonic Order was not overlooked by his brothers. *The Chronicle of Prussia*, written by Peter von Dusburg and Nicolaus von Jeroschin between 1326 and 1341, describes him as “eloquent and wise, far-sighted, friendly, just and honest.”²¹⁵ The chronicle goes on to describe that “before he died, this master also acquired for the order the most advantageous and best privileges from the pope and

²¹³ Desmond Seward, *The Monks of War: The Military Orders* (London: The Folio Society, 2000), 64.

²¹⁴ *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin: A History of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia, 1190-1331*. Trans. Mary Fischer (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2010), 3.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 36.

the emperor the brothers had ever had. During his lifetime the order was also given donations of land in Apulia, Romania, Armenia, an area in Hungary called the Burzenland, Livonia and Prussia, all of which came into the brothers' ownership. No order has ever been so elevated, in terms of its possessions and reputation, as a result of one man's actions, and that was no surprise."²¹⁶ Clearly, by the middle of the fourteenth century Hermann had already been elevated to somewhat of a folk hero within the Teutonic Order, perhaps not a surprise when considering it was he who had secured the authorisation to establish the *Ordensland* in Prussia that the Order was still administrating and securing when this chronicle was written roughly a century later.

Shortly after becoming the grand master of the Teutonic Order, Hermann seems to have turned his eyes to other frontiers in which the knights could expand their power and even carve out state of their own. In 1211 the brothers accepted an invitation from King Andrew of Hungary to defend his eastern border against the Cumans in a region known as the Burzenland.²¹⁷ The Order took up this invitation and using techniques developed in the Holy Land, they had little problem defeating the Cumans who lacked the experience of the enemies the Order had become accustomed to fighting in the east. By 1225, the Teutonic Knights had not only taken care of the Cumans in the Burzenland, but they had also started to settle the region with German colonists. This new development alarmed King Andrew and with the Cumans taken care of, he quickly evicted the Order from the region despite the strong protestations of grand master Hermann.²¹⁸

In November of 1217 Hermann was summoned by King John de Brienne of Jerusalem to participate in the Fifth Crusade. Following a few unsuccessful campaigns to capture Jerusalem

²¹⁶ *The Chronicle of Prussia* by Nicolaus von Jeroschin, 37.

²¹⁷ Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 699.

²¹⁸ Seward, *The Monks of War*, pp. 64-65; see also Eric Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades: The Baltic and the Catholic Frontier, 1100-1525* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 79.

by direct force, Hermann led the Teutonic Order to Damietta in March 1218 when King John decided that an attack on Egypt would better serve his agenda in the Holy Land. Between August and November of 1219, al-Kamil offered the crusaders all of muslim Palestine as well as the city of Jerusalem if they abandoned the siege of Damietta. King John and the Teutonic Order wished to accept this deal, however Cardinal Pelagius, the Templars, and the Hospitallers refused.²¹⁹ The siege of Damietta was eventually successful with the city falling to the Franks on 5 November and this disagreement was payed little attention, but it bears striking similarities to a disagreement that would occur a decade later which would also see the Teutonic Order in opposition to the other two military orders as well as a papal representative overseeing negotiations between a secular ruler and al-Kamil. With the benefit of hindsight, this incident foreshadows the institutional divisions which would reach a climax during the reign of Frederick II.

The Teutonic Order's Arrival in the Baltic

After being evicted from the Burzenland in 1225, Hermann did not have to wait long for the next opportunity to expand the Teutonic Order to present itself. That same year, Duke Conrad of Mazovia extended an offer to the Order to come and aid him against the pagan Prussians. The Prussian raids had become so demoralizing for Conrad he was forced to abandon

²¹⁹ For an account of the Teutonic Order's role in the Fifth Crusade see; Seward, *The Monks of War*, pp. 40-41; For a full account for the Fifth Crusade in general see; Tyerman, *God's War*, pp. 606-649.

Kulm²²⁰ in 1222, a region he would formally cede to the Teutonic Order with the *Treaty of Kruszwica* in 1230.²²¹

Learning from their experience in Hungary, Hermann made sure to secure official recognition of the Order's conquests in the Baltic. This was to prevent them from being evicted from the region once the Prussian problem was dealt with, as had transpired in the Burzenland. To this end, in March 1226, Frederick issued the *Golden Bull of Rimini*. This letter granted the Teutonic Order access to the land of Kulm as well as any other lands Duke Conrad of Mazovia saw fit to gift them and Hermann von Salza was to govern over these lands as a *Reichsfürst*, an imperial prince.²²² Eric Christiansen suggests this title was granted so that Hermann could negotiate with born princes on equal footing.²²³ Whether or not this was Frederick's reasoning, this document marks the beginning of what would be a very beneficial relationship for the Teutonic Order with the Holy Roman Emperor as well as a close personal relationship between Hermann von Salza and Frederick II.

The *Golden Bull of Rimini* in 1226 did not mark the first time Frederick turned to the Teutonic Order to handle affairs that required imperial attention, nor does it mark the first activity of Hermann von Salza in the Baltic as a representative of the emperor. Three years prior, in 1223, when the Teutonic Knights' attentions were still focused on repressing the Cumans and carving out an *Ordensland* in the Burzenland, Frederick sent Hermann as his representative to

²²⁰ Known today as Chelmno

²²¹ "Letter of 1230," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 75 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 55-56. For the Teutonic Order's account of Conrad's invitation to Prussia see; *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin*, pp. 46-47. For other accounts of Conrad's invitation see; Seward, *The Monks of War*, pp. 67-68; Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades*, 79; Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades, 1147-1254* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 189; and William Urban, *The Baltic Crusade* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1975), pp. 134-135.

²²² "Letter of March 1226," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 56 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 41-43.

²²³ Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades*, 74.

mediate a border dispute between the Danish King Valdemar and Count Henry of Schwerin. The dispute revolved around Danish rights to part of the Slesvig-Holstein borderland in the northernmost region of the Holy Roman Empire, and resulted in Count Henry kidnapping the Danish king from the midst of his own hunting camp after a night of heavy drinking in May 1223. King Valdemar would remain a captive until December 1225 following two years of negotiations between Hermann von Salza and Count Henry regarding his release. The final agreement favoured Henry as Valdemar was ordered to pay the large ransom of 45,000 marks, he was also forced to withdraw his claims to the borderlands in dispute, and he was bound to commit to going on crusade and sailing to the Holy Land before August 1226.²²⁴

While Honorius III wanted Count Henry to be punished for his treatment of the Danish king, Frederick seemed to show little interest in the local politics of his northern German kingdom. Frederick's attention was focused on other theatres, principally his holdings in northern Italy and planning his crusade to the Holy Land in 1226. Frederick must have been thrilled with the result of Hermann's negotiations in the dispute. In theory, the Danish king's resignation of his claims to the borderlands combined with the success of the Schauenburg dynasty in securing Holstein seemed to remove the threat of Danish encroachment into northern Germany. The agreement also appeared to benefit Frederick and the Teutonic Order indirectly as well. In addition to adding 45,000 marks to the imperial treasury, by committing the Danish King to take up the cross, Hermann had created a potential ally for the emperor's crusade which was scheduled to launch on 15 August 1227.²²⁵ However, the release of King Valdemar was not followed by a Danish crusade to the Holy Land, instead the conflict over the northern German

²²⁴ For an account of the conflict between King Valdemar and Count Henry of Schwerin see; David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 227-229; and Urban, *The Baltic Crusade*, pp. 119-122.

²²⁵ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, 151.

borderlands was resumed. The issue was finally settled in July 1227 when Henry of Schwerin, accompanied by a collection of northern German princes destroyed Valdemar's army.²²⁶ This marks a settling of tensions in the region which in turn meant Frederick could put the matter to rest and focus on, what he considered to be more pressing issues.²²⁷

Although Hermann's negotiations failed to end the matter, with the destruction of Valdemar's army the issue was effectively settled and the imperial aims of Hermann's mission had been achieved. Furthermore, the conclusion of this dispute brought an end to a period of Danish domination in the Baltic region.²²⁸ With the Danish army destroyed, the region was now open for another militaristic institution with the ability to lead the campaigns to conquer and convert the pagan populations to the east. A responsibility that was gradually secured by the Teutonic Order during the next decade. Whether Hermann had the potential regional exploits of the Teutonic Order in mind during his negotiations regarding Valdemar's release cannot be determined from the surviving source materials, however this episode would prove incredibly beneficial for the Order as it provided the political landscape for the future establishment of the *Ordensland* in Prussia as well as securing Hermann von Salza's role as the personal representative of Frederick II in northern Europe.

²²⁶ Ibid., 229.

²²⁷ Urban, *The Baltic Crusade*, pp. 121-122; For an account of Frederick's 'hands-off' approach to governing his German holdings see, Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 226-235.

²²⁸ Urban, *The Baltic Crusade*, 122.

Frederick II's Crusade to Jerusalem

In the years between the issuing of the *Golden Bull of Rimini* in 1226 and the arrival of the Teutonic Order in the Baltic in 1229, Frederick continued to rely on the support of Hermann von Salza and the Order as the conflict between the emperor and the papacy came to a head. Originally, Frederick had taken the cross and had planned to launch a crusade to Jerusalem in 1225. As the appointed year approached it became clear that Frederick was not going to be able to launch the campaign in time due to numerous issues in the recruitment for the crusade.²²⁹ Unlike previous crusades which relied on massive recruitment and many loosely organized armies, this crusade was to be much more focused with clearly defined leaders and targets. Honorius III was willing to accept the setbacks that came with organizing this kind of crusade and at a meeting in San Germano, he agreed to delay the launch of the expedition until 15 August 1227.²³⁰ The death of Honorius III on 18 March 1227 and the election of Pope Gregory IX as pope the following day brought a shift in papal policy regarding Frederick II. Where Honorius was willing to pursue a conciliatory approach to handling the emperor, Gregory was determined to demonstrate Frederick's fickleness and reassert papal authority over the emperor.²³¹

Gregory did not have to wait long for his first opportunity to establish his new policy regarding the emperor. By the summer of 1227, Frederick's preparations for the crusade were going well, but as the crusaders gathered in Brindisi disease struck the region resulting in the deaths of pilgrims and crusaders from virulent infections. Despite the situation, Frederick departed for the Holy Land in September only to return to Italy shortly after, discouraged and seriously ill. As a sign of his commitment, he sent Hermann von Salza and the duke of Limburg

²²⁹ For a full account of Frederick's crusade to Jerusalem from 1227-1229 see; Tyerman, *God's War*, pp.739-755, and Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 164-201.

²³⁰ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 149-151.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 165.

ahead to Syria to prepare the defences for his imminent arrival and proclaimed that he would depart in May 1228.²³² Gregory used the opportunity to reassert papal authority over the emperor and excommunicated Frederick over his failure to depart for Jerusalem in 1227 ignoring Frederick's excuse of falling ill and his proclamation to depart the following May.²³³

Despite being excommunicated, Frederick stuck to his commitment to depart for the Holy Land and arrived in Syria the following year. Upon his arrival he was greeted favourably by all three of the major military orders. It should come as no surprise that the Teutonic Order, whose grandmaster Hermann had been sent ahead to prepare the defences for Frederick's arrival, greeted the emperor's arrival with open arms. However, the Templars and Hospitallers also greeted the excommunicated emperor with favour willing, at least temporarily, to overlook the ban of excommunication which Gregory had placed on Frederick. As David Abulafia explains, "[Frederick] was, they knew, excommunicated; but he was also the one hope in the struggle against the Ayyubids. More materialistically, they may have sought grants of land and rights, the more so since the emperor's generosity to the third military order, that of the Teutonic Knights, was well-known."²³⁴

Frederick's popularity in Syria would be short lived. Unlike previous crusades aimed at recovering the Holy Land, Frederick decided his best course of action would be diplomacy not war. Shortly after arriving, the emperor entered negotiations with the Ayyubid Sultan, al-Kamil, which eventually resulted in the *Treaty of Jaffa* on 18 February 1229. The treaty ceded the Christian sites of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth to Frederick as well as corridors linking them to the Christian-held coastal plain as well as the regions of Sidon and Toron in western

²³² Tyerman, *God's War*, pp. 746-747.

²³³ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 165-167.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 180-181.

Galilee. In return, Temple Mount, al-Haram al-Sharif, the Dome of the Rock, and the al-Aqsa mosque remained under the jurisdiction of Islamic authorities although Christians were allowed free access to these sites.²³⁵

Unsurprisingly, Hermann von Salza acted as an advisor to Frederick during his negotiations with al-Kamil in 1228. A logical appointment given that Hermann had experience negotiating with al-Kamil. During the negotiations in Egypt in 1219 it was Hermann and John de Brienne who were in favour of accepting al-Kamil's offer, while the Templars, Hospitallers, and papal legates rejected it. Nine years later, in 1228, Hermann was back negotiating with the same sultan and like the earlier episode, he would help shape an agreement which would bring the Teutonic Order and the secular ruler into conflict with the other two military orders and the papal representatives.²³⁶

The *Treaty of Jaffa* brought an end to any support Frederick received from the Templars and the Hospitallers. Excluded from the treaty were the Templar and Hospitaller castles in the lands of Bohemund IV of Antioch-Tripoli. Christopher Tyerman suggests this might have been inspired by Frederick taking revenge on Bohemund for refusing to swear fealty to him in the summer of 1228.²³⁷ Regardless of the reason for their exclusion, the treaty made it clear to the Templars and Hospitallers that they would not be receiving the same benefits and privileges that the emperor had bestowed on the Teutonic Order, who had received the old royal palace, Manoir-le-Roi, for their support of Frederick in Jerusalem, and so they rebelled. Joined by Patriarch Gerold of Jerusalem, who was also willing to briefly overlook the Emperor's ban of

²³⁵ Tyerman, *God's War*, pp. 749-751.

²³⁶ Seward, *The Monks of War*, pp. 42-43.

²³⁷ Tyerman, *God's War*, 751.

excommunication until the *Treaty of Jaffa*, they claimed the treaty was signed without their input and by an excommunicated Emperor making the agreement null and void.²³⁸

If there was any doubt about the Teutonic Order's loyalty to Frederick amid the new opposition following the *Treaty of Jaffa* it was put to rest on 18 March 1229 when Frederick crowned himself as king of Jerusalem.²³⁹ This self-coronation plays out like medieval theatre, calling to mind other such events like the crowning of Charlemagne in 800 or the self-coronation of Napoleon in 1804. To the horror of the papacy, Frederick, under the ban of excommunication, fulfilled his crusading vow by achieving something that had not been done since the First Crusade in 1099, he captured the holy city of Jerusalem. And furthermore, he did it without the wholesale slaughter that accompanied the capture of Jerusalem during the First Crusade. Following the coronation it was Hermann himself who delivered a speech on the newly crowned King of Jerusalem's behalf which acknowledged papal opposition to Frederick's crusade but pleaded reconciliation now that the campaign had been successfully concluded.²⁴⁰ Hermann delivered the speech in both, a German and French translation, omitting a Latin translation which was likely done on purpose given the location of the speech and Frederick's history of using Latin when issuing formal documents as Emperor.²⁴¹

²³⁸ For the response of Patriarch Gerold to Frederick's crusade to Jerusalem see *Letter of Patriarch Gerold in The Crusades: A Reader* Ed. S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt, No. 74, pp. 282-285 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

²³⁹ Whether or not this event was a self-coronation or the ceremonial act of crown wearing, traditionally this event has been interpreted as a self-coronation, however, Hans Eberhard Mayer argues that Frederick had considered himself King of Jerusalem since his marriage to Yolande de Brienne (also known as Isabella II of Jerusalem) in Brindisi in 1225 and this event in 1229 was only the ceremonial act of crown wearing Hans Eberhard Mayer, *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1965), pp. 204-214; See also Abulafia, *Frederick II*, 187.

²⁴⁰ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, 187.

²⁴¹ For examples of Frederick's use of Latin when issuing formal documents as Emperor see; "Letter of March 1224," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 52 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 38-39; and "Letter of March 1226," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 56 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 41-44. For accounts of the coronation ceremony and Hermann von Salza's speech on behalf of Frederick II see; Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 187-188; Seward, *The Monks of War*, 43; Tyerman, *God's War*, pp. 752-755.

Shortly after his coronation and in the face of increasing opposition from the Templars, Hospitallers, and Patriarch Gerold, Frederick left the Holy Land in haste on 1 May 1229 to return to Italy and hopefully, bring an end to the papal-imperial conflict using his achievements in the Holy Land as leverage. As described by Christopher Tyerman, “after trying to browbeat the Templars and the patriarch by force, Frederick admitted defeat. He maintained the imperial presence by leaving a garrison in Acre and securing Montfort for the Teutonic Knights as well as endowing them with as much property as his opponents could not legally challenge.”²⁴²

In a furious letter sent from Patriarch Gerold to the papal court following Frederick’s ‘conquest’ of Jerusalem he provides his account of the Emperors actions in the Holy Land claiming, “after long and mysterious conferences, and without having consulted anyone who lived in the country, [Frederick] suddenly announced one day that he had made peace with the sultan. No one saw the text of the peace or truce when the emperor took the oath to observe the articles which were agreed upon. Moreover, you will be able to see clearly how great the malice was and how fraudulent the tenor of certain articles of the truce which we have decided to send you. The emperor, for giving credit to his word, wished only the word of the sultan which he obtained. For he said, among other things, that the holy city was surrendered to him.”²⁴³

Noticeably absent from Gerold’s letter is any mention of the Teutonic Order or the role played by Hermann von Salza in the negotiations with al-Kamil. Surely Hermann had seen the text of the peace and was familiar with the agreed upon terms, indeed, Seward goes so far as to suggest that it was Hermann himself who advised Frederick on what terms to offer the sultan.²⁴⁴ This letter is yet another example of how Hermann von Salza, and the Teutonic Order in general,

²⁴² Tyerman, *God’s War*, 754.

²⁴³ *Letter of Patriarch Gerold in The Crusades: A Reader* Ed. S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt, No. 74, pp. 282-285, 282.

²⁴⁴ Seward, *Monks of War*, 43.

appear to get a pass from those who support the papacy for their obvious alliance with the excommunicated Emperor.

And so, the long-awaited crusade of Frederick II was concluded by May 1229. Frederick returned to Europe believing his campaign was a success and hoped that he would be able to use his achievements to force Gregory to the negotiating table concerning the papal-imperial conflict over his Italian holdings. In his wake he left those who allied with the papacy, particularly the Templars, the Hospitallers, and patriarch Gerold furious at his actions. In their opinion his campaign was a farce, led by an excommunicated Emperor who had ‘captured’ Jerusalem through deceit and deception before crowning himself as King of Jerusalem in the most sacred of sites, the Holy Sepulcher. Lost in this polarized landscape was the Teutonic Order and Hermann von Salza. While they had benefitted greatly for their staunch support for Frederick, despite the ban of excommunication and in the face of papal hostilities, their actions were largely ignored by those who opposed the Emperor and sided with Gregory. As we will see, the Order’s support for Frederick would also be overlooked by the papacy as they shifted their attention and resources to the establishment of an *Ordensland* in the Baltic later that year.

The Peace Agreements of San Germano and Ceprano, 1230

With the Golden Bull of Rimini secured and Frederick’s crusade to Jerusalem complete, in 1229 the Teutonic Order’s conquest of Prussia began in earnest. Under the leadership of Hermann von Balk, a small reconnaissance force established a garrison at Kulm, a region for which Hermann von Salza had been appointed *Reichfürst* by Frederick in 1226, in preparation for a larger assault down the Vistula. The advance down the Vistula began the following year

and over the next decade the Teutonic Order would gradually and methodically conquer the region. Using their experiences in the Holy Land and the Burzenland, the Order established fortresses to secure their conquests and exert control over the local populations. During the conquest, fortresses were established in Thorn (1231), Marienwerder (1233), Reden (1234), Elbing (1237), and Christburg (1237). These fortresses served as military bases and symbols of domination while also attracting colonists and missionaries, particularly the Dominicans, who were being employed *en masse* by Gregory to handle external missions in the Baltic and preach the Teutonic Order's crusades in Prussia.²⁴⁵

As the Order began establishing itself in the Baltic, the conflict between Frederick and Gregory still raged on and despite Frederick's hopes that his successes in the Holy Land would force the pope to reconcile, the letter from Patriarch Gerold indicates that those who supported the papacy saw the *Treaty of Jaffa* in a much different light than the emperor. When Frederick arrived in Brindisi on 10 June 1229 after a year absence, he returned to a kingdom in disorder. As described by David Abulafia, "Rebellion had been fomented against [Frederick]; rumours had been spread that he was dead or a prisoner; the pope was organizing a vicious propaganda campaign against him. All seemed at risk." He continues, "[Gregory] saw in Frederick's crusade a chance to achieve the long-desired separation of Sicily from the empire; but no longer by means of a dynastic arrangement concerning the Hohenstaufen heirs. Gregory moved towards a radical solution: to displace Frederick entirely from all his thrones, to rule Sicily and southern Italy directly, since they were already under the ultimate jurisdiction of St. Peter; to find a new dynasty for Germany, more amenable to papal wishes."²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ Tyerman, *God's War*, pp. 700-701.

²⁴⁶ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 194-195.

The war against Frederick would not become a formal crusade until 1239-1240, but the efforts by Gregory to depose Frederick in 1228 are described by Abulafia as a “sort of half-crusade, lacking the privileges conferred on participants in a crusade, but in certain other respects – the use of the tithe, the sign of the keys rather than the cross – modelled on the existing institutions of the crusade.”²⁴⁷

The conflict was eventually brought to a temporary halt during the summer of 1230 with the peace agreements of San Germano and Ceprano. After initially attempting to have Otto of Lüneburg promoted as anti-king, Gregory gave his support to the elderly, John de Brienne, who now saw himself as the Church’s champion against Hohenstaufen tyranny.²⁴⁸ By October 1229, Frederick had crushed John de Brienne’s forces in Italy and Gregory was forced to come to terms with the Emperor. Present at the peace negotiation between Frederick and Gregory in 1229-1230 and acting as an imperial emissary was Hermann von Salza. The discussions concluded with the signing of peace agreements at San Germano on 23 July 1230 and Ceprano in August 1230. The peace established in 1230 resulted in Gregory lifting the ban of excommunication and ending his campaign to depose Frederick, while in return the emperor agreed to allow the Sicilian church to hold free elections, the Sicilian clergy was to be exempt from secular jurisdiction, and he promised to return the southern Italian lands of the Templars and Hospitallers which he had seized as punishment for their opposition to him in Jerusalem. The final act of these negotiations was a private dinner shared between Gregory, Frederick, and Hermann in September 1230 at Agnani.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 196-197.

²⁴⁸ Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, pp. 202-203.

²⁴⁹ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, 201; Seward, *The Monks of War*, 43.

The signed agreements made no mention of the Teutonic Order's support for Frederick during the crusade or the vast amount of benefits they had received in return. Furthermore, the Order's arrival in the Baltic and the commencement of their campaigns in Prussia was likely discussed during these negotiations as the following years would see the papacy would fully endorse the Order's conquest in Prussia.²⁵⁰ Gregory had supported the Order's campaigns against the pagans in Prussia as early as January 1230, but following the peace agreements of San Germano and Ceprano that summer the Order enjoyed a flurry of papal guarantees and benefits over the following years.²⁵¹

In letters issued 27 August 1230 and 12 September 1230, Gregory guaranteed the Order's right to possess the lands it conquered in Prussia, reaffirming the *Golden Bull of Rimini* issued by Frederick in 1226.²⁵² In a letter dated 17 September 1230, Gregory officially sanctioned the Teutonic Order's campaign in Prussia as a crusade. This letter marks the formal beginning of the Order's conquest of Prussia, despite the Order having already established a garrison at Kulm by this time.²⁵³ In letters issued in July 1231 and January 1232, Gregory expanded the scope of the campaigns recruitment by exhorting the Dominicans to preach the crusades against the Prussians

²⁵⁰ Fönnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 206.

²⁵¹ "Letter of 18. January 1230," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 72 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 52-53.

²⁵² "Letter of 27. August 1230," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 79 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 60-61; "Letter 12. September 1230," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 80 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 61-63.

²⁵³ "Letter of 17. September 1230," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 81 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 61-63; Fönnesberg-Schmidt points out that this letter is a copy of the second of two letters dated as 13 September 1230 and both titles *Cum misericors* which are included in the *Vetera Monumenta Poloniae et Lithuaniae Gentiumque Finitimarum Historiam Illustrantia*. Ed. A. Theiner, 4 vols (Rome, 1860-1864), Vol. 1, Nos. 41-42; The Chronicle of Prussia claims that these Bulls issued by Gregory were in response to requests made by Hermann von Salza that the pope "should designate certain lands and regions for the preaching of a crusade for the benefit of Prussia." *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin*, 65.

in Pomerania, Gotland, and Bohemia.²⁵⁴ More clusters of letters were issued by Gregory in October 1233 and August-September 1234 which, following the pattern established since the peace agreements of 1230, exhorted crusaders and local nobles to pay obedience to the Teutonic Order, granted papal protection to the Order's possessions in the Baltic, and called upon the Dominicans to preach the Prussian campaigns.²⁵⁵

While the peace established in the summer of 1230 would collapse after only five years over disagreements concerning the Lombard League in northern Italy and Frederick's rebellious son, Henry (IV), it was plenty of time for Hermann von Salza and the Teutonic Order to secure papal support for their crusades in Prussia and establish themselves as the dominant institution involved in the crusades to the Baltic. Clearly, Gregory had no concerns about the Order's open support for the emperor or their actions during Frederick's crusade to Jerusalem, nor did he seem to care about the large amount of benefits the emperor had bestowed on the Order as he left the

²⁵⁴ "Letter of 18. July 1231," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 85 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 65-66; "Letter of 23. January 1232," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 87 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 66-67.

²⁵⁵ "Letter of 6. October 1233," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 98 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 73; "Letter of 6. October 1233," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 99 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 73-74; "Letter of 7. October 1233," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 100 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 74-75; "Letter of 7. October 1233," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 101 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 75; "Letter of 7. October 1233," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 102 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 76; "Letter of 12. October 1233," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 103 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 76-77; "Letter of 3. August 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 108 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 82-83; "Letter of 5. September 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 109 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 84-85; "Letter of 9. September 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 110 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 85; "Letter of 9. September 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 111 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 86; "Letter of 9. September 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 112 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 86-87; "Letter of 9. September 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 113 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 87; "Letter of 9. September 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 114 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 88; "Letter of 9. September 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 115 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), pp. 88-89; "Letter of 9. September 1234," *Preußisches Urkundenbuch: Politische Abtheilung*, Ed. Rudolf Philippi et al. 6 vols. No. 116 (Königsberg, 1882-2000), 89.

Holy Land. Even after the peace established in 1230, the Teutonic Order and Hermann von Salza made no secret that they still enjoyed a close relationship with the Emperor.

When Gregory met with Frederick in Rieti in the summer of 1234 to discuss the popes need for support against the rebellious Romans and the emperors need for support against his rebellious son, it was Hermann von Salza who was present as Frederick's chief advisor.²⁵⁶ In December 1235, Frederick sent Hermann as his delegate for a peace conference between the emperor and the Lombards in Rome which was called for and mediated by Gregory.²⁵⁷ And two year later, in 1237, Frederick appointed Hermann and Piero della Vigna, the emperor's most trusted Sicilian diplomat, to meet with the Lombards in Matua in the spring of 1237.²⁵⁸ This relationship between the three men, and by extension the institutions they represented, leads Fannesberg-Schmidt to conclude that, "when Gregory issued the letters furthering the Teutonic Order's campaigns in Prussia, he could thus have no illusions that he was supporting an Order neutral towards the German empire. This did not stop him from favouring it and allocating it a decidedly leading role in the mission in the region."²⁵⁹

Conclusions

The establishment of the Teutonic *Ordensland* in Prussia was made possible by the way in which the Teutonic Order was able to navigate the papal-imperial conflict which dominated European politics during the first half of the thirteenth century. Integral to the Order's ability to maintain this mediating role was the Order's Grandmaster, Hermann von Salza, who continued

²⁵⁶ Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 205.

²⁵⁷ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, 293.

²⁵⁸ This conference was postponed and eventually held at Brescia in late July 1237 where Hermann and Piero represented the emperor in negotiations with the Lombards and papal legates; Abulafia, *Frederick II*, 301.

²⁵⁹ Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 206.

his open support with his close personal friend Frederick II while remaining on amicable terms with the popes, Honorius III, Gregory IX, and Innocent IV. From as early as 1211, the Order had designs on establishing their own crusading state, however, it was not until their formal arrival in the Baltic in 1229 with imperial recognition for their future conquests of Prussia in the form of the *Golden Bull of Rimini* that they were able to make this a reality. As the papal-imperial conflict raged on during the 1230s and 1240s, Hermann von Salza, maintained his open support for Frederick II while simultaneously securing benefits and privileges from the papacy. These grants gave full papal endorsement to the Teutonic Order's campaigns in the Baltic making them the principal institution responsible for the conquest and conversion of the pagan population in the region during the pontificates of Gregory IX and Innocent IV.

The public support of Hermann von Salza and the Teutonic Order for Frederick II during his controversial crusade to Jerusalem from 1227 to 1229 meant that when popes, Gregory IX and Innocent IV, gave full papal endorsement to the Teutonic Order's Baltic conquests they could have had no doubts they were supporting a military order which was friendly towards the twice excommunicated Hohenstaufen emperor. The continued papal support of the Teutonic Order's Baltic campaigns and the papal bestowment of privileges and benefits which allowed the Order to establish an *Ordensland* in Prussia contradicts the commonly held interpretation that the papal-imperial conflict of the first half of the thirteenth century encompassed all aspects of papal-imperial politics. Instead it suggests that, at least in the Baltic theatre, the conflicting institutions were willing to put aside their differences and strike a modicum of cooperation in their shared support of the Teutonic Order and their Grandmaster, Hermann von Salza.

Conclusions

Reflections

While examining the relationship between the Teutonic Order, the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire during the papal-imperial conflict of the early thirteenth century, this thesis also addresses numerous shortcomings in the scholarship on the Baltic Crusades and the papacy during this period. As highlighted in the historiography, the pontificates of Honorius III, Gregory IX, and Innocent IV are largely overshadowed and ignored by the scholarship focusing on Innocent III with the one exception being the recent work of Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt. While the pontificate of Innocent III was instrumental in developing the papacy into the political force that challenged the European monarchies for supreme authority during the thirteenth and fourteenth century, this thesis argues that it was the pontificates of Honorius III, Gregory IX, and Innocent the IV which saw these developments in papal policy applied to the Baltic frontier. This conclusion falls in line with the work of Fonnesberg-Schmidt which focuses on papal policy in the Baltic during the pontificates of Innocent III, Honorius III, Gregory IX, and Innocent IV.²⁶⁰ While her work focuses on the development of papal policy in the Baltic, this thesis explores in greater detail the papal-imperial relationship during the reign of Emperor Frederick II and how his conflict with the papacy impacted the conquest, Germanization, and Christianization of the Baltic following the formal arrival of the Teutonic Order in 1229.

This thesis also makes use of numerous primary source materials which are, for the most part, absent from the Anglo-literate scholarship. Principally among these sources is the collection of papal and imperial letters in the *Preußisches Urkundenbuchen*. While some of the more

²⁶⁰ Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades, 1147-1254* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

important documents in this collection have been used in past Anglo-literate scholarship on the Baltic Crusades, such as the so-called *Golden Bull of Rimini* of 1226 and the *Kaisermanifest* of 1224, most of these letters have been ignored in the Anglo-literate scholarship on the Baltic Crusades.²⁶¹ Evidence of this tendency by Anglo-literate scholars to ignore this collection of letters is the fact that these letters still only exist in the Latin transcriptions with German commentary. Despite the extensive work on the Baltic Crusades and the Teutonic Order this valuable collection of letters has never been translated into English. Again, the major exception to this trend is the recent work of Fonnesberg-Schmidt who makes extensive use of these letters and in this regard bridges the gap between the Anglo-literate scholarship and the German scholarship which has worked with this collection extensively.²⁶²

Perhaps the most valuable and unique contribution this thesis makes is to the scholarship on the Baltic Crusades. By examining the Baltic Crusades in the context of the papal-imperial conflict of the first half of the thirteenth century, this thesis expands on the scholarship of crusades studies which tend to relegate the Baltic Crusades to the periphery and views the Christian conquest and expansion into the Baltic frontier within the context of Western European politics. While this is not the first work to place the Baltic Crusades in the context of Western European politics, previous attempts at this scholarship were poisoned by political and nationalist agendas which reached their zenith during the highly charged middle of the twentieth century.²⁶³ Scholars since then have resisted connecting the Baltic Crusades to Western

²⁶¹ The well-known works of both, William Urban and Christopher Tyerman, make use of these particular documents while ignoring the vast majority of the letters included in the *Preußisches Urkundenbuchen*. William Urban, *The Baltic Crusade*, 1975; and Christopher Tyerman, *God's War*, 2006.

²⁶² For examples of German scholarship which has made extensive work of this collection see; Ernst Pitz, *Papstreskript und Kaiserreskript im Mittelalter*, 1971 and Helmuth Kluger, *Hochmeister Hermann von Salza und Kaiserreskript im Mittelalter*, 1971.

²⁶³ For examples of these nationalist accounts see *Treitschke's Origins of Prussianism (The Teutonic Knights)*, Trans. Eden & Cedar Paul, 1942 and Ernst Kantorowicz, *Frederick the Second*, Trans. E.O. Lorimer, 1931.

European politics favouring instead to view the Baltic conquests through the ‘safer’ context of crusade studies. This thesis provides a post-nationalist and post-confessional account of the Baltic Crusades in the context of the Western European context lacking the over-tones of German superiority, religious justification, and pro-colonial sentiments which plagued these nationalist accounts of the first half of the twentieth century.

Summation

The historical narrative of European politics during the first half of the thirteenth century has largely focused on the papal-imperial conflict between Emperor Frederick II and the papacy.²⁶⁴ While this conflict certainly had far ranging consequences, one only needs to examine the controversial crusade of Frederick II to Jerusalem between 1227 and 1229 to see how this conflict spread to the Holy Land, this study provides evidence that not every major institution

²⁶⁴ The larger conflict between the pope and emperor dominates both the papal and imperial scholarship on the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. This is evidence in the large body of scholarship dedicated to the investiture controversy of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the conflict between Emperor Henry IV and Gregory VII which resulted in the infamous ‘Humiliation at Canossa’ in 1077, and the conflict between Frederick II and the papacy during the first half of the thirteenth century. The scholarship on the first half of the thirteenth century almost always contextualises the period through the lense of the papal-imperial conflict. For examples of this contextualisation in the scholarship on Frederick II see; Ernst Kantorwicz, *Frederick the Second, 1194-1250*, trans. E.O. Lorimer (London: Constable & Co. LTD, 1931) and David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) which both frame Frederick’s reign through the lense of the papal imperial conflict, albeit for different reasons as highlighted in the historiography. For examples of this conflict being used to frame the period in crusades studies see; Christopher Tyerman, *God’s War* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 739-755, which includes a section titled ‘The Crusade of Frederick II, 1227-9’ in which Frederick’s crusade to Jerusalem is contextualised within his conflict with the papacy. Another example in this branch of scholarship is Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A Short History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 149-151 which also frames the reign of Frederick II and his campaign to Jerusalem through the lense of his conflict with the papacy. For examples of how this conflict dominates scholarship focused on more wide-ranging histories see; John E. Rodes, *Germany: A History* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), pp. 51-60, which devotes a section to Frederick II and begins by contextualising his reign through the lense of ‘Church-State Relations under Frederick II.’ Another example of a broad historical account is Clifford R. Backman, *The Worlds of Medieval Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 293-296, which begins a section titled ‘Germany, Italy, and the Papacy’ by claiming, “German, Italian, and papal relations in the thirteenth century were dominated by the struggle to undermine, and if possible to destroy and replace, the power of the Hohenstaufen family.”

was forced into siding with either the Emperor or the Papacy despite papal declaration to the contrary.²⁶⁵ As hostilities between the Hohenstaufen emperor and popes Honorius III, Gregory IX, and Innocent IV gradually increased, the Teutonic Order found itself caught in the middle. As a military order founded in the Holy Land, the Teutonic Knights relied on papal confirmation for their legitimacy. As an ethnically German institution the Teutonic Order shared a close relationship with Frederick who relied on the Knights to uphold imperial authority in his German lands, particularly those in the north. Rather than being forced to side with either the papacy or the empire, the Teutonic Order and their Grandmaster, Hermann von Salza, played a mediating role in the papal-imperial conflict by arbitrating negotiations in 1230, 1234, 1235, and 1237 while receiving numerous benefits and privileges from both institutions which would ultimately allow the Teutonic Order to establish an *Ordensland* in Prussia.

While this study's focus was on the relationship between the Teutonic Order, the papacy, and Frederick II, in order to examine the way in which the Order benefited from the papal-imperial conflict I turned my attention to the Baltic Crusades. While the Teutonic Knights were originally founded in the Holy Land to provide a German equivalent to the Knights Templars and the Hospitallers, their attentions quickly shifted from supporting the Crusades to wanting to establish their own sovereign state. After their failed attempt at annexing part of the Hungarian empire and carving out a crusader state in the Burzenland, their attentions quickly turned to the Baltic frontier. The Baltic was a logical choice for the Teutonic Order to establish themselves as the dominant institution. As an ethnically German order, the Teutonic Knights had close connections to many of the northern German kingdoms which bordered the Baltic and their

²⁶⁵ The bans of excommunication against Frederick II made it clear in no uncertain terms that no Christians were to support the excommunicated Frederick II see; *Innocent IV's Call for a Crusade, 1248* in *The Crusades: A Reader*, Ed. S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt, No. 74, p. 285 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

unofficial role as Frederick's representative in the region made it easy for them to secure imperial support for their expansion into north-eastern Europe.

The pontificate of Innocent III attracts the most attention from crusades scholars during this period and for good reason. Innocent's achievements include the development of the final formula for crusades and the indulgence, the Fourth Lateran Council reaffirmed the papal approach to conversion and mission which affected all theatres of penitential war, and his reforms to canon law and crusading theology transformed crusades into a powerful political weapon that the papacy could extend against those both, outside and inside Christendom. However, it was Innocent's successor, Honorius III who was responsible for bringing these ideas to the Baltic frontier. It was Honorius who authorized the first plenary indulgence for the Baltic Crusades elevating their status to being on par with the crusades to the Holy Land. Beginning in Honorius' pontificate and extending through his successors, the Baltic Crusades would gradually increase in importance for papal policy.

Shortly after the election of Gregory IX to the papal throne in 1227, the papal-imperial conflict reached a new level of hostilities. While Honorius pursued a conciliatory approach to handling Frederick II, Gregory was quick to declare his belief in papal supremacy over the emperor with the excommunication of Frederick following his failure to launch his long-awaited crusade in 1227. With Frederick excommunicated, the Teutonic Order was forced to decide between recognizing the papal ban on Frederick or supporting the Emperor's crusade to Jerusalem which was launched despite the ban of excommunication later that same year. When Frederick crowned himself in the Holy Sepulcher in 1229 after successfully negotiating the return of Jerusalem to Christian hands, the Teutonic Order stood firmly beside him and it was the

Order's Grandmaster, Hermann von Salza, who delivered the speech on Frederick's behalf in that most sacred of Christian sites pleading for cooperation between the Emperor and the papacy.

Following the return of Frederick to Italy and the ensuing negotiations that took place between the Emperor and the papacy it was Hermann von Salza who played the role of chief mediator. While securing a temporary piece between the two institutions at the peace agreements of San Germano and Ceprano in 1230, he also used the opportunity to secure numerous benefits and privileges from both institutions which made the Teutonic Order the primary institution charged with carrying out the conquests in the Baltic. Between 1230 and 1235 Gregory issued numerous letters exhorting the faithful in the Baltic to give their complete support and obedience to the Knights while also employing the Dominicans as preachers to the region who were tasked with recruiting for the Teutonic Order's campaigns. Perhaps learning from their failure in the Burzenland a decade earlier, by 1234 Hermann von Salza had secured official recognition for the Teutonic Order's conquest of Prussia from the Emperor, the Papacy, and the local Duke Conrad of Mazovia laying the foundation for the establishment of the *Ordensland* of Prussia. What is most surprising during this period is Gregory's willingness to give the Teutonic Order unquestioned papal support despite their continuing and public support for Frederick II.

The pontificate of Innocent IV would grant an even greater amount of papal support for the Teutonic Order's conquests in Prussia and the establishment of an *Ordensland*. Perhaps fueled by the emergence of new external threats on the Baltic frontier in the Mongols and the rising Russian principalities, Innocent granted the Teutonic Knights the authority to authorize their own crusades as well as the ability to recruit for their campaigns without the use of public preaching. This allowed the Order to effectively wage a perpetual crusade in the Baltic and removed the need to have the Dominicans preach the campaigns as their attentions now focused

solely on the carrying out of missionary activity in the region. This decision was made despite the ongoing papal-imperial feud which had now commenced in open hostilities in the Italian peninsula and the continuation of the Teutonic Knights public support for Frederick II.

By studying the Baltic crusades through the context of the papal-imperial conflict during the first half of the thirteenth century, the traditional interpretation that this conflict polarized all aspects of papal-imperial politics is called into question. While there was certainly a unique level of hostility which ultimately led to open warfare between Frederick II and the papacy, the ability of the Teutonic Order, and more specifically Hermann von Salza, to maintain a mediating role between the two institutions while simultaneously securing numerous benefits and privileges which allowed them to establish an *Ordensland* in Prussia suggests that at least in the Baltic theatre, the two institutions were willing to strike a modicum of cooperation in their support for the Teutonic Order.

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