Title
Between Two Worlds: A Comparative Study of the Representations of Pagan Lithuania in the Chronicles of the Teutonic Order and Rus'

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0g57z7kw

Author
Markman, Kristina

Publication Date
2015

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation
Between Two Worlds:

A Comparative Study of the Representations of Pagan Lithuania in the Chronicles of the Teutonic Order and Rus' 

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in History

by

Kristina Markman

2015
ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Between Two Worlds:
A Comparative Study of the Representations of Pagan Lithuania
in the Chronicles of the Teutonic Order and Rus'

by

Kristina Markman
Doctor of Philosophy in History
University of California, Los Angeles, 2015
Professor Patrick Geary, Chair

By the mid-fourteenth century, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania comprised a territory stretching across the present-day republics of Lithuania and Belarus as well as parts of Latvia, Poland, Ukraine, Moldova, and Russia. While the transformation of Lithuania into a powerful and dynamic polity under the leadership of a pagan dynasty has received much attention, concurrent changes in literary representations of Lithuania have been rarely addressed. This dissertation seeks to present the first comprehensive comparative survey of the images of Lithuania in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order and Rus'—i.e., Lithuania’s closest neighbors and most frequent economic and military competitors as well as collaborators. By examining each chronicle within the historical and intellectual context of its composition, I argue that the
A portrayal of Lithuania in these texts was neither directly political nor polemical, but influenced by a wide variety of social factors. Representations of Lithuania were functional and constitutive; or, in other words, far from being passive reflections, these images were intended to shape perception and worked to reinforce as well as alter general ideas and attitudes.

The first part (chapters 1–5) provides a detailed overview of the political and ideological structures that gave rise to the two chronicles traditions under investigation. Then, moving to questions of representation, this part argues that although images of Lithuania usually took on the form of “us” versus “them,” “good” versus “evil,” Christian versus pagan, they were deployed in different ways. The Teutonic Order’s chroniclers, for example, deferred to conventional Western paradigms of “otherness” in order to construct an image of the hostile Lithuanian and justify the Order’s mission of conversion and colonization in Prussia and Livonia. In Rus’ian chronicles, on other hand, the use of negative images of Lithuania appears to have been symptomatic of attitudes during years of crisis rather than a definitive ideological or pragmatic program. The second part (chapters 6–8) is comparative; it analyzes the similarities and differences between the presentation of specific Lithuanian characters and events in both chronicle traditions. One of the principal conclusions of this section is that multiple discourses were involved in the production of image rather than primarily a religious one. Using Lithuania as a case study, the final chapters also explore the interplay of cultural systems in the Baltic region, especially questions of cultural identity and how it is reflected in the literary production of frontier societies.
The dissertation of Kristina Markman is approved.

Teofilo F. Ruiz

Piotr Górecki

Patrick Geary, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2015
Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations .................................................................................................................... vii
List of Geographic Place Names ................................................................................................. ix
List of Terms .................................................................................................................................. xii
List of Maps and Figures ............................................................................................................... xiii
Acknowledgments ......................................................................................................................... xiv
Vita ................................................................................................................................................. xvii

INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................................. 1
   The Chronicle as Genre and Agent ............................................................................................ 6
   Representation: Image, Identity, and Ideology .......................................................................... 12
   Lithuania as Europe’s Final Frontier ......................................................................................... 21
   Dissertation Overview .............................................................................................................. 25

PART I: THE INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK

1. Lithuania between the Teutonic Order and Rus', c. 1000–1387 ............................................. 28
   Lithuania ...................................................................................................................................... 28
   The Teutonic Order .................................................................................................................. 36
   Rus' ........................................................................................................................................... 40

2. Sources: The Chronicles of the Teutonic Order .................................................................... 47
   The Start of the Baltic Mission: Heinrici Chronicon Livoniae (HCL) ................................. 55
   From Mission to Crusade: Livländische Reimchronik (LRC) ..................................................... 61
   The Institutionalization of Chronicle Writing in the Teutonic Order: Peter of Dusburg’s
      Chronicon terrae Prussiae (PD) .............................................................................................. 65
   The Fourteenth-Century Chronicles: Nikolaus von Jeroschin (NJ), Hermann von Warberge,
      and Wigand of Marburg ......................................................................................................... 72
   Conclusions ............................................................................................................................... 76

3. hostes fidei vs. milites Christi: The Representations of Lithuania in the Chronicles of the
   Teutonic Order ......................................................................................................................... 78
   Lithuanians, from pagani to hostes fidei .................................................................................. 80
   Constructing Dichotomies I: The Theological and Spatial Divide ......................................... 93
   Constructing Dichotomies II: Virtue and Manful Action ......................................................... 102
   Conclusions ............................................................................................................................... 119

4. Sources: The Chronicles of Rus’ ............................................................................................ 120
   Setting the Stage: Povest’ vremennykh let (PVL) ................................................................. 121
   Northern Rus’: Novgorod First Chronicle (NPL) ................................................................. 129
   Southwestern Rus’: Galician-Volhynian Chronicle (GVL) ..................................................... 134
   Conclusions ............................................................................................................................... 137

5. “Pagan,” “Godless,” and “Accursed” Litva: The Representations of Lithuania in the
   Chronicles of Rus’ ..................................................................................................................... 139
PART II: CASE STUDIES

6. From Obscurity to Notoriety in the Thirteenth Century: The Many Faces of Mindaugas
   The “Real” Mindaugas.................................182
   First Impressions I: Galician-Volhynian Chronicle (GVL).........................187
   First Impressions II: Livländische Reimchronik (LRC)..............................190
   The Two Traditions........................................194
   The Question of Religion and the Case of Vaišvilkas............................212
   Conclusions....................................................................219

7. “Good” and “Bad” Lithuanians..............................................................223
   Life on the Baltic Frontier........................................................................230
   “Bad” Lithuanians..................................................................................246
   “Good” Lithuanians in the Chronicles of the Teutonic Order........................257
   “Good” Lithuanians in the Chronicles of Rus'.............................................264
   Conclusions.........................................................................................272

8. Gediminas between Two Worlds..............................................................274
   The “Real” Gediminas............................................................................276
   The Inveterate Pagan: The Image of Gediminas in Peter of Dusburg’s Chronicon terrae Prussiae.................................................................287
   Shifting Attitudes: The Image of Gediminas in Northwestern Rus' and the Novgorod First Chronicle (NPL).......................................................300
   Conclusions.........................................................................................317

CONCLUSION ..................................................................................320

Maps and Figures .............................................................................327
Bibliography ......................................................................................331
Abbreviations


MGH  Monument Germaniae Historica


PL  

PrUB  

PSRL  
*Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei.* Moscow, 1997–.

PVL  
*Povest' vremennykh let*

Smith and Urban  

SRP  

VMPL  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic</th>
<th>Present-day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amboten</td>
<td>Embûte, Latvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aukaimis</td>
<td>near Batakiai, Lithuania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austechia; terra Eustoythen</td>
<td>Aukštaitija, Lithuania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balga</td>
<td>near Pogranichny municipality in Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berestia</td>
<td>Brest, Belarus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisenė</td>
<td>near Kartupėnai, Lithuania (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christburg</td>
<td>Dzierzgoń, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmemel</td>
<td>Skirsnemunė, Lithuania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colayne</td>
<td>Kolainiai, Lithuania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courland; Kurland</td>
<td>Kurzeme region, Latvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danzig</td>
<td>Gdańsk, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dobrin; Dobrzyń</td>
<td>Dobrzyń nad Wisłą Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorogichin</td>
<td>Drohiczyn, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorpat (Rus.: Yuryev)</td>
<td>Tartu, Estonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dünaburg</td>
<td>Daugavpils, Latvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dünamünde</td>
<td>Daugavgrīva, Latvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elbing</td>
<td>Elbląg, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermland; Varmia</td>
<td>Warmia, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garth; Garten (Rus.: Goroden)</td>
<td>Hrodna, Belarus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldingen</td>
<td>Kuldīga, Lavia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heiligenberg</td>
<td>Svetkalns, Latvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helmet</td>
<td>Helme, Estonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izborsk</td>
<td>Izborsk, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerwen</td>
<td>Jārvamaa, Estonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jersika; Gerzika</td>
<td>Latgale region, Latvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junigede</td>
<td>Veliuona, Lithuania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalaine; Colayne</td>
<td>Kolainiai, near Užventis, Lithuania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamenets</td>
<td>Kamyenyets, Belarus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karkus; Carthusen</td>
<td>Karksi-Nuia, Estonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khodynitsy</td>
<td>Khodyni (?), Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kholm</td>
<td>Chelm, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kokenhusen</td>
<td>Koknese, Latvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Königsberg</td>
<td>Kaliningard, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koporye</td>
<td>Koporye, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulm; Colmensis</td>
<td>Chelmno, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladoga</td>
<td>Staraya Ladoga, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lettigallia; Lettgallia; Latgallia</td>
<td>Latgale region, Latvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luki</td>
<td>Velikiye Luki, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lviv</td>
<td>Lviv, Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marienburg</td>
<td>Malbork, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marienwerder</td>
<td>Kwidzyn, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melnitsa</td>
<td>Mielnik, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memel</td>
<td>Klaipėda, Lithuania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memel River</td>
<td>Nemunas River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nalsen (Rus.: <em>Nal'shchanskaia zemlia</em>)</td>
<td>Nalšia (historical region probably in northeastern Lithuania)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuermühlen</td>
<td>Adazi, Latvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novgorodok</td>
<td>Navahrudak, Belarus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novi-torg; Torzhok</td>
<td>Torzhok, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orekhov; Oreshek</td>
<td>Shlisselburg, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ösel</td>
<td>Saaremaa, Estonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peipus Lake, Chud Lake</td>
<td>Chudskoe Ozero, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pertuyev</td>
<td>(?), Estonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pisten</td>
<td>Pieštve, Lithuania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleskov</td>
<td>Pskov, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ploczensis</td>
<td>Plock, Poland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Poltus, Pultusk, Poland
Putenicka, Pūtvė, Lithuania
Ragnit, Neman, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia
Rehden; Redino, Radzyń, Poland
Reval, Tallinn, Estonia
Rositten, Rēzekne, Latvia
Russa, Staraya Russa, Russia
Samland; Sambia, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia
Samogitia; Sameiten, Žemaitija region, Lithuania
Semigallia, Zemgale region, Latvia
Schaulen; Saule, Šiauliai, Lithuania
Shelon', Shelon', Russia
Sisditen; Sirdite, Gargždutė or Kvėdarna, Lithuania
Slonim, Slonim, Belarus
Stettin, Szczecin, Poland
Thorn, Toruń, Poland
Toropets, Toropets, Russia
Torzhok; Novi-torg, Torzhok, Russia
Turiis'k, Turiisk, Ukraine
Ümera, Jumara, Latvia
Üxküll, Ikšķile, Latvia
Varmia; Ermland, Warmia, Poland
Volkovysk, Vawkavysk, Belarus
Vozviagl, near Novohrad-Volhynskyi, Ukraine
Weißenstein, Paide, Estonia
Wenden (Rus.: Kes), Cēsis, Latvia
Wesenberg; (Rus.: Rokovor), Rakvere, Estonia
Woplauken, Wopławki, Poland
### List of Russian and Old Russian Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>English Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bezakon'n'nyi; безаконныйнюи</td>
<td>lawless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bezbozhniia; безбожная</td>
<td>godless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boyar</td>
<td>member of landed nobility usually occupying political office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iarlyk</td>
<td>patent of rule granted to the grand prince of Vladimir by the Tatar khan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iazytsi; азыц; языц</td>
<td>gentiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>konets</td>
<td>city “end,” borough, quarter, administrative district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knyaz</td>
<td>prince</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>letopis</td>
<td>chronicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litva; zemli Litovskii</td>
<td>Lithuania; Lithuanian lands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>okan'nyia; оканьныя</td>
<td>accursed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>namestnik</td>
<td>deputy, lieutenant, governor usually subject to the prince</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pogani; погани</td>
<td>pagans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>posadnik</td>
<td>annually appointed magistrate or mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sbornik</td>
<td>collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>svod</td>
<td>chronicle compilation; codex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vechе</td>
<td>public assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voevoda</td>
<td>military commander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vladyka</td>
<td>(arch)bishop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### List of German and Middle High German Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>English Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gäste</td>
<td>“guests”; members of the European nobility who joined the Teutonic Order on campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heidenkampf</td>
<td>war against pagans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hochmeister</td>
<td>grand master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Komtur</td>
<td>provincial commander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landmeister</td>
<td>land marshal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reise</td>
<td>military foray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tischbuch</td>
<td>book read during meal times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Maps and Figures

Chart detailing Lithuanian raids on Rus’ and the use of pejorative epithets..........................146

Lithuanian territorial expansion eastward c. 1200–c. 1260........................................152–153

Map 1. Northeastern Europe c. 1200..........................................................327

Map 2. Northeastern Europe c. 1265..........................................................328

Map 3. Northeastern Europe c. 1350..........................................................329

Figure 1. Genealogical table of select members of Mindaugas’ household....................330
Acknowledgments

The writing and completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the continued mentorship, advice, and support of the many people who believed in my project and me.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my committee chair and advisor, Patrick Geary, for his academic guidance and faithful encouragement over the past seven years. He is a model of scholarly excellent and professional integrity. His wisdom and thought-provoking comments have always been a source of inspiration for me. To him I own my training as a scholar, my continued dedication to the field, my appreciation for analytical and critical rigor, and my sense of intellectual self-confidence as a historian and researcher.

It is my sincere pleasure to also thank Teofilo Ruiz, whose remarkable commitment to teaching is only matched by his boundless energy, warmth, and kindness. As a scholar and teacher, Teo enriches the lives of his colleagues, friends, and students. For those who know him at UCLA, he is a model of collegiality, care, and attention. His humanity and compassion have guided my research and pushed me to persevere.

Special thanks are also owed to Piotr Górecki of the Department of History at the University of California, Riverside. He not only introduced me to the world of medieval east-central Europe, which was to become the focus of my dissertation, but his meticulous feedback has helped transform me into a more critical and reflective writer.

Thank you also to Rasa Mažeika from the University of Toronto, whose interest in my project reinvigorated my passion for history and writing at a much-needed time. She carefully read every sentence of this dissertation with the eye of an expert medieval historian of Lithuania.
I would never have been able to finish this dissertation without the help of one man who kindly stepped in to fill a seat on my committee that had become vacant a week before my prospectus defense. I am deeply honored to have had the opportunity to work with J. Arch Getty. He has always encouraged me to think “outside of the box” and never be afraid to voice my ideas, no matter how radical or extreme they might be.

I also gratefully acknowledge the generous funding that I received for my research and writing from the American Council of Learned Societies and the Fulbright Program in Lithuania as well as my hosts at the U.S. Embassy in Vilnius and Vilnius University, especially the chair of the Department of History, Rimvydas Petrauskas. Thank you also to the UCLA Department of History and especially Hadley Porter for supporting my research by finding me funding opportunities and teaching assistantships.

I owe a particular debt to the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at UCLA. Karen Burgess, Brett Landenberger, and Benay Furtivo work tirelessly to keep interest in medieval history alive at the university and in the community. Their efforts in supporting new research and interdisciplinary projects have broadened my understanding of the application of medieval history in the modern world. During my first year of graduate study, the CMRS took me on as a graduate student researcher for the St. Gall Project where I learned about practices in digital humanities and interdisciplinary collaboration. Since then the CMRS has generously funded my conference travel, including my participation in the annual academic fieldtrip at Central European University in Budapest, a paper presentation at the German Historical Institute in Warsaw, and my most recent trip to the Herder Institute in Marburg, Germany. Thanks to the colloquiums, seminars, and conferences organized by the CMRS, I have also had the opportunity
to meet scholars from around the world, many of whom have been greatly influential in my formation as a historian.

Finally, I wish to thank my family, friends, and colleagues who stood by me, endured my complaints and frustrations, and always encouraged me to “keep at it.” I am deeply grateful to Kate Craig, my classmate, friend, and “partner in crime” for the past seven, and my dearest friends Mariam Babayan, Victoria Ratnikova, Mike Mills, Jaime Lennox, and Natalie Dolph. Special acknowledgment goes to Ben Brown whose skills in graphic design and hours of hard work helped produce all the maps in this dissertation. I am exceptionally grateful to my mother and grandmother for instilling in me a passion for history and excitement of discovery. They are my “unofficial” colleagues. I will never forget the many nights that we stayed up late together reading Old Slavic manuscripts via Skype. As for the men in my family, the silent pride of my father, grandfather, and brother is a source of strength for me.
VITA

2007  
B.A., History with Honors with Distinction  
B.A., Philosophy  
University of California, San Diego

2008–2009  
Graduate Student Researcher, St. Gall Project  
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Project  
UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies

2009–2011  
Teaching Assistant
2015  
UCLA Department of History

2010  
M.A., History  
University of California, Los Angeles

2010–2011  
FLAS (Foreign Language and Area Studies) Fellowship for German study cancelled due to insufficient funding

2011  
C.Phil., History  
University of California, Los Angeles

2011–2012  
UCLA Department of History Pre-Dissertation Fellowship

Online Teaching Fellow  
UCLA Department of History Online Program

2012–2013  
Fulbright IIE US Student Grant to Lithuania

2013–2014  
ACLS Dissertation Fellowship in Eastern European Studies

2013–2014  
Editorial Board  
*Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*

2014–2015  
UCLA Department of History and Writing II Program Competitive Teaching Fellowship

2014–2015  
Instructor of Record  
UCLA Department of History

2014–2015  
Managing Editor  
*UC Undergraduate Journal of Slavic and East/Central European Studies*

2015–2016  
Conference Co-organizer  
Futures of History: Discussion, Demonstrations, Displays, February 25–26, 2016  
American Historical Association Career Diversity for Historians initiative
PUBLICATIONS


PRESENTATIONS


Introduction

By the mid-fourteenth century, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania comprised a vast territory stretching across the present-day republics of Lithuania and Belarus as well as parts of Latvia, Poland, Ukraine, Moldova, and Russia.¹ Nearly everything we know about medieval Lithuania comes from the written records of its neighboring polities. From these sources, we can begin to learn about the early history of Lithuania, its conflicts with the Teutonic Order, diplomatic relations with Europe and Rus', and its eventual transformation into a leading political and commercial power under the rule of a pagan dynasty. Although we have been left with a large body of evidence, apart from half a dozen letters and two treaties, all the extant documents are foreign, varying in provenance from Rus' to as far west as the Holy See and the British Isles. The origin and character of these texts present a historiographical dilemma. Foreign authors who wrote about Lithuania were not always consistent in their descriptions. Their accounts contain evident misunderstandings as well as deliberate alterations and even complete fabrications. As Christopher Tyerman points out, “Most medieval primary sources were exercises in interpreting reality, not describing it.”² Expanding and embellishing material, adding invented dialogue, anecdotes, moral musings, and words of praise or condemnation were as common a practice as purposefully abbreviating, abridging, and excluding unpleasant information. While medieval writers strove to make their stories credible and believable, they were bound by cultural

prescriptions as well as political agenda, aesthetics, and formalistic concerns. Consequently, as problematic as foreign sources might be for the study of Lithuanian cultural structures, they provide valuable insight into the literary and historical context in which they were produced and read.

Through a comparison of two textual traditions—the chronicles of the Teutonic Order and the chronicles of Rus⁴—the dissertation examines how medieval writers described Lithuania, its grand dukes, and the Lithuanian people. The aim of this study is not to evaluate the reliability of the information on Lithuania but to understand contemporary attitudes toward Lithuania by investigating the nature of the representational practices of two very different cultures whose own history and political development was intrinsically linked to that of Lithuania. The purpose of the present work is essentially threefold. First, this study endeavors to present a comprehensive and comparative survey of the images of Lithuania in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order and Rus'. Second, it seeks to define basic trends in foreign understanding of pagan Lithuania and determine how the rapid territorial expansion of Lithuania in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries affected its literary treatment. Lastly, arguing for a constructivist approach to image, this thesis aims to elucidate what foreign representations of Lithuania reveal about the cultures that produced them.

The case of medieval Lithuania offers exceptionally rich material for the study of cross-cultural perception because until 1387 Lithuania effectively remained a pagan territory. Moreover, unlike the Livonians, Estonians, Yotvingians (Sudovians), Curonians, and Prussians, the Lithuanians were never conquered by European crusaders, nor baptized, subjugated, or forcibly integrated into the cultures of Western or Eastern Christendom. In fact, it has even been suggested that Lithuanian dukes “deliberately prolonged baptism negotiations,” wavering

³ The provenance of these sources is closely examined in chapters 2 and 4.
between the options of Orthodoxy and Catholicism. This strategy of non-commitment to any one rite attracted much attention from both the pope in Avignon and the patriarch in Constantinople who were each willing to make concessions in hopes of extending their own authority over the Baltic region. Lithuania’s status as a pagan land sandwiched between two Christian territories did little to stem its power or independence. On the contrary, it gave Lithuanian dukes a bargaining chip that could override religious divisions. Despite their adherence to ancestral values, Lithuanian rulers did not hinder the spread of Christianity. They opened their lands to Christian merchants, guaranteed trade on equal terms, and welcomed Christian settlers, promising to defend Catholic as well as Orthodox institutions from any offenses suffered at the hands of Lithuania’s enemies. According to S. C. Rowell, it was precisely this policy of preserving “the poly-ethnic, multi-confessional character of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania” that by the mid-fourteenth century gave rise to a “politically stable,

---


5 Today the Baltic region corresponds to the modern states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. In this study, the term “Baltic region” is used in the broader sense and includes all the “pagan” territories located on the southern and eastern seaboard of the Baltic Sea, which were the targets of European crusade and colonization efforts.

6 *CL*, nos. 16, 21, pp. 46, 48, 58, 60, 62, 64.
economically viable polity relatively free from serious internal division and capable of
withstanding all that her neighbors could throw against her.”

The extraordinary growth of a pagan polity at a time when the process of European
Christianization seemed to be drawing to a close had a profound impact upon the way that
Lithuania was portrayed in the historical record especially by two of its closest neighbors—the
Teutonic Order and Rus'. Analysis of the representations of Lithuania reveals an attempt by
foreign chroniclers to integrate new information about Lithuania into existing paradigms and
frameworks of knowledge. Understanding the image of Lithuania as merely reactive, however,
oversimplifies the question of its representation. When examined within the appropriate
historical and intellectual context, representations of Lithuania appear to be functional and
constitutive; in other words, far from being passive reflections, these images were intended to
shape perception and could reinforce as well as alter general ideas and attitudes. For instance, it
is evident that representing Lithuania as a pagan stronghold helped define a category of
“otherness” and worked to reaffirm the identity of the author’s in-group. A more nuanced view
of these processes indicates that multiple intellectual discourses were involved in the production
of image rather than primarily a religious one. For example, chroniclers were often constrained
by practical concerns such as political interests. The inclusion and exclusion of certain narrative
elements should therefore be understood as both a response to and appraisal of contemporary
circumstances sometimes even offering a solution or course of action. By means of a problem-

---

8 In this study, the term “Teutonic Order” is used to refer to the society of knight-brothers known collectively as the Teutonic Knights. The terms “Teutonic Order State” or “state of the Teutonic Order” are used only when referring to the geographic region administrated by the Teutonic Knights. The term “Rus’” is used to refer to the geographic region once collectively known as Kievan Rus’ and administrated by members of the Rurikid dynasty. The adjective “Rus’ian” is used to describe attributes of the intellectual and material culture of medieval Rus’. The adjective “Russian,” on the other hand, is used to describe attributes of the culture of early modern and present-day Russia.
oriented literary analysis, this dissertation seeks to determine how context affected choice of representation.

Since the subject of this work is the image of Lithuania in contemporary chronicles, its temporal scope is limited by the availability of sources. The inquiry begins in the twelfth century with the few references to Lithuania in the so-called Primary Chronicle or Povest’ vremennykh let. The majority of the study examines the century between the reigns of Mindaugas and Gediminas from c. 1240 to c. 1340. Although an analysis of the period from the end of Gediminas’ reign (c. 1341) to the official conversion of Lithuania in 1387 would have been valuable, the contemporary Rus'ian chronicle record ends in the 1330s.9 The events of the following decades are documented in later Rus'ian sources from the fifteenth century. By that time, the political situation in Rus' had changed and even local chroniclers worked in the service of Moscow. For the most part, therefore, representations of Lithuania after the 1340s exemplify the attitudes of later chroniclers with a completely different set of cultural values and intentions. As a result, while the written record of the Teutonic Order continues throughout the fourteenth century, this thesis concludes in the 1330s because thereafter a comparative investigation of the image of Lithuania in the contemporary chronicles of the Teutonic Order and Rus' is impossible.

Before turning to the main subject of this dissertation, the image of Lithuania, it is helpful to briefly consider some of the larger theoretical and practical concerns associated with the study of medieval Lithuania and literary representation. Three issues in particular are addressed in the following sections: (1) the chronicle as both an artifact of the context in which it was created and a genre of communication; (2) the ideological function of image and representation in

---

9 The older redaction of the Novgorod First Chronicle ends in 1330 with addendums in 1331–1333, 1337, 1345, and 1352. See chapter 4.
constructing and fixing interpretation; and (3) the impact of the frontier experience upon image production.

**The Chronicle as Genre and Agent**

The chronicle is not a neutral literary genre. Broadly speaking, the term “chronicle” refers to a genre of historical writing in which events are arranged in chronological order.¹⁰ For the most part, chronicles tend to employ a realistic style meant to convince the reader of the authenticity of the events reported. As Chris Given-Wilson stresses, even medieval chronicles claimed to be “presenting the truth.”¹¹ In fact, medieval chronicle writers went to great lengths to demonstrate to the reader the accuracy and authority of their work. It was customary for an author to announce his expertise on the subject matter and confirm the reliability of his sources in a separate prologue or at intervals throughout the body of the text. Given-Wilson also points out that in the Middle Ages an “accurate” account of events was understood as possessing three characteristics. First, it had to seem truthful; the author’s chosen rhetoric had to convince the reader of the validity of the events described. Second, as long as an account was thought of as truthful, it was also believed to have didactic value that could provide insight into universal truths. Third, a truthful account was expected to be comparative; in other words, the accuracy of an account was measured by analogy to already accepted truths.¹² This is especially relevant in the case of Lithuania because, as will be demonstrated later, authors writing about pagan

---


¹² Ibid., 2–4.
Lithuanian values and practices drew on familiar strands of biblical and early-Christian rhetoric rather than lived experience or observation. As long as their descriptions did not markedly deviate from established ideas concerning pagan peoples, then their accounts were recognized as truthful and understood as having auctoritas or authority.\(^\text{13}\) Given the nature of the criteria used to establish accuracy and authority in the Middle Ages, it is clear that the attitudes and ideas expressed by medieval chroniclers reflect a wide range of cultural and ideological concerns as well as social and even personal interests. Before we begin to examine these attitudes and ideas in terms of their origins and function, it is useful to consider the chronicle genre in terms of some of the broader historiographical discussions about how history is constructed.

According to Hayden White, however factual or faithful to the evidence a chronicle attempts to be, the genre of chronicle in and of itself precludes objectivity. He argues that when an the author imposes narrative structure on simple events turning them into an intelligible story with a defined plotline, the text immediately becomes conditioned and constrained by the author’s discursive choices as well as an “impulse to moralize reality.”\(^\text{14}\) By attaching moral significance to the events described, the author imparts form and meaning, transforming a text into a literary artifact. White concludes that the task of the historian is therefore to “recognize that there is a fictive element in all historical narrative.”\(^\text{15}\) Adopting a more moderate approach, Gabrielle Spiegel contends that historians must account for what she terms the “social logic of the text.” Her argument rests on the premise that historical texts, including chronicles, represent


“situated uses of language.” Since language acquires meaning only within the social context of a particular time and place, Spiegel reasons that meaning, though relational, is nevertheless firmly grounded in reality. The role of a historian is to reveal the “social logic of the text,” that is, the relationship between the text as an example or “site of linguistic usage” and the context which gives it meaning. For Spiegel, the fact that medieval chronicles are imperfect and sometimes even fictitious does not detract from their historical value. On the contrary, by recognizing these limitations and examining the medieval chronicle as both a reflection and a specimen of its context, she contends that we can gain historical insight and begin “recovering some sense of the material world of the past.”

When applying these principles to the present project, it is first necessary to consider the character of the texts in question. Many of the narrative sources cited in this work and examined respectively in chapters 2 and 4 have been erroneously termed “chronicle.” Apart from a roughly chronological format, most of these texts do not share any other common literary features. For example, the Novgorod First Chronicle lists events according to year and presents information in a strict matter-of-fact tone with minimal authorial intervention. The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle, on the other hand, rarely mentions dates; it is written in the style of an epic poem intended to arouse the reader’s emotions by celebrating the heroic deeds of its main characters—the Livonian Knights. Here it is worthwhile to return to White’s discussion of the literary qualities of historical narrative. White distinguishes between three forms of historical writing: annals, chronicles, and histories. Annals simply list events in chronological order without attempting to

---

17 Ibid.
impose any narrative structure or plot. Chronicles, on the other hand, strive toward narrative coherency; they are longer, more elaborate and usually revolve around a central subject such as “the life of an individual, town, or region, some great undertaking, such as a war or crusade, or some institution such as a monarchy, episcopacy, or monastery.” However, like annals, chronicles also fail to realize any casual connection between the events recorded or achieve narrative closure. History “proper,” which White associates specifically with modern historiography (nineteenth- and early twentieth-century), resolves these deficiencies, but in doing so, adds a fictitious layer of interpretation. According to White, the historian, as a storyteller, imbues real events with an imaginary plot structure in order to provide a comprehensive and logical image of the past.

Over the years, scholars have challenged the basis of White’s distinction between the three genres of historical writing. Sarah Foot, for example, contends, “If sets of annals are read entire, rather than as random assortments of variously collected (and unedited) notes, they convey significant narratives.” For Foot, the fixed linear format of annals and chronicles “is not an impediment to comprehension but is a central element in conferring meaning on their content.” The chronological structure of annals and chronicles is precisely what gives form to the progression of years and meaning to the totality of its contents. Despite their given titles, none of the texts used in this study entirely conform to White’s definition of annal or chronicle,

---

20 Ibid., 20.
21 Ibid., 8.
24 Ibid.
but fall somewhere on a spectrum between annal and history. For example, the *Novgorod First Chronicle*, which is the most annal-like of the texts examined, begins with a terse year-by-year list of events. Later, however, the accounts become longer, fuller, and more complex, resembling the style of a chronicle. Moreover, events are often explained by reference to cause and effect such as when a dispute among the Novgorodians incites God’s wrath or when the actions of one prince lead to years of dynastic conflict and fratricide. These causal connections are interpretative and exemplify what White classifies as the “fictive elements” of narrative. Unlike the *Novgorod First Chronicle*, the *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle* and the *Chronicle of Galicia-Volhynia* follow a basic chronological structure but without a defined dating system. These texts are each written as a continuous narrative in which all events have a specific place and purpose in a causal chain. Nonetheless, both works fall short of history “proper” because they lack definitive closure or the type of narrative resolution that White claims is necessary to impart the events described with a cohesive overarching meaning and purpose.

Understood within this framework, both the chronicles of the Teutonic Order and Rus' present a largely fictitious discourse about real events shaped by literary conventions and the author’s imagination. The unavoidable layers of literary artifice, however, do not diminish the value of these texts as historical sources. In fact, as Spiegel suggests, by identifying the ways in which the author reconstitutes reality through narrative, we can observe the author’s worldview and determine how the text functioned within the society in which it was created. Accordingly, we can gain access to the world beyond the text, in particular the values and ideals of that society. Before turning to the texts themselves, it is therefore important to evaluate the various social and intellectual conditions that impacted their production.

As we shall see in the following chapters, medieval chronicles were bound by two
narrative dimensions. The first dimension could be described as conscious and constructed by the chronicler with a particular aim in mind. Since all the chronicles used in this study were written at the behest of a prominent individual or institution, it is reasonable to assume that they were composed for the explicit purpose of presenting a more desirable image or validating the actions and decisions of the central protagonist. The second dimension is unconscious and shaped by the author’s environment, including his social relationships, religious beliefs, moral and philosophical convictions, communal obligations as well as his skill as a writer, command of language, and mood at the time of composition. Although both dimensions are more or less accessible, it is necessary to note the limitations and complications of such inquiry. For instance, each of the chronicles of the Teutonic Order examined in this thesis (chapter 2) represents the work of a single author who usually identifies himself in the colophon, states the name of the commissioner or sponsor of the manuscript as well as the date of inception, and explains his motivation for writing. By contrast, the Russian chronicles used in this study represent a much more complex legacy of writing (chapter 4). The Novgorod First Chronicle was most likely written by several scribes working under the supervision of successive scriptorium directors over the course of several decades. The Galician-Volhynian Chronicle was probably composed by two authors as two separate works and combined into one narrative by a later compiler. Furthermore, none of these texts exist today in their original form, but only as copies or copies of copies made several centuries later. As long as such biases are acknowledged, it is nevertheless possible to deconstruct these texts and identify the layers of interpretation that structure them. From a methodological point of view, one of the goals of this thesis is therefore to determine the relationship between the context of production and representations of Lithuania in order to

25 See chapter 4, pp. 130–1.
26 See chapter 4, pp. 134–5.
expose some of the underlying assumptions and implications encoded in each chronicle tradition.

Finally, it is worth noting that this thesis uses the designation “chronicles of the Teutonic Order” and “chronicles of Rus'” not only to denote the disparate geographic origin of the texts discussed but also to indicate their connection to two distinct textual traditions each with a unique cultural heritage. By and large, chronicles produced in the Teutonic Order follow a model of Western historiography associated with the crusade movement. Drawing on biblical and patristic imagery, these texts defend the activities of the Teutonic Order and present the knights as continuing a divinely ordained mission of bringing Christianity to pagan lands. At the same time, influenced by contemporary chivalric romances these works present the knights as models of heroism, faith, and honor. The chronicles of Rus', on the other hand, adhere to a literary convention set forth by Kiev and the *Povest' vremennykh let*. By imitating the form and style of the *Povest' vremennykh let*, these texts evoke a connection to Kievan Rus' and thus justify local claims to Kievan inheritance. Recognizing the variants between these two traditions is essential to understanding the ideological function of the image of Lithuania in these texts.

**Representation: Image, Identity, and Ideology**

The term “image” as employed in this dissertation refers to a literary construct intended to capture the salient features of a particular object or idea. Like narrative, because an image functions as a representation or interpretation of reality, it is capable of expressing meaning. An image has symbolical value; it works to classify the world into set categories and raise effective awareness of differences. The very nature of image therefore calls into question the power of
representation in creating social divisions and defining identity relations. In other words, image or representation has the power to construct boundaries by circumscribing identity and marking difference most commonly in terms of a dichotomy of “us” versus “them.” Such a model inherently privileges the “us” group while marginalizing the “them” group and interprets difference in terms of opposition or competition. The question of how and why these categories come into being deserves further attention.

In his analysis of the conceptual pairing of Self and Other, “us” and “them,” Hegel concluded that the Self cannot exist in isolation because the formulation of an identity of Self prefigures the Other. The realization of an identity of “otherness” provides a cognitive background for the articulation of an identity of Self. Identity formation thus involves a process whereby the Self is set categorically apart from the Other. Historians have shown that societies in the early Middle Ages constructed and reaffirmed their identity of self through a complex discourse of inclusion and exclusion. Walter Pohl, for example, maintains that identity is not a fixed concept but develops through what he calls “strategies of distinction.” According to Pohl, group identity depends on that group’s awareness of self as well as recognition by others of its distinctiveness. In this sense, identity formation is a process by which a group comes to understand itself and be understood by others as distinct in some way.

Like the concept of Self, the concept of Other is also a construct that requires constant reinforcement. Arguing that the image of the Other is usually divorced from the actual historical

---

entity it represents, Edward Said demonstrated that the “us” versus “them” model that dominates cultural discourse derives from one culture’s program of self-affirmation. Although the subject of his inquiry was misrepresentations of the Orient or Islam in Western thought, the impact of his work was far more general. He claimed that the East received “intelligibility and identity” in European psychology through a “whole complex series of knowledgeable manipulations by which the Orient was identified by the West.”31 This means that Western ideas about Islam were largely shaped by a myriad of customary paradigms, biases, and prejudices about the Other that were already part of a general European cultural discourse and used to underscore Western self-identity. Furthermore, Said claimed that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Orientalists actively reinforced these ideas through their scholarship thus expressly perpetuating a fixed image of Islam as a counterpoint to Christianity and the superior Western civilization.

Though to a lesser extent than during the colonial period discussed by Said, Christian cultures of the medieval Baltic region also constituted themselves in relation to their non-Christian pagan neighbors. As demonstrated in chapters 3 and 5, the inclusion of a pagan Lithuanian Other in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order and Rus’ was a narrative strategy intended to define the in-group by contrast to an out-group. Investigating the use of the term “Saracen” to describe the Lithuanians, Alan V. Murray has shown that medieval chroniclers appropriated older discourses of “otherness” to describe developments in the Baltic region. He argues that by the later Middle Ages, the term “Saracen” had evolved from an ethnonym used to describe only Muslims into a general label for all “enemies of Christendom.”32 He thus concludes that the use of such vocabulary to describe the wars against the Lithuanians imbued

the Baltic mission with a value equal to that of crusading for the Holy Land and provided justification for a Lithuanian crusade.

Some other recent studies have also explored the representations of pagans in select Baltic chronicles. Analyzing Peter of Dusburg’s *Chronicon terrae Prussiae*, Russian historian Vera Matuzova proposes that Dusburg deliberately cast the Prussian pagans in binary opposition to the Teutonic Knights, making no attempt to critically evaluate their practices, not because he lacked the skill to do so or was unaware of cultural differences, but in order to provide theological and political justification for the aggressive actions of the Order. Matuzova describes Dusburg as a “bearer of ethnocentrism.” She explains that his account of Prussian practices reveals that he viewed pagans “according to the system of values characteristic of his own world” and lacked any “desire to approach the mentality of Prussians.” Dusburg therefore relied on stereotypes to promote an image of pagans as diametrically opposed to Christians and in so doing helped justify the Order’s war efforts.

Raza Mažeika offers a slightly different interpretation of Dusburg’s chronicle. She agrees with Matuzova that the purpose of the text was to provide the knights with an argument to justify continued military action against Lithuania. However, she contends that presenting the pagans as totally ignorant or evil was unnecessary. Dusburg needed to defend the Teutonic Order against accusations of excessive cruelty and exploitation that had been brought against it by the archbishop of Riga. This meant that he needed to provide justification that would be more potent than yet another Christian-pagan analogy; he needed a legal argument. Thus, Dusburg presented

---

the Teutonic Knights as victims of Lithuanian aggression and “the Order’s miraculous survival and victories […] as evidence that the Baltic Crusade had become a forum for direct divine intervention.”³⁵ Relying on such reasoning, Mažeika maintains that Dusburg’s chronicle does not portray the Baltic region as divided into diametrically opposed and irreconcilable worlds. Instead, as discussed further in chapter 3, she contends that Dusburg’s imagery suggests a degree of admiration for certain pagan virtues such as simplicity and hospitality.

In her latest study on patterns of direct speech in Baltic chronicles, Mažeika likewise contends that evidence of constant exchange and interaction between the knights and the indigenous peoples of Baltic region reveals traces of mutual respect. She thus concludes that what we see in the texts is “not so much a discourse of alterity as one of liminality.”³⁶ The present thesis also takes a more middling approach. On the one hand, as demonstrated in chapter 3, it agrees with Matuzova that Dusburg and other crusade chroniclers intended to portray the Baltic region as divided into two opposed worlds. However, the complex nature of interaction between the knights and the native populations challenges this theory. Chapter 7 questions the difference between the ideal and the real as categories of experience in a space where identities were constantly shifting and boundaries were artificially constructed.

There have also been some recent attempts to study the image of pagans in Rus’ian chronicles. Perhaps most notable is Donald Ostrowski’s reflection on the representation of Polovtsians (Cumans) and other steppe peoples in the Povest’ vremennykh let. Influenced by Hayden White’s approach to historical documents as literary artifacts, Ostrowski argues that the representation of pagan invaders in Rus’ian texts was reflexive and intended to draw attention to

some special attribute of Rus'ian culture, namely Rus'ian attempts to deflect these invasions or recover from their devastation.37 The image of pagan Lithuanians in Rus'ian sources was supposed to be the topic of a study by Michael Moser. However, rather than providing an analysis of Lithuanian “stereotypes,” as indicated in the introduction to his article, Moser instead delivered a comprehensive quantitative survey of references to Lithuania in the earliest chronicles of Rus'.38

Since very little has been written on the image of Lithuanians and cross-cultural perception in the Baltic region, studies on medieval Western views of Islam offer a valuable point of comparison. The work of John Tolan, for example, raises important questions about context and reception. He presents his research as a complement and response to Said challenging what he interprets as Said’s static and undifferentiated view of medieval representations of Islam. As an alternative, he insists that when analyzed within the appropriate political and intellectual context, the sources reveal a variety of images and approaches.39 Particularly relevant to this dissertation is Tolan’s evaluation of the emergence of a more hostile image of Islam, which he argues occurred in the thirteenth century to justify, among other things, Spanish reconquista and to explain the gradual failure of the crusade movement in the East.40 As he claims, the denigration of Muslims was a primarily a rhetorical strategy used by Christian authors to reaffirm notions of Christian universalism.

Indebted to studies such as Tolan’s, this dissertation attempts to remedy the gap in scholarship caused by the apparent lack until now of any full-length analysis of the images of pagan Lithuania in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order and Rus'. Similarly to authors writing on Islam, from the mid-thirteenth century, European and Rus'ian chroniclers were faced with the challenge of making sense of a rapidly expanding Lithuania. Although, as previously noted, Lithuania was an ethnically and religiously diverse territory, the fact that it was ruled by pagan dukes meant that in the eyes of Europe and Rus', Lithuania was a pagan land. Teutonic chroniclers regularly used the Latin infideli or German heiden as a synonym for Lithuanians, while Rus'ian chroniclers systematically referred to their western neighbors as pogani. The mere use of generic terms, however, tells us very little about the actual image of Lithuanians. As already discussed, image and representation are constructs that carry meaning within a particular setting. Read in context, the chronicles of the Teutonic Order and Rus' therefore reveal a plurality of images of Lithuania. For example, at times the Lithuanians were portrayed as “pagan enemies of the faith,” yet at other times authors avoided mention of religious practices altogether. Occasionally, they depicted the grand dukes as rational rulers and desirable military and political allies, but then accused them of attacking Christian institutions. Such characterizations may be linked to both exact events (e.g., a recent military defeat, trade agreement, alliance against a third party, etc.) as well as political and intellectual agenda. The multiplicity of images implies that grouping the Lithuanians into one all-encompassing category of “otherness” is too simplistic. An investigation of the use of the images of the Lithuanian Other in the literature of the Teutonic Order and Rus' therefore requires close examination of the specific material causes which produced diverse and often conflicting representations.
Despite variations in representation, all the images of Lithuania examined in this work share one common feature: they all played a key role in the construction of an ideology. This is not to say that the images of Lithuania in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order and Rus’ were used to construct an entirely new ideology. On the contrary, the chronicles mainly reflect an already existent ideology deeply entrenched in Christian tradition and discourses of “otherness.” However, as this thesis will demonstrate, both chronicle traditions also carefully constructed an image of Lithuania to suit contemporary social and political needs. Consequently, chronicle writers built and elaborated on recognizable literary and historical themes while also incorporating subtle variants and modifications unique to Lithuania in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Simply defined an ideology is a coherent set of beliefs or ideas. As used in this study, ideology also includes a purposeful or intentional aspect and thus should be understood in terms of its function or capacity to promote a certain set of interests and guide its followers to accept a particular set of moral norms. In describing what he calls “pre-modern ideology” or, medieval ideology as we might call it, Donald Ostrowski underscores three basic components—social, political, and intellectual. He explains them as follows:

The social component describes what the social hierarchy should be and how the various groups in society should interact. The political component delineates a program of political struggle, especially in terms of battling designated enemies, both internal and external. The intellectual component justifies the existence of the present social hierarchy and political actions by placing them within the context of an artificial construct, the virtual past, which is then designated the historical past, or “what really happened.”

---

For Ostrowski, ideology first defines social identity and establishes social divisions by deciding who is included (in) and who is excluded (out). Second, ideology contributes to the creation of a political agenda by determining patterns of interaction between the in-group and the out-group. In the case of medieval societies, the out-group was usually depicted in negative terms as a threat to the in-group. Such representations were used to justify cooperative action against the out-group and promote a sense of in-group unity, camaraderie, and superiority. Finally, the survival of an ideology depends entirely on the in-group’s collective intellectual recognition of a common past, referred to by Ostrowski as the “virtual past” and more commonly known in historiography as a myth of shared history.

Here we must return again to the idea of historical representation and the function of chronicles. As already noted, chronicles provide a selective and partly artificial record of events in order to explain the past and give structure to the present. The function of chronicles is therefore to commit evidence to memory for a particular reason. As Patrick Geary stresses, “Historians write for a purpose, essentially to shape the collective memory of the historical profession and ultimately of the society in which they live.” As a set of beliefs shared by a particular group, ideology can be located in the collective memory. Ideology forms the basis of memory because it shapes and defines the beliefs and values that underlie representational practices. At the same time, ideology is both derived from and preserved by memory.

Accordingly, ideology exists only in the realm of representation. Medieval chronicles therefore provide a means to access and examine medieval ideologies.

The same is true in the case of image. As we have seen, an image, as something created, always reflects a specific ideological imperative. It helps to establish and discern cultural

---

categories, particularly the in-group from the out-group. As a result, an image underscores the “us” versus “them” dichotomy and provides an ideological argument for collective action by the in-group against the out-group. By dividing and classifying the world into discrete categories, an image also helps to create meaning and promulgates a hierarchy of identity. The group that produces that image thus ascends to the very top of the hierarchy of identity and uses its image as a benchmark of self-legitimation. A context-driven study of images therefore offers valuable historical insight not only into function and purpose of those images but also the culture that produced them.

**Lithuania as Europe’s Final Frontier**

As insinuated in the previous sections, representation is informed by cultural context. Culture, defined as “a learned set of shared perceptions about beliefs, values, and norms, which affect the behaviors of a relatively large group of people,” is subject to change, especially when confronted by other cultures. In the thirteenth century, several cultures came into contact in the Baltic region. Although the sources imply that religious antagonism and territorial ambitions precipitated inexorable conflict and encouraged cultural exclusivism, there is also significant evidence of cross-cultural cooperation, negotiation, and even cohabitation. Such cultural intermingling, characterized by both hostile as well as friendly relations, produced two noteworthy effects. First, it gave rise to a distinctive set of attitudes and ideas characteristic of medieval frontier regions; and second, it influenced literary representation, specifically the construction of the “us” versus “them” dichotomy and the image of the Lithuanian Other. While the second point is discussed further in chapter 7, for now it is important to consider the concept

---

of the frontier, its impact upon culture, and its application to the study of the eastern Baltic region.

Until the Christianization of Lithuania in 1387, the pagan lands of the eastern Baltic rim remained on the fringe of Latin Europe. One of the tasks of the crusading orders was to bring these lands into a common Christian civilization, or as Peter of Dusburg wrote, to “expand the boundaries of Christendom.” Modern historiography tends to regard the Baltic region as one of the final frontiers of medieval Europe. Recent interest in the concept of the frontier and frontier societies has produced a multiplicity of definitions. For Robert Bartlett, for example, the frontier represents an area of cultural diffusion from territories of what had once been the Carolingian Empire (“core”) to regions outside the former imperial scope (“periphery”). Using the example of the Teutonic Order, he demonstrates that the newly arrived military orders exported Christian culture and religion as well as economic and political institutions to the Baltic “periphery.” Colonization, therefore, according to Bartlett, occurred through “a process of replication, not differentiation.” In other words, rather than gradual adaptation, active cultural

---

45 PD, III, nos. 13, 18, 31, 175, 315, 346, 360: ad Christianorum terminos dilatandos; in ampliando fines Christianorum et dilatando.
47 Bartlett, The Making of Europe, 307. The exportation and replication of institutions of the core to the periphery led to the emergence of a shared European culture. Bartlett describes this process as “Europeanization.” The application of this thesis to the Baltic region is discussed by Nils Blomkvist, “Culture Clash or Compromise?: The Medieval Europeanisation Process of the Baltic Rim Region (1100–1400 AD). Problems for an International Study,” in Culture Clash or Compromise?: The Europeanisation of the Baltic Sea Area 1100–1400 AD: Papers of the Xth Visby Symposium held at Gotland Centre for Baltic Studies, Gotland University College, Visby, October 4th–6th, 1996, ed. Nils Blomkvist (Visby: Gotland Centre of Baltic Studies, Gotland University College, 1998), 9–36. Blomkvist suggests that because the cultures of the eastern Baltic region had remained isolated for so long from
dissemination and assimilation quickly superseded the diversity of local traditions. David Abulafia, in contrast, defines the frontier as an area of encounter characterized by the overlapping of cultural space. He sees the frontier as a zone of continual confrontation and (re)negotiation between people of different states of mind and conceptual understandings of their place in the world. Building off of Abulafia’s interpretation, Nora Berend maintains that frontiers develop as a result of confrontation as well as peaceful interaction between different cultural groups. She claims that a frontier society can represent either a society that shares a frontier region with another or a “conquest society” that constantly pushes further away from the core.

Despite slight differences in definition, most scholars agree that the concept of the frontier is a construct best understood not in terms of geographic boundaries but through a critical evaluation of the ideas and relationships that develop in frontier zones. Of particular importance are the various discourses of identity that arose not as a result of the clash of large monolithic powers but the interaction of smaller groups and peoples living side-by-side in frontier societies. In the case of the Baltic region, it is clear that iterant conflict and cooperation between people of different religious, ethnic, and linguistic background gave rise not only to distinctive political, social, and economic structures but also to a state of mind and ideology. It could be argued that for anyone living and accustomed to frontier life the experience of cooperation and even friendship with the so-called “enemy” was as commonplace as competition and conflict. As demonstrated in chapter 7, peaceful commerce, institutional borrowing, and cultural exchange were common aspects of everyday life in the Baltic lands. Despite evidence of

Western culture, “theirs were to be the most radical cultural encounters of the entire process of Europeanization of the Baltic Rim”: *The Discovery of the Baltic: The Reception of a Catholic World System in the European North (AD 1075–1225)* (Boston: Brill, 2004), 170.


49 Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom*, 11–2.
local cross-cultural networks and relations, however, chroniclers accentuated the “us” versus “them” dichotomy. As we shall see in the following chapters, this dualistic image of cultural relations in the Baltic region was founded upon a determinate rhetoric of difference that underlay the two chronicle traditions. The systematic use of such rhetoric worked to erect and maintain what we might call mental or imagined frontiers in order to underscore the very differences that cross-cultural contact had obscured. This study aims to understand the complex relationship between what appear to be ill-defined cultural boundaries on the one hand, and the development and function of well-defined ideological boundaries in the written record on the other hand.

While Lithuania is generally regarded as part of the Baltic frontier, as William Urban points out, the circumstances of Lithuania’s political development and territorial expansion present a “frontier challenge.”50 Lithuania lay at the edge of the far eastern frontier of Europe; at the same time, Lithuanian dukes continued to carve out a new frontier in Rus' pushing further away from the Lithuanian heartland in Aukštaitija. Unlike other frontier societies, Lithuania was both a region where expanding cultures met and attempted to replicate their institutions and also a conquest society expanding eastward at the expense of the principalities of Rus'. Nevertheless, Lithuanian dukes never imposed their customs on the local peoples, instead voluntarily adopting the administrative, social, and even religious institutions of their conquered subjects. Lithuania’s unique experience as both a target of European expansion and an aggressor thus raises questions concerning the nature of Lithuania’s frontier experience: Was Lithuania a transitional frontier between the established cultures of Western and Eastern Christendom? Was it home to two separate frontiers? Or was Lithuania one large frontier zone characterized by several pockets of cultural encounters?

Dissertation Overview

The present work begins with a short chapter that provides a brief overview of the Baltic region in the late and high Middle Ages. This chapter is intended for the reader who is unfamiliar with the basic history of Lithuania, the Teutonic Order, and Rus'. The main content of the work is divided into two parts. Part I consists of two pairings of chapters, 2–3 and 4–5, intended to be read as units. The first chapter of each pair introduces the chronicles of the Teutonic Order (chapter 2) and Rus' (chapter 4) by asking the fundamental questions: By whom were these records created and kept, and for what purposes? The second chapter of each pair examines the general presentation of Lithuanians in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order (chapter 3) and Rus' (chapter 5), especially the cause of textual variants and changes over time. Essentially, Part I seeks to answer the following: What were some of the dominant representations of Lithuania in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order and Rus'? What specific differences are there between alternative depictions? What are the circumstances that informed these representations? To be more exact, these chapters investigate the evolution of the representation of the Lithuanian Other from its first appearance to the fourteenth century.

In addressing these issues, several factors are taken into consideration, including religious, political, social, economic, linguistic, and aesthetic, that at times reinforced and at other times blurred the boundaries between the Christian in-group and the pagan out-group. In short, Part I argues that despite slight variations in representation, chronicles were instrumental in constructing a Lithuanian stereotype. Although this stereotype usually took on the form of “us” versus “them,” “good” versus “evil,” Christian versus pagan, it was deployed in different ways. The Teutonic Order’s chroniclers deferred to conventional paradigms or topoi of “otherness” in order to construct an image of the hostile Lithuanian Other and justify the Order’s mission of
conversion and colonization in Prussia and Livonia. In Rus’ian chronicles, on other hand, the use of negative images of Lithuania appears to have been symptomatic of attitudes during years of crisis rather than a definitive ideological or pragmatic program.

Part II of the dissertation is comparative. It analyzes the similarities and differences between the presentation of specific Lithuanian characters and events in both chronicle traditions. Chapter 6 examines the figure of Mindaugas and his portrayal in the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle and the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle. Special attention is given to (1) the historical basis of these conflicting representations; (2) the structuration of the narrative and its possible ideological underpinnings; (3) the social function of each representation within its immediate context; and (4) the impact of religious differences upon the construction of the literary image of Mindaugas. One of the principal conclusions of this chapter is that religious preference was not the primary factor to determine choice of representation. Political and diplomatic concerns were also important. Moreover, the image of Mindaugas served a vital literary function. In the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle, he became a symbol for the success of the Order’s mission, while in the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle, he provided an obvious point of contrast to the good king Danilo of Galicia.

Once again taking up the question of religion, chapter 7 examines the evident disparity between cross-cultural interaction on the Baltic frontier and literary depictions of cultural differences. Observing that both chronicle traditions clearly differentiated “good” and “bad” Lithuanians, this chapter seeks to explain which factors, situational and ideological, informed these categories. It argues that the “bad” category was an exaggeration applied to real Lithuanian figureheads whose actions somehow threatened the Order State or Rus’, while the “good” stereotype was contrived for didactic purposes. The perpetuation of such stereotypes suggests
that mental or imagined frontiers were actively constructed when physical frontiers became threatened and cultural boundaries indistinct.

The final chapter examines the figure of Grand Duke Gediminas and the reaction of chronicle writers to a perceived increase of Lithuanian military and diplomatic involvement in the affairs of the Teutonic Order and Rus' during his reign. This chapter does not seek to compare and contrast the image of Gediminas in the two chronicle traditions. Rather, using Peter of Dusburg’s *Chronicon terrae Prussiae* and the *Novgorod First Chronicle*, it aims to show how each image is a quintessential example of the representational conventions of the chronicle tradition to which it belongs. The image of Gediminas in Dusburg’s chronicle, for example, demonstrates an adherence not only to the recognizable narrative patterns described in chapters 2 and 3, but also to the larger ideological purpose of the Order’s chronicle writing tradition. On the other hand, the *Novgorod First Chronicle* reveals the unmistakable influence of socio-political factors, namely the rivalry between Moscow and Lithuania, upon the image of Gediminas and its subsequent reinterpretations in later redactions of the same text. While Teutonic chroniclers advanced an image of Gediminas that could be used to justify the Order’s crusade efforts, Rus'ian chroniclers presented Gediminas as a character whose failure to achieve his goals in Rus' inevitably led to the final triumph of Moscow for political supremacy.

In conclusion, this dissertation aims to demonstrate that the portrayal of Lithuania in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order and Rus' is neither directly political nor polemical, but influenced by a wide variety of factors contingent upon the time and place of composition. What follows therefore is an attempt to identify some of the dominant images of Lithuania in these two very distinct chronicle traditions so as to determine the effects of the social context upon textual content.
Chapter 1

Lithuania between the Teutonic Order and Rus', c. 1000–1387

The medieval Baltic lands were a place of encounter between several unique cultures, including Latin Christendom, Orthodox Rus', and “pagan” Lithuania.¹ For historians unfamiliar with the history of the Baltic region in the high and late Middle Ages, this chapter provides a general overview or brief “potted” history of Lithuania, the Teutonic Order, and the western principalities of Rus' from eleventh to the fourteenth centuries. Because the subject of this thesis is the literary image of Lithuania as a creation of external observers, it is helpful to first consider where the chronicles that will be analyzed later were produced. The following summary therefore provides the essential context for the source discussions in chapters 2 and 4. When reading it, it is imperative to remember that the narrative presented here, though deconstructed whenever possible, is also largely formulated from the very chronicles that this dissertation attempts to unpack.

Lithuania

The first known reference to Lithuania (Lituae- genitive form) appears in the March 9, 1009 entry of the Annales Quedlinburgenses (Annals of the Imperial Abbey of Quedlinburg) in

¹ The term “pagan” appears in quotation marks here because although Lithuania was a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional territory, its grand dukes did not accept baptism, and, therefore, in the eyes of Europe and Rus', Lithuania effectively remained a “pagan” territory.
connection with the martyrdom of Bruno of Querfurt during his mission to Prussia.² Bruno’s experience in the “heathen” lands at the edge of the then known world sparked interest among his contemporaries who retold the tale of his travels in their own works.³ The Lithuanians whom Bruno encountered were a predominantly agrarian people. Along with the neighboring lands of the Semigallians, Curonians, Lettigallians, and Livs, the Lithuanians paid tribute to Kievan Rus’ and were subject to perennial raids by Rus’ian princes.⁴ The Lithuanian heartland, located near the Nemunas River basin, was comprised of two culturally distinct regions Aukštaitija (Upper Lithuania) and Žemaitija (Lower Lithuanian known as Samogitia in Latin). Apart from trade contacts along the amber road and Daugava River, Lithuanian lands remained secluded from the rest of Europe. Harsh weather conditions and dense forests made the terrain particularly difficult to transverse. Due to a low concentration of salt, the Baltic Sea would freeze annually, forming a thick layer of ice that would limit maritime access. When the ice thawed in the summer months, the ground would become wet and swamp-like making travel difficult and time consuming, especially on horseback.⁵ For a long time, environmental challenges, therefore, deterred even the most hopeful traders and settlers who rarely penetrated further inland than the coastline, usually having to return home before the frost.

In the twelfth century, the eastern Baltic region began to experience rapid political and economic changes. With the arrival of Danish and German merchants, permanent trading posts

---


⁴ According to the Povest’ vremennykh let: Lav., col. 11; Ipat., col. 8. See also chapters 4–5.

were established along the coast. Two major rivers, the Nemunas and Daugava, flowed through the region linking Rus' with the Baltic littoral (Map 1). These rivers carried goods, including amber, tar, wax, fur, grain, timber, and linen, from the hinterlands to the port markets. Growing trade networks facilitated communication and movement and attracted missionaries who discovered that some local peoples were not opposed to conversion, especially when offered economic incentives. Nevertheless, life in the Baltic lands was far from peaceful; missionaries and merchants required safeguarding from unreceptive local populations, widespread piracy, and frequent attacks by rival Westerners vying for control of the region. The task of protection was taken up by the military monastic orders.

In 1202, the newly appointed bishop of Riga Albert von Buxhöveden founded the Livonian Brothers of Sword to aid the bishopric in its Christianizing mission and defend European settlers as well as neophyte converts from the incursions of hostile pagans. Two decades later in 1226, the Order of the Brothers of the German House of Saint Mary, also known as the Teutonic Knights, arrived in Prussia to help quell pagan raids of Mazovia. After their defeat by the Samogitians at Battle of Saule in 1236, remnants of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword merged with the Teutonic Knights. Together the two branches of the Teutonic Order—

---


7 Chapter 7 provides several examples of how the locals converted in return for promises of protection, military aid, and commercial benefit.

8 For the classic study on the Livonian Brothers of the Sword, see Friedrich Benninghoven, *Der Orden der Schwerterbrüder: Fratres milicie Christi de Livonia, Ostmitteleuropa in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* 9 (Köln: Böhlau, 1965).


Werner Paravicini has set out to complete the first multi-volume study of “all things Teutonic,” including the Order’s land policies, campaigns, financing, etc. There are two volumes to date: *Die Preussenreisen des europäischen Adels* (Sigmaringen: J. Thorbecke, 1989–).
Prussian and Livonian—gradually subdued the local populations and established an independent temporal domain stretching from Pomerelia to the Gulf of Finland (Maps 2 and 3).  

It is generally believed that the Teutonic Order’s steady expansion placed pressure on local Lithuanian princelings who, around the same time, began to take steps toward political consolidation. Given the scant availability of sources, it is difficult to trace the early history of the development of a Lithuanian state. From 1183 onward, Rus'ian chronicles report the beginnings of systematic Lithuanian raiding expeditions against the lands of Polotsk and Pskov (chapter 5). Evidence of planned military campaigns suggests that some form of administrative organization may have already emerged by that time. By the mid-thirteenth century, Lithuanian raids on Mazovia, Poland, and the Teutonic Order were as commonplace as raids on Polotsk, Pskov, and Novgorod. It could be argued that these expeditions not only served as a means to amass plunder and slaves, but also functioned as a symbolic demonstration of Lithuanian muscle and determination.

---


12 Baranauskas is one of the main proponents of this theory.

13 For a list of Lithuanian military raids in the thirteenth century, see Baranauskas, *Lietuvos valstybės ištakos*, 177 or Kiaupa et al., *History of Lithuania*, 45.
Although we know very little about Lithuania in the early thirteenth century, it appears that sometime before 1238 Mindaugas assumed supreme military (and perhaps political) authority.\textsuperscript{14} In 1253, he was baptized and crowned \textit{rex Letwinorum} (chapter 6). The same year, the pope granted him rights to the lands of western Rus'.\textsuperscript{15} The reign of Mindaugas (r. c. 1238–1263) thus effectively marks the beginnings of Lithuanian territorial expansion eastward.

Through a series of military victories, dynastic unions, and land transfers, the newly crowned king extended Lithuanian influence in Black Rus' (a territory roughly corresponding to the lands of Grodno, Novgorodok, and the basin of the upper Nemunas River) as well as Polotsk, Vitebsk, and Turov-Pinsk (Map 2). At the same time, Mindaugas strengthened diplomatic relations with Europe and the Papacy by declaring Lithuania a friend and ally of the Livonian Order. His policies, however, led to regional conflict with the lesser dukes, and in 1263, Mindaugas was assassinated. For the remainder of the decade, Lithuania experienced a period of unrest and a series of short-lived rulers until the reign of Traidenis (r. c. 1270–1282). Unlike Mindaugas, Traidenis remained pagan and collaborated with the Yotvingians (Sudovians), Semigallians, and eastern Prussians in defense against the Teutonic Knights. His reign ushered in period of internal political stabilization and external territorial growth (chapter 7). He established diplomatic and commercial contacts with Riga, arranged the marriage of his daughter to duke Bolesław II of Mazovia, and extended Lithuanian lands further eastward.

The last notable Lithuanian ruler of the thirteenth century was Vytenis (r. 1295–1315). Although he continued the policies of his predecessors, his methods have been described as much more assertive perhaps in reaction to new developments in the region (chapter 7). Just before 1283, the Teutonic Knights completed their conquest of the so-called territory of

\textsuperscript{14} The \textit{GVL} describes Mindaugas as leading a Lithuanian military campaign in 1238: \textit{Ipat.}, col. 776.
\textsuperscript{15} \textit{VMPL} I, no. 123, pp. 60–1.
Prussia.\textsuperscript{16} With the conversion of the Yotvingians the very same year, the Order effectively extended its lands to the southern bank of the Nemunas River.\textsuperscript{17} In the north, the Livonian branch of the Order had similar success in 1290 when the knights burned the final remaining Semigallian stronghold of Heiligenberg.\textsuperscript{18} Thus, when Vytenis came to power in 1295, Lithuania proper was essentially surrounded by its most aggressive adversary.

Throughout most of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Order’s lands remained geographically divided by Lithuanian Samogitia (Maps 2 and 3). Located at the lower reaches of the Nemunas River and extending as far as the Baltic Sea, Samogitia was a nominal territory of Lithuania and a coveted target of the Order’s expansionist aims. The extent of Lithuanian influence in Samogitia is unclear. Teutonic chroniclers differentiated between “Lithuanians” and “Lithuanians called Samogitians.”\textsuperscript{19} Nonetheless, already in the mid-thirteenth century, the grand duke of Lithuania appears to have claimed jurisdiction over Samogitia as evidenced by Mindaugas’ donation of it to the Livonian Order shortly following his coronation (chapter 6). After Samogitian victory over the Order in 1260 at the Battle of Durbe, the territory reverted once again to Lithuania. This back-and-forth seems to have bred a fair amount of resentment among the Samogitian locals who frequently opposed grand ducal policies.\textsuperscript{20} Even today the Samogitians maintain an individual cultural history and speak a distinct dialect of the Lithuanian language.

In response to the growing threat of the Order’s expansion, Vytenis established two networks of castles along the Nemunas and Jūra Rivers in southern Samogitia. The knights

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16} According to Peter of Dusburg: PD, III.221.
\item \textsuperscript{17} PD, III.219. See also, William Urban, “The Teutonic Order and the Christianization of Lithuania,” in \textit{La Cristianizzazione della Lituania}, 105–35.
\item \textsuperscript{18} LRC, lines 11,794–12,017.
\item \textsuperscript{19} LRC, lines 4,465–6, 5,445–6, 9,965–6, 11,097–8: \textit{Lettowen, die Sameiten sin genant}.
\item \textsuperscript{20} The author of the LRC notes that certain Samogitians bore “bitter sorrow and great hatred” (\textit{bitterlichen smertzen / und dar zû grôzen haz}): lines 4,090–1.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
responded in kind and soon a definitive military front formed between the two territories. Intensification of conflict in the west did little to stem Vytenis’ campaigns in the east. Around the turn of the century, the influence of Lithuania’s primary Rus’ian competitor, the Principality of Galicia-Volhynia, began to decline. This may be one reason why the reigns of Vytenis and his successor Gediminas (r. 1315/6–1341) represent a noteworthy period of Lithuanian territorial expansion (Map 3).

Occasionally credited in modern historiography as the “founder of Lithuania’s medieval power,” Gediminas gave his name to the dynasty that would rule Lithuania until 1572. Six letters drafted by Franciscan scribes at the request of Gediminas survive as copies today. The content of these letters implies that Gediminas exercised authority similar to that of a Western European ruler. For instance, the signature suggests that despite never having received baptism, Gediminas fashioned himself as rex, Dei gratia (“king by the grace of God”) thus alluding to his divine appointment. He also claimed certain military and fiscal privileges, including the exclusive right to conclude agreements with foreign princes, apportion land for military and economic purposes, grant hereditary land privileges, displace rulers in conquered territories with his own family members or chosen officials, collect taxes as well as release individuals from tax burdens, order the construction of castles and fortresses, and recruit men for the defense of bridges, roads, and passes. Like Traidenis and Vytenis, Gediminas encouraged Lithuanian commercial ties with Riga, a member of the Hanseatic League since 1281, and concluded several defensive treaties with neighboring states, including Novgorod (chapter 8). Moreover, it

---

21 Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, xi.
22 The letters were written between 1322 and 1325. The first letter was addressed to the pope, four letters to the citizens of neighboring port cities, and a final letter to bishops of Livonia, the Danish viceroy of Reval and the city council of Riga. The letters were copied at the request of Gediminas. See CL, nos. 14, 16, 17–9, 21, 60.
23 We can infer that Gediminas held such rights based upon the types of privileges that he promised to new settlers: CL, nos. 16, 21, pp. 46, 48, 58, 60, 62, 64, 66.
24 NPL, pp. 98, 341.
appears that Gediminas successfully forestalled the Order’s attacks by writing the pope and expressing his willingness to receive baptism, an event that never took place but prompted John XXII to command the knights to temporarily cease all action against Lithuania.

Gediminas was succeeded by his son Jaunutis in 1341. Four years later, he was deposed by his older brothers Algirdas and Kęstutis. Remembered as a great conqueror, Algirdas (r. 1345–1377) extended Lithuanian territory as far south as the Black Sea and annexed the once powerful principalities of Smolensk and Briansk which had withstood Lithuanian incursions since the time of Mindaugas. In 1362, he defeated the Tatars at the Battle of Blue Waters and took control of Kiev as well as Podolia and Dykra (Wild Fields in present-day eastern Ukraine). Then, supported by a powerful Novgorodian contingent, Algirdas besieged Moscow in 1368 and 1372.25 Although married first to Maria of Vitebsk and later Uliana of Tver, it is believed that Algirdas remained pagan throughout his life.26 According to Hermann von Wartberge, after his death, Algirdas was burned on a ceremonial pyre with eighteen warhorses.27 When Jogaila became grand duke in 1377, he inherited a realm ten times larger than the one ruled by Mindaugas 150 years earlier.28 In 1386, he married Queen Jadwiga of Poland, accepted baptism, and was crowned King Władysław II Jagiełło of Poland. The following year, he officially instituted Christianity in Lithuania. As grand duke of Lithuania and king of Poland, Jogaila ruled the largest territory in Europe.

25 Kiaupa et al., History of Lithuania, 121–3.
28 Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 82.
The Teutonic Order

From the beginning of the thirteenth century until 1410 when a Polish-Lithuanian army defeated the Teutonic Knights in the decisive Battle of Grunwald, Lithuania’s history was to a large extent shaped by unrelenting conflict with the Teutonic Order. The knights first arrived in Prussia by invitation of Konrad I of Mazovia.\(^29\) Since around 1209, he had been embroiled in a struggle with the pagan Prussians for the lands of Chełmno (Ger.: Kulmerland). Seeking aid, he called upon the Teutonic Knights who had just recently been expelled from Hungary.\(^30\) The Order’s move and privileges in Prussia were secured by two documents—the Golden Bull of Rimini issued by Emperor Fredrick II (1226) and the Papal Bull of Rieti issued by Gregory IX (1234).\(^31\) These documents confirmed the Order’s legal claim to the lands of Prussia and placed the knights under the direct jurisdiction of the Holy See. Thus, as the knights would later argue, these documents sanctioned the Order’s mission, legitimated its crusader tactics, and allowed for the creation of an autonomous Teutonic state in Prussia.

At first the Order’s attention was split between the Holy Land and the Baltics. However, after the fall of Acre and a short stay Venice, in 1309, Grand Master Siegfried von Feuchtwangen moved the Order’s headquarters to Marienburg on the Nogat River, a distributary of the Vistula, Poland’s most important northern commercial waterway. The new castle, which at the time of its final completion in 1406 was one of the largest fortified building in Europe covering fifty-two acres (twenty-one hectares), became the symbol of the Order’s power and


\(^{30}\) In 1211, King Andrew II of Hungary granted the Teutonic Knights Burzenland in return for military aid against the Polovtsians (Cumans). He expelled the knights in 1225 after they petitioned Pope Honorius III to have their lands placed under direct papal jurisdiction.

influence in the region.\textsuperscript{32} The Grand Master’s move to Marienburg further confirmed the Order’s political status as an independent political entity with complete authority in temporal matters.

The government of the Order was largely in the hands of the Hochmeister (grand master) and the Komturs (provincial commanders).\textsuperscript{33} In theory, the corporate body of the Order held two thirds of the land. The remaining one third belonged to the bishops of Sambia, Pomesania, Warmia, and Kulm all of whom became suffragans of the archbishop of Riga in 1255.\textsuperscript{34} To attract settlement, the Order issued several hundred land grants promising tenurial rights to colonists.\textsuperscript{35} Native Prussian noblemen who accepted Teutonic overlordship received similar privileges.\textsuperscript{36} The local peasantry worked the land and paid taxes and seigniorial dues necessary to support the Order’s military enterprise.\textsuperscript{37} The Order likewise supported trade and urban growth. Emerging cities were granted Magdeburg town law.\textsuperscript{38} Larger port towns such as Danzig, Elbing, Thorn, Königsberg, Riga, Reval, and Dorpat became members of the Hanseatic League.\textsuperscript{39}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{33} For the classic study on the grand masters of the Teutonic Order, see Udo Arnold, \textit{Die Hochmeister des Deutschen Ordens, 1190–1994} (Weimar: VDG, Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, 2014).
\bibitem{34} Iben Fonnesburg-Schmidt, \textit{The Popes and the Baltic Crusades 1147–1254} (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 233.
\bibitem{39} On Hansa and commercial development see Andris Šnē, “The Hanseatic League and the Eastern Baltic: Towns, Trade and Politics in Medieval Livonia from the Thirteenth to the Mid-Sixteenth Century,” reprint in \textit{The
The knight-brothers were expected to follow a strict monastic rule and adhere to a threefold ideal of chastity, obedience, and poverty. All property was held in common and intended for use in the war against the “enemies of the faith.” The Order’s success depended on a variety of factors, including military skill, resources, wealth, and, of course, numbers. Every spring, Gäste (guests) would arrive with donations in hopes of participating in the Order’s Reisen or military forays into enemy territory. Most expeditions were carried out in the spring and autumn months when the forests thinned and the ground was hard enough to support the movement of troops. For the most part, medieval Baltic warfare was siege not battle warfare. Castles were constructed at regular intervals. As well as defense, they provided shelter, supplies, and a base of operations from which raids were launched into enemy lands. Moreover, rising several meters high, usually positioned on a hilltop, and sometimes enclosing a territory of several acres with numerous layers of defensive walls, these fortified stone structures visually partitioned the landscape. They served as symbols of the Order’s military power and successful


conversion and colonization of the local populations.\textsuperscript{45}

The Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order remained semi-independent and conducted its own military operations against Lithuania and Rus'. It was headed by the Livonian \textit{Landmeister} (land marshal) who, at least in theory, was obligated to report directly to the \textit{Hochmeister} (grand master) in Prussia. The ratio of lands governed by the Order in Livonia was reversed. Unlike in Prussia, where the Order held two thirds of the land, in Livonia, the Order only controlled one third. The remaining two-thirds belonged to the bishopric of Riga, which in 1255 was elevated to the status of an archdiocese with jurisdiction over the sees of Livonia (Dorpat, Ösel-Wiek, Courland) and Prussia (Sambia, Pomesania, Warmia, and Kulm).\textsuperscript{46}

Relations between the Order and the archbishop remained generally tense. As mentioned previously, the Livonian Brothers of the Sword were established in 1202 by Bishop Albert von Buxhöveden. To repay them for services granted, he allocated one third of Livonia to the Order in 1207.\textsuperscript{47} Pope Innocent III approved the transfer of land and stipulated that the bishop should retain the right to collect one quarter of the tithe in the Order’s domains.\textsuperscript{48} The Livonian Knights were clearly unhappy with this settlement. By the turn of the fourteenth century, they had gained a significant foothold on mercantile activities in Livonia. In response, the municipal government of Riga accused them of blockading the city’s trade.\textsuperscript{49} Corroborating these accusations, the archbishop also charged the knights with refusing to defend the see, making peace treaties and selling military armaments to the pagans, obstructing the conversion of Lithuanian rulers, as well


\textsuperscript{46} Fonnesburg-Schmidt, \textit{The Popes and the Baltic Crusades}, 233.

\textsuperscript{47} HCL, XI.3.

\textsuperscript{48} LUB I.1, nos. 16; HCL, XI.3. When the archbishop attempted to exercise his right to collect the tithe, the Order resisted. See Urban, \textit{Baltic Crusade}, 199.

\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Das Zeugenverhör des Franciscus de Moliano}, ed. August Seraphim. \textit{Quellen zur Geschichte des Deutschen Orders} (Königsberg: Thomas und Oppermann, 1912), VIII, §22, p. 47. See also Mažeika and Rowell, “\textit{Zelatores maximi},” 50.
as plundering and desecrating churches.\textsuperscript{50} These allegations combined with jurisdictional disputes complicated the relationship between the Order, the archbishop, and the townspeople of Riga.\textsuperscript{51} Intermittent conflict between the three created opportunities for Lithuanian dukes to exert their influence in the region. In 1297, for example, Vytenis offered the archbishop and the town burghers military assistance against the knights who had just interrupted river access to Riga by converting the Cistercian monastery of Dünamünde into a fort and building a new castle at Dünaburg. With the consent of the townspeople, the Lithuanians defeated the knights at Karkus and remained garrisoned near the city of Riga for the next thirteen years.\textsuperscript{52}

Rus'

Following the death of Yaroslav the Wise (r. 1019–1054), dynastic tensions led to the fragmentation and gradual disintegration of Kievan Rus'.\textsuperscript{53} Over a dozen independent principalities emerged (Map 1). Though nominal, Kiev remained the political and cultural heart of All Rus', now an ethno-cultural designation used to identify the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the metropolitan.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{50} Anti Selart provides a summary of the accusations recorded by the papal auditor Francis of Molino: “Confessional Conflict and Political Co-operation: Livonia and Russia in the Thirteenth Century,” in Crusade and Conversion, 171.

\textsuperscript{51} Riga was founded in 1201 by Albert von Buxhöveden. The city received German town law in 1225: Andris Šnē, “The Emergence of Livonia: The Transformations of Social and Political Structures in the Territory of Latvia during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries,” in Clash of Cultures, 69.

\textsuperscript{52} Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 57–8; Christiansen, Northern Crusades, 141.


\textsuperscript{54} John Meyendorff, Byzantium and the Rise of Russia: A Study of Byzantino-Russian Relations in the Fourteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 17: “In the absence of any unquestionable political centre in Russia, the unity of the nation was largely maintained through the agency of the Church. The national unity of Russia was, in fact, inseparable from the nation’s ties with Christian universalism.” On the history, status, and authority of the metropolitanate of Kiev and All Rus', see Meyendorff, Byzantium and the Rise of Russia,
The lands of northwestern Rus' were dominated by Veliky Novgorod (Novgorod the Great). Situated just north of Lake Ilmen on the Volkhov River along the trade route leading to the Gulf of Finland, Novgorod’s wealth came from its rich lands and economic contacts. The principality stretched from the Baltic Sea to as far north as the Arctic Ocean with colonies in Perm, Yugra, Pechora and the Kola Peninsula. In the thirteenth century, Novgorod became the easternmost Kontor (non-member trading post) of the Hanseatic League. The principality supplied Europe with furs, including sable, ermine, fox, and squirrel.\(^{55}\)

Apart from its leading commercial presence in the Baltic region, Novgorod is also notable for its unique administrative structure. In one of his classic studies on Rus', John Fennell described Novgorod as the “only Russian district which was not a principality proper.”\(^{56}\) Much like a republic, Novgorod was ruled by elected officials. From 1136, when a popular uprising led to the expulsion of the Kiev-appointed Prince Vsevolod Mstislavich from the city, the veche (public assembly) reserved the right to invite and dismiss any prince of their choosing.\(^{57}\) This system created competition among the neighboring dynasties who vied for princely power by rallying on the support of rival Novgorodian boyars (chapter 5). The title of knyaz (prince) brought with it military prestige as well as unofficial financial and seigniorial benefits.\(^{58}\) In practice, a powerful prince could assert his will independently of the veche as evidenced by

---


\(^{56}\) Fennell, \textit{Crisis of Medieval Russia}, 17.

\(^{57}\) The veche was the topic of a recent interdisciplinary international roundtable discussion in St. Petersburg. The materials were published in the following volume: M. M. Krom, ed. \textit{Spory o novgorodskom veche: Mezhdistsiplinarnyĭ dialog} (St. Petersburg: Evropeĭskiĭ universitet v Sankt-Peterburge, 2012).

\(^{58}\) On princely authority in Novgorod, see Michael C. Paul, “Was the Prince of Novgorod a ‘Third-rate Bureaucrat’ after 1136?,” \textit{Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas} 56:1 (Spring 2008): 72–113. He argues that the dismissal of Vsevolod in 1136 did little to curtail the prince’s powers. Although Novgorod’s princes did not have the stability of dynastic inheritance and had to vie for influence, they nonetheless possessed a wide range of executive and legislative powers that ensured their influence not only in Novgorod but also among other princes of Rus'.
rulers such as Alexander Nevsky. The prince’s duties were predominantly military. He and his army were expected to defend the frontiers of Novgorod against the incursions of the Swedes, Teutonic Knights, Lithuanians, Chud, Votes, Yam (Tavastians) and others peoples living along the shores of the Gulf of Finland and Lake Ladoga. For the most part, the prince governed extraneously, represented by his namestnik (deputy). In 1165, the veche also acquired the right to appoint the vladyka (archbishop).⁵⁹ His duties extended far beyond ecclesiastical administration and he soon became one of the most powerful civic officials. Fennell suggests that in the absence of a strong-willed prince, the vladyka ruled as “the nominal head of state.”⁶⁰

The thirteenth century also witnessed the emergence of a powerful and equally unusual principality in southwestern Rus’—the Kingdom of Galicia-Volhynia. Originally two separate territories, the principalities of Galicia and Volhynia were ruled on a rotating basis by younger members of the Rurkid dynasty of Kiev. The death of Vladimir II Yaroslavich, the last prince of Galicia, created a political power vacuum that several princely families struggled to fill. The territory boasted fertile lands and access to lucrative trade routes, overland from Kiev to Krakow and along the Dniester River to the Black Sea. Among the claimants were the Rostislavichi of Smolensk, Ol'govichi of Chernigov, and the Hungarians.⁶¹ It was Roman Mstislavich of Volhynia (d. 1205), however, who was able to annex Galicia in 1199 forming the joint principality of Galicia-Volhynia.⁶²

Roman was succeeded by his son Danilo (r. 1205–1264) who, after several years of unrest, managed to reunite the lands of southwestern Rus’, including Volhynia (1221), Galicia

---

⁶⁰ Fennell, *Crisis of Medieval Russia*, 18.
⁶¹ Ibid., 22–6.
⁶² On the person and image of Roman the Great, see Andreĭ Gorovenko, *Mech Romana Galitskogo: Kniaz’ Roman Mstislavich v istorii, epose i legendakh* (Tambov: Tambovskii gos. universitet, 2010).
(1238), and Kiev (1239) under his rule. Cut off from northern Rus' by the Tatars, Danilo adopted a westward-oriented political course. Through a series of marriages and military agreements with the kingdoms of Hungary and Poland, he gained international recognition as a desirable political and military ally. In 1253, Danilo was crowned rex Russiae. Unlike Mindaugas, who was also crowned that year, Danilo never accepted the Latin rite. His coronation did, however, help him secure a mutual defense alliance with the West. According to Danilo’s biographer, it was his mother who persuaded him to accept the crown in return for papal support against the Tatars.

Throughout the thirteenth century, the Kingdom of Galicia-Volhynia continued to prosper. Danilo was succeeded by his equally capable son Lev (r. 1264–1301). Unlike his father, Lev looked eastward cultivating a close alliance with Khan Nogai with whom he invaded Lithuania twice. After Lev’s death in 1301, the kingdom became a target of Lithuanian and Polish territorial aspirations. The last Rurikid princes of Galicia-Volhynia were killed in battle in 1323. Volhynia subsequently passed to Gediminas, while Galicia fell under Polish control.

As the fragmentation of Rus' led to the development of more and more distinct regional centers of power, rulers not only asserted their own political self-determination, but also competed to establish historical continuity with Kiev. Among the strongest contestants for Kievan patrimony were the princes of Galicia-Volhynia, Vladimir-Suzdal, Chernigov, and

---

63 Ipat., cols. 737–8, 774–6, 782.
64 On Danilo’s diplomatic alliance with Bela IV of Hungary, bid for the ducal throne of Austria, the marriage of his son Roman to the Babenberg heiress Gertrude, and his relations with Poland and Mazovia, see M. F. Kotliar, “Diplomatiia Galitsko-Volyns'koj Rusi v XIIIv.,” in Vostochnaia Evropa v istoricheskoj retrospektive: K 80-letiiu V. T. Pashuto, ed. T. N. Dzhakson and E. A. Mel'nikova (Moscow: IAzyki russkoj kul'tury, 1999), 122–6.
65 Ipat., cols. 826–7; Ibid., 128–9.
Smolensk. In 1299, the prince of Vladimir-Suzdal emerged triumphant when Metropolitan Maksim moved his seat from Kiev to Vladimir. Severely devastated by the Tatars, the princes of Vladimir struggled to maintain their authority in the aftermath of the invasion. The territory was subdivided into eleven small appanage principalities whose princelings all contended for the title of Grand Prince of Vladimir. Early in the fourteenth century, two main candidates emerged—Yuri Danilovich of Moscow, who secured the support of the Horde by marrying the sister of Khan Uzbek, and Mikhail Yaroslavich of Tver, who forged an alliance with Gediminas by marrying his son to the grand duke’s daughter.68

While the history of the emergence of Moscow as the new political center of Rus' lies outside the scope of this thesis, it is important to note that Moscow’s success was partly due to the relationship that its rulers cultivated with the Golden Horde and the Orthodox Church. Fifteen years after the Tatar victory at the Battle of Kalka River, Batu Khan launched a full-scale invasion of Rus', established the Khanate of the Golden Horde with its capital in Sarai, and ushered in the age of so-called Tatar rule (c. 1237–1480).69 For the most part, the Tatars governed indirectly, rarely making their physical presence known. To prevent further destruction by the Horde, each principality had to pay a fixed tribute that was collected by local princes under the supervision of officials known as baskaki.70 The khan also retained the right to invest the grand prince of Vladimir with the iarlyk or patent of rule. To receive this honor, Rus'ian princes were expected to travel to Sarai and declare allegiance to the khan himself. As

68 On the struggle between Yuri Danilovich and Mikhail Yaroslavich, see Fennell, Emergence of Moscow, 57–110.
69 In this study the term “Tatar” is used to refer to the political and administrative structures of the Golden Horde rather than as an ethnic designation.
demonstrated by the case of Lev Danilovich, it was not unusual for Rus'ian princes to collaborate with the Tatars hoping for leverage in their struggle against rival princely dynasties.\(^71\)

The period right after the Tatar invasion is when the Lithuanians first began to actively push eastward. It has been suggested that Mindaugas intended to take advantage of Rus' in the wake of Tatar devastation.\(^72\) It is unclear how the Rus'ians reacted to the Lithuanian incursion. Fennell argues that they may have “welcomed, or at any rate offered no resistance” to the Lithuanian conquerors who could provide “some degree of protection against unpredictable Tatar interference.”\(^73\) Perhaps the timing was as much fortuitous as it was deliberate. By the 1240s, Lithuania had finally developed the necessary internal infrastructure to pursue external interests and opportunities. Lithuanian expansion occurred in several forms: (1) military conquest (e.g., Black Rus', Polotsk, Minsk, Turov-Pinsk, Chernigov, Kiev); (2) diplomatic alliance (e.g., Smolensk, Pskov, Galicia); and (3) marriage (e.g., Tver, Vitebsk, Volhynia). Very little is known about exactly how and when most of these territories came under Lithuanian control. As attested by Gediminas’ title—*Gedeminne Dei gratia Letphinorum Ruthemorumque rex, princeps et dux Semigallie*\(^74\)—by the early fourteenth century, Lithuania could be classified as a Lithuanian-Rus'ian state. The grand dukes allowed their Rus'ian subjects to remain Orthodox and whenever possible attempted to maintain traditional administrative units replacing only the highest-ranking officials. Lithuanian dukes who married into royal Rus'ian families or accepted landholdings in conquered territories often voluntarily adopted the Orthodox faith.

---


\(^73\) Fennell, *Emergence of Moscow*, 124.

\(^74\) “Gediminas by the grace of God, King of Lithuanians and Russians, prince and duke of Semigallia”: *CL*, nos. 14, 16, 21, 60, pp. 38, 46, 58, 62, 218.
It would be reasonable to assume that already in the time of Gediminas, the Orthodox Slavic population of the grand duchy outnumbered the pagan Lithuanians. This disbalance placed the grand dukes in a precarious situation. According to the rules of the Orthodox ecclesia, all the faithful in the lands of Rus', including those now part of Lithuania, remained subject to the Metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus'. In 1325, Metropolitan Peter transferred his residence from Vladimir to Moscow. The next several metropolitans remained loyal supporters of the princes of Moscow who by that time were embroiled in conflict with the Lithuanian dukes. Perhaps to counterbalance the clerical influence of Moscow, Gediminas established a rival metropolitanate in Lithuania. Although short-lived, the see appears to have been officially recognized by the patriarch and a Lithuanian metropolitan was noted as one of the attendees of a synod discussion on ecclesiastical boundaries in 1317. The fact that Gediminas and his successors held enough influence to contend for ecclesiastical and political sovereignty in western Rus' reveals how in less than a century after Mindaugas consolidated grand ducal authority, Lithuania had transformed from a confederation of warrior duchies in the highlands of Aukštaitija into a powerful and dynamic polity.

75 According to the Constantinople Notitae Episcopatuem ecclesia constantinoplitanae and a report of Metropolitan Cyril Monemvasia (1428), the Lithuanian metropolitanate was established by Patriarch Andronicus II (1282–1328); Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 155–6. The metropolitanate probably existed between the years 1316–1330, 1354–1361 and 1375–1389: Kiaupa et al., History of Lithuania, 108. For a general history, see Giedroyć, “The Ruthenian-Lithuanian Metropolitanates,” 315–42.
Chapter 2

Sources: The Chronicles of the Teutonic Order

Crusade rhetoric was first applied to northern Europe by Bernard of Clairvaux. In March 1147, Bernard attended a meeting in Frankfurt where a group of nobles expressed their desire to campaign against the pagan Wends, a Slavic people living east of the Elbe. Shortly thereafter, Bernard issued a letter of approval declaring military action against the pagans of northern Europe part of a common Christian crusade against the enemies of the church.\(^1\) Then, urging the faithful to take up the cross as soon as possible and “completely destroy or, at least, convert those peoples,” Bernard promised the crusaders the “same indulgences for their sins that those who set out toward Jerusalem [receive].”\(^2\) A month later, Bernard met with his former pupil Pope Eugenius III at Clairvaux most likely to discuss this issue. Within a few days, on April 11, the pope authorized the war against the “Slavs and other pagan inhabitants of the north” in a document known as *Divina dispensatione II*.\(^3\) Likening the crusade in the north to the crusade in the Holy Land, Eugenius promised anyone who wished to fight the very same spiritual rewards and indulgences accorded by Urban II to participants of the First Crusade.\(^4\) Similar privileges were granted by successive popes in effect validating the status of the Baltic mission as

\(^{1}\) Bernard of Clairvaux, *epistula* 457 in *PL* 182, cols. 651C–652B.
\(^{2}\) Ibid., cols. 651D–652A: *ad delendas penitus, aut certe convertendas nationes illas [...] eamdem eis promittentes indulgentiam peccatorum, quam et his qui versus Hierosolymam sunt profec.*
\(^{3}\) Eugenius III, *epistola* 166 in *PL* 180, col. 1203B: *contra Sclavos caeterosque paganos habitantes versus Aquilonem ire.*
\(^{4}\) Ibid., col. 1203C: *illam remissionem peccatorum quam praedecessor noster felicis memoriae papa Urbanus Hierosolymam transseuntibus instituit [...] concedimus* (we grant that same remission of sins that our predecessor of happy memory Urban instituted to those going to Jerusalem). On Bernard’s involvement and privileges granted by Eugenius, see Fonnesburg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades*, 29–34.
penitential warfare and establishing the Baltic region as a new arena of war against the enemies of Christendom.\(^5\)

Bernard not only played a significant role in broadening the geographic scope of the crusades to include war against the pagans of northern Europe, but his writings, especially on the nature of military orders, helped reinforce the crusade ethos and profoundly influenced the literary tradition of the Teutonic Order.\(^6\) The idea of crusade as a fusion of military principles and Christian devotion took its impetus from Urban II’s dramatic appeal in Clermont and had been developed and promoted by subsequent generations of theologians and ecclesiastics.\(^7\)

Bernard made an important contribution to the discourse. He was the first to clearly articulate the specific nature of the military orders as a consecrated knighthood and unequivocally justify their right to violence for the defense of the church and the conversion of pagans.\(^8\) Nearly a century and a half later, when the Teutonic Order was forced to confront allegations of undue violence against the native Baltic populations, apologists returned to Bernard’s image of the warrior-monk to help provide a rationale for the presence and activities of the Teutonic Knights in the Baltic region. To a large extent, therefore, the Order’s official chronicle tradition, which, as we shall see later, was developed in part to legitimize the Order’s wars, drew and expanded upon

---


accepted Christian theories of knighthood, especially the ideal of the *militia Christi* as advanced by Bernard and his successors.

This chapter provides a general overview of the texts produced by, on behalf of, and about the Teutonic Order and its earlier antecedent in the Baltic region, the Livonian Brothers of the Sword. As already mentioned, contemporaries viewed the northern or Baltic crusades as part of the general European crusading movement. Accordingly, this thesis refers to the authors writing in support of the Teutonic Order as crusade chroniclers and identifies their works as crusade literature. Before proceeding to a closer examination of the actual texts, it is useful to briefly consider the general character of the Order’s literary tradition and its ideological underpinnings.

While crusade chroniclers used various literary strategies to highlight the righteousness of the Order’s mission and underscore its necessity, three in particular are worth noting. First, most texts produced by the Order usually begin with a reminder that the wars waged by the knights are indeed commanded by God and penitential in nature. In other words, the act of waging war against the pagans was in and of itself presented by the Order’s chroniclers as a fulfillment of divine will and deserving of the full remission of the penalties of sin. The first known text produced in the Baltic region, Henry of Livonia’s *Chronicon Livoniae*, reports that “the lord pope, therefore, granted remission of sins to all those who should take the cross and arm themselves against the perfidious Livonians.” The author of the *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle* portrays Bishop Albert von Buxhöveden as giving the following speech to attract

---


10 For the classic study of the Order’s literature, see Karl Helm and Walther Ziesemer, *Die Literatur des deutschen Ritterordens* (Geissen: Wilhelm Schmitz Verlag, 1951).

11 *HCL*, II.3 (Brundage, 32): *Igitur domnus papa cunctis signum crucis accipientibus et contra perfidos Lyvones se armentibus remissionem indulget peccatorum.*
crusaders: “Undertake the journey for His sake. You will receive remission of all sins, and will have praise and honor before God.”\textsuperscript{12} Describing the arrival of the knights in Prussia, Peter of Dusburg stresses in his chronicle, “The most holy father and lord Gregory IX declared that to obtain remission of sins the said brethren should avenge injuries to the crucified lord and regain the land due to the Christians.”\textsuperscript{13} As demonstrated by Axel Ehlers in his examination of the chronicle of Wigand of Marburg, the Teutonic Order continued to promote its activities as a way to obtain the remission of sins well into the fourteenth century.\textsuperscript{14} Officially, the remission of sins had to be granted by a papal indulgence.\textsuperscript{15} As already noted, Eugenius III was the first pope to confirm such privileges on crusaders in northern Europe. The grant of indulgence effectively served as proof of papal approval and legitimized the act of crusading. By announcing the receipt of an indulgence, crusade chroniclers provided justification for the Order’s war against the Baltic pagans.

Recently, scholars have questioned whether the Order’s wars against Lithuania should be regarded as a crusade. Norman Housley has pointed out that the Order’s Reisen, or military forays against Lithuania, “had no discernable spiritual rewards.”\textsuperscript{16} In other words, the Order’s wars against the Lithuanians lacked the canonical criteria of a crusade because indulgences had never officially been granted to the participants. While he agrees that they were “not technically crusades,” Housley also maintains that the wars against Lithuania were represented as Holy

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{LRC}, lines 861–4 (Smith and Urban, 13): \textit{vart durch sînen willen dar: / dâ werdet ir aller sunden bar, / des habet ir immer mêre / vor gote lob unde êre.}

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{PD}, II.6: \textit{sanctissimus pater et dominus Gregorius IX papa [...] confirmavit, injungens dictis fratribus in remissionem peccaminum, ut vindicarent injuriam crucifixi domini et terram Cristianis debitam recuperarent.}


Wars. Since campaigning against Lithuania had become the primary military function of the knights in the fourteenth century, presenting the wars as crusade-like was essential to the survival of the Order. Ehlers argues that contemporaries viewed the Reisen as part of “a permanent holy war.” Moreover, crusade vocabulary continued to be used in reference to the wars and the participants expected the remission of sins for their efforts. In fact, Ehlers points out that the Order issued their own indulgences for the Reisen and “relied on thirteenth-century documents to justify their conduct and to assert their privileges.” Although the wars against Lithuania lacked official authorization, for the purposes of this study, they should nonetheless be understood as part of the Baltic crusade movement and equal in status and importance to the crusades in the Holy Land.

Apart from announcing indulgences, chroniclers were also keen to remind their audiences of the special nature of the knight-brothers as both warriors and monks. The author of the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle, for example, lauded the members of the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order for their “martial courage and true love of God.” Describing the Prussian branch of the Order, Peter of Dusburg added that the knights lead a virtuous life in the monastery and on the battlefield. Both texts imply that only this combination of virtues allows one to successfully wage war against the pagans. This brings us back to Bernard of Clairvaux and his classic justification for the crusading military orders. Praising the efforts of the Templar Knights in the Holy Land, Bernard wrote that the monastic military orders represent a “new kind of

\[\text{\(\text{17 Ibid., 272.}\)}\]
\[\text{\(\text{18 Axel Ehlers, “The Crusade of the Teutonic Knights against Lithuania Reconsidered,” 43.}\)}\]
\[\text{\(\text{19 Ibid., 38.}\)}\]
\[\text{\(\text{20 LRC, lines 624–5: die hatten ellenthaften mút, / dar zú die wâre minne.}\)}\]
\[\text{\(\text{21 See for example PD, III.64: In hoc castro Cristburgk fuerunt deo devoti et mire abstinentie regularisque observancie sectatores, et cum hoc strenui milites in bello, ita ut vere posset de ipsis dict, quod in domo monachalem, et in campo vitam ducent militarem (In this castle Christburg lived [men] devoted to God, striking followers of abstinence and observance of the rule, and because of this they were brave knights in battle so that it could truly be said about them, that they led a [virtuous] life in the monastery and in the battlefield).}\)}\]
knighthood,” specifically created to wage “a twofold war both against flesh and blood and against a spiritual army of evil.” The Order’s chroniclers embraced the idea of a “new” knighthood armed with physical and spiritual weapons. Dusburg, for example, in describing the main weapons and armor of the knights—shield, sword, spear, buckler, breastplate, bow, arrow, quiver, sling, and helmet—attributed each with a symbolic spiritual value thus reinforcing the image of the Teutonic Knights as soldiers of God or the militia Christi. Furthermore, he presented the Order as waging both a “new war, chosen by God to destroy the gates of the enemy” and a “new kind of warfare, in that the enemy is overcome not only by material but also spiritual weapons.” As well as emphasizing the dual nature of the Order’s military tactics, Dusburg also inferred the Order’s dual origin as a knighthood created by man but consecrated by God: “This praiseworthy knighthood was not only confirmed by men on earth, but also largely prefigured in form by heaven and earth.” Stories of triumphs further confirmed the knights’ privileged status and divine approval of the wars against the pagans. By presenting the Order as an embodiment of the monk-knight ideal, crusade chroniclers could thus argue that the motives and tactics of the knights were above human reproach.

The image of the gallant monk-knight fighting the enemies of man and God not only confirmed the Order’s status as a divinely consecrated knighthood, but also revealed something very important about the Order’s enemies. If the knights should be armed with both material and spiritual weapons than the enemy had to be understood as posing both a physical and spiritual

---


23 PD, I.1 (p. 28): Hec reverenda milicia non solum in terra est ab hominibus confirmata, verum eciam typo celi et terre multipharie prefigurata.
threat. Essential to crusading was the realization of an antagonist. As demonstrated below and in the following chapter, chroniclers labored to portray the Baltic pagans as enemies of the faith and faithful. This became even more important in the fourteenth century when, for all intents and purposes, Lithuania was recognized as the last pagan territory in Europe. Dusburg himself noted that by 1283 “all the nations in the said land had been beaten and exterminated so that not one survived which did not humbly bend their neck to the holy Roman Church.” It was at this time, he wrote, that the Order “began the war against those powerful people, most hard of neck and skilled in war, which are neighbor to the land of Prussia dwelling beyond the Nemunas River in the land of Lithuania.”

Exaggerating the hostile and belligerent character of the Lithuanians justified the Lithuanian Reisen as defensive warfare. Housley suggests that as long as the knights’ case for the Lithuanians being “more advanced, aggressive, and determinedly pagan than any other” Baltic peoples was convincing, the Order could effectively argue that “conversion was out of the question until the Lithuanian state had been conquered.” Presenting the Lithuanians as the chief military adversaries of Western Christendom and listing their frequent attacks, also justified the need for a Teutonic Order state on the grounds that only a permanent defensive settlement could ensure the safety of other, less militarily capable, neighboring Christian territories and recently converted Baltic peoples. If the knights could convince their critics that the Lithuanians posed a serious threat to Christendom, then it could be reasoned that their mission of conversion and colonization was necessary.

26 PD, III.221: Anno domini MCCLXXXIII eo tempore, quo ab incepto bello contra gentem Pruthenorum fluxerant jam LIII anni, et omnes naciones in dicta terra expugnate essent, et exterminate, ita quod unus non superesset, qui sacrosancte Romane ecclesie non subiceret humiliter collum suum, fratres domus Theutonice predicti contra gentem illam potentem et durissime cervicis exercitatumque in bello, que fuit vicinior terre Prussie, ultra flumen Memele in terra Lethowie habitans, inceperunt bellum un hunc modom.


28 Housley, The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades, 272.
Together these three ideas—the Baltic crusade as officially sanctioned Holy War, the Teutonic Order as a model of the knight-monk ideal, and the need for a strong collective defense against the enemies of faith and faithful—formed the basis of what we might call the ideology of crusading for the Teutonic Order. Other concepts of crusading such as pilgrimage, just war, vengeance, and *imitatio Christi*, which are discussed in the following chapter, crept into this ideology but as subsets of the three primary interpretations of the Order’s mission. Working to substantiate the knights’ military status and state building activities in the Baltic region, the Order’s literature reinforced these ideas. For the most part, therefore, the Order’s chronicles depict the unrelenting struggle of the knights, usually assisted by local Christianized populations, against the enemies of Christian Europe, including first the peoples of Prussia and Livonia, and later the Lithuanians. In great detail, these texts describe the Order’s frequent campaigns against the pagans, the destruction of fortifications, villages, and fields, seizure of slaves, livestock, and goods, and the knights’ brave defense of the church against invading enemy troops. The Order’s triumphs are portrayed as divine victories and usually accompanied by expressions of gratitude to God and the Virgin Mary as well as recognition of the martial skill and perseverance of the knights who achieved the victory. The indigenous populations, on the other hand, are usually stereotyped as violent blasphemers, evildoers, and cowards in contrast to the bold and pious knights. This chapter provides an introduction to the Teutonic Order’s chronicle tradition and overview of the origins, scope, and general content of the chronicles used to examine the image of Lithuania in the following chapters.
The Start of the Baltic Mission: *Heinrici Chronicon Livoniae (HCL)*

The oldest known source detailing the early stages of Western Christendom’s expansion into the eastern Baltic lands is the *Chronicon Livoniae* (hereafter *HCL*) by Henry of Livonia.29 The text consists of four books that document the conquest, settlement, and extension of Christian rule over the native Baltic and Finno-Ugrian populations of the historic region of Livonia.30

The first book describes events from 1186–1196, including the arrival of Meinhard, an Augustinian canon from the monastery of Segeberg in Holstein who was the first cleric to settle among the Livs, a Baltic people living along the Daugava River. Henry tells us that Meinhard made a bargain with the local peoples. After a band of Lithuanians ransacked a few nearby villages, Meinhard offered to arrange the construction of a defensive stone fortress as long as the Livs agreed to accept baptism.31 Henry writes, “This pleased them and they promised and confirmed by an oath that they would receive baptism.”32 The following year Meinhard began to build the fortified church at Üxküll which became the first episcopal see of the region in 1186.

---


30 The region of Livonia roughly corresponds to present-day territories of Latvia and Estonia.

31 *HCL*, I.5–6.

32 *HCL*, I.5 (Brundage, 26): *Placet et promittitur et, ut baptismum recipiant, iuramento firmatur.*
when Meinhard was appointed its bishop (r. 1186–1196).\textsuperscript{33} According to Henry, in 1193, Pope Celestine III officially recognized the Livonian mission, authorized Meinhard to gather recruits, and granted indulgences to the participants.\textsuperscript{34}

Henry’s text carefully chronicles the evolution of the Livonian mission. The second book describes the arrival of Bishop Berthold of Hannover in Úxküll (r. 1197–1198) and the beginning of military campaigns against the Livs. The central narrative begins in the third book where Henry describes the arrival of Bishop Albert von Buxhöveden (r. 1199–1229), his transfer of the bishopric to Riga (1201), foundation of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword (1201), division of the Livonian territory, conversion of the Livs and Lettigallians, conquest of Selonia, and wars against Polotsk and Lithuania. The principle protagonist of the text is Albert, Henry’s much admired bishop whose efforts led to the final conquest of Livonia. The final book documents Albert’s campaigns against the Estonians and wars with the Curonians, Semigallians, and Lithuanians, as well as the Rus’ians of Pskov and Novgorod. As James A. Brundage, the English translator of the text, argued, the repetitive descriptions of warfare in the third book suggest that by the first decades of the thirteenth century crusading in the Baltic region had been systematized.\textsuperscript{35} The conquest and colonization of Livonia under Bishop Albert set a military and ideological precedent for the Baltic crusade movement.


\textsuperscript{34} \textit{HCL}, I.12. There are no surviving papal documents to verify Henry’s claim of indulgences. However, Arnold of Lübeck corroborates Henry’s claim, see Fonnesberg-Schmidt, \textit{The Popes and the Baltic Crusades}, 67–73. Indulgences were officially granted to participants in the Livonian mission by Innocent III, see Ibid., 90–8.

\textsuperscript{35} Brundage, xxii.
Henry’s biography remains a matter of speculation. He was most likely born sometime between 1180 and 1188. He came to Livonia as an interpreter in Albert’s household in 1205. Henry’s frequent references to native words suggest that he had knowledge of Livish, Lettigallian, and Estonian. Perhaps this might explain why he was assigned as an interpreter to the papal legate William of Modena during his visit to Livonia. Given Henry’s line of work, it is reasonable to assume that he was privy to a wide-range of information and witnessed many of the events that he describes firsthand. In fact, Henry himself states, “Nothing has been put into this account except what we have seen almost entirely with our own eyes. What we have not seen with our own eyes, we have learned from those who saw it and who were there.” It has been suggested that Henry was an active participant in several missions and may have road along on campaigns as a chaplain.

In 1208, Henry was ordained a priest and assigned to the parish of Ümera on the Lettigallian frontier. For the next fifty years until his death in c. 1259, Henry lived among the native peoples presiding over the village that made up his parish. A keen observer of local customs, Henry left us with what Estonian historian Jüri Kivimaë termed an “‘encyclopedic database’ of medieval Baltic and Finno-Ugric tribes.” Henry names various groupings of local peoples, including the Livs, Estonians, Semigallians, Curonians, Selonians, Rotalian, Vironians,

---

36 Ibid., xxvii.
38 See chapter 6, p. 196.
39 HCL, XXIX.9 (Brundage, 237–8): Nichil autem hic aliud superadditum est, nisi ea, que vidimus oculis nostris fere cuncta, et que non vidimus propriis oculis, ab illis intelleximus, qui viderunt et interfuerunt.
40 Marek Tamml, Linda Kejundi, and Carsten Selch Jensen, preface to Crusading and Chronicle Writing, xviii.
Öselians, Lithuanians, and many more. His descriptions of these peoples suggest that he was partial to his own Lettigallian parishioners and even sympathetic to their struggles. He evidently preferred methods of peaceful conversion rather than forced baptism. Warning against the use of violence, Henry wrote, “Give heed and see, you who hold dominion […] Do not unduly oppress the poor, I mean the poor Livonians and Letts [Lettigallians].” It is not surprising therefore that Henry admonished the knights for using excessive force, while continuing to exalt the efforts of the Livonian bishops.

It is believed that Henry completed his chronicle between 1224 and 1227. The work closely adheres to the “history of the church” narrative model. He presents the conversion and settlement of Livonia as essential for the realization of the church’s God-given right to universal jurisdiction. Albert is a pivotal character in the narrative. He personifies the temporal powers and spiritual righteousness of those chosen to bring the pagans into the light of monotheism. While careful to acknowledge the primacy of Rome, Henry also highlights the independence of the Livonian see. He presents Albert as the driving force behind the Livonian mission: He founded the Livonian Order and established Riga; he secured the support of the emperor and the blessings of the pope; he successfully converted the Livs, a task that his predecessors Meinhard and Berthold had failed to do; he subjugated the remainder of the Livonian territory bringing the entire region under the temporal and ecclesiastical authority of Latin Christendom; it was during his leadership that Henry claims, “Many and glorious things happened in Livonia;” and it was

---

43 *HCL*, XXV.2 (Brundage, 200): Attendite eciam et videte, qui tenetis dominium […] ne pauperes nimum opprimatis, pauperes dico Lyvones et Lettos. See also, *HCL*, XXIX.2–3.

44 Christopher Tyerman, “Henry of Livonia and the Ideology of Crusading,” in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing*, 34: “Henry was determined to portray Livonia as autocephalic and autogenous but, at the same time, enjoying direct papal approval.”

during his pontificate that “the land of the Livonians [finally] reposed in the tranquility of peace.”

The central theme of the chronicle is the impossibility of peace between the Christians and the pagans. Henry presents the pagans as routinely apostatizing and breaking peace treaties. He claims, “Neither can there be one heart and soul nor a firm treaty of peace between Christians and pagans unless you accept with us the same yoke of Christianity and of perpetual peace and serve the one God.” With proper instruction Henry insinuates that Livonian pagans, especially the Livs and Lettigallians can become good Christians. He presents the Lithuanians, on the other hand, as the most hostile, violent, and resistant to Christianity of all the pagan nations and explains that the local peoples dread their attacks:

The Lithuanians were then such lords over all the peoples, both Christian and pagan, dwelling in those lands that scarcely anyone, and the Letts especially, dared live in the small villages. Not even by leaving their houses deserted to seek the dark hiding places of the forest could they escape them. For the Lithuanians, laying ambuses for them at all times in the forest, seized them, killing some and capturing others, and took the latter back to their own country. The Russians also fled through the forests and villages from the face of the Lithuanians, however few, as rabbits flee before hunters, and the Livonians and Letts were food and provender for the Lithuanians and like sheep in the jaws of wolves.

Fearing the Lithuanian onslaught, Henry reports that many of the locals welcomed Christian aid and protection. He thus presents Albert and the Livonian Knights as defenders of the native

---

46 HCL, XXIX.1 (Brundage, 228): *Annus bisdecimus septimus antistitis extitit, etiam Lyvonum terra tranquilla pace silebat.*

47 For more examples, see chapter 7.

48 HCL, XII.6 (Brundage, 85): *Sed neque inter christianos et paganos unum cor et una anima neque forma pacis firma esse poterit, nisi recepto nobiscum eodem iugo christianitatis et pacis perpetue, unum Deum colatis.*

49 HCL, XIII.4 (Brundage, 90–1): *Erant eciam tunc Lethones in tantum omnibus gentibus in terris istis existentibus dominantes, tam christianis quam paganis, ut vix aliqui in villulis suis habitare auderent, et maxime Lethiti. Qui relinquentes domos suas desertas tenebrosa silvarum semper querebant latibula nec sic quidem eos evadere potuerunt; nam insidiando eis omni tempore per silvas eos comprehenderunt et aliiis occisis, alios captivos in terram suam deduxerunt et omnia sua eis abstulerunt. Et fugerunt Rutheni per silvas et villas a facie Letonum licet paucorum, sicut fugiunt lepores ante faciem venatorum, et erant Lyvones et Lethiti cibus et esca Lethonum et quasi oves in fauce luporum.*

50 Livs: *HCL*, I.5; Selonians: XI.6; Unganians: XI.7; “Thalibald, Rameke and his brothers from Tholowa”: XVIII.3; Semgallians of Mesoten: XXIII.3.
populations from the one “real” regional threat—the Lithuanians. Accordingly, Henry insinuates that conversion is a small price to pay for the benefits of episcopal protection. It has been suggested that by the thirteenth century the local peoples had no real possibility of autonomy. Eric Christensen, for example, argues that the only alternative to subjugation by the Order was servility to what he calls the Lithuanian “military machine.” Henry is careful not to equate conversion with conquest. Instead, he portrays the knights as saviors and Bishop Albert as a shepherd sent by God to free “his Livonian sheep and the now-baptized Letts from the jaws of the wolves.” As discussed in the following chapter, Henry’s presentation of the Lithuanians as the most aggressive of the pagans served as an important model for future generations of crusade writers.

Although Henry was not a chronicler of the Teutonic Order per se, his contribution to crusade literature in the north is noteworthy. He was the first to provide the Baltic mission with an identity and define the conditions of its legitimacy. Christopher Tyerman describes his chronicle as a work of “didacticism and advocacy, a sermon and a manifesto.” He suggests that the text helped establish and promote the “spiritual efficacy and the value of the Livonian mission.” As the first chronicler active in the Baltic region, Henry created a literary model for later authors. Most importantly, he demonstrated that although the Baltic mission was originally peaceful in intent, certain hostile local peoples such as the Lithuanians precluded the continuation of peaceful relations. According to Henry, Bishop Albert had no other choice but to establish the Swordbrothers and seek papal authorization for a crusade. This implication that the

51 Christiansen, *Northern Crusades*, 126.
52 *HCL*, XII.4 (Brundage, 91): *Misso igitur pastore liberavit Deus oves suas Lyvones et Lethhos iam baptizatos a faucibus luporum.*
54 Ibid., 30.
successful conversion of the Baltic peoples requires a coordinated military effort formed the basis of later arguments supporting continued military presence in the Baltic region.

**From Mission to Crusade: Livländische Reimchronik (LRC)**

Unlike Henry’s chronicle, which highlights the activities of the bishops of Livonia, the Livländische Reimchronik (Livonian Rhymed Chronicle; hereafter LRC) focuses almost exclusively on the affairs of the Teutonic Knights, particularly the Livonian branch of the Order. Recounting events from roughly 1180–1290, the LRC is the oldest known work of the Teutonic Order and the earliest surviving German text written in Livonia. It is generally believed that the chronicle was composed c. 1290 by an anonymous author, probably a knight-brother of the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order. The author’s excellent knowledge of military tactics and terminology, battlefield maneuvers, siege engines, and local geography suggests that he was likely an active participant in many campaigns and witnessed much of what he describes firsthand. Leonid Arbusow believed that the author was a herald or messenger of the land marshal of the Livonian Order. It is possible that his duties included writing a chronicle about the exploits of the knights.

---


The chronicle is written in Middle High German epic verse form using short rhyming couplets with three to four stressed syllables per line.\(^{57}\) Alan V. Murray notes that the chosen language of the \textit{LRC} is rather peculiar since most knights who joined the Livonian Order were from Low German speaking areas. This of course raises questions about who actually understood the text.\(^{58}\) As mentioned in the introduction, the \textit{LRC} is not a chronicle proper, but comprises one continuous narrative that lacks an annalistic dating schema. In lieu of specific years, Murray contends that linear continuity is established through references to changes in office, especially that of the Livonian land marshals.\(^{59}\)

The \textit{LRC} begins with a summary of the Creation Story and then abruptly skips forward to Christ’s sacrifice and offer of salvation. In contrast to Henry, the author of the \textit{LRC} relies upon a universal model of history. References to the institutional church are noticeably absent and the efforts of bishops such as Albert are overlooked. The Order’s mission is presented as a continuation of the labors of the apostles. The chronicler states that Christ sent his apostles to many lands “where His fame was unknown” and God gave them the ability to work miracles so that “many evil pagan people began to be moved.”\(^{60}\) Then, skipping suddenly to contemporary events in the Baltic region, the chronicler claims that the knights continue to fulfill the apostolic mission and explains that his purpose in writing the \textit{LRC} is to “tell how God’s grace sent Christianity into many lands where no apostle had gone.”\(^{61}\) Biblical history thus serves largely as a historical background against which later events unfold. For the remainder of the text, the author rarely references the Bible, instead focusing primarily on the achievements of the knights,

\(^{57}\) Smith and Urban, xxii.
\(^{59}\) Ibid., 238.
\(^{60}\) \textit{LRC}, lines 57–9 […] 65–9 (Smith and Urban, 2): \textit{dannoch was vil manich lant, / dâ sîn lob was umbekant: / dô sante er sîne boten hin […] des wart in manich widerstôz. / got sîne gnâde ûf sie gôz, / mit manchem grôzen zeichen. / daz begunde irweichen / sumelîche bôse heidenschaft.}
\(^{61}\) \textit{LRC}, lines 90–3 (Smith and Urban, 2): \textit{ich hân willen mêr zû sagen, / wie gotes güte hât gesant / den cristentûm in manch lant, / dar nie kein apostol quam.}
including their efforts to convert the Lettigallians and their wars against the Estonians, Curonians, Semigallians, Prussians, Lithuanians, and Rus'ians, all of whom are described as hostile adversaries bent on precluding the progress of Christianity.

Like Henry, the author of the LRC appears to have also been interested in ethnography. Of all the various peoples that he mentions, he classifies the Lithuanians as the most dangerous and resilient. He describes them as “daring and unrestrained” and claims that their excessive pride causes them to wage an endless war against Christendom: “Those pagans are arrogant and because of their great might, their army does much harm to pure Christianity.”

Like Henry, the author of the LRC also presents the local peoples as requiring protection from the Lithuanians and indicates that many of them are more than willing to receive baptism in return for the Order’s aid. However, by contrast to Henry who denounces the use of excess force, the author of the LRC defends the need for military action and sensationalizes violence with vivid battle scene imagery: “There was hacking and stabbing and rivers of blood spurted through the steel rings of armor.” Bloodshed is presented as a means to an end: “If one wishes to win a battle he must inflict losses on his enemy.” The killing of pagans is thus explained as a necessary part of the Order’s mission equal in value to baptism and conversion.

---

62 LRC, line 1,436: sie wären käne unde lös.
63 LRC, lines 327–9 (Smith and Urban, 5): die heidenschaft ist höchgemüt, / ir her vil dicke schaden tüt / an der reinen christenheit.
64 LRC, lines 2,787–93 (Smith and Urban, 39): „wir hân uns manchen tag gewert: / unser lant sint vil verhert. / wolle wir behalden unseren lip / und dar zâ kinder unde wip, / sô laze wir uns toufen in gotes namen.” / „der dinge sulle wir uns nicht schamen” / sprâchen sie alle gemeine dô (“We have been defending ourselves for a long time now, and our lands are devastated. If we wish to save our lives and those of our women and children, we must allow ourselves to be baptized in God’s name.’ ‘There would be no dishonor in that,’ they all agreed”).
65 LRC, lines 8,419–21 (Smith and Urban, 103): Man hieb sêre und stach, / daz blût vlôz als ein bach / durch die stêline rînge rôt. See also, LRC, line 512 (Smith and Urban, 8): die walstat wart von blüte rôt (“The meadow turned red from blood”).
66 LRC, lines 3,089–90 (Smith and Urban, 43): wer den strit volherten mac / der tût den vienden bôsen tac.
Because of the author’s stylistic choices and use of vernacular, it was traditionally thought that the \textit{LRC} was intended as a \textit{Tischbuch}, a book read during meal times.\footnote{Smith and Urban, xxii; Angermann, “Die mittelalterliche Chronistik,” 11; Helm and Ziesemer, \textit{Die Literatur des deutschen Ritterordens}, 29.} Murray challenges this view. He argues that it is highly unlikely that such a text would have been used for “moralistic mealtime reading” when other more appropriate devotional literature was readily available in the Order’s archives.\footnote{Murray, “The Structure, Genre, and Intended Audience of the \textit{Livonian Rhymed Chronicle},” 241, 250.} Alternatively, he contends that the work was primarily intended for documentary purposes, namely to record the history of the Order. Highlighting the deeds and achievements of knights may have also served as a method for recruitment new knights. The \textit{LRC} places great emphasis on the material and spiritual rewards of crusading. Along with the remission of sins, the author suggests that the crusades bring wealth in the form of captives, livestock, and loot as well as a means of gaining honor (\textit{êre}).\footnote{\textit{LRC}, lines 854–64, 1,333–6.} Attracting potential crusaders was vital to the Order’s survival at the time of the work’s composition.

The chronicle was written during a period of great distress for the Order. In 1236, the Livonian Brothers of the Sword were disgraced when the Samogitians inflicted a devastating defeat on the knights at the Battle of Saule. In the aftermath, the remaining Swordbrothers were incorporated into the Teutonic Order and obligated, at least in theory, to acknowledge the supremacy of the grand master and the Prussian branch of the Order. At the same time, the local populations, including the Curonians, Semgallians, Selonians, and Ôselians, rebelled against the knights in Livonia. With most of their army destroyed, the Livonian Order struggled to contain the rebels. During the 1270s and 1280s, the Order also did not seem to be making much progress in their wars against the Lithuanians and Semigallians. In fact, the Order’s raids did little to deter Lithuanian territorial expansion. Moreover, as will be discussed in chapter 7, by the 1290s, the
municipal government of Riga and the archbishop had established commercial and military ties with Lithuania without consulting the Order. Throughout the thirteenth century, the knights continued to compete with the archbishop for political and economic supremacy in Livonia. To make matters worse, as the Teutonic Order’s wars in Prussia gained popularity, the Livonian mission fell to secondary status. By the end of the thirteenth century, the Livonian branch of the Order was in dire need of replenishment. The goal of the *LRC* may therefore have been to spread awareness of the Order’s mission and procure the reader’s sympathies for the struggles and sacrifices of the Livonian Knights so as to attract a new generation of crusaders.

The Institutionalization of Chronicle Writing in the Teutonic Order: Peter of Dusburg’s *Chronicon terrae Prussiae* (PD)

If the *LRC* succeeded at restoring the reputation of the Order, it was not for long. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, monk-knights, whose heroic deeds had once been idolized, faced charges of idolatry, perversion, fraud, and other offenses hitherto associated with heretics and deviants. On November 22, 1307, Pope Clement V issued the bull *Pastoralis praeminentiae* ordering the arrest of the Knights Templar and the confiscation of their assets. Then, at the Council of Vienne in 1312, Clement officially dissolved the Templar Order. In the meantime, the archbishop of Riga, Friedrich von Pernstein, issued his own list of complaints against the Teutonic Order.\(^{70}\) The knights were no strangers to criticism. In 1268, Roger Bacon singled out the Teutonic Order in his *Opus Majus*, accusing the brethren of “wishing to dominate entirely.”\(^{71}\)

---

\(^{70}\) Complaints were levied against the knights on 230 counts including heresy and witchcraft. See *Das Zeugenverhör des Franciscus*. For a summary of the accusations, see Anti Selart, “Confessional Conflict and Political Co-operation,” 171.

He denounced the Order for hindering peaceful conversion and insisted that the Prussians and Lithuanians, who had previously been ready to covert, have actually fallen into greater disbelief because of the Order’s violent tactics.\(^72\) Archbishop Friedrich corroborated these accusations. He wrote the pope in 1305 claiming that as a result of the “atrocity actions” of the Livonian Order, “Christianity has to a large extent been wiped out in our province.”\(^73\) In 1311, Clement sent Francis of Moliano to Riga to investigate charges levied against the knights.\(^74\) On the basis of Francis’ report, which positively confirmed that excessive violence against the Semigallians had pushed them to join the Lithuanians in retaliation rather than receive baptism as they had originally promised, Clement excommunicated the Livonian branch for one year and imposed an interdict on its lands.\(^75\)

Around the same time, the prospect of accommodation between Latin Europe and Lithuania also seemed more real than ever before. In 1322, Grand Duke Gediminas sent a letter to the pope in which he described the baptism of his predecessor Mindaugas and his subsequent apostasy as a result of what he described as the “atrocious injuries and innumerable treacheries” of the knights.\(^76\) He then promised to obey the pope as do “other Christian kings” provided that the pope assist him in subduing Lithuania’s “torturers.”\(^77\) Before a formal reply had arrived, Gediminas issued a second letter on January 25, 1323, this time to “Christians, diffused

---

\(^{72}\) Ibid., pp. 121–2: *Non enim est dubium quin omnes nationes infidelium ultra Alemanniam fuissent diu conversae, nisi esset violentia fratrum de Domo Teutonica, quia gens paganorum fuit multoties parata recipere fidem in pace secundum praedicationem* (There is no doubt that all the heathen nations beyond Germany would long ago have been converted, if not for the violence of the brethren of the German House, because the pagan nation has many times been ready to receive the faith in peace through preaching).

\(^{73}\) *Das Zeugenverhör des Franciscus*, 166: *quia per eorum enormia facta in magna parte christianitas in nostra provincia est deleta.*

\(^{74}\) Francis interviewed twenty-four witnesses who confirmed many of the charges. For a brief survey of the proceeding, see Norman Housley, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades*, 168–71.

\(^{75}\) PrUB II, no. 69.

\(^{76}\) CL, no. 14, p. 40: *atroces iniurias et innumerabiles priditiones.*

\(^{77}\) CL, no. 14, p. 40: *ceteri reges christiani; tortoribus.*
throughout the world all the way to Rome.” In it, he declared that he had gained the approval of the pope and was “most impatiently” awaiting the arrival of papal legates at his court. He then welcomed Christian merchants and artisans as well as knights and clergymen into his lands, promising the settlers temporary exemptions from certain taxes and the privileges of Saxon Law. On May 26, 1323, Gediminas drafted three more letters offering the same rights to the burghers of northern Germany and the Dominican and Franciscans Orders of Saxony. Then, in early 1325, he sent a letter to the signatories of the Treaty of Vilnius (October 2, 1323), including the bishops of Ösel and Dorpat, the Danish viceroy of Reval, and the city council of Riga, in which he detailed the offenses of the Teutonic Knights against the Lithuanians and neighboring Christian territories. He claimed that the Order disregarded the terms of the peace treaty by purposefully inhibiting the movement of merchants, travelers, and royal legates through predetermined zones of amity. By corroborating his complaints against the Teutonic Order with the citizens of Riga, Gediminas presented Lithuania as a Christian ally. In the meantime, the pope spread word of what he interpreted as Gediminas’ intention to receive baptism. On November 23, 1323, he announced the good news to Charles IV of France. Then, referring to Gediminas as a “magnificent man,” the pope wrote the grand master, ordering the knights “to come to their senses” and stop “molesting, damaging, and inflicting injury on him [Gediminas]

---

78 CL, no. 16, p. 46: Christicolis universes in toto orbe diffuses [...] usque Romam.
79 CL, no. 16, p. 46: tediosissime. Gediminas makes reference to having received a preliminary response from the pope. No such letter survives in the papal archives and the pope does not mention any earlier correspondence in his letter to Gediminas on June 1, 1324 (CL, no. 44, p. 142). S. C. Rowell suggests that Gediminas my have received a verbal message from the pope via an envoy: CL, p. 373. If the original letter was drafted in the summer of 1322, it would have taken six to twelve months to receive a reply. Travel time from Vilnius to Avignon varied from three to six months: CL, p. 371.
80 CL, no. 16, p. 48.
81 CL, nos. 17, 18, 19, 21.
82 CL, no. 60.
83 CL, no. 28.
and the people of his kingdom.”

The pope’s sympathetic attitude toward Gediminas and inclination to believe accusations brought against the knights struck at the very foundations of the Order’s reason for existence. Crusading ideology, built upon the fundamental division between Christian and non-Christian, good and evil, dictated the necessity of an enemy, ignorant of the absolute truth of God, intentionally destructive, and violent by nature. The original targets of the Baltic mission, the pagans of Prussia and Livonia had been successfully subdued, baptized, and already lived under the administration of the Order. To ensure the survival of their mission, the knights needed a new enemy, one that had similar characteristics to other pagans, but was even more violent and aggressive, against whom the use of any and all tactics could be justified. The task of building a convincing case for the continuation of the Baltic crusade fell to Peter of Dusburg.

Completed in 1326, Dusburg’s *Chronicon terrae Prussiae* represents what has been termed “the most important monument” of Teutonic historiography. Although the chronicle consists of four books, thematically the work can be divided into two parts: (1) a detailed history

---

84 *CL*, no. 44, p.142: *magnifici viri Gedemine Regis Letwinorum et multorum Ruthenorum [...] suscepit, a molestiis, dampnis et iniuriis inferendis eidem et hominibus regni sui resipiscatis omnino.*

of the Order from its foundation in Acre to the creation of the autonomous state of the Teutonic Order in Prussia and the final subjugation of the local populations of Prussia and Livonia; and (2) an account of the Order’s ongoing wars against the last enemy of Western Christendom—the Lithuanians. Insofar as the work records the Order’s victories and exploits, it could also be read as an ideological self-affirmation of the Order’s activities in the Baltic region. Peter’s selection of events and preferred framework of interpretation impart to the text not only a moralizing program but also an explicit political purpose. As will be demonstrated in the following chapter, the chronicle represents a bold attempt to justify the continued status of the Teutonic Order in the Baltic region by constructing the knights’ struggle against the Lithuanians as a war of good against evil.

Very little is known about the chronicle’s author. From the text it is possible to conclude that Dusburg was well educated. His prose is replete with biblical quotations and invocations of God indicating that he had an in depth knowledge of the Bible. Dusburg was also familiar with the works of the early Church Fathers, including Augustine, Jerome, Gregory the Great, Boethius, and Macrobius, all of whom he frequently cites. Dusburg’s dual identity as both a priest and a knight is reflected in his writing. He seems equally interested in conveying the exploits of the Order as in praising its moral character. His work is highly constructed and multifaceted, interlacing themes familiar to both a secular and religious audience. On the one hand, Dusburg imbues the chronicle with a sense of naturalism as is most evident in his descriptions of the local peoples, geography, and battles. On the other hand, a deep sense of religiosity permeates the narrative. Dusburg emphasizes the infallibility of Christian moral precepts that he believes will never lead the believer astray. He attributes the Order’s triumphs to

---

86 The actual four books of the *Chronicon* as intended by Dusburg describe (1) the origins of the Order in the Acre; (2) the arrival of the Order in Prussia; (3) the war against the Prussians and Lithuanians; and (4) world events beginning from the Fourth Crusade (1202–1204) to the Hungarian victory over the Tatars in 1326.
divine grace, which he implies is a privilege granted only to the most worthy. Dusburg shows particular concern for inner spirituality. He espouses the importance of a personal connection with God and commends knights that practice self-imposed acts of penance such as self-flagellation, fasting, and confession. At the same time, Dusburg also praises the knights for their dedication to the Order and implies that God rewards the knight who remains loyal to his brethren especially during times of hardship. The actions of individual knights are thus seen as a reflection of the general welfare of the Order.

While the text gives some insight into Dusburg’s philosophical convictions, almost nothing is known about his background. Historians long considered Duisburg on the Rhine to be the writer’s homeland. In the 1960s, Polish scholar Marzena Pollakówna proposed an alternative theory. She argued that Dusburg was a native of the Dutch town of Doesburg in the Order’s bailiwick of Utrecht. According to her theory, the chronicler arrived in Prussia around the age of forty, where he remained until his death in 1326. Much debate likewise surrounds the question of where exactly Dusburg lived and worked while in Prussia. It has been suggested that he wrote in Ragnit castle, which at that time served as the central military base for the Order’s campaigns against Samogitia and Lithuania. This might explain his extensive knowledge of the surrounding landscape. An alternative view suggests that Dusburg lived in Marienburg, the Order’s administrative headquarters from 1309, where he had access to the grand master’s archives. This theory is also supported by the fact that Dusburg dedicated his work to Werner von Orseln, the seventeenth grand master of the Teutonic Order who resided in Marienburg during his years of service, 1324–1330.

---

88 Ibid., 165.
89 Matuzova, “‘Khronika zemli Prusskoii’ Petra iz Dusurga,” 218.
90 Ibid., 219.
The main topic of the chronicle is the war against the pagans. Dusburg almost completely avoids all mention of the political and commercial activities of the Order such as governance, trade, and immigration. Individuals and individual events serve merely as anchors advancing the greater war narrative. Russian historian Vera Matuzova maintains that Dusburg worked as an apologist for the Teutonic Order. She argues that his chronicle was intended as a tripartite apology for the crusade, the formation of a permanent monastic state, and its military practices. In light of the events leading up to the Order’s final move to Prussia and pan-European criticism of its aggressive methods, the chronicle should indeed be read as such. Dusburg is involved in the text not only as its narrator, but also as a guide to the meaning of past events. He defends the crusade against the pagan Lithuanians as part of an eternal Holy War begun by Maccabees, carried on by the military orders in Jerusalem, and finally taken up by the Teutonic Knights in the Baltic region. The typological connection between the crusaders and Old Testament protagonists lends the chronicle authority and establishes a transfer of responsibility for spreading the Christian faith from the Holy Land to Prussia. The Lithuanians thus take the place of the Saracens as the newest threat to Christendom, while the Teutonic Knights emerge as heroes entrusted to defend the faith and faithful. In this way, Dusburg justifies the Order’s policy of colonization as vital for the protection of Christian territories that would otherwise be

---

91 Ibid., 227.
93 On the use of the term Saracen to describe the Lithuanians, see Murray, “The Saracens of the Baltic,” 413–29.
exposed to constant pagan raids. Finally, he reveals that the Order only engages in acts of violence in response to pagan aggression. Focusing on the narrative of the Prussian wars, Matuzova, however, neglects the fact that the chronicle was actually written at a time when the Prussians no longer posed a significant threat to the knights or the neighboring Christian lands. While portraying the Prussians as the ultimate Christian antithesis, may have been useful in justifying the Order’s past actions, it in no way validated the continuation of the crusade. Dusburg’s argument for continued military action and colonization presupposes the necessity of an antagonist, which in the chronicle is personified by the Lithuanians not the Prussians. As demonstrated in the following chapter, Dusburg’s overtly negative representation of the Lithuanians was part of a rhetorical juxtaposition aimed at restoring the reputation of the Teutonic Order by slandering its adversaries.

The Fourteenth-Century Chronicles: Nikolaus von Jeroschin (NJ), Hermann von Wartberge, and Wigand of Marburg

Immediately following its completion, Grand Master Luther von Braunschweig (r. 1331–1335) commissioned a vernacular translation of Dusburg’s chronicle. Respectively titled, Di Kronike von Pruzinlant, the translation was completed in c. 1341 by Nikolaus von Jeroschin, a priest-brother of the Teutonic Order in Prussia and later chaplain under Grand Master Dietrich von Altenburg (r. 1335–1341). The author’s origin is unclear. It is generally believed that he

---

was born around 1290 in Prussia, Thuringia, or Saxony. The first part of the chronicle is based entirely on Dusburg’s original text. The increase in detail after 1311 and the fact that the chronicle contains a supplemental five years, 1326–1331, suggest that the final twenty years describe events that Jeroschin personally experienced. Because the text ends abruptly in 1331, it is generally thought that Jeroschin died unexpectedly around 1341 prior to completing the work.

Already in the fourteenth century, *Di Kronike von Pruzinlant* became one the most widely available and popular works produced by the Teutonic Order. Like the *LRC*, it may have been intended to serve as a *Tischbuch* in hopes of reinvigorating the crusader zeal at home and attracting new recruits from abroad. For the most part, Jeroschin adheres to Dusburg’s narrative and thematic schema. He presents the Order’s wars as divinely ordained and praises God for granting the knights victory in battle and protection on the battlefield. Perhaps in an effort to make the text more accessible to a wider audience, Jeroschin replaced Dusburg’s sweeping religious overtones with more secular themes, adding humor and vivid, often even grotesque anecdotes to entice the reader. At times, he inserts himself into the text, offering his opinion and commenting on events. Jeroschin celebrates the Order’s triumphs and describes the slaughter of pagans in great detail. Even more so than the author of *LRC*, he appears to commend the use of violence as necessary to combat evil and protect Christian domains from hostile and destructive enemies.

Mary Fischer has noted the prominence of chivalric themes in Jeroschin’s chronicle. Unlike Dusburg’s text, which appeals to biblical and theological authority, Fischer claims that

---

95 Fischer, 5.
96 Ibid., 6.
Jeroschin’s work was influenced more by secular courtly ideals. She argues that by praising chivalric qualities such as patriotism, honor, and physical prowess and casting them in the light of biblical models such as the wars of the Maccabees, Jeroschin’s text reconciled the seemingly incompatible values of faith in God and worldly chivalry. Contrasting Dusburg’s original work with Jeroschin’s translation, she writes that while in the “former secular influences are entirely subordinate to the central purpose of providing the knights with a Christian ideology and an understanding of the aims and theory of crusading warfare,” the latter exploits ideas of secular knighthood to convey Christian principles.99 This spiritualization of chivalric culture, according to Fischer, contributed to the popularity of the text because it made the Order’s mission and values easily accessible to a lay audience. In other words, Jeroschin’s text “enabled the Order to explain the idea of the militia Christi to knights with little or no theological training.”100 By reconciling knightly pursuits with Christian values, Jeroschin thus gave the northern crusades and the Baltic mission new life both within the framework of general crusading ideology and contemporary European cultural values.

Apart from Jeroschin’s work, two other fourteenth-century chronicles should be noted: Hermann von Wartberge’s Chronicon Livoniale, which describes the history of the Livonian branch of the Order from 1196 to 1378,101 and Wigand of Marburg’s Chronica nova Prutenica, which details the history of the Order in Prussia between 1293 and 1394.102 According to Ernst

99 Fischer, Di Himels Rote, 222.
100 Ibid., 144.
Strehlke, the editor and German translator of the *Chronicon Livoniale*, Wartberge likely arrived in Livonia in the mid-fourteenth century and remained there until his death in c. 1380.  

It is generally accepted that he used Henry’s chronicle in preparing his own text. Anti Selart argues that Wartberge’s goals, however, were quite different from Henry’s because unlike Henry, Wartberge was not a staunch supporter of the archbishop. As Selart suggests, Wartberge intended “to demonstrate the privileges of the Teutonic Order in Livonia and to prove the order’s precedence over the archbishop of Riga.” Although his text seldom overlaps with Dusburg’s and Jeroschin’s, it is possible that Wartberge was familiar with their work as well and may have used it as an example in writing his own chronicle.

Wartberge’s contemporary in Prussia, Wigand of Marburg, followed Jeroschin’s example much more closely by choosing to write in Middle High German rhymed verse. Although only 500 of the original estimated 16,500–25,000 lines survive as fragments today, the core text of the chronicle has been preserved as a Latin translation in the fifteenth-century annals of Jan Długosz. Unfortunately, many of the literary details were omitted in translation making it difficult to judge the exact size, scope, and ideological penchant of the original work. Wigand most likely never became a member of the Order but served as a herald to the grand master. Like his predecessors, Wigand attributes the Order’s victories to divine grace, presents the knights as performing service to God, and offers prayers for Christians killed in battle. He also seems to have been interested in the mechanics of warfare—battlefield tactics, preparations, armaments, and campaign plans. Interestingly, his work describes the first use of canons by the

---

103 Strehlke, Einleitung, 12–3.
Order. In general, Wigand highlighted not the religious elements of war like Dusburg, but its military features and potential payoff in the form of honor and glory to the victors.

If the Order’s mid-fourteenth-century chroniclers intended to revive the crusade ethos by presenting the Order as the perfect knightly corporation where chivalric and Christian ideals coexist in harmony, then they achieved their goal. Fischer alleges that in the fourteenth century, the Order attracted more recruits than ever before. Whether this was coincidental or a result of the authors’ efforts, it is certain that the fourteenth-century chroniclers were instrumental in adapting the Order’s literary tradition to contemporary values and adjusting it to reaffirm the crusading ideal that had become tarnished by recent events.

Conclusions

As literary artifacts, crusade chronicles offer invaluable insight into the mentality of the knights and the challenges faced by the Teutonic Order. The aim of this chapter was to introduce the literary tradition of the Order and provide a basic overview of the structure and content of the chronicles in order to lay the foundation for further analysis of the relationship between ideology and representation in the following chapters. The most important conclusion that can be drawn from this chapter is that crusade chronicles were written for a specific purpose. These texts were clearly intended to be read and to rouse the reader to accept a certain set of beliefs. As a result, while at first glance it may appear that these works provide merely a year-by-year account of events, the way that the events and characters are described impart each text with an overarching thematic unity and meaning intended to grant authority to the Baltic mission and legitimize the activities of the Teutonic Order. As we turn to the image of Lithuania and Lithuanians, it is

---

107 SRP II, 599–600.
therefore important to remember that all the representations that will be discussed operate within this framework. In other words, the image of Lithuania advanced by crusade chroniclers was adjusted not only to ensure coherency of narrative but also to meet the immediate ideological needs of the Order. From the mid-thirteenth century this meant defining the struggle against a shared and intrinsically evil enemy in order to justify the continuation of the Baltic crusade movement.
Chapter 3

*hostes fidei* vs. *milites Christi*

The Representations of Lithuania in the Chronicles of the Teutonic Order

The history of conquest and colonization, especially in the context of European expansion, is intimately tied to the history of representation, namely that of cultural difference and the construction of the image of “otherness.” As discussed in the introduction, in medieval European culture, representations of the Other were most often shaped by contemporary power dynamics and reinforced by a language of binary opposition in which the Other was represented as inferior to the Self. Nowhere was this process of identification through dis-identification more apparent than in crusade discourse. In fact, crusade literature very clearly tended to circumscribe the Christian in-group by setting it against a background of “otherness.” In terms of the Baltic crusades, Ildar Garipzanov argues that this dichotomy was so pervasive that Christian identity became a “social category” that fostered in-group pride and attracted new converts.\(^1\) The polemic against the pagans in northern Europe was closely intertwined not only with processes of self-identification but also self-affirmation. By perpetuating the Christian-pagan dichotomy, crusade chroniclers likely hoped that reading audiences would sympathize with the struggles of the knights and in turn lend their support to the crusade despite widespread criticism of the Order’s tactics. Dividing the world into two camps, one of moral excellence and the other of moral

---

reprobation, helped to create a clear line of demarcation between friend and enemy thus establishing a theoretical framework that could legitimize aggression against the pagan Other.

This chapter examines the principal ways in which crusade chroniclers represented Lithuanians and defined the boundary between the Christian in-group and the pagan Lithuanian out-group so as to understand how the construct of the Lithuanian Other worked to justify the Order’s political status and military activities in the Baltic region. Crusade literature attests to a gradual radicalization of attitudes toward the Lithuanians from the thirteenth to the fourteenth centuries. Unlike other native populations of the eastern Baltic lands, who were portrayed as having the potential to convert and live as good Christians, the Lithuanians were explicitly presented as determined *hostes fidei* (“enemies of the faith”). For the Teutonic Knights who were struggling to convince their opponents of the necessity of the Baltic crusades, depicting the Lithuanians as capable military foes eager to destroy Christianity was a useful discursive strategy. The image of the aggressive and purposefully destructive Lithuanian Other provided a constant background against which to juxtapose the actions of the virtuous knights in their struggle to defend the frontiers of Christendom.

Of course this strategy could only be viable as long as the chronicles were regarded as credible witness testimonies. In order to establish textual authority (*auctoritas*), chroniclers therefore relied upon accepted models of historical writing and employed frequent *topoi* so as to strengthen their claims.² The use of stock narratives, usually derived from classical and patristic traditions, and conventional paradigms, especially in the description of pagan customs and

practices, lent the text a sense of authority by establishing clear intertextual connections. Consequently, representations of the pagan Lithuanian Other were not new or innovative but derived from familiar and instantly recognizable discourses on Christian virtue versus barbarian vice.³

After a discussion of the evolution of the image of Lithuania from the beginning of the Baltic mission to the fourteenth century, this chapter turns to a more detailed consideration of the patterns of representation used by crusade chroniclers in their formulation of the image of Lithuania and Lithuanians. Two patterns in particular emerge as dominant, one rooted in the theology, and the other based upon contemporary chivalric ideals. Through close observation of the nature and character of these patterns, this chapter investigates the structure of various images of the pagan Lithuanian Other and their ideological function in the context of the Baltic crusade movement.

**Lithuanians, from pagani to hostes fidei**

Medieval Christian writers referred to all the non-Christian peoples of northern Europe using the single blanket-term—*pagani*.⁴ At the time of the Baltic crusades, the term required little clarification because it had been part of the general Latin lexicon since the Romans first used it to describe the peoples living beyond the *limes*.⁵ One of the understood differences between Christians and pagans was their adherence either to *religio* or *superstitio*. From as early

---
as the fourth century, Christian polemicists depicted *superstitio* as a distortion of the true *religio* whose followers had been duped, usually by demons, to believe in its legitimacy.\(^6\) They attributed the error of pagan ways to what they perceived as pagan ignorance or the easily corruptible nature of the native peoples. Describing the population of the eastern Baltic lands, Pope Gregory IX wrote in 1234 that “since they do not know devotion of the Christian kind, they apply all their devotion only to the cult of visible things.”\(^7\) Innocent IV later added that ignorance leads them to “change the glory of the incorruptible Lord to that of corruptible men and birds, quadrupeds and serpents, and prefer to serve the created rather than the Creator.”\(^8\) Chronicle writers adopted a similar vocabulary. Peter of Dusburg referred to the natives as simpletons (*simplices*) and claimed that they lack even the most basic understanding of God because they do not have the ability to comprehend God either through reason or scripture.\(^9\) He thus concluded that the Baltic peoples have inadvertently fallen into idolatry (*ydololatria*) and continue to unwittingly worship “creatures instead of God, namely the sun, moon and stars, the thunder, birds, and even four-legged animals including toads.”\(^10\) The association of pagans with ignorance excused their sins, but also called for their imminent conversion. Christian duty required the faithful to help the pagans escape from ignorance and embrace God and the church.

One of the fundamental characteristics highlighted by Christian writers in the polemic against pagans was the superficiality of pagan rituals, in particular cleromancy and divination.

\(^{6}\) Ibid., 103. Augustine of Hippo, *De doctrina Christiana* II.19–24 in *PL* 34, cols. 50–4 described pagan practices as superstitious and condemned pagans for making pacts with demons (II.24).

\(^{7}\) *MGH*, Epistolae saeculi XIII.1, no. 575, p. 469: *ut cultum Christiani nominis non habentes, omnem intentionem suam cultui tantum visibilibus applicarent.*

\(^{8}\) *LUB* I.1, no. 179, col. 234: *mutantes gloriam incorruptibilis Dei, in similitudinem imaginis corruptibilis hominis et volucrum, quadrupedum et serpentium, et creature servire quam Creatori potius eligentes. This is an allusion to Rom. 1:23 and Augustine, *Confessions*, V.iii.5 and VII.ix.15.

\(^{9}\) *PD*, III.5 (p. 53): *noticiam dei non habuerunt. Quia simplices fuerunt, eum ratione comprehendere non potuerunt, et quia literas non habuerunt, ymmo in scripturis ipsum speculari non poterant* (they did not have a notion of God. Because they were simpletons, they were not able to comprehend him with reason and because they did not have letters, they were not able to observe him in writing).

\(^{10}\) *PD*, III.5 (p. 53): *quod errando ommem creaturam pro deo coluerunt, scilicet solem, lunam et stella, tonitrua, volatilia, quadrupedia eciam, usque ad bufonem.*
Beginning with Henry of Livonia, crusade chroniclers reported how the Prussians, Livonians, and Lithuanians cast lots before going on campaigns.\textsuperscript{11} Dusburg strongly criticized these practices as ineffectual, noting that anytime that the Lithuanians attempt cleromancy, they are led astray, usually directly into an enemy ambush.\textsuperscript{12} For example, Dusburg reports that the Lithuanians, after “casting their lot” during a campaign against Ragnit castle, decided to return home fearing the prediction of imminent danger. However, as they retreated, they encountered a retinue of knights who effortlessly defeated the alarmed pagans killing twenty-five of their men.\textsuperscript{13} In a similar instance, Dusburg describes how the cries of a frightened soothsayer alerted the knights to nearby Lithuanian presence and led them to the pagan camp.\textsuperscript{14}

The Baltic pagans were likewise said to engage in sacrificial practices such as ritual murder and cremation. The author of the \textit{LRC} explains that the natives believed that by promising to sacrifice one third of all war spoils to their gods, they could ensure victory in battle.\textsuperscript{15} Henry of Livonia recounts how the pagans “sacrificed animals, paying honor to their gods according to their old customs” when celebrating a recent military success.\textsuperscript{16} Later, he reports that they threw the immolated carcasses of dogs and goats from the ramparts of their fort “to mock Christianity.”\textsuperscript{17} Christian writers also depicted pagan methods of disposing of their dead as a kind of sacrificial ritual in which the bodies of the deceased were cremated along with animals, weapons, and objects of daily use. The author of the \textit{LRC} notes that it was the custom of the Baltic peoples to be burned with spears, shields, armor, horses, helmets, clubs, and swords so

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} PD, III, nos. 5, 240, 241, 347.
\item \textsuperscript{13} PD, III.240.
\item \textsuperscript{14} PD, III.241.
\item \textsuperscript{15} \textit{LRC}, lines 4,693–4 (Smith and Urban, 60): \textit{ir sult geloben daz dritte teil / den goten, sô geschiet ūch heil} (“If you promise a third of the spoils to the gods, you will meet with success”).
\item \textsuperscript{16} \textit{HCL}, XVI.4 (Brundage, 127): \textit{disque suis secundum antiquis consuetudines honorem inpendentes animalia mactant}. See also \textit{HCL}, XV.3.
\item \textsuperscript{17} \textit{HCL}, XVI.4 (Brundage, 127): \textit{canes et hircos immolantes ad illusionem christianorum} […] \textit{de castro proiciunt}.
\end{itemize}
as to “appease the devil in the world beyond.”

Dusburg claims that the pagans “believed in the resurrection of the flesh, but not as they should.”

He writes that they erroneously invested the afterlife with a great degree of materiality thus rendering it a continuation of terrestrial life. Thinking that the rich will remain rich and the poor will remain poor after death, the chronicler explained that the pagans burn weapons, horses, slaves, clothing, hunting dogs, and war goods with the bodies of noblemen and tools of trade with the bodies of peasants.

In the ideological struggle between Christians and pagans, cremation and sacrifice was one of the most important criteria of difference. Christian polemicists had been greatly troubled by such practices since late antiquity, especially among recently converted populations. In 1249, the Treaty of Christburg officially forbade the cremation of horses, people, arms, clothes, and other goods as well as the worship of the harvest god Curche among new Christian converts in the Baltic region. Although never fully honored, the terms of this treaty testify to a general hardening of Christian attitudes toward pagan culture and customs. We may therefore reasonably assume that Dusburg’s descriptions of Lithuanian horse sacrifices nearly a century later would have shocked his audiences. Particularly poignant would have been Dusburg’s account of how

---

18 LRC, lines, 3,888–9 (Smith and Urban, 52): dar mite solden sie stillen / den tüvel in jener werde dort.
19 PD, III.5 (p. 54): resurrectionem carnis credebant, non tamen, ut deebant.
20 PD, III.5 (p. 54): Credebant enim, si nobilis vel ignobilis, dives vel pauper, potens vel impotent eset in hac vita, ita post resurrectionem in vita futura. Unde contingebat, quod cum nobilibus mortuis arma, equi, servi et ancille, vestes, canes venatici, et aves rapaces, et alia, que spectant ad miliciam, urrentur. Cum ignobilibus comburebatur id, quod ad officium suum spectabat (For instance, they believed that, if someone is a noble or a commoner, rich or poor, powerful or powerless in this life, so it will be after resurrection in the hereafter. Thus it happened that with dead nobles they burned arms, horses, servants and maids, clothes, hunting dogs and hunting birds, and all other things related to military [craft]. With commoners they burned that [those goods] which belonged to their occupation).
21 Kahlos, Debate and Dialogue, 119–22.
22 PrUB I.1, no. 218, pp. 158–65 (especially p. 161).
the Lithuanians captured and burned Brother Gerhard alive and fully armed on his horse.\textsuperscript{24}

While ascribing pagan foolishness to ignorance demonstrated the need for missionary activity in the Baltic region, such descriptions in no way warranted the use of military force. The expressly military enterprise of the northern crusades required further justification. Crusade chroniclers had to make sure that pagans were not simply regarded as harmless peoples waiting for Christian missionaries to free them from the veil of disbelief, but, more specifically, as a dangerous and inimical force that had to be stopped before it could bring harm to all Christendom. When the Order’s chroniclers referred to the Lithuanians as \textit{pagani}, \textit{infideli}, or \textit{barbari}, such terms immediately conjured up images of subversive and potentially hostile forms of behavior. Estonian historian Tiina Kala notes that Christian texts associated \textit{pagani} with \textit{perfidia} ("treachery").\textsuperscript{25} This characteristic entailed a carnal brutality and ferocity, which according to Kala, medieval audiences understood as antithetical to Christian virtue and civilized behavior. Henry of Livonia referred frequently to both the "treachery" and "ferocity" of the pagan Estonians, Curonians, Semigallians, and Lithuanians.\textsuperscript{26} While partial to the Livs and Lettigallians, as noted in the previous chapter, Henry expressly singled out the Lithuanians as the most ferocious and treacherous among the Baltic populations. He described them as “the people who are swifter and crueler than the other pagans”\textsuperscript{27} and claimed that they “despised the peace of the Christians and sought daily to do evil to the Christians.”\textsuperscript{28} By treating the Lithuanians as a separate pagan entity, Henry divided the pagan world into two camps. On the one side, we find the benighted pagans of Livonian and Estonia waiting to be delivered out of their childish

\textsuperscript{24} PD, III.338.
\textsuperscript{25} Kala, “The Incorporation of The Northern Baltic Lands,” 16.
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{HCL}, XI.5 (Brundage, 73): \textit{Lethones, quasi velociores et crudeliores alis gentibus}.
\textsuperscript{28} \textit{HCL}, XXVIII.3 (Brundage, 222): \textit{contemnebant pacem christianorum, et querebant mala cottidie christianis}.
wanderings like “lost sheep.” On the other side, we find the Lithuanians who, as Henry claims, “abhorred the Christian name.” Reserving such epithets as “enemies of Christ” (hostes Christi), “enemies of the church” (inimici ecclesiae) and “enemies of Christ’s name” (inimici nominis Christi) almost exclusively for the Lithuanians, Henry thus identified the Lithuanians as the only truly malevolent pagan peoples.

The tendency to distinguish between naive pagans in general and the Lithuanians in particular is likewise present in the LRC. On the one hand, the author of the LRC portrays the Baltic peoples as one pagan conglomerate with the common aim of bringing harm to Christians. On the other hand, he appears sympathetic to the struggles of certain pagan groups. For example, describing the Livs, he writes, “[They] are also heathens, but we have hope that God shall soon sunder them from that.” He does not, however, express the same optimism for the conversion of the Lithuanians. Both Henry and the author of the LRC seem convinced of an inherent Lithuanian belligerency and antagonism toward Christians and other pagans. Highlighting their hostile character, the author of the LRC remarks, “For wherever they came they taught the people how to die—men and women, whoever could not escape them.” He portrays Lithuanian forces as “large and strong and full of military cunning.” As mentioned in the previous chapter, both texts present the more vulnerable pagans as victims of frequent

---

29 HCL, XI.5: ove perdita.
30 HCL, VIII.1: Lethones christianorum nomen abhorrentes.
31 HCL, IX.2, IX.5, HCL, XI.6. Latvian historian Arveds Švābe questioned Henry’s supposed animosity toward the Lithuanians. He argued that Henry’s pejorative descriptions were a reflection of Bishop Albert’s anti-Lithuanian policies, especially Albert’s aspirations to control the Dvina trade routes: Eva Eihame, “The Baltic Crusades: A Clash of Two Identities,” in Clash of Cultures, 49, n. 48.
32 LRC, lines 163–5 (Smith and Urban, 3): alsô was ir allir mût, / daz sie liep und güt / den cristen wolden haben genomen (“Their common aim was to take the lives and goods of the Christians”); LRC, lines, 854–5 (Smith and Urban, 13): daz dâ die heiden mit gewalt, / den cristen wolden en gesigen (“heathens were seeking to conquer the Christians with force”).
33 LRC, lines 375–7 (Smith and Urban, 6): Lîven die sint heiden; / dâ sal sie got von scheiden / kurzelijk, des wir haben wân.
34 LRC, lines 1,453–6 (Smith and Urban, 21): wâ sie sich hine kêrten / daz volc sie sterben lêrten, / ez wêre wib oder man, / waz in mit nóten nicht entran.
35 LRC, lines 8,367–8 (Smith and Urban, 102): daz lantvolk zogete vaste hin, / zû hûse stünt ir aller sin.
Lithuanian attacks. Henry even uses the analogy of “sheep in the jaws of wolves” to emphasize the danger posed by the Lithuanians to the other local peoples.\footnote{HCL, XIII.4: quasi oves in fauce luporum.} Setting the Lithuanians apart from other pagans was an important literary tactic for thirteenth-century writers. Highlighting the indiscriminately violent nature of the Lithuanians and then demonstrating that they pose a serious threat to the more peaceful pagans who are ready and willing to accept baptism, underscored the need for a military presence in the Baltic region. By discerning between pagans that had the potential to become good Christians and the inherently evil Lithuanians, crusade chroniclers could effectively argue that the knights provided vital aid and protection to prospective Christian converts.

By the fourteenth century, however, this strategy was no longer viable because the very same pagan peoples that before required the knights’ protection, now lived under the direct administration of the Order. The last great Prussian uprising ended in 1283 with the forced Christianization and enslavement of the rebels.\footnote{Urban, The Teutonic Knights, 68–72.} In fact, Peter of Dusburg himself noted that of all the Baltic peoples, only the Lithuanians still remained staunch pagans by the fourteenth century.\footnote{PD, III.221; See chapter 2, p. 53.} Moreover, as previously discussed, widespread criticism of the Order’s tactics and papal hopes of rapprochement between Catholic Europe and the grand dukes of Lithuania posed a serious threat to the Order’s crusade. In an attempt to substantiate the Order’s status in the Baltic, Dusburg revised the model set forth by Henry and the author of LRC, adapting it to the new challenges.

More so than ever before, in Dusburg’s chronicle, the Lithuanians appear as deliberate evildoers leading a coordinated program of sustained violence against the church and the faith. Dusburg refers to the Lithuanians as \textit{hostes fidei} regularly substituting this nickname for the
ethnonym *Lethowini*. He writes that as a sign of their “contempt of God”\(^{39}\) and in hopes of wreaking “maximum havoc to the people of God,”\(^{40}\) the Lithuanians attack Christians on feast days, killing hundreds of parishioners, priests, monks, and clerics, burning churches, monasteries, and convents, and leading away the faithful into “eternal captivity.”\(^{41}\) On Pentecost of 1294, for example, Dusburg reports that 800 Lithuanians attacked a church in Łęczyca during mass and killed 400 parishioners, clerics, and priests.\(^{42}\) When the Lithuanians invaded Brandenburg, Dusburg writes that they destroyed 140 villages near Frankfurt and burned all 140 parish churches as well as three houses of the Cistercian Order and two convents, “inhumanly expelling the monks and nuns consecrated by God, servants of the church and priests, carrying away sacred vessels, vestments, and other sacred objects.”\(^{43}\) Dusburg interprets the attacks as part of a general Lithuanian assault on Latin Christendom. After yet another Lithuanian raid of Dobrzyń on the feast day of the Exultation of the Cross and the death of 600 clerics and 2000 Christian parishioners, Dusburg exclaims, “Behold how much evil was brought upon the Christian faith and the faithful.”\(^{44}\) By presenting the Lithuanians as bent on destroying the Christian world, Dusburg expertly construes the Order’s actions as necessary countermeasures to atrocities such as the desecration of Christian holy places, persecution of the clergy, execution of captured brethren, and the slaughter of innocent Christians. Unlike other pagans whose ignorance excuses their sins, Dusburg describes the Lithuanians as willfully malicious and, therefore, deserving of punishment for the violence they commit against Christians.

According to Rasa Mažeika, Dusburg’s presentation of the Lithuanians as belligerent

\(^{39}\) PD, III.250, p. 156: *in contemptum dei.* 
\(^{40}\) PD, III.250, p. 156: *maxima strage in populo dei.* 
\(^{41}\) PD, III, nos. 250, 310, 343, 346, 357, 361: *in captivitatem perpetuam deducendo.* 
\(^{42}\) PD, III.250. All the battle figures, lists of participants, casualties, etc. listed in this thesis are rhetorical and should not be interpreted as real statistics. 
\(^{43}\) PD, III.361: *inhumaniter religiosos et sacras deo dicatas virgines de claustris extrahentes, ministros ecclesie et sacerdotes, vasa sacra, vestes et sacramenta alia pertractantes.* 
\(^{44}\) PD, III.346: *Ecce quanta mala fidei cristiane et fidelibus.*
invaders attacking poor Christian victims is highly constructed to fit the model of just war theory. She argues that simply describing the Lithuanians as an evil pagan Other would have been insufficient to justify the Order’s wars. Christian theology assumes that pagan error is rooted in ignorance thus calling for education not extermination. Dusburg, on the other hand, clearly insinuated the need to kill all pagans who refuse conversion, especially the Lithuanians. As Mažeika notes, Dusburg “cannot resist gloating” when he states that the pagan peoples in the land of Prussia have been exterminated. As a result, she concludes that Dusburg’s chronicle was intended to provide a “legal argument” not only for a war of conversion, but also for the Order’s wars in general, whether they be against the pagans of Prussia and Lithuania or the Christians of Poland and Riga.

Like Dusburg, his successors also emphasized the aggressive nature of the Lithuanians. For example, the contrast between Lithuanian savage hostility and the plight of their Christian victims receives even greater attention in the work of Dusburg’s translator, Nikolaus von Jeroschin. It is useful to compare the two versions. Describing the assault on Łęczyca, Dusburg writes,

On the day of Pentecost, when in the church of Łęczyca, the canons and ministers of the altar and other clerics with festive garb were in procession, he [Lithuanian Grand Duke Vytenis] aggressively attacked them and killed 400 Christians in the church, clerics and prelates, whomever he wished he lead away with him into captivity; all the vestements, chalices, and other church vessels he used in an illicit way as a sign of [his] contempt for God; the church with all its holy objects he turned to ash, and desolated the adjacent surrounding lands and wreaking maximum havoc to the people of God, he took such a multitude of captives that after dividing the captives each Lithuanian received 20 Christians.

---

45 Mažeika, “Violent Victims?,” 123–37. According to Mažeika, for the knights, a “just war” was one waged “to repel enemy attack or to recover what had been lost because of attacks” (p. 131).
46 PD, Prologus (p. 23): omnes gentes, que inhabitabant terram Prussie, quarum innumera multitudo inferius apparebit, exterminate sunt; Mažeika, “Violent Victims?,” 136.
47 PD, III.250: in die pentecostes, dum in ecclesia Lunczensi canonici et ministri altaris et alii clerici cum solemni ornatu essent in processione, irruit hostiliter in eos, et in ecclesia cccc homines cristianos trucidavit, clericos et prelatos, quos voluit, captivos secum duxit, ominem ornatum, calices et alia vasa ecclesie ad illicitum usum pertrahebat in contemptum dei, ecclesiam cum sacramentis redigit in favillam, depopulataque terra circum
Jeroschin recounts the same event in greater detail:

On Whit Sunday, when all the clergy in the cathedral at Łęczyca and other clerics had put on their ornate festive robes to the praise of God and were processing through the town and the ordinary people had assembled devoutly to hear the holy office, the devil’s emissary burst in with his army without warning and killed 400 Christians in the church. [...] The barbarous man laid profane hands on all the robes and vessels used for the mass and sullied everything which was sanctified for use in the service of God. The bread for the Eucharist too, which we use as a blessing and eternal pledge, was burned to ash along with the church in an act of blasphemy. Over and above all this he laid waste to and destroyed all the surrounding area and carried off many men, women and children, to the extent that every Lithuanian had 20 Christians as his share of the booty. 48

Jeroschin’s version is unmistakably more dramatic than Dusburg’s. While both authors emphasize the depravity of Lithuanian actions, Jeroschin’s vivid imagery and use of the first person plural “we” to describe the community under attack is considerably more emotionally wrenching than Dusburg’s matter-of-fact summary. Moreover, his allusion to the devil implies that the Lithuanians are not just sinful and malicious in and of themselves, but actually in league with Satan in his war against Christianity. 49 Accordingly, Jeroschin’s work marks the final step in the evolution of the representation of Lithuanians from general pagani through enemies of recent converts and Christians living in the Baltic lands to enemies of all Christendom and all Christians.

Presenting the Lithuanians as unrelenting and hostile foes justified the Order’s war efforts

adjacente factaque maxima strage in populo dei, tantam multitudinem deduxit captivam, quod cuilibet Lethowino in divisione cesserunt xx homines cristi. 


49 See below, pp. 98–101.
based on three grounds. First and foremost, Christians living in the Baltic region required protection. Dusburg wrote that the Order came to the Baltic lands explicitly for this purpose, that is, “for the defense of the land, the faith, and the faithful.” The argument was nothing new. Both Henry and the author of LRC had already explained that a skilled military order was necessary to defend the local Christians from the Lithuanians. Dusburg added a sense of gravity by implying that not only the local Christians require defense, but all the faithful. He thus presented the knights as protecting the Christian world from Lithuanian plans of destruction. Jeroschin adopted a similar logic. Celebrating the knights’ victory over the Lithuanians after a raid on Warmia, he remarks, “If the battle had been lost the Christian faith would have been persecuted and wiped out.” Jeroschin seems certain that the Lithuanians attack Christian communities explicitly in hopes of bringing harm to Christianity. Both chroniclers therefore agree that the military actions of the knights, however harsh they may appear, are in fact necessary for the protection of Christians worldwide.

Second, the knights were seen as saviors of souls lost in pagan error. Especially later chroniclers presented the knights as offering the local peoples not only protection from corporeal enemies such as the Lithuanians but also the spiritual enemy of false belief. After the knights rescued a group of newly converted Christians that had been captured by a Lithuanian raiding

50 All three justifications can be linked to ideas of “just war” or bellum justum. The development and use of concept of “just war” in the Middle Ages, especially in connection with the crusades has received significant attention in modern scholarship. The standard work on this subject is Frederick H. Russell’s The Just War in the Middle Ages. As mentioned above, the concept of “just war” and its application in the chronicles of the Baltic crusades is the subject of Mažeika’s article “Violent Victims?: Surprising Aspects of the Just War Theory in the Chronicle of Peter von Dusburg.”  
51 PD, II.5: ad defensionem sue terre, fidei et fidelium.  
52 NJ, lines 23,860–3 (Fischer, 259): want wô vorlurn wêr der sic, / sô müste gar in jâmirs schric / der cristene geloube / sîn gelegin toube.  
53 The question of conversion as one of the original aims of the crusade movement has been examined by Benjamin Z. Kedar, Mission and Crusade: European Approaches Toward the Muslims (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 57–74. While it appears that the early crusades did not explicitly call for conversion, conversion had always been an important motive of the northern crusades: Iben Fonnesburg-Schmidt, “Pope Honorius III and Mission and Crusades in the Baltic Region,” in Clash of Cultures, 103–22.
party, Jeroschin has them say to knights in gratitude:

We poor people hail you too, because your arrival has saved us from a bitter fate. Noble knights of God, may God always honour you on earth and in heaven, because your bold actions have broken the chains of suffering which bound us in perpetual captivity. We were wretchedly lost and now we have been born again and saved from death by you.\textsuperscript{54}

The freed captives appear thankful to the knights not only for rescuing them from their Lithuanian kidnappers but, more specifically, for rescuing them from the burden of ignorance and sin. Such statements provided evidence to reading audiences of the fact that the knights were not impeding the progress of Christianity as many of their critics had suggested but actually winning souls for Christ.

Lastly, chroniclers presented the knights as agents of divine vengeance.\textsuperscript{55} They saw Lithuanian incursions into Christian lands, the desecration of holy places, and the killing of Christians as injuries done to Christ and beseeched the knights to carry out the proper punishment. Dusburg, for example, wrote, “O strongest knights and renowned warriors, arm yourselves with these weapons, and avenge the crucified Lord.”\textsuperscript{56} Jeroschin used similar language: “Avenge the shameful insult which this evil people offered to your God, the torrents of misery and the innocent blood shed by your poor people.”\textsuperscript{57} His insistence on the Order’s right to


\textsuperscript{55} Several studies have recently been published on the nature of and reasons for vengeance in medieval society. See for example, Susan A. Throop, \textit{Crusading as an Act of Vengeance}, 1095–1216 (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), especially Throop’s analysis of the meaning of vengeance (pp. 11–42) and the growing appeal of vengeance as a reason for crusading activity in the later twelfth century (pp. 73–116). On the emotional component of vengeance, including vengeance as a demonstration of love of God and anger at sin, see Ibid., 145–72 and Susan A. Throop, “Zeal, Anger and Vengeance: The Emotional Rhetoric of Crusading,” in \textit{Vengeance in the Middle Ages: Emotion, Religion, and the Discourse of Violent Conflict}, ed. Paul R. Hyams and Susan A. Throop (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 177–201.

\textsuperscript{56} PD, II.8 (p. 44): \textit{O fortissimi milites et bellatores ineliti, induite hec arma et vindicate injuriam crucifixi domini.}

\textsuperscript{57} NJ, lines 23,722–9 (Fischer, 258): \textit{Andit gemein / des lastirs mein, / den ê bôt ûwirm gote / di rote / só gar unrein, / di jâmîrvlût, / daz reine blût / der ûwern vil armen.}
use even the harshest tactics to ensure proper revenge: “Strike back boldly and show no mercy on the Lithuanians. You should stab and hack at them until they are completely silenced.”  

Both Dusburg and Jeroschin likewise emphasized the Order’s effectiveness in fulfilling their duty of vengeance. Jeroschin even rejoiced at the death of Lithuanians claiming divine victory for the knights and divine vengeance for the Lithuanians. After the knights ambushed a raiding party returning from Warmia, he described the Order’s massacre of the Lithuanians as follows: “The good Lord slaughtered them ferociously with the rod of His wrath, robbing them of life, persecuting them with righteous revenge.”  

As long as the chronicles continued to provide proof of the fact that the knights were in deed fulfilling their duty of avenging injuries done against the faith and the faithful, it could be argued that the Order’s continued presence in the Baltic region was necessary to ensure the proper dispensation of divine justice.

By drawing attention to the threat posed by the Lithuanians and then highlighting both the effectiveness of the Order’s tactics and knights’ devotion to the Christian cause, crusade chronicles confirmed the need for military action in the Baltic region. The works of Dusburg and Jeroschin were particularly instrumental in reviving the crusading ethos that had come under attack by critics. Part of this process involved a reconceptualization of the Order’s military role, especially after the conclusion of the Prussian and Livonian crusades. The image of the Lithuanians as *hostes fidei* should therefore be understood as highly ideological. Portraying the Lithuanians as more aggressive than other pagan peoples and intent on destroying Christendom helped to promote the Order’s immediate political agenda and substantiate the need for a professional military in the Baltic lands to defend both the Christians and Christianity.

---


Constructing Dichotomies I: The Theological and Spatial Divide

So as to draw attention to the more aggressive and determinedly pagan nature of the Lithuanians, crusade chroniclers not only explicitly distinguished the Lithuanians from other, more amenable Baltic peoples, but in particular from the pious and righteous knights. Crusade literature worked to redefine the Christian-pagan dichotomy as a theological and spatial divide. Chronicles depicted the pagan way of life as an inversion of Christianity, a mockery and a potentially dangerous antithesis.\(^{60}\) For example, describing the central place of pagan worship in the Baltic region, Dusburg wrote, “In the middle of this perverse nation […] there was a certain place called Romowe, whose name derives from Rome.”\(^{61}\) Since there are no other contemporary references to Romowe or archeological evidence of its existence, it is reasonable to assume that the name was in fact Dusburg’s invention and a phonetic derivation of the city name “Rome.”\(^{62}\) Dusburg moreover reports that in Romowe “a certain man called Krivè lived whom the people revered as pope, for just as the lord pope rules the universal church of the faithful, so not only the aforesaid people but also the Lithuanians and the other nations of Livonia were ruled by him.”\(^{63}\) His authority was “so great,” Dusburg alleges, that he and any of his kin and anyone bearing his insignia or carrying his staff was highly revered by nobles and commoners alike and given


\(^{61}\) PD, III.5 (p. 53): *Fuit autem in medio nacionis hujus perverse [...] locus quidam dictus Romow, trahens nomen suum a Roma.*

\(^{62}\) Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 126.

\(^{63}\) PD, III.5 (p. 53): *in quo habitat quidam, dictus Criwe, quem coelebant pro papa. quia sicut dominus papa regit universalem ecclesiam fidelium, ita ad istius nutum seu mandatum non solum gentes predicte, sed et Lethowini et alie naciones Lyvnoie terre regebantur.* Alexander Brückner put forth the hypothesis that Krivè the man did not exist. This view was shared by Henryk Łowmiański, and since, has been advanced by Rowell: *Lithuania Ascending*, 39–40, 125–8.
secure passage throughout “the lands of the infidels.” In describing pagan beliefs, Dusburg reverted to the only pattern of interpretation with which he was familiar, namely that of Western Christianity. Borrowing the vocabulary of the church, he depicted pagan religion as posing a fundamental challenge to the spiritual and temporal authority of Rome. According to Rowell, Dusburg intentionally construed pagan religion as the “counter-church.” By this reasoning, it follows that his presentation of the pope-like Krivê was nothing more than a rhetorical ploy aimed at showing the antithetical nature of paganism. Even Krivê’s symbols of office appear analogous to those of the Christian pope. For example, Dusburg claims that Krivê guarded the “eternal flame” (jugis ignis), a symbol of the presence of Christ traditionally placed before the church tabernacle. He also writes that Krivê’s messengers carried the pastoral staff (baculus), a symbol of authority often associated with the apostolic see. It seems likely that Dusburg’s polarization of the two religions was intended to sow hostility for the pagans. The chronicle’s Christian audiences would surely have recognized Dusburg’s imagery and understood pagan religion as adversarial to Christian values.

The metaphor of the counter-church headed by the counter-pope is further strengthened by Dusburg’s presentation of the state of the Teutonic Order as a fully imagined sacred space imbued with a divine presence, privileged and efficacious by design. In the prologue to the first

64 PD, III.5 (p. 53): Tante fuit autoritatis, quod non solum ipse vel aliquis de sanguine suo, verum eciam nuncius cum baculo suo vel alio signo noto transiens terminos infidelium predictorum a regibus et nobilibus et communi populo in magna reverencia haberetur (His authority was such that not only he or anyone of his blood line, but even messengers carrying the baculus or anyone bearing his markings [and] passing through the aforementioned territory of the infidels was greatly revered by kings, nobles, and commoners).
65 Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 126.
66 PD, III.5 (p. 54): Fovebat eciam prout in lege veteri jugem ignem (He also guarded the eternal flame in accordance with ancient law). In Christian liturgy, the eternal flame signifies the presence of Christ, see Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed., vol. 16, s.v. “Lights, Ceremonial use of,” 677. See also Lev. 6:13: ignis est iste perpetuus qui numquam deficient in auri (This is the perpetual fire which shall never go out on the altar).
book, the chronicler directly apposes the Order’s organization with church architecture. He explains that “like a real house,” the Order is made up of three elements—a foundation, seven pillars, and a superstructure—represented respectively by the grand master, seven provincial commanders (Komturre), and the brethren. The house-building analogy is a reference to the Old Testament: “Wisdom has built herself a house, she carved out seven pillars” (Proverbs 9:1). In Dusburg’s version, wisdom is personified by Pope Celestine III whom he credits as the original founder of the Order. Praising Celestine’s vision, Dusburg writes that he erected the Order as a “house of holy piety” on seven pillars so that “if the rain of greed and the rivers of luxury will flow and the winds of pride will blow and attack it, it would not fall.” The seven pillars symbolize the three knightly vows—obedience, poverty, and chastity—and the four stages of penance—contrition, confession, satisfaction, and absolution—which fortify the Order against its enemies and validate its cause. The Order State thus emerges as a model of the celestial city: “This venerable knighthood,” Dusburg declares, like the church, “was made in the image of the sky and the manifold earth.”

The association of the Order with the Virgin Mary played a equally important role in both


69 PD, I.Prefacio (p. 25): tanquam materialis domus innixa columnnis edificata sustentatur, ut sic magister generalis et capitulum sint fundamentum hujus domus, provinciales commendatores seu preceptores columnne, alii fratres superedificati (like a real house resting on erected pillars, so too the grand master and the chapter are the foundation of this house, the komturs or provincial commanders [are] the pillars, [and] the other brothers [are] the superstructure).

70 As quoted in PD, I.Prefacio (p. 24): Sapiencia sibi edificavit domum, excidit columnnas septem.

71 PD, I.Prefacio (p. 25): Hec sunt columnne spirituales excise manu sapiencie in domo hac sacre religionis, quam edificavit dominus papa, ita quod si pluvia avaricie descendat et flumina luxurie et venti superbie flent et irruant in illam, non possit cadere; fundata et enim supra firmam petram, petra autem est Cristus (Here are the spiritual pillars, carved by the hand of wisdom, in this house of holy piety, which was erected by the lord pope, so that if the rain of greed and the rivers of luxury will flow and the winds of pride will blow and attack it, it would not fall, because it is founded on solid rock, and that rock, moreover, is Christ).

72 PD, I.Prefacio (p. 25). On the relationship between the Dusburg’s numeric choices and Augustinian numerology, see Matuzova, “Iedino-teologicheskaia osnova,” 162.

73 PD, I.1 (p. 28): Hec reverenda milicia non solum in terra est ab hominibus confirmata, verum eciam typo celi et terre multiplicarie prefigurata.
physically and ontologically setting apart the lands of the military monastic orders from the pagan realms. Henry identified Livonia as the legal patrimony of the Virgin (*terra beate virginis*) and urged Christians living there to remain steadfast and undaunted by the pagan threat for “the Lady of the world and the Empress of all lands always protects Her special land.”\(^{74}\) He also implied that Mary protects Livonia from all external conquerors. For example, when the king of Denmark sent a warrior to take Livonia from the knights, according to Henry, “The sun of justice did not shine upon him, because he had offended Mary, His Mother, Who is called the Star of the Sea, and for this reason She would not show him the right way.”\(^{75}\) Likewise, Henry stressed that when the Rus'ians invade, Mary always protects Livonia from destruction by bringing various troubles upon them:

> Did she not afflict them when She struck with sudden death the great King Vladimir of Pskov as he was coming into Livonia with his army? [...] Did She not kill through the Tatars the other king of Novgorod who devastated Livonia for the second time? [...] Did She not sufficiently humiliate King Vsevolod of Jersika, who despoiled the Rigans with fire and sword?\(^{76}\)

Later chroniclers adopted the Marian association to represent all the lands administrated by the Teutonic Order and any lands that would be conquered in the future. In fact, the knights were even popularly referred to as *Marienritter*.\(^{77}\) Mary Fischer argues that the Marian association was further bolstered after the arrival of the Teutonic Knights in the Baltic region.\(^{78}\) Since the Order’s patron saint was Mary, it seemed appropriate for the lands of Mary to be administered by her


\(^{75}\) HCL, XXV.2 (Brundage, 198): sol iustitiæ non illuxit ei, eo quod Mariam matrem eius offenderat, quæ maris dicitur stella, quapropter et ipsa certam ipsi viam non ostendit.

\(^{76}\) HCL, XXV.2 (Brundage, 198): Nonne exacerbavit, quando regem magnum Woldemarum de Plosceke venientem in Lyvoniam cum exercitu subitanea morte percussit? [...] Et alium regem Nogardie, qui secunda vice Lyvoniam depredavit, per Tataros occidit? [...] Numquid non regem Wissewaldum de Gercike, qui Rigenses spoliavit, igne er gladio satis humiliavit?.

\(^{77}\) Fischer, *Di Himels Rote*, 126.

\(^{78}\) Ibid., 134.
knights. Claims of divine approval strengthened the Order’s case for the territorial consolidation of Prussia and Livonia, while frequent allusions to Mary and the church-like organization of the Order validated the Order’s status as an ordained knighthood and helped delimit the Order’s lands as a sacred space.

Determining the boundaries between the sacred Christian world and the pagan lands was more than just a theoretical exercise; it involved both visually and conceptually partitioning the Baltic landscape. In his analysis of medieval geographical scholarship, Jacque Le Goff observed that in the medieval imagination, pagans occupied a space beyond the “built, cultivated, and inhabited” world. Aron Gurevich added that in those lands, “space lost its positive qualities; there began the forests and the wastelands of the barbarians to which God’s peace and

---


80 Le Goff, The Medieval Imagination, 58.
human institutions neither extended nor applied.”^81 The term *paganus*,-i, which by the thirteenth century had clear pejorative connotations, evolved from the classical Latin meaning, “of or belonging to the country or to a village.”^82 The dichotomy between Christian-pagan, urban-rural found expression in theological treatises throughout the Middle Ages. Isidore of Seville, for example, explained that “in rural places and the countryside (*pagis*) people established groves and idols, and from this they received the name pagans (*pagani*).”^83 In the Baltic lands, the thick uncultivated forests constituted an unknown and dangerous wilderness from which the natives perennially emerged to attack Christian settlements. Henry portrayed the forest as a murky hideout where the pagans clandestinely plan their assaults and to where they run in refuge when defeated by the Christians. ^84 The image of Lithuania as a land of forests was further popularized by Bartholomeus Anglicus in the fifteenth book of his *De proprietatibus rerum*. ^85 He described Lithuania as a region so marshy and wooded that the people do not even require fortifications; they are protected by the rivers, forests, and swamps. ^86 So as to navigate such dense forests, Bartholomeus added that the Lithuanians are a “robust and mighty, warlike and wild people.”^87

As dangerous spaces that sheltered the enemies of the faith, forests were likewise

---

82 Charlton Thomas Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s.v. “paganus.”
83 Isidore, *Etymologiae*, VIII.x.1 in PL 82: *Ibi enim in locis agrestibus et pagis gentiles lucos idolaque statuerunt, et a tali initio vocabulum pagani sortiti sunt.*
84 *HCL*, VIII.1, IX.8, X.12, XI.5, XI.9, XXV.4. On Henry’s presentation of woods and wilderness, see Nielsen, “Henry of Livonia on Woods and Wilderness,” 157–78.
86 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, Book XV, De Lectonia: *palustris in multis locis et valde nemorosa, fluminibus et aquis est irrigua, feris et pecudibus valde nemorosa, fluminibus et aquis est irrigua, feris pecudibus valde plena. Nemoribus et plaudibus est munita, paucas habens alias munitiones preter flumina, nemora et paludes* (it is marshy and wooded in many places, irrigated by rivers and waters, there are a lot of wild animals and livestock. It is protected by forests and swamps, therefore there are few fortifications other than rivers, forests and swamps).
87 Ibid.: *cuius populi Lectimi sunt vocati, homines robusti et fortes, bellicosi et feroces* (those people are called Lithuanians, [they are] robust and mighty, warlike and wild people).
believed to be home to demons.\textsuperscript{88} Christian theologians construed pagan idols as devils.\textsuperscript{89} In fact, there seems to have been little doubt that pagan practices were some how related to demon worship. Bernard of Clairvaux described the pagans as the “children of disbelief” and the “followers of the princes of darkness.”\textsuperscript{90} Henry compared conversion to a symbolic “renunciation of the Devil and his works.”\textsuperscript{91} According to Dusburg, genuine conversion was a multi-step process that began with the realization of pagan falsehoods. To demonstrate this, the chronicler related the story of man named Drayko from the Lithuanian stronghold of Aukaimis who was “pained that he had been trapped for so long in diabolical deceit,” until finally he “set aside the veneration of idols, and wanting to begin serving the true and living God” asked the knights of Ragnit castle for asylum.\textsuperscript{92}

Crusade chroniclers generally regarded Lithuanian hostility as a direct consequence of their involvement with evil spirits. Dusburg reminisced that at one time the pagans lived peacefully alongside their Christian neighbors until the devil, “the enemy of mankind, envious of the peace, sowed tares.”\textsuperscript{93} From that time forward, the chronicler explains that “incited to the most severe persecution,” the pagans initiated a war against the faith and the faithful.\textsuperscript{94} He identified the pagans as filii Belial, or sons of Belial, a name frequently used in reference to

\textsuperscript{89} Ps. 95:5: \textit{quoniam omnes dìi gentium daemoni} (For all the gods of the gentiles are devils). Augustine of Hippo claimed that pagan superstitions come from the “pestiferous fellowship between men and demons” (\textit{pestifera societate hominum et daemonum}): \textit{De doctrina Christiana} II.23 in \textit{PL} 34, col. 52.
\textsuperscript{90} Bernard of Clairvaux, \textit{De laude novae militia}, ch.1 in \textit{PL} 182, col. 921B: \textit{filii diffidentiae; satellites tenebrarum principes}.
\textsuperscript{91} \textit{HCL}, X.14: \textit{diabolo et operibus eius abrenunciant}. See also \textit{HCL}, IX.3, XI.5, XI.6.
\textsuperscript{92} \textit{PD}, III.280: \textit{quidam Lethowinus dictus Drayko castrensis de Oukaym dolens, se tamdiu fraude diabolica deceptum, volensque ydolorum cultura postposita dei veri et vivi servicio mancipari}.
\textsuperscript{93} \textit{PD}, II.1: \textit{Sec hoc inimicus humani generis, pacis emulus, non diu sustinens superseminavit zizania.} According to Matt.13:24–5, during the Last Judgment, the angels will separate the “sons of evil” (the “tares”) from the “sons of the kingdom” (the “wheat”).
\textsuperscript{94} \textit{PD}, II.1: \textit{Excitavit enim persecutionem durissimam}. Mažeika argues that Peter’s allusion to the once peaceful relations between the pagans and Christians is an indication of his occasional sympathetic attitude toward the Prussians and Lithuanians. See below, p. 112.
devil. Singling out the Lithuanians specifically, Jeroschin referred to them as the “spawn of the devil” (*des tuvils kint*) and “warriors of the devil” (*des tuvils kempfe*). This imagery may have been borrowed from the *LRC*. After a Lithuanian raid on Ōsel, the author of the *LRC* comments, “I am convinced that the devil was leading them.”

In stark contrast to the weak-minded and easily deceived pagans, Christian chroniclers cited the devil’s failure to influence the strong-willed knights. Dusburg’s work, for example, contains many anecdotes of the knights resisting the devil’s temptations. When the “angel of Satan” attempted to lead the commander of Königsberg Albert von Meissen astray, the chronicler reports that he immediately turned to God and through prayer prevailed over his seducer. In a similar incident, when the devil appeared night after night to Wolfram the Saxon because he was “envious of his happiness,” Dusburg claims that the knight remained steadfast in his devotion to God. After a year of torment, the devil stopped visiting Wolfram ashamed by his failure to compel him to sin. Henry interprets the devil’s trials of temptation as God-given opportunities for the knights to fortify their faith.

While the Lithuanians were presented as tools of the devil, the knights were seen as agents of God who had been appointed to ward off evil like the *angeli potestates* or the warrior

---

97 LRC, lines 1,426–30 (Smith and Urban, 21): noch wên ich, / daz sie der tüvel vûrte.
98 PD, III.230.
99 PD, III.233: dyabolus invidens felicitati sue nitebatur modis, quibus poterat impedire.
100 PD, III.233: Revoluto itaque anno cum dyabolus in illusione hac non proficeret confusus destitit, et comparere amplius no audebat (And thus when a year had passed, the devil was not able to succeed in this temptation, embarrassed, he turned back and no longer dared to appear).
101 HCL, VIII.3 (Brundage, 46): Licet enim omnipotens Deus electos suos in variis tribulationibus positis quasi aurum in igne probare non desinit, nunquam tamen omnino deserit, immo ex omnibus malis eos eripiens maiorem hostibus eorum timorem ingerit (“Although Almighty God does not cease to test his elect ones, now placed in various tribulations, like gold in fire, nevertheless He does not desert them entirely, but rather, rescuing them from all evils, puts their enemies in greater fear”).
angels who battle demons.\textsuperscript{102} It was widely believed that the souls of the Baltic pagans required liberation from the devil. The author of the \textit{LRC} wrote that the knights had come to the Baltic lands to help the pagans “throw down the devil.”\textsuperscript{103} Jeroschin added that each day the Order struggles “to put an end to the devil’s contempt.”\textsuperscript{104} The Order’s victories over the pagans served as proof of divine approbation. The author of the \textit{LRC} maintains that “God gives victory to His own.”\textsuperscript{105} The death of pagans, on the other hand, was justified by their association with demons. After a devastating battle in 1245, the author of the \textit{LRC} offers the following explanation for the massive Lithuanian death toll: “Many a pagan neck was severed, and many fell to earth, never to wage war again. Thus God gave help to His friends, while the devil gave the heathens pain and suffering. Woe to him, who allies himself with Satan.”\textsuperscript{106} Dusburg’s text supports this outlook. Of the nearly two-dozen Lithuanian campaigns against the Order described by Dusburg between 1283 and 1326, the Lithuanians are victorious only eight times.\textsuperscript{107} In other words, Dusburg reports eight cases when the Lithuanians successfully overwhelmed the knights at their original target location and returned home with plunder. By comparison, he describes nearly five-dozen raids by the Order against Lithuania during the same time period. The knights are only unsuccessful four times.\textsuperscript{108} The vast quantitative disparity served as confirmation of God’s

\textsuperscript{102} PD, I.1 (p. 28). On medieval beliefs in angelic hierarchy and duties of the \textit{angeli potestates} or Powers, see David Keck, \textit{Angels and Angelology in the Middle Ages} (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 53–68.

\textsuperscript{103} \textit{LRC}, line 73: \textit{warf der tûvel nider}.

\textsuperscript{104} NJ, line 3,659: \textit{zu swechene des tûvils spot}.

\textsuperscript{105} \textit{LRC}, line 1,838: \textit{got gab den sinen dâ den prîs}.

\textsuperscript{106} \textit{LRC}, lines 2,656–62 (Smith and Urban, 37): \textit{dô wart manich heiden hals gedrumet / sô daz er üf der erden lac, / der keiner reise mê enpflac. / alsus half got den vrûnden sin. / den heiden jêmerlichen pîn / gab der tûvel üf der stat. / wê dem, den er zû gaste bat!}


\textsuperscript{108} Junigeda in 1291: PD, III.243; Castrum Gedimini in 1317: III.332; Bisena in 1313: III.316; Novgorodok, in 1314: III.322.
approval of the Order’s endeavors and protection of the knights in battle.\textsuperscript{109}

The types of images and analogies used by crusade chroniclers to describe the Baltic pagans suggest that much of the Order’s literary tradition was designed to perpetuate a binary view of the world long espoused by Christian writers. The forces of good are represented by God, the Virgin Mary and championed by the knights. On the other hand, evil is represented by the pagans, especially the Lithuanians who live beyond the limits of the blessed Christian world and routinely attack Christians in hopes of destroying the Christian faith. The war between the Order and the Lithuanians thus takes the form of the battle between good and evil, the sacred and profane, the church and the counter-church, the pope and the counter-pope.

\textbf{Constructing Dichotomies II: Virtue and Manful Action}

Apart from theological arguments, crusade chroniclers also drew on elements of chivalric culture to set the heroic and noble knights apart from their unheroic and ignoble pagan adversaries. The fourteenth-century chroniclers in particular presented the Baltic crusades as the ultimate expression not only of Christian piety but also chivalric duty. The medieval concept of chivalry was intimately tied to qualities of secular masculinity.\textsuperscript{110} However, once Bernard of Clairvaux denounced ordinary knighthood as a “frivolous” and “effeminate” and declared that a new knighthood had come into being which “arms itself inside with faith, [and] outside with steal, rather than decorates itself with gold and without rich dressings, strikes fear into the enemies, rather than inciting greed,” it was the crusading monk-knight that became the ultimate

\textsuperscript{109} Dusburg’s descriptions are clearly exaggerated because the crusade against the Lithuanians continued for more than a century with significant casualties on both sides.

embodiment of the masculine ideal.\textsuperscript{111} It is not surprising therefore that crusade chroniclers exaggerated the Christian virtues of the knights. At the same time, this superior form of monastic knighthood or Christian chivalry was also conditioned by secular chivalric values.\textsuperscript{112} In other words, the conquering Christian warrior was expected to exhibit the highest form of Christian devotion as well as more traditional manly qualities—courage, martial prowess, and loyalty—while also always observing pledges and protecting those unable to defend themselves, including the church, the poor, women, and children. Dusburg portrayed the Teutonic Order as epitomizing all these characteristics. He claimed that the brethren are “chosen knights and warriors” who “crush their enemies with a firm hand” and, at the same time, “flow with charity and kindness, receiving strangers, wanderers, and the poor.”\textsuperscript{113}

The Order’s literary tradition worked to reinforce this image of the knights as models of both Christian and masculine behavior. Above all, the knights were expected to act manfully (Lat.: \textit{viriliter}; Mhd.: \textit{menlîch}).\textsuperscript{114} Describing a failed campaign by the Estonians, Henry reports

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{111} Bernard of Clairvaux, \textit{De laude novae militiae}, ch. 2 in PL 182, col. 923C–D: \textit{Militaria sunt haec insignia, an muliebria potius ornamenta?} [...] \textit{causa illa nimirum satis levis ac frivola?} (Is this military insignia or rather effeminate ornaments? [...] your cause is without doubt light and frivolous); ch. 4, col. 926C–D: \textit{Porro imminente bello, intus fide, foris ferro, non auro se muniunt: quatenus armati, et non ornati, hostibus metum incutiant, non provocent avaritiam.}
\item \textsuperscript{113} PD, I.1 (p. 29): \textit{Sunt namque milites et bellatores electi zelo legis patrie manu valida hostes conterentes. Sunt et caritatis beneficis affluentes, hospitum, peregrinorum et pauperum receptores.}
\end{itemize}
that knights “manfully” repulsed the invaders.\textsuperscript{115} When the knights learned that pagan troops were approaching, the author of the \textit{LRC} states that they “quickly and manfully prepared a defense against the pagan array.”\textsuperscript{116} Dusb urg uses the adverb \textit{viriliter} thirty-five times just in the third book of his chronicle. He implies that even when faced with insurmountable odds, the knights always fight “manfully” (\textit{viriliter impugnantibus}), resist the enemy “manfully” (\textit{viriliter restiterunt}), “defend themselves manfully” (\textit{se viriliter defendentes}), and attack the enemy in a “manful way” (\textit{viriliter sunt aggressi}).\textsuperscript{117}

The link between \textit{virtus} (virtue) and \textit{viriliter} (acting manfully) can be traced back to Roman military metaphors in which martial excellence and moral righteousness were both seen as quintessential components of the masculine heroic standard.\textsuperscript{118} Mathew Kuefler contends that by late antiquity, virtue was already “so intimately linked to maleness in the Roman universe that it is impossible to separate Roman definitions of masculinity from more general notions of ideal human behavior.”\textsuperscript{119} In the Middle Ages, elements of the Roman military ideal were integrated into a theological framework. The ideology of knighthood, especially monastic knighthood, was therefore closely associated with obligations of Christian observance and morality. Accordingly, war waged with righteous cause and legitimate authority was seen as an expression of both Christian virtue and masculine fortitude.

The theological concept of \textit{viriliter agere} (“to act manfully”) appears in Psalm 26 when David advises the faithful to remain steadfast “while the wicked draw near” and “expect the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{115}{\textit{HCL}, XXI.3: illi viriliter repellentes eos.}
\footnotetext{116}{\textit{LRC}, lines 167–8 (Smith and Urban, 3): menlich quåmen sie zû der were / snelle kegen der heiden here.}
\footnotetext{117}{PD, III, nos. 4, 11, 19, 37, 40, 50, 84, 87, 91, 103, 104, 107, 115, 116, 117, 123, 140, 144, 157, 162, 169, 192, 193, 194, 196, 223, 251, 253, 300, 317, 318.}
\footnotetext{118}{Myles McDonnell argues that with the Hellenization of Roman culture the definition of \textit{virtus} was expanded to include a sense of moral excellence: \textit{Roman Manliness: “Virtus” and the Roman Republic} (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 107–41.}
\footnotetext{119}{Mathew Kuefler, \textit{The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 19.}
\end{footnotes}
Lord, act manfully, let thy heart take courage, and wait for the Lord.”

The Psalm’s definition of manly action entails complete trust in God’s mercy and protection in battle. Dusburg espouses a similar connection between acting manfully and divine grace. In one instance, for example, he recounts how the commander of Ragnit warned his man to act manfully in order to ensure God’s protection in the battle to come. Placing one’s faith in God, especially in battle against such cruel and wicked foes as the Lithuanians, was seen as the truest form of courage, a trait implicit to the masculine ideal. Afterall, Judas Maccabee, the Order’s alleged biblical forefather, had said to his people: “Take courage and behave manfully.” For the Teutonic Knights, courage thus entailed the ability to remain steadfast in mortal danger and determined one’s willingness to endure suffering in the name of the faith. Psalm 26 explicitly praises these characteristics: “If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear. If a battle should rise up against me, in this will I be confident.”

Building on such discourses, crusade chroniclers portrayed the knights as models of courageous action always prepared for battle. Henry wrote that when deciding who would enter the battlefield first, the knights or their Baltic Christian allies, the knights “begged insistently that they go first into battle with the enemies of Christ.” The author of the LRC stressed that the knights fear “neither death nor any danger.” He presented them as going into battle while shouting the following war cry: “‘Whether things go for good or ill, stay by the flag! Have the

120 Ps. 26:2[…]14: dum adpropiant super me nocentes […] expecta Dominum viriliter age et confortetur cor tuum et sustine Dominum.
121 PD, III.251: ergo eos viriliter et dominus liberabit nos (We will break through them manfully and the Lord will deliver us).
122 1 Mac. 2:64. PD quotes this passage in PD, II.6: Confortamini et viriliter agite. The allusion to Judas Maccabee in the Order’s chronicles is the subject of several recent studies, see Chapter 1, p. 71, n. 92.
123 Ps. 26:3: si consistant adversus me castra non timebit cor meum si exsurgat adversus me proelium in hoc ego sperabo.
124 HCL, IX.3 (Brundage, 49): instanter deprecantes, ut ipsi primum cum hostibus Christi prelium ineant.
125 LRC, lines 2,474–5 (Smith and Urban, 35): sie achten minner dan ein hâr / des liebes oder keiner drô.
courage of lions!” He claimed that the knights “ignore the danger of ambush in their determination to either save the [Christian] men and women or die in the attempt.” Dusburg likewise affirmed that the knights “do not fear surrendering their bodies to death for the defense of that faith.” He highlighted the brave actions of specific knights as proof of the Order’s excellence. Praising Brother Gundram, for example, he presented the knight as immune to both pain and the fear of death. When Gundram was disemboweled during a confrontation with ten Lithuanian raiders, Dusburg reported that he did not surrender, but continued to engage his opponents with his intestines exposed. Describing one of his favorite Prussian land marshals, Meinhard von Querfurt (r. 1288–1299), Dusburg alleged that he was so “totally courageous” that all his enemies feared him “because no building, no distance could protect them from his vengeance.” According to the chronicler, he was “undefeated by disease, not amenable to the death, nor fearful of death.” A model of manly virtue, he engaged the enemy “sparing neither himself nor his people, nor effort or expense, but all the time tending to the elevation of the faith and the faithful.” Likewise, praising the willpower of the knights during a difficult battle in which forty Christians had already been killed, Nikolaus von Jeroschin adds, “Nothing daunted them, they pressed on like lions.” He described the knights as extraordinary men who are “brave enough to risk life and possessions to protect Christians against the Lithuanians.”

---

126 LRC, lines 2,532–3 […] 2,535 (Smith and Urban, 36): „ez sie krum oder slecht / sô sult ir blîben bie dem vanen / […] dan habet alle lewen müt.”
127 LRC, lines 1,508–10 (Smith and Urban, 22): Sie achten keiner lâge, / sie wolden lâzen dô den lîp, / sie enlôsten man und wip.
128 PD, Prologus (pp. 21–2): pro defensionem fidei corpora sua tradere in mortem non formidant
129 PD, III.281.
130 PD, III.234: Totus fuit magnanimus […] Unde formidabant ipsum omnes adversarii ejus, sic quod nec municiones, nec locorum distancia ipsas a vindicta sua defendere potuerunt.
131 PD, III.254: frater Meneko magister nec labore victus, nec morte vincendus, qui nec mori timuit.
132 PD, III.252: magister nec sibi nec suis parcens, nec laboribus, nec expensis; sed semper intentus ad exaltationem fidei et fidelium.
133 NJ, lines 23,685–7 (Fischer, 258): doch sî daz nicht irschracte, / man insê sî strewin / vor sich sam dî lewin.
Using such examples Baltic crusade chroniclers thus reaffirmed the warrior ideal and presented it as fully realized in the Teutonic Order.

Although, as previously noted, Christian chroniclers often demonstrated respect for Lithuanian military prowess and commended their audacity on the battlefield, they were careful not to conflate these characteristics with true *virtus* or *viriliter*. Mažeika suggests that examples of Lithuanian praise speak to the chivalric ethos of the Order, or more specifically, “the need to glorify the Order’s knights by showing that they fought a formidable enemy.”

Chivalric values stipulated that an honorable knight should only challenge a worthy opponent. Moreover, as revealed by contemporary chivalric literature, it was common for knights to respect their enemy and pay tribute to them. The show of reverence was a sign of valor and courteous behavior. It proved that the knight was not rushing mindlessly into battle, but had clearly considered the need for war.

Recounting the battle of Aizkraukle in 1279, the author of the *LRC* describes the knights and their Lithuanian opponents as “both Christian and pagan, dauntless warriors, daring and outstanding.” Jeroschin describes the Lithuanians as “skilled and strong in battle.” On three occasions, Dusburg even uses the adverb *viriliter* to describe the tenacity with which the Lithuanians defended their domains. When 100 knights and 6000 cavalrymen attempted to lay siege to Garth (Russ.: Grodno), Dusburg writes that the Lithuanians *manfully* defended the castle. Likewise, when 500 cavalrymen and 2000 foot soldiers attacked the Lithuanian

---


137 *LRC*, lines 8,398–400 (Smith and Urban, 103 [translation amended]): von cristen und von heiden / manchen unverzageten helt, / beide rasch und üz erwelt.

138 NJ, line 23,506: kunstig unde stark in strît.

139 PD uses the adverb *viriliter* 40 times in Book III. He uses it 35 times in reference to the Order, 2 times in reference to the Prussians (III.116, III.121), and 3 times in reference to the Lithuanians (III.238, III.293, III.321).

140 PD, III.293: *castrenses, ex adverso se viriliter opponents.*
stronghold of Kolainiai, he claims that a local Lithuanian garrison of 120 men resisted *manfully*. Finally, when the knights devastated the lands of Medininkai in an attempt to take castle Sisditen, Dusburg commends the Lithuanians for fighting *manfully*. Dusburg’s use of the term *viriliter* should not be interpreted as an indication of his acknowledgement of Lithuanian manliness or virtue. In all three cases the knights were not as successful as they had expected to be and, after suffering many causalities, they were forced to retreat. To explain their seeming failure, Dusburg deferred to the strength and determination of the Lithuanian resistance. By presenting the knights as fighting a worthy opponent, Dusburg thus diffused the shame of the knights’ withdrawal.

Although recognized as good warriors, Lithuanians were nevertheless represented as embodying essentially negative or shameful behavioral traits such as excessive arrogance. For example, chroniclers frequently portrayed the Lithuanians as rushing into battle driven by a foolish sense of over-confidence. The image of the *hubris*-driven and impulsive pagan had long been popular in Christian exegesis. In the preface to the first book of the *City of God*, Augustine counterposed those compelled by divine grace (*divina gratia*) and those driven by human arrogance (*humano fastu*). The association between pagans and arrogance appears to have been especially prevalent in the Order’s vernacular literature. The author of the *LRC* repeatedly uses the following synonyms to describe Lithuanian arrogance: *hôchgemûdt, ubermût, vrevelîchen, stolz, and stoltz*. He depicts the Lithuanians as “arrogant by their nature” implying

---

141 PD, III.238: *qui viriliter fratribus resisterunt.*
142 PD, III.321: *castrensibus ex adverso viriliter se defendentibus.*
143 PD, III.238: At Kolainiai the knights almost defeated the Lithuanians, but, as Dusburg reports, their foot soldiers fled in fear and the knights had to abandon the mission. PD, III.293: The attack on Garth was a draw. Dusburg reports that 12 knights and 300 Christian allies were wounded. Brother Hartmann von Elsterberg was killed. PD, III.321: The knights had to withdraw from castle Sistiden after the Lithuanians killed 3 brothers and 4 mounted allies.
145 *LRC*, lines 327, 1,429, 1,490, 2,498, 2,731, 2,735, 9,857.
that not only their behavior but their very soul (gemüt) is arrogant.\textsuperscript{146} Recounting a Lithuanian raids on the Order, he claims, “No army ever moved so arrogantly into foreign lands as did this one.”\textsuperscript{147} Especially in the \textit{LRC}, the image of the inherently arrogant Lithuanians stands in stark contrast to the author’s presentation of the knights as “humble, faithful, worthy, and immune to arrogance.”\textsuperscript{148}

Jeroschin also identifies arrogance as a despicable vice that inevitably leads one to sin and causes the downfall of men. Like the pagans of the Old Testament—Never considering the power of God, but puffed up in mind (2 Maccabees 11:4)\textsuperscript{149}—he presents the Lithuanians as crippled by a sense of entitlement and false pride. Describing a Lithuanian campaign against the bishopric of Warmia, he recounts how Grand Duke Vytenis’ excessive arrogance reversed his initial success and led to Lithuania’s crushing defeat at the subsequent battle of Woplauken (April 7, 1311). The narrative begins on the day before Palm Sunday when, according to Jeroschin, the Lithuanians entered Warmia, burned the churches, and “wickedly destroyed everything dedicated to God and consecrated to his service, including the Host, which was grievously mishandled by them in their contempt, defiled and spat at.”\textsuperscript{150} After three days of looting and pillaging, Jeroschin tell us they retreated with 1300 prisoners to the plain of Woplauken where Vytenis began to take inventory of his plunder. Convinced of his victory, Vytenis also took to taunting his Christian prisoners: “‘Tell me where is the god of whom you are so fond, who should be helping you now? Why is he not coming to your aid? I think that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{146} \textit{LRC}, line 9,858 (original translation): \textit{sie wâren irs gemûtes stoltz.}
\item \textsuperscript{147} \textit{LRC}, lines 1,428–30 (Smith and Urban, 21): \textit{kein her sich nie gerûrte / sô vrevelîchen in vremde lant, / sô von den selben wart bekant.}
\item \textsuperscript{148} \textit{LRC}, lines 7,558–60 (Smith and Urban, 92): \textit{dêmûtec lîchen hielt er sich, / er was getrûwe unde gût / und ache nich üf übermûüt.}
\item \textsuperscript{149} As quoted in PD, II.9 (p. 45): \textit{nunquam recogitans potestatem dei, sed mente effrenatus.}
\item \textsuperscript{150} \textit{NJ}, lines 23,533–7 (Fischer, 257): \textit{und öt blözlich alliz, daz / gote was gewiet / und in sin dînst gevliet,/ dî dît böslich zuspente, / darzû di sacramnete.}
\end{itemize}
your helpless Chris is a nobody.’”\(^{151}\) He then crushed the host under his feet and yelled in blasphemy: “‘Look, you stupid people, how I’m trampling on the god to whom you pray. He is incapable of helping you or himself, or of releasing you from your misery. Christian beliefs are all simply vain imaginings.’”\(^{152}\) Overcome by “immeasurable pride” (\textit{ummezlichir hôchvart}), Vytenis thus failed to foresee the Teutonic counteroffensive.\(^{153}\) Jeroschin reports that 80 knights stormed the Lithuanian camp, defeated the pagans, and liberated all the prisoners. Vytenis had not choice but to flee in shame. Jeroschin explains the outcome:

Good fortune breeds arrogance; arrogance is evil since it resists authority and destroys everything. Men who are raised high by arrogance are also brought low by it. This is clearly illustrated in the case of King Vytenis, the proud heathen, as I shall tell you now. He had always had good fortune, as you have heard me tell. That made him so proud that he thought he could threaten any kingdom he pleased, as could be seen from the stupid things he said. His pride seduced him so much that he mocked his creator, God […] and God punished him suitably for his shameless behavior and destroyed his honor.\(^{154}\)

The example of Vytenis serves not only as a reminder of the torment suffered by the Christians at the hands of the pagan Lithuanians, but also as a warning against the dangers of arrogance. As Jeroschin demonstrates Vytenis’ ego led him to invade the Christian lands, but then blinded him to the potential dangers of his actions and, as a result, created an opportunity for the knights to claim retributive justice.

The same arrogance that deprives the Lithuanians of \textit{viriliter}—they serve themselves


\(^{152}\) NJ, lines 23,626–33 (Fischer, 257): „\textit{Sêt, tummen, wî ich trete, / den ir mit gebete / zu eime gote rûfit an! / Noch er ûch, noch im selbin kan / geleisten keinerhande trôst / noch von nôten tûn irlôst. / Iz ist gar ein ětel wân, / dâmît ir cristen unmegân.”

\(^{153}\) NJ, line 23,567.

\(^{154}\) NJ, lines 23,470–90 […] 23,492–4 (Fischer, 256): \textit{Gelucke machit ubirmüt; / ubirmüt ist ein ungût, / daz ubirhoubit vichtet / und alle dinc vornichtet. / Swen ubirmüt tîfsteigît, / vil nîddir er den neigît; / daz wol ist zu spêne / an kunge Witêne, / dem hömûtigen heiden, / als ich ûch sol bescheiden. / Gelucke was im ê geschên, / als ir hûrît mich vor jên; / daz steigete sînên mût sô hô, / daz in dûchte, wi sîn drô / ob allen richin swebbete, / als man wol intsebbete / an tumpheit sînre worte. / Hômût in joch bekorte, / daz er hîlt zu spote / sînen schepfer gote, / als ir hernâch gehôren sult, […] got in billîch schentte, / und al sin êre swentte / daz in sulchir wîs geschach. Dusburg’s account of these events is much less elaborate: PD, III.310.
rather than God—also appears as the cause of other behaviors that rob them of virtus, namely deceitfulness and cowardice. Dusburg, for example, regularly refers to Lithuanian raiding parties as *latrunculi* (bandits), implying that their military tactics and conduct are dishonorable.\footnote{\textit{PD}, III, nos. 240, 242, 281, 282, 286.} Whenever possible, he explains that the Lithuanians take advantage of the Order’s mercy and generosity. In one anecdote, Dusburg describes how a Lithuanian named Nodam, by request of the commander of Kolainiai, volunteered to dress as a woman in order to lure a passing ship of knights. When the ship was nearby, the chronicler reports that Nodam began crying out to the knights, asking them to bring him on board, and “liberate his soul, redeemed by the blood of Christ from the servitude of the devil.”\footnote{\textit{PD}, III, 239: \textit{ille miser traditor cepit voce flebili clamare et petere, ut eum ad navem sumerent, et animam suam Cristi sanguine redemptam a servitute dyaboli liberarent.}} Sworn to protect and offer asylum to new converts, the knights approached the shore at which time sixty Lithuanians who had been lying in wait stormed the ship. Such cases of trickery served as evidence of Lithuanian disregard for the rules of engagement and the moral constraints of warfare.

The chronicles also suggest that the Lithuanians are just as willing to deceive or betray their own masters and kinsmen for financial gain or personal convenience. Dusburg, for example, relates the story of a Lithuanian named Pelus who led the brothers to his master’s castle because he wanted to take revenge on his master for an insult that he felt that he had wrongly suffered.\footnote{\textit{PD}, III, 228.} Describing a Lithuanian military leader named Jesbuto who warned the knights of a Lithuanian attack, Dusburg writes, “Although this Jestbuto was with the pagans, he nevertheless loved the brothers.”\footnote{\textit{PD}, III, 241: \textit{Iste Jesbuto licet esset cum infidelibus, occulte tame dilexit fratres.}} Jeroschin clarifies, “Although Jesbuto lived with the heathens and was officially one of their number, in secret he was at this time an ally of the brothers.”\footnote{\textit{NJ}, lines 19,351–6 (Fischer, 218–9): \textit{Und wî dirre Jeisbûte / bi den heiden wonte / unde zûzin donte / in offînlicher schichte, / doch er in tougir pflichte / was in de zît der brûdre vrûnt.}}
chroniclers appear to have mixed feelings about such acts of betrayal. On the one hand, both authors commend Jesbuto for helping the knights. On the other hand, they portray him as breaking the sacred bond of camaraderie, a shameful act even for a Lithuanian. Both chroniclers report that Jesbuto eventually returned to Lithuania and attacked the land marshal the following year.\textsuperscript{160} As a two-time traitor, his subsequent death in the ensuing battle seems to be a fitting punishment for his sins.

Nearly all Lithuanian customs and habits seem to be deceptive in one way or another. In describing the pagan lifestyle, Dusburg effectively cautions the reader not to mistake the guise of pagan modesty for true humility. He mentions that the pagans do not care for superfluous or expensive dress; they do not require soft beds or extravagant food; they drink simply water, mead, and horse milk.\textsuperscript{161} He adds that they are very hospitable; they show their guests every courtesy and offer them all their food and drink.\textsuperscript{162} Mažeika regards this seemingly favorable presentation of pagan customs as evidence that Dusburg respected certain pagan traits such as simplicity and generosity which he perhaps saw as dying out in contemporary Western society. Using the noble savage analogy, she compares Dusburg’s evaluation of honorable pagan characteristics to Tacitus’ presentation of the Germans.\textsuperscript{163} However, when analyzed within the larger context of the Order’s literature, these seemingly positive characteristics appear in juxtaposition to the Order’s superior qualities. For example, Dusburg stresses that while pagan clothes are modest in form, they are dirty and ill fitted. He states that they wear the same garments everyday; they pay so little attention to their appearance that they do not even notice

\textsuperscript{160} PD, III.346; NJ, lines 19,624–71.
\textsuperscript{161} PD, III.5 (p. 54). Dusburg mentions two types of mead: hydromel and braggot.
\textsuperscript{162} PD, III.5 (p. 54): \textit{Hospitalibus suis omnem humanitatem, quam possunt, ostendunt, nec sunt in domo sua esculenta vel potulenta, que non communicent eis ille vice} (To their guests they show all the courtesy that they can; there is never food or drink in their home that they do not share).
\textsuperscript{163} Mažeika, “Violent Victims?, 125.
when they put on their clothes inside-out.\textsuperscript{164} Anyone familiar with the Order’s 
\textit{regula} would have known that the knights, though dressed simply, were expected to maintain high standards of 
hygiene and appearance. The Order’s \textit{trapier} or draper, whose duties included supplying the 
brethren with properly fitted clothing and armaments—“not too long, nor too short, nor too tight, 
not too wide”\textsuperscript{165}—was appointed by the grand master himself and ranked as one of the five 
highest officials in the Order.\textsuperscript{166} In contrast to the knights, the pagan habit of sloppy dress seems 
primitive. Despite such examples of cloaked criticism, Dusburg does not, however, insinuate that 
all pagan virtues are vices in disguise as argued by Vera Matuzova or Edith Feistner.\textsuperscript{167} For 
Dusburg, pagan virtues are essentially virtues of ignorance. In other words, he implies that the 
pagans live a modest and seemingly humble lifestyle because they do not know any other way of 
being. As a result, they are predisposed to corruption. For the knights, on the other hand, 
modesty and humility are choices which require the utmost restraint, endurance, and strength of 
mind. Consequently, the knights deserve admiration and praise unlike the simple-minded pagans.

Dusburg also alerts the reader to the disingenuous nature of pagan hospitality. He illustrates that they offer their guests all their food and drink not out of sincerity, but rather because they lack a basic understanding of moderation and self-discipline. The chronicler alleges that the pagans insist that their guests drink until complete intoxication.\textsuperscript{168} He notes that it is customary for them to have drinking sessions where they continue indulging until everyone is 
drunk, including the host, guests, women, and children.\textsuperscript{169} Henry points out that pagans typically

\textsuperscript{164} PD, III.5 (p. 54).
\textsuperscript{165} \textit{Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens}, article 11, p. 39: \textit{nec largiora nec breviora nec strictiora nec largiora sint.}
\textsuperscript{166} Burleigh, \textit{Prussian Society and the German}, 45, 188; Matuzova, “Mental Frontiers,” 257.
\textsuperscript{168} PD, III.5 (p. 54).
\textsuperscript{169} PD, III.5 (p. 54).
celebrate the death of important men with drinking bouts.\textsuperscript{170} The Lithuanian tendency to excess, which contrasts sharply with the Order’s exceptional self-control, is moreover presented by the chroniclers as a quality that frequently leads to serious calamity. For example, when the traitor Pelus led the knights to his master’s castle, they were delighted to find an entire Lithuanian wedding party inebriated and sleeping. The small retinue of knights thus reportedly killed seventy drunken Lithuanian princes and returned home with a hundred horses and a multitude of gold and silver.\textsuperscript{171}

Most notably, crusade chroniclers portrayed their pagan adversaries as incapable of mastering their fear, and hence, prone to extreme cowardice, the most unmanly of qualities. Henry jests that during battle, the Lithuanians “showed themselves as swift in flight as they were agile in war.”\textsuperscript{172} Similarly, Dusburg reports that when threatened their “hearts patter” and they throw down their weapons and flee, abandoning their fellow cohorts.\textsuperscript{173} Among the wide range of cowardly offenses attributed to the Lithuanians, desertion and surrender seem to be the most common. Henry, for instance, draws a clear distinction between the Order’s courageous actions and the shame of Lithuanian cowardice. Describing a standard confrontation between the Order and the Lithuanians, he writes that when the Lithuanians heard the German war cry, “seize, ravage, and kill,” they became so frightened by the noise that they immediately threw down their weapons and fled.\textsuperscript{174} On the other hand, when the knights heard the Lithuanian war cry, Henry

\begin{footnotes}
\item[170] HCL, XVII.5.
\item[171] PD, III.228.
\item[172] HCL 5 (Brundage, 73): \textit{sicut agiles ad bellum, sic veloces efficiuntur ad fugam}.
\item[173] PD, III, nos. 277, 310, 329.
\item[174] HCL, XXV.4 (Brundage, 202–3): \textit{Theuthonici primo venerunt ad prelium, et Letti omnes subsequebantur clamantes, sicut edocti fuerant, lingua Theuthonicorum, ut caperent, raperent, interficerent. Quo clamore nimis territi Letones […] conversi sunt in fugam, et cecidit fortissimus eorum et ex aliis fere centum, et ceteri proiectis armis fugerunt per silvas} (“the Germans went first into battle and all the Letts [Lettigallians] followed, shouting as they had been taught in the German language to seize, ravage, and kill. The Lithuanians were extremely frightened by the noise […] They turned in flight and the strongest of them fell, along with about a hundred of the others. The rest threw away their weapons and fled through the woods”).
\end{footnotes}
insists, “Not fearing their yell and their numbers, and confiding in God, raised their banners and suddenly rushed upon them.”

The author of the LRC evokes the same dichotomy. He portrays the brethren as “yearning for battle like a hungry falcon,” while the Lithuanians flee in various directions.

Describing an ambush by the knights, Jeroschin alleges that “they gave the heathen such a shock that immediately there was a great noise and people began falling over themselves to run away, just like a flock of starlings when someone scares them.”

Dusburg adds that even in cases when the Lithuanians outnumber the knights or when there is no apparent danger, the Lithuanians still tend to flee. For example, he reports that when six Lithuanian guards at Bisena castle noticed two approaching knights, they instantly abandoned their posts in fear.

According to Dusburg and Jeroschin, extreme cowardice also leads to disloyalty. When a small group of knights came upon the Lithuanian troops as they were returning home from a raid on Dobrzyń, Dusburg states that “they became so timid and terrified that no one waiting for anyone, ran by day and night.” Describing the same event, Jeroschin asserts, “The army became so afraid that every one of them ran home as best they could: friends deserted their friends and no-one waited for anyone else. Many horses and men died during this headlong rush home.”

This image of Lithuanian deserters is especially poignant in contrast to the following:

---

175 HCL, XI.5 (Brundage, 73): Quorum clamorem et multitudinem non verentes christiani et in Deo confidentes elevatis vexillis subito irruunt in ipsos.

176 LRC, lines 1,824–5 (Smith and Urban, 26): zû strîte sie alle gert / recht als ein hungeric vedi / rspil.

177 NJ, lines 23,712–8 (Fischer, 258): Daz gab den heiden sulchin schric, / daz als in eins ougen blic / wart ein gebreich der lutie pur, / dâmit ouch nam di dî den snur / gar zustrouwit an dî vlucht / recht als eine starentrucht, / sô man si vorsch chooser tût.

178 PD, III.329.

179 PD, III.277: que facta fuerant eis a fratribus, adeo meticulosi facti sunt, et territi quod nullus alium expectavit, sed cursitando per diem et noctem.

180 NJ, lines 21,273–82 (Fischer, 237): daz her zumâle wart so blas / und sô gar vorzagete, / daz iclichir jagete / kegn lande, swî er mochte baz; / vrûnt dâ vrûndis gar vorgaz, / nîman des andrin beite. / Dâ wurdin an der reite / ilende kegn lande wert / beide lutie unde pfert / vil vorterbit von der schar.
entry, which relates the story two knights who were so devoted to each other that when one died, the other begged God to let him die too.\footnote{PD, III.278; NJ, lines 21,288–345.}

The courageous-cowardly antithesis finds further parallel in the chronicles’ formulation of a “good” and “bad” death. By and large, death scenes appear to serve as a reminder of the ideological boundary between moral excellence and moral deficiency. The death of Christians who fight with courage and endurance is presented as a spiritual reward and celebrated as martyrdom. Henry maintains that the souls of Christians killed by pagans rejoice because in death they join the company of the holy martyrs.\footnote{HCL, XIX.3. On Henry’s conception of death and various typologies of death and dying in his chronicle, see Marek Tamm, “Martyrs and Miracles: Depicting Death in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia,” in Crusading and Chronicle Writing, 135–156. On the development and character of the cult of martyrdom and the crusades, see Ibid., 15, n. 72.} The author of the \textit{LRC} claims that there is no need to mourn the dead “for they exchanged this wretched life for the kingdom of heaven. As comrades of the martyrs their joy shall never fade, but rather endure forever. There is no doubt that they shall rejoice with God.”\footnote{LRC, lines 4,518–26 (Smith and Urban, 58–9): \textit{ich enwil sie nimmer geclagen: / sie haben diz vil cranke leben / um daz himelrîche gegeben. / die vreude die mûz êwic stân, / nimmer mër mac sie vergân, / ir vreude mûz dâ wesen grôz, / sie sint der merterêre genôz; / daz, ist sunder zwîvel sô: / mît gote suhn sie wesen vrô.}} Describing the aftermath of the battle of Garoza (1287), the chronicler likewise states, “It would not be right to mourn all the Brothers who have been slain in Livonia. Many chivalrous warriors become soldiers of God. They save their souls and enter the kingdom of heaven when they receive the gift of martyrdom.”\footnote{LRC, lines 10,759–66 (Smith and Urban, 129): solde man die brûdere alle clagen, / die zû Nieflant sint geslagen, / vor wâr sô tête man unrecht. / manch vromer helt wirt gotes knecht, / der die sêle dâ genert / und zû dem himelricht vert / von der martir crône, / die manchem wirt zû lône.}

Sightings of apparitions seem to have been common after the death of an especially courageous knight or gruesome battle. According to Dusburg, two doves hovered above the body of Gundrum, the above-mentioned knight who had been disemboweled.\footnote{PD, III.315.} After the battle of Löbau (1263) during which the Prussian land marshal was killed, Jeroschin reports that a local
hermit witnessed a vision of many candles and a bright light spreading across the battlefield. The chronicler interprets the apparition as a sign confirming that “the Christian army which had shed its blood there had already received from Christ the good King the crown of martyrdom.”\footnote{NJ, lines, 12,826–30 (Fischer, 153): daz dî cristinlîche schar / di dâ vorgozzin hât ir blût / von Cristô dem kunge gât / intpfangin hatte schöne / der martirâte crône. See also PD, III.123.} In this instance, the “crown of martyrdom” serves as a metaphor likening the Order’s self-sacrifice to imitatio Christi.\footnote{On the development of the ideal of imitatio Christi, see Giles Constable, Three Studies in Medieval and Social Thought (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 143–248. On crusading as an imitation of Christ’s life and death, see Chris T. Maier, “Portraying the Crusade,” chap. 4 in Crusade Propaganda and Ideology: Model Sermons for the Preaching of the Cross (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 59–63; C. Matthew Phillips, “Crucified with Christ: The Imitation of the Crucified Christ and Crusading Spirituality,” in Crusades: Medieval Worlds in Conflict, ed. Thomas F. Madden, James L. Naus, and Vincent Ryan (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 25–33; William Purkis, “Elite and Popular Perceptions of Imitatio Christi in Twelfth-Century Crusade Spirituality,” in Elite and Popular Religion, ed. K. Copper and J. Gregory, Studies in Church History 42 (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2006), 54–64. On the image of the crusader as consumed by love and ready to die for divine justice, see Jonathan Riley-Smith, “Crusading as an Act of Love,” History 65 (1980): 177–92.} This motif recurs throughout Order’s fourteenth-century literature.\footnote{Fischer discusses imitatio Christi and the Teutonic Order’s fourteenth-century literature in Di Himels Rote, 79–94.} Dusburg, for example, distinguishes the Order as the “one and particular” knighthood that “will suffer on behalf of Christ when the cross is shamed.”\footnote{PD, I.1 (p. 28): Hec enim milicia celi et terre typo prefigurata sola et precipua esse videtur, que vicem Christi in opprobrio sue crucis doleat (In fact this knighthood, made in the image of the heaven and earth, seems to be the one and particular which will suffer on behalf of Christ when the cross is shamed). Dusburg is quoting the Order’s regula: Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens, prologue 3, p. 24.} In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the notion of imitatio was intimately tied to missionary ideology. The life of a monk-knight was understood as a model of the vita apostolica. As mentioned in previous chapter, the author of the LRC directly compared the Livonian mission with acts of the early apostles. It is not surprising therefore that chroniclers also likened the trials and tribulations of the crusaders and the glory gained by their martyrdom to a physical imitation of Christ’s suffering. The knight, who fearlessly confronted the pagans, was essentially seen as imitating Christ both in his motivation to fight evil for the love of God, and also in his death, sacrificing himself for the good of mankind.
While explicit references to martyrdom and frequent allusions to Christ’s suffering emphasized the redemptive nature of the knights’ deaths, the Lithuanians were typically presented as dying in the most shameful manner. All the chroniclers agree that when faced with “unexpected circumstance or insurmountable difficulties, they commit suicide.” Henry, for example, reports that when the Lithuanians came to the Daugava River as they fled from the knights, they found the crossing to be too difficult and either drowned or hanged themselves in the forest. The author of the LRC stresses the irrational nature of such acts of suicide. He tells the story of three Lithuanians who fled a battle, returned safely home, and then hanged themselves anyway. According to Dusburg, Lithuanians commit suicide almost every time that they encounter Christian forces unexpectedly. When the Lithuanian army fled after a sudden ambush, Dusburg writes that some of them died of hunger, others of thirst, and the rest “hanged themselves in sorrow.” Likewise, when the knights attacked a Lithuanian raiding party near Löbau, the survivors fled in fear. As they made their journey home, some of them drowned, others died of hunger, and the rest “hanged themselves in sorrow.” Similarly, when the Christian army caught up to the Lithuanians as they returned home from a raid on Bartia with 1200 captives, they immediately threw down their weapons and fled. Once again, Dusburg alleges that some of them drowned and the rest “hanged themselves in sorrow.”

The Lithuanians, as an example of a people incapacitated by fear and prone to acts of disloyalty, sabotage, and treason, provided a constant counterpart against which the Order could build its own identity and justify claims of superior bravery, loyalty, and righteous cause. While,

---

190 PD, III.5 (p. 55): Quando ex inopinato rerum eventu aliquam immoderatam incurrerunt turbacionem, se ipsos occidere consueverunt.
191 HCL, XXV.4.
192 LRC, lines 1,542–6.
193 PD, III.241: in solitudine quidam pre tristicia se suspenderunt.
194 PD, III.282: ceteri se pre tristicia suspenderunt.
195 PD, III.310: pre dolore se suspendentes.
for the most part, the image of the Lithuanians advanced by the chroniclers followed conventional patterns of representations of the pagan Other, the incorporation of chivalric concepts was an important new addition to an old polemic. The use of chivalric imagery transformed the rhetoric of admonition from one largely based upon theological discourse into one easily recognized by a secular courtly audience. Stirring descriptions of the heroic knights and their victories over the powerful yet dastardly Lithuanians thus confirmed the honorable nature of the Order and served as further proof of its virtuous nature and activities.

Conclusions

In short, the construct of the sinful and unmanly Lithuanian Other effectively bolstered Christian claims to moral and ethical superiority. Using a combination of theology and contemporary secular knightly ideals, by the mid-fourteenth century, crusade chroniclers had fully recast the Order’s war against the Lithuanians as a battle of good against evil, the noble warrior against the ignoble savage. The image of the Lithuanians as having rejected godly peace and bent on destroying Christianity effectively confirmed that the Lithuanians were undeserving of the rights of “honorable” men. It could therefore be argued that they needed to be either forcefully subjugated or eliminated in order to prevent further injury to Christendom. Filling their works with references to Lithuanian raids, robbery, theft, and human sacrifice, crusade chroniclers thus urged Christians to hurry to the rescue of the faith and the faithful.
Chapter 4

Sources: The Chronicles of Rus'

Lithuania’s offensive drive eastward did not go unnoticed in the chronicles (letopisi) of its Rus'ian neighbors. Occasional references to Lithuania (Litva) and the Lithuanian lands (zemli Litovskii) can even be found in the earliest known Rus'ian chronicle—Povest' vremennykh let. However, it was not until the thirteenth century when the Lithuanians began to actively push eastward into Rus'ian lands that they became prominent characters in Rus'ian sources. By and large, medieval Rus'ian chroniclers showed interest in Lithuania only at times of direct contact or conflict. As a result, apart from a few notable exceptions, we are told very little about internal developments in Lithuania. This is especially striking when we consider the fact that Rus'ian chronicle writers seem to have made no attempt to explain or admonish Lithuanian pagan practices like their counterparts in the West. Finding it difficult to believe that these authors were unaware of what was happening in the lands of their direct Baltic neighbor and political competitor, modern scholars have been inclined to attribute the absence of such information to

---

1 It is generally accepted that chronicle writing in Rus' began at the end of the eleventh century. The texts relevant to this study, namely chronicles dating from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, survive only as copies in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century compilations (svodi). Whenever possible, the problem of contemporaneity is addressed. A multitude of studies have been published on Old Rus'ian chronicles and chronicle writing. For a general introduction, see for example the following classic studies: M. D. Priselkov, Istoriia russkogo letopisaniia XI–XVvv. (1940; repr., St. Petersburg: DB, 1996), especially pp. 5–168; D. S. Likhachev, Russkie letopisi i ikh kul'turno-istoricheskoe znachenie (Moscow: Izdat. Akademii nauk SSSR, 1947); A. N. Nasanov, Istoriia russkogo letopisaniia XI–nachala XVIII veka: ocherki i issledovannia (Moscow: Nauka, 1969), especially pp. 12–274. For a more contemporary approach, see P. P. Tolochko, Russkie letopisi i letopisty X–XIIIvv. (St. Petersburg: Aleteia 2003); G. M. Prokhorov, Drevnerusskoe letopisanie: vzgliad v nepovtorimoe (St. Petersburg: Izdat. Olega Abyshko, 2014). For a general introduction in English, see Dmitry Obolensky, “Early Russian Literature (1000–1300),” in An Introduction to Russian Language and Literature, Companion to Russian Studies, ed. Robert Auty and Dimitri Obolensky, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 56–89.
intentional omission by the chroniclers. While questions of authorial agency remain complicated, it is possible to draw a few conclusions. Much like the chronicles of the Teutonic Order, Rus'ian chronicles were also intended to provide justification for the activities of the individual or institution that commissioned their production. However, the way in which these texts reported events is not indicative of any pervasive overarching ideological agenda like in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order. Instead, the chronicles of Rus' reveal that the immediate context of composition, including the slightest changes in the local political, economic, and social climate, could play a central role in the depiction of Lithuania. Before examining specific Lithuanian evidence, it is therefore essential to first consider the origins and nature of the Rus'ian chronicle writing tradition as well as the context of its later development, especially in Novgorod and Galicia-Volhynia.

Setting the Stage: Povest' vremennykh let (PVL)

The Povest' vremennykh let (hereafter PVL), also known as the so-called Primary Chronicle or Tale of Bygone Years, is one the most important extant sources on the history of Kievan Rus' from around 850 to 1110. The earliest known text of the PVL dates to 1116 and is

---

3 On the intended purpose and function of medieval Rus'ian chronicles, see T. V. Guimon, “Dlia chego pisalis' russkie letopisi?” Zhurnal FIPP 1:2 (1998): 8–16. Guimon challenges the traditional and widely accepted interpretation of M. D. Priselkov who argued that chronicles were political texts intended to legitimize the authority of the ruling institution by recording its history, genealogy, and achievements: Istoriia russkogo letopisaniia, 37. On the contrary, Guimon maintains that chronicles were intended to portray fixed precedents (e.g., contracts, laws, private acts, etc.) by which all Rus'ians were expected to abide. Every chronicler presumably represented some political corporation (e.g., princely family, urban community, episcopal see, etc.) and its objective would have been to ensure that future generations of that corporation have a record of precedents that could help them in their struggle for power against potential challengers. Chronicles were thus intended to provide information about the past to solve the practical problems of the future.
4 The two oldest extant versions of the PVL are Lav. (see below n. 6) cols. 1–286 and Ipat. (see below n. 7) cols. 1–285. As the older of the two, the Lav. is considered more authoritative. However, because this study closely examines other texts contained in the Ipat., including the GVL, when referencing the PVL, two citations will be provided, one corresponding to the Lav. and the other corresponding to the Ipat. All translations are mine. The PVL
attributed to Sylvester, the hegumen of St. Michael’s Monastery near Kiev. It forms the first part of the fourteenth-century Laurentian Chronicle (Lavrent'evskaia letopis’). A second version from 1118, most likely prepared for Prince Mstislav Vladimirovich of Kiev, survives in the fifteenth-century Hypatian Chronicle (Ipat'evskaia letopis’). Until the nineteenth century, the


5 The text has been attributed to Sylvester based on a colophon in Lav., 286,1–7.

6 Lavrent'evskaia letopis’ in PSRL I, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2001), cited hereafter as Lav. by column number. The Lavrent'evskaia letopis’ or Laurentian chronicle codex (c. 1377) was named after the monk Laurentius. The manuscript colophon states that the document was prepared with the blessings of bishop Dionysius of Suzdal' between January 14 and March 20, 1377 by the monk Laurentius in Nizhegorod for the Grand Prince of Suzdal Dmitry Konstantinovich: Lav., col. 488. In accordance with the analysis of Priselkov who noted the presence of characteristically pro-Tver tone in the events listed from the late thirteenth to the early fourteenth century, it is generally accepted that Laurentius copied the now lost codex of Prince Mikhail Yaroslavich of Tver (Grand Prince of Vladimir, r. 1304–1308): “Istoriiia rukopisi Lavrent'evskoi letopisi i ee izdaniia,” Uchenye zapiski Leningradskogo Gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo instituta 19 (1939): 175–97. The surviving manuscript is incomplete. Codicological studies have identified a total of 18 missing folios, which account for three chronological gaps in the record: 898–921 (12 missing folios), 1263–1283 (5 missing folios), and 1288–1293 (1 missing folio). In Lav. these gaps are substituted with material from the Radziwill chronicle, a fifteenth-century redaction of the same text. The Radziwill and Lav. are identical until 1205, when the Radziwill text ends. For general background on the composition of the Lav., see Nasanov, Istoriiia russkogo letopisania, 168–78; G. M. Porokhov, “Kodikologicheskii analiz Lavrent'evskoi letopisi,” Vspomogatel'nye istoricheskie distsipliny 4 (1972): 77–104; IA. S. Lur'e, “Lavrent'evskaia letopis’—svod nachala XIVv.,” Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literatury 29 (1974): 50–67; B. M. Kloss, “Predislavie k izdaniiu 1997,” Lav., G–N; Alan Timberlake, “Who Wrote the Laurentian Chronicle (1177–1203)?,” Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie 59 (2000): 237–66.

7 Ipat'evskaia letopis’ in PSRL II, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2001), cited hereafter as Ipat. by column number. The Ipat'evskaia letopis’ or Hypatian chronicle codex (c. 1428) was named after the Monastery of St. Hypatius at Kostroma where it was discovered. The work is written in an East Slavic version of Church Slavonic with several dialectic irregularities between the five hands. A. A. Shakhmatov linked these linguistic features to northern Rus' suggesting that the Ipat. may have been compiled in Pskov: Ipat., viii. For general background on the composition of the Ipat., see Nasanov, Istoriiia russkogo, 226–45; A. A. Shakhmatov, “Predislavie (1908g.),” Ipat., iii–xvi. For a description of the Hypatian manuscript and textual analysis of the
work was believed to have been authored by Nestor (c. 1056–c. 1114), a monk from the Kiev
Monastery of the Caves, based on a reference to “Nestor, the monk of Theodsius’ Caves
Monastery” in a sixteenth-century copy of the PVL and the mention of Nestor “who wrote the
chronicle” in the patericon of the same monastery.\textsuperscript{8} Modern scholarship has cast doubt on
Nestor’s purported authorship and generally sees the surviving text as a compilation of several
earlier works. In his analysis of the PVL, Russian philologist Aleksey A. Shakhmatov established
that chronicle writing in Rus' predates Nestor. He attempted to reconstruct a proto-Nestor version
of the PVL known as the Nachalnyï svod (c. 1095).\textsuperscript{9} Shakhmatov’s proposed stemmata of the
genealogical relationship between the extant versions of the PVL and their hypothetical
predecessors forms the foundation for modern textological studies.\textsuperscript{10} His work greatly influenced
the well-known Soviet scholar Dmitry S. Likhachev and, though slightly modified, continues to
find present-day proponents in the likes of Alexei A. Gippius, Alan Timberlake, and Tatiana L.
Vilkul.\textsuperscript{11}

Lithuania is mentioned three times in the PVL—twice in the introductory section and
once under the year 1040 where we are told that Yaroslav the Wise “went out against

---

\textsuperscript{8} Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, introduction to The Russian Primary Chronicle, 6.
\textsuperscript{9} A. A. Shakhmatov, “O nachal'nom Kievskom letopisnom svode,” Chteniia v Imperatorskom oshchestve
istorii i drevnosti Rossiiskih pri Moskovskom universitete 182:3 (1897): 1–58; A. A. Shakhmatov, Razyskaniia o
drevneishikh russkikh letopisnykh svodakh (1908; reprint, The Hague: Europe Printing, 1967); A. A. Shakhmatov,
“‘Povest' vremennykh let’ i ee istochniki,” Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoï literatury 4 (1940): 9–150.
\textsuperscript{10} For a critical discussion of Shakhmatov’s stemmata and his successors, see the introduction to The Povest’
vremennykh let: An Interlinear Collation and Paradosis, xxxii–xlv.
\textsuperscript{11} Likhachev, Russkie letopisi, 10–171; Timberlake, “Redactions of the Primary Chronicle,” 196–218; Tatiana
several articles on this subject, see for example, “O kritike teksta i novom perevode-rekonstruktsii ‘Povesti
vremennykh let’,” Russian Linguistics 26 (2002): 63–126; and “Dva nachala Nachal'noi letopisi: k istorii
kompozitsii ‘Povesti vremennykh let,’” in Verenitsa liter: K 60-letiiu V. M. Zhivova, ed. A. M. Moldovan (Moscow:
IAzyki slavianskoï kul'tury: 2006), 57–96. For a general overview of past scholarship and the present state of
research, see Donald Ostrowski, “The Nachal'nyj Svod Theory and the Povest' vremennykh let,” Russian Linguistics
Lithuania.” No explicit reason is given for this campaign. The PVL classifies the Lithuanians as one of the “gentile” nations (ӕзъци; æzytsi or языци; iazytsi) who inhabit the “lands of the north” and who, like the Slavs, belong to the “race of Japheth” but are distinct in language and subordinate status. Lithuania is listed along with several other Baltic and Finnic lands as a tributary of Rus. The absence of any meaningful references to Lithuania suggests that the territory remained marginal for most of the eleventh and twelfth centuries serving primarily as a kind of source of goods and slaves that Rus’ian princes would regularly raid.

Since the PVL describes events that predate the time frame of the present study and only mentions Lithuania a scant three times, at first glance it may seem that it is irrelevant to this investigation of the representations of Lithuania in Rus’ian sources. However, this impression is misleading. As the first known work of Rus’ian history, the PVL is a paradigmatic text which holds the key to understanding the nature and development of the Rus’ian chronicle writing tradition as well as the interests and concerns of Rus’ian chronicle writers. First, the tone and structure of the PVL greatly influenced later chronicles. Written from a clerical rather than a princely point of view, the PVL is steeped with Christian motifs and allusions to the Bible. The author uses a variety of sources, ranging from earlier Greek chronicles (George Hamartolos and John of Malalas), to treatises, apocryphal and hagiographical texts, eyewitness accounts, and personal experience. The multitude of sources works to establish the text’s authority and didactic value. To heighten the naturalism of the work, the author frequently uses dialogue and, in times

---

12 Lav., col. 153; Ipat., col. 141.  
13 Lav., cols. 4, 11; Ipat., cols. 4, 8. On the PVL’s terminology and my reasoning for translating iazytsi/ie as “gentile,” see chapter 5, pp. 163–4.  
14 Lav., col. 11; Ipat., col. 8: According to the PVL, the “gentile” nations are Chud, Merya, Ves, Muroma, Cheremis, Mordva, Perm, Pechera, Yam (Tavastians), Lithuanians, Samogitians, Curonians, Narva, and Livs.  
15 Hazzard Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, introduction to The Russian Primary Chronicle, 23–4.
of crisis, offers personal moral reflections. As discussed more fully below, many of these stylistic elements became common features of Rus'ian chronicle writing and were integrated in one form or another into later texts.

Second, the PVL defined the idea of Rus' and the Rus'ian lands thus establishing a common origin myth and history for the Rus'ian people. As Kievan Rus' gradually splintered into more and more principalities and regional centers, the memory of a shared origins and the sense of a collective destiny worked to promulgate the notion of an All Rus'ian identity equal in importance to developing local sensibilities. The PVL places the origin of Rus' in a general cosmological narrative. The chronicle begins with the biblical story of Noah’s sons and the division of the earth after the flood. The PVL identifies the people of Rus' along with the other nations of Europe, including the Lithuanians, as descendants of Noah’s son Japeth. The narrative then turns to the story of the Tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues. Here, the chronicle alludes to the origin of the Slavs and the Lithuanians as one of the original seventy-two

---


17 The importance of history writing in the creation of historical or “social memory” and its impact on the formulation and preservation of cultural identity has received much attention in medieval historiography. Matthew Innes defines “social memory” as “the shared views about the past which inform the identity of a social group and thus act as a potent guide to action in the present.”: “Memory, Orality, and Literacy in an Early Medieval Society,” Past and Present 158 (1998): 5. For an introduction to medieval scholarship on “social memory,” see Geary, introduction to Phantoms of Remembrance, 7–20. For a critical analysis on the function of annalistic sources in the construction of memory and the formulation of Christian self-awareness, see Rosamond McKitterick, “Constructing the Past in the Early Middle Ages: The Case of the Royal Frankish Annals,” Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 7 (1997): 101–29. For an overview of the present state of research on memory, see Lucie Doležalová, ed. The Making of Memory in the Middle Ages (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009). The volume contains several case studies on different regions of Europe by contributors from various academic fields. For studies on memory in Russia, see Jaroslav Pelenský, The Contest for the Legacy of Kievan Rus' (Boulder: East European monographs, 1998); Serhii Plokhy, The Origins of the Slavic Nations: Premodern Identities in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Simon Franklin and Emma Widdis, eds. National Identity in Russian Culture: An Introduction (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). These studies mostly examine the history of Kievan Rus' in terms of the formulation of modern national identity. Very little has been written on the impact of social memory on the medieval cultural identity in Rus'.

18 See below, p. 127, n. 25.

nations, and then, proceeds to provide a meticulous account of the history of the Slavic migrations and the founding of Kiev by the legendary prince Kyi. By interweaving the record of local events with biblical stories, the author interprets the emergence of Rus' as part of the universal master-narrative. The sense of the grand historical experience is reinforced by the chronicle’s dating system, commencing at the beginning of the world.

The first year explicitly mentioned is 852 (6360), when the chronicler tells us that the territory of Rus' finally received its name and the people of Rus' attacked Constantinople.\(^{20}\) Thereafter, the main subject of the text becomes the establishment of Kievan Rus' under the rule of the Rurikid dynasty. Special prominence is given to the initial expulsion of the Varangians by the Slavs, their refusal to pay tribute to foreign overlords, and their later invitation of the Varangian brothers Rurik, Sineus, and Truvor to govern in Rus'.\(^{21}\) The *PVL* emphasizes the military prowess of Rurik’s successor Oleg and celebrates his capture of the cities along the Dnieper River and campaigns against Constantinople.\(^{22}\)

The Christianization of Rus' under Vladimir in 988 and his choice of the Byzantine or the Greek form of Christianity represents a vital moment in the narrative.\(^{23}\) By stressing Vladimir’s initiative, the author seemingly plays down the role of the Byzantine church and the emperor in the conversion process, instead highlighting the self-determination of the people of Rus' and the Rurikid princes. Vladimir’s decision to receive baptism marks a pivotal step in the formation of a shared Rus'ian identity.\(^{24}\) The memory of Vladimir’s conversion and his unification of an

\(^{20}\) The chronicler tells us that he knows of this event from a Greek chronicle (в лѣтописанія Гречѣствъ): *Lav.*, col. 17; *Ipat.*, col. 12.


\(^{22}\) *Lav.*, cols. 22–41; *Ipat.*, cols. 16–31.

\(^{23}\) *Lav.*, cols. 84–121; *Ipat.*, cols. 71–106: The *PVL* explains that representatives of various religions, including Islam, Judaism, Latin and Greek Christianity, visited Vladimir in Kiev. He then sent envoys to investigate each of these religions. In the end, he chose the Greek rite.

\(^{24}\) The importance of Christianity and the memory of Vladimir’s conversion in the formation of Russian cultural identity are widely accepted in modern scholarship. Nicholas V. Riasanovsky’s statement encapsulates this idea:
otherwise loose confederation of lands under the influence of a new Christian order continued to form the basis of Rus'ian cultural identity well into the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Although later chronicles such as those produced in Novgorod or Galicia-Volhynia promoted a sense of local identity, they also stressed the common bond between all Rus'ian peoples as attested by the use of terms such as “All Rus’” (vsia Rus’) or “all the land of Rus’” (vsia zemlia Rusi). Despite the gradual fragmentation of Kievan Rus’, the idea of Rus’ as a conceptual unifying entity therefore continued to play an important cultural role. The realization of a pan-Rus’ian identity helped define in-group affiliation and set a clear line of demarcation between the Rus' and other peoples. The impact of the PVL in molding the idea of an All Rus'ian identity through the belief in a shared history and common religious heritage must not be overlooked. In fact, as discussed more thoroughly in the following chapter, the construction of the image of Lithuania in later texts was in some ways bound by the PVL’s formulation of Rus'ian identity and the relationship of Rus' to the outside world.

Lastly, the PVL created a basic framework for understanding why foreign armies frequently attack Rus'ian lands. The chronicle presents the prosperity of Rus' and its ability to overcome external threats, including the onslaught of the pagan peoples of the steppe such as the


Polovtsians (Cumans), as directly tied to princely relations. One of the pervading themes of the text is the chronicler’s sense of outrage at the lack of unity among Rus'ian princes and their cruelty toward one another. The PVL suggests that Rus' has been cursed with perpetual inter-princely strife since the time of Sviatopolk I (c. 980–1019). The text relates in great detail the events surrounding Sviatopolk’s murder of his brothers Boris and Gleb as a result of which the former earned the moniker “accursed” and the latter were canonized as the first Russian saints.26 Describing Sviatopolk’s crime, the chronicler alludes to story of Cain and Abel: “Sviatopolk was filled with lawlessness. Adopting the device of Cain,” he had his brothers murdered.27 The designation “accursed” is a reference to God’s curse of Cain and a symbol of the growing fragmentation of political power in Rus'. The author portrays the “accursed” man as one who “envies” and “seeks evil.”28 According to the PVL, such a man is “worse than a devil, because devils at least fear God, whereas an evil man neither fears God nor is ashamed before men.”29 As demonstrated in the following chapter, the epithet “accursed” was also applied to certain pagan peoples, including the Polovtsians in the PVL and the Lithuanians and Tatars in later texts. The use of such language reinforced the causal relationship between the supposed “curse” of inter-princely warfare and the onslaught of the “accursed” pagan armies.30 Describing the PVL’s treatment of the Polovtsians, Donald Ostrowski maintains, “The chronicler does not hold out much optimism for overcoming the pagans.”31 For as long as Rus'ian princes are at odds, it is implied that Rus' will remain victim to constant attacks by foreign armies. In the thirteenth

26 The cult of Boris and Gleb was very important in medieval Rus' as attested by several contemporary texts, including the Life of Boris and Gleb attributed to Nestor and The Legend of Boris and Gleb. On the cult of Boris and Gleb, see Gail Lenhoff, The Martyred Princes Boris and Gleb: A Socio-Cultural Study of the Cult and the Texts (Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, 1989).
28 Lav., col. 135; Ipat., col., 121: на злою всегда ловать...и завидша ему на злою слеми скоро суть.
29 Lav., col. 135; Ipat., col., 121: чльвъ тщас* на злою не хужи есть бъса бо бо бояется а золь чльвъ ни Ба боитса ни чльвъ са стьдить.
30 The use and meaning of the term “accursed” to describe invading foreign armies is discussed in chapter 5.
century, when Lithuanians began regularly raiding Rus'ian lands, chroniclers adapted the model of the PVL to explain the attacks.

Northern Rus': Novgorod First Chronicle (NPL)

The shifting of the political center of gravity away from Kiev led to the development of new and independent writing centers one of which was Novgorod. The Novgorod First Chronicle (Novgorodskaiia pervaiia letopis'; hereafter NPL) was composed and kept most likely at the episcopal court of the principality whose name it bears. The earliest extant copy of the NPL, the so-called Synod Scroll (Sinodal'nyi spisok) or older redaction dates to the fourteenth century and covers the period 1016–1330. Because the first sixteen quires have been lost and the surviving text begins abruptly in 1016, scholars generally agree that the original manuscript also contained the PVL. The history of the younger redaction of the NPL is quite complicated. The critical edition consists largely of the fifteenth-century Komissionnyi spisok with additions from the Moscow-Academic and Tolstovsky compilations. It begins with the PVL and ends in the year 1446. The older and younger redactions are virtually identical apart from a few linguistic

---


33 B. M. Kloss, “Predisloviie k izdaniju 2000 g.,” in NPL, v. It is generally agreed that the original manuscript consisted of thirty-seven quires of eight leaves each. The record for the years 1273–1298 is lost. Studies have shown that the Synod Scroll consists of two parts. The oldest part was most likely written in 1234 and carries the record up to 1230 (f. 1–118). The second part was written c. 1330 and covers the following century. Three additional flyleaves written in four different hands were added latter. They contain information on the years 1331–1333, 1337, 1345, and 1352.
differences.\textsuperscript{34} For the purposes of this study, the younger redaction was used sparingly, primarily to clear up lacunae in the older redaction. Keeping with established scholarly tradition, when quoting from the \textit{NPL} two references are given—the first to the older redaction and the second to the younger redaction.

Based upon the observations of mid-nineteenth-century paleographer Dmitrii I. Prozorvskii, it was traditionally believed that two scribes were involved in the production of the first part of the older redaction. He noted two colophons in the manuscript—one in 1144 and a second in 1230. On the basis of his findings, he identified two scribes—Herman Voyata, a priest of the church of St. James, and Timothy, a sacristan of the same church nearly a century later.\textsuperscript{35} Mikhail P. Pogodin pointed out the leading role of the archiepiscopal see in the production of literature in Novgorod. He concluded that even though the manuscript of the \textit{NPL} may have been prepared at the church of St. James, it was nevertheless done so under the authority of the archbishop and, most likely, kept at the archiepiscopal cathedral of St. Sophia.\textsuperscript{36} Alexei A. Gippius, one of the foremost present-day experts on medieval Russian philology, agrees that the \textit{NPL} was produced under the auspices of the archbishop’s court. He has demonstrated, however, that the first part of the existing manuscript features the handwriting of only one scribe who, in fact, was not Timothy the sacristan. As a well-known scribe, Timothy authored several known works, including the 1262 Lobkovski Prologue and five other monographs. Gippius’ paleographic analysis confirms that the hand of the \textit{NPL} does not match the other six manuscripts attributed to Timothy. He contends that as the colophon indicates, Timothy was

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{34} See chapter 5, p. 143, n. 22.
\item \textsuperscript{35} D. I. Prozorvskii, “Kto byl pervym pisatelem pervoi Novgorodskoi letopisi?,” \textit{Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia} (July 1852): pt. 2, p. 23 as cited by Gippius, “K istorii slozheniia teksta Novgorodskoi pervoi letopisi,” 5.
\item \textsuperscript{36} M. P. Pogodin, “Novgorodskie letopisi,” \textit{Izvestiia po russkomu iazyku i slovesnosti} 1:3 (1857): 228 as cited by Gippius, “K istorii slozheniia teksta Novgorodskoi pervoi letopisi,” 5.
\end{itemize}
indeed involved in the compilation of the *NPL*, but not as the primary scribe. Rather, he oversaw its composition, acting as a kind of “notary” appointed to manage the production of archiepiscopal texts.\(^{37}\)

Gippius also discerned that the chronicle consists of several segments varying in length from seven to thirty-five pages, distinct in grammatical and lexical style. He found that these segments correspond chronologically to changes in the archbishop’s office. Given the presence of only one distinguishable hand, he postulated that the entire manuscript was copied at the end of the twelfth century and then annually maintained under Timothy’s supervision until the year 1234.\(^ {38}\) Building on Gippius’ research, Timofey V. Guimon determined that the systematization of record keeping in Novgorod coincided with the growing power of see.\(^ {39}\) Keeping with the latest academic trends in Russian textual criticism, this study assumes that the entries in the *NPL* were in fact recorded on an annual or semi-annual basis in the archbishop’s scriptorium and that the record keeping was overseen by a direct appointee of the archbishop. The implication is twofold. First, unlike most of the other chronicles discussed here, which were written in retrospect and represent a more or less uniform position, the *NPL* reflects the most contemporary attitudes, which, as seen in chapters 5 and 8, were subject to change in accordance with the politics of the reigning archbishop. Second, because an official loyal to the see oversaw the writing process, it is reasonable to assume that while different scribes were involved in its composition, the text nevertheless always expresses the explicit viewpoint of the see of Novgorod.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 68–70.
The office of the bishop (vladyka) of Novgorod was established in the late tenth century shortly after the Christianization of Rus'. It remained a bishopric until 1165 when Metropolitan Cyril raised Bishop Ilya to archiepiscopal dignity and Novgorod became the first archdiocese in Rus'. 40 Prior to the annexation of the city by Moscow in the late fifteenth century, the archbishop was elected by the drawing of lots or chosen by the veche. 41 After his election, he would travel to Kiev for consecration by the Metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus'. Local elections gave the archbishops considerable autonomy in both clerical and secular matters. Following the dismissal of the prince in 1136 and the establishment of a republic-like government, the archbishop became one of the chief political figures in the city. As the prince’s powers declined, the archbishop’s political influence grew. He signed treaties on behalf of the city, headed embassies to the Horde in the thirteenth century, governed the outlying districts, managed the city’s treasury, oversaw the standardization of weights and measures in the marketplaces, supervised civic as well as ecclesiastical construction projects, commanded the local militia and city police, and administered the ecclesiastical courts which in Novgorod, unlike elsewhere in Rus', also adjudicated cases of a secular nature. 42

While the NPL emits a fierce sense of Novgorodian loyalty and presents Novgorod as one-of-a-kind and the greatest of all the Rus'ian principalities, the text also maintains Novgorod’s essential belonging to All Rus'. On the one hand, the chronicle draws a clear distinction between Rus' and Novgorod. We hear again and again how the “men of Novgorod” went into the “land of Rus’” on campaign. 43 On the other hand, the NPL also presents Novgorod as belonging to a common Rus'ian culture. The chronicle laments misfortunes that befall other

---

40 NPL, pp. 31, 219.
43 NPL, pp. 24, 28, 32, 36, 37, 58, 208, 214, 219, 226, 227, 259.
areas of Rus’ (e.g., the Tatar invasion or dynastic struggles in neighboring principalities) as
genuine tragedies affecting all Rus’ian people. Likewise, Novgorod’s hardships (e.g., famine or
conflict among the boyars) are interpreted as having an affect on the whole of Rus’. The NPL
thus provides us with a view into the life of a Rus’ian polity with a tripartite identity as an
autonomous regional center, intimately tied to the metapolitical entity of All Rus’, and defined by
its omnipresent ecclesia.

Written in a strict business-like style, the NPL lacks many of the ornamental features of
the PVL. It records such events as the appointment of archbishops, metropolitans, princes, and
local officials as well as the foundation of churches and towns, construction of fortifications, and
urban beautification projects. The welfare of Novgorod is of central importance. Many entries
comment on the price of bread perhaps in an effort to show the city’s growing prosperity.44 Other
tables keep track of periods of famine, drought, flood, fire, and the outbreak of disease.

Thematicall, the NPL is very similar to the PVL. Much of the text is dedicated to the description
of hostilities among rival princely dynasties and the incursion of foreign armies such as those of
the Lithuanians, Swedes, Teutonic Knights, and Tatars. For the most part, the NPL blames the
tragedies that befall the principality upon internecine princely warfare. Like the PVL, the NPL is
therefore very critical of princes and presents pagan raids, especially the devastation caused by
the Lithuanians, as punishment for the princes’ inability to live together in peace. Observing
strong similarities between the PVL and NPL, Gippius argues that the authors of the NPL used
the PVL as a direct blueprint for describing and rationalizing pagan raids.45 As discussed further
in the following chapter, the treatment of the Lithuanians in the NPL closely aligns in form and

44 NPL, pp. 21, 33, 39, 66, 69, 205, 221, 229, 271, 277, 354.
meaning to the example of the *PVL*, suggesting that Novgorodian chroniclers not only used the *PVL* as a stylistic guide but also imitated elements of its thematic structure.

**Southwestern Rus’**: *Galician-Volhynian Chronicle (GVL)*

Contemporary with the *NPL*, the *Galician-Volhynian Chronicle* (*Galitsko-Volynskaia letopis’*; hereafter *GVL*) reflects a very different writing tradition, also descendent from the *PVL*, but adjusted to meet different political needs. The *GVL* forms the last part of the *Hypatian Chronicle*. Unlike other Rus’ian chronicles, it is written in narrative rather than annalistic form and lacks a strict chronological schema. As a result, the text has a distinct poetic quality. It is divided into two parts: (1) the Galician (1205–1259), which rather than a chronicle proper consists of the biography of the Prince Danilo Romanovich (r. 1205–1264); and (2) the Volhynian (1259–1290), which celebrates the deeds of Danilo’s brother Vasilko Romanovich (d. 1264) and his son Vladimir (d. 1289). Ukrainian scholar Mykhailo S. Hrushevsky was among the first to claim that the *GVL* was in fact composed as two separate works. His analysis influenced

---


47 Because of a confusion of years and the absence of dates in the sixteenth-century Khlebnikov version of the *GVL*, it is thought that dates were most likely added only during the creation of the Hypatian manuscript in c. 1428. Oleksiy P. Tolochko argues that the author of the Hypatian chronicle misunderstood the purpose of the *GVL*. He viewed the *GVL* not as a continuous literary narrative but as a defective chronicle. He thus took it upon himself to “fix” the chronicle by adding dates by comparing the events described to other extant chronicles such as the *Sofia First Chronicle*. When dates were unavailable, he substituted transitional phrases such as “then,” “after,” “at that time,” etc: “Proiskhozhdenie khronologii Ipat’evskogo spiska Galitsko-Volynskoi letopisi,” *Paleoslavica* 13:1 (2005): 81–108. The absence of dates in the Khlebnikov chronicle has led some scholars to conclude that the version of the *GVL* in Khlebnikov compilation predates that of the Hypatian: Ibid., 84–5.

48 On the border between the Galician and Volhynian sections and a review of past literature on the subject, see
Lev V. Cherepnin who suggested that the Galician part consists not of separate annalistic entries, but was actually written as one continuous narrative dedicated explicitly to Danilo Romanovich. Cherepnin also noted a change in tone between the two parts that he argued was obvious even to the average reader because the same accolades used in the first part to describe Danilo, in the second, are used to describe his brother Vasilko. Moreover, Danilo is referred to as “king” (король; korol’) in the first, but only as “prince” (князь; knyaz’) in the second.49

Following in the footsteps of Cherepnin, present-day Ukrainian historian Mykola F. Kotliar also subjected the chronicle to an in-depth textological analysis. He likewise concluded that the work consists of two texts, fundamentally distinct in scope and character, compiled at the end of the thirteenth century. He also suggested that the final compiler of the work likely added his own content in order to provide the overall text with a coherent structure, especially in lieu of exact dates.50 As a work that was later reconfigured and modified, the GVL is fundamentally different from the NPL in both style and composition. When examining the GVL, it is therefore important to remember that in its extant form, the text represents several layers of interpretation, sympathetic either to Danilo or Vasilko, and adjusted to meet the needs of late thirteenth-century compilers.

The chronicle begins in 1205 with a eulogy to Grand Prince Roman. The author describes him as “Prince Roman the Great, the unforgettable Autocrat of all of Rus’, who conquered all the heathen nations and at the same time wisely kept the Divine commandments.”51 He then compares Roman to Vladimir Monomakh, whom he credits with conquering the “entire” land of

51 Ipat., col. 715–6 (Perfecky, 17): великаго князя Романа приснопамятнаго самодержца всєа Роуси идольваша всымъ поганьскымъ дэтько оума моудростью одаща по заповьдемъ Бжимь.
the Polovtsians and driving out its inhabitants, the “accursed sons of Hagar.” The main purpose of the text is to honor the achievements of the Romanovich dynasty, in particular Roman’s sons Danilo and Vasilko who, like their father, are also described as great conquerors determined to defend Rus' from pagan invasions. Unlike the PVL and the NPL, the GVL distinctly lacks religious and theological references. It has been suggested that an official of the prince’s chancellery may have written the text. The authors of both parts clearly support the princes in their fight against boyar rule. The term “godless” (безбожныя; bezbozhnyia) used by the PVL and the NPL in reference to pagan invaders is almost exclusively reserved in the GVL for boyar factions opposed to the rule of Danilo. More interested in the activities of the princes than the local ecclesia, the GVL is filled with lively descriptions of battles, military decorations, armor, weapons, and battlefield maneuvers. War is presented as necessary and glorious. The chronicle praises values such as military prowess and courage, and considers loyalty to the prince of paramount importance.

Unlike the NPL, which espouses the coexistence of a Novgorodian identity alongside that of All Rus', the GVL construes regional Galician identity as essentially All Rus'ian. In other words, the chronicle presents Galicia as the “new” Kiev and Danilo as the rightful successor to the grand princely throne and principal guardian of the lands of Rus'. Omeljan Pritsak draws attention to what he calls Danilo’s “appropriation” of Kiev’s past as evidenced by the chronicler’s substitution of the “national” term Rus' for the local territorial designation of

---

52 Ipat., col. 716: тогда Володимерь Мономахъ пиль золото“шоломомъ Донь и приемно землю ихъ всю и загнавшю щканыя Агарыы. The connection between Monomakh and Danilo and the imagery of war against the pagans is discussed further in chapter 5.


54 See chapter 5, p. 175.
Galicia.\textsuperscript{55} The chronicle refers to Danilo’s people and army as “the Rus’” (Роусь; Rous’) and portrays Danilo as wielding the “military banner of Rus’” (Роускае хоро; Rouskæ khorou).\textsuperscript{56} In the \textit{GVL}, the term Rus’ thus designates the imperium of Danilo, implying the priority of Galicia and the rights of its prince to exert his will upon All Rus’. Cherepnin notes that Danilo is painted as a martyr for the Rus’ian land, from birth continuously at war against the Poles, Hungarian, Lithuanians, Yotvingians, and other foreign peoples who threaten the welfare of All Rus’.\textsuperscript{57}

Despite unmistakable stylistic differences, one of the central themes of \textit{GVL} remains the struggle of Rus’ against external enemies. However, neither the attacks of the Lithuanians nor the Tatars are presented as wholly catastrophic. While the \textit{NPL} portrays Lithuanian and Tatar invasions as punishment for the sins of the people of Rus’ and discord among princes, the \textit{GVL} provides a very different interpretation. In fact, as demonstrated in chapters 5 and 6, descriptions of Lithuanians and Lithuanian attacks act primarily as a point of contrast to the character and activities of the “good” king Danilo. Much more so than in the \textit{NPL}, stories of Rus’ian victories over the Lithuanians in the \textit{GVL} therefore work to underscore the excellence of the Romanovich dynasty and Danilo’s skillful defense of the lands of All Rus’.

\textbf{Conclusions}

Although Rus’ian chronicles reflect a range of viewpoints, some sympathetic to an ecclesiastical institution and others to the local princes, all the texts described above are nonetheless part of a distinct tradition that can be traced back to the \textit{PVL}. The \textit{PVL} provided

\textsuperscript{55} Omeljan Pritsak, introduction to \textit{The Old Rus’ Kievan and Galician-Volhynian Chronicles: The Ostroz’kyj (Xlebnikov) and Cetvertyns’kyj (Pogodin) Codices} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1990), xxx.

\textsuperscript{56} Ipat., cols. 757, 812; Pritsak, introduction to \textit{The Old Rus’ Kievan and Galician-Volhynian Chronicles}, xxx.

\textsuperscript{57} Cherepnin, “Letopisets Daniloa Galitskogo,” 229.
Rus'ian chroniclers with a framework for understanding and studying the world. Most importantly, it established the idea of Rus' as a conceptual space identified by a shared culture and memory. Later chronicles used this notion of a common bond to distinguish Rus' from its enemies, including the Lithuanians. Descriptions of the Lithuanians, their frequent attacks, and the plight of the Rus'ian princes to defend the lands of Rus', though represented very differently in the _NPL_ and the _GVL_, helped to reinforce a sense of cultural identity and solidarity.

Like the chronicles of the Teutonic Order, the chronicles of Rus' also celebrate victories over foreign invaders. However, these texts do not portray foreign peoples, including the Lithuanians, as unequivocal antagonists diametrically opposed to all things Rus'ian. Rather, the imagery of the belligerent Lithuanian Other is used almost exclusively to commend the achievements of the people of Rus' and demonstrate the success of Rus'ian princes in fulfilling their ancestral duty. Accordingly, descriptions of Lithuanian attacks serve primarily as a reminder of the sins of the Rus'ian princes and God’s punitive justice, while the triumphant victories of the Rus'ians give proof of the perseverance of the people of Rus'. When comparing the chronicles of the Teutonic Order and Rus' it is therefore important to note that despite the fact that Rus'ian chronicles do not directly juxtapose the Rus'ians and the Lithuanians like the chronicles of the Teutonic Order, the image of the Lithuanian Other is still essential to the narrative. The nature and function of this image is the subject of the following chapter.
Chapter 5

“Pagan,” “Godless,” and “Accursed” Litva: The Representations of Lithuania in the Chronicles of Rus'

In 1183, the NPL reports the first (or the first deemed important enough to report) Lithuanian organized raid on Rus'. The text states, “The same winter the men of Pleskov [Pskov] fought with Lithuania, and much evil was done to the men of Pleskov.”¹ Thereafter, several more Lithuanian raids on Rus' are reported. In 1198, the Lithuanians attacked the fort of Luki.² Two years later, they attempted to seize control of the Lovat River in the neighborhood of the villages of Naliutsi, Beleia, Svinort, and Vorch not far from Novgorod.³ Together with the Yotvingians, in 1205, they ravaged Turis'k and the district of Komov near the ducal city of Volodymyr-Volhynsky.⁴ In 1213, they burned Pskov, followed by Shelon' in 1217, and Toropets in 1223.⁵

Lithuania’s attacks on Rus' were met with significant opposition. For example, the assault on the settlements along the Lovat River led to a full-scale battle with the Novgorodians, who we

¹ NPL, pp. 37, 227 (Michell and Forbes, 32): На ту же зиму бишася пльсковци съ Литвою, и много ся издъя зла пльсковичемь. The year 1183 has received much attention in Lithuanian historiography, especially in Tomas Baranauskas’ study on the formation of what he calls a Lithuanian “state.” He argues that 1183 marks a turning point between two “epochs” in Lithuanian history. The fact that Lithuania organized an independent raid against Pskov indicates that some time before 1183, Lithuania had begun to transform from a tributary land of Rus' into an autonomous polity with a self-prescribed policy of military expansion. See “The Formation of the Lithuanian Vilnius State,” summary of Lietuvos valstybės ištakos, 264.


³ NPL, pp. 45, 239.

⁴ Ipat., col. 721.

⁵ Pskov: NPL, pp. 52, 250; Shelon': NPL, pp. 57, 257; Toropets: NPL, pp. 61, 263. Henry of Livonia mentions that the Lithuanians attacked Pskov in 1218 but he may have been referring to the raid of Shelon': HCL, XXII.6.
are told emerged victorious “having recovered all the plunder” and killed eighty Lithuanians.⁶ Both the *Suzdal Chronicle* and the *NPL* describe how in 1203/5, “the sons of Oleg defeated the Lithuanians, and did to death seven hundred and a thousand of them.”⁷ In 1210, the Novgorodians broke up a Lithuanian raiding party near Khodynts.⁸ In 1225, when 7000 Lithuanians “came and wrought havoc” around Torzhok, the *NPL* reports that Prince Yaroslav overtook them near lake Vesviat (Usvyaty) and “with the help of God and St. Sophia” killed 2000 Lithuanians and recovered all the plunder.⁹ Just as the chronicle praises Rus’ian triumphs, it also laments their losses. When posadnik Feodor rode out from Russa “evil happened”: the Lithuanians “drove the men of Russa from their horses and took many horses, and killed Domazhir Torlinits and his son […] and many others, and the rest they drove asunder into the forest.”¹⁰

Accounts of twelfth-century Lithuanian slave raids correspond to what Michael Moser terms the “elementary stereotype” of Rus’ian-Lithuanian relations—the Lithuanians attacks the lands of Rus’, inflict “much evil,” and take much plunder, so prince X along with the men of Novgorod pursues the Lithuanians to return the plunder and punish them for their insolence; or, conversely, prince X attacks Lithuania or plans a slave raid to Lithuania and returns with much plunder.¹¹ This type of military back-and-forth appears to have been commonplace not only between the Rus’ians and the Lithuanians but also other pagan peoples of the Baltic region. For

---

⁶ *NPL*, pp. 45, 239: а полонь вьсь отяша.
⁷ *NPL*, pp. 45, 240 (Michell and Forbes, 43): побьдиша Олговиця Литву: избиша ихъ 7 сотъ и 1000. See also *Lav.*, col. 421.
⁸ *NPL*, pp. 51, 249. See also *Lav.*, col. 435.
⁹ *NPL*, pp. 64, 269 (Michell and Forbes, 68): Тон же зимь придоша Литва, повоеваша около Търожку […] Князь же Ярославь сгьони е на Въсвятъ и наворопи на не; и тако, божею помочью и святыя София, отнимаша въсъ полонь, а сынь ихъ избиша 2000. See also *Lav.*, cols. 447, 510.
¹⁰ *NPL*, pp. 61, 264 (Michell and Forbes, 64): ту ся зло створи […] выеха Федорь посадник съ рушаны, и бися съ Литвою и сгониша рушаны съ конь и много коневъ отяша, и убиша Домажира Търлиници и сынь его, а рушань Богъшво, а иныхъ много, а другихъ по лъсу розгониша.
example, the Novgorodians led regular campaigns against the Chud (1113, 1116, 1130, 1133, 1179, 1212, 1214, 1223)\textsuperscript{12} and Yam (1042, 1123, 1186, 1191, 1227)\textsuperscript{13} as well as the Yotvingians and Semigallians (983, 1039, 1106, 1113, 1196, 1228).\textsuperscript{14} Expeditions against neighboring pagan lands could serve as a kind of rite of passage. When a new prince came to Novgorod, he usually led a campaign against the Lithuanians, Chud, or Yam. Joining a fellow prince on his slave raid could reinforce a standing alliance or establish a new one. To celebrate a peace agreement in 1191, the \textit{NPL} reports that the princes of Novgorod and Polotsk planned a joint raid on either the Lithuanians or the Chud.\textsuperscript{15} Like the Lithuanians, the Yam and Chud also led offensive campaigns against Rus'. The Yam attempted to invade Novgorod in 1142 and 1149.\textsuperscript{16} The Chud attacked Pskov in 1176 and 1190.\textsuperscript{17}

A successful campaign entailed the destruction of enemy lands and collection of tribute, goods, and slaves. Henry of Livonia observed that the Rus'ians were less concerned with converting the Baltic peoples than gathering tribute. He wrote, “It is, indeed, the custom of the Russian kings not to subject whatever people they defeat to the Christian faith, but rather to force them to pay tribute and money to themselves.”\textsuperscript{18} When “Vsevolod with the men of Novgorod


\textsuperscript{14} 983: \textit{Lav.}, col. 82; 1039: \textit{Lav.}, col. 153 and \textit{Ipat.}, col. 141; 1106: \textit{Lav.}, col. 281; 1113: \textit{NPL}, pp. 20, 203, \textit{Lav.}, col. 289, and \textit{Ipat.}, col. 273; 1196: \textit{Ipat.}, col. 702; 1228: \textit{Ipat.}, col. 751. The Yotvingians (Sudovians) and Semigallians (Zemgalians) were two groups of Baltic peoples later incorporated into of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{NPL}, pp. 40, 230.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{NPL}, pp. 26, 38, 212, 215.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{NPL}, pp. 35, 39, 224, 230.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{HCL}, XVI.2 (Brundage, 122): \textit{Est enim consuetudo regum Russianorum, ut quamcunque gentem expugnaverint, non fidei christianae subicere, sed ad solvendum sibi tributum et pecuniam subiugare. See also \textit{HCL}, XXVIII.4 (Brundage, 222): mater Ruthenica sterilis semper et infecunda, que non spe regenerationis in fide Iesu Christi, sed spe tributorum et spoliorum terras sibi subiugare conatur (“the Russian mother, always sterile and
went against the Chud people,” the NPL reports, “Them he slaughtered, their dwellings he burned and their wives and children he brought home.”¹⁹ Likewise, after Mstislav burned numerous villages leading away prisoners and livestock, the chronicle states that the Chud “bowed down” to the prince and “he took tribute from them.”²⁰

Most narratives describing slave raids and military expeditions in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries fit neatly into the Rus'ian-pagan model of conventional antagonism outlined above—Lithuania attacks Rus' and Rus' attacks Lithuania in retaliation. In fact, this type of warfare appears to have been so ordinary that the vast majority of entries describing violent encounters are completely devoid of all emotional considerations and written in such a matter-of-fact way that the reader is left questioning whether Lithuania’s growing presence in the Baltic region had any effect on Novgorod at all. It is by contrast to this otherwise neutral tone that the introduction of a new stylistic element in the early thirteenth century is especially striking.

Between the years of c. 1210 and c. 1260, three words, previously absent from author’s vocabulary come into general usage—“pagan,” “godless,” and “accursed.” Since these terms generally appear together, for the purposes of this study, they will be referred to as the discursive triplet. Moreover, since these terms were used as epithets to identify the Lithuanians (and Tatars), it is reasonable to assume that they all carried pejorative connotations.

While Lithuania certainly began to emerge as a formidable rival to Rus' in the Baltic region during the early thirteenth century, neither the increasing frequency of Lithuanian raids nor Lithuanian territorial expansion explains the introduction of the discursive triplet. Likewise, its later disappearance does not correspond to a waning in Lithuanian hostilities or eastward barren, for she always attempted to subject lands to herself, not with the hope of regeneration in the faith of Jesus Christ, but with the hope of loot and tribute”.

¹⁹ NPL, pp. 22, 206 (Michell and Forbes, 12): Иде Всєволодъ съ новгородци на Чюдь зимъ, въ говение, и сами исесе, а хороцы пожжъ, а жены и дети приведе домовь.
²⁰ NPL, pp. 52, 250: поклонишася Чюдь князу, и дань на нихъ взы.
expansion. When examined within the appropriate local context, however, the use of pejorative terminology appears to coincide chronologically to years of domestic instability, dynastic warfare, and inter-princely strife. Taking into account contemporary social and political issues as well as the thematic tendencies of the Rus'tian chronicle writing tradition, this chapter argues that the use of the discursive triplet—"pagan," "godless," and "accursed"— in the NPL reflects local attitudes during times of perceived crisis rather than a grand ideological program intended to condemn the Lithuanians for their advance on Rus'.

Lithuania and the Novgorod First Chronicle (NPL)

As discussed in chapter 4, the so-called older redaction of the NPL survives in a single manuscript known as the Synod Scroll. It spans approximately 315 years from 1016 to 1330 with later addendums in 1331–1333, 1337, 1345, and 1352. Of all the various peoples and nations mentioned in the chronicle, only the Lithuanians, Polovtsians, and Tatars are described as "pagan," "godless," and "accursed."21 Almost every instance of the use of these terms occurs between c. 1200 and c. 1260.22 The Lithuanians are the first to be termed "godless." The record for 1213 states,

On the feast day of St. Peter, godless Lithuania came out against Pskov, and set fire to it; for the people of Pskov at that time had driven out Prince Vladimir from among them, and were on the lake [Chud; Ger.: Peipus]; they did much harm and went away.23

---

21 The terms “accursed” is also sometimes used to describe the Teutonic Knights (Nemsty) and Swedes (Svei): NPL, pp. 80, 81, 87, 91, 93, 307, 309, 318, 330, 334. Neither the Teutonic Knights nor the Swedes are ever referred to as "pagan" or "godless."

22 There is one instance of the use of "accursed" in reference to the Tatars that does not conform to the model outlined above: NPL, pp. 94, 336. The younger redaction of the NPL is more liberal with the use of terms such as "pagan," "godless," and "accursed." For uses of the term "pagan" that do not appear in the older redaction, see NPL, pp. 183–4, 186–8, 190, 290, 300–3; for "godless," see NPL, p. 183; for "accursed," see NPL, p. 296.

23 NPL, pp. 52, 251 (Michell and Forbes, 52 [translation amended]): Въ Петрово говение изъехаша Литва безбожная Пльсковъ и пожгаша: пльсковици бо бяху въ то время изгнали князя Володимира от себе, а пльсковици бяху на озѣрѣ; и много створиша зла и отъидоша.
Apart from the addition of the adjective “godless,” there appears to be nothing unusual about the event described. As we have already seen, encounters such as this were quite commonplace. The Lithuanians would regularly attack, inflict “much harm” or “much evil,” and withdraw. An almost identical confrontation had occurred fifteen years earlier in 1198 when the Lithuanians attacked Luki. Located on the Lovat River, the town held strategic importance as it guarded the approach to Pskov and Novgorod. Just as in 1213, the townspeople were warned that the Lithuanians were approaching and evacuated. The Lithuanians then burned the empty city and returned home.24 Although the events described comply with Moser’s “elementary stereotype,” the choice of terminology indicates a change in the author’s tone. 1213 marks not only the first use of such language in reference to Lithuania, but also the first occurrence of the term “godless” in the text in general.

In 1234, we encounter similar terminology, this time describing a Lithuanian attack on the town of Russa approximately 100 kilometers south of Novgorod. Unlike most of the other entries, which are laconic and formulaic, the events of 1234 are presented in considerable detail. The text reports that the fighting began in the marketplace but quickly moved into the neighboring fields at which time several Lithuanians were killed along with four men from Russa, including a priest named Petrila. When news of the Lithuanian ambush reached Prince Yaroslav in Novgorod, he immediately set out to aid the people of Russa. Victory came swiftly and the Novgorodians easily recovered all the plundered goods before the surviving Lithuanians escaped. Once again the events that transpire seem rather usual in the context of medieval Rus'ian-Lithuanian relations. The Lithuanians attacked Russa, just as they had done ten years earlier in

---

24 NPL, pp. 43, 235.
They chased the citizens out of the town and pillaged the monastery carrying away icons and other liturgical objects. Then, as they were leaving, the Novgorodians caught up to them and recovered not only all the stolen goods, but also stripped them of their armor and horses and sent them fleeing disgraced and naked into the woods. The size of the raiding party and the purported death toll is also typical. The chronicler tells us that “several” Lithuanians, four men of Russa, and ten Novgorodians were killed. By comparison, in 1225, when an alleged 7000 Lithuanians occupied the “whole” district of Toropets and killed “many” merchants, the *NPL* reports that the Novgorodians killed 2000 Lithuanians but also suffered heavy losses, including the prince of Toropets. Although in terms of scale and scope the events of 1234 do not appear unusual, as in 1213, the author’s tone and choice of terminology is worth noting. The chronicle states,

[Yarolsav] overtook them at Dubrovna, a village in the district of Toropets, and there he fought with *godless accursed* Lithuania; and there, God and the Holy Cross and Holy Sophia, the wisdom of God, helped Prince Yaroslav and the men of Novgorod [triumph] over the *pagans*. For a brief moment, the chronicler breaks his otherwise matter-of-fact tone. The use of all three pejorative epithets or the full discursive triplet—“pagan,” “godless,” and “accursed”—warrants further consideration.

---

25 *NPL*, pp. 61, 264.
26 *NPL*, pp. 73, 283–4.
27 *NPL*, pp. 64, 269 (Michell and Forbes, 68): беше бо ихъ 7000, и гость биша многъ, и Торопьцьскую волость всю поимаша.
28 *NPL*, pp. 73, 283–4 (Michell and Forbes, 79–80 [translation amended]): И постиже я на Дубровић, на селищи въ Торопьчьской волости, и ту ся би съ безбожными оканьною Литвою; и ту пособи богъ и крести честныхъ и святая София, пръмудрость божия, надъ погаными князю Ярославу съ новгородци.
It cannot be denied that in the thirteenth century Lithuanian raids on Rus' increased in number and frequency. Thomas Baranauskas estimates that between 1200 and 1268, the Lithuanians mounted sixty-eight campaigns against Rus', Livonia, Poland, and Prussia. Thirty-two of these attacks were targeted at Rus' and twenty specifically at northern Rus'.\(^{29}\) The NPL clearly reveals an increase in Lithuanian raiding activity in the early decades of the thirteenth century. Moreover, as evinced by the chart below, at first glance, it may even appear that the introduction of the discursive triplet may have been a reaction to the sudden rise in Lithuanian hostility.

\(^{29}\) Baranauskas, *Lietuvos valstybės ištakos*, 177.
However, while the argument of increased hostility could be used to explain the appearance of pejorative terminology, it does not explain its later disappearance or, concurrently, the almost complete absence of reports detailing Lithuanian raids on Rus' after c. 1260. The chart indicates a steady increase in both raiding activity and the use of the epithets “pagan,” “godless,” and “accursed” until the mid-thirteenth century. Then, suddenly, such terms fall out of use. Moreover, only two raids are mentioned after 1258. This shift in the chronicle’s tone begs important questions concerning the role of the discursive triplet—“pagan,” “godless,” and “accursed”—as well as its application to the Lithuanians.

First, it is important to note that the disappearance of pejorative terminology does not correspond to a change in authorship. As stated in the previous chapter, the NPL was maintained annually or semi-annually under the supervision of a scriptorium master at the episcopal court. Since the discursive triplet overlaps several decades, it is reasonable to assume that it was employed not only by various scribes but also that its use was approved by successive scriptorium masters. Moreover, since the chronicle was kept at the episcopal court, it could be argued that the text expresses the explicit viewpoint of the see of Novgorod. The appearance and disappearance of the discursive triplet therefore reflects the disposition of see rather than the general political or military considerations of the Novgorodian people.

Second, it is important to remember that Novgorod, like other Rus'ian lands, was accustomed to the experience of pagan invasions and prepared to defend itself. It is highly unlikely therefore that the introduction of the discursive triplet indicates growing Novgorodians fears of Lithuanian invasion. As already noted above, the NPL implies that most Lithuanian raids on Rus' were largely unsuccessful. Later entries, in particular, laud Rus'ian victories and demonstrate that the Novgorodians were more than capable of defending their lands and
inflicting defeats upon the Lithuanians. For example, when the Lithuanians attacked the towns of Torzhok and Bezhits in 1245, the *NPL* describes how Alexander Nevsky with reinforcements from Pskov, Tver, and Dmitrov met the invaders in two successive battles in Toropets and Zizhets. The chronicle claims that Alexander took away “all the plunder” that the Lithuanians had gathered and “killed more than eight lesser princes.”\(^{30}\) Then, in a second battle at Zizhets, Alexander “did not let a single man go and killed the rest of the lesser princes.”\(^{31}\) Recounting the same event, Alexander’s hagiographer wrote,

> At that time, the people of Lithuania gained strength and began to lie waste the lands of Alexander. But he went out and slaughtered them. Once it happened that he went out and defeated seven armies in one battle, and he killed many of their dukes and others he took captive as his slaves, [and] laughing, [he] bound them to the tails of their horses. And from then on, they began to fear his name.\(^{32}\)

In light of such telling accounts of the Lithuanian onslaught and Alexander’s victory, John Fennell argues that 1245 marks “the greatest and most determined” Lithuanian invasion of Rus' up until that time.\(^{33}\) The description of this event in the *NPL*, nevertheless, does not contain any pejorative epithets. The absence of the discursive triplet suggests that terms such as “pagan,” “godless,” and “accursed” were not used as marker words to distinguish particularly destructive or large-scale Lithuanian raids. Moreover, the use of such labels was not intended to make a specific victory seem more heroic. Whether a prince triumphed over the Lithuanians or the “pagan,” “godless,” and “accursed” Lithuanians seems to have made little difference in terms of the praise he received. We could therefore conclude that while the introduction of the discursive

---

\(^{30}\) *NPL*, pp. 79, 304: Заутра приспѣ Александръ с новгородци, и отѣша полонъ всѣ, а княжиць исѣче или боле.

\(^{31}\) *NPL*, pp. 79, 304: не упусти ихъ ни мужа, и ту изби избытокъ княжичь.

\(^{32}\) *PSRL* V.2, p. 14: В то же время умножися языка Литовскаго и начаша пакостити волости Александрове; он же възездя и избиваше я. Единою ключися ему выехать, и побѣдѣ 7 рати единьмъ выездомъ и множество князих и изби, а овѣх роукама изыма; слоугы же его, ругающеся, взахоуть ихъ къ хвостомъ конеи своихъ; и начаша оттоль блестиа* имени его.

\(^{33}\) Fennell, *Crisis of Medieval Russia*, 102.
triplet may have been brought on by an escalation in Lithuanian-Novgorodian hostilities, its continued use had little to do with the nature or intensity of Lithuanian raids. Furthermore, there does not seem to have been anything necessarily emphatic about the meaning of “pagan,” “godless,” and “accursed” as these terms were not used to designate particularly catastrophic Lithuanian campaigns or to distinguish exceptional Novgorodian victories.

Third, relations between Lithuania and Rus’ were never exclusively hostile but rather characterized by intermittent military confrontation as well as negotiation and collaboration. Foreign sources commented on the close relationship between the Rus’ians and the Lithuanians. Henry of Livonia, for example, wrote that since prince Vsevolod of Jersika had taken the daughter of “one of the most powerful Lithuanians as his wife […] Joined thus to them [Lithuanians] in all the bonds of friendship and family ties, he often acted as the leader of their army.”34 When the Lithuanians would go on campaign, Henry notes that Vsevolod supplied them with food. In 1203, a Rus’ian cohort from the Jersika attacked Riga with the help of the Lithuanians.35 The Lithuanians also allied with the Novgorodians against the Teutonic Knights. In 1222, the Lithuanians joined the Novgorodians in what turned out to be an unsuccessful assault on the Livonian hill fort of Wenden.36 Recounting the battle, Henry stated, “The Lithuanians carried out the harm which the Rus’ians had failed to do.”37 Later in 1262, a Lithuanian-Pskovite force led by Mindaugas’ nephew Tautvilas joined Novgorod in a campaign against Yuryev (Ger.: Dorpat).38 The following year when a civil war broke out in Lithuania, according to the NPL, 300 Lithuanians escaped to Pskov seeking refuge and protection from

---

34 *HCL*, XIII.4 (Brundage, 90): *qui filiam potentioris de Lethonia duxerat uxorem […] et eis omni familiaritate coniunctus, dux exercitus eorum frequenter existebat.*
35 *HCL*, VII. 8.
36 *NPL*, pp. 60–1, 262–3.
37 *HCL*, XXV.3 (Brundage, 201): *que minus mala fecerunt Rutheni, Litowini suppleverunt.*
38 *NPL*, pp. 83, 311–2.
prince Yaroslav of Novgorod.\textsuperscript{39} Henry of Livonia tells us that the Lithuanians and Rus'ians together inflicted so much damage that the bishop of Livonia “took counsel with his more discreet men in order to consider how the new church could be freed from the plots of the Russians and Lithuanians.”\textsuperscript{40} Even as late as the fourteenth century, Western chroniclers reported the presence of Rus'ian bowmen in Lithuanian raiding parties.\textsuperscript{41} To treat the Lithuanians merely as evil enemies of Novgorod, risks oversimplifying the relationship between the two polities. The “pagan,” “godless,” and “accursed” image perpetuated by the \textit{NPL} should not obscure the fact that relations between Lithuania and Novgorod were never entirely hostile, but included periods of collaboration as well as conflict.

Finally, even if the argument of increased hostility could be used to explain the appearance of pejorative terminology, it does not explain its later disappearance. As already noted, after the 1260s, the \textit{NPL} reverts back to its original dispassionate tone, the discursive triplet completely vanishes from the text, and only two Lithuanian raids are recorded. In fact, it would be accurate to describe the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries as a period of silence concerning Lithuanian events in the \textit{NPL}. This phenomenon, however, does not correspond to any abatement in Lithuanian hostility. On the contrary, the period of silence corresponds to the reigns of Traidenis (r. c. 1270–1282), Vytenis (r. 1295–1315), and Gediminas (r. 1315/6–1341), which mark a period significant Lithuanian territorial expansion eastward.

Beginning with Mindaugas (r. c. 1238–1263), Lithuanian dukes began to annex the lands of western Rus'. Particularly at risk were the lands of Polotsk, Pskov, Smolensk, and Novgorod. According to the \textit{GVL}, when Mindaugas sent Vykontas, Tautvilas, and Gedvydas on a military

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{39} \textit{NPL}, pp. 313.
\item \textsuperscript{40} \textit{HCL}, XIII.4 (Brundage, 90): \textit{episcopus […] habito consilio cum discretionibus suis, qualiter ecclesiam novelam a Lethonum et Ruthenorum insidiis liberaret.}
\item \textsuperscript{41} \textit{NJ}, line 23,698.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
campaign against Smolensk in 1248, he told them that “anything they conquer they could keep by force.” Shortly after his baptism and coronation, Mindaugas asked the pope to be granted the rights to the lands of western Rus'. In 1255, Alexander IV sent a letter to Mindaugas congratulating him on his profession of the Christian faith and confirming his dominion over those territories of Rus' that he had already conquered. Although the circumstances surrounding Lithuania’s acquisition of the lands of western Rus' remain obscure, it is known that the cities of Polotsk and Vitebsk as well as areas of Black Rus' came under Lithuanian control during the reign of Mindaugas. His successors continued to push eastward eventually annexing Grodno, Novgorodok, Mink, Turov, and Pinsk. As the maps below demonstrate, vast territories of western Rus' came under Lithuanian control or influence during the so-called period of silence. Moreover, as Russian historian Valentin L. IAanin noted, what Lithuanian dukes could not conquer militarily, they brought under their influence through dynastic alliance. For example, by the fourteenth century, the princes of Smolensk were so closely allied with the Lithuanians that the border between Rus' and Lithuania effectively extended all the way to Novgorod. It is rather curious, therefore, why Lithuanian expansion into Rus'ian lands after 1260 goes completely unnoticed in the NPL.

---


43 VMPL I, no. 123, pp. 60–1: Cum itaque, sicut ex parte tua propositum coram nobis, tu contra Regnum Russie ipsiusque habitatores in infidelitatis devio constitutos indefessa strenuitate decertans, nonnullas terras ipsius Regni tue subiugaveris dicioni, nos attendentes, quod te terras habente predictas, vicine paganorum et infidelium regiones de facili poterunt tuo dominio subici et acquirer cultui christiano, tuis benigne precibus annuentes, prefatas terras tibi tuisque successoribus (Since therefore, as it was laid before us, you are fighting with tireless effort against the kingdom of Rus' and the inhabitants thereof that stand in the wrong path of infidelity, when you will have subjected certain of the kingdom’s lands to your rule, we consenting graciously to your prayers, confirm with apostolic authority the aforesaid lands as belonging to you and your successors).

44 IAanin, Novgorod i Litva, 52–4.
It is also interesting to note a similar tendency of silence in regards to the Polovtsians and Tatars. As demonstrated by the chart above, much like the Lithuanians, the Polovtsians and Tatars were treated as “pagan,” “godless,” and “accursed” invaders until the mid-thirteenth century. Since the Polovtsians were conquered by the Tatars and incorporated into the Golden Horde in the 1230s, it is not surprising that the NPL does not mention them after that time. However, Fennell observed a similar pattern with regard to the Tatars. Originally described as “pagan and accursed foreigners,” “lawless sons of Ishmael,” and “shedders of Christian blood,”
as he pointed out, after 1252, there is an “astonishingly neutral attitude towards the Tatars,” so much so that “one gets the impression that the Tatars were a benevolent force rather than an oppressive force.”

In light of such evidence, it appears that Novgorodian relations with Lithuania (or the Tatars) cannot explain the appearance or disappearance of pejorative language. To understand the use and development of the discursive triplet we must therefore look to other factors such as the series of domestic conflicts that plagued Novgorod in the thirteenth century.

**Novgorod: Crisis and Resolution**

The thirteenth century began with an event that deeply affected the Novgorodian chroniclers. In 1204, after three days of looting and vandalizing, crusaders captured the city of Constantinople. Commonly referred to as the “Tale of the Siege of Tsargrad” (*Povest' o Vziati Tsar'grada*), the 16-page lament devoted to the events of 1204 comprises one of the lengthiest and most detailed entries in the *NPL*. The chronicler attributes this disaster to successive inter-princely intrigues stemming from a dispute between emperor Alexis III and his recently deposed and blinded brother Isaac II. According to the *NPL*, Isaac’s son escaped from Constantinople and seeking to depose his uncle, traveled to the court of Philip of Swabia to ask for his assistance in the matter. The latter sent word to pope, requesting permission to lead an army against Alexis.

---

46 Ibid., 106.
48 *NPL*, pp. 46–9 correspond to f. 64r–f. 72r of the Synod Scroll.
The pope approved of Philip’s plan as long as he would “do no harm the Greek land.” However, when the Franks arrived, the chronicle tells us that they were overcome by a “lust for gold and silver.” Ignoring the pope’s warning, “they broke the iron locks, and having advanced to the town, they hurled fire into the churches,” destroyed sacred icons, crosses, ambo, and other liturgical objects, and robbed the priests and monks, beating some to death and driving the others out of the city. Emphasizing the greed and cruelty of the invaders, the *NPL* reiterates that so many churches were destroyed that “we cannot say” and so much loot was taken that “there is no number.” In other words, the destruction caused by the Franks is presented by the chronicle as beyond comprehension and the amount of plunder taken and goods destroyed as beyond count.

The fact that the siege of Constantinople was largely overlooked by all the other surviving contemporary Rus’ian chronicles, including the *Kievan Chronicle* and the *Suzdal Chronicle*, but received great attention in the *NPL* is worth noting. John Meyendorff argues that the events of 1204 effectively weakened the semblance of imperial authority that had already been declining for many years. More specifically, he claims that while the actual inability of Byzantine authorities to prevent destruction was not surprising, for the rest of the world, the events of 1204 signaled a kind of end to Byzantine dominance. The Novgorodian chronicle conveys not only feelings of outrage, but also a deep sense of loss: “And so perished the empire of the God-protected Kostyantingrad and the Greek land.”

---

49 *NPL*, pp. 46, 241: пакости не деите Гръчскои земли.
50 *NPL*, pp. 46, 241: Фрязи же и вси воеводы ихъ възлюбиша злато и сребро.
51 *NPL*, pp. 46, 241 (Michell and Forbes, 44): замкы желѣзния разбиша, и приступивъше къ граду, огнь въвергоша 4-рь мѣсть въ храмы.
52 *NPL*, pp. 47, 242: не можемъ числа съповѣдати; *NPL*, pp. 49, 245; яко нету числа.
54 *NPL*, pp. 49, 246 (Michell and Forbes, 48): И тако погибъ царство богохранимаго Костятиняграда и земля Гръчъсская.
discussed in the previous chapter, medieval Rus'ian writers were very critical of the constant warfare between Rus'ian princes. Following the model of the *PVL*, the authors of *NPL* attributed many of the calamities that befell Rus', such as the invasion of pagan forces, to the princes’ inability to live in peace. By suggesting that inter-princely strife caused the destruction of the once great city of Constantinople and led to the demise of the Byzantine “empire,” the *NPL* implicitly also questions the future of Rus'.

The chronicler’s anxiety seems to have been especially timely as the tragedy of 1204 was compounded by a series of domestic disputes. At the turn of the century, two families contended for the princely title in Novgorod—the members of Vsevolod’s family from Vladimir-Suzdal and the Rostislavichi of Smolensk headed by Mstislav Mstislavich, popularly referred to as “the Bold.” The conflict divided the city between the west and east bank, as the boyars of *Liudin konets* (also known as the *Prusskaia ulitsa* on west bank of the Volkhov River) aligned themselves with the pro-Suzdalian *posadnik* Tverdislav, while the boyars of *Nerevskii konets* (known as the “Trade Side” on the east bank) supported the incumbent prince Mstislav the Bold.\(^{55}\) The power struggle reached its climax on April 21, 1216 when Mstislav challenged his son-in-law Yaroslav, the son of Vsevolod the Big Nest of Vladimir-Suzdal near Lipitsa River. The battle, which in both contemporary and later chronicles came to epitomize the peak of fratricidal strife in medieval Rus', ended in a victory for Mstislav and Novgorod.\(^{56}\) The *NPL* commends Mstislav’s triumph and laments the casualties: “O great was the victory, countless the number, my brethren;

\(^{55}\) *NPL*, pp. 58–9, 259. See also Fennell, *Crisis of Medieval Russia*, 51–2. For a topographical analysis of Novgorod and its administrative divisions, see Ibid., 18.

\(^{56}\) The Battle of Lipitsa is described in the *NPL* (pp. 55–7, 254–8) and the *Novgorod Fourth Chronicle* (*PSRL* IV.1, pp. 186–97) as well as in later chronicles, including the collections from Tver (*PSRL* XV, col. 316–26) and Moscow (*PSRL* XXV, pp. 111–4).
numberless the number of killed so that the mind of man cannot imagine it [...] O, great, my brethren, is the Providence of God!"\(^{57}\)

Mstislav returned to Novgorod in celebration. The *NPL* reports that “the vladyka and all the men of Novgorod were glad.”\(^{58}\) In 1217, however, Mstislav left for Galicia. His departure led to another wave of internal quarrels (*rospri*) that culminated in a string of urban upheavals (*miatezhi*) in the 1220s.\(^{59}\) This time the factions were divided between the pro-Suzdalian supporters of Yaroslav and his challenger Mikhail of Chernigov. As violence raged in the streets and “the tumult in the town was great,”\(^{60}\) Novgorod also suffered from a string of natural disasters: In 1228, the fields flooded after a “great rain;” the same year winds broke nine stays on the bridge; five weeks after Easter there was an earthquake, then a solar eclipse; the same year an early frost killed the crops leading to a city-wide famine; a year later a fire broke out, destroying the entire *Slavenskii konets*.\(^{61}\)

Then, just as tensions seemed to be subsiding, Rus' faced a second great catastrophe. On May 31, 1223, an army led by three Rus'ian princes (Mstislav the Bold, Mstislav III of Kiev, and Mstislav of Chernigov), together with a force of Polovtsians, met the Tatars near Kalka River. The battle ended in a decisive victory for the Tatars. The chronicler reports, “A countless number of people perished, and there was lamentation and weeping and grief throughout the towns and villages.”\(^{62}\) Fifteen years later, in 1237–1238 a much larger Tatar force led by Batu Khan overran northeastern Rus' destroying Ryazan, Suzdal, and Vladimir. In 1240, the same army launched a

---

\(^{57}\) *NPL*, pp. 56–7, 257 (Michell and Forbes, 57): О, много побьды, братье, безчислиное число, око не можеть умь человьч́скь домыслити избьеныхъ а повязаныхъ […] О, великъ е, братье, промыслъ божии.

\(^{58}\) *NPL*, pp. 57, 257: Пріиде Мьстиславъ в Новъгород, и радъ бысть владыка и вси новгородци.


\(^{60}\) *NPL*, pp. 67, 273: бысть мятежь въ городь вълкъ.


\(^{62}\) *NPL*, pp. 63, 267 (Michell and Forbes, 66): и погибье много бещисла людии; и бысть вълпль и плачь и печаль по городьмъ и по сельмъ.
southern invasion, sacking the city of Kiev before heading further west to Poland and Hungary. Only Novgorod and Pskov escaped physical destruction, eventually also submitting to Tatar overlordship in the form of regular tribute. Meyendorff maintains that the Tatar invasion was “a national and cultural disaster for Russia, a political humiliation for its princes, and an economic catastrophe for its entire population.”63 Both the initial battle of 1223 and the final conquest of 1237–1240 receive significant attention in the NPL. Rus' had never before faced such a determined and formidable enemy. In modern historiography, the Tatar invasion marks what some scholars consider the official end of Kievan Rus'. John Fennell and Charles Halperin described the account of the Tatar invasion in the NPL as permeated with feelings of “apocalyptical resignation” and “universal disaster” seldom seen in the rest of the narrative.64

Concurrent with the Tatar invasion, Novgorod witnessed an intensification of hostilities with the Swedes and the Teutonic Knights. The crusade had always been a bother to Novgorod as Western colonization of the Baltic region slowly subsumed its tributary lands. The merger of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword and the Teutonic Knights made the threat of crusader presence ever more real. While the Teutonic Knights pushed eastward into the region near Lake Peipus (Lake Chud), the Swedes pushed northward into Ladoga (Karelia). Located at the mouth of the Volkhov River, Lake Ladoga formed a vital part of the trade route leading from Scandinavia to the Black Sea.65 When Pope Gregory IX called a crusade against the Yam (Tavastians) in 1237, the Swedes launched a series of punitive expeditions into lands just west of

---

63 Meyendorff, Byzantium and the Rise of Russia, 38.
64 Fennell, Crisis of Medieval Russia, 64, 78; Charles J. Halperin, The Tatar Yoke: The Image of the Mongols in Medieval Russia (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2009), 33; Halperin, Russian and the Golden Horde, 64.
Karelia. Their progress, however, was stunted when they met the army of Alexander of Novgorod near the confluence of the Neva and Izhora Rivers. His famous victory over the Swedes earned Alexander the sobriquet “Nevsky” and to this day it is still celebrated as an event of national importance symbolizing Russia’s victory over Western aggression.

Two years later, in 1242, Alexander defeated the Livonian Order at Lake Peipus in the so-called Battle on the Ice. Tensions between Novgorod and the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order grew when a joint force of knights and their allies from Odenpäth, Dorpat, and Fellin captured Izborsk, a fortress southwest of the Pskov. They then launched a campaign against Pskov and forced the posadnik to surrender the city to them. The knights remained in Pskov for nearly two years, wreaking havoc to the surrounding lands. In response, Alexander gathered an army of men from Novgorod, Ladoga, Karelia, and Izhoria and met the knights near Lake Peipus. After yet another decisive victory, Alexander forced the knights to surrender all the lands that they had taken during the campaign of 1240–1242.

Given the memory of the events in Constantinople, Novgorod did not react lightly to the invasions from the West. Meyendorff contends, “The crusading spirit of the Swedes and, particularly, the German Knights had thus provoked, on the part of the Russians, a reaction in all things similar to the reaction of the Greeks to the sack of Constantinople: Western Latin Christianity became identified with conquest by crusading armies.” In the past, historians have postulated that the simultaneous launch of the Swedish and Teutonic campaign against Rus' was

69 Meyendorff, Byzantium and the Rise of Russia, 54–5.
part of a coordinated crusade-like program planned by the papal curia.\textsuperscript{70} Modern historians disagree with this interpretation explaining the offensive in terms of political and economic concerns and pointing to the opportune timing of the campaigns just after the Tatar invasion.\textsuperscript{71} Either way, overwhelmed by domestic strife and exposed to the growing power of foreign enemies, it appeared that in the early 1240s, the “crisis of medieval Russia” had come to a climax in Novgorod.\textsuperscript{72}

As the 1250s approached, however, things began to change. The reign of Alexander Nevsky marks an important turning point in the history of Novgorod. For the first time in over four decades, no major domestic disturbances are recorded. Alexander followed a policy of collaboration with the Tatars. When Innocent IV called for an all-Christian front against the Tatars, Alexander rejected the papal alliance and instead submitted to the Tatar census, himself going to Saray to pay allegiance to the khan. Although his pro-Tatar policy led to a series of small and unsuccessful local uprisings in 1252, 1255, 1257, and 1259, it also saved the principality from physical destruction by Tatar raiders and ensured that Novgorod retain more independence than almost any other Rus’ian land. Halperin suggests that far from being enfeebled by the Tatar invasion, the city in fact flourished. For example, he notes that instead of restricting trade, the Tatars gave tax exemptions to merchants thus promoting the city’s wealth. The vast reaches of the Mongol empire also brought an influx of goods from the Orient making Novgorod an important conduit of luxury goods to the Baltic and Europe.\textsuperscript{73}

Despite the increase in hostilities with the Swedes and the Teutonic Knights, as noted

\textsuperscript{70} Fonnesberg-Schmidt, \textit{Pope and Baltic Crusades}, 117.


\textsuperscript{72} Crisis of Medieval Russia is the title of Fennell’s monograph (London, New York: Longman, 1983).

\textsuperscript{73} Halperin, \textit{Russian and the Golden Horde}, 80–1. Ostrowski agrees that the Tatar invasion did not interrupt economic growth. He notes that handicraft production in the fourteenth century exceeded that of the thirteenth century: \textit{Muscovy and the Mongols}, 112–3.
above, both armies proved to be essentially ineffectual against Alexander's forces. The *NPL* recounts that when the knights attacked Pskov again in 1253, they were easily defeated by the Pskovites before reinforcements had even arrived. Later that year, the Novgorodians and the Pskovites led a campaign against the Order in Livonia. Then, in 1262, Alexander recaptured the fort of Yuryev which the knights had taken from the Rus'ians thirty years earlier. The Swedes were equally unsuccessful. In 1256, they attempted to build a stronghold on the Narva River. However, as soon as they learned that the Novgorodians were planning to retaliate, the *NPL* reports that the frightened Swedes “fled beyond the sea.” For the time being, Swedish ambitions in Rus' had also been quelled.

Alexander Nevsky was succeeded by his younger brother Yaroslav III Yarsolavich as prince of Novgorod. For the most part, his rule was marked not by the expected boyar feuding, but by a surprising cohesion among the boyars who had found a common cause and together endeavored to limit princely power. By the 1270s, princes rarely stayed in Novgorod, relying more and more on their *namestniki*. At the same time, the *veche* curtailed the judicial powers of the prince and enacted new legislation intended to prevent princes from enriching themselves at the expense of the city. Fennell maintains that by the later part of the thirteenth century, the prince of Novgorod “had become little more than a mercenary hired to defend the frontiers and unable to dictate how the real rulers of Novgorod should conduct their foreign policy.” A series of formal contracts (*gramoty*) between the *veche* and Yaroslav were drawn up detailing the

---

74 *NPL*, pp. 80, 307.
76 *NPL*, pp. 81, 309: Они же, окаяннии, услышавшее, побьгаша за море.
78 Ibid., 138.
prince’s new powers. The Yaroslav’s attempts to assert his dictatorial will led to a brief conflict in 1270. The veche took a firm stance. The NPL reports that the men of Novgorod told Yaroslav, “‘Go away, we do not want thee; else we shall come, the whole of Novgorod, to drive thee out.’” The prince had no choice but to leave “against his will.”

To limit executive powers even further, the veche also established a new system for the election of the posadnik (chief magistrate). Previously a position held for life, beginning in 1294, the posadnik was elected annually by the Council of Lords (sovet gospod), which consisted of boyar members from the city’s five administrative districts. Fennell maintains, “All this greatly diminished the risk of in-fighting between various groups supporting this or that candidate for the throne, markedly decreased the arbitrary powers of whoever ruled Novgorod and paved the way toward what might be called oligarchic republicanism.” In their effort to pass new legislation, the city boyars finally began to collaborate thus ending the period of civil dispute that had crippled Novgorod for nearly half a century.

For the time being, it appeared as though the “crisis” was over. Novgorod had emerged out of what Fennell describes as “the age of leaden hopelessness and seemingly utter purposelessness.” The city had overcome “the age of chaotic disunity, fragmentation and disintegration, of feebleness of endeavor.” Beginning in the 1270s, the NPL evinces new feelings of confidence. Consequently, pejorative terminology almost completely disappears from the text. The image of the Lithuanians (and Tatars) as evil ransackers of Rus’ian lands is replaced in the NPL, pp. 88, 320 (Michell and Forbes, 104): княже, поћди проче, не хотимъ тебе; али идемъ всь Новгородь прогонить тебе».


80 NPL, pp. 88, 320 (Michell and Forbes, 104): княже, поћди проче, не хотимъ тебе; али идемъ всь Новгородь прогонить тебе».

81 Ibid., 141.

82 Fennell, Crisis of Medieval Russia, 157.

83 Ibid., 162.

84 Ibid.

85 Ibid.
by a more neutral representation. It is important to recognize that this change does not correspond to any abatement in Lithuania’s raids or territorial expansion. The absence of the epithets “pagan,” “godless,” and “accursed” instead points toward much deeper changes in the mindset of the chroniclers. Once the “crisis” had seemingly ended, the chroniclers’ tone also once again became emotionally uninvolved. Since the use of derogatory language coincides chronologically to a time of domestic instability, it is reasonable to conclude that the changes in tone tell us more about the chroniclers’ outlook on internal social realities than relations with Lithuania. The onset of pejorative language at the beginning of the thirteenth century and its discontinuation after the 1260s therefore appears to have been symptomatic specifically of attitudes during the years of crisis in Novgorod.

**The Discursive Triplet and the *Povest' vremennykh let (PVL)***

The *NPL* was not the first Rus'ian chronicle to employ the epithets “pagan,” “godless,” and “accursed.” Traces of the discursive triplet are also found in the *PVL*. It is reasonable to assume therefore that the Novgorodian chroniclers did not accidentally choose this specific vocabulary. By comparing the application of the discursive triplet to foreign invading armies in the *NPL* and the *PVL*, we can begin to deconstruct the meaning of the terms “pagan,” “godless,” and “accursed” in the medieval Rus'ian imagination.

It is clearly evident that in medieval Rus'ian chronicles, the term “pagan” (погань; *pogan(i)*) carried a derogatory connotation. By examining the *PVL*, we can infer that the more neutral counterpart of the term “pagan” was *iazychnik* (usually appearing in the Old East Slavic plural form: азыци; *æzytsi* or языци; *iazytsie*), which can be roughly translated to English as

---

86 The spelling of the Old East Slavic terms discussed in this study varies across critical editions. For the purposes of this study, I will only provide the spelling that I determined occurs most frequently in *PSRL* I–III.
“gentile.” In modern Russian, the words *iazychnik* is etymologically related to the word *iazyk*, meaning “language” or “tongue.” Medieval Rus'ian chroniclers seem to have been very interested in linguistic differences. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the *PVL* traces ethnic differences to the biblical story of the Tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues. The significance of language as an ethnographic marker is perhaps best demonstrated by the term *nemtsy*, literally meaning “the mute ones” or “ones who cannot speak like us.” This exonym was used by medieval chroniclers to describe the Teutonic Knights (нѣмци) and in modern Russian refers to the Germans (немцы). Given both the conceptual and etymological relationship between the term for “tongue” or “language” (ѧзыкъ; *æzyk*”) in Old East Slavic and the term for “gentiles” (ѧзыци; *æzytsi*), Russian-born German linguist Max Vasmer concluded that the Old Slavic *æzytsi* is similar in meaning to the ancient Greek *ethnos* (ἔθνος) or the Latin *gens, gentis*. When we meet the Lithuanians for the first time in the *PVL*, like all the other pre-Christian peoples including the Rus', they are described as one of the *æzytsi (gens)* of the north, distinct from the Slavs in *æzyk"* (“tongue”).

The distinction between *æzytsi* and *pogani*, which occurs later in the narrative, is in part a commentary on the superiority of the people of Rus'. At the beginning of the *PVL*, the term *æzytsi* refers to all non-Christian people. However, once Rus' converts to Christianity, the term disappears. Thereafter, non-Christian peoples are referred to as *pogani*, implying that unlike the more enlightened people of Rus' who have already chosen the righteous path of Christian truth, they are still trapped in error. According to Soviet linguist Pavel Chernykh, the term *pogani* was

---

87 *Lav.*, col. 5; *Ipat.*, cols. 4–5.
90 *Lav.*, col. 11.
borrowed from Latin. The earliest application of the word in the *PVL* is semantically analogous to the Latin *paganus, -i,*, meaning “of or belonging to the country or to a village; rustic.” The first peoples to be termed *pogani* are the Derevlians, Radimichians, Vyatichians, Severians, and Krivichians, Slavic tribes who according to the *PVL*, “existed in a bestial fashion, and lived like cattle.” When juxtaposed against the city-dwelling Christians of Rus' and the author’s descriptions of the wonderful transformation of Kiev into a leading religious and urban center after Vladimir’s conversion, the use of such vocabulary carries an obviously negative connotation. The *PVL* reports that the *pogani* lived in the forests like “wild beasts” and ate “every unclean thing.” They engaged in “demonic games,” kept multiple wives, cremated the dead, and set the remaining bones on roadside posts. “Such customs were observed,” the chronicle states, “because they [pagans] did not know the law of God.”

To an extent, the implications of these allegations are still inherent in the definitions of certain modern Russian words such as *poganka* (поганка), a general term for an inedible or poisonous mushroom, *poganets* (поганец), meaning unworthy or nasty person, and *pogan'* (погань), meaning “filth.”

Like the authors of the *PVL*, early Rus’ian theologians were also concerned by the differences between the newly Christianized people of Rus' and their pagan neighbors. In contrast to the still ignorant pagans, they presented the Rus' as already having completed the rise from darkness to knowledge. The close geographic proximity between the Rus' and the pagans, nonetheless, troubled ecclesiastics. Theodosius of Kiev stressed that Christians must remember

---

91 Chernykh, *Istoriko-ëtimologicheskii slovar’,* s.v. “поганый.”
93 *Lav.,* col. 13: Древлѧне жилиѧ въбрынѣскимъ избранимъ жиоуще скотьськи.
95 *Lav.,* col. 14: вѣсовскихѣ игрѣц; имѣю же по двѣ и по три жены аще кто оумраше творѧху трѣзино надѣ нимъ и по семь творѧху кладу велику и вѣложахуть и накладу мртица сожжѧху и посємы собраше кости вложѧ въ судицу малу и поставѧху на столѣ на пустѣ.
96 *Lav.,* col. 14: си же творѧху вѣбычѧ Кривичи [и] прочии поганнии не вѣдуше закона Бжѧ.
the fact that although they live alongside “Jews and Saracens, Bulgars and heretics, Latins and pagans,” they are not equal to the pagans in God’s eyes. He claimed that while it may seem that God protects both the Christians and pagans in this life, in next, pagans will be “strangers to God’s grace.” The promise of heaven, according to Theodosius, divides those of the “right faith” (право-вѣрный) from those of the “other faith” (ино-вѣрный).

Donald Ostrowski noted a shift in the representation of pagans in the PVL after the year 1051. Relying on Hayden White’s theory of the four principle modes of emplotment, Ostrowski sees the PVL as the work of two narrators with two distinct viewpoints or “virtual past attitudes” in regards to the pagans and their relationship to Christian Rus’. He argues that while Narrator A exhibits a characteristically moderate attitude, Narrator B, who takes over in 1051, is much more critical. It is at this point that the terms “godless” (безбожныя; bezbozhnyia) and “accursed” (оканъныя; okan’nyia) came to be used alongside “pagan” roughly as synonyms. Avoiding semantic analysis, Ostrowski instead focuses on the shift in emplotments, which he attributes not simply to a difference in narrators, but to a definitive change in Kiev’s fortunes with the start of political and military conflicts between the princes. According the Ostrowski, the first part of the PVL follows an “upward trajectory” leading to the joyous climax of

---

97 I. P. Eremin, “Literaturnoe nasledie Feodosiia Pecherskogo,” Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literatury 5 (1947): 172 (159–184): будь ли жидашь, ли сорочинь, ли болгаринь, ли сектникь, ли латинь, ли от поганныхъ… Богъ бо и самь нынѣ набьдить поганыя, якоже и крестьяныя. Theodosius of Kiev was an eleventh-century saint thought to have brought Cenobitic Monasticism to Kievan Rus’. He is also considered to be the founder of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra (Cave Monastery).

98 Ibid.: Поганымъ же и иноѣрнымъ въ семь вѣкъ попечение от Бога, въ будущемъ же чужи будуть добрья дѣтели.


Vladimir’s conversion. The text portrays a generally “happy society” emerging out of pagan ignorance. During this time, Ostrowski observes that none of the invading armies, not even the Pechenegs, are referred to as “godless” or “accursed.” After 1051, however, revealing the chroniclers’ frustration at the lack of unity among Rus’ian princes, the tone of the PVL changes. As Ostrowki states, it reflects the fact that “things begin to get more difficult.” At this point, the term “godless” begins to be used regularly in reference to the Polovtsians: “The Polovtsians came to wage war on Rus’ian land […] This was the first evil done by these pagan and godless foes;” “The godless sons of Ishmael knocked down the gates of the monastery.” The crucial divide between Christians and pagans, previously expressed in terms of a friction between the urban and the rural, the civilized and the uncivilized, thus takes on a new form as a hierarchical opposition between godly and godless, right and wrong. Paradoxically, the new “pagans,” clearly distinct from the “gentiles” of the first emplotment, become, as Ostrowski illustrates, “divine agents.” The chronicler describes them as “godless sons of Ishmael sent to punish the Christians” for their sins, in particular the unremitting warfare among princely dynasties. The direct connection between domestic instability and the new representation of the “pagan” Other suggests that the introduction of terms such as “godless” and “accursed” was not related to a change in relations between Rus’ and its neighboring steppe peoples. Instead, the use of pejorative epithets created a sense of danger that could effectively be used by Rus’ian chroniclers as a warning about the troubles that would continue to plague Rus’ until the Rus’ian princes learned to live in brotherly harmony.

---

101 Ibid., 249.
102 Ibid., 247.
103 Ibid., 250.
104 Lav., col. 163: Придоша Половци первое на Русьскую землю воеватъ […] се бы' первое зло поганы' и безбожных врагъ; Lav., col. 232: безбожних же снове Измаилеви въськоша врата манастьр.
106 Lav., col. 234: безбожних си́ве Измаилеви пущени бо на казнь х'язномъ.
As early as 1051, the terms “pagan” and “godless” had therefore already become virtually synonymous. To be “godless” (безбожныя; bezbozhnyia), derived literally from the phrase “without God” (без Бога; bez Boga), meant: (1) to be non-Christian; (2) to lack divine grace as set out by Theodosius of Kiev; and (3) to be trapped in ignorance as a result of a refusal to accept divine guidance. These qualities, or rather lack thereof, set the pagans apart from the Novgorodians. While the NPL never represents the Lithuanians as entirely evil per se, the use of such terms as “godless” was surely intended to conjure up images of a loathsome and vile race. Novgorod’s military victories over Lithuania could thus be said to symbolize the spiritual and moral triumph of the people of God over their “godless” enemies.

Much like “godless,” the meaning of the term “accursed” was also influenced by deeply rooted literary connotations, at least in part based on the popular story of Sviatopolk “the accursed” who murdered his brothers Boris and Gleb like the “accursed” Cain had murdered Abel.107 The term itself (оканьныя; okan'nyia) is etymologically related to the name Cain (Каин; kain). In the PVL and the NPL, it appears most often as a nickname for the devil—the “accursed one” (оканьныи; okan'nyi). Both chronicles portray the devil as sympathetic to the pagans, therefore also implying that those who are God-less, naturally gravitate toward the devil or are more easily ensnared by the schemes of the “accursed one”. The PVL explains that the devil desires people to remain ignorant and captive to him. Before the Christianization of Rus’, the author writes, “The people back then were ignorant and pagan; the devil rejoiced.”108 Unlike the chronicles of the Teutonic Order, Rus’ian chronicles nonetheless do not interpret the wars against the “accursed” Lithuanians as part of an epochal struggle between good and evil. In fact, even in the PVL, good and evil are not presented as ontologically equal and the devil is not directly

---

107 See chapter 4, p. 128.
108 Lav., col. 83: баху бо тогда члви невъголоси и погани дьяволь ра'вашеса сему.
responsible for pagan hostility. Instead, the PVL depicts the devil as a kind of mischief-maker who derives pleasure from disturbing divine order. The devil’s role in bringing about evil derives from human proclivity toward sin. While the devil incites man to sin, it is in fact God who permits the pagans to attack Rus’ as punishment for falling prey to the devil’s guile. Like Narrator B of the PVL, the Novgorodian chroniclers also blamed the misfortunes that befell the city on the sins of the Rus’ians. The text states again and again, “God let the pagans on us for our sins”; “for our sins they were defeated by the godless pagans”; “for our sins, the Lithuanians led an ambush.”

The greatest “sin” is war between brothers, which according to the NPL is instigated by “the accursed and all-destroying devil, who from the beginning wishing no good to the human race, raised discord among the Russian princes, that men might not dwell in peace.” Reflecting on the street riots of 1228, the NPL presents these events as the work of the devil who “rejoices in bloodshed among brothers.” The “great tumult” occasions yet another Lithuanian attack. This time the author writes, “And seeing our lawlessness and our hatred of our brothers, and our rebelliousness against each other, jealousy and false swearings by the Cross […] God brought the pagans upon us and they laid waste our land.” The growing power and influence of Lithuania is likewise presented as a sign of God’s retributive justice. Describing Lithuania’s victory in the Battle of Saule (1236), the chronicler writes,

The same year the Nemtsy [Teutonic Knights] came in great strength from beyond the sea to Riga and all united there; both the men of Riga and all the Chud Land, and the men of Pleskov [Pskov] from themselves sent a help of 200 men, and they

---


110 NPL, pp. 73, 284 (Michell and Forbes, 80): Не хотя исперва оканьныи, всепагубныи дьяволъ роду человѣческому добра, въздвигше крамолу межи русскими князия, да быша человѣци не жили мирно.

111 NPL, pp. 67, 273: радуешь бо ся окаянными о кровопролитии братии.

112 NPL, pp. 69, 276–7 (Michell and Forbes, 74): Того же богъ видя наша безакония и братоненавидение и непокорение другъ къ другу и зависть, и крестомъ върщаяся въ лжю […] за то богъ на нас поганыя навѣдѣ, и землю нашу пусту положиша.
went against the godless Lithuanians; and thus for our sins they were defeated by the godless pagans and each tenth man came back to his home.\textsuperscript{113}

Divine grace and judgment thus go hand in hand. The chronicler notes that God repeatedly gives Novgorodians the opportunity to atone for their sins, but they return to their corrupt ways “like swine ever wallowing in the filth of sin.”\textsuperscript{114} As a result, he asserts, “We receive every kind of punishment from God; and the invasion of armed men, too, we accept at God’s command, as punishment for our sins.”\textsuperscript{115} For their part, the pagans including the Lithuanian, ignorant of the truth, act unknowingly as agents in God’s plan to punish the disobedient Christians.

The notion of moral accountability in the NPL is directly tied to the chronicler’s perception of free will. The Rus'ians are not the only people who suffer for their sinful actions. The Lithuanians are also punished for raiding Rus' and killing Christians. It should be noted that while Rus'ian chronicles portray God as allowing the pagans to devastate Christian lands, he does not incite them to do so. The responsibility for this decision falls squarely upon the shoulders of the Lithuanians. As a result, the same year that the Lithuanian did “much evil” to Torzhok, the NPL reports that God sent the Tatars and they “took the entire Lithuanian land and killed the people.”\textsuperscript{116} Five years later, the NPL describes a local uprising in Lithuania, citing Lithuanian raids on Christian lands as its cause:

There was a great tumult amongst the Lithuanians by God’s infliction on them, for our Lord God could not bear to look upon the unrighteous and pagan seeing

\textsuperscript{113} NPL, pp. 74, 287 (Michell and Forbes, 81): Того же лѣта придоша въ силѣ великѣ Нѣмцы изъ заморя въ Ригу, и ту совѣкупившеся вси, и рижане и вся Чудьская земля, и пльсковичи отъ себе послаша помощь мужь 200, идоша на безбожную Литву; и тако, грѣхъ ради нашихъ, безбожными погаными побѣжени быша, придоша каждо десяти въ домы своя.

\textsuperscript{114} NPL, pp. 76, 289 (Michell and Forbes, 84): акы свинья валяющеся въ калѣ грѣховѣмь присно.

\textsuperscript{115} NPL, pp. 77, 289 (Michell and Forbes, 84): изни приемлемъ всякю отъ бога, и нахожение ратныхъ; по божию повелѣнню, грѣхъ ради нашихъ казнь приемлемь.

\textsuperscript{116} NPL, pp. 82, 310: и много зла бысть въ Торжку. Тон же зимы изняща Татарове всю землю Литовскую, а самѣѣ избиша. For a discussion of the ramifications of the Tatar invasion of Lithuania, see Baronas, “The Encounter between Forest Lithuanians and Steppe Tatars,” 11–6. Baronas argues that as a result of Burundai’s invasion of Lithuania, the Yotvingians and some Lithuanians recognized the authority of Batu and took part in his campaign against Poland.
them shedding Christian blood like water and others scattered by them over strange lands; then the Lord will repay them according to their works.\footnote{NPL, pp. 84, 313 (Michell and Forbes, 99): бысть мятеж великъ в Литвѣ божиемь попущениемь на нихъ: не тераяше бо господь богъ нашь зрѣти на нечестивыя и поганыя, видя ихъ проливающа кровь христыѧнскую акы воду, и ины расточены от нихъ по чюжимъ землямъ; тогда господь въздасть имъ по дѣломъ ихъ. The chronicle is likely referring to events leading up to Mindaugas assassination. This incident is discussed further in chapter 6.}

In this way, the \textit{NPL} highlights the self-destructive nature of the Lithuanians. The chronicler writes, “God sending down his wrath upon them: they rose themselves against themselves and Grand Prince Mindaugas was killed by his own relatives.”\footnote{NPL, pp. 84, 313 (Michell and Forbes, 98): богу попущью на нихъ гиѣвъ свои: вѣсташа сами на ся, и убиша князя великага Миндовга свои родицѣ.} Nevertheless, in contrast to the Lithuanians who also suffer misfortunes as a result of divine punishment, the author of the \textit{NPL} holds out hope for the future of Rus'. Unlike the Lithuanians, the people of Rus' are capable of atoning for their sins because God allows Christians to repent for their sins.

Considering Novgorod’s adherence to the Kievan paradigm and Ostrowski’s observations on the relationship between social unrest and literary representation, it is reasonable to argue that reacting to Novgorod’s domestic troubles, local chroniclers embraced the discursive triplet first used in the \textit{PVL} to describe pagan raiders. Just as Novgorod replaced Kiev as the central focus of the \textit{NPL}, the Lithuanians (and Tatars) replace the Polovtsians as the primary agents of divine wrath. They represent the new wave of “pagan,” “godless,” and “accursed” peoples sent by God to punish the Novgorodians for their transgressions. By identifying the invading Lithuanians (and Tatars) as “godless” and “accursed” and then presenting their attacks and any devastation caused by them as divine justice, the authors of the \textit{NPL} may have hoped to alert the people of Novgorod to that fact that in-fighting among the princes and boyars had once again moved God to send “godless” and “accursed” “pagans” upon Rus'. The introduction of the discursive triplet suggests that Novgorodian chroniclers were not just responding to the crisis but also attempting
to uncover its cause and perhaps even help solve it. It is not surprising therefore that once the period of conflict ended and Novgorod emerged from its time of trouble, the Novgorodian chroniclers also stopped using the discursive triplet.

**The Case of the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle (GVL)**

In contrast to the *NPL*, the representation of Lithuania in the *GVL* remains consistent throughout the thirteenth century and the chronicle never uses the terms “pagan,” “godless,” and “accursed” to describe the Lithuanians even in times of increased hostilities. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, although the *GVL* was also influenced by the Kievan tradition, it was composed for a completely different purpose than the *NPL* and therefore represents Lithuanian invaders in a very different way as well.

The *GVL* is essentially an homage to the sons of Roman the Great, Danilo and Vasilko. The first part of the chronicle describes the long reign of Danilo as prince of Galicia (r. c. 1219–1264), his efforts to quell opposing factions of Galician boyars, and his notable military successes. In the history of Galicia-Volhynia, the reign of Danilo marks a period of domestic political stabilization and economic growth sometimes even referred to in historiography as a golden age. Danilo reunited Galicia and Volhynia and successfully secured his borders. In 1238, he defeated the Teutonic Knights at Dorogichin temporarily curtailing their eastward offensive. To help promote commerce, Danilo invited German and Polish merchants and artisans to settle in his domains. As a result, the *GVL* reports that “day after day they came […] and the households, fields, and villages around the city grew rich.”\(^{119}\) Danilo also founded several cities, including Lviv and Kholm, where, according to the *GVL*, he built the “beautiful and majestic”

---

church of St. John. In 1245, Danilo defeated his rival Rostislav of Chernigov along with a joint Polish-Hungarian force at the Battle of Yaroslav. His victory cemented his reputation in Europe as a formidable military commander. A few years later, he arranged the marriage of his son Roman to Gertrude, the Babenberg heiress to the duchies of Austria and Styria.

The GVL completely overlooks the capture of Constantinople that had so greatly distressed the Novgorodian chroniclers. In fact, the text begins a mere year later by announcing the joyous state of affairs in Rus'. Likewise, the Tatar invasion is not presented as wholly catastrophic. The author seems upset by the events but also forgiving of Danilo’s formal submission to the Tatars. Meyendorff suggests that following the Tatar conquest Galicia-Volhynia was left in a “relatively privileged position.”

The fear of a second invasion prompted European rulers to seek alliance with Danilo as his lands could provide the perfect buffer zone against another Tatar onslaught. Hoping to secure his aid, in 1253, the pope crowned the still-Orthodox prince rex russiae. Danilo continued to oscillate between paying homage to the Tatars and aiding his Western allies. In 1256, Danilo and Mindaugas led a campaign against the Tatars, temporarily driving them out of Vozviagl in eastern Volhynia.

Most importantly, Galicia-Volhynia did not suffer from the same inter-princely warfare.

---

120 Ipat., col. 843: озда же црквь стго Ивана красноу и лѣпоу. For a description of the church of St. John in Kholm, see Ipat., cols. 843–4.
121 Ipat., cols. 800–5.
123 Meyendorff, Byzantium and the Rise of Russia, 39.
125 Ipat., cols. 839 (Perfecky, 73): When a joint Rus'sian-Lithuanian force entered the Tatar-occupied city of Vozviagl, the GVL reports that the Lithuanians immediately "rushed" in. As soon as they discovered that the city had been abandoned and burned, "they became infuriated, spat, and began to swear in their own language: "Junda!" They invoked their gods Andaj and Diviriks as well as their gods—that is—the devils…After reviewing their position, the Lithuanians set out looting in a fit of anger" (потокши на градъ Литва ни вѣдћа нишьто…тouкахоу же и плеваюo по своиски рекоуше щенда. вѣзвающе бѣ своєе Андае и Дивирѣа и вса бѣ своєе поминянуче рекомьс бѣс… Литва же роздоумавше и вевоаша гићь держаше). What began as joint Rus'sian-Lithuanian effort, ended in a Lithuanian ambush on the city of Lutsk.
that troubled the rest of Rus’. The *GVL*’s praise of Danilo’s relationship to his brother Vasilko stands in stark contrast to the sibling rivalries depicted in the *NPL*. Describing what he sees as one of Danilo’s most admirable traits, the chronicler writes, “King Danilo was a good, brave, and wise prince, who founded many cities, built churches, and embellished them in many different ways. He was renowned for his brotherly love for Vasilko.”

Familiar with the debilitating effects of fraternal competition as described in the *PVL*, the chronicler applauds Danilo’s and Vasilko’s devotion to each other. For example, the *GVL* reports how even under Tatar threat, Vasilko refused to surrender his brother’s cherished city of Kholm.

Given the context of its composition, it is no accident that the *GVL* lacks the sense of melancholic resignation that permeates the *NPL* in the mid-thirteenth century. Consequently, the terms “pagan,” “godless,” and “accursed” have a profoundly different meaning and function. For instance, “pagan” seems to be primarily a religious designation meant to distinguish the lands of Christian Rus’ from its non-Christian neighbors, including the Lithuanians, Yotvingians, Polovtsians, and Tatars. The act of waging war against the pagans is also more of a symbolic gesture by which members of the Romanovich family fulfill their ancestral duty to Vladimir Monomakh. The *GVL* opens with a tribute to Roman the Great who, as the chronicler writes, “Emulated his grandfather Monomakh” and used to “pounce upon the pagans [Polovtsians] like a lion and like a lynx; annihilate them like a crocodile and pass through their lands like an

---

126 *Ipat.*, col. 862 (Perfecky, 84): король Данило князь добрый и храбрый и мудрый иже создает города многие и церкви поставил и украсил в различными красотами. Башеть бо братолюбьем святася с братом своим Васильком.

127 *Ipat.*, cols. 851–2: The *GVL* reports that when Tatars forced Vasilko to command the inhabitants of Danilo’s city of Kholm to surrender, Vasilko devised a cunning strategy to dupe the Tatars and save his brother’s city. As he called out to the guards demanding their submission, he threw down three stones, signaling to the people to do the opposite and defend the city.
eagle.”  

As Roman’s successor, Danilo is expected to continue this tradition. After a successful campaign against the Yotvingians, the chronicler writes that Danilo and Vasilko “returned with glory to their own land, emulating their father, the great Roman.”

All pagans, including the Polovtsians, Lithuanians, and Yotvingians are thus presented as age-old enemies and campaigning against them as part of the princely duty.

Apart from duke Traidenis, whom the author seems to particularly dislike, the Lithuanians are never referred to as “godless” or “accursed” in the GVL. These terms are reserved for anyone whose actions threaten Danilo’s sovereignty, namely: (1) the “godless Galicians,” seditious boyars who plot against Danilo with their Polish and Hungarian supporters, and (2) the “godless,” “accursed,” and “lawless” Tatars whose conquest devastated a large part of the Rus’ian lands. In contrast to the NPL, in the GVL, being “pagan” does not render an invading group necessarily “godless” or “accursed” as well. The Lithuanians are never labeled “godless” or “accursed” because their attacks, though potentially destructive, are never perceived as a threat to Danilo’s authority. Nearly all the Lithuanian campaigns against Volhynia described in the GVL are successfully repelled or avenged by Danilo.

---

128 Ipat., cols. 715–6 (Perfecky, 17 [translation amended]): ходаща по заповѣдемь Бѣймѣ оустремил бо са баше на поганѣ аѣко и лѣвъ сердить же бѣгъ аѣко и рѣсь и гоубаше аѣко и коркодиль и прехожаше землю ихъ аѣко и шрѣль…ревноваше бо дѣю своєму Мономахоу.

129 Ipat., col. 813 (Perfecky, 61): придоста со славою на землю свою наследивши поуть шча своего великаго Романа.

130 The second part of the Galician-Volhynian chronicle is dedicated to prince Vladimir (Vasilko’s son). The chronicler explains that Traidenis and Vladimir were in a feud because Vladimir’s father had killed Traidenis’ brothers during a campaign against Lithuania: Ipat., col. 871. This might explain the chronicler’s unfavorable portrayal of Traidenis as Ѳоканыѣ и безаконыѣ прокляты немѣгѣѣ (accursed, lawless, condemned, and merciless): Ipat., col. 869. Traidenis’ treatment in the GVL is discussed in chapter 7.

131 On the use of the epithet “godless” in reference to local Galician boyars (бѣбожныѣ Галичани), see Ipat., cols. 718, cols. 762 (x3), 763 (x2), 774.

132 It was unusual for Rus’ian chroniclers to mention Tatar overlordship. The GVL represents a rare example of such a statement: тогда бахоутъ всѣ князи Руссии въ воли Татарскому покореніи гѣвѣымь Бѣймѣ (“for at that time the princes of Rus’ were Tatar subjects, having been conquered by God’s wrath”): Ipat., col. 897 (Perfecky, 99).

133 Peresopnitsia in 1244: Ipat., cols. 797–8; Melnitsa in 1245: col. 798; Lake Zyat in 1251: cols. 818–9; Turiis’k in 1252: col. 819; Lutsk in 1255: cols. 839–40; Kamenets and Melnitsa in 1262: cols. 855–6; attack near
reports that the Lithuanians “could not withstand” the charge of the Rus’ians and turned to flee. Describing the aftermath of a Lithuanian attack on Lutsk, for example, the chronicler states that Danilo and Vasilko’s men chased down the already fleeing Lithuanian army and cornered them at a nearby lake “cutting them down and driving their spears through them.” In fear, the Lithuanians took to the water. The GVL provides an extremely detailed description of the horrifying defeat suffered by the Lithuanians. Struggling to survive, the chronicle tells us that the drowning Lithuanians attempted to grab hold of their horses, sometimes ten men per animal. Eventually, they succumbed to their fate, flooding the lake with so many corpses, shields, and helmets that the local inhabitants profited from the spoils.

While in northern Rus’ the Lithuanians represented an instrument of divine punishment, in southern Rus' the Lithuanians were seen as yet another non-Christian peoples who ever so often invade in order to test the fortitude of the Rus’ian princes much like the Polovtsians, Pechenegs, and Volga Bulgars had done before them. Though fickle, easily overcome by temporal desires, and never to be fully trusted, nevertheless, the Lithuanians were not portrayed as enemies of Rus'. This title appears to have been reserved for the “godless” and “accursed” boyars and Tatars who deliberately plot against Danilo. In the case of Lithuania, the reason for their malicious actions, treachery, and violence against Rus' was simple—they were pagan.

Conclusions

Although Rus'ian chroniclers were clearly aware of religious differences and referred to the Lithuanians as “pagan,” the addition of the epithets “godless” and “accursed” to form the full
discursive triplet reflects attitudes during times of crisis. Unlike their counterparts in the Teutonic Order, Rus'ian chroniclers were not as interested in affirming differences or setting themselves apart from their pagan neighbors. They did not seek to demonize their Lithuanian adversaries in order to justify the need for conquest or colonization. Descriptions of Lithuanian attacks on Rus' and the use of pejorative terminology seems to have been more of a reaction to local circumstances than underlying antagonistic attitudes or greater ideological concerns.
Chapter 6

From Obscurity to Notoriety in the Thirteenth Century:

The Many Faces of Mindaugas

For nearly a century now, Mindaugas (d. 1263), the first and only king of Lithuania, has been a major subject of academic inquiry and popular fascination. The immense historiographical tradition, encompassing several hundred books and articles in various languages, that has risen up around the figure of Mindaugas attests not only to the breadth of scholarly interest but also the high demand for further research.¹ Following the national revival movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Mindaugas came to occupy a dominant position in Lithuania’s historical memory, and since Lithuania proclaimed its independence in 1991, he has been celebrated as an icon of national solidarity with major streets named after him and dozens of monuments erected in his honor. While almost everything about Mindaugas, from his ancestry to his legacy, remains a matter of heated debate, he is often considered the founder of the Lithuanian state and recognized as the first ruler to bring Lithuania into the sphere of medieval European civilization.² His achievements are celebrated annually on July 6, known officially as Lithuanian Statehood Day.³

¹ Edvardas Gudavičius provides a thorough review of twentieth-century academic literature on Mindaugas: Mindaugas, 9–86. For the latest studies on Mindaugas, see also Vytautas Ališauskas, ed. Mindaugas Karalius (Vilnius: Aidai, 2008).
² On research regarding the formation of a Lithuanian state, see chapter 1, p. 31, n. 11.
³ July 6 commemorates the coronation of Mindaugas in 1253. The exact date is disputed. July 6 was chosen according to a hypothesis put forth by Gudavičius, Mindaugas, 237. See also Edvardas Gudavičius, “Polityczny problem królestwa Litewskiego w połowie XIIIw.,” in Ekspansja niemieckich zakonów rycerskich w strefie Bałtyku od XII do połowy XVIw. (Materiały z konferencji), ed. Marian Biskup (Toruń: Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1990), 69–70.
Apart from a handful of letters, land charters, and other select archival materials, almost everything we know about Mindaugas comes from two sources: the *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle* (LRC) and the *Galician-Volhynian Chronicle* (GVL).\(^4\) As demonstrated in Part I, the LRC and the GVL belong to two very distinct literary traditions, each laced with layers of theological and political connotations indicative of the time and place of their composition. Written in a style that echoes contemporary Western European chivalric romances, the LRC relates the daring exploits and sacrifices of the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order in their struggle against the ever-growing “pagan menace” and the “self-serving” archbishops of Riga. The GVL, by contrast, glorifies the deeds of the Romanovichi princes of Galicia-Volhynia who are presented by the author as the rightful heirs of the Kievan cultural patrimony and defenders of the Rus’ian lands from both external enemies and internal discord.

While this disparity in authorship is undoubtedly responsible for much of the ambiguity that surrounds almost every aspect of Mindaugas’ reign (e.g., his ancestry, rise to power, place of residence, international diplomacy, economic policies, the sincerity of his conversion, etc.) we must not overlook the conspicuous similarities between the LRC and the GVL. For instance, both chronicles are evidently sympathetic not to an ecclesiastical institution, but rather to a stately authority, the princes of Galicia and Volhynia in the case of the GVL and the Livonian land marshals in the case of the LRC. For this reason, both texts praise military and knightly values such as courage, loyalty, and honor. In most cases, war is presented as necessary and victory as the achievement of righteous warriors aided by divine benediction.

Moreover, both texts were completed during the last decade of the thirteenth century, nearly thirty years after Mindaugas’ death at a time when tensions with Lithuania were higher.

than they had ever been before.\textsuperscript{5} Both the Teutonic Order in Prussia and Livonia had been locked in war with the Lithuanians since 1283.\textsuperscript{6} After the fall of Acre in 1291, the Teutonic Knights shifted their primary focus from the war in the Holy Land to the Baltics. The activities of the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order thus came under much closer scrutiny by the grand master who moved his headquarters to Marienburg in 1309. Furthermore, with the last Prussian uprising having been successfully put down, now, more than ever, the reputation of the entire Order depended on its relations with Lithuania. Europe closely monitored the progress of Baltic Christianization as well as the Order’s ability to forestall the Lithuanian counter-offensive.

The efforts of the Teutonic Knights, nevertheless, did little to prevent the growth and expansion of Lithuania. The Lithuanians constructed a line defensive fortification on the border with Livonia and offered military assistance to the Order’s rivals in Riga and Poland, all the while continuing to extend Lithuanian domains further eastward.\textsuperscript{7} By the 1290s, Black Rus’, including the lands of Novgorodok, Grodno, Volkovysk, and Minsk, was no longer a territory contested by Galicia-Volhynia and Lithuania, but firmly controlled by the Lithuanians. The powerful Rus’ian kingdom, which only fifty years prior held undisputed authority in southwestern Rus’, now found itself confronted by a new neighbor that had managed to seize military control of Black Rus’ as well as Polotsk, Vitebsk, and Turov-Pinsk in less than half a century. Although living in two confessionally and political distinct territories and charged with two very different tasks, when the authors of the \textit{LRC} and the \textit{GVL} took on their respective

\textsuperscript{5} It is generally accepted that the \textit{LRC} was written c. 1290: chapter 2, pp. 61–3. The \textit{GVL} is thought to have been compiled in c. 1292 from at least two earlier works, one written c. 1266 favoring Danilo and one written c. 1289 favoring Vasilko Romanovich and his son Vladimir. This thesis agrees with Mykola F. Kotliar’s theory that the final compiler of the \textit{GVL} not only collected the original texts but also added his own material at the time of compilation: chapter 4, p. 135.

\textsuperscript{6} According to the chronicle of Peter of Dusburg, 1283 is the year that the Teutonic Knights finally established sovereignty in Prussia and turned their attention exclusively toward the conversion of Lithuania. See chapter 2, p. 53 and chapter 3, p. 86.

\textsuperscript{7} In 1297, the Lithuanians offered the archbishop and town burghers military assistance, entered Riga, destroyed the Order’s fort, and remained garrisoned near the city for the following thirteen years: chapter 7, p. 254–5.
projects, they were each confronted by a transformed Lithuania, which could pose a threat equal to that of any other established eastern European polity.

The fact that the two principal sources on Mindaugas were completed roughly at the same time may be merely a coincidence of historical preservation and surviving materials. While the coeval nature of these texts provides fruitful grounds for comparison, one other unique aspect of both works also deserves further consideration. As noted previously, the LRC and the GVL lack a strict chronological schema. They are both written in a discursive style rather than the more commonly used annalistic style of the day. We may therefore surmise that these texts were intended to be read and understood as one continuous historical narrative in which each event stands in some kind of relation to every other, simultaneously playing two pivotal roles as both cause and effect. As such, both the LRC and the GVL are much more closely related to the genre that Hayden White terms “history” rather than “chronicle.” As discussed in the introduction, unlike the more simplistic genres of “annal” and “chronicle,” White argues that “history” is always imbued by the author with a distinct “continuity, coherency, and meaning” that help turn a mere sequence of events into an intelligible story.8 However accurate and insightful these stories may be, White maintains that they are always charged with a “moral significance” that is consciously or unconsciously imparted by the author on the narrative.9 As a result, the inception of higher modes of narrativity, such as chronicles and histories, also prefigures a certain level of thematic complexity and character development. When evaluated within this context, the character of Mindaugas in both the GVL and the LRC appears to possess a deep idiographic identity. He is ascribed with specific psychological and social traits as well as motives, intentions, goals, and desires intended to affect the reader’s predisposition to him. At the same time

---

8 White, “The Value of Narrativity,” 15.
9 White defines “moral significance” as the product of the author’s “impulse to moralize reality, that is, to identify it with a social system that is the source of any morality we can imagine”: Ibid., 18.
however, he is also an entity of a predetermined storyworld and remains subordinate to the
narrative action. In order to understand the character of Mindaugas, it is therefore important to
examine his role both within the context of the overall narrative as well as in the context of the
society in which the narrative was produced and intended to be read.

This chapter provides a comparative analysis of the literary treatment of Mindaugas in
the LRC and the GVL. Two dominant impressions of Mindaugas emerge from the sources. The
author of the GVL depicts Mindaugas as a ruler bent on establishing power by any means
possible, including bribery, deception, and murder. The author of the LRC, on the other hand,
presents Mindaugas as an honest and trustworthy king who bestows gifts with royal generosity
and whose conversion marks Lithuania’s long-awaited entry into Western Christendom. The first
two questions addressed in this chapter are essentially empirical in nature: What are the two
primary images of Mindaugas? And, how are they different? These questions serve as points of
departure for extending theoretical considerations, which come to light upon detailed
examination of the original chronicle material and awareness of the text’s ideological
understructure. Accordingly, the second part of this chapter assesses the two conflicting images
of Mindaugas by paying close attention to (1) the evolution (if any) of these images throughout
the course of each chronicle; (2) the historical basis of these representations; (3) the ideological
and moralizing program used by the author to impose meaning upon the narrative; and (4) the
impact of religious difference upon the construction of the literary image of Mindaugas.

The “Real” Mindaugas

Attempts to produce a biography of Mindaugas’ life have been complicated by the
relative scarcity of extant sources. In fact, we know almost nothing about his early life and ascent
to power. It is generally believed that Mindaugas was born some time around 1200. The \textit{LRC} mentions that the Lithuanians and Samogitians considered his father to have been a “great king.”\textsuperscript{10} The \textit{GVL} indicates that Mindaugas had an older brother named Dausprungas (Figure 1).

He was probably married to the sister of Vykins, the duke of Samogitia who helped his people achieve victory over the Livonian Brothers of the Sword in the Battle of Saule (1236).\textsuperscript{11} As we shall see later, Dausprungas’ sons, Tautvilas and Gedvydas (Edivydas) were notable rivals of Mindaugas and along with Vykins played an important role in the power struggles of the 1250s. Mindaugas most likely also had at least two sisters. They were the mothers of Lengvenis, Mindaugas’ loyal nephew who led Lithuania against Volhynia in 1245,\textsuperscript{12} and Treniota, who orchestrated Mindaugas’ assassination in 1263 with the help of Daumantas, Duke of Nalšia.\textsuperscript{13}

Historians for the most part agree that Mindaugas’ rise to power was expedited by two contemporary events: (1) the establishment of the state of the Teutonic Order; and (2) the Tatar invasion of Rus', which impeded the formation of an all Rus’ian defensive front thus enabling Lithuanian eastward expansion.\textsuperscript{14} At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the territory of what would later become known as the Grand Duchy of Lithuania could best be described as a loose confederation of several warrior duchies bonded by military alliance and marriage. Scholars generally contend that the threat posed by the Order encouraged cooperation between the various princlings eventually giving way to some semblance of military and administrative

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{10} \textit{LRC}, lines 6,383–4 (Smith and Urban, 79): \textit{din vater was ein kunic grôz, / bie den zîten sînen genôz (“Your father was a great king, and during his lifetime he had no equal”).}
\textsuperscript{11} See chapter 1, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{12} See chapter 7, p. 242, 260–3.
\textsuperscript{13} Mindaugas’ genealogy has not been conclusively established. There are several theories about the relationship between Mindaugas, Dausprungas, Tautvilas, Gedvydas, Vykins, and Treniota. See Gudavičius, \textit{Mindaugas}, 150, 211. While Gudavičius maintains Treniota’s leading role in the assassination plot (p. 304–5) not all scholars agree, see for example Kiaupa et al., \textit{History of Lithuania}, 66.
\textsuperscript{14} Baronas, “The Encounter between Forest Lithuanians and Steppe Tatars,” 5: “The shock of devastating Tatar attacks and the eradication of the traditional way of life created favorable conditions for the Lithuanian warriors to gather spoils of war.”
\end{flushright}
consolidation by the 1240s.\textsuperscript{15} It was during this time that Mindaugas rose to political supremacy by what Rowell describes as a “familiar processes of marriage, murder and military conquest.”\textsuperscript{16} Although Rowell’s theory is merely an inference based upon his reading of the \textit{GVL}, it does explain the string of internecine conflicts that plagued the later part of Mindaugas’ reign.

The structural and administrative changes that occurred in the Lithuanian lands during the first half of the thirteenth century, whether in response to new pressures from aggressive neighboring powers, the agency of one cunning and self-determined ruler, or a combination of the two, have long fascinated historians of Lithuania. Unfortunately, our understanding of Mindaugas’ role in these changes remains limited. What can be deduced with a some degree of certainty is that (1) in the 1240s Mindaugas came to occupy a dominant position among the Lithuanian dukes and was acknowledged as the ruler of Lithuania by European dignitaries; (2) he maintained diplomatic relations with neighboring polities including the Teutonic Order; and (3) he engaged in repeated attempts to expand Lithuanian territories into Black Rus' as well as the principalities of Polotsk and Vitebsk (Map 2).

Mindaugas’ difficulties seem to have begun in 1248, when, according to the \textit{GVL}, determined to take control of his nephews’ lands, Mindaugas expelled Tautvilas, Gedvydas, and Vykins. The chronicle reports:

That year Mendovg drove out his nephews Tevtivil and Jedvid. He sent them with their uncle Vykont to Smolensk to wage war against Rus' and told them that anything they conquered they could keep by force, for, because of his dispute with them, [Mindaugas already] occupied all of Lithuania. He took possession of the Lithuanian land [including] their countless possessions, and destroyed their estates. Then he sent his soldiers against [Tevtivil and Jedvid], for he wished to kill them.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{15} Kiaupa et al., \textit{History of Lithuania}, 52–3.
\textsuperscript{16} Rowell, \textit{Lithuania Ascending}, 51. See also Kiaupa et al., \textit{History of Lithuania}, 53–4.
\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ipat.}, col. 815 (Perfecky, 62): Въ то же льтѣ изгна Миндогъ свюца своего Тевтевила и Ёдивида. пославшомуоу на воинуо со воемь своиоми на воинуо со Въконтомъ на Роусь воевать ко Смоленькоу и ре" што хто приемлеть собь дерьжить. вражбою бо за ворожьство с ними Литвоу, зане поимана бѣ всѣ землѣ
The GVL’s account of this event is generally accepted as reliable and often cited by historians as the main catalyst in the formation of an anti-Mindaugas coalition, which included Tautvilas and Gedvydas, Vyknintas and the Samogitians, Danilo of Galicia (Tautvilas and Gedvydas’ brother-in-law), and the Livonian Order. The next few years did not go too favorably for Mindaugas. Tautvilas endeavored to strengthen his ties in the West by traveling to Riga to accept baptism; Vyknintas attempted, though unsuccessfully, to lay siege to Mindaugas’ castle in Voruta; Danilo managed to temporarily gain control of Black Rus; and, the Order organized a major raid on Nalśia penetrating deep into Lithuania proper.

It is at this time that Mindaugas agreed to receive baptism. His reasons for conversion remain a matter of speculation. The precise place and date of Mindaugas’ baptism is unknown. The event must have occurred sometime before July 17, 1251 because on that day, Pope Innocent IV declared Mindaugas the “special son of Christ” (carissimus in Christo filius), proclaimed the kingdom of Lithuania (Regnum Luthawie), and welcomed it into jurisdiction of the papal see (in ius et proprietatem beati Petri suscipimus). He also placed Mindaugas, his family, and his possessions under direct papal protection and forbid any one from “attempting to hinder or molest” his kingdom and lands. Innocent then wrote the bishops of Livonia (Riga, Dorpat, Ösel-Wiek, and Courland) instructing them to honor the peace with Lithuania and

---

Литовскіе имѣніе и притягивала бѣ батыство ихъ, и посла на иѣ вон свой хотя оубитни а. Rowell maintains that sending rivals to carve out new territories for themselves abroad was a common practice in warrior societies: Lithuania Ascending, 51.

18 Gudavičius, Mindaugas, 311–4. It has also been suggested that Mindaugas attempted to expel Tautvilas and Gedvydas because of their failed expedition to Smolensk: Kiaupa et al., History of Lithuania, 56.
19 Ipat., col. 816.
20 Pope Innocent IV wrote that Mindaugas was baptized with his wife Morta, two sons, and cum numerosa multitudo paganorum (with a great multitude of pagans): VMPL, I, no. 102. In a letter to the pope (1322), Gediminas claimed rex Myndowe cum toto suo regno ad fidem Christi fuit conversus (King Mindaugas, with his entire kingdom was converted to the faith of Christ): CL, no. 15, p. 38.
21 VMPL I, no. 102, p. 49: et ea cum [...] uxore, filius et familia tuis sub protectione sedis apostolice permanere sanctim [...] Districtius inhibentes, ne quis te in fide sedis apostolice persistentm super prefatis Regno et terris temere impedire seu molestare presumat.
support Mindaugas in his propagation of the faith. Finally, he wrote Bishop Heidenreich of Kulm directing him to crown Mindaugas rex Letwinorum, begin the construction of a cathedral, and find a suitable candidate for the new bishopric of Lithuania that would be directly subject to the Holy See. Two years later in 1253, with Bishop Heidenreich presiding, the land marshal of the Livonian Order Andrew von Stierland conferred the crown on Mindaugas and his wife Morta. The following year Mindaugas formally endowed Christian as the first bishop of Lithuania. Then, to confirm his royal privileges and secure his family’s succession to the throne, in 1255, Mindaugas received permission from Pope Alexander IV to crown his son king of Lithuania as well.

Immediately after his coronation, Mindaugas transferred portions of Samogitia (Karšuva, Ariogala, Betygala, Laukuva, and Raseiniai, Kulėnai and Vangiai), Nadruva, and Sudavia (Dainava and Veisiejai) to the Order. The annexation of Samogitia finally bridged the Order’s territories in Livonia and Prussia creating a land route that could guarantee communication between the two branches even during the winter months when travel by sea was too difficult. Since Mindaugas’ authority in Samogitia was largely nominal, his donation was met with strong local resistance and the implementation of a new Christian order proved unsuccessful. Several

---

23 VMPL I, no. 103, p. 49 and no. 106, p. 50
24 VMPL I, no. 105, p. 50. Efforts to evangelize are mentioned in LRC, lines 3,569–75. In the 1980s, archeologists discovered the remains of a thirteenth-century church under the Lower Castle in Vilnius: Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 135–6. However, there is still much speculation about its date of construction: Kęstutis Katalynas, “Vilnius XIII amžiuje, mitai ir faktai,” Kultūros paminklai 6 (2000): 207–19.
26 LUB I.1, no. 263: March 12, 1254, Mindaugas granted half of the districts of Raseiniai, Betygala and Laukuva in Samogitia to Bishop Christian. Christian received a post in Prussia in 1259. There is no evidence of a bishop in Lithuania after his departure.
27 VMPL I, no. 123, p. 60–1. Rimvydas Petrauskas interprets Mindaugas’ efforts to have his son crowned as evidence of an emerging dynastic mindset: “Praviashii rod i znan,” 95–116.
28 LUB I.1, nos. 252, 286, 294, 342, 354. The grants only survive as copies. Their authenticity has been debated. For the classic study, see Karol Maleczyński, “W sprawie autentyczności dokumentów Mendoga z lat 1253–1261,” Altemum wileński 11 (1936): 1–56.
29 Due to a low concentration of salt, the Baltic Sea would freeze during the winter making sea travel between the Order’s domains in Prussia and Livonia difficult: Jensen, introduction to Crusade and Conversion, xvii.
pitched battles ensued between the knights and the Samogitians leading to the Order’s resounding defeat at Skuodas in 1259 and at Durbe in 1260. The Order’s weakened position spurred a rebellion in Semigallia and the Great Prussian Uprising that lasted for the next fourteenth years.

In early 1260, Mindaugas again broke peace with the Order. According to the LRC, with the assistance of his nephew Treniota, the Samogitians, and Danilo of Galicia, he launched a series of military expeditions into Livonia in 1261 and Prussia in 1263. Mindaugas’ alliance with his nephew was short-lived however. In 1263, Treniota, aided by Daumantas, assassinated Mindaugas and his two sons. Several hypotheses have been put forth to explain the circumstances leading up to this event. It is often assumed that the two acted in retaliation after Mindaugas took Daumantas’ wife as his own when Morta died. For the next several years, Lithuania witnessed the succession of several short-reigning dukes (Treniota, Vaišvilkas, and Švarn) until Traidenis came to power in c. 1270.

First Impressions I: Galician-Volhynian Chronicle (GVL)

The first known written reference to Mindaugas can be found in the GVL where he is listed as one of the five senior dukes among the twenty-one Lithuanian signatories of a peace treaty with Galicia-Volhynia. The treaty was most likely concluded in response to growing Polish hostilities under Leszek the White of Little Poland and Konrad I of Mazovia. According

---

30 LRC, lines 6,471–513, 6,883–950.
31 This theory is advanced by Gudavičius (Mindaugas, 304–5) based upon a reference in the GVL (Ipat., col. 859–60).
32 Ipat., cols. 735–6. As there is no archival evidence of such a treaty ever having been concluded, we know of this agreement only from the GVL. The five elder dukes in order of appearance are Živinbundas, Dausprungas, Mindaugas, Daujotas and Vilikaila. Many scholars consider the treaty proof of early Lithuanian state formation. See Barnauskas, Lietuvos valstybės istorijos, 185–8; Kiaupa et al., History of Lithuania, 52–4; Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 50.
to Vladimir Pashuto, the agreement was mutually beneficial: Galicia and Volhynia needed an ally against Leszek, and Lithuania was looking to secure its southern border. Although like most agreements of the time, the treaty was short-lived, temporary peace meant that Danilo could focus more effectively on the ongoing struggle for Galician-Volhynian union, while the Lithuanian dukes could devote more manpower to the defense of their northern frontier against the Livonian Order.

Because the GVL does not specify the provisions of treaty, its intended purpose remains largely unknown. The chronicle tells us only that the Lithuanians sent a delegation to Danilo and Vasilko with an offer of peace, and then lists the Lithuanian signatories by name and occasionally familial relationship. For the most part, the chronicler’s tone is unaffected and he shows very little interest in the dukes. His contempt for Mindaugas, however, is readily apparent. Immediately drawing the reader’s attention to the duke’s devious character, the chronicler introduces Mindaugas as the main perpetrator in the murder of three other signatories of the treaty—the Bulionys brothers: Vismantas, Gedvilas, and Sprudeikis. As discussed in chapters 4 and 5, Rus’ian chroniclers openly disapproved of inter-princely rivalry and identified dynastic warfare as the root of all troubles in Rus’. Adhering to the example of the PVL, early Rus’ian texts traditionally equated competition among kin members to the sins of Cain and saw such violence as deserving of divine punishment, which typically came in the form of civil war, pagan invasion, or natural disaster. The causal relationship between fraternal discord and resulting difficulties seems implicit in the GVL. Just as inter-princely strife was often blamed for times of trouble, inter-princely harmony could explain times of peace and prosperity. As seen in chapter 5,

---

33 V. T. Pashuto, Vneshniaia politika Drevei Rusi (Moscow: Nauka, 1968), 260–1. The alliance was most likely the work of Danilo who at that time needed allies in his conflict against the local boyars and their Polish and Hungarian supporters.

34 Ipat., col. 736.
the author of the *GVL* lauded Danilo and Vasilko for their brotherly love and depicted it as bringing political stability and economic growth to Galicia-Volhynia. By introducing Mindaugas as a prince who kills his fellow princes, the chronicler drew a strict dividing line between the virtuous protagonists of the *GVL*—Danilo and Vasilko—and their Lithuanian antithesis—Mindaugas. The mention of Mindaugas’ murderous actions would have conjured up a variety of associations for the reader, including ones based upon biblical teachings (Cain and Abel) as well as historical antecedents (Sviatopolk’s murder of his brothers Boris and Gleb).

Mindaugas’ attempts to secure his rule by means of harm to his own kin would not only have been seen as condemnable in the eyes of the Rus’ian chroniclers but also as the root of his misfortunes. For instance, in the *GVL*, Mindaugas’ conflict with Tautvilas and Gedvydas testifies to the damaging consequences of the duke’s actions. The chronicle portrays Mindaugas’ expulsion of his nephews as the principle factor leading to their formation of a coalition with Danilo and the Livonian Order and the string of devastating campaigns against him in the early 1250s. Likewise, the text explicitly states that Mindaugas’ unscrupulous methods of securing power by murdering his brothers and nephews directly led to his death. The author presents his assassination as essentially retributive. He is killed because “he began murdering his brothers and nephews, and others he drove from the country [until] he ruled alone.”

From the outset, the *GVL* portrays Mindaugas as a power hungry tyrant lacking any regard for the consequences of his actions and therefore deserving all manner of punishment and detestation. This initial impression serves a dual function. First, it lays the foundation for the

---

35 *Ipat.*, col. 858 (Perfecky, 82): и оубиство же его сиче скажемь. быѥ кнѧщю емоу в земль Литовьскѹн и нача избиати брѧтъ свою и сбѹцѣ свої а друугтѧ выгна и землѣ. и нача кнѧжити ўдинъ во всен землѣ Литовьскѣн. и нача горѣти велмѣ и вознесєса славою и гордостью великою и не творѧше противу себѣ никого же (“Let us now relate [the circumstances leading to] his death: While he was reigning in the Lithuanian land, he began murdering his brothers and nephews, and others he drove from the country. [Finally] he ruled alone in the Lithuanian land. He grew very proud, and his glory and great pride [affected him to such an extent that] he considered no one his equal”).
general representation of Mindaugas in the *GVL*. Second, it acts as a counterpoint to highlight Danilo’s virtues. For example, when Tautvilas and Gedvydas arrived in Galicia, the chronicler notes that Danilo declined Mindaugas’ request to kill his nephews and instead offered the exiles asylum and protection in his kingdom because he was married to their sister. The author of the *GVL* defends Danilo’s efforts to assemble the coalition as motivated in part by loyalty to his brothers-in-law. Using the familiar theme of inter-princely strife versus harmony, the author of the *GVL* therefore expertly silhouettes the image of Danilo, the loyal and trustworthy prince who protects his people and fights for their honor, against the image of Mindaugas, the cruel pagan who attempts to establish his rule through perfidy and treachery.

**First Impressions II: Livländische Reimchronik (LRC)**

As in the *GVL*, the initial impression of the pagan duke in the *LRC* is not particularly favorable. He is first mentioned in the chronicle when he attempts to expel the Livonian Order from Courland (Ger.: Kurland). Eager to restore their reputation in aftermath of the disastrous defeat at Battle of Saule, the knights began to push southwestward into Courland in 1242. The region held strategic importance as it offered an outlet both to Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Riga as well as the potential for complete control of shipping activities on the Daugava, Lielupe, and Venta Rivers. In addition, access to these waterways could provide a new safer alternative to land travel, which was made difficult not only by the dense forests and marshlands, but also by the ever-present threat of enemy ambush. Under the leadership of Land Marshal Dietrich von Grüningen, the Livonian Order defeated the Curonians at Amboten and founded the fortress of Goldingen on the crossroads of the Venta River and land routes linking the Order’s Prussian

---

36 *Ipat.*, col. 815.
lands with the lower reaches of the Daugava River. In 1245, Pope Innocent IV confirmed the Order’s rights by allotting two-thirds of all the territories conquered in Courland to the Livonian Knights and one-third to the newly established Bishopric of Courland. The new castles in Courland and adjacent Semigallia served as important military bases for the Order’s raids on Samogitia and Lithuania.

Shortly after the Order’s expansion into Courland, the LRC reports that Mindaugas, “the Lithuanian king,” led an army to Amboten, the southernmost castle in Courland, and attacked it “in great force.” A retinue of thirty knights immediately arrived and with the help of 500 Curonian allies successfully pushed back the Lithuanian onslaught. Edvardas Gudavičius maintains that Mindaugas’ attack on Amboten was a tactical ploy intended to expand Lithuanian territory at a time when the Order’s regional supremacy was being challenged. When Konrad I of Mazovia appealed to the Teutonic Knights to defend his borders from the Baltic Prussians in 1226, he granted the Order use of the lands of Chelmno (Ger.: Kulmerland) on the bend of the Vistula River as a base for their campaigns. During the next two decades, the knights steadily moved northward toward the mouth of Vistula, conquering large parts of Prussian territory where they constructed the forts of Thorn, Rehden, Marienwerder, and Elbing on the river’s delta.

By 1240, Duke Swietopelk II of Pomerania found himself in competition with the knights

---

38 LUB I.1, no. 171: On April 19, 1242, the Livonian Order received the grand master’s permission to build Goldingen.
39 LUB, I.1, nos. 181 and 182. The see was established by William of Modena.
40 William Urban, “The Prussian-Lithuanian Frontier of 1242,” Lituanus 21:4 (1975): 6: “The defensive line in Livonia stretched along the Dvina river from Dunaburg to Riga, thence across Semgallia to Kurland. Along the river the knights maintained a series of castles that served as bases for scouting activities and as assembly points for the militia. Also they were used as bases for the raiding parties that crossed the border wilderness to attack Lithuania. Semgallia was held by an alliance with native chiefs who feared Lithuanian domination. The few castles there were too far back from the frontier to be of any use against the Lithuanians, but in 1242 the Teutonic Knights made plans to build a castle at Mitau on a site accessible by water. This castle would dominate central Semgallia and protect the line of communication to Kurland, where a great castle was being built at Goldingen.”
41 LRC, line 2,450: der Littowen kunic.
42 LRC, line 2,465: mit grôzer macht.
43 Gudavičius, Mindaugas, 207.
who now had the means to curtail his access to the Vistula River and the Baltic Sea.\textsuperscript{44} At the same time, civil war broke out in Pomerelia (eastern Pomerania) between Swietopelk II and his brothers Sambor II and Ratibor. As William Urban points out, “Polish dukes feuded but none of these feudal lords, nor their bishops, had the resources to provide an occupation force—that became the role of the Teutonic Knights.”\textsuperscript{45} As a result, when Sambor II and Ratibor sought assistance from the Order, Swietopelk turned to the Prussians who seized this opportunity to rebel against their Teutonic masters and overran much of Warmia, Natangia, and Bartia also destroying the Order’s forts in Chelmno.\textsuperscript{46} News of Swietopelk’s alliance concerned even Pope Innocent IV who wrote to the Polish duke warning him to immediately stop collaborating with the enemy.\textsuperscript{47} Innocent likewise wrote Archbishop Fulko I of Gniezno and Grand Master Heinrich von Hohenlohe expressing his concern for Swietopelk’s actions and condemning his alliance with the pagan Prussians and, interestingly, the Lithuanians.\textsuperscript{48} Gudavičius argues that since Mindaugas’ raid on Courland coincided with Swietopelk’s war against the Order, there is sufficient evidence to argue that the attack was part of a coordinated effort by Mindaugas and Swietopelk. Innocent’s mention of Lithuanian involvement in Swietopelk’s war supports this conclusion.

While the events of the early 1240s—Swietopelk’s decade-long war against the Order in Prussia, the First Prussian Uprising, and the Livonian Order’s disastrous defeat at Lake Peipus

\textsuperscript{44} Christensen, \textit{Northern Crusades}, 101.
\textsuperscript{45} Urban, \textit{Teutonic Knights}, 57.
\textsuperscript{46} Christensen, \textit{Northern Crusades}, 101–2. For more on Swietopelk’s activities, alliance with the Prussians, and relations with the Teutonic Knights, see Paul Milliman, “\textit{A iugo principum Polonie, a iugo Theutonicorum: Pomerania and the South Baltic Frontier in Latin Christendom in the Early Thirteenth Century},” chap. 1 in \textit{The Slippery Memory of Men: The Place of Pomerania in the Medieval Kingdom of Poland} (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013), 23–64.
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{PrUB} I.1, no. 160
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{PrUB} I.1, nos. 161–2.
(Battle on the Ice)\(^49\)—may have paved the way for Lithuania’s first major offensive against the Order in Courland, the author of the \(LRC\) describes Mindaugas’ actions as motivated entirely by personal reasons. He writes, “The mighty Lithuanian king Mindaugas was grieved by this [the Order’s takeover of Courland]. Reduced by his great enmity toward Christians, he heaped shame upon himself. He assembled an army and led it to Courland.”\(^50\) Upset by the Order’s conquest and motivated by his hatred for Christianity, the chronicler explains that Mindaugas “wanted to crush the Christians.”\(^51\) In describing the actual attack, the \(LRC\) employs the \textit{topos} of arrogance frequently used by the Order’s chroniclers to describe the Lithuanians.\(^52\) The author claims that Mindaugas was “proud” (\textit{stolz}) and came with his men to the castle “believing that he could make his will prevail.”\(^53\) However, his self-confidence was misplaced because “God protects his own.”\(^54\) For this reason, the knights defeated the pagans and “by God’s will, they received honor.”\(^55\) The chronicler also recognizes the bravery of the Order’s recently Christianized Curonian allies, who he writes, “resolved to defend their women and children, themselves and their lords, their castles and land […] they] defended their lands well with heroes’ hands and helped attack Mindaugas.”\(^56\) Too arrogant to realize their own weakness, the \(LRC\) reports that the Lithuanians were “dismayed” by the Order’s powerful counter-offensive and “took to flight.”\(^57\) Mindaugas, “stung by his loss and disgrace,” fled in such a hurry that the chronicler alleges that

\(^49\) See chapter 5, p. 159.
\(^50\) \(LRC\), lines 2,450–3 (original translation): \textit{Der Littowen kunic rîch} / \textit{Myndowen müete daz} / \textit{er trûc den cristen grôzen haz} / \textit{und nam sich dar umme laster an.} / \textit{ein her er samenen began,} / \textit{dâ mit vûr er kegen Kûrlant.}
\(^51\) \(LRC\), line 2,468: \textit{er wolde den cristen tüm verladen.}
\(^52\) See chapter 3, pp. 108–10.
\(^53\) \(LRC\), line 2498; \(LRC\), lines 2,458–9 (Smith and Urban, 35 [translation amended]): \textit{Myndowe wânte des wol,} / \textit{daz sîn wille solde îrgân.}
\(^54\) \(LRC\), lines 2,460–2 (original translation): \textit{got sîne vrûnt bewaren kan,} / \textit{der kunde ouch die vil wol bewarn,} / \textit{ûf die Myndowe wolde varn} (God can protect His own, and wished to protect them from the aggression emanating from Mindaugas).
\(^55\) \(LRC\), line 2,590: \textit{dô gote die êre an in geschach.}
\(^56\) \(LRC\), lines 2,478–81 […] 2,541–4 (Smith and Urban, 35–6): \textit{die Kûren wolden des nicht lân,} / \textit{sie enwerten kint und wib} / \textit{ir herren und irs selbes lîb,} / \textit{dar zû burge und lant} […] \textit{die Kûren dâ mit heldes hant} / \textit{werten wol ir selbes lant.} / \textit{sie hulfen Myndowen só} / \textit{sturmen.}
\(^57\) \(LRC\), lines 2,546 […] 2,549: \textit{die Littowen des verdrôz} […] \textit{dâ machten sie sich ûf die vlucht.}
he would not even allow his horse to rest. On account of his embarrassment, we are told that Mindaugas refrained from attacking Curonia for five weeks and Amboten for one whole year. The first impression of Mindaugas in the LRC therefore closely aligns with the conventional image of Lithuanians in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order as detailed in chapter 3.

The Two Traditions

Mindaugas’ baptism and coronation are among the most studied aspects of his life and reign. Several theories have been proposed explaining the duke’s reasons for conversion, ranging from personal religious devotion to diplomatic advantage. The formation of the anti-Mindaugas coalition undoubtedly put great pressure on Mindaugas who at that very time was still struggling to assert his authority both in Lithuanian proper and the newly annexed regions of Black Rus'.

Facing strong local resistance from supporters of Tautvilas and Vykitas in Samogitia, in early 1250, Mindaugas’ resilience was tested by a series of attacks from the north and south. Danilo and Vasilko led a joint army to Novgorodok, then, splitting their forces into three parts, they set out ravaging Volkovysk, Slonim, and Zditov. The same year, the Livonian Order penetrated deeper into Lithuania than ever before moving through Nalšia into Samogitia. The devastation of the campaign is vividly described in the LRC:

They moved into the land of Nalsen [Nalšia], where they killed the people with a free hand. They slaughtered them like cattle—men, women and children—and few of them were spared. The well-ordered army moved through Nalsen toward Lithuania, for the Master [land marshal] wanted to see what King Mindaugas was capable of, if he were any good at fighting. The king stayed in his castle [Voruta]. The Christian army ravaged the area and was often attacked, but it repaid this fully. All exerted themselves in devastating the land. Even those who should have defended their camps against them had fled. They had been checkmated. The

---

58 LRC, lines 2,573–5 [...] 2,584–5 (Smith and Urban, 36): Myndowe hin heim zû lande / vlôch. im tet die schande / und ouch der schade beide wê [...] die pfert enwurden nicht gespart / biz er zû Littowen quam.
59 LRC, lines 2,576 and 2,587.
60 Ipat., col. 816.
Christians rejoiced and thanked God in heaven and His loving mother, for the help of both of them was evident there. They also took an innumerable amount of booty in the land of Lithuania and then destroyed by the torch everything around them. They could take their pick of all the roads and the Brothers were seen in places no Christian had ever been before.  

The immediate damage caused by this campaign together with Danilo’s attack on Black Rus' may have prompted Mindaugas to seek a resolution to the conflict. It is reasonable to assume that hoping to split the coalition, Mindaugas opened negotiations with the Livonian Order. Alliance with the knights could potentially neutralize Lithuania’s northern rival. Moreover, as Rasa Mažeika points out, once Mindaugas was baptized and his kingdom pronounced *in ius et proprietatem beati Petri*, he would receive status equal to the Teutonic Order’s grand master and above that of the Livonian land marshal. Tautvilas would then be forbidden from further aggressive action against Lithuania, now a vassal of the Holy See. At the same time, as long as the bishopric of Lithuania remained under the jurisdiction of Rome, Mindaugas could avoid ecclesiastical subordination to the soon-to-be archbishop of Riga, the tenacious Albert Suerbeer who had already secured suffragan bishoprics in Dorpat, Ösel-Wiek, Courland, Sambia, Pomesania, Warmia, and Kulm. For these reasons, it can be concluded that coronation offered Mindaugas not only a viable alternative to continued conflict with the Order, but also a considerable advantage against his political competitors in the Baltic region.

---

61 *LRC*, lines 3,318–50 (Smith and Urban, 46): daz her begunde breiten sich / hin zû Nalsen in daz lant. / man slûc daz volc mit vrîer hant, / sam man tût die rinder. / man wib unde kinder / wurden wênie dá gespart. / sus vûr daz her vil wol geschart / durch Nalsen kein Littowen. / der meister wolde schowen / wie kunic Myndowe mochte, / ob er zû strîte tochte. / der kunic in sîner burge lac. / daz cristen der umme bejac / wart vil dicke ane gerant. / sie widergulenz mit der hant / rechte volleclîche. / sie vlizzen sich gelîche, / daz daz lant wurde verhert. / sie gevlogen wâren, die in gewert / solden hân die legirstat: / er hatte sie gemachet mat. / die cristenheit was alle vrô, / sie danken got von himele dô / und der lieben müter sin. / ir beider helfe wart dá schin. / dô was roubes alsó vil / genomen rechte dne zil / zu Littowen in dem lande. / sie verwûsten ouch mit brande / allez daz was um sie gelegen. / sie hatten kure an allen wegen: / dâ nie cristen her hin quam, / die brûdere man dá wol vernam.  

62 Rasa Mažeika, “When Crusader and Pagan Agree: Conversion as a Point of Honour in the Baptism of King Mindaugas of Lithuania (c. 1240–63),” in *Crusade and Conversion*, 201–2. The grand master was a direct vassal of the Holy See, while the land marshal was subject to the grand master.  

Several other parties were also interested in Lithuania’s entry into Western Christendom. The pope had never been too involved in the ecclesiastical affairs of the Baltic dioceses. The first bishopric in the region was founded in Üxküll as a suffragan of the archbishop of Bremen-Hamburg. In 1201, Bishop Albert von Buxhöveden moved the see to Riga and subsequently attempted to obtain a papal exemption in order to be released from the authority of Bremen-Hamburg. Innocent III reviewed Albert’s case and responded stating that he had never known Riga to be subject to another see. Iben Fonnesburg-Schmidt suggests that the curia may not have been aware of the move from Üxküll to Riga and, therefore, did not realize that the two sees were one and the same. While the confusion made it exceedingly obvious that the church in the Baltic region was in need of reorganization, Innocent more or less avoided the matter.

In 1229, after the death of Albert von Buxhöveden, the archbishop of Bremen-Hamburg appointed Albert Suerbeer as the new bishop of Riga. The canons of Riga, however, refused to recognize his appointment and elected their own candidate Nicholas. Mounting administrative problems called for papal intervention. Finally, Honorius IV sent William of Modena to examine the state of affairs in the Baltic lands and define appropriate spheres of influence in Livonia, Prussia, Holstein, Estonia, Semigallia, Sambia, Courland, and Vironia. Then, looking for a more permanent solution to papal representation in the Baltic region, in 1246, Innocent IV appointed Albert Suerbeer Archbishop of Prussia and metropolitan of Livonia and Estonia. Suerbeer thus received supervisory authority over the bishopric of Riga which he had been denied fifteen years prior. In 1253, Suerbeer moved the archiepiscopal see to Riga. As archbishop of Riga, he now

---

64 LUB I.1, no. 26.
65 Fonnesburg-Schmidt, The Popes and the Baltic Crusades, 125.
66 Ibid., 130.
67 Ibid., 231.
68 Ibid., 230–1.
69 Ibid., 231.
had jurisdiction over all the sees of Livonia (Dorpat, Ösel-Wiek, and Courland) and Prussia (Sambia, Pomesania, Warmia, and Kulm). Suerbeer was not shy to assert his authority.\textsuperscript{70} In 1253, he consecrated Christian as bishop of Lithuania and made him swear submission to Riga against papal orders.\textsuperscript{71} The pope rebuked Suerbeer and ordered the bishop of Naumburg to re-administer the oath.\textsuperscript{72} As a direct suffragan of Rome, the bishopric of Lithuania guaranteed the pope more direct control in Baltic affairs, which at the time seemed to have fallen almost entirely under the authority Suerbeer.\textsuperscript{73}

Furthermore, the pope welcomed Lithuania as a new powerful ally against the Tatar threat.\textsuperscript{74} In 1245, at the First Council of Lyon, Innocent IV denounced the Tatars as a “wicked race” who seek to “destroy the Christian people” and called for an all-Christian front in an effort to prevent another invasion.\textsuperscript{75} He then urged the clergy of Livonia, Estonia, and Prussia to launch a crusade against the Tatars.\textsuperscript{76} Around the same time, Innocent sent a papal legate to Rus' to crown Danilo \textit{rex Russiae}.\textsuperscript{77} Together the kingdoms of Lithuania and Galicia-Volhynia formed a geographic buffer zone that stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea and could shield central Europe from future steppe invaders. In 1255, the newly crowned kings, Danilo and Mindaugas, led a joint Rus'ian-Lithuanian military expedition against the Tatars in Vozviagl.\textsuperscript{78}

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 233.
\textsuperscript{71} Mažeika, “When Crusader and Pagan Agree,” 206.
\textsuperscript{72} VMPL I, no. 120, p. 58 as cited in Ibid. In his letter to the Bishop of Naumbrug, Innocent outlined how Albert attempted to subject the bishop of Lithuania by claiming that his actions were contrary to the “honor” (ablative: \textit{honore}) owed to the Lithuanian king.
\textsuperscript{73} On Suerbeer’s activities in the Baltic lands (e.g., collection of taxes and tithe, limitations on urban property ownership, requirements to render fealty, division of land, etc.), see Urban, \textit{Baltic Crusade}, 199–200, 205.
\textsuperscript{76} LUB I.1, no. 268.
\textsuperscript{77} See chapter 1, p. 43 and chapter 5, p. 173.
\textsuperscript{78} Ipat., cols. 839. See chapter 5, p. 173, n. 125.
According to Gudavičius, Mindaugas’ conversion was entirely the work of the “intelligent and farsighted” Livonian Land Marshal Andrew von Stierland who recognized that the Lithuanians were uniting under Mindaugas and understood that the conquest of a unified Lithuanian state would be militarily and financially unreasonable. Gudavičius argues that Stierland saw Mindaugas’ coronation as an opportunity to enhance the duke’s prestige and pit him against other pagan leaders, specifically Vykinsas who may have played a pivotal role in the Order’s embarrassing defeat at the Battle of Saule (1236), in the aftermath of which, the surviving Livonian Knights were forced to subordinate themselves to the Teutonic Order. Vykinsas’ chief ally, Tautvilas, had also recently traveled to Riga to receive baptism from the bishop. By arranging Lithuania’s peaceful conversion, Stierland perhaps hoped to win himself papal favor, which at that very time was oscillating between increasing freewheeling ecclesiastics like Suerbeer and the Teutonic Order.

William Urban maintains that Mindaugas’ coronation was mutually beneficial to both the Lithuanian ruler and Stierland. Choosing to accept baptism from the land marshal, Mindaugas could both ensure the effective breakup of the recently formed coalition of his rivals and win the support of one of the coalition’s strongest members—the Livonian Order.

Much like contemporary historians, the authors of the LRC and the GVL were also interested in Mindaugas’ conversion, the sincerity of his baptism, and the events leading up to

---


82 Urban, “The Teutonic Order and the Christianization of Lithuania,” 112.
his decision. The author of the *LRC* describes Mindaugas’ conversion as a *wunder.83* While the chronicler gives full credit to Stierland for making the proper arrangements, he does not overlook Mindaugas’ participation and acknowledges his proactive role as the initiator of baptismal negotiations. According to the *LRC*, it was Mindaugas who first sent his messenger to the Order to request an audience.84 Upon hearing that Mindaugas would be “forever grateful” if his request was granted, Stierland journeyed to Lithuania.85 We are told that Mindaugas and his wife Morta “lovingly” welcomed the knights.86 A royal banquet was prepared and “nothing proper to such an occasion was omitted. They treated their guests well.”87 After the meal, Mindaugas thanked the land marshal for his consideration and prompt response to the matter. Impressed by the duke’s hospitality, Stierland assured Mindaugas “in good word:”88 “‘If you become a Christian, I will give you great honor. I will win a crown for you, unless I die.’”89 The chronicler tells us that Mindaugas was pleased by the offer.90 As a sign of his gratitude, “he promised the Master [land marshal] part of his land and bore good will toward him.”91 Finally, the two “swore oaths” and Stierland returned to Livonia.92

Immediately following his visit to Lithuania, the *LRC* reports that the land marshal sent a messenger to Rome to report the good news to the pope. It is worth noting that when the pope

---

83 *LRC*, lines 3,451–3 (Smith and Urban, 47): Nû wil ich üch ein teil verjehen, / waz mër wunders ist geschehen / an dem meistere von Nieflant (“Now I will tell you some of the other marvels that happened to the Master of Livonia”).

84 *LRC*, lines 3,457–61.

85 *LRC*, line 3,463: er wolde des immer wesen vrô.

86 *LRC*, line 3,474: lieplich.

87 *LRC*, lines 3,480–2 (Smith and Urban, 47): nichts wart dâ vergezzen, / daz man zû êren haben sol: / dâ mite pflac man der geste wol.

88 *LRC*, line 3,490: güte wort.

89 *LRC* lines 3493–6 (Smith and Urban, 47–8): „wurdest dü ein cristen man, / grôze êre ich dir danne gan: / sö wil ich dir irwerben / die crône, ich ensterben.“

90 *LRC*, line 3,497: Der kunic was der rede vrô.

91 *LRC*, lines 3,498–500 (Smith and Urban, 48): dem meister gelobete er dô / sînes landes genûc; / güten willen er zû im trûc.

92 *LRC*, lines 3,501–3: dô diz allez was irlgân, / der meister und der kunic sân / ir gelubde machten sie dô.
heard of Mindaugas’ intentions, according to the LRC, he proclaimed the day to be very happy,\(^{93}\) and drafted several letters confirming Stierland’s right to crown Mindaugas.\(^{94}\) The chronicler presents the pope’s enthusiastic approval of Stierland’s arrangement as cause for celebration. When the messenger delivered the papal letters to the land marshal, we are told that “both young and old rejoiced.”\(^{95}\) Stierland at once had two crowns prepared, “rich in ornament and artistry.”\(^{96}\) He then sent for Bishop Heidenreich of Kulm who was likewise “pleased by the news.”\(^{97}\) The bishop joined Stierland in Lithuania where “they baptized and consecrated the noble King Mindaugas and his wife, Martha.”\(^{98}\) After the ceremony, the chronicler reports, “The king rejoiced and gave the Master [land marshal] documents, generously conferring upon him rich and fertile lands in his kingdom.”\(^{99}\) The LRC portrays Mindaugas’ conversion as an act of a pious and honest man who realizing the error of his pagan ways, truly wished to reform. In return for the kindness shown to him by Stierland, Mindaugas presented him with a generous gift of land. The two men thus emerge as heroic examples of faithfulness and righteousness. Mindaugas represents the repentant sinner who has finally “abandoned paganism for the sake of the glory of God,”\(^{100}\) while Stierland is his spiritual guide. As the author claims, Stierland “was able to live so harmoniously with his allies,”\(^{101}\) that “he was full of the grace of God, and whoever beheld

\(^{93}\) LRC, line 3,528: ein vil lieber tac.

\(^{94}\) LRC, lines 3,535–41.

\(^{95}\) LRC, line 3,542 (Smith and Urban, 48): dô vreute sich junc und alt.

\(^{96}\) LRC, line 3,544 (Smith and Urban, 48): mit vil rîchen sachen.

\(^{97}\) LRC, line 3,550: sînen boten vor gesant. Heidenerich was the first bishop of Kulm. He was invested by William of Modena. The pope probably chose Heidenerich to preside over the coronation because he had demonstrated his loyalty during the conflict with Albert Suerbeer. Michał Giedroyć suggests that at the time of the coronation, he was a confidant of the pope: “The Arrival of Christianity in Lithuania,” 23.


\(^{99}\) LRC, lines 3,563–7 (Smith and Urban, 48): der kunic was der crône vrô. / dem meister gab er mit brîven dô / rîchlich in sîne hant / rîche unde güte lant / in sîme kunicriche sân.

\(^{100}\) LRC, lines 4,580–1 (Smith and Urban, 59): er hatte der heiden orden / nách gotes lobe ein teil verzigen.

\(^{101}\) LRC, lines 3,228–9 (Smith and Urban, 45): der meister sô vridesam / mit sînen vrûnden kunde sîn.
him said to themselves that their eyes had never seen such a man before.”  

As expected, the *GVL* presents a very different account of Mindaugas’ conversion and his interaction with the land marshal. According to the author of the *GVL*, Mindaugas turned to Stierland because he was afraid that Tautvilas’ alliance with the Livonian Order and the bishop of Riga would impede his plan to achieve political supremacy in Lithuania. The chronicler writes, “When Mindaugas learned that the knights, the bishop [of Riga], and all the soldiers of Riga wanted to help [Tautvilas], he became frightened and sent [an envoy] in secret to Land Marshal Andrew in Riga.”

His interaction with the land marshal is portrayed as devious and ignoble. The chronicle states that Mindaugas “won him over with many gifts, that is, he begged him, sending him much gold and silver, fine gold and silver vessels of [great] beauty, and many horses, and promised him even more, if he would kill or drive out Tautvilas.” Persuaded by Mindaugas’ bribes, Stierland agreed to help him depose Tautvilas. His only stipulation was that Mindaugas accept baptism.

Mindaugas’ communication with Stierland has been the subject of several studies. Based upon the account in the *GVL* and its mention of Mindaugas sending his envoy “in secret” (тайн, *tainie*) to the land marshal, Gudavičius suggested that Mindaugas and Stierland had already been

---

102 *LRC*, lines 3,195–203 (Smith and Urban, 44): *wen er was gotes genäden vol, / só ich die wärheit sprechen sol. / wer in mit ougen ane sach, / in sînem herzen er jach, / daz só natürlich man / sin ougen nie gesêhen an.*

103 *Ipat.*, col. 816 (Perfecky, 62–3 [translation amended]): *оувѣлдъав же се Миндаро гэко хотать емоу помогати Бжни дворанию и пискоуеть и вса вои Рижкае и оубоевса послап тайнѣ ко Андрѣеви мастэролу Рижъской.*

104 *Ipat.*, cols. 816–7 (Perfecky, 63 [translation amended]): *и оубѣлди и дарми многими сирѣ* оумоли его. послалъ бо бы злата много и сребра и сосудъ серебреныи и златыи и красныи и конѣ многы рекыи ащь оубѣщи и женеши Теотивила и ёще болша си* приямеши.
negotiating “in secret” long before their meeting in Lithuania.\(^{105}\) He argues that the furtive nature of the whole operation indicates that Mindaugas was indeed bribing Stierland. Mažeika disagrees with Gudavičius. She argues that while Mindaugas may have sent his envoys “in secret” from the Rus'ians and other pagans, the actual gifts were exchanged publically in a manner customary to medieval gift-giving procedures.\(^{106}\) For this reason, Mindaugas’ offer of gold and horses should not be interpreted as bribery but rather as a sign of royal generosity intended to endow the recipient as well as the donor with honor and social prestige.\(^{107}\) These divergent interpretations speak to the disparate origin of our sources. Gudavičius’ reasoning seems predominantly based upon his reading of the *GVL*, while Mažeika’s counter-argument favors the *LRC*. Without additional source materials this debate is likely to remain unresolved. Perhaps the question here should thus be not whether Mindaugas was attempting to bribe the land marshal or use the gifts to bolster his relationship with the Order, but what do these seemingly contradictory accounts of Mindaugas’ character tell us about Galicia-Volhynia and the Livonian Order at the end of the thirteenth century.

One thing that is evident in both texts is that Mindaugas’ negotiations for conversion involved a transfer of goods. The *GVL*’s portrayal of this transaction as bribery coincides with the text’s overarching image of Mindaugas as a man prepared to achieve his desired ends by any means possible, no matter how dishonorable they may be. One of the complaints brought against Mindaugas by Tautvilas to Danilo, for example, is that he is always trying to win over his


competitors, including the Samogitians and Yotvingians, with gifts of silver. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the GVL also casts his conversion in a negative light, interpreting his decision as politically motivated, disingenuous, and ultimately hypocritical:

Mindaugas sent [envoys] to the Pope and became baptized. But his baptism was false, for he secretly continued to offer sacrifice to his gods—the supreme Nonadejev, Teljavel, Mejdejn, and Diviriks, the rabbit god. Whenever Mindaugas rode out into the open field and a rabbit chanced to cross his path, he would neither enter the forest grove nor dare to break [a] twig. And thus he continued to bring sacrifice to his gods, to burn corpses, and to profess his paganism outwardly.

Labeling Mindaugas a phony and pointing out his double-dealings could certainly help to highlight the conniving ways of the pagan duke. His actions serve as a reminder of his unworthy princely conduct. Moreover, the GVL’s account of Mindaugas’ bribery and false baptism could also be read as a critique of the Livonian Order and especially Stierland who was so easily seduced by Mindaugas’ bribes that he agreed to baptize the duke under false pretenses. In contrast to the LRC, which praises Mindaugas’ desire to receive baptism and Stierland’s generosity, the GVL presents both men as essentially corrupt and self-serving.

The chronicler’s interpretation of Mindaugas’ conversion and Stierland’s involvement is representative of general Rus’ian attitudes toward the West. Although doctrinal differences had already led to the great schism of 1054, it was not until the infamous events of 1204, when Western crusaders besieged Constantinople and desecrated Orthodox holy places that Catholic

---

108 Ipat., col. 820 (Perfecky, 64): тогда же Тевтиль прибык к Данилоу и Жемоите и Летвойль река аяко Мндогъ оубымъ а серебръ многимъ (“At that time also Tautvilas fled from the Samogitians and Yotvingians [and came to Danilo complaining] that Mindaugas had won them over with much silver”).

109 Ipat., col. 817 (Perfecky, 63): Миндогъ же после к папъ и прие кръшне. крън же его лъстиво быъ жрѣше боымъ своимъ в таинъ—первому Йънадѣеви и Телѣвѣ и Диверикъзуо заззчзомо боу и Мѣйдѣнюю. егда выбѣхше на поле и выбѣнаше заще на поле в лѣсь рощѣние не вохожаше впоу, и не смѣаше ни розгы олумыни и бмъ свои жрѣше и мртвѣъ телеса сожигаше и поганьство свое жѣтвораше.
Europe came to be seen as a hostile adversary by Eastern Christians.\(^{110}\) The “Tale of the Siege of Tsarigrad,” which describes in great detail how the crusaders, overcome by “lust for gold and silver,” set out looting and pillaging the sacred city, helped to embed the idea of the barbarian West in the Rus’ian imagination.\(^{111}\) While Rus’ian chroniclers recognized the Latin rite as Christian in theory, they saw the beliefs of their Western counterparts as misguided, that is, predicated on good faith, but tending toward sacrilege and materiality. Like the crusaders who ravaged Constantinople, the *GVL* presents Stierland as a victim of his carnal desires, specifically in this case greed. The chronicler reproaches him for his lack of self-restraint: “Oh, the worst evil he could commit was to allow his eyes to be blinded by gold.”\(^{112}\) Stierland’s involvement in Mindaugas’ baptism, which was praised by the author of the *LRC*, was seen as unfavorable and even potentially harmful by the Rus’ian chronicler. In fact, the author of the *GVL* openly laments Mindaugas’ collaboration with Stierland stating that because of their friendship “now again there will be trouble.”\(^{113}\) The chronicler thus presents Mindaugas’ baptism not as a rite of religious admission, but rather as a moment in which two conniving and treacherous rulers concluded a dangerous agreement.

In marked contrast, the *LRC* presents the relationship between Mindaugas and Stierland as one based upon mutual camaraderie and trust. After his retirement, for example, the chronicler notes that Stierland first journeyed to Lithuania where he stayed with Mindaugas as a special guest in his court before leaving the Baltic lands.\(^{114}\) The chronicler also points out that Mindaugas continued to maintain good relations with successive land marshals. When Burchard

\(^{110}\) This is a commonly held view. See, for example, John Fennell, *A History of the Russian Church to 1488* (London; New York: Longman, 1995), 103.

\(^{111}\) *NPL*, pp. 46, 241: възлюбиша злато и сръбryo. See chapter 5, pp. 154–6.

\(^{112}\) *Ipat.*, col. 817 (Perfecky, 63): вглѣе зла зла’мь’я йѣльнихъ ячнъ имень.

\(^{113}\) *Ipat.*, col. 817: нынѣ паки в немъ бѣду приемѣть.

\(^{114}\) According to the *LRC*, Stierland became ill after 6.5 year of service and resigned his post in 1253: lines 3,593–607. According to the *GVL*, he was banished from the Order: col. 817.
von Hornhausen sent Mindaugas gifts, the duke responded by sending gifts of his own and “there
was great friendship between the two.” After his conversion, Mindaugas is presented as a man
transformed. He is no longer the typical pagan who wishes harm to all Christians and arrogantly
rushes into battle oblivious of his own downfalls. Instead, the chronicler now portrays
Mindaugas as espousing both Christian and chivalric values. He has readily received the faith,
bears “good will” toward the “soldiers of God” (Teutonic Knights), and supports the efforts of
Christian missionaries in his kingdom.

Moreover, his gifts to the land marshals serve as proof of his fidelity and willingness to
meet his obligations. Mažeika is correct to point that the exchange that occurs between
Mindaugas and Stierland marks not only the transmittal of the Christian rite but also honor
(Mhd.: êre). When Stierland agrees to baptize Mindaugas, he promises the duke a crown as
well as “great honor” (grôze êre). Once Mindaugas reciprocates with the gift of land, his
honour is officially confirmed. The LRC’s account of Mindaugas’ baptism and coronation thus
represents a critical moment of transition when the pagan duke submits not only to Catholic
precepts but also those of general Western medieval civilization. Writing at a time when rising
criticism threatened the entire crusade enterprise and membership in the Livonian Order was
waning, the example of Mindaugas demonstrated to the reader that, through the Order’s
intervention and with proper instruction, Lithuanians could in fact be honest, God-loving
Christians. The success of Mindaugas’ conversion and his continued good relations with the land
marshals throughout the 1250s served as proof to European audiences of the Order’s
effectiveness and ability to fulfill their mission of Christianizing Lithuania.

115 LRC, lines 4,453–8 (Smith and Urban, 58): Myndowe des meisteres nicht vergaz, / er envergulde im daz / mit
einer guten gifte; / ouch grûste er in mit schrifte. / die vrûntschaft von in beiden / was grôz.
117 LRC, line 3,494.
Even when Lithuanian relations with the Order began to deteriorate, the author of the *LRC* conspicuously overlooked Mindaugas’ involvement, instead blaming the duke’s manipulative nephew Treniota for pressuring Mindaugas to renew hostilities with the West. In 1260, the nearly decade-long peace between Lithuania and the Livonian Order came to an end. The Samogitian victory at the Battle of Durbe on July 13, 1260 against a joint force of Teutonic Knights from Prussia and Livonia aided by Prussian, Danish, and Swedish auxiliaries revealed the weakness of the Order’s position in Livonia. Gudavičius speculates that “public opinion” in Lithuania was on the side of the Samogitians.\(^\text{118}\) In other words, he suggests that most Lithuanians supported the Samogitians in their struggle against the Order. As a result, threatened by a possible pagan rebellion and allied with what now appeared to be a militarily vulnerable organization, by early 1261, Mindaugas found himself yet again in a seemingly precarious situation.

According to the *LRC*, the Samogitians approached Mindaugas and his nephew Treniota requesting that he sever relations with the Order and reclaim the lands of Samogitia which he had previously donated to the knights. The chronicler contends that Mindaugas was “greatly distressed” by their request and dismissed the pagans at once because “he was a Christian.”\(^\text{119}\) The Samogitians, however, were unrelenting. They turned to Treniota hoping that he could convince Mindaugas to “destroy all the Christians in his kingdom and become a heathen again, rejecting the baptism which he had received.”\(^\text{120}\) As a pagan, we are told that Treniota had always wanted to drive Mindaugas and the Order apart. He told the Samogitians that he would go to Mindaugas and “‘implore and threaten him until all his Christianity becomes hateful to

---

\(^{118}\) Gudavičius, *Mindaugas*, 289.

\(^{119}\) *LRC*, lines 6,336–7: *die wären im vil swère, / wen er dannoch cristen was.*

\(^{120}\) *LRC*, lines 6,350–5 (Smith and Urban, 79): *die Sameiten wären vrò, / daz kunic Myndowe wolde lân / die cristen under im vergân / und wurde wider heiden. / sus solde er sich scheiden / von der toufe, die er hât.*
Although it took much persuading, Treniota eventually managed to convince Mindaugas that the knights had mislead him with false promises and compelled him to unknowingly betray his people and surrender his kingdom to their authority.\textsuperscript{122} Treniota then assured Mindaugas that if he terminates relations with the Order, the Samogitians, Lettigallians, and Livonians will ally themselves with him.\textsuperscript{123} Lastly, Treniota noted that it would be in Mindaugas’ best interest to heed his advice and welcome Samogitian partnership rather than risk the wrath of their powerful army, which had just devastated the Order’s forces.\textsuperscript{124}

When Mindaugas heard Treniota’s admonitions, the author of the \textit{LRC} alleges that “he again turned hostile toward the Christians and followed all their [Treniota and the Samogitians] advice and adhered to the pagan cause.”\textsuperscript{125} He immediately had all the Christians in his lands seized and killed.\textsuperscript{126} He also sent word to Danilo, who was very “pleased” by Mindaugas’ change of heart and pledged his support to Lithuania.\textsuperscript{127} Then, “like a man with bitterness in his

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{121}LRC, line 6,359–62 (Smith and Urban, 79): „wir gâñ him an Myndowen / und vlêhen unde drowen / sô lange, daz im wirdet leit / zû aller sîner cristenheit.“
\textsuperscript{122}LRC, lines 6,372–3 […] 6,380–401 (Smith and Urban, 79): „die Sameiten sint unvrô / durch dich und durch dîn êre: […] ez ist wîrlichen gelogen / waz dich die brûdere hân gelârt, / von dînen goten dich hân bekârt, / dîn vater was ein kunic grôz, / bie den ziten sînen genôz / mochte man nicht vinden: / wîltu nû dînen kinden / und dîr machen ein joch / alsô wol als du doch / mochetes ummer wesen vrie! / dîr wonet ein grôze tûrheit bie. / wanne die cristen hânt verdrucet / die Sameiten, sô ist entzûcket / dîn êre und al dîn êrle: / sô müstu endelîche / eigen wesen und dîne kint. / wie bistu sô rechte bïnt! / du bist ein wîser kunic genant, / daz ist dîr doch unbekant: / wîltu der cristen werden vrie, / sô stân dîr die Sameiten bie, / die dich mit trûwen meinen“ (‘The Samogithians grieve for you and for your honor […] You have been deceived, and everything the Brothers told you to convert you from your gods was a lie. Your father was a great king, and during his lifetime he had no equal. Would you now make a yoke for yourself and your children, when you could be forever free? You have been very foolish. If the Christians subdue the Samogithians all your honor and wealth will be taken away, and you and your children will eventually become serfs. How blind you are! You are said to be a wise king, yet you do not act the part. If you wish to be free of the Christians, then support the Samogithians, who love you faithfully’ ).
\textsuperscript{123}LRC, lines 6,421–5.
\textsuperscript{124}LRC, lines 6,374–9 (Smith and Urban, 79): „du salt nû ir lêre / volgen, sich, daz wirt dir güt. / von irenthalben wîrt behüî / alcz daz dir gehôric ist, / daz du lâžest varen Crist, / dâ mîte du bist betrogen“ (“Truly, it would be to your advantage to obey their instructions. They will act as guarantors of your domains if you but give up Christ’ ”).
\textsuperscript{125}LRC, lines, 6,427–31 (Smith and Urban, 79–80): Dô der kunic sô vernam, / den cristen wart er wider gram / und volgete gar irs râtes mite / und hielt sich an der heiden site.
\textsuperscript{126}LRC, lines 6,457–60.
\textsuperscript{127}LRC, lines 6,465: daz die Rûzen wêren vrô.
\end{flushleft}
heart,” Mindaugas ordered Treniota to lead a military expedition against Wenden in 1261, and against the Order’s holdings in Courland and Wiek as well as Mazovia the following year.

The sudden change in Lithuanian relations with the Order has often been cited as proof of Mindaugas’ supposed apostasy. This theory mainly rests on evidence from fourteenth-century documents. For example, in a letter of complaint, likely intended for review by the papal curia, Archbishop Johannes III of Riga (r. 1294–1300) wrote that the people of Lithuania had been driven to renounce their faith by the harsh tactics of the Teutonic Knights. Likewise, in his 1322 letter to Pope John XXII, Grand Duke Gediminas claimed that his predecessor Mindaugas with his entire kingdom had accepted baptism, but “because of the atrocious injuries and innumerable treacheries of the master of the brothers of the Teutonic Order, they all withdrew from the faith.” Contemporary documents, however, fail to mention Mindaugas’ apostasy. Gudavičius has commented on the lack of papal reaction to the situation. He points out that Urban IV, who had been previously very involved in Baltic affairs and even participated in drafting the Treaty of Christburg in 1249, is unusually silent about Mindaugas’ supposed apostasy in his correspondences. His successor Clement IV likewise did not remark on the matter. On the contrary, in a letter to King Ottokar II of Bohemia, he referred to Mindaugas as “a brilliant memory” and expressed his regret for his ruthless murder. Mažeika suggests that in 1268, the pope would not dare to call Mindaugas an apostate because according to the Theodosian Code and the Corpus juris Civilis of Justinian, apostates were forbidden from

---

129 LRC, lines 6,471–98, 6,883–906.
130 LUB I.1, no. 584, cols. 738–9.
131 CL, no. 14, p. 40: predecessor noster rex Myndowe cum toto suo regno ad fidem Christi fuit conversus, sed propter atroces iniurias et innumerabiles proditiones magistri fratrum de domo Theutonica omnes a fide recesserunt.
133 VMPL I, no. 151, p. 79: clare memorie Mindota.
bequeathing their property.\textsuperscript{134} Mindaugas had already granted his entire kingdom to the Order in 1260 if he should die without an heir.\textsuperscript{135} In 1267, his only living son Vaišvilkas abdicated the throne.\textsuperscript{136} The pope therefore had to be extra careful to ensure that the Order would receive its allotted property.

Although it is uncertain whether Mindaugas ever actually apostatized, his policy toward the Order clearly changed at this time. Several factors probably influenced Mindaugas’ decision to shift his political orientation and renew hostilities with the Order. Michał Giedroyć, for instance, maintains that Mindaugas himself initiated negotiations with Treniota and the Samogitians. In the wake of the Order’s defeat at Durbe, Mindaugas recognized that his relations with the Order were no longer lucrative, especially if the Samogitians were now the real military heavy weights of the eastern Baltic region.\textsuperscript{137} If we are to believe the chronicler that Treniota promised to secure the support of the Lettigallians and Livonians, then Mindaugas’ choice to cooperate with the Samogitians may have had something to do with his temptation to annex these territories which at that time were held by Order.

The \textit{LRC} likewise does not clarify whether or not Mindaugas renounced his Christian beliefs, instead stating only that he began attacking Christians after hearing Treniota’s appeal. Shortly thereafter, however, the author suggests that Mindaugas realized that renewing hostilities was a mistake and began to repent his decision. We are told that the duke felt great guilt for his actions and was prepared to accept the consequences of his sins. The \textit{LRC} depicts Mindaugas as an unfortunate victim of Treniota’s intimidation. The chronicler stresses that Mindaugas “deeply

\textsuperscript{134} Mažeika, “When Crusader and Pagan Agree,” 204.
\textsuperscript{135} PrUB 1.2, no. 106: \textit{si nos sine legittimis hereditibus decedere contingeret, transferentes in ipsos exnunc ut extunc dominium et possessionem tocius regni Lettowie} as quoted in Ibid.
\textsuperscript{136} See chapter 6, p. 215.
regretted having followed Treniota’s advice.”

After the unsuccessful raid on Wenden, Mindaugas rebuked his nephew for convincing him to break his alliance with the knights.

When Mindaugas returned from the failed expedition, the chronicle reports that Morta immediately noticed that he was “deeply disturbed.” She also reproved him for following the advice of that “ape” (affen) Treniota and repeatedly begged him to restore his relations with the land marshal. Here again, through Morta’s character, the chronicler accuses Treniota for leading Mindaugas astray and provoking him to attack the Order. In his response to Morta, Mindaugas expresses clear remorse for his actions, but believing his sins to be beyond reprieve, states that reconciliation with the Order would be impossible: “I have done what I have done. Leave off the speeches. They can help neither you nor me. I have abused Christianity, whether you like it or not, and I have broken with the Master and chosen paganism. It is too late now for me to listen to your advice.”

Mindaugas therefore emerges as a tragic hero, while Treniota is the real antagonist. His manipulative ways lead Mindaugas astray and cause him to lose the “honor and distinction” that had been bestowed on him by the Stierland. Mindaugas’ downfall comes when he abandons his alliance with the Order. At this point the narrative of Mindaugas’

---

138 LRC, lines 6,514–6 (Smith and Urban, 81): ez mochte in sêre rûwen sider / daz er Traniâtes rât / ie gevolgete mit der tât.
139 LRC, lines 6,499–511 (Smith and Urban, 80): „Traniâte, sage, / du böser man und rechter zage, / nû hân die Rûzen mir gelogen, / den meister hâstu mir gezogen / zû einem unvrûnde zu: / waz râtes gibestu mir nû? / Letten, Lîven und die lant, / die du gelobtes in mine hant, / die kêren sich an mich nicht ein här: / diz reisen mac mir werden swár. / ich wil kêren al zû hant / wider in mîn eigen lant / und wil al mîn reisen lân“ (“Traniate, tell me, you evil man and absolute coward, now that the Russians have betrayed me and now that you have turned the Master into my enemy, what advice can you give me? The Letts [Lettigalians] and the Livs and all those lands which you promised would be mine, have not come over to me in the slightest. I may come to rue this expedition. I intend to return to my own land and end my attacks”).
140 LRC, line 6,523: was betrûbet harte.
141 LRC, line, 6,560.
142 LRC, line 6,567–74 (Smith and Urban, 81): „diz hân ich getân. / dise rede lâz bestân, / sie enkan dir nicht gevromen / noch mir zû keinem vronem komen. / ich hân versmeit die cristenheit, / ez sie dir lieb oder leit. / den meister den hân ich verlorn / und die heindenschaft erkorn.“
143 LRC, lines 6,590–8 (Smith and Urban, 81–2): er hatte nicht gemezzen, / waz êren unde wirdekeit / der meister hatte an in geliet, / dô er im die crône irwarb, / die wirdekeit an im vertarb, / daz er Traniâten rât / vollenbrâchte mit der tât, / daz er meister Werner / entpfiec alsô mit síinem her (“He ignored the honor and distinction which the Master had bestowed upon him when he awarded him the crown. He dishonored himself when he followed Traniate’s advice and attacked Master Werner with his army”).
life reaches its denouement. His assassination two years later is only mentioned in passing when the chronicler briefly notes that Mindaugas was murdered by “another Lithuanian who bore him great hatred and who was powerful and had many noble friends.”

The GVL, on the contrary, presents Mindaugas’ baptism as disingenuous from the beginning and shows little interest in Mindaugas’ supposed apostasy and conflict with the Order. In fact, the entire affair is completely overlooked and the narrative resumes at the moment of Mindaugas’ assassination. The Rus'ian chronicler again emphasizes the duke’s arrogance and deviousness, identifying these flaws as the cause of his downfall. The text states, “He grew very proud and having proclaimed his glory and pride, he considered no one his equal.” Mindaugas’ false sense of omnipotence consequently blinds him to the plots of his enemies and leads to his inevitable murder. The chronicler explains that after the death of Morta, Mindaugas desired to marry her sister, the wife of Daumantas, Duke of Nalšia. He therefore summoned her to the funeral, and as she mourned, he convinced her that Morta’s dying wish was for them to wed. When Daumantas learned that Mindaugas had stolen his wife, the chronicler reports that he was “consumed with sorrow” and immediately began to plan his revenge. Finding an ally in Treniota, the two dukes conspired and killed Mindaugas along with his two sons, Ruklys and Rupeikis, as they rode out on a military campaign against Briansk.

Thus, we are left with two overlapping, yet substantively different biographic accounts of Mindaugas’ life and activities. In the GVL Mindaugas’ character is essentially static. From the beginning he is depicted as a typical “bad” ruler whose cruel, deceitful, and untrustworthy

---

144 LRC, line 7,124 (Smith and Urban, 88): ein ander Lettowe der trúc nit / üf in heimliche; / der was ouch alsö riche / und der vründe alsö grôz.
145 Ipat., col. 858 (Perfecky, 82 [translation amended]): нача гордъти велми и вознесьа славою и гордостью великою и не твораше противу себе никого же.
146 Ipat., col. 860: Довъмнотъ же се оусляшавъ печалень бывъ велми въ семь мъшлать бо абь како оубити Миндовга.
147 Ipat., col. 860.
conduct foreshadows his eventual downfall and leads to his death. In addition to inspiring moral outrage, Mindaugas’ character serves a didactic purpose. His actions demonstrate that a “bad” ruler cannot escape his imminent fate. The LRC’s presentation, on the other hand, is much more dynamic. We see the duke evolve from a stereotypical pagan leader who is haughty, quick to rush into battle, and eager to bring harm to the Christians into a trustworthy ruler and honest Christian. Like a tragic hero, his eventual downfall is brought on not by some inherent vice or depravity, but by an error in judgment. Too trusting of his closest advisors, Mindaugas is easily beguiled by Treniota. As a result, he becomes an instrument in Treniota’s plot against the Livonian Order and inadvertently falls back into sin.

The Question of Religion and the Case of Vaišvilkas

The apparent disparity between the representation of Mindaugas (and the Lithuanians) in the GVL and the LRC is most commonly explained by invoking the author’s religious identity. Judging from the generally negative depiction of Mindaugas in the GVL, Serhii Plokhy maintains that “being Christian was insufficient to obtain a positive characterization in chronicle. The kind of Christianity (Eastern or Western) adopted by a Lithuanian ruler and the nature of his relations with the Galician-Volhynian princes were no less important factors.”148 The same could be said for the general representation of Mindaugas in the LRC. Certainly the duke’s decision to be baptized in the Catholic rite influenced the much more positive portrayal of Mindaugas in the chronicle.

However, as Plokhy also aptly observes, religious differences, though significant, were not the sole determining factor of representation. Political and cultural considerations also

influenced literary image. For example, the GVL always acknowledges the legitimacy of Lithuanian princes, pagan and Christian, and recognizes their military assistance against Poland (1219, 1245, 1265, 1285, 1286), Mazovia (1238), and the Tatars (1255). Moreover, the GVL appears openly sympathetic to Tautvilas. First, the chronicler praises Danilo for offering the still-pagan Tautvilas asylum and helping him in his conflict against Mindaugas. Later, when Tautvilas, now baptized by the bishop of Riga, comes to Danilo accusing Mindaugas of bribing the Samogitians and Yotvingians into submission, the chronicler approves of Danilo’s sympathetic reaction. Furthermore, the GVL seems to commend Tautvilas’ choice to receive baptism in Riga implying that had he been allowed to return to Lithuania then he would have brought Christianity to the Lithuanians, but because Stierland favored Mindaugas, Lithuania remains a pagan land. Tautvilas receives an even more positive characterization in the NPL. The chronicle describes him as the prince of Polotsk and a loyal Rus’ian ally. For example, the NPL reports how Tautvilas along with 500 men joined Dmitri of Pereslavl, the son of Alexander Nevsky, in a 1262 campaign to recapture the fort of Yuryev (Ger.: Dorpat) which had been taken by Order in 1224. Likewise, the NPL laments that the “murderers of Mindaugas” also “killed the good Knyaz Tovtivil of Polotsk” and “called on the people of Polotsk to kill Tovtivil’s son,

---

149 Joint Rus’ian-Lithuanian campaign against Poland in 1219, 1215, 1245, 1265, 1285, 1285/6: Ipat., cols. 736, 801, 805, 864, 888–90, 891; against Mazovia in 1238: col. 776; against the Tatars in Vozviagl in 1255: cols. 838–40.
150 Ipat., col. 820.
151 Ipat., col. 817 (Perfecky, 63): Вирьжань сожалишаси по немь вѣдѣху бо аще Тевътивилъ не бы изгнань Литовьскѣ земля в рукоу бѣ ихъ крѣпье неволею приѣли быша. си же всѣ некрѣтѣны Литву створи Андрѣи и изгнанъ бы сану своего ѳ братьѣ (“They [Bishop of Riga and the Provost Virzhan] felt sorry for him, for they knew that if Tevtiwil had not been driven out, the Lithuanian land would have been in their hands and would have had to accept Christianity. [Since the Grand Master] Andrej was responsible for the fact that the Lithuanians did not become Christians, he was banished from his order by his brother knights”).
152 Tautvilas may have converted to Orthodoxy in order to rule in Polotsk. However, the NPL does not mention his baptism.
153 NPL, pp. 83, 312.
too.”\textsuperscript{154} The fact that neither the GVL’s nor the NPL’s representation of Tautvilas was affected by his religious choices, indicates that religion was not the primary factor distinguishing “good” from “bad” Lithuanians.

The extent to which the author’s immediate religious context determined literary representation is perhaps best demonstrated by the example of Mindaugas’ son Vaišvilkas (Vaišalgas, Vojšelk).\textsuperscript{155} Vaišvilkas first entered the historical record in 1254 when he captured Novgorodok and concluded a treaty on behalf of his father with Danilo.\textsuperscript{156} According to the GVL, Vaišvilkas was so drawn to religious life that shortly after his conquest, he arranged the marriage of his sister to Danilo’s son Švarn, transferred his title to the lands of Black Rus’ to Danilo’s other son Roman, and embarked on a pilgrimage to Mt. Athos.\textsuperscript{157} As opposed to his father’s baptism, the GVL describes Vaišvilkas’ conversion as a genuine religious epiphany. The narrative traces his moral progress from a bloodthirsty pagan to an obedient Christian and devout follower of the Eastern Church. When Vaišvilkas first arrived in Novgorodok, the chronicler alleges that “being a pagan, he began to shed much blood, murdering three to four persons every day. If on a certain day he did not kill someone, he was depressed, but when he did, he was

\textsuperscript{154} NPL, pp. 84, 313 (Michell and Forbes, 98): Того же лѣта роспрѣвашеся убици Миндовгови о товарь его, убиша добра князя Полотьского Товтивила [...] и просиша у полочанъ сына Товтиви лова убить же.


\textsuperscript{156} Ipat., cols. 830–1.

\textsuperscript{157} On Vaišvilkas’ conversion and monastic life, see Giedroyć, “The Arrival of Christianity in Lithuania,” 16–8.
happy.” However, soon thereafter, “fear of the Lord entered his heart.” Vaižvilkas was then promptly baptized, received tonsure, and entered the monastery.

Vaižvilkas’ exact course of action in the wake of Mindaugas’ assassination remains largely a matter of conjecture. According to the GVL, he fled to Pinsk where he remained until Treniota had been deposed and killed by men still loyal to Mindaugas. Vaižvilkas then returned to Lithuania, reestablished his powerbase with the help of Vasilko and Švarn, and for the next three years waged war against outstanding rival factions. As the GVL states, “He slaughtered a countless multitude of them [his enemies], while the others fled wherever it was possible to flee.” According to the NPL, upon learning of his father death, Vaižvilkas took a leave of absence from the monastery for three years, gathered his father’s closest soldiers and friends, and set out to take revenge on Treniota. He then ruled in Lithuania for three years before abdicating his throne to Danilo’s son Švarn in 1267 and returning to the monastery.

David Goldfrank has pointed out that the nearly continuous narrative of Vaižvilkas’ life in the

---

158 Ipat., col. 858 (Perfecky, 82): Воишелъ в Новгороdъ в поганыствЬ боуда и нача проливать крови много убивашеть бо на всѧк дй по три по четыри которогО же дй не оубьышеть кого печаловашеть тогда коли же убивашеть кого тогда весель бышеть.

159 Ipat., col. 858: поем же више страхъ Бй во.

160 The NPL provides a similar account: pp. 84, 313 (Michell and Forbes, 99): The chronicle reports that “the Lord chose [him] as champion of the true faith,” he then journey to the Holy Mountain where he acknowledged the true Christian religion, received baptized and was “shorn into the monastic order” where he remained for three years (того избра господь поборника по правов врЬ: шедь бо в гору Синанскую от отца своего и от рода своего и от поганы врЬ своея, позна истинную врЬ христьянскую, и крестися во имя Отца и Сына и святого Духа, и научися святымъ книгамъ, и пострижися въ мнишьския чинъ въ Святои горЬ; и пребывь тамо 3 лта, пониде в землю свою къ отцю своему).

161 Ipat., col. 861.

162 Ipat., col. 861 (Perfecky, 83): изби ихь бешислене множество а дроуини розбоощася камо кто вида.

163 NPL, pp. 84–5, 314. Two contemporary Polish sources note Vaižvilkas’ involvement in Treniota’s assassination: (1) Rocznik Krasinskiich, MPH 3, p. 133: Mendog rex Lythwanie a Thrognath nepote suo dolose cum filius suis occiditur. Quod nephas Woyaullk, filius regis Mendok, existens monachus Russie, egrediens de claustro regicidam Thrognath cum alis ducibus, uieciscens patris mortem, occidit (Minduagas, king of Lithuania with his sons was deceitfully murdered by his nephew Treniota. For his sin, Vaižvilkas, the son of king Minduagas, living as a monk in Russia, came out the monastery, [and] in revenge for his father’s death, killed his king’s killer, Treniota along with other dukes); and (2) Annales Cracovienses, MGH Scriptores (in folio) XIX, p. 601: Stroynat potens princeps Lituanorum qui occiderat Mendog, occiditur per Theophilum et per Woyaullk filium Mendog regis (Treniota, the powerful ruler of the Lithuanians who killed Minduagas, was killed by Tautvilas and by Vaižvilkas, the son of king Minduagas).

164 Ipat., col. 868.
GVL has distinct hagiographic qualities: he begins his life as a ruthless and cruel pagan; he then abruptly mends his ways, recognizes the true faith, relinquishes all trappings of the material world, including his title and lands, and journeys to the Holy Mountain (Mt. Athos) where he is baptized; later he returns to Lithuania to avenge his father and bring peace to the land; as soon as he has completed his task, he once again returns to monastic life, despite Švarn’s numerous attempts to convince him to remain in Lithuania.¹⁶⁵

The GVL’s ideal Lithuanian prince is Vaišvilkas. He is presented as a pious Christian, dedicated monk, and loyal student of his chosen mentor Gregory of Polonina.¹⁶⁶ Throughout his life he maintains friendly relations with Galician-Volhynian princes. In fact, according to the GVL, he even allegedly referred to Vasilko as his father and Švarn as his brother,¹⁶⁷ and was godfather to Lev’s son Yury.¹⁶⁸ The chronicler reports that he welcomed Rus'ian assistance in subduing his enemies in Nalšia and Deltuva.¹⁶⁹ Later, when Vaišvilkas was finally installed as grand duke with the help of Vasilko and Švarn, the chronicler claims that the Lithuanians rejoiced and greeted him as their legitimate ruler.¹⁷⁰ Most importantly, the chronicler commends Vaišvilkas for relinquishing his throne to Švarn and returning to the monastery. The following year when Vaišvilkas is assassinated by Danilo’s son Lev, the chronicler openly condemns the latter for allowing the devil to “imbue his heart” with envy, and laments Vaišvilkas’ untimely death.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶ The GVL is the only known source to mention Gregory: Pravoslavnaia entsiklopediia: Russkaiia pravoslavnaia tserkov’, s.v. “Grigoriĭ Poloninskiĭ.”
¹⁶⁷ Ipat., cols. 862–3.
¹⁶⁸ Ipat., col. 859.
¹⁶⁹ Ipat., col. 863.
¹⁷⁰ Ipat., col. 861 (Perfecky, 83): Литва же всѧ приӕша и с радостью своего господичича (“And all the Lithuanians joyfully received the son of their master”).
¹⁷¹ Ipat., col. 868 (original translation): дьявол же искоьщ не хота добра члюкому родоу и вложи во ср’це Льови (But the devil never wanted good for mankind and filled Lev’s heart [with evil]).
Interestingly, the description of Vaišvilkas in the LRC is just as positive. The author states that after his murder, Mindaugas’ subjects send for the duke’s son in Rus'. Although the chronicler never identifies the son by name, it is reasonable to assume that he was in fact referring to Vaišvilkas who at that time was living in a monastery in Rus'. According to the chronicler, when Vaišvilkas received the news of his father’s death, he immediately returned to Lithuania eager to take revenge. Hoping to secure the Livonian Order as an ally, Vaišvilkas sent word to Land Marshal Konrad von Mandern reminding him that he is also a Christian and asking for his assistance. The LRC reports that as soon as the land marshal received the message “his heart rejoiced.” He immediately summoned his commanders and prepared to help the Lithuanian duke. Vaišvilkas “was pleased that he had been blessed to witness the good faith and steadfastness which the Master had shown toward him,” and, although he had already managed to establish his rule in Lithuania, he was very grateful to the land marshal and promised to maintain “everlasting friendship.” The chronicler praises Vaišvilkas’ determination to bring order to Lithuania in the aftermath of his father’s death. He describes the duke as “noble” and “virtuous,” claims that despite his youth, he always “showed great charity toward Christians,” and emphasizes that he only ever desired God’s grace as a reward. The character of Vaišvilkas therefore stands in stark contrast to the stereotypical representation of the Lithuanians in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order as described in chapter 3.

The exceedingly positive treatment of Vaišvilkas in both the LRC and the GVL reveals that religious affiliation, though significant, did not determine representation. The author of the

---

172 LRC, line 7,147.
173 LRC, line 7,151: er wart des von hertzen vrô.
174 LRC, lines 7,192–5 (Smith and Urban, 88): Myndowen sun wêre vrô, / daz im die sêlde was geschehen / daz er die trûwe hette gesehen, / die der meister hette zû im.
175 LRC, line 7,198–9 (Smith and Urban, 89): daz er immer âne wanc / wil gantze vrûntschaf mit dir haben.
176 LRC, lines 7,169 and 7,170: tugent and begienc.
177 LRC, lines 7,171–2: er sô grôzer erbarmekeit / an die cristen hatte geleit.
178 LRC, lines 7,159–63.
LRC seems to have been aware of the fact that Vaišvilkas had previously chosen the Orthodox faith. Furthermore, he appears to have known that upon Vaišvilkas’ return, Lithuania once again reverted to paganism. He states, for example, that the Lithuanians swore allegiance to Vaišvilkas “according to pagan custom.” Nevertheless, the chronicler commends the duke for his resolve in avenging his father’s murder as well as his efforts to maintain friendly relations with the Teutonic Knights and extend his protection to Christians in his lands. The image of Vaišvilkas in the LRC is strongly reminiscent of the Order’s knightly ideal. He is presented as loyal, generous, and eager to protect those who cannot protect themselves. He is skillful in battle and even able to establish himself as grand duke without the Order’s assistance. He also has a clear sense of personal obligation to his kin and companions as demonstrated by his fortitude in his quest for vengeance and his gratitude to the land marshal. Given the Order’s precarious situation at the time of the LRC’s composition, the positive characterization of Vaišvilkas and his good-willed relations with land marshal may have served the purpose of debunking commonly held beliefs concerning the Order’s indiscriminately aggressive tactics. By recalling the land marshal’s enthusiasm to negotiate and lend his military support to Vaišvilkas, the LRC instead highlighted the Order’s reasonable and tolerant approach to their Lithuanian neighbors. Like the relationship between Stierland and Mindaugas, Konrad von Mandern’s alliance with Vaišvilkas therefore demonstrated that peace is a matter of Lithuanian initiative because the Order always responds in kind.

As in the LRC, the image of Vaišvilkas’ in the GVL also appears to have been influenced by political factors. For example, Mykola F. Kotliar suggests that Vaišvilkas was portrayed as an admirable Lithuanian duke by Rus’ian chroniclers because he had conferred his title and lands to

---

179 LRC, lines 7,206: gantz nâch der heiden orden.
Švarn thereby paving the way for a potential Galician-Volhynian annexation of Lithuania. The chronicler takes great pains to point out the sincerity of Vaišvilkas’ transfer most likely in order to confirm the legitimacy of Galician-Volhynian claims to the territory. It could thus be argued that political and cultural determinants were often more important than religion. As mentioned previously, both the LRC and the GVL were composed for a predominantly lay audience to honor the respective achievements of the Livonian Order and the princes of the Romanovich family (e.g., Danilo, Vasilko, Švarn, etc.). It therefore follows that while the image of Vaišvilkas in the LRC embodies ideals set by the Western chivalric ideal, his image in the GVL serves a more utilitarian purpose intended to authenticate Galician-Volhynian aspirations to Lithuanian lands.

Conclusions

Up until this point, this chapter has emphasized the differences between the two dominant literary representations of Mindaugas. However, the question of what informed the choice of representation still remains. The very existence of two distinct images of Mindaugas reveals that the primary function of the medieval chronicle was not referential, but rather influenced by ideological and political concerns.

It has already been demonstrated that the initial representation of Mindaugas in the LRC seamlessly conforms to the conventional paradigm of the Lithuanian pagan Other as articulated in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order and described in chapter 3. Consequently, as noted above, Mindaugas’ conversion represents an important moment of transformation. It serves as proof of the knights’ efficacy and works to validate the Order’s Christian mission and continued presence in the Baltic region. At the time of the LRC’s composition, the Order was desperately seeking

---

approval specifically for its military activities. It was therefore in the Order’s best interest to
demonstrate that conversion without military defeat is impossible. On the one hand, the LRC’s
presentation of Mindaugas’ baptism seemingly attests to the possibility of peaceful
Christianization. The text demonstrates that the Order does not interfere with but rather aids the
conversion process. On the other hand, Treniota’s conspiracy stands as proof of the fact that
without military involvement “real” or “lasting” conversion cannot be achieved. The LRC thus
defines the Order’s role in ensuring long-term or permanent Christianization. The example of
Mindaugas demonstrates that the preservation of the faith requires military subjugation.

Much like in the LRC, the image of Minduagas in the GVL also serves a specific purpose.
The chronicler depicts Mindaugas as an archetypal “bad” ruler, or more accurately, as the exact
opposite of Danilo, the quintessential “good” ruler. In fact, the author of the GVL even seems to
purposefully play down Mindaugas’ individual traits. For example, he does not make any
reference to Mindaugas’ coronation. Given the chronicler’s general knowledge of Mindaugas’
baptism, negotiations with Stierland, and papal involvement, it is highly unlikely that he did not
know about the coronation. Considering the general pro-Romanovich tendency of the text, this
omission is not at all surprising. The author’s choice of material, just like his general
presentation of Mindaugas functions to underscore Danilo’s virtuous attributes and exceptional
achievements.

Moreover, we cannot dismiss the possibility that the final compiler of the GVL may have
added his own commentary at the time of compilation. By the 1290s, Lithuania posed a serious
threat to Galician-Volhynian political dominance in southern Rus'. Looking back fifty years,
however, it would seem that during the actual reign of Mindaugas, the duke presented little more
than an annoyance to Danilo whose “real” enemies, as demonstrated in the previous chapter,
were Poland and Hungary and their boyars allies in Galicia. Apart from occasional raids, Mindaugas’ seems to have been Danilo’s ally. For example, Mindaugas aided Danilo in his campaigns against Poland. Likewise, his steady encroachment into the lands of Smolensk distracted Danilo’s rivals in Rus’. Given the discrepancy between the actual events and the GVL’s presentation of Mindaugas, it is reasonable to conclude that the image of Mindaugas in the GVL was in part constructed to meet the needs of the later thirteenth century. At the same time, however, the level of detail and insight into contemporary affairs suggests that it is highly unlikely that the final compiler designed the image entirely himself. As a result, it seems that the main storyline was in fact composed during Mindaugas’ lifetime by an author who was knowledgeable about the events taking place, but deliberately portrayed them in a way that would be advantageous to Danilo. The final compiler then exaggerated some of these images to promote further enmity toward Lithuania at a time when tensions with Lithuania were growing.

On the basis of the disparity of the image of Mindaugas in the LRC and the GVL, two larger conclusions may be drawn. First, Mindaugas is not a character that can be explained simply by reference to the author’s religious affiliation. His character development is intrinsically linked to the manifest ideological content of each work. When considered within the appropriate literary and historical context, it therefore becomes clear that the treatment of Mindaugas in both the LRC and the GVL was determined by more general patterns of narrative discourse, particularly those concerning issues of self-justification (LRC) and self-legitimization (GVL). Second, the image of Mindaugas in both chronicles corresponds to the conventions of the Teutonic and Rus'ian chronicle writing tradition as set out in Part I. The LRC introduces Mindaugas as a typical pagan; he represents an antithesis to the knights, bent on destroying Christian institutions, lacking noble qualities such as military fortitude, and trapped by his own

---

181 Ipat., cols. 736, 776, 801.
ignorance. Once he becomes a Christian, he also acquires basic knightly qualities. For example, he begins to conduct himself in a courtly manner by offering hospitality and gifts to the land marshal. The chronicler’s depiction of Mindaugas’ positive characteristics, just like his negative characteristics, therefore seems largely based upon common Western cultural ideals. In other words, the text uses topoi and motifs familiar to a Western audience and found throughout the chronicles of the Teutonic Order. The representation of Mindaugas in the GVL conforms to the stereotype of a “bad” ruler in the Rus’ian tradition. He is depicted as deceitful, self-serving, and willing to kill his fellow dukes, including even his own kin, for wealth and power. These negative traits had been criticized since the time of the PVL and would have been recognized by Rus’ian audiences. As a result, it could be concluded that while the image of Mindaugas in the LRC and the GVL is fundamentally different in content, in both texts, it is nonetheless of critical narrative importance and serves as a reminder of the text’s ideological function.
Chapter 7

“Good” and “Bad” Lithuanians

Lithuanians were generally regarded as “bad.” As long as the grand duke remained pagan, Teutonic and Rus'ian chroniclers deemed Lithuania to be a pagan territory and, by and large, considered anyone who lived within its vast lands and submitted to the rule of its pagan leaders to be necessarily “bad.” The fact that by the fourteenth century, Lithuania had become a leading military powerhouse capable not only of defending its borders but also inflicting defeats of its own reinforced the image of Lithuanians as savage and ferocious enemies of Christendom. As already discussed, perpetuating the “bad” stereotype, the Order’s chroniclers framed the conflict with Lithuania in terms of a clash of two opposing identities—i.e., the forces of good and evil, the armies of God and the scourge of the devil, the civilized and barbarian worlds. Although not to the same extent, Rus'ian chroniclers also distanced themselves from their Lithuanian neighbors, labeling them “godless” and “accursed” to highlight their moral failings and socially disruptive nature. Although the model of congenital antagonism between the Christian in-group and the Lithuanian pagan out-group, which both Teutonic and Rus'ian chroniclers advanced, was in some ways true of relations in the Baltic region, assimilation and acculturation often superseded differences. Christians and pagans engaged in common warring activities, lived alongside each other in fortresses, and maintained regular trade relations. The very nature of such interaction fostered a degree of immediacy and intimacy of experience that
gave rise to a unique interplay of cultural systems and a synthesis of social, administrative, political, and even confessional practices. Ignoring evidence of cultural transmission, however, Christian chroniclers instead more often described the Baltic frontier as a battlefield between two irreconcilable worlds, one superior and consecrated by God, and the other inherently inferior and requiring immediate expulsion, conversion, or extermination.

This chapter explores the disparity between day-to-day Christian-pagan interaction in the Baltic lands and its representation in the chronicles. One assumption that underlies this chapter is that Teutonic and Rus’ian chroniclers were aware of the actual processes of cultural exchange that were taking place because they themselves lived on the Baltic frontier and experienced cultural sharing. Portraying the world as strictly divided was therefore a literary choice with deeper ideological and political implications intended to perpetuate ideas of religious and cultural exclusivism. In other words, chroniclers deliberately worked to erect and uphold artificial or imagined cultural boundaries in order to preserve a sense of identity and difference that the realities of life on the frontier threatened to invalidate.

Several scholars have explored the aim and advantage of using selective (i.e., inclusionary and exclusionary) rhetoric in frontier regions. Acknowledging that the medieval frontier experience was not uniform or homogeneous in any way, David Abulafia for example maintains that the frontier should not be thought of “simply as a place but as a set of attitudes.”¹ He defines the frontier as a “state of mind.”² Nora Berend agrees that the concept of the frontier is a construct, usually designed and intended for a specific ends. Using the example Hungary, she argues that following the Tatar invasion of 1241–1242, King Bela deliberately appropriated frontier rhetoric to exaggerate the vulnerability of his kingdom to incursions from the east so as

---

¹ Abulafia, “Seven Types of Ambiguity,” 34.
² Ibid.
to secure special privileges for himself from the pope. As a result, she concludes that “already in the thirteenth century frontier ideology was being used for political purposes, and the central power played a crucial role in the invention of frontiers.”

A similar dichotomy between frontier interaction and frontier rhetoric has also been observed by Charles Halperin. Studying relations between Rus’ and the Tatars, he admits that it is not surprising that scholars at one point portrayed these two cultures as categorically opposed to one another and determined to preserve strict physical and mental boundaries. Rus’ian chronicles almost exclusively depicted the Tatars as evil infidels. Moreover, the fact that during the entire period of Tatar rule, Rus’ was governed from Sarai and the khan relied on emissaries and Rus’ian princes to fulfill tax quotes could be mistaken for proof of the existence of a strict territorial and ideological borderline between the two cultures. Halperin, however, rejects the traditionalist view of Rus’ian-Tatar relations as predominantly antagonistic. Instead, he argues that on the Rus’ian-Tatar frontier, much like in other contact zones of late medieval Europe, the potential benefits of cooperation produced a fine line between hostile and friendly relations. For example, he notes that it was not unusual for a frontier society to recognize the virtues of its enemy: “Rulers and warriors grew to respect the political acumen, military prowess, and integrity of their adversaries. Merchants were impressed with the business sense or honesty of their counterparts of the other faith.” Halperin also suggests that seeking advantage over their enemies, competing societies tended to study their opponents, including their military capabilities and strategies as well as their habits and resources. Such interaction required necessarily close contact and often precipitated a degree of familiarity and even empathy.

Despite evidence of diverse relations ranging from animosity to impartiality and even

---

4 Halperin, Russia and the Golden Horde, 2.
5 Ibid.
goodwill, Halperin agrees that Rus'ian sources generally present the Tatars as cruel and destructive pagans, never acknowledging the possibility of communication or cultural exchange. He claims that this paradox between experience and representation is a shared feature of many ethno-religious frontiers where theoretical hatred is in conflict with pragmatism and opportunism. To mitigate this discrepancy, Halperin contends that past societies resorted to what he terms “the ideology of silence.” In other words, in order for a society to maintain a sense of division, exclusivism, or moral superiority, Halperin insists that “the realities of daily life simply were not allowed to intrude into the realms of religious ideology or to disturb religious prejudices.” Admitting to any modicum of friendly contact or cultural borrowing could presuppose the legitimacy of an enemy civilization. Such claims had the potential to undermine the social order by bringing into question certain normative assumptions, including ones that defined all pagans as enemies of Christendom. Consequently, it was generally believed that “if one could not speak ill of the enemy, it was better not to speak of him at all.” Such policies ensured the continuity of tradition and helped to maintain in-group identity.

The influence of “the ideology of silence” on the historical record is as evident in the Baltics as it is on the Rus'sian-Tatar frontier. Both Teutonic and Rus'ian chroniclers camouflaged signs of intercultural contact and instead drew on familiar strands of anti-pagan rhetoric to reinforce cultural and religious biases. When assessing the presentation of Lithuanians in Teutonic and Rus'ian sources, we must therefore remember that these texts do not comprise the sum of Christian knowledge about the pagan peoples, but rather reflect the needs of the context in which the text was produced. For instance, as already discussed in the case of the Teutonic

---

7 Ibid.
8 Ibid., 6.
Knights, the Order’s mission depended upon its ability to rally Christians in the West and rouse them to combat in the Baltic lands. Mention of cooperation with the pagans could potentially undercut the crusade initiative. It must also be remembered that the Order’s chronicle writing tradition was mitigated by a concern for credibility of narrative. To make their accounts believable to a European audience, chroniclers relied on recognizable and familiar images, including key themes and stereotypes. As a result, inconsistencies or deviations in representational norms provide us with a glimpse into the unavoidable realities of profitable cooperation on the Baltic frontier.

Rus'ian chroniclers, who had long been familiar with the Baltic world and accustomed to pagan invasions from the steppe, likewise used conventional paradigms and common derisive terminology to validate Rus'ian claims of cultural superiority. They faced the problem of explaining how a civilization that was once a tributary of Rus' had now become one of its main competitors. Their approach was therefore much more varied and attentive to situational contingencies and political changes. As discussed in the previous chapter, while Rus'ian chroniclers openly condemned Lithuanians such as Mindaugas who allied himself with the Order and expanded his kingdom at the expense of the Rus'ian lands, they also praised Lithuanians like Vaišvilkas or Tautvilas who befriended Rus'ian rulers, subordinated themselves to their policies, and fought to subdue hostile, rebellious, and unsympathetic pagans. Likewise, while Rus'ian chroniclers admitted to the presence of Lithuanian princes in Rus', they carefully avoided mentioning their Lithuanian past, instead presenting their conversion to Christianity also as an act of acceptance of a new Rus'ian identity.

To successfully navigate between agenda and practice, chroniclers of the Teutonic Order and Rus' relied on distinct formula plots and character stereotypes. As mentioned above,
Lithuanians were generally deemed “bad” and presented as the villains of the narratives. Both chronicle traditions defined “bad” or villainous behavior in terms of two principal markers: (1) a staunch adherence to paganism; and (2) a desire to destroy or to bring harm to all Christendom, especially the writer’s home polity whether it be the Teutonic Order in Livonia or Prussia or one of the principalities of Rus'. Typically, “bad” characters also exhibited a variety of additional traits, such as arrogance and conceit, commonly associated with Lithuanians and described in chapters 3 and 5. Despite the preponderance of “bad” Lithuanian characters, we also find many examples of “good” Lithuanians. In fact, it appears that Teutonic and Rus'ian chroniclers were not completely opposed to breaking “the ideology of silence” in describing Lithuanian relations. They showcased the deeds of “good” Lithuanians and openly praised their two defining virtues: (1) sincere religious conviction; and (2) exceptional support for the institutions and struggles of the Christian people. As seen in the case of Mindaugas and Vaišvilkas, chroniclers also highlighted the process of transformation from “bad” to “good” thus demonstrating that even the most vile and cruel pagan can become a pious Christian and trustworthy ally.

Generally speaking, every Lithuanian character mentioned in the chronicles loosely falls into the dominant categories of “bad” or “good.” The aim of this chapter is to unpack these categories by considering three interdependent factors: first, the construction of the “good” versus “bad” Lithuanian category; second, the function of such categories within the context of the frontier experience; and third, the potential use of such categories in promoting beliefs of cultural exclusivism. The first part of the chapter is essentially descriptive. It provides a general survey of life on the Baltic frontier and stands as proof of the fact that the image of religious animosity advanced by Teutonic and Rus'ian chronicles was in fact constructed.
The second part of the chapter uses specific examples of “bad” and “good” Lithuanian characters to examine the use and usefulness of such categories. As suggested below, because cultural boundaries were strictly artificial, so were the stereotypes that reinforced them. “Bad” Lithuanians, described as unremitting evil idolaters bent on destroying the institutions of the righteous Christian world, received such a reputation because their behavior somehow threatened the hegemony of Teutonic or Rus'ian authority. To understand the “bad” stereotype, we must therefore look not only to its social function but also to the actions and activities of the characters that were regarded most deserving of such a label.

In direct contrast to a “bad” Lithuanian, a “good” Lithuanian was expected to be both a champion of the faith and a military hero. The conditions of life in the Baltic region however, guaranteed that the attainment of such an ideal remained functionally impossible. Conversion was rarely based purely on a genuine commitment to the Christian faith. Even Vaišvilkas, who is often singled out by historians as the only truly devout Lithuanian duke, received political benefits as a result of his baptism as evinced by his long-lasting friendship with Galician-Volhynian princes. Since most of the major Lithuanian characters mentioned in the chronicles were dukes whose conversion and collaboration with the Order or Rus' brought with it some sort of profit, it could be argued that no Lithuanian character truly espouses the genuine convert-military hero ideal. Nevertheless, there are many examples of “good” Lithuanians in both chronicle traditions. The very fact that the strikingly over-idealized representation of these characters begs the question of their historicity, suggests that they served a literary function. In other words, when examined within the appropriate social context, the “good” stereotype reveals didactic intentions and provides a basis to discern differences as well as commonalities between Teutonic and Rus'ian chronicles. Keeping in mind that categories such as “bad” and “good” were
rhetoric constructs, we now turn to the examination of the Baltic frontier and the delicate balance between the real and the ideal.

**Life on the Baltic Frontier**

Relations between Christians and pagans on the Baltic frontier were not as clearly defined as chroniclers led their readers to believe. The lack of strict linear boundaries between the newly arrived Christians and the native populations facilitated a kind of cultural fluidity whereby voluntary as well as imposed collaboration and coexistence was as commonplace as competition and armed conflict. For example, even when political tensions escalated, commercial activity flourished undeterred by the ever-growing rhetoric of religious and ethnic antagonism. In fact, trade networks in the Baltic region continued to prosper and grow throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries giving rise to thriving urban centers such as Riga, Königsberg, Novgorodok, and Vilnius. With the final incorporation of Polotsk in the second half of thirteenth century, Lithuania inherited a system of established trade routes thus becoming the new guardian of a critical transshipment point between the Dvina, Dnieper, Volga, and Lovat Rivers.⁹ For western merchants wishing to avoid heavy Polish tolls and for Rus'ian merchants moving goods from Constantinople, Kiev, and the Orient to the Hanseatic ports of the north, Lithuania became a principal conduit of trade.¹⁰ Already in the thirteenth century, Lithuanian dukes offered tariff-free entrance into their lands and pledged to protect merchants

---

⁹ Ships would be carried from one river to the others on carts through man-made ditches known as voloks (portages): Bojtár, *Foreword to the Past*, 20–1.

“be they Christian or heathen.”\textsuperscript{11} Commercial aspirations fostered a degree of religious toleration especially in more urban areas. Papal envoys staying at the court of Gediminas, cited the grand duke as saying: “Let Christians worship God in accordance with their customs, Ruthenians [Rus'ians] in accordance with their rites, Poles in accordance with their customs, while we worship God in accordance with our rites.”\textsuperscript{12} By mid-fourteenth century, with the influx of trade, Vilnius transformed into a dynamic arena of cross-cultural interaction complete with Rus'ian and German quarters as well as Catholic (Franciscan and Dominican) and Orthodox merchant churches.\textsuperscript{13}

The Order and Rus' likewise sought opportunities to extend trade networks. Cities in Gotland, North Germany, and Livonia as well as Rus'ian centers of trade such as Novgorod and Smolensk welcomed merchants and craftsmen regardless of their ethnicity and religion, building churches and establishing merchant quarters to accommodate the foreign traders.\textsuperscript{14} Concern for profit meant that the same authorities that decried pagans as “enemies of Christ” and “godless heathens” to the point of advocating military action against them, also prized Lithuanians as valuable trade partners. In 1309, for instance, the bishop of Polotsk wrote the archbishop of Riga confirming his continued friendship with Lithuania in commercial matters.\textsuperscript{15} Several treaties concluded in the first half of the fourteenth century during a resurgence of tensions between the

\textsuperscript{11} \textit{CL}, no. 69, p. 258: \textit{he sy cristen eder heyden}. In 1253, Mindaugas granted merchants from the Teutonic Order free access to Lithuania by land and water routes as well as exemption from all tariffs and dues: \textit{CL}, no. 2, p. 4. His example was followed by Gediminas: \textit{CL}, nos. 16–9, 21, pp. 46, 48, 58, 60, 62, 64. On Lithuanian economy in the early fourteenth century, see Rowell, \textit{Lithuania Ascending}, 73–80.

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{CL}, no. 54, p. 184: \textit{christianos facere deum suum colere secundum morem suum, ruthenos secundum ritum suum, polonos secundum morem suum et nos colimus deum secundum ritum nostrum}.

\textsuperscript{13} Rowell, \textit{Lithuania Ascending}, 73.


\textsuperscript{15} \textit{CL}, no. 7, p. 18.
Order and Lithuania guaranteed the safeguarding of important trade routes. In 1323, the Treaty of Vilnius established a truce between Lithuania, the Livonian Order, the viceroy of Reval, the archbishop of Riga, and the municipal government of Riga along all land and water routes. In 1338, Gediminas and the land marshal of the Livonian Order reaffirmed the same trade privileges guaranteeing the safety of merchants traveling between Lithuania and the lands of the Order. Interestingly, the scribe noted that when the treaty was concluded, the pagans swore according to their holy rights (êre hilligh) and the Christians kissed the seal. The treaty was likewise approved by the princes of Polotsk and Vitebsk, the bishop of Polotsk, and the city council of Vitebsk all of who also kissed the seal. The following year, Ivan Aleksandrovich of Smolensk wrote the Livonian Order asking to join the list of signatories. Not only did such agreements bolster the sale of basic goods such as timber, fur, grains, and textiles, they also ripened the field for the exploitation of trade privileges. The Order, for instance, sold weapons, iron, and shipbuilding materials to the Lithuanians in direct violation of a papal ban on the sale of military armaments to the enemy. Such examples clearly demonstrate that the promise of

---

16 CL, nos. 23, 24, pp. 72–5.
17 CL, no. 69, p. 258–60.
19 CL, no. 69, p. 260. Although by 1338 Polotsk and Vitebsk were part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the bishop of Polotsk remained a suffragan of Novgorod and the metropolitan of Rus'.
20 CL, no. 70, p. 262.
21 Mažeika argues that because the Order’s wars required more funding than the profits of “petty trade” could provide, a large part of the Order’s revenue came from the sale of arms: “Of Cabbages and Knights,” 69–70. She also notes that the sale of arms in crusader states had long been a matter of concern for the Papacy. Decrees had been issued at Lateran III and Lateran IV threatening to excommunicate anyone engaged in such activity: Ibid., 66, n. 15–7. The sale of iron, weapons, and salt to pagans in the Baltic was prohibited by Pope Honorius III in 1218: PrUB 1, no. 25, p. 18 as cited in Ibid., 66, n. 18: Cum igitur sicut audivimus, pagani de Pruscia nec ferrum nec arma nec sal habeant nisi que a vicinis comparant christianis, nolentes ut armis nostris contra nos milent, fraternitati tue per apostolica scripta mandamus, quantinus christianos regionem circumpositam habitan tes ne predicta paganis vendant eisdem moneas et inducas (“We have heard, that the pagans of Prussia have neither iron, nor weapons nor salt except those which neighboring Christians supply. [Since] we do not desire that the, make war against us with our own weapons we order that you admonish and exhort the Christians having around that region not to sell the aforementioned things to those pagans”).
revenue overshadowed religious and ethnic prejudice. Europeans profited by selling their enemies the very same weapons that they would later use in combat against them.

Perceived ethnic and religious differences likewise did not interfere with the political and military aspirations of local rulers. For the most part, diplomatic and military alliances between interested parties were short-lived and driven by short-term strategic motives. As mentioned in chapter 5, Lithuanians often participated in Novgorodian raids on Estonia and the Order’s territories in Livonia. Mindaugas himself partook in several joint Lithuanian-Galician campaigns against Poland and Mazovia. At other times, the Lithuanians similarly assisted Poland against Rus'. It also appears that the Lithuanians may have even allied themselves with Order. The NPL records how the Novgorodians were met by a vanguard consisting of Livonian Knights, Lithuanians, and Livs during a raid on Pertuyev in Estonia. Later, a joint coalition of knights, Lithuanians, and Chud invaded Novgorod in 1240. On occasion, the knights also involved themselves in Rus'ian affairs. For example, in 1231, the Livonian Order came to Novgorod offering cereal and flour during a famine. At other times, the knights participated in conflicts among rival dynasties or collaborated with the Rus'ian princes in joint expeditions against the Lithuanians.

Effective economic, political, and missionary activity demanded a high level of linguistic proficiency. The languages spoken in the Baltic lands comprised four language families—

22 Joint Russian-Lithuanian campaign against Poland in 1219, 1245: Ipat., col. 736, 801, 805; against Mazovia in 1238: col. 776.
24 NPL, pp. 59, 261.
25 NPL, pp. 78, 295.
26 NPL, pp. 71, 280.
Eastern Slavic, Germanic, Baltic, and Finno-Ugrian. Apart from merchants and soldiers, interpreters were among the most travelled and highly prized professionals in the region. If the Teutonic Knights were to succeed in their proselytizing mission, they needed a way to interact with the indigenous populations. Henry of Livonia was himself an interpreter who first came to the Baltics in the service of Albert von Buxhöveden. Locals were also frequently recruited as translators and sometimes even sent to schools in Europe for clerical training. Henry, for example, relates the story of Philip the Interpreter, a Lithuanian who was brought up at the bishop’s court and employed by a priest named Salomon during his mission to Estonia. The Lithuanians likewise employed interpreters to facilitate communication with the Latin West and Slavic East. Already in the mid-thirteenth century, mendicant clerics had a significant presence in the grand ducal chancellery. Several Franciscans and Dominicans are listed as witnesses to Mindaugas’ first land donation to the Order. When the envoys of the papal legates arrived in Vilnius to verify Gediminas’ readiness to receive baptism, Franciscans from the local hospitium served as their liaisons to the ducal court and introduced the envoys to father Hennekin, Gediminas’ personal interpreter. In his letters of invitation to the Franciscans of Saxony, Gediminas specifically asked that brothers who speak Polish, Semigallian, and Prussian be appointed to his court. These new arrivals served as scribes and advisors to the grand duke in his dealings with the West. Although there is no surviving evidence of Lithuanian correspondence with Rus’, Rowell suggests that the dukes similarly employed Slavic speaking

---

28 On Henry as interpreter and the linguistic challenges of the Livonian mission, see Murray “Henry the Interpreter, 107–34.
30 HCL, XV.9.
31 LUB I.1, no. 252.
32 CL, no. 54, pp. 182–90.
33 CL, nos. 19, 21, p. 64.
scribes.\textsuperscript{35} It would also be reasonable to assume that German and Lithuanian interpreters served in Novgorod, Smolensk, Galicia-Volhynia, and other Rus'ian principalities involved in Baltic affairs. It is therefore highly likely that our chroniclers may have encountered foreign interpreters in their daily activities and perhaps even shared workspace at the local scriptorium.

Given its geographic location and continued territorial expansion throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Lithuania developed as one of the most unique frontier zones of late medieval Europe. Situated between the heartland of Europe and Rus', Western and Eastern Christendom, Lithuania became a crossing point for two distinct civilizations both of which were granted free economic and missionary access to Lithuanian lands.\textsuperscript{36} Consequently, the local culture did not develop in isolation; it grew out of a complex system of symbiotic cultural interactions. Furthermore, unlike other indigenous Baltic peoples, the Lithuanians were masters of their own expansionist frontier. While western Lithuania remained the target of an encroaching civilization, in the east, Lithuania assumed the role of the encroacher. This made for two distinctive yet interconnected frontier experiences. The Lithuanian-Teutonic frontier remained a zone of mortal combat for over two centuries. At least in theory, the knights refused to compromise and strove to bring Lithuania into the sphere of Western Christian civilization. This of course entailed a kind of tug-of-war between Lithuania and the Order as regions of Samogitia, Semigallia, Curonia, Scalovia, and Yotvingia passed back and forth. For those living in these regions, the line between friend and enemy was often blurred as friends frequently became enemies and visa versa. Further east, the Lithuanian-Rus'ian frontier presented a different challenge.\textsuperscript{37} Lithuanian expansion occurred in several forms, including military

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 341.
\textsuperscript{36} On the rights of Christian missionaries, see CL, nos. 16–9, 21, pp. 46, 58, 60, 64. The rights of merchants are discussed above.
conquest, but also diplomatic and dynastic union. Moreover, Lithuanian rulers never claimed religious or moral superiority, instead adopting the institutions of their new Rus’ian subjects. The Lithuanian-Rus’ian frontier thus developed as a contact zone of relatively peaceful culture interaction rather than as a contact zone exacerbated by protracted warfare.

Turning first to the west, it is evident that from the time of their arrival in the Baltic lands, the Christian military orders were highly dependent upon the local inhabitants. Enrollment in the Teutonic Order remained too low to support a large-scale military establishment such as the Order State.\(^38\) While the knights were responsible for the administration and maintenance of castles and the organization of regular Reisen into enemy territory, they also depended on large numbers of local peasants who worked the fields, paid tribute, and formed a major part of the Order’s infantry.\(^39\) It has even been suggested that in some cases, the Order purposefully refrained from baptizing the local population because “exploiting pagans as labourers was much easier than exploiting converts.”\(^40\) In addition to forced labor, the Teutonic Knights also relied on independent native allies. For example, we know from Henry’s chronicle that the Livonian Order cooperated with the Livs and Lettigallians during their wars against the Estonians and Curonians.\(^41\) Likewise, Peter of Dusburg relates how the Bartians, Natangians, and Sambians aided the Order during their military expeditions to Lithuania.\(^42\)

\(^{39}\) Kaspars Klaviņš, “The Significance of the Local Baltic Peoples in the Defense of Livonia (Late Thirteenth–Sixteenth Centuries),” in Clash of Cultures, 333.
\(^{40}\) Favreau-Lilie, “Mission to the Heathen in Prussia and Livonia,” 149. Sven Ekdahl points out that the subjugation of local pagans was justified by reference to Thomas Aquinas: *Christiani possunt habere servos infideles* (“Christians can have infidels as slaves”): *Summa Theologica* II–II.10.9,3 as cited in “The Treatment of Prisoners of War the Fighting between the Teutonic Order and Lithuania,” in The Military Orders: Fighting for the Faith and Caring for the Sick, 265.
\(^{42}\) PD, III, nos. 225, 244, 260, 291, 351.
Fighting in an unfamiliar landscape, the Order also employed native scouts.\(^{43}\) Seeing the arrival of the knights as a potential opportunity to defeat age-old rivals, the locals frequently volunteered for such jobs. For example, when the three brothers Gineika, Milgerinas, and Tusche heard that Mindaugas’ nephew Lengvenis was planning to attack their lands, the author of the \textit{LRC} reports that they “gladly allied” (\textit{vil gerne}) themselves with the Christians and served as scouts (\textit{stîge}) in the Order’s army.\(^{44}\) Native nobles who cooperated with the knights were granted land and allowed to retain their hereditary titles.\(^{45}\) Michael Burleigh notes that for the most part the knights preserved pre-existing social and political divisions especially for tax collection purposes.\(^{46}\) Describing the generosity of the Order, Dusburg claimed that native noblemen were allowed to keep their status and native peasants were granted freedom in return for their service.\(^{47}\) Given the nature of such relations, it may not have been unusual for a German landlord to be neighbors with a Prussian or Lithuanian.

Switching allegiance for military or political purposes also seems to have been quite common. While Christianization was deemed a necessary precondition for natives wishing to join the Order, the sincerity of their conversion was never questioned. For instance, both Henry and the author of the \textit{LRC} ostensibly praise a Liv elder named Caupo. Some scholars suggest that he represented a “model” pagan.\(^{48}\) Upon receiving baptism, Henry tells us that Caupo traveled to Rome in the company of the Livonian Knights where he graciously exchanged gifts with Innocent IV.\(^{49}\) He then returned to Livonia and fought alongside the knights, defending the Order

---

\(^{44}\) \textit{LRC}, lines 2,766–78.
\(^{47}\) PD, III.220.
\(^{49}\) \textit{HCL}, VII.5–6.
from other, more hostile pagans.\textsuperscript{50} The author of the \textit{LRC} describes Caupo as an “outstanding pagan, powerful and rich as well as virtuous.”\textsuperscript{51} Despite his “good” Christian virtues, however, Henry reports that Caupo was cremated after dying in battle.\textsuperscript{52} This example of religious syncretism suggests that being a nominal Christian and fighting for the Order’s cause was enough to win one elite status as well as perhaps material gain. We know from archival sources that Lithuanian defectors were granted land in the Order State and promised fiefs in Lithuania once it had been conquered.\textsuperscript{53} Wigand of Marburg relates how Kestutis’ own sons Survilla and Butautas fled to the Order, received baptism, and then invaded Lithuania in a failed attempt to seize power.\textsuperscript{54} The promise of material gain was similarly enticing to Christians, including even the knights themselves. Although aiding the enemy, particularly the Lithuanians, was regarded as a sin, Christian neophytes still rendered their services. Dusburg, for example, relates the case of a Bartian-born armiger who betrayed the knights and led the Lithuanians to a Skalovian castle near Ragnit. The chronicler describes the traitor as the “son of perdition” (\textit{filius perditionis}), implying that his treason is an offense deserving of divine punishment.\textsuperscript{55} Such condemnations did little to dissuade even German-born knights from defecting. The \textit{LRC} describes the noteworthy case of Berthold the Christian archer who “gladly” joined the Semgallians.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{HCL}, X.3, X.10, X.13, XIV.7.
\textsuperscript{51} \textit{LRC}, 259–262 (Smith and Urban, 4): \textit{Nû was dâ bie gesezen / ein heiden wol vormezzen / beide gewaldic und rîch, / dar bie was er tugentlich.}
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{HCL}, XXI.4.
\textsuperscript{53} \textit{PrUB} I.2, nos. 529, 576, 791, 792, 838, 839; \textit{PrUB} II, nos. 30,125, 126, 336, 781, 798 as cited in Rowell, \textit{Lithuania Ascending}, 201–2.
\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg}, 550–53.
\textsuperscript{55} PD, III.253. In John 17:12, Judas is called the “son of perdition”: \textit{quos dedisti mihi custodivi et nemo ex his perivit nisi filius perditionis} (“Those whom you gave me have I kept; and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition”).
\textsuperscript{56} \textit{LRC}, lines 8,630–4.
notes at least three cases of knights defecting to Lithuania. Interestingly, one of the defectors is later accepted back into the Order. Describing the Baltic crusade as an undertaking led by enterprising elites incited by hopes of profit, William Urban points out that allegiances were circumstantial and sufficiently flexible. He argues that “nobles used the threat of treason, rebellion or passive resistance to coerce ruler after ruler.”

Analysis of the mechanics of Baltic Christianization reveals analogous patterns of opportunistic behavior, exploitation, and coercion. Given the nature of our sources, it is difficult to tell how the indigenous populations actually felt about the Christian faith. The Baltic peoples had been exposed to both Western and Eastern Christian teachings since the arrival of the first missionaries in the eleventh century. An anonymous Christian author who attended the coronation of Mindaugas wrote that the Lithuanians and Yotvingians are not opposed to Christianity because they have been raised by Christian wet nurses. Once the Christian mission was taken up the Teutonic Knights, conversion largely came to entail no more than a profession of one’s obedience to the church through the act of baptism. Converts were expected to attend religious services, pay the tithe, and abstain from pagan practices such as cremation and spirit worship. For the most, no one really checked if a covert had truly experienced a religious awakening, recognized the supremacy of Christ, or even understood the meaning of the baptism that they had received. In some cases parochial activity might follow conversion. However, we know from the Treaty of Christburg that the Order’s attempts to eliminate pagan practices were not always successful because as late as 1249 an official document was issued forbidding new

---

57 Hermann von Wartberge, 104–5, 111: Joannes Lanzeberg and Fredrick de Missen in 1374 and Johannes Vlowere in 1376. See also, Mazeika, “An Amicable Enmity,” 54.
58 Hermann von Wartberge, 116: Joannes Lanzeberg in 1378.
60 Descripcio terrarium, 732: Dicti Lectai Ietuesi et Nalsani de facili baptizantur eo quod a Christianis nutricibus ab ipsis cunabulis sunt enutriti.
converts from adhering to the teachings of pagan priests. The grand master also periodically issued ordinances requiring landlords to keep an eye on the religious habits of their tenants and serfs, and to ensure that they attend religious services.

The acceptance of Christianity by the locals entailed subjugation to the political and administrative institutions of the Order. The act of apostasy therefore represented not only a rejection of the new faith, but also a refusal to participate in the local Christian community and a symbolic defiance of Western domination. Our first evidence of baptism on a larger scale is also our first evidence of apostasy on a large scale. Henry of Livonia writes that after yet another devastating Lithuanian raid, the Livs promised to accept the Christian faith in return for a stone fortress. Once the fortress had been built, the Livs “forgot their oath and perjured themselves.” They plundered the bishop’s household and then washed off their baptism in the river sending it back to Germany. The case of the Livs clearly demonstrates that the local populations used the promise of conversion as a means of coercion. As soon as the newly converted received whatever they had been promised (e.g., a stone fortress, protection against the Lithuanians, military aid in an ongoing struggle with an old local rival) they did not hesitate to renounce their Christian identity. As mentioned in the previous chapter, scholars have also described Mindaugas’ conversion and supposed apostasy as strategic moves aimed at shoring political and military alliances. Mažeika argues that “flirtations with Christianity were an

---

63 *HCL*, I.5–6.
64 *HCL*, I.9 (Brundage, 27): *oblita iuramenti mentita est iniquitas sibi*.
66 Kala, argues that peace and protection against the Lithuanians was an incentive for conversion but “when the newly converted felt assured of their own military were ready to apostasize”: “Rural Society and Religious Innovation,” 178.
important aspect of Lithuanian state diplomacy.” Indeed, it appears that the native populations commonly used conversion as a tactic of manipulation. Dusburg relates how a local who promised to convert and escort the brothers to a pagan hideout, led the knights into a trap instead. Iterant conversion and apostasy had become such a problem that the author of the LRC reports that when the Semigallians wanted to convert yet again, the knights refused to baptize them, instead granting them peace as long as they pay taxes. Similarly, Jeroschin reports that when the knights besieged the castle of Medewaga in Samogitia in 1329 and the Lithuanians declared that they wished to accept baptism, Grand Master Werner von Orsln refused to believe them until the king of Bohemia who took part in the raid implored him not to prejudge their intentions. As witnessed by the case of Vaišvilkas in chapter 6, Orthodox converts conducted themselves in a similar way. Even an honest and sincere Christian like Vaišvilkas did not hesitate to temporarily relinquish his faith to avenge his father’s murder and receive his kingdom “according to pagan custom.”

Cultural overlap, whether for reasons of political expediency, convenience, or material gain, led to a melding of religious practices. Although the Christians never adopted pagan customs per se, we know that some knights believed in the efficacy of pagan gods. As Mažeika notes, the author of the LRC, for example, credits Perkune, a pagan deity, with freezing the sea to help the Semigallian army cross. Several sources confirm that the knights were also convinced of the value of divination. The LRC suggests that the brethren believed the predictions of their pagan allies. For example, the knights rode out against the Curonians only after victory was

---

68 PD, III.186.  
69 LRC, lines 9,639–42.  
70 NJ, lines 26,995–7,037.  
71 LRC, line 7,206: nach der heiden orden.  
72 LRC, lines 1,434–7; Mažeika, “Granting Power to the Enemy Gods,” 163.  
determined by the casting of lots. The knights were similarly impressed when their Lithuanian captive Lengvenis learned of the death of his brother from the pork bones on his dinner plate. When the archbishop accused the Order of heresy in 1305, he claimed that the knights practice divination, perform mercy killings, and cremate their dead. A Cistercian monk interviewed by the papal legate Francis of Moliano in 1312, confirmed that the knights predict the future with the help of pork bones. Kaspars Kļaviņš questions whether these charges were real or fabricated by the Order’s enemies in Riga. The chronicles, however, corroborate several of these accusations. Hermann von Wartberge, for example, alleges that the knights burned twenty-five of their own men who had been killed in battle during a military expedition to Lithuania. Eventually, in response to such allegations, the pope was compelled to issue an ordinance forbidding the Order from practicing cremation and cleromancy.

Similar processes of cultural and social amalgamation also occurred on the Lithuanian-Rus’ian frontier. Apart from some evidence of military campaigns and trade contacts, we know very little about Rus'ians in Lithuania and the Baltic lands. John H. Lind attributes this lack of information to the fact that the Polotsk dynasty, which given its geographic location would have been most involved in Baltic affairs, did not leave any written records. According to Henry of Livonia, Rus'ians were primarily interested in collecting tribute from the Baltic pagans.

Already by the end of the twelfth century, Rus'ian jurisdiction likely extended quite far westward

---

74 LRC, lines 7,229–34.
75 LRC, lines 3,019–45.
76 See for example, Das Zeugenverhör des Franciscus, VII, §22, p. 27–8.
77 Das Zeugenverhör des Franciscus, VIII, §187, p. 57.
78 Kļaviņš, “The Ideology of Christianity and Pagan Practice,” 262. Anti Selart suggests that arguments used against the Order were intended to protect the political and economic interests of the parties involved: “Confessional Conflict and Political Co-operation,” 172.
82 HCL, XVI.2, XXVIII.4.
because Henry reports that the first European missionaries in the Baltic lands had to ask permission from the prince of Polotsk to preach. Nonetheless, there does not seem to be any evidence of permanent Rus'ian settlements except in Yuryev, a defensive fort founded by Yaroslav the Wise in c. 1030 probably to expedite the collection of tribute. All the same, in the early thirteenth century, perhaps in response to the progress of Western missionaries, it appears that Rus' also became interested in Baltic Christianization. Henry notes that some Estonians and Livonians chose to convert to the Orthodoxy. In one striking anecdote, Henry tells us how the Lettigallians “cast lots asking the opinion of their gods as to whether [...] they should submit to the baptism of the Rus'ians of Pskov or rather to that of the Latins.” The dilemma of the Lettigallians and their confidence in the predictions of their own gods suggests that the choice to convert to the Orthodoxy was as pragmatically motivated as the choice of Catholicism.

When Lithuanian dukes began to push eastward and settle the lands of western Rus', they did not attempt to displace or intervene with the Rus'ian way of life. In fact, for the most part, they preserved established administrative and tax collection systems, and even voluntarily adopted the Orthodox faith. The fact that Vaišvilkas converted only after Mindaugas awarded him Novgorodok in c. 1254 suggests that baptism was largely a strategic move. Similarly, three of Traidenis’ brothers and certain members of the Gediminas’ family including his brother Fedor (possibly Duke of Kiev) were baptized upon receiving landholdings in Rus'. Darius Baronas argues that by accepting Orthodoxy, these Lithuanian dukes “became “natural lords” to their Rus'ian subjects. They could not just command loyalty but also represent local interests.”

83 HCL, I.3.  
84 HCL, XI.7, XIV.2, XX.3.  
85 HCL, XI.7 (Brundage, 75): missis tamen prius sortibus et requisito consensus deorum suorum, an Ruthenorum de Plicecowe [...] an Latinorum debeant subire baptismum.  
86 Kiaupa et al., History of Lithuania, 106–10.  
87 Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 97.  
Lithuanian policy of adopting institutions rather than imposing new ones affected the
textual representation of Lithuanian dukes in the chronicler record. In fact, as discussed below, some
dukes were portrayed as liberators (e.g., Daumantas). The image of peaceful coexistence is not
however entirely accurate. Perfidy and betrayal were just as common on the Rus'ian-Lithuanian
frontier. For example, the author of the GVL tells us that when Traidenis decided to invade the
holdings of Danilo’s son Lev in Berestia, he was led to the castle of Dorogichin by a local man
named Trid.89

With the incorporation of the lands of southwestern Rus', it is reasonable to assume that
by the end of the fourteenth century, the eastern Slavic population of Lithuania outnumbered the
native pagans. Baronas even goes so far as to suggest that “the Lithuanians became more and
more like a island in a Slavonic Sea.”90 This of course explains Polish historian Kazimierz
Chodynicki’s assertion that when Grand Duke Jogaila married Jadwiga of Poland and accepted
the Catholic faith, he faced greater resistance from his Orthodox subjects than the pagan.91 With
so little documentation to rely on, linguistic evidence best attests to the influence of Rus' on
medieval Lithuanian culture. Henryk Łowmianski determined that Christian terminology began
to appear in the Lithuanian language in the second half of the twelfth century. Despite the
presence of Catholic missionaries, Łowmianski concluded that many Lithuanian religious terms
were Slavic in origin—krikščionis (Rus.: khrisťanin; Eng.: Christian), krikštas (Rus.:
kreshchenie; Eng.: baptism), Verbų sekmadienis (Rus.: Verbnoe voskresen'e; Eng.: Palm
Sunday), rojas (Rus.: rai; Eng.: heaven), etc.92 Several linguists have also noted that Old Russian

89 Ipat., col. 871.
90 Baronas, “Lithuania’s Entry in Christendom,” 31. There is some evidence of Lithuanian settlements among
the Slavs, see Kiuapa et al., History of Lithuania, 90–2.
91 K. Chodynicki, “Próby zaprowadzenia chrześcijaństwa na Litwie przed r. 1386,” Przegląd Historyczny 18:3
92 Henryk Łowmiański, “Uwagi o wpływach słowiańskich na litewska terminologię kościelną,” Studia z
words that have since disappeared from the Russian language still retain their meaning in modern Lithuanian—ба́знычія (Old Rus.: bozhnitsa; Rus.: tserkov’; Eng.: church) and гаве́ня (Old Rus.: goven’e; Rus.: post; Eng.: Lent). Since Lithuanian dukes assumed legislative authority in Rus’, it is not surprising that Slavic terms related to statecraft were also imported—кня́га (Rus.: kniga; Eng.: book), прися́га (Rus.: prisiaga; Eng.: oath), присе́кти (Rus.: prisiagat’; Eng.: to swear). Although no longer in use, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Lithuanian evinces many other imported Slavic terms—закона́ (Rus.: zakon; Lith.: įstatymas; Eng.: law), сво́дба (Rus.: svad’ba; Lith.: vestuvės; Eng.: wedding), громе́та (Rus.: gramota; Lith.: diplomas; Eng.: charter), дьяка́ (Old Rus.: d’iak”; Rus.: pisets; Eng.: scribe), неде́ля (Rus.: nedelia; Lith.: savaitė; Eng.: week). The presence of Rus’ian religious and bureaucratic vocabulary in the Lithuanian language serves as proof of close Lithuanian contact with Rus’ long before Lithuania’s official Christianization in 1387.

Cultural, religious, and linguistic overlap suggests that despite the illusion of religious and ethnic animosity perpetuated by chroniclers, interested parties continued to interact, trade, intermarry, form political alliances, borrow words, skills, tools, and weapons, and even admire certain attributes of the other. The demands of frontier life therefore produced a kind of pragmatic coexistence that in and of itself established the social and cultural norms of interaction. Observing the impact of such relations on social structures, Urban concludes: “On a frontier, the enemies are essentially invisible, and even locating them can be difficult.” In Urban’s words, the Lithuanian frontier experience demonstrates that “a ‘German’ could become a Polish vassal, a ‘Lithuanian’ could prosper under a Russian lord.” As we proceed to examine descriptions of

---

94 Words selected from list provided in Ibid., 191.
96 Ibid.
specific “good” and “bad” Lithuanian characters, it is important to keep in mind that both Teutonic and Rus'ian chroniclers labored to perpetuate an image of a world of divided while living in a very different reality.

“Bad” Lithuanians

Every chronicle has at least one Lithuanian villain whom the author denounces as purposefully malignant and whose actions bring necessary ills to the Christian faith and the author’s home polity. As seen in the previous chapter, the villain of the LRC is Treniota. His conniving schemes are presented as the main catalyst for the breakdown of peaceful relations between the Order and Lithuania. By lying and cheating, he manipulates Mindaugas to end his friendship with land marshal and resume hostilities against the Livonian Knights. Within the context of frontier interaction, diplomatic changes were frequently accompanied by a shift in socio-economic relations—i.e., the closing of trade routes, immigration, and apostasy. It therefore seems fitting that the author of the LRC particularly dislikes Treniota, labeling him an “evil man” (bôser man), “total coward” (rechter zage), and an “ape” (affen).97 Much like in the case of Treniota, in order to understand the presentation of “bad” versus “good” Lithuanian characters, it is useful to search the context for clues that could alert us to the author’s rhetorical and discursive choices.

The only true villain of the Rus'ian chronicle tradition appears to be Grand Duke Traidenis (r. c. 1270–1282).98 For the most part, Rus'ian chronicles were never as disparaging of

---

97 LRC, lines 6,499, 6,560.
individual Lithuanian rulers as they were of invading Lithuanian armies. In fact, Mindaugas and Traidenis are the only Lithuanian characters depicted in an overtly negative way. Moreover, perhaps owing to the NPL’s more aloof and matter-of-fact tone, the GVL is the only extant contemporary Russian chronicle that explicitly criticizes the dukes. It is also worth noting that, although the author of the GVL openly disapproves of Mindaugas for his disingenuous conversion and friendship with the land marshal, he never uses any of the traditional pejorative terminology to describe him or his activities. As a result, Traidenis emerges as the only truly hated Lithuanian because he is the only Lithuanian character described as “accursed” (шканьны; okan'nyi), “lawless” (безаконьньныи; bezakon'n'nyi), “condemned” (проклать; prokle'ty), and “merciless” (нелтвыи; nemltvyi).99 From the outset, Traidenis is presented as the worst kind of Lithuanian. The author equates him to biblical and historical villains: “We cannot write of his lawless acts. In lawlessness he equaled Antiochus of Syria, Herod of Jerusalem, and Nero of Rome, but he committed many more evil lawless acts than even they. He [reigned] for twelve years and died in his lawlessness.”100 Like the villains of yesteryear, Traidenis is presented as purposefully and systematically causing harm to Christendom. This condemnatory portrait stands in stark contrast to the chronicler’s portrayal of Traidenis’ Christian brothers who are introduced immediately after the duke: “His brothers were Borza, Sirputij, Lesij, and Svelkenij, [who] were baptized and lived in peace, meekness, and humility. They kept their orthodox Christian faith, [for] they loved the poor and their faith dearly. They died while Trojden was still alive.”101 By comparing Traidenis to his brothers, the author shows regret for the fact

---

99 Ipat., col. 869: шканьныи и безаконьньныи проклатьы немлтвъи Троиден.
100 Ipat., col. 869 (Perfecky 87 [translation amended]) етоже безаконьны не могохомъ п'сатъ срама ради такь бо бышь безаконьны гео и Антихъ Соурыкъи Иродъ Єрлымъстьны и Неронъ Римъськъи и иня многа злыша того безаконьны чинае жывь же лть в и тако престависа безаконьникъ.
101 Ipat., col. 869 (Perfecky, 87): башоуть же в него браты Борза Соуръпъутин Льснъ Свелкенны башоуть же живоуше во стмь крищии сии же живоуоут в любви. во кротости и во смиреньи держаще правоу
that Traidenis became grand duke rather than one of his kin. To more fully understand the GVL’s presentation of Traidenis, it is useful to consider the chronicle’s provenance and context of composition.

Traidenis became grand duke of Lithuania in c. 1270 after Švarn. While it remains unknown how he came to power, it is generally agreed that his twelve-year reign ended the period of unrest that followed Mindaugas’ death and helped reestablish the grand duchy as a stalwart military and political force. The character of Traidenis first appears in the second or Volhynian part of the GVL. This section of the chronicle celebrates the deeds of Vladimir, Vasilko’s son, who succeed his father as prince of Volhynia but always remained subordinate to his cousin Lev, Prince of Galicia and Grand Prince of Kiev. The author of the Volhynian part of the GVL expresses evident dislike for Lev. He presents Lev as quick to anger, self-centered, and opportunistic, reproving him for his jealousy toward his brother Švarn and murder of Vaišvilkas.102 The chronicler portrays Vladimir, on the other hand, in a manner similar to Danilo and praising his good nature, claims, “He was renowned for his brotherly love to all his friends, boyars, and common people.”103 The two princes’ relationship with Traidenis reinforces this dichotomy. Vladimir and Traidenis are presented as mortal enemies. The author explains that because Vladimir’s father Vasilko had killed three of Traidenis’ brothers during a campaign against Lithuania, Traidenis “did not live in peace with [Vladimir], but was [constantly] at war with him […] Traidenis sent his infantry, and they pillaged Vladimir’s [land].”104 Vladimir also

102 Ipat., col. 868.
103 Ipat., col. 870 (Perfecky, 87): правдолюбьемь сватась ко всеи своеи брати и к боеромь и ко простыми людемь.
104 Ipat., col. 871 (Perfecky, 87): не живаше с нимь в любви но воевашеться с нимь но не великими ратми. Троиденей же пославъ пышцъ татемь воевашеть Володимера.
sent his men into Traidenis’ lands and the two continued to raid each other’s territories. To make matters worse, the chronicler presents Traidenis and Lev as friends. He writes, “While Trojden was still reigning in the Lithuanian land, he lived in great harmony with Lev, and they would send each other many gifts.” For all intents and purposes, Traidenis emerges as a quintessential literary antagonist; he is in conflict with the central protagonist and eager to aid his main rival.

As typical of Rus’ian chronicles and demonstrated in the case of Mindaugas, the image of Traidenis also serves a didactic function. The author explains that Traidenis’ friendship with Lev eventually ended, when, as expected of a pagan, he “forgot his love for Lev” and attacked Dorogichin on Easter Sunday. The example of Traidenis’ betrayal delivers a clear message to the reader. First, it serves as a warning against alliance with pagans. Second, it highlights Vladimir’s sense of loyalty and good judgment in comparison to Lev’s lack of both qualities. Since there are no other sources that corroborate the GVL’s account of Lev’s initial friendship with and later betrayal by Traidenis, it is reasonable to assume that the story was designed by the chronicler for this specific purpose. Presenting Traidenis as a malicious evil-doer and enemy of Rus’, and then contrasting Lev’s and Vladimir’s relationship with him could help advance the text’s underlying purpose, that is, to dignify Vladimir as the better prince.

The negative representation of Traidenis was most likely also influenced by the political context. Traidenis’ reign marked the definitive end of friendly relations with Galicia-Volhynia established by Vaišvilkas and Švarn. Unlike his immediate predecessors, Traidenis was neither sympathetic nor accommodating to Rus’ian interests. Instead, he challenged Rus’ian authority in

---

105 Ipat., col. 871 (Perfecky, 87): а Володимерь пославъ тако же вовашеть и тако воевастась льто цьло.
106 Ipat., col. 871 (Perfecky, 87): Троиденеви же еще книжащеу в Литовськои землѣ живаше со Львомъ во величь любви шлючи многы дары межи собою.
107 Ipat., col. 871: Троидении забывь любви Лвовы послав Городыны вель взать Дорогичинъ.
Black Rus', a territory that had been transferred to Danilo’s son Roman by Vaišvilkas nearly twenty years earlier. From around 1274, Traidenis waged war against Galicia-Volhynia in an attempt to secure these lands. In the end, undeterred even by the onslaught of a joint Rus’-Tatar force, Traidenis ultimately annexed Black Rus’. Although his military policies in Black Rus’ were similar to those of Mindaugas, one notable difference deserves attention. When Mindaugas conquered Black Rus’, he compromised with Danilo and transferred his holding to Danilo’s son Roman. Traidenis, on the other hand, firmly held on to his conquered lands. His victory against a Rus’-Tatar force near Novgorodok in 1277 marks the final time that Black Rus’ would change hands for the next several decades. Unlike Mindaugas, Vaišvilkas, and Švarn, Traidenis did not negotiate with the Rus’ian princes. It is not surprising, therefore, that even present-day scholars such as Michał Giedroyć regard him as the duke who firmly established Lithuania as an uncompromising pagan stronghold.

One example of a Lithuanian who received an unmistakably negative reputation in the Order’s chronicles is Grand Duke Vytenis (r. 1295–1315). Nikolaus von Jeroschin refers to Vytenis as an “evil king” (kunige vormeint). Describing the origin of his conflict with the Order, Jeroschin alleges that Vytenis “cruelly” inflicted so much “shame and suffering” on God.

---

108 Ipat., col. 871–4: The GVL describes how Lev Danilovish sent an envoy to the Tatars asking for aid against the Lithuanians. Khan Mengutimur provided an army led by General Jagurchin and ordered several Rus’ian princes, including Roman of Briansk, his son Oleg, and Gleb of Smolensk to help Lev. In the winter of 1274, Lev, his brother Mstislav, Vladimir Vasilkovich, and the Tatars attacked Novgorodok. However, unable to properly coordinate their offensive, they eventually returned home. The chronicler never explicitly states that the Rus’ian princes were defeated. The invasion may have been yet another reason why Traidenis was forced to lift the siege of Dünaburg in Livonia. See also, Dubonis, Traidenis, 115–7.


111 Here, I am refereeing specifically to Dusburg and Jeroschin’s chronicles because Wigand of Marburg presents a very different image of Vytenis: Mažeika, “Granting Power to the Enemy Gods,” 168–9. For general background on Vytenis, see Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 54–9; Kiaupa et al., History of Lithuania, 112–4

112 NJ, line 23,667.
and the Christians that the Teutonic Knights and the local peoples “joined forces against the evil king and by their bravery they intended to avenge” the injustices he had brought upon them.\footnote{NJ, lines 23,666–73 (Fischer, 258): \textit{Dî alle hattin sich voreint / kegn dem kunige vormeint, / daz sî mit vrechin handin / an im woldin andin / daz lastir und dî jâmirket, / dî gote und der cristinheit / von im und von sînen rotin / sô hezlich was irbotin} (”The had all joined forced against the evil king and by their bravery they intended to avenge the shame and suffering he and his people had so cruelly inflicted on God and the Christians”).}

Dusburg presents Vytenis as eager to harm Christians and destroy the Christian faith. He refers to the duke as “a defiler of the name of Jesus Christ.”\footnote{PD, III.310: \textit{rex iste blasphemus nominis Jesu Cristi}.} He claims that Vytenis and his men attack churches on holy days, burning, looting, and polluting holy vestments and objects either by drinking out of them or destroying them “in contempt for God.”\footnote{PD, III.250: \textit{in contemptum dei}.} Jeroschin labels Vytenis, the “devil’s emissary.”\footnote{NJ, line 19,908: \textit{des tûvis bote}.} He likewise details the devastation caused by his men on feast days. In one famous incident already discussed in chapter 3, we are told that Vytenis trampled the communion host in an attempt to dishearten and mock his Christian captives.\footnote{PD, III.310.} Condemning such actions, Jeroschin describes Vytenis as a “dog” who purposefully insults the honor of God.\footnote{NJ, lines 23,523–6 (Fischer, 257): \textit{Ouch ûf der selbin reise / wart dî gotis êre / und sîn dînst vil sêre / gecrenkit von den hundin} (”During this campaign, the dogs insulted the honour of God and His servants”).}

In addition to his zeal in destroying Christian institutions, the Order’s chroniclers also portrayed Vytenis as an archetypal pagan. For example, both Dusburg and Jeroschin describe him as exceedingly arrogant.\footnote{On arrogance as a Lithuanian pagan trait, see chapter 3.} Dusburg writes that he usually marches proudly into the lands of his enemy “thinking that all things should follow him according to his will.”\footnote{PD, III.310: \textit{putans, quod omnia sibi debere\textemdash{}nt ad votum succedere}.} At the first sign of success in battle, instead of patiently awaiting the final outcome, Dusburg reports that Vytenis “with haughty mind brags that his army is mighty in power.”\footnote{PD, III.310: \textit{mente effrenatus gloriar\textemdash{}atur, quasi potens in potencia exercitus sui}.}
“the proud heathen.”\textsuperscript{122} After the destruction Sambia and Natangia, for instance, he writes that the duke rode home “in all his arrogant pride.”\textsuperscript{123} Likewise, after desecrating Warmia, he returns to Lithuania with “immeasurable pride.”\textsuperscript{124} Vytenis’ pride, nevertheless, cannot overcome his deep-seated cowardice. Like other Lithuanians, he drops his weapons and flees whenever he fears that his troops are outnumbered or outmatched.\textsuperscript{125} For example, when the knights arrived to take revenge on Vytenis for defiling and mocking the host, Dusburg reports that at first he rushed into battle, but then he fled, barely escaping alive.\textsuperscript{126}

On the one hand, Vytenis’ behavior appears typical of Lithuanian pagans. On the other hand, the depth of imagery and sever vocabulary used by the both Dusburg and Jeroschin are unusually salient and deserve further scrutiny. While Vytenis generally carried on the policies of his predecessors—he maintained close mercantile contacts Riga, supported friendly relations with the Piast dukes of Mazovia, and continued to push eastward into the Turov and Pinsk—his reign also led to significant military aggrandizement. To better protect his lands from the Order’s advance, the duke established a line of forts along the Nemunas and Jūra Rivers. These new stone castles not only bolstered Lithuanian defenses, but also provided a more permanent infrastructure for operations against the Order. In response, the knights build their own line of forts on the opposite bank of the Nemunas.\textsuperscript{127} The establishment of a defined military front ushered in a new phase of conflict between the two powers. The duke’s resourcefulness confirmed that unlike other local pagan peoples who rely on the Order for protection and military aid, including the construction of defensive fortifications, the Lithuanians were more than

\textsuperscript{122}NJ, line 23,478: \textit{dem hömütigen heidin}.
\textsuperscript{123}NJ, line 23,359: \textit{zôch in vil grôzir hôchwart}.
\textsuperscript{124}NJ, line 23,567: \textit{ummezlichir hôchwart}.
\textsuperscript{125}PD, III.291.
\textsuperscript{126}PD, III.310.
\textsuperscript{127}Kiaupa et al., \textit{History of Lithuania}, 112.
capable of defending themselves and organizing offensive campaigns of their own.

During the reign of Vytenis, the Lithuanians also began to intervene more in the Order’s dealings with Riga and Poland. Unlike Mindaugas, Vytenis did not make any concessions to the Teutonic Order. On the contrary, he sought alliances that would counter the threat posed to his realm by the knights while simultaneously curtailing their political and economic ambitions. In the 1270s, after the Lithuanian army penetrated as far as Lublin in Lesser Poland leaving behind a path of devastation, Mazovian dukes broke relations with the Order and sought alliance with their up-and-coming northern neighbor. The union was secured by the marriage of Duke Boleslaw II to the daughter of Traidenis in 1279. Meanwhile, the knights, who consider themselves to have precedence in Polish affairs, did not take kindly to Mazovia’s newly established alliance. The sudden union posed a direct challenge to the ideological foundations of the Christian mission, especially considering the fact that Order State had been established directly in response to Mazovia’s call for protection against the pagans with whom they were now in coalition. Vytenis upheld the alliance with Boleslaw who, in return, offered Lithuanian troops hospitality and safe passage throughout his lands. Outraged at Bolesław’s show of support for the pagan dukes, Dusburg wrote, “Bolesław, Duke of Mazovia, disregarding the fear of God, in contempt for God, and [hoping to cause] considerable damage and burden to Christians, frequently offered his hospitality to those enemies of the faith, the Lithuanians, at his castle in Wizna, allowing them [better access] to pillage the land of Prussia and Poland.”128 Jeroschin rationalized Bolesław’s behavior by stating that he was “in thrall of the devil and ignored God’s

128 PD, III.258: Bonislaus dux Masovie dei timore postposito, in contemptum dei et cristifidelium prejudicium non modicum et gravamen hostes fidei Lethowinos in castro suo Wisno sepius hospitavit, admittens, quod terram Prussie et Polonie depredarent.
divine wrath.” Lithuania’s involvement in Mazovian affairs signified an extension of Lithuanian power. Vytenis assumed an offensive strategy against the knights and began to encroach upon the Order’s areas of influence.

Lithuanian relations with Riga also changed during this time. In the 1270s and 1280s, the city saw a series of relatively weak archbishops who granted various immunities and trading privileges to the city burghers effectively allowing the citizens greater autonomy. As a result, commerce boomed and in 1282, Riga joined the Hanseatic League. Although the city had long enjoyed the privileges of German town law, the knights continued to hold great influence, especially because they organized the city’s defense. When the Order began interfering with the city council by refusing to secede land and administrative rights to the guilds, the archbishop sided with the town burghers against the knights. Together they hoped to limit the various impediments that the Order had placed on Riga’s foreign and commercial dealings. Especially troubling was the Order’s fortification of the Cistercian monastery of Dünamünde and construction of the new castle of Dünaburg. Completed in 1273, it was situated on the bed of the Daugava River in eastern Lettigallia at the crossroads of two important trade routes linking Novgorod to Lithuania and Polotsk to Riga. The knights were thus in position to collect dues on goods travelling to and from Riga as well as to block river access if they so desired. Responding to the latest disagreement between the archbishop, city burghers, and the Livonian Order, in 1297, Vytenis offered his assistance. A few months later, the duke invaded Livonia, besieged the fort of Karkus, and with the consent of the archbishop and city council remained garrisoned near

---

130 Urban, Baltic Crusade, 230.
131 Rigan law was a form of Lübeck law used throughout the Order’s lands in the Baltic. The city obtained the rights of Lübeck law in 1225. In 1233, Grand Master Hermann von Salza licensed the knights to share in the profits of the townpeople. The Order reserved the right to arbitrate, coin money, own property, and police the cities thus preventing the formation of local militias. See Christiansen, Northern Crusades, 86 and Dollinger, The German Hansa, 34–5.
The knights were clearly upset that their pagan enemies had replaced them as defenders of Riga. On June 1, 1298, the Order’s forces engaged the Lithuanians near the Gauja River in the so-called Battle of Turaida.\textsuperscript{133} Dusburg reports that in the early hours of the battle, the knights gained the upper hand, killed 800 Lithuanians, and succeeded in freeing all the Christian captives. However, Vytenis’ counterattack was catastrophic. Armed with reinforcements provided by the archbishop and the city militia, the grand duke and his men killed the Livonian land marshal, twenty-two brothers, and 1500 Christians.\textsuperscript{134} Although a month later, the komtur of Königsberg arrived and took his revenge, killing 4000 Lithuanians and Rigans, Vytenis remained undeterred.\textsuperscript{135} Having secured a powerbase in Livonian, he used his new military position to organize raids against the knights and drive them slowly out of the very city that they had once been contracted to protect against the same pagans that now held favor with the municipal government.

The examples of Traidenis in the Rus'ian chronicle tradition and Vytenis in the Order’s chronicle tradition demonstrate that “bad” Lithuanians were those that posed a military or political threat to the author’s home polity. In other words, we cannot discount the fact that chroniclers were, at least in part, reacting to increased Lithuanian military presence. However, the decision to describe Traidenis and Vytenis as exceedingly “bad” or villainous appears more directly motivated by political and ideological concerns—reaffirming the crusade program or legitimating the rule of Prince Vladimir—than the actual threat posed by those rulers. For example, although Traidenis was less accommodating to Galician-Volhynian interest than

\textsuperscript{132} Rowell, \textit{Lithuania Ascending}, 57–8; Christiansen, \textit{Northern Crusades}, 141.
\textsuperscript{133} Urban, \textit{Baltic}, 313–4.
\textsuperscript{134} PD.269.
\textsuperscript{135} PD.269: Grand Master Gottfried von Hohenlohe attacked Neuermühlen, a Livonian castle occupied by the Lithuanians.
Mindaugas, his expansion into Rus' never really posed any direct challenge to Vladimir or Lev who still firmly held authority in southwestern Rus'. Likewise, while Lithuania’s growing power under Vytenis was certainly irksome to the knights, it did not undermine the Order’s dominance in the West. In fact, it has even been suggested that the Order was very successful in its wars against Lithuania at this time, managing to rouse local protest against Lithuanian rule and expansion as evidenced by a growing number of refugees to the Order.136

Because deferring to the historical background cannot fully explain the representations of Traidenis and Vytenis as “bad,” it is useful to consider a more literary approach. Within the context of the two chronicle traditions, it would be appropriate to define the type of qualities attributed to Traidenis and Vytenis and the vocabulary used by the authors to describe their actions as essentially stereotypical. Both characters are effectively typecast as “bad” Lithuanians. The GVL describes Traidenis using the common pejorative triplet—“pagan,” “godless,” and “accursed”—and Dusburg and Jeroschin attribute traditional pagan vices to Vytenis—e.g., he is overly arrogant, brash in battle, cowardly, and eager to destroy Christianity. As such, the characters of Traidenis and Vytenis serve to highlight the difference between “good” Christians and “evil” pagans. For a reader familiar with life in the Baltic lands, these characters act as a reminder that accommodation is impossible. In other words, the use of such characters appears to have been strategic and intended by the author to help establish mental frontiers where physical ones had failed. Exaggerating the depravity of “bad” characters such as Traidenis and Vytenis served as proof to audiences that the Baltic frontier was in fact a battleground between “good” and “evil,” despite whatever rumors of peaceful coexistence that they might have heard.

136 Kiaupa et al., History of Lithuania, 112–3.
“Good” Lithuanians in the Chronicles of the Teutonic Order

Of all the Lithuanian characters mentioned in the chronicles, very few actually meet the criteria of a “good” Lithuanian. In Dusburg’s chronicle, for instance, the only characters to embody both traits of a “good” Lithuanian—reverence for the faith and respect for the Order—are three minor castle keepers who upon experiencing a spiritual awakening choose to betray their fellow pagans and aid the brothers in storming a Lithuanian stronghold. Dusburg’s account of their conversions follows a set pattern: the Lithuanian guard grows regretful of his pagan ways, secretly seeks aid from the knights, and in return for their spiritual guidance, delivers a castle up to the Order at night. The guard then returns to the Order State with the victorious brothers, happily receives baptism along with his entire household, and remains in the Order’s lands.137 Dusburg praises these men for taking proactive measures in support of the Christian cause. He refers to Swirtil, the guard of Aukaimis, as a “friend of the faith and the faithful” and to Spudo, the castle keeper of Putenicka, as a “zealot of the faith and the faithful.”138 When Drayko of Aukaimis implores the Order for help, he does so “humbly and faithfully,” showing consideration not only for the Christian faith but, more importantly, the institutions of the Order.139 Given their paradigmatic nature, these accounts deserves further investigation.

We know from archival sources that around the turn of the century, Lithuanian defectors were settled near Labiau in Curonia and promised lands in Aukaimis once the Order had gained control of the territory.140 This might explain why guards from Aukaimis, such as Dryako and Swirtil, were so eager to offer their support to the knights. Dusburg does not mention any

137 Dryako, garrison of Aukaimis: PD, III.280; Swirtil, garrison of Aukaimis: III.280; Spudo, garrison of Putenicka: III.301.
138 PD, III.290: fidei et fidelium amicus; III.301: zelator fidei et fidelium.
139 PD, III.290: humiliter et devote.
privileges or lands granted to the three castle guards despite the fact that at other times he openly praises the Order for offering similar rewards to converts. His reticence consequently strengthens his case for the sincerity of all three conversions. Dryako, Swirtil, and Spudo serve as models of “good” Lithuanians who choose conversion for its spiritual benefits. Their first pious act involves aiding the Order in war against the pagans. While there is no evidence to suggest that Dusburg invented these characters, the specifics of Dusburg’s representation warrant skepticism, especially when considered in the light of the actual processes of Baltic Christianization as outlined above. Given the general tendency to convert for profit (e.g., material profit or protection), it seems more reasonable to assume that the castle guards actually benefited from their conversion and perhaps received land grants in the Order. Moreover, when examined within the wider context of the ideological dimensions of the Order’s chronicle tradition, all three conversion accounts could be judged essentially propagandistic and shrewdly crafted by the chronicler as evidence of the Order’s efficacy in converting, protecting, and expanding the Christian frontier. This is most apparent in the way that Dusburg portrays the Order’s role in the conversion of the guards. Although Dryako, Swirtil, and Spudo all seem independently drawn to the Christian faith, their actual baptism and final “liberation” from paganism occurs expressly through the Order’s intervention. Highlighting the successful conversion of characters such as the three castle guards, Dusburg therefore offers a defense of the Order’s mission and tactics.

Dusburg was not the first chronicler to cast minor characters as models of “good” Lithuanian converts. Mindaugas’ beloved wife Morta is an example of a similar character from the *LRC*. The description of her steadfast devotion to the Christian faith is almost certainly an idealization based upon the familiar medieval *topos* of Clotilde and her relationship with Clovis.

---

141 PD, III.220.
Like Clotilde, Morta is Mindaugas’ second wife. Although she is not the instigator of Mindaugas’ conversion and actually receives baptism along with her husband, she remains resolute in her faith even after Mindaugas’ apostasy and attempts to convince him to remain a Christian ally much like Clotilde who pleads with Clovis to abjure his idolatrous ways and accept the Latin rite. As the author of the *LRC* writes, Morta was “angered” when Mindaugas “turned hostile to the Christians.”142 When she realized that Mindaugas intended to kill or expel Christians living in Lithuania, she begged him to save her friend and confidant Brother Siebert and to secure safe passage for him to Livonia.143 Praising Morta’s perseverance, the author reports that she was overwhelmed by regret and horrified by the thought of all the pain and suffering that the Christians would now have to endure. Confiding in Siebert, she exclaims, “‘Alas, that I have lived to see this day. Heartfelt sorrow besets me.’”144 It is important to note that Morta’s disapproval of Mindaugas’ actions extends far beyond religious sentiment. She criticizes him specifically for his hostility toward Christians, which in this case denotes not only the recent converts of Lithuania, but more specifically, the knights who struggle to bring Christianity to the Baltic lands. This is most evident when Morta implores Mindaugas to reaffirm his friendship with the land marshal and reminds him of the honor and gifts that the knights bestowed upon him.145 By offering her protection to Christians like Brother Siebert and openly admitting her support for the land marshal, Morta thus acts as a patron of both the faith and the Baltic mission. Like the three castle guards, her character reveals that a truly “good” Lithuanian not only adheres

---

142 *LRC*, lines 6,428 […] 6,431 (Smith and Urban, 79): *den cristien wart er wider gram / […] daz was der vrowen alsô zorn.*

143 *LRC*, lines 6,432–56.

144 *LRC*, lines 6,442–4 (Smith and Urban, 80): „*owê, daz ich disen tac / ie gelebete, daz ist mir leit! / grôz hertzzeit ist mir bereit.* “

145 *LRC*, lines 6,546–611.
to the Christian faith but also supports and serves the Order State. The interests and intentions of “good” Lithuanians therefore appear fundamentally aligned with those of the knights.

By juxtaposing “good” Lithuanians with “bad” Lithuanians and highlighting the injuries and suffering endured by the former, chroniclers likewise underscored the necessity of the Order’s mission of protection and the need for a permanent Teutonic state in the Baltic region. Descriptions of ruthless Lithuanian warlords deliberately causing harm not only to the faith in general but specifically to neophyte converts helped prove to audiences that the knights provide an indispensable service without which the faithful would be in grave danger. Chroniclers sought to demonstrate that the Order not only offers proper guidance to those who seek edification, but also readily lends protection and relief to anyone in need. The LRC provides the example of three brothers—Gineika, Milgerinas and Tusche—who accepted baptism in return for the Order’s protection against Mindaugas’ nephew Lengvenis.\footnote{The GVL implies that that Lengvenis played an important role in Mindaugas’ wars of eastward expansion. In 1245, he led a campaign against Volhynia but was forced to retreat after suffering an injury near Melnitsa: Ipat., col. 798. He most likely escaped negative characterization in Rus’ian texts because the expedition was unsuccessful.} The author describes all three as “noble” and “renowned.”\footnote{LRC, line, 7,737: rische; LRC, line, 7,739: die dô wâren wol bekant.} He writes that Milgerinas “followed an upright and just course out of sincere conviction.”\footnote{LRC, lines, 2,742–3 (Smith and Urban, 38): der sich in trûwen vinden liez / nâch sîner ê in rechtekeit.} Gineika was a “hero” and “because of his manful conduct he never suffered dishonor in any battle.”\footnote{LRC, line 2,749: helt; LRC, lines, 2,746–9 (Smith and Urban, 38): er endorfte nie gewinnen schame / bie sînes mannes sîten, / wâ man solde strîten.} Lengvenis, on the other hand, is introduced as a villain who maliciously causes harm to both Christians and pagans. The chronicler writes, “His name is well-known to many of you from old, and I will tell you why. In his lifetime he took no respite, for his heart was filled with violence, as his neighbors discovered full well to their sorrow. He gave
much trouble to Christian and heathen alike.”\textsuperscript{150} Lengvenis’ character serves as a counterpoint to “good” pagans or pagans who intend to convert. He represents the stereotypical Lithuanian who intends harm to Christians while believing that he himself is indestructible because he is “so arrogant.”\textsuperscript{151} Lengvenis’ bravado thus stands in stark contrast to the positive qualities of Gineika, Milgerinas, and Tusche, including their sense of duty and honor.

Demonstrating clear disapproval of Lengvenis’ actions, the author the \textit{LRC} blames him for instigating a feud with Gineika, Milgerinas, and Tusche because “he was tempted by his pride.”\textsuperscript{152} He explains that Lengvenis would ride into the lands of the three brothers, burning, looting, and causing “all manner of hardships.”\textsuperscript{153} The brothers were thus forced to retaliate in kind, burning and looting Lengvenis’ lands. Although at first they were able to repulse his attacks, eventually Gineika, Milgerinas, and Tusche felt compelled to find a permanent solution. The chronicle reports that one brother suggested, “‘Let us ride to the Master [land marshal] and accept his counsel, for he has great wisdom. If he will accept us let us gladly ally ourselves with the Christians. Then we can avenge our sorrows by bringing great armies into this land.’”\textsuperscript{154} The second brother then added, “‘If we wish to save our lives and those of our women and children, we must allow ourselves to be baptized in God’s name.’”\textsuperscript{155} Finally, they all agreed, “‘There would be no dishonor in that.’”\textsuperscript{156} Although baptism for reasons of genuine religious conviction was preferable, the knights also encouraged conversion for reasons of protection. For the most

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{150} \textit{LRC}, lines 2,722–9 (Smith and Urban, 38): \textit{sîn name ist manchem wol bekant / von alder her, ich sage ûch wie. / bie sîner zît er nie gelie, / sîn hertz was ie sturmes vol; / sîn nâkebûr iz dicke wol / bevunden. daz was in vil leit. / er brâchte mancher hande arbeit / den cristen und den heiden zû.}
\item \textsuperscript{151} \textit{LRC}, line 2,731: \textit{er was sô hôchgemût.}
\item \textsuperscript{152} \textit{LRC}, line 2,735: \textit{Lengewîn betrouc sîn ubermût.}
\item \textsuperscript{153} \textit{LRC}, line 2,750 (Smith and Urban, 38): \textit{liden mancher hande pîn.}
\item \textsuperscript{154} \textit{LRC}, lines 2,770–7 (Smith and Urban, 38–9): \textit{,wir rîten an den meister hin / und nemen dar zû sînen rât. / der selbe man vil wisheit hât; / und wil er uns entpfâhen / wir wollen uns genâhen / vil gerne zû der cristenheit. / sô wir rechen unser leit / mit machem here in daz lant.”}
\item \textsuperscript{155} \textit{LRC}, lines 2,789–91 (Smith and Urban, 39): \textit{,wolle wir behalden unseren lip / und dar zû kinder unde wîp, / sô lâze wir uns toufen in gotes named. “}
\item \textsuperscript{156} \textit{LRC}, line 2,792 (Smith and Urban, 39): \textit{,der dinge sulle wir uns nicht schamen.”}
\end{itemize}
part, the chronicles distinctly praise converts who voluntarily chose to receive baptism regardless of their reason for doing so. It is also important to note Gineika, Milgerinas, and Tusche’s choice to receive baptism from the land marshal rather than the archbishop or the local parish priest. Again, the author of _LRC_ implies that a “good” Lithuania not only willingly converts but also readily subordinates himself to the Order.

The very fact that Gineika, Milgerinas, and Tusche decided to accept Christianity in order to gain an advantage over Lengvenis also adds an element of credibility to the account. The author even notes that the land marshal promised to enrich the three brothers with “honor and goods” and grant them land and people for their allegiance. This statement suggests that the author knew that conversion was rarely motivated by genuine religious feelings. Perhaps this explains why the author stresses that despite the circumstances that first prompted Gineika, Milgerinas, and Tusche to seek the aid of the land marshal, “their pure hearts really did long for Christianity.” The author likewise clarifies that “it was also the Holy Ghost, sent to them by God in His supreme grace, who caused them to ride to the Master [land marshal].” When they arrived in Livonia, the _LRC_ alleges that they immediately admitted to the land marshal that “they would rather have True Faith than paganism.” Then, showing their support for the knights, the brothers asserted, “‘We all eagerly desire to join with you and the Christians.’” To prove

---

157 _LRC_, lines 2,828–34 (Smith and Urban, 39): „wir tûn ûch machen rîche / an êren unde an güte. / ir sult in unser hûte / sîn und wer mit ûch wirt brächt. / ir habet des besten ûch bedâcht“ (“‘We shall gladly extend to you our friendship. We shall enrich you in honor and goods, and you and whomever you bring with you shall be under our protection’”); _LRC_, lines 2,954–60 (Smith and Urban, 41): _der meister, als iz was gewant, / entpfienc sie lieplîchen dô. / er machte sie alle gemeine vrô / mit grûze und mit stifte. / er gab in ouch mit schrifte / beide lûte unde lant. / daz wart sider manchem bekant_ (“The Master received them lovingly and made them all happy with his greetings and his gifts. He also gave them written grants of people and land and this was later widely proclaimed”).

158 _LRC_, line 2,795–7 (Smith and Urban, 39): _vromen Littowen / ir reinez herze doch begert / in dem cristentûme_.

159 _LRC_, lines 2,807–9 (Smith and Urban, 39): _ouch sante in got den sûzen geist / von sînen genâden aller meist, / daz sie an den meister riten dô_.

160 _LRC_, line 2,812–3 (Smith and Urban, 39): _daz sie den rechten gelouben hân / wolden vor die heidenshaft_.

161 _LRC_, line 2,824–5 (Smith and Urban, 39): „_wir wollen uns gerne nähen / kein ûch und zû der cristenheit_.“

262
their devotion they told the land marshal that they are willing to wage war against the pagans on behalf of the Order: “‘If you extend us welcome, it will be a blow to paganism.’”\textsuperscript{162} Finally, they rejoiced in their decision and pledged military service to the land marshal: “‘We have found a remedy for our troubles and if God allows us to live, we shall be at your service.’”\textsuperscript{163} Afterwards, the \textit{LRC} reports that they served the knights so loyally that they “were counted among the Christian forces.”\textsuperscript{164} They even captured Lengvenis and delivered him to the land marshal. Interestingly, the author claims that as soon as Lengvenis was taken prisoner “all of his arrogance vanished”\textsuperscript{165} and he wished to hang himself.\textsuperscript{166} Even after they defeated Lengvenis, Gineika, Milgerinas, and Tusche continued to fight alongside the knights. As the chronicler states, “they often displayed their loyalty in battle, and each one offered himself and his steadfast heart for all manner of noble endeavors.”\textsuperscript{167}

Upon closer analysis, Gineika, Milgerinas, and Tusche’s conversion account demonstrates a conspicuous similarity to that of Dryako, Swirtil, and Spudo. In all four cases, the “good” Lithuanian protagonist seeks protection from the knights and willingly subordinating himself to the Order. In fact, support for the Order is presented almost as a precondition of conversion—Dryako, Swirtil, and Spudo promise to help the knights besiege a castle, while Gineika, Milgerinas, and Tusche pledge military service to the land marshal before they receive baptism. These characters thus demonstrate that part of being a “good” Christian also involved supporting the Teutonic Knights in their wars against Lithuania. As the Order’s activities came

\footnotesize{\begin{tabular}{l}
\textsuperscript{162} \textit{LRC}, line 2,826–7 (Smith and Urban, 39): „tû wir der heidenschaft leit, / daz wir ûch wilkomen sîn.“
\textsuperscript{163} \textit{LRC}, line 2,842–4 (Smith and Urban, 40): „unser sorgen wirt gût rât: / wil uns got daz leben lân, / unsen dienst sult ir hân.“
\textsuperscript{164} \textit{LRC}, line 2,988 (Smith and Urban, 41): \textit{sint stünden sie an der cristen schar.}
\textsuperscript{165} \textit{LRC}, line 2,866 (Smith and Urban, 40): \textit{siner hêrschaft wart vergezzen.}
\textsuperscript{166} \textit{LRC}, line 3,049–54.
\textsuperscript{167} \textit{LRC}, lines 2,976–80 (Smith and Urban, 41): \textit{die tâten dicke trûwe schîn, / wâ man ir dorfie zû der nôt; / ie der man sich selber bôt / zû mancher hande vromekei / ir stêtez hertz was bereit.}
\end{tabular}}
under scrutiny, such characters not only served as proof of the Order’s effectiveness, but also as a reminder that supporting and aiding the knights is a basic part of Christian duty.

“Good” Lithuanians in the Chronicles of Rus’

Like their counterparts in the Teutonic Order, Rus’ian chroniclers praised Lithuanians who converted to Christianity and defended Rus’ against other hostile pagans. As suggested by David M. Goldfrank, the “good” Lithuanian ideal most likely originated from the GVL’s treatment of Vaišvilkas. Elements of his character such as his sense of duty and justice as well as his military prowess and friendship with Rus’ were later adopted as part of the heroic motif. No character personifies this ideal better than Daumantas (Rus.: Dovmont), the supposed duke of Nalšia who ruled as prince of Pskov from 1266 to 1299 and was later canonized as the city’s patron saint. The GVL is more or less impartial to Daumantas. The chronicle refers to him as Treniota’s co-conspirator and Mindaugas’ actual murderer, but remains neutral in tone and does not mention his later rule in Pskov. Northern Rus’ian chroniclers seem to have been much more interested in Daumantas. Both the NPL and the Pskov chronicles treat Daumantas as a great prince and defender of Rus’ from Lithuanians and other foreign enemies.

The NPL first mentions Daumantas in 1266 when the Pskovites invited him to be their prince. As soon as Daumantas arrives in Pskov, he initiated a series of military campaigns. The NPL reports, “The same year [as he came to Pskov] God laid his grace into the heart of...”

---

169 Daumantas is venerated by his Christian name Timofei. He was canonized in the sixteenth century. His feast day is May 20. On the historic figure of Daumantas, his dealings with Novgorod, Lithuania, and the Livonian Order as well as the spread of his cult, see S. C. Rowell, “Between Lithuania and Rus’. Dovmont-Timofey of Pskov, His Life and Cult.” Oxford Slavonic Papers, New Series 25 (1992): 1–33.
170 Ipat., col. 860.
171 Like in Novgorod, the prince in Pskov was an elected official expected to serve as the city’s chief military commander.
Dovmont to fight for St. Sophia and the Holy Trinity, to avenge the Christian blood, and he went with the men of Pleskov against the pagan Lithuanians. The expedition was targeted against a small Lithuania dependency ruled by a minor duke named Gerdenis, most likely in ally of Vaišvilkas. Based upon the timing of the campaign, Fennell suggests that Daumantas probably fled to Pskov after Mindaugas’ assassination in order to regroup before returning to Lithuanian to depose Vaišvilkas who had just assumed power. This might explain why Daumantas’ first military maneuver was to attack Vaišvilkas’ lesser allies in the East. According to the NPL, the expedition was successful. The Pskov chronicle also confirms that Daumantas and ninety men captured Gerdenis’ wife and sons, defeated 700 Lithuanians, and returned victoriously to Pskov having suffered only one casualty. Daumantas then led another campaign against Lithuania the following winter and a third in 1267. Once Vaišvilkas abdicated the throne, tensions seem to have eased and no major altercations with Lithuania are reported for remainder of Daumantas’ reign in Pskov.

The most famous account of Daumantas’ life, the so-called Povest’ or Skanzaniia o Dovmonte, is found in the Pskov chronicles. Even more so than the NPL, the Povest’ accentuates Daumantas’ Christian virtue and military skills. He is presented as an archetype of the genuine convert-military hero ideal. The Povest’ begins in 1265. The author reports that “the

---

172 NPL, pp. 85, 314 (Michell and Forbs, 100): Того же лѣта вложи боѣ въ сердце Довмонту благодать свого побороти по святои Софьи и по святои Троицѣ, отмьстити кровь христьянскую, и понде со пльсковичи на поганую Литву.

173 Fennell, Crisis of Medieval Russia, 133.

174 PSRL V.2, p. 83.


176 The version of the Povest’ contained in the Tikhonov redaction of the First Pskov Chronicle is thought to be the most authentic surviving copy. None of the extant manuscripts are complete. For this reason, the Povest’ from the Third Pskov Chronicle is traditionally used as the critical edition of the text. The surviving fragments of the version in the First Pskov Chronicle and the Third Pskov Chronicle do not exhibit any significant variations. For a study of the text, see V. I. Okhtnikova, Povest’ o Dovmonte (Leningrad: Nauka, 1985).
Lithuanians quarreled among themselves because of some grievance.” It was then that the “blessed prince Dovmont with his retinue and with all his kin left his homeland of Lithuania and fled to Pskov.” Immediately after arriving he received baptism. The author claims that even though Daumantas was Lithuanian by birth and used to worship idols, God chose him to rule Pskov and imbued him with grace. Thus, “awakened, as if from sleep, from serving idols, he decide to be baptized with his boyars in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” All the citizens of Pskov rejoiced and invited him to be their prince. Apart from its sheer length and detail, two other important aspects differentiate this account of Daumantas’ life from the one in the NPL. First, the NPL curiously overlooks Daumantas’ conversion. It is implied that sometime between leaving Lithuania and assuming his new role as prince of Pskov, Daumantas accepted the Christian faith. Second, the NPL suggests that Daumantas left Lithuania because he had already been invited to rule in Pskov. The author of Povest’, however, explains that he was invited only after he had formally renounced paganism and accepted baptism. Despite these slight differences, both accounts effectively recognize Daumantas as a legitimate ruler and dismiss his past indiscretions.

In addition to his campaigns against the Lithuanians, both chronicles also celebrate Daumantas’ victories against the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Knights. In 1267, Daumantas joined a coalition of Rus’ian princes, including Dmitri of Pereslavl whose daughter he had recently married, in an expedition against the Livonian town of Wesenberg (Rus.: Rokovor). The battle that took place on February 18, 1268 is believed to have been a draw with each side

\[177\] PSRL V.2, p. 82: Побиша Литва межи собою нѣка ради нужа.
\[178\] PSRL V.2, p. 82: Блаженый же князь Домантъ съ друженою своєю и съ всѣм родомъ своимъ оставль отечество свое, землю Литовскую, и прибѣже въ Плѣсковъ. Selart, Livonia, Rus‘ and the Baltic Crusades, 234–6.
\[179\] PSRL V.2, p. 83: вѣзнубился, яко от сна, от идолского служения и помысли своими бояры креститися во имя отца и сына и святого духа.
claiming victory. The author of the _LRC_, the battle ended when “five thousand Russians lay dead on the battlefield, and the others were defeated and routed. [And the rest,] they fled homeward in disgrace.” The author does not mention Daumantas’ involvement. The _NPL_ acknowledges that the Rus’ians suffered many casualties at first but eventually prevailed when “the merciful Lord speedily sent His mercy, not wishing utter death to the sinner.” In this account, Daumantas is mentioned only in passing as one of the princes in Dmitry’s retinue. The _Povest’,_ in contrast, provides a much less detailed account of the battle but more explicitly praises Daumantas for his involvement. The author explains that Daumantas eagerly went to aid his father-in-law Dmitry when he learned of the prince’s plans. Then, fast-forwarding to the conclusion of the battle, the author rejoices at the triumph of the Rus’ians, stating, “And their land became famous in all lands, where [people] feared the thunderous courage of Great Prince Dmitry, and his son-in-law Dovmont, and their men from Novgorod and Pskov.”

The short summary of the battle in the _Povest’_ introduces the next years of conflict with the Order. Angered by the Rus’ian invasion, the Livonian land marshal retaliated by attacking Pskov. The _Povest’_ highlights Daumantas’ bravery in defending his principality: “Blessed Dovmont could not tolerate this insult to [his] land and the home of the Holy Trinity by the attack of the pagan Germans, [and] he pursued them with a small retinue in five boats with sixty men of Pskov, [and] with the help of God, he defeated eight hundred Germans.”

---

180 Fennell, _Crisis of Medieval Russia_, 134–5; Selart, _Livonia, Rus’ and the Baltic Crusades_, 242–52.
181 _LRC_, lines 7,664–8 (Smith and Urban, 94): _vumf tûsent Rûzen lâgen tôt / ûf der selben walstat. / die andern vluchtic und mat / jageten hin zu lande. / in tet vil wê die schande._
182 _NPL_, pp. 87, 317 (Michell and Forbes, 102): милосердыи господь посла милость свою въскорѣ, не хотя смерти грѣшнику до конца. The chronicler refers to the Novgorodian as “sinners” implying that their initial failure was divine punishment. On the association between military victory and divine intervention in Rus’ian chronicles, see chapter 5.
183 _PSRL_ V.2, p. 84: И славна бысть вся земля ею во всѣхъ странах страхом грозы храбрость великого князя Дмитрея и зятя его Домонта и мужъ ею новогородцевъ и псковичъ.
184 _LRC_, lines 7,711–68
185 _PSRL_ V.2, p. 85: И боголюбвы же князь Домонтъ, не стерпь обидимъ быти земли и дому святыхъ
knights attempted another attack in 1272, according to the *Povest*, Daumantas “with the help of God defeated them, broke the regiment of the enemy, and wounded the land marshal in the face.” He also repulsed two attempts by the knights to besiege Pskov in 1298 and 1299. The *NPL* states, “And the men of Pleskov with Knyaz Dovmont, fortified by God and the Holy Mother of God, drove them away, giving them no little hurt.” The *Povest* likewise glorifies his victory: “And there was a cruel slaughter as had never been before in Pskov, and the [Livonian] commander himself was wounded in the head and many were captured [...] and the others dropped their weapons and fled, fearing the thunderous courage of Dovmont and his men from Pskov.” Daumantas posed enough of a threat to the Order that William Urban claims that the knights were compelled to construct the fortress of Weissenstein in the province of Jerwen.

While Daumantas’ reputation seems to have been based largely on his military career, the *Povest* also carefully shows that he led a pious and virtuous Christian life. Before entering battle, the author notes that Daumantas would go to church and pray in supplication while crying. Most importantly, he recognized his own meekness thus fully committing himself to God’s mercy. His devotion to God explains his achievements in war. As seen in the examples above, God and St. Sophia were said to aid Daumantas in all his victories. In fact, the author presents his faith as

---

186 *PSRL* V.2, p. 86: божиею силою побѣди и изби полки ихъ, самого же местера раниша по лицю.
187 *NPL*, p. 329 (Michell and Forbes, 113): и плесковици же съ княземъ Домонтомъ, укрѣпившіеся богомъ и святою богородицю, прогнаша ихъ, давше имъ рану не малу.
188 *PSRL* V.2, p. 86: и бысть сѣча зла, яко же николи же не бывала оу Пскова; и раниша самого менѣбря по главѣ, а вельнивцѣ, изымаю вѣрнымъ, [...] а прочии вскорѣ повергъша орошна и устроимъща на бѣгъ, страхомъ грозы храборства Домонтова и мужъ его псковичь.
190 *PSRL* V.2, p. 85: «господи боже силь, мы людие твои и овца пажити твоей, имя твое призывамъ, призри на кротка и смиренныхъ възвыши, и городыхъ высокихъ мысли низложи, да не опустеть пажить овцы твоихъ» (“O Lord God Almighty, we, your men and flock in your pasture, invoke they name, have mercy upon the meek and lift up the humble, and humble the haughty thoughts of the proud, [and] your flock will not abandon the pasture”).

268
both his primary inspiration—God calls upon him to receive baptism and defend Pskov—as well as the reason behind his success. As the *Povest* states, “This prince was distinguished not only by his bravery given to him by God, but also by his love for God.” The twofold ideal of the good Christian and brave warrior was a common motif in contemporary Rus’ian literature. Daumantas not only embodies both qualities, but through his character, the author reveals that they are fundamentally inseparable. The chronicler portrays Daumantas as waging God’s war. He is essentially a divine agent impelled to battle by divine inspiration. God also helps Daumantas achieve victory. His triumphs therefore reinforce the image of Daumantas as the defender of righteous people of Rus’.

Moreover, once Daumantas becomes prince of Pskov, he transcends not only his pagan ways but also his Lithuanian nature. By the end of the *Povest*, the author even refers to him by his baptized name, Timofei, rather than the Slavic variation of Daumantas—Dovmont. Unlike the “good” Lithuanians in the chronicles of the Order, who remain culturally Lithuanian but in the service of the knights, Daumantas transforms into a Rus’ian. Even more so than Vaišvilkas, the example of Daumantas demonstrates that a truly “good” Lithuanian in the Rus’ian chronicle tradition is also one who overcomes both religious and cultural differences becoming a “naturalized” Rus’ian. It may also be that the Pskov chronicles praised Daumantas because his rule ushered in the period of Pskov’s independence from Novgorod. Until the Pskovites invited Daumantas to be their prince, the principality remained a semi-autonomous dependency of Novgorod often ruled by a prince with loyalties to Novgorod.

The influence of political and social factors is evident in the representation of other “good”

---

191 *PSRL* V.2, p. 86–7: Сей же бѣ князь не одинем храбростьвом показанъ бысть от бога.
193 *NPL*, pp. 85, 314: пособи богъ князю Довмонту.
194 Rowell, *Dovmont-Timofey of Pskov*, 1–3. Recent studies have shown that Novgorod never officially had the right to appoint princes to Pskov.
Lithuanians such as Gediminas’ son Narimantas. Like Daumantas, he was invited by the boyars of Novgorod in 1333 to serve as defender of the republic’s northern territories. The NPL carefully portrays his conversion as a religious epiphany: “The same year God put into the heart of the Lithuanian Knyaz Narimont, called in baptism Gleb, the son of Gedimin, Veliki Knyaz of Lithuania, and he sent to Novgorod, wishing to bow down to Saint Sophia.” The chronicler likewise presents his allegiance to Novgorod as genuine and resolute, stating, “He arrived at Novgorod, wishing to worship, in the month of October; and they received him with honour, and he kissed the Cross to Great Novgorod.” The magnitude of Narimantas’ piety is questionable. As already discussed, Russian chroniclers attributed Lithuanian converts with a much greater degree of piety than they most likely exhibited in order to justify their rule in Rus'. Narimantas’ acceptance of his new appointment was by no means purely altruistic. It is generally believed that Gediminas arranged for Narimantas to go to Novgorod in hopes of bolstering Lithuania’s alliance with the newly elected archbishop Vasili Kalika. According to the NPL, Narimantas received lands in Ladoga, Orekhov, and Korelia as well as half of Koporye in return for his services.

While Narimantas arrives in Novgorod in celebration, his image soon changes. Despite his promise to defend Novgorod’s northern outposts, it appears that Narimantas spent very little time in the republic and continued to reside in his home principality of Polotsk. When the

---

196 NPL, p. 345 (Michell and Forbes, 129): Сем же льть вложить богъ въ сердце князю Литовскому Наримонту, нареченому въ крещении Глѣбу, сыну великого князя Литовскаго Гедимина, и присла в Новуград, хотя поклоннится святѣ Софіи.
197 NPL, p. 346 (Michell and Forbes, 129): и прииха в Новгород, хотя поклоннится, мѣсяца октября; и пришла его съ честью, и цѣлова крестъ къ великому Новуграду.
198 PSRL IV.1, p. 263. Fennell argues that Archbishop Vasili agreed to grant the title to Narimantas as part of his negotiations for release after he had been captured by Gediminas’ men while en route to Volhynia: Emergence of Moscow, 131–32.
199 NPL, p. 346; PSRL IV.1, p. 263.
Swedes devastated the town of Toldoga in 1338, the NPL reports that the duke ignored the pleas of the Novgorodians for aid. Later, instead of reinforcing defenses, he withdrew his son from Orekhov, leaving only a lieutenant to rule in his stead. In contrast to the earlier description of Narimantas’ joyous arrival in Novgorod, the later portrayal of Narimantas as a military commander neglectful of his duties is worth noting. This change in tone begs the question of whether Narimantas should be regarded as a “good” or “bad” Lithuania. As discussed in the following chapter, Narimantas’ arrival in Novgorod coincided with a time of civil unrest. While previously politically aligned with Moscow, in the 1330s, Novgorodian loyalties began to waver, leading to a series of popular uprisings between local pro-Muscovite and pro-Lithuanian factions. Remembering that the NPL was updated annually, this shift in the image of Narimantas from a “good” to a “not so good” Lithuanian should not be thought of as a discrepancy in representation. Rather, it reflects the state of turmoil in Novgorod. The author of the NPL presents Narimantas as a “good” Lithuanian in 1333 because at that very time the newly elected archbishop Vasili had begun to take steps to reduce Moscow’s control over Novgorod. A defensive alliance with Lithuania could certainly help achieve this effect. By 1338, however, Vasili had no choice but to accept Muscovite dominance once again. This meant that he had to disassociate himself from Lithuania. Presenting his Lithuanian ally as apathetic to Novgorod’s interests, therefore, served Vasili’s new political agenda. However, since the NPL does not present Narimantas as wholly evil, instead emphasizing his ineffectiveness, it seems plausible that Vasili never intended to fully sever relations with Lithuania. If the author of the NPL had transformed Narimantas into a truly “bad” Lithuanian, then the possibility of future cooperation would be ruled out. Perhaps Vasili wished to keep his options open, especially given the state of “political suspension” in

---

200 NPL, p. 349; PSRL IV.1, p. 267. On possible reasons for Narimantas’ withdrawal, see Fennell, Emergence of Moscow, 154–5.
Novgorod at the time.\textsuperscript{201} The shift in Narimantas’ image thus serves as yet another example of the intimate connection between the choice of representation and the context of the composition.

Thus far we have examined the various attributes of the “good” Lithuanian stereotype in the Rus’ian chronicle tradition and the circumstances of its use. One final aspect of the “good” stereotype requires attention. Like the chronicles of the Teutonic Order, Rus’ian chronicles also praised Lithuanians who willingly converted to Christianity and tirelessly defended the Rus'ian people from invading armies, including those of their own countrymen. However, unlike “good” Lithuanian characters in the Order’s tradition whose show of deference was expected to be voluntary, such status in the Rus'ian tradition could only be achieved by invitation.\textsuperscript{202} While Rus’ian chronicles seem to have had no choice but to acknowledge the rule of Lithuanian dukes in their lands, implying that the Lithuanian rulers held favor with Rus’ian subjects could break “the ideology of silence.” As seen in the examples of Daumantas and Narimantas, chroniclers overcame this problem by presenting “good” Lithuanians as those who had been invited to rule in Rus' by the Rus'ian people. Moreover, they portrayed “good” Lithuanians essentially as a naturalized Rus'ian who had not only converted to Orthodoxy but also assumed Rus'ian identity upon arriving in Rus'. Like “good” Lithuanians in the Order’s chronicles, who were seen as clients of the knights, “good” Lithuanians in the Rus'ian tradition were presented as clients of the Rus'ian people.

\textbf{Conclusions}

Evidence of cross-cultural interaction and exchange on the Baltic frontier suggests that the world of absolute duality existed only in the literary dimension; it was created in response to

\textsuperscript{201} Fennell, \textit{Emergence of Moscow}. 157.
\textsuperscript{202} Although Vašvilkas was never invited to rule in Rus', he was encouraged to convert by Danilo who remained his patron throughout his life and supported his monastic lifestyle: \textit{Ipat}. col. 859.
social and political needs. In the case of the Teutonic Knights, chroniclers were working to shore up support for the Order’s wars against Lithuania. In the case of Rus', chroniclers aimed to show that the rule of Lithuanian dukes was not necessarily disruptive and alliance with Lithuania could in fact be beneficial. As a result, the crucial distinction between “good” and “bad” Lithuanians was not simply religious. A “good” Lithuanian was expected to be a military hero who had voluntarily or by invitation come to defend and aid the people of the chronicler’s home polity. Neither ideal, however, existed in reality. The very nature of the exaggerated and conventional language and imagery used by the chroniclers indicates that both the “good” and “bad” Lithuanian stereotype was a construct used to bolster extant political and ideological structures.
Chapter 8
Gediminas between Two Worlds

Remembered as one of Lithuania’s most famous and influential medieval rulers, Gediminas (d. 1341) is frequently credited in historiography with completing the consolidation of the Lithuanian state, a process that had been begun by his predecessors, and expanding Lithuanian lands from the Baltic Sea to the Dnieper River basin in present-day Ukraine (Map 3).¹ In fact, some historians even apply the term “empire,” though with reservations, to describe certain characteristics of the administrative structure and territorial scope of Lithuania from the time of Gediminas.² While questions concerning Lithuania’s political status during the reign of Gediminas have led to what might be called a war of terminology, one thing is certain: As Rowell contends, “During his reign which lasted from the winter of 1315/16 to the winter of 1341/42 the Grand Duchy became firmly established as a major diplomatic and military power […] rather than a mere piratical irritation on the borders of Poland and Rus’.”³

Much like today, the figure of Gediminas and his activities also interested medieval historians. In particular, they were concerned with his military dealings with neighboring territories and his religious sentiments. However, despite the fact that modern historiography sometimes emphasizes the unique character of Gediminas as a ruler and leader, this chapter

¹ There is a substantial literature on Gediminas. In English, see for example, Rowell, Lithuania Ascending. In Lithuanian, see Alvydas Nikžentaitis, Gediminas (Vilnius: Vyriausioji enciklopedijų redakcija, 1989); Albinas Jovaišas et al., eds. Metraščiai ir kunigaikščių laiškai, Senoji Lietuvos literatūra 4 (Vilnius: Pradai, 1996).
³ Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 59.
demonstrates that the image of Gediminas in the contemporary chronicle record of the Teutonic Order and Rus' expressly conforms to representational practices already associated with discourses on the Lithuanian Other. In other words, it appears that for the medieval chronicler already familiar with the political developments that had been taking place in the Baltic region for the past century, the reign of Gediminas does not mark a radical deviation from known trends. More specifically, this chapter analyzes two incidents involving Gediminas: one from Peter of Dusburg’ Chronicon terrae Prussiae, which details the duke’s rejection of baptism and subsequent military expeditions against neighboring Christian lands; and one from the Novgorod First Chronicle (NPL), which describes a failed attempt by Gediminas to appoint the bishop of Pskov. While the representation of Gediminas in Dusburg’s chronicle serves as yet another example of the use of well-defined and recognizable imagery as ideological justification for the Order’s crusading program, the inconsistent and ambiguous presentation of Gediminas in the NPL and its later redactions is reflective of the state of affairs in Rus' in the first half of the fourteenth century.

After a brief outline of certain known aspects of Gediminas’ dealings with Europe and Rus', this chapter turns to the image of Gediminas. It is important to note that this chapter does not aim to provide an exhaustive overview of the difference between Gediminas’ treatment in Dusburg’s chronicle and the NPL. Rather, by closely analyzing the two images separately, this chapter seeks to assess each image as a product of its socio-political circumstances as well as its author’s reliance upon established narrative forms. The image of Gediminas in Dusburg’s chronicle, for example, reveals a distinct intertextual cohesion not only with the Order’s other contemporary writings but also the underlying ideological considerations of the Order’s chronicle writing tradition more generally. On the other hand, the representation of Gediminas in
the *NPL* and his attempt to secure an independent bishopric in Pskov reveals a tampering with
the chronicle record in response to competition between Lithuania and Moscow for influence in
Novgorod. Interestingly, none of the redactions of the *NPL* present Gediminas as an alien
intruder upon Rus'ian affairs. Instead, they portray him as a powerful and legitimate rival whose
failure to achieve his goals inevitably led to Moscow’s final triumph. Like other representations
of Lithuanians in the Rus'ian chronicle tradition, the image of Gediminas therefore includes a
teleological component that necessarily presupposes the supremacy of Rus', or in this case,
Moscow.

**The “Real” Gediminas**

Especially in comparison to many of his predecessors, the reign of Gediminas is
reasonably well documented in contemporary sources. Nevertheless, the record is often terse and
contains many gaps. In the past, scholars turned to later chronicles such as the *Second Lithuanian
Chronicle* and the *Bychowiec Chronicle* that were compiled at the end of the sixteenth century
and provide much fuller accounts of Gediminas’ activities.\(^4\) While historians today generally
agree that these chronicles must be approached with caution, there is still a tendency to use later
narratives to supplement lacunae in older sources. Writing the history of Gediminas’ reign has
therefore proven especially difficult from both an archival and historiographical point of view.
Before we turn to the question of Gediminas’ image in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order and
Rus', it is useful to consider what we could conclude about the person of Gediminas and his reign
by examining only contemporary sources.

---

Gediminas’ early life, ancestry, and ascent to power continue to be the subject of scholarly debate.⁵ Despite past suggestions that he may have been the son, cousin, or hostler of Vytenis, it is generally accepted that Gediminas was his brother and assumed the grand ducal title after Vytenis’ death in 1315/6. Six letters drafted by Franciscan scribes between 1322 and 1325 at the request of Gediminas as part of a circular chain of correspondence between the grand duke, the pope, the Teutonic Order, and various Hanseatic merchant towns survive as copies today.⁶ Despite the fact that the pope never officially anointed Gediminas, according to these letters, it appears that the duke styled himself as “by the grace of God, king of Lithuanians and Rus’ians, prince and duke of Semigallia” (Gedeminne Dei gratia Letphinorum Ruthemorumque rex, princeps et dux Semigallie).⁷ Other European rulers recognized Gediminas’ supreme authority in his realm. In a letter to Charles IV of France, Pope John XXII referred to Gediminas as “the one who calls himself king of Lithuania and the Rus’ians.”⁸ In his correspondence with Gediminas, however, the pope addressed the duke as “the most excellent and magnificent man Gediminas, illustrious king of the Lithuanians and many Rus’ians.”⁹ The city council of Riga likewise showed its esteem for the duke by referring to him as the “illustrious prince lord Gediminas, by the grace of God king of Lithuanians and Rus’ians.”¹⁰ When peace was confirmed with the Livonian Order in 1323 and 1338, both treaties cited “Gediminas, king of Lithuania”

---

⁶ The documents were reproduced by a notary at the request of Gediminas who in the addendum to each letter instructed that it be copied for wider circulation. See for example, *CL*, nos. 16–19, 21, pp. 48, 58, 62. Although there has been some controversy concerning the authenticity of these letters, it is now generally agreed that they were indeed drafted at Gediminas’ request. See Kurt Forstreuter, “Die Bekehrung Gedimins und der Deutschen Orden,” *Altpreußische Forschungen* 5 (1928): 239–61; Kurt Forstreuter, “Die Bekehrung des Litauerkönigs Gedimin: eine Streitfrage,” *Jahrbuch der Albertus Universität Königsberg* 6 (1955): 142–58; Rowell, “Letters of Gediminas,” 325, 339–41, 345–51, 359–60.
⁸ *CL*, no. 28, p. 92: Gedeminne, qui se regem Lethonie et Ruthenorum intitulat.
⁹ *CL*, no. 41, p. 132: Excellenti et magnifico viro Gedeminne Letwino et multorum Ruthenorum regi illustri.
¹⁰ *CL*, no. 15, p. 42: Illustri principi domino Gedemynde Dei gratia Lethwinorum Ruthenorumque.
(Gedemminen, deme koninge van Lettowen) as one of the signatories. Similarly, Dusburg, the first of the Order’s chroniclers to mention to Gediminas, referred to him as “king of the Lithuanians and Rus’ians.” Rus’ian writers also acknowledged Gediminas’ authority. The NPL describes Gediminas as “grand prince of Lithuania” (kniaz’ velikiy Gedimen” Litov’skyi), implying not only the territorial scope of his power but also his dominance over other dukes in his realm. One redaction of the Novgorod Fourth Chronicle states that Gediminas was first among the dukes and ruled many great men and lands of Rus’. 

As the nominal ruler of his lands, Gediminas is believed to have also held certain privileges such as the right to enforce or release from taxation as well as grant land and royal exemptions. In fact, Gediminas described himself as the mightiest ruler in his lands. In one of his letters, he wrote, “By the providence of God we are the greatest in our own [domain], in which we have the [power] to instruct and govern, to condemn and to save, to close and to open.” The letters of Gediminas have been closely studied over the years by scholars trying to understand the nature of grand ducal power in Lithuania before Christianization. Perhaps the most debated aspect of the letters remains Gediminas’ purported decision to receive baptism and his open invitations to Christian immigrants, merchants, and missionaries.

11 CL, no. 24, p. 72; CL, no. 69, p. 258: Ghodeminne de koningh van Lettowen.
12 PD, III.356: rex Lethowinorum et Ruthenorum.
13 NPL, p. 345, 353: князь великий Гедимень Литовьский.
14 PSRL IV.1, p. 477.
15 Gediminas claimed to have these privileges in his letters to the pope and the Hanseatic merchant towns. See chapter I, p. 34.
16 CL, nos. 18, 21, p. 60: tamen Dei providencia in propriis maximus, in quibus habemus precipere et impetrare, perdere et salvare, claudere et reserare.
In 1322, Gediminas sent a letter to Avignon in which he promised to obey the pope “in everything and receive the Catholic faith.”\(^{18}\) He then drafted four more letters inviting Christian townspeople as well as Franciscan and Dominican missionaries to come to Lithuania and insisted that he wished “to harm no one, but to help all and to create by eternal peace and charity a brotherhood of all of Christ’s faithful.”\(^{19}\) He even noted that several churches had already been built in Lithuania, including one Dominican church in Vilnius and two Franciscan churches in Vilnius and Novgorodok.\(^{20}\) Gediminas also praised Lithuanian efforts to protect these churches. When, according to him, the Teutonic Knights burned the Franciscan church in Novgorodok, he claimed that he rebuilt it within a year “to honor the omnipotent God and his genetrix, the virgin Mary, and the blessed Francis.”\(^{21}\) Perhaps playing up to Christian sensibilities, he also added that the church had been restored “so that the praise of Christ, for our benefit and for the healthful salvation of our sons and wives and all those worshiping the true God, Jesus Christ, might continue by the same brothers [Franciscans].”\(^{22}\)

Gediminas’ seeming friendliness toward Christianity and Christians, which has often been interpreted as part of an extended diplomatic dialogue aimed at shoring alliances and securing papal favor in the war against the Teutonic Knights, remains a subject of great interest because already in the time of Gediminas’, witness reports doubted the genuineness of his claims. For example, the envoys of papal legates staying in Riga around 1324 reported that during a visit to Vilnius, when approached, Gediminas confirmed his respect for the pope and the archbishop of Riga as well as his tolerance of Christian immigrants, but denied ever having any

\(^{18}\) CL, no. 14, p. 40: *in omnibus obedire et fidem catholicam recipere.*

\(^{19}\) CL, no. 16, p. 48: *Nam post istud capiti nulli obesse, sed omnibus prodesse volumus ac pacem fraternitatem karitatemque veram cum omnibus fidelibus Christi firmare federe sempiterno.*

\(^{20}\) CL, no. 16, p. 46. In his letter to the Pope, Gediminas noted that a Franciscan church had already been built during the reign of Vytenis: CL, no. 14, p. 38.

\(^{21}\) CL, no. 16, p. 46: *ad honorem Dei omnipotentis et sue genetricis Virginis Marie, et beati Francissi fecimus.*

\(^{22}\) CL, no. 16, p. 46: *ut laus Christi ad utilitatem nostram et in remedium salutiferum filiorum et uxorum nostrarum et eciam omnium verum Deum Ihesum Christum colentium ab eisdem fratribus iugiter perseveret.*
intention to convert. In fact, according to the envoys, he even exclaimed, “But if I ever had this as my intention, let the devil baptize me.” Dusburg also seems to have been aware of the envoys’ visit to Lithuania. As discussed below, his account underscores what he perceives as Gediminas’ hateful attitude toward Christians. The report of the envoys, however, suggests that Gediminas was rather tolerant of Christians. They attest to the presence of Franciscan and Dominican friars on the duke’s personal council and quote him as saying, “I allow Christians to worship their God in accordance with their customs.”

While some sources imply that Gediminas welcomed Franciscans into his lands, others such as the account of the martyrdom of the Franciscan brothers Martin and Ulrich by order of Gediminas in 1341, point to the contrary. Rowell explains this discrepancy by arguing that Ulrich and Martin’s mission was not sanctioned by Gediminas like that of the Franciscans described in the report of the envoys. Darius Baronas maintains that Gediminas tolerated quiet missionary activity but condemned Ulrich and Martin for publically denouncing the pagan rite. Mažeika suggests that because the account of Ulrich and Martin’s execution follows a traditional hagiographic model, we cannot overlook the possibility that the two Franciscans were in fact “actively seeking martyrdom.”

---

23 CL, no. 54, p. 184. See also, Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 210–1; Rowell, “Pagans, Peace, and the Pope,” 83–4.
24 CL, no. 54, p. 184: Sed si unquam habui in proposito, dyabolus me baptizet.
25 CL, no. 54, p. 184: christianos facere Deum suum colere secundum morem suum.
27 Rowell, “Lithuania and the West,” 310.
29 Rasa Mažeika, “Paradigm Shifts And Continuity In Lithuanian Rulers’ Attitudes To Christianization,” forthcoming.
The often-opposing information that has come down to us about Gediminas’ policies toward Christianity and Christians has created much speculation about his motives and methods of diplomatic manipulation. For Rowell, Gediminas’ expression of amity toward Christians, especially in his letters to the city burghers and mendicant orders of western Baltic cities (i.e., Lübeck, Bremen, Magdeburg, Köln, Rostock, Stralsund, Greifswald, Stettin, and the territory of Gotland) was essentially a tactical ploy just like his 1322 promise to “receive the Catholic faith.” Despite the implications of this statement, Rowell argues that Gediminas never intended to be baptized. Rather, he presented himself as receptive to Christianity in order to solicit papal assistance in the ongoing conflict against the Teutonic Order. Moreover, by promoting an image of Lithuania as a kingdom comparable to its Catholic neighbors and welcoming to Christians and pagans alike, Rowell suggests that Gediminas hoped to attract merchants, skilled artisans, and knights to Lithuania. Rowell’s claim that Gediminas’ religious views were inextricably linked to his political, military, and economic aspirations is convincing, especially considering Lithuania’s increasingly prominent position in Europe during the fourteenth century. While the ambiguity and contradictions inherent in much of the extant sources on Gediminas add to their historiographical appeal, our understanding of the duke and his role in the historical development Lithuania remains very limited.

In terms of foreign diplomacy, it is clear that Gediminas upheld the policies of his predecessors, including maintaining close relations with Riga and Poland. Furthermore, it appears that Rigan leaders and Polish monarchs viewed Gediminas as a valuable political and military ally. In 1323, for example, the council of the city of Riga wrote Gediminas professing its

---

30 CL, nos. 16–9, 21, pp. 46–52, 55–67.
31 See above, p. 279, n. 18.
eagerness to uphold “peace and truce” with the duke and requesting that he refrain from concluding any unilateral agreements with the Teutonic Knights.\textsuperscript{34} Gediminas’ alliance with Poland was secured by the marriage of his daughter Aldona-Anna to Władysław Łokietek’s son Casimir III in October 1325.\textsuperscript{35}

For nearly two decades, Łokietek, the newly crowned king of Poland, had been struggling to reunify the duchies of former Piast Poland under his rule. In 1308, when the city of Gdańsk rebelled, Łokietek turned to the Order for help. By the Treaty of Soldin (1309), Waldemar, the margrave of Brandenburg, relinquished his rights to Gdańsk and the surrounding lands of Pomerelia (eastern Pomerania) to the knights, who then firmly held these territories refusing to secede them to Łokietek.\textsuperscript{36} A year later, the knights moved their headquarters from Venice to Marienburg thus impeding Łokietek’s access to the Baltic Sea. In retaliation, Łokietek initiated legal action against the knights. Responding to Polish complaints, the pope appointed Archbishop Jan Janisław of Gniezno and two other clerics to investigated the charges.\textsuperscript{37}

Relations between Łokietek and the Teutonic Knights were further aggravated in 1326 when the knights pushed deeper into Poland, pillaging Kuyavia. This time, Łokietek appealed to Gediminas and Charles I of Hungary for help. In 1326, a joint Polish-Lithuanian force devastated the Neumark region of the Mark of Brandenburg before turning against the Teutonic Order in Chełmno.\textsuperscript{38} As discussed below, Dusburg and Jeroschin decried this alliance. The Order’s chroniclers never forgot how the Lithuanians aided the Poles in destroying their lands. Nearly half a century later, Wigand of Marburg emphasized, “Three kings were enemies of the Order:

\textsuperscript{34} CL, no. 15, p. 42: pacem et treugas.
\textsuperscript{36} Knoll, \textit{The Rise of the Polish Monarchy}, 31–2.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 42–4.
\textsuperscript{38} On contractual relations between Gediminas and Łokietek, see Rowell, \textit{Lithuania Ascending}, 232–7; Rowell, “Swords for Sale?,” 5–7.
the king of Poland Łokietek, the pagan Lithuanian king called Gediminas, and the king of Hungary.”

Despite Gediminas’ alliance with Łokietek against the knights, the two rulers remained rivals in the quest for southwestern Rus'. Like his predecessors, Gediminas used a combination of military and diplomatic strategy in his dealings with Rus'. He annexed several previously contested territories, including Vitebsk, Brest, Minsk, Turov and Pinsk, and extended Lithuanian influence over Volhynia, Lutsk, Chernigov, Novgorod-Seversky, Smolensk, and temporarily Briansk (Map 3). The area of Podlachia, just east of Mazovia, was one of the first Rus’ian territories to fall under Gediminas’ control. Soon thereafter, the duke set his sights further south on the principality of Galicia-Volhynia. In 1323, Andriy II and Lev II, the last Rurikid princes of Galicia-Volhynia, were killed in battle without heirs. Gediminas thus found himself in a favorable position because his son Liubartas had married the daughter of Andriy II earlier in 1320 and was now in line for the throne. The Galician boyars, however, contended his claims and sought military assistance from Łokietek. To avoid war with Poland, Gediminas compromised with Łokietek and agreed to install fourteen-year-old Bolesław-Yuri II as prince of Galicia. Not only was Bolesław-Yuri betrothed to Gediminas’ daughter Eufemija, but he was also the nephew of Andriy II and Lev II, the son of Trojden I of Mazovia (Traidenis’ grandson), the cousin of Łokietek, and the nephew of Gediminas’ son-in-law Waclaw of Płock. In other words, he had blood ties to Poland, Lithuania, and Galicia-Volhynia and, therefore, was an acceptable candidate for everyone involved in the conflict. As a result, the wars of Galician-


40 On Lithuanian expansion eastward under Gediminas, see Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 82–91, 94–111.

41 On Lithuania’s expansion into southern Rus’, see F. M. Shabul'do, Zemli IUgo-Zapadnoi Rusi v sostave Velikogo kniazhestva Litovskogo (Kiev: Nauk. dumka, 1987).
Volhynian succession were forestalled until Bolesław-Yuri’s death by supposed poisoning in 1340.\(^42\)

Gediminas’ aspirations for southwestern Rus’ did not end with Galicia-Volhynia. In 1322, he led a military expedition against Kiev. The details of this campaign, which are known mainly from the sixteenth-century text of the *Second Lithuanian Chronicle*, have been reconstructed by Rowell.\(^43\) He explains that according to this source, in April 1323, the Lithuanians captured Ovruch and Zhytomir' just south of Brest. Gediminas then met Stanislav of Kiev, Oleg of Pereyaslavl, Dmitry of Briansk, and Lev II of Galicia near Belgorod, one of Kiev’s defensive outposts on the Irpin River. The battle ended in a resounding Lithuanian victory. Lev and Oleg were killed, and Dmitry and Stanislav fled to Briansk. By June 1323, Kiev and Pereyaslavl capitulated to the Lithuanians and Gediminas installed his brother, known only by his Christian name Fedor, as prince of Kiev.\(^44\)

Expansion into Rus' also brought Lithuania into closer contact with the Tatars. During the reign of Gediminas, Rowell has noted evidence of at least eleven armed encounters between the Lithuanians and Tatars.\(^45\) As with other neighboring lands, Lithuanian relations with the Tatars were not always hostile. The envoys of the papal legates that traveled to Vilnius in 1324, reported the presence of Tatar representatives at Gediminas’ court.\(^46\) Given the paucity of credible sources, the nature of Lithuanian-Tatar relations during this time remains a matter of speculation. Many scholars insist that Lithuanian expansion posed a great challenge to Tatar supremacy in Rus'. For example, Fennell and Meyendorff agree that the Tatars strategically


\(^{44}\) Ibid., 97.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 111, n. 129.

\(^{46}\) *CL*, no. 54, p. 188.
offered political and military support to Muscovite princes so as to build up the principality as the “main bulkhead of opposition against Lithuanian eastward expansion.” At the same time, however, it appears that the Lithuanians did not oppose the presence of Tatar officials in conquered Rus'ian lands. The continued presence of a baskak in Kiev suggests that Rus'ian lands under Lithuanian control continued to pay tribute to the Horde.

In northern Rus', Gediminas practiced a more diplomatic approach. As already discussed in the previous chapter, some Rus'ian princes were more than willing to cooperate with the Lithuanians. In 1322, for example, the Pskovites invited one of Gediminas’ most devoted military commanders, David of Grodno, to rule as the city’s prince. After David was killed during the Brandenburg campaign, Gediminas established his ally Alexander Mikhailovich of Tver as vice regent in Pskov. Other Rus'ian lands were secured through marriage. For example, Vitebsk joined Lithuania in 1318 by the marriage of Gediminas’ son Algirdas to Maria, the only living heiress of Vitebsk’s last prince. After her death, Algirdas married Ul'iana of Tver. According to Rowell, “These marriages […] merely strengthened ties that had already been created in the region through pressures of economic need and/or force of Lithuanian arms.” Gediminas’ daughters also married into the families of Rus'ian princes. In 1320, his daughter

---


48 Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 112–3.

49 David of Garth was a Lithuanian military commander and ally of Gediminas in Grodno (Ger.: Garth). Dusburg refers to David as Gediminas’ castellan in Garth: David castellanus suus de Gartha: PD, III.357. His status is also attested in Mazovian sources, which refer to him as the “pagan prince by the name of David, subject to the king or duke of Lithuania” (princeps infidelis nomine David, regi sive duci Litwanie subjectus): Codex diplomaticus Prussicus II, ed. Johannes Voigt (Königsberg: Bornträger, 1842), no. 114, p. 153. David is one of the most frequently appearing Lithuanian characters in Dusburg’s chronicle: III, nos. 337, 343, 349, 357, 361. Based upon information found in sixteenth-century sources, there is some speculation that he may have been the son of Daumantas: Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 179. The NPL records that in 1322 David was invited by the citizens of Pskov to be their prince and help supervise the defense of the city: NPL, pp. 97, 339.

50 Fennell, Emergence of Moscow, 122.

Maria married Dmitry of Tver who ruled as grand prince of Vladimir until his death in 1326.\textsuperscript{52} In 1333, Gediminas’ younger daughter Aigusta (baptized Anastasia) married Simeon of Moscow who became grand prince of Vladimir in 1340. Although never directly subject to Lithuania, the prince of Smolensk, Ivan Alexandrovich, remained fiercely loyal to Gediminas. When Ivan wrote the Livonian Order in 1339 to negotiate a trade treaty, he referred to Gediminas as his “older brother” and promised to comply with the terms set out by Gediminas and the Order the previous year.\textsuperscript{53} Rowell suggests that “his loyalty was presumably encouraged by the fact that the western Dvina trade routes which ensured the city’s prosperity were in Lithuanian hands.”\textsuperscript{54}

While it remains difficult to determine the extent of Gediminas’ power and influence, it is evident that the duke’s dealings with both Europe and Rus' included a combination of military and diplomatic maneuvering. It seems reasonable to conclude therefore that although, for the most part, he carried on the policies of his predecessors, Gediminas was much more involved in the affairs of his neighboring polities. He did not seek to simply dominate militarily, but cultivated his power through a network of both long-term and short-term alliances. In other words, it would appear that Gediminas knowingly built upon the legacy of his predecessors and following the example of other European rulers worked to transform Lithuania into a polity with notable international influence.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 41–6.
\textsuperscript{53} CL, no. 70, p. 262: брат мой старьший Кедимень.
\textsuperscript{54} Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 84.
The Inveterate Pagan: The Image of Gediminas in Peter of Dusburg’s *Chronicon terrae Prussiae*

Dusburg first mentions the “Lithuanian king,” presumably Gediminas, when describing a raid on the castle of Pisten in 1319. He reports that overwhelmed by the Order’s onslaught, the residents of the castle offered hostages to the knights and assured them that they were prepared to recognize Christian authority and subjugate themselves to the Order. Despite their agreement, however, Dusburg alleges that the Lithuanians were unable to fulfill their promise because, “compelled by the Lithuanian king, those who had accepted the faith did not serve it after.”

Recalling the same incident, Jeroschin explains, “The heathens did not keep their oath, because their king forced them to abandon it.” Although the king is never mentioned by name, based upon the date of the campaign, it is reasonable to assume that Dusburg and Jeroschin were in fact referring to Gediminas. Both accounts of the raid on Pisten present an overtly negative image of the Lithuanian king. While the Lithuanian people are prepared to accept Christianity, the king compels them to remain pagan and hostile toward the Order. Here, again we encounter the familiar *topos* of Lithuanian pagan deceit. The perpetrators, however, are not the Lithuanians themselves, but rather Gediminas who commands his people to sin and renounce their vow to the Order. Even before formally introducing him, Dusburg portrays Gediminas as a ruler both antagonist toward Christians and wielding great influence over the people in his lands.

Dusburg first refers to Gediminas by name when describing the experience of the envoys of the papal legates who journeyed to Vilnius in 1324 to inquire about the duke’s purported decision to receive baptism. The chronicler explains that Pope John XXII, at the request of the

---

55 PD, III.340: *Sed artante ipsos rege Lethwinorum, fidem prestitam postea no servabant.*
56 NJ, lines (Fischer, 276): *Abir des gelubdis pflicht / di heidin sint inhildin nicht, / want si des kungis getwanc / mit gewalt darabe dranc.*
57 PD, III.356.
archbishop and the townspeople of Riga, sent two legates to Livonia: Bartholomew, bishop of Electen, and Bernard, abbot of the Benedictine monastery of St. Theofred (present-day Abbey of Saint-Chaffre-du-Monastier) in the diocese of Aniciensis. The legates’ first order of business was to ratify a peace treaty that had been signed a year prior in Vilnius by Gediminas, the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order, the viceroy of Reval, the archbishop of Riga, and the city council of Riga. The terms of the treaty guaranteed safe passage to all free men travelling along land and water routes in territories subject to Gediminas (Aukštaitija, Žemaitija, Pskov, and all Russian [lands]), the diocese and the city of Riga, the land marshal of the Livonian Order, the bishops of Ösel and Dorpat, and the Estonian holdings of the king of Denmark.

Dusburg’s knowledge of the event is quite remarkable. He refers the legates by names, describes them as monks of the Benedictine Order, lists their home monasteries, and cites the exact date of their arrival—September 22, 1324. Interestingly, however, Dusburg does not mention Gediminas’ communication with the pope in 1322. Instead, he explains that the legates came to Riga by request of the archbishop. In 1324, the archbishop of Riga was Friedrich von Pernstein (r. 1304–1340), a member of the Franciscan Order with close ties to John XXII. Like many of his predecessors, Friedrich opposed the policies of the Order, including the knights’ claims to territorial jurisdiction in Livonia. Almost immediately after assuming his post, he accused the Livonian Knights of corruption and undue violence toward pagans. In 1312, the pope

---

58 CL, nos. 23–4, pp. 72–5.
59 CL, nos. 23, 24, p. 72: van des koninges wegene van Lettowen dat lant to Ousteyten unde Sameyten, Plessekowe und alle de Russen. See also, Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 211–2; Rowell, “Pagans, Peace, and the Pope,” 84–5.
60 Although there is not direct extant correspondence between Gediminas and the archbishop, a letter from the city council of Riga to Gediminas mentions that Gediminas had inquired about the “status” of the archbishop. The letter then confirms that the archbishop requested aid from the pope against the knights. It is implied that Gediminas and the archbishop had similar concerns: CL, no. 15, p. 42. On Gediminas’ contact with the archbishop, see Mažeika and Rowell, “Zelatores maximi,” 52.
sent a commission headed by Francis of Moliano to investigate the archbishop’s allegations.\footnote{For Francis’ report, see Das Zeugenverhör des Franciscus.} In 1325, Friedrich received permission from John to initiate excommunication proceedings against the Livonian Order.\footnote{Mazeika and Rowell, “Zelatores maximi,” 54.} Given the rivalry between the archbishop and the knights, Dusburg’s respectful tone toward Friedrich is worth noting. He presents the knights and the archbishop as essentially working toward one goal—the Christianization of Lithuania. Avoiding any mention of hostilities, he thus portrays the Order as fully supportive of the legates’ mission to Riga. Moreover, by citing the treaty, Dusburg alludes to the Order’s preference for reconciliation with archbishop and peaceful coexistence with other Christian communities of the Baltic region.

After confirming the terms of the treaty, Dusburg reports that the legates turned their attention to the more pressing matter—Gediminas’ baptism. They proceeded very cautiously. Rather than immediately journeying to Vilnius, the legates sent envoys to verify the duke’s intentions. Perhaps they already doubted Gediminas’ promise “to receive the Catholic faith.”\footnote{See above, p. 279, n. 18.} Dusburg explains that “the legates sent loyal envoys to Gediminas, king of the Lithuanians, to offer him an arrangement […] and to carefully find out if he, himself, along with the people of his kingdom would wish to receive the grace of baptism, and relinquishing idolatry humbly honor the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”\footnote{PD, III.356: Hoc facto legati solemnes nuncios miserunt ad Gedeminum regem Lethowinorum, [...] et diligenter investigarent, si ipse cum populö regni sui vellet baptismi graciam suscipere et relicta ydololatria nomen domini nostri Jesu Cristi humilitäeadorare.} As expected of a pagan, Gediminas responded unfavorably. According to Jeroschin, “that evil king was so set in his sinful ways that he paid little attention to the peace treaty or his baptism.”\footnote{NJ, lines 26,282–6 (Fischer, 282): der kung unreine / in suntlichim meine / vorsteinet was sô harte, / daz er sich lutzil karte / an touf noch an vridde.} When approached by the envoys, he refused to honor their previous agreement. Comparing the duke’s deceitful behavior to the goodwill of the envoys and trustworthy nature of other Christians including the knights, Dusburg writes,
When the peace was confirmed and the brothers and other Christians in the lands of Livonia and Prussia and other neighboring areas truly believed that they ought not wage war, and they already arranged to forge their swords into plowshares and their spears into scythes, that wicked enemy of the faith and the faithful, like a deaf asp, closed his ears to the salutary admonitions of the lord pope.\footnote{PD, III.357: Firmata igitur pace, dum fratres et alii cristifideles terre Lyvonie et Prussie et aliarum parcium vicinarum indubitanter crederent, quod non debherent a modo prelia exerceri, et jam disponenter gladios suos confiare in vomeres, et lanceas in falces, idem prophanus fidei hostis et fidelium, tanquam aspis surda, obturavit aures suas ad salutaria monita domini pape.} The image of Gediminas as a “deaf asp” is a reference to Psalms: “The wicked are alienated from the womb; they have gone astray from the womb: they have spoken false things. Their madness is according to the likeness of a serpent: like the deaf asp that obstructs its ears.”\footnote{Ps. 57: 4–5: alienati sunt peccatores a vulva erraverunt ab utero loquentes mendacium; / furor eorum sicut furor serpentis sicut reguli surdi obturantis aurem suam.} Like the biblical asp, Dusburg implies that Gediminas’ sins are inherent to his character because his evil stems from obstinacy rather than from ignorance. By contrasting Gediminas’ disingenuous promises with the sincerity of the knights who are prepared to cease all military action at a moment’s notice, Dusburg essentially put forth an argument defending the Order’s presence in the Baltic region. First, he demonstrated the complete ineffectiveness of the archbishop’s plans for the peaceful conversion of Lithuania. Then, by implying the Order’s willingness to “forge their swords into plowshares and their spears into scythes,” Dusburg presented the knights as supporters of peace. Finally, to justify the Order’s military role, Dusburg called attention to Gediminas’ irreverent behavior not only toward the envoys but also the peace treaty.

The following entries detail Lithuania’s devastating campaigns against Livonia and Mazovia immediately after the envoys’ visit. Describing Gediminas’ motive for attacking these territories, Dusburg states, “When he had to think about his salvation and that of his people, namely how he could receive the sacrament of baptism with dignity and with due reverence, himself following in the footsteps of his predecessors, he turned all his efforts to the destruction
of the faith and the faithful.”69 On November 21, 1324, less than two months after the arrival of the legates and their confirmation of the peace treaty, David of Grodno led an offensive against the city of Pułtusk in the diocese of Płock. According to the chronicler, he destroyed thirty parish churches and 130 villages, killed many clerics, and took 4000 Christians captive.70 Jeroschin describes this attack as a “savage onslaught.”71 The same year, Gediminas also sent an army to Livonia, burning and looting the territory of Rositen.72 Trying to make sense of Gediminas’ actions, the Dusburg writes, “That king sent these two armies, in order to destroy the faithful, while the envoys of the legates of the apostolic see were still with him, attempting to do their said job. Behold, what kind of devotion, that seducer had to receiving the rite of baptism.”73 Here, again Dusburg highlights Gediminas’ malevolent nature. Like the biblical serpent, he is a “seducer.” In other words, the chronicler implies that Gediminas attracts the goodwill of Christians with false promises, only to deceive them later for reasons of personal gain. Jeroschin also emphasizes the duke’s manipulative character. He implores his readers: “Judge for yourself how sincerely this heathen dog submitted to the much-vaunted baptism.”74 Both authors thus depict Gediminas as essentially untrustworthy. Given the complicated state of relations between the Order, the Papacy, and other Christian powers in the Baltic region at the beginning of the fourteenth century, this image of Gediminas warrants further examination.

69 PD, III.357: quia dum de salute sua et suorum cogitare debuerat, quomodo scilicet posset digne et cum reverencia debita suscipere baptismatis sacramentum, ipse sequens vestigia predecessorum suorum, totum conatum suum in destructionem fidei et fidelium convertit.
70 PD, III.357.
71 NJ, line 26, 291: mit swinder plâge.
72 PD, III.358.
73 PD, III.358: Hos duos exercitus misit ipse rex ad destructionem fidelium, dum adhuc nuncii legatorum sedis apostolice in persecutione dicti negocii fuerant circa ipsum. Ecce qualem devocionem seductor iste habuit ad susciundi baptismatis sacramentum.
74 NJ, lines 26,328–31 (Fischer, 283): Nû sêt, wî rechte innenclîch / schickte zu dem toufe sich / dirre heidenische hunt, / als man è machte von im kun! 😎
Dusburg’s account of Gediminas’ denial of ever having had any intention to receive baptism is very similar to the surviving report of the envoys of the papal legates mentioned above. However, unlike Dusburg who indicates that Gediminas opposed not only baptism, but also violated the truce by “turn[ing] all his efforts to the destruction of the faith and the faithful,” as already mentioned, the report of the envoys suggests that Gediminas intended to uphold the peace. According to the envoys, Gediminas openly confirmed the contents of the letters that he had sent to the pope and Riga, and acknowledged his eagerness to maintain peace, denying only his supposed promise to receive baptism. The misunderstanding was blamed on Brother Berthold who drafted the letters. Despite Gediminas’ refusal to accept baptism, or as Rowell writes, “this thwarting of the pope’s carefully laid plans,” the peace remained in effect for at least another four years. In other words, “neither the papal legates nor the pope reacted by revoking the truce.” For all intents and purposes, in the realm of international politics, Gediminas’ adherence to paganism seems to have been inconsequential.

The pope’s willingness to negotiate with Gediminas despite his rejection of baptism was upsetting to the Order whose primary function remained to conduct war against the pagans. As Mažeika points out, the possibility of rapprochement between Gediminas and the pope threatened the Teutonic Order’s very existence because the pope had the authority to “abolish the Order’s crusade privileges” thus rendering the knights obsolete. The ratification of the peace treaty by the papal legates in Riga therefore led to what Rowell has termed a “war of words.” The knights and their defenders denounced Gediminas as a liar and claimed that the Lithuanians

---

75 See above, p. 290, n. 69.
76 CL, no. 54, p. 184.
77 Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 189; Rowell, “Pagans, Peace, and the Pope,” 154.
79 Mažeika, “Violent Victims?,” 130.
80 Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 213; Rowell, “Pagans, Peace, and the Pope,” 85.
had violated the peace. On October 16, Bishop Eberhard of Ermland issued a letter in support of
the Teutonic Knights in which he characterized the Order’s opponents as ill-informed and
ignorant of the real state of affairs. He wrote that despite evidence of atrocities committed by the
Lithuanians, many Christians still believe that the “pagans, who spill the blood of Christ’s
faithful, wish to convert to the faith of Christ, but the brothers of the Teutonic Order preclude
this.” He then cited three examples of recent Lithuanian attacks against the Order in Reval and
Memel as well as the lands of Dobrzyń where he claimed that the Lithuanians had burned and
looted villages and churches, attacked and killed many clerics, and led away several hundred
Christians into “eternal captivity.” Finally, in lieu of such irrevocable proof of Lithuanian
hostility, he declared that those Christians who knowingly continue to criticize the knights, are
actually “put[ting] false ideas into [the minds of] others with rashness [and] deny God.”
Eberhard thus called upon all Christians to dismiss whatever false rumors that they might hear
about the Order and support the knights in their war against the pagans. While the letter was
drafted two weeks after the ratification of the peace treaty, all the military encounters listed by
Eberhard had occurred before the treaty had been signed. According to Rowell, he purposely
“omitted” these details His letter should therefore be read as an attempt to restore the
reputation of the Order and discredit all hope of rapprochement between Catholic Europe and
Lithuania.

Eight days later, on October 24, Eberhard issued another letter, this time in conjunction
with the bishops of Sambia and Pomesania, warning against the dangers of concluding a peace

81 CL, no. 26, p. 84: [ge]ntiles Christifidelium sanguinis effusores velint converti ad fidei Christi, sed per
fratres de domo Theutonica nullatenus admittantur.
82 CL, no. 26, p. 86: in captivitatem perpetuam.
83 CL, no. 26, p. 86: qui notam ex falsitatis temeritate ponere nituntur in alios, Deum [...] in hoc abnegantes.
84 Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 213; Rowell, “Pagans, Peace, and the Pope,” 85.

293
“with the children of Satan.”85 Like Dusburg, he also alluded to the serpent, implying that those who believe disingenuous pagan promises are “like a mouse in a bag and a snake warming it in its bosom.”86 The following month, the warden of the Prussian Franciscans, Brother Nicholas, drafted an open letter to “all the faithful of Christ.”87 So as to dispel any possible illusions about Gediminas’ friendship with Christians, he explained that duke had indeed previously sent letters declaring his readiness to convert. However, when papal envoys arrived as he had requested, they “not only discovered the falsehood of his deed, but they also heard him blaspheming God.”88 By portraying Gediminas as an obstinate pagan and emphasizing the failure of the papal mission, Nicholas confirmed that it is impossible to convert the Lithuanians by peaceful means. He thus inferred the necessity of the Order’s military mission and claimed that because the knights dedicate themselves to the defense of faithful, they would never “hinder the conversion of the aforesaid king and his people, although he and his accomplices frequently bring great evil to Christians and to themselves.”89 This letter was copied in Kulm, Pelpin, and Oliwa for wider circulation and sent to the pope in Avignon.90

In the meantime, Gediminas issued his own list of grievances against the knights. He wrote the bishops of Dorpat and Ösel, the Danish viceroy of Reval, and city council of Riga, stating that it was in fact the knights who had violated the peace treaty that had been “affirmed in writing by both sides and confirmed by the lord pope.”91 More specifically, Gediminas stated that the knights killed men and stole goods from merchants traveling along roads safeguarded by

85 CL, no. 27, p. 90: si pax huiusmodi, quod absit, retractata non fuerit exoriri, maxime cum iidem filii Sathane fraudis comenta contra vos et nos machinetur in dolo.
86 CL, no. 27, p. 90: quemadmodum mus in pera et serpens in gremio foti.
87 CL, no. 29, p. 94: Universis Christi fidelibus.
88 CL, no. 29, p. 94: non solum in hoc facto ficticium repperientes, sed etiam eundem blasphemare Deum ibidem audierunt.
89 CL, no. 29, p. 94: regis prefati et gentis ipsius debeat impedire conversionem cum tanta ab ipso et suis satellitibus christianis et sibimetipsis mala frequencius inferantur.
91 CL, no. 60, p. 218: ex utraque parte munita, et per dominum papam confirmata.
the terms of the treaty. He thus presented the Lithuanians as victims of Teutonic aggression and asserted his desire to maintain peace.92 The letter echoed Gediminas’ earlier correspondence with pope in which he stated that “we do not fight Christians in order to destroy the Catholic faith, but in order to oppose injuries to our people, as do Christian princes and kings.”93 Gediminas’ envoy, Lesse, who had been captured by the knights and later released, confirmed the duke’s accusations and eagerness to end the war. In a statement given to the city council of Riga in March 1326, he declared that Gediminas is so intent on preserving the peace that he only takes up arms when forced to defend his people from the abuses of the Order.94 Lesse then described how the knights continue to attack Lithuanian envoys traveling along protected roads. Finally, he reproached the Order for attempting to “defame” Gediminas and asserted that knights invent lies about the Lithuanians because Gediminas continues to expose their crimes.95 Along with Archbishop Friedrich of Riga and King Łokietek of Poland, Gediminas became the third ruler to bring serious allegations of abuse against the Teutonic Order.

Pope John XXII was not only concerned by Gediminas’ complaints, but also likely touched by the fact that Gediminas had reached out to him for help. Seven years earlier in 1317, John had written to an unnamed ruler of Lithuania (probably Gediminas) inviting him to join the church and accept baptism.96 At the time, the invitation seems to have fallen on deaf ears. When Gediminas responded in 1322 admitting his readiness to obey the pope and “receive the Christian faith” if only the Order would cease all military action against Lithuanian, John must have felt

92 CL, no. 60, p. 220: Nos igitur iustitiam ac promissum nostrum coram vobis ostendentes eis in nullo aliquam iniuriam fecimus in hanc horam (We, therefore, showing justice and our promises openly to you, have not inflicted any injuries upon them up to this time).
93 CL, no. 14, p. 40: nos christianos non impugnamus ut fidem catholicam destruamus, sed ut iniuriis nostris resistamus sicut faciunt reges et principes christiani.
94 CL, no. 63, p. 228.
95 CL, no. 63, p. 230.
96 CL, no. 12, pp. 32–5.
quite accomplished.\textsuperscript{97} He wrote the duke on June 1, 1324 thanking him for his correspondence and praising him for his “odor of devotion” and “spirit of reverent obedience.”\textsuperscript{98} He also promised to ask the grand master to stop all “molestations, damages, and injuries” to the Lithuanians after Gediminas accepts baptism.\textsuperscript{99} On the same day, the pope also wrote Grand Master Karl von Trier instructing the knights to suspend all military operations against Gediminas and his people once he is baptized.\textsuperscript{100} The fact that the pope commanded the knights to comply with the peace only after Gediminas’ baptism was a short-lived victory for the knights. Two month later on August 8, 1324, the pope wrote the Order again. This time he was much more sympathetic toward Gediminas. He explained that he had investigated the duke’s complaints and had found them compelling. He thus commanded both branches of the Order to immediately comply with the terms of the peace in expectation of Gediminas’ pending baptism.\textsuperscript{101}

This letter arrived shortly after Werner von Orseln became grand master of the Teutonic Order. Given the pope’s inclination to believe accusations brought against the knights, von Orseln was faced with the crucial task of restoring the Order’s reputation and recouping papal favor. It is at this very time that he commissioned Dusburg to write an official history of the Order’s activities in Prussia. Following the example set by Eberhard, Nicholas, and other proponents of the Order, Dusburg presented Gediminas as a steadfast pagan whose purported

\textsuperscript{97} CL, no. 14, p. 40: \textit{Nunc autem, pater sancta et reverende, studiose supplicamus ut flebilem statum nostrum attendatis, quia parati sumus vobis, sicut ceteri reges christiani, in omnibus obedire et fidem catholicam recipere dummodo tortoribus predictis, videlicet magistro predicto et fratribus in nullo teneamur} (We, however, holy and revered Father, humbly pray that you take notice of our lamentable situation because we are ready like certain Christian kings, to obey you in everything and receive the Catholic faith, provided that we are restrained in nothing by the aforementioned torturers [Teutonic Knights], especially by the aforementioned master and brothers).

\textsuperscript{98} CL, no. 41, pp. 132, 134: \textit{perfuse devocionis odore […] in persona tua inmuentes obediencie reverentis haberi spiritum.}

\textsuperscript{99} CL, no. 41, p. 136: \textit{molestis, dampnis et injuriis.}

\textsuperscript{100} CL, no. 44, pp. 142–3.

\textsuperscript{101} CL, no. 51, pp. 162–72.
decision to convert was nothing more than a scheme intended to attract attention from the pope and neighboring Christian states. According to the chronicler, when the envoys returned to Riga from Vilnius on November 25, they were accompanied by a Lithuanian who, on behalf of the duke, proclaimed that Gediminas never had any intention to receive baptism. Moreover, he affirmed that Gediminas will never submit to the authority of the pope or allow the preaching of Christian doctrine in his lands. Through the words of his envoy, Dusburg explains, “That king swore by the power of his own gods, that he will never accept any law, other than that which his ancestors followed.” By exposing Gediminas’ superficial promises, Dusburg’s chronicle reminded European audiences that Christians cannot negotiate confidently with pagans.

While the image of Gediminas as an unrelenting pagan certainly could help justify the conversion mission, it was Dusburg’s description of his efforts to destroy Christendom that confirmed the need for continued Teutonic presence in the Baltic lands. Much like his general presentation of the Lithuanians, Dusburg’s portrayal of Gediminas worked to reaffirm the Order’s military efforts on grounds of “just war” or the need to defend fellow Christians from pagan hostility. Dusburg reports a raid nearly every year of Gediminas reign. The campaign against the Mark of Brandenburg in 1326 is perhaps one of the must brutal and bloody military encounters described in the chronicle. According to Rowell, the campaign was organized by

102 PD, III.359: *Hoc anno VII Kalendas Decembris nuncii legatorum Rigam sunt reversi, et cum eis quidam Lethowinus nobilis et quasi secundus post regem: qui ex ore ipsius regis in presencia legatorum et multitudine prelatorum et aliorum fidelium circumstante alta voce dixit: quod nunquam aliqua littere de conscientia regis super negocio baptismatis sui vel suorum emanaverint, aut domino pape fuerint presentate, nec mandaverit talia in civitatibus maritimis et provinciis aliis in sermonibus publicari* (In that year [1324], on the seventh calends of December (November 25), the envoys of the legates returned to Riga, and with them a certain Lithuanian noble, as though the second after the king, who on behalf of the king himself in the presence of the legates and many prelates and other faithful [Christians] around proclaimed loudly that never will they see any letter of consent from the king on the matter of his baptism of his people, and they will not submit to the lord pope, nor will he order the preaching of such things in coastal cities and other provinces).

103 PD.359: *quod ipse rex per deorum potencion juraverit, quod nunquam alien legem vellet assumere, preter eam, in qua progenitors sui decesserunt.*

Łokietek who viewed the Mark as a territory of the Polish crown. Rowell also argues that the pope likely supported Łokietek’s aspirations because the ruling margrave was the son of his main rival, Emperor Louis IV of Bavaria.\textsuperscript{105} Dusburg acknowledges Łokietek’s involvement but presents the actual campaign as the work of David of Grodno. He writes that when Łokietek asked the Lithuanians for help, Gediminas sent him 1200 horsemen. Under David’s command, they invaded the Mark and pillaged the lands near the city of Frankfurt, where they destroyed more than 140 villages and parish churches, three Cistercian monasteries and two convents, and many other sacred places, “barbarically dragging monks and nuns from cloisters, ministers of the church and priests, carrying away sacred vessels, vestments, and other sacred objects.”\textsuperscript{106} In the end, Dusburg reports that the Lithuanians killed 6000 Christians and took many women and children as slaves. Jeroschin embellished Dusburg’s account with more dramatic and emotionally charged imagery:

O our heavenly consolation, you know what misery these depraved inflicted on your chosen successors. Your servants were treated viciously: they razed the churches to the ground, they desecrated the sacred things, they drank from chalices and ate from other sacred vessels and despoiled the altar cloths; they put the chasubles, hoods and other garments dedicated to the service of God in an affront to God. They spat on, hacked about and trampled underfoot the ornate pictures of God and His gracious Mother Mary, they mocked the sacrament and, and even to speak of this is dreadful, they threw God’s body, the holiest of the holies, into degrading filth, if I may call it that.\textsuperscript{107}

While Dusburg implies that the Lithuanians caused most of the devastation, Jeroschin admits that the Poles also contributed to violence. Swept up in the chaos and following the example of the

\textsuperscript{105} Rowell, “Swords for Sale?,” 5–8; Mażeika and Rowell, “Zelatores maximi,” 44.
\textsuperscript{106} PD, III.361: \textit{inhumaniter religiosos et sacras deo dicitas virginis de claustris extrahentes, ministros ecclesie et sacerdotes, vasa sacra, vestes et sacramenta alia pertractantes.}
\textsuperscript{107} NJ, lines 26,447–74 (Fischer, 284): Ô himelischir trôster, / dû weiz, was dî vorkarten / dâ jâmirket urbarten / an dîm irweltin erbe! / Dîn dînst vil umbederbe / müste zwâr dâ werden, / want sî glîch der erden / dî kirchin gar vortilgetin, / dî heilikeit bimilgetin; / kelch und andre heilge vaz / betranc dî dit und dariz az, / und übten in unvlête / der altäregewête; / kalsen, kappen, andre cleit, / dî gotis dînstê wârn gereit, / trüg an dî tûvils rote / zu vorsmêunge gote. / Sû den gezirten bilden / gotis und der milden / sinre mütr Marion / sach man sî üfspien, / zurhouwin und vortrettin, / dî sacrament si smêttin / und, daz zu jên ist grûwesam, / den hêren gotis lîcham, / dâ allir heiligen heil an stât, / wurfen si in manch unvlât / smêlichir, wen ich sprechen tar.
Lithuanians, he writes:

They [Poles] also contrived to murder and most cruelly put to death consecrated clerics who had devoted their lives to the service of God: some were strangled, others mistreated and their tongues cut out, others beheaded and their heads displayed on stakes so that the terrible manner of their death could be seen far and wide; yet others had their navels cut out and were disembowelled. They cut the limbs off others and roasted them on a fire. They hung up others and toyed with them, shooting at them and spilling desecrated blood.108

Neither chronicle mentions that in order for the Lithuanians and the Poles to reach the Mark of Brandenburg, the armies had to transverse the Order’s territories, an action that had been made possible by the peace treaty of 1323. Rather, both chroniclers present the Christians of Brandenburg as victims of irrational pagan aggression. Their graphic deaths serve as a proof of the horrific atrocities that Lithuanians commit when other Christians, namely the knights, are at peace. Moreover, using the example of Poland and the transgressions of the Polish at the instigation of the Lithuanians, both chroniclers imply that Christians who ally themselves with the Lithuanians risk becoming murderous like the pagans. Despite Lokietek’s involvement, Dusburg and Jeroschin portray Gediminas and the Lithuanians as the real perpetrators of these crimes.

Rowell is correct to describe Gediminas’ reign as a time of “phoney peace” between the Lithuanians and the Teutonic Knights.109 Neither the peace treaty nor the “war of words” assuaged the conflict. On the contrary, if we examine the complaints and allegations issued by the knights against Gediminas more closely, then it appears that they were intended to encourage

108 NJ, lines 26,479–508 (Fischer, 284): sunder ouch vorhîngen, / daz sî gewîhte pfaffen / swî den was geschaffen / in gotisdînste ir lebbin / begebûn und unbegebûn, / mit manchirleie tôten / in bittirlîchen nôten / von dem lebne schurgeten; / sumelîche wurgeten, / disel lebende schunden, / dî zungen den ûzwunden, / genen dî houbt abhakten / und hû ûf pfele stakten, / daz man ôt verre hû und dort / schouwete den vreislichin mort, / etslîche in vorebbele / intlostiti sî dî nebbele / und bouné niddirbukten, / dî spîldin unde drukten / darin der nable zipfle / lâzende sneln dî wipflle / und sî also inditermeten; / ochu sumelîche hermeten / dî liddir abschrötlende / und kegn dem vuire brôtende; / etslîche sû ûfgingen, / ir spîl mit in begîngin / unde zûzin schuzzen / und manchirwis vorguzzen / quelnde daz gewîte blût.

war rather than peace. Exacerbated by the conflict with the archbishop and his attempts to negotiate with and even convert Gediminas, the knights had to take control of the situation before the crusade was rendered obsolete. For the knights to prove their effectiveness, they had to be the ones to Christianize Lithuania, not the archbishop. While Dusburg showed respect for Archbishop Friedrich as an ecclesiastic, he highlighted the failure of his mission to Lithuania. Then, responding to critics of the Order’s military tactics, Dusburg presented Gediminas as an inveterate and potentially dangerous pagan so as to demonstrate that the peaceful conversion of Lithuania was effectively impossible. Furthermore, by drawing attention to Lithuania’s aggressive military campaigns against Christian lands, Dusburg presented the Order’s crusade not only as war of conversion but also vengeance, a burden that the archbishop was incapable of fulfilling. Dusburg’s representation of Gediminas is therefore closely aligned with the larger ideological goal of his text, that is, to defend the Teutonic Order’s political status and military activities in the Baltic region.

Shifting Attitudes: The Image of Gediminas in Northwestern Rus’ and the Novgorod First Chronicle (NPL)

Although it is well known that Gediminas was very involved in the affairs of northwestern Rus’ and he is prominently featured in many later Rus’ian chronicles, the NPL, which is the only surviving Rus’ian chronicle contemporary to his reign, contains little evidence on the duke. In fact, only one entry in the NPL provides sufficient material for us to begin to understand the image of Gediminas in the Rus’ian chronicle tradition. Before we examine this entry in more detail, it is useful to consider the broader context of Lithuanian-Novgorodian relations in the first three decades of the fourteenth century.
Even when the authors of the *NPL* did not refer to the Lithuanians by the pejorative triplet described in chapter 5, it is reasonable to assume that they were still annoyed by frequent Lithuanian raids. However, it was Lithuania’s off and on alliance with Pskov that seems to have been particularly worrisome. As mentioned earlier, in 1322, the Pskovites invited David of Grodno to be their prince. For most of the thirteenth century, Pskov maintained close political ties with Novgorod. In 1266, when the Pskovites elected the Lithuanian duke Daumantas as their prince, according to the *NPL*, the prince of Novgorod, Yaroslav Yaroslavich, was so outraged at their insolence that he planned to invade Pskov and depose the new Lithuanian ruler until the Novgorodian people forbade him to take action for unspecified reasons.\textsuperscript{110} In 1323, when David assumed the princely title, it was the people of Novgorod, however, who responded by forming a defensive alliance with the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order.\textsuperscript{111} According to Rowell, the alliance was provoked by Gediminas’ “growing influence” in northwestern Rus' and led to a “state of virtual war” between Novgorod and Lithuania.\textsuperscript{112} The very same year the *NPL* records a Lithuanian raid on the valley of the Lovat River just south of Lake Ilmen in the lands of Novgorod.\textsuperscript{113} The Pskov chronicles report two Livonian attacks on Pskov in March and May of 1323.\textsuperscript{114}

Three years later in 1326, relations between Novgorod and Lithuania began to improve. The *NPL* states that envoys arrived from Lithuania, including Gediminas’ brother Vainius (Voin) of Polotsk, Vasili of Minsk, and Fedor Sviatoslavich (presumably also a prince but of an undisclosed territory), and concluded an alliance with Novgorod and the Livonian Order.\textsuperscript{115} This

\textsuperscript{110} *NPL*, pp. 85, 315.
\textsuperscript{111} *CL*, no. 32, pp. 100–3.
\textsuperscript{112} Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 238; Rowell, “Swords for Sale?,” 8.
\textsuperscript{113} *NPL*, pp. 97, 339.
\textsuperscript{114} *PSRL* V.1, p. 15; *PSRL* V.2, pp. 22–3, 89–90.
\textsuperscript{115} *NPL*, pp. 98, 341.
alliance marks an important shift in Novgorodian foreign policy toward closer political and military relations with Lithuania. It was likely motivated by the escalating tensions between the princes of Tver and Moscow as they vied for supremacy in Rus'. Before we examine the implications of this alliance, it is useful to consider the character of the political power struggle that took place in Rus' during the time of Gediminas.

From 1322 until his death in 1325, the prince of Novgorod had been Yuri Danolovich of Moscow. Yuri challenged Mikhail of Tver for the title of grand prince of Vladimir. In 1315, he travelled to Sarai where he formed an alliance with the Horde and married the sister of Khan Uzbek. The khan thus deposed Mikhail who had been ruling as grand prince since 1304 and passed the iarlyk to Yuri. After a confrontation near Tver, Mikhail took Yuri’s wife, the sister of Khan Uzbek, hostage. Thereupon, Yuri fled to Novgorod but, when he heard news of his wife’s unexpected death, he went to Sarai where he accused Mikhail of withholding Tatar tribute and poisoning Uzbek's sister. Mikhail was summoned by the khan and executed, while Yuri returned to Rus' as grand prince of Vladimir. His rule was however challenged by Mikhail’s son and successor, Dmitry the Terrible Eyes. In 1322, Dmitry went to the Sarai and announced that Yuri was appropriating tribute owed to the Horde. Uzbek summoned Yuri for questioning but it is believed that Dmitry killed Yuri before the investigation had begun. Eight months later, the khan executed Dmitry for his impudence.

While the princes of Moscow cultivated close relations with the Horde, the princes of Tver turned to Lithuania. The alliance between the two polities was sealed by the marriage of Gediminas’ daughter Maria to Mikhail’s son Dmitry in 1320. This collaboration became

---

116 Yuri was the oldest son of Daniil (1261–1303), the first prince of Moscow, and the youngest son of Alexander Nevsky. He received the patrimony of Moscow when he was only two-years old.
117 On the rivalry between Yuri and Mikhail, see Fennell, Emergence of Moscow, 52–90.
118 Fennell, Emergence of Moscow, 94–7.
119 Ibid., 101–3.
increasingly more evident after the election of Metropolitan Peter. When the presiding metropolitan died in 1305, Mikhail who had just recently been granted the iarlyk and his frustrated rival Yuri each sent a candidate to Constantinople. Although the exact sequence of events is unclear, Yuri’s candidate Peter was consecrated metropolitan and returned to Vladimir in 1308. Mikhail thus lost the support of the metropolitan who now firmly upheld Yuri’s claims to the title of grand prince. The turn of events was particularly troubling to Andrei, the Lithuanian-born bishop of Tver and close advisor to Mikhail who, in an attempt to depose Peter, sent a list of accusations against him to the patriarch and demanded an official investigation of his activities.120 Representatives from Constantinople convened a council in Pereyaslavl in 1310/1. Peter was absolved of the charges and Andrei retired to a monastery shortly thereafter.121

While Andrei was unsuccessful in his ploy against Peter, the very fact that he challenged Peter’s appointment reveals that ecclesiastical support was regarded as very important in the struggle for supremacy in Rus'. The jurisdiction of the metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus' included all the Christian faithful in the lands of Rus'. Orthodox churches in lands subject to Lithuanian authority therefore remained part of Metropolitanate of All Rus'. In 1299, Metropolitan Maksim moved his residence from Kiev to Vladimir. While the princes of Moscow and Tver sought his support, the princes of Galicia-Volhynia and Lithuania moved to establish independent sees. At the beginning of the fourteenth-century, the see of Galicia was briefly raised to the status of a metropolitanate.122 The first mention of a Lithuanian metropolitan appears in the records of the patriarch of Constantinople in August 1317.123 Although unnamed,

120 Ibid., 69.
121 Ibid., 71–2; Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 152–5; Meyendorff, Byzantium and the Rise of Russia, 149.
122 Fennell, Emergence of Moscow, 125–9; Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 151–2; Giedroyć, “The Ruthenian-Lithuanian Metropolitans,” 319–23; Meyendorff, Byzantium and the Rise of Russia, 91–5.
he is listed as present at a synod discussion on the boundaries of Byzantine metropolitanates. The Lithuanian metropolitan was likely ordained some time between 1315 and 1317, suggesting that negotiations with the patriarch for an independent Lithuanian see probably began during the final years of Vytenis’ reign. The see of the metropolitan of Lithuania was probably in Novgorodok with suffragan bishops in Polotsk and Turov as well as jurisdiction over Lithuanian lands in Black Rus'. The creation of a Lithuanian metropolitanate drained revenue from Peter, the newly-consecrated metropolitan of Kiev and rival of Gediminas’ allies Mikhail of Tver and Bishop Andrei. Rowell implies that Lithuania’s friendship with Tver as well as the rift created by the ordination of Peter and the subsequent accusations brought against him by Andrei may have played a role in the creation of the Lithuanian metropolitanate. In either case, it appears that Tver supported Lithuanian aspirations for ecclesiastical independence.

As Gediminas’ influence in the lands of Rus' grew, so did the jurisdiction of the Lithuanian metropolitan. Peter most likely regarded this shift in the balance of ecclesiastical power as potentially damaging to his authority. In 1325, he transferred his residence from Vladimir to Moscow where he died two years later. The same year the metropolitan of Lithuania travelled again to Constantinople. Rowell suggests that he may have hoped to win a nomination and succeed Peter as metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus'. The patriarch, however, appointed a Greek named Feognost. Rather than returning immediately to Moscow, Feognost travelled to southwestern Rus' where he held audiences with prelates and bishops officially subject to the

---

125 Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 157.
126 Ibid., 159–161.
127 Ibid., 161.
metropolitan of Lithuania. In 1329, the metropolitan of Lithuania, finally described by name as Feofil, returned to Constantinople perhaps to file a complaint against Feognost. He died a few months later. Novgorodok was once again reduced to episcopal rank and the metropolitanate of Lithuania was reincorporated into the metropolitanate of Kiev and All Rus' under the rule of Feognost. Since Feofil is the only named metropolitan of Lithuania, it is unknown how many metropolitans were ordained by Gediminas. Rowell argues that while the quarrelling of the Rus'ian princes and prelates may have contributed to the end of the metropolitanate of Lithuania, it was actually the patriarch who finally dissolved it hoping to preserve the unity of the metropolitanate of Rus'.

Apart from ecclesiastical matters, control of Novgorod played a crucial role in the contest between Moscow and Tver. The princes of northern Rus' had long vied for influence in Novgorod because of the city’s vast wealth and access to Baltic trade routes. Although the prince’s powers had been greatly curtailed by the reforms of the 1260s and 1270s, the title still retained nominal importance. The grand prince of Vladimir generally also ruled as prince of Novgorod. The conflict between the princes of Moscow and Tver therefore had a significant impact on Novgorodian affairs. In 1325, Novgorod elected as its new prince Dmitry’s brother and prince of Tver, Alexander Mikhailovich. The same year, Archbishop David who had overseen the 1323 anti-Lithuanian alliance between Novgorod and the Livonian Order died. Archbishop Moisei was elected as his successor. In 1326, he travelled to Moscow for consecration. Taking advantage of his absence, Rowell explains that the Novgorodians and

---

129 Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 162.
133 See chapter 5, pp. 161–2.
Prince Alexander broke the former alliance and concluded a treaty with Lithuania. Waiting until Moisei was in Moscow averted confrontation between the new pro-Muscovite archbishop and the city’s Tverite prince who, like his brother and father, maintained close relations with Gediminas. In fact, the treaty may have been the work of Alexander himself. The fact that the author of the *NPL*, a scribe working in the archbishop’s scriptorium, demonstrates clear contempt for Alexander by remarking that he returned to Novgorod with Tatar tax collectors, supports this argument. In either case, the treaty signaled a change in Novgorod’s relationship with Lithuania. While it is incorrect to assume that all Novgorodians unequivocally accepted the city’s new Lithuanian orientation, it is clear that beginning in 1326 loyalties began to waver. In 1327, the *NPL* reports turmoil in the city.

When the Horde despoiled Tver later that year, Alexander was denied asylum in Novgorod. The decision may have been influenced by Archbishop Moisei who certainly disapproved of Alexander’s friendship with Lithuania and distrusted the prince for concluding a peace treaty with Gediminas in his absence. Alexander was forced to flee to Pskov where he became prince under the patronage of Gediminas, while Tver fell to Alexander’s brothers, loyal supporters of Moscow.

Alexander’s reception in Pskov further aggravated his relations with the archbishop and his supporters in Novgorod. Earlier in 1327, Ivan Kalita of Moscow had travelled to Sarai and persuaded Uzbek to repeal Alexander’s right to the throne of Vladimir and pass the *iarlyk* to him. The same year he succeeded Alexander as prince of Novgorod. As one of his first princely acts, Ivan convinced the newly appointed Metropolitan Feognost and Archbishop Moisei to threaten

---

135 *NPL*, pp. 98, 341.
136 *NPL*, pp. 98, 341.
137 Fennell, *The Emergence of Moscow*, 134–6.
the Pskovites with excommunication for offering asylum to Alexander. Although sympathies seemed to be tilting once again in favor of Moscow, Ivan and Moisei soon lost their hold on Novgorod. In 1330, Moisei retired. His seat remained vacant for eight months. Ever since the powers of the prince had been reduced to that of a nominal figurehead appointed to protect the republic from foreign attack, the archbishop of Novgorod assumed the role of chief legislator. Except for in the sphere of military matters, his authority in Novgorod basically equaled that of other Rus'ian princes in their respective territories. The relationship between Novgorod and Lithuania was therefore complicated by the political leanings of the archbishops.

Eight months after the pro-Muscovite archbishop Moisei retired, Vasili Kalika was elected archbishop. The incident that follows serves as our basis for understanding the image of Gediminas in the *NPL*. On the feast day of St. John the Baptist in 1331, Vasili set out for Volhynia to be consecrated by Feognost who at that time was touring southwestern Rus' in order to reclaim his jurisdiction and reestablish his authority as Metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus' in the wake of the recent splintering and reuniting of the see. Vasili naturally chose to travel along the shortest route to Volhynia and transverse Lithuania’s Rus’ian land holdings. According to the *NPL*, Vasili arrived in Volhynia unimpeded. The fifteenth-century *Novgorod Fourth Chronicle*, however, reports that Gediminas’ men attacked and captured Vasili presumably near Polotsk. “Under great duress,” Vasili agreed to establish Narimantas as defender of Novgorod’s northern frontiers and granted him patrimonial rights to lands in Ladoga, Orekhov, and Korelia as well as parts of Koporye. The agreement may not have been as unwelcome as the text suggests. In fact, both *NPL* and the *Novgorod Fourth Chronicle* hail Narimantas’ baptism and arrival in Novgorod

---

138 Ibid., 117.
139 *NPL*, pp. 99, 342.
141 *PSRL* IV.1, pp. 263–4: в таковой тяготѣ.
two years later in 1333 as a marvelous occasion.\textsuperscript{142} Rowell suggests that the arrangement offered Vasili a way to protect Novgorod’s northern lands without relying on Ivan, the Muscovite prince of Novgorod.\textsuperscript{143} In other words, Vasili did not simply acquiesce to Gediminas’ demands as the \textit{Novgorod Fourth Chronicle} suggests, but struck an agreement with the duke in order to counterbalance the growing influence of Muscovite princes in his lands.

After his brief encounter with Gediminas, Vasili proceeded south to Volhynia where he was consecrated archbishop of Novgorod on August 25, 1331 by Feognost. Shortly thereafter, envoys sent by Gediminas, Alexander of Tver, and “all the Lithuanian princes” also arrived at the metropolitan’s residence.\textsuperscript{144} According to the \textit{NPL}, they brought with them a cleric named Arseni “desiring to appoint him to the vladyka-ship [bishopric] of Pskov.”\textsuperscript{145} This event has commonly been interpreted as an attempt by Gediminas to “remove Pskov from direct ecclesiastical control by the archbishop of Novgorod.”\textsuperscript{146} While the Pskovites had already asserted their autonomy from Novgorod by electing a Lithuanian prince, the diocese of Pskov remained under the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Novgorod who retained the right to appoint the bishop of Pskov. The appointment of Arseni would bring about the final severance of ecclesiastical ties from Novgorod in the same way that political ties had been cut by the invitations of Daumantas and David of Grodno. Moreover, as Fennell points out, “The new diocese would come immediately under the metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus'; and this would mean a drastic curtailment of the diocese and the income of the archbishop.”\textsuperscript{147} It is not surprising that the author of the \textit{NPL}, probably a member of the archbishop’s court, was vexed

\hspace{1em}\textsuperscript{142} See chapter 7, p. 270–1.
\hspace{1em}\textsuperscript{143} Rowell, \textit{Lithuania Ascending}, 175.
\hspace{1em}\textsuperscript{144} \textit{NPL}, p. 343: послове изъ Плескова от князя Александра, и от Гидимена послове, и от всѣх князии литовских.
\hspace{1em}\textsuperscript{145} \textit{NPL}, p. 343 (Michell and Forbes, 127): хотяще его поставить на владычество въ Плесковь.
\hspace{1em}\textsuperscript{146} Rowell, \textit{Lithuania Ascending}, 172. See also, Fennell, \textit{The Emergence of Moscow}, 130–4.
\hspace{1em}\textsuperscript{147} Fennell, \textit{The Emergence of Moscow}, 131.
by Gediminas’ attempts to have his own bishop ordained in Pskov. In fact, he snidely remarks that “thinking Novgorod of no account [the Lithuanians] had puffed themselves with their pride.”

Feognost rejected the envoys plea. Fennell suggests that if we are to believe the events related by the NPL, then the very fact that Gediminas and Alexander sent envoys to Feognost seems rather “naïve.” Sure they would have known that Feognost would not readily accede to their request and yield his authority in Pskov to Lithuania. Just two years earlier, Feognost had threatened to place ecclesiastical sanctions on Pskov for harboring Alexander. The NPL explicitly recalls Pskov’s rebellious acceptance of Alexander. The chronicler states that “the men of Pleskov violated their kissing of the Cross to Novgorod, [for] they had set up Knyaz Alexander on their throne by Lithuanian hands.” It seems strange that Gediminas and Alexander would think that he would now grant Pskov an independent bishopric. Feognost unsurprisingly denied their request. The chronicle reports that “Arseni with the men of Pleskov went disgraced from the metropolitan.”

Gediminas was clearly not a fool. If negotiating with Feognost was a lost cause, he would have surely known. Perhaps, he intended to coerce the metropolitan with force as he had done to Vasili according to the Novgorod Fourth Chronicle. Feognost’s rejection of Arseni likely angered Gediminas. Fennell maintains that because the duke could not effectively punish Feognost, he turned his attention and efforts toward Vasili who at that very time was travelling home to Novgorod. According to the NPL, as he approached Chernigov, Fedor of Kiev

---

149 Fennell, The Emergence of Moscow, 131.
150 NPL, pp. 343 (Michell and Forbes, 127): зане плесковици измѣнилъ крепынное цѣлованіе къ Новуграду, посадилъ себѣ князя Александра изъ литовъскыя руки.
151 NPL, pp. 344 (Michell and Forbes, 127):; Арсѣніи же со плесковицѣ поиха посрамленѣ отъ митрополита.
(presumably Gediminas’ brother\textsuperscript{152}), assisted by the local \textit{baskak} and fifty men “at the prompting of the devil set upon him murderously.”\textsuperscript{153} Vasili and the men of Novgorod managed to hold off Fedor and escaped. The \textit{NPL} reports, “Only by a little was it not a disaster for them.”\textsuperscript{154} Fedor meanwhile rode home “disgraced.”\textsuperscript{155} The chronicler indicates that God later punished him because all his horses died.\textsuperscript{156} The \textit{Novgorod Fourth Chronicle} provides a slightly different account. The text explains that Vasili decided to travel home via Kiev so as to avoid passage through the Lithuanian lands. Feognost’s messenger intercepted his company warning them that Gediminas had dispatched 300 men to capture him. Vasili thus redirected his party toward Chernigov where they met Fedor.\textsuperscript{157} Both chronicles use the term \textit{розбоемъ} (\textit{rozboem’}) to describe Friedor’s actions. Best translated as “brigandry” or “robbery,” the choice of vocabulary implies the criminal nature of the attack. Like the \textit{NPL}, the \textit{Novgorod Fourth Chronicle} also states that disaster was barely avoided. The Novgorodians defended themselves fiercely and “not much blood was spilled between the two.”\textsuperscript{158} Vasili then returned to Novgorod via Torzhok. The Novgorodians were waiting anxiously because rumors had spread that the Lithuanians had taken Vasili captive.

The account of Vasili’s eventful journey and Gediminas’ attempt to instate Arseni in Pskov is rather puzzling. First, it is unclear if Gediminas attacked Vasili when he was en route to Volhynia or made a mutually beneficial agreement with the archbishop-elect. If Vasili perceived Lithuania as a threat, then it seems highly unlikely that he would have travelled through

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{152} See above, p. 284.
\item \textsuperscript{153} \textit{NPL}, p. 344 (Michell and Forbes, 127): ту научениемъ дияволимъ пригнася князь Федоръ.
\item \textsuperscript{154} \textit{NPL}, p. 344 (Michell and Forbes, 127): мало ся зло не учинило промежо ими.
\item \textsuperscript{155} \textit{NPL}, p. 344 (Michell and Forbes, 127): а князь въсприимъ срамъ и отъиха (“the Knyaz was disgraced and rode away”).
\item \textsuperscript{156} \textit{NPL}, p. 344 (Michell and Forbes, 127): нь от бога казни не убѣжа: помроша конѣ у егѡ (“he did not escape punishment from God: his horses all died”).
\item \textsuperscript{157} \textit{PSRL IV.1}, p. 264.
\item \textsuperscript{158} \textit{PSRL IV.1}, p. 264: мало кровопролитіе не оучинілося промежи ими.
\end{itemize}}
Lithuanian lands in the first place. Secondly, the very fact that Gediminas decided to ask Feognost to create an independent bishopric in Pskov at a time when tensions between Gediminas, his Tverite ally Alexander, and Feognost were at an all time high seems rather odd. Perhaps it was the goal of the chronicler to present Gediminas as an impulsive negotiator.

Thirdly, Fedor’s attack on Vasili’s company in lieu of the fact that nothing could be done to convince Feognost does seems very rational. Moreover, it is strange that Vasili who, according to the chronicles, wished to avoid Lithuanian lands on his journey home, made haste for Chernigov and Kiev, territories recently brought under Lithuanian control. Lastly, the warm welcome extended to Narimantas just two years later is inconsistent with the account of Vasili’s perilous journey. Furthermore, the NPL reports that right before Narimantas’ arrival in Novgorod, Vasili went to Pskov where he was received with “great honor” and baptized Alexander’s son.159 These actions all demonstrate Vasili’s friendship not hostility toward Lithuania.

One possible explanation for these peculiarities could be that the chronicle record was purposefully doctored. Fennell, for example, speculates that the archbishop may have chosen to expunge unpleasant information such as Gediminas’ attack on the archbishop’s company and his subsequent acceptance of Narimantas as the city’s defender.160 Moreover, he suggests that Gediminas may have also forced Vasili to agree to the establishment of an independent bishopric in Pskov. This would explain why Gediminas’ envoys proceeded to the metropolitan’s residence in Volhynia. Rowell’s codicological analysis of the manuscripts confirms that the original account was excised from the older redaction of the NPL and altered in the younger redaction.161 He maintains that this was done by Vasili’s contemporaries so as to remove “all material which

159 NPL, p. 245: прияша его плесковици с великою честью.
160 Fennell, The Emergence of Moscow, 132.
might be considered by later generations as detrimental to his honour.”

It is possible that Vasili was not forced into submission but rather willingly collaborated with Gediminas. The compiler of the *Novgorod Fourth Chronicle* who, according to Rowell, used the original record of the older redaction of the *NPL* as his source had no reason to truncate the record because of his pro-Muscovite leanings. As a result, Rowell concludes that the *Novgorod Fourth Chronicle* is more reliable than the younger redaction of the *NPL* which was modified in order to conceal the details of Vasili’s encounter with Gediminas.

While Fennell’s and Rowell’s assessment does suggest that later compilers manipulated the chronicle record to suit contemporary political sentiments, it does not fully clarify all of the questions raised by the 1331 entry. For example, it is still unclear whether Vasili willingly cooperated with Gediminas or was forced into submission. If he collaborated with Gediminas, that would explain why the *Novgorod Fourth Chronicle* disguises his dealings with the pagan duke by insisting that Vasili was “under great duress” when he arranged for Narimantas’ appointment. Moreover, if he had agreed to the creation of an independent bishopric in Pskov, that could explain why the author of the *NPL* writes that the Lithuanians “had puffed themselves with their pride” when they arrived at Feognost’s residence. Gediminas probably saw his meeting with Vasili as a personal victory and expected Feognost to invest Arseni without any difficulties. In fact, he may have been so confident that he even sent envoys rather than traveling to visit Feognost himself. This would also explain why Vasili wished to avoid Lithuanian lands once he received news that Feognost denied Gediminas’ request. The fifteenth-century *Sophia First Chronicle* reports that after his consecration, Vasili made haste for Kiev because his

---

163 See above, p. 307, n. 141.
164 See above, p. 209, n. 148.
company “feared Lithuania.” However, as previously mentioned, if Vasili intended to avoid Lithuania, it seems rather strange that would have decided to travel through Kiev, which at that time was ruled by Gediminas’ brother Fedor who subsequently attacked Vasili near Chernigov. Even the theory of Vasili’s collaboration with Gediminas is therefore not fully convincing.

Although scholars generally interpret Vasili’s encounter with the Gediminas, the visit of the Lithuanian embassy, and Fedor’s attack on Vasili as part of one narrative, these events could be wholly unrelated. Perhaps Vasili did not know that Gediminas intended to establish a separate bishopric. The *NPL* clearly states that Gediminas sent Arseni to Feognost “thinking Novgorod of no account.” Furthermore, while Vasili was certainly more receptive to cooperating with Lithuania than his predecessors David and Moisei, he was not “pro-Lithuanian” by any means. His policies demonstrate a concern first and foremost for the welfare of the Novgorod. It is unlikely, therefore, that he would have agreed to relinquish control of the see of Pskov. Since Feognost had very little influence over the archbishop of Novgorod who was elected by the people of Novgorod rather than appointed by the metropolitan, it also seems rather curious that Feognost was not receptive to Gediminas’ offer. Even though the Lithuanian duke had personally selected Arseni, he was not suggesting the creation of a completely autonomous bishopric; instead, he proposed to remove Pskov from Vasili’s control and place the city under the direct jurisdiction of Feognost.

While there is still much ambiguity that surrounds the events of 1331, it is nevertheless possible to draw some valuable conclusions. First, Gediminas’ relationship with Vasili was not exclusively antagonistic, but fluctuated between periods of conflict as well as collaboration. Second, although all the chronicles certainly acknowledge that Gediminas was the pagan duke of

---

165 *PSRL*, VI, col. 405: о(т)уде поѣха на Киевь, бояся Литвы, и ѐха вборѣ.
166 See above, p. 209, n. 148.
Lithuania, none of the texts present him as a strange foreigner or intruder in Rus'. In fact, he seems fully in his right when he attempts to negotiate with Vasili and Feognost. In other words, Gediminas’ involvement with Rus'ian princes and ecclesiastics is presented as part of long tradition of Lithuanian-Rus'ian relations. Finally, variations in the record of 1331 imply not only a manipulation of the chronicle writing tradition, but also speak to the utility of the character of Gediminas. In other words, the smallest adjustment in the representation of Gediminas and his relationship with Vasili could alter the text’s meaning. Rus'ian chronicles therefore had to be careful as to how they presented Gediminas.

The very fact that these discrepancies in the representation of Gediminas occur in the entries describing the 1330s is indicative of the state of affairs in Novgorod during that time. Just as Vasili was returning to Novgorod, Ivan Kalita, the Muscovite prince of Novgorod, left the city to visit Sarai again. During his absence, Ivan appointed a namestnik. Vasili, however, had already agreed to hand over the city’s northern outposts to Narimantas. Fennell stresses, “It was a delicate situation […] The coexistence of a son of Gedimin[as] and a governor of Ivan in Novgorod itself, or even in Novgorod territory, was unthinkable.” 167 Shortly after Ivan’s departure, the NPL reports a disturbance in Novgorod. The chronicle states, “Turbulent men rose in Novgorod.” 168 In addition to pillaging the property of certain boyars, the “turbulent men” deposed posadnik Fedor Akhmyl and installed Zakhary Mikhailovich. The change in office reflects a change in the city’s political orientation. Fedor Akhmyl loyalties likely lay with Moscow because he is mentioned as accompanying Moisei and a Muscovite embassy to Pskov

167 Fennell, The Emergence of Moscow, 138–9.
168 NPL, pp. 100, 344 (Michell and Forbes, 127): Въсташа крамолници в Новѣгородѣ.
earlier in 1329.\textsuperscript{169} It is reasonable to assume therefore that Zakhary Mikhailovich most likely had anti-Muscovite or pro-Lithuanian leanings.

When Ivan returned to Novgorod, he was displeased by the turn of events. The \textit{NPL} reports that he “threw upon Novgorod his wrath” and punished the Novgorodians by imposing a fine.\textsuperscript{170} The Novgorodians and Vasili tried to pacify Ivan. They quickly removed Zakhary Mikhailovich from office and installed Matvei Koska as the new \textit{posadnik}. Ivan was not appeased. He entered Torzhok, called back his \textit{namestnik}, and began “despoiling the district of Novgorod.”\textsuperscript{171} The Novgorodians sent two embassies, one headed by Vasili himself, to Ivan to plead for peace. He refused to withdraw. In defiance of Ivan, the following year, Vasili travelled to Pskov where he baptized Alexander’s son. Later that year he welcomed Narimantas. The events of the early 1330s therefore undermined the primacy of the pro-Muscovite faction in Novgorod and laid the foundations for the growth pro-Lithuanian sympathies.

The next few years evince a fluctuation of loyalties. In 1324, Ivan was welcomed back to Novgorod “with love.”\textsuperscript{172} However, when he wished to “go with the men of Novgorod and with the whole of the Low Country against Pskov,” presumably to punish the Pskovites yet again for harboring Alexander, the Novgorodians denied his request.\textsuperscript{173} This time, conflict was avoided. The \textit{NPL} states that Ivan and the people of Novgorod had a “friendly meeting” where it was decided that they would defer the march but “did not grant peace to the men of Pskov.”\textsuperscript{174} Gediminas must have been angered by this turn of events because the \textit{NPL} reports that the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[169] Fennell, \textit{The Emergence of Moscow}, 139.
\item[170] \textit{NPL}, pp. 100, 344 (Michell and Forbes, 127): възерже гнѣбѣ на Новѣград.
\item[172] \textit{NPL}, p. 346: и прия их с любовию.
\item[173] \textit{NPL}, p. 346 (Michell and Forbes, 129): Ивань хотѣ ити на Плесковъ с новгородци и со всею Низовскою землею.
\item[174] \textit{NPL}, p. 346 (Michell and Forbes, 129): бысть ему по любви рѣчь с новгородци, и отложиша ѣздѣ; а плесковицемъ миру не даша.
\end{footnotes}
Lithuanians ransacked Torzhok and the district of Novi-Torg in 1335.\footnote{NPL, p. 347.} Ivan retaliated by burning the Lithuanian towns of Osechen and Ryasna near Smolensk. Ivan’s return to Novgorod led to a series of disturbances in 1335 and 1337.\footnote{NPL, pp. 347–8.} Fennell even suggests, “The republic indeed was on the brink of civil war.”\footnote{Fennell, The Emergence of Moscow, 150.} For most of the 1330s, Vasili and Ivan remained at odds.

For later chroniclers with loyalties to Moscow, it was advantageous to portray Gediminas’ cooperation with Vasili in a negative light. It is therefore difficult to determine whether contemporary Novgorodian chroniclers actually intended to portray Gediminas as a ruler “puffed with pride” and quick to use force to coerce the archbishop and metropolitan. The image of Gediminas that has survived in the Novgorod chronicle record is clearly a product not only of the confusion of 1330s but also subsequent omissions and alterations. Gediminas is not a static character like many of the “good” and “bad” Lithuanians discussed in the previous chapter. His image was manipulated to suit later political needs and reveals more about the state of affairs in Rus’ than the person of Gediminas and his in relations with Novgorod. Using the character of Gediminas, we could thus conclude that Rus'ian chroniclers created and altered the image of their Lithuanian rivals in response to domestic circumstances. There is no definitive image of Gediminas in the \textit{NPL} because of the complex and confused state of affairs in Novgorod in the 1330s.
Conclusions

Although the NPL reports that Gediminas died in the winter of 1341, our story concludes a decade earlier when the contemporary chronicle records ends. The final years of Gediminas’ reign have been reconstructed by scholars from later sources. For the most part, it appears that Gediminas abided by many of the same policies. In the west, Lithuania and the Order remained at war. In 1329, the Order launched a brutal attack on Samogitia with the help of King John of Bohemia. The assault was famously documented by the poet Guillaume de Machaut. Until the death of Bolesław-Yuri II, Gediminas also maintained close relations with Łokietek. The Polish had proven to be sure allies against the knights because they refused to concede to the Order and relinquish lands that they believed were right rightfully theirs. While the knights were devastating Samogitia, Gediminas wasted the Order’s lands in Kulm with the help of Polish forces.

At the same time, Gediminas was also caught up in Riga’s struggles against the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Knights. In 1330, Eberhard von Monheim, the Livonian land marshal, besieged Riga and held the city until food supplies were exhausted. According to Jeroschin, the starving people of Riga revolted against the municipal government and capitulated to the knights handing over “their own persons and possessions, the city and all its privileges and freedoms.” Hermann von Wartberge, writing nearly half a century later, recalled how the Lithuanians assisted the Rigans during the Order’s blockade. He presented Gediminas as a typical pagan who

---

178 NPL, p. 353: Тои же зимь умре князь великий Гѣдимень Литовскыи поганыи (The same winter the grand prince Gediminas of Lithuania, the pagan). The cause of death is unknown.
179 Rowell, Lithuania Ascending, 252–9, 263–71.
180 NJ, lines 26,959–7,052.
182 NJ, lines, 27,053–104.
disrespects Christian institutions. He reported that Gediminas stabled his horses in a church in Peystele and “perpetrated an infinite number of crimes, wasting everything with fire.” He then looted the parish of Tharwest, killing 400 Christians. In retaliation, the knights besieged Riga and concluded a truce. A few years later in 1338, Gediminas and the Livonian land marshal signed another commercial peace. Unlike the treaty of 1323, this truce did not call for an immediate end to hostilities, but rather defined zones of safe passage between the Order and Lithuania.

Meanwhile in the east, Gediminas’ continued to command the loyalty of Pskov and Smolensk. His relations with Novgorod, however, remained lukewarm. Perhaps this is why in 1333, Gediminas married his daughter Aigusta to Ivan Kalita’s heir Simeon of Moscow. The marriage seems to have failed to achieve its desired effect as competition over Novgorod between Moscow and Lithuania persisted almost uninterrupted. Aigusta died twelve years leaving no surviving male heirs. As for Gediminas’ loyal ally Alexander of Tver, he was executed by the Horde on October 29, 1339. After his death, Tver was effectively pacified. Thereafter, a client of the prince of Moscow ruled the principality. By the time of Gediminas’ death in 1341, Lithuania had thus become the main contender for power in northwestern Rus’ against Moscow.

Again, the lack of contemporary sources makes it difficult to judge the extent to which Gediminas’ policies affected the political development of Lithuania in the fourteenth century. From the contemporary record it is clear that Gediminas’ relationship with the pope and other Christian rulers of Europe earned him the reputation of a stalwart pagan who skillfully and cunningly diverts attempts by Westerners to Christianize his lands. The Order’s chroniclers used

---

185 Hermann von Wartherbe, 64: in qua ecclesia rex cum duobus fratribus suis per duas noctes equos suos stabulavit et coram sacramento infinita exercuit facinora; omnia alia vastantes atque igne cremantes.

186 CL, no. 69, pp. 258–261.
this image to promote their crusade. At the same time, Gediminas’ involvement in Rus'ian ecclesiastical affairs and Novgorodian foreign policy seems to have prompted a revision of the Rus'ian chronicle record implying that his influence in Rus' may have been much greater than later Rus'ian chroniclers were willing to admit.
Conclusion

Using Lithuania as a case study, this dissertation has aimed to examine how the image of the Other was constructed and used in medieval European and Rus'ian chronicles. As has been shown, there was never one definitive image of the Lithuanian Other advanced by the chroniclers. Rather, representations of Lithuania were adjusted and adapted to the historical and literary context. The example of Lithuania demonstrates that chronicle writing or the practice of history in the Middle Ages involved reinterpreting reality in accordance not only with local social, political, and religious needs but also accepted ideas of knowledge and truth. By deconstructing the image of the Lithuanian Other in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order and Rus', the goal of this dissertation was to reveal its function and possible purpose within the context of its creation.

As demonstrated early on, chronicle writing in the Teutonic Order developed largely in response to mounting accusations of undue violence levied against the knights by the archbishop of Riga, the dukes of Poland, and various local Baltic municipalities. With the dissolution of the Templar Knights at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the situation was not to be taken lightly. Moreover, the very fact that Lithuanian dukes corroborated the complaints of their neighboring Christian polities in order to win the pope’s sympathies presented the knights with a serious problem. The existence of the Order and its state was intrinsically tied to the need for a permanent garrison of skilled knights to protect Christendom from the wicked pagan enemy. The Order’s chronicle tradition should therefore be read as a defense not only of the Order’s mission
of conversion, but more specifically its crusading activities against Lithuania, the so-called last pagan stronghold in Europe.

Much like the chronicles themselves, the image of Lithuania in the texts is essentially propagandistic. As demonstrated in chapter 3, juxtaposing the Lithuanians against the knights was a rhetorical strategy used by the chroniclers to highlight the Order’s moral rectitude and the sacrifices made by the knights as the *militia Christi*. At the same time, depicting the Lithuanians as relentless and hostile foes of the faith and the faithful helped demonstrate the necessity of the Order’s mission and curry favor for the establishment and growth of the Order State. It could even be argued that the Order’s chroniclers exaggerated the vulnerability of neighboring Christian territories to Lithuanian attacks so as to confirm their *raison d’être* both as defenders of Christendom and avengers of wrongs done to the lands and people of Christ.

As seen in chapters 6–8, the presentation of individual Lithuanian dukes follows these general guidelines. Before his conversion, Mindaugas is depicted as a pagan who rejoices in the death of Christians. His assassin, Treniota, hates Christians so much that he later manipulates Mindaugas into renouncing his newfound faith with lies and deceit. Just as Lithuanians were presented as prone to using treachery and lies, they were also seen slaves to their arrogance. Vytenis, for example, was depicted by Dusburg as mocking his Christian captives and trampling the host because of his false sense of confidence and self-worth. As a result, he is easily defeated in battle by the virtuous knights. Gediminas represents the culmination of the pagan Lithuanian stereotype. He deceives the knights into believing that he is ready to receive baptism, but then, as the Order prepares for peace, he leads a military offensive against neighboring Christian lands. The example of Gediminas serves largely as a warning against the possibility of conciliation or compromise with Lithuania.
While descriptions of Lithuanian aggression and perfidy certainly provided justification for the Order’s crusading activities, portraying the Lithuanians as purely evil could potentially undermine the credibility of the narrative. Medieval chronicles were expected to present an “accurate” account of reality. In other words, despite their didactic leanings, medieval audiences viewed chronicles as records of the “truth.” It was the chroniclers task, therefore, to present a “truthful” narrative or, at least, a narrative that could be understood as truthful. Anyone living on the Baltic frontier knew that collaboration between the knights and their supposed pagan enemies was commonplace. Between bouts of hostility, the knights traded with the pagans and even allied with certain pagan peoples in times of need. Presenting some Lithuanians as “good,” or showing that some Lithuanians willingly accept baptism and aid the Order’s cause, not only helped substantiate the truth of the narrative (a world of strict dichotomy can only exist in the literary dimension), but also demonstrated that the Order was not precluding baptism as its critics claimed. When Gineika, Milgerinas, and Tusche or Dryako, Swirtil, and Spudo asked for the Order’s aid, the knights immediately welcomed them, baptized them, and offered them protection. Likewise, when Mindaugas was first baptized, the knights instantly accepted him as a friend and ally. At the same time, the failure of his conversion showed that without military subjugation, Christianization is effectively impossible because seditious pagans will always beguile innocent neophytes to renounce their beliefs and resume the war against Christianity.

The characters and events depicted in the Order’s chronicles all point to the highly constructed nature of the texts. In describing the Lithuanians, Teutonic chroniclers drew on common discursive models and motifs familiar to Western audiences. Most notably, they appropriated the rhetoric that had just recently been applied to the crusade in the Holy Land, especially by apologists such as Bernard of Clairvaux. Although the Order’s chronicles were
intended for a very specific purpose, that is, to justify the Order’s activities in the Baltic lands, it
is important to note that they were part of a much older tradition of history writing in the West.
One the goals of this thesis was therefore not only to explore the impact of the Order’s chronicles
on crusading ideology but also its adherence to accepted forms of crusading literature, chivalric
epos, and depictions of “otherness.” The very fact that the Order’s chronicles did not deviate
from accepted literary standards but were accessible to European audiences, may be why in the
fourteenth century, despite the charges brought against the knights, the Order attracted more
recruits than ever before.¹

The chronicles of Rus' provide a worthwhile basis for comparison with the Order’s
chronicles because these texts serve as an equally rich collection of source material on medieval
Lithuania. Moreover, despite what is often perceived as the divergent path of Russian history
from the Western European trajectory, in the Middle Ages, Rus' was not isolated from the West.
In fact, thriving mercantile networks between Europe and Rus' served not only as conduits of
trade, but also culture and information, especially through the Baltic lands. As a result, although
Rus'ian princes never sought to colonize the Baltic peoples like the Teutonic Knights, they were
very much involved in the commercial and political life of the Baltic region. The Rus'ian
chronicle tradition attests to these connections and interactions.

Much like in West, Rus'ian chroniclers also sought to establish credibility of narrative.
For this reason, they drew on the traditions set forth by earlier texts such as the $PVL$. At the same
time, Rus'ian chronicles were greatly influenced by contemporary politics and local social
structures. We know that the $NPL$, for example, was written at the court of archbishop and is
partial to the see of Novgorod, especially in its dealings with political rivals. The $GVL$, on the

other hand, was written to celebrate the deeds of the ruling dynasty of Galicia-Volhynia, including Danilo, Vasilko, and their sons. Unlike Western Europeans who came into regular contact with the Lithuanians only in the twelfth century when trading posts were first established on the eastern Baltic rim, the people of Rus' were no strangers to their Lithuanian neighbors. The PVL describes Lithuania as a tributary land of Rus' even before Vladimir’s conversion in 988. However, it was not until the Lithuanians began to conduct military expeditions and slave raids into Rus' after 1183 that they became central characters in the Rus'ian chroniclers. Since the people of Rus' were accustomed to the experience of pagan invasion, accounts of early Lithuanian raids conform to the model used by the PVL to describe the attacks of other pagan peoples such as the Pechenges, Polovtsians, and Volga Bulgars.

As Lithuania became a regional power rather than just a small consortium of tribes irritating the western frontiers of Rus', Rus'ian chroniclers were faced with the difficulty of making sense of an ever-growing Lithuanian polity that was now subsuming the lands of western Rus'. This fundamental change in the nature of Baltic power dynamics, nevertheless, did not change the character of Rus'ian chronicle writing. To a large extent, Lithuania’s territorial expansion went unnoticed in Rus'ian chronicles. This suggests that medieval Rus'ian chroniclers did not simply endeavor to present the Lithuanians as political or military competitors encroaching on Rus'ian lands. Rather, descriptions of Lithuanians functioned in a self-referential way. In other words, accounts of Lithuanian attacks on Rus’ were intended to reveal something important about Rus' not Lithuania per se. As demonstrated in chapter 5, the authors of NPL identified the Lithuanians as “pagan,” godless,” and “accursed.” However, they only employed these pejorative epithets during times of local crisis, which they blamed on the sins of the Rus'ians, particularly fratricidal warfare among princes. The appearance of such terminology was
intended to evoke a sense of fear not for renewed Lithuanian invasion, but specifically for the misfortunes that the chroniclers believed would continue to befall Rus' until conflicts were resolved. In the *GVL*, on the other hand, “evil” Lithuanian dukes served as a counter-point to the good princes of Galicia-Volhynia. Victories over the Lithuanians showed the effectiveness of Danilo and Vasilko at deflecting enemy invasion, while the descriptions of Mindaugas’ treachery worked to bolster the image of Danilo as a virtuous and righteous prince.

Even “good” dukes such as Vaišvilkas, Daumantas, Narimantas were only presented as such because their actions somehow benefited Rus’—Vaišvilkas relinquished his crown and the lands of Lithuania to Danilo’s son Švarn thus making the dynasty a Galicia-Volhynia a contender for the throne of Lithuania; Daumantas offered the Pskovites protection thus ensuring the city’s independence from Novgorod; and Narimantas’ was hailed as the new defender of Novgorod’s northern frontiers because his acceptance of the position helped Archbishop Vasili Kalika temporarily lessen Moscow’s grip on the city’s affairs. The fact that the archbishops of Novgorod sometimes supported Moscow’s ambitions and at other times refused to cede to Moscow’s demands is also reflected in the presentation of Gediminas. The duke is never portrayed as wholly “good” or “bad.” Moreover, later redactions of the *NPL* indicate efforts to revise entries detailing Gediminas’ involvement in Novgorodian affairs. While this precludes us from making any definitive conclusions about the image of Gediminas in the *NPL*, it does suggest that representations of Gediminas, like those of other Lithuanians, had a political and social function. The way in which Rus'ian chroniclers incorporated Lithuanians and Lithuanian events into the written record implies that they used the image of the Lithuanian Other in a variety of ways: (1) as a warning about the potentially damaging effects of inter-princely strife; (2) as a background to emphasize the virtues of the people of Rus' and certain princes; and (3) as
a means to demonstrate the self-determination of the people of Rus' and their dominion over other peoples, including the Lithuanians with whom they strike alliances for personal benefit.

The utility and versatility of the images of the pagan Lithuanian Other in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order and Rus' reveals that the construct of the Other in medieval chronicles was informed by a wide range of discourses not only the “us” versus “them” polemic. Furthermore, religious differences, though important, were not the primary identifying marker of “otherness.” In fact, Christians and pagans continued to interact across confessional boundaries on the Baltic frontier. As this dissertation implies, to understand the image of the pagan Lithuanian Other in contemporary literature, we must therefore look to the local context.
Figure 1. Genealogical table of select members of Mindaugas’ household.
Bibliography

Primary Sources


http://d3seu6qyu1a8jw.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/collections/32/324D849D-5D6C-4FC5-B8F4-390AF48ECA45.pdf


Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei. Moscow: IAzyki russkoj kul'tury, 1997–.


Secondary Sources


The Old Rus' Kievan and Galician-Volhynian Chronicles: The Ostroz'kyj (Xlebnikov) and Cetvertyns'kyj (Pogodin) Codices. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1990.


__________. “‘Povest’ vremennykh let’ i ee istochniki.” *Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literature* 4 (1940): 9–150.


Tolochko, Oleksiy P. “Christian Chronology, Universal History and the Origin of Chronicle Writing in Rus’.” In *Historical Narratives and Christian Identity on a European*


Vasmer, Max. Ėtimologicheskii slovar' russkogo iazyka. Translated by O. N. Trubacheva. Edited by B. A. Larina. Moscow: Progress, 1964–.


“A Response to Professor Chartier’s Four Questions.” *Storia della Storiografia* 27 (1995): 63–70


